

GCSE Music – Unit 4 (42704)

Guidance for Students (to be given to students at the start of work for this unit.)

These notes are intended to help you with your work. They explain what you can and cannot do. Read them carefully and keep referring to them during the course of the controlled assessment. If you are unclear about any aspect of the work, you may ask your teacher for guidance.

The task:

The task is to compose a piece of music in response to **two or more** of the five areas of study in the specification. The areas of study are:

Rhythm & Metre	Harmony & Tonality	Texture & Melody	Timbre & Dynamics	Structure & Form
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You will have up to **25 hours** to complete the composition.

When the work is finished, you will hand in to your teacher:

- **A recording of the final completed composition.** This should be on a CD or minidisc. You cannot submit it as an MP3 file. Your recording can be made by live performers (including yourself), ICT, or a combination of both.
- **A musical score.** The score should reflect the kind of music you have composed. You might wish to submit a staff notated score, possibly using score writing software such as Sibelius. However, you may wish to submit a graphic score or use Tab for guitar music, or write a detailed account of the music. If you wish, you can combine any of these. The important thing is that your score matches the music in your composition and shows your intentions clearly.
- **A completed Candidate Record Form (CRF).** You must complete fully the first three pages of the CRF. Explain carefully how you have used the areas of study. Also make sure you write down accurate details about musicians involved in the recording of your composition and how the recording was achieved, including help from others in making the recording. This will include stating exactly who has performed, what instrumental/vocal parts they have performed and other details such as where those musicians might have contributed improvisations. This will help your teacher to assess your work and will help the moderator to understand your teacher's assessment.

In many cases, the recording might take place as part of the composition, for example if you use a sequencing programme to create your music such as Cubase or Garageband and you record most or all of the parts yourself. However, you might have composed for a group of instruments that you don't play and might want to use other musicians to produce a live recording. If necessary, you can have extra time to do this at the end of the 25 hours. In this case, you must give them the score to perform from and indicate on the CRF how the recording was achieved. They will not be able to change anything in your composition so it is important to make sure you are happy with the final composition.

What you can do:

- The bulk of your composition should be completed in your school/college and will be supervised by your teacher. You can try out and develop ideas at home if you wish, but your teacher will need to monitor the time spent on your composition and must be satisfied that the work is your own.
- You can undertake research and preparation tasks at home. For example, if you are composing in a particular style or genre, you might want to listen to similar music by other composers to get some ideas or study musical scores.
- You may work with other musicians in producing the recording, but the composition must be entirely your own work. Other musicians (including your teacher) will not be able to help you with the composition once the 25 hours have started. You may produce the recording outside your school or college if this is necessary but your teacher must be able to authenticate this.
- You may ask your teacher for technical help and guidance during the composition, for example how to use a particular feature on a piece of software, but you may not ask for specific help with the composition.

What you cannot do:

- You cannot work on the composition outside the general supervision of your teacher, although you can try out ideas away from the classroom. Your composition must be entirely your own work.
- In the recording of the composition, you cannot ask other musicians to contribute their own composed parts for you. The recording should follow **your** score. If any musicians contribute improvised parts, you **must** acknowledge this on the CRF.
- You **must not plagiarise** (copy) anybody else's music. If you use an existing piece of music in your work, for example if you write a theme and variations or use pre-prepared samples and loops from a piece of software, you **must** acknowledge this on the CRF.

Guidance notes for success:

- Work to your strengths. You are likely to be more successful if you compose music that interests you.
 - There are no restrictions on different styles or genres and you will not gain extra marks by choosing a genre that you think might be more worthy than another.
 - Don't choose to compose in a particular style just because others in your class are doing so.
 - Try to consider using all of your musical skills when composing. Students often do very well when they compose music that they can also perform.
 - During the composition, keep thinking about how you are using the **areas of study**. The Organisation of Sound section on pages 6 & 7 of the specification gives you all the detail of the areas of study. You might wish to consider using some of these features in your composition. Your teacher will be able to give you the specification or show you where to find it on the AQA website.
 - Take some time to produce a detailed score in whatever form best suits your composition, and fill the CRF in carefully and thoroughly.
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