



National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Music: Aural Skills (SCQF level 4)

Unit code: H295 10

Superclass: LF

Publication date: August 2012

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

Summary

This Unit enables candidates to develop aural discrimination skills through listening to music. Candidates will listen to music and identify a variety of musical features including intervals, scales, triads, chords and time signatures. On completion of this Unit, candidates will be able to apply the skills of aural discrimination to a variety of musical contexts and situations.

This is a mandatory Unit within the National Certificate in Music at SCQF level 5 but can also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

This Unit is suitable for candidates who wish to pursue a career within the music industry and may be of benefit to those pursuing careers as session musician, sound engineer, songwriter or performing artist.

Outcomes

- 1 Identify intervals and scales from aural stimuli.
- 2 Identify chords and triads as major or minor from aural stimuli.
- 3 Identify time signatures from aural stimuli.

Recommended entry

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, some previous experience of music theory and/or a basic level of competence playing an instrument, would be beneficial. An ability to read music would enhance understanding of the skills and knowledge developed in this Unit.

General information (cont)

Unit title: Music: Aural Skills (SCQF level 4)

Credit points and level

1 National Unit credit at SCQF level 4: (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 4*)

**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

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit specification.

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

National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Music: Aural Skills (SCQF level 4)

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 and scales from aural stimuli.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Accurately identify ascending intervals based on a major scale.
- (b) Accurately identify scales as being major or minor.

Outcome 2

Identify chords and triads as major or minor from aural stimuli.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Correctly identify major triads.
- (b) Correctly identify minor triads.
- (c) Correctly identify chords.

Outcome 3

Identify time signatures from aural stimuli.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Accurately identify simple time signatures from given audio examples.
- (b) Accurately identify compound time signatures from given audio examples.

National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Music: Aural Skills (SCQF level 4)

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 that they can identify:

- ◆ the following intervals played melodically: unison, tone/major 2nd, major 3rd, perfect 4th, perfect 5th, major 6th, major 7th
- ◆ major and harmonic minor scales (either descending or ascending)
- ◆ major and minor triads when played melodically
- ◆ four note chords including major, minor and flattened 7th (“dominant 7”)
- ◆ simple and compound time signatures including 4/4, 3/4, 6/8, from audio examples

National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Music: Aural Skills (SCQF level 4)

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

At the time of writing, there are no National Occupational Standards that this Unit can be mapped against. However, centres should consider National Occupational Standards as part of the context for delivering this Unit, when they are available.

This is a mandatory Unit in the National Certificate (NC) in Music (SCQF level 5). It could be taught in conjunction with the *Music: Literacy* (SCQF level 4) Unit, as a means of reinforcing knowledge and understanding, but can also be delivered as a free-standing Unit.

This Unit will also allow candidates to develop aural skills which will have benefits for those undertaking the Unit *Music: Live Performance* (at SCQF level 5 or 6) or Units in *Performing Music on One Instrument or Voice* (at SCQF level 5, 6 or 7).

Although there are no formal entry requirements, some previous experience of music theory and/or a basic level of competence playing an instrument, would be beneficial. An ability to read music would also enhance candidates' understanding of the skills and knowledge developed.

It may be possible for elements of this Unit to be integrated into the teaching of *Performing Music on One Instrument or Voice* (SCQF level 5) and/or *Music: Live Performance* (SCQF level 5 or 6), where the context of what is being taught relates to practice. Tutors who deliver *Performing Music on One Instrument or Voice* (SCQF level 5) should encourage candidates to exercise 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 Unit *Performing Music on One Instrument or Voice* (SCQF level 5), for example playing major and minor scales. In such cases, instrumental instructors should emphasise the link between the two Units and should clearly explain the connection between technical playing ability and understanding what is being listened to. In addition, instrument instructors can encourage candidates to practise chords and triads, both melodically and harmonically, in order to develop their listening skills.

Successful completion of this Unit could help prepare candidates for entry to the NC in Music at SCQF level 5 and provide useful underpinning knowledge for later Higher National Units in music. It will also provide a good basis of aural discrimination skills which are useful for a career in the music industry.

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Music: Aural Skills (SCQF level 4)

Guidance on learning and teaching approaches for this Unit

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

Aural Skills 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 be encouraged to refer to examples of written music where possible, as this will reinforce the development of aural discrimination through recognition of music in a different context. 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 during band rehearsals.

When teaching intervals, triads and chords, the candidate could be presented with both harmonic and melodic versions, ie two or more notes played together or notes played sequentially. When teaching time signatures tutors should adopt a variety of methods. For example, clapping games such as 'passing on the rhythm' could be used, or alternatively a selection of percussion instruments could be used play back examples of different rhythms, stressing the difference between those time signatures which will be assessed.

Use of information technology is recommended and there are many online theory and aural websites 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.

Guidance on approaches to assessment for this Unit

Assessment for this Unit is recommended to be holistic and in the form of one aural test lasting approximately 45 minutes, occurring towards the end of the Unit. Assessment will take place under closed-book, supervised conditions. Alternatively, the assessment could be in the form of three discrete aural tests, lasting approximately 15 minutes each. Where possible, candidates could be offered the opportunity to hear examples on their instrument of choice.

Time should be allowed for any necessary re-assessment when planning delivery. An alternate assessment should be used for any re-assessment.

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Music: Aural Skills (SCQF level 4)

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 analytical skills through listening to music. Candidates will identify intervals, scales, chords, triads and time signatures. In undertaking these tasks, there are opportunities for candidates to develop aspects of the Core Skills of *Problem Solving*.

In addition, whilst completing this Unit, candidates may develop aspects of the following Core Skills where specific learning and teaching approaches are adopted:

- ◆ *Working with Others*, where encouraged to participate in group instrumental lessons and rehearsals.
- ◆ *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)*, through use of electronic material such as online theory and aural websites.

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

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2012

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.

Additional copies of this Unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Please contact the Business Development and Customer Support team, telephone 0303 333 0330.