

CONDITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

# GCSE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Music (2021)

November 2020

**ofqual**

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<i>About this document</i> .....	3
<i>Requirements set out in this document</i> .....	3
<b>Subject Level Conditions</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<i>GCSE Subject Level Conditions for Music</i> .....	4
<b>Subject content requirements</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<i>Requirements in relation to subject content for GCSE Qualifications in Music</i> .....	6
<b>Assessment objectives</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<i>Assessment objectives - GCSE Qualifications in Music</i> .....	7
<b>Assessment requirements</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<i>Requirements in relation to assessments for GCSE Qualifications in Music</i> .....	8
<b>Appendix 1 - Subject content (published by Department for Education)</b> .....	<b>11</b>

# Introduction

## About this document

This document is part of a suite of documents which sets out the regulatory requirements for awarding organisations offering GCSE qualifications (graded from 9 to 1) in 2021.

We have developed these requirements with the intention that GCSE qualifications (graded from 9 to 1) should fulfil the following purposes:

- to provide evidence of students' achievements against demanding and fulfilling content;
- to provide a strong foundation for further academic and vocational study and for employment; and
- to provide (if required) a basis for schools and colleges to be held accountable for the performance of all of their students.

## Requirements set out in this document

This document sets out the GCSE Subject Level Conditions for Music. These conditions will come into effect at 09:30 on 5 November 2020 for all GCSE qualifications (graded from 9 to 1) in Music for Learners completing the qualification in 2021, except where the GQCov Framework applies.

It also sets out our requirements in relation to:

- interpretation of the content document - an awarding organisation must comply with these requirements under Condition GCSE(Music)1.1(c);
- assessment objectives - awarding organisations must comply with these requirements under Condition GCSE(Music)1.2; and
- assessment - awarding organisations must comply with these requirements under Condition GCSE (Music) 2.3.

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

With respect to all GCSE Qualifications (graded from 9 to 1) in Music in 2021, awarding organisations must also comply with:

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

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

# Subject Level Conditions

## GCSE Subject Level Conditions for Music

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

#### **GCSE(Music)1.1**

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

- comply with the requirements relating to that qualification set out in the document published by the Secretary of State entitled '[Music GCSE subject content](#)', document reference DFE-00703-2014,
- have regard to any recommendations or guidelines relating to that qualification set out in that document, and
- 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.

#### **GCSE(Music)1.2**

In respect of each GCSE 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 GCSE(Music) 2: Assessment**

### **GCSE(Music)2.1**

Condition GCSE4.1 does not apply to any GCSE Qualification in Music which an awarding organisation makes available or proposes to make available.

### **GCSE(Music)2.2**

In respect of the total marks available for a GCSE 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.

### **GCSE(Music)2.3**

An awarding organisation must ensure that in respect of each assessment for a GCSE 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.

## Subject content requirements

### Requirements in relation to subject content for GCSE Qualifications in Music

The subject content for GCSE Qualifications (graded 9 to 1) in Music is set out in the Department for Education's [Music GCSE subject content](#), document reference DFE-00032-2016 (the 'Content Document').

Condition GCSE (Music)1.1(c) requires awarding organisations to interpret the Content Document in line with any requirements, and having regard to any guidance, published by Ofqual.

We set out our requirements for the purposes of Condition GCSE(Music)1.1(c) below.

#### *Composition*

An awarding organisation must interpret paragraph 8 of the Content Document as if a Learner may compose either freely as he or she chooses or in response to a brief or commission supplied by others.

## Assessment objectives

### Assessment objectives - GCSE Qualifications in Music

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

The assessment objectives set out below constitute requirements for the purposes of Condition GCSE (Music)1.2. Awarding organisations must comply with these requirements in relation to all GCSE Qualifications in Music they make available or propose to make available.

	Objective	Weighting
<b>AO1</b>	Perform with technical control, expression and interpretation	30%
<b>AO2</b>	Compose and develop musical ideas with technical control and coherence	30%
<b>AO3</b>	Demonstrate and apply musical knowledge	20%
<b>AO4</b>	Use appraising skills to make evaluative and critical judgements about music	20%

# Assessment requirements

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

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

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

### *Forms of non-examination assessment*

Condition GCSE(Music)2.2(b) states that an awarding organisation must ensure that of the total marks available for a GCSE 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) 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
- (b) 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*

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 -
  - (i) one minute and 30 seconds if all pieces are performed solo, or
  - (ii) two minutes where including performance as part of an ensemble,
- (b) require each Learner to select, following discussion with the Centre which will deliver the assessment, the 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 7 of the document published by the Secretary of State entitled '[Music GCSE subject content](#)', document reference DFE-00703-2014, it is stated that Learners must make use of musical elements, techniques and resources to interpret and communicate musical ideas with technical control and expression through one or more of the following means -

- (a) playing music,
- (b) singing music,
- (c) improvising, or
- (d) 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.

### *The Composition Assessment*

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

- (a) require each Learner to compose one or more separate pieces of music with a combined duration of at least two minutes, which may be -
  - (i) in response to a brief set by the awarding organisation, and/or
  - (ii) composed freely as the Learner chooses,
- (b) 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,
- (c) minimise the predictability of such assessments,
- (d) facilitate the comparability of such assessments, and
- (e) assess assessment objective AO2 in its entirety.

An awarding organisation must not communicate the brief(s) that it has set for each Composition Assessment to Centres before 1 September in the academic year in which the assessment is to be taken.

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.

---

<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.

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***

Evidence generated by a Learner in an assessment for a GCSE 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 the assessments (and to moderation where appropriate), 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

**GCSE subject content**

**January 2015**

# Contents

The content for music GCSEs	3
Introduction	3
Subject aims and learning outcomes	4
Subject content	5
Areas of Study	7

# The content for music GCSEs

## Introduction

1. GCSE subject content sets out the knowledge, understanding and skills common to all GCSE 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 Key Stage 3 national curriculum requirements and the possibilities for development into A level.
3. GCSE 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. GCSE music specifications must also support the development of musical fluency and provide access to further study of music at AS and A level.

## Subject aims and learning outcomes

5. GCSE 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 individually and in groups to communicate musically with fluency and control of the resources used
- develop composing skills to organise musical ideas and make use of appropriate resources
- recognise links between the integrated activities of performing, composing and appraising and how this informs the development of music
- broaden musical experience and interests, develop imagination and foster creativity
- develop knowledge, understanding and skills needed to communicate effectively as musicians
- develop awareness of a variety of instruments, styles and approaches to performing and composing
- develop awareness of music technologies and their use in the creation and presentation of music
- recognise contrasting genres, styles and traditions of music, and develop some awareness of musical chronology
- develop as effective and independent learners with enquiring minds
- reflect upon and evaluate their own and others' music
- engage with and appreciate the diverse heritage of music, in order to promote personal, social, intellectual and cultural development

## Subject content

6. GCSE specifications in music must require students to develop and demonstrate their musicianship skills through performing, composing and appraising.

7. GCSE specifications in music must require students to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the musical elements, musical contexts and musical language listed below, and allow students, where appropriate, to apply these to their own work when performing and composing.

### Musical elements

- organisation of pitch (melodically and harmonically) including simple chord progressions e.g. perfect and imperfect cadences, and basic melodic devices e.g. sequence
- tonality including major, minor and basic modulation e.g. tonic - dominant
- structure; organisation of musical material including simple structure e.g. verse and chorus, call and response, binary and theme and variations
- sonority including recognition of a range of instrumental and vocal timbres and articulation e.g. legato and staccato
- texture; how musical lines (parts) fit together including simple textural combinations e.g. unison, chordal and solo
- tempo, metre and rhythm including pulse, simple time, compound time, and basic rhythmic devices e.g. dotted rhythms
- dynamics; basic dynamic devices e.g. crescendo and diminuendo

### 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

### Musical language

- reading and writing of staff notation including treble-clef and bass-clef note names, rhythmic notation in simple time, key signatures to four sharps and four flats
- major and minor chords and associated chord symbols including traditional and contemporary notation as appropriate e.g. IV or G7



- recognising and accurately using appropriate musical vocabulary and terminology related to the Areas of Study e.g. slide, repeats and stepwise

8. GCSE 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 control and expression. This must be achieved by one or more of the following means: playing or singing music, improvising, or realising music using music technology
- perform music with control, making expressive use of phrasing and dynamics appropriate to the style and mood of the music

### **Compose**

- make use of musical elements, techniques and resources to create and develop musical ideas with technical control and coherence; freely as the composer chooses, and responding to a brief or commission supplied by others
- compose music that develops musical ideas, uses conventions, and explores the potential of musical structures and resources

### **Appraise**

- analyse and evaluate music in aural and/or 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
- use knowledge and understanding of musical elements, musical contexts and musical language to analyse unfamiliar music (i.e. individual pieces of music that have not been stipulated within the specification)
- make critical judgements about music, using appropriate musical vocabulary
- formulate critical judgements, which will be achieved by attentive listening (rather than just hearing) and aural perception

9. GCSE specifications in music must require students to apply practically the knowledge and understanding in paragraph 7, including musical vocabulary and notation as appropriate to the context, through the skills of:

- performing
- composing
- appraising

## Areas of Study

10. Areas of Study must provide an appropriate focus for students to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and skills across a broad range of musical genres, styles and traditions. 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 when performing and composing.
11. An area of study might be, for example, a genre, style, musical device, idiom, musical process, period of time, cultural tradition or contextual influence.
12. GCSE music specifications must require students to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and skills from paragraph 5 through a minimum of four Areas of Study.
  - at least one area of study 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 must not be drawn from the Western Classical Tradition
13. GCSE 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.

---

<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



Department  
for Education

© Crown copyright 2015

You may re-use this document/publication (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0. Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

To view this licence:

visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3)  
email [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)

About this publication:

enquiries [www.education.gov.uk/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus)  
download [www.gov.uk/government/publications](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications)

Reference: DFE-00703-2014



Follow us on Twitter:  
[@educationgovuk](https://twitter.com/educationgovuk)



Like us on Facebook:  
[facebook.com/educationgovuk](https://facebook.com/educationgovuk)



© Crown Copyright 2020

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated.

To view this licence, visit

[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/)

or write to

Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU

Published by:



Earlsdon Park  
53-55 Butts Road  
Coventry  
CV1 3BH

0300 303 3344  
[public.enquiries@ofqual.gov.uk](mailto:public.enquiries@ofqual.gov.uk)  
[www.gov.uk/ofqual](http://www.gov.uk/ofqual)