



*Rewarding Learning*

# GCSE Music

STUDENT  
GUIDE



# INTRODUCTION

Students who follow the GCSE Music specification engage in the following three fundamental musical activities:

- performing and appraising;
- composing; and
- listening and appraising.

This specification will give you the opportunity to acquire knowledge, understanding and appreciation of past and present musical styles, traditions and contexts. You will study a wide variety of music through the four Areas of Study.

## WHY STUDY MUSIC?

GCSE Music is not just for students who are considering specialising in music and neither is it solely aimed at those with a classical training; GCSE Music is for everyone.

For someone who has talent as a performer, who enjoys composing their own music, who is interested in music technology or who simply enjoys music of any description, GCSE Music offers a way to develop their potential and ultimately to achieve a worthwhile qualification.

You will have the opportunity to:

- develop the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to communicate effectively as a musician;
- develop awareness of music technologies and their use in creating and presenting music;
- reflect critically on your own work and the work of others; and
- progress to further study and/or employment.



# WHAT WILL I STUDY?

COMPONENT	AREAS OF STUDY
<p><b>Component 1: Performing and Appraising</b></p>	<p><b>Performing</b> You will complete a solo performance and an ensemble performance (as part of a group).</p> <p>In both, you will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate technical control and accuracy;</li> <li>• consider interpretation and communication of the composer's intentions with an appropriate style; and</li> <li>• demonstrate understanding and apply stylistic features appropriate to the chosen programme.</li> </ul> <p><b>Appraising</b> You will learn to discuss and appraise your own work and the work of others.</p>
<p><b>Component 2: Composing</b></p>	<p>You will compose two original pieces of music; one is free choice and one is in response to a stimulus.</p> <p>You will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• create and develop musical ideas;</li> <li>• understand, control and use musical resources effectively; and</li> <li>• make consistent and effective use of the following within a chosen style or genre: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– structure;</li> <li>– harmony;</li> <li>– texture;</li> <li>– rhythm;</li> <li>– timbre; and</li> <li>– music technology.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Component 3: Listening and Appraising</b></p>	<p>You will build on the knowledge, understanding and appreciation of music gained through Components 1 and 2.</p> <p>You will study four compulsory Areas of Study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Western Classical Music 1600–1910</b></li> <li>• <b>Film Music</b></li> <li>• <b>Musical Traditions of Ireland</b></li> <li>• <b>Popular Music 1980–present day</b></li> </ul> <p>Within each area you will study set works.</p> <p>You will develop your understanding of the relationship between music and its contexts and you will listen to and appraise familiar and unfamiliar music by a range of composers.</p>

# HOW WILL I BE ASSESSED?

COMPONENT	ASSESSMENT DESCRIPTION	WEIGHTING
<b>Component 1: Performing and Appraising</b>	<p><b>External examination (visiting examiner)</b></p> <p>You will complete <b>one</b> solo and <b>one</b> ensemble performance and you will discuss your performance with the visiting examiner.</p> <p>Solo (30 marks) Ensemble (30 marks) Discussion (10 marks)</p>	35%
<b>Component 2: Composing</b>	<p><b>Controlled assessment</b></p> <p>You will create <b>two</b> compositions – one in response to a pre-release stimulus and one free choice.</p> <p>Teachers will mark the compositions and we will moderate the results.</p> <p>Composition A (30 marks) Composition B (30 marks)</p>	30%
<b>Component 3: Listening and Appraising</b>	<p><b>External written examination</b></p> <p>1 hour 30 mins</p> <p>You will answer questions based on familiar and unfamiliar music relating to the Areas of Study.</p>	35%



Component 1  
**Performing and  
Appraising**

35%

+



Component 2  
**Composing**

30%

+



Component 3  
**Listening and  
Appraising**

35%

# WHAT CROSS-CURRICULAR SKILLS, THINKING SKILLS AND PERSONAL CAPABILITIES WILL I DEVELOP?



## CROSS-CURRICULAR SKILLS AT KEY STAGE 4 COMMUNICATION, USING MATHEMATICS AND USING ICT

You will have opportunities to develop these skills in a variety of ways, for example:

- performing for an audience and discussing your performance with the examiner;
- presenting composition ideas through a score, lead sheet or written account;
- responding to questions in the examination on the Areas of Study;
- creating chord sequences and melodies in composition;
- timing performances; and
- exploring a range of music software, including Logic Pro and GarageBand or notation software such as Sibelius, in the creation and presentation of your composition.

## THINKING SKILLS AND PERSONAL CAPABILITIES AT KEY STAGE 4 SELF-MANAGEMENT, WORKING WITH OTHERS AND PROBLEM SOLVING

You will be encouraged to, for example:

- compile a rehearsal schedule for performance;
- create a study plan for the written paper;
- prepare performance pieces for the examination date and complete compositions within the 25 hour time frame;
- rehearse and perform as part of an ensemble;
- justify performance ideas to the visiting examiner; and
- analyse different set works from the Areas of Study.

# WHAT CAN I DO WITH A QUALIFICATION IN MUSIC?

A wide variety of job opportunities are available in music or associated areas for suitably qualified and motivated people.

- The most obvious careers are those that are directly involved in creating and performing music, such as instrumentalists, singers, accompanists, conductors, composers and arrangers.
- There are various types of music teaching jobs in the primary and secondary sectors, with more specialised work in third level institutions such as universities and colleges. Instrumental and vocal tuition (whether classical, traditional, jazz or popular) may be carried out privately or on a peripatetic basis.
- For those with a background in music technology, there is the possibility of employment in the recording industry as a composer, producer or sound engineer.
- Instrument making and repair are sometimes overlooked and yet provide a lucrative income because of the specialised nature of the work.
- There are numerous jobs associated with music, such as arts management, music publishing, musicology and music journalism.

Music is also a rewarding leisure activity for those who take part in choirs, bands and amateur ensembles or simply enjoy attending concerts or listening to music.



