

Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Music Second Study 1: Composition

Unit code: DJ2W 34

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to enable candidates to create a musical composition in a chosen style. It prepares them as musicians to develop the necessary skills implicit in musical composition. The candidates will work through a series of musical examples and research into their chosen genre in order to assist the creative process and assimilate the necessary underpinning knowledge and/or skills. This Unit is intended for First Study instrumentalists, vocalists and songwriters who wish to broaden their compositional knowledge and skills. If song writing is the main form of music composition to be explored it may be more relevant for candidates to study the unit Songwriting 1.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

1. Display technical understanding in a range of compositional techniques.
2. Show evidence of research into a chosen style.
3. Create and notate a musical composition in the chosen style.

Credit points and level: 1 HN Credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7*)

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: A basic knowledge of music and some notational skills. The ability to understand and write a chord chart for guitar and/or keyboard as well as a level of appropriate technique on an instrument. These may be demonstrated SQA Music at Intermediate 2 or equivalent. Candidates should also have good communication skills. These may be demonstrated by the achievement of core skill Communication at Higher level or by possession of Higher English and Communication or a suitable NQ Communication Unit (SCQF level 5/6).

Core skills: There may be opportunities to gather evidence towards core skills in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of core skills or core skills components.

Context for delivery: This is an optional unit included in the frameworks for HNC/D Music. It is recommended that it is taught and assessed within the context of the particular group award to which it contributes.

General information for centres (cont)

Assessment: Three instruments of assessment, each relating to a specific outcome, should be used to assess this Unit:

- ◆ At least three exercises demonstrating compositional technique and the submission of sketches of original melodic fragments.
- ◆ A set written question paper or a short essay evidencing research into the chosen style.
- ◆ A portfolio containing a range of short pieces as well as a final two-minute composition, accompanied by an appropriate score.

Alternately a single presentation can be used to present all required evidence. Outcome 1 could be evidenced in the form of a workbook which showed experimentation using a range of compositional tools. Outcome 2 could consist of a written submission in the form of a short essay researching their chosen style, or alternatively, a set question paper on the genre. A marking sheet/template could be utilised to ascertain that the knowledge/skills criteria are evident in the candidate's research. Outcome 3 may involve the use of a checklist to chart the development of the candidate's compositional process from generating melodic fragments, constructing melodic phrases, simple harmonisation, more advanced harmonisation, rhythmic accompaniments and finally the finished piece. Assessment evidence should be recorded on a high quality format. A hand-written or printed score and/or lead sheet and appropriate parts for voice/instruments could be utilised to assess outcome 3. Set worksheets/examples as well as the final score could be submitted as evidence of the candidate's ability to arrange/transpose and use appropriate instrumental range and voicing. The instrument of assessment for outcome 3 could also be a checklist incorporating knowledge and skills as criteria to be demonstrated in the final score and/or lead sheet and parts.

For generic material such as listed for outcome 3, i.e. musical signs, terms and parameters, assessments could be combined with Music Theory 1 or 2 where some common formative and summative assessments.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Music Second Study 1: Composition

Unit code: DJ2W 34

The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, knowledge and/or skills, and evidence requirements are mandatory.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the knowledge and/or skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Display technical understanding in a range of compositional techniques.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Creative use and manipulation of musical materials
- ◆ Awareness of a variety of styles
- ◆ Understanding of a broad range of compositional techniques
- ◆ Notational skills
- ◆ Genre-specific compositional techniques

Evidence requirements

Candidates will need evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ satisfactorily complete a minimum of three exercises using appropriate techniques in a given style
- ◆ provide evidence of works-in-progress by submitting sketches.

This outcome could be evidenced in the form of a workbook which showed experimentation using a range of compositional tools.

Assessment guidelines

It is recommended that all outcomes are assessed holistically see Outcome 3. Candidates undertaking the group award may combine this assessment with an outcome from 'Music Theory 1'. Assessment may be divided into component parts, or as a single submission towards the end of the period of study allowing the candidate time to refine their skills through practical work and technical exercises.

Should there be ambiguity regarding a candidate's response, oral questioning may be used to eliminate any doubt as to the candidate's understanding. The lecturer should note questions and responses.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Music Second Study 1: Composition

Outcome 2

Show evidence of research into a chosen style

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Demonstrate knowledge of their chosen style
- ◆ Analyse a compositional form utilised in this genre
- ◆ Appraise the cultural context of the genre
- ◆ Show evidence that they have based their compositional form on the chosen style
- ◆ Analyse the relevance of their compositional techniques to the genre

Evidence requirements

Candidates will need evidence to demonstrate their skills and/or knowledge by showing that they can produce and submit a short essay or answer a set question on each of the 5 knowledge/skills items listed above. The underpinning knowledge could be assessed through the use of ‘open’ questions, which allow a candidate to respond from their experience of working through the compositional process and researching the genre. Oral questioning would also be appropriate in the case of special needs.

Assessment guidelines

It is recommended that all outcomes are assessed holistically see Outcome 3. This outcome could consist of a written submission in the form of a short essay researching into their chosen style, or alternatively, a set question paper on the genre. A marking sheet/template could be utilised to ascertain that the knowledge/skills criteria are evident in the candidate’s research. The assessment for this outcome could be integrated with that of outcome 3 as evidence of the process of composition and research into the candidate’s chosen genre. Should there be ambiguity regarding a candidate’s response, oral questioning may be used to eliminate any doubt as to the candidate’s understanding. The lecturer should note questions and responses.

Outcome 3

Create and notate a musical composition in the chosen style

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Production of simple melodic ideas
- ◆ Use of appropriate harmony
- ◆ Construction of rhythmic phrases for accompaniment or counterpoint
- ◆ Musical composition which adheres to the conventions of the chosen style
- ◆ Instrumental range, voicings and transpositions
- ◆ Use of appropriate notation to clearly record intentions

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Music Second Study 1: Composition

Evidence requirements

Candidates will need evidence to demonstrate their skills and/or knowledge by showing that they can present a portfolio of compositional sketches and a final recording of the finished composition. These sketches will show the development of their ideas from initial melodic/harmonic fragments to the construction of phrases and accompaniments and finally to the overall structure or form. The candidate should demonstrate knowledge of form based on their chosen genre by applying this to their composition. This will also be evidenced in Outcome 2 in their research. The portfolio should contain a range of short pieces as well as a final two-minute composition.

Assessment guidelines

It is recommended that all outcomes are assessed holistically as a determination of the candidate's ability to research and follow through the compositional process. The assessment for Outcome 3 could be recorded in a checklist incorporating the key knowledge and skills as criteria to be demonstrated. Opportunities may also exist to combine assessments with Music Theory 1 or 2.

The scores submitted should be clear and legible and should utilise the notational conventions appropriate to both the employed instrumentation and musical genre. For example, a lead-sheet would not be acceptable for a string quartet and guitar TAB would not be appropriate for keyboard. Where the genre is, say, that of 'singer/songwriter' a lead-sheet consisting of properly notated vocal part with lyric and accompanying chord chart, perhaps with TAB, would be sufficient. The keyword for the notation is 'appropriate'. Set worksheets/examples as well as the final score could be submitted as evidence of the candidate's ability to arrange/transpose and use appropriate instrumental range and voicing.

Should there be ambiguity regarding a candidate's response, oral questioning may be used to eliminate any doubt as to the candidate's understanding. The lecturer should note questions and responses.

Administrative Information

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Version	Description of change	Date
02	Removal of Word Count and Presentation Length.	27/05/11

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Music Second Study 1: Composition

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This Unit is designed to enable First Study instrumentalists and vocalists to develop the necessary skills and underpinning knowledge which are required for basic music composition. This will involve following through a process of compositional techniques, researching into a chosen style and analysing, applying and synthesising knowledge gained from this in the final written piece of music. The importance of basic research here is that it gives context to learning and gives the candidate a foothold in the compositional process by engaging with their choice of genre.

Outcomes 1 and 2 are both concerned with this process and should provide a map of the candidate's learning for the roles of tutor and assessor. This research may often overlap with some of the historical understanding gained by researching for Music First Study 1: Instrument and provide incentive for the candidate to re-apply this knowledge in the context of compositional techniques, awareness of form and cultural setting. It is intended that this will deepen learning and broaden the candidate's approach to study through integrating some of the influences from their Music First Study 1: Instrument and Music History 1 units.

The final part of this Unit is the production of a finished composition which demonstrates the candidate's ability to write out the piece of music in appropriate notation. Set exercises and worksheets dealing with instrumental voicing, range and transposition would also help the candidate in developing notation skills. It may also be possible for the candidate to integrate the final composition into their performance programme for First Study 1: Instrument or Live Performance 1.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

This unit is an option in the HNC/D Music group award. The research required for outcome 1 may be treated as part of the material for Music History 1. Furthermore, the score / lead sheet and parts for outcome 3 could contribute to outcome 3 of First Study 1: Instrument as material for musicians to rehearse and perform. This would enable composers to hear their work played live and to gain feedback from both players and audience response. It is anticipated that the delivery of this Unit will be carried out in small group tutorials combined with larger practical demonstration/workshops. For generic material such as listed for outcome 3, i.e. musical signs, terms and parameters, a lecture format could be useful. This may be under the auspices of Music Theory 1 or 2 where some common formative and summative assessments could be combined.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Music Second Study 1: Composition

Open learning

This unit could be delivered by open learning. However, it would require planning by the centre to ensure the sufficiency and authenticity of candidate evidence.

For information for normal open learning arrangements, please refer to the SQA guide *Assessment and Quality Assurance of Open and Distance Learning* (SQA, 2000).

Candidates with additional support needs

This Unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Additional Support Needs* (BA 2399, SQA, due 2004).

General information for candidates

Unit title: Music Second Study 1: Composition

The main purpose of this Unit is to enable you to develop the necessary skills required to write a piece of music in a style or genre that you have chosen. This may be related to your first study instrument (or voice) or to a second study instrument that has given you an insight into the main features of the genre.

To help you further your understanding of the chosen style, you will be required to carry out research or answer written questions on the genre. This will involve a study of harmony, form, instrumentation, notation and the cultural context of the style.

This Unit is also designed to enable you to write down your composition in appropriate notation and to gain the necessary skills needed to produce a final score and/or lead sheet and parts for instrumentalists/vocalists. This will involve developing an understanding of musical parameters, signs, expression marks and terms in order to show your intent as a composer, and to observe the working ranges and appropriate voicing of chosen instruments. Where appropriate you will utilise transposition skills to produce parts for other instruments.

On completion of the Unit you should be able to:

1. Display technical understanding in a range of compositional techniques
2. Show evidence of research into a chosen style
3. Create and notate a musical composition in the chosen style

The assessment for this Unit will consist of three parts. Firstly, you will be assessed on:

- ◆ At least three exercises demonstrating compositional technique. You will also be required to submit sketches of original melodic fragments, Outcome 1.
- ◆ A set written question paper or a short essay in which you show evidence of research into the style you have chosen, Outcome 2.
- ◆ A portfolio containing a range of short pieces as well as a final two-minute composition, accompanied by an appropriate score, Outcome 3.

It is desirable however that assessment is approach holistically where you will undertake one single assessment, combining all of the above.