

MUSIC

AT ADVANCED LEVEL (A/S AND A2)

Our Course: AQA, Specification

Summary of Subject Content

The specification consists of six units, three at each level, AS and A2. At both levels, candidates will be required to interpret musical ideas with control and style (performing), create and develop musical ideas (composing) and demonstrate an understanding of a broad range of musical ideas (appraising). The six units provide the opportunity for students to work in a variety of ways responding to different topics within each unit according to their interests and specialisms.

First Year

AS: Unit 1: Influences on Music

- The Western Classical Tradition (compulsory)
- Choral Music in the Baroque Period
- Music Theatre: a study of the musical from 1940-1980
- British Popular Music from 1960 - the present day.

Assessment: Written Paper: 1 hour 45 minutes - 80 marks
Weighting: 30% of total AS / 15% of total A Level marks

Candidates are given structured listening questions using a CD of musical excerpts.

Candidates then answer two essay questions, one question from a choice of two based on the compulsory Areas of Study and one question from a choice of two based on a second Area of Study.

Unit 2: Composing: creating musical ideas

- Compositional techniques
- Free composition or pastiche in response to a given brief
- Arranging

Assessment: Composing: Externally assessed
Coursework: 60 marks
Weighting: 30% of total AS / 15% of total A Level marks

Candidates respond to one brief from a choice of three. Briefs will be released to candidates on 1st November in the examination year.

Unit 3: Performing: Interpreting musical ideas

- Solo and/or ensemble performances
- Technology-based performances

Assessment: Performing: 10-16 minutes internally assessed

Coursework: 80 marks

**Weighting: 40% of total AS / 20% of total
A Level marks**

Candidates offer two performances (each 5-8 minutes) from a choice of six, including opportunities for using music technology.

Second Year

A2: Unit 4: Music in Context

- The Western Classical Tradition (compulsory)
- English Choral Music in the 20th Century
- Chamber Music from Mendelssohn to Debussy
- Four decades of Jazz and Blues (1910 - 1950)

Assessment: Written Paper: 2 hrs 15 minutes 100 marks

Weighting: 20% of total A Level marks

Candidates are given structured listening questions using a CD of excerpts. Candidates then answer two essay questions, one question from a choice of two based on the compulsory Areas of Study and one question from a choice of two based on a new Area of Study.

Unit 5: Composing: creating musical ideas

- Compositional techniques
- Free composition or pastiche in response to a chosen brief
- Arranging

Assessment: Composing: Externally assessed

Coursework: 60 marks

Weighting: 15% of total A Level marks

Candidates respond to one brief from a choice of three. Briefs will be released to candidates on 1st November in the examination year.

Unit 6: Performing: A Musical Performance

- A choice of solo, acoustic and/or technology-based performances.

**Assessment: Performing: 15 minutes externally assessed -
60 marks**

Weighting: 15% of total A Level marks

Candidates will offer two contrasting performances, as a soloist or using music technology or a combination of these.

Aptitudes, skills or qualities you will need:-

This new specification forms a very natural progression from GCSE music and so students who have followed this course will be ideally suited. Alternatively, students who have equivalent qualifications in music performance and theory with a broad musical understanding may wish to choose this course.

Value of the subject for higher education and future careers:-

Music combines well with a wide range of other subjects. The course allows opportunities to advance a number of skills and has openings into careers in music or simply a lifelong understanding and love for music.