

12 February 2007

To: SQA Co-ordinators
Secondary schools and FE colleges

cc: HMIE
LEA Contacts
SQA Customer Account Managers

Action by Recipient	
	Response required
✓	Note and pass on
	None — update/information only

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Dear Colleague

**2007 National Qualifications Music
External assessment support for centres**

Please pass this letter to the member of staff responsible for Music.

This letter has been compiled to support centres in preparation for the 2007 external examinations in Music in the first year of new Arrangements for Courses and Units. It is hoped that centres find the following update and guidance informative and useful. Information is provided on:

- 1. Music external assessment timetable 2007**
- 2. Music with Performing (X231) preparing for the external Performing examination**
- 3. Music with Performing (X231) sampling guide**
- 4. Music with Technology (X233)**
- 5. Music with Technology (X233) summary of requirements**

Important information:

Music Performing with Technology (X233) flyleaf

These documents were distributed to all centres presenting Music with Technology candidates this week. If applicable to you, please see the requirements on the reverse side of the Higher flyleaf. There is an error in Section C, line 2, which states that the stereo master recording should last four minutes in total. In line with the Course specification and the Course Assessment specification for Sound Engineering and Production this should read **six** minutes in total. This is consistent with what centres have been working to. Please accept our apologies for this.

Approval of Repertoire

For the 2007 examination and after, SQA requires all pieces performed **for NQ external assessment** to be pre-approved. Please note that this requirement **does not** apply to Standard Grade Music.

If candidates intend to perform, for assessment purposes, pieces which are:

- ◆ not included in SQA's *National Qualifications in Music: Performing*; or
- ◆ not included in the syllabus of ABRSM, Trinity Guildhall, RockschooL, or London College of Music; or
- ◆ not previously approved for your centre by SQA

then centres must provide details of the piece(s) and the level(s) for which they seek approval on the National Qualifications in Music: Performing Level Approval form. A copy of the music for each piece should be submitted with the form.

The Approval of Repertoire for all candidates (Performing and Performing with Technology) continues in 2007 in order that centres may continue to extend their libraries of pieces approved for use in their centres.

Please note the following which will continue in 2007 and subsequent years:

- ◆ Music for approval should continue to be sent in on a **centre-by-centre** basis to safeguard the interests of candidates and centre staff. Each presenting centre is responsible for the approval of pieces for their candidates.

If centres are considering sharing repertoire with other schools then they may send in repertoire from their own centre and include with this a list of the other schools that this repertoire is to cover. SQA will then send back to the first named centre the music and the stamped approval form. However, if adopting this strategy the responsibility and the onus is entirely on the original centre to communicate this to the other named centres and distribute copies of forms and details of music.

- ◆ **In 2007 the approval period will be 1 May – 31 October.** It is not possible for SQA to approve material out-with this period.

Visiting Examining

Centres will not be required to show Visiting Examiners copies of their Approval Forms on arrival. However, it is advisable for centres to have their folders with stamped approval forms ready at hand should there be a query about the level of a piece.

Please circulate a copy of this letter to your Music teaching and instrumental staff. If you would like to discuss any of the contents of this letter please contact Muriel Walker (contact details above) or myself on 0131-561 6811, or e-mail mary.mcdonald@sqa.org.uk.

Yours faithfully



Mary McDonald
Qualifications Manager

1. Music external assessment timetable 2007

Performing Examinations	Dates
Standard Grade Intermediate 1 (X231) Intermediate 2 (X231) Higher (X231)	12 February – 23 March 2007
Advanced Higher (X231)	7 May – 23 May 2007

Performing with Technology folios	Dates
All levels, including Advanced Higher (X233)	Submit to SQA for 26 April 2007

Question papers	Dates
Standard Grade Listening (all levels)	2 May 2007
Intermediate 1 and 2 (all candidates)	15 May 2007
Higher and Advanced Higher (all candidates)	16 May 2007

Performing examination timings:

- ◆ **Standard Grade — no change from 2006** — The total playing time for each pupil must be four-six minutes.
- ◆ **NQ Levels – New Timings for 2007**

Level	Instrument 1	Instrument 2
Intermediate 1	Centre prepares four mins VE samples three mins	Centre prepares four mins VE samples three mins
Intermediate 2	Centre prepares four mins VE samples three mins	Centre prepares four mins VE samples three mins
Higher	Centre prepares 10 mins VE samples six mins	Centre prepares five mins VE samples three mins
Advanced Higher	Centre prepares 15 mins VE samples 10 mins	Centre prepares 10 mins VE samples six mins

(VE = Visiting Examiner)

2. Music with Performing (X231)
Preparing for the external Performing examination
A guide for centres

SQA has allocated a Visiting Examiner to each presenting centre. Your Visiting Examiner (VE) will make contact with you directly.

SQA Visiting Examiners have been asked to:

- ◆ contact their allocated centres without delay to organise dates and make arrangements. They will ask to speak to the member of staff in charge of/responsible for Music. When a date and time have been arranged for the visit, they will:
 - ask the centre to confirm the number of candidates at each level (this can change from week to week in centres)
 - give a reminder about the new time allocations per candidate, in terms of how many candidates may be examined per day
 - ask the centre to identify if there are any Accompanying candidates. If so, they will determine at which levels and on which instruments (piano, guitar or clarsach) the candidates are playing
 - ascertain if any candidates are to be examined out-with the centre and, if so, ask you to take account of this when planning schedules for exam days
- ◆ write to the SQA Co-ordinator of each centre to confirm dates of the visit
- ◆ give the following important reminders about what should be available on the examination days:
 - *candidate mark sheets completed by the centre, with the **duration of each prepared piece clearly indicated** in the appropriate box on the mark sheet (for NQ only)*
 - copies of all music for each candidate's prepared programme
 - *each session's (morning or afternoon) candidate mark sheets and music must be available to the Visiting Examiner **at the start of each examining session (morning or afternoon)***

Please note that points 1 and 3 above (in italics) are new requirements for the 2007 examination and after. It is crucial that for all NQ candidates, the duration of each piece is clearly indicated on the candidate mark sheet. (Note: This does not apply to Standard Grade)

3. Music with Performing (X231) Sampling — A guide for centres and Visiting Examiners

The following information appears in the Course Assessment specification for each level. This shows the guidelines on sampling which will be followed by the Visiting Examiner (VE). Additional advice and guidance for VEs is printed in italics. Centres may find this advice helpful when preparing candidates for the Visiting Examination.

- 1 Decide the sample before the start of each candidate's examination.
Take a few minutes before each candidate enters the examination room to decide on the sampled programme. The candidate should not be in the room at this time.
- 2 Do not give the centre any prior information regarding the content of the sample.
There will be no prior discussion with either staff or candidates about the content of the sample.
- 3 Be guided to the sample by considering the stated duration of each piece in the programme.
VEs will use professional judgement here in terms of being consistent from one candidate to the next.
- 4 Hear at least one piece in its entirety.
*The first piece **requested by the VE** should be heard in its entirety. This will be made clear to the candidate at the outset and the VE will say that he/she will sample from the remaining music as the examination proceeds. After each piece, there will be a clear request for which piece is going to be heard next.*
- 5 Always start from the beginning of a piece.
VEs will not start any piece in the middle.
- 6 Where possible, hear some of every piece.
VEs will aim for this, but bear in mind when preparing your candidates for the exam that this may not be possible due to time constraints.
- 7 Advise the candidate before the start of a performance if you do not wish repeats to be observed.
Candidates will not be asked to observe repeats of long sections of music. An exception to this would be instruments/voice which have a pre recorded backing track, which should be allowed to run.
- 8 Advise candidates before the start of the performance that they may be asked to stop before the end of a piece.
VEs will make this clear by stopping the piece by saying 'Thank you' and, if appropriate, indicating with their hand. There will be no physical contact with any candidate.
- 9 Exercise discretion, consideration and fairness in stopping a candidate before the end of a piece.
The aim is to ensure that the examination is as musical an experience as possible for each candidate.
- 10 Where a candidate refuses to play a piece, award no marks for that piece. Reduce the overall sample time by the intended allocation of time to that particular piece.
The VE will not substitute another piece for the one which the candidate refuses to play.

NB: There is no penalty for exceeding the number of minutes' preparation time for each level, eg in the case of drumkit or vocal music, candidates may well have exceeded the prepared time. In these cases, centres have been advised that they make judicious cuts or fades within prepared material. Whichever approach has been adopted, the VE will sample in the usual way.

Additional points for guidance:

- ◆ It is the centre's responsibility for accompaniment at all grades/levels.
- ◆ For Accompanying candidates, the Visiting Examiner will play the solo part for the accompaniments played at sight. Teachers concerned should not participate in this part of the examination.
- ◆ The presence of teachers during the examination is permitted at the Visiting Examiner's discretion.
- ◆ A copy of all music being performed must be available to the Visiting Examiner whether or not the candidate has chosen to play this from memory.
- ◆ The course codes and levels shown on each candidate mark sheet is the information held by SQA at the time of issue. If a candidate has changed course and/or level, centres can amend this by hand on the sheet, but it is the centre's responsibility to inform SQA (Data Services) of the change.
- ◆ If a centre wishes to add further names at the examination stage they should prepare a candidate mark sheet (blank copies are distributed for this purpose), then enter all relevant details and write '**Addnl**' at the top right hand corner of the form. The Visiting Examiner will assess the candidate, but it is the centre's responsibility to confirm this with SQA if they have not already done so.

4. Music with Technology (X233)

At all levels, the requirement is for candidates to submit a Performing with Technology folio to SQA for marking. The submission date to SQA for all levels (including Advanced Higher) is 26 April 2007.

The Music Technology folio consists of:

- ◆ **A recording of a complete performance programme on one instrument/voice**
 - Pieces should be at the appropriate level and they should be recorded in the course of a single event under conditions which replicate those of Visiting Examining.
 - Clear recordings to any appropriate audio or video medium are acceptable.
 - The candidate mark sheet should be completed by the centre with titles of pieces and durations of each piece indicated. Please note that the latter is a new and important requirement.
 - A copy of all the music being performed should be carefully attached to the candidate mark sheet.

Note: Centres submit total **prepared** programmes for each candidate. Please do not submit a sampled programme and please do not assign marks or grades to any piece(s).

and either

- ◆ **A finished product in MIDI Sequencing, completed under supervision by the centre**
 - This must be submitted as a MIDI or MIDI/audio file **and** stereo recording and should be supported by a session log.
 - Titles of piece(s) and details of the software and computer platform used in producing the file must be provided on the accompanying candidate mark sheet.

or

- ◆ **A stereo master recording of contrasting pieces**
 - Each of these pieces should contain the minimum number of specified recorded parts and last the specified duration for each level*. This should be completed under the supervision of the centre.
 - Titles of pieces should be provided on the accompanying candidate mark sheet.

* See the summary table on the following page for the minimum requirements for each level.

5. Music with Technology (X233)
Summary of minimum requirements

	Folio contains	Centre prepares	SQA samples
Intermediate 1	Performing Instrument/Voice MIDI Sequenced Composition (minimum four tracks) Sound Engineering & Production (minimum four parts)	four mins two mins three mins (two pieces)	three mins
Intermediate 2	Performing Instrument/Voice MIDI Sequenced Composition (minimum four tracks) Sound Engineering & Production (minimum four parts and at least one of the tracks in each piece must use a mic)	four mins two mins four mins (two pieces)	three mins
Higher	Performing Instrument/Voice MIDI Sequenced Composition (minimum four tracks) Sound Engineering & Production (minimum five parts and at least one of the tracks in each piece must use a mic)	five mins three mins six mins (two pieces)	three mins
Advanced Higher	Performing Instrument/Voice MIDI Sequenced Composition (minimum six tracks including one or more digital audio parts) Sound Engineering & Production (minimum eight parts and at least one of the tracks in each piece must use a mic; knowledge of digital audio should be evident) <i>or</i> (stereo techniques master recording of four or more musicians using four or more microphones)	10 mins three mins six mins (two pieces) six mins (two pieces)	six mins

Additional points for guidance

In submitting Music with Technology folios, separate submissions should be made for each candidate and should be clearly labelled with the candidate's name.

If centres choose to submit a CD with the work of several candidates, with tracks carefully labelled and named, this is considered acceptable. Submitting an audio cassette of recordings may not show candidate work to full advantage and runs the risk of potential confusion when trying to ascertain the location of each candidate's work.

If adopting the above approach with CDs, centres are advised to submit a different CD for each level being presented (and each area of Technology, ie MIDI Sequencing only or Sound Engineering and Production only).

Where the term 'tracks' is used in Sound Engineering and Production Courses and Units, centres should be aware that several microphones used for one instrument equals one track when considering the requirements at each level. Examples include a drum kit recorded with multiple microphones which would only count as one 'track' where the requirements at Higher level are for 'five or more tracks and at least one of the tracks in each piece must use a microphone'. Similarly a recording of a piano using two microphones would count as one 'track'.