



# Higher Music — draft Course rationale and summary

May 2011



This edition: May 2011, draft version 1.0

Published by the Scottish Qualifications Authority  
The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow G2 8DQ  
Ironmills Road, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1LE

[www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2011

# Contents

<b>Course rationale</b>	<b>1</b>
Background	1
Relationship between the Course and Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles	2
Purpose and aims of the Course	2
Information about typical learners who might do the Course	3
<b>Course summary</b>	<b>5</b>
Course outline	5
Course structure and conditions of award	6
Assessment	8

# Course rationale

## Background

All new and revised National Courses reflect Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles. They offer flexibility, provide more time for learning, more focus on skills and applying learning, and scope for personalisation and choice.

In this Course, and its component Units, there will be an emphasis on skills development and the application of those skills. Assessment approaches will be proportionate, fit for purpose and will promote best practice, enabling learners to achieve the highest standards they can.

This Course provides learners with opportunities to continue to acquire and develop the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities as well as skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

All Courses provide opportunities for learners to develop breadth, challenge and application, but the focus and balance of the assessment will be appropriate for the subject area.

## **Relationship between the Course and Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles**

This Course enables learners to develop and broaden skills and experiences in creating, understanding and performing music. Creating, understanding and performing music is the essence of this Course. The Course, which allows for a flexible approach, can meet the needs of learners with a range of musical interests.

The Course engages learners through practical musical activities and provides scope for personalisation and choice. Learners can, for example, perform music in a variety of styles on their own choice of instrument. Learners will develop their ability to express themselves through music, which encourages creativity and autonomy.

The Course also enables learners to gain the knowledge and understanding of music concepts and musical literacy.

Across the Course, skills and experiences, which complement and supplement each other, are developed. Creating music encourages learners to think imaginatively and to explore and develop their own ideas, making use of musical ideas and concepts developed in the Course. Understanding music through listening enables learners to build their knowledge and understanding of music, bringing depth to their learning and raising their social and cultural awareness. Performing music allows learners to express themselves musically and to reflect on their learning.

The Course provides opportunities for learners to further acquire and develop the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities, including: creativity, flexibility and adaptability; enthusiasm for learning and the motivation to learn; perseverance, independence and resilience; responsibility and reliability; and confidence and enterprise.

## **Purpose and aims of the Course**

The Higher Music Course enables learners to develop skills in creating, understanding and performing music in a wide variety of contexts. It enables candidates to develop and consolidate a general interest in music, but also permits them to acquire more specialist skills in an area which may be of particular interest to them. The Course also provides opportunities for learners to develop a range and depth of skills in the use of music technology. Overall, it gives learners the skills they need to create and perform music and to confidently discriminate between a range of different styles and genres of music.

The Course enables learners to develop their skills and capabilities as musicians. The added value in the Course comes from applying the skills learned through

the Units in the context of either a performance of a programme of music or the creative production of music using music technology. The Course offers further added value through application of learning from across the Course.

The skills that learners gain throughout the Course will be valuable for learning, life and work. Performing music, for example, demands skills of autonomy, interpretation and creativity, as well as providing the opportunity to build confidence and self-esteem. The practice required to develop these skills can promote perseverance, among other things, as well as helping learners to learn how to learn.

The aims of the Course are to enable learners to:

- ◆ perform a variety of music on their chosen instrument(s) with accuracy
- ◆ have the opportunity to acquire a range of skills in the use of music technology
- ◆ develop their musical literacy through an understanding of a wide range of music concepts and ideas
- ◆ develop skills in musical analysis, and to discriminate between a wide range of styles and genres of music
- ◆ develop skills in creating music, which includes composing, arranging and improvising, by applying a wide range of compositional techniques
- ◆ provide opportunities through music for learners to reflect on and evaluate their own work and that of others

Developing skills in creating, understanding and performing music allows for Course activities in which learners can work independently and in collaboration with others. In addition, activities can help learners to plan and organise, to make decisions, and to take responsibility for their own learning. Further, the practical and experiential nature of the Course gives learners opportunities to show imagination and creativity by refining and developing their musical ideas.

The Course also provides opportunities for vertical and lateral progression to National Courses, and to other SQA qualifications in music and other related fields.

## **Information about typical learners who might do the Course**

This Course is suitable for learners with a broad interest in music and for learners with a more specific interest in particular aspects of music. The Course allows learners to consolidate and extend musical skills and knowledge and understanding developed through Music (National 5) and other National 5 Courses. The Course enables learners to develop a range of skills in creating, understanding and performing music. It provides a pathway for those who want to progress to higher levels of study.

The Course is practical and experiential in nature, and there is considerable scope for personalisation and choice through the activities of creating, understanding and performing music, and through the use of music technology. This makes the Course accessible, as it can be contextualised to suit a diverse range of learners' needs, interests and aspirations.

On completing the Course, learners will be able to: explore and experiment to create a variety of original music using a range of compositional techniques; listen to music with increased critical awareness, understanding and discrimination; and perform a varied programme of music with accuracy.

Learners will also have the opportunity to apply a range of music technology, and will critically reflect on and evaluate their own work and that of others to identify strategies to improve musical creativity and performance.

The Course has an integrated approach to learning through practical activity. Through creating, performing and using music technology, learners will develop and apply their understanding of music and will experience music in a variety of styles.

Reflective skills will be developed across the Course as learners evaluate their own work and that of others. In this Course, learners will be required to make evaluative judgements using music criteria selected for them from a range with which they will be familiar.

# Course summary

**Course title: Higher Music**

**SCQF level 6 (24 SCQF credit points)**

## Course outline

There are two routes to achieving the Higher Course, which will be distinguished by the choice of optional Unit.

### Mandatory Units

Music: Composing Skills (Higher) (6 SCQF credit points)  
Understanding Music (Higher) (6 SCQF credit points)

### Optional Units

Music: Performing Skills (Higher) (6 SCQF credit points)  
Music: Technology Skills with Performing Skills (Higher) (6 SCQF credit points)

**Course assessment** (6 SCQF credit points)

This Course includes six SCQF credit points for 40 additional programmed hours to allow preparation for Course assessment. The Course assessment covers the added value of the Course. Further information on the Course assessment is provided in the Assessment section.

## Course structure and conditions of award

The Course has an integrated approach to learning and includes a mix of practical learning, and knowledge and understanding. Musical understanding, awareness and knowledge of a range of musical conventions and styles are developed in the *Understanding Music* Unit. Learners will apply aspects of these conventions, styles and techniques in the *Music: Composing Skills* Unit, and will use this understanding when developing their performing techniques in the *Music: Performing Skills* Unit.

The optional Unit *Music: Technology Skills with Performing Skills* provides learners with increased flexibility and choice for learning through and about music. These skills are developed through practical experience and by the use of music technologies to enhance learners' performance and/or the performance of others.

To achieve the Course award, learners must successfully complete the two mandatory Units *Music: Composing Skills* and *Understanding Music* and **either** the *Music: Performing Skills* Unit **or** the *Music: Technology Skills with Performing Skills* Unit.

Each of the component Units of the Course is designed to provide progression to the corresponding Units at Advanced Higher.

Units are statements of standards for assessment and not programmes of learning and teaching. They can be delivered in a variety of ways.

### Mandatory Units

#### **Music: Composing Skills (Higher)**

In this Unit, learners will develop a range of skills in creating music, which includes composing, arranging or improvising, in order to create their own original music. This Unit allows learners to explore, experiment with, and apply an increased range of compositional techniques. Learners will also develop understanding of a range of musical styles and of the social and cultural influences on music.

#### **Understanding Music (Higher)**

In this Unit, through listening, learners will develop knowledge and understanding of music, a range of music concepts and musical literacy. This knowledge and understanding will be enhanced from integrated learning across the Course. Learners will explore music of a wider range of styles and genres, and consider the social and cultural influences on music.

## **Optional Units**

### **Music: Performing Skills (Higher)**

In this Unit, learners will develop performing skills appropriate to their chosen instrument(s)/voice. Through regular practice and reflection, learners will develop a broad range of technical and musical skills while exploring a variety of music.

**or:**

### **Music: Technology Skills with Performing Skills (Higher)**

In this Unit, learners will explore and develop a range of skills and techniques relating to the use and application of music technology. They will develop a range of performing skills appropriate to their chosen instrument/voice, and through reflection of music produced and performed will develop a wide range of technical and musical skills.

To gain the award of the Course, the learner must pass all the Units as well as the Course assessment. The required Units are shown in the Course outline section. Course assessment will provide the basis for grading attainment in the Course award.

## Assessment

Information about assessment standards for the Course will be included in the *Course Assessment Specification*, which will provide full details including advice on how a learner's overall attainment for the Course will be determined.

### Unit assessment

All Units are internally assessed against the requirements shown in Unit specifications.

They will be assessed pass/fail within centres.

SQA will provide rigorous external quality assurance, including external verification, to ensure assessment judgements are consistent and meet national standards.

Exemplification of possible assessment approaches for these Units will be provided in the *National Assessment Resource*.

### Course assessment

Courses from National 4 to Advanced Higher include assessment of [added value](#)<sup>1</sup>. At National 5, Higher, and Advanced Higher the added value will be assessed in the Course assessment. The added value for the Course will address the key purposes and aims of the Course as defined in the Course Rationale. It will do this by addressing one or more of breadth, challenge or application.

In the Higher Music Course, added value will focus on:

- ◆ challenge
- ◆ application

Learners will draw on, extend and apply the skills they have learned during the Course. This will be assessed through a [practical activity](#)<sup>2</sup> and a [question paper](#)<sup>3</sup>. The practical activity will be in the context of either a performance of a programme of music or the creative production of music using music technology. Both of these activities will be underpinned by knowledge and understanding of music and will be sufficiently open and flexible to allow for personalisation and choice.

---

<sup>1</sup> Definitions can be found here: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45528.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45528.html)

<sup>2</sup> See link above for definitions.

<sup>3</sup> See link above for definitions.

*successful learner, confident individual, responsible citizen, effective contributor*

The question paper will require demonstration of breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding of music, music concepts and musical literacy drawn from the Units in the Course.

Draft