**Music A level Assessment Policy 2022-24**

**The Importance of Feedback and Learning Outside the Classroom – ‘50:50’**

Learning will not happen instantly and takes time; attending lessons is not enough, you also need to be working outside of class, to learn new information, practise your performance and composition skills, and consolidate learning. In the process, you will make mistakes but hopefully feedback will enable you to learn from these mistakes. Better to make a mistake during the year and correct it, than make your first mistake in the final assessment/exam! Feedback is essential for your learning and will consist of whole class (teacher runs a session in lessons), written (teacher marking), peer (where you feedback on someone else’s work in the class) and self (where you assess yourself).

There are 66 weeks of teaching weeks in total at College to help you learn and prepare for your final assessments. The classes taught between Ceilidh and Paul; Paul will be the Lead Subject Tutor who will be responsible for formalised 1-2-1s, seeing your parents at parents evening and for writing Action Plans, however both Ceilidh and Paul will write your student reviews.

In line with the College’s ‘50-50’ initiative, each week, homework will be set and could take between 4.5 to 6 hours in total. If the total amount of teacher-set homework in a week takes you 3 hours for example, then you will need to complete an additional 1.5 – 3 hours of independent study on top of this. Remember that you are expected to complete regular instrumental/vocal practise (ideally daily), time developing your composition each week, and revision of the set works. We won’t always prompt you to do this.

**The Final Assessment**

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| **COMPONENT 1 PERFORMANCE (30%)** | **COMPONENT 2 COMPOSITION (20%) & TECHNICAL STUDY (10%)** | **COMPONENT 3 APPRAISING EXAM** |
| * Solo performance lasting at least 8 minutes, of music of at least grade 7 standard * Recording and scores to be submitted to exam board for marking | * Composition score and recording to be submitted to exam board for marking * Bach Chorale assessment sat over 6 hours during lessons after the Easter holidays. Recording and score to be submitted to exam board for marking. * Both elements combined must last 6 minutes | * 2 hour exam sat in the summer term * Exam consists of:   Q1-3: 3xset work listening tests (42 marks)  Q4: Dictation test (8 marks)  Q5: Essay on an unfamiliar piece (20 marks)  Q6: Essay on a set work (30 marks) |

**Types of Assessment (and feedback)**

* **Homework (Weekly):** Homework does not necessarily need to be completed at home! You can use free periods during the day to complete these tasks outside of lessons. To keep a good work/life balance, you might like to treat College as an 0845 to 1615 day and use your free periods in the library or the Music department completing tasks. This will minimise the work you need to complete at home and might make you more productive. Homework tasks will vary, but typically consist of:

COMPONENT 1 PERFORMANCE: It is expected that you practise your instrument/voice very regularly, ideally every day. We recommend that you build this into your college timetable and use our practise rooms. These are almost always available – please just help yourself. As a minimum, you should practise for 30-45 minutes per day. Remember to complete focussed practise – start each session with an aim, thinking about recent feedback you have had from your instrumental/vocal teacher and Paul. Remember to work on the bars/passages that need work. Avoid playing pieces through from start to finish too often. Keeping a diary of your practise can help some students to progress.

COMPONENT 2 COMPOSITION: Some weeks there will be specific compositional techniques/tasks to complete for homework and often these will need to be completed on Sibelius software. You are welcome to use Room 820 whenever you like, but can also access the software on a PC in the library. Other weeks you will be expected to spend time developing your own compositions. Paul will set you targets and deadlines to help you manage your workload. You should aim to complete around 2 hours a week on your composition.

COMPONENT 2 BACH CHORALE: Teaching of this will start in the summer term of year 1 and continue throughout year 2. Weekly homework tasks will be set, with some needing to be completed on Sibelius software

COMPONENT 3 APPRAISING EXAM: There are 12 set works to cover in year 1 and 6 to cover in year 2. Each set work can take between 2-4 lessons to analyse as a class. As we finish each piece, you will have homework set to consolidate your knowledge. This will typically be some short questions, related research or connected wider listening. You will also be asked to regularly prepare for essay and listening test assessment on the set works.

* **Mock Exams/Benchmark Checkpoints/Coursework Assessment:** The calendar below shows the key assessment points for each unit.In Unit 1, you will receive the opportunity to complete 6 performance recordings under exam conditions across the two years. After each of the first 5 recordings, you will receive detailed feedback and a mark for your performance. It is assumed that you will improve during each recording and that your sixth recording will be the highest standard and will be the one submitted to the exam board. In Unit 2, you will receive regular feedback in lessons on your composition work in progress, and there will be official mid-point assessments where you will submit your composition and receive detailed feedback and a mark. Remember to access the 1-1 tutorials/workshops with Paul outside of lessons if you require additional support. Bach Chorale exercises will be assessed regularly and you will receive feedback and a mark for each one. In Unit 3, you will complete an essay assessment and a listening test in a lesson, in exam conditions, after the analysis of each work is complete. You will receive feedback and a mark each time. In half term 6 of year 1, you will receive a full mock exam on the 12 works studied. In half term 4 of year 2, you will receive a full mock on all 18 pieces. Thorough feedback and marks will be given with the mock exams. We will use the marks and data we have for you on all 3 units to calculate your benchmark grades at the points in the year shown on the calendar below.

**Tracking your Progress: Student Reviews, Action Plans and Parents Evenings**

The College’s policy is to deal with the student first but we also report to your parents at regular intervals to let them know how you are progressing and to inform them of what our expectations are through four Student Reviews (Reports) spread throughout the two years at College and also four parents evenings.

If the department feel you are under-performing based on evidence such as benchmark grades and your approach to learning in between these periods, then your Lead Subject Tutor may place you onto a Formal Department Action Plan and we will formally write to your parents after a 1-2-1 with yourself and to try and get you back on track in a supportive way

**Student Review 2, the ARG and Predicted Grades**

At the end of the first year, your Lead Tutor will have a 1-2-1 to discuss your Annual Review Grade or ARG and also finalise your Predicted Grade which might be used for UCAS applications for University and other destinations.

The ARG is determined by your Lead Tutor in communication with your other teacher and will rely on the following evidence base:

1. **Benchmark Checkpoints Performance Grades (1 to 4).**
2. **Approach to Learning :** How you are engaging in your learning, evidenced by attendance, punctuality, ability to meet weekly deadlines with quality work, how you have sought out extra support via workshops and your overall communication with your teachers.

The ARG plays a key part in determining the context in which you progress to the second year. Students who receive an A\*-D grade (A-level) are encouraged to continue with their studies into the 2nd year. However for students who receive a U or E Grade (A-level) as their ARG, it suggests that for whatever reason they have struggled with the transition from Level 2 Courses (GCSE) to Level 3 Courses (A-level/BTEC). This will be evidenced by poor performances throughout their benchmarks and an inconsistent or poor approach to learning in their student reviews and via formal Action Plans. Students who receive a U Grade we would not recommend to continue with the course and they would need to speak to a Senior Tutor about alternative pathways.

The College adopts a consistent and optimistic approach to predicting grades to ensure that they are both aspirational and achievable. A predicted grade is what we believe a student is likely to achieve by the conclusion of their course in positive circumstances and the predicted grade provides universities and colleges with some understanding of a student’s academic potential alongside their Personal Statement and a written Reference from their Personal Tutor.

The ARG is important in forming the basis for the predicted grade as well but the predicted grade will also be aspirational for the students’ ambitions although it must remain realistic and cannot be based on the idea that only now will the student start to work harder in the second year!

**Other Considerations**

* *LATE POLICY:* In line with the ‘College Assessment Policy’, the department are under no obligation to provide feedback to a student who does not meet the internal deadlines for weekly independent tasks, benchmark assessments or coursework drafts. Please be warned that a failure to meet the final coursework deadline is the equivalent to missing the exam and it will be recommended that the student should be removed from the course. Students who fail to prepare adequately for the lesson as requested, maybe excluded for part of the lesson and asked to work independently at the back of the classroom. A continued failure to meet ‘PREP’ work requirements will result in a reference to the pastoral team and a phone call home to parents.
* *RETURNED WORK:* Work will be assessed and returned within 10 working days of it being submitted.
* *PLAGIARISIM:*  Plagiarism is submitting another person’s written work as one’s own original work or using someone else’s idea without referencing the source or using pictorial work without permission or referencing the source. If there is a suspicion of plagiarism, the Head of Department and Senior Tutor will be informed and a meeting will take place. If a student is found guilty, they will be subject to disciplinary action by the College and the awarding body will be informed. Students should be aware that the College is subscribed to software designed to detect plagiarism.

**Checkpoints: Benchmark, Student Reviews (Reports) and Mock Exams 2022-24**

Below is an overview of all the key assessment checkpoints

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| **CHECKPOINT** | **DATE** | **DETAILS** |
| **Benchmark 1 Checkpoint** | Nov 2022 | C1: Class Recital  C2: Melody composition completed  C3: Listening tests completed up until this point |
| **Parents Evening (For All)** | Nov 2022 | **Meetings with your parents to discuss how you have settled in and transferred from GCSE to A-level learning based upon:**   1. **Approach to learning** (how you are engaging in your learning, evidenced by attendance, punctuality, ability to meet weekly deadlines with quality work, how you have sought out extra support via workshops and your overall communication with your teachers) 2. **Performance Grade** in Benchmark 1 and from your homework tasks |
| **XMAS BREAK** |  |  |
| **Benchmark 2 Checkpoint** | Jan 2023 | C1: Recital 1 recording  C2: Composition 1-string quartet minimum 2 minutes  C3: Listening tests completed up until this point |
| **Student Review 1** | Jan 2023 | **A review of your progress in the first term (12-13 weeks of teaching) after a 1-2-1 with your Lead Tutor:**   1. **Performance grade (A to U)** (based on benchmark 1 and 2 but also your homework tasks) 2. **Approach to Learning** (how you are engaging in your learning, evidenced by attendance, punctuality, ability to meet weekly deadlines with quality work, how you have sought out extra support via workshops and your overall communication with your teachers). |
| **Parents Evening (Targeted)** | Mar 2023 | **Meetings with your parents primarily where teachers may have a concern about your progress since Student Review 1 in January.** |
| **Benchmark 3 Checkpoint** | Mar 2023 | C1: Recital 2 recording  C2: Composition 2-Free. Minimum 2 mins 30sec  C3: Listening tests completed up until this point |
| **EASTER BREAK** |  |  |
| **Benchmark 4 Checkpoint** | June 2023 | C1:Recital 3 recording  C2: Chorale assessment 90 min controlled assessment(20 marks) +average Comp 1 and 2(40 marks)  C3: Mock exam consisting of the set works we have studied up to this point. Q6 essay plus Q1-3 listening tests and q4 dictation task. |
| **Student Review 2** | June 2023 | **A review of your progress for the academic year (30-35 weeks of teaching) after a 1-2-1 with your Lead Tutor**   1. Approach to Learning 2. Performance Grade (Annual Review Grade or ‘ARG’ – performance for whole year (see notes above in main doc.) 3. Predicted Grade |
| **SUMMER BREAK** |  |  |
| **Benchmark 5 Checkpoint** | Oct 2023 | C1: Recital 4 recording  C2:Free composition first draft minimum 4:30  C3: Set works essay and listening test scores completed up until this point, as well as Q5 unfamiliar piece essay scores |
| **Parents Evening (All)** | Oct 2023 | **Meetings with your parents to discuss how you have settled in to the second phase of learning:**   1. **Approach to learning** (how you have engaged since Student Review 2 including completion of summer homework and the first five weeks of teaching – deadlines met, engagement in class and communication with teacher) 2. **Performance** with reference to your draft coursework mark and to talk about the final deadline for after half-term. 3. **How to support you:** Discuss how parents can further support you and what is coming up in this year |
| **Benchmark 6 Checkpoint** | Dec 2023 | C1: Recital 5 recording  C2: Free composition final draft minimum 4:30 and Chorale mock(3hrs)  C3: Set works essay and listening test scores completed up until this point, as well as Q5 unfamiliar piece essay scores |
| **Student Review 3** | Dec 2023 | **A review of your progress for the academic year since last Student Review (July) after a 1-2-1 with your Lead Tutor**   1. Approach to Learning 2. Performance Grade (based upon benchmark 6 and homework tasks) compared to Predicted Grade |
| **XMAS BREAK** |  |  |
| **Benchmark 7 Checkpoint** | Mar 2024 | C1: Final recital recording  C2: Coursework Deadline Final composition completed and full Chorale mock(6hrs)  C3: Full mock exam (2 hours 10 mins) SAT DURING MOCK WEEK  Q1-3: 3xset work listening tests (42 marks)  Q4: Dictation test (8 marks)  Q5: Essay on an unfamiliar piece (20 marks)  Q6: Essay on a set work (30 marks) |
| **Student Review 4** | Mar 2024 | **A review of your progress for the academic year (30-35 weeks of teaching) after a 1-2-1 with your Lead Tutor (see above)**   1. Approach to Learning 2. Performance Grade (based upon benchmark 7 Mock Exam only) compared to Predicted Grade |
| **Parents Evening (Targeted)** | Mar 2024 | **Meetings with your parents primarily where teachers may have a concern about your progress since Student Review 4.** |
| **EASTER BREAK** |  |  |

**Rationale for Assessment Programme**

It is really important that when you come to sit your final exam, you are prepared and able to perform at your highest ability. Likewise, it is important that your completed coursework accurately demonstrates your true ability. Therefore the benchmark assessments are designed to ensure you are ‘exam fit’ and on track with your coursework production.

Component 1 Performance - You are given regular opportunities and perform a recital which will be marked against the exam board’s mark scheme. We hope that the feedback and mark you receive after each recording will help you improve for the next.

Component 2 Composition - In the first benchmark, you will be given a short melody writing exercise as a basic introduction to the unit. Over the next two benchmarks, you will be required to produce short compositions. This gives you the opportunity to respond to contrasting briefs and refine your skills. For benchmark 5 you will submit a full draft of your free-choice composition. It is this piece that will be submitted to the exam board. You will receive feedback and then have a chance to submit a revised version at benchmark 6 where you will receive further feedback. By benchmark 7 you will have submitted your final version of your composition. This will then be sent to the exam board for assessment.

Component 2 Technical Study - By benchmark 4 you will have begun to study the Bach Chorale technical study exercise and will sit a short, 90 min assessment in exam conditions (the final assessment in year 2 is 6 hours!). You will also sit a mock Bach Chorale exam over 3 hours in preparation for the exam at benchmark 6. At benchmark 7, you will sit a full 6 hour mock exam in preparation for the final exam in April/May.

Component 3 Appraising Exam – You will begin your first year by learning set works from the New Directions, Fusions and Pop & Jazz areas of study. As you study each piece you will be given a listening test assessment in exam conditions. These scores will inform your benchmark 1-3 grades, along with regular dictation testing. By benchmark 4, you will have begun to study the Film Music area of study which will be assessed through essay writing and listening tests. You will sit a mock exam in exam conditions on all the set works you have studied at this point. In your second year you will study the following areas of study: Instrumental Music and Vocal Music. As you study each work, you will be given a listening test and essay assessment in exam conditions. These marks will contribute to your benchmarks. You will also learn how to write Q5 essays for each area of study. Each essay you write will contribute to your benchmark. You will sit a full mock exam, covering all areas of study, in exam conditions for benchmark 7. Regular dictation tests will be given throughout the year and will contribute to benchmarks. Through all this regular exam practise, we very much hope you will be fit for the final exam at the end of the second year.

ARG grade calculation – This will largely be calculated on your performance across all 3 units at benchmark 4, however previous performance over your first year at college will also be considered.

**Grade Boundaries**

In your L6 year we will be using the 2022 exam board grade boundaries both in terms of marking assessments for specific units and when calculating a current overall grade for you. We believe these to be the most accurate representation of how the exam board would grade you.