



Higher National Unit specification

General information

Unit title: Sound Recording: An Introduction

Unit code: H4A5 34

Superclass: KG

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Unit purpose

This Unit is designed to allow the learner to develop the knowledge and/or skills necessary to use microphones and sound mixing equipment to produce an audio track in response to a given brief.

Outcomes

On successful completion of the Unit the learner will be able to:

- 1 Describe the properties of sound and recording equipment.
- 2 Select, rig and line up sound recording equipment.
- 3 Operate sound recording equipment to produce a recording.

Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7)

Recommended entry to the Unit

Access to this Unit will be at the discretion of the centre. No prior knowledge is required to undertake the Unit.

Higher National Unit specification: General information (cont)

Unit title: Sound Recording: An Introduction

Core Skills

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes for this Unit specification.

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this Unit.

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.

Equality and inclusion

This Unit specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements

Higher National Unit specification: Statement of standards

Unit title: Sound Recording: An Introduction

Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

Outcome 1

Describe the properties of sound and recording equipment.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Relationship between frequency, wavelength and velocity
- ◆ Reverberation, standing waves, direct and indirect sound paths
- ◆ Operating levels, compression, balanced and unbalanced
- ◆ Powered and dynamic microphones, pick-up patterns
- ◆ Mono, stereo and multichannel sound
- ◆ Sampling theory, bit depth and data reduction relation to quality
- ◆ Use of Timecode and synchronisation
- ◆ Health and Safety pertaining to Sound recording

Outcome 2

Select, rig and line up sound recording equipment.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Selection of appropriate equipment for a given situation
- ◆ Connecting microphones and other recording equipment
- ◆ Lining up of recorder, mixer and ancillary equipment
- ◆ Positioning of microphones
- ◆ Use of Timecode
- ◆ Health and safety requirements

Higher National Unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

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Outcome 3

Operate sound recording equipment to produce a recording.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Adjustment of sound levels
- ◆ Sound perspective
- ◆ Position microphone/s to maximise clarity
- ◆ Monitor continuously during recording
- ◆ Check recording on completion where possible
- ◆ Identification of final recording
- ◆ Note session details and evaluation in a log
- ◆ Health and safety requirements

Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Outcome 1 is a theoretical Outcome and learners will need to demonstrate their understanding of the properties of sound and recording equipment by describing the following through oral or written responses using appropriate text, diagrams etc:

- ◆ Relationship between frequency, wavelength and velocity.
- ◆ Reverberation, standing waves, direct and indirect sound paths.
- ◆ Operating levels, compression, balanced and unbalanced.
- ◆ Powered and dynamic microphones, pick-up patterns.
- ◆ Mono, stereo and multichannel sound.
- ◆ Sampling theory, bit depth and data reduction relation to quality.
- ◆ Use of Timecode and synchronisation.

Outcomes 2 and 3 — Evidence may be gained while observing the learner by means of practical assignment(s). Learners will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by producing a log and/or plan showing the locations and types of microphones and routings of cables required to make the recording. The assessment can be applied to any recordings made by the learner in the course of her/his academic work. Evidence must be provided of learners' awareness of correct Health and Safety procedures whilst operating sound recording equipment.

While online logs can be used, the information must be entered **on location** rather than several hours or days later.

Evidence of effective operation of the sound equipment should be demonstrated by the final recording, which must provide clean, clear, undistorted sound at appropriate levels.

Higher National Unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

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Learners will need to evaluate their final recording demonstrating their ability to:

- ◆ Assess overall sound quality.
- ◆ Position microphones correctly.
- ◆ Line up equipment.
- ◆ Use Timecode if required.



Higher National Unit Support Notes

Unit title: Sound Recording: An Introduction

Unit Support Notes are offered as guidance and 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

The Unit is intended to provide learners with the knowledge and skills necessary to make a simple sound recording such as location sound for a simple interview, news piece, solo musical artist, etc. Outcome 1 will provide the necessary underpinning knowledge to enable the practical elements in the other Outcomes to be carried out.

The practical skills can be demonstrated on a project integrated with other assessments, eg as part of a production or as a stand-alone assessment to a given brief.

Guidance on approaches to delivery of this Unit

Outcome 1

This is a theoretical, knowledge-based Outcome. The nature of sound should be examined in terms of frequency, wave length and velocity and related to the human ear and microphone pick up and recording. Health and Safety pertaining to the area: Electrical Safety, Lifting and Handling, Control of Noise at Work Regulations, etc.

Outcome 2 requires the learner to rig the complete recording session in preparation for performers. Learners should discuss/justify the selection of sound equipment (microphone and mixer) for a given brief/location. If resources allow, line up should be achieved by recording a reference line up tone. Otherwise a test recording should be made.

In **Outcome 3** the learner should be made aware of the importance of listening skills. A practical exercise can be used to assess their ability to pick up inappropriate or unwanted sounds in a recording. Learners should also be able to measure, set and monitor levels and to ensure that technical and aesthetic quality meet the requirements of the brief. Recordings should be checked to assure quality.

Learners should be made aware of the importance of the relationship between the sound recordist and the dubbing engineer — ie discussing in advance of the recording the format/quantity and/or type of material required.

Higher National Unit: Support Notes (cont)

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Guidance on approaches to assessment of this Unit

Evidence can be generated using different types of instruments of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met.

Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

Outcome 1

This is a theoretical Outcome which could be assessed through responses to short answer questions, multiple-choice, a written report or oral presentation.

Outcome 2

The learner should use the knowledge gained during Outcome 1 to decide the equipment necessary to make a sound recording. All types of microphones and other equipment may not be available in a practical situation and it is a requirement that the learner should choose suitable equipment from available resources.

A simple floor plan showing positioning and cabling of equipment should be produced by the learner. This plan should take account of health and safety requirements particularly in the routing of cables.

On completing this stage of the recording all equipment should have been safely rigged, technically checked and lined up.

Outcome 3

This is a practical Outcome and learners will be required to provide evidence of the effective operation of sound equipment. This could be a simple sound recording such as location sound for a simple interview, news piece, solo musical artist, etc. The learners' final recording must provide clean, clear and undistorted sound at appropriate levels.

The recording can be labelled electronically if the recording is made to a digital system. The final evaluation can be oral or written.

Higher National Unit: Support Notes (cont)

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Opportunities for e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all learner evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

Depending on the learning and teaching approaches adopted, all Outcomes of this Unit provide opportunities for developing the three components of the Core Skill of *Communication* at SCQF level 6 and two components of *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 6.

Communication: Oral Communication at SCQF level 6

Learners will need to convey information, ideas and opinions accurately, coherently and succinctly using vocabulary and language structures appropriate to the audience. If contributing orally to discussion, they will respond to others and take account of their contributions. On occasion learners will also need to ask pertinent questions, seek clarification of instructions and consider and evaluate received responses.

Communication: Written Communication (Writing) at SCQF level 6

Learners will produce a plan showing the locations and types of microphones and routings of cables required to make the recording as part of the evidence for Outcome 3. The plan may include diagrams and explanations and use specialist technical vocabulary.

Communication: Written Communication (Reading) at SCQF level 6

This Unit requires learners to operate different types of equipment, which will involve reading instructions, operating manuals or other informative and explanatory text, including information about health and safety. They will use the information gained to make decisions about the selection of equipment and accessories.

Problem Solving: Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6

Learners will have to identify an effective approach to a given task or brief by analysing its component parts. Before starting they will need to consider alternative ways of doing it and assess the advantages and disadvantages of each. Relevant information and a variety of factors will need to be identified and analysed in order to produce a satisfactory solution.

Problem Solving: Planning and Organising at SCQF level 6

Before starting the task, learners will need to plan their approach. This will involve generating a number of ideas and selecting the best combinations of equipment, positions etc for including in the final set-up.

Higher National Unit: Support Notes (cont)

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Other essential skills

Throughout the Unit learners will develop knowledge and skills which are specifically intended to enhance their employability as a sound recording person in the Creative Industries sector. Because these and other soft skills such as punctuality, presentability and efficient time management are readily transferable, they could also be applied to many other media and areas of employment such as radio and film and video making.

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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General information for learners

Unit title: Sound Recording: An Introduction

This section will help you decide whether this is the Unit for you by explaining what the Unit is about, what you should know or be able to do before you start, what you will need to do during the Unit and opportunities for further learning and employment.

This Unit is designed to give you the skills necessary to make a sound recording using one or more sound sources. On completion of this Unit you will have a knowledge of the different types of microphones and sound mixers which are available and how and when to use them.

You will also undertake a sound recording to meet the requirements of a given brief. This brief will include details of the requirements of the recording and equipment available to you for completing the recording.

The technical competence and quality of the final recording will be assessed. You will be required to make an oral or written evaluation of the final recording. If your evaluation is delivered orally, your comments will be recorded by a scribe, or you may be recorded by video link or audio tape.