

## Higher National Unit Specification

### General information for centres

**Unit title:** Music First Study 2: Composition

**Unit code:** DR10 35

**Unit purpose:** This Unit is designed to provide the candidate with a knowledge and understanding of composing music. The Unit is aimed at those who wish to pursue composition as their principal study and who want to further develop their skills in a particular musical genre. A wide range of musical styles will be introduced and musical analysis undertaken as well as the study of general compositional techniques.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

- 1 Compose music demonstrating creativity and appropriate technical proficiency in a musical genre.
- 2 Demonstrate understanding and competence in a range of compositional techniques.

**Credit points and level:** 3 HN Credits at SCQF level 8: (24 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8\*).

*\*SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

**Recommended prior knowledge and skills:** Access to this Unit will be at the discretion of the centre, however some previous experience in musical composition/invention and the ability to communicate complex musical ideas using appropriate terminology and notation is required. These may be demonstrated by possession Advanced Higher Music or equivalent, such as Music First Study 1: Composition (DJ20 34, SCQF level 7). Candidates should also have good communication skills. These may be demonstrated by possession of Core Skill Communication at Higher level, Higher English and Communication, or a suitable NQ Communication Unit (SCQF level 6).

**Core skills:** There may be opportunities to gather evidence towards Core Skills in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

**Context for delivery:** If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

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**Assessment:** This Unit will be assessed by two separate components:

- ◆ a portfolio of compositions
- ◆ a workbook

The portfolio will consist of three finished compositions, each in the form of audio recordings and an appropriate form of notation.

The workbook will consist of three selected pieces of work the candidate has undertaken throughout the period of study.

When assessing individual portfolios the following criteria should be used.

The portfolio should show compositional skills with regard to:

- ◆ style and concept
- ◆ pitch, rhythm, dynamics, articulation, timbre etc
- ◆ good working knowledge of appropriate instrumentation/technology
- ◆ ability to shape and structure musical ideas
- ◆ accurate and appropriate musical notation

Candidates must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified for each Outcome, or combination of Outcomes in order to pass the Unit.

Candidates undertaking the Group Award may find opportunities to integrate assessments with:

<b>HN Unit</b>	<b>Unit Title</b>
DR0M 35	Songwriting 2
DR1G 35	Music Theory 2
DR12 35	Music for the Visual Arts
DR2P 36	Music Production
DR2L 35	Music: Live Performance Skills 2

The portfolio component may contribute to the Graded Unit.

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards**

**Unit title:** Music First Study 2: Composition

**Unit code:** DR10 35

The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, knowledge and/or skills, and evidence requirements are mandatory.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the knowledge and/or skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

### **Outcome 1**

Compose music demonstrating creativity and appropriate technical proficiency in a musical genre

#### **Knowledge and/or skills**

- ◆ Facility in the creative use and manipulation of musical materials
- ◆ Identification of key parameters within a musical genre
- ◆ Use of suitable instrumentation/technology for chosen idiom
- ◆ Use of suitable melodic, rhythmic and harmonic language
- ◆ Appropriate notational skills

#### **Evidence requirements**

Candidates will need evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can produce a portfolio consisting of three musical compositions in a chosen genre (NB there must be only one genre).

Each of the compositions should be represented by:

- ◆ an audio recording
- ◆ the appropriate form of musical notation
- ◆ a critical analysis of the candidate's own compositions providing an account of the creative processes and outlining their aesthetic point of view

The portfolio would therefore comprise nine components. The contents should be legible and well presented, clearly listed and defined.

The portfolio should show compositional skills with regard to:

- ◆ style and concept
- ◆ pitch, rhythm, dynamics, articulation, timbre etc
- ◆ good working knowledge of appropriate instrumentation/technology
- ◆ ability to shape and structure musical ideas
- ◆ accurate and appropriate musical notation

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)**

### **Unit title:** Music First Study 2: Composition

The candidate's work should display an understanding of the compositional techniques and stylistic features relating to their selected musical genre and demonstrate an ability to create music utilising these applied skills.

#### **Assessment guidelines**

Candidates undertaking the Group Award may combine this assessment with an Outcome from Songwriting 2 (DR0M 35).

Assessment may be divided into component parts, or a single submission towards the end of the period of study allowing candidates time to refine their skills through practical work and technical exercise.

Should there be ambiguity regarding a candidate's response, oral questioning may be used to eliminate any doubt as to the candidate's understanding. The lecturer should note questions and responses.

### **Outcome 2**

Demonstrate understanding and competence in a range of compositional techniques

#### **Knowledge and/or skills**

- ◆ Facility in the creative use and manipulation of musical materials
- ◆ Awareness of a variety of styles
- ◆ Awareness of a broad range of compositional techniques
- ◆ Notational skills
- ◆ Detailed knowledge of genre-specific compositional techniques

#### **Evidence requirements**

Candidates will need evidence in the form of a workbook to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can satisfactorily complete a minimum of three studies and/or exercises using appropriate techniques in a variety of styles which have been explored during the period of study as outlined in the knowledge and/or skills above.

The workbook will comprise a minimum of three items, be legible and well presented, its contents clearly listed and defined in order to potentially achieve a pass in the Outcome.

#### **Assessment guidelines**

Candidates undertaking the Group Award may combine this assessment with an Outcome from Music Theory 2 (DR1G 35). Assessment may be divided into component parts, or as a single submission towards the end of the period of study allowing the candidate time to refine their skills through practical work and technical exercises.

Tutors may wish to present a completed pro forma to evaluate the creative achievement and technical success of the candidate's work.

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)**

**Unit title:** Music First Study 2: Composition

Should there be ambiguity regarding a candidate's response, oral questioning may be used to eliminate any doubt as to the candidate's understanding. The lecturer should note questions and responses.

## **Administrative Information**

<b>Unit code:</b>	DR10 35
<b>Unit title:</b>	Music First Study 2: Composition
<b>Superclass category:</b>	LF
<b>Date of publication:</b>	August 2005
<b>Version:</b>	01
<b>Source:</b>	SQA

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## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes**

### **Unit title:** Music First Study 2: Composition

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 120 hours.

### **Guidance on the content and context for this Unit**

The Unit is aimed primarily at candidates who already have some compositional experience. The overall concept is that, by focusing on areas of personal interest, a candidate will achieve greater skill levels in their chosen genre. Also, through broader study, candidates will expand their knowledge of and proficiency in general compositional techniques. The Unit should be thought of as specialist, befitting a first study composer, rather than a generalised rudiments course. There are certain aspects essential to success:

- ◆ musical imagination
- ◆ understanding of musical elements — pitch, rhythm, dynamics, articulation, timbre etc
- ◆ knowledge of instrumentation
- ◆ ability to shape and structure musical ideas
- ◆ ability to express, convey or notate musical thoughts
- ◆ organisational skills, initiative, self-motivation

### **Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit**

This Unit has been developed as a mandatory Unit in the framework for the HND Music Group Award. The Unit is intended to enable the candidate to be assessed in an area of music which is of primary interest to them. Familiarity and understanding of the genre on the part of the assessor is therefore of some importance, although thorough expertise need not be required at this level.

For candidates undertaking this Unit as part of a Group Award the portfolio may contribute to the Graded Unit.

The portfolio should show excellent compositional skills with regard to:

- ◆ style and concept
- ◆ pitch, rhythm, dynamics, articulation, timbre etc as appropriate
- ◆ good working knowledge of appropriate instrumentation/technology
- ◆ ability to shape and structure musical ideas
- ◆ accurate and appropriate musical notation

### **Outcome 1**

For candidates undertaking the Group Award Outcome 1 may contribute to the Graded Unit. It is fundamental that the aesthetic concept and compositional techniques of the genre are represented in the candidate's work. This may be judged in the form of a critical analysis, which should contain references to the musical parameters and stylistic elements important to the genre. However, special consideration should, of course, be given to innovative work.

## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

### **Unit title:** Music First Study 2: Composition

The recording of one work should be compatible in quality with industry definition of a master recording. The recording of the other two works should be of a sufficiently high quality to accurately represent both the candidate's intentions and current good practice in the genre. An assessment instrument or pro forma would be of use in evaluating the technical quality of submitted audio. The scores submitted should be clear and legible and should utilise the notational conventions appropriate to both the employed instrumentation and musical genre. For example, a lead-sheet would not be acceptable for a string quartet; guitar TAB would not be appropriate for keyboard. Where the genre is that of 'singer/songwriter' a lead-sheet consisting of properly notated vocal part with lyric and accompanying chord chart, perhaps with TAB, would be sufficient.

For the critical analysis the candidate should present an informative account for each individual work. However, they should be assessed collectively where the candidate describes a common goal or artistic endeavour throughout his or her work.

The candidate should discuss his/her perception of his/her work in relation to the genre eg which aspects might be considered representative and which may be drawn from outside influences.

It is important that the candidate is able to show that he/she is aware of his/her own artistic reasoning, in terms of how his/her own work fits in to the genre. The candidate's critical analyses should provide insight into the works with, for example, analytical synopses of formal structures, choices and usage of instrumentation/technology, stimulus and process.

### **Outcome 2**

The purpose of the first part of this Outcome is to equip the candidate with compositional techniques and skills considered fundamental to a first-study composer, irrespective of whether these are applicable or not to his/her own particular genre. The tutor should direct the technical study to these ends.

The candidate will select examples of his/her work to be submitted for assessment. The candidate must present a minimum of three (completed) pieces of work comprising a mixture of course-work studies, technical exercises, sketches and works-in-progress. These may be in a variety of written and audio formats and should demonstrate the range of the candidate's technical capabilities. In general, the quality rather than the quantity of submitted work is of the essence.

The sketches and works-in-progress are submitted to allow the candidate an opportunity to display further work undertaken throughout the period of study which they feel would provide a valuable insight into the breadth and scope of their compositional abilities.

## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

**Unit title:** Music First Study 2: Composition

### **Open learning**

This Unit could be delivered by open learning. However, it would require planning by the centre to ensure the sufficiency and authenticity of candidate evidence.

For information for normal open learning arrangements, please refer to the SQA guide *Assessment and Quality Assurance for Open and Distance Learning* (A1030).

### **Candidates with additional support needs**

This Unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs*, which is available on the SQA website **[www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)**.

## General information for candidates

### Unit title: Music First Study 2: Composition

This Unit is designed to enable you to:

- ◆ increase your compositional skills and knowledge in your chosen genre of music
- ◆ increase your broader technical understanding and proficiency as a composer

You will be asked to:

- ◆ create a portfolio of three compositions in your own genre of music. This will be made up of recorded audio and appropriately notated versions of each work accompanied by a detailed critical analysis
- ◆ compile a workbook containing a minimum of three studies/technical exercises, sketches in a variety of styles and works-in-progress

You will receive tuition in appropriate compositional studies enabling you to undertake the above tasks. You should also receive support and guidance in your development as a composer, helping you towards realising your creative potential. A large amount of self-study and independent work is expected.

Your portfolio should show excellent compositional skills with regard to:

- ◆ style and concept
- ◆ pitch, rhythm, dynamics, articulation, timbre etc
- ◆ good working knowledge of appropriate instrumentation/technology
- ◆ ability to shape and structure musical ideas
- ◆ accurate and appropriate musical notation

If you are undertaking this Unit as part of a Group Award the portfolio may contribute to the Graded Unit.