

Music Extension — Composition 2026 v1.2

General (Extension) senior syllabus

October 2024



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Contents

Queensland syllabuses for senior subjects	1
Course overview	2
Rationale	2
Syllabus objectives	3
Designing a course of study in Music Extension — Composition	4
Reporting	16
Units	18
Unit 3: Explore	18
Unit 4: Emerge.....	23
Assessment	25
Internal assessment 1: Composition 1 (20%)	25
Internal assessment 2: Composition 2 (20%)	29
Internal assessment 3: Composition project (35%)	33
External assessment: Examination — extended response (25%)	38
Glossary	39
References	39
Version history	39

Queensland syllabuses for senior subjects

In Queensland, a syllabus for a senior subject is an official ‘map’ of a senior school subject. A syllabus’s function is to support schools in delivering the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) system through high-quality and high-equity curriculum and assessment.

Syllabuses are based on design principles developed from independent international research about how excellence and equity are promoted in the documents teachers use to develop and enliven the curriculum.

Syllabuses for senior subjects build on student learning in the Prep to Year 10 Australian Curriculum and include General, General (Extension), Senior External Examination (SEE), Applied, Applied (Essential) and Short Course syllabuses.

More information about syllabuses for senior subjects is available at www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/senior-subjects and in the ‘Queensland curriculum’ section of the *QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook*.

Teaching, learning and assessment resources will support the implementation of a syllabus for a senior subject. More information about professional resources for senior syllabuses is available on the QCAA website and via the QCAA Portal.

Course overview

Rationale

The arts are an intellectually engaging intersection of lateral thought and practice. They interrogate the human experience and challenge our understandings by encouraging and provoking alternate ways of seeing, thinking and doing. They enable us to know and observe our world collectively and as individuals. They reveal a sense of who we are and might become as we make connections and new meaning of the world around us and our place in it.

Creative and expressive communication is central to the arts. Students learn to pose and solve problems, work independently and in collaboration, and create and convey meaning from various viewpoints. New skills are learnt and knowledge is created through the investigation and experience of valued traditions and practices across various art forms.

The arts encourage unity through active involvement in building cultural literacy, by respecting and valuing the meaningful and unique impact of Aboriginal people's and Torres Strait Islander people's contribution to Australia's arts knowledge, traditions and experience. Australia's multicultural identity, cultural inheritance and contemporary arts practice is enhanced through this recognition and the shared inspirations of the broader Asia-Pacific community.

Music is a unique art form that uses sound and silence as a means of personal expression. It allows for the expression of the intellect, imagination and emotion, and the exploration of values. The purpose of Music Extension is to provide challenging and rigorous opportunities for students to realise their potential as composers, musicologists or performers, and to provide the basis for rich, lifelong learning. This syllabus considers that students with an extended history of music involvement frequently reach a high level of musical sophistication and aspire to specialise.

The Music Extension syllabus should be read in conjunction with the Music syllabus. In Music Extension, students follow an individual program of study designed to continue the development of refined musicianship skills. Music Extension encourages students to investigate music concepts and ideas relevant to their specialisation.

In the Composition specialisation (making), students create and resolve new music works. They demonstrate use of music concepts and manipulate music concepts to express meaning and/or emotion to an audience through resolved compositions. In the Musicology specialisation (responding), students investigate and analyse music works and ideas. They synthesise analytical information about music, and document sources and references about music to support research. In the Performance specialisation (making), students realise music works, demonstrating technical skills and understanding. They make decisions about music, interpret music elements and concepts, and realise music ideas in their performances.

Music Extension prepares students for a future of unimagined possibilities, helping them to become self-motivated and emotionally aware. As a unique means of expression, music makes a profound contribution to personal, social and cultural identities. As they develop highly transferable and flexible skills, students become adaptable and innovative problem-solvers and collaborative team members who make informed decisions. As enquirers, students develop their ability to analyse and critically evaluate. Literacy in Music Extension is an essential skill for composers, musicologists and performers, and learning in Music Extension prepares students to engage in a multimodal world.

Syllabus objectives

The syllabus objectives outline what students have the opportunity to learn.

1. Analyse music.

When students analyse, they examine and consider the constituent parts and the relationship between music elements and concepts, compositional devices and stylistic characteristics for the purpose of finding meaning.

2. Apply literacy skills.

When students apply literacy skills, they select appropriate language for particular purposes and contexts. They use grammar and systematically arrange words, phrases, clauses and sentences to communicate meaning in texts. Students recognise, distinguish and apply genre-specific features appropriate to the text. They use and understand appropriate referencing conventions, including citations, that acknowledge the expertise of others, sourced information and ideas.

3. Evaluate music.

When students evaluate, they make judgments about the ideas and concepts evident in music in relation to purpose and context, examining and determining the value or significance of music from various perspectives. They justify their viewpoint, response or conclusion with valid reasons or evidence.

4. Apply compositional devices.

When students apply, they use their knowledge and understanding of compositional devices to create a composition.

5. Manipulate music elements and concepts.

When students manipulate, they adapt and combine music elements and concepts in the compositional process.

6. Resolve music ideas.

When students resolve, they express music ideas to consolidate and communicate meaning in composition.

Designing a course of study in Music Extension — Composition

Syllabuses are designed for teachers to make professional decisions to tailor curriculum and assessment design and delivery to suit their school context and the goals, aspirations and abilities of their students within the parameters of Queensland's senior phase of learning.

The syllabus is used by teachers to develop curriculum for their school context. The term *course of study* describes the unique curriculum and assessment that students engage with in each school context. A course of study is the product of a series of decisions made by a school to select, organise and contextualise subject matter, integrate complementary and important learning, and create assessment tasks in accordance with syllabus specifications.

It is encouraged that, where possible, a course of study is designed such that teaching, learning and assessment activities are integrated and enlivened in an authentic setting.

Course structure

Music Extension — Composition is a General (Extension) senior syllabus. It contains two QCAA-developed units from which schools develop their course of study.

Each unit has been developed with a notional time of 55 hours of teaching and learning, including assessment. This subject is an extension of the related General subject and is studied either concurrently with, or after, Units 3 and 4 of the General course.

A General (Extension) senior syllabus may only be started after completion of Unit 1 and Unit 2 of the General senior syllabus. Units 3 and 4 are studied as a pair.

More information about the requirements for administering senior syllabuses is available in the 'Queensland curriculum' section of the [QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook](#).

Curriculum

Senior syllabuses set out only what is essential while being flexible so teachers can make curriculum decisions to suit their students, school context, resources and expertise.

Within the requirements set out in this syllabus and the [QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook](#), schools have autonomy to decide:

- how and when subject matter is delivered
- how, when and why learning experiences are developed, and the context in which learning occurs
- how opportunities are provided in the course of study for explicit and integrated teaching and learning of complementary skills.

These decisions allow teachers to develop a course of study that is rich, engaging and relevant for their students.

Assessment

Senior syllabuses set out only what is essential while being flexible so teachers can make assessment decisions to suit their students, school context, resources and expertise.

General (Extension) senior syllabuses contain assessment specifications and conditions for the assessment instruments that must be implemented with Units 3 and 4. These specifications and conditions ensure comparability, equity and validity in assessment.

Within the requirements set out in this syllabus and the [QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook](#), schools have autonomy to decide:

- specific assessment task details
- assessment contexts to suit available resources
- how the assessment task will be integrated with teaching and learning activities
- how authentic the task will be.

In Units 3 and 4, schools develop three assessments using the assessment specifications and conditions provided in the syllabus.

More information about assessment in senior syllabuses is available in 'The assessment system' section of the *QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook*.

Subject matter

Each unit contains a unit description, unit objectives and subject matter. Subject matter is the body of information, mental procedures and psychomotor procedures (see Marzano & Kendall 2007, 2008) that are necessary for students' learning and engagement with the subject. Subject matter itself is not the specification of learning experiences but provides the basis for the design of student learning experiences.

Subject matter has a direct relationship with the unit objectives and provides statements of learning that have been constructed in a similar way to objectives.

Aboriginal perspectives and Torres Strait Islander perspectives

The QCAA is committed to reconciliation. As part of its commitment, the QCAA affirms that:

- Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the first Australians, and have the oldest living cultures in human history
- Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples have strong cultural traditions and speak diverse languages and dialects, other than Standard Australian English
- teaching and learning in Queensland schools should provide opportunities for students to deepen their knowledge of Australia by engaging with the perspectives of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- positive outcomes for Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students are supported by successfully embedding Aboriginal perspectives and Torres Strait Islander perspectives across planning, teaching and assessing student achievement.

Guidelines about Aboriginal perspectives and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and resources for teaching are available at www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/k-12-policies/aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-perspectives.

Where appropriate, Aboriginal perspectives and Torres Strait Islander perspectives have been embedded in the subject matter.

Complementary skills

Opportunities for the development of complementary skills have been embedded throughout subject matter. These skills, which overlap and interact with syllabus subject matter, are derived from current education, industry and community expectations and encompass the knowledge, skills, capabilities, behaviours and dispositions that will help students live and work successfully in the 21st century.

These complementary skills are:

- literacy — the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions about language and texts essential for understanding and conveying English language content
- numeracy — the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that students need to use mathematics in a wide range of situations, to recognise and understand the role of mathematics in the world, and to develop the dispositions and capacities to use mathematical knowledge and skills purposefully
- 21st century skills — the attributes and skills students need to prepare them for higher education, work, and engagement in a complex and rapidly changing world. These skills include critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, collaboration and teamwork, personal and social skills, and digital literacy. The explanations of associated skills are available at www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/senior-subjects/general-subjects/21st-century-skills.

It is expected that aspects of literacy, numeracy and 21st century skills will be developed by engaging in the learning outlined in this syllabus. Teachers may choose to create additional explicit and intentional opportunities for the development of these skills as they design the course of study.

Additional subject-specific information

Additional subject-specific information has been included to support and inform the development of a course of study.

First Nations cultural and intellectual property in The Arts

The Australia Council for the Arts provides protocols for using First Nations cultural and intellectual property in The Arts, which are available at <https://australiacouncil.gov.au/investment-and-development/protocols-and-resources/protocols-for-using-first-nations-cultural-and-intellectual-property-in-the-arts>.

Making and responding

Making and responding are interconnected. When students make music, they are informed by their knowledge and experiences as an audience of art forms. Making in Music Extension involves the processes of composing and performing. When students respond, they are informed by their knowledge and experiences as an artist.

The syllabus objectives in Music Extension reflect this interconnection by integrating the knowledge, understanding and skills acquired through both making and responding. The objectives recognise that when students work as artist and audience, making involves working *in* the art form, while responding involves working with knowledge *about* the art form.

Reverse chronology for historical understanding

Reverse chronology is an effective approach that could be used to investigate arts practice. This approach begins with a contemporary focus and follows logical pathways backwards to learn about relevant historical, cultural and traditional styles and art forms. Reverse chronology follows a cause-and-effect pathway to understanding influences on artists, styles and practices. This differs from a customary chronological approach, which would begin in the past and follow a sequential path to the present.

The benefits of a reverse-chronology approach to learning about contemporary and historical art traditions include:

- assisting in an understanding of ourselves, and the decisions and choices made by artists in the present, by examining and acknowledging the influences and events that affected previous generations
- fostering research skills in an inquiry learning model; students pose questions about the causes and effects of influences and compare art forms of past and present times
- ensuring enough time is dedicated to focus on relevant historical practices
- engaging students who are more interested in ideas that relate to themselves and the time they inhabit, which enables them to follow connecting pathways more effectively
- understanding how knowledge of historical art forms and practices helps develop an understanding of contemporary music.

Organisation of subject matter

Subject matter is organised under key ideas. Within each key idea, subject matter is developed by exploring the following:

Best practice: What constitutes best practice and why should it be used?

Best practice involves students developing techniques and strategies to achieve the most efficient and effective result.

By engaging in best practice, students use techniques and apply strategies specific to their specialisation that may include:

- seeking information specific to their specialisation
- using efficient rehearsal strategies
- experimenting with music technologies
- researching music concepts
- using research methods.

Models of apprenticeship: What is apprenticeship and why is it important?

Apprenticeship involves students working alongside an expert, artisan and/or with a resource to explore their specialisation. Models of apprenticeship that must be studied in this course are listed below:

- oral traditions — the practice used by masters of music to orally communicate musical wisdom to successive generations of musicians; specific examples of the oral tradition as an apprenticeship model must include Aboriginal peoples' and Torres Strait Island peoples' perspectives
- cognitive apprenticeship — this approach uses methods of modelling, coaching, scaffolding, articulating, reflecting and exploring to develop mastery
- interactive learning — this approach focuses on the use of digital technology and virtual communication to enable access to global experts, mentors, artisans and/or resources.

Reflective practice in music: What is reflective practice and why is it important?

Reflective practice involves examining experiences to improve ways of working. The process of reflection involves critical analysis and evaluation to build on existing knowledge and skills.

By engaging in reflective practice, students:

- set and review goals
- make observations about the models of apprenticeship
- examine their own interpretation of the models of apprenticeship
- collect examples of their own work and the work of others
- document ideas and thoughts about their work
- evaluate their progress towards goals.

The collection of evidence of reflective practice will be required to inform the external assessment.

Interrelationships in Music Extension

Music is a unique language. Through the development of musicianship, students come to understand how the language of music communicates meaning. In the Music course, musicianship is developed as a result of learning in, through and about music. In Music Extension, students will develop specialised knowledge and skills that pertain to one of the individual areas of composition, musicology or performance. Through exploring metacognition and self-systems, students will consider how they learn music, the effect of reflective practice, what motivates their engagement in the creative process, and the possibilities for developing their own individual style.

Music Extension students will use the inquiry model to explore metacognition when working with music. They will ultimately evaluate how they engage with music, how they learn about music and what motivates them as artists.

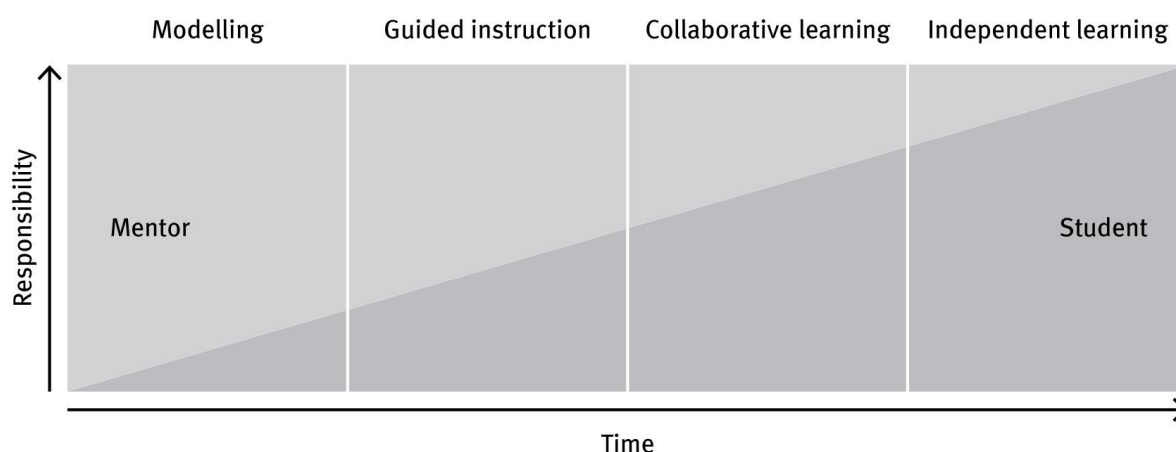
Specialisation as extension

Through specialising in one specific area of music, students will engage in subject matter and learning in their specialisation. There are three discrete specialisations in this course. Students will choose one specialisation to focus on for the duration of the course. The Composition specialisation will focus on the creation of original music, the Musicology specialisation will focus on research about music and meaning, and the Performance specialisation will focus on realisation of music works.

Gradual release of responsibility

Through a gradual release of responsibility model, students work with a mentor as they develop expertise in their area of specialisation and work towards becoming independent learners. The mentor guides and facilitates learning until the student is capable of assuming responsibility for their own learning and instruction.

Figure 1: Gradual release of responsibility



Music elements and concepts

Music is learnt through developing skills and knowledge associated with elements of music. Musical ideas are conceived, organised and shaped by aspects and combinations of duration, expressive devices, pitch, structure, texture and timbre.

Concepts associated with each music element are included in the table below. These concepts are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive, nor do they form a checklist. They provide a guide for exploring music elements in context, style and genre, and employ commonly used terminology.

Element	Explanation	Concepts that could be used to explore the elements
duration	the relative lengths of sounds and silences in music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • beat and pulse • metre • accent and syncopation • tempo • rhythm
expressive devices	ways of influencing mood and character of music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dynamics • contrast • instrumental and vocal techniques • articulation
pitch:	the relative frequency of sound: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • melody • harmony • tonality 	
• melody	the horizontal arrangement of sound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • melodic patterns • melodic shape and contour • motif • intonation • range and register
• harmony	the vertical arrangement of sounds (describes the ways in which combinations of sounds progress throughout a piece of music)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consonance and dissonance • chord progressions • countermelodies • cadence
• tonality	the organisation of pitches that establishes tonal relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • keys and modes • scale forms • modulation
structure	the form and design of music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • repetition, variety, contrast, development and unification • treatment of thematic material • multi-movement and contemporary structures
texture	the density of sound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monophony, homophony, polyphony, heterophony • linear and vertical arrangement • voicing • sequencing and track layering
timbre	characteristic quality of sound sources, or tone colour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • instrumentation • instrumental and vocal techniques and devices • manipulation of sound quality • register

Compositional devices

Compositional devices are techniques and processes that composers use to build and enhance their music ideas. Compositional devices are inextricably connected to the treatment of music elements and concepts and represent the means by which a music work is developed.

Compositional devices are included in the table below. These devices are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive, nor do they form a checklist. They provide a guide for exploring compositional devices in context, style and genre, and employ commonly used terminology.

Compositional device	Explanation	Techniques and processes that could be used to explore the device
accompaniment	musical ideas/layers which provide rhythmic and/or harmonic support for main or subsequent subjects/themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • riff • ostinato • orchestration • rhythmic accompaniment • pedal • harmonisation • alberti bass
contrast	creating change by adding new ideas, patterns or musical elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • modulation • augmentation • cross rhythm • poly-rhythm • inversion • arpeggiator
development	the transformation and restatement of initial musical ideas, repeated in different contexts or in altered forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • augmentation • canon • countermelody • call and response • fragmentation • sampling • filters • vocoder • compression • low-frequency oscillation
subject/theme	a recognisable melody, upon which part or all of a composition is based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • word painting • similar motion • motif • sampling
transition	shift from one musical idea or section to another	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • voice leading • modulation • risers • breakdowns
unity	maintaining consistency by repeating similar ideas, creating a sense of cohesion and structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • repetition • imitation • sequence

Compositional device	Explanation	Techniques and processes that could be used to explore the device
variation	changes to established musical patterns when heard again	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • harmonic change • diminution • augmentation • extension • sampling • filters • vocoder • compression • low-frequency oscillation

Communicating meaning

When students compose, they express music ideas through the purposeful manipulation of music elements and concepts, and compositional devices to communicate meaning.

Composition

Composition tasks should allow students to respond in any genre/style. Students must present their compositions as a sound recording, or a score (traditional, graphic or contemporary) or both.

Examples of compositions include:

- a response to a stimulus, e.g. another composer's work, a film clip or advertisement
- composition demonstrating an understanding of a particular style or genre, or a fusion of styles and genres
- composition for a particular occasion, purpose or musical production
- works for combinations of instruments and/or voices
- compositions generated by electronic means and contemporary technologies
- composition using sound sources other than traditionally recognised instruments/voices, such as the *musique concrète* genre.

Statement of intent

A statement of intent accompanies a composition. It assists the audience to understand the intent and motivations behind the work. When students write a statement of intent to accompany their composition, they analyse and evaluate the use of music elements and concepts, and compositional devices to communicate their intent.

Documentation of reflective practice

Documentation of reflective practice is a valuable tool in teaching and learning. It is a way of organising students' creative processes and helps in the formulation of ideas and communication of intentions. This evidence can provide a useful link between the teacher and student, helping during discussions and feedback as well as supporting the authenticity of student work through evidence of primary sources, acknowledgment of secondary sources, and/or documentation of progressive development. The reflective practice documentation collected throughout each unit can be used to support and inform the statement of intent and reflective statement.

Documenting reflective practice can take any form, e.g. journal, folder, digital files, website, blog, screenshots, sound recordings. It may include documenting investigations of ideas, subject matter, experimentation, reflection, interests, issues, processes, expressive forms, inspirational materials, and examining and critiquing examples of students' own work and the work of others. It may include the student's experimental work in any medium, including drawings, annotated diagrams, notes, ideas, reflective commentary, collections of stimulus materials.

Literacy in Music Extension

Ongoing systematic teaching and learning focused on the literacy knowledge and skills specific to Music Extension is essential for student achievement. Students need to learn and use knowledge and skills of reading, viewing and listening to understand and learn the content of Music Extension. Students need to learn and use the knowledge and skills of writing, composing and speaking to convey the Music Extension content they have learnt.

To understand and use Music Extension content, teaching and learning strategies include:

- breaking the language code to make meaning of Music Extension language and texts
- comprehending language and texts to make literal and inferred meanings about Music Extension content
- using Music Extension ideas and information in classroom, real-world and/or lifelike contexts to progress students' learning.

To analyse and evaluate Music Extension content, teaching and learning strategies include:

- drawing conclusions about the purpose and audience of Music Extension language and texts
- analysing the ways language is used to convey ideas and information in Music Extension texts
- transforming language and texts to convey Music Extension ideas and information in particular ways to suit audience and purpose.

These aspects of literacy knowledge and skills are embedded in the syllabus objectives, unit objectives and subject matter, and instrument-specific marking guides (ISMGs) for Music Extension.

Suggestions for developing literacy in Music Extension

Engaging in symbol systems for the representation of musical sound is fundamental to the teaching and learning of music. Becoming proficient with symbol systems is essential for developing students' music literacy for composition, musicology and performance.

Critical literacy

Critical literacy involves the active analysis and interpretation of codes and conventions of aural, digital, kinaesthetic, oral, visual and written texts. Students engage critical literacy skills to identify and challenge representations in texts, and think flexibly about how meaning is contextual and influenced by both the maker and the audience. Students should be taught to identify and use the distinctive literacy that is appropriate for particular contexts.

- **Aural literacy** is the ability to actively use critical listening skills to interpret, analyse and evaluate sounds, dialogue and argument to make decisions. It also involves creating messages using selected sounds and dialogue, and the purposeful integration of sound into the design of products.
- **Digital literacy** is the ability to use technologies to find, apply and share information in order to solve a problem or create knowledge.
- **Kinaesthetic literacy** is the ability to use body movement to communicate and interpret meaning. It is also the ability to use manual dexterity skills such as fine motor control and hand-eye coordination with an instrument using a particular part of the body to make meaning.
- **Oral literacy** is the ability to use and interpret language, voice and expression to communicate meaning.
- **Visual literacy** is the ability to look closely at visual texts, observing and describing visual elements to analyse and interpret form, symbols, ideas and meaning. It is also the ability to use materials, elements, and symbols to create visual texts.
- **Written literacy** is the ability to select appropriate language and written features to express meaning in response to particular purposes and contexts. This involves using correct grammar and systematically arranging words, phrases, clauses and sentences. It is also the capacity to correctly interpret and comprehend meaning, genre and structure of written texts.

Numeracy in Music Extension

Being numerate involves using mathematical skills across the curriculum. Therefore, numeracy development is an essential component of teaching and learning across the curriculum and a responsibility for all teachers.

To understand and use Music Extension content, teaching and learning strategies include:

- identifying the specific mathematical information in the learning area
- providing learning experiences and opportunities that support the application of students' general mathematical knowledge and problem-solving processes
- communicating and representing the language of numeracy in teaching, as appropriate
- integrating numeracy topics, including
 - basic concepts and terms underpinning number, space and measurement
 - structural thinking, e.g. the mathematical structures of scales and scale patterns, chords and musical form
 - patterns and relationships (e.g. melodic, rhythmic, temporal, harmonic and cyclic patterns), structural forms, awareness of recurring ideas (both visual/spatial and auditory), and the relationship between visual pattern recognition and auditory pattern recognition
 - fractions, e.g. lengths of notes or note values, such as semibreves (whole notes), minims (half notes), crotchets (quarter notes), quavers (eighth notes), integers, e.g. pitch class, integer notation, and time signatures
 - transformation geometry, e.g. repetition, sequence, transposition, inversion, retrograde, augmentation, diminution, rounds, canons and fugues
 - groups, e.g. chords and note groupings
 - ratios, e.g. ratios between pitches (i.e. intervals and note ratios), and the numerical ratios of musical scales, especially the ratios of small integers
 - periodic functions, e.g. soundwaves, timbre, harmonics and harmonic series, tones and overtones, equal temperament, tuning systems and alternate methods of tuning
 - logarithmic and exponential functions, especially in electronic music
 - use of the golden ratio (golden section) and Fibonacci numbers in composition
 - use of symbols as visual representations of concepts, relationships and quantities
 - shape recognition, e.g. the different shapes of notes indicating beat length.

21st century skills

Music Extension helps develop all six 21st century skills. They are embedded in the syllabus objectives, unit objectives and subject matter and ISMGs for Music Extension.

Reporting

General information about determining and reporting results for senior syllabuses is provided in the 'Determining and reporting results' section of the [QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook](#).

Reporting standards

Reporting standards are summary statements that describe typical performance at each of the five levels (A–E).

A
The student specialising in composition applies compositional devices that are synthesised to create a polished work; manipulates music elements to show sensitivity towards the genre/style with sustained synthesis of stylistic nuances; resolves the work by revealing subtleties of meaning through the perceptive synthesis of music ideas; analyses music elements, concepts and compositional devices to show detail and specificity; applies literacy skills through sequenced and connected ideas, and referencing conventions; evaluates music to show insightful judgments about the purpose of music elements and concepts to communicate the intent; and evaluates techniques and/or strategies of best practice, demonstrating evidence of metacognition that informs independent best practice.
B
The student specialising in composition applies idiomatic compositional devices to develop the work; manipulates music elements that are integrated to make the genre/style explicit and incorporate genre/style specific characteristics; resolves music ideas that are integral to communicate meaning; analyses music elements and concepts, and compositional devices to show detail and specificity; applies literacy skills through sequenced and connected ideas, and referencing conventions; evaluates music to show insightful judgments about the purpose of music elements and concepts to communicate the intent; and evaluates techniques and/or strategies of best practice, examining the logic of the two selected techniques and/or strategies.
C
The student specialising in composition applies compositional devices in the creation of their own work; manipulates music elements and concepts for the chosen genre/style; resolves music ideas to communicate meaning; analyses music elements, concepts and compositional devices; applies literacy skills using music terminology relevant to genre/style and language conventions to communicate ideas; evaluates music to communicate the intent; and evaluates techniques and/or strategies of best practice.
D
The student specialising in composition applies a selection of compositional devices; manipulates a selection of music elements to convey a music idea; demonstrates music ideas; explains the choices made in the composition; applies literacy skills to communicate ideas; makes statements about the intent; and identifies techniques or strategies of best practice.
E
The student specialising in composition shows evidence of a compositional device; selects some music elements and concepts; demonstrates music ideas; uses terminology to identify music; and provides a statement about a music idea.

Determining and reporting results

Units 3 and 4

Schools mark each of the three internal assessment instruments implemented in Units 3 and 4 using instrument-specific marking guides (ISMGs).

Schools report a provisional mark by criterion to the QCAA for each internal assessment.

Once confirmed by the QCAA, these results will be combined with the result of the external assessment developed and marked by the QCAA.

The QCAA uses these results to determine each student's subject result as a mark out of 100 and as an A–E.

Units

Unit 3: Explore

In Unit 3, students enter into an apprenticeship and work towards realising their potential as composers, musicologists or performers. As an apprentice, students will work alongside an expert, artisan and/or resource to explore their specialisation.

Through a gradual release of responsibility model, students develop into musicians who are working towards independence. With explicit guidance from teachers, students explore three models of apprenticeship: oral traditions, cognitive apprenticeship and interactive learning. They consider what constitutes good practice through research, mentor guidance, critique and fundamental skills of the specialisation. Students also develop skills in goal setting and reflective practice when developing their skills and understanding in the specialisation.

Unit objectives

1. Analyse music elements and concepts, and compositional devices.
2. Apply literacy skills to communicate ideas.
3. Evaluate music elements and concepts, and compositional devices.
4. Apply compositional devices in composition.
5. Manipulate music elements and concepts in composition.
6. Resolve music ideas in composition.

Key ideas

- Initiate best practice
- Consolidate best practice

Subject matter

Key idea 1: Initiate best practice

Common area of study

Students:

- initiate best practice by developing techniques and strategies to achieve the most efficient and effective result, such as
 - seeking information specific to their specialisation
 - using efficient rehearsal strategies
 - experimenting with music technologies
 - researching music elements and concepts and ideas about music
 - using research methods
- explore three models of apprenticeship
 - oral traditions
 - cognitive apprenticeship
 - interactive learning
- demonstrate metacognitive skills as they appear in reflective practice, such as
 - setting and reviewing goals
 - making observations about the models of apprenticeship
 - examining their own interpretation of the models of apprenticeship
 - collecting examples of their own work and the work of others
 - documenting ideas and thoughts about their work
 - evaluating their progress towards goals
 - critiquing their own work and the work of others
 - evaluating influence of best practice techniques and/or strategies
 - collecting evidence of reflective practice.

Specialised area of study

Composition

Students:

- analyse music elements, concepts and compositional devices when exploring
 - a variety of approaches to the composition process
 - techniques for capturing sound creations
 - innovative music-making techniques
 - technical capabilities and conventions of composing for voices and instruments
- evaluate the music elements, concepts and compositional devices in composition
- apply written and oral literacy skills to communicate ideas
- manipulate music elements and concepts, such as
 - creating and notating or recording rhythms, melodies and harmonic progressions
 - adapting music from one context to another
 - arranging music in a particular context, style or genre
 - imitating or parodying style
 - writing idiomatically for instruments and/or voices, including word-setting as appropriate
- apply compositional devices
- resolve music ideas to communicate meaning.

Key idea 2: Consolidate best practice

Common area of study

Students:

- consolidate best practice by using techniques and strategies to master their craft, such as
 - seeking information specific to their specialisation
 - using efficient rehearsal strategies
 - experimenting with music technologies
 - researching music elements and concepts and ideas about music
 - using research methods
- explore three models of apprenticeship, which are
 - oral traditions
 - cognitive apprenticeship
 - interactive learning
- demonstrate metacognitive skills as they appear in reflective practice, such as
 - goal setting and reviewing
 - making observations about the models of apprenticeship
 - examining their own interpretation of the models of apprenticeship
 - collecting examples of their work and the work of others
 - documenting ideas and thoughts about their work
 - evaluating influence of best practice techniques and/or strategies
 - evaluating their progress towards goals
 - critiquing their own work and the work of others
 - collecting evidence of reflective practice
 - applying literacy skills to communicate music ideas.

Specialised area of study

Composition

Students:

- analyse music elements, concepts and compositional devices when exploring
 - a variety of approaches to the composition process
 - techniques for capturing sound creations
 - innovative music-making techniques
 - technical capabilities and conventions of composing for voices and instruments
- evaluate the music elements, concepts and compositional devices in composition
- apply written and oral literacy skills to communicate ideas
- manipulate music elements and concepts when experimenting with music elements, contexts, styles and genres, in such ways as
 - creating and notating or recording rhythms, melodies and harmonic progressions
 - adapting music from one context to another
 - arranging music in a particular context, style or genre
 - imitating or parodying style
 - writing idiomatically for instruments and/or voices, including word-setting as appropriate
- apply compositional devices
- resolve music ideas to communicate meaning.

Unit 4: Emerge

In Unit 4, students draw on their experiences from Unit 3 to realise their potential as composers, musicologists or performers. As emerging artists, students critically reflect on their musicianship and refine practice in an endeavour to discover their personal style as musicians. They operate with increasing independence and sophistication through independent application of the subject matter from Unit 3 and through the student's emerging individual music voice or identity.

Unit objectives

1. Analyse music elements and concepts, and compositional devices.
2. Apply literacy skills to communicate ideas.
3. Evaluate music elements and concepts, compositional devices and best practice.
4. Apply compositional devices in composition.
5. Manipulate music elements and concepts in composition.
6. Resolve music ideas in composition.

Key idea

- Independent best practice

Students work towards an individual approach to their specialisation. They consolidate the subject matter from Key ideas 1 and 2 in Unit 3.

Subject matter

Key idea 3: Independent best practice

Students:

- engage in independent best practice, exhibiting techniques and strategies developed in Unit 3
- demonstrate engagement with models of apprenticeship
- demonstrate metacognitive skills as they appear in reflective practice, such as
 - goal setting and reviewing
 - making observations about the models of apprenticeship
 - examining their own interpretation of the models of apprenticeship
 - collecting examples of their own work and the work of others
 - documenting ideas and thoughts about their work
 - evaluating music ideas, information and concepts resulting from research and reflection activities
 - critiquing their own work and the work of others
 - evaluating influence of best practice techniques and/or strategies
 - applying literacy skills to communicate music ideas.

Specialised area of study

Composition

Students:

- analyse music elements, concepts and compositional devices when exploring
 - a variety of approaches to the composition process
 - techniques for capturing sound creations
 - innovative music-making techniques
 - technical capabilities and conventions of composing for voices and instruments
- manipulate music concepts when creating their own music works
- apply compositional devices that may
 - challenge compositional conventions
 - show a personal style or voice
- resolve music ideas to communicate meaning
- apply written and oral literacy skills to communicate ideas
- evaluate the music elements, concepts and compositional devices in composition
- evaluate techniques of best practice.

Assessment

Internal assessment 1: Composition 1 (20%)

Students create a composition and devise a statement of intent. Their response will show a demonstration of technical, creative and expressive skills, and theoretical and conceptual understandings. This composition assesses learning in Unit 3.

Assessment objectives

1. Analyse music elements, concepts and compositional devices in the composition.
2. Apply literacy skills, using music terminology relevant to genre/style and language conventions to communicate ideas in the composition.
3. Evaluate the use of music elements, concepts and compositional devices to communicate the intent in the composition.
4. Apply compositional devices in the creation of their work.
5. Manipulate music elements and concepts for the chosen genre/style.
6. Resolve music ideas to communicate meaning.

Specifications

This task requires students to:

- when composing
 - create one complete work or section/movement of a much larger work
 - manipulate music elements and concepts, and apply compositional devices to create their work
 - resolve music ideas to communicate meaning
- when devising a statement of intent
 - analyse and evaluate the use of music elements and concepts, and compositional devices to communicate the intent in the composition
 - apply literacy skills to communicate ideas in the composition using
 - music terminology relevant to genre/style
 - language conventions.

Conditions

- Students can develop their responses in class time and their own time.
- This is an individual task.
- The teacher must provide students with continuous class time to develop the composition.

Response requirements

Composition

Composition: at least 2 minutes

Statement of intent

One of the following:

- Written: up to 500 words
- Spoken (live or recorded): up to 3 minutes, or signed equivalent

Mark allocation

Criterion	Assessment objectives	Marks
Applying compositional devices	4	5
Manipulating music elements and concepts	5	7
Resolving music ideas	6	5
Statement of intent	1, 2, 3	3
Total marks:		20

Instrument-specific marking guide (IA1)

Applying compositional devices	Marks
The student response has the following characteristics:	
• application of compositional devices is synthesised to create a polished work	5
• application of compositional devices creates a unified and cohesive work	4
• application of idiomatic compositional devices to develop the work	3
• application of compositional devices in the creation of their work	2
• application of a selection of compositional devices.	1
The student response does not match any of the descriptors above.	0

Manipulating music elements and concepts	Marks
The student response has the following characteristics:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> manipulation of music elements and concepts shows <ul style="list-style-type: none"> perceptive understanding of genre/style sensitivity towards the genre/style through sustained synthesis of stylistic nuances 	6–7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> manipulation of music elements and concepts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is integrated incorporates genre/style-specific characteristics makes the genre/style explicit 	4–5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> manipulation of music elements and concepts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> for the chosen genre/style throughout the composition 	2–3
• some selection of music elements and concepts.	1
The student response does not match any of the descriptors above.	0

Resolving music ideas	Marks
The student response has the following characteristics:	
• resolution of music ideas is perceptively synthesised and reveals subtleties of meaning	5
• resolution of music ideas is sustained and consolidates meaning	4
• resolution of music ideas is integral to communicate meaning	3
• resolution of music ideas to communicate meaning	2
• demonstration of music idea/s.	1
The student response does not match any of the descriptors above.	0

Statement of intent	Marks
The student response has the following characteristics:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analysis of music elements and concepts, and compositional devices in the composition is detailed and specific • application of literacy skills through sequenced and connected ideas • evaluation shows insightful judgments about the use of music elements, concepts and compositional devices to communicate the intent in the composition 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analysis of music elements and concepts, and compositional devices in the composition • application of literacy skills using music terminology relevant to genre/style and language conventions to communicate ideas in the composition • evaluation of the use of music elements and concepts, and compositional devices to communicate the intent in the composition 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explanation of the choices made in the composition • application of literacy skills that communicate ideas about the composition • statements made about the use of music elements and concepts, and compositional devices in the composition. 	1
The student response does not match any of the descriptors above.	0

Internal assessment 2: Composition 2 (20%)

Students create a composition and devise a statement of intent. Their response will show a demonstration of technical, creative and expressive skills, and theoretical and conceptual understandings. This composition assesses learning in Unit 3.

Assessment objectives

1. Analyse music elements, concepts and compositional devices in the composition.
2. Apply literacy skills, using music terminology relevant to genre/style and language conventions to communicate ideas in the composition.
3. Evaluate the use of music elements, concepts and compositional devices to communicate the intent in the composition.
4. Apply compositional devices in the creation of their work.
5. Manipulate music elements and concepts for the chosen genre/style.
6. Resolve music ideas to communicate meaning.

Specifications

This task requires students to:

- when composing
 - create one complete work or section/movement of a much larger work
 - manipulate music elements and concepts, and apply compositional devices to create their work
 - resolve music ideas to communicate meaning
- when devising a statement of intent
 - analyse and evaluate the use of music elements and concepts, and compositional devices to communicate the intent in the composition
 - apply literacy skills to communicate ideas in the composition using
 - music terminology relevant to genre/style
 - language conventions.

Conditions

- Students can develop their responses in class time and their own time.
- This is an individual task.
- The teacher must provide students with continuous class time to develop the composition.

Response requirements

Composition

Composition: at least 2 minutes

Statement of intent

One of the following:

- Written: up to 500 words
- Spoken (live or recorded): up to 3 minutes, or signed equivalent

Mark allocation

Criterion	Assessment objectives	Marks
Applying compositional devices	4	5
Manipulating music elements and concepts	5	7
Resolving music ideas	6	5
Statement of intent	1, 2, 3	3
Total marks:		20

Instrument-specific marking guide (IA2)

Applying compositional devices	Marks
The student response has the following characteristics:	
• application of compositional devices is synthesised to create a polished work	5
• application of compositional devices creates a unified and cohesive work	4
• application of idiomatic compositional devices to develop the work	3
• application of compositional devices in the creation of their work	2
• application of a selection of compositional devices.	1
The student response does not match any of the descriptors above.	0

Manipulating music elements and concepts	Marks
The student response has the following characteristics:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> manipulation of music elements and concepts shows <ul style="list-style-type: none"> perceptive understanding of genre/style sensitivity towards the genre/style through sustained synthesis of stylistic nuances 	6–7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> manipulation of music elements and concepts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is integrated incorporates genre/style-specific characteristics makes the genre/style explicit 	4–5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> manipulation of music elements and concepts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> for the chosen genre/style throughout the composition 	2–3
• some selection of music elements and concepts.	1
The student response does not match any of the descriptors above.	0

Resolving music ideas	Marks
The student response has the following characteristics:	
• resolution of music ideas is perceptively synthesised and reveals subtleties of meaning	5
• resolution of music ideas is sustained and consolidates meaning	4
• resolution of music ideas is integral to communicate meaning	3
• resolution of music ideas to communicate meaning	2
• demonstration of music idea/s.	1
The student response does not match any of the descriptors above.	0

Statement of intent	Marks
The student response has the following characteristics:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> analysis of music elements and concepts, and compositional devices in the composition is detailed and specific application of literacy skills through sequenced and connected ideas evaluation shows insightful judgments about the use of music elements, concepts and compositional devices to communicate the intent in the composition 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> analysis of music elements and concepts, and compositional devices in the composition application of literacy skills using music terminology relevant to genre/style and language conventions to communicate ideas in the composition evaluation of the use of music elements and concepts, and compositional devices to communicate the intent in the composition 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explanation of the choices made in the composition application of literacy skills that communicate ideas about the composition statements made about the use of music elements and concepts, and compositional devices in the composition. 	1
The student response does not match any of the descriptors above.	0

Internal assessment 3: Composition project (35%)

Students create a composition, devise a statement of intent and a reflective statement. Their response will show a demonstration of technical, creative and expressive skills, and theoretical and conceptual understandings. This composition project assesses learning in Unit 4.

Assessment objectives

1. Analyse music elements and concepts, and compositional devices in the composition.
2. Apply literacy skills, using music terminology relevant to genre/style and language conventions to communicate ideas.
3. Evaluate the use of music elements and concepts, compositional devices to communicate the intent in the composition, and techniques and/or strategies of best practice.
4. Apply compositional devices in the creation of their work.
5. Manipulate music elements and concepts for the chosen genre/style.
6. Resolve music ideas to communicate meaning.

Specifications

This task requires students to:

- when composing
 - create one complete work or section/movement of a much larger work
 - manipulate music elements and concepts, and apply compositional devices to create their work
 - resolve music ideas to communicate meaning
- when devising a statement of intent
 - analyse and evaluate the use of music elements and concepts, and compositional devices to communicate the intent in the composition
 - apply literacy skills to communicate ideas in the composition using
 - music terminology relevant to genre/style
 - language conventions
- when devising a reflective statement
 - evaluate at least two techniques and/or strategies of best practice that influenced the composition
 - apply literacy skills to communicate ideas using
 - music terminology relevant to genre/style
 - referencing conventions, e.g. citations, reference list or bibliography
 - language conventions.

Conditions

- Students can develop their responses in class time and their own time.
- This is an individual task.
- The teacher must provide students with continuous class time to develop the composition.

Response requirements

Composition

Composition: at least 3 minutes

Statement of intent

One of the following:

- Written: up to 500 words
- Spoken (live or recorded): up to 3 minutes, or signed equivalent

Reflective statement

One of the following:

- Written: up to 500 words
- Spoken (live or recorded): up to 3 minutes, or signed equivalent

Mark allocation

Criterion	Assessment objectives	Marks
Applying compositional devices	4	8
Manipulating music elements and concepts	5	10
Resolving music ideas	6	8
Statement of intent	1, 2, 3	3
Reflective statement	2, 3	6
Total marks:		35

Instrument-specific marking guide (IA3)

Applying compositional devices	Marks
The student response has the following characteristics:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • application of compositional devices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – creates a unified and cohesive work – is synthesised to create a polished work 	7–8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • application of compositional devices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – is idiomatic – to develop the work 	5–6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • application of compositional devices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – in the creation of their work – throughout the composition 	3–4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • application of a selection of compositional devices. 	1–2
The student response does not match any of the descriptors above.	0

Manipulating music elements and concepts	Marks
The student response has the following characteristics:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manipulation of music elements and concepts shows <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – perceptive understanding of genre/style – sensitivity towards the genre/style through sustained synthesis of stylistic nuances 	9–10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manipulation of music elements and concepts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – is integrated – makes the genre/style explicit 	7–8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manipulation of music elements and concepts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – incorporates genre/style-specific characteristics – throughout the composition 	5–6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manipulation of music elements and concepts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – for the chosen genre/style – throughout the composition 	3–4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some selection of music elements and concepts. 	1–2
The student response does not match any of the descriptors above.	0

Resolving music ideas	Marks
The student response has the following characteristics:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • resolution of music ideas is <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – sustained and consolidates meaning – perceptively synthesised and reveals subtleties of meaning 	7–8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • resolution of music ideas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – is integral to communicate meaning – throughout the composition 	5–6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • resolution of music ideas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – to communicate meaning – throughout the composition 	3–4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstration of music idea/s. 	1–2
The student response does not match any of the descriptors above.	0

Statement of intent	Marks
The student response has the following characteristics:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analysis of music elements and concepts, and compositional devices in the composition is detailed and specific • application of literacy skills through sequenced and connected ideas • evaluation shows insightful judgments about music elements, concepts and compositional devices to communicate the intent in the composition 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analysis of music elements and concepts, and compositional devices in the composition • application of literacy skills using music terminology relevant to genre/style and language conventions to communicate ideas in the composition • evaluation of the use of music elements and concepts, and compositional devices to communicate the intent in the composition 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explanation of the choices made in the composition • application of literacy skills that communicate ideas about the composition • statements made about the use of music elements and concepts, and compositional devices in the composition. 	1
The student response does not match any of the descriptors above.	0

Reflective statement	Marks
The student response has the following characteristics:	
• evaluation provides evidence of metacognition that informs independent best practice	6
• application of literacy skills through sequenced and connected ideas, and referencing conventions • evaluation examines the logic of the two selected techniques and/or strategies	4–5
• application of literacy skills using terminology relevant to genre/style and language conventions to communicate ideas • evaluation of two techniques and/or strategies of best practice	2–3
• application of literacy skills to identify techniques or strategies of best practice.	1
The student response does not match any of the descriptors above.	0

External assessment: Examination — extended response (25%)

External assessment is developed and marked by the QCAA. The external assessment in Music Extension — Composition is common to all schools and administered under the same conditions, at the same time, on the same day.

Assessment objectives

1. Analyse music to examine and consider the constituent parts and relationships between music elements and concepts, and compositional devices.
2. Apply written literacy skills, using music terminology relevant to genre/style, and use language conventions to communicate ideas.
3. Evaluate the use of music elements and concepts, and compositional devices to justify a viewpoint.

Specifications

This examination requires students to:

- respond to an unseen question selected from various options and unseen stimulus
- analyse, evaluate and communicate information to fully answer a question
- respond in the form of an analytical essay that expresses a viewpoint.

Stimulus specifications

The QCAA provides succinct unseen stimulus with contextual information.

Conditions

- Mode: written
- Time allowed
 - Planning time: 20 minutes
 - Working time: 120 minutes

Glossary

The syllabus glossary is available at www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/downloads/senior-qce/common/snr_glossary_cognitive_verbs.pdf.

References

Marzano, RJ & Kendall, JS 2008, *Designing and Assessing Educational Objectives: Applying the new taxonomy*, Corwin Press, USA.

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Myers, P 2015, 'In the push for marketable skills, are we forgetting the beauty and poetry of STEM disciplines?', <https://theconversation.com/in-the-push-for-marketable-skills-are-we-forgetting-the-beauty-and-poetry-of-stem-disciplines-45085>.

Version history

Version	Date of change	Information
1.0	January 2024	Released for familiarisation and planning (with implementation starting in 2026)
1.1	July 2024	Released for implementation with minor updates
1.2	October 2024	ISBN removed and minor updates

