**Music Technology 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 sequencing and recording 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 by the Lead Subject Tutor who will be responsible for formalised 1-2-1s, writing your Student Reviews, seeing your parents at parents evening and for writing Action Plans.

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 book the studio to practise recording techniques regularly, set aside time daily to work on your Logic and composition skills, and revise exam content learnt in class. We won’t always prompt you to do this.

**The Final Assessment**

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| **Component 1 Recording (20%)** | **Component 2 Sequencing (20%)** | **Component 3 Listening and Analysing (25%)** | **Component 3 Producing and Analysing (35%)** |
| * Choose a song to record from the list released by the exam board June 2023 * Record and mix compulsory and additional instruments * Final mix, Logic project and completed logbook submitted to exam board for marking | * Choose a brief set by the exam board September 2023 * Submit 3 minute tech-based composition, Logic project and completed logbook to exam board for marking | * 1hr 30 mins exam sat in the summer term * Section A: Q1-4(10 marks each) based on unfamiliar commercial recordings(40 marks) * Section B: 2 essay questions. Q5 is a comparison question of 2 unfamiliar commercial recordings. Q6 is a wider impact question of an unfamiliar recording. | * 2hr 15 min exam sat in the summer term * Section A: 5 questions relating to the audio and MIDI files provided that include both written responses and practical tasks completed in Logic Pro X. Each task is exported as a .wav file and the final task(Q5) is a mix question worth 24 marks   (85 marks)   * Section B: Essay on a specific mix scenario, signal path, effect or hardware device.   (20 marks) |

**Types of Assessment**

* **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:

Coursework: You are expected to complete the majority of your recording and composing coursework outside lessons. It is your responsibility to manage your time effectively to ensure your meet coursework deadlines. This will include planning ahead, as you need to book the studio, equipment and musicians to complete your tasks. It is important to do all coursework at college and therefore you must check availability of the music technology and studios on weekly basis to get the most out of your free periods. Remember Component 1,2 and 4 tests your ability to use music production software and equipment, and it is therefore essential to get into a daily routine of using the studio and music tech suite to develop your skills. Assessment of coursework will be regular and varied, this will include formal assessment at various checkpoints, peer assessment where you share your progress with the class, 121s with your teacher and using a production log for self assessment.

Exam components:

We will cover the history and development of music technology which are divided into 5 eras. You are required to identify the fingerprint features of each era and you have to consolidate each era with a series of listening tasks consisting of short questions. You can supplement this with a listening diary and working your throught the essential listening list. In addition to the eras, we will cover 22 topics required to prepare you both exams. Each topic has an A3 revision sheet to complete. You can supplement this with a 3 week cycle production diary logging summaries of tutorial videos on eSTREAM, further listening and practical techniques.

**Mock Exams/Benchmark Checkpoints/Coursework Assessment:** The calendar below shows the key assessment points for each component.In Component 1, you will receive the opportunity to complete 2 recordings. The first consisting of a reduced ensemble of vocals, acoustic and electric guitar, and bass guitar. The second recording builds on the skills learnt by including drums and an additional melodic instrument. All recordings are assessed at the tracking, mix and final mix (mastering)stages of the production process. That is a total of 6 assessment points where feedback is given. Only the second recording will be submitted to the exam board. In Component 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 your teacher outside of lessons if you require additional support. In Component 3, you will complete a listening test in a lesson, in exam conditions, after the each completed era. You will receive feedback and a mark each time. In half term 6 of year 1, you will receive a full mock exam on all 5 era studied. This will include a comparison essay on 2 unfamiliar recording. Thorough feedback and marks will be given with the mock exams. In Component 4, you are tested on your Logic skills. As you use Logic in both Component 1 and 2, you expected to transfer these skills to this exam. There are multiple topics that are covered in other components from mix scenarios to hardware devices. A mock testing your knowledge of the topics will be completed after half term 6 in year 1 and full mock including practical and written task will be given at the final checkpoint. This will be supplemented by essay tasks and practical tasks in lessons, where feedback is given. We will use the marks and data we have for you on all 4 components 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.

**Benchmark Checkpoints, 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: Vocal and Guitar recording task  C2: Arrangement Task  C3: Era 1 listening test  C4: Recording scenario essay and microphone test(short questions) |
| **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: Recording of compulsory and additional instruments completed  C2: AS composition first draft  C3: Era 2 and 3 listening test  C4: Recording scenario essay and EQ test(short questions) |
| **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: Completed final mix, logic project and logbook  C2: Completed composition, logic project and logbook  C3: Era 4 listening test, and Q5 essay  C4: 2x Recording scenario essays (20 marks each) |
| **EASTER BREAK** |  |  |
| **Benchmark 4 Checkpoint** | June 2023 | C1: Tracking in June 2021, not possible due to Covid-19. Date set for September.  C3: Remote mock 1hr 15 mins listening paper:  Q1-4 unfamiliar commercial recordings(44 marks) and Q5 comparison essay (16 marks)  C4:Remote topics test 2x scenario/hardware essays(20 marks each) and short questions (80marks) |
| **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: Completed tracking of compulsory and additional instruments  C2: Composition plan  C3: Era 5 listening test(40 marks),Q5 comparison essay(16 marks),  C4: Q1-4 Audio and MIDI practical and written tasks (50 marks)and Q5 mix question(18 marks) |
| **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: Draft mix and logbook 60 marks  C2: Composition draft (60 marks)  C3: Era 1-5 listening test(40 marks), Q6 wider impact essay(20 marks)  C4: Q1-4 Audio and MIDI practical and written tasks(61 marks) and Q5 mix question(24 marks) |
| **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: Completed final mix, Logic project and logbook (60 marks) .  C2: Completed final composition, Logic project and logbook (60 marks)  Remember the mark is just a guide, as the work is submitted to and marked by the exam board.  C3: Full listening mock 1hr 30mins:  Q1-4 based on unfamiliar commercial recordings(40 marks)  Q5 is a comparison question of 2 unfamiliar commercial recordings. (15 marks)  Q6 is a wider impact question of an unfamiliar recording.( 20 marks)  C4: Full mock 2hr 15 mins:  Q1-4 Audio and MIDI practical tasks completed on Logic and written responses (61 marks)  Q5 Mix question-series of practical tasks completed on Logic (24 marks)  Q6 Essay question- a specific mix scenario, signal path, effect or hardware device(20 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 Recording – You are given several recording and mixing tasks during your first year that will inform benchmark 1-4 grade. Each task builds on the last and you will produce a final mix at the end of your first year. In your second year you will complete the recording and mixing task set by the exam board. Benchmarks 5-7 will assess your progress and you will receive feedback using the exam board’s assessment grid at each point. Your final mix is submitted to the exam board for your final grade.

Component 2 Composition – You will complete an arrangement task for your first benchmark to familiarise yourself with a DAW and learn basic sequencing skills. Benchmark 2-4 will track your progress of your tech-based composition. You will receive feedback at each assessment point your final first year grade is based on your composition final mix. Year 2 you will choose a brief set by the exam board. Benchmarks 5-7 will assess your progress and you will receive feedback using the exam board’s assessment grid at each point. Your final mix is submitted to the exam board for your final grade.

Component 3 Listening and Analysing-In the first year you will cover all Era 1-4 of the listening exam. Your first benchmark will cover short listening questions focusing only on Era 1. Benchmarks 2-4 will cover Eras 2-4 and preparing for the comparison essay(Question 5). Year 2 will cover the final Era as well as the wider impact essay(Question 6). Benchmark 6-7 are full exam papers to prepare for your final exam.

Component 4 Producing and Analysing-In your first year the practical skills required for this component is taught in Component 1 and 2. Benchmark 1-3 will test your understanding of practical scenarios and key equipment. Your assessment will included recording scenarios essays( Question 6) and short theory questions to prepare for the written aspects of the exam. Benchmark 4 will be a full AS paper consisting of practical tasks as well as a scenario essay. Bench 5-7 is preparation for your final exam. You will complete practical tasks in the style of the exam including the 24 mark mix task(Question 5). Scenario essay(Question 6) will include mixing and key equipment.

ARG grade calculation – This will largely be calculated on your performance across all 4 components 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 also 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.