

Application for GCE O-Level Music Course (2021-2022) Frequently Asked Questions

About the Application Process

1) Who can apply for the O-Level Music course?

The O-Level Music course is for students with a strong interest to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of music beyond the foundations laid by the primary and lower secondary music syllabus. It is also suitable for students who have musical performance background from experiences in CCAs, school-based music programmes or external music-related activities. Students who will be in Secondary 3 Express / Normal (Academic) or Secondary 4 Normal (Academic) course in 2021 may apply in 2020.

2) What should I expect in the Selection Exercise?

There are two components to the Selection Exercise:

- Component 1: Recorded Performance
- Component 2: Video Response to Aural Imitation & Creating Tasks

All applicants are required to complete both Components 1 and 2. Applicants must meet the requirements for both components to qualify for the course. Details of both components are available in the “Annex A: Information Sheet For Applicants 2021-2022” sent to all secondary school Music Coordinators.

3) Do I still need to complete both components if I already have external certifications in practical and theory?

Yes, ALL applicants must complete both components regardless of attainment of certifications by external examination boards.

4) I play a non-Western instrument proficiently but have not been trained in Western Music theory. Can I take the O-Level Music course?

The O-Level Music course is open to applicants who play Western or non-Western instruments, and both types of instruments may be used for the Selection Exercise. Applicants should note that staff notation is the prevalent notation used throughout the O-Level Music course.

5) What is the standard of playing expected for the Selection Exercise in order to qualify for the course?

The standard of playing expected would be at a competent level of performance skills (e.g. display fluency and sound fundamental technique) demonstrated with an understanding of musical concepts that would be expected through music CCA and Primary and Lower Secondary Music learning and/or other musical experiences.

6) Is there any prior preparation or knowledge required to complete Component 2 well?

No additional preparation or knowledge would be required other than continuing with ongoing musical pursuits and learning (e.g. music CCA, Music lessons in school). Component 2 would require applicants to clap and sing accurately, coordinate effectively with the backing track, and creatively respond to rhythmic and melodic stimuli. It is intended to assess applicants' basic musicianship skills that would be acquired through the Primary and Lower Secondary Music syllabus or other music-related learning experiences.

About the O-Level Music Course

7) What is the difference between the O-Level Music course and private instrumental tutoring?

The O-Level Music course goes beyond music performing to encompass the development of knowledge and skills that fully integrates music listening, creating and performing. Students engage with music through diverse musical styles and traditions, learning through a curriculum that prioritises musical exposure, authentic experience, and creativity. It is intended that students will then discover the relevance of music learning and develop a sense of purpose as musicians.

8) Will the O-Level Music course prepare me for external music examinations then?

The purpose of the O-Level Music course is not to prepare students for external music examinations, but to develop students' aural abilities and musical understanding to foster a lifelong interest and involvement in music. Students would be able to apply the musical knowledge and skills gleaned from the course across wider musical interests and pursuits.

9) Will I receive individualised instrumental tutoring as part of the O-Level Music course?

No, individualised instrumental tutoring will not be provided. Students are advised to continue engaging in the practice of their instrument(s) outside curriculum hours to ensure that there is consistent progress and proficiency.

10) Are there additional school fees to be incurred for the O-Level Music course?

No, students will only pay regular school fees. If students face issues in transportation costs, they may approach their schools for financial support.

Students who need financial assistance can apply for the MOE Financial Assistance and Bursary Schemes through their schools. More information can be obtained from <http://www.moe.gov.sg/initiatives/financial-assistance/>.

11) Can I withdraw from the O-Level Music course at any point of the study?

Withdrawal from the O-Level Music course is not encouraged. Students and their parents must give due consideration of the level of commitment before applying for the subject as vacancies are limited. Withdrawal requests must be supported by the O-Level Music Teacher and Principal of the student's secondary school.