

Music A Level (Pearson Edexcel): Distance-learning

This unique distance-learning A-Level Music course is distinctive because it involves on-line classes in small groups covering the content required for Components 2 and 3 of the examination.



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 notation software such as Sibelius 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 aural perception, dictation and listening activities. Your study of **theory, 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 will involve the use of notation software. In **analysis**, you study set works from a range of varied styles leading to written tasks arising from class work, or as preparation for lessons; essays requiring research and planning form a significant part of independent study. Essential to success on the course is a commitment to **wider listening** and expanding your general knowledge of music from across musical history.

Performing skills continue to be developed by students' own tutors 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)

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 composition (Bach chorale harmonisation).



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

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.

The appraising 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, to enhance awareness of context and style in essay-writing and to develop aural perception skills.



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 6 (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. **A confident understanding of theory at Grade 5 level is expected before starting the course, and fluent musical literacy is essential.**

We ask all students to sit an assessment paper 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 IT. 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 the Arts, Humanities 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 will I be expected to 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 a music conservatoire, and all students taking any form of university or music college entrance examination will be offered extra support, including the preparation of references, if required.

Penny Davis
GCSE and A Level Music Programme Manager
Junior Trinity
Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance
September 2020