

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Cambridge IGCSE® Music (0410)

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FAQs – Support and resources

When are the examinations taken?

Information about when the examinations can be taken can be found in the syllabus. You can download the syllabus from **Teacher Support**.

Examination dates are listed in the **exam timetable** which you can download from our public website, or speak to the Examinations Officer at your centre.

Reference: Syllabus

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What resources are available to support Cambridge syllabuses?

Teaching resources can be found on the **Teacher Support** page for your syllabus.

For syllabuses, specimen papers, mark schemes and examiner reports look under the *Syllabus Materials* tab.

For support materials, including Schemes of Work* and Example Candidate Responses*, look under the *Teaching Materials* tab.

The *Resource List* tab directs you to endorsed and suggested resources including textbooks and websites. You can also access these from the **Resource Centre** on our public website.

Music syllabus CDs, for past papers and specimen papers, as well as the past papers themselves, can be ordered from the **Catalogue of resources**.

For music syllabuses, there is no requirement to use a particular score. For many of the set works, the score will usually be available to download and print from IMSLP Petrucci Music Library for free (<http://imslp.org>).

For more details about the support types available, and how to use them for planning, preparing, teaching, assessing and revision, see our guide *Cambridge teacher support*, which can be downloaded from the **Teacher Support** homepage under Teacher Support Resources.

You can also visit our **Discussion Forums***, where teachers discuss resources and teaching methods, and you can ask questions and receive a response from our subject expert moderator or from other Cambridge teachers in our Community.

*where available

Reference: Teacher Support Resources

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What textbooks are available for my subject?

From the *Resource List* tab on the **Teacher Support** page for your syllabus you can search for textbooks for your subject. No particular book is necessary for a course and teachers are advised to choose the textbook that best suits their needs. Many of our syllabuses are supported by a range of different endorsed textbooks to ensure that schools have choice. There is information on the back of endorsed textbooks about which examination series it was first produced for.

Endorsed resources go through a rigorous quality-assurance process to make sure they closely reflect the syllabus and are appropriate for Cambridge schools worldwide. Resources may be 'endorsed for full syllabus coverage' or endorsed to cover specific sections, topics or approaches. Look for the specific 'endorsed for...' logo on the resource.

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FAQs – Support and resources

What training and professional development is available for my subject?

Cambridge online and face-to-face training courses are designed to support you by providing you with the knowledge and skills required to deliver our syllabuses. These can be booked through the **Events and training calendar** on our public website.

Reference: Events and training calendar

Location: Public Website

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How can I find out about any changes to the syllabus?

This information can be found on the inside cover of the syllabus, which can be downloaded from **Teacher Support**. Changes are described in detail within this section. Throughout the syllabus, any significant changes are indicated by black vertical lines either side of the text.

If a syllabus update document is listed next to a syllabus this is notification that the syllabus has been updated to reflect a change. The changes that have been made will be clearly indicated in the syllabus update.

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What can students take into their exams?

Guidance for use of equipment in examinations, including use of dictionaries and calculators, is provided in the **Cambridge Handbook** from our public website. A list of unauthorised materials is also included.

For help or information about administering qualifications it is often useful to speak to the Examinations Officer at your centre.

Reference: Cambridge Handbook

Location: Public Website

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FAQs – Performing

What is the difference between a solo and an ensemble performance?

In a solo performance it is the job of the accompanist to respond to the needs of the soloist; in an ensemble performance the performers are equal partners. Therefore, somebody who wanted to play a solo with piano accompaniment as an ensemble would not be demonstrating a different skill from their solo performance. However, the skills needed by the piano accompanist are quite different from those they need as a soloist, which is why piano accompaniment is allowed as an ensemble skill.

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Can solo singers perform with a band?

Singers being accompanied by bands (e.g. guitars and drums, jazz band, etc.) can be submitted. However, the candidate is unlikely to receive full marks in the ensemble coordination category as they are being accompanied.

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FAQs – Performing

How long do performances have to be?

The syllabus states that the total playing time should be between four and ten minutes. Moderators are looking for evidence that a candidate can perform at a particular level for a reasonably sustained period of time.

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Are duets allowed?

The syllabus explains that duos are allowed provided the candidate's part demonstrates genuine ensemble skills and could not also be counted as a solo.

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Is conducting acceptable?

Conducting is not acceptable because moderators would not be able to identify what the candidate was doing from just the audio recording.

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Are rap/beat-boxing and DJing acceptable?

The decision is ultimately up to the centre. If a rap performance is the only thing that the candidate is able or prepared to do then it may be submitted, but the centre should be aware that performances of this nature are unlikely to meet the assessment criteria. DJing is not acceptable.

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What music grade should candidates be?

The syllabus does not recommend a minimum grade requirement but states that candidates should perform music that is appropriate, in its technical and musical demands, to their stage of development at the time of the examination. However, the syllabus does give guidance on the mark levels and the difficulty of music required, with reference to grades.

Reference: Syllabus

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Can one ensemble be used for several candidates?

A group of candidates can perform one piece of music and each be assessed individually as long as their parts are not consistently doubled. The paperwork should clearly identify which candidate is playing which part.

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Is tab allowed?

Tab, or tablature, is acceptable as notation.

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FAQs – Performing

Is improvisation allowed in performance?

A performance may include improvisation as long as it is clearly stylistically appropriate and enhances the performance. Use the comments box on the mark sheet to indicate that the changes were intentional. The syllabus states that a copy of the sheet music of performances must be submitted for all pieces where it is available in print. If the candidate has intentionally altered their performance from the sheet music this must be clearly indicated. The teacher should take account of any alteration, which makes a piece easier to play, in the marking.

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Can candidates perform pieces that have been transcribed or made easier?

This is acceptable. The syllabus states that if the candidate has intentionally altered their performance from the sheet music, this must be clearly indicated. The teacher should take account of any alteration, which makes a piece easier to play, in the marking.

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Can performances be recorded outside school?

Candidates can record their performances outside of school but the teacher must be fully confident in authenticating the work. It is recommended that the candidate is asked to play their own part to the teacher in person so it is clear that it is the candidate performing on the recording.

Reference: Syllabus

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When should performances be recorded and submitted?

The deadlines and methods for submission are in the **Cambridge Handbook**.

Reference: Cambridge Handbook

Location: Public Website

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What if no sheet music is available?

In the event that sheet music is not readily available, this does not need to be provided. However, teachers will need to provide comments to support their mark for accuracy. Additionally, submitting original recordings of songs for reference along with candidate's work is not required or allowed.

Reference: Syllabus

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Can a candidate perform their own composition?

This is acceptable, assuming the centre is confident that the piece allows the candidate to demonstrate their best performing.

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FAQs – Composing

How long do compositions have to be?

There is no maximum or minimum length for IGCSE compositions.

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Do candidates need to perform their own compositions?

Candidates do not have to perform what they compose. However, the syllabus states that it is essential that candidates hear their compositions in performance, even if it cannot be done with the exact forces intended. Recordings of live performances (even if they are not note-perfect) give moderators a much better impression of the music than performances generated from music technology (e.g. music notation programs or sequencers). However, if it is impossible to record a live performance, sequenced versions may be submitted.

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Can candidates use the same instruments for both compositions?

The syllabus states that candidates must submit two contrasting compositions, written for different instruments and/or voices. If both pieces are written for identical instruments/voices, a mark of 0 in the *Use of Medium* category must be awarded for composition 2.

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Is improvisation allowed in compositions?

Provided that any improvised section is not unduly long in proportion to the total length of the composition, it would be acceptable in certain musical contexts, although it will not be taken into account in determining a mark for score presentation and notation.

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Are single-line compositions acceptable?

Although we do not actively encourage the submission of single-line pieces, we would not wish to discourage an able candidate from submitting any piece which allows all the assessment criteria to be fulfilled, which includes single-line pieces. However, compositions that maintain a single musical texture will often display a lack of compositional understanding. Candidates who have submitted single-line pieces in the past have often appeared not to appreciate the difficulty of the task.

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Can candidates use loops in their composition?

If pre-composed 'loops' are used then the candidate would have to receive 0 marks for *ideas*. Marks might be awarded for the *structure of their compositions* and for their *use of the chosen medium*, and also possibly for *compositional technique*, although that involves making assumptions about the extent of the candidate's own input. It would also be 0 marks for *notation* if there is no score.

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If you have a syllabus or teaching related question which has not been answered here, and you've read the syllabus and supporting resources on **Teacher Support**, have a look at the information on our **Help** pages.

For individual assessment queries or centre-specific enquiries, contact our Customer Services team either by email at info@cie.org.uk, by **web form** or by calling us on +44 1223 553554.