



National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Sound Design in Visual Media Applications:
An Introduction (SCQF level 5)

Unit code: FN92 11

Superclass: CE

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Summary

The purpose of this Unit is to introduce candidates to the use of sound design in visual media applications. Candidates will have the opportunity to investigate the role and application of sound design in a variety of visual media. Candidates will also have the opportunity to acquire practical skills in collecting and using sound elements to produce a sound design to support a visual media sequence.

This Unit is an optional Unit in the National Certificate in Computer Games Development, but is also available for candidates wishing to study the Unit on its own.

This Unit is suitable for candidates who are interested in an introduction to the creative use of sound in a variety of visual media such as computer games, animation and multimedia presentations. As this is an introductory Unit, it is suitable for candidates with no prior experience of sound design.

Outcomes

- 1 Explain the role of sound design in visual media.
- 2 Plan a sound design to support a visual media sequence.
- 3 Apply a sound design to support a visual media sequence.

Recommended entry

Entry is at the discretion of the centre although candidates would benefit from having basic skills in the use of Information Technology.

National Unit specification: general information (cont)

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Credit points and level

1 National Unit credit at SCQF level 5: (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

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

- ◆ Critical Thinking at SCQF level 5
- ◆ Planning and Organising at SCQF level 5

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

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.

Outcome 1

Explain the role of sound design in visual media.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe how musical sound can be used to support visual media.
- (b) Describe how non-musical sound can be used to support visual media.
- (c) Demonstrate the correct use of sound design terminology.

Outcome 2

Plan a sound design to support a visual media sequence.

Performance Criteria

- a) Investigate appropriate non-musical and musical sound elements to support the visual media sequence.
- (b) Create a sound design map for the visual media sequence.
- (c) Source appropriate sound elements in accordance with the sound design map.

Outcome 3

Apply a sound design to support a visual media sequence.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Apply appropriate non-musical sound elements to a visual media sequence in accordance with a sound design map.
- (b) Apply appropriate musical sound elements to a visual media sequence in accordance with a sound design map.
- (c) Present the completed sound design on an appropriate media format.

National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

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Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Evidence is required to demonstrate that the candidates have achieved all of the Outcomes and Performance Criteria. Current Copyright legislation must be applied to all activities undertaken as part of this Unit.

Outcome 1 — Written and/or oral evidence

Evidence is required which demonstrates that candidates have achieved Outcome 1 to the standards specified in the Outcome and Performance Criteria. The evidence for this Outcome must be obtained under open-book conditions at appropriate points throughout the Unit.

Candidates must provide evidence that demonstrates that they can explain the role of sound design in two short visual media sequences. The candidate must describe how sound elements have been used, using at least two of the appropriate sound design terms for each visual media sequence. At least one non-musical and one musical sound element must be described for each visual media sequence.

Outcome 2 — Product evidence and written and/or oral evidence

Evidence is required which demonstrates that candidates have achieved Outcome 2 to the standards specified in the Outcome and Performance Criteria. The evidence for this Outcome must be obtained under open-book conditions at appropriate points throughout the Unit.

Candidates must provide evidence that demonstrates that they can investigate at least two non-musical and two musical sound elements for a visual media sequence. The candidate should use the appropriate terminology in explaining the reasons for the sound elements being researched.

Candidates must provide product evidence that demonstrates that they can plan the appropriate use of, and source at least two non-musical and two musical sound elements to support a visual media sequence. This evidence should be in the form of a sound design map, and the collected sounds on an appropriate media format.

Outcome 3 — Product evidence

Evidence is required which demonstrates that candidates have achieved Outcome 3 to the standards specified in the Outcome and Performance Criteria. The evidence for this Outcome must be obtained under open-book conditions at appropriate points throughout the Unit.

The candidate must demonstrate correct application of the collected sound elements to a visual media sequence in accordance with the sound design map. At least two non-musical and two musical sounds should be applied, and should be placed appropriately with respect to time. This evidence should be in the form of a sound design map, and a completed sound design presented on an appropriate media format. The completed sound design should be at least one minute in length.

National Unit specification: support notes

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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 aligned to the following Skillset National Occupational Standards (NOS):

- ◆ IM27 Create Sound Effects for Interactive Media Products
- ◆ IM28 Create Music for Interactive Media Products

In this Unit candidates are required to describe the role of sound design in visual media applications such as computer games, animation, and multimedia presentations. Candidates are then required to research appropriate sound elements for a visual media sequence, and create a plan in the form of a sound design map for the use of these sound elements within the sequence. Candidates will then collect the appropriate sound elements according to their plan, and apply these sound elements to produce a sound design that accompanies the visual media sequence.

In Outcome 1, candidates will learn about how non-musical and musical sounds are used to support narrative and convey emotion in a variety of visual media. Through investigating appropriate examples, candidates should examine how sound and music can be used to enhance on-screen action, and establish or support the on-screen environment. Through this examination, they will learn how to describe the use of sound using the appropriate descriptive terminology. Candidates should learn how to correctly use the following terms:

Synchronous sound	sound that is matched to on-screen movements
Asynchronous sound	sound that is not matched to on-screen movements
Empathetic sound	music or sound effects that match the mood of the on-screen action
Anempathetic sound	music or sound effects that contradict the mood of the on-screen action
Room tone/wild track	the background sound of the location depicted on-screen
Foley	sound effects used to reinforce the on-screen action

Although no previous knowledge of music is required, candidates should be able to describe the use of musical sound with reference to the following terms:

Lyrical content	how any lyrical content relates to the narrative or environment
Tempo	the pace or pulse of the music

Candidates should also be able to describe how major and minor tonalities can be used to support the on-screen action.

In Outcome 2 and 3, candidates will learn about practical applications of sound design through the process of researching, planning and acquiring sound elements, and then applying a sound design to support a visual media sequence.

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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With reference to the knowledge and skills gained in Outcome 1, candidates should create an appropriate sound design for a visual media sequence. Emphasis should be placed on researching appropriate non-musical and musical sounds that will enhance and support the narrative or on-screen action of the sequence.

Candidates will learn how to produce an appropriate sound design map for a visual media sequence with reference to a storyboard or script, and will learn about possible sources for collecting sounds. In the process of doing this, consideration should be given to any applicable copyright legislation.

Candidates will then learn how to use basic skills in appropriate software to place these sound elements correctly with respect to the narrative and/or on-screen action, and present their completed sound design on an appropriate media format.

Candidates would benefit from having knowledge and/or skills in using basic Information Technology.

This Unit could be integrated with Digital Media: Audio Editing (SCQF level 5) F1KT 11

This Unit should prepare candidates for progression to Sound: Design (SCQF level 6) F5DY 12

Guidance on learning and teaching approaches for this Unit

For Outcome 1 candidates would benefit from:

- ◆ A general overview of the historical context to help candidates understand the development and growth of sound design with reference to key practitioners, historically important work, and the subsequent influence on sound design across a range of visual media. Candidates should also be made aware of technological developments that have had a significant impact on sound design.
- ◆ Working as a class to examine case studies and discuss the role of sound design in visual media. It would be a useful exercise to present to the class two or more excerpts in which the visual content is the same, but accompanied by different soundtracks that create opposing atmospheres. This will lead to a greater appreciation of the ability of creative sound design to convey different emotions to an audience.
- ◆ Working individually, or in small groups to identify possible reasons for the choice and inclusion of sound elements in commercial examples of computer games, animations and multimedia presentations. This will allow them to explore a wide range of examples and practice describing the use of sound using the correct terminology. For example, each group could be given a different example to discuss, and present their conclusions to the class.
- ◆ Having visits from working industry professionals such as practicing sound designers and dubbing mixers. This will give candidates the opportunity to learn about industry practice, and will further reinforce the concepts being explored. Alternatively, visits could be arranged to industry organisations or professionals.

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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For Outcomes 2 and 3, candidates would benefit from:

- ◆ Working individually, or in small groups to research appropriate sounds for a supplied storyboard or script. Groups could be given different examples, and could then discuss a set of appropriate sound elements with reference to the appropriate terminology. They could then create a sound design map and present their ideas for class discussion.
- ◆ Working individually to practice aligning sound elements to visual media using appropriate resources such as simple audio editing software. This will allow candidates to become familiar with synchronising sounds to on-screen actions, and appropriately placing underlying sounds such as room tone. Candidates should be encouraged to experiment with the relative volume level of sound elements in order to produce a satisfactory result.
- ◆ Having practical seminars with working industry professionals would be beneficial and lead to a greater understanding of the workflow involved in Sound Design.

There are a number of online sources of royalty-free sound effects and music. In addition, there are several affordable commercial sound effect, sample and media music libraries that could be used. Candidates could be made aware of how the production of such libraries can provide a source of income for a sound designer.

Guidance on approaches to assessment for this Unit

The following approaches to assessment are suggested:

Outcome 1 — Questions or oral presentation based on case studies

Outcome 2 and 3 — Project

For Outcome 1 the candidate will learn how to correctly apply terminology that may be initially unfamiliar, therefore the candidate will benefit from a series of tutorials using a variety of appropriate case studies prior to being assessed on the correct use of the terminology.

For Outcome 2 and 3, the assessor should provide a range of visual media sequences, from which the candidate will choose one for the project. Assessors should ensure that the range of visual media sequences are appropriate in that they provide enough scope for assessment at the level described in the evidence requirements.

Prior to the application of the sound design by the candidate, the assessor should approve the sound design map to verify that it meets the evidence requirements.

Assessor checklists could be used to record the candidate's progress throughout the Unit.

Note — Evidence can be holistic or Outcome by Outcome but it is recommended that Outcome 2 and 3 are assessed holistically in the form of a project.

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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Centres must be satisfied that the evidence submitted is the work of individual candidates. Assessors should maintain a record of discussions with each candidate about the plan prior to the submission of the final folio.

Time should be allowed for any necessary re-assessment.

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 and Communication Technology (ICT), 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)*.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

In this Unit candidates will develop skills in collecting and using sound elements to produce a sound design to support a visual media sequence.

Candidates will:

- ◆ describe the role of sound design in visual media applications such as computer games, animation, and multimedia presentations.
- ◆ research appropriate sound elements for a visual media sequence
- ◆ create a plan in the form of a sound design map for the use of these sound elements within the sequence.
- ◆ collect the appropriate sound elements according to the plan, and apply these sound elements to produce a sound design that accompanies the visual media sequence.
- ◆ present the completed sound design on an appropriate media format

This Unit has the Problem Solving components of Critical Thinking and Planning and Organising embedded in it, so when candidates achieve this Unit their Core Skills profile will be updated to show they have achieved Critical Thinking at SCQF Level 5 and Planning and Organising at SCQF level 5. In addition, as candidates are doing this Unit they will be developing aspects of the Core Skills in Communication and Information and Communication Technology.

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
02	Core Skills Components Critical Thinking and Planning and Organising at SCQF level 5 embedded.	08/08/2011

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