



Music ATAR – Summary of syllabus changes – May 2022

Background

In May of 2022, all 66 schools with student enrolments in the Music ATAR course in 2022 submitted their response to the syllabus review acceptance survey:

- the syllabuses were accepted by 94% of schools
- the implementation timeline of Year 11 commencing the new course in 2023 (2024 for Year 12) was supported by 92% of schools.

The new Music ATAR syllabuses are, therefore, accepted and are endorsed for teaching from 2023 for Year 11 (from 2024 for Year 12).

Content changes

The main differences between the current Years 11 and 12 Music ATAR syllabuses and the new Years 11 and 12 Music ATAR syllabuses are summarised below.

Overall

- The course rationale has been rewritten based on key phrases identified in stakeholder responses from the 2020 survey on the current syllabuses. The new rationale is more concise than the current rationale.
- The course aims replace the course outcomes. The four aims closely mirror the current outcomes, with some changes to the naming to reflect changes to content and assessment. Phrases that appear in other parts of the syllabus have been removed. The new aims are more concise than the current outcomes.
- The content organisers have been updated to improve the structure of syllabus:

Table 1: content organisers in the current and new Music ATAR syllabuses

	Current syllabus	New syllabus
Written	Aural and theory	Music literacy
	Cultural and historical analysis	Music analysis
	Composition and arrangement	Composition
Practical	Performance and/or composition portfolio	Performance and/or composition portfolio

- The three defined contexts in the written component of the current syllabus (Contemporary, Jazz and Western Art Music) are combined into a single course for the new syllabus.
- Designated works (music works for compulsory study as part of the music analysis component of the course and the written examination) are retained but with some key changes:
 - a single list of 12 music works replaces the current list of 110 works divided into the three defined contexts
 - the new list is compulsory for all, rather than the current system of one compulsory style for each context/year and four to five optional styles for each context from which schools choose one

Note: the reduction in the number of works on the list does not impact on the ATAR written examination, as only the compulsory style for Year 12 (i.e. two to four works in total) is explicitly examinable in the current design brief.

- The four defined **contexts** for the performance component (Contemporary, Jazz, Music Theatre and Western Art Music) are retained but now referred to as the four defined **styles**. To clearly distinguish the new syllabus from the current syllabus and reduce confusion, use of the word 'context' has been avoided throughout the syllabus.
- Unit themes for music analysis – for each of Units 1–4, a theme to frame the analysis of the designated works has been chosen, based on the successful Queensland Music General Senior Syllabus model:
 - Unit 1 – Elements
 - Unit 2 – Narratives
 - Unit 3 – Identities
 - Unit 4 – Innovations.

Each unit includes generic dot points for analysis of the designated works (e.g. pitch, form/structure, musical characteristics of the associated musical style), as well as one dot point specific to the unit theme (e.g. Unit 4 – Innovations: 'how the composer achieved musical innovation (as a result of ideas driven by personal experience, socio-political and cultural influences) through the application, combination and manipulation of the music elements and concepts below').

Year 11 specific

- Units 1 and 2 have been modified in the following ways:
 - content from the current three defined contexts for the written component was combined and then reduced across all the content areas
 - the current organisation of content by 'aural and theory' and 'additional theory' is combined and simplified as 'music literacy' in the new syllabus. To reduce confusion and to allow for differences in assessment between listening- and reading/writing-focussed activities, the music literacy section is divided into 'content' and 'skills'
 - composition has been made non-examinable content within the written component but must still be assessed at the school level. This allows for composition to be taught and assessed in a more authentic way, driven by a developmental process of creation and refinement, rather than the timed, written tests of the current syllabus
 - music analysis content in the new syllabus focusses on deep analysis of the designated works by music elements and concepts. Content reduction is achieved by narrowing the focus in this area of the syllabus to the designated works themselves, de-emphasising the historical background and peripheral knowledge of many related works
 - the practical component remains virtually unaltered in practice. Additional supporting content has been added for both the performance and composition portfolio options to articulate the skills and processes that most teachers currently focus on with their students. These new dot points have been drawn from three sources: the Music ATAR practical marking keys, feedback from the stakeholder surveys and syllabus documents from other states (including Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland).

Year 12 specific

- Units 3 and 4 have been modified in the following ways:
 - the above five dot points apply to both the Year 11 and Year 12 syllabuses
 - cognitive complexity increases in the Year 12 syllabus in several ways (see *Appendix 1* for detail):
 - the designated works selected for Units 3 and 4 are more complex than Units 1 and 2
 - some key additions/modifications to content dot points (mostly in the music literacy section, e.g. irregular metre, several scale types are added; dictations are modified from a maximum of four bars to a maximum of eight bars)
 - longer and more complex compositions are required under the assessment specifications
 - the standard expected in the practical component increases.

School-based assessment changes

Overall

- The number of assessment types is reduced from six to five (i.e. the current two practical assessment types are combined into a single assessment type).
- The mandated number of assessments for a year/pair of units is **nine**. Examinations, practical, music literacy and music analysis must be assessed twice each per year, with composition being assessed only once (see Table 2).
- Composition is assessed once per year, by submission of two short musical works that have been developed over time. Significant teaching and learning throughout the course culminates in the submission of this assessment.
- Written assessments in ‘music literacy’ are largely unchanged.
- Written assessments in ‘music analysis’ will remain very familiar to teachers. The above-mentioned shift in focus to analysis by music elements and concepts of the designated works, applies here.
- The weighting of the written assessment types has changed slightly, with all three types now weighted evenly at 10 per cent each of the combined mark.

Table 2: Music ATAR new syllabus assessments by type, number and weighting

Assessment type	Number per year	Weighting of type
Examinations (including written and practical components)	2	50
Practical (class-based performance and/or composition portfolio tasks)	2	20
Music analysis (analysis of designated works and unseen works)	2	10
Music literacy (i.e. aural and theory)	2	10
Composition (musical works developed over time, including evidence of development)	1	10
	9	100

Assessment table – Year 11

- The points above apply to both the Year 11 and Year 12 assessment tables. Specific changes relating to Year 11 only are:
 - composition specifications for assessment are two complete, original works with a duration of at least **90 seconds** each. At least one of the works must be written for a minimum of **two instruments/parts/voices**
 - it is noted that the Year 11 practical examinations should be modelled on the Year 12 ATAR practical examination design brief. Modified time requirements are provided as a suggestion.

Assessment table – Year 12

- The points above apply to both the Year 11 and Year 12 assessment tables. The specific change relating to Year 12 only is:
 - composition specifications for assessment are two complete, original works with a duration of at least **2 minutes** each. At least one of the works must be written for a minimum of **four instruments/parts/voices**.

Reporting section changes

Overall

- This section title has been revised to reflect generic expectation for all subjects and is now called Reporting (it was previously Grading).

Practical examination design brief changes

- The number of ensemble members permitted for accompaniment is reduced from eight to four.
- The number of examination options in performance is reduced to one: one instrument/one style. This eliminates three options that were various permutations of multiple instruments and/or multiple styles, requiring candidates to attend two separate, half-length examinations. Candidates may perform repertoire from a different style, providing the majority of repertoire is in the chosen style, still only requiring one examination.

Written examination design brief changes

- Table 3 compares the current and new written examination design briefs. Key differences to note in the new design brief include:
 - the written examination changes from three sections to two
 - composition has been removed
 - theory, previously part of section three, is now combined with aural in the new section one
 - the sections are renamed to align with the new course aims and content areas
 - the new design brief represents a small reduction in the amount of content and overall length of time required for students to complete.

▪ **Table 3: comparison of current and new written examination design briefs**

Current design brief	New design brief
Section One: Aural and analysis (36%), 6–8 questions	Section One: Music literacy Part A: Aural (35%), 6–8 questions
Section Two: Cultural and historical analysis Part A: Analysis (11%), one question	Section One: Music literacy Part B: Theory (20%), 2–4 questions
Section Two: Cultural and historical analysis Part B(i): Short response – compulsory area of study (11%), one question	Section Two: Music analysis Part A: Unseen analysis (20%), two questions
Section Two: Cultural and historical analysis Part B(ii): Short response – non-compulsory area of study (12%), one question	Section Two: Music analysis Part B: Designated works (25%), two questions
Section Three: Theory and composition (30%), 2–4 questions	

Appendix 1: Progression of cognitive complexity from Year 11 to Year 12

	Year 11 (Units 1 and 2)	Year 12 (Units 3 and 4)
Music literacy content	Metre: simple and compound	Irregular metre added
	Key signatures to five sharps and flats	Key signatures to seven sharps and flats
	Clefs: treble and bass	Clefs: alto and tenor added
	Accidentals: sharp, flat, natural, enharmonic equivalents	Double sharp, double flat added
	Tonality: major, minor, modal	Atonal added
	Scales/modes: major pentatonic, minor pentatonic, major (ionian), natural minor (aeolian), harmonic minor, blues and mixolydian	Melodic minor, chromatic, dorian added
	Intervals up to an octave	Intervals up to a ninth
	Intervals: major, minor, perfect	Diminished, augmented, tritone added
	Modulation: relative major, relative minor, dominant	Subdominant added
	Chords: major, minor, dominant 7 th , minor 7 th , major 7 th	Diminished, augmented, dominant 9 th , minor 9 th , major 9 th , minor 7(♭5) added
	Alternate chord symbols: -, Δ	+, O, ∅ added
	Compositional devices: ostinato/riff, pedal, sequence, imitation	Inversion, augmentation, diminution added
Timbre: woodwind, brass, etc.	Instrumental/vocal techniques and effects added	
Music literacy skills	Rhythmic dictations max 4 bars	Rhythmic dictations max 8 bars
	Melodic dictations max 4 bars	Melodic dictations max 8 bars
	Discrepancies questions may target rhythm or pitch or form	Discrepancies questions may combine rhythm, pitch and form
	Chord progressions: I, IV, V, V ⁷ , vi	May also include chords ii and iii
	Transposition: for any clef and for B flat instruments	May also include instruments in the keys of E flat, A and F
Composition specification	90-second pieces One piece must be written for two or more instruments/parts/voices Expected standard is simple	2-minute pieces One piece must be written for four or more instruments/parts/voices Expected standard is more complex
Designated works	Medium level of complexity	Higher level of complexity
Music analysis	Unit themes (Elements and Narratives) target simpler concepts	Unit themes (Identities and Innovations) target more complex concepts
Practical component	Expected standard and time of composition and/or performance increases	