



GCSE Music

Examination Board: AQA
Course Specification: 8271

What is GCSE Music all about?

GCSE Music is constantly evolving, inspiring creativity and expression in a way that no other subject can. This specification is relevant and contemporary which also offers the chance to study a wider range of musical genres, with more opportunities for practical learning. A passion for performing on your instrument should be the reason for taking GCSE music. Students must be able to have instrumental lessons on their instrument during the GCSE course. Each student has different learning styles and musical tastes and this qualification will allow students of all abilities and backgrounds to enjoy. The ability to read standard notation is not essential at the start of the course but students will be expected to read music by Year 11 due to the 40% weighting of the exam.

Course Structure:

Component 1: Understanding Music 40%

Students complete a written paper with listening exercises using excerpts of music. The paper is 1hr 30 minutes and there are two sections in the paper. Section A contains listening questions only based on the 4 Areas of Study (Classical, Popular, Traditional and Contemporary Classical Music) and Section B contains contextual understanding questions based on study pieces set by the exam board..

Component 2: Performing Music 30%

Students give two performances on their instrument: one individually and one as an ensemble. There will be opportunities to use performances as a basis for workshops.

Component 3: Composing Music 30%

Students compose two compositions:

Composition 1: Composition to a brief set by the Exam Board (36 marks)

Composition 2: Free composition (36 marks)

How will I be assessed?

- Component 1 is an external exam which lasts 1 hour 30 minutes and is worth 40% of the GCSE Music Exam.
- Component 2 is internally assessed and is worth 30% of the GCSE Music Exam.
- Component 3 is internally assessed and worth 30% of the GCSE Music Exam.

What could I do next with GCSE Music?

Music beyond the classroom is a very diverse field and there are many pathways you can follow. GCSE Music offers a solid foundation for progression to other music studies, including A-level Music, and often to a music-related career. Our course provides the opportunity for students to develop valuable transferable skills such as self-confidence, concentration, creativity, evaluation and team work.