

Music performance comparison

Comparison of A level subject content and assessment objectives (released January 2015 by the Department for Education and Ofqual respectively) and the existing Trinity College specification for graded examinations in music performance grades 6-8 (syllabus from 2015).

Comparison headings	A level subject content (DfE January 2015)	Grades 6-8 (Trinity piano syllabus)
<p>Aims and objectives</p>	<p>AS and A level specifications in music must offer a broad and coherent course of which encourages students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engage actively in the study of music • develop skills that facilitate performances which demonstrate an understanding of tempo and style and a sense of continuity • develop skills that facilitate coherent compositions which demonstrate the manipulation of musical ideas and the use of musical devices and conventions • recognise the interdependence of musical knowledge, understanding and skills, and make links between the integrated activities of performing, composing and appraising underpinned by attentive listening • broaden experience and interests, develop imagination and foster creativity • develop and extend the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to communicate effectively as musicians • develop knowledge and understanding of a variety of instruments and styles, and of relevant approaches to both performing and composing • develop awareness of music technologies and their use in the creation and presentation of music • appraise contrasting genres, styles and traditions of music, and develop understanding of musical contexts and a coherent awareness of musical chronology • develop as effective, independent learners and as critical and reflective thinkers with enquiring minds • reflect critically and make personal judgements on their own and others' music • engage with, and extend appreciation of, the diverse 	<p>Graded music exams offer the choice and flexibility to allow candidates to play to their strengths, enabling them to gain recognition for their own unique skills as performers.</p> <p>Music exams: Recognise that a flexible approach is best, prioritising candidates' individual needs Offer freedom of choice within assessments, enabling candidates to demonstrate their musicianship in the way that suits them best Assess real-life skills that translate naturally from real music-making to the assessment Assess skills that are specific to each discipline – the opposite of a one-size-fits-all assessment Allow candidates to express their whole musical personalities through options to demonstrate creativity in different ways Use diagnostic mark schemes where appropriate, offering precise and specific feedback to inform continued learning</p>

Appendix E - A comparison of Graded Examinations with relevant GCSEs and A levels

	<p>heritage of music in order to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote personal, social, intellectual and cultural development 	
<p>Content - practical</p>	<p>AS and A Level specifications in music must require students to develop an in- depth knowledge and understanding of the musical elements, musical contexts and musical language listed below, and allow students to apply these, where appropriate, to their own work in performance and composition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • musical elements and their interdependence (as used in the students’ own work and in the music of others) • organisation of pitch (melodically and harmonically) including sequence, plagal and interrupted cadences and augmentation at AS; additionally chromatic harmony, diminished 7th and additive melody at A level • tonality including modulation to the dominant, cycle of 5ths subdominant & relative minor key relationships at AS; additionally modulation to remote keys, atonality and polytonality at A level • structure including sonata form at AS; additionally, fugue and through-composed at A level • sonority including antiphony, identification of less common instruments e.g. piccolo, cor anglais, bass clarinet and instrumental techniques e.g. con sordino, una corda at AS; additionally smaller vs larger group pieces e.g solo concerto/concerto grosso, vocalisation e.g. sprechgesang and acoustic resonance at A level • tempo, metre and rhythm including syncopation and cross-rhythms at AS; additionally rubato, hemiola and more complex rhythmic patterns, e.g. polyrhythm at A level • texture including homophony, imitation and monophony at AS; additionally polyphony, fugue and canon at A level • dynamics including crescendo & diminuendo, terraced dynamics and application of dynamics to style & performance context at AS; additionally expressive application of dynamics in interpretative choices, nuance and additional special effects, e.g. fp, sf, dim al niente, con tutta 	<p>Pieces Candidates must perform three pieces, and are encouraged to present a balanced programme. Pieces by at least two composers must be played.</p> <p>From Grade 4, pieces are divided into two groups: group A and group B. Candidates must choose at least one piece from each group. The third piece may be chosen from either group, or may be candidates’ own composition.</p> <p>Performance and interpretation All pieces must be prepared in full. Repeats of more than a few bars should not be played All da capo and dal segno instructions should be observed. Cadenzas should be omitted unless otherwise stated. Candidates are encouraged to use appropriate ornamentation, particularly at Grades 6–8. All tempo and performance markings should be observed (eg Allegro, rall., cresc.). Candidates may perform any or all of their pieces from memory, although this is not compulsory and no additional marks are given for this.</p> <p>Own composition Candidates can choose to present an own composition as one of their pieces. The focus of the assessment for this is on performance, using the same assessment criteria as for all other pieces.</p> <p>The complexity and demand of the pieces is specified by the syllabus. At Grades 6-8 the own composition pieces need to be suitably demanding. For example in piano at Grade 6 a piece will require the use of a variety of pedal effects, at Grade 7 the piece</p>

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	<p>forza at A level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • musical contexts (relating to the students’ own work and the music of others) • composer, performer and audience including stylistic conventions, appropriate performance choices e.g. ornamentation/ improvisation and technical demands at AS; additionally stylistic “fingerprints”, awareness of audience expectations and performance practice at A level • occasion, time and place including musical limitations/demands on composers, historical period and the effects of venue on the production and performance of music at AS; additionally awareness of social & historical context and live & recorded music at A level • musical language (relating to the students’ own work and the music of others) • reading and writing staff notation including rhythmic notation in compound time and key signatures to 5 sharps & 5 flats at AS; additionally chord notation and all key signatures at A level • chord symbols and harmonic progression including standard cadential progressions, chord inversions and dominant 7th chords at AS; additionally extended chords including secondary 7ths and 9ths at A level • technical musical vocabulary including recognition and use of appropriate terminology e.g. glissando, repetition and conjunct at AS; additionally recognition and use of sophisticated terminology e.g. portamento, ostinato and ascending minor scale at A level <p>AS and A level specifications in music must require students to demonstrate the ability to:</p> <p>Perform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make use of musical elements, techniques and resources to interpret musical ideas with technical and expressive control and an understanding of style and context. This must be 	<p>will need to feature octaves in both hands and at Grade 8 the piece will need to feature at least two contrapuntal voices.</p> <p>Technical work</p> <p>This section of the exam supports the development of technical skills by assessing candidates’ performance in a range of technical work options.</p> <p>All similar motion scales and arpeggios must be performed ascending then descending with the right hand playing one octave above the left hand.</p> <p>Scales and arpeggios must be performed from memory.</p> <p>A minimum pace is required, increasing gradually grade by grade.</p> <p>Rhythmic patterns are all even quavers in pairs or fours</p> <p>Sight reading</p> <p>This test assesses candidates’ ability to perform an unseen musical extract, at a level approximately two grades lower than the exam being taken.</p> <p>Candidates are given 30 seconds to study the test before performing it, during which time they may practise any or all of it aloud.</p> <p>Aural</p> <p>This test supports the development of candidates’ abilities in the field of musical perception by assessing their responses to carefully graded questions. Questions are based on a single musical example, performed at the piano by the examiner.</p>
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	<p>achieved by one or more of the following means: playing or singing solo or in ensemble, improvising, or realising music using music technology.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> perform with a sense of continuity using appropriate tempi, showing critical understanding of the music chosen <p>Compose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> make use of musical elements, techniques and resources to create, develop and refine musical ideas with technical control and expressive understanding, either freely as the composer chooses, or by responding to a brief or commission supplied by others. This must be achieved by one or more of the following means: experimenting, developing, critical refinement and being influenced by other composers' work. produce compositions that make some use of musical ideas and show some understanding of musical devices and conventions in relation to the chosen genre, style and tradition <p>In addition, A level specifications must allow students to demonstrate the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform - present generally fluent performances showing critical understanding of the overall shape, direction and style of the music chosen Compose - show a sophisticated use of musical elements in combination to produce musically convincing compositions produce compositions that make creative use of musical ideas and show understanding of musical devices and conventions in relation to the chosen genre, style and tradition 	
<p>Content – theoretical understanding and historical and contextual studies</p>	<p>Appraise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use knowledge and understanding of musical elements, techniques and resources to make critical judgements about: 	

- repertoire and context of music within the Areas of Study
 - musical interpretations (this could be the process of deciding how to perform a piece of music, respond to a brief or to a starting point to produce a composition, or demonstrate stylistic understanding)
 - their own work
 - others' work including unfamiliar music (individual pieces of music that have not
 - been stipulated within the specification)
 - Formulation of critical judgements will be achieved by attentive listening (rather than just hearing) and aural perception, and could also be achieved by informed discussion (in writing and/or through speech), analysis, evaluation, contextualisation and reflection.
 - comment on music heard, showing understanding across the genres, styles and traditions studied
- In addition A level specifications must allow students opportunities to:
- Appraise - comment in some detail on music heard, showing critical understanding across the genres, styles and traditions studied
 - use acute aural perception and discrimination skills
 - use technical musical vocabulary to communicate sophisticated judgements
 - show understanding of the complex interdependencies between musical elements
 - show understanding of the sophisticated connections between music and its context
 - apply practically specialist musical vocabulary and notation appropriate to the context
 - the relationship between compositional devices and techniques, musical elements including harmonic progressions, tonal relationships and musical structures appropriate to the context

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<p>Assessment - practical</p>	<p><i>NB the assessment objectives are likely to contain a mixture of practical and theoretical elements which will be assessed using a variety of means.</i></p>	<p>For performance pieces, technical work, sight reading and aural marks are awarded for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fluency and accuracy (7 marks max) • Technical facility (7 marks max) • Communication and interpretation (8 marks max)
<p>Assessment – knowledge and understanding</p>	<p>AO1 Perform with technical control, expression and interpretation 30%</p> <p>AO2 Compose and develop musical ideas with technical control and coherence 30%</p> <p>AO3 Demonstrate and apply musical knowledge 20%</p> <p>AO4 Use appraising skills to make evaluative and critical judgements about music 20%</p>	