

A-Level Music Technology – Pearson Edexcel

Overview

A Level Music Technology is a practical and creative course for students interested in recording, producing and analysing music using modern technology.

The course develops skills in:

- Recording and microphone techniques
- Digital audio workstations (DAWs)
- MIDI sequencing
- Mixing and mastering
- Music production
- Critical listening
- Technology in popular music

The course combines practical coursework with listening and analytical skills and can lead to university courses in Music Technology, Audio Engineering, Music Production, Media, Film and Broadcasting.

Component	Weighting	Description
Recording	20%	Produce a professional multi-track recording
Technology-based Composition	20%	Create original music using music technology
Listening & Analysing	25%	Written exam on production techniques and technology
Producing & Analysing	35%	Practical and written examination

Summer Preparation

The aim of this bridging work is not to teach you the course before September, but to help you become familiar with the tools and vocabulary used in Music Technology.

Essential Viewing

Music Production Explained

Rick Beato

Search:

"Rick Beato What Makes This Song Great"

Excellent breakdowns of professional recordings.

Produce Like A Pro

<https://www.youtube.com/@ProduceLikeAPro>

Recording and mixing tutorials from professional producers.

Recording Revolution

<https://www.youtube.com/@RecordingRevolution>

Simple explanations of recording and mixing concepts.

Sound On Sound

<https://www.soundonsound.com>

Industry-standard articles covering every aspect of recording and production.

Essential Listening

Choose three recordings from different genres:

- Rock
- Pop
- Acoustic/Folk
- Jazz
- Hip Hop
- Electronic

For each recording make notes on:

- Instruments used
- Stereo placement
- Reverb and effects
- Vocal production
- Overall sound quality

Aim for approximately half a page per track.

Useful Websites

Pearson Edexcel Specification

<https://qualifications.pearson.com>

Search:

"A Level Music Technology Specification"

Sound On Sound

<https://www.soundonsound.com>

Professional recording and production articles.

PureMix

<https://www.puremix.net>

Mixing demonstrations from professional engineers.

Spitfire Audio

<https://www.spitfireaudio.com>

Free virtual instruments and tutorials.

BBC Introducing

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/introducing>

Discover modern production styles and emerging artists.

Recommended Reading

Mixing Secrets for the Small Studio - Mike Senior

Probably the single most useful beginner book on recording and mixing.

Recording Secrets for the Small Studio - Mike Senior

Excellent introduction to recording techniques.

Modern Recording Techniques - David Miles Huber

Industry-standard reference book.

Sound On Sound Magazine

Read any three articles related to:

- Recording
 - Mixing
 - Mastering
 - Studio equipment
-

Transition Tasks -

Task 1 – Critical Listening (Highly Recommended)

Choose one professionally produced track.

Identify:

- Instruments
- Panning
- Effects
- Dynamics
- Production style

Write approximately one page.

Task 2 – DAW Exploration (Highly Recommended)

If you have access to Logic Pro, GarageBand, Reaper, Ableton or Cubase:

Create a short 30–60 second piece using:

- At least four tracks
- MIDI instruments
- Drum sounds
- Automation or effects

Export an MP3 and bring it to your first lesson.

Task 3 – Create a Home Studio Inventory (Recommended)

Make a list of:

- Computer
- DAW software
- Audio interface
- Microphones
- Headphones
- Speakers

If you do not own any equipment, research what a beginner home studio would require and estimate the cost.

Task 4 – Learn the Vocabulary (Recommended)

Research and define:

- DAW
- MIDI
- Audio Interface

- Dynamic Microphone
- Condenser Microphone
- EQ
- Compression
- Reverb
- Delay
- Sampling Rate
- Bit Depth

Create a glossary.

Task 5 – Recording Investigation (Recommended)

Watch videos explaining microphone techniques.

Research:

- Close miking
- Stereo miking
- Room miking

Write a short explanation of the advantages and disadvantages of each.

Task 6 – Research a Producer (Highly recommended)

Choose one:

- George Martin
- Trevor Horn
- Quincy Jones
- Brian Eno
- Max Martin
- Nigel Godrich
- Rick Rubin

Research:

- Artists they worked with
- Signature production techniques
- Most famous recordings

Present findings on one side of A4.

Stretch Challenge

Create a recording or production project over the summer. Most of you should already have a project if you have chosen this course. If not, start experimenting.

Possible ideas:

- Record an original song
- Produce a cover version
- Record a live performance
- Compose an electronic track

Bring your project to the first lesson.

What To Bring In September

- USB memory stick (8GB minimum)
 - Any recordings you have created
 - A willingness to experiment and learn
-