

Music Technology A Level

Preparation work: Pre-course Reading, Research and Tasks

Pre-reading and research will help you to become more familiar with the topics you are going to study on your A Level Music Technology course. If you complete the tasks below they will also help you to become more confident when you start your course.

Specification:

Music Technology is a multifaceted and multiskilled course with a unique balance of practical and theoretical content. It is both exciting and challenging, as you gather the skills and knowledge to produce a professional final product. Find out more about the course:

Edexcel A level Music Technology Specification

https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/A%20Level/Music-Technology/2017/specification-and-sample-assessments/9781446933329_GCE2017_AL_MusicTech_Spec.pdf

Task 1:

The development of recording and production technology

Recording has come a long way since Edison's phonograph capture of "Mary had a little lamb". Download the material or complete the online course (link below) and **create a timeline poster** of the development of recording from 1877 to present day. Ensure you include all relevant technology e.g. magnetic tape, shellac disc, microphones, CD etc.

Free Introduction to Recording and Sound Course

<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/recording-music-and-sound/content-section-1>



Case Studies:

The studio is where the magic happens! There is nothing more inspiring than having a control room full of vintage and modern equipment for your creative projects. As Music Technology students you need to know your way around a studio from a basic home set up to the multimillion pound commercial studios. Use these links to help understand studios before you start work in ours.



<https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/home-studio-setup-recording-how-to-790937>

<https://www.musictech.net/tutorials/point-blank-home-studio>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pcYdIT63r0I&feature=emb_rel_pause

Task 2:

Design your dream studio

Use the above links, and the manufacturers links below, to research the equipment you need for a home studio set up:

- Make a list of the key equipment you need e.g. computer, DAW, monitors, microphones etc.
- Explore online music stores like [Thomman](#), [Studiospares](#) and [Andertons](#) to cost up all your equipment
- Draw a floor plan on the layout of your control room and live recording space

Websites for Further Research and Reading:

It is important to keep up to date with the rapidly moving landscape of Music Technology. Reading and subscribing to magazines is the best way to ensure you are on track. These are some favourites in the industry:

Sound on Sound <https://www.soundonsound.com>

MusicTech Mag <https://www.musictech.net>

Computer Music <https://www.musicradar.com/computermusic>

Mix Mag <https://mixmag.net>

All the magazines have YouTube channels full of interviews, tips & tricks, techniques and more. Manufacturers such as Shure, AKG and Nuemann have tutorial sections and YouTube channels that are a rich source of expert knowledge. Here's a few essentials:

Microphones <https://www.shure.com/en-GB/videos/events/webinars/shure-webinar-how-to-choose-a-microphone-101>

Mixers https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uq_Lvut9o0g&list=PL4CF0FA9E71C443FE

Studio Monitors <https://www.genelec.com/correct-monitors>

Recording Techniques https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISBuP-uTwQg&list=PLXo2VCZ_cSFci7LYuTmdBOFF8Om_L952W

Books to Read:

- **EDEXCEL AS/A LEVEL MUSIC TECH STUDY GUIDE** by T Hallas, Rhinegold Education, 2017
- **EDEXCEL A LEVEL MUSIC TECH REVISION GUIDE** by J Reeve, Rhinegold Education, 2017
- **The Mixing Handbook** by Bobby Owsinski, Media Group, 2017
- **Mixing Audio: Concepts, Practices and Tools** by R Izhaki, Focal Press; 1 edition, 2007
- **Recording And Production Techniques** by P White, Sanctuary Publishing Ltd, 2nd edition 1 Nov. 2002
- **MUSIC PRODUCTION** by Rockschool, Grades 1-8, Rockschool Ltd, 2015
- **Pop Music Text Book** by J Winterson, Peter Nikol Ltd, 2003
- **Understanding Popular Music**, D Ventura, Rhinegold, 2012



Task 3:

Listening

The way we consume music has changed, and with the rise of streaming, we are now more than likely listening to playlists rather than full albums. However you need to listen to and analyse a wide range of music to compare production techniques. Your next challenge is to choose one album from the list below and listen to it from start to finish. Write a one page Rolling Stone Magazine style review on the album you have chosen.

- *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band - The Beatles*
- *Talking Book - Stevie Wonder*
- *IV - Led Zeppelin*
- *Anarchy in the UK - Sex Pistols*
- *Raising Hell - Run DMC*

Find full albums on Spotify or YouTube. The Classic Album series (see below) is a good place to find out more about how the album was put together.

Films to Watch:

- **Hip Hop Evolution** - Netflix docuseries on the development of Hip Hop. Explore how the genre/culture used sampling techniques to create new music.
- **Classic Albums Series** - Explores the creation of the greatest albums in music available on Sky Arts and Amazon Prime Video
- Recent Music BioPics - **RocketMan**, **Straight Outta Compton** and **Bohemian Rhapsody**

Progression Opportunities

Why choose Music Technology A Level:

- Explore the range of careers in the Music industry: <https://www.careersinmusic.com>
- Read how the music is thriving through the success of the video gaming industry: <https://www.theguardian.com/games/2018/aug/22/video-games-music-industry>
- 5 Ways Music Technology Can Make You a Star: <https://www.whatuni.com/advice/choosing-a-course/music-technology-can-make-you-a-star/20803>

We hope you enjoy completing these tasks and look forward to you joining the course.

