



National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Music: Aural Skills (SCQF level 5)

CODE F58L 11

SUMMARY

This Unit is designed to enable candidates to develop aural discrimination skills through listening to music. Candidates will be required to identify a variety of musical features within music heard. They will listen to music and identify intervals, scales, triads, chords and time signatures. Following the completion of this Unit, candidates should be able to apply the skills of aural discrimination to a variety of musical contexts and situations.

This Unit is a mandatory Unit within the National Certificate in Music (SCQF level 6), but can also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

This Unit is suitable for those candidates who wish to pursue a career within the music industry. It may be of benefit to those pursuing a career as a session musician, sound engineer, producer or composer.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Identify intervals, scales and tonality from aural stimuli.
- 2 Identify triads and chords from aural stimuli.
- 3 Identify rhythms and time signatures from aural stimuli.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, it would be beneficial if candidates had prior experience of basic music theory.

Administrative Information

Superclass: LF

Publication date: February 2009

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

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CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Intermediate 2 (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 5*).

**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 is no automatic certification of Core Skills in this Unit.

The Unit provides opportunities for candidates to develop aspects of the following Core Skills:

- ◆ Communication
- ◆ Information Technology
- ◆ Working with Others

These opportunities are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit Specification.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Music: Aural Skills (SCQF level 5)

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.

OUTCOME 1

Identify intervals, scales and tonality from aural stimuli.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Accurately identify ascending diatonic intervals.
- (b) Accurately identify both ascending and descending scales as major or minor.
- (c) Identify the tonality of musical phrases as major or minor.

OUTCOME 2

Identify triads and chords from aural stimuli.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Correctly identify major and minor triads.
- (b) Correctly identify chords with more than three notes.
- (c) Correctly identify simple chord progressions.

OUTCOME 3

Identify rhythms and time signatures from aural stimuli.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Accurately identify rhythms from given audio examples.
- (b) Correctly identify time signatures from given audio examples.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Music: Aural Skills (SCQF level 5)

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Evidence is required to demonstrate that candidates have achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

Candidates are required to produce written and/or oral evidence under supervised conditions, which shows the ability to identify:

- ◆ the following melodic intervals: unison, tone/major 2nd, major 3rd, perfect 4th, perfect 5th, major 6th, major 7th, octave
- ◆ the following scales: major, melodic minor and harmonic minor
- ◆ whether a selection of four bar phrases are in major or minor keys
- ◆ major and minor triads when played melodically or harmonically
- ◆ four note chords including major and minor 7ths
- ◆ chord names or numbers within three and four chord progressions
- ◆ simple and compound time signatures, and dotted rhythms
- ◆ 4/4, 3/4, 6/8, and 9/8 from audio examples

The assessment will be closed-book and should last no more than 45 minutes. This assessment should take place on a single assessment occasion towards the end of the Unit.

The Assessment Support Pack (ASP) for this Unit provides sample assessment material including an Instrument of assessment, specified briefs and checklists. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the Assessment Support Pack to ensure a comparable standard.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Music: Aural Skills (SCQF level 5)

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 a mandatory Unit within the National Certificate in Music (SCQF level 6), but can also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

This Unit may be taught in conjunction with the *Music: Literacy* (SCQF level 5) Unit, as a means of reinforcing knowledge and understanding. This Unit will also allow candidates to develop aural skills which will have benefits for those undertaking the *Music: Live Performance* Unit (SCQF level 5 or 6) and/or *Performing Music on One Instrument or Voice* Units (SCQF level 5, 6 or 7).

Although there are no formal entry requirements for this Unit, it would be beneficial if a candidate has some previous experience of music theory or has a basic level of competence playing an instrument. An ability to read music could also enhance the candidate's understanding of the skills and knowledge required to pass this Unit.

It may be possible for elements of this Unit to be integrated into the teaching of the *Performing Music on One Instrument or Voice* (SCQF level 5, 6 or 7) Unit or *Appreciation of Music* (SCQF level 6) Unit where the context of what is being taught may be related to practice and musical analysis. Teachers/lecturers who teach *Performing Music on One Instrument or Voice* (SCQF level 5, 6 or 7) should encourage candidates to practise skills taught during this Unit while practising on their chosen instrument.

There are elements of this Unit which may be taught by instrumental instructors as part of the *Performing Music on One Instrument or Voice* Unit (SCQF level 5, 6 or 7), for example playing different types of scales. In such cases, instrumental instructors should emphasise the link between the two Units and should clearly explain the connection between technical ability and understanding what is being listened to. In addition, instrumental instructors can encourage candidates to practise chords and arpeggios both melodically and harmonically in order to develop their listening skills.

Successful completion of this Unit could help prepare candidates for entry to HNC/D Music and will give them a good basis of aural discrimination skills for a career in the music industry.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

This Unit can be delivered in a variety of teaching situations: in class and/or in the course of individual or group instrumental lessons.

This Unit may be primarily taught in a classroom context however, a varied approach to teaching should be encouraged to make learning interesting and meaningful. Candidates should be encouraged to use their own instruments, where practical, to follow up classroom lessons and to develop their skills in a more familiar context. When practising aural skills candidates should, where possible, refer to written examples of scales, intervals and chords, etc as this will further help to relate one skill to another.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Music: Aural Skills (SCQF level 5)

It may be helpful to relate teaching and knowledge of chords, intervals and tonality to music that candidates are familiar with. This may encourage candidates to analyse material which they listen to as part of a study programme.

It would be beneficial for candidates to work in small groups on a regular basis to test each other on the content of the Unit.

Candidates may also collaborate to further develop aural skills both within the classroom and during ensemble rehearsals. Candidates should be encouraged to use listening skills in a 'real life' context whilst learning new songs or transcribing from recorded material. When assessing intervals, triads and chords, the candidate could be presented with both melodic and harmonic versions, ie two or more notes played together or notes played sequentially. When assessing tonality, the candidate could be played short passages of music of at least four bars' duration.

While teaching rhythm the teacher/lecturer may wish to get candidates to clap their hands or use a selection of percussion instruments to play back examples of different rhythms, stressing the difference between those time signatures within the Evidence Requirements.

Use of information technology is recommended and there are many online theory and aural sites currently available in addition to software packages. This can be of particular benefit to candidates who are working at a different pace to others within the class group.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Candidates will be producing written and/or oral communication evidence as part of the assessment. This offers ideal opportunities to develop aspects of the Core Skill of *Communication*.

If candidates are given the opportunity to participate in group instrumental lessons as a means of learning and teaching, this will offer the ideal opportunity to develop aspects of the Core Skill *Working with Others*.

Should candidates choose to use online theory and aural sites currently available in addition to software packages, they will have the opportunity to develop the Core Skill of *Information Technology*.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Assessment for this Unit should be holistic and in the form of an aural test lasting no more than 45 minutes. A suitable method would be a multiple choice assessment. Where possible, candidates could be offered the opportunity to hear/play examples on their instrument of choice.

Time should be allowed for any necessary re-assessment.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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Opportunities for the use of e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by information technology, such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or e-checklists. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all candidate evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. Further advice is available in *SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education (AA1641, March 2003)*, *SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools (BD2625, June 2005)*.

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).