

GCSE Music

Course Details	Edexcel (Pearson) GCSE Music (1MU0/03) The subject content for GCSE Music is divided into three components: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Performance (Solo & Ensemble)• Composition (one free, the other set to a brief)• Listening and Appraising - <i>Areas of study: Instrumental Music, Vocal Music, Music for Stage and Screen, Fusions</i>
Exam Details	Listening and Appraising - Written exam: 1 hour and 45 minutes, 40% of GCSE, Questions - The paper is made up of two sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Section A: Six questions related to six of the eight set works One short melody/rhythm completion exercise One question on an unfamiliar piece (skeleton score provided) with questions on its musical element• Section B: Extended response comparison between a set work and one unfamiliar piece One question that asks students to compare and/or evaluate the musical elements, musical contexts and musical language of one set work with one unfamiliar piece of music.
Other Assessment	Controlled Assessments (Internally marked, externally moderated) Performance 30% Two performances: Combined duration of four minutes - Solo and Ensemble Composition 30% Two compositions: Combined duration of three minutes One free composition and one set to a brief, provided by the exam board
Subject support	It is paramount that your daughter has weekly instrumental or singing lessons in order to prepare for her Unit 1 performance exams, which are worth 30% of the final mark. There will be a composers' lab offered after school for those who wish to gain more experience composing and using Sibelius.
Revision Guidance	Listening and Appraising - Students will need to ensure they are entirely familiar with all eight set works and that their theoretical knowledge is of a standard whereby they are able to analyze written music. Also, a competent aural ability will need to be developed in order to be able to appraise music based purely on its sonic components. The vast majority of the questions in the exam rely on a candidate's ability to identify musical features by purely listening. Therefore, the most useful practice is simply listening to music, all the time. Performing - Your daughter, along with their peripatetic instrument or vocal tutor, will keep a log of the progress made in performance. They will be required to practice most days at home to ensure their continued development. Composing - Students will be required to have a working knowledge of Sibelius/Musescore/Soundtrap as this will be the software they will use to notate/record their compositions. They will receive training on this in YR10.
Useful Websites	BBC Bitesize Music theory Edexcel specification Set works Revision podcasts
What can I do?	Ensure your daughter attends her instrumental/vocal lessons and completes all homework assignments. Encourage her to take part in extracurricular music activities, e.g. orchestra and concerts. Ask to hear their compositions and have them explain the various different elements. Also, encourage them to perform their performance repertoire for you and other family members and friends. There is no replacement for practice performance than performing in an open and supportive environment in front of others.
What does your daughter need to do to succeed in this subject?	Maintain a positive attitude and an inquisitive mind. Be willing to work hard on theoretical practices as well as the practical elements of the course. Upon starting the course your daughter will be given a Music GCSE Handbook, she should be proactive in her independent learning and complete all sections of the theory catch up material provided. Listen to a wide variety of musical styles and build a familiarity with music from all genres and eras. Feel comfortable experimenting in musical areas that they may have little or no previous knowledge of.

What does your daughter need to do to excel in this subject?

Use the facilities at school in and out of lessons to gain as much exposure to the compositional element as they can. Spend time researching all music styles to help them understand the elements of those covered by the syllabus from all the areas of study. Habitual and regimented instrumental/vocal practice. Also, participating in external musical activities and ensembles, as well as those which are offered at school (gigs, concerts, youth music programs).

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I have to be a certain grade on my instrument?

The short answer is no, although it is recommended that you are around Grade 4 level by the end of Year 11. You must sing or play an instrument and have lessons with a teacher in or outside of school. Playing an instrument/singing is vital to passing 30% of the course, however, you can still take Music GCSE if you do not currently have instrumental lessons. It is entirely possible for a highly motivated and musically passionate student to start lessons at the beginning of Year 10 and reach a good performance standard by the time of examination in Year 11. I must also stress that voice (singing) counts as an instrument. Therefore, if you can sing you can play an instrument!

What about music theory?

We will teach you all the theory you need to know. If you don't read standard notation that is fine, you will learn. You just need a positive mind-set and you may need to work a little harder at first. But at GCSE the most important skill is your listening.

Do I have to sing or play the piano?

You do not have to be a singer or a pianist, however having a basic understanding of these two instruments from Keystage 3 will help. In a lot of lessons, we use the piano and sing to break down the eight pieces we must learn for the exam.

Why take Music GCSE?

- It is a flexible course to suit your strengths – whether you are a singer, drummer or violinist, whether you are into Stormzy, K Pop or Mozart!
- Appealing areas of study. Yes, we do classical music, but we also study Queen, Star Wars and Wicked!
- The transferable skills you will acquire and develop studying music are invaluable: communication/teamwork; independence/resourcefulness; discipline/reliability; analysis/problem-solving; creativity/synthesis
- Music is an academic subject and colleges/universities look up on it very favourably. It is not an easy pass – it requires hard work and dedication!