



**Arrangements for:**  
**National Progression Award in  
Contemporary Gaelic Songwriting and  
Production**  
**at SCQF level 5**

**Group Award Code: GC7Y 45**

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## **Acknowledgement**

SQA acknowledges the valuable contribution that Scotland's colleges have made to the development of National Qualification Group Awards.



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# 1 Introduction

This is the Arrangements Document for the ***new Group Award in Contemporary Gaelic Songwriting and Production at SCQF level 5, which was validated in June 2011***. This document includes: background information on the development of the Group Award, its aims, guidance on access, details of the Group Award structure, and guidance on delivery.

The focus of this new National Progression Award (NPA) is on Gaelic Songwriting and Production as a means to promote a broad understanding of the Gaelic world and the relevance of the use of Gaelic in contemporary contexts. This will ensure that Gaelic will be promoted in a context which engages younger learners as well as being accessible to adult returners. This award will also lead candidates to an understanding of the issues which have shaped modern Gaelic society, both culturally and linguistically. While candidates will be introduced to the roots of Gaelic music making, the focus will be on the transition to contemporary Gaelic music and the application of Gaelic to contemporary genres. The NPA will also allow candidates to explore the development of contemporary music and song across different Celtic cultures. It will allow candidates to become familiar with the methods, skills and technology required for music production. For those at the beginning of their Gaelic learning journey, the intention is that the award should be delivered concurrently with Intermediate 2 Gaelic/Gàidhlig. However it could also be of interest to fluent speakers who wish to develop their understanding of contemporary Gaelic culture in the context of music and this is also possible.

It is envisaged that candidates successfully completing this award will be able to progress to further study in Gaelic arts, language and culture with a view to employment in related fields.

# 2 Rationale for the development of the Group Award(s)

This NPA responds to the Scottish Government's Action Plan for Gaelic. It aims specifically to promote the appreciation and use of Gaelic language and culture amongst young people by harnessing their musical skills and talents in the writing, arranging and performing of self-composed Gaelic songs. The award will also give candidates the opportunity to familiarise themselves with contemporary sound recording technology.

Given the increase in job opportunities within the Gaelic arts, especially since the arrival of BBC Alba, the new Gaelic medium channel, this award will give candidates an awareness of one of Scotland's unique cultures along with the skills to enable them to prepare for employment in this growing media sector.

This award is very much in line with the Ministerial Action Plan for Gaelic launched by the Minister for Education and Culture in 2010, along with the Gaelic Language Plans of organisations such as Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles Islands Council) and Lews Castle College. This award aims to contribute to the following aspiration highlighted in the Ministerial Plan: *A significant area which requires to be developed in parallel with the achievement of fluency is expanded provision of general knowledge of Gaelic studies through awareness and understanding courses in primary*

*and secondary schools as a separate subject area, to enable more pupils to understand more about the place of Gaelic within Scotland's wider historical, linguistic and cultural environment.*<sup>1</sup>

There are an increasing number of arts/media related employment opportunities at various levels within the Media sector which also require good Gaelic skills. This award will provide a gateway for candidates who may be interested in pursuing a career in the arts or media. This award will also give candidates the opportunity to enhance their Gaelic communication skills and will increase the number of Group Awards which include Gaelic at school/FE level.

Further, the award will respond to the emerging opportunities identified in the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Gaelic Language Plan: *There are three distinct areas of activity with enormous potential for job creation, and for helping to revitalise Gaelic in the Western Isles. These areas are Culture and the Arts, Gaelic Media, and Heritage and Local History Societies.*<sup>2</sup>

This award also corresponds to the CNES commitment to; *promote an awareness of a relevant Gaelic identity amongst young people that encourages self-confidence, and fosters a sense of community pride.*<sup>3</sup>

### **3 Aims of the Group Award(s)**

This qualification has been developed for a range of possible candidates, from those of school age to adults who wish to enhance their Gaelic language skills through the creativity of music and song. The aims outlined in the following section reflect the breadth expected of candidates and the intention to provide an introductory level award which will facilitate access to further study.

#### **3.1 Principal aims of the Group Award(s)**

The purpose of the award is to provide candidates with the knowledge and skills to understand contemporary Gaelic media, performing arts and literature (poetry); understand development issues relating to the Gaelic language; and provide the opportunity to enhance Gaelic language skills.

The principal aims of the qualification are to:

- ◆ promote the appreciation and use of Gaelic language and culture amongst young people by harnessing their musical skills and talents in the writing, arranging and performing of self-composed Gaelic songs.
- ◆ give candidates the opportunity to familiarise themselves with contemporary sound recording technology.
- ◆ develop candidates' awareness of one of Scotland's unique cultures along with the skills to enable them to apply these in the emerging opportunities for employment in the growing Gaelic media sector.
- ◆ give candidates the opportunity to enhance Gaelic communication skills
- ◆ put the development of Gaelic media in context

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<sup>1</sup> Bòrd na Gàidhlig (2010) *Ginealach Ùr na Gàidhlig*

<sup>2</sup> Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (2007) *Gaelic Language Plan 2007 -2012*

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

- ◆ give candidates an introduction to production methods, software, job roles and progression opportunities
- ◆ develop candidates' awareness of the structure of the Gaelic arts/media industry
- ◆ develop candidates' awareness of Gaelic language development and related political/support organisations
- ◆ give candidates the opportunity to explore contemporary themes in Gaelic poetry and song

In addition to the above, the award should develop knowledge and/or skills on the following:

- ◆ historical and musical background to Gaelic music making
- ◆ listening and critical awareness of traditional and contemporary Celtic music
- ◆ awareness of different genres in contemporary music
- ◆ contemporary themes in Gaelic lyrics

### **3.2 General aims of the Group Award(s)**

- ◆ enhance the Gaelic portfolio available to centres
- ◆ encourage candidates' creativity
- ◆ encourage candidates to take responsibility for their own learning and development
- ◆ develop a range of appropriate practical skills, knowledge and understanding relevant for a range of Gaelic arts contexts
- ◆ provide a range of learning and assessment styles to motivate candidates to achieve their full potential
- ◆ allow candidates to build on their existing interests, knowledge and/or skills in order to progress to further study and/or employment in a relevant sector
- ◆ produce a flexible award that will have appeal to a wide range of learner profiles

### **3.3 Target groups**

The level of the award is set at SCQF 5 in order to be suitable for any candidate who is at the start of a Gaelic learning journey. It is suitable for a range of possible candidates, from those of school age who are looking to progress to a career within the arts or media sectors to adults who wish to enhance their Gaelic language skills through the creativity of music and song .

### **3.4 Employment opportunities**

There are an increasing number of arts/media related employment opportunities at various levels within the media sector which also require good Gaelic skills.

As an introductory level programme this award is not expected to produce employment ready candidates on its completion. However, the broad range of core and transferable skills which candidates have the opportunity to

develop, coupled with the hands-on practical experience offered as part of this award, will improve future job prospects. The skills set candidates will develop include interpersonal, group working and project based skills. These will be supported by the hands on experience of practical activities. It is envisaged that candidates successfully completing this award will be able to progress to further study in Gaelic arts, language and culture with a view to employment in related fields.

## 4 Access to Group Award

Whilst entry is at the discretion of the Centre, an interest in and a basic knowledge of Gaelic would be useful and this may be evidenced by attainment of Intermediate 1 Gaelic or equivalent skills. It would also be helpful if candidates had attained Intermediate 1 Music or had an equivalent skill level. It is recommended that candidates should study Intermediate 2 Gaelic/Gàidhlig concurrently.

## 5 Group Award structure

The NPA comprises 4 SQA national credits (24 SCQF credit points at level 5). All Units within this award are mandatory and candidates will be awarded the NPA in Contemporary Gaelic Songwriting and Production at SCQF level 5 on successful achievement of all of the four Units listed below.

The combination of Units within this NPA is designed to provide a broad overview of Gaelic arts, language and development issues, as well as specific skills in songwriting and sound recording technology. This will allow candidates to develop specific knowledge and skills that are required for preparation for employment in the Gaelic arts/media sector.

### 5.1 Framework

Unit title	Code	SCQF credit points	SCQF level	SQA credit value
Contemporary Gaelic Music and Song	FN42 11	6	5	1
Contemporary Gaelic Language and Culture: An Introduction	FN44 11	6	5	1
*Music Technology Skills	J255 75	6	5	1
Music: Songwriting	F5EB 12	6	6	1

\*Refer to history of changes for revision details

### 5.2 Mapping information

#### Core Skills

The design of this award and the Units within it have been carried out in a way which promotes the development of Core Skills and other transferable skills. Opportunities to develop aspects of the Core Skills in Communication and Problem Solving at SCQF Level 5 are present throughout the first three Units, the Core Skill of Information Technology will be developed in the Unit Music: Performing with Technology, while skills in Communication, Problem



Solving and at Working with Others at SCQF Level 6 can be developed in Music: Songwriting.

Opportunities to develop Core Skills either occur naturally through Unit content, or may be developed through the recommended approaches to learning and teaching outlined in the Unit specifications and through suggested assessment approaches.

See Appendix 1 for table mapping Core Skills development to the Units.

### National Occupational Standards

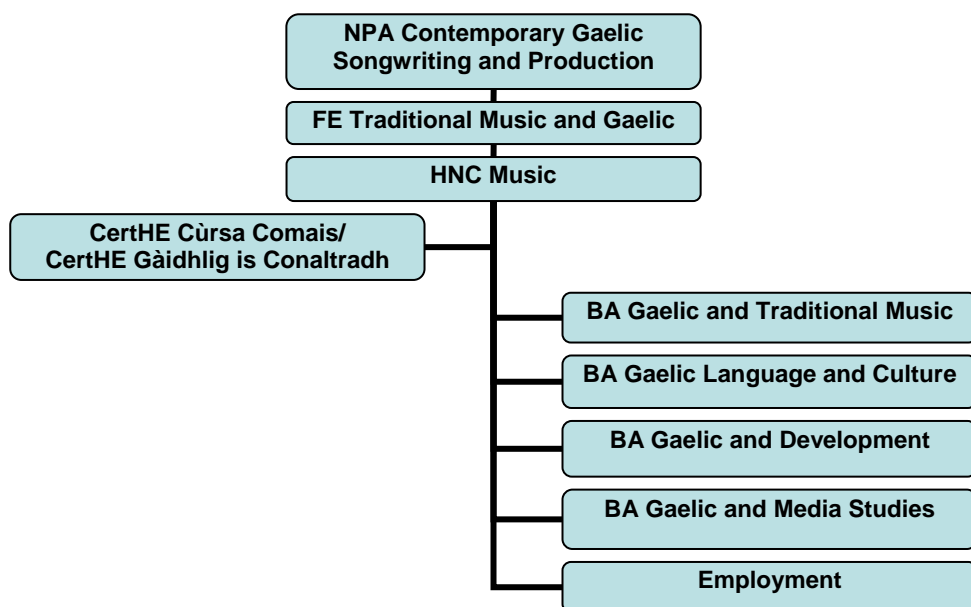
Content of the NPA responds to the following National Occupational Standards from Creative and Cultural Skills:

- ◆ Understand the cultural heritage sector, and the wider creative and cultural context in which you work
- ◆ Record sound for a live performance
- ◆ Operate sound for a basic live performance

See Appendix 2 for table mapping National Occupational Standards development to the Units.

## 5.3 Progression Pathways

This award will be a step in developing a pathway for candidates who wish to progress from NQ through Higher National awards to degree level studies.



## 6 Approaches to delivery and assessment

### 6.1 Content and context

The NPA in Contemporary Gaelic Songwriting and Production at SCQF Level 5 is intended for delivery to a range of learners, from school and college learners with some experience in Gàidhlig or Gaelic, who also have an interest in music to adults with an interest in the Gaelic arts. It is designed as a practical, creative award which should encourage learners to develop skills in songwriting, performance and presentation, and to develop knowledge of contemporary Gaelic culture and sound technology. In addition, the award aims to develop confidence, self-expression, communication and group working skills.

The award should facilitate further study in Gaelic language and culture, in music, or in the digital media. The recent expansion in Gaelic television should provide future employment opportunities for Gaelic speakers with appropriate skills in various Gaelic performing arts and in digital technology. The NPA will contribute towards achieving the aims of Curriculum for Excellence by affording students the opportunity to enhance their own creative talents and artistic skills, play an important role in contributing to the vitality of Gaelic culture and develop a range of skills for learning, life and work.

#### **Contemporary Gaelic Language and Culture: An Introduction**

The purpose of this Unit is to provide learners with the knowledge and skills to enable them to understand development issues relating to the Gaelic language; understand contemporary Gaelic media, performing arts and literature; and provide the opportunity to enhance the four language skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. As this Unit will inform all other Units studied, it should be delivered early in the award.

Assessment could be through the creation of individual folios consisting of short written reports on the main topics explored. This could be combined with group discussion and listening tests.

#### **Contemporary Gaelic Music and Song**

This Unit is designed to introduce students to the roots of Gaelic music making and singing, to the transition to contemporary Gaelic music making and singing, and to the application of Gaelic to contemporary music genres and parallels in other Celtic cultures. As it is closely linked to it, it may be delivered before, after or concurrently with Contemporary Gaelic Language and Culture: An Introduction.

Assessment could be through either a folio of evidence or a cumulative test, combined with either a live performance or an audio or video compilation.

The latter items may incorporate material produced during the following Units, to facilitate holistic assessment.

#### **Music: Performing with Technology**

This Unit is intended to enable learners to develop their skills in performing on a musical instrument or voice, and in the use of music technology. It enables learners to use MIDI sequencing to record, edit and mix pieces of music using a computer or multi-track recording equipment. Skills developed here will be of use in the practical elements of the final Unit, Music: Songwriting.

Assessment will consist of a performance programme lasting 4 minutes and evidence of attainment derived from assessor observation checklists and a test of knowledge and understanding.

### **Music: Songwriting**

This Unit is designed to introduce candidates to the basic building blocks that constitute a song and to the way in which these can be combined. Candidates will have the opportunity to learn the way lyrics and melody can be combined to create a successful song, and will also have the opportunity to develop their own songwriting skills. Learners will be encouraged to use the skills and knowledge acquired in the preceding Units to create an original Gaelic song in contemporary style. Assessment will involve the compilation of evidence of the development of the song, which may be in the form of recordings of the song at various stages, combined with a written or oral report.

## **6.2 Delivery and assessment**

The award is suitable for delivery in a range of settings. Where delivered in schools, it is envisaged that the award could be taught over 2 years, commencing in S3; thus it could be delivered concurrently with an Intermediate Gàidhlig or Gaelic course. Alternatively it could be offered in S5 or S6 over 1 year, where timetabling in the centre permits. Each Unit requires 40 hours of study, and the Units may be delivered in any order or even concurrently, although it may be considered appropriate to delay the SCQF Level 6 Unit Music: Songwriting until the latter stages in the award.

Although each Unit can be delivered in stand-alone form, there are links in knowledge, skills and experiences between the Units within the award, and it will be beneficial if those involved work collaboratively in relation to intended delivery and timings. A Course Leader should be identified in advance to ensure smooth coordination.

It is anticipated that much of the learning will be through group interaction, the study of written and recorded materials, and visits from writers, performers and producers currently working in contemporary Gaelic performing arts. There are opportunities for integrating both learning and assessment across the Units, and where possible a holistic approach should be taken to the delivery and assessment of this award. A variety of assessment techniques will be required, including compilation of folios of evidence, cumulative written or oral tests, and observational checklists combined with assessor feedback.

There may be scope within this award for e-learning and e-assessment of theoretical components. However, in the case of activities involving performance, e-assessment will not be appropriate; the use of other forms of evidence gathering such as audio and video recording are encouraged.

## 7 General information for centres

### Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website [www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements).

### Internal and external verification

All instruments of assessment used within this/these Group Award(s) should be internally verified, using the appropriate policy within the centre and the guidelines set by SQA.

External verification will be carried out by SQA to ensure that internal assessment is within the national guidelines for these qualifications.

Further information on internal and external verification can be found in *SQA's Guide to Assessment* ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)).

## 8 General information for candidates

This National Progression Award in Contemporary Gaelic Songwriting and Production has been designed to be a creative and engaging course which will allow you to develop your skills in both the Gaelic language and songwriting, while at the same time expanding your knowledge of Gaelic culture and music production technology. The skills and knowledge obtained should both develop your abilities as a performer, and enable you to progress to further study in any of these areas; this in turn could lead to employment opportunities in the Gaelic media and entertainment sectors.

To gain this National Progression Award, you must successfully achieve all four of the Units outlined below.

### 1 Contemporary Gaelic Language and Culture: An Introduction

This Unit is aimed both at people who are Gaelic learners, as well as being of interest to fluent Gaelic speakers. You will learn about the key factors contributing to Gaelic language and cultural development and the key movements that changed the linguistic and cultural landscape. You will consider ways in which the Gaelic language and cultural development landscape nowadays is radically different to that of the early days of development. You will look at the reasons for the decline of Gaelic in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and at other minority language communities such as Wales and Ireland.

You may work in small groups to discuss these factors, and to generate and explain your own ideas to each other. You may also identify projects you can develop together, and co-operate positively to bring these to fruition. You may have visits from individuals and organisations working in fields relevant to your course, and have opportunities to visit Gaelic exhibitions and performances.

## 2 Contemporary Gaelic Music and Song

In this Unit you will learn how Gaelic music and song developed under the influence of British and American popular music during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. You will also study the development of contemporary musical styles across related cultures, eg Ireland, Wales, Brittany (France), Cape Breton (Canada) and Galicia (Spain). You will listen to and analyse recordings of influential traditional and contemporary Gaelic music performers, discuss current and future musical directions, and perform music together in small groups. Later on you will choose and compile a programme either of live concert material, or of commercial recordings, for a final assessment.

You may have visits from Gaelic musicians and singers, and have opportunities to visit live musical events.

## 3 Music: Performing with Technology

In this Unit you will have the opportunity to develop and refine your technical and musical competence in performing. You will study a variety of musical styles and genres, and have opportunities, solo and in group, to perform to members of your class and to others. You will learn about the creative use of MIDI Sequencing or Sound Engineering and Production, working both individually and in small groups, and will compile a folio of your work for assessment.

## 4 Music: Songwriting

This is largely a practical Unit in which you will be introduced to some of the key components required to create a successful song. You will listen to and analyse songs that you are familiar with, either in a classroom or small group setting, and discuss their components. You will study songs from several genres as a means of understanding and recognising different songwriting styles, and learn how to recognise when a song is ready for presentation. When you are ready to write your own song, you will create a melody with Gaelic lyrics and a chord progression to fit it. You will then develop the song for presentation, and compile a report on the development stages.

## 9 Glossary of terms

**SCQF:** This stands for the Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework, which is a new way of speaking about qualifications and how they inter-relate. We use SCQF terminology throughout this guide to refer to credits and levels. For further information on the SCQF visit the SCQF website at [www.scqf.org.uk](http://www.scqf.org.uk)

**SCQF credit points:** One SCQF credit point equates to 10 hours of learning. NQ Units at SCQF levels 2–6 are worth 6 SCQF credit points, NQ Units at level 7 are worth 8 SCQF points.

**SCQF levels:** The SCQF covers 12 levels of learning. National Qualification Group Awards are available at SCQF levels 2–6 and will normally be made up of National Units which are available from SCQF levels 2–7.

**Dedicated Unit to cover Core Skills:** This is a non-subject Unit that is written to cover one or more particular Core Skills.

**Embedded Core Skills:** This is where the development of a Core Skill is incorporated into the Unit and where the Unit assessment also covers the requirements of Core Skill assessment at a particular level.

**Signposted Core Skills:** This refers to the opportunities to develop a particular Core Skill at a specified level that lie outwith automatic certification.

**Qualification Design Team:** The QDT works in conjunction with a Qualification Manager/Development Manager to steer the development of the National Certificate/National Progression Award from its inception/revision through to validation. The group is made up of key stakeholders representing the interests of centres, employers, universities and other relevant organisations.

**Consortium-devised National Certificates/National Progression Awards** are those developments or revisions undertaken by a group of centres in partnership with SQA.

## 10 Appendices

Appendix 1: Core Skills Mapping of the Group Award

Appendix 2: Mapping of National Occupational Standards to Units

## Appendix 1: Core Skills Mapping of the Group Award

### *Core Skills Mapping of the Group Award*

Group Award title: Contemporary Gaelic Songwriting and Production SCQF Level 5

<i>Unit code</i>	<i>Unit name</i>	Communication		Information and Communication Technology	Numeracy		Problem Solving			Working with Others
		<i>Oral</i>	<i>Written</i>	<i>ICT</i>	<i>Using Graphical Information</i>	<i>Using Number</i>	<i>Critical Thinking</i>	<i>Planning and Organising</i>	<i>Reviewing and Evaluating</i>	<i>Working with Others</i>
FN42 11	Contemporary Gaelic Music and Song	S	S				S	S	S	S
FN44 11	Contemporary Gaelic Language and Culture: An Introduction	S	S				S		S	
DV4F 11	Music: Performing with Technology			S				S		
F5EB 12	Music: Songwriting	S	S	S			S	S		S

Key: S = Signposted

C = Certificated

## Appendix 2: Mapping of National Occupational Standards to Units

Group Award title: Contemporary Gaelic Songwriting and Production SCQF Level 5

<b>Unit code</b>						<b>Unit title</b>	<b>NOS title(s)</b>
F	N	4	2		1 1	Contemporary Gaelic Music and Song	Understand the cultural heritage sector, and the wider creative and cultural context in which you work: <i>Creative and Cultural Skills (Dec 09)</i>
F	N	4	4		1 1	Contemporary Gaelic Language and Culture: An Introduction	Understand the cultural heritage sector, and the wider creative and cultural context in which you work: <i>Creative and Cultural Skills (Dec 09)</i>
D	V	4	F		1 1	Music: Performing with Technology	Record sound for a live performance Operate sound for a basic live performance <i>Creative and Cultural Skills (Dec 09)</i>
F	5	E	B		1 2	Music: Songwriting	There are currently no NOS in this area