

MUSIC

Exam board: AQA

Assessment methods: Appraising, Performing and Composing

Length of exams: A two and a half hours written paper for Component 1 and external assessment for the performing and composing units

The A-level music course attracts students with a passion for music, who want to develop their composition, listening and performing skills. They are suitable for students with instrumental skills at around grade VI. An ability to read music or the willingness to learn is an important prerequisite of the course.

Breakdown of units

Component 1 – Appraising Music

The areas of study in this unit provide an appropriate focus for students to appraise, develop and demonstrate an in-depth knowledge and understanding of musical elements, musical contexts and musical language from a range of historical periods. In all, students study three areas, one of which is compulsory (Western classical tradition 1650–1910). This module is assessed by a two and a half hour written examination and accounts for 40% of the A-level marks.

Component 2 – Performing

Students must be able to perform music using one or both of the following ways:

- instrumental/vocal: as a soloist, and/or as part of an ensemble
- production: via music technology.

A minimum of ten minutes is required. This module is externally assessed by the exam board and is 35% of the A-Level mark.

Component 3 – Composing

Students are required to submit two compositions for this unit – one which is set to a brief and one which is a free composition. A minimum of four and a half minutes of music is required in total. This module is externally assessed by the exam board and is 25% of the A-Level mark.

Overlap with other subjects

Music as an academic discipline does not necessarily have a set of transferable study skills although our students have been encouraged in recent years to work with students in Film Studies to create original compositions.

Updated 19/6/20