

International Baccalaureate Music Undergoing Curriculum Review

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Greetings everyone. It's a pleasure to be hearing from so many of you already this school year at festivals and online. I don't believe this should be news to anyone who has been reading the AMIS Update, but I wanted to keep everyone posted on the developments of the current IB curriculum review. Many of you might recall that one of most significant changes in the music program came during the last review process a few years ago with the inclusion of the group performance as one of the options for the standard level students. This came as a direct result of input from music teachers like you. A music curriculum review is once again in process. Input is being collected and discussed now for implementation in 2008. I wanted to make sure this was included once again in the AMIS Update so that music teachers in international schools were given an opportunity to offer their suggestions.

Here are some of the main points that have already been discussed by the review committee.

- Overall, the basic structure of the last curriculum has been well received by music teachers. The present syllabus needs to be maintained and built upon.
- The internationalism of the program needs to be further stressed.
- There needs to be more of a differentiation between Higher Level (HL) and Standard Level (SL) students.
- It was felt that the new syllabus should consider the study of two smaller prescribed works rather than the one lengthy work currently prescribed. A comparative study of these two works could be included as part of the listening paper.
- HL students will have one extra question on the listening paper that focuses on a comparative analysis taken from a previous question on the exam.
- Incorporate an individual student reflection module as a component to the group ensemble component.
- Extend music technology components to the list of available options.
- Include in the assessment criteria a caption for creativity skills to include:
 - Composition
 - Music technology
 - Arrangement
 - Pastiche (composition techniques)
 - Improvisation
- Revise the nature of the subject to include commonalities from one culture to another. Students need to seek personal and communal identification in music.
- Revise the Aims to include:
 - Exploration
 - Develop knowledge personally and collaboratively
 - Engage in music as a life long participant.

This is merely an overview of the ideas being discussed by the curriculum review committee. I would like to stress once again that input from teachers in the field is critical in this process. There are several ways you can do this. First, if you are an IB School, you can access the Online Curriculum Centre website of the IBO at <http://occ.ibo.org> When you get to the music home page, click on the forum section. There you will have access to threads of discussion regarding the curriculum. You could also e-mail me at jyarnell@ash.nl with any thoughts you might have regarding the IB Music curriculum. I can then forward this information to the IBO. Or, you can contact the IBO headquarters directly. Remember that the curriculum will only be stronger when the people who work with it offer feedback and get involved.

Thanks for your response and input. In the meantime you might want to check out the new IB student – teacher workshop planned by AMIS for February. Information is available on the AMIS website but I would advise you to check it out soon as the availability is going fast.

Keep in touch and best wishes.