A-LEVEL
MUSIC
(7272)

Specification

For teaching from September 2016 onwards
For exams in 2018 onwards

Contents

Are you using the latest version of this specification?

- You will always find the most up-to-date version of this specification on our website at aqa.org.uk/7272
- We will write to you if there are significant changes to the specification.

1 Introduction

1.1 Why choose AQA for A-level Music

Music is constantly evolving, inspiring creativity and expression in a way that no other subject can. That's why we have designed a relevant and contemporary A-level qualification that offers your students the chance to study a wide range of musical genres. Our A-level brings listening, performance and composition to life in new and engaging ways, and links to the world around us like never before.

We know that every student has different learning styles and musical tastes, which is why our A-level values all music styles, skills and instruments. Broaden your students' minds and foster a love of all music with a qualification that students of all abilities and backgrounds will enjoy.

You can find out about all our Music qualifications at aqa.org.uk/music

A specification designed for you and your students

Our specification and assessments have been designed to the highest standards, so that teachers, students and their parents can be confident that an AQA award provides an accurate measure of students' achievements.

The flexibility of the previous specification has been retained so that students can focus on an area of personal interest and you can create courses which play to your school or college's strengths.

The specification supports progression to higher education in music and related subjects, as well as providing all students with a platform to inspire a lifelong interest and enjoyment of music.

It also offers logical progression from GCSE as the assessment objectives, structure and titles are very similar to those specified in the AQA GCSE Music specification.

Teach AS and A-level together

The specification has been designed to enable AS and A-level students to be co-taught. For example, you may deliver the course to AS and A-level students in the same year group, as well as give AS students the option to progress onto the full A-level.

At the start of the course, to ensure you are clear about the standards at AS and A-level, review the A-level Music performance descriptions and the online exemplification materials provided on e-AQA. Please also see Assessment criteria (page 35).

1.2 Support and resources to help you teach

We've worked with experienced teachers to provide you with a range of resources that will help you confidently plan, teach and prepare for exams.

Teaching resources

Visit aqa.org.uk/7272 to see all our teaching resources. They include:

- **Schemes of work:** a variety of ideas across all titles to help you plan your course with confidence
- **Good practice guides:** to help you to inspire and challenge students to think creatively
- **Teachers guides:** detailed guides for the set works to help you to support your students in all areas of the specification
- **Suggested listening lists:** details of tracks/works for named artists/composers to help you prepare your students for the written exam.
- **Exemplification materials:** to showcase sets of students' work supported by examiner commentaries and guidance.

Support service

- **Training courses:** to help you deliver AQA Music qualifications
- **Subject expertise courses:** for all teachers, from newly-qualified teachers who are just getting started to experienced teachers looking for fresh inspiration.
- **Music advisory service:** each school or college is allocated a subject adviser. You can contact them for one-to-one advice on any aspect of the subject, assessment and/or support with planning and delivery of course content.
- **Subject community:** provides access to free resources and services offered by music venues, organisations and charities.
- **Support meetings:** to help you with course delivery; offering practical teaching strategies and approaches that really work.
- **Teacher network group:** this group has been set up to allow teachers to contact colleagues at other centres to share ideas about resources and teaching strategies for the AQA specification.

To find out more about our support service visit aqa.org.uk/7272

Preparing for exams

Visit aqa.org.uk/7272 for everything you need to prepare for our exams, including:

- past papers, mark schemes and examiners' reports
- sample papers and mark schemes for new courses
- Exampro: a searchable bank of past AQA exam questions
- example student answers with examiner commentaries.

Analyse your students' results with Enhanced Results Analysis (ERA)

Find out which questions were the most challenging, how the results compare to previous years and where your students need to improve. ERA, our free online results analysis tool, will help you see where to focus your teaching. Register at aqa.org.uk/era

For information about results, including maintaining standards over time, grade boundaries and our post-results services, visit aqa.org.uk/results

Keep your skills up-to-date with professional development

Wherever you are in your career, there's always something new to learn. As well as subject-specific training, we offer a range of courses to help boost your skills.

- Improve your teaching skills in areas including differentiation, teaching literacy and meeting Ofsted requirements.
- Prepare for a new role with our leadership and management courses.

You can attend a course at venues around the country, in your school or online – whatever suits your needs and availability. Find out more at coursesandevents.aqa.org.uk

Help and support available

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at aqa.org.uk/7272

If you'd like us to share news and information about this qualification, sign up for emails and updates at aqa.org.uk/keepinformedmusic

Alternatively, you can call or email our subject team direct.

E: music@aqa.org.uk

T: 01483 437 750

2 Specification at a glance

This qualification is linear. Linear means that students will sit all their exams and submit all their non-exam assessment at the end of the course.

2.1 Subject content

Core content

1. Appraising music (page 11)
2. Performance (page 25)
3. Composition (page 26)

2.2 Assessments

Students must complete all three components.

Component 1: Appraising music
What's assessed • Listening • Analysis • Contextual understanding
How it's assessed • Exam paper with listening and written questions using excerpts of music.
Questions • Section A: Listening (56 marks) • Section B: Analysis (34 marks) • Section C: Essay (30 marks) This component is 40% of A-level marks (120 marks).

Component 2: Performance
What's assessed Music performance
How it's assessed Solo and/or ensemble performing as an instrumentalist, or vocalist and/or music production (via technology).
Requirement **A minimum of ten minutes of performance in total is required.** This component is 35% of A-level marks (50 marks). Non-exam assessment (NEA) will be externally marked by AQA examiners. Work must be completed between 1 March and the specified date given at aqa.org.uk/keydates Work must be sent by post/uploaded to AQA by the specified date given at aqa.org.uk/keydates

✚

Component 3: Composition
What's assessed Composition
How it's assessed   - Composition 1: Composition to a brief (25 marks)   - Composition 2: Free composition (25 marks)
Requirement **A minimum of four and a half minutes of music in total is required.** This component is worth 25% of A-level marks (50 marks). NEA will be externally marked by AQA examiners. Work must be completed and sent by post/uploaded to AQA by the specified date given at aqa.org.uk/keydates.

3 Subject content

Developing and applying the musical knowledge, understanding and skills set out in our specification can ensure your students form a personal and meaningful relationship with music. They will be encouraged to engage critically and creatively with a wide range of music and musical contexts, and reflect on how music is used in the expression of personal and collective identities.

The specification allows students to develop particular strengths and interests, encourage lifelong learning and provide access to higher education and university degree courses in music and music-related subjects as well as music-related and other careers.

The Subject content is divided into three components:

- Appraising music
- Performance
- Composition.

3.1 Appraising music

The areas of study 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. The areas of study can also provide a rich source of material for your students to work with when developing performance and composition skills.

There are seven areas of study:

1. Western classical tradition 1650–1910 (compulsory)
2. Pop music
3. Music for media
4. Music for theatre
5. Jazz
6. Contemporary traditional music
7. Art music since 1910.

Students **must** study Area of study 1: Western classical tradition 1650–1910 and choose **two** from Areas of study 2–7.

3.1.1 Area of study 1: Western classical tradition 1650–1910 (compulsory)

For the purposes of this specification, the western classical tradition is defined as art music of (or growing out of) the European tradition, normally notated, and normally intended for public performance.

There are **three** strands of music represented which cover **three** key genres:

- Baroque: the solo concerto
- Classical: the operas of Mozart
- Romantic: the piano music of Chopin, Brahms and Grieg.

Listening – unfamiliar music

Students must be able to listen attentively to unfamiliar music from each of the **three** strands to identify and accurately describe musical elements and use musical language (including staff notation).

Analysis and contextual understanding – set works

For **two** of the selected strands, students must also be able to critically appraise music through analysing excerpts from the set works using knowledge and understanding of:

- the effect of audience, time and place on how the set works were created, developed and performed
- how and why the music across the selected strand is different
- how the composer's purpose and intention for the set works is reflected in their use of musical elements
- relevant musical vocabulary and terminology for the set works
- the complex interdependencies between musical elements
- the sophisticated connections between music and its context.

Strand A: Baroque solo concerto

Composer	Set works
Purcell	Sonata for trumpet and strings in D major Z.850 (complete)
Vivaldi	Flute concerto in D *Il Gardellino* op.10 no.3 RV428 (complete)
Bach	Violin concerto in A minor BWV1041 (complete)

Strand B: The operas of Mozart

Composer	Set works
Mozart	*Le Nozze di Figaro* k.492: Act 1, focusing on: - overture - No.1 Duettino (Figaro and Susanna, including following recitative) - No.3 Cavatina (Figaro, including the previous recitative) - No.4 Aria (Bartolo) - No.5 Duettino (Susanna and Marcellina) - No.6 Aria (Cherubino) - No.7 Terzetto (Susanna, Basilio, Count) - No.9 Aria (Figaro).

Strand C: The piano music of Chopin, Brahms and Grieg

Composer	Set works
Chopin	• Ballade no.2 in F major op. 38 • Nocturne in E minor op.72 no.1
Brahms	• Intermezzo in A major op.118.no. 2 • Ballade in G minor op.118 no. 3
Grieg	• Norwegian march op.54 no. 2 • Notturno op.54 no. 4

The edition and any translation used are at the discretion of the teacher and student. However we will name the editions used for the exam at aqa.org.uk/music.

Musical elements

Students must be able to use knowledge and understanding of the following musical elements when appraising music from this Area of study.

The following table contains all the musical elements, for this area of study, that students must know and understand, to answer questions in section A (Listening) and section B (Analysis and Contextual understanding) of the exam. Marks will also be awarded for knowledge of other terms, if relevant to this area of study, in section B (Analysis and Contextual understanding) of the exam.

Element type	Element
Melody	• contour – ascending, descending, stepwise, conjunct, disjunct, scalic, triadic and arpeggio • intervals, including compound intervals • phrase length – equal, unequal and balanced • ornaments – trill, mordent, turn, acciaccatura and appoggiatura • passing notes – accented, unaccented and chromatic • auxiliary notes – upper, lower and chromatic • note of anticipation • echappée note • portamento • melodic devices – sequence, motif, fragmentation, repetition, intervallic augmentation and diminution.

Element type	Element
Harmony	- consonant and dissonant - diatonic – primary and secondary triads, dominant 7th and all inversions - chromatic – diminished 7th, secondary dominant 7th, substitution chords (borrowing from opposite mode), chord of the Neapolitan, Neapolitan 6th and augmented 6th chords (Italian, German, French) - cadences – perfect, imperfect, interrupted, plagal, half close, phrygian and tierce de Picardie - circle of 5ths progression, harmonic sequence - pedal notes – tonic, dominant, inverted and inner - suspensions (4–3, 7–6, 9–8 and bass), preparation and resolution - cadential 6/4.
Tonality	- major, minor, and their key signatures - modulation to dominant, subdominant, and their relatives, also to tonic minor, relative minor and tertiary keys - enharmonic keys - modality.
Structure	- binary, rounded binary and ternary - ritornello and episode - sonata form - through-composed - introduction and coda - recitative and aria - foursquare - antecedent and consequent phrases - ostinato.
Sonority (Timbre)	- standard orchestral and vocal types - basso continuo - pizzicato, arco, col legno, con sordino, sul ponticello, sul tasto and double stopping - sotto voce, vibrato - una corda, pedalling.

Element type	Element
Texture	• solo, monophonic, unison, octaves, parallel 3rds • melody and accompaniment, homophonic, chordal • polyphonic, contrapuntal, imitative, fugal • antiphonal • trio sonata texture • polarised • countermelody, descant • canon.
Tempo, metre and rhythm	• simple and compound time • common Italian tempo terms including ritenuto, rallentando and accelerando • rubato, pause • syncopation, hemiola, cross-rhythm, motor-rhythm.
Dynamics and articulation	• common Italian dynamic terms including *sfz* and *fp* • accent, tenuto, staccato, marcato, legato.

Musical language

Students must be able to use musical language appropriate to this Area of study in the following ways:

Reading staff notation

Students must be able to identify musical elements (as above) when reading staff notation.

For unfamiliar music, students must be able to read short passages of a minimum of four bars and a maximum of eight bars.

For familiar music, students must be able to read approximately two pages of music score.

Writing staff notation

Students must be able to:

- write melodic notation in all keys within short passages of music of a minimum of four bars and a maximum of eight bars
- write rhythmic notation, including compound time within short passages of a minimum of four bars and a maximum of eight bars.

Chords

Students must learn standard and extended chords, including chord inversions and secondary dominant 7^{ths}, and be able to identify them in aural and written form. Examples of relevant types of chords can be found in the Musical elements (page 13).

Musical vocabulary and terminology

Students must be able to identify and apply appropriate musical vocabulary and terminology to both music heard and notated. The appropriate vocabulary and terminology required can be found in the tables appropriate to the student's selected area of study.

3.1.2 Areas of study 2–7

Students must choose **two** areas of study from the following:

2. Pop music

3. Music for media

4. Music for theatre

5. Jazz

6. Contemporary traditional music

7. Art music since 1910.

Listening – unfamiliar music

Students must be able to listen attentively to unfamiliar music from **all** the named artists/ composers in their selected areas of study to identify and accurately describe musical elements and use musical language (including staff notation).

Analysis and Contextual understanding

For **three** of the named artists/composers from each of their selected areas of study, students must be able to appraise music and make critical judgements, using knowledge and understanding of:

- how the artists'/composers' use of musical elements for **at least two** published works reflects the style of the genre and their purpose and intentions for the work
- how the style of the artists'/composers' music has varied over time through comparison of published works
- musical vocabulary and terminology relevant to the work and area of study.

Selection of the published works for each named artist/composer is at the discretion of the teacher and student. However, the works must be in the public domain such that they are easily accessible to examiners.

3.1.3 Area of study 2: Pop music

For the purpose of this specification, pop music is defined as popular mainstream music derived from and including a number of musical genres including rock, funk and R&B from 1960 to the present.

Named artists

- Stevie Wonder
- Joni Mitchell
- Muse
- Beyoncé
- Daft Punk
- Labrinth

Musical elements

The following table contains all the musical elements, for this area of study, that students must know and understand to answer questions in section A (Listening) and section C (Essay) of the exam. Marks will also be awarded for knowledge of other terms, if relevant to this area of study, in section C (Essay) of the exam.

Element type	Element
Melody	• riff • pitch bend • melisma, syllabic • hook • slide • glissando • ostinato • blue notes.
Harmony	• power chords • sus4 chords • chord extensions – secondary 7th, 9th, 11th, 13th • other complex chords eg half diminished 7th, added 6th • chord symbols eg C/E C7 Cø and C+ • tonic and dominant pedal.
Tonality	• specific modes eg dorian, lydian • pentatonic • blues scale.
Structure	• intro/outro • middle 8 • bridge • breakdown • verse • chorus • instrumental • break • drum fill.
Sonority (Timbre)	• studio/technological effects eg reverb, panning • standard contemporary instrumental types eg electric guitar, synthesisers • drum kit components and techniques eg rim shot • vocal timbres eg falsetto, belt, rap • specific instrumental techniques eg slap bass • specific instrumental effects eg distortion.
Texture	• looping • layering • a cappella.

Element type	Element
Tempo, metre and rhythm	• bpm (beats per minute) • mm (metronome marking) • groove • backbeat • irregular metre.
Dynamics and articulation	• fade in/fade out.

3.1.4 Area of study 3: Music for media

For the purpose of this specification, music for media is defined as music specifically composed for film, television and gaming from 1958 to the present.

Named composers

- Bernard Herrmann
- Hans Zimmer
- Michael Giacchino
- Thomas Newman
- Nobuo Uematsu

Musical elements

The following table contains all the musical elements, for this area of study, that students must know and understand to answer questions in section A (Listening) and section C (Essay) of the exam. Marks will also be awarded for knowledge of other terms, if relevant to this area of study, in section C (Essay) of the exam.

Element type	Element
Melody	• leitmotif.
Harmony	• power chords • sus4 chords • chord extensions – 7th, 9th, 11th, 13th • other complex chords eg half diminished 7th, added 6th • chord symbols eg C/E C^7 $C^\emptyset$ and C^+ • tonic and dominant pedal.
Tonality	• tonal • atonal • modal.

Element type	Element
Structure	• cue • underscore • soundtrack • mickey-mousing • diegetic and non-diegetic music • source music.
Sonority (Timbre)	• standard orchestral instruments • standard jazz, rock and pop instruments • electronic instruments • ethnic instruments suitable for sense of location • technological effects eg echo, reverb, panning, distortion • tremolo.
Texture	• cluster • polarised texture • drone.
Tempo, metre and rhythm	• mm (metronome marking) • additive rhythm • cross rhythm • rhythmic layering.

3.1.5 Area of study 4: Music for theatre

For the purpose of this specification, music for theatre is defined as music composed to govern, enhance or support a theatrical conception from 1925 to the present.

Named composers

- Kurt Weill
- Richard Rodgers
- Stephen Sondheim
- Claude-Michel Schönberg
- Jason Robert Brown

Musical elements

The following table contains all the musical elements, for this area of study, that students must know and understand to answer questions in section A (Listening) and section C (Essay) of the exam. Marks will also be awarded for knowledge of other terms, if relevant to this area of study, in section C (Essay) of the exam.

Element type	Element
Melody	• pitch bend • melisma, syllabic • slide • glissando • leitmotif • angular.
Harmony	• power chords • sus4 chords • chord extensions – secondary 7th, 9th, 11th, 13th • other complex chords eg half diminished 7th, added 6th • chord symbols eg C/E, C^7, $C^ø$ and C^+.
Structure	• intro/outro • bridge • verse • chorus • instrumental • middle 8.
Sonority (Timbre)	• studio/technological effects eg reverb • standard orchestral instruments • standard contemporary instrumental types eg electric guitar, synthesisers • vocal timbres eg falsetto, belt, rap • specific instrumental techniques eg slap bass, tremolo.
Texture	• a cappella • colla voce.
Tempo, metre and rhythm	• bpm (beats per minute) • mm (metronome marking) • irregular metre.

3.1.6 Area of study 5: Jazz

For the purpose of this specification, jazz is defined as a style of music characterised by a strong but flexible rhythmic understructure with solo and ensemble improvisations on basic tunes and chord patterns and a highly sophisticated harmonic idiom from 1920 to the present.

Named artists

- Louis Armstrong
- Duke Ellington
- Charlie Parker
- Miles Davis

- Pat Metheny
- Gwilym Simcock

Musical elements

The following table contains all the musical elements, for this area of study, that students must know and understand to answer questions in section A (Listening) and section C (Essay) of the exam. Marks will also be awarded for knowledge of other terms, if relevant to this area of study, in section C (Essay) of the exam.

Element type	Element
Melody	- glissando - pitch-bend - smear - spill/fall-off - rip.
Harmony	- chord extension – secondary 7th, 9th, 11th, 13th chords - other added notes – eg 2nd, 6th, sus4th - substitution (especially tritone substitution) - commonly used jazz harmony symbols - turn-around.
Tonality	- blue notes - blues scale - pentatonic scale - diminished (octatonic) scale - knowledge of specific modes for modal jazz.
Structure	- 12-bar blues - chord changes - song form/standard form - middle eight/bridge - intro and outro - head - chorus - fours - break.
Sonority (Timbre)	- growl/talking trumpet - harmon mute - wah-wah mute - ghosted notes - slap bass - rim-shot - standard big band instruments.

Element type	Element
Texture	• heterophonic • a cappella
Tempo, metre and rhythm	• swing and straight rhythm • cross rhythms eg three over four • push and drag • double time • ametrical • stop time • riff.

3.1.7 Area of study 6: Contemporary traditional music

For the purpose of this specification, contemporary traditional music is defined as music influenced by traditional musical features fused with contemporary elements and styles.

Named artists

- Astor Piazzolla
- Toumani Diabaté
- Anoushka Shankar
- Mariza
- Bellowhead

Musical elements

The following table contains all the musical elements, for this area of study, that students must know and understand to answer questions in section A (Listening) and section C (Essay) of the exam. Marks will also be awarded for knowledge of other terms, if relevant to this area of study, in section C (Essay) of the exam.

Element type	Element
Melody	• raga • pitch bend • kumbengo (ostinato riffs on kora) • birimintingo (improvised runs).
Harmony	• drone • sus4 chords • chord symbols eg C/E, C^7, $C^ø$ and C^+ • other added notes – eg 2nd, 6th, sus4.
Tonality	• specific modes eg Dorian, Lydian.

Element type	Element
Structure	• tango nuevo, milonga • fado • alap • fusion • verse and chorus • folk rock • song form/standard form.
Sonority (Timbre)	• specific instruments: bandoneon, kora, sitar, Portuguese guitar • specialist string techniques for tango, including chicharra, latigo, arrestre and tambor • studio effects eg reverb, sampling • piano glissando • drone • sympathetic strings (sitar).
Texture	• looping • layering • heterophonic.
Tempo, metre and rhythm	• polyrhythm • latin 3 + 3 + 2 rhythm • habanera rhythm • tala • riff.

3.1.8 Area of study 7: Art music since 1910

For the purpose of this specification art music since 1910 is defined as music that comprises modern, contemporary classical, electronic art, experimental and minimalist music as well as other forms.

Named composers

- Dmitri Shostakovich
- Olivier Messiaen
- Steve Reich
- James MacMillan

Musical elements

The following table contains all the musical elements, for this area of study, that students must know and understand to answer questions in section A (Listening) and section C (Essay) of the exam. Marks will also be awarded for knowledge of other terms, if relevant to this area of study, in section C (Essay) of the exam.

Element type	Element
Melody	• modes of limited transposition (including whole tone and octatonic scales) • pentatonic and hexatonic scales • tone row • note addition and subtraction • resultant melody • cells and motifs • metamorphosis.
Harmony	• non-functional harmony • chord extensions eg added 6th • cluster chords • static harmony • open fifths.
Tonality	• bitonality • tonal ambiguity • atonality • modality.
Structure	• cyclical structures • ostinato • cadenza.
Sonority (Timbre)	• organ stops eg reeds, mixtures, use of swell pedal, tremulant • studio effects eg reverb, sampling • unusual instruments eg ondes Martenot • unusual effects eg col legno, harmonics.
Texture	• looping • layering • a cappella • drones.
Tempo, metre and rhythm	• additive rhythms • palindromic rhythms • metrical displacement • phasing • augmentation and diminution.

3.1.9 Musical language: Areas of study 2–7

Students must be able to use musical language appropriate to their selected area of study, in the following ways:

Reading staff notation

Students must be able to identify musical elements relevant to their selected area of study (as above) when reading staff notation.

For unfamiliar music, students must be able to read short passages of up to eight bars.

For familiar music, students must be able to read extended passages of score of approximately two pages.

Chords and their associated chord symbols

Students must learn standard and extended chords, including chord inversions and secondary dominant 7^{ths} and their associated symbols, and be able to identify them in aural and written form. The specific types of chords and symbols can be found in the tables relevant to the student's selected area of study.

Musical vocabulary and terminology

Students must be able to identify and apply appropriate musical vocabulary and terminology to both music heard and notated. The appropriate vocabulary and terminology required can be found in the tables appropriate to the student's selected area of study.

3.2 Performance

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.

Students **must** perform for a minimum of **ten** minutes.

Care should be taken when selecting repertoire for ensemble performance; the level of demand refers to the individual part performed by the student and not to the overall level of demand of the selected piece.

Performance of pieces written with an accompaniment intended by the composer should not be unaccompanied.

Students must be able to interpret musical elements specified in Subject content (page 11), using resources and techniques as appropriate, to communicate musical ideas with technical and expressive control.

Through their performance students must also demonstrate understanding of context, including the chosen style or genre of the music being performed and the composer's purpose and intention.

If students choose to perform using non-standard instruments (ie for which there are no nationally recognised accredited music grades) the requirements for instrumental/vocal **must** be followed.

Please refer to Component 2: Performance assessment grids (page 35) for more information about how performance will be marked.

In all cases, the recording of the performances must be accompanied by one or more of the following documents, as appropriate to the type of performance:

- notated score
- lead sheet
- guide recording
- annotation (production only).

Performance type	Definition	Technical control, including:	Expressive control, including:
Instrumental/vocal	Solo performance The student's performance can be one or more of the following: • a single musician playing/singing solo • a soloist accompanied by another musician (eg pianist, guitarist, backing track etc) Ensemble performance • as an accompanist to a solo musician • as an instrumentalist/ singer contributing to a unique and significant role (ie that is not doubled) to a small group (of up to eight musicians).	Pitch (including intonation) Rhythm Tone (including breathing and diction, bowing and pedalling etc) Synchronisation of ensemble	Tempo, dynamics, phrasing and articulation
Production (via technology)	A complete performance of a pre-existing piece using music technology. The performance should include the use of at least one musical instrument digital interface (MIDI) sequenced track and at least one audio track. Audio sounds should be captured by close-mic or direct injection. The total amount of MIDI sequenced sounds and audio sounds is at the discretion of the student but should be a minimum of five tracks. At least five tracks should be inputted or played/ sung by the student.	Pitch Rhythm Articulation Phrasing Clarity of capture	Choice of timbres Dynamics Dynamic processing (including compression and EQ etc)

3.3 Composition

Students **must** learn how to develop musical ideas, including extending and manipulating musical ideas, and compose music that is musically convincing through **two** compositions. One must be in response to an externally set brief (Composition 1) and the other a free composition (Composition 2).

The combined duration of the compositions **must** be a minimum of **four and a half minutes**.

Compositions must demonstrate technical control in the use of appropriate musical elements and how they are combined to make sense as a whole. Please refer to the tables of musical elements in Subject content (page 11).

Students must be able to compose music in one or both of the following formats:

- instrumental/vocal: produce notated score, written accounts and/or lead sheet by traditional means or by using music software as appropriate
- production: generated entirely digitally, by using music software, without notated score but with accompanying annotation.

Students must be able to make creative use of the musical elements appropriate to their chosen style or genre of music.

3.3.1 Documenting the composition

Programme note

Students must write a Programme note of approximately 150 words for each composition, which clearly informs the assessor of their compositional intention. This must include how it relates to the selected audience/occasion. Students must also provide details of any software and hardware used in their compositional process.

In all cases the recording of the composition must be accompanied by one or more of the following documents:

- staff notated score
- lead sheet
- aural guide.

Please refer to Component 3: Composition assessment grids (page 41) for more information about how composition will be marked.

Visit [aqa.org.uk/7272](aqa.org.uk/7272) for the most up-to-date specification, resources, support and administration

4 Scheme of assessment

Find past papers and mark schemes, and specimen papers for new courses, on our website at aqa.org.uk/pastpapers

This specification is designed to be taken over two years.

This is a linear qualification. In order to achieve the award, students must complete all assessments at the end of the course and in the same series.

A-level exams and certification for this specification are available for the first time in May/June 2018 and then every May/June for the life of the specification.

All materials are available in English only.

Our A-level exams in Music include questions that allow students to demonstrate their ability to:

- draw together their knowledge, skills and understanding from across the full course of study
- provide original practical responses
- provide short and extended written responses.

Synoptic assessment of A-level Music should require students to:

- develop a broad understanding of the connections between the knowledge, understanding and skills set out in the specification as a whole
- demonstrate their understanding of the relationships between theory and practice.

4.1 Aims and objectives

Courses based on this specification should encourage students to:

- engage actively 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
- broaden musical experience and interests, develop imagination and foster creativity
- 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
- develop awareness of music technologies and their use in the creation and presentation of music
- appraise contrasting genres, styles and traditions of music, and develop understanding of musical contexts and a coherent awareness of musical chronology
- develop as effective, independent learners and as critical and reflective thinkers with enquiring minds

- 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.

4.2 Assessment components

Component 1: Appraising music (Assessment objectives AO3 and AO4)

Appraising music is an externally marked exam in three sections lasting two hours and thirty minutes. It is marked out of a total of 120 and constitutes 40% of the total marks for the qualification.

Section A: Listening (Assessment objectives AO3 and AO4)

Students will be assessed on their ability to analyse and evaluate the music heard in the exam and demonstrate knowledge and understanding of musical elements and musical language to make critical judgements (Subject content (page 11)).

Students **must** answer **three** sets of questions:

- **one** set of questions linked to Area of study 1: Western classical tradition 1650–1910, one of which will require aural dictation
- **two** sets of questions, each linked to an area of study, from a choice of six options covering Areas of study 2–7.

Each set of questions will contain **three** excerpts of **unfamiliar** music by the named artists/composers for each area of study.

One question in each set will be an extended answer and require students to use knowledge of appropriate musical elements and musical language to make critical judgements relating to the context of an artist's/composer's work in the area of study.

The paper will instruct the student to spend a suggested amount of time on each section. However, students will be able to access their own excerpts relevant to their options digitally and control how many times they hear each excerpt in order to answer the questions.

Section B: Analysis (assessment objectives AO3 and AO4)

Students will be required to answer **two** sets of linked questions, including short answers and extended writing, on **two** extracts of the set works from the **two** selected strands in Area of study 1. The question paper will include scores of the extracts.

Students will be able to access the excerpts relevant to their options digitally on an individual basis and control how many times they hear each excerpt in order to answer the question.

Students will be assessed on their ability to analyse and evaluate the music heard and demonstrate knowledge and understanding of musical elements and musical language to make critical judgements. See Subject content (page 11).

Section C: Essay (Assessment objective AO4)

Students will be required to answer **one** essay question on **one** area of study from a choice of Areas of study 2–7.

Students will be assessed on their critical understanding across the genres, styles and traditions studied and their ability to show sophisticated connections between the music and its context.

Students will need to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of **three** of the named artists/composers and at least two published or recorded works. See Subject content (page 11).

Component 2: Performance (Assessment objective AO1)

Performance is externally marked by AQA out of 50 and constitutes 35% of the total marks for the qualification.

Each student must select, following discussion with their teacher, the piece or pieces that the student will perform during the assessment. The performance must meet the specified duration of **ten minutes**.

If the student's performance does not meet the required duration a penalty is applied to the mark (the size of the penalty depends on the severity of the timing infringement). It may also result in schools or colleges being investigated for maladministration.

Teachers must check the final performance for assessment of each student's work to ensure it meets the minimum duration requirement.

There is no maximum duration for performance.

The student can perform through one of the following, or through a combination:

- instrumental/vocal solo and/or in an ensemble
- production via technology.

Teachers are responsible for ensuring the following requirements are met in administering the performances for assessment:

- performances should take place in a suitable venue
- performances should be recorded using good quality audio equipment
- performances must be under the supervision of a teacher for authentication purposes
- recordings of performances and production must be submitted complete and without post-performance editing or augmentation
- performances must take place between 1 March and the NEA deadline date given at aqa.org.uk/keydates
- where available a copy for assessment of either the score(s) or lead sheet(s) must be submitted with the performance assessment. Where a written score or lead sheet does not exist other means of showing the performance intention should be submitted. For example annotation(s), guide recording(s) or written evidence (production via technology) must be submitted with the performance for assessment .

Assessment evidence

Audio recordings and performance documentation must be submitted as evidence as well as a signed *Candidate record form* (CRF).

Assessment evidence for this component will be marked using the Component 2: Performance assessment grids (page 35).

Audio recording of performance

Performances should be saved digitally and must be produced in accordance with the *AQA Guidance for recording of music performance AS and A-level* at aqa.org.uk/music

Recordings of performances must be submitted without post-performance editing.

Each student's recording of the performance for assessment must be kept under secure conditions until it is sent to AQA by the specified date given at aqa.org.uk/keydates

The performance documentation is referred to by examiners when marking the audio recording of the performance. Students must submit **one or a combination** of the following, as appropriate, for each of the pieces performed for assessment.

Evidence type	Requirement
Notated score	Providing full performance information through musical notation.
Lead sheet	Providing a detailed framework giving structure and musical substance from which a performance can be produced that meets the composer's intentions.
Guide recording (If no score or lead sheet available)	If students have based their own performance on a recording of another performance of the same piece, this must be submitted digitally so that the file can be easily accessed by the examiner.
Annotation (Production only)	Including details of the processes, devices and techniques used, showing how the areas detailed in the criteria contributed to the final performance. Students must provide details of the hardware and software used.

Component 3: Composition (Assessment objective AO2)

Composition is externally marked by AQA out of 50 and constitutes 25% of the total marks for the qualification.

Each student must compose two pieces. One composition must be in response to an externally set brief and the other composition is freely composed by the student.

Composition 1: Composition to a brief

The composition must be in response to **one** brief from a choice of **seven** externally set briefs. The briefs will be released on or as near as possible to 15 September of the year of certification. Students must be given the externally set briefs in their entirety; they must not be edited, changed or abridged in any way.

The briefs may include different stimuli, such as:

- a poem or a piece of text
- photographs, images or film
- notation.

Composition 2: Free composition

Free compositions need not reference areas of study or a given brief.

4.2.3.3 Compositions 1 and 2

Together, the compositions must last a combined minimum time of **four and a half minutes**.

If the student's combined compositions do not meet the required duration a penalty is applied to the mark (the size of the penalty depends on the severity of the timing infringement). It may also result in schools or colleges being investigated for maladministration.

There is no maximum duration for composition.

For each student, teachers are responsible for ensuring the following requirements are met in administering the final compositions for assessment:

- the final compositions for assessment of each student's work meet the minimum duration requirement
- the audio recordings of the final compositions must be recorded from start to finish
- the student is not required to perform the composition but may do so if they wish
- the student's composition that is being assessed must be identified by name and candidate number at the start of the recording.

Supervising students

Students must have sufficient direct supervision to ensure that the work submitted can be confidently authenticated as their own.

You may provide guidance and support to students so that they are clear about the requirements of the tasks they need to undertake and the marking criteria on which the work will be assessed.

You should encourage students to reflect upon and evaluate their own music, including considering the success of meeting the brief/intent, during their composition process.

Teachers are expected to follow the *Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) instructions regarding the provision of feedback to students*.

See also Non-exam assessment administration (page 51).

Assessment evidence

Audio recordings and composition documentation must be submitted as evidence for both compositions as well as a signed *Candidate record form* (CRF).

The audio recordings are marked alongside the composition documentation, to derive an overall mark for the component, using the Component 3: Composition assessment grids (page 41)

Audio recording of compositions

The student is not required to play on the recording but may do so if they wish.

The audio recordings of the final compositions for assessment must be:

- recorded from start to finish
- saved digitally
- kept under secure conditions until sent to AQA for assessment by the specified date given at aqa.org.uk/keydates
- submitted complete and in their final state as completed by the student without any further editing or augmentation.

Composition documentation

For both compositions, students must be able to present written evidence that details the composition's structure and musical substance.

Programme note

For both compositions students must provide a Programme note of approximately 150 words that identifies:

- the compositional intention, including the intended audience/occasion
- details of the software and hardware used in the compositional process.

For both compositions, students must also be able to present one or more of the following which details the composition's structure and musical substance.

Evidence type	Requirement
Notated score	Providing full performance information through musical notation, detailing, for example, dynamics, tempo, and techniques where appropriate.
Lead sheet	Providing a detailed framework giving structure and musical substance from which a performance can be produced that meets the composer's intentions eg a melody line with chord symbols and lyrics.
Aural guide	A written account which provides a detailed guide through the aural experience of the piece which will highlight structure and musical ideas, including the ways in which they have been explored.

4.3 Assessment objectives

Assessment objectives (AOs) are set by Ofqual and are the same across all A-level Music specifications and all exam boards.

The assessments will measure how students have achieved the following assessment objectives.

Assessment objective weightings for A-level Music

Assessment objectives		Weighting (approx %)
AO1	Interpret musical ideas through performing, with technical and expressive control and an understanding of style and context.	35
AO2	Create, develop and refine musical ideas with technical and expressive control and coherence.	25
AO3	Demonstrate and apply musical knowledge.	10
AO4	Use analysis and appraising skills to make evaluative and critical judgements about music.	30

Assessment objectives	Component weightings (approx %)			Overall weighting (%)
	Component 1: Appraising music	Component 2: Performance	Component 3: Composition	
AO1		35		35
AO2			25	25

Assessment objectives	Component weightings (approx %)			Overall weighting (%)
	Component 1: Appraising music	Component 2: Performance	Component 3: Composition	
AO3	10			10
AO4	30			30
Overall weighting of components	40	35	25	100

The marks awarded on the papers will be scaled to meet the weighting of the components. Students' final marks will be calculated by adding together the scaled marks for each component. Grade boundaries will be set using this total scaled mark. The scaling and total scaled marks are shown in the table below.

Component	Maximum raw mark	Scaling factor	Maximum scaled mark
Appraising music	120	1	120
Performance	50	2.1	105
Composition	50	1.5	75
		Total scaled mark	300

4.4 Assessment criteria

The assessment criteria below details the mark bands with descriptors for the assessment of students work.

Component 2: Performance assessment grids

The performance evidence will be marked as a whole out a total of 50, with the overall mark comprising four assessment grids.

Mark	Assessment grids
5	Ambition of project (page 36)
15	Technical control (page 37)
15	Expressive control (page 38)
15	Performance quality (page 40)
50	Total

Please note: for students performing a combination of instrumental/vocal and production via technology, examiners will assess each performance against the corresponding assessment grid. Examiners will take an average of the two marks to derive the total mark. If students perform using both forms, care should be taken to ensure the duration of each performance is sufficient to ensure adequate coverage of required content and the full range of criteria in the grid.

The assessment grids refer to the individual part performed by the student either as a soloist or as part of an ensemble.

4.4.1.1 Ambition of project

The following assessment grid shows the comparable levels of demand for all performance types.

- Instrumental/vocal grades refer to nationally recognised accredited music grades.
- For non-standard instruments the levels of demand for instrumental/vocal **must** be applied.

Teachers must refer to online exemplification materials which show how marks are awarded for each level of demand across all performance types. Please refer to e-AQA

Both the common level descriptor and additional descriptors, as appropriate to the type of performance, should be used to locate the correct mark.

Mark	Instrumental/vocal	Production
5	The chosen programme will make high musical and technical demands.	
	The standard expected will be greater than grade seven or its equivalent and will demonstrate considerable expressive variety across the programme.	The chosen programme will demonstrate a highly complex texture and considerable expressive variety.
4	The chosen programme will make a substantial range of musical and/or technical demands.	
	The standard expected will equate to grade seven or its equivalent with expressive variety across the programme or greater than grade seven or its equivalent without expressive variety.	The chosen programme will demonstrate complex texture and expressive variety.
3	The chosen programme will make a reasonable range of musical and/or technical demands.	
	The standard expected will equate to grade six or its equivalent with expressive variety across the programme or equate to grade seven or its equivalent without expressive variety.	The chosen programme will demonstrate moderately complex texture and some degree of expressive variety.
2	The chosen programme will make a range of musical or technical demands.	
	The standard expected will equate to grade six or its equivalent without expressive variety.	The chosen programme will feature relatively simple texture and demonstrate little or no expressive variety.

Mark	Instrumental/vocal	Production
1	The chosen programme will make some musical or technical demands upon the student.	
	The standard expected will equate to grade five or its equivalent with expressive variety across the programme.	The chosen programme will demonstrate rudimentary texture and basic skills.
0	No work submitted or not worthy of credit.	

4.4.1.2 Technical control

Instrumental/vocal: assessment of pitch (including intonation), rhythm and quality of tone, (including breathing and diction, bowing, pedalling etc).

Production: assessment of pitch, rhythm, articulation, phrasing and clarity of capture.

Mark	Instrumental/vocal	Production
13–15	- at the top of the band there will be no discernible flaws and pitch/intonation will be completely secure - towards the bottom of the band inaccuracies will be limited to small but noticeable errors - a performance which is entirely fluent and rhythmically secure, without any hesitations - the techniques demanded are fully mastered with a mature tone quality across the whole range.	- excellent accuracy of pitch and control of all rhythmic elements to produce a musically satisfying recording - detailed and musically effective articulation and phrasing - well considered choice and placement of microphones which have produced a clear, clean capture for all tracks with no noise or distortion.
10–12	- a performance which is generally accurate in pitch and security of intonation - rhythmically stable with only a few small errors not affecting the overall fluency - tone production is generally good but the quality suffers at the extremities of the pitch range, or at moments of technical difficulty, or is uneven between registers - techniques demanded by the music are met.	- a few minor slips which do not inhibit the overall musicality or fluency of the recording - close attention to all performance detail with effective articulation and phrasing - appropriate choice and placement of microphones, a few tracks have occasional clipping or a slight noise.

Mark	Instrumental/vocal	Production
7–9	• a performance which achieves consistency of pitch overall with reasonably secure intonation • weaknesses of rhythm or pulse may be evident • evidence of good tone quality over most of the pitch range but with occasional weaknesses • in general technical demands are met but there will be evidence of loss of integrity.	• slips in pitch and rhythm become increasingly frequent interrupting the fluency of the recording • generally effective articulation and phrasing • largely appropriate choice and placement of microphones, however some tracks are not captured cleanly.
4–6	• a performance in which the basic outline of the music is appreciable but **either** errors of pitch are significant and intonation may be consistently flat or sharp **or** rhythmic problems are sufficient enough to interrupt the flow • tone production is be inhibited, with only some technical demands being met.	• more significant errors in pitch and rhythm affecting the overall sense of ensemble • some attempts, which are not always successful, to create articulation and phrasing • some appropriate choice of microphones but not all placement is appropriate • there is likely to be some intrusive noise or distortion.
1–3	• a performance which achieves limited consistency of pitch **and** rhythm or fluency • accuracy is only evident in the more straightforward passages • intonation is rarely secure and is inconsistent • technique and tone production are problematic.	• significant lapses in the accuracy of pitch and rhythm resulting in an unmusical performance • mechanical with limited attention to articulation and phrasing • poor microphone choice and placement results in a noisy and problematic recording.
0	No work submitted or worthy of credit.	

4.4.1.3 Expressive control

Instrumental/vocal: assessment of tempo, dynamics, phrasing and articulation.

Production: assessment of choice of timbres, dynamics, dynamic processing including compression and EQ.

Mark	Instrumental/vocal	Production
13–15	• a highly musical performance in which tempo is entirely appropriate throughout • the composer's expressive and performance directions have been fully observed resulting in accurate, effective and broad-ranging dynamics, phrasing and articulation • subtlety and control will be a feature at the top of the band.	• well-chosen timbres which have been appropriately edited • excellent management of dynamics in ways completely appropriate to the music • dynamic shaping appropriately used • compression and EQ have been used appropriately to good effect.
10–12	• musical performance in which the main chosen tempi are appropriate, but there are one or two misjudged moments • the majority of the composer's expressive and performance directions have been carefully observed • dynamics, phrasing and articulation are successfully varied and mostly effective.	• appropriate choice of timbres but without further editing • good overall dynamic contrast but lacks some shaping • some occasional miscalculations of over or under use of compression so tracks do not sit well in the mix • there are some slight errors in the use of EQ.
7–9	• a performance in which the main chosen tempi are slightly misjudged and the performance mechanical on occasion • the composer's expressive and performance directions have been largely observed and phrases are generally well shaped • articulation and dynamics are mostly accurate, if rather bland.	• the majority of chosen timbres are appropriate • some misjudgements with dynamic contrast and shaping • there are some occasional intrusive misjudgements with the use of compression and more frequent errors in the application of EQ.
4–6	• a performance in which the main chosen tempi are generally misjudged and the performance is very mechanical • there is a basic control of phrasing, articulation and dynamics; these are often misjudged.	• partially successful choice of timbres • sections where attempts to create dynamic contrast and/or the dynamic processing is misjudged and EQ has been applied inconsistently.

Mark	Instrumental/vocal	Production
1–3	• the main chosen tempi are inappropriate • there is little or no application of dynamics, phrasing and articulation.	• chosen timbres are largely inappropriate • limited dynamic contrasts • a mechanical or unmusical result • limited or no use of dynamic processing and EQ.
0	No work submitted or worthy of credit.	

4.4.1.4 Performance quality

Instrumental/vocal: assessment of musical style and communication.

Production: assessment of style, balance, blend, panning and use of effects.

Mark	Instrumental/vocal	Production
13–15	• an engaging and commanding performance in which the student demonstrates total involvement in the music with real flair • a mature and sensitive understanding of both period and style is evident; communicated through an assured, convincing and well-projected performance.	• complete awareness of the stylistic requirements of the music including musical shaping • excellent sense of balance and effectively blended throughout the recording • musically appropriate use of the stereo field • excellent and judicious use of stylistically appropriate effects.
10–12	• performance which is mostly commanding and convincing • there is clear commitment and the performance is mostly assured • a good sense of style is evident but there is lack of individual flair.	• a consistent sense of style with attention to musical detail • most tracks are well balanced and blended with some minor slips • effective placement in the stereo field • well controlled use of appropriate effects.
7–9	• a performance which demonstrates some level of commitment but lack an overall assurance • there is still an overall sense of conviction • the style of the music is appropriate with a clear sense of character.	• broadly successful creation of the required style • more frequent miscalculations as to balance and blend • largely effective use of the stereo field but with some misjudgements • occasional miscalculations as to the use of effects.

Mark	Instrumental/vocal	Production
4–6	• a performance which lacks conviction and commitment on occasions • there is limited sensitivity to the demands of the music although there is a general understanding of the overall character.	• some sense of the required style but achieved inconsistently • there are also inconsistencies in balance and blend with key tracks or features obscured • largely inappropriate use of the stereo field • inconsistency in the application of effects.
1–3	• a performance which is limited in conviction and displays rudimentary sensitivity to the style of the music • there is a limited sense of assurance leading to an anxious experience for performer and listener.	• limited sense of style with little attention to musical detail • poorly balanced resulting in a misjudged final product • little or no use of the stereo field • inappropriate use of effects.
0	No work submitted or worthy of credit.	

Component 3: Composition assessment grids

The composition evidence is marked out of a total of 50 marks. Each of the two compositions is out of a maximum of 25.

Mark	Assessment grids
25	Composition 1: Composition to a brief (page 41)
25	Composition 2: Free composition (page 47)
50	Total

Composition 1: Composition to a brief

There are five bands of achievement and there are five marks available for each band. The lower mark indicates the lower level of achievement.

Mark	Composition 1: Composition to a brief	Requirements Brief 1 – Chorales	Requirements Briefs 2–7
21–25	an authoritative composition • lower marks in the band suggest some less imaginative elements or passages, and/or some inconsistencies in the supporting written material.	• stylistic detail is evident throughout, using imaginative and interesting features • cadences are varied and there is an inventive exploration of keys • a wide variety of chords is used fluently and with few significant errors • grammatical errors are insignificant and part-writing is fluent and sophisticated.	• the composition has a sustained mastery of technical control • the quality of contrasting ideas and their development creates a commanding structure that is more than just a standard form, providing a musical journey • musical elements are used with flair and imagination, complementing each other with strong creative purpose to give a consistently fluent and successful result • the style of the composition is convincing, fluent and used perceptively to give a compelling musical experience • imaginative use of the brief fundamentally informs the composition • the music is communicated fluently on paper with comprehensive score or commanding annotation.

Mark	Composition 1: Composition to a brief	Requirements Brief 1 – Chorales	Requirements Briefs 2–7
16–20	a confident composition • higher marks in the band represent music that has some signs of imagination • lower marks in the band suggest greater inconsistencies in technical control and/or elements of the style.	• there is interesting stylistic detail but the result is secure rather than imaginative • main keys and cadences are well-chosen but there is scope for more interest and variety, for example with passing modulation • chord choice is mostly secure and varied with some adventurous moments • some grammatical errors occur but they have little effect on the aural result • part-writing has melodic direction and few difficulties.	• the composition has a largely successful technical control • the quality of contrasting ideas and/or their development has led to a successful musical structure • musical elements are used with variety and secure handling, though some may be used with more creative purpose than others, combining to give a largely successful, if not always consistent, result • the style of the composition is assured and used proficiently to give a clear musical experience • interesting use of the brief significantly informs the composition • the music is communicated clearly on paper with a good score or helpful annotation, despite some imprecision • this band may also be appropriate for compositions of top band compositional quality which have very weak supporting written material (score or annotation).

Mark	Composition 1: Composition to a brief	Requirements Brief 1 – Chorales	Requirements Briefs 2–7
11–15	a secure composition • higher marks in the band represent music that has some signs of creative exploration or a superior score/ annotation • lower marks in the band suggest greater concerns with technical control, little creative exploration or a less convincing sense of style.	• stylistic awareness is evident at times, but inconsistently, throughout the composition • cadences are largely effective despite some errors; key choices may lack some variety • chord choice is often suitable but there will be errors and some lack of variety • there is some awareness of part-writing, but errors are frequent, and there is a lack of interest.	• the composition has largely competent technical control • there is a clear musical structure, though this may lack effective contrast or development of ideas • musical elements are used with moderate effectiveness and some control, providing evidence of creative purpose, which is not always fully explored or realised, to give a partially successful result • the style of the composition is evident but used in a generic manner to give a predictable musical experience • satisfactory use of the brief informs the composition • the music is communicated on paper through a score of annotation, but not always clearly, accurately or with sufficient detail.

Mark	Composition 1: Composition to a brief	Requirements Brief 1 – Chorales	Requirements Briefs 2–7
6–10	a composition of some limitations • higher marks in the band represent music that has more signs of technical competence and/or a stronger sense of intended style • lower marks in the band suggest serious concerns regarding technical control or music with no discernible sense of style.	• stylistic awareness is apparent only occasionally • some understanding of cadences, but errors frequently occur and the key is insecure at times • chord choice is weak and progression is often ineffective • errors are significant but a few passages have successful part-writing.	• the composition has some persistent issues with technical control • there are some signs of a musical structure, but these are not always clear • musical elements are used with some effectiveness, but there are sustained difficulties in some aspects and little sense of creative purpose leading to a composition of limited success • there is evidence of an intended style in the composition but this is dilute, inconsistent or ineffectively contradictory, leading to a restricted musical experience • limited use of the brief is evident at times • the music is only partially communicated on paper through an incomplete, confusing or only outline version provided as score or annotation.

Mark	Composition 1: Composition to a brief	Requirements Brief 1 – Chorales	Requirements Briefs 2–7
1–5	a rudimentary composition • higher marks in the band represent music that has a few signs of musical awareness • lower marks in the band represent compositions that have strongly random elements and/or are very simplistic, scant or short.	• there is no evidence of stylistic awareness • important key centres have not been grasped; cadences are mostly inaccurate • chords are often incomplete, inaccurate or inappropriate • errors are frequent and there is little awareness of part-writing.	• the composition is dominated by issues with technical control • there is little or no evidence of musical structure • musical elements are used with little control, making genuine creative intentions hard to discern in a rudimentary or confused result • there is no sense of style evident in the composition, leading to a lack of musical experience • rudimentary use is made of the brief • the written material in no way enhances the composition and is likely to be poor in its detail and layout (whether score or annotation).
0	No work submitted or worthy of credit.		

Composition 2: Free composition

Mark	Composition 2: Free composition	Requirements
21–25	an authoritative composition • lower marks in the band suggest some less imaginative elements or passages, and/or some inconsistencies in the supporting written material.	• the composition has a sustained mastery of technical control • the quality of contrasting ideas and their development creates a commanding structure that is more than just a standard form, providing a musical journey • musical elements are used with flair and imagination, complementing each other with strong creative purpose to give a consistently fluent and successful result • the style of the composition is convincing, fluent and used perceptively to give a compelling musical experience • the music is communicated fluently on paper with comprehensive score or commanding annotation.
16–20	a confident composition • higher marks in the band represent music that has some signs of imagination • lower marks in the band suggest greater inconsistencies in technical control and/or elements of the style.	• the composition has a largely successful technical control • the quality of contrasting ideas and/or their development has led to a successful musical structure • musical elements are used with variety and secure handling, though some may be used with more creative purpose than others, combining to give a largely successful, if not always consistent, result • the style of the composition is assured and used proficiently to give a clear musical experience • the music is communicated clearly on paper with a good score or helpful annotation, despite some imprecision • this band may also be appropriate for compositions of top band compositional quality which have very weak supporting written material (score or annotation).

Mark	Composition 2: Free composition	Requirements
11–15	a secure composition • higher marks in the band represent music that has some signs of creative exploration or a superior score/annotation • lower marks in the band suggest greater concerns with technical control, little creative exploration or a less convincing sense of style.	• the composition has largely competent technical control • there is a clear musical structure, though this may lack effective contrast or development of ideas • musical elements are used with moderate effectiveness and some control, providing evidence of creative purpose, which is not always fully explored or realised, to give a partially successful result • the style of the composition is evident but used in a generic manner to give a predictable musical experience • the music is communicated on paper through a score of annotation, but not always clearly, accurately or with sufficient detail.
6–10	a composition of some limitations • higher marks in the band represent music that has more signs of technical competence and/or a stronger sense of intended style • lower marks in the band suggest serious concerns regarding technical control or music with no discernible sense of style.	• the composition has some persistent issues with technical control • there are some signs of a musical structure, but these are not always clear • musical elements are used with some effectiveness, but there are sustained difficulties in some aspects and little sense of creative purpose leading to a composition of limited success • there is evidence of an intended style in the composition but this is dilute, inconsistent or ineffectively contradictory, leading to a restricted musical experience • the music is only partially communicated on paper through an incomplete, confusing or only outline version provided as score or annotation.

Mark	Composition 2: Free composition	Requirements
1–5	a rudimentary composition • higher marks in the band represent music that has a few signs of musical awareness • lower marks in the band represent compositions that have strongly random elements and/or are very simplistic, scant or short.	• the composition is dominated by issues with technical control • there is little or no evidence of musical structure • musical elements are used with little control, making genuine creative intentions hard to discern in a rudimentary or confused result • there is no sense of style evident in the composition, leading to a lack of musical experience • the written material in no way enhances the composition and is likely to be poor in its detail and layout (whether score or annotation).
0	No work submitted or worthy of credit.	

5 Non-exam assessment administration

The non-exam assessment (NEA) for this specification is performance and composition.

Visit aqa.org.uk/7272 for detailed information about all aspects of NEA administration.

The head of the school or college is responsible for making sure that NEA is conducted in line with our instructions and Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) instructions.

5.1 Supervising and authenticating

To meet Ofqual's qualification criteria and conditions, you must adhere to the requirements set out in Assessment components (page 30). Evidence of authentication for each student must include:

- a *Candidate record form* (CRF), signed by the student and their teacher to confirm that all the student's Non-exam assessment evidence submitted is their own work
- audio recordings of each student's performance/composition, which identify the candidate by name and candidate number.

Students must have sufficient direct supervision to ensure that the work submitted can be confidently authenticated as their own. This means that you must review the progress of work during its production to see how it develops.

Any work produced without supervision, for example outside of the classroom, should be compared to work produced with supervision.

In comparing the student's work, consideration must be given to the consistency in levels of skill demonstrated.

Work that cannot be confidently authenticated must not be included in the student's submission.

You are required to provide details of the support the student received on the CRF and sign the authentication statement. If the statement is not signed, we **cannot** accept the student's work for assessment.

5.2 Submitting NEA evidence to AQA

You must send all students' NEA evidence (set out above in Assessment components and in Supervising and authenticating (page 51)) to AQA for assessment by the specified date given at aqa.org.uk/keydates

All the work of your students will be assessed by a trained AQA examiner.

5.3 Avoiding malpractice

Please inform your students of the AQA regulations concerning malpractice. They must not:

- submit work that is not their own
- lend work to other students
- allow other students access to, or use of, their own independently-sourced source material
- include work copied directly from books, the internet or other sources without acknowledgement
- submit work that is word-processed by a third person without acknowledgement
- include inappropriate, offensive or obscene material.

These actions constitute malpractice and a penalty will be given (for example, disqualification).

If you identify malpractice **before** the student signs the declaration of authentication, you don't need to report it to us. Please deal with it in accordance with your school or college's internal procedures. We expect schools and colleges to treat such cases very seriously.

If you identify malpractice **after** the student has signed the declaration of authentication, the head of your school or college must submit full details of the case to us at the earliest opportunity. Please complete the form *JCQ/M1*, available from the JCQ website at jcq.org.uk

You must record details of any work which is not the student's own on the front of the assessment booklet or other appropriate place.

You should consult your exams officer about these procedures.

5.4 Factors affecting individual students

For advice and guidance about arrangements for any of your students, please email us as early as possible at eos@aqa.org.uk

Occasional absence: you should be able to accept the occasional absence of students by making sure they have the chance to make up what they have missed. You may organise an alternative supervised session for students who were absent at the time you originally arranged.

Lost work: if work is lost you must tell us how and when it was lost and who was responsible, using our special consideration online service at aqa.org.uk/eaqa

Special help: where students need special help which goes beyond normal learning support, please use the CRF to tell us so that this help can be taken into account during marking.

Students who move schools: students who move from one school or college to another during the course sometimes need additional help to meet the requirements. How you deal with this depends on when the move takes place. The new school or college should be responsible for the work. Teachers in the new school or college must ensure that student work submitted for assessment can be confidently authenticated as their own.

5.5 After the exams

We will give you the final marks for when results are issued.

We may need to keep some of your students' work to meet Ofqual requirements for awarding, archiving or standardisation purposes.

6 General administration

You can find information about all aspects of administration, as well as all the forms you need, at aqa.org.uk/examsadmin

6.1 Entries and codes

You only need to make one entry for each qualification – this will cover all the question papers, non-exam assessment and certification.

Every specification is given a national discount (classification) code by the Department for Education (DfE), which indicates its subject area.

If a student takes two specifications with the same discount code, further and higher education providers are likely to take the view that they have only achieved one of the two qualifications. Please check this before your students start their course.

Qualification title	AQA entry code	DfE discount code
AQA Advanced Level GCE in Music	7272	TBC

This specification complies with:

- Ofqual *General conditions of recognition* that apply to all regulated qualifications
- Ofqual GCE qualification level conditions that apply to all GCEs
- Ofqual GCE subject level conditions that apply to all GCEs in this subject
- all other relevant regulatory documents.

The Ofqual qualification accreditation number (QAN) is 601/8304/4.

6.2 Overlaps with other qualifications

There is overlapping content in the AS and A-level Music specifications. This helps you teach the AS and A-level together.

6.3 Awarding grades and reporting results

The A-level qualification will be graded on a six-point scale: A*, A, B, C, D and E.

Students who fail to reach the minimum standard for grade E will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate.

6.4 Resits and shelf life

Students can resit the qualification as many times as they wish, within the shelf life of the qualification.

6.5 Previous learning and prerequisites

There are no previous learning requirements. Any requirements for entry to a course based on this specification are at the discretion of schools and colleges.

However, we recommend that students should have the skills and knowledge associated with a GCSE Music course or equivalent.

6.6 Access to assessment: diversity and inclusion

General qualifications are designed to prepare students for a wide range of occupations and further study. Therefore our qualifications must assess a wide range of competences.

The subject criteria have been assessed to see if any of the skills or knowledge required present any possible difficulty to any students, whatever their ethnic background, religion, sex, age, disability or sexuality. If any difficulties were encountered, the criteria were reviewed again to make sure that tests of specific competences were only included if they were important to the subject.

As members of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) we participate in the production of the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments: General and Vocational qualifications*. We follow these guidelines when assessing the needs of individual students who may require an access arrangement or reasonable adjustment. This document is published on the JCQ website at jcq.org.uk

6.6.1 Students with disabilities and special needs

We can make arrangements for disabled students and students with special needs to help them access the assessments, as long as the competences being tested are not changed. Access arrangements must be agreed **before** the assessment. For example, a Braille paper would be a reasonable adjustment for a Braille reader but not for a student who does not read Braille.

We are required by the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to remove or lessen any disadvantage that affects a disabled student.

If you have students who need access arrangements or reasonable adjustments, you can apply using the Access arrangements online service at aqa.org.uk/eaqa

6.6.2 Special consideration

We can give special consideration to students who have been disadvantaged at the time of the assessment through no fault of their own – for example a temporary illness, injury or serious problem such as the death of a relative. We can only do this **after** the assessment.

Your exams officer should apply online for special consideration at aqa.org.uk/eaqa

For more information and advice about access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration please see aqa.org.uk/access or email accessarrangementsqueries@aqa.org.uk

6.7 Working with AQA for the first time

If your school or college has not previously offered any AQA specification, you need to register as an AQA centre to offer our specifications to your students. Find out how at aqa.org.uk/becomeacentre

6.8 Private candidates

This specification is available to private candidates, under condition that:

- candidates attend an AQA school or college which will supervise the production of non-exam assessment evidence
- any other requirements concerning the administration of non-exam assessments contained within this specification are met.

A private candidate is someone who enters for exams through an AQA-approved school or college but is not enrolled as a student there.

A private candidate may be self-taught, home-schooled or have private tuition, either with a tutor or through a distance learning organisation. You must be based in the UK.

If you have any queries as a private candidate, you can:

- speak to the exams officer at the school or college where you intend to take your exams
- visit our website at aqa.org.uk/privatecandidates
- email: privatecandidates@aqa.org.uk

Get help and support

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at aqa.org.uk/7272

You can talk directly to the Music subject team:

E: music@aqa.org.uk

T: 01483 437 750

aqa.org.uk