

## Higher National Unit Specification

### General information for centres

**Unit title:** Songwriting 1

**Unit code:** DJ35 34

**Unit purpose:** This unit is designed to enable the candidate to develop the skills required by a songwriter. This will be achieved through listening, analysing and researching existing songs. 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/skills. Candidates should then undertake the process of songwriting based on the conventions of the chosen genre. This Unit is intended for candidates who have some skill on a musical instrument and wish to explore basic elements of songwriting.

On completion of this unit the candidate will be able to:

- 1 Produce examples of specific structural elements of songs in a given genre.
- 2 Research the song structures of a chosen genre of popular music.
- 3 Write an original song using the conventions of a chosen genre of popular music.

**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; experience recognising and playing songs from different genres as well as 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. This may be demonstrated by the achievement of 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)**

If other forms of music composition are to be explored candidates should select Music Second Study 1: Composition.

**Assessment:** This unit should be assessed using three different instruments of assessment. The candidate is required to submit:

### **Outcome 1**

Three extracts of songwriting examples within the classroom environment, requiring both performance and/or recording of the extracts accompanied by appropriate notation. Candidates should be guided by the tutor in choosing a genre of popular music as a comparative model.

### **Outcome 2**

A text demonstrating familiarity with a chosen genre of popular music. Candidates should be able to show evidence of research and recognition of the different stylistic traits of the chosen genre. Candidates should also be able to compare their own pieces with the relevant elements of structure, melody, harmony, rhythm and lyrical application with those of the chosen genre.

### **Outcome 3**

An original song applying the conventions of a chosen genre. The tutor should ensure that candidates have been given the particular information with which they can construct their song whilst using a chosen genre as a guide and, ultimately, a standard for comparison.

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards**

**Unit title:** Songwriting 1

**Unit code:** DJ35 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**

Produce examples of specific structural elements of songs in a given genre

#### **Knowledge and/or skills**

- ◆ Differentiate between popular song genres
- ◆ Recognise the structural elements including lyrics of a song in a given genre
- ◆ Recognise the songwriting (compositional) tools used in songwriting within the given genre
- ◆ Apply knowledge of the structures and songwriting tools from the given genre to the candidate's own songwriting

#### **Evidence requirements**

Candidates will need evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can produce completed sections of songs in a chosen genre. Candidates must produce evidence of:

- ◆ a verse section with a melody and appropriate accompanying harmony (chords)
- ◆ a chorus or verse section with melody and harmony showing the application of lyrics which can be original or taken from existing songs
- ◆ a verse and chorus with melody, harmony, lyrics and rhythm.

The candidate should be able to produce the above evidence within a series of structured lessons and should be given the above three tasks to be completed as classroom exercises. These classroom tasks should be set by the tutor according to the particular lesson and should be completed by the candidate as part of a classroom assessment where the authenticity of the candidate's response can be guaranteed.

The standard of evidence required for this Outcome should be measured against a model of a song from a chosen genre. The comparison should focus on elements of structure, melody, harmony, lyrics and rhythm which are synonymous with the chosen genre.

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards**

### **Unit title:** Songwriting 1

The amount of evidence:

- ◆ the verse section should be a minimum of 4 bars and should be performed and/or recorded with accompanying appropriate notation (e.g. a guitar and vocal recording with a chord chart underneath a lead sheet)
- ◆ chorus section should be a minimum of 4 bars and should be performed and/or recorded with accompanying appropriate notation.
- ◆ the verse and chorus section should be a minimum of 8 bars and should be performed and/or recorded with accompanying notation.

The three specific pieces of work to be produced by the candidate should take the form of responses to tasks set by the tutor. The candidate should be able to choose a genre from several presented. The three tasks should be completed within allocated teaching time. The candidate can use simple recording devices and all the tasks must have a minimum of two distinct parts (for example guitar and vocals). The appropriate notation should also be done as a response to the tasks set in the classroom.

### **Assessment Guidelines**

The assessment of this Outcome should take place in the form of continuous assessment within the classroom situation. This outcome should be treated separately from outcomes 2 and 3 although some material may be developed for use in outcome 3.

A folio of completed songs or sections containing song writing ideas and songwriting elements can also be submitted as evidence of the creative process and can be used to support required work in instances of borderline passes.

The candidate may also produce a folio of completed work, ideas and songwriting elements as supporting evidence of the creative process. This may be used to support required evidence in case of borderline results.

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:** Songwriting 1

### **Outcome 2**

Research the song structures of a chosen genre of popular music.

### **Knowledge and/or skills**

- ◆ Research songs of a similar genre
- ◆ recognise genre through listening.
- ◆ Recognise song structures within the genre
- ◆ Recognise compositional tools (songwriting tools which support a lyric such as melody, harmony, rhythm) within the genre

### **Evidence requirements**

Candidates will need evidence to demonstrate their skills and/or knowledge by showing that they can produce a written submission outlining areas of research into a specific genre of popular music:

- ◆ evidence of familiarity with the genre through listening
- ◆ evidence of research of the genre
- ◆ evidence of structural awareness within the genre
- ◆ evidence of compositional (melody, harmony, rhythm and lyrics) components within the genre

Elements of structure and composition should be addressed within the submission

### **Assessment guidelines**

It is recommended that elements of the analysis are integrated with chosen genre and songwriting required for outcome 3.

The candidate should select a genre from several presented and should carry out a brief analysis of its historical, structural and compositional context. Given that the candidate should have some ongoing compositional ideas and possibly have started their major songwriting task for Outcome 3 they should be able to make a comparison between the chosen genre and the elements of songwriting required in Outcome 3 and any other current song ideas.

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:** Songwriting 1

### **Outcome 3**

Write an original song using the conventions of a chosen genre of popular music.

#### **Knowledge and/or skills**

- ◆ Apply appropriate genre specific structures to own songwriting.
- ◆ Apply appropriate genre specific songwriting elements (e.g. melody, harmony, rhythm, lyrics) to own songwriting.
- ◆ Present own songwriting.
- ◆ Produce appropriate notation for the differing elements within song.
- ◆ Compare own song with the chosen genre.

#### **Evidence requirements**

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

- ◆ write a song in a chosen genre lasting a minimum of three minutes containing a minimum of two parts e.g. vocal and guitar parts and making effective use of song writing tools i.e. melody, harmony, rhythm and lyrics. The song must contain a minimum of four structural elements i.e. intro, verse, chorus, outro or coda and have elements, both structurally and compositionally, which are comparable with the chosen model
- ◆ provide separate parts within the song using appropriate notation e.g. a lead sheet for vocals and a chord chart for guitar
- ◆ be of a length acceptable within the genre
- ◆ produce a comparative analysis, between their own songwriting and a chosen genre of popular song with regard to lyrics and support structure, style and composition. The analysis should address historical, cultural, structural and compositional aspects.

The song should be recorded on a high quality format and kept as evidence for external moderation.

#### **Assessment guidelines**

It is acceptable to present a portfolio of songwriting ideas and elements as evidence of the creative process. This portfolio may be used to support the required evidence for outcome 3 and may be used in cases of borderline result.

For candidates undertaking the group award this outcome may be integrated with Music Live Performance 1, Music History 1 and Music First Study 1: Instrument.

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

**Unit code:** DJ35 34  
**Unit title:** Songwriting 1  
**Superclass category:** LF  
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### History of changes:

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

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## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes**

### **Unit title:** Songwriting 1

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 intended for candidates who have some skill on a musical instrument and wish to explore basic elements of songwriting. This will be achieved through listening, analysing and researching existing songs. Candidates should then undertake the process of songwriting based on the conventions of the chosen genre.

Candidates will be encouraged to follow the models of existing popular songwriting in their own creative work. The history, cultural, structural, stylistic and compositional elements of popular songwriting, should be explored within this Unit.

During the course of the Unit, after familiarising themselves with the elements of existing popular songwriting, candidates will be expected to produce three short classroom exercises involving completion of specific parts of songs, a brief textual analysis of their chosen genre and a complete song written using a generic model as a guide. Appropriate notational skills should be built in to the delivery of the Unit.

### **Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit**

This Unit is an optional part of a group award and is primarily designed to provide candidates with a framework within which they can apply various aspects of creativity with regard to songwriting.

The work within this unit should be viewed as an evolutionary process. The undertaking of the practical tasks in Outcome 1 along with the skills of recognition and research required for Outcome 2 should be looked on as necessary tools for completion of the bigger task of writing a whole song and comparing with chosen genre, as required in Outcome 3.

### **Open learning**

All Outcomes are appropriate to Open and Flexible Learning approaches with Tutor support at all stages. Delivering centres will be responsible for ensuring authenticity of candidate's work.

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

## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

**Unit title:** Songwriting 1

### **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: Songwriting 1

This Unit is designed to enable you to show evidence of recognition and research into different genres of popular song.

This Unit is designed to enable you to apply supporting structures (verse, chorus, middle eight, etc) and compositional tools (melody, harmony, rhythm and lyrics) from a specific genre to your own songwriting. A chosen genre will become the comparative model against which your own work will be judged. You should be able to apply appropriate notation to the different parts (guitar, vocal etc) of your work.

In Outcome 1 you will have to produce evidence, in class, of various tasks e.g. three short compositional exercises involving the completion of structural elements of songs.

The tutor will give you:

- ◆ a minimum 4 bar melody for a verse in a specific style and you should apply appropriate harmony and notation.
- ◆ a minimum 4 bar chord sequence for a chorus in a specific style and you should create an appropriate melody and apply existing or original lyrics with appropriate notation.
- ◆ a specific style and you should create a minimum 8 bar sequence of a verse and chorus with melody, harmony, lyrics and rhythm along with appropriate notation.

These three tasks should be performed live or recorded with a minimum of two distinct parts (for example guitar and vocals).

A portfolio of ideas, elements of composition and completed work may be submitted as evidence of the creative process. This may also be used in situations of borderline results.

For Outcome 2 you will have to write a short essay based on classroom tutorials, showing evidence of an ability to recognise and research a chosen genre.

For Outcome 3 you should apply your knowledge of popular song structures and compositional elements to the writing of a complete song following guidelines of a chosen genre and compare the elements of the song with your own song. You will be required to show evidence of a verse section, a chorus section, introduction and a coda. The song itself should include melody, harmony, lyrics and rhythm should last no less than three minutes. The song should be recorded or performed live and there should be two distinct parts to the performance/recording (e.g. guitar and vocals). Appropriate notation for the different compositional elements should accompany the song.