



Higher National Unit specification

General information

Unit title: Digital Media: Audio (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: HF50 34

Superclass: KG

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Unit purpose

The purpose of this Unit is to introduce learners to the fundamental concepts of digital audio production, in terms of defining project requirements, planning and production. Practical experience will be gained in the acquiring and editing digital audio data to a given project brief. This Unit will also introduce learners to wider areas of consideration in digital audio production in terms of copyright issues.

The Unit is suitable for a wide range of learners with a personal or vocational interest in digital media.

Outcomes

On successful completion of the Unit the learner will be able to:

- 1 Identify requirements for digital audio content for a project brief.
- 2 Plan the acquisition and creation of digital audio content for a project brief.
- 3 Acquire digital audio content for a project brief.
- 4 Create content for inclusion in a digital audio project.

Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7)

Higher National Unit specification: General information (cont)

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Recommended entry to the Unit

Access to this Unit will be at the discretion of the centre. However, it is recommended that learners should have a working knowledge of personal computers. This may be evidenced by the possession of relevant National Units, HN Units, or relevant work experience.

Core Skills

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following Core Skills component:

Complete Core Skill	None
Core Skill component	Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6 Planning and Organising at SCQF level 6

There are also opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills which are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit specification.

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.

This Unit is included within the framework of the HNC Interactive Media although it can also be delivered within other frameworks which require the inclusion of digital audio acquisition. This Unit may be delivered as a free standing Unit but benefits greatly by being integrated with other practical Units within the context of a larger project.

There is potential to integrate this Unit with other practical or content creation Units.

Equality and inclusion

This Unit specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

Higher National Unit specification: Statement of standards

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Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

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. Learners 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

Identify requirements for digital audio content for a project brief.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Digital audio formats
- ◆ Audio recording and acquisition hardware
- ◆ Audio editing and manipulation software
- ◆ Digital audio distribution methods
- ◆ Copyright implications of digital audio acquisition
- ◆ Appropriate sources of digital audio media
- ◆ Methods for the creation of digital audio media

Outcome 2

Plan the acquisition and creation of digital audio content for a project brief.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Script and storyboard audio sequences
- ◆ Technical resources
- ◆ Human resources
- ◆ Legitimate methods for the sourcing and creation of digital audio media taking account of copyright law
- ◆ Plan the acquisition and creation of digital audio media within the timescale specified by a given brief

Outcome 3

Acquire digital audio content for a project brief.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Source legitimate digital audio media which meet the requirements
- ◆ Create digital audio media which meet the requirements
- ◆ Digital audio media conforms to the technical requirements

Higher National Unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Digital Media: Audio (SCQF level 7)

Outcome 4

Create content for inclusion in a digital audio project.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Edit and mix digital audio media according to the requirements of a project brief
- ◆ Output edited digital audio media in the format specified within the requirements of a project brief

Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills across all Outcomes.

The evidence for this Unit may be written or oral or a combination of these. Evidence may be captured, stored and presented in a range of media (including audio and video) and formats (analogue and digital). Particular consideration should be given to digital formats and the use of multimedia.

The Evidence Requirements for this Unit will only take one form — Evidence of practical competence (practical abilities) for all the Outcomes.

Outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 4 should be assessed as one integrated project and this project should be based on one given project brief throughout all the Outcomes. The assessment covering all these Outcomes are open-book but should be carried out in supervised conditions. All Evidence Requirements for each Outcome must be achieved. Candidates may have access to notes, text and appropriate on-line help.

Candidates will be required to demonstrate that they will be able to:

- ◆ Produce a Requirements Document for the project brief which must include at least:
 - purpose of the project
 - content to be included in the audio sequence(s) eg voiceover, music, sound effects and the order in which they should be
 - digital audio formats including edited and unedited
 - audio recording and acquisition hardware required
 - editing and manipulation software required for production
 - digital audio distribution methods, eg CD, USB flash drives, portable digital music players (iPods, Smartphones, etc) online streaming services, online music stores, cloud services
 - copyright implications related to sourcing and creating digital audio media

Higher National Unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Digital Media: Audio (SCQF level 7)

- ◆ Produce a Production Document for the given project brief which should contain:
 - a script and/or storyboard to define the audio sequence to be used
 - itemised technical and human resources
 - a detailed plan/schedule of acquisition and creation activities
 - legitimate sources of digital audio media, eg websites like www.soundjay.com and opengameart.org

- ◆ Acquire for the given project brief, eg record, capture, source digital audio media:
 - acquire audio media within the timescale prescribed by a production schedule
 - audio media must meet the requirements of the project
 - digital audio media must conform to the technical requirements of the project
 - source at least two pieces of digital audio media legitimately
 - create at least two pieces of digital audio media

- ◆ Edit and mix digital audio media to the script/storyboard for the given project brief:
 - apply at least one edit, eg cut, copy, paste,
 - apply at least one audio effect, eg amplify, normalise, change pitch, change speed, change tempo, add echo, reverse, etc
 - mix two pieces of audio
 - the choice of edit(s) and mix(es) should be relevant to the project brief

- ◆ output edited audio media in the format specified within the requirements of the given brief.

- ◆ produce original, edited and mixed audio media which conforms to the requirements of the project brief which must be presented and submitted to the assessor.

Evidence for practical competence may be produced over an extended period of time under open-book conditions; but where it is generated without supervision some means of authentication must be carried out.

The Guidelines on *Approaches to Assessment* (see the Support Notes section of this specification) provides specific examples of instruments of assessment.



Higher National Unit Support Notes

Unit title: Digital Media: Audio (SCQF level 7)

Unit Support Notes are offered as guidance and 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 included within the framework of the HNC Digital Design and Web Development although it can also be delivered within other frameworks which require the inclusion of digital audio acquisition. The Unit may be delivered as a free standing Unit but benefits greatly by being integrated with other practical Units within the context of a larger project.

There is potential to integrate this Unit with other practical or content creation Units.

The purpose of this Unit is to introduce learners to the fundamental concepts of digital audio production. Discussion, throughout this Unit, should cover how to use portable audio recorders and players (iPods, smartphones, etc.), analogue to digital conversion, streaming audio services, cloud services, file formats, eg RAW, MP3, WMA, WAV, MIDI, etc. The various pieces of equipment and staffing required should also be introduced. Learners will not be expected to be sound engineers at the end of the Unit but should be able to demonstrate basic skills and knowledge.

Learners should be given the opportunity to explore the various aspects of defining a project based on clients' needs, planning projects based on time and resources and the necessity to produce clear plans of their activities.

Learners should be given plenty of practical experience sourcing audio, creating audio and producing digital audio sequences. Learners should experience a range of devices for capturing audio from smartphones to traditional desktop pc digital microphones. There are opportunities for group work to be used in these instances.

Learners should learn how to make effective use of an audio authoring software application to edit, manipulate, mix and apply effects to digital audio media. At the time of writing, there are a number of applications for use in the delivery of this Unit. These include: Sony Sound Forge, Adobe Audition, Audacity, SoundEdit Pro, Avid Pro Tools. This list is not exhaustive, however, the software that learners are exposed to should allow them to achieve the requirements of the assessment without any limitations.

The Unit should allow for learners to create their own audio, eg music, sound effects. Formative exercises could address the requirements of a scenario, eg animation, presentation, game, newsreel, whereby learners can source sound effects, wild tracks and record dialogue and narration.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Digital Media: Audio (SCQF level 7)

At the time of writing this Unit relates to Tech Partnership IT User Skills Standards (National Occupational Standards), particularly ESKITU072 Digital content.

There is also the opportunity to combine this Unit with the HN Unit *Digital Media: Video* to provide a sound track for the video footage that the learner has created.

The Unit exists to provide centres with the opportunity for their learners to work with audio within an interactive media context and to allow centres the freedom to integrate the content within their own context of delivery.

Guidance on approaches to delivery of this Unit

The assessment of this Unit could be contained as part of a larger project plan or integrated with the HN Unit *Digital Media: Video*.

Outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 4 should be assessed holistically by the use of one project. Learners could be given a choice of topics from a given list to base this project on. Learners could base this project on a choice of topics offered by the centre or an alternative of their own choice, however, this should be approved by the assessor. Knowledge should be demonstrated within the context of the interpretation of the project brief and the strategy proposed to fulfil the requirements of this project brief.

The relationship of the assessor to the learner is analogous to that of a client or an executive producer. As the Unit is a single credit Unit at level 7, care should be taken to avoid providing a project brief which is too complex for delivery within the given time scale and available resources. The acquired audio media need not all be original media produced by the learner themselves. For example, the brief could be to produce a sound track for a piece of work that the learner has produced for another Unit, eg an animation, video, presentation or website.

It is recommended that the project brief be issued early on in the course, so that learners are given adequate time to form and try out different ideas.

Outcome 1

For this Outcome, the learners are required to analyse the requirements of a given brief and then present their solution to the assessor. Assessors should be looking for the application of the Knowledge and Skills for the Outcome within the solution.

An assessor should make sure that a learner is aware of the technical constraints, timescales and deadlines that they are working to.

From the project brief, learners could produce documentation such as a requirements document. It is expected that the documentation should consist of at least 600 words. Centres may wish to make successful submission of this Outcome as a pre-requisite for progressing on to Outcome 2.

Audio scripts or storyboards could also be used to define the sequence to be used.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Digital Media: Audio (SCQF level 7)

Outcome 2

This Outcome is where the learner plans the acquisition of the audio media. For example, identifying who does what, where, when and how. The Production Document could comprise of a combination of documents — word processed document, spreadsheets, project management schedules, media requirements list/table. The plan should clearly indicate a list of tasks and timescales. A one page document would not be deemed sufficient.

Learners should adhere to current copyright legislation and provide evidence that they have requested copyright permission for clips used, that aren't of their own creation. Learners should clearly state in the plan which pieces of audio will be sourced and which will be created.

Centres may wish to make successful submission of this Outcome a pre-requisite for progressing on to Outcome 3.

Outcome 3

In this Outcome, the learner physically acquires the digital audio media, by creating it themselves and by sourcing it legitimately. The digital audio acquired should conform to appropriate legislation and be fit for purpose as proposed in the Requirements Document, script, storyboard and/or plan. The learner should also acquire the audio media according to the schedule they produced.

Centres may wish to make successful submission of this Outcome a pre-requisite for progressing on to Outcome 4.

Outcome 4

In this Outcome, the learners will produce the final digital audio sequence by editing and applying effects to the acquired audio clips. They will also prepare it for distribution via the medium and method specified by the given brief. Learners should be encouraged to experiment with the different features of the audio authoring software used for editing, manipulating, applying effects and mixing sounds.

The finished product should be an accurate realisation of the learner's initial presented creative solution. There may be occasions where an initial idea hits problems or an opportunity to enhance the initial solution presents itself. Under these circumstances the assessor (client) should approve these changes and these should be noted in the production documentation.

The final sequence should be output in the format specified within the project requirements. All files used, originals and edits, should be supplied to the assessor via whatever method the learner and assessor has agreed.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Digital Media: Audio (SCQF level 7)

Guidance on approaches to assessment of this Unit

Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to candidates.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where candidates experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

Candidates are encouraged to use the internet in any research, etc. however, the evidence produced must be the candidate's own words. Assessors should assure themselves of the authenticity of candidates' evidence.

Written and/or oral recorded, performance and product evidence is required which demonstrates that the candidate has achieved the requirements of all of the Outcomes to show that the candidate has appropriate knowledge and understanding of the content of this Unit.

This Unit should be based upon a practical project that allows the candidate to demonstrate the skills and knowledge required to work within a production environment.

The candidate will implement a solution based on:

- ◆ Presentation documentation/materials
- ◆ Planning documentation
- ◆ Acquired digital audio
- ◆ Edited digital audio
- ◆ Finished product

All assessments within this Unit should be presented as open-book and carried out under supervised conditions. Due to the nature of this open-book assessment presentation assessors should assure themselves of the authenticity of each candidate's submission. Authentication may take various forms including, but not limited to, oral questioning and plagiarism checks. Some forms of evidence generation (such as video recordings) have intrinsic authentication and would require no further means of verification.

Candidates could base this project on a choice of topics offered by the centre or alternative of their own choice, however, this should be approved by the assessor. Knowledge should be demonstrated within the context of the interpretation of the brief and the strategy proposed to fulfil the requirements of this project brief.

Candidates should be given the project brief early on in the delivery of the Unit to familiarise themselves with what they have to achieve.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Digital Media: Audio (SCQF level 7)

It is expected that the Requirements Document would consist of at least 600 words. Audio storyboards could also be used to define the sequence of the clips to be used. The Production Document could comprise of a combination of documents — word processed reports, media tables, spreadsheets, project management schedules and copyright emails/letters. The plan should clearly indicate a list of tasks and timescales with a summary of the tasks to be undertaken. A one page document would not be deemed sufficient evidence.

It is recommended that the digital audio sequence is composed from at least four pieces of audio and should last for at least 3 minutes. Candidates should be given the opportunity to demonstrate a number of edits and effects, beyond the minimum stated in the Evidence Requirements of the Unit.

It is expected that candidates should be able to complete this assessment in about 10 hours.

Opportunities for e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all learner evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment.

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

The assessment of this Unit may contribute towards the component Planning and Organising of the Core Skill of *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 5. Learners may have to develop a plan for their own research in Outcome 1 and 2. The general skill that learners may have to complete is 'Plan, Organise and Complete a Task'.

Assessment of this Unit may allow learners to develop the Critical Thinking component of the Core Skill of *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 5. Learners may have opportunities to gather evidence to support their thinking and analysis. The general skill that learners may complete is 'Analyse a Situation or Issue'.

This Unit has the Critical Thinking and Planning and Organising components of Problem Solving embedded in it. This means that when learners achieve the Unit, their Core Skills profile will also be updated to show they have achieved Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6 and Planning and Organising at SCQF level 6.

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Core Skills Components Critical Thinking and Planning and Organising at SCQF level 6 embedded.	19/08/16

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General information for learners

Unit title: Digital Media: Audio (SCQF level 7)

This section will help you decide whether this is the Unit for you by explaining what the Unit is about, what you should know or be able to do before you start, what you will need to do during the Unit and opportunities for further learning and employment.

The purpose of this Unit is to introduce you to the fundamental concepts of digital audio production in terms of defining project requirements, planning and production. You will gain practical experience in the acquiring and editing audio data to a given project brief. This Unit will also introduce copyright issues that relate to digital audio production.

On completion of the Unit you should be able to:

- 1 Identify requirements for digital audio content for a project brief.
- 2 Plan the acquisition and creation of digital audio content for a project brief.
- 3 Acquire digital audio content for a project brief.
- 4 Create content for inclusion in a digital audio project.

In Outcome 1, you will be given a brief by your assessor (the client) which you will be required to interpret. You will then present your solution to the brief to your assessor who will approve your solution and you will proceed to Outcome 2.

In Outcome 2, you will plan how you are going to acquire the audio media you require for your solution and plan a schedule for this within any deadlines set by your assessor (client).

In Outcome 3, you actually undertake the acquisition of your digital audio media according to your schedule.

In Outcome 4, you will prepare the digital audio media for editing, undertake the edit and then output the finished solution in the format specified in the brief. The finished product will be presented to your assessor (client) via the chosen distribution method.

You will have opportunities to develop the Planning and Organising component and Critical Thinking component of the *Problem Solving* Core Skill at SCQF level 5.

This Unit has the Critical Thinking and Planning and Organising components of Problem Solving embedded in it. This means that when you achieve the Unit, your Core Skills profile will also be updated to show you have achieved Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6 and Planning and Organising at SCQF level 6.