The truth about GCSE

The specification for a new GCSE in music is getting ever closer. But who is it for? Certainly, it should be one measure of celebrating the achievement of those young people who choose to study music through to the age of 16, whether or not they continue to take music further afterwards. But should it be the only one?

GCSE music should build on 9 years of good quality music education - that is the entitlement for all young people.

GCSE music must prepare those young people who wish to go on to take AS and A level music, just as A levels must provide an appropriate stepping stone on to and a foundation for higher education, be that at university or conservatoire.

GCSE music must have equal currency and value with a GCSE in any other subject. This may require some concessions. It is up to us in the music education sector to ensure that any concessions do not undermine the integrity of our subject.

BTEC exams will be appropriate for some young people and others will wish to augment their GCSE with graded instrumental and vocal exams. Arts Awards are also available to celebrate engagement in music.

The music education sector is currently debating what should be in the new music GCSE and how its various component parts should be assessed. Join in by engaging with your professional association or network; completing the ISM survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GCSEmusicreform> or emailing admin@mec.org.uk to ensure your views are taken fully into account.