

CONDITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

# GCE Subject Level Conditions and Requirement for Music (2021)

November 2020

**ofqual**

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# Introduction

## About this document

This document is part of a suite of documents which sets out the regulatory requirements for awarding organisations offering reformed A levels and AS qualifications in 2021.

We have developed all our requirements for GCE qualifications with the intention that AS and A level qualifications should fulfil the purposes set out in the table below:

A levels	AS qualifications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="260 719 916 1003">□ define and assess achievement of the knowledge, skills and understanding which will be needed by students planning to progress to undergraduate study at a UK higher education establishment, particularly (although not only) in the same subject area;</li><li data-bbox="260 1048 906 1205">□ set out a robust and internationally comparable post-16 academic course of study to develop that knowledge, skills and understanding;</li><li data-bbox="260 1261 911 1339">□ permit UK universities to accurately identify the level of attainment of students;</li><li data-bbox="260 1384 858 1462">□ provide a basis for school and college accountability measures at age 18; and</li><li data-bbox="260 1507 874 1574">□ provide a benchmark of academic ability for employers.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="952 719 1422 958">□ provide evidence of students' achievements in a robust and internationally comparable post-16 course of study that is a subset of A level content; and</li><li data-bbox="952 1003 1382 1126">□ enable students to broaden the range of subjects they study.</li></ul>

## Requirements set out in this document

This document sets out the GCE Subject Level Conditions for Music. These conditions will come into effect at 09:30 on 5 November 2020 for the following qualifications:

- all GCE A levels in Music; and
- all stand-alone GCE AS qualifications in Music

for Learners completing the qualification in 2021, except where the GQCov Framework applies.

It also sets out our requirements in relation to:

- assessment objectives - awarding organisations must comply with these requirements under Condition GCE(Music)1.2; and
- assessment - awarding organisations must comply with these requirements under Condition GCE (Music)2.3.

Appendix 1 reproduces the [subject content requirements for Music](#), as published by the Department for Education. Awarding organisations must comply with these requirements under Condition GCE(Music)1.1.

With respect to the qualifications listed above, awarding organisations must also comply with:

- our [General Conditions of Recognition](#), which apply to all awarding organisations and qualifications;
- our [GCE Qualification Level Conditions and Requirements](#); and
- all [relevant Regulatory Documents](#).

With respect to all other GCE Qualifications in Music, taken by Learners completing the qualification in 2022 and after, an awarding organisation must continue to comply with the [GCE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Music](#).

# Subject Level Conditions

## GCE Subject Level Conditions for Music

### *Condition GCE(Music) 1: Compliance with content requirements*

#### **GCE(Music)1.1**

In respect of each GCE Qualification in Music which it makes available, or proposes to make available, an awarding organisation must -

- (a) comply with the requirements relating to that qualification set out in the document published by the Secretary of State entitled '[Music GCE AS and A level subject content](#)', document reference DFE-00695-2014,
- (b) have regard to any recommendations or guidelines relating to that qualification set out in that document, and
- (c) interpret that document in accordance with any requirements, and having regard to any guidance, which may be published by Ofqual and revised from time to time.

#### **GCE(Music)1.2**

In respect of each GCE Qualification in Music which it makes available, or proposes to make available, an awarding organisation must comply with any requirements, and have regard to any guidance, relating to the objectives to be met by any assessment for that qualification which may be published by Ofqual and revised from time to time.

## **Condition GCE(Music) 2: Assessment**

### **GCE(Music)2.1**

Condition GCE4.1 does not apply to any GCE Qualification in Music which an awarding organisation makes available or proposes to make available.

### **GCE(Music)2.2**

In respect of the total marks available for a GCE Qualification in Music which it makes available, an awarding organisation must ensure that -

- (a) 40 per cent of those marks are made available through Assessments by Examination, and
- (b) 60 per cent of those marks are made available through assessments that are not Assessments by Examination.

### **GCE(Music)2.3**

An awarding organisation must ensure that in respect of each assessment for a GCE Qualification in Music which it makes available which is not an Assessment by Examination it complies with any requirements, and has regard to any guidance, which may be published by Ofqual and revised from time to time.

## Assessment objectives

### Assessment objectives - GCE Qualifications in Music

Condition GCE(Music)1.2 allows us to specify requirements relating to the objectives to be met by any assessment for GCE Qualifications in Music.

The assessment objectives set out below constitute requirements for the purposes of Condition GCE(Music)1.2. Awarding organisations must comply with these requirements in relation to all GCE AS and A level qualifications in Music they make available.

	Objective	Weighting (A level)	Weighting (AS)
AO1	Interpret musical ideas through performing, with technical and expressive control and an understanding of style and context.	25–35%	30%
AO2	Create and develop musical ideas with technical and expressive control and coherence.	25–35%	30%
AO3	Demonstrate and apply musical knowledge.	10%	15%
AO4	Use analytical and appraising skills to make evaluative and critical judgements about music.	30%	25%

# Assessment requirements

## Requirements in relation to assessments for GCE Qualifications in Music

Condition GCE(Music)2.3 allows us to specify requirements and guidance in relation to assessments which are not Assessments by Examination for GCE Qualifications in Music.

We set out our requirements for the purposes of Condition GCE(Music)2.3 below.

### *Forms of non-examination assessment*

The requirements in this section apply to all GCE Qualifications in Music which an awarding organisation makes available or proposes to make available.

Condition GCE(Music)2.2(b) states that an awarding organisation must ensure that of the total marks available for a GCE Qualification in Music, 60 per cent of those marks shall be made available through assessments which are not Assessments by Examination.

In respect of that 60 per cent, an awarding organisation must ensure that -

(a) for a GCE A level qualification in Music -

- (i) either 25 per cent, 30 per cent or 35 per cent of the total marks available for the qualification are made available through tasks which assess a Learner's knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to performance (the 'Performance Assessment'), and
- (ii) the remaining marks made available through assessments which are not Assessments by Examination are made available through tasks which assess a Learner's knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to composition (the 'Composition Assessment').

(b) for a GCE AS qualification in Music -

- (i) 30 per cent of the total marks available for the qualification are made available through tasks which assess a Learner's knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to performance (the 'Performance Assessment'), and
- (ii) 30 per cent of the total marks available for the qualification are made available through tasks which assess a Learner's knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to composition (the 'Composition Assessment').

## ***The Performance Assessment (A level)***

The requirements in this section apply to GCE A level qualifications in Music which an awarding organisation makes available or proposes to make available.

An awarding organisation must ensure that each Performance Assessment is designed and set to -

- (a) require each Learner to perform one or more pieces of music, with a combined duration of -
  - (i) where 25 per cent of the total marks available for the qualification are allocated to tasks targeting assessment objective AO1, at least two minutes and 30 seconds,
  - (ii) where 30 per cent of the total marks available for the qualification are allocated to tasks targeting assessment objective AO1, at least three minutes,
  - (iii) where 35 per cent of the total marks available for the qualification are allocated to tasks targeting assessment objective AO1, at least three minutes and 30 seconds,
- (b) require each Learner to select, following discussion with the Centre which will deliver the assessment, the piece or pieces of music that the Learner will perform during the assessment,
- (c) be taken by each Learner in the academic year in which that Learner expects to be awarded the qualification,
- (d) be taken under conditions specified by the awarding organisation, including in particular, conditions which ensure that the evidence generated by each Learner can be Authenticated, and
- (e) assess assessment objective AO1 in its entirety.

An awarding organisation must ensure that, in respect of each piece of music performed by a Learner in the Performance Assessment, the Centre which delivered that assessment provides the awarding organisation with -

- (a) a complete and unedited recording of the Learner's live performance, and
- (b) where available, the score or lead sheet for that performance.<sup>1</sup>

In paragraph 8 of the document published by the Secretary of State entitled '[Music GCE AS and A level subject content](#)', document reference DFE-00695-2014, it is stated that Learners must perform using one or more of the following means -

- (a) playing or singing solo or in ensemble,
- (b) improvising, or
- (c) realising music using music technology.

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<sup>1</sup> Where, in circumstances in which a written score is not available, an awarding organisation allows the piece of music to be performed by the Learner, it must require an alternative to a written score to be submitted. Where an awarding organisation allows the performance, the alternative materials must be sufficient to allow assessors to make valid judgements against the marking criteria for the task.

In its assessment strategy, an awarding organisation must demonstrate to Ofqual's satisfaction that, with respect to each Performance Assessment, it has taken all reasonable steps to ensure that the Level of Demand is consistent no matter which of those means is chosen by a Learner.

## ***The Performance Assessment (AS)***

The requirements in this section apply to GCE AS level qualifications in Music which an awarding organisation makes available or proposes to make available.

An awarding organisation must ensure that each Performance Assessment is designed and set to -

- (a) require each Learner to perform one or more pieces of music, with a combined duration of at least two minutes and 30 seconds,
- (b) require each Learner to select, following discussion with the Centre which is delivering the assessment, the piece or pieces of music that the Learner will perform during the assessment,
- (c) be taken by each Learner in the academic year in which that Learner expects to be awarded the qualification,
- (d) be taken under conditions specified by the awarding organisation, including, in particular, conditions which ensure that the evidence generated by each Learner can be Authenticated, and
- (e) assess assessment objective AO1 in its entirety.

An awarding organisation must ensure that, in respect of each piece of music performed by a Learner in the Performance Assessment, the Centre which delivered that assessment provides the awarding organisation with -

- (a) a complete and unedited recording of the Learner's live performance, and
- (b) where available, the score or lead sheet for that performance.<sup>2</sup>

In paragraph 8 of the document published by the Secretary of State entitled '[Music GCE AS and A level subject content](#)', document reference DFE-00695-2014, it is stated that Learners must perform using one or more of the following means -

- (a) playing or singing solo or in ensemble,
- (b) improvising, or
- (c) realising music using music technology.

In its assessment strategy, an awarding organisation must demonstrate to Ofqual's satisfaction that, with respect to each Performance Assessment, it has taken all reasonable steps to ensure that the Level of Demand is consistent no matter which of those means is chosen by a Learner.

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<sup>2</sup> Where, in circumstances in which a written score is not available, an awarding organisation allows the piece of music to be performed by the Learner, it must require an alternative to a written score to be submitted. Where an awarding organisation allows the performance, the alternative materials must be sufficient to allow assessors to make valid judgements against the marking criteria for the task.

## ***The Composition Assessment (A level)***

The requirements in this section apply to GCE A level qualifications in Music which an awarding organisation makes available or proposes to make available.

An awarding organisation must ensure that each Composition Assessment is designed and set to -

- (a) offer each Learner a choice of composing music -
  - (i) in response to a brief set by the awarding organisation, and/or
  - (ii) freely as the Learner chooses,
- (b) require each Learner to compose -
  - (i) where 25 per cent of the total marks available for the qualification are allocated to tasks targeting assessment objective AO2, one or more pieces of music with a combined duration of at least two minutes,
  - (ii) where 30 per cent of the total marks available for the qualification are allocated to tasks targeting assessment objective AO2, one or more pieces of music with a combined duration of at least three minutes,
  - (iii) where 35 per cent of the total marks available for the qualification are allocated to tasks targeting assessment objective AO2, two or more separate pieces of music with a combined duration of at least four minutes,
- (c) be taken under conditions specified by the awarding organisation, including, in particular, conditions which ensure that the evidence generated by each Learner can be Authenticated,
- (d) minimise the predictability of such assessments,
- (e) facilitate the comparability of such assessments, and
- (f) assess assessment objective AO2 in its entirety.

An awarding organisation must ensure that each brief it sets for a Composition Assessment specifies the occasion or audience with reference to which the piece is to be composed.

An awarding organisation must ensure that, in respect of each piece of music composed by a Learner for the Composition Assessment, the Centre which delivered that assessment provides the awarding organisation with -

- (a) a complete recording of the piece, and
- (b) a score, lead sheet or written account of the composition, which has been produced by the Learner.

The Learner does not have to perform the piece of music which he or she has composed.

## ***The Composition Assessment (AS)***

The requirements in this section apply to GCE AS qualifications in Music which an awarding organisation makes available or proposes to make available.

An awarding organisation must ensure that each Composition Assessment is designed and set to -

- (a) offer each Learner a choice of composing music -
  - (i) in response to a brief set by the awarding organisation, and/or
  - (ii) freely as the Learner chooses,
- (b) require each Learner to compose one or more pieces of music with a combined duration of at least two minutes and 30 seconds,
- (c) be taken under conditions specified by the awarding organisation, including, in particular, conditions which ensure that the evidence generated by each Learner can be Authenticated,
- (d) minimise the predictability of such assessments,
- (e) facilitate the comparability of such assessments, and
- (f) assess assessment objective AO2 in its entirety.

An awarding organisation must ensure that each brief it sets for a Composition Assessment specifies the occasion or audience with reference to which the piece is to be composed.

An awarding organisation must ensure that, in respect of each piece of music composed by a Learner for the Composition Assessment, the Centre which delivered that assessment provides the awarding organisation with -

- (a) a complete recording of the piece, and
- (b) a score, lead sheet or written account of the composition, which has been produced by the Learner.

The Learner does not have to perform the piece of music which he or she has composed.

## ***Marking of assessments***

The requirements in this section apply to all GCE Qualifications in Music which an awarding organisation makes available or proposes to make available.

Evidence generated by each Learner in each assessment for a GCE Qualification in Music which is not an Assessment by Examination may be marked -

- (a) by the awarding organisation or a person connected to the awarding organisation
- (b) by a Centre, or
- (c) through a combination of (a) and (b).

In any event, the awarding organisation must demonstrate to Ofqual's satisfaction in its assessment strategy that -

- (a) it has taken all reasonable steps to identify the risk of any Adverse Effect which may result from its approach to marking of the assessments, and

- (b) where such a risk is identified, it has taken all reasonable steps to prevent that Adverse Effect or, where it cannot be prevented, to mitigate that Adverse Effect.

## Appendix 1 – Subject content (published by Department for Education)



Department  
for Education

# Music

**GCE AS and A level subject content**

**January 2015**

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# The content for music AS and A levels

## Introduction

1. AS and A level subject content sets out the knowledge, understanding and skills common to all AS and A level specifications in a given subject.
2. Together with the assessment objectives it provides the framework within which the awarding organisations create the detail of their specifications, so ensuring progression from GCSE and the possibilities for development into HE.
3. AS and A Level music specifications must support students in forming personal and meaningful relationships with music through the development of musical knowledge, understanding and skills including performing, composing and appraising. They must encourage students to engage critically and creatively with a wide range of music and musical contexts, develop an understanding of the place of music in different cultures and contexts, and reflect on how music is used in the expression of personal and collective identities.
4. The specifications must also allow students to develop particular strengths and interests, encourage lifelong learning and provide access to higher education and university degree courses in music and music-related subjects as well as music-related and other careers.

## Aims and Objectives

5. AS and A level specifications in music must offer a broad and coherent course of study which encourages students to:

- engage actively in the process of music study
- develop performing skills to demonstrate an understanding of musical elements, style, sense of continuity, interpretation and expression
- develop composing skills to demonstrate the manipulation of musical ideas and the use of musical devices and conventions
- recognise the interdependence of musical knowledge, understanding and skills, and make links between the integrated activities of performing, composing and appraising underpinned by attentive listening
- broaden musical experience and interests, develop imagination and foster creativity
- develop and extend the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to communicate effectively as musicians
- develop knowledge and understanding of a variety of instruments and styles, and of relevant approaches to both performing and composing
- develop awareness of music technologies and their use in the creation and presentation of music
- appraise contrasting genres, styles and traditions of music, and develop understanding of musical contexts and a coherent awareness of musical chronology
- develop as effective, independent learners and as critical and reflective thinkers with enquiring minds
- reflect critically and make personal judgements on their own and others' music
- engage with, and extend appreciation of, the diverse heritage of music in order to promote personal, social, intellectual and cultural development

## Subject content

6. AS and A Level specifications in music must build on the knowledge, understanding and skills established at Key Stage 4 and in GCSE qualifications.

7. AS and A Level specifications in music must require students to develop an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the musical elements, musical contexts and musical language listed below, and allow students to apply these, where appropriate, to their own work when performing and composing.

## Musical elements and their interdependence

- organisation of pitch (melodically and harmonically) including:
  - harmonic change, cadences e.g. interrupted , and melodic and harmonic devices at AS
  - additionally complex chord progressions e.g. the use of secondary dominant, and melodic devices e.g. augmentation at A level
- tonality including:
  - how keys are related to each other e.g. circle of fifths at AS
  - additionally complex and remote key relationships e.g. enharmonic at A Level
- structure; organisation of musical material including:
  - complex structures e.g. sonata form at AS
  - additionally increasingly complex structures e.g. fugue and through-composed music at A Level
- sonority including:
  - combinations of vocal timbres and instrumental techniques e.g. con sordino at AS
  - additionally further combinations of vocal timbres and instrumental techniques e.g. sul ponticello at A level
- texture including:
  - complex combinations of musical lines (parts) e.g. homophony and polyphony at AS
  - additionally more complex applications of these e.g. fugue at A level
- tempo, metre and rhythm; how music is organised in time including:
  - metrical and rhythmic devices e.g. changing metres and syncopation at AS
  - additionally complex metrical and rhythmic devices e.g. additive rhythm and polyrhythms at A level
- dynamics; use of dynamics including:
  - expressive devices e.g. contrast and extended ranges at AS
  - additionally refined control of dynamics and extreme ranges at A level

## Musical contexts

- the effect of purpose and intention (e.g. of the composer, performer, commissioner) on how music is created, developed and performed in different historical, social and cultural contexts
- the effect of audience, time and place (e.g. venue, occasion) on how music is created, developed and performed in different historical, social and cultural contexts
- how music from different historical, social and cultural contexts has changed over time

## Musical language

- reading and writing staff notation including:
  - rhythmic notation in compound time and key signatures to 5 sharps & 5 flats at AS
  - additionally all key signatures and irregular time signatures at A level
- chords and associated chord symbols including:
  - standard harmonic progressions e.g. chord inversions and dominant 7th chords at AS
  - additionally extended chords e.g. secondary 7ths and 9ths at A level
- musical vocabulary and terminology related to the Areas of Study including:
  - recognition and use of appropriate musical vocabulary and terminology e.g. glissando, repetition and conjunct at AS
  - additionally recognition and use of sophisticated terminology e.g. portamento, and ascending minor scale at A level

8. AS and A level specifications in music must require students to demonstrate the ability to:

## Perform

- make use of musical elements, techniques and resources to interpret and communicate musical ideas with technical and expressive control and an understanding of style and context. This must be achieved by one or more of the following means: playing or singing solo or in ensemble, improvising, or realising music using music technology
- perform music with control and continuity using appropriate tempi, showing critical understanding of the music chosen

## Compose

- make use of musical elements, techniques and resources to create and develop musical ideas with technical control and expressive understanding, either freely as the composer chooses, or by responding to a brief or commission supplied by others
- compose music that develops musical ideas and shows understanding of musical devices and conventions in relation to the chosen genre, style and tradition

## Appraise

- analyse and evaluate music in aural and written form, using knowledge and understanding of musical elements, musical contexts and musical language to make critical judgements about:
  - repertoire within the Areas of Study
  - musical interpretations (e.g. how a performer plays a piece of music, how a composer responds to a brief or a starting point, or demonstration of stylistic understanding)
  - others' work including unfamiliar music (i.e. individual pieces of music that have not been stipulated within the specification)
- formulate critical judgements, which will be achieved by attentive listening (rather than just hearing) and aural perception, and could also be achieved by informed discussion (in writing and/or through speech), analysis, evaluation, contextualisation and reflection
- comment on music heard, showing understanding through the genres, styles and traditions studied

9. In addition, A level specifications in music must require students to demonstrate the ability to:

## Perform

- perform fluently showing critical understanding of the overall shape, direction and style of the music chosen

## Compose

- compose music that is musically convincing and shows a sophisticated use of musical elements in combination
- compose music that makes creative use of musical ideas and shows understanding of musical devices and conventions in relation to the chosen genre, style and tradition

## Appraise

- comment in detail on music heard, showing critical understanding across the genres, styles and traditions studied
- use acute aural perception and discrimination skills
- use appropriate technical musical vocabulary to communicate sophisticated judgements
- show understanding of the complex interdependencies between musical elements
- show understanding of the sophisticated connections between music and its context

10. AS and A level specifications in music must require students to apply practically, knowledge and understanding of:

- specialist musical vocabulary and notation appropriate to the context
- the relationship between compositional devices and techniques, musical elements including harmonic progressions, tonal relationships and musical structures appropriate to the context

## Areas of Study

11. Areas of Study must provide an appropriate focus for students to demonstrate in-depth knowledge, understanding and skills. They must encompass repertoire that allows the musical elements, musical contexts and musical language to be taught in context and allow opportunities for students to demonstrate contextual understanding through their performing and composing.

12. An area of study might be, for example, a genre, style, musical device, idiom, musical process, period of time, cultural tradition or contextual influence.

13. Music specifications must require students to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and skills from paragraph 7 through an in-depth study of a minimum of two Areas of Study at AS level and a minimum of three Areas of Study at A level.

- At least one Area of Study at both AS and A level must be drawn from music composed in the Western Classical Tradition<sup>1</sup> with all or the majority being composed between 1650 and 1910
- At least one other Area of Study at both AS and A level must not be drawn from the Western Classical Tradition

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this subject content document “Western Classical Tradition” is defined as art Music of (or growing out of) the European tradition, normally notated, and normally intended for public performance

14. AS and A level Music specifications must offer a minimum choice of four Areas of Study and require students to place music studied within a wider context and chronology.



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