

Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Music: Session Skills

Unit code: DR1A 35

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to give candidates opportunities to experience and understand the work of the session musician in live and studio contexts. Candidates are expected to create musically appropriate parts from written, verbal or aural stimuli, working under pressure of time, while maintaining professional standards of conduct and musicianship. This Unit is suitable for candidates who intend to work freelance in any musical situation as a session musician.

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

- 1 Demonstrate an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the session musician.
- 2 Undertake the role of session musician.

Credit points and level: 1 HN Credit at SCQF level 8: (8 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 candidates will require a high level of ability on their first study instrument which will allow them to develop skills to the level required by this Unit. Candidates should have completed Music First Study 1: Instrument (DJ27 34).

Candidates should have good communication skills. These may be demonstrated by the possession of Core Skill Communication at Higher level or by possession of 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.

General information for centres (cont)

Unit title: Music: Session Skills

Assessment: It is possible to assess each Outcome individually. However, a single holistic assessment could be used which would require candidates to undertake at least three ‘sessions’ in live or studio contexts and to produce relevant documentation.

Evidence for the knowledge and/or skills should be provided by assessments where candidates undertake at least three ‘sessions’ in live or studio contexts and produce relevant documentation. Oral or written questioning should be used to assess underpinning knowledge, and candidates will be required to maintain a diary of practice as a session musician.

It is suggested that the recording of assessment achievement in Outcome 1 and 2 should be done by use of a comprehensive observation checklist and a marking sheet with which to assess the session diary and accompanying documentation.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

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Unit code: DR1A 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

Demonstrate an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the session musician

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Equipment: appropriate choice, utilisation and maintenance
- ◆ Client expectations of the session musician in terms of musical input
- ◆ Industry conventions and practices — financial/contractual

Evidence requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ select the appropriate equipment for a given session
- ◆ keep personal equipment in a constant state of good repair and adjustment
- ◆ provide the musical services required of the client, in a variety of musical and environmental contexts
- ◆ establish an appointments diary
- ◆ create professional documentation — financial/contractual

Evidence for the knowledge and/or skills should be provided by assessments where the candidate undertakes at least three ‘sessions’ in live or studio contexts and by the production of relevant documentation. Oral or written questioning should be used to assess underpinning knowledge, and the candidate will be required to maintain a diary of practice as a session musician.

A tutor observation checklist and marking sheet should be used to record evidence for this Outcome.

Assessment guidelines

The assessment for Outcomes 1 and 2 should be mainly practical, supplemented by oral or written evidence demonstrating knowledge and/or skills as detailed in evidence requirements.

It is possible to assess each Outcome individually. However, a single holistic assessment could be used which would require candidates to undertake at least three ‘sessions’ in live or studio contexts and to produce relevant documentation.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Music: Session Skills

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

Undertake the role of session musician

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Musical sensitivity to style and idiom
- ◆ Knowledge of appropriate range of instruments and playing techniques
- ◆ Understanding of a range of systems of musical communication
- ◆ Ability to employ effectively a range of musical vocabularies
- ◆ Good communication skills and professional standards

Evidence requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ select appropriate equipment
- ◆ employ appropriate techniques
- ◆ employ appropriate musical vocabulary
- ◆ create appropriate musical parts from written, verbal and aural stimuli
- ◆ maintain professional standards of communication and conduct

Evidence for the knowledge and/or skills should be provided by holistic assessments where the candidate undertakes at least three 'sessions' in live or studio contexts and the production of relevant documentation. Oral or written questioning should be used to assess underpinning knowledge, and the candidate will be required to maintain a diary of practice as a session musician.

A tutor observation checklist and marking sheet should be used to record evidence for this Outcome.

Assessment guidelines

The assessment for Outcomes 1 and 2 should be mainly practical in nature possibly supplemented by oral evidence demonstrating knowledge and/or skills as detailed in the evidence requirements.

It is possible to assess each Outcome individually. However, a single holistic assessment could be used which would require candidates to undertake at least three 'sessions' in live or studio contexts and to produce relevant documentation.

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

Unit code: DR1A 35
Unit title: Music: Session Skills
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History of changes:

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Removal of Word Count.	27/05/11

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Musical: Session Skills

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 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This Unit will introduce candidates to the role of the session musician in live and studio contexts. Candidates will take part in simulated and ‘real’ live and studio-based sessions, in a variety of musical contexts (eg different styles, types of ensemble etc.). They will be expected to demonstrate versatility and stylistic sensitivity, appropriate technical and musical ability and knowledge, and professional standards of communication and behaviour. Candidates will be expected to create parts ‘at sight’ or with little preparation from different forms of instruction: appropriately notated written parts, verbal instructions from a producer, or by ‘busking’ to previously recorded material.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

This Unit has been developed as an optional Unit in the framework for the HND Music Group Award. This Unit is almost wholly practical in nature, although candidates are expected to maintain a diary of sessions, and create relevant professional documentation. Candidates should be observed during sessions, and assessment checklists should be used to record details of performance.

Candidates should be exposed to a range of commonly used methods of musical communication: traditional notation; lead sheets; chord charts; Nashville number charts; verbal instruction; musical stimuli (busking). The types of communication employed should be appropriate to the style of music but all candidates should cover a range of systems.

Assessment to produce evidence for the knowledge and/or skills of this Unit should be provided by candidates undertaking at least three ‘sessions’ in live or studio contexts and produce relevant documentation. Oral or written questioning should be used to assess underpinning knowledge, and candidates will be required to maintain a diary of practice as a session musician.

It may be possible to integrate assessment for this Unit with other Units such as Music First Study 2: Instrument (DR11 35), or Music Live Performance Skills 2 (DR2L 35).

Open learning

This Unit is not suitable for delivery by open learning.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Musical: Session Skills

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.

General information for candidates

Unit title: Music: Session Skills

This Unit is designed to enable you to recognise and understand the key issues and opportunities inherent in the professional life of the session musician. The Unit will give you practical experience and the opportunity to operate as a session musician in live performance and studio recording contexts. You will be expected to perform music ‘at sight’ or with little preparation in a variety of styles and types of musical group. Working under pressure of time, recording studio protocols, and sensitivity to the type of music being played. On completion of the Unit you should be able to:

- 1 Demonstrate an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the session musician.
- 2 Undertake the role of session musician.

You will be expected to maintain professional standards of behaviour, follow written, verbal and aural instruction and use your instrumental or vocal ability to create parts to enhance the product. In addition to undertaking a minimum of three sessions, you will be expected to maintain a diary of sessions, create invoices for sessions completed, and show that you understand the business and practical sides of the business of sessions.

For assessment evidence for this Unit you will undertake at least three ‘sessions’ in live or studio contexts and produce relevant documentation. Oral or written questioning will be used to assess underpinning knowledge, and you will be required to maintain a diary of practice as a session musician.