National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Music: MIDI Sequencing (SCQF level 5)

CODE F5DX 11

SUMMARY

In this Unit candidates will be given the opportunity to develop practical and creative skills, which will allow them to use a MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) sequencer to create, edit and mix audio. This is a practical Unit, but candidates will also gain knowledge and understanding of MIDI theory, functions and capabilities.

This Unit is optional within the National Certificate in Music (SCQF level 6) and National Certificate in Sound Production (SCQF level 6), but can also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

This Unit is suitable for candidates undertaking a music programme of study and interested in acquiring skills in MIDI sequencing.

OUTCOMES

1 Create a MIDI sequence.
2 Edit a MIDI sequence in accordance with a given brief.
3 Mix a MIDI sequence in accordance with a given brief.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Entry is at the discretion of the centre, however candidates would benefit from some knowledge or practical experience of computer multimedia applications.

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Intermediate 2 (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 5*).

**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.*

Administrative Information

Superclass: LH

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

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CORE SKILLS

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

The Unit provides opportunities for candidates to develop aspects of the following Core Skills:

- Information Technology
- Problem Solving

These opportunities are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit Specification.

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

Create a MIDI sequence.

Performance Criteria

(a) Use arrangement/compositional techniques to create a MIDI sequence.
(b) Use sequencer features effectively.
(c) Save the MIDI sequence to an appropriate medium.

OUTCOME 2

Edit a MIDI sequence in accordance with a given brief.

Performance Criteria

(a) Effectively use a variety of editing functions to modify a MIDI sequence.
(b) Save the MIDI sequence to an appropriate medium.

OUTCOME 3

Mix a MIDI sequence in accordance with a given brief.

Performance Criteria

(a) Use a variety of editing and controller functions to mix a MIDI sequence.
(b) Mix is creative and effective.
(c) Save final mix to an appropriate medium.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Product evidence is required to demonstrate that candidates have achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

Outcome 1

Product evidence, supplemented by an Assessor Observation Checklist, is required to demonstrate that the candidate has achieved Outcome 1 to the standard specified in the Outcome and Performance Criteria. Each candidate will:

- create a MIDI sequence using arrangement/compositional techniques. At least one MIDI sequence should be completed and must consist of at least four distinct composed/substantially reworked parts. The playing time of which should be a minimum of three minutes. Arrangement/compositional elements must include melody, harmony, rhythm, structure and timbre.
- use the following sequencer features: transport controls, metronome, tempo, time signature, MIDI input recording, program change.
- save the MIDI sequence to an appropriate medium.

It is not a requirement that the MIDI sequence be an original composition of the candidate. New arrangements of existing pieces are acceptable. Original and existing MIDI files are also acceptable and can be arranged and edited. However, some MIDI input recording must be carried out.

If drums and/or percussion are used, these will count as one part only.

Practical understanding of techniques and processes should be assessed as the candidate works through the Unit in a controlled environment.

The evidence for this Outcome will be gathered under supervised conditions at an appropriate point in the Unit.

Outcome 2

Product evidence is required to demonstrate the candidate's ability to use editing functions on a MIDI sequence. An Assessor Observation Checklist will be maintained by the tutor to ensure that all Performance Criteria are met.

The modified MIDI sequence must be saved to an appropriate medium.

The candidate will be required to carry out the following editing functions on a MIDI sequence (of at least four distinct parts):

- sequence/track/arrangement editing: structural alterations, program changes, tempo changes
- part/region editing: cut/delete, copy, paste, duplicate
- note editing: pitch, rhythm, velocity, quantise

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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Candidates will be required to use each of these editing functions at least once within the completed saved file.

The evidence for this Outcome will be gathered under supervised conditions at appropriate points in the Unit.

Outcome 3

The brief for Outcome 3 will be a MIDI sequence (of at least four distinct parts) that the candidate will be asked to mix. Product evidence, in the form of the mix, is required for this Outcome.

Performance evidence, supplemented by an Assessor Observation Checklist, is also required for Outcome 3. Candidates will be required to demonstrate the ability to use the following editing and controller functions in mixing: dynamics, volume, panning.

Although the assessor will have an input in monitoring candidate progress and in advising on the next steps throughout delivery of the Unit, the responsibility for creating and/or editing and saving the completed MIDI file is entirely that of the candidate.

The evidence for this Outcome will be gathered under supervised conditions at appropriate points in the Unit.

The Assessment Support Pack (ASP) for this Unit provides sample assessment material including an instrument of assessment, specified briefs and checklists. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the Assessment Support Pack to ensure a comparable standard.

National Unit Specification: support notes

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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 is an optional Unit within the National Certificate in Music (SCQF level 6) and the National Certificate in Sound Production (SCQF level 6), but can also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

Candidates should gain an understanding and develop skills and techniques used in the creation of a MIDI sequence. Candidates should also be able to apply skills and techniques learned when editing and mixing a MIDI sequence.

It is recommended that various connections of MIDI systems are demonstrated and that candidates have a clear idea of devices that are inter-connectable.

MIDI workstation setups may include:

- MIDI keyboard, MIDI interface, computer, MIDI sound module and headphones
- MIDI keyboard/synthesizer, sequencer, headphones
- computer with software, headphones

Outcomes 2 and 3 are designed to allow candidates to acquire skills required in editing and mixing MIDI sequences to a given brief. In this way candidates should be encouraged to use the range of editing and mixing features of the chosen MIDI sequencer workstation, using the editing features and controllers referred to in the Evidence Requirements for this Unit.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

The Unit can be delivered through practical demonstrations aided by theoretical presentations and notes. The nature of the Unit is very much practical and the candidate is encouraged to apply skills and knowledge in creating the finished MIDI sequence through regular practice.

Outcome 2 can be achieved using the MIDI sequence created by the candidate (for Outcome 1).

Candidates should be encouraged to keep notes on how they create their sequences and of the various techniques they utilise to create, edit, mix and save their MIDI sequences to a suitable medium. This information can be used to assist assessors in ensuring that candidates complete each task to the level required. Question and answer sessions could be used during the presentation and demonstration of the sequenced piece to ensure that candidates have a clear understanding of the Unit's purpose and what is required to pass. It would be beneficial for candidates to demonstrate an understanding of why an edit has been performed on a certain part of the sequence and why a mixing technique has been performed on a certain part of the sequence. This could be provided by writing a brief editing report or by oral questioning.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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Candidates must be aware of, and adhere at all times to the requirements of current copyright legislation in relation to the creation, performance and use of music and other forms of intellectual property.

Health and safety should be integral to teaching and learning, and centres should view this holistically in any practical exercises. Candidates should be made aware that Health and Safety is the concern of all professionals.

Time should be allowed for any necessary reassessment.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Candidates will have the opportunity to develop aspects of the Core Skill of *Problem Solving* while undertaking the task of creating a MIDI sequence in Outcome 1.

Should the MIDI workstation include a computer and software, this will allow candidates opportunities to develop aspects of the Core Skill of *Information Technology*.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Suitable instruments of assessment are as follows:

Outcomes 1, 2 and 3: Practical exercises.

It may be possible to exchange MIDI sequences completed from Outcome 1 in order that they can be mixed by fellow candidates.

Outcome 3 may be assessed through a series of practical exercises. The centre will provide candidates with a MIDI sequence of at least four distinct parts and they must demonstrate mixing techniques by using all of the editing and controller functions listed within the Evidence Requirements.

Opportunities for the use of 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 communications technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or e-checklists. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all candidate evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. Further advice is available in *SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education (AA1641, March 2003), SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools (BD2625, June 2005)*.

CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES AND/OR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

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. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* **(www.sqa.org.uk)**.