

Music GCSE

AQA 4270

Overview

Unit 1:	Listening to and Appraising Music	Written Paper – 1 hour – 80 marks – 20%
Unit 2:	Composing and Appraising Music	Externally assessed – 40 marks – 20%
Unit 3:	Performing Music	Controlled Assessment – 60 marks – 40%
Unit 4:	Composing Music	Controlled Assessment – 30 marks – 20%

Unit 1: Listening to and Appraising Music

(Written Paper – 1 hour – 80 marks – 20%)

Assessment is through a terminal examination marked by AQA examiners. Candidates respond to questions based on short musical excerpts drawing on music from all five Areas of Study. Recorded excerpts of music will be provided on a CD.

Candidates explore the five Areas of Study (AoS) through the three Strands of Learning. Through their exploration of these five AoS, candidates will develop an understanding of the organisation of sound.

AoS for the whole specification are based on the Musical Elements:

AoS1	Rhythm & Metre
AoS2	Harmony & Tonality
AoS3	Texture & Melody
AoS4	Timbre & Dynamics
AoS5	Structure & Form

These will be explored through the three strands of Learning:

- a) The Western Classical Tradition
- b) Popular Music of the 20th & 21st Century
- c) World Music

Within each strand, candidates could explore any music from the following areas to gain an understanding of how composers have used the Elements of Music. Questions will focus on listening skills related to the AoS and not on the specific genres of the strands.

a) The Western Classical Tradition

Baroque orchestral music
The concerto
Music for voices
Chamber music
The sonata

b) Popular Music of the 20th & 21st centuries

Blues
Popular music of the 1960s
Rock music, R'n'B, Hip-Hop
Music Theatre
Film music

c) World Music

Music of the Caribbean
Music of Africa
Music of India

Unit 2: Composing and Appraising Music

(Externally assessed – 40 marks – 20%)

A. Candidates are required to compose one piece of music and must choose two or more of the five Areas of Study (10%). There must be a link to one of the three strands, which will be announced annually by AQA. Candidates have up to **20 hours of Supervised Time** in which to complete the composition, under informal supervision.

Candidates' work must be monitored during this period by the teacher so that he/she is able to authenticate it as the candidate's own. There is no time limit in terms of the duration of the composition but candidates should be aware of the need to demonstrate sufficient development of musical ideas in the music and, as a consequence, very short pieces may not allow for this.

B. Candidates appraise the process and the outcome of the composition in relation to the Areas of Study and indicate the link to the strand (10%). Candidates have up to **2 hours of Controlled Time** for the appraisal, which must be undertaken as an individual exercise under formal supervision.

The composition and appraisal are externally assessed and should be submitted to examiners as follows:

- i) A recording of the final completed composition.
- ii) A musical score or annotation
- iii) Written appraisal of the process of composition and the final outcome (completed in an appraisal booklet, supplied by the exam board)

(For 2010 and 2011 the strand is The Western Classical Tradition.)

Unit 3: Performing Music

(Controlled Assessment – 60 marks – 40%)

Candidates perform individually and as part of a group.

Each candidate should perform two different pieces:

- (a) Individual Performance (Solo)
- (b) Group Performance (Ensemble)

(Each lasting no more than five minutes.)

Both performances must be recorded and sent to the AQA moderator.

Unit 4: Composing Music

(Controlled Assessment – 30 marks – 20%)

Candidates are required to compose **one** piece of music which explores **two or more** of the five Areas of Study. This may be in any style or genre of the candidate's choosing.

Candidates have **25 hours of Controlled Assessment** in which to complete the composition. This must be undertaken as an individual exercise under informal supervision. There is no time limit in terms of the duration of the composition but candidates should be aware of the need to demonstrate sufficient development of musical ideas in the music and as a consequence, very short pieces may not allow for this.

The composition must be submitted as follows:

1. **A recording of the completed composition.**
2. **A musical score and/or annotation.**

The Organisation of Sound

Rhythm & Metre

- pulse
- simple & compound time
- regular, irregular, free
- augmentation, diminution, hemiola, cross-rhythm

- dotted rhythms, triplets, syncopation
- tempo, rubato
- polyrhythm, bi-rhythm
- drum fills

Harmony

- diatonic, chromatic
- consonant, dissonant
- pedal, drone
- cadences: perfect, plagal, imperfect, interrupted, Tièrce de Picardie
- identification of major, minor and dominant seventh chords using roman numerals/chord symbols

Tonality

- tonal, major, minor, modal
- use and identification of key up to 4 sharps and 4 flats
- modulation:
 - to dominant/subdominant in major or minor key
 - to relative major or minor

Texture

- harmonic/homophonic, polyphonic/contrapuntal
- imitative, canonic, layered
- unison, octaves, single melody line, melody with accompaniment, antiphonal

Melody

- intervals within the octave
- conjunct, disjunct, triadic, broken chords, scalic, arpeggio
- passing notes, acciaccaturas, appoggiaturas
- blue notes
- diatonic, chromatic, pentatonic, whole tone, modal
- augmentation, diminution, sequence, inversion
- slide/glissando/portamento, ornamentation
- ostinato, riff
- phrasing, articulation
- pitch bend • improvisation

Timbre

- instruments and voices singly and in combination as found in music for solo instruments, concertos, chamber groups, pop and vocal music
- generic families of instruments as found in world music
- timbre, including the use of technology, synthesised and computer-generated sounds, sampling, and use of techniques such as reverb., distortion and chorus
- instrumental techniques including con arco/with a bow, pizzicato/plucked, con sordino/muted, double-stopping, tremolo/tremolando

- vocal techniques such as falsetto and vibrato

Dynamics

- gradation of dynamics as follows:
 - pp, p, mp, mf, f, ff
 - cresc., crescendo, dim., diminuendo
 - sfz, sforzando
 - 'hairpins'
- common signs, terms & symbols

Structure & Form

- binary, ternary, call & response
- rondo, theme & variations, arch-shape
- sonata, minuet & trio, scherzo & trio
- strophic, through-composed, da capo aria, cyclic
- popular song forms
- ground bass, continuo, cadenza

Unit 2 only:

Composer, Performer & Audience

- intention, use, purpose
- commission, patronage
- technical/emotional demands
- amateur/professional performance
- performance practice, interpretation, improvisation

Occasion, Time & Place

- sacred, secular, utility
- private, public, concert
- live, recorded, media
- internet
- performing conventions

