

Version 4 – October 2025

# GCSE MUSIC HANDBOOK

WJEC

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## Unit 1 Performing

### Requirements for every candidate:

- 1 ensemble performance lasting at least 1 minute. See the [ensemble flowchart](#) to check pieces for suitability.
- At least one other performance – solo, or ensemble or a mixture. (i.e., there is no compulsory solo)
- A minimum of 4 minutes performance in total.
- A programme note for one piece they have performed which is linked to an area of study.
- Submit an mp3 and score/leadsheet for each performance, and a [marksheet](#).

### Things to remember:

- Recordings **MUST** be made in the year of assessment – Usually Year 11.
- Each piece must be recorded and assessed separately.
- The teacher **MUST** be present for all recordings, but this does not necessarily have to be in school.
- You **MUST** supply a score/ lead sheet for every performance unless it is impossible to do so. In this case, please contact the Music team for advice before proceeding. Scores should be annotated if the candidate deviates from what is printed.
- The teacher assesses all performances, and a sample will be submitted for moderation.
- Work will be submitted online, so keep all documents and recordings in a digital format.
- All declarations **MUST** be signed by the teacher and the candidate. Typed signatures **are** acceptable.
- You must also submit a [timing penalty declaration](#), and if any candidates did not perform for at least 4 minutes you must complete the [Microsoft Form](#).
- Timing begins from the start of the first note performed by the candidate and stops at the end of the final note performed by the candidate. Sections when the candidate is not performing are not included in the timing.
- If there is anything unusual or unclear in the work, please use the comments box on the marking sheet

### The moderation process:

- Teacher/candidate prepares **all work** ready for assessment and possible submission.
- Teacher assesses all candidate work.
- Candidates are given an opportunity to appeal marks, under the school policy.
- Teacher/exam officer submits marks for every candidate via the [Portal](#).
- Sampled candidates (usually 15) are identified on the Portal.
- The work can be uploaded straight away by clicking on the upload button next to the candidate's name.
- Teacher/exam officer uploads all of the work for the sampled candidates – mp3 files, scans of scores and signed mark sheets. **Deadline – 5<sup>th</sup> May.**
- Moderators begin by looking at sampled work.
- Additional work may be requested as late as July. Reasons for this include issues with assessment, but also random checks, errors in levels of difficulty, errors in time penalties. The aim is to achieve the fairest possible outcomes for every candidate in every centre. **You should have the work of every candidate ready to submit at short notice.**
- Any Clerical Errors are identified on the Portal. These could be incorrect addition, incorrect transfer from the marksheet, incorrect application of levels of difficulty, incorrect timing penalties. These are not necessarily the final processed marks.

## Unit 2 Composing

### Requirements for every candidate:

- 1 composition based on a [brief](#) released to the Portal on 1<sup>st</sup> September in the year of entry.
- An evaluation of the composition based on a brief.
- 1 free composition.
- Submit mp3 and score/leadsheet for each composition, one evaluation and a non-assessed [log and mark sheet](#).

### Things to remember:

- Briefs are released to the Portal on 1<sup>st</sup> September every year.
- The brief composition **MUST** be completed in the year of assessment – Usually Year 11.
- For the free composition the candidate must write their own brief.
- The teacher **MUST** monitor each composition on at least 3 occasions and must be confident to sign to authenticate them as the candidate's own work.
- You **MUST** supply a score/ lead sheet for every composition. Annotated screenshots are an acceptable alternative, but the annotations must explain the musical content.
- The teacher assesses all compositions, and a sample will be submitted for moderation.
- Work will be submitted online, so keep all documents and recordings in a digital format.
- All declarations **MUST** be signed by the teacher and the candidate. Typed signatures are acceptable.
- There are no timing penalties in composing.
- Any non-original material in the compositions **MUST** be identified on the log. This includes loops.
- If there is anything unusual or unclear in the work, please use the comments box on the marking sheet to identify this.

### The moderation process:

- Teacher/candidate prepares **all work** ready for assessment and possible submission.
- Teacher assesses all candidate work.
- Candidates are given an opportunity to appeal marks, under the school policy.
- Teacher/exam officer submits marks for every candidate via the Portal.
- Sampled candidates (usually 15) are identified on the [Portal](#).
- The work can be uploaded straight away by clicking on the upload button next to the sampled candidates' names.
- Teacher/exam officer uploads all of the work for the sampled candidates – mp3 files, scans of scores and signed mark sheets. **Deadline – 5<sup>th</sup> May.**
- Moderators begin by looking at sampled work.
- Additional work may be requested as late as July. Reasons for this include issues with assessment, but also random checks, errors in levels of difficulty, errors in time penalties. The aim is to achieve the fairest possible outcomes for every candidate in every centre. **You should have the work of every candidate ready to submit at short notice.**
- Any Clerical Errors are identified on the Portal. These could be incorrect addition, or incorrect transfer from the marksheet. These are not necessarily the final processed marks.

### Unit 3 Appraising

#### Before the exam:

- Refer to the [specification](#) for details of set works and Areas of Study.
- Refer to Appendix C of the specification for a list of terms candidates should know, understand and be able to use.

#### The audio:

- If you have candidates entitled to 25% extra time the exams officer can download audio with the extra time built in from the **Portal**. This will be available under “today’s papers” one working day before the exam. A password will be required. This will be available one working day before the exam.
- For candidates entitled to different percentages of extra time please email the music team for instructions.
- The standard mp3 file can be downloaded from “today’s papers,” on the **Portal**. A password will be required. This will be available one working day before the exam.
- Music teachers are **NOT** permitted to listen to or check the mp3 files before the examination.
- You should check the audio equipment before the exam using a non-confidential CD or mp3 file.

#### How to run the exam:

- All the usual rules of examination venues apply. Examination conduct posters should be displayed.
- The Music exam cannot be held in the same room as any other exam.
- The audio must be played **out loud** in the room unless there is an agreed reasonable adjustment in place for specific candidates, e.g., a candidate with hearing problems.
- Use the best quality audio equipment you have.
- Consider the acoustic of the room. A large hall or gym may add extra echo to the audio which could make details unclear and disadvantage candidates.
- The duration of all Music exams is listed as “approximately” because the extracts of music are selected based on the questions which can be asked, rather than the length of the audio.
- You should **NOT** attempt to time the music exam.
- Start the exam by playing the audio. When it finishes the exam is complete and the papers should be collected.
- The candidates must **NOT** have any access to the audio controls.
- The invigilator should **NOT** pause or replay any part of the audio.
- The Music teacher should **NOT** be in the examination room.

#### Special Considerations, Reasonable Adjustments and What to do if...:

- If you have a candidate who you believe should receive special considerations, please ask your exams officer to make an application online.
- If you have a candidate who requires reasonable adjustments to be made, please email the music team with the details.
- If something goes wrong in the exam, please ask one invigilator to make a note of exactly what happened and what was done. Contact WJEC for advice as soon as possible.
- If you think there is an error in the exam paper, please check to see if an erratum notice has been released. If any error has disadvantaged your candidates, please email the music team with the full details as soon as possible.

## Timeline for WJEC GCSE Music NEA, assuming a two year course with entries made in Year 11.

### Year 10

Any time during Year 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work on composition exercises and free composing.</li> <li>• Select and practice pieces for performing. Record these for internal feedback purposes and as backup in case of any disasters.</li> </ul>
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### Year 11

**Composing briefs are available to download from the Portal from September 1<sup>st</sup>. Check all of the details on the front of the document very carefully to ensure you have the correct one.**

Between September and the end of April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Record performances.</li> <li>• Candidates write Composing evaluation.</li> <li>• Candidates write Performing programme note.</li> <li>• Candidates complete Composing log.</li> <li>• Teacher assesses ALL Performing and Composing work.</li> <li>• Candidates can appeal the marks under the school policy.</li> <li>• <b>Teacher ensures that the work for all candidates is ready to submit.</b></li> </ul>
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At the start of May  (You can submit marks and work before May if ready)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher / Exams officer submits the marks for Performing and Composing for every candidate.</li> <li>• The sample for each unit will be identified straight away.</li> <li>• Teacher / Exams officer checks that all signatures have been completed.</li> <li>• Work can be uploaded straight away.</li> <li>• Teacher / Exams officer uploads work of sampled candidates <b>by 5<sup>th</sup> May.</b></li> </ul>
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After sampled work has been submitted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exams officer monitors emails for any requests for additional work or information.</li> <li>• <b>Any additional work required by the moderator should be ready to submit</b> and should be uploaded promptly. All candidate work is kept securely until the end of the appeals window in the autumn term.</li> </ul>
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Please see separate [guidance](#) on uploading NEA.