



National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Music: Songwriting (SCQF level 6)

CODE F5EB 12

SUMMARY

This Unit is designed to introduce candidates to the basic building blocks that constitute a song and to the way in which these can be combined. Candidates will have the opportunity to learn the way lyrics and melody can be combined to create a successful song, and will also have the opportunity to develop their own songwriting skills. This is essentially a practical Unit in which candidates will be required to create an original song.

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

This Unit is suitable for candidates who have an interest in developing their songwriting techniques.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Describe the basic components of a song.
- 2 Create an original song.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Entry is at the discretion of the centre, however it would be desirable for candidates to have previous musical knowledge or experience.

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Higher (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6*).

**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: LF

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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:

- ◆ Communication
- ◆ Problem Solving
- ◆ Working with Others

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

Describe the basic components of a song.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Identify and describe the basic components that constitute a song.
- (b) Describe how these components can be combined to create different styles and moods.

OUTCOME 2

Create an original song.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Create an original melody.
- (b) Create original lyrics to fit with the melody.
- (c) Create chord progression to fit with melody.
- (c) Develop the original song.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Evidence is required to demonstrate that all Outcomes and Performance Criteria have been achieved.

For Outcome 1 candidates are required to produce written and/or oral evidence to demonstrate that they can identify and describe the following basic components of songs and how they are used:

- ◆ melody
- ◆ harmony
- ◆ rhythm
- ◆ structure
- ◆ lyrics

Candidates must also describe how these components have been/can be combined to create:

- ◆ two different styles
- ◆ two different genres
- ◆ two different moods

Candidates must select a genre and analyse how these components have been used by a minimum of two artists to create two different styles and two different moods.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Music: Songwriting (SCQF level 6)

Evidence for Outcome 1 should be gathered under open-book conditions at appropriate points in the Unit.

Candidates are also required to produce product evidence in the form of a finished song. This product evidence should demonstrate that they have:

- ◆ created a song that lasts a minimum of 2.5 minutes' duration
- ◆ created a melody
- ◆ created lyrics/narrative that fit with the melody
- ◆ created a chord progression that fits with the melody

For Outcome 2 candidates are required to produce written and/or oral evidence which documents the development of the song.

Evidence for Outcome 2 should be gathered under open-book conditions at appropriate points in the Unit.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Music: Songwriting (SCQF level 6)

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), but can also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

This is largely a practical Unit in which candidates will be introduced to some of the key components required to create a successful song. This Unit aims to promote a sense of aural discrimination. The candidate will also learn how to recognise when a song is ready for presentation.

This focus of the Unit is on the processes involved in writing a song.

The importance of protecting the intellectual property of the created song should be stressed within the Unit. The work in this Unit can be integrated with the Unit *Music: An Introduction to the UK Music Industry* (SCQF level 6), which provides more detail on how intellectual property can be protected. This Unit could also be integrated with the Unit *Appreciation of Music* (SCQF level 6), which further allows candidates to explore a range of musical genres.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

A varied approach to teaching is encouraged to ensure that learning is both interesting and meaningful.

Initially it may be helpful to analyse songs that candidates are familiar with either in a classroom or small group setting. It would also be beneficial for candidates to work in small groups to discuss the components of songs that they have analysed.

Candidates should be encouraged to analyse songs from a variety of genres and to analyse the work of established songwriters within each genre as a means of understanding and recognising different songwriting styles.

Learning and teaching may be organised in the order of analysis, deconstruction and creation of melody, composition of lyric, performance, recording, and evaluation. This can be achieved by listening to a range of examples. Candidates should be encouraged to develop their own analytical skills by selecting songs from a variety of genres.

On-going evaluation, revision and rewriting should be encouraged until the candidate has confidence in the song.

A commentary on the stimuli involved in development would also be useful.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Music: Songwriting (SCQF level 6)

Writing at different times of the day could be encouraged to avoid potential repetition of the same mood. Exploring the use of different instruments should also be encouraged. Candidates should be encouraged to work both individually and in a group context. By encouraging candidates to evaluate other candidates' songs they will have the opportunity to work with others and to effectively monitor the quality of the overall song.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Candidates will be producing written and oral communication evidence as part of the assessment for Outcomes 1 and 2. This offers ideal opportunities to develop aspects of the Core Skill of *Communication*.

Candidates will have opportunities to develop aspects of the Core Skill of *Problem Solving* in Outcome 2 in the creation, development and editing of their original song.

Should candidates choose to participate in evaluating group members' songs then there will be opportunities to develop the Core Skill of *Working with Others*.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

The following approaches to assessment are suggested:

- Outcome 1: report
- Outcome 2: practical assignment

As songwriting is an iterative process candidates should provide evidence of the development of the created song. This could include a number of recordings of the song at various stages and different versions of the lyrics and melody.

Time should be allowed for any necessary re-assessment.

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).