

NQ Verification 2015–16 Key Messages Round 1

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Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Music
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	March 2016

National Courses/Units verified:

H23V 73 National 3: Music: Composing Skills

H23X 73 National 3: Understanding Music

H240 73 National 3: Music: Performing Skills

H23V 74 National 4: Music: Composing Skills

H23X 74 National 4: Understanding Music

H240 74 National 4: Music: Performing Skills

H23V 75 National 5: Music: Composing Skills

H23X 75 National 5: Understanding Music

H240 75 National 5: Music: Performing Skills

H23V 76 Higher: Music: Composing Skills

H23X 76 Higher: Understanding Music

H240 76 Higher: Music: Performing Skills

H240 77 Advanced Higher: Performing Skills

H7XA 77 Advanced Higher: Composing Skills

H7X9 77 Advanced Higher: Understanding and Analysing Music

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Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

Centres that were selected for verification had clearly spent a great deal of time carefully preparing their assessment approaches and submissions for verification.

A range of assessment approaches are being used by centres. These include the use of assessment tasks published in SQA Unit assessment support packs (UASPs) and centre-adapted assessment tasks.

In the vast majority of cases, centres' approach to assessment was considered and informed and this enabled candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in Music.

Assessment judgements

Assessment judgements were generally in line with the national standard with some candidates exceeding the minimum requirements in a number of areas.

Candidate assessment records should be included and indicate clearly the assessment judgement (pass or fail) made by the centre for each Assessment Standard. Assessor comments should also reference how the candidate has or has not achieved the Assessment Standards relating to the candidate evidence provided.

Understanding Music and Understanding and Analysing Music

Some centres are over-assessing their candidates for Assessment Standard 1.1. Submission of naturally occurring evidence is entirely appropriate and is encouraged. In some cases a series of tests in Course assessment format has led to excessive assessment. Please refer to the [Music Understanding Standards page on the secure site](#) for examples of, and approaches to, assessment.

To achieve Assessment Standard 1.2 at National 5 and Higher level, centres are reminded that candidates must show and explain clearly the influence of analysing the impact of social and cultural influences on the development of specific music styles and how this has impacted on the sound and structure of the music. Some candidates gave a detailed account of the social and cultural context of the period/factual biography of a composer but made no reference to the distinctive sounds of the music being written at that time.

Music: Composing Skills

For Assessment Standard 1.1 (Higher and Advanced Higher) — some centres are only partially meeting this as candidates do not fully explain the specific influences of the identified concepts on the composer's music. To fully meet the Assessment Standard, candidates in addition to analysing how a range of compositional methods and music concepts are used by other composers, must then go on to explain the influences these concepts had on the music as a whole.

For Assessment Standard 1.2 — centres are reminded to show adequate evidence of experimenting and using complex music concepts and compositional methods in creative ways to develop refine and create original music. Candidates should be able to show sufficient development of their ideas at this stage and centres should evidence this in their submissions.

For Assessment Standard 1.4 at Higher level — candidate reflections should include a brief description of musical choices and decisions, an objective review of the impact of these choices and identification of their chosen approaches to creating music which were successful and those which were less effective musically. Candidates should also identify one area for improvement in the music.

At all levels, the submission of an audio recording along with score/performance plan greatly informs the verification process for the Music: Composing Skills Unit.

Music: Performing Skills

In most cases centres are approaching Assessment Standard 1.1 appropriately, however some candidates would benefit from not playing complete pieces for Unit assessment purposes.

For Assessment Standard 1.2 — there should be a clear step up in candidate output from National 5 to Higher and from Higher to Advanced Higher. This was not always evident. Please refer to the judging evidence tables in the UASPs for further details about the responses expected at each level. Examples of candidates' responses can be found on the [Music Understanding Standards page on the secure site](#).

For the Music: Performing Skills Unit, centres should ensure candidates are performing music that is of the appropriate level.

When preparing evidence for verification, centres should make it clear which musical instruments are being assessed and which assessment judgements relate to each example of music performed. On occasion it was difficult to match up assessor comments and judgements to the instruments and the examples of music performed by the candidate.

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Section 3: General comments

For external verification purposes it is possible to submit interim evidence for a Unit which candidates have not fully completed. For more information please refer to our [Guidance on Interim Evidence](#).

An example of appropriate interim evidence for the Music: Performing Skills Unit would be to include candidate evidence of one example of music performed on each instrument and one instrument and voice. The centre would provide an assessment judgement (pass/fail) on each example of music for Assessment Standard 1.1 and indicate if each example met the requirements or if re-assessment was required.

For verification purposes, when using the Unit-by-Unit approach to assessment, centres should only submit one Unit per level selected for verification.

Understanding Standards materials for all Units at various levels are available from the [Music Understanding Standards page on the secure site](#). These materials include candidate evidence and commentaries which explain why the evidence has or has not met the Assessment Standards being exemplified.

Centres are reminded that SQA provides a prior verification service for centres that devise their own assessments or significantly change SQA's assessments to suit their particular needs. The service gives centres additional confidence that their proposed assessment is fit for purposes and is valid. For more information please refer to our [Prior Verification Guide](#).