

The Course

The AQA specification consists of three components:

Component 1: Appraising Music

- 40% of A Level (listening, analysis and contextual understanding).
- This consists of one written exam (2 hours and 30 minutes).
- Students must study Area of Study 1 (Western Classical Tradition 1650-1910) and two other Areas of Study, from Pop Music, Music for Media, Music for Theatre, Jazz, Contemporary Traditional Music or Art Music since 1910. Students must be able to use knowledge and understanding of the musical elements within each genre, namely melody, harmony, tonality, structure, timbre, texture and rhythm.

Component 2: Performance

- 35% of A Level (solo and/or ensemble as instrumentalist or singer).
- A programme of pieces lasting between 10 to 12 minutes in total performed as a portfolio. It is anticipated that pieces of Grade 6 level will be marked as 'standard' level of difficulty; pieces above this will attract weighting of an extra 2-4% in marks. Performances are marked with reference to Technical Control (pitch, rhythm, tone, ensemble skills) and Expressive Control (tempo, dynamics, phrasing, articulation).

Component 3: Composition

- 25% of A Level.
- Two compositions to be completed, lasting between four to eight minutes in total.
 - Composition 1: Set to a brief (Bach Chorale)
 - Composition 2: Free composition

Why study Music?

If music is your passion, this A Level will give you two years of bliss! The AQA course is designed to build on the range of listening, performing and composing activities covered in GCSE Music. You will be exposed to a reasonably broad spectrum and can perform in a style most appropriate to your experience and skill. You should be aware that there will be a focus in a number of the units on the detailed study of classical 'art' music repertoire. A Level Music encourages the skills of analysis and criticism and helps you to develop your critical thinking through music composition. Clearly you will also develop your practical skills, as well as enhancing listening and aural abilities. Essay writing is an important facet of the course and there are opportunities for you to develop your powers of musical criticism through the study of set works and topics.





What can I do with a qualification in this subject?

The course is essential for Music degrees and is useful for others such as Performing Arts/Media Studies. It offers a balance of practical and theoretical work. A number of Music A Level students in the past have gone on to read Music at university or to Music college to pursue performance on their principal instrument. However, A Level Music develops a wide range of skills which are also applicable in situations outside Music itself, notably analytical ability, a sense of historical perspective and the self-discipline and confidence that come from performing in public. Music A Level is recognised by all universities, who welcome the subject as a qualification for almost all their degree courses. Many other subjects go well with Music, from Humanities and Languages to Mathematics and Sciences.

What do I need to study Music?

A minimum Grade 6 in GCSE Music is required and a Grade 7 is strongly recommended as is Grade V theory.

A Level subject video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cCMBZn187Pw>

