

May newsletter – WJEC Music

I hope you have all had a chance to rest over the Spring break and are gearing up for the summer examination season. Thank you all for all of the work you have done so far in preparing your candidates. Please remember that we are here to answer any queries you may have.

This newsletter is a quick round up and some key reminders for this term.

I recently came across some general information put together by Devon and Torbay Music Education Hubs in collaboration with Wiltshire Connect, which includes a number of resources for teachers to support them at options time with the question “[Why Music?](#)” These are not available in Welsh, as they are an external resource, but nevertheless may be useful for teachers.

You can add yourself to our WJEC Music centre map [here](#).

You can subscribe for updates [here](#).

Key dates:

GCSE Performing and Composing sample submission deadline – 5th May.

GCE Composing submission deadline – 15th May.

AS exam – 15th May.

A Level exam – 10th June.

GCSE exam – 17th June.

GCE results day – 15th August.

GCSE results day – 22nd August.

Contact us:

If you have any questions or you need any help or advice, please contact the Music team:

Subject Officer, Music – Rachel Edwards

Subject Support Officer, Music – Natalie Harvey

Subject Support Officer, GCE Music Routes – Romi Lawrence

Subject Adviser, Music and Drama – Elise Arnold

We all monitor the Music inbox and phone line.

Music@wjec.co.uk

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General news

The reorganisation of the subject web page should have been completed by the time you read this. Please feel free to send feedback to let us know what you think, and if things are now easier to find.

As mentioned in the January newsletter, the secure website has also undergone the first stage of a large-scale improvement. It is now called “[WJEC Portal](#)” and again the aim is to make it easier to navigate, but also to enhance the security of confidential materials. For this reason, there will be a need to go through some initial authentication processes. If you need assistance with logging in please see your exams officer for support initially, but there are some FAQs on the website [here](#).

Exemplar materials and standards

There are new exemplars for all aspects of GCE and GCSE Music – performing, composing, and appraising – available to download from WJEC Portal. These are there to help you to understand the expected standards. There is also further guidance on assessing GCSE NEA in the form of a pre-recorded presentation, and amplification documents which go through the assessment criteria in more detail, for both performing and composing. There is a similar document for GCE Composing too, which should help you in providing feedback to your students during the composing process.

CPD

Please see the website for details of our [CPD programme](#). Materials from previous events can be downloaded from WJEC Portal.

Access arrangements

We have had some queries regarding rest breaks in exams, and also the use of a laptop/word processor.

Candidates who are permitted rest breaks in exams will need to be roomed separately as the CD/mp3 file will need to be paused when they have a break. During the break they should not be allowed access to their exam paper. Do not STOP the audio. Press PAUSE so that you can resume from the same place. You are not permitted to repeat any part of the recording. Candidates must NOT have access to the audio controls.

Candidates who are permitted to use a laptop or word-processor *generally* only choose to type their answer to the extended response question and write the other responses on the paper. Any questions they answer on the laptop must be clearly numbered e.g. “Question 4b.” The exams officer will then print, authenticate, and attach their responses to the exam paper. There is no version of the exam paper for them to type onto.

Extensions

If there is a genuine reason why you need to request an extension to the NEA deadline for one or more candidates please send an email with the full details, including the centre and candidate name and number as appropriate, to music@wjec.co.uk.

Artificial Intelligence

A number of centres have asked questions regarding the use of AI in compositions. Candidates are **not** permitted to use AI to compose or improve the **music** they compose, but they **are** permitted to use AI to generate **lyrics**. There are no marks awarded for the words – we permit candidates to use poems, existing lyrics etc. Candidates should consider the lyrics when writing the music, as there may for example be opportunities for word painting.

Please give details in the log, of any lyrics taken from elsewhere, including the prompt given to the AI if used.

GCSE

There is a [teacher guide](#) on the website which contains procedural information for performing, composing and appraising. Please share this with your exams officer too. There is also a document which explains how [extra time](#) should be applied to music exams.

In readiness for submitting work for the 2024 series it may be useful to remind yourself of the comments made in the [Principal Examiners' report](#) which is available on the website. There are also FAQ documents for each Unit.

Performing and Composing

Please refer to the specification and the reminder in the January newsletter for details of the requirements of these Units.

Submitting Non-Examination Assessment work.

The final deadline for GCSE Unit 1 and Unit 2 submission is 5th May. In 2024 this is a Sunday, but the deadline does not change.

It will take 2 working days to get your codes to upload the sample work, so you need to input your marks by Wednesday 1st May.

Before you can submit your marks, you need to have followed your individual school policy for allowing candidates to appeal and allow time for any appeals to be looked at.

Once you have submitted your marks, within 2 working days the codes will be available in Surpass. Ask your exams officer to get these for you – and send them to you in an email rather than printing, so you can just copy and paste them. You will have different codes for performing and composing. Do not mix them up!

All sampled work must be uploaded. There is no option to submit by post.

Uploading:

See [guidance here](#), which includes the links you will need. Here is a summary for you:

- Go to the [upload](#) page.
- Copy the code into the box for the first candidate, again checking if it's for performing or composing.
- On the next screen you attach the correct files, a bit like adding files to an email.
- **TAKE A SCREENSHOT** so you have a record of which files you uploaded.
- Click the button to submit it.
- Repeat for all candidates in both samples.

Further samples:

There are a number of reasons why further samples could be requested by your moderator. They will do this by emailing the school exams officer. Please make sure that you have the work for all candidates ready to upload promptly if requested.

Appraising

There is no change planned for the GCSE set works. Past papers, mark schemes and audio files are available to download from WJEC Portal.

Please note that there will be a 25% extra time version of the audio available to download from Portal before the exam. Further details will be sent to exams officers.

The 2024 exam papers and marking schemes will be published to Portal on results day.

GCE AS and A Level

There is a new [teacher guide](#) on the website which contain procedural information for performing, composing and appraising. Please share this with your exams officer too. There is also a document which explains how [extra time](#) should be applied to music exams.

In readiness for the 2024 series it may be useful to remind yourself of the comments made in the [Principal Examiners' report](#) which is available on the website.

Performing

As the A Level Performing Visiting Examiners' Route draws to an end, we would like to thank teachers (and accompanists) for their hard work in preparing candidates, but also for making arrangements and welcoming the examiners to your centres. They always thoroughly enjoy their visits and the opportunity to hear such talented young musicians.

Composing submissions

As with GCSE the AS and A Level Composing work will be submitted via **Surpass**. There is no option to submit by post.

The codes for uploading will be ready in Surpass in advance of the deadline for submission which, as always, is **15th May**. There will be a code for every candidate, as these Units are externally assessed.

Please remember that the composition to a set brief **MUST** demonstrate an understanding of the Western Classical Tradition, which for this purpose is defined as Baroque, Classical and Romantic music. If they compose an excellent piece but do not demonstrate aspects of the WCT they will not be able to access the higher mark bands, so this is absolutely vital.

Full details of the requirements and the process for uploading can be found in this [guide](#).

Here is a brief summary:

- Go to the [upload](#) page.
- Copy the code into the box for the first candidate.
- On the next screen you attach the correct files, a bit like adding files to an email.

- **TAKE A SCREENSHOT** so you have a record of which files you uploaded.
- Click the button to submit it.
- Repeat for all candidates.

We have produced some additional information regarding GCE composing, which is available on the website:

Composing: Amplification of the Criteria of Assessment – this gives further details on how the examiner will use the criteria for assessment, so that you can advise your candidates and give them effective feedback.

Appraising

The final decision regarding changes to set works will be confirmed in the coming weeks and months. This will be communicated officially via circular, and also via our website and social media channels. Any change in the set pieces will be accompanied by detailed resources for teachers, and there will be time before the first teaching for you to prepare.

Past papers, marking schemes and audio files can be downloaded from WJEC Portal.

Candidates will need to take unannotated copies of the scores of their GCE set works into the exam. If there are no printed bar numbers, you are permitted to write these in. No other markings are allowed.

Questions?

Please get in touch if you need to ask any questions. We are here to help.

Music@wjec.co.uk