



Music A Level (Edexcel): Distance-learning

What is the course about?

The course introduces you to some of the disciplines involved in an academic study of the Music. It develops the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to communicate through music and to take part in music-making, whether as a composer, a performer or a listener.

- Insights into techniques of harmony and composition used by composers
- Analytical study of pieces of music in a variety of styles
- Performance
- Composition
- Development of areas of musicianship such as aural perception
- Experience in the use of Sibelius software for musical notation

What sort of work will I be doing?

Wherever possible we try to integrate the diverse elements of the subject, each one supporting the understanding and development of others.

Aural awareness is encouraged through dictation and listening exercises. Your study of **harmony** and **compositional techniques** involves weekly exercises, which can be completed with the aid of a keyboard instrument, as well as longer **composition assignments**, which may involve the use of computer software. In **analysis**, you are given written tasks, arising from class work, or as preparation for lessons, and essays requiring research and planning are written over one or two weeks. **Performing** skills are developed throughout the course.

Revision programmes and regular testing are built into the course to help you to prepare for final examinations.

What other skills will I develop during this course?

The course will provide you with the opportunity to develop your skills in communication and IT as well as encouraging you to become an independent learner.

How will I be assessed?

1 Performing (30%) (minimum standard of music played should be Grade 7 for A Level)
8 minutes minimum of performance time; either solo or ensemble.

2 Composing (30%)

Two compositions totalling a minimum of 6 minutes: one free composition; one techniques (Bach chorale harmonisations).

3 Appraising (40%)

Study will cover six Areas of Study with three set works in each. The exam will include multiple-choice questions, short open answer questions and extended writing.

Areas of Study:

Vocal Music	Instrumental Music
Music for Film	Popular Music and Jazz
Fusions	New Directions

The course will also involve wider listening to music beyond the study of set works in order to prepare for the assessment of analysis skills in unfamiliar music and to develop listening skills such as musical dictation.

AS Music

An AS course will be taught alongside the A Level course. Note that this is not an easier option and is examined at the same standard as the full A Level. The work required is the equivalent of about two-thirds of the full A Level. The AS Appraising assessment involves a subset of the A level set works. It is possible to take this course in one year, but it is recommended to pace it over two years.



What prior qualifications are recommended?

We do not require you to start the course with any specified prior qualifications. However, you should be capable of achieving five GCSE subjects at Grade B or above, including English and Mathematics, and a music performance standard of at least Grade 5 (exams do not have to have been taken). A GCSE in Music is very helpful, although not essential if you have appropriate previous experience in performing and composing. **An understanding of theory at Grade 5 level is strongly advised before starting the course.**

We ask all students to sit an assessment test before the start of the course. This helps us to assess your suitability for A Level Music study, and on this basis we can also make recommendations as to whether you would benefit from the extra support of 'referral' lessons in theory and analysis.



What are the progression routes with this qualification?

Music 'A' Level is an extremely demanding qualification that offers you the development of a wide range of skills including analysis, criticism, creative expression, verbal, written and musical communication, discipline, initiative, team work and the application of ICT. Few other subjects cover such a range of disciplines, so Music is recognised as an excellent preparation not only for music-related careers but also for progression into other fields, and it can readily complement and broaden programmes of study in both the Arts and Sciences. Music can be studied for single honours at university or at conservatoire, but there are also many established joint honours courses with subjects such as English, History, Languages, Maths, Media Studies, Philosophy and Physics.



What extra work can I do?

You will be given regular reading and listening lists to support your studies and it is expected that you will follow a recommended listening schedule throughout the course. It is also hoped that, where appropriate, students will look for opportunities to perform, in youth orchestras, jazz bands and choirs.

The work covered on the course will be appropriate if you are contemplating entry to Oxford or Cambridge or to one of the recognised music conservatoires, and all students taking any form of university or music college entrance examination can be offered extra support if required.

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