



Higher National Unit specification

General information

Unit title: Creative Sound Production (SCQF level 8)

Unit code: HA6K 35

Superclass: XL

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Unit purpose

Creative Sound Production is designed to introduce learners to the broader concept of 'creativity' and its application in audio production. Through analysis of complex productions learners will become more comfortable tackling content in interesting ways using appropriate audio techniques.

This Unit can be integrated with others in the HNC/HND Radio structure or be delivered as a stand-alone experience.

Outcomes

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

- 1 Analyse a production that uses creative sound production techniques.
- 2 Pitch a programme idea that uses creative sound techniques.
- 3 Produce a sample from the pitched idea.

Credit points and level

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

Recommended entry to the Unit

Access to this Unit is at the discretion of the Centre. However, it is recommended that learners should have some prior Knowledge and/or Skills in making audio programmes or have achieved NC media Units such as *Radio: Making a Programme 1 and 2*.

Higher National Unit Specification: General information (cont)

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Core Skills

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following Core Skills component:

Complete Core Skill	None
Core Skill component	Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6 Planning and Organising at SCQF level 6

There are also opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills which are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit specification.

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

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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

Analyse a production that uses creative sound production techniques.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Storytelling and production techniques
- ◆ Advanced sound techniques
- ◆ Creative and innovative approaches

Outcome 2

Pitch a programme idea that uses creative sound techniques.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Interpreting a Brief
- ◆ Creative story development and planning
- ◆ Innovative ideas and techniques
- ◆ Pitching an idea

Outcome 3

Produce a sample from the pitched idea.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Editing and mixing audio
- ◆ Sound design
- ◆ Sound file formats

Higher National Unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

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Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Learners will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills across all Outcomes by showing that they can:

- ♦ identify, explain and implement creative production techniques appropriately in audio programmes.

While this Unit can be assessed independently of others, it can be integrated with other parts of the HNC/HND Radio structure, for example the various technical operations Units.

For **Outcome 1** learners will be required to analyse a production that uses creative sound production techniques and:

- ♦ identify the techniques involved in producing the programme.
- ♦ describe how the use of sound contributed (or otherwise) to the finished programme.
- ♦ analyse the effectiveness of production ideas which demonstrate creative thinking both in terms of the time taken in the production process and what they add to the listener experience.
- ♦ identify use of audio which goes beyond basic sound production.

Outcome 2

Learners will be required to:

- ♦ interpret a brief, prepare and pitch their idea for a practicable production using creative sound techniques.
- ♦ describe at least one complex technique and how it will impact on the production.
- ♦ show how the innovative ideas and techniques will enhance the finished production.

Outcome 3

The learner must produce sample audio to demonstrate mastery of the techniques described in Outcome 2. The total duration of the submitted audio should be no less than three minutes. This audio can be presented as a seamless piece of work or as a sequence of excerpts. The learner must be responsible for the sound design, recording and editing, but there is no requirement for them to personally feature in the audio. Submissions should be submitted in a high-quality format, eg Wave, FLAC and be of a professional, broadcast standard for target media.



Higher National Unit Support Notes

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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 website dictionary.com defines 'Creativity' as:

'the ability to transcend traditional ideas, rules, patterns, relationships, or the like, and to create meaningful new ideas, forms, methods, interpretations, etc originality, progressiveness, or imagination'.

This purpose of this Unit is to encourage learners to produce content that goes beyond the norm at this level. Where typical submissions are linear packages with a minimum level of audio production 'Creative Sound Production' encourages learners to listen to more challenging content. Having been inspired by that content, learners move on to pitch ideas using interesting and innovative storytelling techniques, then producing a sample of that programme idea.

While creativity is a subjective concept, it is an important part of the mindset of programme makers. This Unit encourages centres to integrate ideas and advanced techniques into their delivery. A successful learner will produce content that stretches their storytelling technique and uses techniques to either capture or process sound in a more complex method than a straightforward field recorder or a DJ studio.

As such the pitch is for a long-form programme which could range from drama to documentary. Meanwhile the final Outcome has learners produce complex parts of their programme, demonstrating a grasp of the techniques they intended to use.

Learners will analyse and review the effectiveness of a production employing creative sound production techniques, then pitch a programme idea to a brief that employs creative sound production techniques and then produce three minutes of audio from the programme idea they pitched.

Please refer to the notes for each Outcome below in conjunction with the inexhaustive list of suggested texts and 'creative sound techniques'.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Guidance on approaches to delivery of this Unit

This Unit is best approached in the order of the Outcomes as each builds on previous learning.

In the early stages learners should be encouraged to expand their listening to include features and documentaries. It is recommended that centres provide links to or, where possible, recordings of outstanding productions which showcase creativity. Learners can take part in classroom discussions or online groups and forums to debate the merits of productions and develop their technical vocabulary.

At the time of writing, some possible sources include:

- ◆ Radiolab from NPR, which uses a variety of techniques to keep the listener involved, including music beds and clever script writing to make the narrative sound like a conversation while mixing in and out of clips. (<http://www.radiolab.org/>)
- ◆ BBC Radio 2's 'Sounds of the 20th Century', a tour de force of editing and mixing where the music and audio clips are mixed sympathetically, often entailing complex music edits to make the archive audio fit.
- ◆ NPR's 'This American Life' combines compelling stories with a multi-layered sound incorporating speech, music, effects and occasionally silence to make its stories stand out. (<http://www.thisamericanlife.org/>)

There are many other sources of compelling creative content and learners should be encouraged to seek out and share their best examples.

The pitch in Outcome 2 is likely to be heavily inspired by the content listened to in Outcome1. Learners should be encouraged to try something new and demonstrate that they are doing so in theory pitch. A non-exhaustive list of potential ideas includes:

- 1 Radio Drama:
 - (a) Studio, either stereo pair or multi-mic
 - (b) Location recording, post produced in a multi-track editor
- 2 Complex live mixing of sound from many sources, merging speech with effects and other sounds.
- 3 Mixing live performance (music or drama) with other elements.
- 4 Binaural sound in drama or actuality.
- 5 Radio comedy, eg a sketch show.
- 6 Complex Sport Production, using correct microphones and audio samples¹.
- 7 Seamless layering of effects (mono, stereo or surround) in a documentary with clips of actuality and narration.

¹ audio played in when a mic cannot pick it up clearly, eg the sound of a golf ball landing on a fairway

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 assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners.

Outcome 1

The learner should review a programme that uses more than simple package making skills to review. The programme could be provided by the centre or the learner, but where a learner chooses a programme the centre should listen to ensure that it demonstrates enough complexity. The programme would stand out for creative technical production. The learner should identify the techniques involved in producing the programme, from mic techniques (eg Binaural recording) to the way the content has been manipulated in the editing software. They would go on to talk about how the creative use of sound contributed (or otherwise) to the finished programme, analysing their effectiveness both in terms of the time taken in the production process and what they add to the listener experience. This can be a written assessment, an audio review with excerpts or a presentation. Reviews can be submitted in a variety of ways, eg an essay or blog post of 600 words or an audio review of 3-5 minutes.

Outcome 2

Based on a brief provided by the centre, the learner should prepare a pitch for a production employing creative sound techniques. The brief may steer the learner towards using techniques that reflect the expertise of the centre and available equipment, but the learner will be expected to understand the use of at least one complex technique and how it will impact on the production. This assessment could be a combination of a written element (a pro forma pitch or 100 word 'lead') and a verbal pitch to either a member of the teaching team or an external expert. The 'pro forma' pitch should be retained for evidence alongside a checklist or lecturers notes about the quality of the pitch and the techniques it uses.

Outcome 3

The pitch in Outcome 2 and production could be marked holistically.

In these Outcomes it should be noted that learners must demonstrate a basic understanding of this kind of audio production in both sound design and storytelling techniques before the additional skills that lift the production from the 'ordinary' to the 'creative' allow a pass. The additional skills can be in the way the story is told *or* in the technical aspects of the production.

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.

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

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skill of *Communication* at SCQF level 6.

This Unit has the Critical Thinking and Planning and Organising components of Problem Solving embedded in it. This means that when learners achieve the Unit, their Core Skills profile will also be updated to show they have achieved Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6 and Planning and Organising at SCQF level 6.

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Core Skills Components Critical Thinking and Planning and Organising at SCQF level 6 embedded.	20/05/16

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General information for learners

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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 will be beneficial for learners who wish to explore advance sound techniques for a variety of purposes. The Unit is designed to introduce you to the broader concept of 'creativity' and its application in sound production. Through analysis of complex productions you will become more comfortable tackling content in interesting ways using appropriate audio techniques.

The *Creative Sound Production* Unit is an optional Unit in the HNC/HND Radio and will build on your existing knowledge of radio production techniques, giving you the skills to understand when producers have used advanced or unexpected techniques to improve the quality of their storytelling.

These techniques may include the use of technical approaches in the way the programme is recorded, edited and mixed, to place the listeners at the heart of the story rather than having them merely 'listen'. They may also include finding creative ways to tell a story rather than a straightforward journalistic approach.

You will listen to and review programmes that have used different techniques to make their content compelling. Inspired by these programmes you will develop a programme idea that uses some of these techniques to elevate the programme above the ordinary. Finally you will showcase your creativity by producing an excerpt (or series of excerpts) from the programme idea you developed and pitched.

This Unit has the Critical Thinking and Planning and Organising components of Problem Solving embedded in it. This means that when you achieve the Unit, your Core Skills profile will also be updated to show you have achieved Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6 and Planning and Organising at SCQF level 6.