

## Higher National Unit specification

### General information for centres

**Unit title:** Conceptual Sound: Theory and Practice

**Unit code:** F1ED 35

**Unit purpose:** This Unit is designed to prepare the candidate for working within the discipline of conceptual sound by providing the underpinning theoretical knowledge and language. It is intended that the candidate will undertake a project that will help to develop their creative, analytical, research, and aesthetic art and or design skills in relation to the production of Conceptual sound.

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

- 1 Research and identify the key terms and techniques used in sound production
- 2 Evaluate key theories used in conceptual sound
- 3 Apply key theories and techniques to a given brief

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

*\*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:** Access to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. However, it would be beneficial if candidates were proficient in the use of a computer. In addition the possession of relevant computer based HN Units such as DW9G 34 *3D Animation Motion Studies*, DW9J 34 *Animation: An Introduction*, DW9H 34 *3D Computer Visualisation* or similar. Prior experience in basic sound recording and editing would prove beneficial.

**Core Skills:** The achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6. There are also further opportunities to develop the Core Skills of Information Technology and Communication at SCQF level 6 in this Unit.

**Context for delivery:** If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

**Assessment:** A number of product-based assessment instruments will be required which will include work/sketchbooks of gathered evidence, illustrated report writing and evidence of practical work. All Outcomes can be approached holistically through product-based assessment. Integrative assessment should be encouraged across a range of Units as appropriate to the framework in which the Unit is offered. If this approach is taken, then a matrix for assessment should be devised.

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

**Unit title:** Conceptual Sound: Theory and Practice

**Unit code:** F1ED 35

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**

Research and identify the key terms and techniques used in sound production

#### **Knowledge and/or Skills**

- ◆ Research and investigation
- ◆ Distortion/effects
- ◆ Looping
- ◆ Sampling
- ◆ Dubbing
- ◆ Diegetic and non diegetic
- ◆ Stereo and mono
- ◆ Analogue and digital

#### **Evidence Requirements**

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ identify and collate appropriate material that shows an understanding of the key theories used in the production/practice of conceptual sound
- ◆ assemble an illustrative research portfolio
- ◆ produce evidence of key texts and images

Evidence should be presented as a research portfolio containing illustrations and descriptive annotations. Alternatively evidence could also be presented orally, supported by visual material.

#### **Assessment Guidelines**

There is an opportunity for this Outcome to be assessed with Outcome 2, or it could form part of a set project brief that requires specific research. There is an opportunity, therefore, for integration of this Outcome with a number of existing projects throughout a variety of art and design, multimedia, web, television and broadcast media and creative industries frameworks. If used in this manner, an assessment matrix should be devised.

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)**

**Unit title:** Conceptual Sound: Theory and Practice

### **Outcome 2**

Evaluate key theories used in conceptual sound

#### **Knowledge and/or Skills**

- ◆ Furniture music
- ◆ Sound and image
- ◆ Soundscapes
- ◆ Sound and the Industrial Revolution
- ◆ Found sound
- ◆ Musique concrete
- ◆ Silence and noise
- ◆ Digital domain and laptop performances
- ◆ Evaluation

#### **Evidence Requirements**

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ evaluate four of the eight key theories identified within a specific chosen example of either sound art or film sound track
- ◆ produce case studies that critically analyse the chosen key theories in terms of suitability within the context of the case studies
- ◆ produce case studies that analyse the chosen key theories and proposes alternatives for use within the case studies
- ◆ produce case studies that analyse the chosen key theories in terms of the concepts and the aesthetics of sound within the arts

Evidence should be presented as a written report oral oral/digital presentation, with supporting illustrative material.

#### **Assessment Guidelines**

It would be expected that three or more case studies should be presented for assessment.

There is an opportunity for this Outcome to be assessed with Outcome 1 as one assessment activity.

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)**

**Unit title:** Conceptual Sound: Theory and Practice

### **Outcome 3**

Apply key theories and techniques to a given brief

#### **Knowledge and/or Skills**

- ◆ Sound production techniques
- ◆ Conceptual sound theories
- ◆ Creative application

#### **Evidence Requirements**

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ produce sound sketches in an appropriate audio format
- ◆ produce sound sketches that contain examples of influences and experimentation of personal ideas
- ◆ apply technical and theoretical knowledge to create/produce a finished a conceptual sound piece in response to a given brief

#### **Assessment Guidelines**

The candidate should demonstrate that they have developed the ability to understand theoretical ideas within their chosen area of conceptual sound.

## Administrative Information

<b>Unit code:</b>	F1ED 35
<b>Unit title:</b>	Conceptual Sound: Theory and Practice
<b>Superclass category:</b>	KG
<b>Original date of publication:</b>	April 2007
<b>Version:</b>	02 (June 2007)

### History of changes:

Version	Description of change	Date
02	The achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6. There are also further opportunities to develop the Core Skills of Information Technology and Communication at SCQF level 6 in this Unit.	June 07

**Source:** SQA

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2007

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.

SQA acknowledges the valuable contribution that Scotland's colleges have made to the development of Higher National qualifications.

Additional copies of this Unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Please contact the Customer Contact Centre for further details, telephone 0845 279 1000.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes

### Unit title: Conceptual Sound: Theory and Practice

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 develops and explores ideas of conceptual sound, enabling candidates to analyse and discuss sound compositions and theories in a manner that generates knowledge of individual sound works, at the same time as learning to listen and analyse what is being heard. This will assist the candidate in the creation and evaluation of their own projects.

This can be achieved through detailed research and investigation where the emphasis is not placed on an accumulation of facts, but focuses on the practical application of knowledge and skills.

This Unit is designed to introduce the candidate to the theory and practices involved in conceptual sound. The intention is to provide an opportunity for candidates to participate in this area of study at a level for a person with little or no experience of sound as an art form and to provide a foundation for further development. It is recommended that the exercises undertaken in the study of this Unit give adequate opportunity for the candidate to explore the subject.

#### Outcome 1

Candidates should acquire a basic knowledge of the principles of sound production by the introduction of terminology and techniques. These should be applied to existing knowledge of sound composition eg soundtracks for films, abstract noise and experimental music.

The candidate should be encouraged to experiment with any sound recording devices available to them and also editing software to begin the process of developing their own skills and style.

#### Outcome 2

The candidate should be led through the audible past and present by investigation and evaluation of both the concepts and the aesthetics of sound.

The concepts explored could be chosen from the list below. Names of sound artists and composers have been given as examples and are not mandatory, but are appropriate at the time of writing. This supporting information is not intended as definitive.

- ◆ Furniture music (Erik Satie, Brian Eno, Muzak)
- ◆ Sound and image (Sergei M. Eisenstein, Tarkovsky, Carter Burwell)
- ◆ Soundscapes (Hildegard Westerkamp, R. Murray Schafer, Tacita Dean)
- ◆ Sound and the Industrial Revolution (Italian Futurists, Kraftwerk)
- ◆ Found sound (Scanner, Mark Vernon, Zoë Irvin, John Smith)
- ◆ Musique concrete (Pier Schaefer)
- ◆ Silence and noise (John Cage, Toru Takemitsu)
- ◆ Digital domain and laptop performance (Kirsty Stansfield, Markus Schmickler)

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

**Unit title:** Conceptual Sound: Theory and Practice

### **Outcome 3**

The emphases in this Outcome should be on developing ideas and practical elements involved in creating finished work.

Work carried out for Outcomes 1 and 2 should inform the candidates' production of their own ideas. Any practical exercises should be carefully thought through in order to give the candidate the opportunity to become involved with the technical attributes of sound creation. The reviewing of work and ideas by peer group members in a constructive way and should be encouraged. The given brief should contain a description of the project to be undertaken together with any instruction necessary for successful completion.

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

This Unit has been developed as part of the HND Computer Art and Design Award. It is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

Opportunities may be taken to link or integrate with other aspects of the course and a thematic approach adopted for both delivery and assessment.

The Unit may be taught alone as an independent research Unit. However it is suggested that this Unit is used to support practical Units within the framework. These could include Video filming/editing, photography, Multimedia and Web Design. This could allow for extended research by the candidate, for a given project brief.

The Unit can be delivered as a general introduction to the concepts of sound, criticism and analysis. It can also be integrated as a tool for evaluation of the candidate's own project. It prepares the candidate for working within the discipline of sound production by providing the underpinning knowledge and language used in their discipline. Due to the accessibility of open source software every candidate with Internet access has the opportunity to compose sound pieces. It is intended that the candidate will, as part of this process, develop and apply these skills and theories to produce a finished Outcome or artefact.

Evidence Requirements for assessment have been expressed in the guidelines for each Outcome. Assessment should be continuous, and assessed summatively on completion of all three Outcomes.

#### ***Opportunities for developing Core Skills***

Candidates are working in a context which requires the application of current theories and techniques to the production of a practical sound work. Internet access to open source software provides opportunities for the composition of sound pieces by relatively inexperienced individuals. Candidates should develop and apply skills following extensive research as they explore their own concepts to creatively express themselves through the medium of sound. Although they work unaided in the selection, modification and customising of applications to the reviewing of work and ideas by peer group members in a constructive way should be encouraged.

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

### **Unit title:** Conceptual Sound: Theory and Practice

Knowledge and understanding of the history, development and of conceptual sound is researched in depth, through critical analysis of key theories and practical illustrations of art compositions and audiovisual screenings. Techniques to produce and present written and oral reports effectively to standards acceptable in industry, using industry terminology, should be discussed.

As they develop initial design concepts to produce and present a practical sound work candidates should naturally develop problem solving skills. They could identify specific objectives, using critical evaluation of the developmental process, time frame and proposed process and production analysed in Outcome 2. Contextualising and developing draft ideas to produce an appropriate work will involve significant creativity and skill in management of time and resources, particularly if there is integration with other Unit work. Peer review should be encouraged to evaluate how well they have met their original objectives by identifying appropriate methods to measure achievement and progress.

### **Open learning**

This Unit could be delivered by open learning provided suitable online materials were developed. There would also have to be a well-defined brief that took into account any factors specific to open learning. Feedback from the lecturer and peers could come from the formation of an online group where discussions relevant to the Unit could take place.

For further information and advice please refer to the SQA document *Assessment and Quality Assurance for Open and Distance Learning* which is available on SQA's website: [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk).

### **Candidates with disabilities and/or additional support needs**

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. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)).



## General information for candidates

### Unit title: Conceptual Sound: Theory and Practice

This Unit will provide you with knowledge of the terminology and techniques used in the production of sound, both complimentary to other mediums and as an art form in its own right. You will analyse sound and noise and learn to understand your chosen discipline and place it in an historical and contemporary context. You will source and research information on the key terms and techniques used in sound production.

For **Outcome 1** you will research and identify the key terms and techniques used in conceptual sound. You will produce an illustrated presentation of your research findings.

For **Outcome 2** you will demonstrate that you can evaluate and reference the key theories used in conceptual sound from a wide range of sound art compositions and audiovisual screenings. You will critically analyse the chosen sound art compositions and audiovisual screenings.

For **Outcome 3** you will develop your own concepts for a given brief, with the intention of creatively expressing yourself through the medium of sound. You will maintain a high standard of production.