Oide

Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional Learning of School Leaders and Teachers

Introducing the New Leaving Certificate Music Specification 2027-2030

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PLE 2026-2027

CC BY NC

Learning together, we will…



- get to know the SCR Leaving Certificate Music Specification
- further deepen our understanding of the Strands, Modes of Engagement, and the Learning Outcomes in the specification
- explore the planning considerations for effective learning, teaching and assessment to take place

Key Documents





https://oide.ie/post-primary/home/music/music-senior-cycle/key-documents/

Key Dates Tranche 3: Music

Oide

Prepare
2026-2027

Sep 2026
Music Specification published

Nov 2026
AAC Guidelines published

Apr 2027
Sample Examination Papers

May 2027
Sample AAC Brief

5th Year
2027-2028

Sep 2027
Teaching for Student Learning begins

Jan 2028
Live AAC Brief published

6th Year
2028-2029

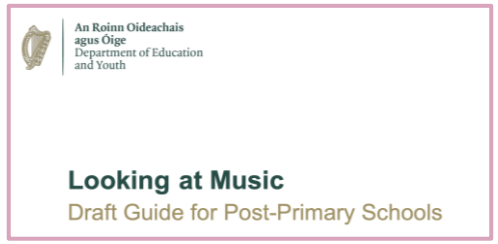
Sep 2028
Teaching for Student Learning continues

Term 2 2029
Music Performance AAC Completed

Jun 2029
SEC Written Examination

Oide Music Team Support 2026 - 2030
Connected Policies and Documents



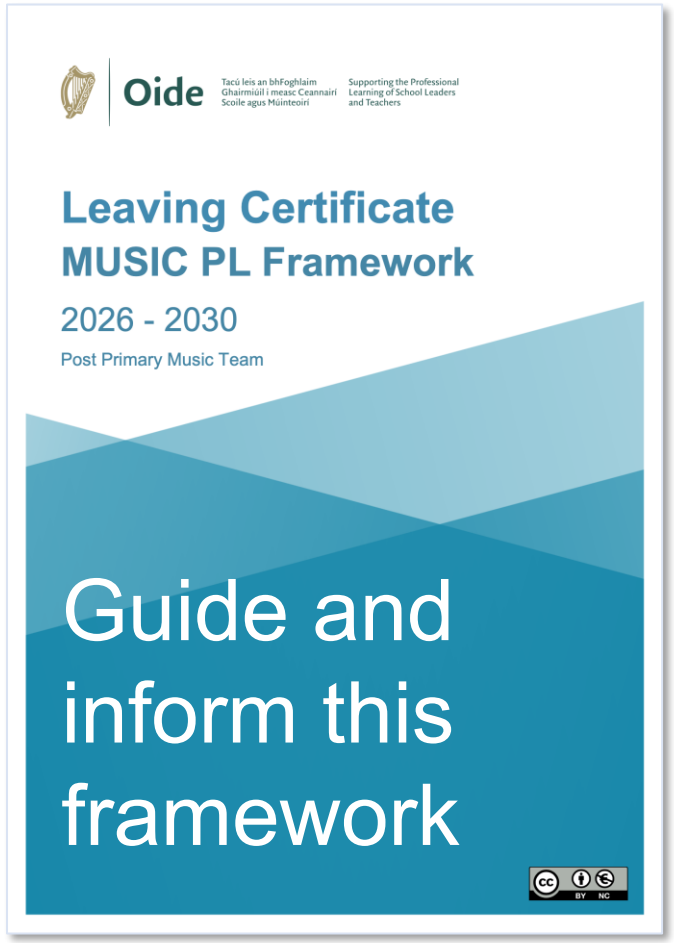






- ✓ DRAFT SCR LC Music Specification
- ✓ Cosán
- ✓ Coursework Rules and Procedures
- ✓ Design and QA Protocols
- ✓ Guidance on AI in Schools
- ✓ Inclusive Education for All
- ✓ TY Programme Statement
- ✓ Wellbeing Policy Statement
- ✓ Ireland's Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy

This list is not exhaustive.



Oide Music Team Support
Models of Professional Learning

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PLE	In-person full-day PLE school closure
Webinar	Online 2-hour PLE during school hours
Workshop	In-person 2-hour PLE outside school hours
Collaboratives a & b	PLCs at national and local levels
Sustained School Support	Bespoke from Year 2

Oide Music Team Support
A Year in the Life of a Music Teacher

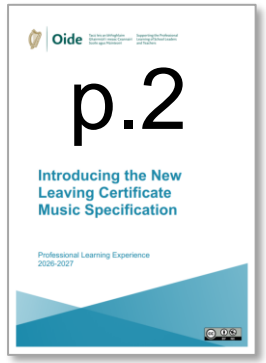
2026-2027	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Workshop 1									
Professional Learning Experience Day 1									
Collaborative 1a									
Webinar 1									
Collaborative 1b									

2027-2028	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Workshop 2									
Professional Learning Experience Day 2									
Collaborative 2a									
Webinar 2									
Collaborative 2b									

2028-2029	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Workshop 3									
Professional Learning Experience Day 3									
Collaborative 3a									
Webinar 3									
Collaborative 3b									

2029-2030	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Workshop 4									
Professional Learning Experience Day 4									
Collaborative 4a									
Webinar 4									
Collaborative 4b									

Identify key events that take place in a year in the life of your Music department



Oide Music Team Support
Professional Learning Focus

Oide

Year 1: Introducing the Curriculum specification for LC Music

Year 2: Implementing the Learning, Teaching and Assessment of the specification to support engagement with the AAC

Year 3: Implementing and Evidencing the Learning

Year 4: Embedding the specification in Learning, Teaching and Assessment through a reflective process

Learning together, we will…



- get to know the SCR Curriculum specification for Leaving Certificate Music
- further deepen our understanding of the Strands, Modes of Engagement, and the Learning Outcomes in the specification
- explore the planning considerations for effective learning, teaching and assessment to take place

Overview



- September 2027 – June 2029
- 180 hours
- 2 Interconnected Strands
- 27 Learning Outcomes
- 3 Integrated Modes of Engagement
- Assessment for Certification

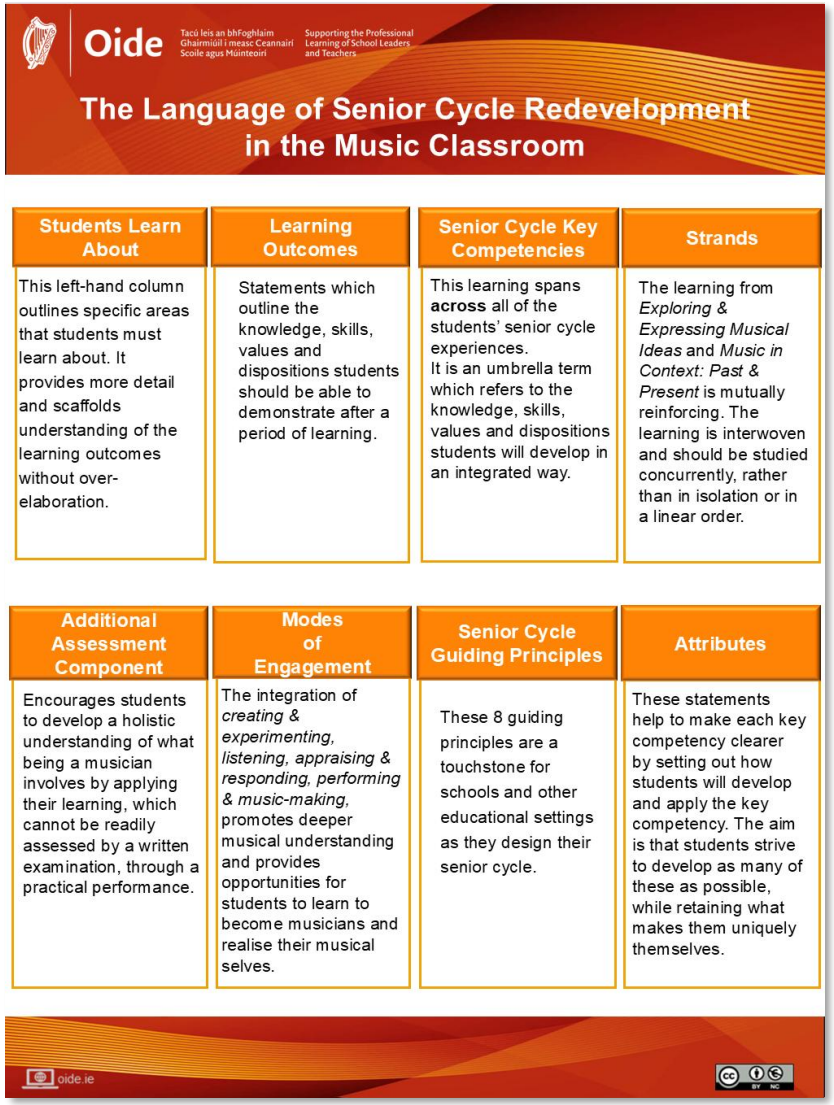
Assessment component	Weighting	Level
Music Performance AAC	50%	Common brief. Assessed at Higher and Ordinary Level
Written examination	50%	Higher and Ordinary Level

Senior Cycle Redevelopment in LC Music

Oide

Before Workshop				After Workshop		
TRUE	FALSE	Don't Know	Anticipatory Exercise	TRUE	FALSE	Don't Know
			Strand 1 is to be taught in 5th year and Strand 2 in 6th year.			
			The Key Competencies are integrated across the rationale, aims, learning outcomes and assessment sections of the specification.			
			Technology is gone from the Practical examination.			
			The 27 Learning outcomes promote teaching and learning processes that develop students' knowledge, skills, values and dispositions incrementally across the two years.			
			Students must choose between solo and group performance in the Practical Examination.			
			Students will only spend 25 hours on the Additional Assessment Component (AAC).			
			In addition to the prescribed music list, students will engage with other music in the classroom, which will expose students to additional musical styles, types, and genres, and to music which reflects the students' own interests.			

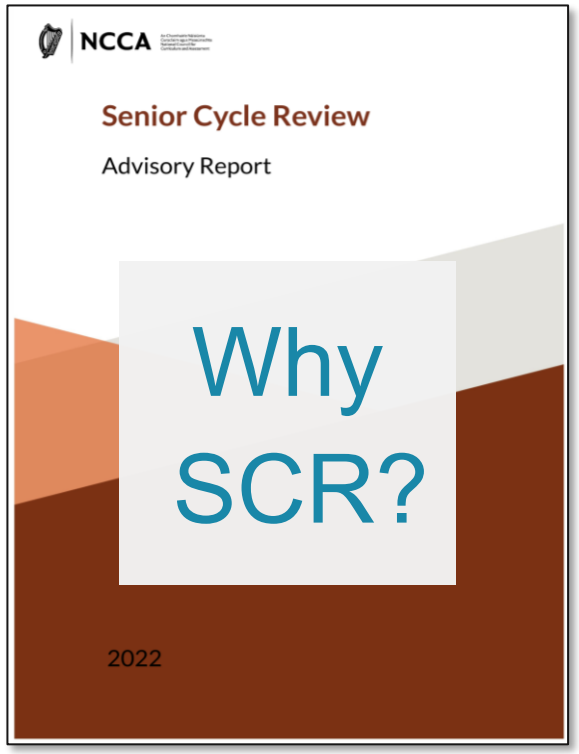
Senior Cycle Redevelopment Language



Deepen your understanding of the language of Senior Cycle Development

- Shuffle the cards
- Deal the cards to each player
- Each player reads their description card
- Together, decide which term best matches this description

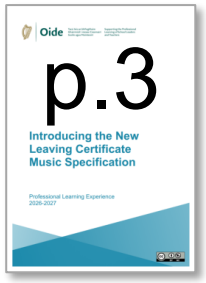
Senior Cycle Redevelopment



The 8 guiding principles are a touchstone for schools and other educational settings, as they design their senior cycle

Curriculum specification for Leaving Certificate Music (2026), p.2

A touchstone evaluates the quality of something.



Select 1 principle and share in your group how your classroom practice might reflect this principle

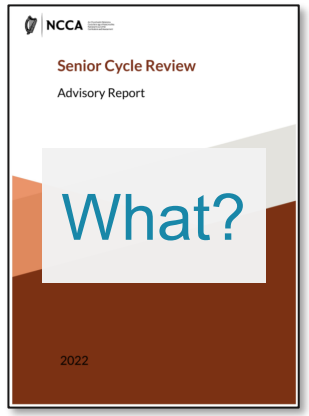
Student Learning in Senior Cycle

*...consists of everything students learn **within** all of the subjects and modules they engage with.*

*The learning which spans **across** all of their SC experiences is outlined in the Key Competencies.*

*The learning which occurs **within** a subject is outlined in the Strands and Learning Outcomes.*

Curriculum specification for Leaving Certificate Music (2026), p.7



Lifelong Learning

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SC Key Competencies

Students come to know

KNOWLEDGE

SKILLS

VALUES AND DISPOSITIONS

Enriched, engaged and competent learners

What to do
How to do it
When to act
When not to act

Meet the Specification





- The Purpose
- Student Learning in Senior Cycle
- Learning in the Music Class
- Evidencing the Learning
- Language of Learning

Contents

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Meet the Specification



- The Purpose
- Student Learning in SC
- Learning in the Music Class
- Evidencing the Learning
- Language of Learning



Note: this carousel image was generated using AI.



Curriculum Specification for Leaving Certificate Music

Appendix 1: Action Verbs

Active verb	Students should be able to
Adapt	make something suitable for new condition, use or purpose.
Apply	select and use information and/or knowledge and understanding to explain a given situation or real circumstances.
Appraise	evaluate, judge or consider text or a piece of work.
Brief description/ explanation	give a short statement of only the main points.
Collaborate	work jointly with another, or others, on an activity or project.
Create	bring something into existence; to cause something to happen as a result of one's actions.
Demonstrate	prove or make clear by reasoning or evidence, illustrating with examples or practical application.
Describe	give a detailed account of the main points of the topic, using words, diagrams and/or images.
Devise	plan, elaborate or invent something from existing principles or ideas.
Discuss	offer a considered, balanced review that includes a range of arguments, perspectives, factors or hypotheses, grounded in appropriate evidence.
Evaluate (data/ information)	collect and examine data to make judgments and appraisals; describe how evidence supports or does not support a conclusion in an inquiry or investigation; identify the limitations of data in conclusions; make judgments about the ideas, solutions or methods.
Evaluate (ethical judgement)	collect and examine evidence to make judgments and appraisals; describe how evidence supports or does not support a judgement; identify the limitations of evidence in conclusions; make judgments about the ideas, solutions or methods.
Explain	give a detailed account supported by reasons or causes.
Explore	systematically look into something closely; to scrutinise or probe.
Identify	recognise patterns, facts, or details; provide an answer from a number of possibilities; recognise and state briefly a distinguishing fact or feature.
Illustrate	use drawings or examples to describe something.
Improvise	create and perform music spontaneously or without prior preparation; to produce or make something from whatever is available.
Justify	give valid reasons or evidence to support an answer or conclusion.
Outline	give the main points, restricting to essential pieces of information.
Perform	a step in the musical process where musical ideas are expressed and shared to a listener.
Present	to bring, offer or give in a formal way; to bring before or introduce to a public forum.
Provide	offer data, work or documentation that support inferences or conclusions.
Reflect	give thoughtful consideration to actions, experiences, values and learning in order to gain new insights and make meaning.
Rehearse	practice a play, piece of music, or other work for a performance.
Research	inquire specifically, through collecting, organising and analysing evidence in order to draw conclusions.
Respond	react or reply to something, typically in speech, writing, or action.
Transcribe	write out what is heard.
Use	apply knowledge, skills or rules to put them into practice.

Appendix 2: Glossary of Terms

Term	Interpretation
Aural perception	Involves the ability to interpret and understand based on what can be heard.
Balance	The relative dynamics of sounds in a piece of music.
Chord progression	A series of chords sounding one after another to create a harmonic phrase.
Chorus (processing effect)	A processing effect that creates copies of the original sound, slightly alters the pitch and timing, and blends them back in with the original.
Compositional devices	Techniques, methods or tools used by a composer to create, vary, develop and shape their music
Compression	A processing effect used in mixing or recording where the dynamic range of a sound is reduced when it exceeds a set threshold level.
Countermelody	A melodic line that is heard alongside a main melody in a piece of music.
Culture	The ideas, customs, practices, traditions, values and social behaviour of a particular people or society.
Delay	A processing effect where the original sound is repeated at a set time interval. There is normally a decrease in volume with each repeat.
Distortion	A processing effect where the audio signal is altered by increasing the gain beyond a maximum limit causing clipping resulting in a harsh gritty tone quality.
Echo	A distinct duplication of a sound which decays over time.
Effect Automation	The process of controlling changes in audio effects over time within a digital audio workstation (DAW).
Elements	Pulse, duration, tempo, pitch, dynamics, timbre, texture, structure, style, tonality and instrumentation.
Equalisation (EQ)	A processing effect where specific frequencies can be increased or decreased without effecting the rest of the sound.
Expressive techniques	The ways performers and composers shape sound to convey emotion, mood, and character in music.
Feedback	A high-pitched sound which results when a microphone or instrument picks up its own amplified output and re-amplifies it.
Imitation	The repetition of a musical idea or motif in a different voice or part, creating texture.
Improvisation	Spontaneous musical creation, often based on an existing melodic, rhythmic or harmonic fragments, or chord patterns.
Leitmotif	A recurring musical idea—such as a melody, rhythm, or harmony—associated with a particular character, place, emotion, or concept in a piece of music, especially in opera, film scores, and programmatic works.
Live musical performance	A musical performance in real time at a physical venue.
Loop	A short section of music or sample that is repeated. Commonly used in digital and electronic music.
Media	The various platforms and formats where music is used purposefully to enhance storytelling, narrative, atmosphere, mood or meaning. Media includes film, audio and audio-visual, musical theatre, video games and incidental music.
Modulation	The process of changing from one key to another within a piece of music.

Term	Interpretation
Motif	A musical idea in a piece of music.
Ostinato	A repeated pattern that can be rhythmic, melodic or harmonic and that is maintained continually in a piece of music.
Panning	The placement of sound in the stereo field.
Processing effects	A series of mechanical or technological operations on a recording process that modifies the original sound inputted.
Reverb	A processing effect where the blended reflection of sounds from surfaces gives the impression of space or environment. Can be achieved both naturally or digitally.
Sequence	A melodic, rhythmic or harmonic motif or phrase which is repeated at a higher or lower pitch.
Sound source	The means by which a sound is produced (e.g. on an instrument, by using the voice, an environmental object, an electronic device).
Stimulus	Something that inspires students to create a musical idea; a stimulus can include: a mood, an event, film and television, a personal experience, a piece of music, prescribed music, text or place.
Style	A musical type or genre that is characterised by specific features, form and structure, or a typical use of musical elements and compositional devices.
Symbolism	The use of musical elements to represent ideas, emotions, characters, or themes.
Technical dexterity	The skill and control of a performer in executing the physical demands of their instrument or voice.
Texture	How layers of sounds within a piece of music interact.
Timbre	The specific tone or sound quality of an instrument or voice, or a collection of instruments and voices.
Visual perception	Involves the ability to interpret and understand based on what can be seen.
Word painting	When music reflects the literal meaning of the lyrics.
Word setting	The way in which lyrics or text are matched to music in vocal compositions.

Appendix 1: Action Verbs p.31
Appendix 2: Glossary of terms pp.32-33



Inside the Spec: Purpose

Oide

- ✓ Highlight the statements in this rationale that align with your beliefs and values as a music teacher (p. 4)
- ✓ Organise the five aims according to what is currently done well and what may need further development in your music department
- ✓ Select 3-4 key messages you can use to highlight the value of choosing music as a Senior Cycle subject (p. 6)


Purpose – Curriculum Specification for Leaving Certificate Music

Oide

- ✓ Highlight the statements in this rationale that align with your beliefs and values as a music teacher (p. 4)
- ✓ Organise the five aims according to what is currently done well and what may need to be developed further in your music department (p. 5)
- ✓ Select 3-4 key messages you can use to highlight the value of choosing music as a Senior Cycle subject (p. 6)

Rationale

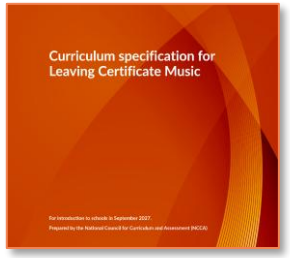
Aims

Continuity and progression

Junior Cycle

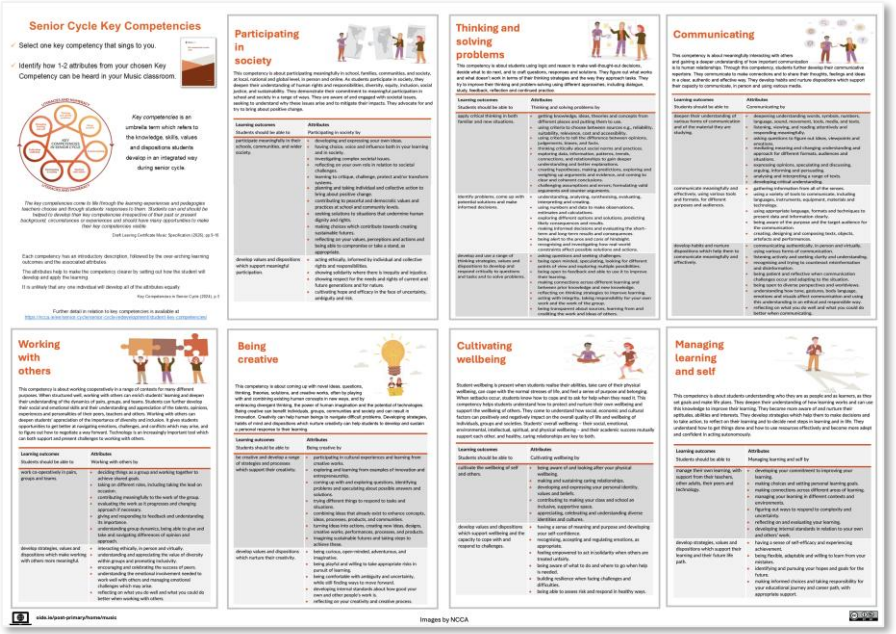
Beyond senior cycle

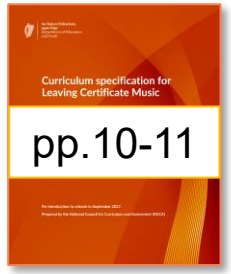




Student Learning in Senior Cycle

- ✓ What key competency did you choose?
- ✓ Identify how 1-2 attributes from your chosen key competency might be activated in your music classroom.









Learning in the Music Class

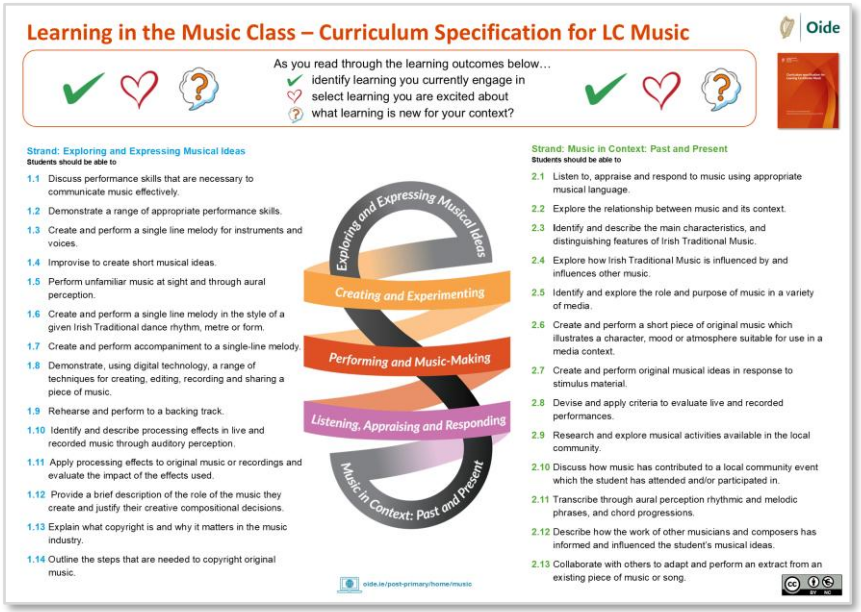
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As you read through the Learning Outcomes...

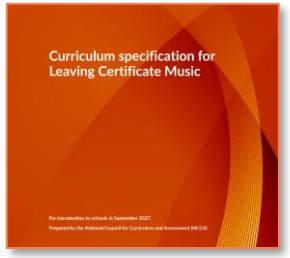
✔ identify learning you currently engage in

♡ select learning you are excited about

? what learning is new for your context?

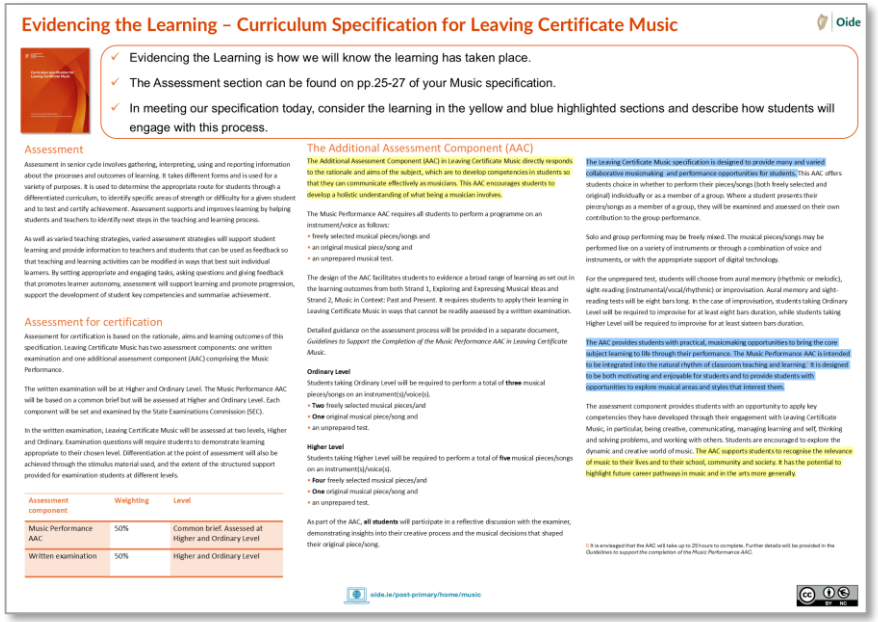






Evidencing the Learning

- ✓ Consider the highlighted yellow and blue sections from pp.25-30
- ✓ In evidencing this learning, how might students engage with this process in your Music classroom?



Evidencing the Learning – Curriculum Specification for Leaving Certificate Music

Oide

- ✓ Evidencing the Learning is how we will know the learning has taken place.
- ✓ The Assessment section can be found on pp.25-27 of your Music specification.
- ✓ In meeting our specification today, consider the learning in the yellow and blue highlighted sections and describe how students will engage with this process.

Assessment

Assessment in senior cycle involves gathering, interpreting, using and reporting information about the processes and outcomes of learning. It takes different forms and is used for a variety of purposes. It is used to determine the appropriate route for students through a differentiated curriculum, to identify specific areas of strength or difficulty for a given student and to test and certify achievement. Assessment supports and improves learning by helping students and teachers to identify next steps in the teaching and learning process.

As well as varied teaching strategies, varied assessment strategies will support student learning and provide information to teachers and students that can be used as feedback so that teaching and learning activities can be modified in ways that best suit individual learners. By setting appropriate and engaging tasks, asking questions and giving feedback that promotes learner autonomy, assessment will support learning and promote progression, support the development of student key competencies and summarise achievement.

Assessment for certification

Assessment for certification is based on the rationale, aims and learning outcomes of this specification. Leaving Certificate Music has two assessment components: one written examination and one additional assessment component (AAC) comprising the Music Performance.

The written examination will be at Higher and Ordinary Level. The Music Performance AAC will be based on a common brief but will be assessed at Higher and Ordinary Level. Each component will be set and examined by the State Examinations Commission (SEC).

In the written examination, Leaving Certificate Music will be assessed at two levels, Higher and Ordinary. Examination questions will require students to demonstrate learning appropriate to their chosen level. Differentiation at the point of assessment will also be achieved through the stimulus material used, and the extent of the structured support provided for examination students at different levels.

Assessment component	Weighting	Level
Music Performance AAC	50%	Common brief. Assessed at Higher and Ordinary Level
Written examination	50%	Higher and Ordinary Level

The Additional Assessment Component (AAC)

The Additional Assessment Component (AAC) in Leaving Certificate Music directly responds to the rationale and aims of the subject, which are to develop competencies in students so that they can communicate effectively as musicians. This AAC encourages students to develop a holistic understanding of what being a musician involves.

The Music Performance AAC requires all students to perform a programme on an instrument/voice as follows:

- freely selected musical pieces/songs and
- an original musical piece/song and
- an unprepared musical test.

The design of the AAC facilitates students to evidence a broad range of learning as set out in the learning outcomes from both Strand 1, Exploring and Expressing Musical Ideas and Strand 2, Music in Context: Past and Present. It requires students to apply their learning in Leaving Certificate Music in ways that cannot be readily assessed by a written examination.

Detailed guidance on the assessment process will be provided in a separate document, *Guidelines to Support the Completion of the Music Performance AAC in Leaving Certificate Music*.

Ordinary Level

Students taking Ordinary Level will be required to perform a total of **three** musical pieces/songs on an instrument(s)/voice(s).

- **Two** freely selected musical pieces/and
- **One** original musical piece/song and
- an unprepared test.

Higher Level

Students taking Higher Level will be required to perform a total of **five** musical pieces/songs on an instrument(s)/voice(s).

- **Four** freely selected musical pieces/and
- **One** original musical piece/song and
- an unprepared test.

As part of the AAC, **all students** will participate in a reflective discussion with the examiner, demonstrating insights into their creative process and the musical decisions that shaped their original piece/song.

The Leaving Certificate Music specification is designed to provide many and varied collaborative musicmaking and performance opportunities for students. This AAC offers students choice in whether to perform their pieces/songs (both freely selected and original) individually or as a member of a group. Where a student presents their pieces/songs as a member of a group, they will be examined and assessed on their own contribution to the group performance.

Solo and group performing may be freely mixed. The musical pieces/songs may be performed live on a variety of instruments or through a combination of voice and instruments, or with the appropriate support of digital technology.

For the unprepared test, students will choose from aural memory (rhythmic or melodic), sight-reading (instrumental/vocal/rhythmic) or improvisation. Aural memory and sight-reading tests will be eight bars long. In the case of improvisation, students taking Ordinary Level will be required to improvise for at least eight bars duration, while students taking Higher Level will be required to improvise for at least sixteen bars duration.

The AAC provides students with practical, musicmaking opportunities to bring the core subject learning to life through their performance. The Music Performance AAC is intended to be integrated into the natural rhythm of classroom teaching and learning. It is designed to be both motivating and enjoyable for students and to provide students with opportunities to explore musical areas and styles that interest them.

The assessment component provides students with an opportunity to apply key competencies they have developed through their engagement with Leaving Certificate Music, in particular, being creative, communicating, managing learning and self, thinking and solving problems, and working with others. Students are encouraged to explore the dynamic and creative world of music. The AAC supports students to recognise the relevance of music to their lives and to their school, community and society. It has the potential to highlight future career pathways in music and in the arts more generally.

It is envisaged that the AAC will take up to 25 hours to complete. Further details will be provided in the *Guidelines to support the completion of the Music Performance AAC*.

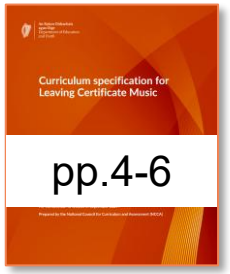
oide.ie/post-primary/home/music



Feedback: Purpose

- ✓ Highlight the statements in this rationale that align with your beliefs and values as a music teacher (p.4)
- ✓ Organise the five aims according to what is currently done well and what may need further development in your music department (p.5)
- ✓ Select 3-4 key messages you can use to highlight the value of choosing music as a Senior Cycle subject (p.6)

Share key takeaways that you will use for your department

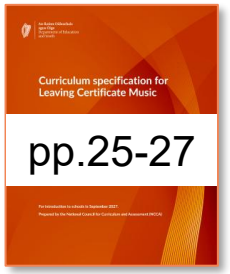




Feedback: Evidencing the Learning

- ✓ Consider the highlighted sections on pp.25-27
- ✓ In evidencing the learning, how might students engage with this process in your Music classroom?

Share one strategy you considered for evidencing this learning
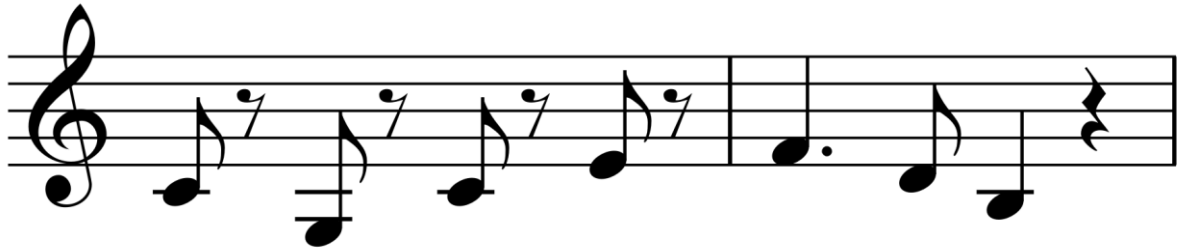


Student Learning in Senior Cycle
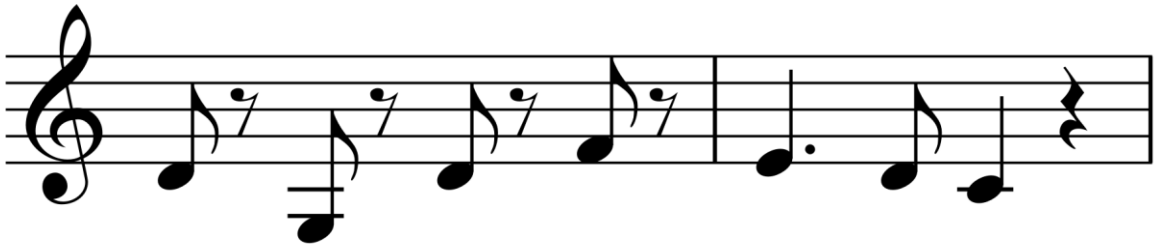
In practice, key competencies are developed by students in schools via the pedagogies teachers use and the environment they develop in their classrooms and within their school.

Curriculum specification for Leaving Certificate Music (2026), p.7

Please Stand!
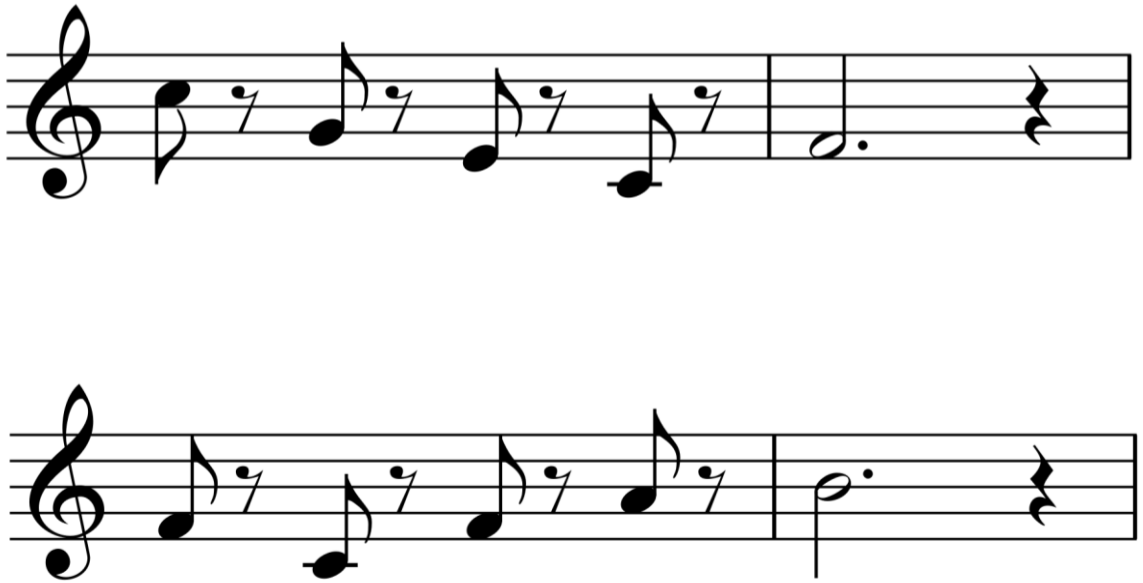
Activating the Key Competencies



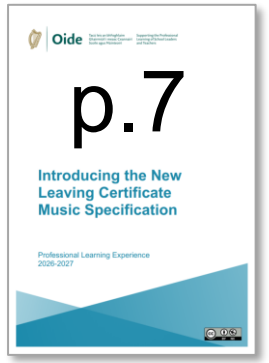


Through call and response, sing these idioms.
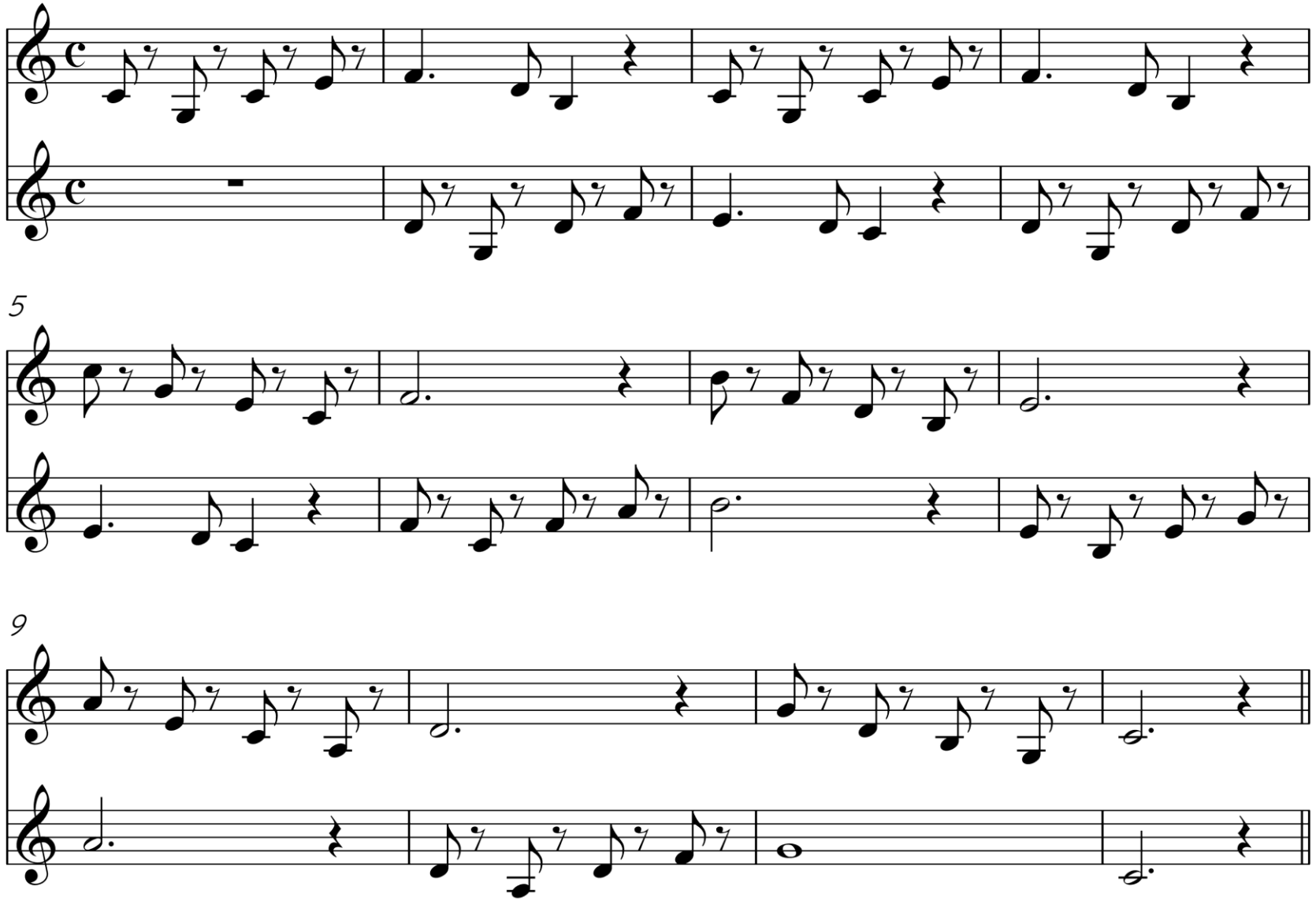
The Sounds of our Specification



In your group, continue your 2-bar motif in a descending sequence



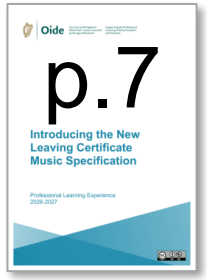
Building the Score
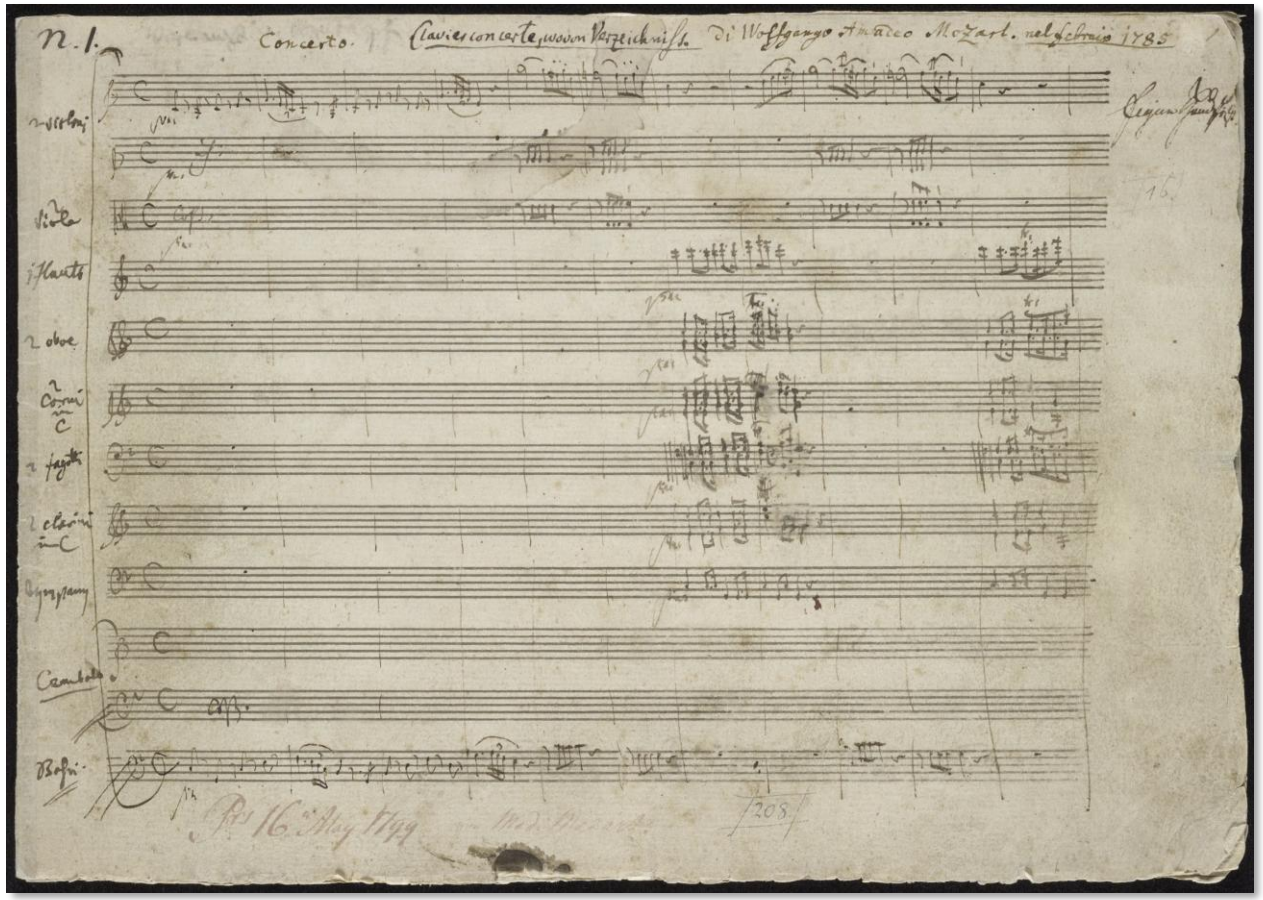




Piano Concerto no. 21, Mvt I, recapitulation bb. 328-339

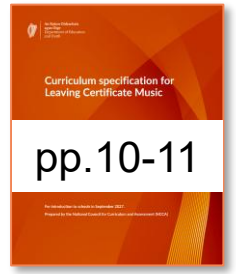
9'29" – 9' 49"



Activating the SC Key Competencies



What Key Competencies from pp.10-11 of the specification were activated in this learning experience?

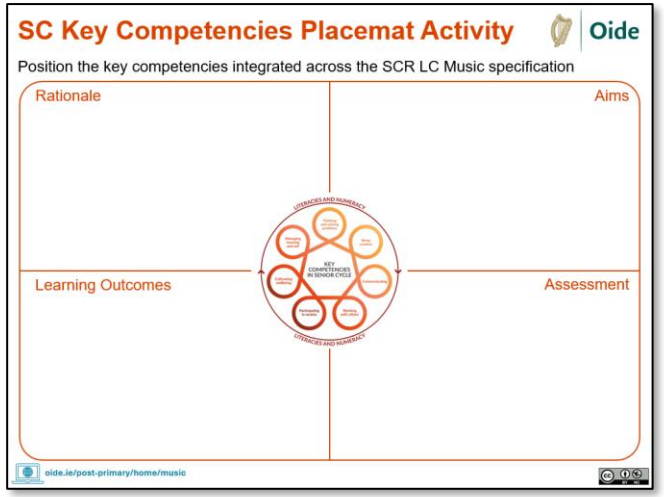


Student learning in Senior Cycle

Key competencies are integrated across the rationale, aims, learning outcomes and assessment sections of specifications.

Curriculum Specification for Leaving Certificate Music (2026), p. 7

Use the placemat to position what key competencies are integrated across the new Music specification

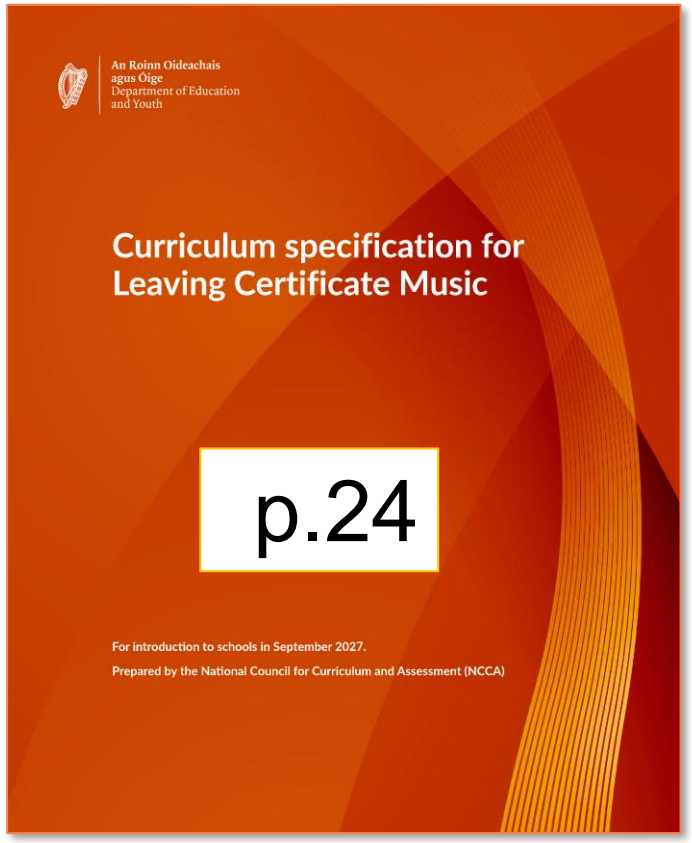


Learning together, we will…



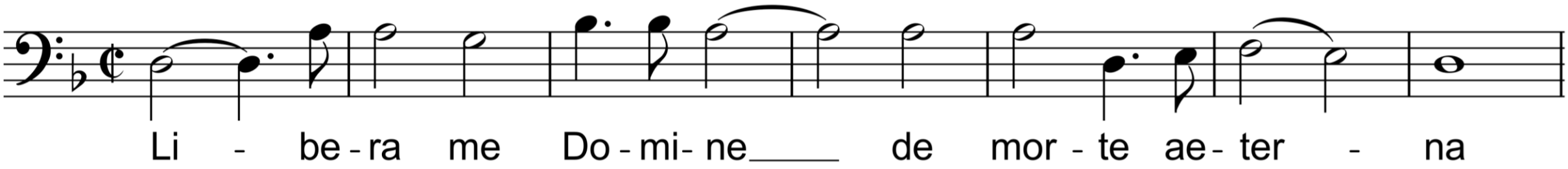
- get to know the SCR Curriculum specification for Leaving Certificate Music
- further deepen our understanding of the Strands, Modes of Engagement, and the Learning Outcomes in the specification
- explore the planning considerations for effective learning, teaching and assessment to take place

Teaching for Student Learning



- Student-centred
- Safe space
- Music encountered is a rich source for exploration
- Emphasises practical music-making
- Socialisation of learning
- Learning for all

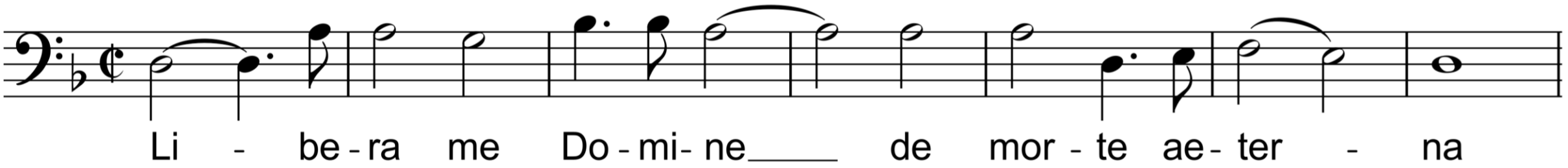
Aural Awareness and Critical Listening Skills



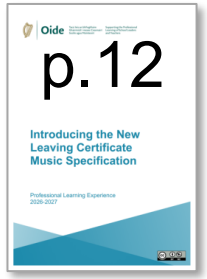
What observations can we make about this phrase taken from the melody?

0'00" – 1' 08"

Experiment when Creating

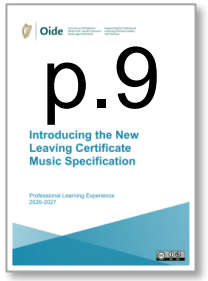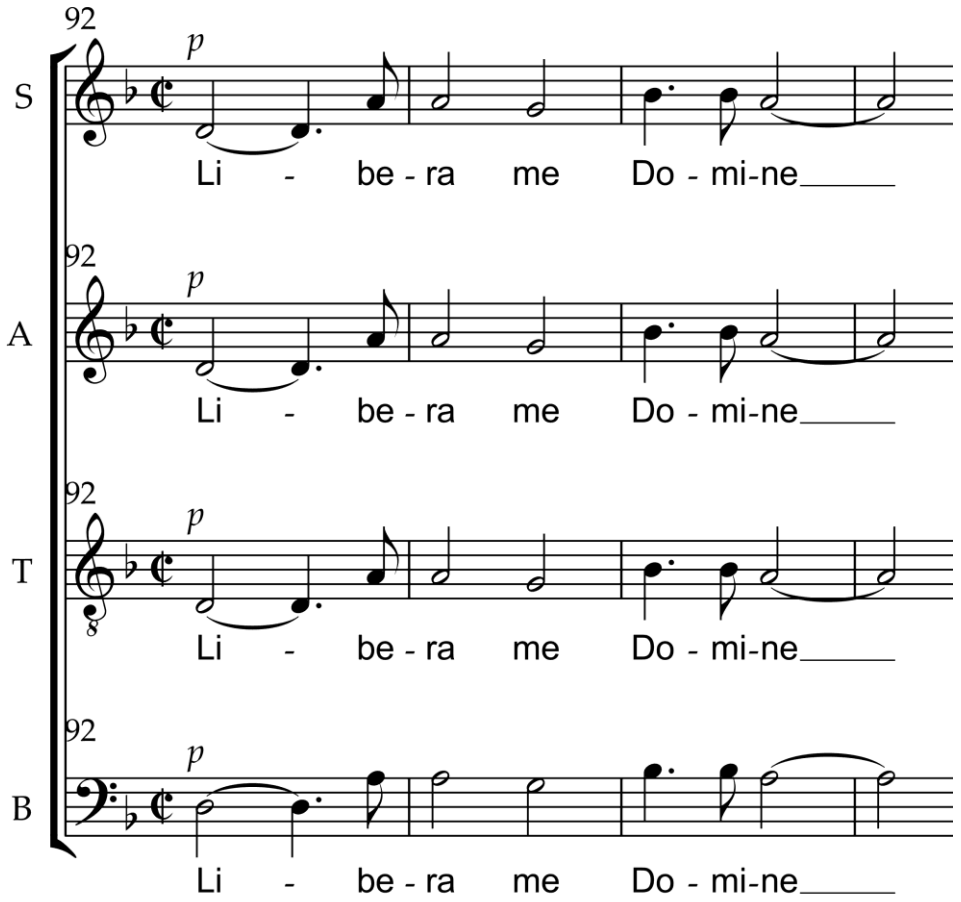


In pairs, discuss how you would modulate to the relative major.



Build Confidence and Motivation

Sight sing the melody and consider what performance skills will be needed to communicate this music effectively



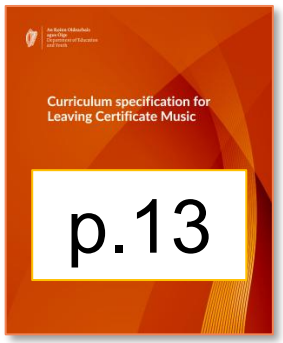


2'40" – 3' 40"

Integrated Modes of Engagement



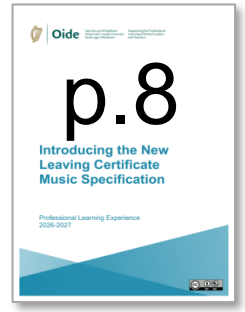
…promote deeper understanding and provide opportunities for students to learn to become musicians and realise their musical selves.



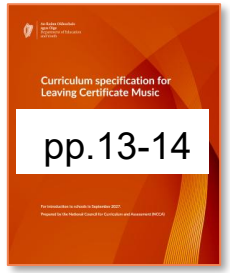
Teaching for Student Learning



Further consider these three messages from the *Teaching for Student Learning* section of the specification.



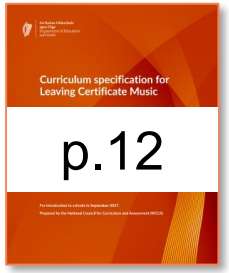
Using the modes of engagement on pp.13-14, describe in detail the learning students will engage in to enact these messages as musicians in today's world.



Two Interconnected Strands



The learning from the two interconnected strands is mutually reinforcing.





Two Interconnected Strands

Oide



Interconnected Strands

Discuss how you might support your students to engage with this interconnected learning in your Music classroom

Strand 1: Exploring and Expressing Musical Ideas

In this strand students develop their creative voice and realise their musical selves. Students do this by exploring, developing and expressing original musical ideas in a variety of musical styles. Students explore and express their musical creativity and imagination in both solo and group contexts. They develop a range of aural, analytical, technical, digital and notational skills as they learn to construct, organise and shape their musical ideas in response to a variety of stimuli and performance contexts. Creating musical ideas involves exploring and experimenting with musical elements including pulse, duration, tempo, pitch, dynamics, timbre, texture, structure, style, tonality and instrumentation.[3]

Prescribed and unprescribed music act as a rich source of stimulus material from which students explore, select, adapt and incorporate compositional and instrumental devices in their own work. Students learn to draft, redraft and edit their musical ideas.

When creating musical ideas, students perform their ideas using instruments, voices, sound sources, digital technology or a combination of these. Realising their learning in this way develops aural awareness and ensures the creative process is engaging, meaningful and authentic for all students.

In this strand, students learn about ethical and responsible practices in music. Students learn to value and protect their music, and the music of others when creating, performing or sharing music.

Throughout their learning, students' musical literacy and digital literacy evolve in sophistication. Students use appropriate musical language and notation practices to describe, document and communicate their ideas. Students make more informed and considered decisions about their creative direction, justifying and articulating their compositional choices with increasing confidence.

Students engaging with Ordinary Level are expected to be able to create music in key signatures of up to two sharps and two flats in both major and minor keys. Students engaging with Higher Level are expected to be able to create music in key signatures of up to four sharps and four flats in both major and minor keys. Students undertaking both Ordinary Level and Higher Level should be encouraged to create, experiment, perform, listen, appraise and respond to music which extends beyond these parameters where appropriate. In addition, all students will be expected to engage with all prescribed music, including music which extends beyond these parameters.

[3] These elements are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive, nor do they form a checklist.

Strand 2: Music in Context: Past and Present

In this strand, students develop an understanding of the key features and contextual influences of a wide range of musical styles. This understanding helps to shape students' ability to create, perform, appraise, and respond to music meaningfully.

Students investigate music associated with emotions, feelings, times, places, and social groups. Students share and discuss examples of music experienced at home, at school and in the wider community. They come to understand the historical, personal, political, social, and cultural dimensions of music and gain insights into the purpose, intent, and impact of music across different contexts and environments.

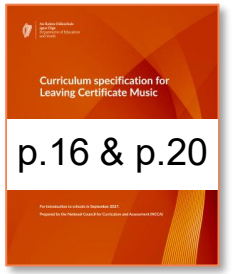
This strand aims to foster the curiosity, enjoyment, and pleasure that listening to, performing, and engaging with music can bring. Students engage with music from both historical and contemporary contexts. They listen to, appraise, and respond to music from a prescribed music list, as well as unprescribed music selected collaboratively by students and teachers. The prescribed music list will introduce students to music from a wide variety of musical styles, types, and genres. In addition to the prescribed music list, students will engage with other music in the classroom which will expose students to additional musical styles, types, and genres, and to music which reflects the students' own interests. Students listen to, appraise and respond to music they engage with; select and perform short extracts from this music; and use this music as stimulus material in creative tasks which are outlined in learning outcomes in this strand and also in Strand 1: Exploring and Expressing Musical Ideas.

Engagement with music repertoire should begin through aural perception. Students develop a deeper and more intuitive understanding of music repertoire by focusing on critical listening, internalising sounds, structures, and patterns, learning to imitate, perform and experiment with what they hear. Students will explore, investigate, and compare how stylistic features, musical elements, compositional, instrumental and vocal techniques are applied in different ways for different purposes across different musical styles. As students learn to appraise and respond to music, they formulate responses using appropriate musical language.

In this strand, students critique both live and recorded performances and use their learning to reflect upon, inform, and improve their own music practices. It is expected that students engaging with Leaving Certificate Music would attend at least one live musical performance(s)[3] as a class group during their study of the subject.

Curriculum specification for Leaving Certificate Music p.16 and p. 20

Together in your group, discuss how you might support your students to engage with this interconnected learning in your Music classroom



Music in Context and Exploring and Expressing Musical Ideas



“This is a tune I composed a few years ago as a birthday present for my godson, Soren. Soren is a Viking name meaning ‘God of War’ and I named this tune ‘To War’ or ‘Chun Cogaidh’. It’s a command given to those who are left with no other option other than to fight. I wanted to play a descriptive piece on the concertina relating to the intensity of battle and to explore the use of drones and the breath and buttons as percussion to the tune. These latter sounds in particular remind me of medieval battle”. Begley (2022)

To War / Chun Cogaidh

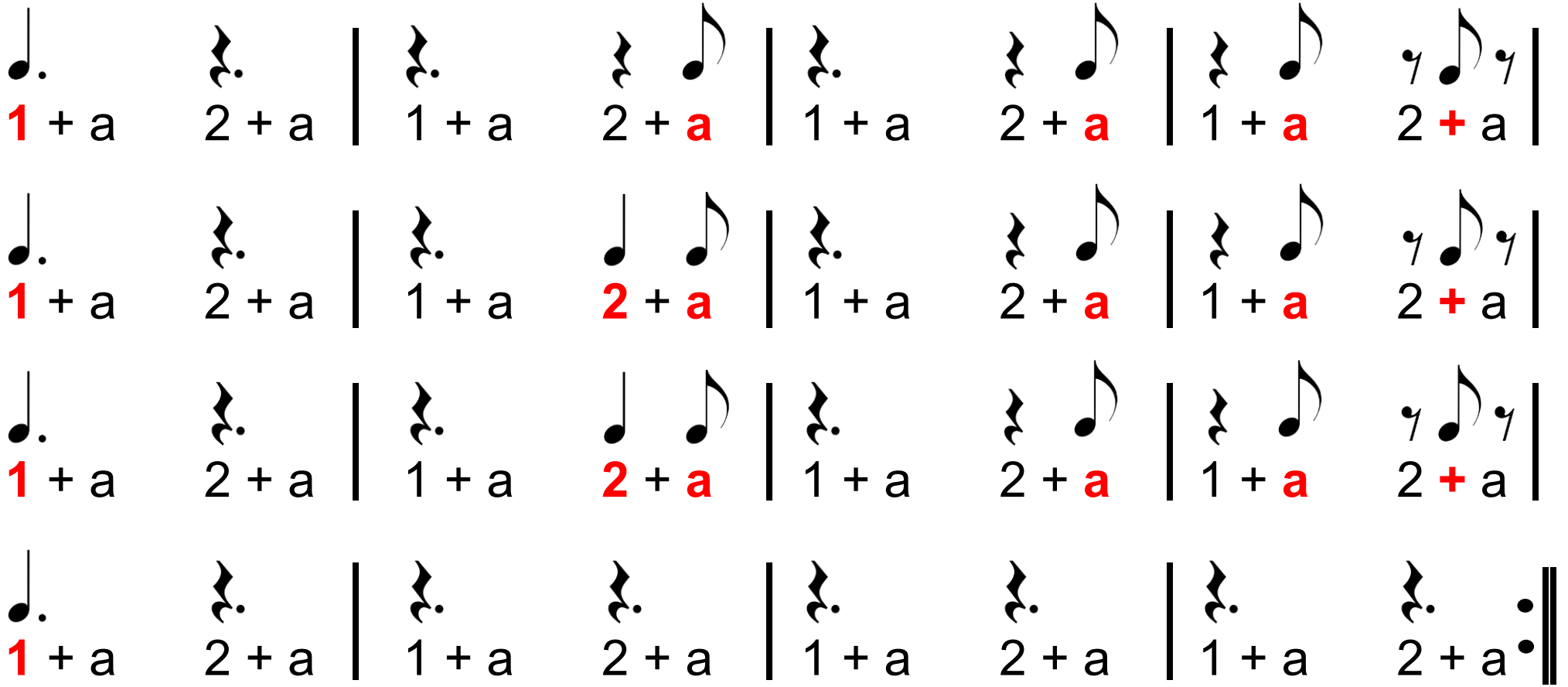
Oide



As you listen, consider how the relationship between music and its context is exemplified here.

Progress the Learning

Oide



What was the learning about in these 2 experiences?

1'08" – 1' 28"

Linking the Learning

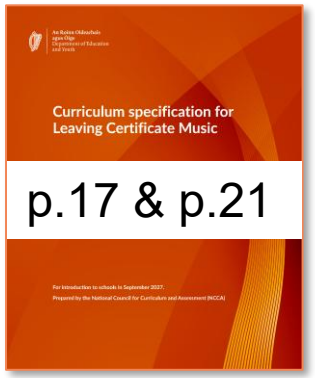
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Students should be able to

2.2 explore the relationship between music and its context.

1.5 perform unfamiliar music at sight and through aural perception.

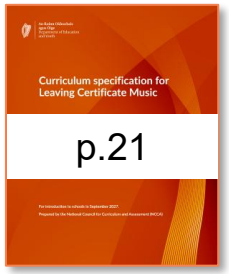
Find the two learning outcomes, one from each strand, that informed both of these learning experiences



Students Learn About...

Students learn about	Students should be able to
The relationship between music and its context, including: • historical, personal, political, social and cultural contexts as appropriate • stylistic features of the music • styles which may have influenced composers/arrangers/ performers	2.2. Explore the relationship between music and its context.

This left-hand column outlines specific areas that students learn about. It provides more detail and scaffolds understanding of the learning outcomes without over-elaboration.

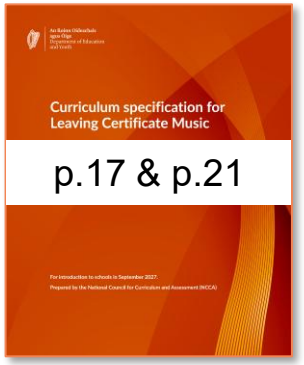


Students Learn About...

Oide

Students learn about	Students should be able to
The relationship between music and its context, including: • historical, personal, political, social and cultural contexts as appropriate • stylistic features of the music • styles which may have influenced composers/arrangers/performers: How to perform unfamiliar rhythmic, melodic and harmonic phrases and chord patterns: • in simple and compound time signatures • in major and minor keys • with performing and expressive techniques	**2.2** Explore the relationship between music and its context. **1.5** Perform unfamiliar music at sight and through aural perception.

What learning will students engage in to scaffold their understanding of these two learning outcomes?





Learning in the Music Classroom

Oide

Consider your earlier responses to the Learning Outcomes...

- Identify learning you currently engage in
- Select learning you are excited about
- What learning is new for your context?



Learning in the Music Classroom

Acting on your Feedback

Oide

Consider your earlier responses to the Learning Outcomes...

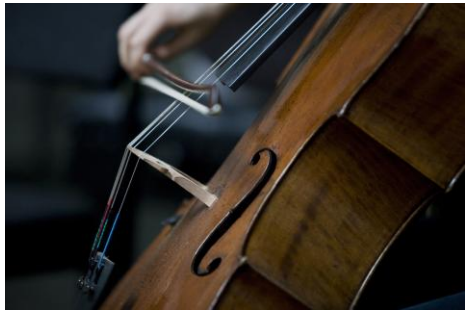
- How might this learning activate the SC Key competencies?
- How might students experience this learning?
- What area of learning, if any, might you need to upskill in?

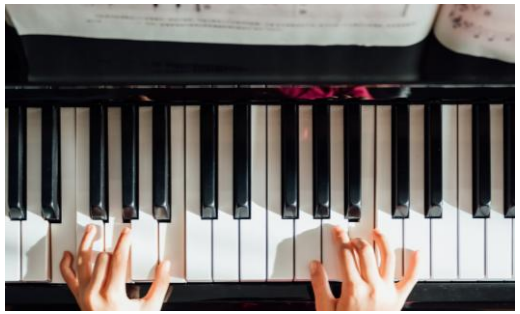
Learning together, we will…



- get to know the SCR Curriculum specification for Leaving Certificate Music
- further deepen our understanding of the Strands, Modes of Engagement, and the Learning Outcomes in the specification
- explore the planning considerations for effective learning, teaching and assessment to take place

Collaboratively Exploring & Expressing Musical Ideas



In your group, compose an accompaniment to the melody

Group 1: Rhythmic Accompaniment

Group 2: Melodic Accompaniment

Group 3: Harmonic (Bass line) Accompaniment

What was the learning at the heart of that experience?

Oide

*'**Learning Outcomes** commence with an action verb and describe the intended learning, i.e., what a learner will know, understand and be able to do after a period of learning'*

1.7 Compose and perform accompaniment to a single line melody.

Construct of a Learning Outcome

Oide

Students should be able to

1.8 demonstrate using digital technology, a range of techniques for creating, editing, recording and sharing a piece of music.

Action Verb
The Doing

...describes what the learner should be able to demonstrate

The Learning
About

What the learner will know and understand

Clarity and Coherence of Learning

Oide

Processing effects:

- Reverb
- Panning
- Delay
- Distortion
- Chorus
- Equalisation
- Compression
- Automation

1.10. Identify and describe processing effects in live and recorded music through auditory perception.

1.11. Apply processing effects to original music or recordings and evaluate the impact of the effects used.



Appendix 2: Glossary of Terms p. 32-33

Term	Interpretation
Aural perception	Involves the ability to interpret and understand based on what can be heard.
Balance	The relative dynamics of sounds in a piece of music.
Chord progression	A series of chords sounding one after another to create a harmonic phrase.
Chorus (processing effect)	A processing effect that creates copies of the original sound, slightly alters the pitch and timing, and blends them back in with the original.
Compositional devices	Techniques, methods or tools used by a composer to create, vary, develop and shape their music
Compression	A processing effect used in mixing or recording where the dynamic range of a sound is reduced when it exceeds a set threshold level.
Countermelody	A melodic line that is heard alongside a main melody in a piece of music.
Culture	The ideas, customs, practices, traditions, values and social behaviour of a particular people or society.
Delay	A processing effect where the original sound is repeated at a set time interval. There is normally a decrease in volume with each repeat.
Distortion	A processing effect where the audio signal is altered by increasing the gain beyond a maximum limit causing clipping resulting in a harsh gritty tone quality.
Echo	A distinct duplication of a sound which decays over time.
Effect Automation	The process of controlling changes in audio effects over time within a digital audio workstation (DAW).
Elements	Pulse, duration, tempo, pitch, dynamics, timbre, texture, structure, style, tonality and instrumentation.
Equalisation (EQ)	A processing effect where specific frequencies can be increased or decreased without effecting the rest of the sound.
Expressive techniques	The ways performers and composers shape sound to convey emotion, mood, and character in music.
Feedback	A high-pitched sound which results when a microphone or instrument picks up its own amplified output and re-amplifies it.
Imitation	The repetition of a musical idea or motif in a different voice or part, creating texture.
Improvisation	Spontaneous musical creation, often based on an existing melodic, rhythmic or harmonic fragments, or chord patterns.
Leitmotif	A recurring musical idea—such as a melody, rhythm, or harmony—associated with a particular character, place, emotion, or concept in a piece of music, especially in opera, film scores, and programmatic works.
Live musical performance	A musical performance in real time at a physical venue.
Loop	A short section of music or sample that is repeated. Commonly used in digital and electronic music.
Media	The various platforms and formats where music is used purposefully to enhance storytelling, narrative, atmosphere, mood or meaning. Media includes film, audio and audio-visual, musical theatre, video games and incidental music.
Modulation	The process of changing from one key to another within a piece of music.

Term	Interpretation
Motif	A musical idea in a piece of music.
Ostinato	A repeated pattern that can be rhythmic, melodic or harmonic and that is maintained continually in a piece of music.
Panning	The placement of sound in the stereo field.
Processing effects	A series of mechanical or technological operations on a recording process that modifies the original sound inputted.
Reverb	A processing effect where the blended reflection of sounds from surfaces gives the impression of space or environment. Can be achieved both naturally or digitally.
Sequence	A melodic, rhythmic or harmonic motif or phrase which is repeated at a higher or lower pitch.
Sound source	The means by which a sound is produced (e.g. on an instrument, by using the voice, an environmental object, an electronic device).
Stimulus	Something that inspires students to create a musical idea; a stimulus can include: a mood, an event, film and television, a personal experience, a piece of music, prescribed music, text or place.
Style	A musical type or genre that is characterised by specific features, form and structure, or a typical use of musical elements and compositional devices.
Symbolism	The use of musical elements to represent ideas, emotions, characters, or themes.
Technical dexterity	The skill and control of a performer in executing the physical demands of their instrument or voice.
Texture	How layers of sounds within a piece of music interact.
Timbre	The specific tone or sound quality of an instrument or voice, or a collection of instruments and voices.
Visual perception	Involves the ability to interpret and understand based on what can be seen.
Word painting	When music reflects the literal meaning of the lyrics.
Word setting	The way in which lyrics or text are matched to music in vocal compositions.

Appendix 1: Action Verbs p. 31

Action verb	Students should be able to
Adapt	make something suitable for new condition, use or purpose.
Apply	select and use information and/or knowledge and understanding to explain a given situation or real circumstances.
Appraise	evaluate, judge or consider text or a piece of work.
Brief description/ explanation	give a short statement of only the main points.
Collaborate	work jointly with another, or others, on an activity or project.
Create	bring something into existence; to cause something to happen as a result of one's actions.
Demonstrate	prove or make clear by reasoning or evidence, illustrating with examples or practical application.
Describe	give a detailed account of the main points of the topic, using words, diagrams and/or images.
Devise	plan, elaborate or invent something from existing principles or ideas.
Discuss	offer a considered, balanced review that includes a range of arguments, perspectives, factors or hypotheses, grounded in appropriate evidence.
Evaluate (data/ information)	collect and examine data to make judgments and appraisals; describe how evidence supports or does not support a conclusion in an inquiry or investigation; identify the limitations of data in conclusions; make judgments about the ideas, solutions or methods.
Evaluate (ethical judgement)	collect and examine evidence to make judgments and appraisals; describe how evidence supports or does not support a judgement; identify the limitations of evidence in conclusions; make judgments about the ideas, solutions or methods.
Explain	give a detailed account supported by reasons or causes.
Explore	systematically look into something closely to scrutinise or probe.
Identify	recognise patterns, facts, or details; provide an answer from a number of possibilities; recognise and state briefly a distinguishing fact or feature.
Illustrate	use drawings or examples to describe something.
Improvise	create and perform music spontaneously or without prior preparation; to produce or make something from whatever is available.
Justify	give valid reasons or evidence to support an answer or conclusion.
Outline	give the main points, restricting to essential pieces of information.
Perform	a step in the musical process where musical ideas are expressed and shared to a listener.
Present	to bring, offer or give in a formal way; to bring before or introduce to a public forum.
Provide	offer data, work or documentation that support inferences or conclusions.
Reflect	give thoughtful consideration to actions, experiences, values and learning in order to gain new insights and make meaning.
Rehearse	practice a play, piece of music, or other work for a performance.
Research	inquire specifically, through collecting, organising and analysing evidence in order to draw conclusions.
Respond	react or reply to something, typically in speech, writing, or action.
Transcribe	write out what is heard.
Use	apply knowledge, skills or rules to put them into practice.

Planning for Learning, Teaching and Assessment



Planning is the <u>hard thinking</u> teachers need to do in order to design quality opportunities for student learning

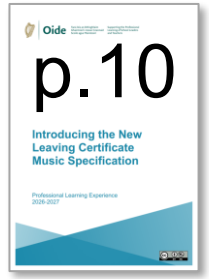
…Absolum, M. (2010), *Clarity in the Classroom*, p.179

Planning for Learning

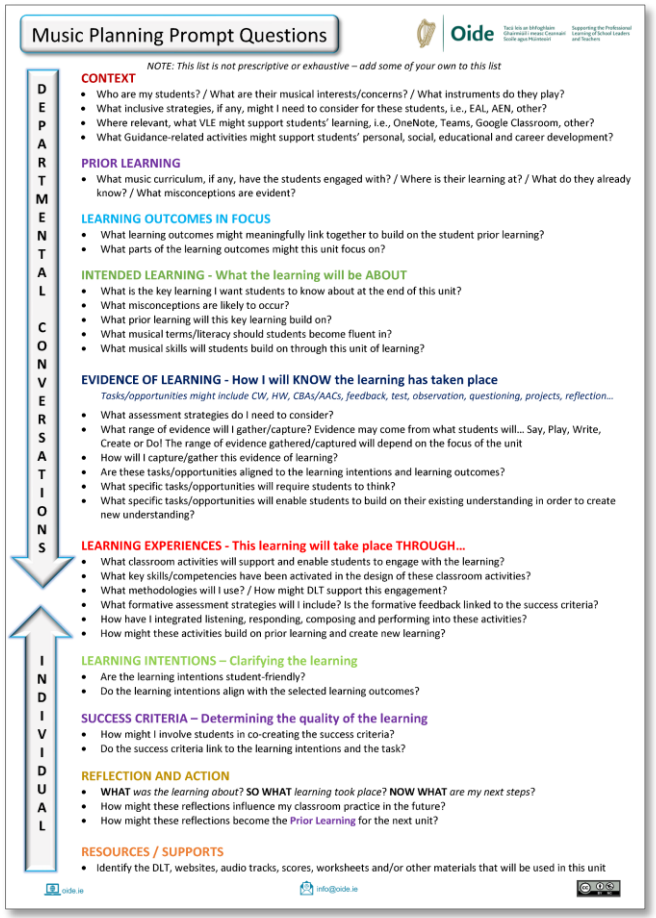


How does your department currently plan for 5th & 6th years?

What are the good practices that we can continue from planning at JC and TY?



Departmental Planning Considerations



Music Planning Prompt Questions

Oide

NOTE: This list is not prescriptive or exhaustive – add some of your own to this list

DEPARTMENTAL CONVERSATIONS

CONTEXT

- Who are my students? / What are their musical interests/concerns? / What instruments do they play?
- What inclusive strategies, if any, might I need to consider for these students, i.e., EAL, AEN, other?
- Where relevant, what VLE might support students' learning, i.e., OneNote, Teams, Google Classroom, other?
- What Guidance-related activities might support students' personal, social, educational and career development?

PRIOR LEARNING

- What music curriculum, if any, have the students engaged with? / Where is their learning at? / What do they already know? / What misconceptions are evident?

LEARNING OUTCOMES IN FOCUS

- What learning outcomes might meaningfully link together to build on the student prior learning?
- What parts of the learning outcomes might this unit focus on?

INTENDED LEARNING - What the learning will be ABOUT

- What is the key learning I want students to know about at the end of this unit?
- What misconceptions are likely to occur?
- What prior learning will this key learning build on?
- What musical terms/literacy should students become fluent in?
- What musical skills will students build on through this unit of learning?

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING - How I will KNOW the learning has taken place

Tasks/opportunities might include CW, HW, CBAs/AACs, feedback, test, observation, questioning, projects, reflection…

- What assessment strategies do I need to consider?
- What range of evidence will I gather/capture? Evidence may come from what students will… Say, Play, Write, Create or Do! The range of evidence gathered/captured will depend on the focus of the unit
- How will I capture/gather this evidence of learning?
- Are these tasks/opportunities aligned to the learning intentions and learning outcomes?
- What specific tasks/opportunities will require students to think?
- What specific tasks/opportunities will enable students to build on their existing understanding in order to create new understanding?

LEARNING EXPERIENCES - This learning will take place THROUGH…

- What classroom activities will support and enable students to engage with the learning?
- What key skills/competencies have been activated in the design of these classroom activities?
- What methodologies will I use? / How might DLT support this engagement?
- What formative assessment strategies will I include? Is the formative feedback linked to the success criteria?
- How have I integrated listening, responding, composing and performing into these activities?
- How might these activities build on prior learning and create new learning?

INDIVIDUAL

LEARNING INTENTIONS – Clarifying the learning

- Are the learning intentions student-friendly?
- Do the learning intentions align with the selected learning outcomes?

SUCCESS CRITERIA – Determining the quality of the learning

- How might I involve students in co-creating the success criteria?
- Do the success criteria link to the learning intentions and the task?

REFLECTION AND ACTION

- **WHAT** *was the learning about?* **SO WHAT** *learning took place?* **NOW WHAT** *are my next steps?*
- How might these reflections influence my classroom practice in the future?
- How might these reflections become the Prior Learning for the next unit?

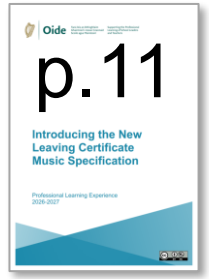
RESOURCES / SUPPORTS

- Identify the DLT, websites, audio tracks, scores, worksheets and/or other materials that will be used in this unit

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How might these planning prompts assist your music department in building on your current planning practices?

Identify and agree on 2-3 questions that your department will explore together over the next 5-6 weeks



Two Interconnected Strands



The learning from the two strands is mutually reinforcing.

The interconnected strands... should be studied concurrently, rather than in isolation or in a linear order.

Curriculum specification for Leaving Certificate Music (2026), p.12

Non-linear Approach?



- Learning spans multiple areas
- Flexible and iterative
- Consolidates the learning
- Where to begin?
- Responsive teaching
- Non-linear approach to assessment

Non-linear approach

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Strand: Exploring and Expressing Musical Ideas

Students should be able to

1.1 Discuss performance skills that are necessary to communicate music effectively.

1.2 Demonstrate a range of appropriate performance skills.

1.3 Create and perform a single line melody for instruments and voices

1.4 Improv

1.5 Perfor

1.6 Create Irish T

1.7 Create

1.8 Demo creatir

1.9 Rehea

1.10 Identif music

1.11 Apply evalua

1.12 Provid and ju

1.13 Explain what copyright is and why it matters in the music industry.

1.14 Outline the steps that are needed to copyright original music.

Strand: Music in Context: Past and Present

Students should be able to

2.1 Listen to, appraise and respond to music using appropriate musical language.

2.2 Explore the relationship between music and its context.

2.3 Identify and describe the main characteristics, and distinguishing features of Irish Traditional Music

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c phrases,
and chord progressions.

2.12 Describe how the work of other musicians and composers has informed and influenced the student's musical ideas.

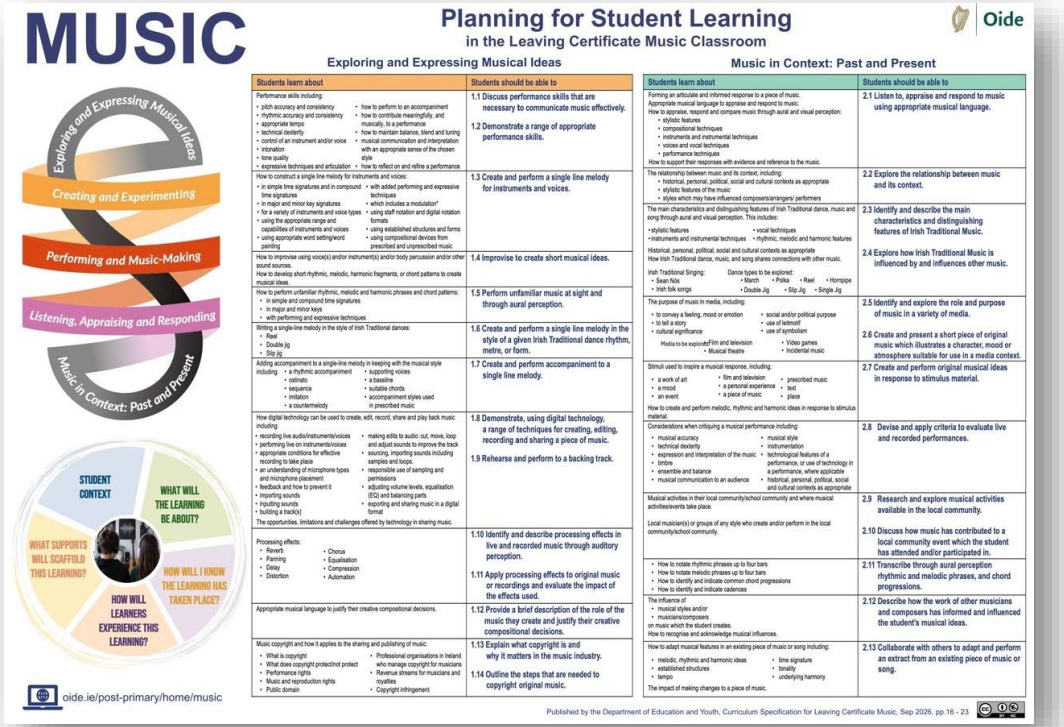
2.13 Collaborate with others to adapt and perform an extract from an existing piece of music or song.

Randomly select one learning outcome.

What is the learning at the heart of your chosen learning outcome?

Link the learning to another 2-3 learning outcomes from across the 2 strands.

Mapping the Learning



MUSIC

Planning for Student Learning
in the Leaving Certificate Music Classroom

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Exploring and Expressing Musical Ideas

Creating and Experimenting

Performing and Music-Making

Listening, Appraising and Responding

Music in Context: Past and Present

STUDENT CONTEXT

WHAT WILL THE LEARNING BE ABOUT?

HOW WILL I KNOW THE LEARNING HAS TAKEN PLACE?

HOW WILL LEARNERS EXPERIENCE THIS LEARNING?

WHAT SUPPORTS WILL SCAFFOLD THIS LEARNING?

oide.ie/post-primary/home/music

Exploring and Expressing Musical Ideas

Students learn about	Students should be able to
Performance skills including: • pitch accuracy and consistency • rhythmic accuracy and consistency • appropriate tempo • technical dexterity • control of an instrument and/or voice • intonation • tone quality • expressive techniques and articulation • how to perform to an accompaniment • how to contribute meaningfully, and musically, to a performance • how to maintain balance, blend and tuning • musical communication and interpretation with an appropriate sense of the chosen style • how to reflect on and refine a performance	1.1 Discuss performance skills that are necessary to communicate music effectively. 1.2 Demonstrate a range of appropriate performance skills.
How to construct a single line melody for instruments and voices: • in simple time signatures and in compound time signatures • in major and minor key signatures • for a variety of instruments and voice types • using the appropriate range and capabilities of instruments and voices • using appropriate word setting/word painting • with added performing and expressive techniques • which includes a modulation* • using staff notation and digital notation formats • using established structures and forms • using compositional devices from prescribed and unprescribed music	1.3 Create and perform a single line melody for instruments and voices.
How to improvise using voice(s) and/or instrument(s) and/or body percussion and/or other sound sources. How to develop short rhythmic, melodic, harmonic fragments, or chord patterns to create musical ideas.	1.4 Improvise to create short musical ideas.
How to perform unfamiliar rhythmic, melodic and harmonic phrases and chord patterns: • in simple and compound time signatures • in major and minor keys • with performing and expressive techniques	1.5 Perform unfamiliar music at sight and through aural perception.
Writing a single-line melody in the style of Irish Traditional dances: • Reel • Double jig • Slip jig	1.6 Create and perform a single line melody in the style of a given Irish Traditional dance rhythm, metre, or form.
Adding accompaniment to a single-line melody in keeping with the musical style including: • a rhythmic accompaniment • ostinato • sequence • imitation • a countermelody • supporting voices • a baseline • suitable chords • accompaniment styles used in prescribed music	1.7 Create and perform accompaniment to a single line melody.
How digital technology can be used to create, edit, record, share and play back music including: • recording live audio/instruments/voices • performing live-on instruments/voices • appropriate conditions for effective recording to take place • an understanding of microphone types and microphone placement • feedback and how to prevent it • importing sounds • inputting sounds • building a track(s) • making edits to audio: cut, move, loop and adjust sounds to improve the track • sourcing, importing sounds including samples and loops. • responsible use of sampling and permissions • adjusting volume levels, equalisation (EQ) and balancing parts • exporting and sharing music in a digital format The opportunities, limitations and challenges offered by technology in sharing music.	1.8 Demonstrate, using digital technology, a range of techniques for creating, editing, recording and sharing a piece of music. 1.9 Rehearse and perform to a backing track.
Processing effects: • Reverb • Panning • Delay • Distortion • Chorus • Equalisation • Compression • Automation	1.10 Identify and describe processing effects in live and recorded music through auditory perception. 1.11 Apply processing effects to original music or recordings and evaluate the impact of the effects used.
Appropriate musical language to justify their creative compositional decisions.	1.12 Provide a brief description of the role of the music they create and justify their creative compositional decisions.
Music copyright and how it applies to the sharing and publishing of music: • What is copyright • What does copyright protect/not protect • Performance rights • Music and reproduction rights • Public domain • Professional organisations in Ireland who manage copyright for musicians • Revenue streams for musicians and royalties • Copyright infringement	1.13 Explain what copyright is and why it matters in the music industry. 1.14 Outline the steps that are needed to copyright original music.

Music in Context: Past and Present

Students learn about	Students should be able to
Forming an articulate and informed response to a piece of music. Appropriate musical language to appraise and respond to music. How to appraise, respond and compare music through aural and visual perception: • stylistic features • compositional techniques • instruments and instrumental techniques • voices and vocal techniques • performance techniques How to support their responses with evidence and reference to the music.	2.1 Listen to, appraise and respond to music using appropriate musical language.
The relationship between music and its context, including: • historical, personal, political, social and cultural contexts as appropriate • stylistic features of the music • styles which may have influenced composers/arrangers/ performers	2.2 Explore the relationship between music and its context.
The main characteristics and distinguishing features of Irish Traditional dance, music and song through aural and visual perception. This includes: • stylistic features • instruments and instrumental techniques • vocal techniques • rhythmic, melodic and harmonic features Historical, personal, political, social and cultural contexts as appropriate How Irish Traditional dance, music, and song shares connections with other music. Irish Traditional Singing: • Sean Nós • Irish folk songs Dance types to be explored: • March • Polka • Reel • Hornpipe • Double Jig • Slip Jig • Single Jig	2.3 Identify and describe the main characteristics and distinguishing features of Irish Traditional Music. 2.4 Explore how Irish Traditional Music is influenced by and influences other music.
The purpose of music in media, including: • to convey a feeling, mood or emotion • to tell a story • cultural significance • social and/or political purpose • use of leitmotif • use of symbolism Media to be explored: Film and television, Musical theatre, Video games, Incidental music	2.5 Identify and explore the role and purpose of music in a variety of media. 2.6 Create and present a short piece of original music which illustrates a character, mood or atmosphere suitable for use in a media context.
Stimuli used to inspire a musical response, including: • a work of art • a mood • an event • film and television • a personal experience • a piece of music • prescribed music • text • place How to create and perform melodic, rhythmic and harmonic ideas in response to stimulus material.	2.7 Create and perform original musical ideas in response to stimulus material.
Considerations when critiquing a musical performance including: • musical accuracy • technical dexterity • expression and interpretation of the music • timbre • ensemble and balance • musical communication to an audience • musical style • instrumentation • technological features of a performance, or use of technology in a performance, where applicable • historical, personal, political, social and cultural contexts as appropriate	2.8 Devise and apply criteria to evaluate live and recorded performances.
Musical activities in their local community/school community and where musical activities/events take place. Local musician(s) or groups of any style who create and/or perform in the local community/school community.	2.9 Research and explore musical activities available in the local community. 2.10 Discuss how music has contributed to a local community event which the student has attended and/or participated in.
• How to notate rhythmic phrases up to four bars • How to notate melodic phrases up to four bars • How to identify and indicate common chord progressions • How to identify and indicate cadences	2.11 Transcribe through aural perception rhythmic and melodic phrases, and chord progressions.
The influence of • musical styles and/or • musicians/composers on music which the student creates. How to recognise and acknowledge musical influences.	2.12 Describe how the work of other musicians and composers has informed and influenced the student's musical ideas.
How to adapt musical features in an existing piece of music or song including: • melodic, rhythmic and harmonic ideas • established structures • tempo • time signature • tonality • underlying harmony The impact of making changes to a piece of music.	2.13 Collaborate with others to adapt and perform an extract from an existing piece of music or song.

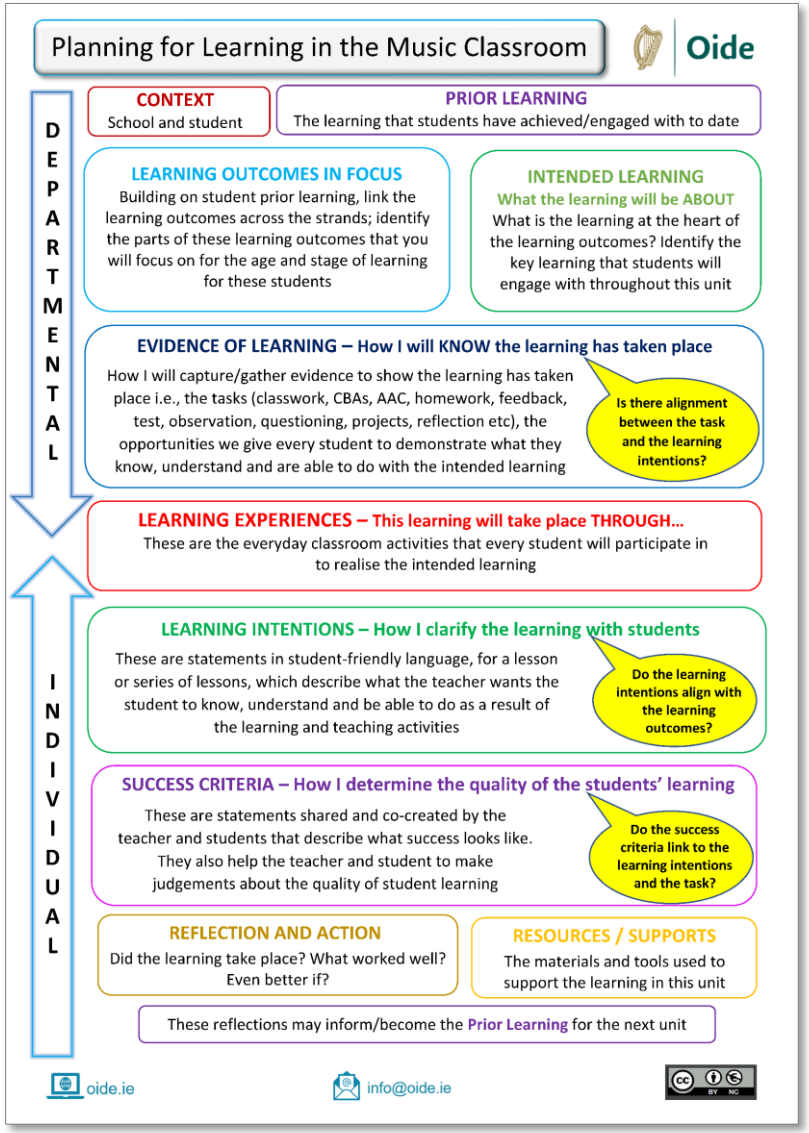
Published by the Department of Education and Youth, Curriculum Specification for Leaving Certificate Music, Sep 2026, pp.16 - 23

In what way might your unit of learning be progressed and revisited over time to allow students to develop a deeper understanding?

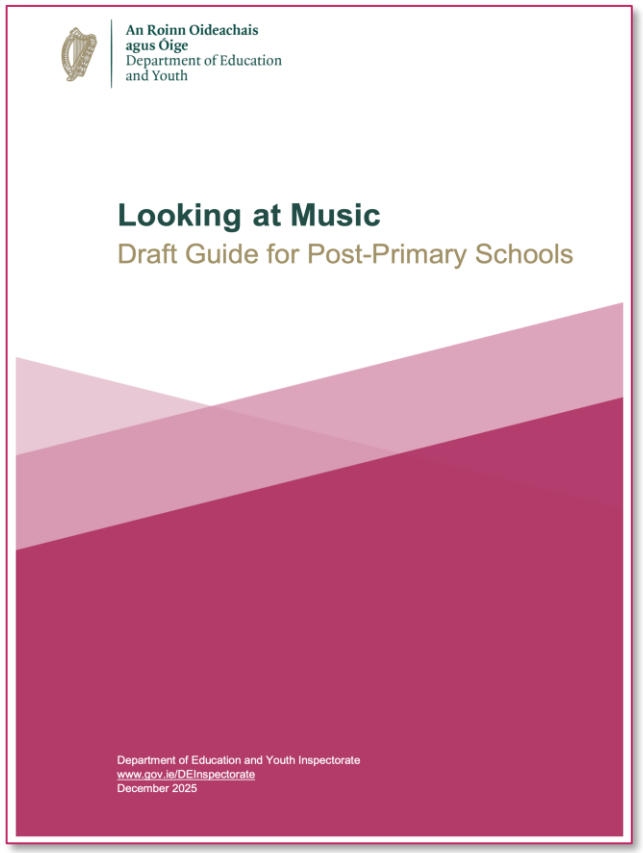
Individual Teacher Planning

1. Do the learning intentions align with the learning outcomes?
2. Is there alignment between the task and the learning intentions?
3. Do the success criteria link to the learning intentions and the task?





Teachers' Collaborative Practice



Teachers meet regularly to plan lessons, share resources and reflect on teaching and learning strategies. This strong collaboration is evident in the consistent quality of learning and teaching across different classes and year groups.

Looking at Music: A Draft Guide for Post-Primary Schools (2025), p.10

Collaboratives: Focus on Planning



- Feb 2027 National Planning Conversation
- May 2027 Regional Planning Conversations
- Have you booked your place?

SC Redevelopment in LC Music

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Before Workshop				After Workshop		
TRUE	FALSE	Don't Know	Anticipatory Exercise	TRUE	FALSE	Don't Know
			Strand 1 is to be taught in 5th year and Strand 2 in 6th year.		✓	
			The Key Competencies are integrated across the rationale, aims, learning outcomes and assessment sections of the specification.	✓		
			Technology is gone from the Practical examination.		✓	
			The 27 Learning outcomes promote teaching and learning processes that develop students' knowledge, skills, values and dispositions incrementally across the two years.	✓		
			Students must choose between solo and group performance in the Practical Examination.		✓	
			Students will only spend 25 hours on the Additional Assessment Component (AAC).		✓	
			In addition to the prescribed music list, students will engage with other music in the classroom, which will expose students to additional musical styles, types, and genres, and to music which reflects the students' own interests.	✓		

Learning together, we…



- got to know the SCR Curriculum specification for Leaving Certificate Music
- further deepened our understanding of the Strands, Modes of Engagement, and the Learning Outcomes in the specification
- explored the planning considerations for effective learning, teaching and assessment to take place

Further Supports

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NCCA Senior Cycle Redevelopment Music

Oide Website Senior Cycle Music

Curriculum Online

DEY Senior Cycle Redevelopment

SEC Senior Cycle Redevelopment

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For all queries contact info@oide.ie

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Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional Learning of School Leaders and Teachers

Thank you for your engagement

PLE 2026-2027

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