

Music

A LEVEL - EDEXCEL

What are the aims of the course?

The aims and objectives of the course are to enable students to:

- Actively engage in the process of music study
- Develop performing skills to demonstrate an understanding of musical elements, style, sense of continuity, interpretation and expression
- Develop composing skills to demonstrate the manipulation of musical ideas and the use of musical devices and conventions
- Recognise the interdependence of musical knowledge, understanding and skills, and make links between the integrated activities of performing, composing and appraising, underpinned by attentive listening
- Develop and extend the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to communicate effectively as musicians
- Develop knowledge and understanding of a variety of instruments and styles, and of relevant approaches to both performing and composing
- Appraise contrasting genres, styles and traditions of music, and develop understanding of musical context and a coherent awareness of musical chronology
- Reflect critically and make personal judgements on their own and others' music
- Engage with, and extend appreciation of, the diverse heritage of music in order to promote personal, social, intellectual and cultural development.

What does it involve?

Each student is required to perform and record a recital of solo and/or ensemble music which lasts for a minimum of 8 minutes in front of a live audience of at least two people. Students must submit two compositions of a combined duration of 6 minutes. The student selects one composition brief from a choice of six, as a basis for a 4 minute composition in addition to a technical study exercise on the harmonisation of a Bach chorale. The examination component of the course focuses on developing listening and appraisal skills through the study of music across a variety of styles and genres. The content is grouped into six areas of study, each of which contains three set works. In the examination paper, students will complete analytical, listening and contextual questions relevant to their set works.

How is it assessed?

The A Level course comprises three components which are all externally assessed:

Component 1

Performing
A non-examined component
30% of A Level

Component 2

Composition
A non-examined component
30% of A Level

Component 3

Appraising
An examination paper
40% of A Level

Are there any specific entry requirements?

Although GCSE Music is beneficial, it is not a prerequisite of the course. Students must, however, have the ability to read and understand written musical notation in at least two different clefs, as well as perform to a minimum of Grade 4 standard.

Why is it a useful qualification?

Studying music at A Level gives students the power to engage with music more deeply as a performer, composer and listener. It also helps students to develop a wide variety of skills such as analysis, dedication, group skills, self-confidence and self-reliance, as well as providing a means of artistic expression and relaxation. Although A Level music involves a lot of creative work (around 60%), the theoretical study of music history and theory is sufficiently rigorous. Even if students are not considering a career in music, A Level Music is held in high esteem by universities and other institutions of higher education, as well as by potential employers. It is a very versatile subject to choose – essential for any student wanting a career within the music industry but also an excellent addition to any other combination of subjects.

Possible careers in music include performing, composing and arranging, education and music therapy, music administration and management, music production and the wider creative industries.

