

Music

A-level music extends the GCSE skills of performing, composing, listening and appraising. GCSE music, or an equivalent qualification, is a prerequisite for this course.

Eduqas A-level pupils can elect to set up the course to play to their strengths, as follows:

Performance major

- Performance (35%): 10-12 minute recital to a visiting external examiner
- Composition (25%): 2 compositions, 4-6 minutes in total
- Appraising (40%): listening and writing paper

Composition major

- Performance (35%): 6-8 minute recital to a visiting external examiner
- Composition (25%): 3 compositions, 8-10 minutes in total
- Appraising (40%): listening and writing paper

The performing module features a recital that is assessed on the day by a visiting examiner. Pupils are expected to perform at grade 7 standard in order to access the top mark brackets. However Eduqas emphasises quality of performances over difficulty, and it is therefore perfectly possible to achieve highly with a musical and accurate performance at a lower level of difficulty.

For the composing module, pupils must write one composition in a style that links to the 'Western Classical Tradition', i.e. Baroque, Classical or Romantic music. Their second composition is a free choice, and if taking the 'composition major' option, their third must relate to a different area of study (see below). These compositions are externally assessed.

The Appraising unit is an exciting opportunity to explore music analysis and appreciation using a university-style approach. The three areas of study we teach are:

- The development of the symphony from 1750-1900 (featuring two set works)
- Into the 20th Century (featuring two set works)
- Rock and Pop Music (music chosen by the teacher and pupils)

Pupils are expected to form a holistic understanding of these areas, developing their own 'big picture' of the evolution of trends, styles and genres and the impact of composers, historical events, etc. The focus on in-depth study of a small amount of required set works frees up time for independent reading, listening and tutorial-style class discussion, encouraging pupils to develop the intellectual confidence to articulate their own observations and analyses. These skills are immensely valuable for university study in any subject. A-level music is a course which is highly regarded by universities for the breadth of skills which students develop.

Mr IAIN SANSOM
assistant director of music