Course Report 2015

Subject	Music Technology
Level	Higher (new)

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any Post Results Services.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers, lecturers and assessors in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published assessment and marking instructions for the examination.

Section 1: Comments on the Assessment

Component 1: Assignment

The assignment was completed successfully, with many centres submitting high quality material which showcased candidates' creativity. Candidates submitted a wide range of material, from radio broadcast, through audio books to Foley and sound design for film, animation or gaming. In most cases, candidates successfully followed the sample briefs or briefs adapted by their centre.

Component 2: Question paper

The question paper performed well overall during year 1 of the Higher Music Technology Course. Candidates were presented with a wide range of music excerpts which provided suitable challenge and demand for this level.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Component 1: Assignment

Candidates performed particularly well in this component, with many achieving excellent marks. The average mark for the assignment was 50/70.

Component 2: Question paper

Many candidates performed well in this component, and it was clear that centres had prepared them well.

Section 3: Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: Assignment

In most cases the Music Technology assignment was completed successfully. Evidence suggests that centres are comfortable in implementing a variety of assessment briefs, and in adapting sample briefs to suit their own candidates.

The majority of candidates demonstrated a secure knowledge of Stage 2: Implementing the production, comprising:

- 2 (a) audio capture, including mic placement and techniques
- 2 (b) manipulation and sequencing skills
- 2 (c) creative and appropriate use of sound and/or music

There is strong evidence that centres are preparing candidates well for Stage 2. Centres are using appropriate resources and are providing candidates with good experiences at this

level, in working both with hardware and software. Candidates are generally adept at the practical implementation of acquired skills, knowledge and understanding.

Component 2: Question paper

Question 1: Candidates identify a musical genre and associated musical concept. The majority of candidates accessed the full range of marks.

Question 6: Candidates identify Music Technology effects and processes. Candidates were able to access the full range of marks and were well prepared by centres for this question.

Question 7: Candidates identify five music/production features from a list of ten. Candidates were well prepared for this question and were able to access the full range of marks.

Section 4: Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: Assignment

Some candidates had difficulty with Stage 1: Planning the production. Some candidates did not submit sufficiently detailed planning following the criteria in the Course Assessment Task document and Course Assessment Specification.

Some candidates had difficulty with Stage 3: Evaluating the production. Some candidates did not submit sufficiently evaluation reports following the criteria in the Course Assessment Task document and Course Assessment Specification.

Component 2: Question paper

Question 2 (a): Candidates identify a genre and give two reasons for their choice. Some candidates had difficulty accessing the full range of marks.

Question 3 (a) (i) and (ii): Candidates identify a fault and describe a solution. This question proved inaccessible for many candidates.

Question 3 (b) (i) and (ii): Candidates identify a fault and describe a solution. Some candidates had difficulty in answering this question.

Question 4 (a): Candidates identify applied EQ and justify their answer. Some candidates had difficulty in answering this question.

Question 5 (c): Candidates identify missing articulation marks. Some candidates found this question challenging.

Section 5: Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Component 1: Assignment

Candidates should be encouraged to adhere to the assignment briefs given to them by centres. In particular, candidates should be encouraged to provide adequate evidence for Stage 1 and Stage 3 and in maintaining a fully informative log.

In Stage 2 it is important for candidates to ensure they are working in **two** distinct contexts, and are including music from more than one genre in their submissions.

Component 2: Question paper

In preparing candidates for the question paper, centres should ensure that candidates are well prepared for the range of types of questions. In particular, candidates should be prepared for questions on Music Technology faults and their possible solutions.

Candidates should be encouraged to study microphone technique and its application in both studio and live contexts. It would be useful for candidates to study common microphone techniques for woodwind, brass, strings and percussion instruments as well as common rock and pop instruments.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2014	0

Number of resulted entries in 2015	280

Statistical information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark - 100				
A	47.5%	47.5%	133	68
B	23.9%	71.4%	67	58
C	16.1%	87.5%	45	48
D	5.4%	92.9%	15	43
No award	7.1%	-	20	0

For this Course, the intention was to set an assessment with grade boundaries at the notional values of 50% for a Grade C and 70% for a Grade A.

Question 3a in the Question Paper was intended to be accessible to all candidates; however it proved slightly more difficult than intended. The grade boundaries were decreased by 2 for Grade A and by 2 for Grade C to reflect this.

General commentary on grade boundaries

- While SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions which will allow a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary) and a well prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional A boundary), it is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level.

- Each year, SQA therefore holds a grade boundary meeting for each subject at each level where it brings together all the information available (statistical and judgemental). The Principal Assessor and SQA Qualifications Manager meet with the relevant SQA Business Manager and Statistician to discuss the evidence and make decisions. The meetings are chaired by members of the management team at SQA.

- The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the exam is more challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.

- The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the exam is less challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.

- Where standards are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.

- An exam paper at a particular level in a subject in one year tends to have a marginally different set of grade boundaries from exam papers in that subject at that level in other years. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions, are different. This is also the case for exams set in centres. If SQA has already altered a boundary in a particular year in, say, Higher Chemistry, this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter boundaries in their prelim exam in Higher Chemistry. The two are not that closely related, as they do not contain identical questions.

- SQA's main aim is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and all levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.