

# **GCE AS and A level Subject Criteria for Music and Music Technology**



September 2011

Ofqual/11/4992

# Contents

The criteria .....	3
Introduction .....	3
Aims and objectives .....	3
Subject content.....	3
Assessment objectives .....	6
Scheme of assessment .....	7
Internal assessment.....	7
Synoptic assessment.....	8
GCE A level performance descriptions for Music .....	9
AS performance descriptions for Music .....	9
A2 performance descriptions for Music.....	10
GCE A level performance descriptions for Music Technology.....	11
AS performance descriptions for Music Technology .....	11
A2 performance descriptions for Music Technology .....	14

## **The criteria**

### **Introduction**

AS and A level subject criteria set out the knowledge, understanding, skills and assessment objectives common to all AS and A level specifications in a given subject.

They provide the framework within which the awarding organisation creates the detail of the specification.

### **Aims and objectives**

1. AS and A level specifications in Music and Music Technology should encourage learners to:
  - extend the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to communicate through music and to take part in making music;
  - engage in and extend their appreciation of the diverse and dynamic heritage of music, promoting spiritual and cultural development;
  - develop particular strengths and interests, encouraging lifelong learning and providing access to music-related and other careers;
  - recognise the interdependence of musical skills, knowledge and understanding and the links between the activities of performing/realising, composing and appraising.
2. AS and A level specifications should also encourage learners to broaden experience, develop imagination, foster creativity and promote personal and social development.
3. A level specifications in Music and Music Technology should extend the skills, knowledge and understanding developed in the AS and provide a basis for further study.

### **Subject content**

4. AS and A level specifications in Music and Music Technology should build on the requirements for music in earlier key stages including the skills, knowledge and understanding established at key stage 4 and GCSE qualifications.

5. AS and A level specifications in Music and Music Technology should require learners to develop aural perception skills and the ability to:
- make expressive use of musical elements, structures and resources through:
    - interpreting musical ideas (for example presenting performances, performing with others, sequencing/realising, directing ensembles);
    - creating and developing musical ideas (for example improvising, arranging, composing) using innovative and/or established musical techniques;
  - make critical judgements about the use of musical elements, structures and resources through:
    - listening to, analysing, evaluating and reflecting on own and others' work (for example refining own performances and compositions, reviewing written/published, live and recorded music, comparing different interpretations).
6. AS and A level specifications in Music should require learners to:
- gain a depth of understanding of two contrasting areas of study, at least one of which should be taken from the western classical tradition. An area of study might be, for example, a genre, style, musical device, musical process, period of time or contextual influence;
  - gain a breadth of understanding by being able to place the selected areas of study within a broader musical perspective;
  - develop and apply, in practical activities, knowledge and understanding of, and specialist vocabulary where appropriate, related to:
    - the use of musical elements including harmonic progressions and relationships;
    - musical structures including established forms;
    - appropriate notations including staff notation;

- the relationship between music and its context, including an awareness of the influences which maintain continuity and cause change.
7. AS and A level specifications in Music Technology should require learners to:
- gain a depth of understanding of two contrasting areas of study, one of which should reflect a historical and contextual aspect of music relevant to music technology. An area of study might be, for example, a genre, style, musical or technical process, period of time or contextual influence;
  - gain a breadth of understanding by being able to place the selected areas of study within a broader musical perspective;
  - develop and apply in practical activities, knowledge and understanding of, and specialist vocabulary, related to:
    - the use of musical elements and musical structures;
    - technical processes relating to sound production, recording and editing;
    - appropriate notations including aspects of staff notation relevant to music technology.
8. In addition, A2 specifications in Music and Music Technology should require learners to:
- demonstrate more finely discriminating aural perception;
  - use a wider range and more finely developed control and application of specific techniques and conventions;
  - show increased stylistic awareness in solo and/or ensemble performance/realisation and in composing activities;
  - increase depth of study within one of the areas selected at AS;
  - increase breadth of study to include one further area of study;
  - make more extensive connections, for example between music and its context, between different areas of knowledge and between different aspects of musical activities;

- apply the musical knowledge and understanding gained through study at both AS and A level to unfamiliar music.
9. AS and A level specifications in Music and Music Technology should take account of the impact of information technology on the way music is heard, created and performed. Some specifications will provide extensive opportunities for developing and generating evidence for assessing the key skill of information technology.

### Assessment objectives

10. The assessment objectives and the associated weightings for AS and A level are the same. Aural perception skills and the application of knowledge and understanding will be assessed within each objective.
11. All learners must be required to meet the following assessment objectives. The assessment objectives are to be weighted in all specifications as indicated.

Assessment objectives		Weighting	
		Music	Music Technology
<b>AO1</b>	Interpret musical ideas with technical and expressive control and a sense of style and awareness of occasion and/or ensemble ( <i>performing/realising</i> ).	20–40%	15–35%
<b>AO2</b>	Create and develop musical ideas with technical control and expressive understanding, making creative use of musical devices, conventions and resources ( <i>composing/arranging</i> ).	20–40%	15–35%
<b>AO3</b>	Demonstrate understanding of, and comment perceptively on, the structural, expressive and contextual aspects of music ( <i>appraising</i> ).	35–45%	15–35%
<b>In addition, Music Technology learners should:</b>			

<b>A04</b>	Demonstrate effective use of music technology to capture, edit and produce musical outcomes.	—	20–40%
<b>A05</b>	Demonstrate understanding of, and comment perceptively on, the technical processes and principles that underpin effective use of music technology.	—	15–25%

12. Each objective should be assessed at both AS and A2.
13. For Music Technology, assessment objectives AO1 and AO3 should not exceed a total weighting of 45 per cent.
14. AS and A level must require learners to develop and present ideas relating to music in a coherent manner. At least one unit of assessment in A level must require learners to use extended writing or comment articulately through a viva voce.

### **Scheme of assessment**

15. A level specifications in Music will consist of three units at AS and three units at A2, except in Northern Ireland where they will consist of two units at AS and two units at A2.
16. A level specifications in Music Technology will consist of two units at AS and two units at A2.

### **Internal assessment**

17. All A level specifications in Music may have a maximum internal assessment weighting of 50 per cent. Not more than 25 per cent internal assessment may be located in either the AS or the A2.
18. All A level specifications in Music Technology may have a maximum internal assessment of 65 per cent.
19. Where internal assessment is included, specifications must make clear how reliability and fairness are secured, by setting out requirements that ensure the robustness of each stage of the internal assessment, i.e.:
  - the specific skills to be assessed;
  - setting of tasks;

- extent of supervision in carrying out of tasks;
- conditions under which assessment takes place;
- marking of the assessment and internal standardising procedures;
- any moderation process.

### **Synoptic assessment**

20. All A level specifications should include synoptic assessment at A2. Synoptic assessment should require learners to:

- make connections between different aspects of musical activities;
- apply the skills, knowledge and understanding described in the assessment objectives to unfamiliar music;
- demonstrate aural perception and aural discrimination.

21. For example:

- relating music, previously unheard, to styles, genres and traditions experienced in a range of different activities, making judgements based on the identification of musical characteristics that indicate a particular cultural context;
- performing/directing music with awareness of stylistic conventions and contextual influences and technical and expressive control;
- creating a composition within a clearly defined brief that refers to the use and selection of resources, structural and expressive features and contextual influences, accompanied by a log, review or commentary.



## GCE A level performance descriptions for Music

### AS performance descriptions for Music

	<b>Assessment objective 1</b>	<b>Assessment objective 2</b>	<b>Assessment objective 3</b>
<b>Assessment objectives</b>	Interpret musical ideas with technical and expressive control and a sense of style and awareness of occasion and/or ensemble.	Create and develop musical ideas with technical control and expressive understanding, making creative use of musical devices, conventions and resources.	Demonstrate understanding of, and comment perceptively on, the structural, expressive and contextual aspects of music.
<b>A/B boundary performance descriptions</b>	Learners characteristically: a) present musically convincing and generally fluent performances that show musical understanding.	Learners characteristically: a) produce coherent compositions that show an ability to manipulate musical ideas, and make use of musical devices and conventions in relation to the chosen genre, style and tradition.	Learners characteristically: a) make critical judgements about music heard and show a breadth of understanding across the genres, styles and traditions studied.
<b>E/U boundary performance descriptions</b>	Learners characteristically: a) perform with a sense of continuity using appropriate tempi and showing some understanding of the music chosen.	Learners characteristically: a) produce compositions that make some use of musical ideas and show some understanding of musical devices and conventions in relation to the chosen genre, style and tradition.	Learners characteristically: a) comment on music heard, showing some understanding across the genres, styles and traditions studied.

**A2 performance descriptions for Music**

	<b>Assessment objective 1</b>	<b>Assessment objective 2</b>	<b>Assessment objective 3</b>
<b>Assessment objectives</b>	Interpret musical ideas with technical and expressive control and a sense of style and awareness of occasion and/or ensemble.	Create and develop musical ideas with technical control and expressive understanding, making creative use of musical devices, conventions and resources.	Demonstrate understanding of, and comment perceptively on, the structural, expressive and contextual aspects of music.
<b>A/B boundary performance descriptions</b>	Learners characteristically: a) present musically convincing and fluent performances that show musical understanding and personal interpretation.	Learners characteristically: a) produce musically convincing compositions that show musical imagination, and make effective use of musical devices and conventions in relation to the chosen genre, style and tradition.	Learners characteristically: a) make and justify personal judgements on music heard and show some depth of understanding within the genres, styles and traditions studied, making connections between the structural, expressive and contextual aspects of music.
<b>E/U boundary performance descriptions</b>	Learners characteristically: a) present generally fluent performances showing some understanding of the overall shape, direction and style of the music chosen.	Learners characteristically: a) produce compositions that make creative use of musical ideas and show understanding of musical devices and conventions in relation to the chosen genre, style and tradition.	Learners characteristically: a) comment in some detail on music heard, showing some understanding across the genres, styles and traditions studied.

## GCE A level performance descriptions for Music Technology

### AS performance descriptions for Music Technology

	<b>Assessment objective 1</b>	<b>Assessment objective 2</b>	<b>Assessment objective 3</b>	<b>Assessment objective 4</b>	<b>Assessment objective 5</b>
<b>Assessment objectives</b>	Interpret musical ideas with technical and expressive control and a sense of style and awareness of occasion and/or ensemble.	Create and develop musical ideas with technical control and expressive understanding, making creative use of musical devices, conventions and resources.	Demonstrate understanding of, and comment perceptively on, the structural, expressive and contextual aspects of music.	Demonstrate effective use of music technology to capture, edit and produce musical outcomes.	Demonstrate understanding of, and comment perceptively on, the technical processes and principles that underpin effective use of music technology.
<b>A/B boundary performance descriptions</b>	Learners characteristically:  a) produce musical recordings and sequences which show a high level of control and understanding, and a creative and imaginative use of the technology.	Learners characteristically:  a) produce convincing arrangements that show musical imagination and expression and make appropriate and creative use of a wide range of	Learners characteristically:  a) make critical judgements about music heard and show a breadth of understanding across the genres, styles and traditions studied;	Learners characteristically:  a) demonstrate a highly accomplished use of a wide range of music technology skills to produce excellent recordings;	Learners characteristically:  a) demonstrate a high level of aural perception in comprehensively identifying a wide range of instruments and effects, and in recognising and describing the

		resources and techniques.	b) demonstrate a thorough understanding of the development of music technology.	b) capture, process and mix sound to produce consistently well-balanced and effectively balanced tracks.	creative use of music technology; b) successfully identify a range of shortcomings in earlier recordings and suggest how they might be overcome using modern-day recording techniques.
<b>E/U boundary performance descriptions</b>	Learners characteristically: a) use technology with sufficient control and understanding to produce musical recordings and sequences.	Learners characteristically: a) produce arrangements with sufficient control and understanding of relevant resources and techniques to achieve the intended effect	Learners characteristically: a) comment on music heard, showing some understanding across the genres, styles and traditions studied; b) show some	Learners characteristically: a) demonstrate limited use of some basic music technology skills to produce recordings with some encouraging signs;	Learners characteristically: a) demonstrate limited aural perception in identifying instruments and effects and show only modest awareness of the creative use of music

			<p>understanding of the development of music technology.</p>	<p>b) mix sound to produce recordings with a lack of clarity, poor balance and inconsistent management of the resources, leading to tracks of limited success.</p>	<p>technology;</p> <p>b) identify some shortcomings in earlier recordings and suggest some ways in which they might be overcome using modern-day recording techniques.</p>
--	--	--	--	--	--

**A2 performance descriptions for Music Technology**

	<b>Assessment objective 1</b>	<b>Assessment objective 2</b>	<b>Assessment objective 3</b>	<b>Assessment objective 4</b>	<b>Assessment objective 5</b>
<b>Assessment objectives</b>	Interpret musical ideas with technical and expressive control and a sense of style and awareness of occasion and/or ensemble.	Create and develop musical ideas with technical control and expressive understanding, making creative use of musical devices, conventions and resources.	Demonstrate understanding of, and comment perceptively on, the structural, expressive and contextual aspects of music.	Demonstrate effective use of music technology to capture, edit and produce musical outcomes.	Demonstrate understanding of, and comment perceptively on, the technical processes and principles that underpin effective use of music technology.
<b>A/B boundary performance descriptions</b>	Learners characteristically:  a) produce musical recordings that effectively integrate sequencing and recording skills;  b) demonstrate an authoritative use of a wide range of resources and	Learners characteristically:  a) produce compositions that show an imaginative and effective use of technical resources, musical devices and conventions, and meet all the requirements of	Learners characteristically:  a) make critical judgements about, and justify personal opinions on, music heard and show some depth of understanding within the genres, styles and traditions studied,	Learners characteristically:  a) demonstrate a highly accomplished use of a wide range of music technology skills to produce excellent recordings;  b) capture, process and mix sound to	Learners characteristically:  a) demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of the technical processes and principles which can be employed to achieve a completely successful recording;

	techniques.	the brief.	making perceptive and informed connections between the structural, expressive and contextual aspects of music;  b) demonstrate a thorough and comprehensive understanding of the contexts and development of music technology.	produce consistently well-balanced and effectively blended tracks;  c) make mature and sophisticated use of appropriate music technology in a composition which produces a thoroughly satisfying outcome for the listener.	b) apply their skills, knowledge and understanding to produce an excellent final balanced stereo mix using appropriate effects where any small slips or misjudgements are unobtrusive.
<b>E/U boundary performance descriptions</b>	Learners characteristically:  a) produce musical recordings that integrate sequencing and recording skills;  b) demonstrate a	Learners characteristically:  a) produce compositions that show sufficient technical control and understanding of resources,	Learners characteristically:  a) comment in some detail on music heard, showing some understanding across the genres, styles	Learners characteristically:  a) demonstrate limited use of some basic music technology skills to produce recordings with some	Learners characteristically:  a) demonstrate a basic knowledge of the technical processes and principles which can be employed to achieve a

	<p>broad but basic use of a range of resources and techniques.</p>	<p>musical devices and conventions to meet the minimum requirements of the brief.</p>	<p>and traditions studied and the ability to make some connections between the structural, expressive and contextual aspects of music;</p> <p>b) demonstrate a broad but basic understanding of the contexts and development of music technology.</p>	<p>encouraging signs but where there are areas of inconsistency;</p> <p>b) capture, process and mix sound to produce recordings where inconsistent management of the resources leads to tracks of limited success;</p> <p>c) make some attempt to use music technology to produce a basic composition but one which has some inconsistencies and technical problems.</p>	<p>satisfactory recording;</p> <p>b) apply their skills, knowledge and understanding to produce a final balanced stereo mix using appropriate effects where the handling is adequate but where there are some intrusive errors.</p>
--	--	---	---	--	---



We wish to make our publications widely accessible. Please contact us if you have any specific accessibility requirements.

First published by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation in 2011

© Crown copyright 2011

You may re-use this publication (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the [Open Government Licence](#). To view this licence, [visit The National Archives](#); or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4DU; or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is also available on our website at [www.ofqual.gov.uk](http://www.ofqual.gov.uk)

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at:

Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation	
Spring Place	2nd Floor
Coventry Business Park	Glendinning House
Herald Avenue	6 Murray Street
Coventry CV5 6UB	Belfast BT1 6DN

Telephone 0300 303 3344

Textphone 0300 303 3345

Helpline 0300 303 3346