



Higher National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Stage Sound and Technology

Unit code: FA08 35

Superclass: LE

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Unit purpose

The Unit is designed to prepare candidates for work as theatre sound technicians.

It is designed to enable candidates to develop technical skills in digital recording technology, editing and resource management of theatre sound systems.

This Unit allows the candidate to work closely with the artistic director co-ordinating stage sound operations throughout the production process, engaging in scheduling, budgeting, communication and problem-solving.

Candidates will also study the health, safety and legal requirements necessary for preparation and delivery of sound for performance.

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

- 1 Manipulate a range of sound effects incorporating digital sound technology.
- 2 Explain the legal and health and safety requirements for sound in theatre performances.
- 3 Manage sound resources throughout the production process.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills

Entry to this Unit is at the discretion of the delivering centre. However candidates may benefit from having completed Unit F38E 34 'Technical Theatre: Sound' or equivalent.

General information (cont)

Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit credit at SCQF level 8: (16 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.*

Core Skills

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of *Working with Others*, *Problem Solving*, *Communication* and *IT* at SCQF level 6 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

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

Outcomes 1 and 3 of this Unit could be assessed through the use of assessor checklists and a completed sound disc of at least 10 cues for Outcome 1. Extended response questions could be provided for Outcome 2.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

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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

Manipulate a range of sound effects incorporating digital sound technology.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Sound systems and technology
- ◆ Digital audio workstations
- ◆ Mixing desk
- ◆ Loudspeakers
- ◆ IT Equipment
- ◆ Recording Media
- ◆ Digital recording and editing
- ◆ Live effects
- ◆ Microphone set-up
- ◆ Live recording

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ Set up a digital audio workstation incorporating computer, mixing desk, recording and playback equipment.
- ◆ Create a sound disc or file from a given text containing a minimum of 10 cues.
- ◆ Explain the recording and editing processes used throughout the project.

Assessment Guidelines

This Outcome could be assessed by observation of the candidate's practical work, a completed disc or file and a short report explaining the processes used.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Stage Sound and Technology

Outcome 2

Explain the legal and health and safety requirements for sound in theatre performances.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Legal requirements for sound reproduction.
- ◆ Health and safety Regulations
- ◆ Performing rights society (PRS)
- ◆ Mechanical Copyright Protection Society (MCPS)
- ◆ Phonographic Performances Limited (PPL)
- ◆ Noise at work
- ◆ Working at height
- ◆ Manual handling
- ◆ Portable appliance testing
- ◆ Industry links (PSA, ABTT, PLASA)

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ Explain the key legal requirements for sound reproduction and performance.
- ◆ Explain the Health and Safety regulations and industry related guidance associated with theatre sound systems.

Assessment Guidelines

This Outcome could be assessed by a series of extended response questions.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Stage Sound and Technology

Outcome 3

Manage sound resources throughout the production process.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Team working.
- ◆ Time management.
- ◆ Organisation
- ◆ Equipment preparation.
- ◆ Resource management
- ◆ Fault finding
- ◆ Problem solving
- ◆ Schedules.
- ◆ Budgets and costing
- ◆ Creative expectations

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ Organise resources in preparation for production and ensure sound equipment is operational, maintained and safe for use.
- ◆ Create a provisional sound cue list.
- ◆ Liaise with director, technical and production departments to communicate information.
- ◆ Produce accurate detailed costing for sound requirements.
- ◆ Analyse practical or technical constraints; health & safety, venue, identifying problems and work with technical team to find solutions.
- ◆ Create a sound schedule and ensure work is completed to deadlines.
- ◆ Co-ordinate sound plotting session.
- ◆ Create back up files/discs and archiving documentation.
- ◆ Document music/effects used in performance as required by PRS.
- ◆ Attend notes and feedback sessions and respond appropriately.
- ◆ Co-ordinate striking/de-rigging sound equipment.

Assessment Guidelines

This Outcome could be assessed through a portfolio of relevant production paperwork supported by an observation checklist for the practical elements of the Outcome.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Stage Sound and Technology

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 to develop the candidate's skills as a sound technician. The emphasis is on practical work throughout.

In Outcome 1 candidates are required to manipulate a range of sounds using digital technology. A brief could be given learners record and edit both music, voice-overs or musical instruments and make specific edits from the given text.

Current sound technology should be utilised, and candidates could set up a system with appropriate sound editing software to record to and from a range of sources. Manipulation of digital sound effects are the main feature in this Outcome where candidates can experiment with, cut and paste, repeat sections, change tone, attach effects and so on.

In Outcome 2 candidates are required to demonstrate safe, legal working practices. The content of this should be relevant to stage sound systems and processes. HSE legislation could include *Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998*, *Electricity at Work Regulations 1989* and *Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005*. Industry standards or 'codes of practice' such as *Portable Appliance Testing & advice on electrical safety in theatres* and *Electrical safety for entertainers*. Industry links could include the Production Services Association (PSA), Professional Lighting and Sound Association (PLASA) and other codes of practice outlined by the Association of British Theatre Technicians (ABTT) such as flying equipment, wire ropes, model technical rider etc dependent on the sound rig/system each centre operates.

Legal aspects of downloading music, performing rights and copyright should be covered in this Outcome with emphasis on theatre sound and return of information as required by individual venues. Candidates should be encouraged to apply knowledge and skills of health, safety and legality throughout the production process.

In Outcome 3 candidates are required to manage and co-ordinate stage sound operations throughout the production process.

The content of this Outcome entails practical involvement with the candidate operating as head of sound engaging fully throughout the preparation period, rehearsal period, production week, the run and the strike. The production could be a play, musical, dance or live music event which offers a range of stage sound effects and a structured production schedule. Candidates should oversee all activities from planning, preparation and recording to final performance and strike.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Stage Sound and Technology

Whilst safe fault finding methods and diagnosis can be carried out when setting up recording and editing processes or for a production — simulation exercises could be designed for candidates to trace problems in a similar set up at an early stage in the Unit. For example — if no sound comes out or sound production is distorted, how to trace and repair damaged cables, essentially a logical process of problem solving within the sound chain.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

This Unit, which is likely to form part of a Group Award, is primarily intended to provide candidates with the necessary skills to carry out the role of stage sound technician. The Unit should be delivered in an appropriate theatre/stage environment. Outcome 3 should be incorporated within public performance productions which will allow candidates to experience 'real' situations.

Learning and teaching approaches could be through lectures, tutorials practical workshops and visits by professionals. To enhance the learning experience theatre trips and backstage tours would be valuable.

In Outcome 1 a project brief is given and candidates are required to manipulate a range of sounds using digital technology.

Candidates could be given an individual sound project where they set up digital equipment and record and manipulate a range of sounds. The project should be sufficiently demanding to enable candidates to demonstrate skills such as lengthening cues, cutting, pasting, altering tone, frequency and adding effects. Live sounds such as voiceovers or musical instruments could be incorporated in the project.

Assessment checklists could be used to observe the candidate carrying out above tasks and a short report covering their recording and editing techniques, and of course an edited disc submitted.

Outcome 2 requires candidates to prepare a report detailing key health, safety and legal regulations relating to sound processes. Investigation and research into safety within the entertainment sector and key points of each regulation highlighted.

Outcome 3 requires candidates to engage fully in the production process as head of sound. Assessment is by observation throughout the production process. Candidates will also be required to submit relevant paperwork relating to production sound.

A Fault finding diagnosis test could be assessed by a practical exercise whereby the candidate has to demonstrate the logical and safe process to diagnosing a problem and correcting it within the sound system.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of *Working with Others*, *Numeracy*, *Problem Solving*, *Communication* and *IT* at SCQF level 6 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Stage Sound and Technology

Opportunities to develop the Core Skills of *Working with Others*, *Numeracy*, *Problem Solving* and *Communication* will be present throughout Outcome 3 where the candidate manages sound production through a production.

Candidates will also have opportunities to develop the Core Skill of IT in Outcome 1, through the use of IT to record and edit sounds.

Open learning

The Outcomes in this Unit rely on developing practical skills through participation during, and throughout, the phases of a production. It requires communication with production director and related production personnel on an active and on-going basis. Therefore opportunities for distance learning are extremely limited. Centres may, however find it possible to develop solutions, provided all Unit and Evidence Requirements are met in full. Technological advances may make the possibility of such creative solutions more widespread in the future.

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 on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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General information for candidates

Unit title: Stage Sound and Technology

This Unit is designed to enable you to develop stage sound skills using current technology, incorporating digital recording, editing and operation.

This Unit enables you to co-ordinate stage sound operations for a production, work safely and diagnose faults within a sound system.

You will learn the safe working practices and legal aspects of health and safety in stage sound.

In part of this Unit you will work as a sound technician working with the director, company and production team throughout a production.

On completion of the Unit you should be able to:

- ◆ Manipulate a range of sound effects incorporating digital sound technology.
- ◆ Describe health, safety and legal requirements for sound in theatre performances.
- ◆ Manage sound resources throughout the production process.

You are likely to be assessed through observation of your practical work and a portfolio of the documentation you produce for production work. You will also produce a report on relevant aspects of Health, Safety and legal issues.

There will be opportunities for you to develop your Core Skills in *Working with Others*, *Numeracy*, *Problem Solving*, *Communication* and *I.T.*