



Scottish Bagpipe Theory

SCQF level 7

Unit Code: F7NX 34

40 hour Unit

What are the Scottish Bagpipe Qualifications?

These are Scotland's Piping and Drumming Qualifications Board (PDQB) standards, based on the College of Piping and National Piping Centre Tutor Books and the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association Structured Learning Manuals 1-3. They have been developed as an introduction to the finger movements and embellishments required to play the Scottish Bagpipe.

The Scottish Bagpipe is an ancient instrument requiring a variety of performance techniques across Scotland being adopted. To be able to play a Scottish Bagpipe competently an understanding of musical theory, tuning, rhythm, melody, harmony, and musical ornamentation and is essential.

The Bagpipe is synonymous with Pipe Bands and through diligent study and practice you will achieve a standard of playing which allows you to play individually or as part of a Pipe Band.

What is this Unit about?

This Unit will give you an understanding of the main theoretical concepts that form the foundations of music generally but relate to the Bagpipes specifically. It will provide you with knowledge of music theory and maintenance associated with the Scottish Bagpipe as well as historical aspects of the instrument. There are five study areas as follows:

- Study area 1 Demonstrate knowledge of Pitch and Pentatonic Scales.
- Study area 2 Notate Piobaireachd and light music.
- Study area 3 Identify and describe the requirements and format for specific dances.
- Study area 4 Demonstrate understanding of Piping and Pipe Band history, and associated individuals and organisations.
- Study area 5 Demonstrate knowledge of Bagpipe assembly and maintenance.

If there is anything in this Unit you don't understand, ask your tutor to explain it to you.

What should I know or be able to do before I start?

You should have a secure knowledge and understanding of musical theory generally but ideally as it relates to the Scottish Bagpipe to allow you to demonstrate that you have achieved the learning requirements of this Unit.

These may be demonstrated by the achievement of the Scottish Bagpipe Music Theory Certificate SCQF level 6, Institute of Piping 4 Certificate, RSPBA Elementary Certificate or PDQB Piping 4 Certificate.

What do I need to do?

You will need to show that you have developed and gained all the skills required in the Unit. Each study area may be assessed individually; but all areas may also be combined in a single assessment event.

All exercise requirements are marked and a pass or fail is awarded for the Unit.

Pitch and Pentatonic Scales

You must write out the answer to questions to show your understanding of Pitch and Pentatonic Scales. You must be able to state:

- ◆ The difference between relative and absolute pitch
- ◆ The three Highland Bagpipe Pentatonic scales
- ◆ How the Bagpipe scale relates to the Western Major scale
- ◆ Tones and Semitones used in these scales

Notating Piobaireachd and light music

You must write out accurate music notation showing that you can:

- ◆ Compose harmony to a set piece of music
- ◆ Write the first line of a Piobaireachd ground on the stave

Requirements and format for specific dances

You will write out descriptions relating to the playing requirements and format of one of the following dances by naming two suitable tunes, the number of bars required to complete the dance, and a suitable tempo:

- ◆ Highland Fling
- ◆ Sean Truibhas
- ◆ Sword Dance
- ◆ Sailors Hornpipe
- ◆ Irish Jig

Piping and Pipe Band history

You will write an essay on one of the following topics:

- ◆ The Solo Piping competition system
- ◆ The Pipe Band movement
- ◆ Famous Pipers and their contribution to Piping
- ◆ Present day Piping organisations and their contribution to Piping

Bagpipe maintenance

You will show your knowledge of the steps required to assemble and maintain Bagpipes in good playing condition.

You will describe:

- ◆ How to tie in a Stock
- ◆ The materials used in Bag making
- ◆ How to fit a simple leather valve to the Blowstick and how various water traps are fitted and work
- ◆ How to set a Chanter Reed to achieve a good and reasonably true Scale using tape and other means as necessary
- ◆ How to fit, tune and handle Cane and Synthetic Drone Reeds and Bridles to achieve correct pitch and strength
- ◆ How to assemble Bagpipes into good playing order and maintain them in that condition

What might this involve?

Here are examples of some things you will do:

Participate in following activities:

- ◆ Answering sample questions concerning Pitch and Pentatonic scales
- ◆ Practice notation of Piobaireachd and light music
- ◆ Study dance requirements
- ◆ Study Pipe Band and Bagpipe history
- ◆ Answering sample questions concerning Bagpipe maintenance

What can I do next?

You could move on to:

Scottish Bagpipe Theory at SCQF level 8

Guidance for tutors

This Unit is intended to introduce learners to the music theory and rudiments of Scottish Bagpipe music. There are five areas of study covering Pitch and Pentatonic Scales, notating Piobaireachd and Light Music, demonstrating an understanding of dance requirements, Piping and Pipe Band history and Bagpipe assembly/maintenance.

Tutors and instructors will find comprehensive supporting material in relevant publications such as the College of Piping and National Piping Centre Tutor Books, the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association Structured Learning Manuals 1-3 or similar learning materials available from the Piobaireachd Society or other Piping or Pipe Band organisations. Assistance is also available from the Piping and Drumming Qualifications Board in the form of sample test papers covering aspects of the Scottish Bagpipe Theory (Bagpipes) examination. These are available for use as part of instructional programmes or for candidates who wish to take the examinations direct.

This Unit may form part of a Group Award in, for example traditional music, but can be offered on a standalone basis. The Unit may be delivered in a variety of ways from direct teaching/training courses, practical workshop sessions. It may also be possible to deliver using computer-based distance learning programmes for personal study.

Assessment will follow examination procedures approved by the Piping and Drumming Qualifications Board. These procedures provide sample test papers in theory and practical aspects of the examinations, which are available for use as part of instructional programmes or for candidates who wish to take the examinations direct.

All assessment must be carried out in front of an approved examiner either as individual assessments or combined in a single assessment event in a realistic time.

An assessment support pack has been produced for this Unit exemplifying assessment methods and to ensure standards are maintained. This pack includes example assessor observation checklists.

Core Skills

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this Unit.

Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required.

Further advice can be found in SQA's web pages (www.sqa.org.uk)



Administrative information

Credit value

1 credit(s) at (SQA level 7) (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7)

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Helpdesk: 0845 279 1000
Fax: 0845 213 5000
E-mail: customer@sqa.org.uk
Website: www.sqa.org.uk

Optima Building
58 Robertson Street
Glasgow
G2 8QD

Ironmills Road
Dalkeith
Midlothian

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