

MUS2640 Sensing Sound and Music Examination Guide 2025

The school exam consists of four equal parts, each of which is advised to contain at least 400 words. The grades are awarded on a descending scale from A (Excellent) to F (Fail). Each of the four parts contributes equally to the overall grade. Performance criteria are applied to all four parts of the exam, assessing depth of understanding, appropriate use of terminology, analytical ability, and critical reflection.

Core Criteria	A (Excellent)	C (Good)	E (Minimum)
Knowledge and Comprehension	Demonstrates precise understanding of all concepts, including subtleties and interdependencies.	Demonstrates understanding of core concepts in most areas.	Demonstrates basic factual recall, meeting minimum requirements.
Part 1: The sound of a room (Acoustics & Soundscape)	Provides a detailed, multi-layered description of the room and its acoustics (e.g., discussing reflections, absorption, standing waves, and flutter echo). Soundscape analysis employs precise terminology (e.g., keynote, signal, impulsive, iterative) and provides insightful evaluations of modifications across diverse genres.	Provides a coherent description of the main physical features and their influence (e.g., rigid walls reflect, carpet absorbs). The soundscape is described with correct terminology, and evaluations of musical suitability are reasonable, offering relevant modification suggestions (e.g., adding absorbent panels or adjusting room shape).	Satisfies the description requirement and identifies basic acoustic phenomena (e.g., the room is big, sound carries). The soundscape analysis mentions audible sounds. Suggestions for modification are general (e.g., remove furniture or add wood).
Part 2: Sound visualisation (Spectrograms)	Analysis of the four spectrograms is insightful, providing detailed justification for interpretations (e.g., linking waveform structure/overtones to instrument/source/form). Comparisons of scales (linear vs. logarithmic) and settings demonstrate understanding of how specific parameters reveal distinct sound	Interpretation of the spectrograms is justified, recognising fundamental differences (e.g., mono/stereo, linear/logarithmic scales) and suggesting plausible sound sources. Explanations of parameter changes (e.g., changing the y-axis scale to	Interprets at least two spectrograms plausibly and identifies one or two main differences (e.g., time axis presence, frequency range). Mentions basic parameter changes (e.g., turning gain down or zooming in).

	features (e.g., window-size effects on transients vs. frequency detail).	logarithmic for human hearing perception) are contextually relevant.	
Part 3: Listening (Auditory System, Embodied Cognition, Machine Listening)	Provides detailed responses to all three sub-questions, clearly distinguishing nuanced concepts (e.g., the action-perception loop and its impact on musical performance/perception). Discusses the complex components of machine listening (e.g., retrieval, processing, analysis pipeline) and recognises its limitations in handling subjective factors such as emotion.	Answers the questions accurately, covering the three main parts of the ear, defining embodied cognition in terms of relationships between body and mind, and listing key components of a machine listening system.	Answers demonstrate minimum required knowledge for all three components, listing the main parts of the auditory system (ear/brain) and giving a rudimentary definition of embodied cognition. Lists general functions of machine listening (e.g., recognising genre, melody, or rhythm).
Part 4: Research article (Microrhythm & Groove)	Summarises the article thoroughly, focusing on the hypothesis that perceived timing is contingent on microstructure (the "what" affects the "when"). The discussion of groove explains how expertise and enculturation affect beat bin width and P-centres. The methodological reflection is incisive, suggesting alternatives that address the study's limitations.	Summarises the core focus (microrhythm, timing, and perception) and main findings (e.g., effect of attack/duration on P-centre/beat bin). Discusses the relationship between microrhythm and groove, referencing bodily metaphors and matching the "what" and "when". Methodological reflection suggests relevant and plausible alternative approaches.	Provides a brief summary of the article's topic and some findings (e.g., microtiming changes perception). Recognises that microrhythm is linked to groove and bodily movement. Suggests basic modifications to the methodology (e.g., larger sample size or cross-cultural data collection).

Note on Word Count: The exam requires at least 400 words per part. Failure to meet the expected length while also demonstrating significant shortcomings in academic quality may result in a D or E. A short response (significantly below 400 words) that fails to address the complexity of the question likely results in an F if academic criteria are not met.