



Learning Overview for Music  
**GCSE (10/11)**

Full specification available at: <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/music/gcse/music-8271>

Key topics	What most pupils will learn	How this learning might be extended	How this learning will be assessed
<b>Performance</b>	<p>Students must be able to perform live music in one or both of the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• instrumental (including DJ)/vocal</li><li>• production via technology.</li></ul> <p>One performance is recorded as a soloist and one piece recorded as part of an ensemble lasting a combined minimum of four minutes.</p>	<p>Students are given regular performance homework, where they are expected to submit audio recordings detailing their continued progress.</p> <p>Students are expected to be musical performers. Showing commitment to performing where appropriate and in the best interests of the student.</p>	<p>Performance is internally marked by teachers and externally moderated by AQA, marked out of 72 and constitutes 30 % of the total marks for the qualification.</p> <p>Each of the performances is out of a maximum of 36.</p> <p>Students receive regular feedback throughout the course.</p>



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	<p>Through regular performance lessons and homework, a suitable repertoire will be determined by the student and teacher. It need not reference an area of study and can be in any chosen style or genre.</p> <p>Students must be able to interpret relevant musical elements as appropriate using resources (eg microphones) and techniques (eg pizzicato) as appropriate to communicate musical ideas with accuracy and expression and interpretation, including phrasing and dynamics appropriate to the style and mood of the music.</p> <p>All performances are submitted with an appropriate score. Students are guided in how to create and submit their score.</p>	<p>Commitment to school concerts and other opportunities to perform regularly will always benefit the student throughout the course.</p> <p>Students will benefit from experiencing live music as often as possible – particularly if their chosen instrument is being showcased.</p> <p>Students will also benefit from listening to a wide range of music, particularly featuring their chosen instrument so they can select the best material for their own performance.</p>	<p>All performances are recorded.</p>
<p><b>Composition</b></p>	<p>Students must learn how to develop musical ideas, including extending and manipulating musical ideas, and compose music that is musically convincing through two compositions. One must be in response to an externally set brief (Composition 1) and the other a free composition (Composition 2).</p>	<p>Students are always encouraged to listen to as much music as possible, from their own preference to unfamiliar music.</p>	<p>Both compositions are assessed on the student's ability to demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative and effective selection and use of musical elements</li> </ul>





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	<p>Composition lessons teach students the technical skills required to be creative, plus the skills and techniques composers and songwriters exhibit. Compositions can be composed in any style or genre to best reflect the skills, strengths and interests of the individual students.</p> <p>Students must be able to compose using methods appropriate to the style/genre of their composition and may use a combination of vocal/instrumental and technology. This could include the use of score writing software, sequencing software, studio multi-tracking or traditional techniques including handwritten notation and working through improvisation</p>	<p>Students are encouraged to independently research compositional techniques that will improve their own coursework, particularly if the techniques are unique to their chosen style (for example watching a YouTube tutorial on how to create a 'trap beat').</p> <p>Students should be using the facilities to compose outside their lessons. Often a task they want to do will take longer than the hour lesson, therefore students will often want to come and use the Macs at lunchtime / afterschool to continue their work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appropriate selection and use of musical elements (to the compositional intention)</li><li>• Technical and expressive control in the use of musical elements.</li></ul> <p>Regular feedback and targets are essential to keep the student motivated and on track with their ideas.</p> <p>Each composition will demonstrate selection and use of at least four types of musical element as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>at least two of rhythm, metre, texture, melody, structure, form</i></li><li>• <i>at least two of harmony, tonality, timbre, dynamics, phrasing, articulation</i></li></ul>
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<b>Pop Music</b> <b>Blues, Rock,</b> <b>Musicals, Film</b>	<p>A practical introduction to GCSE Music, enabling students the time and knowledge to be musical performers and to learn key elements and musical terminology through practical work.</p> <p>Rock and Pop music is studied first, with a chance to explore their first AQA Set Work. Students learn the history, context, instrumentation and key musical devices associated with the style or period.</p> <p>Core values and skills are embedded into the learning during term 1, such as teamwork, independence, interdependence and confidence, so each musician feels comfortable performing and working alongside their peers.</p> <p>Students must be able to listen attentively to unfamiliar music from the following styles/genres to identify and accurately describe musical elements, musical contexts and musical language.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Music of Broadway 1950s to 1990s.</li><li>2. Rock music of 1960s and 1970s.</li><li>3. Film and computer gaming music 1990s to present.</li></ol>	<p>Students are expected to use the music facilities in their own time, through performing, composing or revising.</p> <p>Students are expected to undertake regular home learning tasks, submitting work to a deadline and to a high standard.</p> <p>Students are expected to take advantage of opportunities to watch and/or participate in live music events.</p>	<p>Students will be assessed on their ability to evaluate the music heard in the exam and demonstrate knowledge and understanding of musical elements and musical language (see <a href="#">Subject content</a>).</p> <p>Regular and consistent formative feedback is provided to all students through their work as performers, composers and listeners.</p> <p>All coursework is internally assessed (see below for more information)</p> <p>Students are regularly given feedback and targets to develop their coursework over time.</p> <p>Where appropriate, theory work is graded using GCSE data and levels,</p>
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	<p>4. Pop music 1990s to present.</p> <p><b>Study piece</b></p> <p><b>Study Piece for 2025 exam:</b></p> <p>Little Shop of Horrors 1982 off-Broadway version – the following three tracks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Prologue/Little Shop of Horrors (overture)</i></li><li>• <i>Mushnik and Son</i></li><li>• <i>Feed Me</i></li></ul> <p><b>Study Piece for 2026 exam:</b></p> <p>Queen – the following three tracks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bohemian Rhapsody</li><li>• The Seven Seas of Rhye</li><li>• Love of my Life</li></ul>		<p>so students are aware of how their work compares to a final exam.</p>
<p><b>Traditional - African, Indian, Folk, Caribbean</b></p>	<p>A practical guide to Area of Study 3, providing knowledge and understanding of the key musical elements and terminology.</p> <p>Students must be able to listen attentively to unfamiliar music from the following styles/genres to identify and accurately describe musical elements, musical contexts and musical language.</p>	<p>Students are expected to use the music facilities in their own time, through performing, composing or revising.</p> <p>Students are expected to undertake regular home learning</p>	<p>Students will be assessed on their ability to evaluate the music heard in the exam and demonstrate knowledge and understanding of musical elements and musical language (see <a href="#">Subject content</a>).</p>





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	<p>Blues music from 1920–1950.</p> <p>Fusion music incorporating African and/or Caribbean music.</p> <p>Contemporary Latin music.</p> <p>Contemporary folk music of the British Isles.</p> <p>Studying traditional music gives students the opportunity to explore the 3rd AQA Set Work. Students learn the history, context, instrumentation and key musical devices associated with the style or period.</p> <p><b>Study Piece for 2025 exam:</b> Paul Simon Graceland album – the following three tracks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Graceland</i></li> <li>• <i>Diamonds on the Soles of Her Shoes</i></li> <li>• <i>You Can Call Me Al</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Study Piece for 2026 exam:</b> Esperanza Spalding – the following three tracks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I Know You Know</li> <li>• Little Fly</li> <li>• I Adore You</li> </ul>	<p>tasks, submitting work to a deadline and to a high standard.</p> <p>Students are expected to take advantage of opportunities to watch and/or participate in live music events.</p>	<p>Regular and consistent formative feedback is provided to all students through their work as performers, composers and listeners.</p> <p>All coursework is internally assessed (see below for more information)</p> <p>Students are regularly given feedback and targets to develop their coursework over time.</p> <p>Where appropriate, theory work is graded using GCSE data and levels, so students are aware of how their work compares to a final exam.</p>
<p><b>20th Century - Jazz, Minimalism,</b></p>	<p>A practical guide to Area of Study 4, providing knowledge and understanding of the key musical elements and terminology.</p>	<p>Students are expected to use the music facilities in their own time,</p>	<p>Students will be assessed on their ability to evaluate the music heard in the exam and</p>





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<p><b>Serialism, Experimental</b></p>	<p>Studying 20<sup>th</sup> century Music gives students the opportunity to explore the 4th AQA Set Work. Students learn the history, context, instrumentation and key musical devices associated with the style or period.</p> <p>Students must be able to listen attentively to unfamiliar music from the following styles/genres to identify and accurately describe musical elements, musical contexts and musical language.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The orchestral music of Copland.</li><li>• British music of Arnold, Britten, Maxwell-Davies and Tavener.</li><li>• The orchestral music of Zoltán Kodály and Béla Bartók.</li><li>• Minimalist music of John Adams, Steve Reich and Terry Riley.</li></ul> <p>This unit is largely taught using Logic Pro, so students directly apply their knowledge to composition work, which in turn creates positives opportunities for coursework.</p> <p><b>Study Piece for 2025 exam:</b> <i>Zoltán Kodály: Battle and Defeat of Napoleon and</i></p>	<p>through performing, composing or revising.</p> <p>Students are expected to undertake regular home learning tasks, submitting work to a deadline and to a high standard.</p> <p>Students are expected to take advantage of opportunities to watch and/or participate in live music events.</p>	<p>demonstrate knowledge and understanding of musical elements and musical language (see <a href="#">Subject content</a>).</p> <p>Regular and consistent formative feedback is provided to all students through their work as performers, composers and listeners.</p> <p>All coursework is internally assessed (see below for more information)</p> <p>Students are regularly given feedback and targets to develop their coursework over time.</p> <p>Where appropriate, theory work is graded using GCSE data and levels, so students are aware of how their work compares to a final exam.</p>
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	<p><i>Intermezzo from Háry János. (Orchestral version with cimbalon and without vocal parts.)</i></p> <p><b>Study Piece for 2026 exam:</b></p> <p>Bartók: Hungarian Pictures – the following four movements*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Movement 1: Evening in the Village</li><li>• Movement 2: The Bear Dance</li><li>• Movement 4: Slightly Topsy</li><li>• Movement 5: Swineherd's Dance</li></ul>		
<p><b>Western classical tradition 1650 – 1910</b></p>	<p>The western classical tradition is defined as art music of (or growing out of) the European tradition, normally notated, and normally intended for public performance.</p> <p>Studying Western Classical Music gives students the opportunity to explore the 1st AQA Set Work. Students learn the history, context, instrumentation and key musical devices associated with the style or period.</p> <p>Students must be able to listen attentively to unfamiliar music from the following styles/genres to identify and accurately describe musical elements, musical contexts and musical language.</p>	<p><b>Reading staff notation</b></p> <p>Students must be able to identify musical elements (as above) when reading short passages of unfamiliar music in staff notation of up to 12 bars.</p> <p><b>Writing staff notation</b></p> <p>Students must be able to demonstrate the ability to write staff notation within short passages of up to eight bars:</p>	<p>Students will be assessed on their ability to evaluate the music heard in the exam and demonstrate knowledge and understanding of musical elements and musical language (see <a href="#">Subject content</a>).</p> <p>Regular and consistent formative feedback is provided to all students through their work as performers, composers and listeners.</p>







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	<p>The Coronation Anthems and Oratorios of Handel.</p> <p>The orchestra music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven.</p> <p>The piano music of Chopin and Schumann.</p> <p>The Requiem of the late Romantic period.</p> <p><b>Study Piece 2025 exam:</b> Mozart Clarinet Concerto in A major, K. 622, 3rd movement, Rondo</p> <p><b>Study Piece 2026 exam:</b> Beethoven: Symphony No.1, Movement 1: Adagio molto – Allegro con brio (first taught 2024, first assessed 2026)</p>	<p>melodically up to four sharps and flats</p> <p>rhythmically including simple and compound time.</p> <p><b>Chords</b></p> <p>Students must learn major and minor chords and be able to identify them in aural and written form. Examples of relevant types of chords can be found in the musical elements table above.</p> <p><b>Musical vocabulary and terminology</b></p> <p>Students must be able to identify and apply appropriate musical vocabulary and terminology to music heard and notated. The appropriate vocabulary required can be found in the table above.</p>	<p>All coursework is internally assessed (see below for more information)</p> <p>Students are regularly given feedback and targets to develop their coursework over time.</p> <p>Where appropriate, theory work is graded using GCSE data and levels, so students are aware of how their work compares to a final exam.</p>
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## Learning Overview for Music NCFE Music Technology (10/11)

Full specification available at: <https://www.qualhub.co.uk/qualification-search/qualification-detail/ncfe-level-2-technical-award-in-music-technology-3665>

Key topics	What most pupils will learn	How this learning might be extended	How this learning will be assessed
<b>Unit 1 Using a Digital Audio Workstation (DAW)</b>	<p>This unit will allow learners to develop skills in operating a Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) creatively using audio, MIDI, hardware and editing tools. Learners will create a musical project in response to a brief, reflecting industry skills.</p> <p><b>Learning outcome 1</b></p> <p>The learner will: Understand the hardware components and software functions of a DAW The learner must know about:</p>	<p>Learners who achieve this V Cert qualification could progress onto further level 3 qualifications and A levels, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Level 3 Applied General Certificate in Music Technology</li></ul>	<p>Internal assessment – each unit is internally assessed and externally quality assured</p> <p>External assessment – written test – this will assess the underpinning knowledge and skills drawn from across the qualifications</p>





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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hardware components: - computer - computer peripherals/hardware - keyboard and other MIDI controllers - audio/MIDI interface</li> <li>• Software functions: - differences between audio, software instrument and MIDI tracks - software instruments - editing tools - plug-ins.</li> </ul> <p><b>Learning outcome 2</b></p> <p>The learner will: Create a musical project that will include MIDI and audio The learner must demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• contextualisation of project to industry-relevant brief</li> <li>• configuration of software preferences</li> <li>• recording of audio and MIDI</li> <li>• selection and editing of software instruments</li> <li>• use of audio and MIDI editing tools</li> <li>• use of plug-ins</li> <li>• export to a stereo audio file.</li> </ul> <p><b>Learning outcome 3</b></p> <p>The learner will: Review a completed musical project The learner must consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how the project has met the brief</li> <li>• musical outcome</li> <li>• use of MIDI &amp; audio</li> <li>• use of editing tools</li> <li>• strengths and weak</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level 3 Diploma in Creative Media</li> <li>• Level 3 Extended Diploma in Creative Media</li> <li>• A level Music</li> <li>• A level Music Technology It may also be useful to those studying qualifications in the following sectors:</li> <li>• film studies</li> <li>• media studies</li> <li>• music</li> <li>• computing</li> <li>• economics and business</li> <li>• science</li> <li>• maths.</li> </ul>	<p>External assessment – practical test – this will assess the application of knowledge and skills acquired throughout the course</p>
<p><b>Unit 2 Creating Music</b></p>	<p>Learners will develop skills to analyse stylistic elements of music and develop a piece of music based on a specific style. Learners will engage in a review of technical and creative processes.</p> <p><b>Learning outcome 1</b></p>		<p>Internal assessment – each unit is internally assessed and externally quality assured</p> <p>External assessment – written test – this will assess the underpinning knowledge</p>





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	<p>The learner will: Understand the musical elements of a chosen style The learner must know about: • key elements of their chosen style including: - structure - melody - rhythm - harmony - instrumentation • music technology developments that have influenced their chosen style.</p> <p><b>Learning outcome 2</b></p> <p>The learner will: Create a piece of music in the style identified in learning outcome 1 The learner must demonstrate: • use of audio and MIDI tracks • selection and creation of key musical elements • stylistically appropriate organisation and structure • mixdown of the piece to an appropriate stereo audio format.</p> <p><b>Learning outcome 3</b></p> <p>The learner will: Review the musical piece The learner must consider: • use of key musical elements • use of DAW technology • strengths and weaknesses • ways to improve.</p>		<p>and skills drawn from across the qualifications</p> <p>External assessment – practical test – this will assess the application of knowledge and skills acquired throughout the course</p>
<p><b>Unit 3 Studio recording</b></p>	<p>Learners will plan and undertake a recording session for a given scenario. Learners will create a mixdown of their recording and review the final product.</p> <p><b>Learning outcome 1</b></p> <p>The learner will: Plan a recording session in response to a given scenario The learner must know about: • health and safety • microphones, sound sources, placement and DI •</p>		<p>Internal assessment – each unit is internally assessed and externally quality assured</p> <p>External assessment – written test – this will assess the underpinning knowledge and skills drawn from across the qualifications</p>





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	<p>audio interfaces • multi-track recorder • monitoring • planning a studio session.</p> <p><b>Learning outcome 2</b></p> <p>The learner will: Undertake a studio recording session The learner must demonstrate: • use of equipment (microphones, DI, audio interfaces/pre-amps, multi-track recorder and monitoring) • health and safety • optimisation of gain • overdubbing.</p> <p><b>Learning outcome 3</b></p> <p>The learner will: Mix a multi-track recording The learner must demonstrate: • editing • EQ • effects • dynamics • balance • stereo field • monitoring • automation.</p> <p><b>Learning outcome 4</b></p> <p>The learner will: Review their mixdown from learning outcomes 2 and 3 The learner must consider: • progression from original recordings to final mixdown • strengths of the mix • ways to improve.</p>		<p>External assessment – practical test – this will assess the application of knowledge and skills acquired throughout the course</p>
<p><b>Unit 4 Sound Creation</b></p>	<p>Learners will explore sound creation and apply their knowledge to a given brief. They will create and review their own original sound creation project.</p> <p><b>Learning outcome 1</b></p>		<p>Internal assessment – each unit is internally assessed and externally quality assured</p> <p>External assessment – written test – this will assess the underpinning knowledge</p>





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	<p>The learner will: Explain sound creation using examples The learner must know about: • different forms of media • types of sound creation • methods of sound creation.</p> <p><b>Learning outcome 2</b></p> <p>The learner will: Plan and undertake the sound creation for a given brief The learner must demonstrate: • planning • selection of materials • creation of audio material • arrangement of sounds.</p> <p><b>Learning outcome 3</b></p> <p>The learner will: Review their completed sound creation project The learner must consider: • how the project has met the brief • strengths and weaknesses • suggested improvements.</p>		<p>and skills drawn from across the qualifications</p> <p>External assessment – practical test – this will assess the application of knowledge and skills acquired throughout the course</p>
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