
Getting Started: GCE Music 2016

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1. Introduction

This Getting Started guide gives 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:

- **Clear and coherent structure:** Three components that assess performing, composing and appraising.
- **Gives a real music focus:** musical elements, contexts and language are approached through areas of study and set works.
- **Wider listening** to help develop students' transferable appraising skills.
- **Clear and straightforward** question papers, mark schemes and assessment grids.

We will be providing a package of support to help you plan and implement the new specification. These support documents will be available on the GCE 2016 Music pages.

- **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 2016, A level Music 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 2016, AS level Music will be a stand-alone qualification. This means that it cannot be used to contribute towards an A level Music grade.

Changes to content requirements

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

Performance:

- **Must perform for a minimum of 6 minutes at AS and 8 minutes at A level:**
 - Minimum of one piece of music.
 - Can play as a soloist and/or part of an ensemble.
 - Performances must be completed between 1 March and submission (15 May) in the year the student completes the qualification.
 - Total performances under 6 minutes at AS and 8 minutes at A level will be awarded 0 marks.
 - Externally assessed (marked) by the awarding organisation.

Composition:

- **Must compose at least two pieces:**
 - In response to a brief set by the awarding organisation, and/or freely as the student chooses.
- **Minimum total composition time (both pieces combined):**
 - 4½ minutes at AS level and 6 minutes at A level.
 - Total compositions under 4½ (AS) or 6 (A level) minutes will be awarded 0 marks.
 - Externally assessed (marked) by the awarding organisation.

Appraising:

- **Defined list of musical elements, contexts and language that must be included.**
- **Students are required to study a minimum of two areas of study at AS and three areas of study at A level:**

2. What's changed?

- At least one area of study must be drawn from music composed in the Western Classical Tradition with all or the majority being composed between 1650 and 1910.
- At least one other area of study must not be drawn from the Western Classical Tradition.

Changes to Assessment Objectives

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

		% in AS level	% in A Level
AO1	Interpret musical ideas through performing, with technical and expressive control and an understanding of style and context.	30	30
AO2	Create and develop musical ideas with technical and expressive control and coherence.	30	30
AO3	Demonstrate and apply musical knowledge.	15	10
AO4	Use analytical and appraising skills to make evaluative and critical judgements about music.	25	30

2.2 Changes to the specification

AS specification overview

Component 1: Performing (*Component code: 8MU0/01)
<i>Non-examined assessment: externally assessed</i> <i>30% of the qualification</i> <i>60 marks</i>
Content overview <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approaches to performing.
Assessment overview <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A public performance of one or more pieces, performed as a recital.• Performance can be playing or singing solo, in an ensemble, improvising, or realising music using music technology.• The total performance time across all pieces must be a minimum of 6 minutes.• Performances must be recorded after 1 March in the year of certification and all materials for assessment submitted to arrive by 15 May in the year of certification.

Component 2: Composing (*Component code: 8MU0/02)
<i>Non-examined assessment: externally assessed</i> <i>30% of the qualification</i> <i>60 marks</i>
Content overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approaches to composing.
Assessment overview: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A total of two compositions, one to a brief set by Pearson and one either free composition or also to a brief. Each composition must be at least 2 minutes in duration. The total time across both submissions must be a minimum of 4 minutes and 30 seconds. Each composition carries 50% of the marks available for this component.

Component 3: Appraising (*Component code: 8MU0/03)
<i>Written examination: 90 minutes</i> <i>40% of the qualification</i> <i>80 marks</i>
Content overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge and understanding of musical elements, contexts and language. Application of knowledge through the context of six areas of study, each with two set works. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocal Music, Instrumental Music, Music for Film, Popular Music and Jazz, Fusions, New Directions. Application of knowledge to unfamiliar works.
Assessment overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One written paper of 90 minutes, with a total of 80 marks. One audio CD per student, with the extracts to accompany questions on the paper, will be given. This paper comprises two sections: A and B.
Section A: Areas of study and dictation (45 marks) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three questions related to the set works (audio and skeleton score given). One short melody/rhythm completion exercise.
Section B: Extended response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two essay questions: essay one (15 marks) and essay two (20 marks). Essay one asks students to draw links from their study of the set works to the music heard as an unfamiliar extract. Essay two gives a choice of three questions that ask students to evaluate the musical elements, context and language of one set work. Each option will be from a different area of study.

2. What's changed?

A level specification overview

Component 1: Performing (*Component code: 9MU0/01)
<i>Non-examined assessment: externally assessed</i> <i>30% of the qualification</i> <i>60 marks</i>
Content overview <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approaches to performing.
Assessment overview <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A public performance of one or more pieces, performed as a recital.• Performance can be playing or singing solo, in an ensemble, improvising, or realising music using music technology.• The total performance time across all pieces must be a minimum of 8 minutes.• Performances must be recorded after 1 March in the year of certification and all materials for assessment submitted to arrive by 15 May in the year of certification.

Component 2: Composing (*Component code: 9MU0/02)
<i>Non-examined assessment: externally assessed</i> <i>30% of the qualification</i> <i>60 marks</i>
Content overview <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approaches to composing.
Assessment overview <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A total of two compositions, one to a brief set by Pearson and one either free composition or also to a brief.• One composition must be from either a list of briefs related to the areas of study, or a free composition, carrying 40 marks for this component. This composition must be at least 4 minutes in duration.• One composition must be from a list of briefs assessing compositional technique, carrying 20 marks for this component. This composition must be at least 1 minute in duration, unless the brief specifies a longer minimum duration.• The total time across both submissions must be a minimum of 6 minutes.

Component 3: Appraising (*Component code: 9MU0/03)
<i>Written examination: 90 minutes</i> <i>40% of the qualification</i> <i>100 marks</i>
Content overview <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge and understanding of musical elements, contexts and language.• Application of knowledge through the context of six areas of study, each with three set works.<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Vocal Music,– Instrumental Music,– Music for Film,– Popular Music and Jazz,– Fusions,– New Directions.• Application of knowledge to unfamiliar works.

<p>Assessment overview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One written paper of 2 hours, with a total of 100 marks. • One audio CD per student, with the extracts to accompany questions on the paper, will be given. • This paper comprises two sections: A and B. <p>Section A: Areas of study and dictation (50 marks)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three questions related to the set works (audio and skeleton score given). • One short melody/rhythm completion exercise. <p>Section B: Extended response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two essay questions: essay one (20 marks) and essay two (30 marks). • Essay one asks students to draw links from their study of the set works to the music heard as an unfamiliar extract. • Essay two gives a choice of three questions that ask students to evaluate the musical elements, context and language of one set work. Each option will be from a different area of study.
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Areas of study and set works

Area of study	Set works
Vocal Music	<p>AS and A level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J. S. Bach, <i>Cantata, Ein feste Burg, BWV 80</i>: Movements 1, 2 and 8 • Mozart, <i>The Magic Flute</i> (Die Zauberflöte): Excerpts from Act 1, Nos. 4 (The Queen of Night) and 5 (Quintet) <p>A level only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vaughan Williams, <i>On Wenlock Edge</i>: Nos. 1, 3 and 5 ('On Wenlock Edge', 'Is my team ploughing?' and 'Bredon Hill')
Instrumental music	<p>AS and A level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vivaldi, <i>Concerto in D minor</i>, Op. 3 No. 11 • Clara Schumann, <i>Piano Trio in G minor</i>, Op. 17: Movement 1 <p>A level only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berlioz, <i>Symphonie Fantastique</i>: Movement 1
Music for Film	<p>AS and A level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Danny Elfman, <i>Batman Returns</i>: Main theme (Birth of a Penguin Part II), Birth of a Penguin Part I, Rise and fall from grace, Batman vs the Circus • Rachel Portman, <i>The Duchess</i>: The Duchess and End titles, Mistake of your life, Six years later, Never see your children again <p>A level only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bernard Herrmann, <i>Psycho</i>: Prelude, The City, Marion, The Murder (Shower Scene), The Toys, The Cellar, Discovery, Finale
Popular Music and Jazz	<p>AS and A level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kate Bush, <i>Hounds of Love</i>: Cloudbusting, And dream of sheep, Under Ice • Courtney Pine, <i>Back in the Day</i>: Inner state (of mind), Lady Day and (John Coltrane), Love and affection <p>A level only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beatles, <i>Revolver</i>: Here, there and everywhere, I want to tell you, Tomorrow never knows

2. What's changed?

Fusions	<p>AS and A level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debussy, 'Estampes': Nos. 1 and 2 ('Pagodes' and 'La soirée dans Grenade') • Familia Valera Miranda, <i>Caña Quema</i>: 'Allà va candela, Se quema la chumbambà' <p>A level only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anoushka Shankar, <i>Breathing Under Water</i>: Burn, Breathing Under Water, Easy
New Directions	<p>AS and A level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cage, <i>Three Dances for two prepared pianos</i>: No. 1 • Kaija Saariaho, <i>Petals for Violoncello and Live Electronics</i> <p>A level only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stravinsky, <i>The Rite of Spring</i>: Introduction, The Augurs of Spring, Ritual of Abduction

Wider Listening:

Area of study	Set works
Vocal Music	<p>AS and A level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handel, <i>Messiah</i>: 'Surely he hath borne', 'And with his stripes', 'Hallelujah', 'Worthy is the Lamb', 'Amen' • Schubert, <i>Selection of Lieder</i>: Erlkönig; 'An die Musik'; 'Die Forelle'; 'Der Leiermann' (Winterreise, no. 24) • Fanny Mendelssohn: 'Ihr Töne schwingt euch fröhlich' (Lied zum Geburtstag des Vaters) • Ethel Smyth, <i>Mass in D</i>: Gloria <p>A level only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verdi, <i>Rigoletto</i>: Act 3, Nos. 11 and 12 • Wagner, <i>Die Walküre</i>: Siegmund and Sieglinde ('Wie dir die Stirn' to 'Walsungen-Blut!' and orchestral postlude)
Instrumental music	<p>AS and A level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haydn, <i>Symphony No. 6 in D</i>: Movements 1 and 4 • Beethoven, <i>String Quartet in C</i>, Op. 59 No. 3: Movements 3 and 4 • Liszt, <i>Les Préludes</i> • Cécile Chaminade, <i>Concertino for flute and orchestra Op.107</i> <p>A level only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chopin, <i>Ballade No.4 in F minor</i>, Op. 52 • Amy Beach, <i>Gaelic Symphony</i>, Op.32: Movement 1
Music for Film	<p>AS and A level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Max Steiner. <i>King Kong</i> • Ennio Morricone, <i>Once upon a time in the West</i> • John Williams, <i>Schindler's List</i> • Debbie Wiseman, <i>Wilde</i> <p>A level only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toru Takemitsu, <i>Black Rain</i> • Hans Zimmer and Lisa Gerrard, <i>Gladiator</i>
Popular Music and Jazz	<p>AS and A level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charles Mingus, <i>Blues and Roots</i> • Carole King, <i>Tapestry</i> • Jay Z, <i>Blueprint 3</i> • Björk, <i>Vulnicura</i>

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	<p>A level only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bix Beiderbecke, <i>Jazz Me Blues</i> • Michael Jackson, <i>Thriller</i>
Fusions	<p>AS and A level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Afro Celt Sound System, <i>Volume 2: Release: 'Eireann', 'Riding the waves'</i> • Villa Lobos, <i>Bachianas Brasileiras: Nos. 2 and 5</i> • R. Rahman, <i>'Jai jo' (You are my destiny')</i> • Gloria Estafan, <i>Mi Tierra</i> <p>A level only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robert Glasper Experiment, <i>Black Radio: 'Afro Blue'</i> • Sara Tavares, <i>Xinti</i>
New Directions	<p>AS and A level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karlheinz Stockhausen, <i>Gesang der Junglinge</i> • Pierre Boulez, <i>Structures: 1a</i> • Peter Maxwell Davies, <i>Eight Songs for a Mad King: Nos. 6–8</i> • Unsuk Chin, <i>Alice in Wonderland: The Mad Tea Party</i> <p>A level only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Olivier Messiaen, <i>Des Canyons aux etoiles: Nos. 8 and 10</i> • Tansy Davies, <i>Re-greening for a large orchestra</i>

3. Planning

3.1 Planning and delivering linear AS and A level courses

- The AS and A level Music courses have been designed to be **entirely co-teachable**, with **the same components and an overlap of set works** at both 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 course. Full course planners and schemes of work can be found on the Pearson website.

a) Co-taught AS and A level

Year One

Autumn 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to AS/A level • Vocal Music set works and wider listening • Free composition exercises and task setting • Performing
Autumn 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instrumental Music set works and wider listening • Music for Film set works and wider listening • Free composition • Performing
Spring 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Popular Music and Jazz set works and wider listening • Composition to a brief/Preparing for brief assessing technique • Performing
Spring 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fusions set works and wider listening • New Directions set works and wider listening • Composition to a brief/Preparing for brief assessing technique • Performing
Summer 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision of areas of study • Revise, complete and record composition(s) • Record performance (AS only)
Summer 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination

Year Two

Autumn 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performing • Finish and record free composition • Preparatory work for composition to a brief assessing technique • Revision of areas of study at AS level
Autumn 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performing • Preparatory work for composition to a brief assessing technique • Vocal Music • Instrumental Music
Spring 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performing • Preparatory work for composition to a brief assessing technique • Music for Film • Popular Music and Jazz
Spring 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performing • Preparatory work for composition to a brief assessing technique • Fusions • New Directions
Summer 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record Performance • Complete and record composition to a brief assessing technique • Revision of all areas of study
Summer 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination

b) Two year A level course

Year One

Autumn 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to A level Music • Performing • Free composition exercises and task setting • Vocal Music set works
Autumn 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performing • Free composition • Vocal Music set works and wider listening
Spring 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performing • Free composition • Preparation for composition to a brief assessing technique • Instrumental Music set works
Spring 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performing • Free composition • Preparation for composition to a brief assessing technique • Instrumental Music wider listening • Music for Film set works
Summer 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performing • Free composition • Preparation for composition to a brief assessing technique • Music for Film set works and wider listening

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Summer 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Performing• Free composition• Preparation for composition to a brief assessing technique• Popular Music and Jazz set works
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Year Two

Autumn 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Performing• Finish and record free composition• Preparatory work for composition to a brief assessing technique• Popular Music and Jazz wider listening• Revision of areas of study from Year One
Autumn 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Performing• Preparatory work for composition to a brief assessing technique• Fusions set works and wider listening
Spring 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Performing• Preparatory work for composition to a brief assessing technique• New Directions set works and wider listening
Spring 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Performing• Preparatory work for composition to a brief assessing technique• Revision of all areas of study
Summer 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Record Performance• Complete and record composition to a brief assessing technique• Revision of all areas of study
Summer 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Examination

4. Content and assessment guidance

4.1 AS and A level Component 1: Performing

Overview

The requirements for Component 1 are set out in this section of the specification, and under 'Content'.

For AS, each student must submit a performance, at least 6 minutes in duration, consisting of one or more pieces.

- Performances must be live and uninterrupted as a recital
- Performances can be solo and/or as part of an ensemble and/or improvised or realised using music technology.
- **If the performance work submitted is less than 6 minutes, no marks will be awarded.**

For A level:

- The requirements are the same except that the performance must be at least **8 minutes** in duration.
- **If the performance work submitted is less than 8 minutes, no marks will be awarded.**

It is useful to add here some comments about the GCE AS and A level Music tutor's role in Component 1, which is to:

- ensure that students know the specification requirements and submit work accordingly
- monitor students' work, for example, to avoid:
 - short submissions which, in line with Ofqual requirements, will receive no marks
 - selection of over-ambitious repertoire.
- be prepared, where appropriate, to liaise with students' instrumental or vocal tutors
- ensure that there are suitable opportunities for students to play or sing, so that all are as comfortable as possible with musical performance.

The place of Performing within a timetabled course is not always obvious, especially when instrumental or vocal teaching takes place outside the student's school or college. Although it may not be possible for all student to practise during timetabled lessons because of shortage of practice spaces, any supervised sessions that can be arranged will give tutors the opportunity to monitor progress, advise on repertoire or instruct those who do not have tuition outside the classroom.

Performance can also be integrated into a GCE AS or A level Music course when, for instance, students are able to:

- discuss and mark others' performances informally, using the assessment criteria in the specification.
- listen to, and compare recordings of, pieces being prepared for assessment, and study the effect of varying approaches to, for example, tempo and character

4. Content and assessment guidance

- analyse aurally aspects of others' performances, for example, by listening for common compositional devices, textures or structural outlines
- identify contextual features, such as genre and period of composition.

The second bullet above recalls the recommendation of the specification (under 'Content') that 'student should listen to how established performers communicate', with a view to developing, by example, their own interpretative skills. They should 'know and understand the appropriate technical vocabulary and terminology related to their performances'.

Additionally some students may benefit from:

- listening to 'historically informed performances' in order to develop a fuller understanding of particular period styles and conventions (especially in the case of those preparing music from the 18th century or earlier)
- comparing works in similar genres/periods to those being prepared for assessment
- playing compositions created by other members of the class, both as works-in-progress and as finished pieces
- composing pieces specifically for other members of the class to perform.

Content

The aim of the specification is that students will perform with understanding as well as with technical and expressive control.

The 'Content' section underlines some key points, notably:

- the necessity for live, unedited and uninterrupted performances in the end-of-course assessments
- the availability of Component 1 to players of all instruments, including those which involve music technology, such as electric guitar (singing is also permitted in Component 1)
- if a student performs two or more pieces, they need not perform both or all of them on the same instrument or voice.

Solo performance

A solo performance is defined, in general terms, in each specification as follows: 'A solo performance is considered to be a piece in which the student's part plays a significant or leading role. The performance may be on any instrument or voice in any style or genre'.

To amplify this definition a little, a solo performance could be:

- a piece for just a single performer/instrument/voice (where the composer did not intend there to be any accompaniment)
- a piece in which one undoubled instrument or voice has an accompaniment for instrument(s) and/or voice(s).

If the composer intended there to be an accompaniment, this must be included in any performance submitted for assessment. Performances may be accompanied by backing tracks, but note the requirement in the specification is that 'the part to be assessed must not be audible as part of the backing track'. Such audibility would restrict the soloist's freedom and would be potentially confusing for the examiner.

An accompanied soloist does not necessarily sing or play right through a performance. There may well be an introduction and/or substantial interludes. Such passages do not count towards the timing of the performance (see specification, end of section entitled 'Performance task taking'). It is not recommended that such passages be omitted, as this would seriously detract from the composer's original intention for the piece.

All pieces therefore should be played in full – but note that 'piece' here refers to 'movement' rather than to a complete multi-movement structure such as a sonata or suite. It is not expected that a few variations will be extracted from a set of variations, for example, or that a middle section is omitted from a song.

Repetitions indicated by the composer should, generally speaking, be observed. For instance, the exposition in a Classical period sonata-form movement should be repeated, as should both sections in a Baroque dance in binary form (although students can be guided here by the practice of established artists in published recorded performances). The time taken to play such repeats counts toward the performance time of the submission.

It is not appropriate to introduce repeats that are not indicated by the composer.

Ensemble performance

Centres who offered the 2008 specification should note that the requirements for the ensemble performance have changed.

An ensemble is now defined as consisting of 'two or more people', rather than being limited to a maximum of five performers, including the students. Thus there is now no upper limit, although the requirement for all the parts to be 'undoubled, simultaneously sounding [and] independent' makes it likely that few ensembles will have many more performers than four or five.

Ensemble performances are the natural choice for many rock and jazz musicians but it is vital that the student's part can be heard on the recording submitted. Classical instrumentalists or singers who lack confidence may feel more comfortable performing with others than on their own as soloists.

A backing track may be used as part of the accompaniment but it does not count as one of the 'two or more people' required for an ensemble. As in solo performances, 'the part to be assessed must not be audible as part of the backing track'.

Improvisation

A student may improvise as a soloist or as a member of an ensemble; in the latter case, as with every ensemble performance, the part to be assessed must be clearly identifiable from the recording.

Improvisation combines the activities of composing and performing in a unique way. It comes naturally to some musicians, but always requires development and practice. In particular, appropriate methods of extending and developing given material must be mastered.

The tutor and students must together agree on a 'stimulus' – a starting point for the improvisation. A stimulus could be, for example, a:

- melody (original, or borrowed, e.g. a folk song)
- rhythmic pattern
- chord scheme
- jazz standard.

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Realisation using music technology

Performance of a live part over a pre-recorded/sequenced backing track is permitted. The wording of the specification, revised since the earliest draft, makes it clear that 'this pre-recorded/sequenced backing track is not assessed'. The pre-recorded or sequenced backing track may (but need not) be prepared by the student.

It is therefore only the live part that will be assessed. This must, of course, be performed in real time (with live use of effects and processes as appropriate) and must not be edited after the live performance.

It is important to think of such a performance as it is labelled in the GCSE specification – namely as 'performance of a live part over a pre-recorded/sequenced backing track', rather than as 'sequenced performance'. The latter could imply that all parts were sequenced whereas the point of the task is that the student being assessed **performs live**.

DJing does not feature in the accredited specification.

In Component 1, music technology may in general involve the use of 'synthesisers, virtual instruments and amplified instruments, such as guitars using pedals (including loop pedals), audio samples, and other processors'.

Approaches to performing

For many people, performing involves:

- playing or singing music from scores in which most details of pitch, rhythm and character are communicated through staff notation, or
- playing or singing from memory based on prior learning of such scores.

It is generally expected that the authority of the score will be fully respected.

- In some forms of non-classical music (e.g. 'show songs'), it is customary – and idiomatic – to take a few liberties, notably with rhythm. In students' performances, such liberties may be based on previously heard professional performances. Where this happens it is good to add a short note to the score explaining generally the *kinds* of deviations made (there is no need to account for every single change).
- In some Baroque music the performer may introduce ornamentation not notated by the composer (for instance when the first section of a da capo aria is repeated).

Legitimate liberties must not be confused with actual inaccuracy or mismanagement (e.g. where an unrealistic tempo is set or faulty intonation is confused with the calculated bending of pitch).

There is further information on scores and their possible substitutes below, under 'Items for submission for assessment'.

The following opportunities for performing exist in addition to performance with a score, improvisation, and performance of a live part over a pre-recorded/sequenced backing track:

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- rapping or beatboxing
- music from the oral tradition (i.e. music transmitted over long periods of time by sound rather than via notation, which cannot be categorised either as improvisation or as performance from a score)
- students performing their own compositions 'when supported by a score with sufficient performance detail to assess accuracy of pitch and rhythm'.

For AS and A level Music there are, as in the musical world at large, different expectations for different styles of music in terms of performance aspects such as tone, colour and diction. For example, the vocal technique required for a classical song is not the same as for a jazz number. In every case, students should take account of best practice in their chosen area of performance.

Musical elements, musical contexts, and musical language

Musical elements, musical contexts and musical language stand at the heart of the new GCE AS and A level music specifications, in line with the following the *GCE AS and A level Subject Content for Music*:

AS and A level specifications in music must require students to develop an in-depth knowledge and understanding of... musical elements, musical contexts and musical language... and allow students to apply these, where appropriate, to their own work when performing and composing.

The nature of this thought and reflection will differ according to repertoire and individual performers. But all performers should, when choosing a programme, consider the suitability of the music for the occasion. Questions to consider are:

- What are the likely preferences of the expected audience?
- How best can the performer's technical strengths be exploited?
- How best can limitations be minimised?

Accordingly, one confident player may choose showy music for an audition, while another may play relatively safe for a high-stakes exam. Music for a very young audience might well be kept light and tuneful, or some old and familiar melodies might be included in an event for an elderly audience.

Assessment information

Performance task setting

No pieces are set by Edexcel for GCE Music.

Each student chooses their own programme, in collaboration with their GCE Music course tutor(s) who, as the specification says, 'should ensure that the performances are relevant and appropriate to the student's course of learning'. Such guidance is second nature to most tutors, some of whom may know from experience the mishaps that can follow an unwise choice of repertoire.

In particular, careful thought must be given to appropriate levels of technical and expressive challenge. Performances of pieces that are too hard to be played comfortably may be awarded a few additional marks on grounds of difficulty, but more marks will almost certainly be lost for deficiencies of technical and expressive control.

4. Content and assessment guidance

Strict adherence to minimum performance times is required (6 minutes for AS and 8 minutes for A level), with no marks to be awarded for less than this. Tutors must therefore ensure that the length of each student's submission does not fall short.

Choices of repertoire may be made at any time during the course. If early choices turn out to be impractical, new selections may be made. It remains the course tutor's responsibility to be aware of, and to approve, any such changes.

An external instrumental or vocal tutor may be involved in choosing repertoire. However, course tutors are best placed to advise on the requirements of Component 1 and the student's overall needs in term of their course of learning.

The specification refers to students accompanying themselves by singing and playing an instrument. Such a student may be assessed as a singer (solo performance) or as singer and player together (which is also solo performance, as an ensemble must have two or more people). It is not allowable to assess only the playing in a case such as this.

Performance task taking

The final recorded performance, for submission to Edexcel's examiners, must be made in the centre between 1 March and 15 May in the year of certification (although the music could in theory have been in rehearsal right from the start of the course). The stipulation about dates is necessary because AS and A level courses are now linear, which means that all assessments must take place towards the end.

Having said this, it is better to avoid delaying the final recorded performances until the last few days (or hours) before the coursework submission date. Such last-minute working leads to additional pressure and anxiety for all concerned. Also, little room is left for manoeuvre if, for example, a performer falls ill just before the deadline or if a performance needs to be re-run (as explained in the next paragraph but one).

The whole of the submission must be performed on the same occasion, continuously, and not compiled from various performances done over a period of time. The recording equipment must be started at the beginning of the performance and stopped at the end, with no intermediate pauses.

If there is a problem during the performance (perhaps the recording equipment has failed or the student has fallen markedly short of their normal standard) the *whole programme* can be repeated and re-recorded. Note that it is not allowable to retain some parts of the original recording and re-record others.

Each student's submission must be recorded in front of a live audience of at least two people in the centre, one of whom can be the course tutor. The tutor must supervise the event, but can ask for assistance with the actual recording process.

The audience may consist of more than two people – some students might well find the presence of a group of close friends and well-wishers supportive and encouraging. Several recitals might together form a lunchtime concert or part of an evening concert.

Some students may be open to the idea of a dress rehearsal – in other words, they may welcome the opportunity to perform their programme to an audience some time before the official recording is due to be made. A dress rehearsal could help build confidence in those who are shy of microphones or of performing in front of others.

Care must be taken to ensure that the minimum time requirement is met (6 minutes for AS and 8 minutes for A level). Student may perform one, two or more pieces to achieve this minimum time requirement.

4. Content and assessment guidance

Performance time begins from the first note of the first piece (that is, it does not include any announcements or tuning up). It ends with the final note of the last piece (that is, it does not include any final applause). It *excludes* pauses between pieces and 'sections of music where the student is not performing'. This refers to whole sections or extended passages such as orchestral ritornelli in concerto movements; it does not mean that the stopwatch has to be paused for every short rest.

It is possible at A level to repeat piece(s) previously submitted for AS. However, repeated pieces must be re-performed and re-recorded, and will be assessed at the new higher level. An AS programme that only just met the minimum time requirement will need adding to if it is to satisfy the A level time requirement.

Submissions for Component 1 at AS and A level may exceed the minimum time requirements. There are no upper limits, but there is a guided maximum of 10 minutes at AS and 12 minutes at A level. Exceeding a guided maximum is allowed but everything will be assessed, even if (as may well happen) a student lacks the stamina to sustain a high standard in the later parts of an overlong programme.

Assessment

Authenticity

The *Performance Authentication Sheet* (Specification, Appendix 1) requires authenticating signatures from the course tutor and the student because it is vital that examiners are confident that each student's work is their own.

It is for this reason that the recording of each student's work is introduced by the student, not the tutor. The introduction must begin with the student's name and student number, and must then state the 'instrument [or voice] and role in the... music' – for example:

- Elinor Dashwood, centre number 00000, student number 1811, piano, solo pieces
- Jimmy Porter, centre number 00000, student number 1956, bass guitar, ensemble pieces with electric guitar and trombone, one solo piece
- Mary Poppins, centre number 00000, student number 2004, soprano, solo songs
- James Bond, centre number 00000, student number 0007, tenor saxophone, one solo piece and one ensemble (saxophone quartet).

A student's introductory statement need not include more detail than in the examples above because the titles of individual pieces will be given on the *Performance Authentication Sheet* (Specification, Appendix 1). However, later in the recording, students are free to introduce each piece if they wish, given that they are aware that such announcements will not count towards the total performance time.

The specification requires that 'performances must be recorded live, unedited, without interruptions and without the tutor giving guidance'.

Resources

The specifications require equal access to IT resources for all students.

Equal access will mean, first and foremost, that each student's submission must be recorded to the same (high) standard. All AS and A level submissions for Component 1 in a particular year must have been recorded using equipment of a similar standard. Equal access would be compromised if one student has access privately to specialised recording equipment that another student attempting the same task does not have (not least

4. Content and assessment guidance

because all performances must take place within the centre and not in other venues, private or public). For more information about recording equipment, see the section 'Recording' below.

Equal access may sometimes be an issue with tasks involving music technology. Apart from the need to ensure equality of access, centres are free to use whatever equipment is appropriate. Pearson do not recommend resources in preference to others, but if in doubt about the suitability of particular equipment, please contact TeachingMusic@pearson.com.

Items for submission for assessment

Recording

The key points set out in the specification are repeated and slightly expanded on below, as they are vital for the smooth running of the examination.

- The recording of each student's work must be a complete and unedited recording of a live performance.
- The recording must be on audio CD ('finalised and playable on standard domestic equipment') or on USB stick – not on MiniDisc or DVD. The same format (CD or USB stick) should be used for the whole centre:
 - The work of every AS student from a centre must be submitted on one CD or USB stick (i.e. there is no longer a requirement to submit a separate CD for each student).
 - The work of every A level student from a centre must be submitted on another (single) CD or USB stick.
 - If a CD is used for AS, another CD should be used for A level.
 - If a USB stick is used for AS, another USB stick should be used for A level.
- The work of each student must be immediately identifiable. It must be on a separate track. The student (as indicated above, under 'Authenticity') must have introduced their work.
- Each CD or USB stick must have on it, or securely attached to it, the centre number and all the relevant student numbers. It must be accompanied by a written list of the tracks.

Before dispatching work, tutors must ensure that the AS and/or A level CD(s) or USB stick(s) are correctly labelled, and not blank, incomplete or otherwise problematic. It is highly advisable for centres to make and keep copies of students' work (recordings and scores) and retain these until well after the appeals window is closed.

The recording quality of each track must be good enough to reflect the student's true performance.

While highly sophisticated recording equipment is unnecessary, it is important to use good-quality microphones. Condenser microphones are ideal, as they are sensitive and have a wide dynamic range. Care should be taken when positioning the microphones: if they are too close, they will pick up breaths/key tapping etc.; if they are too distant, the sound will lack definition. It is wise to experiment with the equipment and test the recording quality before making final recordings.

Microphones can be positioned as a crossed pair (XY figuration) to capture sound in stereo.

For performances with piano, it is important to use the best quality instrument available and to ensure that it is in tune.

Careful thought should be given to the venue for the recording. Dry acoustics can be unforgiving, particularly for singers. Some of the most unlikely places can give the best acoustics for certain instruments. A school or college dining hall may give just the right amount of reverb for a trumpet player. Rock groups are likely to be better off performing in a larger venue such as the school hall, rather than in a classroom.

Score or lead sheet

For each student's work there must be, in addition to the recording, what the specification terms 'a score or lead sheet'.

This may be a score in the most commonly understood sense, with staff notation. For classical pieces a score of this kind is expected. Here is some additional information and some examples.

- Do not send original scores. Instead, send photocopies. This is allowable for assessment purposes. Pearson will destroy all photocopies after use.
- Where possible, send only the part played or sung by the student:
 - For a clarinet piece with piano accompaniment, the clarinet part only is needed. Do not send the accompaniment.
 - For an instrumental ensemble, send only the part played by the student, not the full score (e.g. just the bassoon part for a wind quintet).
 - For a solo piano piece, send a photocopy of the complete score.
 - For songs, the vocal part is not normally supplied separately so send the full song complete with accompaniment.
 - For choral music used in ensemble performance, send the full score, as individual parts of choral music are not printed separately.

A lead sheet may be submitted in the case of any popular music for which this form of notation is appropriate. If a chord chart or tablature is submitted, this must give 'all the information necessary to assess the accuracy of the performance'. In particular, the specification points out the inadequacy of guitar tablature with 'no indication of rhythm'.

For an improvisation, the stimulus must be given in place of a score. A short, written description of the student's working methods, perhaps including a grid outlining the form of the improvisation, is not required by the specification. However, it is likely to be helpful in the process of assessment, and should be included wherever possible.

The specification suggests a detailed commentary as a form of evidence for other types of performance for which a score cannot be given – notably those involving music technology, some world music and folk music. Some classical students who play from staff notation may wish to give programme notes for their audiences; this can help to give a suitable sense of occasion, but is not required. Such programme notes will not attract additional credit and should not be sent to the examiner.

A professional reference recording may be supplied as well as, or instead of, the type of detailed commentary referred to above. Such a recording is usually one to which the student's performance is indebted as examiners can compare the original performance with the one submitted for assessment. Please note that reference recordings must be professionally performed and recorded, which nearly always will mean that they are, or have been, available commercially. Only the live track (which must be identified) will be assessed in performances with a sequenced backing track, but a complete recording must be submitted.

4. Content and assessment guidance

Since the aim must always be to assist the process of assessment, centres must give as much detail as possible in any scores, lead sheets or written commentaries. Where the specification says 'and/or' there is obviously a choice between submitting one form of evidence or another, or both. It is often best to be generous with supporting evidence rather than risk under-provision or an unhelpful lack of detail.

Where scores or other forms of evidence are inadequate for assessment purposes, the work submitted cannot be marked.

Performance authentication sheet

The *Performance authentication sheet* is available as Appendix 1 in the specification, and separately on the Pearson GCE Music page.

Assessment criteria

It is an Ofqual requirement that assessment for Performing is now done externally, that is, by Pearson's examiners and no longer internally by tutors.

However, tutors and student should be familiar with the assessment criteria. This will make it clear what examiners will reward at various levels of achievement. It is good practice to use the assessment criteria during the course (e.g. in mock exams) to accustom students to the examiners' demands.

For AS and for A level, there are three main assessment grids, each with marks out of 16. Therefore, a maximum mark of 48 is available for each student's performance. Where a performance consists of two or more pieces, these are marked together – in other words, a separate mark is not awarded for each piece.

The three grids are as follows:

- Performance assessment grid 1: Technical control (technique)
- Performance assessment grid 2: Technical control (accuracy) and Expressive control (fluency)
- Performance assessment grid 3: Expressive control (style and context).

Each grid identifies six levels of achievement from low to high, each with 2 or 3 marks, and with appropriately graded descriptors.

Difficulty levels

The total mark for Component 1 is 60. Some or all of the 12 marks not awardable through the three main assessment grids are available to performances that exceed the Less Difficult level.

The grid on pages 22–23 of both specifications shows clearly how this works in practice.

- Performances that are assessed as Less Difficult retain their mark out of 48 without penalty or additional credit.
- Performances that are assessed as Standard level (except any that have been awarded 1 out of 48) gain additional credit. The amount of additional credit increases the higher the raw mark. A raw mark of 48 out of 48 will be converted to a final mark of 60 out of 60.
- Performances that are assessed as More Difficult will gain additional credit, the amount of such additional credit increasing the higher the raw mark (more rapidly

than for Standard pieces). All raw marks of 40 out of 48 and above will be converted to marks of 60 out of 60.

The specification explains how examiners will arrive at the difficulty level of each submission.

At AS there will be equivalence between:

- Less Difficult and work which on average is judged to match the demands of the graded awarding bodies' Grade 5 or lower
- Standard level and work which on average is judged to correspond to Grade 6
- More Difficult and work which on average is judged to correspond to Grade 7 or above.

At A level there will be equivalence between:

- Less Difficult and work which on average is judged to match the demands of the graded awarding bodies' Grade 6 or lower
- Standard level and work which on average is judged to correspond to Grade 7
- More Difficult and work which on average is judged to correspond to Grade 8 or above.

The *Pearson Difficulty Levels* book referred to in the specification can be accessed online and used as an aid in the selection of suitable repertoire. For example, if two pieces categorised as Grade 6 in the *Pearson Difficulty Levels* book meet the minimum time requirement for AS, the resulting recital will be deemed to be Standard. The same programme will be deemed to be Less Difficult for A level. Remember that if it does not meet the minimum time requirement it will not be awarded any marks at all.

Where a piece does not appear in the *Pearson Difficulty Levels* book, its difficulty level can be estimated by comparison with pieces that are included there. For further guidance, see each specification, page 22.

It can sometimes be useful to consult specialist instrumental or vocal tutors when dealing with repertoire for an instrument or voice with which you yourself are unfamiliar.

Security and backups

This section of the specification outlines the centre's responsibilities for:

- storing the composition briefs securely until they are due for release to students
- keeping work submitted for assessment secure until dispatch. This is partly to avoid its being lost, but also to emphasise that work has not been altered or adjusted between the time that it is signed for authentication and the time of actual submission to Pearson.

The specification gives practical recommendations for the storage of hard copy and of electronic data.

4. Content and assessment guidance

4.2 AS and A level Component 2: Composing

Overview

After a short preamble describing the intentions and scope of Component 2, this section of each specification sets out what is required of student in terms of the final assessment:

For AS, students must submit two compositions.

- The two compositions together must last for at least 4 minutes and 30 seconds:
 - Failure to meet this minimum duration will result in a mark of 0 for Component 2.
- One composition is to be written to a brief set by Pearson. This composition must last for at least 2 minutes.
- The other composition may be written to a *different* brief set by Pearson **or** may be free. This too must last for at least 2 minutes.
- Both compositions are equally weighted, with 50% of the marks available for this component.

For A level, students must submit two compositions.

- The two compositions together must last for at least 6 minutes:
 - Failure to meet this minimum duration will result in a mark of 0 for Component 2.
- One composition is to be a free-choice (brief-based) composition **or** a free composition. This composition must last for at least 4 minutes. It carries 40 marks out of the total of 60 for Component 2.
- The other composition must be in response to one of four briefs assessing technique, its length depending on the demands of the brief chosen (see further below). It carries 20 marks.

It is useful to add here some comments about the GCE AS and A level Music tutor's role in Component 2, which is to:

- ensure that students know the specification requirements and submit work accordingly
- ensure that there is development of students' compositional skills through appropriate teaching and guidance
- ensure that there are opportunities for their work to be performed where possible and recorded as necessary, so that all students are as comfortable as possible with the process of musical composition
- monitor students' work, notably:
 - to avoid short submissions that, in line with Ofqual requirements, will receive no marks.
 - to ensure that each student's work is their own, so that both tutor and student may conscientiously sign the *Composing Authentication Sheet*.

It is always worth remembering that composing does not come naturally to everyone. In particular, it can be very daunting if students undertake ambitious tasks without sufficient preparation and support.

The place of Composing within a timetabled AS or A level course is not always entirely obvious, given that much of the work is usually done on an individual basis, frequently outside the student's school or college.

For A level, however, there is a straightforward role for the tutor in preparing students for the second task of Component 2 – the response to one of the briefs assessing technique, especially in relation to the first and second briefs (Bach chorale and two-part counterpoint).

Those who enter students for AS Music in Year 12 as part of their preparation for A level in Year 13 will not find any briefs assessing technique there, or indeed any harmony exercises, such as the one in the 2008 AS unit 6MU03.

Nevertheless, training in basic harmony can very well form part of AS teaching, especially for those intending to pursue the Bach chorale or two-part counterpoint task in Year 13, but also for its usefulness generally in composition and in analysis.

Although, for reasons of space, it is not always easy for all students in a sizeable teaching group to compose regularly during timetabled lessons, supervised sessions do give tutors the opportunity to monitor progress, and to give any kinds of individual advice and teaching that are permissible under the scheme of assessment.

For guidance on the Controlled Conditions for Component 2, see below, under 'Assessment information'.

Composing work (whether free or to a brief) is likely to be most enjoyable and fruitful if it is integrated with performing and appraising work where possible. For instance, students can be encouraged to:

- listen widely to music that is relevant to a set brief or to their own ideas for free composition. It is good if this sometimes involves their moving outside their comfort zones
- analyse aurally aspects of their own and other students' compositions, by listening for common compositional devices, textures or structural outlines
- perform, where this is practical, their own and other students' compositions (including, at A level, work related to the briefs assessing technique)
- evaluate such performances. This can be in terms of the effectiveness of the performances, or in terms of compositional success (possibly by using the assessment criteria in the specification for trial-marking).

Content

Skills, knowledge and understanding

Both specifications begin this section with an important summary of what students should be able to do as a result of following a composing course. These, which are not quite the same for A level as for AS, speak for themselves.

It is worth adding the following observations here, which enlarge on, or add to, some of the points in the specifications.

Composing, whether freely, or to a set brief (which at A level may require close knowledge of a specified historical style), requires as much exploration of existing music by established composers as time permits. Relevant music can often be best absorbed by attentive listening, but sometimes by performing or analysing it.

4. Content and assessment guidance

It can be useful to begin with a range of short, simple tasks appropriate to each student's requirements: some of these can be undertaken through listening or analysis. None of these tasks needs to be long or time-consuming. Some could be improvised rather than precisely notated.

Students might, for example, try some of the following, not necessarily in the given order. Each has a brief indication of its purpose.

- Briefly creating different single moods in music, such as peace, anger or mystery (gaining awareness of the expressive and emotional power of music).
- Creating two different moods, and linking one with the other (managing contrast and variety to maintain an essential unity).
- Composing a melodic passage such as balanced 8-, 12- or 16-bar sections (gaining an understanding of melodic shape and construction).
- Composing a short two-part passage in any style (learning the rhythmic interplay of parts, simple part-writing procedures, etc.).
- Creating a short harmonic progression, or borrowing an existing one, and repeating it two or three times in varied form(s) with different musical textures (showing harmonic and textural continuity and 'joinery').
- Any exploration of harmony – not just exercises – at or away from a keyboard (e.g. exploring the concepts of consonance and dissonance, listening to different types of 7th chords, etc.).

Student will not necessarily need knowledge of all the different ways of notating compositions (the specification gives staff notation, graphic notation and written accounts). Rather, it is important for everyone to be aware that such alternatives exist and that each composition should use the form of notation most suited to it. In compositions for acoustic instruments (piano, violin, etc.), staff notation is normally what the performer would expect but for examination purposes, a written account might sometimes be offered instead. Further, see 'Items for submission for assessment' below.

It is not necessary to let students embark on terminal examination tasks at the earliest opportunity (even though in a one-year AS course the set briefs are published at the start of the autumn term). Of course, it is vital not to leave coursework too late but an over-prompt start will reduce the time in which the student can develop composing skills.

Musical elements, musical contexts and musical language

The first two of these short sections hint at the sheer variety of musical expression available to students in today's world. Consideration of the purpose, intention and potential audience for any composition is particularly important. While in examination terms the principal audience for a piece may be the examiner, it is still important here to consider the likely reactions of a real wider audience. It is always vital to think about practicality of performance and suitability for venue and occasion.

The third section refers to the choice of appropriate musical language for each composer, depending on the type of music chosen:

- staff notation
- chords and appropriate chord symbols
- appropriate musical vocabulary and terminology – a reference, presumably, to the written accounts that can be offered in place of staff notation scores (see the penultimate paragraph of 'Content: Skills, knowledge and understanding' above).

The examples in the A level specification are at a higher level of demand than those in the AS specification. All key signatures are considered potentially available at A level, although of course there is no obligation at all for students to use the most extreme ones. In the first and second briefs assessing technique, the signatures used (in accordance with the appropriate historical practice) will not exceed four sharps or four flats. The Arrangement and Remix briefs will be similarly limited.

AS composers appear to be limited to five sharps and five flats but they could use other, more difficult, key signatures if they wished to do so.

Any remarks about key signatures and time signatures in Component 2 have no bearing on choices in Component 1: Performing.

Compositional briefs

New compositional briefs will be published on 1 September at the beginning of each year of certification, except for briefs assessing technique which, in view of their stricter controlled conditions, will appear on the following 1 April. All briefs will be released only on the Pearson website, not in hard copy.

The first of the AS compositional briefs will be released on 1 September 2016 in advance of the first AS examinations in summer 2017.

The first of the A level compositional briefs will be released on 1 September 2017 in advance of the first AS examinations in summer 2018, with the briefs assessing technique appearing on 1 April 2018.

The AS briefs published on 1 September 2018, and each subsequent year, will be different from those simultaneously published for A level.

Each academic year, the composition brief(s) chosen must come from the list published at the beginning of that year (on 1 September) – it is not permissible to use a brief from a previous year. The A level brief assessing technique must be among those published on the 1 April a few weeks ahead of the submission date.

Every set of compositional briefs will allow students the freedom to work in any style or genre or for any instrument. Individual briefs may be more restrictive.

Briefs relating to areas of study

Both at AS and A level, six compositional briefs will be published each year, one for each area of study. Therefore, there is plenty of choice.

At AS, students (with appropriate advice from their tutors) can choose:

- any one of these briefs if they also offer a free composition, or
- any two of these briefs if they do not offer a free composition.

Each composition must be of at least 2 minutes' duration.

At A level, student (with appropriate advice from their tutors) can choose:

- any one of these briefs
- their other submission must be in response to a brief assessing technique.

Each A level composition based on a compositional brief and each free composition must be of at least 4 minutes' duration.

4. Content and assessment guidance

The specification gives information on the focus of the brief for each area of study. Specimen compositional briefs are published in the *Sample assessment materials*, which are available online from the Pearson Edexcel GCE Music page.

Some tutors may wish all members of a group to work on the same brief but it is valid, and perhaps preferable, to negotiate with each student separately, so that everyone can compose to their own strengths.

Regarding choice of instrumental and vocal forces, there is a general instruction in the specification that says, 'you may write for one or more instrument(s), acoustic and/or amplified and/or synthesised'.

The word 'instrument' encompasses voice where appropriate. Although the above instruction appears to permit any scoring in any piece, some briefs will have specific requirements. For instance, Brief 4 in the A level *Sample assessment materials* begins, 'compose a piece for a string quartet'.

On the other hand, Brief 1 is more open-ended: 'compose a piece of music based on sonata form that would be suitable for background music at a formal occasion such as a wedding dinner'.

No instrumentation is specified here, but the *occasion* imposes some limitations. A full symphony orchestra is unlikely for a wedding dinner. (A recording of a synthesised orchestra might be played, but this seems hardly appropriate for a formal occasion, where live performers would surely be expected.) It is most likely then that a small instrumental group or a solo pianist would be engaged for a typical formal occasion.

It is possible that an initial choice of scoring will turn out to be unworkable or unsatisfactory. Students may, in such circumstances, modify their choices of instruments or voices. However, if changes are made, tutors, as overseers of the work, must make sure that the revised forces are still allowable in terms of the chosen brief.

Tutors and students should take note of **all** the instructions in each brief when considering whether or not to select it as the basis for a composition.

Let us look at Brief 1 above in this way.

- The first, and most important, part is the instruction to write a piece of music 'based on sonata form':
 - This task might be appropriate if, for instance, the student already knows about sonata form, is currently studying it in relation to the appraising of one of the set works, or has played some music in sonata form. It may be less appealing to someone whose main musical preferences are in the field of popular music – although educational breadth might sometimes be cultivated by deliberate moves away from existing areas of interest.
- The expression 'that would be suitable for background music' implies music that is relatively easy to listen to, with some straightforward emotional appeal, and not too demanding intellectually:
 - A highly dissonant exercise in Webernesque serialism is unlikely to fit the bill, for instance.
- The brief refers to a 'formal occasion':
 - A wedding dinner is just an example. The student should decide if this is the type of formal occasion that they want to write for. If not, what kind of event do they have in mind?

- A formal occasion may well suggest music in a broadly classical style, although the exact nature of the occasion that the composer has in mind might lead in another direction.
- A sonata-form movement in a jazz style might seem unlikely on the face of it but such a piece might suit some occasions well.

Free composition

At AS, a free composition must be of at least 2 minutes' duration. Remember that a free composition is not obligatory: for AS it is possible to base two compositions on different briefs.

At A level, a few compositions must be of at least 4 minutes' duration. This means that, if a free composition is submitted together with the Arrangement or the Remix (3 minutes minimum for both – see *Sample assessment materials*), a total composition time of 7 minutes' music will be required for Component 2 as a whole (rather than the 6 minutes which the specification gives as the minimum requirement on page 25).

- There are no restrictions on the instrumental and/or vocal forces that can be used in free compositions, and any style is permissible.
- The AS specification does not specify how different a free composition must be from a composition based on a brief (e.g. in terms of instrumental and vocal forces). However, it may be most interesting for the student (and educationally most valuable) if there is some clearly identifiable difference between a free composition and a brief-based piece (e.g. in style, scoring or intention).

Briefs assessing technique (A level Music only)

Each student must respond to one of the four briefs assessing technique to be published on 1 April in the year of certification. Of the requirements set out in the specification note in particular:

- the time requirement (1 minute minimum for Chorale and two-part counterpoint; 3 minutes minimum for Arrangement and Remix)
- the weighting (20 marks, rather than the 40 marks available for the free or free-choice composition)
- the special controlled conditions, with a 'guided maximum... of 6 hours' (further, see 'Composition task taking').

The method of marking each brief assessing technique is outlined in the A level specification.

Brief 1 – Bach chorale

Students should listen to, and if possible sing and/or play, some of Bach's harmonisations of chorales and try to absorb the characteristic sound. It is good if every student has easy access to a copy of Riemenschneider's collection of 371 chorales (*Bach Riemenschneider, 371 Chorales*, published by Schirmer).

Such study must be preceded or accompanied by learning the basic principles of harmonisation and part writing, for work on chorales is essentially an extension and stylistic refinement of this.

4. Content and assessment guidance

Here are some essential points about chorale harmonisation.

- Be clear about the key of a chorale throughout, and spot opportunities for modulation to related keys.
- Replicate Bach's style rather than just give a correct harmonisation, notably by using characteristic chord progressions and effective quaver movement with passing notes and, if possible, some suspensions.
- Although Bach's harmonic vocabulary is varied, he often relies quite heavily on chords I and V (7) and their inversions to establish and maintain each key.

Work on chorale harmonisation can begin with cadences. The majority of phrases end with perfect cadences; most others have imperfect cadences.

It is useful to learn characteristic approaches to cadences – notably Ib or $Ib-II^7b$ before $V-I$. Students need to understand also that Bach did not think of $Ib-II^7b-V-I$ purely vertically as four chords, but gave close attention to the horizontal element (the part writing or voice leading), with the seventh of II^7b duly prepared and resolved.

When working complete phrases, students must identify key(s) first, and remember that if there is a modulation, this often comes quite early on in the phrase. After keys have been identified, a shapely and stylish bass part should be added to define suitable harmonic progressions, before adding the two inner parts (each of which should, as far as possible, have a good sense of line).

Brief 2 – Two-part counterpoint

Students should listen to, play, if possible, and absorb appropriate Baroque two-part music from c.1680 to c.1750. Appropriate music includes two-part writing for melody instrument and bass by Handel, Vivaldi, Corelli, and some of their less well-known contemporaries, such as Barsanti and Schickhardt. It is not expected that music by J.S. Bach, which is often peculiarly complex, will be a major focus of study for Brief 2.

Note that Brief 2 (unlike the corresponding Baroque counterpoint test in the 2008 GCE Music Unit 6MU05) does **not** involve responding to, or adding, figured bass indications.

This is partly because construction of a single upper part from a figured bass can too easily become a composing by numbers exercise. Students must look for the harmonic and tonal implications of the given part, whether this is the bass or the top part. At the same time they must be aware of Baroque conventions regarding harmonic intervals (notably the broad preference for 3rds and 6ths).

Above all, completing a Baroque counterpoint exercise is about writing coherent, stylish *lines*. Especially when constructing a top part, it can help if students begin by adding just one or two notes per bar, to establish a melodic framework or outline. They can then learn how to embellish this, for example, by introducing scalar movement between adjacent fixed points.

Brief 3 – Arrangement

Students must make an arrangement of a given melody. The melody will be 12–24 bars long, and so will require considerable development and extension in order to achieve the required minimum duration of 3 minutes.

There is no one set approach to the task. The piece may begin with a short introduction or may open with a simple harmonised statement of the melody. The piece as a whole could be a short series of variations.

Whatever musical structure is employed, the melody need not be quoted in its full original form throughout. It may be ornamented, or dismembered into various motifs. Processes of development might include changes of rhythm (and perhaps time signature) and key – notably with a major melody, or motifs from it, appearing in a minor key, or minor material being transposed to the major.

The arrangement may be in any style. For instance, the melody given in the *Sample assessment materials* is by Bach – but the arrangement need not be in the style of that composer.

Brief 4 – Remix

The Remix option gives a particularly clear opportunity for students to engage with musical technology, given that appropriate equipment and teaching expertise are available. Music technology can also have a role in some ordinary composition projects both at AS and at A level.

The description of Brief 4 in the specification, together with the directions in the *Sample assessment materials* set out clearly the requirements for the task.

Assessment information

Composition task setting

This section of each specification includes some new information, notably concerning 'the maximum guided length of compositions'. The 6 minutes 30 seconds for AS and the 8 minutes for A level are *suggested maximum durations for both compositions together*.

This is to discourage the kind of excessive length associated with diffuseness, lack of focus and/or excessive repetition. All work will be examined in full, which means that pieces that seem unduly long will be marked in full.

Composition task taking

The assessment referred to in the first bullet point is the 'work offered for assessment', not the process of assessing the work. So, as tutors and students would expect, compositions can be worked at in multiple sessions over long periods of time.

Work to be assessed is submitted at the end of the course because both AS and A level Music are linear qualifications.

Where composition briefs are used, these must belong to the academic year in which the work is offered for assessment. For instance, a student submitting work in May 2020 must respond to free-choice briefs published by Pearson on 1 September 2019 (AS and A level) and to briefs assessing technique on 1 April 2020 – and **not** to briefs from any previous year(s).

For GCE 2016, both for AS and A level, the minimum durations given in the specification are mandatory – failure to meet them will result in the works receiving no marks. This is a requirement of Ofqual, common to all GCE Music 2016 specifications.

- **For AS**, the combined minimum duration is 4 minutes and 30 seconds.
- **For A level**, the combined minimum duration is 6 minutes.

4. Content and assessment guidance

Durations are equivalent to performance time, and do not include gaps between pieces, announcements, or any other preliminaries that happen to be recorded, such as tuning up. So, an A level recording that lasts 6 minutes 0 seconds from start to finish (including preliminaries and gaps) will not meet the minimum duration.

A submission that meets the minimum requirement **for AS level** might, for instance, have a first piece lasting 2 minutes 50 seconds from first note to last note and a second lasting 1 minute 55 seconds from first note to last note. The total duration of this submission would be 4 minutes 45 seconds and therefore over the minimum requirement for 4 minutes 30 seconds' performance time.

Remember that each composition must last for 2 minutes minimum. Ofqual have not insisted on disqualification for any individual piece that falls short of this, but the mark could be compromised in terms of what the student is able to achieve within the reduced duration.

For A level, answers to briefs assessing techniques must be at least 1 minute long but in practice all briefs other than the chorale will suggest or demand responses longer than this minimum. For Briefs 1 and 2 (chorale and counterpoint) given passages, for example, the complete textures that are always found at the start of an exercise, count towards the performance time.

If the two-part counterpoint test, as set by Pearson, should have a performance time of 2 minutes 5 seconds (a metronome mark will be given to clarify this timing), then the free or free-choice composition would need to be at least 3 minutes 55 seconds to give an overall minimum duration of 6 minutes.

Students must introduce their own work at the start of the recording of their work (as in Component 1).

Answers to briefs assessing technique must be recorded; this is a change from the 2008 regulations, where recordings of the technical studies were not required.

Free-choice composition (A level) – and continuation of Composition task taking (AS)

Controlled conditions

Underlying the detailed regulations in the specifications is the requirement that the student's work must be 'authentic' – in other words, it can be reliably stated to be the student's *own* work. The tutor's part in authenticating work is vital.

Paragraph One of 'Controlled Conditions' indicates that some of the time spent on developing each composition – at least 2 hours – must be spent 'in the centre under the tutor's supervision'. In addition to this, the tutor must also oversee the final write-up and the recording.

The final write-up will sometimes mean little more than putting the final touches to a musical score that has been gradually built up over weeks or months, for example, via a program such as Sibelius. However, if that is not the case, the whole of an extended write up (done, no doubt, in multiple sessions) will have to be supervised. (The term 'score' is re-defined in the section on 'Items for submission for assessment' below.)

The final recording of the composition must likewise be supervised by the tutor, in the centre.

4. Content and assessment guidance

Paragraph Two looks back to the origins of the composition. Tutors must 'monitor and authenticate preparatory work throughout the preparatory period and prior to the commencement of the composition period'.

A common-sense approach is recommended. It is sometimes difficult to say exactly when a 'preparatory period' ends and a 'composition period' begins. It is impossible to monitor all the thought processes that form part of the conception of a composition; however, careful observation is necessary and occasionally, probing questions must be asked. Deliberate plagiarism is rarely a problem, but tutors should still be wary of the sudden appearance of ideas, or even complete sections or pieces, that seem just too good to be true. Illicit borrowings may originate from online sources or via direct human contacts.

It is wise to keep a detailed record of the progress of each learner's compositions (including dates) so that final statements of authenticity could be verified and supported if they should ever need to be. Few, if any, tutors will leave even apparently reliable students to their own devices for too long without proper oversight.

Paragraph Three indicates that tutors can give guidance to students on the use of suitable sources of information (as well as on such matters as the prevention of plagiarism). Such guidance is appropriate in both the preparatory and composition periods, although the phrase 'during this period' rather implies just one of these. Tutors can legitimately refer to particular pieces of music (which could mean pointing out particular devices or sections from such pieces), or they could suggest recordings, scores, or books and articles about appropriate repertoire.

From Paragraph Three, it is clear that tutors are not at liberty to revise or refine specific aspects of students' compositions (for example, by suggesting changes of harmony, texture or instrumentation).

Feedback

Explanatory feedback by the tutor to the student is allowed in terms of:

- rubrics – including discussion and explanation of the meaning and requirements of published composition briefs
- the assessment process – including the published criteria.

Tutors may not 'give... solutions' (compare the comment above on Paragraph three of 'Controlled conditions' in the specification). However, any 'additional feedback must be recorded on the *Composition authentication sheet*' (Appendix 2). Additional feedback is not defined in the specification, but could be in the form of advice on broad compositional issues given to a student individually, rather than to a complete teaching group – for instance, 'your middle section seems unduly short – why not add to it' (without specifying how).

Collaboration

Group compositions are not allowed, but it is permissible for students to collaborate on research.

Resources

'Equal access to IT resources' means, for example, that access to professional recording facilities (over and above what are necessary at AS and A level) must not be given to some students in a centre unless these facilities are available to all.

4. Content and assessment guidance

Composition recording (for AS and A level)

Recording the compositions

Some students will be able to record compositions for voice(s) and/or acoustic instruments from live performances given by themselves or by others. While it is good for compositions to be performed in this way, it is not a requirement. Performances created via music technology (including those generated by a score-writing package such as Sibelius) are equally acceptable for Component 2. It is the composition only that is assessed, not the performance.

In that case, why is a performance required? A performance can sometimes *facilitate* assessment – for instance, where the submitted score is very complex or somewhat sketchy or inadequate. Moreover, the performance is some kind of proof of practicality: it is essentially futile to compose music without having some regard to it being capable of being performed.

Students do not have to play or sing in their own compositions. The specification makes an exception in the case of 'sequenced parts of a composition using music technology'. This means that any sequenced material must be input by the composer rather than by anyone else.

Authenticity

The *Composition authentication sheet* (Specification, Appendix 2) requires authenticating signatures from the tutor and the students because it is vital that Pearson's moderators are confident about the identity of each student and, in particular, that each student is submitting work that is their own.

The final paragraph on 'Authenticity' in each specification refers to 're-record[ing] a composition before submission'. A recording that is unsatisfactory for whatever reason (including poor performance or poor microphone placement) can be freely re-recorded, given that the tutor is present and that the new recording (like the original one) is made in the centre. (The word 'recital' in the specifications' reference to 'the whole recital composition' is redundant: the statement presumably means that the whole composition must be re-recorded and not just part(s) of it.)

Items for submission (for assessment)

Score/lead sheet/written account of the composition

As the specifications indicate, a score for each composition must be submitted – the term 'score' covering various types of written evidence (as explained in the fourth paragraph below). The purpose of the score (together with the recording) is to assist the examiner in assessing the music by indicating as clearly as possible the composer's intentions.

The presentation of the score will not be assessed, but it is very much in everyone's interests for the student to present the work neatly and clearly so that the examiner and moderator can arrive as easily as possible at a fully informed judgement of the composition submitted. Student should bear in mind that the inclusion of such indications as phrasing, articulation, bowing marks and pedalling in the score can demonstrate knowledge of the idiomatic characteristics of the instruments used. The examiner and moderator are likely to find such markings particularly helpful in assessing the student's intentions if the realisation on the recording is a fairly basic MIDI 'mock-up'. It is important to make it clear in the score whether the forces being composed for are acoustic/orchestral or synthesised/electronic.

Student may prepare and print their scores using computer software (now the preferred method for many, if not most, composers) or they may give a handwritten copy on manuscript paper.

The score may take a form appropriate to the style of music. This may be a full score in conventional staff notation for classical styles or, in the case of popular music, a lead sheet or chord chart based on the conventions of songbooks, buskers' books and real books. A useful guidebook is *Rock, Jazz and Pop Arranging* by Daryl Runswick (Faber, 1993). If guitar tablature is used, it should indicate rhythm as well as pitch.

A track sheet (or a printed screen dump of a computer window) is acceptable for electronic pop music, for example, urban, rap and club dance. However it should contain sufficient annotations for the examiner to assess the students' technological input including details and any appropriate acknowledgements of samples used, and any effects and processes employed. Tables and diagrams should normally be submitted only in cases where no other notation is appropriate, for example, graphically notated contemporary music and electronic compositions.

A written account of a composition (not more than 500 words) may be presented in place of any of the above types of score. It may be written in continuous prose or with bullet points, as the student wishes. It must include appropriate musical vocabulary rather than being, for example, just a description of programmatic content. Like any other form of score it will not be assessed.

A written account should map out the structure of the composition, using timings where possible (e.g. 'the second variation begins at 1 minute 45 seconds'). It should attempt to describe the melodic, harmonic, rhythmic and textural character of the music, with indications of important changes of tempo, dynamics and instrumentation. For vocal pieces the full text must be included but this will not count towards the 500 word count. The aim should be, as far as possible, to present 'sufficient information for an acceptable realisation [i.e. understanding] of the composer's intentions'. Clearly, however, performers could not recreate from a written account every note of a piece as they might from a score in conventional staff notation.

Recording

Recordings may be made live, or they may employ computer software using general MIDI sounds, virtual instruments or samples. Some compositions will be conceived and recorded entirely at the computer while others, for which live performance is possible, may be recorded as MIDI 'mock-ups'.

As in the case of a score, a recording will not be assessed. However, it is important to produce it in as clear and balanced a form as possible because it will aid the examiner and moderator in arriving at an assessment.

There are some brief notes on recording above (Component 1, 'Recording'). In addition, please note the following.

- The recording must be on audio CD ('finalised and playable on standard domestic equipment') or on USB stick – not on MiniDisc or DVD. The same format (CD or USB stick) should be used for the whole centre:
 - The work of all of a centre's students for AS must be submitted on one CD or USB stick (i.e. there is no longer a requirement to submit a separate CD for each student).
 - The work of every student for A level must be submitted on another (single) CD or USB stick.

4. Content and assessment guidance

- The work of each student must be immediately identifiable. Each composition by each student must be on a separate track. The student must have introduced their work by stating their name, student number and the name of the brief(s) chosen and the titles of the compositions (or for A level, the composition and the response to a brief assessing technique).
- Each CD or USB stick must have on it, or securely attached to it, the centre number and all the relevant student numbers. It must be accompanied by a written list of the tracks.

Before submitting work, ensure that the AS and/or A level CD(s) or USB stick(s) are correctly labelled, and not blank, incomplete or otherwise problematic.

Assessment criteria (free and free-choice compositions)

Work is externally assessed by Pearson's examiners, both for AS and for A level.

- **For AS**, each composition is marked out of 30, using the three grids on pages 34–36 of the specification.
- **For A level**, the free composition or free-choice composition is marked out of 40, using the three grids on pages 37–39 of the specification.

Each grid identifies five levels of achievement from low to high, each with 2 marks at AS or 2–3 marks at A level, and with appropriately graded descriptors. Although external examiners will operate these grids in the end-of-course assessments, it will be useful for tutors to use them when marking their students' work. It is one of the responsibilities of tutors to 'help students to understand... assessment criteria' (see 'Feedback', above).

Briefs assessing technique

Controlled conditions

The controlled conditions for briefs assessing technique are more rigorous than those for free and free-choice compositions.

All work must be done:

- between the release of the briefs on 1 April in the year of certification and a date that will permit the work to reach the examiner by the submission date of 15 May
- under the tutor's supervision in the centre
- with access to means of hearing the music being composed. Headphones plugged into a PC that is running Sibelius is an obvious way for student to hear what they have written. For those who need it (e.g. those writing out answers by hand) a keyboard with headphones must be accessible without disturbance to other student(s). In case of doubt or difficulty, contact TeachingMusic@pearson.com
- within 4–6 hours, which may be divided into two or more sessions. If two or more sessions are used, the work must be 'collected and kept securely in the centre between sessions. Students must not have access to their work between sessions'
- without access in the controlled conditions to any materials or information (such as textbooks or teaching notes) that would not be allowed under full examination conditions.

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The 4–6 hours **includes the recording of the work** because every submission (including chorale harmonisations and two-part counterpoint exercises) must be recorded. Recording can involve electronic means – a Bach chorale harmonisation, for example, can be recorded from Sibelius or a similar score-writing package. A recording of a chorale harmonisation played on the piano would be equally acceptable.

One or more mock assessments, to accustom students to the demands of working within the 4–6 hour time frame, will be valuable, if not invaluable. In particular, the Arrangement brief is likely to require careful time management because the *Sample assessment materials* (page 14) require this to last for 'a minimum of 3 minutes'.

Feedback, Collaboration, Resources; Composition recording; Items for submission for assessment

See the corresponding sections above, under 'Free-choice composition', bearing in mind any differences of approach necessary for briefs assessing technique.

Assessment criteria

The answers to briefs assessing technique (like compositions) are externally assessed by Pearson's examiners.

The response to the chosen brief is marked out of 20, using the three general grids on pages 43–47 of the specification, plus a fourth grid (specific to the chosen brief) drawn from those on pages 48–51.

Each grid identifies five levels of achievement from low to high, with 1 mark for each level, and with appropriately graded descriptors. Although external examiners will operate these grids in the end-of-course assessments, it will be useful for tutors to use them when marking their students' work.

Security and backups

This section outlines the centre's responsibilities for:

- storing the composition briefs securely until they are due for release to students
- keeping work submitted for assessment secure until dispatch. This is partly to avoid its being lost but also to emphasise that it has not been altered or adjusted between the time that it is signed for authentication and the time of actual submission to Pearson.

There are practical recommendations for the storage of hard copy and of electronic data.

4. Content and assessment guidance

4.3 AS and A level Component 3: Appraising

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.

Central to the content and construction of GCE Music courses are the musical elements, context and language laid down in the government's document *Music GCE AS and A level Subject Content*.

The set works chosen by Pearson are the principal means of enabling students to explore these through the medium of living sound. The specifications suggest other wider listening works to support students in their preparation for appraising unfamiliar pieces of music.

The areas of study and set works are listed in the A level specification (page 53) and AS specification (page 47). Some wider listening is suggested in Appendix 4 of each specification.

In short, the Appraising component gives students great opportunities for close encounters with important music in a wide variety of styles, through the study of set works from each of six areas of study. Such study should be enjoyable for all; for those who intend to pursue their musical studies in Higher Education, it will give a good preparation for historical and analytical work at that level.

Finally, it is worth remembering that more music is *heard* by more people today than at any previous time in human history, through broadcasts, recordings of various types, and live performances. Hearing is not, however, the same as attentive listening – which is what the specification expects and encourages. In fact, attentive listening is essential whenever you want to analyse and evaluate music and make critical judgements, or to develop and exercise aural perception.

Content

Knowledge and understanding

The specifications aim to access the musical elements, contexts and language (see below) *first and foremost through the medium of set works* (rather than through abstract rote learning).

Wider listening is important too. Suitable works are suggested in Appendix 4 of each specification as stated above. But tutors may select other relevant music instead or as well. One possible strategy for encouraging students to listen to more unfamiliar music is the setting of listening homework, in which specific works or categories of works are prescribed for them to trace and explore – and perhaps share with others.

The remainder of the 'Knowledge and understanding' section lists what students who take the course should be expected to be able to do.

Note that there are five more bullet points in the A level specification (page 55, beginning with 'comment in detail...') than in the (less demanding) AS specification (page 41).

The best guides to what is expected in the Component 3 examination are:

- the section 'Assessment information' (AS specification, pages 48–49, and A level specification, pages 63–64)
- the *Sample assessment materials*.

Musical elements

For a long time, Music specifications have expected students to be able to identify and comment on features such as melody, rhythm, harmony, tonality and texture. These features are now referred to as elements, and the scope of each is defined in both specifications.

The elements are:

- organisation of pitch (melodically and harmonically)
- tonality
- structure (or Form)
- sonority (organisation of musical material); broadly synonymous with Timbre
- texture
- tempo, metre and rhythm (how music is organised in time)
- dynamics.

The requirements for each element are considerably greater at A level (see pages 55–57) than for AS (pages 41–42). These differences must be borne in mind during teaching and exam preparation.

It will be useful to consult the *Music Vocabulary List* (Appendix 3) in each specification in conjunction with the list of musical elements.

The concluding paragraph in the 'Musical elements' section (AS, page 42; A level, page 53), and its set of six bullet points, must be carefully studied. From it we can conclude, for example:

- that it is not always possible to comment extensively on all elements in every piece
- that identification of elements, although important in itself, makes best sense when used to assist *understanding* of the music. Notice the frequency with which the word 'how' is used in the six bullet points (for instance, 'how the music exploits textural contrasts...').

Musical contexts

The study of musical contexts concerns the purpose and intention of the music, and historical, social and cultural circumstances, not least from the viewpoint of the people who create or recreate it.

These people include, in chronological order of their involvement in the musical process:

- the 'commissioner', the person or organisation who requests, and perhaps pays for, a new work
- the composer, who writes or otherwise devises the music
- the performer(s), who turns it into sound. Sometimes the same person is both composer and performer.

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In particular, students should be aware of:

- the circumstances in which music is heard. Different types of music are performed in different types of venue (e.g. concert hall, church, or outdoor rock festival) to different types of audience
- historical, social and cultural considerations. For example, study of a Bach cantata requires some knowledge of the circumstances in which it was performed within the Lutheran Church in early 18th-century Germany
- changes over time in musical style and content, as linked with historical, social and cultural changes. For example, a 19th-century symphony was a large scale public work performed by a large orchestra in a concert hall, whereas a mid-18th-century symphony was shorter and played by far fewer people and probably in front of a select aristocratic audience.

Musical language

Over many years, musicians have created special methods of communication between composers and performers, and a distinctive vocabulary with which to express musical insights in words.

Staff notation has long been the principal form of musical notation by which composers have passed on their music to performers. It therefore has a privileged position, which is recognised by the reference to it right at the start of the 'Musical language' section in both specifications.

Notice however the different demands at AS and A level in respect of musical language, notably:

- **for AS:** 'notation in compound time and key signatures to 5 sharps and 5 flats'
- **for A level:** 'reading and writing staff notation, including rhythmic notation in compound and irregular time [presumably metres such as 5/4 and 7/8] and all key signatures'.

These, and other differences, relate to Component 3: Appraising. They do not restrict the key signatures or time signatures that students may use in their performances for Component 1 or their compositions for Component 2.

Music can be transmitted from creator to performer by other means than staff notation, notably by chord symbols of the kinds used in much popular music (e.g. Cm, F⁷, E/A).

The ability to recognise and to use appropriate musical vocabulary is vital.

Recognising and understanding it in examination questions can make the difference between being able to answer a question relevantly and not being able to do so.

The importance of employing appropriate music vocabulary in examination answers is clear, for example, from the levels-based mark scheme for Question 5 in the *Sample assessment materials* for A level (pages 70–71), where 'excellent use of musical vocabulary' contributes to the awarding of a very high mark and 'some basic musical vocabulary used with errors/inconsistency' contributes to a very low mark.

Notice the less elevated demand required for Question 5 at AS (*Sample assessment materials*, pages 62–63), where the highest descriptor asks for 'good use of musical

vocabulary'. This is one of the many signs in the two specifications and the two sets of *Sample assessment materials* that expectations are higher in A level than in AS.

Appropriateness is sometimes dependent on genre or style. As an example, the specifications refer to the words 'ostinato' (generally used when one is dealing with a classical piece) and 'riff' (a term used when dealing with a piece of popular music).

There is also a matter of precision. When referring to texture, the adjectives 'thick' and 'thin' are better avoided, as the specifications say, partly because both have some pejorative implications. A thick texture might be better described in terms of its many parts, its heavy orchestration, with much writing in low registers (i.e. pitch areas), and so on. A thin texture might be described in terms of its having just two lines widely separated in register, or the presence of many rests or much use of staccato. There is no need to avoid non-technical adjectives entirely – note, for example, the word 'heavy' above – but, where possible, these need to be supported with more specific information.

The *Music vocabulary* lists printed as Appendix 3 in both specifications give brief definitions of a number of important terms. The preamble to each list must be noted – in particular, the point that the lists are not exhaustive, and the references to sources of more extended information.

Reading and writing staff notation

The substance of this section is the reference to the inclusion of 'musical dictation' in each year's Component 3 examinations (both at AS and A level). The *Sample assessment materials* for both specifications contain sample dictation questions (AS, page 14; A level, page 23).

These dictation questions do not feature guitar tablature or involve completing a chord sequence, which the specifications refer to in connection with dictation. *It is not intended that dictation questions in operational papers from 2017 and 2018 onwards will include use of guitar tablature or harmonic dictation.* Nevertheless, the development of students' aural perception may in rare cases, if time should permit, involve tutors' moving beyond the relatively modest requirements demonstrated in the dictation questions in the *Sample assessment materials*.

Areas of study

Government regulations for GCE Music demand that 'AS and A level Music specifications offer a minimum choice of four areas of study and require students to place music studied within a wider context and chronology.'

The opening remarks in the specifications on areas of study are vital to an understanding of Component 3. The quotation below omits the numbers of set works (which, as we shall see later, differ in AS and A level):

Students will learn the musical elements, context and language in depth through the six compulsory areas of study, each of which consist[s] of... set works... Areas of study give students a focus to demonstrate in-depth knowledge, understanding and skills. The areas of study encompass repertoire that allows the musical elements, musical contexts and musical language to be taught in context

Wider listening pieces belong to each area of study as well as the set works. See Appendix 4 of each specification, but remember that the words listed are suggested, not mandatory.

Whether or not the suggested wider listening works are used, there must be, for each area of study, investigation of some pieces in addition to the set works. Essay questions

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on set works require reference to 'other relevant works [which] may include set works, wider listening or other music'.

Six areas of study are given in both AS and A level specifications, rather than the minimum requirement of four, in order to permit additional breadth. All areas are compulsory in order to give students with a thorough grounding in musical repertoire.

This grounding will:

- stand them in good stead if they progress to Higher Education
- potentially be enriching and enabling to all, including those whose formal musical education will end with GCE AS or A level Music.

For AS, two (compulsory) set works are to be studied for each of the six areas. These works feature also in the A level specification, where they must be studied to a somewhat higher level. In addition, A level students study a third (compulsory) set work for each area.

Area of study 1 – Vocal Music and Area of study 2 – Instrumental Music

It is a criteria requirement that one area of study at least (both for AS and for A level) is based on music in the Western Classical Tradition, with all or most of the content composed between 1650 and 1910.

The Vocal Music area of study alone would satisfy the above requirement. The Instrumental area of study gives a different side of classical repertoire. The two areas recall those featured in the 2008 GCE Music specification, but with different (and entirely classical) repertoire, presented in a new anthology with new recordings.

The specifications have brief comment on the rationale behind the choice of set works for this area of study. The paragraph on the wider listening pieces explains their purpose of providing background and context to the set works. It is necessary to emphasise here that these wider listening works are suggestions – some tutors may decide to choose other suitable repertoire.

Area of study 3 – Music for Film

It is a requirement that at least one area of study at both AS and A level is not based on the Western Classical Tradition. Music for Film is the first of these non-classical areas.

The Music for Film set works range from the 1960s to the first years of the present century, to show something of the varied history of the genre. As with some other areas, very recent repertoire is not included, partly for reasons of copyright clearance.

Area of study 4 – Popular Music and Jazz

This successor to the GCE 2000 area of the same name aims to demonstrate the diversity of popular musical styles, with music ranging from the 1960s to the first years of the present century.

Area of study 5 – Fusions

Especially since the early 20th century, some highly original music has resulted from the fusing of styles from very different cultures. Fusions introduces students to some examples of such fusion, beginning with Debussy's combination of his classically-derived piano style with music from the Far East and from Spain.

Area of study 6 – New Directions

New Directions includes music that, by Ofqual's definition, falls outside the Western Classical Tradition, but which most people would regard as part of the continuation of that tradition. The set works represented clear 'new directions' and new aural possibilities at the time of their composition.

Set works

All set works prescribed in each specification must be studied. There are 12 for AS (with two for each area of study). There are 18 for A level (the same 12 as for AS, **plus one more** for each area of study).

Support from Pearson and other publisher(s) will be available in the form of teaching notes and resources designed for students (although these are not *required* reading).

The following bullet points suggest some approaches to the set works.

- The specifications recommend that student first 'familiarise themselves with each work as a whole', which suggests listening to it right through more than once. Some of this familiarisation could be done outside of timetabled lessons, if the appropriate listening facilities are available to all students:
 - It might be wise to concentrate on one or two areas of study at a time rather than try to tackle all of them at once.
- Each work must be studied in terms of the prescribed musical elements, contexts and language.
- Context may be a good starting point, with concise information being supplied by tutors (and/or researched by students) on:
 - composer
 - date
 - broad historical, social and cultural context
 - circumstances of first and later performances (venue, occasion, etc.).
- At this point some wider listening may be appropriate so that students can begin to put each set work into perspective.
- Thereafter, work can focus on elements hand-in-hand with musical language – for example, study of texture will be linked with learning or revision of appropriate vocabulary.
- Study of the elements might be tackled in one of the following ways:
 - Each element may be mapped across all the works in one or more areas of study, perhaps starting with something relatively straightforward such as dynamics or sonority.
 - Each work or group of works can be investigated element by element, again with a realistic incline of difficulty.
- Study of harmony and tonality in set works can (at least in the case of the more conventional pieces) be linked to some of the learning required for composition projects (most obviously the Bach chorale and two-part counterpoint options for A level students).
- With structure, begin by identifying general formal outlines (e.g. sonata form, or a verse and chorus structure). Then look for somewhat greater detail but, **as with every element, students should be encouraged to apply general principles rather than attempt to memorise bar-by-bar analyses of every piece.**

4. Content and assessment guidance

- Carefully study the *Sample assessment materials* to see the kinds of questions that will be asked in the Component 3 examination.
- Identify and, if desired, buy published practice materials (specimen listening tests, for instance) to help give the students practice with the earlier questions in both the AS and A level exams.
- Ensure that students 'learn how to write perceptively about music, in particular comparing, contrasting, assessing, evaluating and commenting as appropriate'. Here it will be useful to consult *Command word taxonomy* (Specification, Appendix 5).

Suggested wider listening and unfamiliar pieces

Much study for Component 3 concerns the set works, which should be very familiar by the time of the examination.

It is important also for students to be able to respond to *unfamiliar* music – music that they have not previously heard, but which is connected in clear way(s) to music that they do know.

For each area of study, the wider listening works in Appendix 4 (which, as previously stated, are suggestions rather than compulsory) are designed to give:

- practice in applying appraising skills to unfamiliar music
- repertoire other than set works that can be referred to in essay questions.

Assessment information

For AS level

The first examination for AS Component 3 will be Summer 2017. It will last for 90 minutes and will be marked out of 80. The specification (pages 48–49) indicates the structure of the examination and the types of questions to be set.

The specimen paper and mark scheme in the *Sample assessment materials* for GCE AS Music:

- are designed to be very clear indicators of the nature and standard of the assessment
- should be compared with the corresponding A level materials by tutors offering both AS and A level Music, so that the differences of standard can be perceived.

It is useful here to emphasise several key points about the 2017 and later examinations.

- Materials needed in the exam, and supplied by Pearson:
 - the question paper/answer booklet
 - resource booklet containing scores. Students do not take an anthology or other scores into the exam room, neither are they expected to answer questions on set works without any form of notation (as was the case with 2008 GCE Music Unit 6MU03)
 - a CD with the recorded extracts needed for the exam **for each student** so that everyone can listen to each extract in the most convenient way. It is even possible to focus on a particular part of an extract repeatedly if that is helpful. Students will need guidance in time management; however, it

would be possible to spend too long on repeated hearings of a dictation passage, for instance.

- Materials needed in the exam which must be supplied by the centre:
 - a CD player for each student.

Section A

Section A (45 marks) contains four questions.

- Each of Questions 1–3 is based on an extract from a set work from a different area of study, and is divided into short parts worth one or a few marks each and requiring short answers (which need not be in continuous prose):
 - A skeleton score is given for each question in addition to a recorded extract.
- Question 4 is in two parts:
 - The first part has a short passage of unfamiliar music for students to write down from dictation.
 - The second part features a short passage of unfamiliar music. An incorrect version (containing three errors of pitch and/or rhythm) is printed on the exam paper, but the correct version is played on the CD. The correct version must be notated on a blank stave underneath the stave that has the incorrect version.

Section B

Section B (35 marks) is the more challenging section, with essay questions requiring use of continuous prose (not notes or bullet points).

- Question 5 (15 marks) is based on a piece of unfamiliar music related to one of the set works (but not from any of the suggested wider listening pieces). A recording of the music is given, but no notation. Discussion should extend to other music, which may be drawn from set works, suggested wider listening pieces or any other relevant music.
- Question 6 (20 marks) requires students to answer one from a choice of three essay questions, each drawn from a different area of study. (Three out of the six areas will therefore be represented in this question. These will be chosen to cover a wide range of musical styles). No recordings will be given, but a full score of each work for discussion will be printed in the resource booklet. In their chosen question, students will have to 'evaluate music with reference to three [specified] music elements', relating their discussion to other relevant works.
- The *Sample assessment materials* include the levels-based mark schemes, which will be used to mark these questions. Unlike the marking system used for the 2008 specification, there is no precise counting up of points made, the emphasis being on quality of information as well as quantity. These levels-based schemes must be studied with care and it is recommended that they be implemented in mock exams and in marking other students' assignments.

For A level

4. Content and assessment guidance

The first examination for A level Component 3 will be in Summer 2018. It will last for 2 hours and will be marked out of 100. The specification (pages 63–64) indicates the structure of the examination and the types of questions to be set.

The specimen paper and mark scheme in the *Sample assessment materials* for GCE A level Music:

- are designed to be very clear indicators of the nature and standard of the assessment
- should be compared with the corresponding A level materials by tutors offering both AS and A level Music, so that the differences of standard can be perceived.

Little additional comment is required here, but it is useful to emphasise several key points about the paper.

- Materials needed in the exam, and supplied by Pearson, are:
 - the question paper/answer booklet
 - resource booklet containing scores. (Students do not take an anthology or other scores into the exam room)
 - a CD with the recorded extracts needed for the exam **for each student** so that everyone can listen to each extract in the most convenient way. It is even possible to focus on a particular part of an extract repeatedly if that is helpful. Students will need guidance in time management; however, it would be possible to spend too long on repeated hearings of a dictation passage, for instance.
- Materials needed in the exam which must be supplied by the centre:
 - a CD player for each student (or some other device for playing a CD).
- The questions are more demanding than those for AS, but the structure of both papers is similar.

Section A

Section A (50 marks) contains four questions.

- Each of Questions 1–3 is based on an extract from a set work from a different area of study, and is divided into short parts worth one or a few marks each and requiring short answers (which need not be in continuous prose):
 - A skeleton score is given for each question in addition to a recorded extract.
- Question 4 requires students to complete a short (unfamiliar) melodic-rhythmic dictation exercise.

Section B

Section B (50 marks) is the more challenging section, with essay questions requiring use of continuous prose (not notes or bullet points).

- Question 5 (20 marks) is based on a piece of unfamiliar music related to one of the set works (but not from any of the suggested wider listening pieces). A recording of the music is given, but no notation. Discussion should extend to other music, which may be drawn from set works, suggested wider listening pieces or any other relevant music.

4. Content and assessment guidance

- Question 6 (30 marks) requires students to answer one from a choice of three essay questions, each drawn from a different area of study. (Three out of the six areas will therefore be represented in this question. These will be chosen to cover a wide range of musical styles.) No recordings will be given, but a full score of each work for discussion will be printed in the resource booklet. In their chosen question, students will have to 'evaluate music with reference to three [specified] music elements', relating their discussion to other relevant works.
- The *Sample assessment materials* include the levels-based mark schemes, which will be used to mark these questions. Unlike the marking system used for the 2008 specification, there is no precise counting up of points made, the emphasis being on quality of information as well as quantity. These levels-based schemes must be studied with care, and it is recommended that they be implemented in mock exams and in marking other student assignments.

Sample assessment materials

The online location of these is given in each specification. Use of these materials cannot be too strongly recommended.