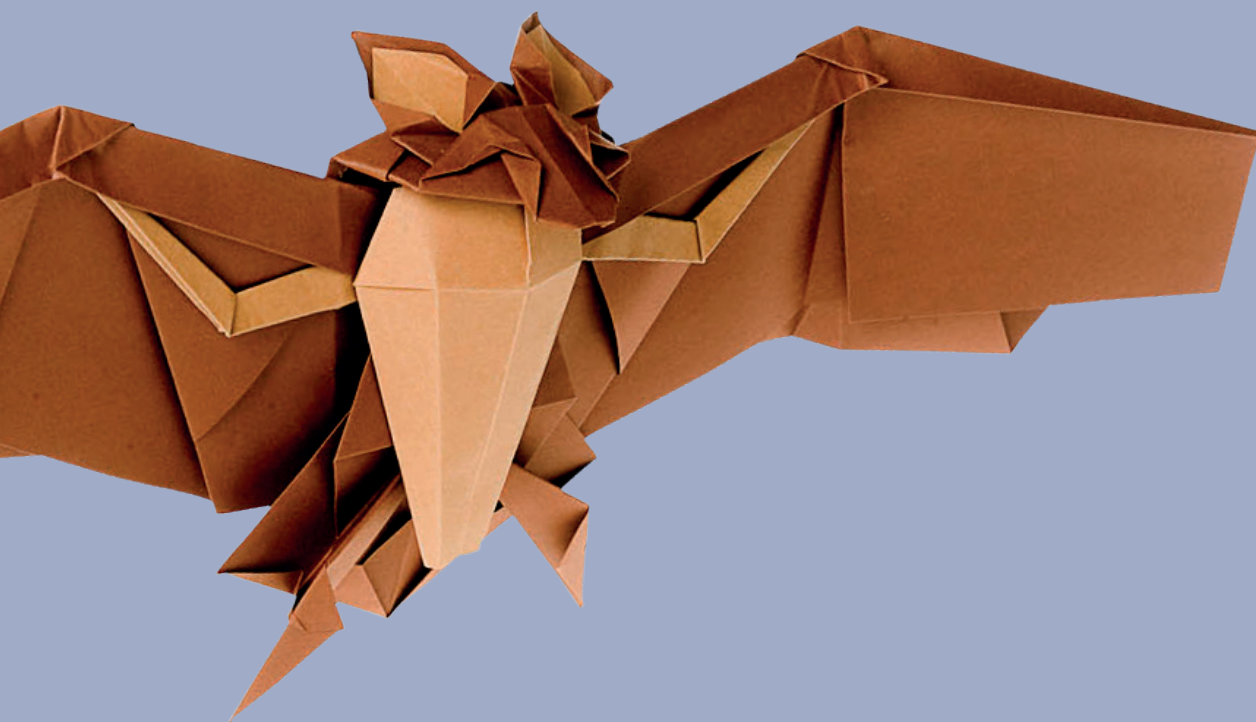


Getting Started Guide



AS and A Level Music Technology

Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Music Technology (8MT0)

Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Advanced GCE in Music Technology (9MT0)

GCE Music Technology 2017: Getting Started

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1. Introduction

This Getting Started guide provides an overview of the new AS and A level specifications, to help you get to grips with the changes to content and assessment, and to help you understand what these mean for you and your students.

Key features of our AS and A level Music Technology:

- **A clear emphasis on music technology, without the music theory:** We've retained the practical aspects and theory of music technology, which motivates your students, and reduced the emphasis on music theory so that candidates can study music technology theory in greater depth.
- **Keeping the engaging practical content your students love:** We know it's important that the content is relevant to your students, and for them to see the practical application in everyday life. We've retained the practical tasks they love and ensured the theory is relevant to the technology they are using.
- **Equipping students with skills for higher education and beyond:** Our content is designed to develop a broad range of skills including project management, appraising and analysis, creativity and imagination. Students will be able to progress to undergraduate study in Music Technology, Sound Production, Sound Engineering and many other courses requiring a similar skill set.
- **Clear and accessible assessments:** Despite an increased exam content, we've kept the practical elements in the course and given higher weighting to the exam containing practical elements. We've also clearly defined the skills required in each of the coursework assessments, to help you focus on the demands and outcomes of the tasks.

We will be providing a package of support documents to help you plan and implement the new specification. These will be available on the AS and A level 2017 Music Technology pages: <http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/music-technology-2017.html>

- **Planning:** In addition to the section in this guide, we will be giving you a course planner and schemes of work that you can adapt to suit your department.
- **Understanding the standard:** We will be supplying exemplars which have been produced by students and marked by our examiners.
- **Tracking student progress:** Our well-established ResultsPlus service will help you track student progress.
- **Personal support:** Our subject advisor is always on hand to help you, and can be contacted at teachingmusic@pearson.com.

2. What's changed?

2.1 How have AS and A level changed?

Changes to AS and A level qualifications

- From September 2017, A level Music Technology will be a linear qualification. This means that all examinations must be sat – and non-examination assessment submitted – at the end of the course.
- From September 2017, AS level Music Technology will be a stand-alone qualification. This means that it cannot be used to contribute towards an A level Music Technology grade.

Changes to content requirements

- The content requirements for AS and A level Music Technology have been revised by Ofqual. All awarding organisations' specifications for AS and A level Music Technology must meet these criteria.

Forms of non-examined assessment (NEA):

- 20% of marks available for the qualification must assess knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to the capture, editing and production of recordings.
- 20% of marks available for the qualification must assess knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to the development of a technology-based composition.

The recording assessment

- Must assess only Assessment Objective AO1.
- Must require each student to capture, edit and produce an audio recording, with a duration of at least 2 minutes for AS and 3 minutes for A level.
- Must require each student to provide such additional evidence as is necessary to adequately assess the level of attainment (e.g. logbook).
- Awarding organisations must minimise predictability of the assessment (e.g. by setting a new brief each year).

2. What's changed?

The composition assessment

- Must assess only Assessment Objective AO2.
- Must require each student to develop a technology-based composition, with a duration of at least 2½ minutes for AS and 3 minutes for A level.
- Must require each student to provide such additional evidence as is necessary to adequately assess the level of attainment (e.g. logbook).
- Awarding organisations must minimise predictability of the assessment.

Changes to assessment objectives

The AS and A level Music Technology Assessment Objectives have been revised.

		% in AS level	% in A level
AO1	Demonstrate use of music technology to capture, edit and produce recordings	35	35
AO2	Demonstrate use of music technology to create, edit and structure sounds to develop a technology-based composition	20	20
AO3	Demonstrate and apply knowledge and understanding of music technology	32–35	27–30
AO4	Use analytical and appraising skills to make evaluative and critical judgements about the use of music technology	10–13	15–18

2.2 Changes to the specification

AS specification overview

The AS level in Music Technology consists of two externally examined papers and two non-examined assessment components. Students must submit their non-examined assessment (NEA) and complete the examinations in May/June in the year of certification.

Component 1: Recording
<i>Non-examined assessment: externally assessed</i> <i>20% of the qualification</i> <i>60 marks</i>
Content overview Production tools and techniques to capture, edit, process and mix an audio recording.
Assessment overview One recording, chosen from a list of ten songs or artists supplied by Pearson, consisting of a minimum of three compulsory instruments and two additional instruments released on our website on 1st June in the calendar year preceding the year in which the qualification is to be awarded. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keyboard tracks may be sequenced. • Total time must be between 2–2½ minutes. • Logbook and authentication form must be supplied.

Component 2: Technology-based composition
<i>Non-examined assessment: externally assessed</i> <i>20% of the qualification</i> <i>60 marks</i>
Content overview Creating, editing, manipulating and structuring sounds to produce a technology-based composition.
Assessment overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One technology-based composition based on a brief set by Pearson released on our website on 1st September in the calendar year preceding the year in which the qualification is to be awarded. • Synthesis, sampling/audio manipulation and creative effects use must be included. • Total time must be 2½ minutes. • Logbook and authentication form must be supplied.

2. What's changed?

Component 3: Listening and analysing
<i>Written examination: 1 hour 15 minutes</i> <i>25% of the qualification</i> <i>60 marks</i>
Content overview <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge and understanding of recording and production techniques and principles, in the context of a series of unfamiliar commercial recordings supplied by Pearson.• Application of knowledge related to all three areas of study:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ recording and production techniques for both corrective and creative purposes◦ principles of sound and audio technology◦ the development of recording and production technology.
Assessment overview <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This paper comprises two sections: A and B; all questions are compulsory.• One audio CD with the unfamiliar commercial recordings to accompany questions on the paper will be provided per student.• Section A: Listening and Analysing (44 marks) – four questions, each based on unfamiliar commercial recordings supplied by Pearson.• Section B: Extended written response (16 marks) – one comparison question, which uses two unfamiliar commercial recordings supplied by Pearson.
Component 4: Producing and analysing
<i>Written/practical examination: 1 hour 45 minutes (plus 10 minutes setting-up time)</i> <i>35% of the qualification</i> <i>84 marks</i>
Content overview <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge and understanding of editing, mixing and production techniques, to be applied to unfamiliar materials provided by Pearson in the examination.• Application of knowledge related to two of the areas of study:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ recording and production techniques for both corrective and creative purposes◦ principles of sound and audio technology.
Assessment overview <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This paper comprises two sections: A and B; all questions are compulsory.• Each student will be provided with a set of audio/MIDI materials for the practical element of the examination, to include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ audio files relating to three instrumental/vocal parts◦ a single MIDI file from which a fourth instrumental part will be created or synthesised.• Students will correct and then combine the audio and MIDI materials to form a completed mix.• Section A: Analysing and producing (68 marks) – five questions related to the audio and MIDI materials provided that include both written responses and practical tasks.• Section B: Extended written response (16 marks) – one essay focusing on a specific signal process, effect or music technology hardware unit.

A level specification overview

The A level in Music Technology consists of two externally examined papers and two non-examined assessment components. Students must submit their non-examined assessment (NEA) and complete the examinations in May/June in the year of certification.

Component 1: Recording
<i>Non-examined assessment: externally assessed</i> <i>20% of the qualification</i> <i>60 marks</i>
Content overview Production tools and techniques to capture, edit, process and mix an audio recording.
Assessment overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● One recording, chosen from a list of ten songs or artists provided by Pearson, consisting of a minimum of five compulsory instruments and two additional instruments, released on our website on 1st June in the calendar year preceding the year in which the qualification is to be awarded. ● Keyboard tracks may be sequenced. ● Total time must be between 3 minutes and 3½ minutes. ● Logbook and authentication form must be supplied.

Component 2: Technology-based composition
<i>Non-examined assessment: externally assessed</i> <i>20% of the qualification</i> <i>60 marks</i>
Content overview Creating, editing, manipulating and structuring sounds to produce a technology-based composition.
Assessment overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● One technology-based composition chosen from three briefs set by Pearson released on our website on 1st September in the calendar year preceding the year in which the qualification is to be awarded. ● Synthesis and sampling/audio manipulation and creative effects use must be included. ● Total time must be 3 minutes. ● Logbook and authentication form must be supplied.

2. What's changed?

Component 3: Listening and analysing
<i>Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes</i> <i>25% of the qualification</i> <i>75 marks</i>
Content overview <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge and understanding of recording and production techniques and principles, in the context of a series of unfamiliar commercial recordings supplied by Pearson.• Application of knowledge related to all three areas of study:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ recording and production techniques for both corrective and creative purposes◦ principles of sound and audio technology◦ the development of recording and production technology.
Assessment overview <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This paper comprises two sections: A and B; all questions are compulsory.• One audio CD with the unfamiliar commercial recordings to accompany questions on the paper will be provided per student.• Section A: Listening and analysing (40 marks) – four questions, each based on unfamiliar commercial recordings supplied by Pearson (10 marks each).• Section B: Extended written responses (35 marks) – two essay questions. One comparison question, which uses two unfamiliar commercial recordings from the CD (15 marks). The second essay uses the final unfamiliar commercial recording on the CD (20 marks).

Component 4: Producing and analysing
<i>Written/practical examination: 2 hours 15 minutes (plus 10 minutes setting-up time)</i> <i>35% of the qualification</i> <i>105 marks</i>
Content overview <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Knowledge and understanding of editing, mixing and production techniques, to be applied to unfamiliar materials provided by Pearson in the examination.● Application of knowledge related to two of the areas of study:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ recording and production techniques for both corrective and creative purposes○ principles of sound and audio technology.
Assessment overview <ul style="list-style-type: none">● This paper comprises two sections: A and B; all questions are compulsory.● Each student will be provided with a set of audio/MIDI materials for the practical element of the examination, to include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ audio files relating to three instrumental/vocal parts.○ a single MIDI file from which a fourth instrumental part will be created or synthesised.● Students will correct and then combine the audio and MIDI materials to form a completed mix, which may include creating new tracks or parts from the materials provided.● Section A: Producing and analysing (85 marks) – five questions related to the audio and MIDI materials provided that include both written responses and practical tasks.● Section B: Extended written response (20 marks) – one essay focusing on a specific mixing scenario, signal path, effect or music technology hardware unit.

2. What's changed?

Areas of Study

Three new Areas of Study have been formulated. They provide a framework for key aspects of knowledge and understanding defined in the new subject content. Within individual components of the AS and A level courses, Areas of Study provide a contextual focus for students' practical and theoretical work, as summarised in the table below:

Area of Study	Found in Component(s):
1: Recording and production techniques for both corrective and creative purposes	1: Recording 2: Technology-based composition 3: Listening and analysing 4: Producing and analysing
2: Principles of sound and audio technology	3: Listening and analysing 4: Producing and analysing
3: The development of recording and production technology	3: Listening and analysing

Changes to specification content and assessment

- The subject criteria are no longer shared with Music; the music content has been removed. There is an increase in the amount of sound theory and more technical aspects of music technology.
- Sequencing and arranging skills are no longer assessed in isolation; instead, these will be assessed in Component 2 (Technology-based composition) as well as the Component 4 examination.
- The two coursework tasks are separated into separate components rather than being submitted and assessed together.
- NEA is now only 40%, down from 60%.
- Two examinations assess:
 - listening and analysing skills and knowledge using commercial recordings as a stimulus (Component 3)
 - producing and analysing skills and knowledge using a range of audio/MIDI materials provided by Pearson (Component 4).

3. Planning

3.1 Planning and delivering linear AS and A level courses

- The AS and A level Music Technology courses have been designed to be entirely **co-teachable**, with the **same components** and an overlap of subject content at AS and A level.
- Please note that AS and A level content will be assessed to a different standard, appropriate to the level of study. Students who sit the AS examination and then continue to the full A level will be assessed on their AS content again, at the end of their course of study, but at the A level standard.
- Please see the *Sample assessment materials*, available online, for examples of the different question structures.
- Tutors who will not be entering students for the AS examination are welcome to approach the course content in any order.

3.2 Delivery models and co-teachability

There are a number of possible routes through the course, and centres will need to decide on a delivery model which suits their teaching methods, school timetables and students.

The section below offers a brief overview of the co-taught AS and A level course, according to component (typically with one lesson per component per week of the half term). Full course planners and schemes of work can be found on the Pearson website.

Year One (co-taught AS and A level)

Autumn 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Component 1: Introduction to recording and mixing • Component 2: Introduction to technology-based composition • Component 3: Introduction to the Component 3 exam • Component 4: Handling and mixing audio
Autumn 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Component 1: Recording acoustic/bass guitar and intermediate mixing skills • Component 2: MIDI and synthesis essentials • Component 3: Analogue technology and vocal production • Component 4: Theoretical and practical tasks focusing on MIDI, dynamics and distortion
Spring 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Component 1: Exploring the mark scheme, recording percussion/keyboards and advanced mixing • Component 2: Exploring mark scheme criteria • Component 3: Detailed exploration of the question paper and focus on analogue synthesisers/electric instruments • Component 4: Detailed exploration of the question paper and specimen long-response questions
Spring 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Component 1: Supervised NEA/practice brief sessions, mixing practice and mastering • Component 2: Supervised NEA/practice brief sessions • Component 3: Comparing analogue and digital effects • Component 4: Specimen questions

3. Planning

Summer 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Components 1 & 2: Refining NEA/practice brief project and logbooks • Components 3 & 4: Final revision • AS students submit NEA projects for external assessment/A level students submit practice projects for internal assessment
Summer 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AS Students sit Component 3 & 4 exams/A level students sit mock Component 3 & 4 exams • Component 1: Drum recording and preparing A level brief (returning A level students only) • Component 2: Preparatory work towards A level set brief (A level only) • Components 3 & 4: Exploring differences between the AS and A level papers (A level only)

Year Two (co-taught AS and A level)

Autumn 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Component 1: Exploring the mark scheme, multiple mic techniques and preparing/starting the NEA set brief • Component 2: Advanced MIDI and sampling and preparing/starting the NEA set brief • Component 3: The impact of digital and sampling technology • Component 4: Advanced MIDI in practice
Autumn 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Component 1: Mixing using advanced dynamics parameters and starting NEA brief • Component 2: Advanced synthesis techniques and starting NEA brief • Component 3: The impact of analogue technology • Component 4: Studio interconnection, microphones and acoustics
Spring 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Component 1: Advanced audio editing, pitch/rhythm correction and continuing NEA brief • Component 2: Automating parameters and continuing NEA brief • Component 3: Identifying effects and their parameters • Component 4: Manipulating advanced parameters with automation
Spring 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Component 1: Supervised NEA sessions with skills-based starter activities • Component 2: Supervised NEA sessions with skills-based starter activities • Component 3: Mixing, mastering and comparing production techniques • Component 4: Focus on essay questions and evaluating production scenarios
Summer 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Components 1 & 2: Moving towards completion with NEA brief and associated documentation • Components 3 & 4: Focus on exam technique and final revision • A level students submit NEA projects for external assessment
Summer 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A level students sit Component 3 & 4 exams

4. Content and assessment guidance

4.1 AS and A level Component 1: Recording

Overview

The main requirements for Component 1 are set out in each specification in the 'Overview' section, and under 'Content'. They must be studied with care, most of all by those who have been teaching the previous specification, as there are important changes. In particular, teachers should pay attention to regulations given for the instrument count, under-length recordings, collaboration and recommended resources.

This component assesses students' skills in capturing, editing and mixing sounds to produce an audio recording. Students will develop the skills to capture and manipulate sounds in corrective and creative ways in order to communicate effectively with listeners.

Content

The skills, knowledge and understanding required for this component are given in detail in each specification, and relate to Area of Study 1 (Recording and production techniques for both corrective and creative purposes). Students will use technology to explore and demonstrate a range of techniques for capturing, editing and mixing sounds to produce a balanced final mix. Competencies in music production covered in this component will allow the student to develop proficiency as both a sound engineer and music producer.

Assessment setting and taking

Students will select one recording, chosen from a list of ten songs or artists provided by Pearson, which will be released on the Music Technology subject website on 1st June in the calendar year preceding the year in which the qualification is to be awarded. Full details on the nature and teachers' authentication of the task can be found in the relevant specification.

Centres will submit candidates' work in a digital format by 15th May in the year in which the qualification is to be awarded. Final submission details will be outlined in an administrative support guide that will be made available on the Pearson website. A logbook for each student will also be submitted.

4. Content and assessment guidance

Assessment marking

Both the AS and A level Component 1 tasks are externally marked, non-examined assessments (NEA). While exhaustive detail of mark scheme assessment criteria can be found in each specification, assessment grid titles are provided for your reference below:

- Capture – use of microphones and DI to capture live performance
- Editing – processing EQ
- Editing – dynamic processing
- Editing – use of effects, including ambience
- Production – balance and blend
- Production – use of stereo
- Production – management of noise, distortion, master level and audio editing (including compiling, pitch correction, handling of fades, top and tail).

Sample assessment materials (SAMs) – recording briefs, logbooks and marking guidance – are available for this Component on the Pearson website. Teachers should take the opportunity to utilise these materials for preparatory practical work. This will enable students to become familiar with the nature of the task and associated assessment criteria.

4.2 AS and A level Component 2: Technology-based composition

Overview

The main requirements for Component 2 are set out in each specification in the 'Overview' section, and under 'Content'. They must be studied with care, most of all by those who have been teaching the previous specification, as there are important changes. In particular, teachers should pay attention to regulations given for under-length work, collaboration and recommended resources.

Component 2 assesses students' skills in creating, editing and structuring sounds to develop a technology-based composition. Students will develop the skills to create and manipulate sounds in imaginative and creative ways in order to communicate effectively with listeners.

Content

The skills, knowledge and understanding required for this component are given in detail in each specification, and relate to Area of Study 1 (Recording and production techniques for both corrective and creative purposes). Students will utilise synthesis, sampling and effects processing to create and manipulate sound in imaginative and creative ways, developing proficiency as a music producer and composer.

Assessment setting and taking

Students will develop one technology-based composition based on a brief set by Pearson and released on our website on 1st September in the calendar year preceding the year in which the qualification is to be awarded. Although the specific content/topics of the briefs will vary each year, their format will remain the same.

<p>At AS level:</p> <p>A single brief will be set, with the following materials provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a 10–15-second sample of a melody and/or harmony • a 2–4-second sample of a vocal phrase, sound effect or percussion sound. <p>Both samples must be used, and must appear at least once in their entirety in the technology-based composition.</p>	<p>At A level:</p> <p>Three briefs will be set, from which students will compose using one of the following three options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a film clip / computer game footage or a descriptive scenario such as an art installation supplied by Pearson • text supplied by Pearson • using 'sound bites' (samples) in a structured way according to a topic set out by Pearson.
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Full details on nature and authentication of the task can be found in the relevant specification.

Centres will submit candidates' work in a digital format by 15th May in the year in which the qualification is to be awarded. Final submission details will be outlined in an administrative support guide that will be made available on the Pearson website. A logbook for each student will also be submitted.

4. Content and assessment guidance

Assessment marking

Both the AS and A level Component 2 tasks are externally marked, non-examined assessments (NEA). While exhaustive detail of mark scheme assessment criteria can be found in each specification, an overview of the assessment grids is provided for your reference below:

- Create and edit sounds – synthesis
- Create and edit sounds – sampling
- Create and edit sounds – creative effects
- Create and edit sounds – control of processing and balance
- Structure sounds – response to brief
- Structure sounds – style and coherence.

For the following five assessment grids, all will be assessed but only the three highest marks will be used to calculate the total:

- Structure sounds – melody
- Structure sounds – harmony
- Structure sounds – rhythm
- Structure sounds – texture
- Structure sounds – form and structure.

Sample assessment materials (SAMs) – technology-based composition briefs, logbooks and marking guidance – are available on the Pearson website. Teachers should take the opportunity to utilise these materials for preparatory practical work. This will enable students to become familiar with the nature of the task and associated assessment criteria.

4.3 AS and A level Component 3: Listening and analysing

Overview

The main requirements for Component 3 are set out in each specification in the 'Overview' section, and under 'Content'. They must be studied with care, most of all by those who have been teaching the previous specification, as there are important changes.

In short, this component gives students the opportunity to identify, analyse and evaluate a range of creative music-production techniques, as applied to the unfamiliar commercial recordings supplied in the examination. As well as identifying effects and their associated parameter settings, students will explain the principles behind the choice of the effects heard on each recording, and their sonic character, in a series of written responses.

Content

Knowledge and understanding

Central to the content and construction of GCE Music Technology assessments is the guidance on specific subject content, defined in the government's document *Music Technology GCE AS and A level Subject Content*. In the specification, the subject content and associated technical terminology for Component 3 is explicitly given, and organised according to the three Areas of Study as outlined on page 7 of this document. In overview, the content covers:

Component 3 – Area of Study 1 content overview

At AS and A level:

- Capture of sound
- Synthesis
- Sampling
- Sequencing
- Audio editing
- Pitch and rhythm correction and manipulation
- Automation
- Dynamic processing
- Stereo
- EQ
- Effects
- Balance and blend
- Mastering

4. Content and assessment guidance

Component 3 – Area of Study 2 content overview

At AS and A level:

- Acoustics
- Leads and signals
- Levels

Additionally at A level:

- Numeracy

Component 3 – Area of Study 3 content overview

At AS and A level:

- Software and hardware: digital
- Hardware: analogue

Music styles and eras of recording and production technology

In order to approach the questions contained within the paper, students need to have understanding and basic knowledge of the sounds and technology used in a range of contrasting popular music styles, as listed under the Component 3 'Content' section in the specification. Students will need to be able to recognise and identify the instruments, sounds and effects associated with each style, as well as specific combinations of instruments and voices. However, they will no longer be assessed on the musical elements that define each style, e.g. the specific musical material contributed by each of the instruments. This change in approach comes as a result of the new subject criteria published by the government, which reduces the emphasis on music theory.

The study of music styles goes hand-in-hand with the investigation of the various eras of recording and production technology, also defined in the Component 3 'Content' section. Such eras – also defined by the government's subject content guidance – place the commercial recordings which act as a stimulus for the examination questions within the context of the historical development of music technology equipment (as associated with Area of Study 3). Indeed, each question paper will incorporate a range of the eras, which are listed below:

- Digital audio workstations (DAW) and emerging technologies (c.1996 – present day)
- Digital recording and sequencing (c.1980 – present day)
- Large-scale analogue multitrack (c.1969 – 1995)
- Early multitrack recording (c.1964 – 1969)
- Direct to tape mono recording (c.1950 – 1963).

Assessment

Both the AS and A level Component 3 examinations are externally assessed written papers. Students will each be provided with a CD containing a series of commercial recordings for use in the examination.

Sample assessment materials (SAMs) are available for this component on the Pearson website and include a question paper and mark scheme. As well as utilising these materials for mock examinations, teachers should take the opportunity to develop further specimen assessments based on these resources. This will enable students to become familiar with the structure of the examination paper, the types of questions found within it and the command-word taxonomy set out in the specification.

4.4 AS and A level Component 4: Producing and analysing

Overview

The main requirements for Component 4 are set out in each specification in the 'Overview' section, and under 'Content'. They must be studied with care, most of all by those who have been teaching the previous specification, as there are important changes.

In outline, this component assesses students' knowledge of the techniques and principles of music technology through a series of written and practical tasks, covering the production stages of sound creation, audio editing and mixing. Students will work with unedited audio and MIDI materials provided by Pearson and the examination will assess the ability to process and correct these materials using a range of production skills, culminating in a series of audio bounces/exports for individual instrumental/vocal parts and final stereo mix. Students will refine and combine pre-existing 'ingredients' of a mix to form a convincing final product, as well as commenting on the sonic characteristics of the materials provided, interpreting the underlying theory associated with these.

4. Content and assessment guidance

Content

Knowledge and understanding

As for Component 3, the knowledge and understanding required for the Component 4 examined assessment is organised according to two of the three Areas of Study as outlined on page 7 of this document. Full details are given for each topic in the specification. In overview, the content relevant to the assessment is given below:

Component 4 – Area of Study 1 content overview

At AS and A level:

- Software and hardware
- Capture of sound
- Synthesis
- Sampling
- Sequencing
- Audio editing
- Pitch and rhythm correction and manipulation
- Automation
- Dynamic processing
- Stereo
- EQ
- Effects
- Balance and blend
- Mastering

Component 4 – Area of Study 2 content overview

At AS and A level:

- Acoustics
- Monitor speakers
- Leads and signals
- Digital and analogue
- Levels

Additionally at A level:

- Numeracy

Music styles

In order to approach the questions contained within the paper, students need to have understanding and basic knowledge of the sounds and technology used in a range of contrasting popular music styles, as listed under the Component 4 'Content' section in the specification. Students will need to be able to recognise and identify the instruments, sounds and effects associated with each style, as well as specific combinations of instruments and voices. However, they will no longer be assessed on the musical elements that define each style, e.g. the specific musical material contributed by each of the instruments.

Since Area of Study 3 (The development of recording technology) is not assessed in this component, students do not require an overview of eras of recording and production technology to complete the examination.

Assessment

Both the AS and A level Component 4 examinations are externally assessed, combined written and practical papers. Each student will be provided with a set of audio/MIDI materials with which to attempt the practical element of the examination, and will submit a number of finished practical tasks as exported audio files ('bounces') alongside their completed written paper at the end of the examination.

Sample assessment materials (SAMs) are available for this Component on the Pearson website and include a question paper, mark scheme and audio/MIDI materials. As well as utilising these materials for mock examinations, teachers should take the opportunity to develop further specimen assessments based on these resources. This will enable students to become familiar with the structure of the examination paper, the types of questions found within it and the command-word taxonomy set out in the specification.