Autumn 2025 Newsletter – Music

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Welcome back to the new term

I hope you have enjoyed a restful break over the summer. Below you will find some information and things to bear in mind as we start the new academic year.

Useful information and where to find it:

The following may be especially useful in preparing for data analysis meetings:

Principal Examiners' and Moderators' Reports

The Principals' reports will all be available to download from the main public website at the end of this month. They always contain useful advice and guidance directly from the person who has set the standards and overseen the assessment of each Component.

Centre reports for Moderated Components

Your centre reports for GCSE Music Component 1 Performing and Component 2 Composing are available via Portal. Ask your exams officer to download these for you.

Item Level Data for Examined Components

On Portal you can also find the Item Level Data for all examined components which breaks down the marks awarded to each assessed item. For the appraising exams this breakdown is by part question on the papers. For A / AS Level performing the breakdown is per piece, and for A / AS Level Composing there are three marks shown for each piece, corresponding to the three columns of the assessment criteria. The item level data documents also have a section which relates to the centre performance when compared to national average marks etc.

2025 Question Papers and Marking Schemes

These can be downloaded from Portal, along with the required audio files. The most recent papers will not be released to the public website until around Easter next year, so may be useful to save for use as a mock exam.

Circulars

These are how we communicate officially with centres. Every month a set of circulars is uploaded to Portal. They are not sent directly to centres, the exams officer should log in and check, around the 20th of each month, and forward any relevant information to individual subject teams. There will be a September circular regarding the visiting examiner route for A Level Music.

Composing briefs for 2026 submission

These are available to download from Portal from the 1st September, as usual. Please ensure that you check carefully to make sure you are looking at the correct document for your cohort – there are different briefs for GCSE, AS and A Level.

NEA forms for 2026 submission

These will be uploaded to the public website shortly. Please use the correct forms to ensure that all required information is supplied.

GCSE news

2025 moderation – thank you

Thank you once more to all centres who responded promptly and helpfully to all moderator requests for information or candidate work during the summer series. We do understand how this can sometimes be stressful, but we also know that teachers understand that any additional requests are made to ensure that all candidates are treated fairly in the assessment process. We are frequently asked to explain why additional items are requested, but please remember that we are not able to give details of the moderation and marks before the publication of results. The main reasons we ask for additional items are:

- There is an issue with an individual candidate's work, eg. the audio file won't play, the audio and score do not match.
- There is something missing, for example only one composition has been submitted.
- There is an issue with authentication – there are missing signatures.
- There is an issue with candidate work not being original.
- A clerical error has been detected (see below) and we need to check that it is the only one.
- There is an issue with the assessment – some or all of the teacher's marks are too harsh or too generous.

Clerical errors

These are centre errors in the processes involved in assessing your candidates' work, not errors in the application of the assessment criteria. They could be:

- Errors in transferring the marks from the mark sheets to IAMIS.
- Errors in calculations.
- Errors in the selection of levels of difficulty.
- Errors in the application of timing penalties.

You will see clerical error marks in red on IAMIS. These show what the mark would have been if you had not made the error. They do not show the final mark for a candidate, as an assessment error is not a clerical error.

If you need any help in understanding clerical errors, you can contact the music team. Please include your centre number in your email.

File types for upload

Once again, this year the moderators encountered some centres whose uploads were not in the correct format. **Please note that zip files are not in the list of accepted files.** Audio files should ideally be mp3 or wav files, and scores and other documents should be pdf or word. Full details can be found in the e-submission subject guide on the website.

GCSE Music Professional Learning 2025/26

Please find details below of all CPD events for Eduqas GCSE Music.

Event	Location and type	Description	Schedule
Eduqas GCSE Music: FREE Summer Assessment Feedback	Online	Click here for a full description	13th October 2025, 4-6pm
Eduqas GCSE Music: Exploring NEA Step by Step & Improving Exam Literacy	London, Face to face	Click here for a full description	7th January 2026, 9:30-3:30
Eduqas GCSE Music: Exploring NEA Step by Step & Improving Exam Literacy	Manchester, Face to face	Click here for a full description	8th January 2026, 9:30-3:30
Eduqas GCSE Music: Exploring NEA Step by Step & Improving Exam Literacy	Birmingham, Face to face	Click here for a full description	3rd February 2026, 9:30-3:30

AS and A Level news

Component 1 Performing – centre reports

We have moved away from providing a report to each centre on the visiting examiner process. There will only be a report available if there were particular issues noted in your centre. These are available from Portal as normal.

Levels of difficulty and timing penalties

Once again there were candidates whose performance pieces were incorrectly judged for the level of difficulty – these were adjusted by the examiner – and also candidates whose performing time fell short of the minimum requirement of either 6 or 10 minutes (depending on the option selected.)

It is essential that teachers check the timing of every candidate's performance to avoid penalties. Remember that you should time from the start of the candidate's first note to the end of their last note of each piece, but discount and long sections where the candidate is silent, such as extended rests while the accompaniment plays, an instrumental verse in a song where the candidate is the singer, or a section where other ensemble members play or sing but the candidate is silent. You are permitted to add additional repeats into a piece, as long as they make musical sense, and this can be a good way to avoid a penalty.

Component 2 Composing – examiner comments

This year for the first time, Composing examiners have been able to save brief comments regarding the candidate's work on Surpass. This is available to you via "access to scripts."

Component 3 Appraising – changes to set works

Centres will have noted in previous newsletters and circulars that there are planned changes to the set works for AS and A Level. Please note that these do not come into effect yet, but we are giving you plenty of warning to prepare. These are as laid out below. Please note that the AS and A Level are both designated as two-year courses, therefore the set works for both change at the same time. You will need to consider your planning if you will be offering the AS for examination in 2027, as a stepping strong to the A level in 2028.

For first teaching in September 2026 and first examination in 2028:

The Area of Study A set works symphonies will change to:

Haydn, Symphony 100 "Military" (AS – movements 1 and 2, A Level – all movements.)

Schubert, Symphony 5 (AS – movements 1 and 2, A Level – all movements.)

The Area of Study E Into the Twentieth Century set works will change to:

Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano, Movement I: Poulenc (alternative movement from existing set work)

Three Nocturnes, Number 2, Fetes: Debussy (alternative movement from existing set work)

The Area of Study F Into the Twenty-First Century set works will change to:

Concerto Grosso, Movement 2 – Errolyn Wallen

Frieze, Movement 4 – Mark-Anthony Turnage

NB. There is no change in the works you should be teaching from September 2025. You do not have to make immediate changes to your planning.

There will be new resources published for each of these pieces.

GCE Music Professional Learning 2025/26

Please find details below of all CPD events for Eduqas AS and A Level Music.

Event	Location and type	Description	Schedule
Eduqas A Level Music: FREE Summer Assessment Feedback	Online	Click here for a full description	14th October 2025, 4-6pm
Eduqas GCSE Music: Exploring NEA Step by Step & Looking at the new Set Works	London, Face to face	Click here for a full description	14th January 2026, 9:30-3:30
Eduqas GCSE Music: Exploring NEA Step by Step & Looking at the new Set Works	Birmingham, Face to face	Click here for a full description	15th January 2026, 9:30-3:30

Looking Ahead

We are frequently asked about changes to the published specifications. At present there are no plans to change the Eduqas GCSE Music specification, as taught in centres in England. This includes the set works which will remain as *Badinerie* and *Africa* for the foreseeable future. When the time comes to make any changes these will be communicated via the website, circulars and newsletters, allowing centres plenty of time to prepare – at least a year.

(If you will be offering the Eduqas A level, there are planned changes to set works. Details in the A level section of this newsletter.)