GCSE Subject Level Guidance for Music
March 2015
Contents

Introduction........................................................................................................................................... 2

Guidance set out in this document........................................................................................................... 3

Guidance on assessment objectives for GCSE Qualifications in Music ................................................. 4
Introduction

This document (highlighted in the figure below) is part of a suite of documents which outlines our guidance for awarding organisations offering GCSE Qualifications.

This document sets out guidance which applies to all GCSE Qualifications (graded from 9 to 1) in Music. It supports the GCSE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Music.¹

This document constitutes guidance for the purposes of section 153 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (the ‘2009 Act’) and Condition GCSE(Music)1.

An awarding organisation has a legal obligation under the 2009 Act to have regard to this guidance, where relevant, in relation to each GCSE Qualification in Music that it makes available or proposes to make available. Condition GCSE(Music)1 imposes the same obligation in respect of the guidance below which is issued under that Condition.

An awarding organisation should use the guidance in this document to help it understand how to comply with the GCSE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Music.

¹ www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-9-to-1-subject-level-conditions-and-requirements-for-music
Guidance set out in this document

This document provides guidance on assessment objectives for GCSE Qualifications (graded 9 to 1) in Music.
Guidance on assessment objectives for GCSE Qualifications in Music

Condition GCSE(Music)1.2 allows us to specify requirements and guidance relating to assessment objectives for GCSE Qualifications in Music.

We published our requirements in relation to assessment objectives AO1 to AO4 and their respective weightings in GCSE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Music, and reproduce them in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AO1</td>
<td>Perform with technical control, expression and interpretation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AO2</td>
<td>Compose and develop musical ideas with technical control and coherence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AO3</td>
<td>Demonstrate and apply musical knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AO4</td>
<td>Use appraising skills to make evaluative and critical judgements about music.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We set out below our guidance for the purposes of Condition GCSE(Music)1.2. This guidance explains how we expect awarding organisations to interpret these assessment objectives in terms of:

- the discrete ‘elements’ within each assessment objective that questions and tasks could target and/or seek to credit – our expectation is that each and every question/task should target or seek to credit at least one of these elements, and may target or seek to credit multiple elements across one or more assessment objectives;

- the coverage expectations, such as in relation to the different elements within each assessment objective and how those elements should be sampled over time; and

- the key areas of emphasis in each assessment objective and the particular meaning for the subject of any key terms and phrases used; defined terms are shown in bold text, followed by their definitions.

In line with the obligations set out in Condition GCSE(Music)1.2, we expect awarding organisations to be able to demonstrate how they have had regard to this guidance. For example, an awarding organisation could map how it has regard to the guidance as it:

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develops its sample assessment materials;

delivers the qualification;

devotes and applies its approach to sampling the elements into which the assessment objectives are divided; and

monitors the qualification to make sure it addresses all elements appropriately.
## AO1: Perform with technical control, expression and interpretation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strands</th>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Coverage</th>
<th>Interpretations and definitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>This AO is a single element.</td>
<td></td>
<td>In the context of performance:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>□ technical control means accurate use of musical elements (as defined in paragraph 7 of 'Music GCSE subject content' document reference DFE-00703-2014 (the ‘Content document’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>□ expression and interpretation means communicating a musically convincing performance through the use of musical elements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 For the purposes of this guidance, a ‘set of assessments’ means the assessments to be taken by a particular Learner for a GCSE Qualification in Music. For clarity, the assessments taken by Learners may vary, depending on any possible routes through the qualification.

# AO2: Compose and develop musical ideas with technical control and coherence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strands</th>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Coverage</th>
<th>Interpretations and definitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1a – Develop musical ideas.</td>
<td>Full coverage in each set of assessments (but not in every assessment).</td>
<td>- <strong>Compose</strong> is defined in paragraph 8 of the Content Document.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1b – Demonstrate technical control.</td>
<td>A reasonable balance between all three elements in each set of assessments (but not every assessment).</td>
<td>- <strong>Develop</strong> means extending and manipulating a musical idea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1c – Compose with musical coherence.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- In the context of composition, <strong>technical control</strong> means the use of appropriate musical elements, as defined in paragraph 7 of the Content Document.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- <strong>Coherence</strong> means using and combining musical elements fluently so that they make sense as a whole.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strands</td>
<td>Elements</td>
<td>Coverage</td>
<td>Interpretations and definitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
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<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| n/a     | This AO is a single element. | Full coverage in each set of assessments (but not in every assessment). | **Demonstrate and apply** means relating musical knowledge to music. This could include:  
- questions/tasks targeting recall of knowledge; and  
- questions/tasks where the Learner identifies musical elements or instruments from a piece of music.  
In the context of this assessment objective, **musical knowledge** means knowledge of musical elements, musical contexts and musical language (as defined in paragraph 7 of the Content Document).  
- No more than 60% of the marks available for this AO should reward knowledge of musical elements.  
- Knowledge of musical contexts and musical language should be weighted broadly equally. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strands</th>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Coverage</th>
<th>Interpretations and definitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>This AO is a single element.</td>
<td>Full coverage in each set of assessments (but not in every assessment).</td>
<td><strong>Use appraising skills</strong> means applying knowledge in a musical context such as a score or a listening extract to identify and describe musical features. This could be in response to written and/or aural stimuli. <strong>Make evaluative and critical judgements about music</strong> means applying understanding of musical elements, musical contexts and musical language (as defined in paragraph 7 of the Content Document). This includes, but is not limited to, reaching conclusions, justifying opinions or making comparisons.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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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