

GCSE



WJEC GCSE Music

Approved by Qualifications Wales
Guidance for Teaching

Teaching from 2025
For award from 2027



This Qualifications Wales regulated qualification is not available to centres in England.

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Ready for the world.

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Introduction

The WJEC GCSE Music has been approved by Qualifications Wales and is available to all centres in Wales. It will be awarded for the first time in Summer 2027, using grades A* to G.

Aims of the Guidance for Teaching

The principal aim of the Guidance for Teaching is to support teachers in the delivery of WJEC GCSE Music and to offer guidance on the requirements of the qualification and the assessment process. The Guidance for Teaching is **not intended as a comprehensive reference**, but as support for teachers to develop stimulating and exciting courses tailored to the needs and skills of their learners. The guide offers possible classroom activities and links to useful resources (including our own, freely available digital materials and some from external sources) to provide ideas for immersive and engaging lessons.

Additional ways that WJEC can offer support:

- sample assessment materials and mark schemes
- professional learning events
- examiners' reports on each unit
- direct access to the subject officer
- free online resources
- Exam Results Analysis
- Online Examination Review.

Qualification Structure

WJEC GCSE Music consists of three units. The qualification is linear and does not contain tiering. There is no hierarchy to the order the units should be taught.

	Unit title	Type of Assessment	Weighting
Unit 1	Performing	Non-examination assessment	32.5%
Unit 2	Composing	Non-examination assessment	32.5%
Unit 3	Appraising	Digital only examination	35%

Summary of Assessment – Unit 1

Unit 1: Performing

Non-examination assessment

Performance: 4-6 mins (at least two pieces)

Marked by the centre and moderated by WJEC

32.5% of qualification

78 marks

Summary of assessment

Learners perform a minimum of **two** pieces of music giving a total performance time of 4-6 mins (each piece should be a minimum of 1 minute).

Learners can choose to perform solos or independent parts within ensembles, or a combination of both, in their chosen style(s) of music, without a conductor.

Learners can choose to perform on any instrument or voice, or technology, or a combination of these.

Overview of Unit 1

Performing

(32.5% of the qualification)

The purpose of this unit is to:

- allow learners to explore a range of performing repertoire and select pieces they wish to perform
- allow learners to develop their technical and performing skills by reflecting on their work in an ongoing cycle of practice and improvement
- provide opportunities for learners to perform individually and/or as part of an ensemble and develop the skills required to become proficient
- provide an opportunity for learners to develop personal skills of self-evaluation, resilience, determination and confidence.

This unit will focus on:

- **exploring** – learners will have the opportunity to explore and perform a range of repertoire, from various genres and periods and linked to different cultures in Wales and the world. This could include performing using any instrument, voice, or technology, as a soloist or as part of an ensemble
- **responding and reflecting** – learners will have the opportunity to reflect on their own work and respond to the feedback from others to focus their practice, allowing them to improve in the performances they give, with increased technical ability and communication
- **creating** – learners will have the opportunity to include improvisation in their performances, and with practice, to become more proficient and confident in this skill. In experiencing the process of creating their final performances, they will also be able to interpret repertoire in a way which is appropriate to their own ability and personal style choices.

For this assessment learners are required:

- to perform a minimum of **two** pieces of music giving a total performance time of 4-6 mins (each piece should be a minimum of 1 minute)
- to perform solos or independent parts within ensembles, or a combination of both, in their chosen style(s) of music, without a conductor.

In this unit, learners will develop knowledge, skills and understanding in:

1.1.1	performing music as a soloist and/or part of an ensemble
1.1.2	communication through performing or realisation with technical control, fluency and expression
1.1.3	the elements of music and how they are represented in the music they perform.

Unit 1 Assessment objectives and weightings

AO1	Demonstrate and apply knowledge and understanding of a range of music	-
AO2	Develop and apply performance and/or realisation skills	32.5%
AO3	Reflect on, analyse and evaluate their own work and the work of others	-
AO4	Create and develop ideas to communicate meaning in compositions	-

Unit 1 Teacher Guidance

1.1 Performing		
Content Amplification		Teacher Guidance
1.1.1 performing music as a soloist and/or part of an ensemble	<p>Learners should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (following exploration of a range of relevant repertoire) perform solos or independent parts within ensembles, or a combination of both, in their chosen style(s) of music, without a conductor. <p>Learners are required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> perform a minimum of two pieces of music giving a total performance time of 4-6 mins. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers could provide resources of varying levels of difficulty for learners to work through. These resources can be in different styles and provide the learner with opportunities to explore the possible pathways and receive feedback to inform their final choices of repertoire, instrument or technology options, under the guidance of the teacher. Teachers could provide exemplar material for learners to understand the difference between a solo and an ensemble performance, encouraging learners to experience a wide variety of performance opportunities. Teachers could provide guidance for learners interested in the Music Technology route enabling them to experience a possibly new route to music making for them to consider and learn about. Teachers could support learners to time their performances so that their portfolios meet the required timings that are outlined in the specification.

<p>1.1.2 communication through performing or realisation with technical control, fluency and expression</p>	<p>Learners should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> perform music in their chosen style(s) using instruments, voice or technology, with appropriate technical control, fluency and expression understand how to communicate music, in their chosen style(s), including reading notation as appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers could provide learners with opportunities to evaluate/mark carefully selected performances that will highlight how musicians can demonstrate technical control, fluency and expression. From this, learners could develop their understanding of what this means for them on a personal level when they prepare pieces. Teachers could provide learners with opportunities to read notation best suited to their needs in this unit. Teachers could provide examples of performances, either live or pre-recorded, which demonstrate how music can be successfully communicated and how sometimes the intentions are not successfully communicated. This would provide an excellent opportunity for students to mark some performances using the Unit 1 assessment criteria and make the connection between the quality of a performance and the mark awarded. Teachers could model the use of a recording device during the practice routine of learners. Learners could develop their understanding of how valuable it is to listen back to the performance, following notation and annotating successes and recognising areas that require further work.
<p>1.1.3 the elements of music and how they are represented in the music they perform</p>	<p>Learners should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate an understanding of how the elements of music are used in the music they perform including following performance directions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers could provide learners with a wide range of repertoire from different styles and make links with the music they have listened to or composed, with reference to the elements of music. Teachers could ask learners to find out what all performance directions in a piece mean and how they can be achieved on the instrument, voice or using technology. Teachers could provide opportunities for learners to listen to performances, together with the relevant notation, to understand whether a performer is following the performance directions.

Suggested Resources:

ABRSM guide to practical music examinations	Information provided within the syllabuses for each instrument family
Tips on how to practise	ABRSM - Tips on How to Practice
Accredited practical exams	e.g. London College of Music / Trinity College / Rockscool
A range of performances	YouTube
WJEC resources	WJEC website: unlimited access to free resources
Being prepared – exemplar performances	Exemplar performances to ascertain standards

Guidance on the use of ‘click tracks’

The use of ‘click tracks’ is permitted as part of a learner’s performance portfolio. However, it must be remembered that this assessment of “performing” is not necessarily the same as the assessment carried out in a graded exam. An audience member at a concert would not expect to hear a metronome ticking during the performance and although professional musicians do use click tracks, they are not audible to the audience. If a learner is unable to perform without a click track, or if no alternative backing track can be sourced then this will still be acceptable, but when assessing, the teacher should consider if the level of difficulty has been affected. If a backing track is used, the volume must be balanced so the accompaniment track and the learner are clearly audible to allow the teacher to assess the performance against the criteria provided in the Unit 1 Assessment Pack. Teachers and learners should consider:

- Does the learner really need the click track?
- Is there a backing track available without a click track?
- Could a live accompaniment be used instead?
- Could technology be used so that the learner can hear the click track but the audience cannot?
- Is the need for a click track because the piece is too challenging for the learner to play successfully?

Requirements of Unit 1

Guidance on how to prepare learners for assessment as a soloist and/or as part of an ensemble

After consultation and agreement, the teacher and learner will select appropriate material to perform. The teacher will provide feedback to learners on their performances at various stages throughout the course, giving necessary guidance and support. This feedback can be oral or written. Teachers will assess the learners' final performances, submit the marks and upload the sample requested following the submission of marks.

Solo performance

It is advised that solo performers rehearse and perform with an accompanist. Unaccompanied performances should always be approached with caution as performing unaccompanied instrumental and vocal music is extremely difficult and demanding, both in terms of technical competence and interpretation. It is recommended that competent accompanists are used in the assessment and the preparation of performances. Alternatively, it is possible to use a suitable backing track.

Ensemble performance

Unlike the previous specification, ensemble performance is no longer compulsory. However, there are differences in the assessment for solo and ensemble, so the following guidance is to assist you in choosing which criteria are most appropriate.

Ensemble performance is often an enjoyable part of music making, and learners can include this option in their Unit 1 portfolios. Ensemble groups must consist of 2 - 8 players and may consist of members of the music class, other learners or outside performers, including teachers and other adults. Ensemble repertoire is often chosen in consultation with peripatetic staff or external tutors, though many music teachers build up their resources over time. They will be familiar with pieces which are fun to perform but which also engage and challenge all members of the ensemble.

Note: The candidate's part should not be doubled by another performer within the ensemble. The ensemble repertoire must allow for interaction of parts – this is a very important indicator as to the suitability of the piece chosen for ensemble. The interaction in the ensemble piece will:

- ***display musical communication***
- ***include separate musical parts responding to each other and working together***
- ***include dialogue and agreement between the separate musical parts.***

If the music is presented as a solo performance with accompaniment, with little or no interaction between parts, then the piece is not considered to be an ensemble. A single instrument, or singer, may be accompanied by a piano, pop group, backing track or an orchestra – but only the actual content will determine whether the candidate is interacting as an equal member of a group or performing as a soloist with accompaniment.

Some examples are given below:

Example	Is this an Ensemble?	Assessment
A flute and piano piece where the flutist is the assessed candidate.	Not classed as an ensemble <i>This would be classed as solo and accompaniment.</i>	Assess the flute using solo criteria
A flute and piano piece where the pianist is the assessed candidate.	Ensemble <i>Accompanying a performer is a challenging ensemble skill.</i>	Assess the piano using ensemble criteria
A clarinet with a trio of instrumentalists where the clarinet part retains thematic material throughout the piece – the clarinettist is the assessed candidate.	Not classed as an ensemble <i>The clarinet part is effectively performing a solo while the other parts are providing an accompaniment</i>	Assess the clarinet using the solo criteria
A clarinet with a trio of instrumentalists where the clarinet part interacts with other performers – the clarinettist is the assessed candidate.	Ensemble <i>The interaction could include:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>musical dialogue, communicating with other performers via responding phrases</i> ● <i>sharing melodic content amongst all performers</i> ● <i>sharing the accompanying texture</i> ● <i>playing a countermelody</i> ● <i>delivering thematic content in harmony with others.</i> 	Assess the clarinet using the ensemble criteria
A singer performing the tune with one (or more) other singers/instrumentalists harmonising or accompanying – the singer performing the tune is the assessed candidate.	Not classed as an ensemble <i>The assessed candidate is keeping time with other performers, but they are effectively delivering a solo with accompaniment and not demonstrating clear interaction with others.</i>	Assess the voice using the solo criteria
A singer performing the tune with one (or more) other singers/instrumentalists harmonising – the assessed candidate is not the singer performing the tune.	Ensemble <i>The assessed candidate could be showing interaction with other parts through:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>providing additional harmonies</i> ● <i>adding countermelodic material</i> ● <i>adding backing ideas.</i> 	Assess the voice using the ensemble criteria

Example	Is this an Ensemble?	Assessment
A piano duet – the assessed candidate plays the tune in octaves high up on the piano throughout, with a second performer providing chordal accompaniment.	Not classed as an ensemble <i>The assessed candidate is keeping time with the other performer, but they are effectively delivering a solo with accompaniment and not demonstrating clear interaction with others.</i>	Assess the primo piano part using the solo criteria
A singer with a rock group demonstrating interaction with other band members – the assessed candidate is the singer.	Ensemble <i>The assessed candidate could be showing interaction with other parts such as:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>performing, at times, in harmony with a melody instrument</i> • <i>sections where the candidate sings in harmony with other vocalists</i> • <i>countermelodic ideas or weaving of parts between the singer and other band members</i> 	Assess the voice using the ensemble criteria
A member of a rock group accompanying a singer – the assessed candidate is an accompanying member e.g. drummer, bass player, keyboard player.	Ensemble <i>The assessed candidate is providing part of an accompaniment, which is a valid ensemble skill.</i>	Assess the drums/bass/keyboard using the ensemble criteria

If you have any questions about the suitability of the chosen format or style of a piece, please contact WJEC for advice.

Performing on more than one instrument/voice

There is no benefit to performing on a “second study” or mixing solo/ensemble/technology performances – each piece is assessed separately. If a candidate is of equal standard on two or more instruments, then they are free to choose. However, most candidates are stronger on one instrument (or voice), and it is worth reminding them that there are no additional marks given for versatility. It may well be that they perform more confidently on one instrument than another, even if they are on a lower grade. The teacher is in the best position to advise on this.

Standards

Learners should choose pieces that are commensurate with their ability, as an unconvincing performance of a technically demanding piece can be counter-productive and often results in lower marks. It is better to perform a less demanding piece that the candidate feels comfortable with and can perform with confidence.

Level of difficulty of pieces performed

All pieces which are listed on an accredited graded music examination syllabus will be accepted at that level **if** they are performed in full using the specified editions. The difficulty level of any **other** piece of music not contained in a graded music syllabus must be determined using the descriptors in the Assessment Pack.

The descriptors are not exhaustive; neither will every piece contain all features listed. When selecting the standard for each piece, teachers should use their professional judgement and look for the best fit. Remember that learners who submit performances of pieces that are **significantly** below the Standard difficulty level (Grade 3) will struggle to demonstrate sufficient skills to achieve a mark in the upper bands of the assessment criteria. A learner choosing to perform on two instruments at the same time e.g. by accompanying themselves singing on the piano or guitar, may be judged as performing at a higher difficulty level, depending on the content.

Timings

The total time of the performances should be calculated in minutes and seconds. If this falls below four minutes, then a penalty should be applied using the table of adjustments in the Assessment Pack.

The timing of a performance should start when the learner plays/sings their first note, and finish at the end of their final note. Any significant sections where the learner is silent should be discounted from the performance time, e.g. an instrumental verse in a vocal performance.

Calculating the total mark.

Each piece is marked out of 39 and the raw mark for each piece must then be adjusted accordingly for the level of difficulty, using the table in the Assessment Pack.

- If the candidate has performed **two** pieces, simply **add together the adjusted marks**. If the total performance time is below **four minutes**, then a penalty must be applied, following the table in the Assessment Pack, to give the final mark which will be submitted to WJEC.
- If the candidate has performed **3 or 4** pieces the calculation is as follows:
(**Total marks awarded for all pieces**) *divided by* (**the number of pieces performed**) *multiplied by 2*.
Again, if the total performance time is below **four minutes**, then a penalty must be applied to the final total before the mark is submitted to WJEC.
- If the candidate has only performed **one** piece, then their total mark for the Unit will be the mark they received for that piece (i.e. a maximum of 39/78) and if this piece is below **four minutes** a timing penalty must be applied before the mark is submitted to WJEC.

Recordings

A good standard of recording equipment is advised in all situations, as the moderator depends on the clarity of the recording. Singers and instrumentalists using backing tracks should be familiar with the electronic equipment (speakers, amps and mics) as well as the acoustic properties of the performing venue. It is advised to do a careful sound check and adjust levels, and if necessary, adjust or move equipment prior to recording, to ensure correct sound balance.

The non-examination assessment performances **must be** recorded in the presence of the teacher assessor. Recordings can be made at the most appropriate time during the course including on separate occasions. Each piece needs to be recorded separately in **one unedited attempt**. It is not permissible to perform different sections of the same piece on different occasions and use technology to join these together or for the recordings to be edited after the performance. Use or addition of effects is not permitted unless they are part of a music technology performance.

Centres are urged to provide the best possible opportunities for learners to be recorded, considering things such as background noise, availability of instruments and venues, the learner's preference for having an audience or not, their preparedness, availability of accompanists etc.

Scores and Accuracy

A copy of the sheet music or lead sheet for all pieces must be provided for the teacher assessor **before** the performance is recorded. Lead sheets must outline the pitch, rhythm, chords, tempo and performance directions as appropriate to the instrument. A lyric sheet is not sufficient for a vocal performance. This is essential as accuracy of the performance makes up one third of the assessment criteria. This is a straightforward request when the candidate is presenting a graded examination piece or equivalent, as the scores are readily available so teachers may prefer to guide learners towards these pieces.

Some learners will download tab etc. from the Internet – but this always needs careful checking. Others who have learnt a piece by ear, or from a YouTube video will need guidance on what to include in the lead sheet.

If the learner intends to deviate from the submitted score, then this should be annotated **before the recording**. If possible, notate the change in the pitch and/or rhythm. If the performance is more improvisatory in nature in some points, then a bracket can be marked over the improvised parts and annotated with “melodic improvisation here” or “rhythm altered here.” An example of this could be in a musical theatre or jazz style song where the second verse is altered, or a pop song where the singer “riffs” at the end of some lines. Inaccurate styling and incorrect delivery of the chosen pieces will result in lower marks in this respect.

- In the case of DJ performances, where it is impossible to provide details of melody and chords on a lead sheet, learners must provide details of tempo, timing and techniques to be used along with any musical (rather than technical) considerations, such as beat matching effectively.
- Scores for beat-box performances can be notated in a similar way to drum kit pieces, or with rhythm grids and numbers of repeats given. It is important to provide a key to show which sounds are being used. Any sung sections can be notated on a staff.
- Rap scores should contain the lyrics with a time signature, beats marked out and any “feature” rhythms notated. As well as tempo and dynamic markings there may also be indications of tone of voice to be used, and again any sung sections can be notated on a staff.

As long as the musical details of the piece are provided in a way that allows the teacher assessor to assess the accuracy, learners and teachers can present these in any appropriate fashion.

It is essential to include performance directions so that there is evidence for the award of marks for following these.

Please remember that it is **not** acceptable to submit a reference recording or a web link in place of a score. Learners submitting performances without a score will not be able to access the higher marking bands as there will not be sufficient evidence of their accuracy.

Improvisation

The original stimulus must be submitted along with a lead sheet showing a plan of the performance. Examples of stimuli are: chord patterns, melodic patterns, rhythms, rag, tala, scales (such as Blues scale etc.). The plan should outline details such as how many times the chord sequence will be repeated, plans for improvisation in each section, planned dynamics and other performance directions etc. Learners will be assessed on whether they are performing accurately within the stimulus and plan i.e. whether the performance actually uses the chosen scale/chord progression etc., and also if the performance is “accurate to the style” and maintains the pulse, flow and communication of the piece, following the plan provided.

Technology-based and non-traditional performances (solo pieces)

There are a number of different opportunities in this specification for learners who may wish to offer a technology-based realisation as a solo performance. Teachers and learners should consider the ‘General features’ for such pieces as outlined in the Assessment Pack for guidance on the difficulty of standards.

DJ-ing – things to consider

- Include a clear performance plan.
- Utilise of a range of equipment (i.e. a traditional set e.g. turntablism and/or use of modern software).
- Effective DJ techniques (mixing, scratching, fading, echo etc.).
- Inventive use of sound sources and effects (EQ/FX).
- Familiarity of techniques relative to a variety of genres, and demonstrating the clear ability to mix songs within the same genre.
- Effective selection of tracks, well blended in terms of the overall key scheme.
- Demonstrate the ability to move a selection of tracks through moods/tempo/shades.
- Demonstrate a creative performance technique including beat mixing/matching skills, pitch-shifting, looping, sampling, time-stretching, scratching and layering.
- Achieve fluency when joining the music/effects together, showing understanding of the musical language and rhythm (effective transitioning and use of crossfaders).
- Interaction with an audience.
- Ability to give the set a sense of direction, keeping to the planned schedule.

Beatboxing – things to consider

- Fluent use of vocal techniques to create range of sonorities (including treble, bass, beats/rhythms, effects).
- Show advanced ability to control vocal sounds and resonances, including the contrasts of the mechanics of sound (nasal, etc.).
- Produce a combination of sounds at the same time, showing understanding of the 'low band' EQ.
- Secure breath control, including inward and outward sounds.
- Demonstrate an ability to copy sounds and patterns.
- Maintain a fluency of tempo and a logical progression of musical ideas.
- Effective microphone technique.
- Incorporate various techniques, changing beat-patterns, controlling the rhythm, including some melodic ideas, varying the pitches; 'looping' ideas live and including various sound effects.
- It is important for learners to use a variety of different techniques in their performance and take the opportunity to show what they can do.

Sequencing – things to consider

- The task is to create an accurate audio version of a selected song/piece, from a score or lead sheet.
- This is not an arranging task.
- Ability shown in achieving an effective and convincing balancing of parts.
- Well-controlled use of effects (panning, reverb, delay etc.).
- Use of a variety of performance controls and dynamics.
- Thoughtful and appropriate use of program functions (quantise, loops, fills etc.).
- Evidence of variation in the suitable and careful articulation of sounds and effects.
- Demonstrate increasingly challenging work in terms of musical complexity.

Rapping – things to consider

- Establish a convincing vocal presence.
- Clear diction and enunciation, including clarity of delivery.
- Effective adoption and creativity of literary techniques and in the lyrical interpretation of the ideas (e.g. alliteration, wordplay).
- Convincing control of rhythmic techniques (i.e. flams, triplets, rests, rhyming patterns/runs, etc.) – either free-styles or pre-written.
- Control of the delivery in sync with the rhythmic patterns, using the beat to emphasize particular words or phrases (i.e. the 'flow').
- Secure breath control.
- Ability to combine vocal and technical skills.
- Evidence of textural variety (use of call and response, variety in content).
- Production of inventive, improvisatory work keeping closely to the beat to achieve a coherent outcome.

Portfolio Requirements for Unit 1

- **Total marks for Unit 1: 78 marks.** Each piece performed is marked out of 39. 'Mark bands' have been designed to assist the marking process, which helps identify individual levels of achievement.
- **Total duration of performance: 4 - 6 minutes (excluding long introductions etc.).** A submission under 4 minutes will incur a sliding penalty, depending on the amount of time that the submission is under the minimum timing requirement. There are no penalties for submissions over 6 minutes but submissions over this length are often self-penalising.
Note: The timing of the performance should start when the learner plays/sings their first note, and finish at the end of their final note. Any significant sections where the learner is silent should be discounted from the performance time, e.g. an instrumental verse in a vocal performance.
- **Number of pieces:** The learner can submit between 2 and 4 pieces to meet the timing requirement. However, each piece should be a minimum of 1 minute. Learners are allowed to add repeats to a performance, but these should make musical sense. Any additional repeats should be marked on the score or lead sheet before the performance.
- **Solo/Ensemble pieces:** The learner can submit a portfolio of all Solo pieces, all Ensemble pieces or a combination of Solo and Ensemble pieces to meet the time required.
- **Level of Difficulty:** The standard of pieces selected for performance should be broadly equivalent to Grade 3 of the graded music examinations. Pages 23-30 of the SAMs Assessment Pack contains descriptions of the levels of difficulty for the range of performances accepted in this qualification. This guidance must be followed when playing pieces **not** listed for graded music examinations. Centres should contact WJEC for advice if a learner wishes to offer a performance not covered by the tables in Appendix A (SAMS).
Note: Centres should be aware that candidates must perform music at a difficulty level suitable for a GCSE course in music – a performance that cannot demonstrate sufficient skills or content will be unlikely to achieve a mark in the upper bands if there is insufficient evidence to award the marks.
- **A copy of the sheet music for all pieces must be provided to the assessor before the performance is recorded:** This can be traditional stave notation, tab, a lead sheet etc., but it must contain sufficient details of pitch, rhythm and performance directions for a valid assessment of accuracy to take place. If a learner does not provide an adequate form of notation, then there will not be sufficient evidence to award a mark for accuracy in the upper bands. A vocalist will need to submit a score containing the melodic line – a lyrics sheet will not suffice.
Note: A reference recording will not be an acceptable alternative to notation.
- **Non-examination Assessment:** Recordings can be made at the most appropriate time during the course but must be in the presence of the teacher responsible for the assessment, i.e. this should not be a private tutor, peripatetic teacher etc. The performance will be internally assessed and externally moderated.

Teachers will assess their learners' performances, submitting the marks and the moderation sample as required, via Portal. This will include the recordings and copies of the scores for all of the music that has been performed by the sampled candidates. The centre marks will then be moderated by a WJEC moderator. WJEC will publish additional guidance on the upload process on the subject webpage.

Learners are encouraged to develop their knowledge and understanding of music through performing. All learners are required to perform a minimum of **two** pieces which can be solo, ensemble, or realisations using technology, or a portfolio containing more than one of these options. Learners can submit up to four pieces to meet the time requirement. Instrumental performances, vocal performances, sequencing, DJ-ing, rapping, beat boxing and improvisation are accepted within both solo and ensemble performances. The main consideration is that learners choose music of an appropriate standard that they enjoy performing.

Assessment Criteria

The new performing assessment criteria has been adapted for the solo, ensemble and technology submissions. Teachers should ensure that they are referring to the correct grid. They can be found in the Assessment Pack.

There are 3 columns for each type of performance. The first two, Accuracy, and Technical Control are the same in each of the discipline options, but Column 3 reflects the different skills being assessed.

Solo Performance		
Column 1: Accuracy	Column 2: Technical Control	Column 3: Expression

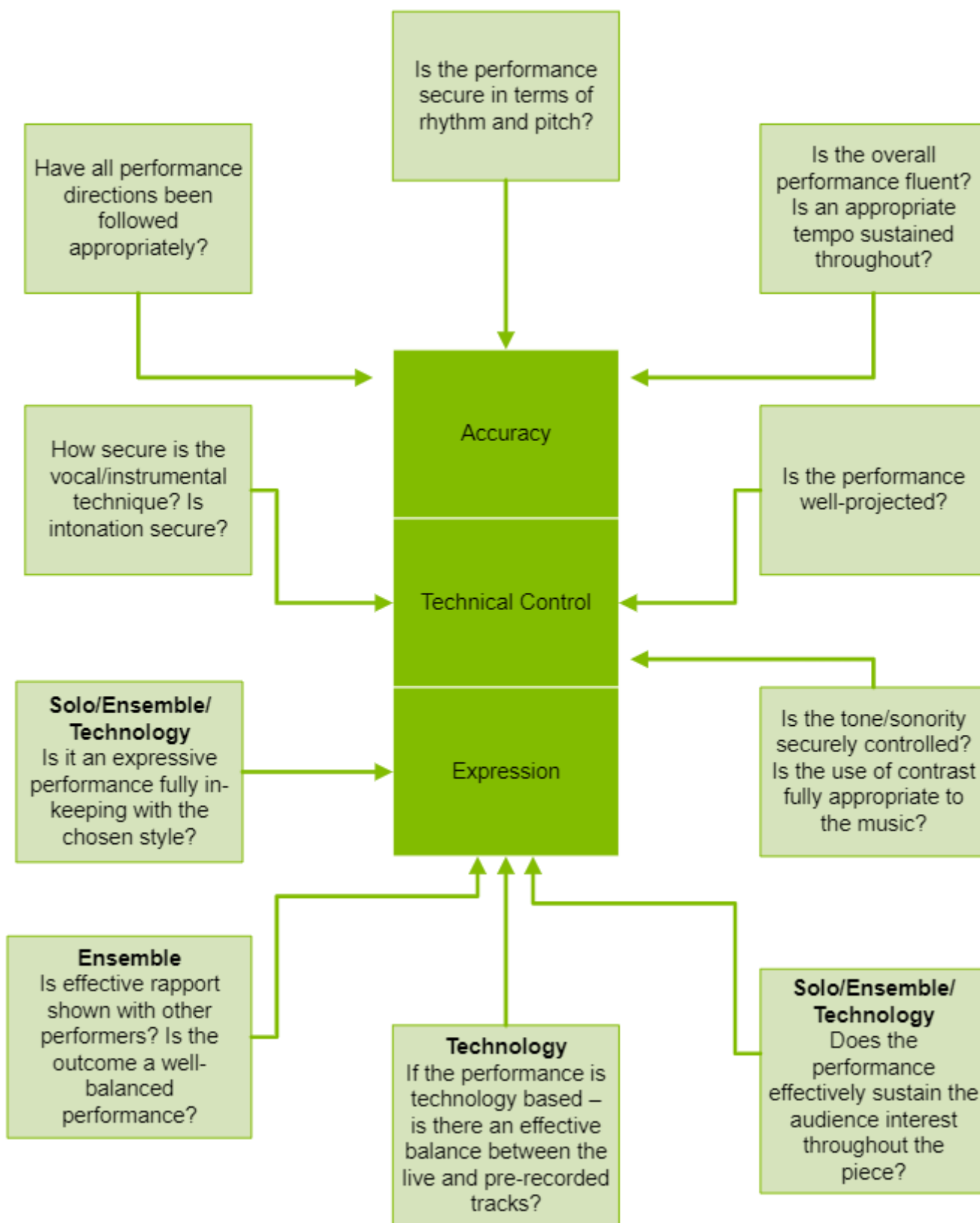
Ensemble Performance		
Column 1: Accuracy	Column 2: Technical Control	Column 3: Ensemble skills

Music Technology Performance		
Column 1: Accuracy	Column 2: Technical Control	Column 3: Mastering and Mixing

When assessing a performance, teachers should decide which mark band reflects the candidate's performance, within each column. They should take a 'best fit' approach and remember that candidates may achieve higher bands in one column than another. Once the band has been selected the teacher assessor must select the most appropriate mark within the band.

It is a good idea to share a copy of the criteria with all candidates during the early part of the course so that they can make sure that private and peripatetic teachers know how the performances will be assessed. The criteria can also be used in class for peer assessment of solo and group performances. If possible, candidates should be encouraged to perform regularly during the course, in class show backs/concerts/assemblies/recitals etc. Record all of these performances to support feedback, and also as possible material for the final submission. Use copies of the final assessment form to monitor the standards achieved, set targets, and offer advice to learners. Regular monitoring and feedback given to candidates in the performing element can only improve standards and raise confidence.

Applying the criteria – considerations



Preparing Unit 1 work for submission

Centres must have completed all assessment and appeals in advance of submitting marks. The sample candidates will be identified when marks are submitted, and work can be uploaded for these candidates straight away.

Check list prior to submission of the Performing sample:

- Have you checked that the correct candidates' work will be uploaded?
- Are the files labelled in a clear way to aid the moderator?
- Have all recordings been checked for sound quality and clarity of performance?
- Has the candidate signed the candidate declaration?
- Have all appropriate sections been authenticated by the teacher and the candidates?
- Have level of difficulty adjustments and timing penalties been applied correctly?
- Have all scores and lead sheets been included for the moderator?
- Are lead sheets sufficiently detailed with musical explanation?

Centres should have the work of **every** candidate ready for submission by the deadline of the 5th of May, regardless of whether they are in the initial sample. Additional candidates' work may be requested by the moderator, and this should be **ready for upload** without delay.

Summary of Assessment – Unit 2

Unit 2: Composing

Non-examination assessment

2 compositions (3-6 mins total recommended)

Reflective Log

Marked by the centre and moderated by WJEC

32.5% of qualification

78 marks

Summary of assessment

Learners compose **two** original pieces of music with a recommended total duration of between 3-6 mins, **one** in response to their own devised brief and **one** in response to a brief set by WJEC.

Learners present a reflective log based on the compositional process of **either** the composition in response to their own devised brief **or** the composition based on the brief set by WJEC.

Overview of Unit 2

Composing

(32.5% of the qualification)

The purpose of this unit is to:

- develop an awareness of the process of creating original music
- develop learners' skills in self-evaluation, refinement and development of their own work
- develop a sense of writing music for a specific purpose
- allow learners to explore creating music in a variety of different genres and styles, from different periods.

The unit will focus on:

- **exploring** – learners will have the opportunity to explore various styles and genres of music linked to different cultures in Wales and the world, and understand how they have been created to produce the intended effect. They will be able to use these methods to create and develop their own ideas. They will also be able to compose through exploring ideas in improvisation
- **responding and reflecting** – learners will be able to evaluate and refine their work through reflection and feedback from others to create a successful finished product
- **creating** – learners will create their own original music in a style of their choosing, and a piece to meet a brief specified by WJEC using the techniques they have explored and reflected upon.

For this assessment learners are required to:

- compose **two** original pieces of music with a recommended total duration of between 3-6 mins, **one** in response to their own devised brief and **one** in response to a brief set by WJEC
- present a reflective log based on the compositional process of **either** the composition in response to their own devised brief, **or** the composition based on the brief set by WJEC.

In this unit, learners will develop knowledge, skills and understanding of the following areas:

2.2.1	composing their own music, in a style of their choosing and to a set brief
2.2.2	controlling the elements of music and musical devices in developing ideas
2.2.3	reflecting on the compositional process
2.2.4	realising their compositions using instrument(s), voice(s) and/or technology as appropriate.

Unit 2 Assessment objectives and weightings

AO1	Demonstrate and apply knowledge and understanding of a range of music	-
AO2	Develop and apply performance and/or realisation skills	-
AO3	Reflect on, analyse and evaluate their own work and the work of others	2.5%
AO4	Create and develop ideas to communicate meaning in compositions	30%

Unit 2 Teacher Guidance

1.2 Composing	
Content Amplification	Teacher Guidance
<p>1.2.1 composing their own music, in a style of their choosing and to a set brief</p>	<p>Learners should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (following exploration of a range of relevant musical styles and genres) create and develop ideas to communicate meaning in composition. <p>Learners are required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> compose two original pieces of music with a recommended total duration of between 3-6 mins, one in response to their own devised brief and one in response to a brief set by WJEC.
	<p>Creating Ideas</p> <p>At the start of the course, it would be advised to explore a wide range of musical styles and genres to inspire learners before they begin the composition process. This would be a good opportunity to explore exemplar compositions from local, national and international cultures and traditions. Learners may benefit from listing these styles in a 'composition sketch book' highlighting any keywords, musical devices and elements of music they study. Learners can reference the 'glossary of terms' found in Appendix B of the specification during this process.</p> <p>Learners should be encouraged to develop their individual creative skills throughout the composition process and a 'composition skills' lesson can be an effective way to demonstrate ways to develop initial ideas, melodies, rhythms, structures etc. Improvisation can be an effective tool as part of the creative process and often works well as a whole class performance. Professional workshops can work well during the initial phases of composition, exposing learners to further genres and styles for inspiration.</p> <p>Ideas for initial composition lessons could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Melody writing (balanced phrasing, repetition, use of sequence) Basic harmonic progressions and cadences Suitable harmonic support for a melodic line Accompanying styles Creating a melody out of chords Balancing ideas and patterns Structure, form and contrast Developing ideas

		<p>Briefs</p> <p>Once learners have created some ideas in their 'sketchbook' they could begin to explore the briefs. Centres may choose to focus on the 'set brief' first followed by the 'response to their own devised brief' or vice versa. Some centres may wish to give the learners the choice. Whichever path is chosen it is vital that the timings of the compositions are closely monitored. The total duration must be between 3-6 minutes and ideally this would be equally balanced across the two compositions to enable learners to fully access the assessment criteria.</p> <p>Learners will be given a choice of four briefs set by the WJEC. These will be released during September at the start of the course. Learners should choose a brief that inspires them and to which they have a genuine interest in. This will allow them to undertake further research into the style/genre to aid with development of initial ideas and gain further understanding. Learners should be encouraged to reflect on this initial process in their reflective log. (See 1.2.3)</p> <p>The free composition is in response to their own devised brief, and this can be an opportunity for learners to explore the cross-cutting themes. This might include human rights and diversity, including Black, Asian, and minority ethnic perspectives, identity, culture, and contributions. This also allows learners to engage with cultures, languages, perspectives, and contributions of their own and others' identities. It is important here that learners get to express their individuality and should be encouraged to work to their strengths, tailoring their musical decisions to suit their musical understanding and capabilities.</p>
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1.2.2
controlling
the elements
of music and
musical
devices in
developing
ideas

Learners should understand:

- how knowledge gained in performing and appraising music can be used to develop their compositions. This includes their understanding of:
 - the elements of music
 - musical forms and devices
 - styles and genres
 - to communicate meaning and develop ideas within their own original work.

Development

As learners begin to develop their compositions, they should look to be inspired by music that surrounds them. As the course progresses learners will study a variety of genres/styles in Unit 3 and hopefully be exposed to further styles in Unit 1 and further develop their knowledge of the musical elements and musical devices. Having a secure knowledge of the elements of music is vital to allow learners to develop a coherent and well-structured composition. It is encouraged that lessons in 'composition skills' continue to focus on the elements and refer to them at frequent intervals. Reference to the glossary of terms (Appendix B of the Specification) will aid learning.

Learners should look to develop their initial ideas to show contrast and not just look to create new ideas.

Ideas for development of initial ideas could include:

- Learners present their initial idea/theme. This could be between 4-8 bars in length.
- Learners study a variety of musical devices. This could include sequence, syncopation, inversion, diminution etc
- Learners take their initial idea and develop it using a chosen device.
- Learners can reflect on the effectiveness of this and if it would be suitable to add to their original work.

This process could be revisited at intervals throughout the academic year to further develop new ideas.

Form and structure of the composition should be ideally considered at an early stage in the process. Learners should consider the timing restraints on the composition and should choose a suitable structure accordingly.

Effective structures to consider are binary, ternary, rondo, 32 bar song/AABA and theme and variation.

		Instrumentation is an important element of music and discussions around this can inspire learners and further develop their compositions. Learners should be encouraged to create music for a variety of instruments and be given opportunities to experiment with alternative sounds/timbres. This will allow learners to take risks in the compositional process and further encourage their individuality.
1.2.3 reflecting on the compositional process	Learners should be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reflect on, analyse and evaluate their own work critically evaluate the effectiveness and impact of their: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> response to a brief and the social, cultural and historical context creative choices, including their initial ideas use of elements of music to develop their initial ideas. 	Learners should be given opportunities to evaluate and refine their work through reflection and feedback from others, to create a successful finished product. Findings of this can be presented in their reflective log. This can be based on the compositional process of either the composition in response to their own devised brief, or the composition based on the brief set by WJEC. Guidance for this is given below.
1.2.4 realising their compositions using instrument(s), voice(s) and/or technology as appropriate	Learners should understand how to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> create an audio version of their compositions in the most appropriate way. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> live performance output from computer software create notation of the compositions in an appropriate format. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> staff notation lead sheet graphic notation written commentary. 	Learners can choose how to best record the audio for their composition. It is important to note that the quality of their performance is not part of the assessment criteria. At this stage of the course, it would be hugely beneficial for learners to experience recording and producing music using current technologies available to them. This could be delivered in house or via a professional workshop. Learners should select the appropriate format to notate their compositions effectively. Many students use popular staff notation packages such as Sibelius or Dorico. However, online score sharing software such as Musescore or Noteflight are becoming increasingly popular and great value for learners. An increasing number of learners are choosing to notate their compositions in the format of a lead sheet. These must outline the structure, harmony, details of melody and rhythm, tempo, dynamics, instruments/tracks used, compositional devices, general musical details of technology of performance (including any use of samples, automated devices etc.) and words if it is a song.

Preparing Unit 2 work for submission

Centres must have completed all assessment and appeals in advance of submitting marks. The sample candidates will be identified when marks are submitted, and work can be uploaded for these candidates straight away.

Check list prior to submission of the Composing sample:

- Have you checked that the correct candidates' work will be uploaded?
- Are the files labelled in a clear way to aid the moderator?
- Have all recordings been checked for sound quality?
- Has the candidate signed the candidate declaration?
- Have all appropriate sections been authenticated by the teacher and the candidates?
- Have all scores and lead sheets been included for the moderator?
- Are lead sheets sufficiently detailed with musical explanation?

Centres should have the work of **every** candidate ready for submission by the deadline of the 5th of May, regardless of whether they are in the initial sample. Additional candidates' work may be requested by the moderator, and this should be **ready for upload** without delay.

Summary of Assessment – Unit 3

Unit 3: Appraising

Digital only examination: 1 hour 30 minutes approx.

Marked by WJEC

35% of the qualification

84 marks

Summary of assessment

Questions requiring objective responses, short and extended answers, in response to the chosen set works and unseen extracts.

Overview of Unit 3

Appraising

(35% of the qualification)

The purpose of this unit is to:

- allow learners to experience a range of music from contrasting styles/genres and periods/contexts, including music created in or inspired by Wales and written by a diverse range of composers including those from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds
- allow learners to develop transferable listening skills based on an appreciation of the elements of music and how they are used
- develop the language of describing and analysing music
- demonstrate aural skills in relation to familiar and unfamiliar music
- allow learners to develop as creative musicians through understanding the music of others.

The unit will focus on:

- **exploring** – learners will have the opportunity to experience listening to a wide range of music to understand how the composers and performers create the intended effect, tell a story or convey emotions including through the use of music technology
- **responding and reflecting** – learners will be able to identify links between different pieces of music in terms of the use of the elements of music and respond to the effectiveness of these in contrasting styles or genres.

In this unit, learners will develop knowledge, skills and understanding of the following areas:

1.3.1	identifying and describing how the elements of music are applied in different genres and styles of music (as noted within the Glossary of Musical Terminology – Appendix B of the specification)
1.3.2	studying a choice of set works in depth from a variety of diverse genres and styles
1.3.3	how meaning is communicated musically
1.3.4	how music is notated and captured

Unit 3 Assessment objectives and weightings

AO1	Demonstrate and apply knowledge and understanding of a range of music	20%
AO2	Develop and apply performance and/or realisation skills	-
AO3	Reflect on, analyse and evaluate their own work and the work of others	15%
AO4	Create and develop ideas to communicate meaning in compositions	-

Unit 3 Teacher Guidance

1.3 Appraising		
Content Amplification		Teacher Guidance
<p>1.3.1 identifying and describing how the elements of music are applied in different genres and styles of music</p>	<p>Learners should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and describe, using musical vocabulary, how the elements of music are used in a variety of extracts of music • identify and describe how musical devices are used in a variety of extracts showing an understanding of the conventions of genre, period, style and context as appropriate • identify and describe how music technology has been used to create aural effects. 	<p>At the beginning of the course, centres are advised to explore a wide range of musical styles and genres to introduce and reinforce the elements of music as part of everyday language within the subject. These examples could include music from local, national and international cultures and traditions as appropriate to the learners and within the context of centres.</p> <p>Learners may benefit from producing a listening diary/blog/vlog, highlighting key terms, and making reference to the use of the elements of music in the pieces they listen to. Learners can refer to the 'glossary of terms' in Appendix B during this process. They should explore each of the elements to enable them to recognise how they are used in familiar and unfamiliar music. Included within this study should be reference to the use of music technology as a technique used by composers. This qualification has been designed to promote the integration of performing, composing and appraising activities so that a deeper understanding of each element can be built over time.</p> <p>For example, to understand aspects of “melody,” learners could begin by performing some well-known melodies in different styles and then match basic terms with each example. Learners could compose a melody which contains examples of these terms e.g. major third, conjunct movement, sequence. They could then listen to different melodies – within set works and unfamiliar pieces – and identify the features they hear using correct terminology.</p> <p>Rather than “moving on” to the next element, teachers should instead add a new element to their lessons, so for example, if they started with melody, they could then look at melody and dynamics, then melody, dynamics and texture to deepen learners' understanding using an increasing musical vocabulary. This should help to avoid learners muddling terminology appropriate to different elements.</p>

<p>1.3.2 studying a choice of set works in depth from a diverse variety of genres and styles</p>	<p>Learners should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and describe, using musical vocabulary, how the elements of music are used in the chosen set works • identify, locate and describe the musical devices used by the composer(s) and performer(s) in the chosen set works • understand the details of the notation specific to the chosen set works. <p>Centres will select two set works:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one set work from List A • one set work from List B. <p>The choice of prepared texts are as follows:</p> <p>List A Concerto for Two Trumpets in C (first movement) Antonio Vivaldi Palladio (allegretto) for string orchestra Karl Jenkins Elizabeth Remembered Debbie Wiseman</p> <p>List B Hwyl Ti, Gymru Fleur De Lys Tale of Two Dragons Calan One Day Like This Elbow Burn (Hamilton) Lin-Manuel Miranda I Don't Wanna Know Mared Sir Duke Stevie Wonder</p> <p>Learners should know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the social, cultural and historical context of the chosen set works. 	<p>There is a full set of free resources available online to support teachers in delivering lessons on the set works. Although teachers will select one from each list for in depth study, they may choose to use some or all of the others to illustrate musical details using the elements of music.</p> <p>Learners could follow lead sheets or scores in class allowing learners to develop their understanding of notation and to gain an overview of how music is structured.</p> <p>List A focuses on orchestral music, and as such could provide opportunities to explore instrumental techniques with reference to all three pieces in advance of detailed study of just one from the list. Teachers could also choose excerpts from these pieces to teach learners about musical devices e.g. sequences and imitation. Short performing and composing activities, could be integrated into these lessons. For example, composing a melody on a given chord structure taken from a set work, would reinforce learners understanding of chord progressions as well as providing opportunities for learners to use and demonstrate their understanding of the associated musical vocabulary.</p> <p>List B provides an opportunity for learners to develop their understanding of popular vocal music. Teachers could focus on vocal techniques from more than one piece to begin with, before choosing the set work that learners will study in depth.</p> <p>When centres have chosen one set work from list A and one set work from list B, teachers may wish to encourage learners to research and create short knowledge organisers of their own, focusing on the cultural and historical context of the chosen works.</p>
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<p>1.3.3 how meaning is communicated musically</p>	<p>Learners should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use technical vocabulary to describe how the elements of music are used. <p>Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how the elements of music are used by composers and performers descriptively or to convey a mood. 	<p>Through the focus on the elements of music, teachers could choose a variety of musical examples that convey different moods and explore how the elements of music are used to create these effects. Questions posed should focus on a specific element, when and how it is used and what effect it has on the mood created. The best learner responses will show an understanding of how elements are used, locating when particular features are heard in a piece, and using musical vocabulary in all responses. In unfamiliar works learners should be encouraged to locate answers using descriptions such as “at the start, “when the violins play,” “during the chorus” etc.</p>
<p>1.3.4 how music is notated and captured</p>	<p>Learners should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read treble and bass clef staff notation in simple time and compound time in major and minor keys with up to four sharps or flats • notate pitch in the treble and bass clef • notate rhythms in simple time and compound time. <p>Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how music is notated and captured, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stave notation • lead sheets showing piano, guitar and vocal lines • roman numerals for chords I, ii, iii, IV, V and vi in a major key and contemporary chord symbols for chords within a major key. For example: C, Dm, Em, F, G⁷ and Am. 	<p>The teaching of musical theory and notation will again be best tackled using an integrated approach. Learners should be encouraged to use appropriate forms of notation when they are performing, and to notate their composition ideas – even if they do not notate the whole piece. Annotating scores or lead sheets is a good way to reinforce the understanding of the set works and using these as a guide to follow when listening will be useful practice. Teachers should note that there is no overall requirement to understand the alto clef, other than in the viola part of the List A set work, and no need to go beyond keys with four sharps or flats unless it is a chosen set work.</p> <p>With regard to naming chords, it is important to make learners aware of both Roman numerals and contemporary chord symbols as appropriate to the work. The use of Roman numerals can help with the understanding of chord progressions and cadences. The set works analyses will also refer to chord inversions as appropriate. These can be exemplified by performing chord sequences and used creatively within compositions.</p>

Learning Experiences

Learners should be encouraged to take part in musical experiences wherever possible.

These could include:

- attending concerts, festivals and other performances
- composing and performing workshops
- opportunities to perform e.g.
 - school concerts and productions
 - local youth groups
 - community projects
 - national groups in Wales and the UK such as the National Youth Orchestra, National Youth Choir, National Youth Jazz Orchestra, etc.
- work experience placements within the music industry
- visiting a recording studio to experience industry standard equipment and software.

Opportunities for embedding elements of the Curriculum for Wales

Cross Cutting Themes	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3
Sustainability	Can be approached in all units through composing music or choosing repertoire which refers to sustainability.		
Relationships and Sexuality Education	Can be approached in all units through composing music or choosing repertoire which refers to different types of relationships and created by a range of different composers and performers.		
Human Rights Education and Diversity	Can be approached in all units through composing music or choosing repertoire which refers to human rights and created by a diverse range of composers and performers.		
Careers and Work-Related Experiences	Careers in the music industry can be referenced in all three units.		
Literacy – Listening			Focused listening activities.
Literacy – Reading			Reading the question.
Literacy – Speaking	Discussing and evaluating music, including their own and others' performances and compositions.		
Literacy – Writing		Reflective log.	Responding to the longer answer question.
Numeracy – Developing Mathematical Proficiency	The use of beats subdivided into fractions and combined into bars will be relevant to all three units.		
Numeracy – Understanding the number system	The use of beats subdivided into fractions and combined into bars will be relevant to all three units.		
Digital Competence – Citizenship	Reference the relevance of copyright, performing rights and the implications of streaming music.		
Digital Competence – Producing	Creating realisations using technology.	Composing original music using specialist software.	Recognising where and how digital processes have been used in music.

Integral Skills – Creativity and Innovation	Improvisation.	Composing original music and developing ideas through a range of musical techniques.	Recognising where and how musical ideas have been developed.
Integral Skills – Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	Focused practice plans to achieve particular performance goals.	Composing original music and developing ideas through a range of musical techniques.	
Integral Skills – Planning and Organising	Focused practice plans to achieve particular performance goals.	Composing original music and developing ideas through a range of musical techniques.	
Integral Skills – Personal effectiveness	Focused practice plans to achieve particular performance goals. Self-evaluation and target setting.	Evaluation of and reflection upon own compositions and determining next steps.	