

# National Qualifications Review

## Music

### Investigation Report Executive summary

This report is the outcome of an investigation into how best to implement the agreed actions which were detailed in the Music Subject Review Report, published in May 2002. The main concerns identified in the Subject Review Report were:

- ◆ The Course structure includes an 80-hour Unit with three discrete Outcomes and assessments.
- ◆ The level of component Units: there are different levels of demand within Courses.
- ◆ The number of optional Units exceeds the maximum of four, and there is a relatively low uptake in some optional Units.
- ◆ The assessment rationale does not clarify the relationship between internal and external assessment.
- ◆ The volume and variety of internal assessments need to be addressed.
- ◆ The external assessment arrangements are too complex and involve a complex variety of assessment instruments and test papers.
- ◆ The use of visiting examination is highly resource-intensive, and alternative models should be investigated.
- ◆ Administration procedures are complex for centres and for SQA.

Consultation with stakeholders took place between January and early April 2003. This included centres (practitioners and co-ordinators), Principal Assessors, the Assessment Panel, local authority groups and advisers, internal SQA stakeholders, further and higher education establishments, HMIE, and a representative Subject Advisory Group.

The consultation took the form of a questionnaire to all presenting centres, as well as seminars, meetings and interviews with stakeholders.

Responses were mixed, and while there was consensus on some aspects of Course structure, there was no clear consensus on the way forward to address the issues raised in the Subject Review Report.

Overall, the feedback indicated support for retaining all three elements of the subject as mandatory: Performing, Listening and Inventing. Initial analysis of the questionnaire responses suggested that a majority accepted models which did not have Inventing as a mandatory element. However, all subsequent discussions in the consultation process indicated that all three elements should be mandatory in some way. In response to this, a number of models which had all three elements as mandatory were given serious consideration during the course of the consultation period, but no consensus was reached in the time available.

A clear view was expressed that more musical literacy content was needed in the Listening element, and there was agreement that the volume of assessment needed to be reduced.

There was much discussion about how to address the issue of the different levels of component Units in each Course, but no clear consensus on how this could best be addressed. Strong views were expressed in favour of retaining visiting examining for the performance element of the Course.

The conclusions drawn were:

- ◆ Performing, Inventing and Listening should be retained as mandatory elements of Music Courses. More time is required to discuss the implications of the model which emerged during consultation before final recommendations on Course structure are made.
- ◆ The component Units should all be at the level of the Course. However, given that there were mixed views how this should be done, and issues were raised which could have an impact on uptake and success rates, more time is needed to investigate this issue further before recommendations are made.
- ◆ The views of the Music profession should be taken into account in the general investigation of the quality assurance of performance-based subjects.

The main recommendations are:

- ◆ Additional time should be given to consult on the emerging Course model.
- ◆ A report with final recommendations should be submitted to relevant groups in SQA and the Scottish Executive, in an agreed timescale, with a view to implementation in session 2005–06. Arrangements should be published as early as possible to allow adequate transition time for all parties.

**The full version of the investigation report is available on the appropriate NQ subject page of the Scottish Qualifications Authority website - [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)**

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