



National 4  
Course  
Specification



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# National 4 Music Course Specification (C750 74)

**Valid from August 2013**

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Please refer to the note of changes at the end of this Course Specification for details of changes from previous version (where applicable).

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## Course outline

**Course title:** National 4 Music  
**SCQF:** level 4 (24 SCQF credit points)  
**Course code:** C750 74

### Mandatory Units

**H240 74 Music: Performing Skills (National 4) 6 SCQF credit points**

Or

**H6NP 74 Music: Performing Skills with a Scottish Context (National 4)\* 6 SCQF credit points**

**H23V 74 Music: Composing Skills (National 4) 6 SCQF credit points**

Or

**H6NR 74 Music: Composing Skills with a Scottish Context (National 4)\* 6 SCQF credit points**

and

**H23X 74 Understanding Music (National 4) 6 SCQF credit points**

and

### Added Value Unit

**H242 74 Music Performance (National 4) 6 SCQF credit points**

This Course includes six SCQF credit points for the assessment of added value in the Added Value Unit. Further information on this Unit is provided in the Assessment section.

\*Scottish Studies Award contributing Unit: This Course Specification should be read in conjunction with the relevant Scottish Studies Unit Specification on the [Scottish Studies Award web page](#).

### Recommended entry

Entry to this Course is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners would normally be expected to have attained the skills, knowledge and understanding required by the following or equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

- ◆ National 3 Music Course or relevant component Units

In terms of prior learning and experience, relevant experiences and outcomes may also provide an appropriate basis for doing this Course. Further information on relevant experiences and outcomes is given in the *Course Support Notes*.

### Progression

This Course or its Units may provide progression to:

- ◆ other qualifications in Music or related areas
- ◆ further study, employment or training

Further details are provided in the Rationale section.

## **Equality and inclusion**

This Course 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. For further information, please refer to the *Course Support Notes*.

## **Rationale**

All new and revised National Courses reflect the Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles. They offer flexibility, provide more time for learning, more focus on skills and applying learning, and scope for personalisation and choice.

In this Course, and its component Units, there will be an emphasis on skills development and the application of those skills. Assessment approaches will be proportionate, fit for purpose and will promote best practice, enabling learners to achieve the highest standards they can.

This Course provides learners with opportunities to continue to acquire and develop the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities, as well as skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

All Courses provide opportunities for learners to develop breadth, challenge and application, but the focus and balance of the assessment will be appropriate for the subject area.

## **Relationship between the Course and Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles**

The Course allows learners to develop practical skills in performing and creating music, while developing their understanding of music styles and concepts. It can meet the needs of a wide variety of learners with a range of musical interests.

The Course provides opportunities for learners to perform a variety of music in solo and/or group settings using their voice or their selected instrument(s). Through music, learners will develop their ability to express themselves and develop their personal creativity and self-confidence when performing and creating. In the Course, learners will develop their understanding of music concepts and musical literacy. They will develop their ability to recognise and distinguish level-specific music signs, symbols and concepts as they perform, create and listen to music.

Across the Course, skills and experiences which complement and supplement each other are developed. Performing and creating music allows learners to express themselves musically and to reflect on their learning. This encourages learners to think imaginatively and to explore and develop their own ideas, making use of their understanding of music concepts and applying this to their own practice.

Understanding music through listening enables learners to build their knowledge and understanding of music, bringing depth to their learning and raising their social and cultural awareness of the influences on musicians and composers.

The Course also provides opportunities for learners to further acquire and develop the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities.

## **Purpose and aims of the Course**

The purpose of the Course is to provide a broad practical experience of performing and creating music, and to develop related knowledge and understanding of music. Course activities allow learners to work independently or in collaboration with others, and can help learners to plan and organise, to make decisions and to take responsibility for their own learning.

This Course is practical and experiential in nature and includes flexibility in the contexts for learning. It helps learners to develop a general interest in music, and to develop performing skills on their two selected instruments or on one instrument and voice. The Course also provides opportunities for learners to develop composing skills and their understanding of music.

The Course enables learners to develop their skills and creative capabilities as a musician. Performing music, for example, demands skills of autonomy, interpretation and creativity, as well as providing the opportunity to build confidence and self-esteem. The practice required to develop these skills can promote perseverance and resilience. The skills that learners gain throughout the Course will be valuable for learning, life and work.

The aims of the Course are to enable learners to:

- ◆ develop performing skills in solo and/or group settings on their selected instruments or on one instrument and voice
- ◆ perform music with sufficient accuracy while maintaining the musical flow
- ◆ create original music using compositional methods and music concepts when composing, arranging or improvising
- ◆ develop knowledge and understanding of the social and cultural factors influencing music
- ◆ develop knowledge and understanding of music and musical literacy by listening to music and identifying level-specific music signs, symbols and concepts
- ◆ reflect on their own work and that of others

## **Information about typical learners who might do the Course**

This Course is a broad-based qualification. It is suitable for learners with a general interest in music. The Course allows learners to consolidate and reinforce musical skills, knowledge and understanding of music developed through the experiences and outcomes for Music and National 3 Courses. It could also provide a pathway for those who want to progress to higher levels of study.

The Course is practical and experiential and there is considerable scope for personalisation and choice through the activities of performing, creating and understanding music, and through opportunities to use music technology to create music. This makes the Course accessible as it takes account of the needs of different learners and can be contextualised to suit a diverse range of learners' needs, interests and aspirations.

On completing the Course, learners will be able to perform a programme of music with accuracy, create their own original music, reflect on and evaluate their own work and that of others, listen to music with awareness, understanding and discrimination, and identify opportunities to improve their musical creativity and performance.

# Course structure and conditions of award

## Course structure

The Course has an integrated approach to learning and includes a mixture of practical learning and underpinning understanding of music. In the Course learners will draw on their understanding of music styles and concepts as they experiment with using these when performing and creating music.

To achieve the Course, learners must successfully complete the three mandatory Units and the Added Value Unit. Each of the component Units of the Course is designed to provide progression to the corresponding Unit at National 5.

Units are statements of standards for assessment and not programmes of learning and teaching. They can be delivered in a number of ways.

### **Music: Performing Skills (National 4)**

In this Unit, learners will develop performing skills on two selected instruments, or on one selected instrument and voice. They will perform level-specific music with sufficient accuracy while maintaining the musical flow. Learners will, through regular practice and reflection, develop technical and musical performing skills.

### **Music: Composing Skills (National 4)**

In this Unit, learners will experiment with and use compositional methods and music concepts in imaginative ways when creating their own music. Learners will reflect on their own creative choices and decisions, and develop a basic understanding of how musicians develop their ideas and create their music.

### **Understanding Music (National 4)**

In this Unit, through listening, learners will develop knowledge and understanding of a variety of level-specific music concepts and music literacy. They will listen to music extracts and identify which specific music concepts are used and where these appear in the music. They will develop an understanding of the distinctive sounds of specific music styles and common music signs, symbols and terms used in music notation.

### **Added Value Unit: Music Performance (National 4)**

This Unit adds value by introducing challenge and application. In the music performance, learners will draw on and extend their performing skills in a new context. Learners will prepare and perform a programme of music in a solo setting and/or as part of a group.

## Conditions of award

To achieve the National 4 Music Course, learners must pass all of the required Units, including the Added Value Unit. The required Units are shown in the Course outline section.

National 4 Courses are not graded.

## Skills, knowledge and understanding

Full skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course are given in the *Added Value Unit Specification*. A broad overview of the mandatory subject skills, knowledge and understanding that will be assessed in the Course is given in this section. These are:

- ◆ preparing and performing a solo and/or group programme of music on two selected instruments, or on one instrument and voice
- ◆ performing sections of music with sufficient accuracy while maintaining the musical flow
- ◆ reflecting on and evaluating their musical and creative skills and identifying areas for improvement
- ◆ understanding the creative process and common approaches used by composers and musicians to create their music
- ◆ a basic understanding of the social and cultural influences on music
- ◆ creating original music using straightforward compositional methods and music concepts in imaginative ways to realise their creative intentions
- ◆ the ability to identify and recognise level-specific annotated music signs and symbols
- ◆ recognising and distinguishing level-specific music concepts and music styles

Skills, knowledge and understanding to be included in the Course will be appropriate to the SCQF level of the Course. The SCQF level descriptors give further information on characteristics and expected performance at each SCQF level ([www.sqa.org.uk/scqf](http://www.sqa.org.uk/scqf)).

# Assessment

Further information about assessment for the Course is included in the *Course Support Notes* and the *Added Value Unit Specification*.

## Unit assessment

All Units are internally assessed against the requirements shown in the *Unit Specification*.

They can be assessed on an individual Unit basis or by using other approaches which combine the assessment for more than one Unit.

They will be assessed on a pass/fail basis within centres. SQA will provide rigorous external quality assurance, including external verification, to ensure assessment judgements are consistent and meet national standards.

The assessment of the Units in this Course will be as follows.

### **Music: Performing Skills (National 4)**

In this Unit, learners will be required to provide evidence of musical performing skills on their two selected instruments, or instrument and voice, and of reflecting on their performing skills. Learners will maintain the musical flow and play, with acceptable accuracy, sections of level-specific music.

### **Music: Composing Skills (National 4)**

In this Unit, learners will be required to provide evidence of a basic understanding of the creative process and how compositional methods and music concepts are used by others. They will provide evidence of experimenting and using compositional methods and music concepts imaginatively to create their own music, and of reflecting on their creative decision making and music.

### **Understanding Music (National 4)**

In this Unit, learners will be required to provide evidence of their knowledge of level-specific music concepts and music literacy. They will evidence their understanding of the factors which influence the distinctive sounds of specific music styles, identify music concepts in excerpts of music, and identify and recognise the meaning of music signs, symbols and terms.

## Added Value Unit

Courses from National 4 to Advanced Higher include assessment of [added value](#).<sup>1</sup> At National 4, added value will be assessed in an Added Value Unit. The Added Value Unit will address the key purposes and aims of the Course as defined in the Course Rationale. It will do this by addressing one or more of breadth, challenge or application.

In the National 4 Music Course, the Added Value Unit will focus on

- ◆ challenge
- ◆ application

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<sup>1</sup> Definitions can be found here: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/58409.html>



Learners will draw on, extend and apply the skills they have learned during the Course. This will be assessed through a performance of a programme of music.

It will be underpinned by knowledge and understanding of music and will be sufficiently open and flexible to allow for personalisation and choice.

# Development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

It is expected that learners will develop broad, generic skills through this Course. The skills that learners will be expected to improve on and develop through the Course are based on SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work* and drawn from the main skills areas listed below. These must be built into the Course where there are appropriate opportunities.

## **3 Health and wellbeing**

### 3.1 Personal learning

## **5 Thinking skills**

### 5.2 Understanding

### 5.3 Applying

### 5.5 Creating

Amplification of these skills is given in SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*. The level of these skills will be appropriate to the level of the Course. Further information on building in skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work for the Course is given in the *Course Support Notes*.

# Administrative information

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Published: June 2013 (version 1.1)

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## History of changes to National Course Specification

Course details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
	1.1	Revised descriptions — Units and Unit assessment.	Qualifications Development Manager	June 2013
	1.2	Scottish Studies Award Unit contributing information added. No other changes made to document content.	Qualifications Manager	September 2014

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