

# **National 4 Music Course Support Notes**



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

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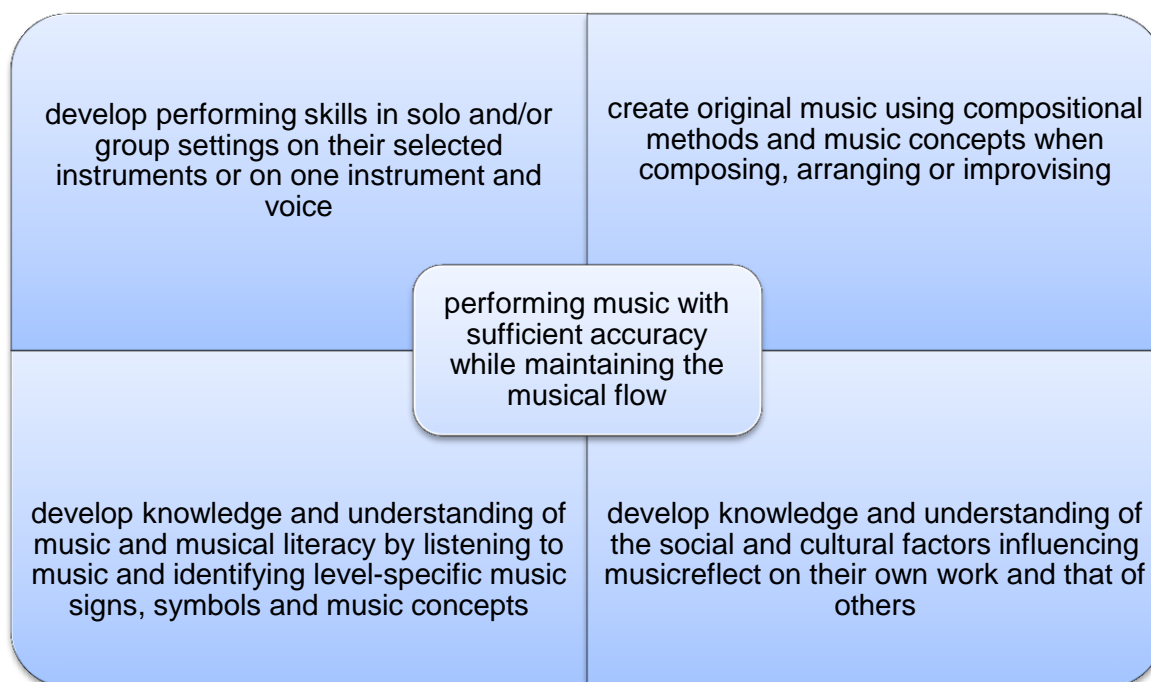
# Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing National 4 Music Course. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering the Course and its Units. They should be read in conjunction with the *Course Specification*, the *Added Value Unit Specification*, and the Unit Specifications for the Units in the Course.

# General guidance on the Course

## Aims

The National 4 Music Course is designed to help learners develop their knowledge of music concepts and music literacy, and to integrate and apply this understanding in practical learning activities.



## Progression into this Course

Entry to this Course is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners would benefit from having some or all of the following skills and knowledge before starting this Course:

- ◆ some prior experience of playing a musical instrument or singing
- ◆ a basic awareness of some of the forms and styles of music

This underpinning knowledge could also be evidenced by having one or more of the following or equivalent qualifications:

- ◆ National 3 Music Course or relevant Units

### Experiences and outcomes

New National Courses have been designed to draw on and build on the curriculum experiences and outcomes as appropriate. Qualifications developed for the senior phase of secondary education are benchmarked against SCQF levels. SCQF level 4 and the curriculum level 4 are broadly equivalent in terms of level of demand although qualifications at SCQF level 4 will be more specific to allow for more specialist study of subjects.

Learners, who have achieved the Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes below, will find these an appropriate basis for doing the Course.

I can give assured, expressive and imaginative performances of vocal and/or instrumental music from a wide range of styles and cultures, using performance directions, musical notation, and/or playing by ear.

EXA 4 -16a

I can use my chosen vocal and/or instrumental skills to improvise and compose, showing developing style and sophistication

EXA 4 - 17a

Having developed my ideas from a wide range of stimuli, I can create and present compositions using a broad range of musical concepts and ideas

EXA 4 – 18a

Having reflected on my personal experiences, including participation and engagement with professionals, I can listen to a wide range of music and identify and analyse technical aspects, make informed judgements and express personal opinions on my own and others work

EXA 4 – 19a

In this Course, learners will build on the skills and knowledge gained through the above experiences and outcomes for Music when performing creating and understanding music. They will learn about musical signs, symbols and music concepts and use this understanding when performing and creating original music.

## **Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Course**

This section provides further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding that could be included in the Course.

Note: teachers and lecturers should refer to the *Course Assessment Specification* for mandatory information about the skills, knowledge and understanding to be covered in this Course.

The mandatory subject skills, knowledge and understanding that will be assessed in the National 4 Music Course are:

- ◆ preparing and performing a solo and/or group programme of music on two selected instruments, or on one instrument and voice
- ◆ performing music on two selected instruments, or using instrument and voice, in solo and/or group programmes
- ◆ reflecting with some support on their musical and creative skills

Repeated practice and rehearsal will be required for learners to be able to perform a programme of music with sufficient technical skill and control when performing in solo or as part of a group.

Skills developed could include, for example, negotiating and working collaboratively with others, interpersonal skills development including resilience and basic self-management opportunities and the chance to gain valuable insights from others which could be used to help improve their own technical and musical skills.

Using structured supported reflection at this level, will help learners to identify their personal strengths and any areas for improvement in their own work and practise.

- ◆ 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 level-specific music concepts in imaginative ways to realise their creative intentions

This part of the Course gives learners the opportunity to use and apply their understanding of music in a creative way. The focus should be on creative experimentation and exploration using composing, arranging or improvisation techniques as appropriate. To support these activities, teachers/lecturers should encourage learners to review their creative choices, options and decisions. This part of the Course could also provide opportunities to help learners develop their discriminatory aural judgement when creating ideas for music that make musical sense.

Creative activities could include composing music for a specific purpose, using music to 'draw' a scene, combining visual and aural learning modes and other creative project-based approaches to learning.

- ◆ the ability to identify and recognise familiar annotated music signs and symbols
- ◆ recognising and distinguishing level-specific music concepts and music styles

Developing learners' ability to aurally discriminate between different styles and music concepts will involve active listening. Teachers/lecturers should encourage this through structured listening tasks and activities. Where possible, learning about music and music styles should be contextualised and relevant to learners, helping them to understand the influences that shape Scottish music and music of other cultures.

This process could include the in-depth study of a diverse range of music, using a rolling programme of structured activities helping learners to understand and distinguish between the music concepts in each piece of the music. This could be, for example, by engaging learners with individualised listening programmes based on specific music concepts using ICT-based online resources or centre-developed materials.

These skills can be developed on an ongoing basis throughout the Course.

Teachers/lecturers should ensure that learners are fully aware of the wide range of skills, knowledge and understanding that they are developing in the Units and Course as a whole. This should include all subject-related skills, knowledge and understanding. It is also important to highlight any associated transferable learning that is taking place which supports the development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

## Progression from this Course

This Course or its components may provide progression to:

- ◆ other SQA qualifications in Music or related areas, including for example the National 5 Music Course
- ◆ further study, employment or training

## Hierarchies

**Hierarchy** is the term used to describe Courses and Units which form a structured progression involving two or more SCQF levels.

It is important that any content in a Course and/or Unit at one particular SCQF level is not repeated if a learner progresses to the next level of the hierarchy. The skills and knowledge should be able to be applied to new content and contexts to enrich the learning experience. This is for centres to manage.

The Units in the Music Courses from National 3 to Advanced Higher level are designed in a hierarchy. This means that learners may be able to achieve and be certificated for a Unit at the level above the level of the Course they are doing.

This could be achieved by, for example, learners in the class group completing similar practical activities and their work being differentiated and benchmarked against the Assessment Standards and Evidence Requirements at different SCQF levels.

The range and progressive nature of music concepts at each successive SCQF level have been designed to minimise repetition and to create challenge for learners at all levels.

Additional information and guidance on possible approaches and strategies are included in the 'Approaches to learning and teaching' section. This section also provides some suggestions for teachers/lecturers working with differentiated levels within a group of learners.



# Approaches to learning and teaching

The need to encourage personalisation and choice is a recurring theme for qualifications developed to support the Curriculum for Excellence programme. It is important for teachers/lecturers to create and use inclusive approaches to teaching and learning. This can be achieved by encouraging the use of a variety of learning and teaching strategies which suit the needs of all learners.

This Course has been designed with a variety of opportunities for personalisation and choice for centres and learners. It also includes opportunities to use technology in a range of innovative and creative ways.

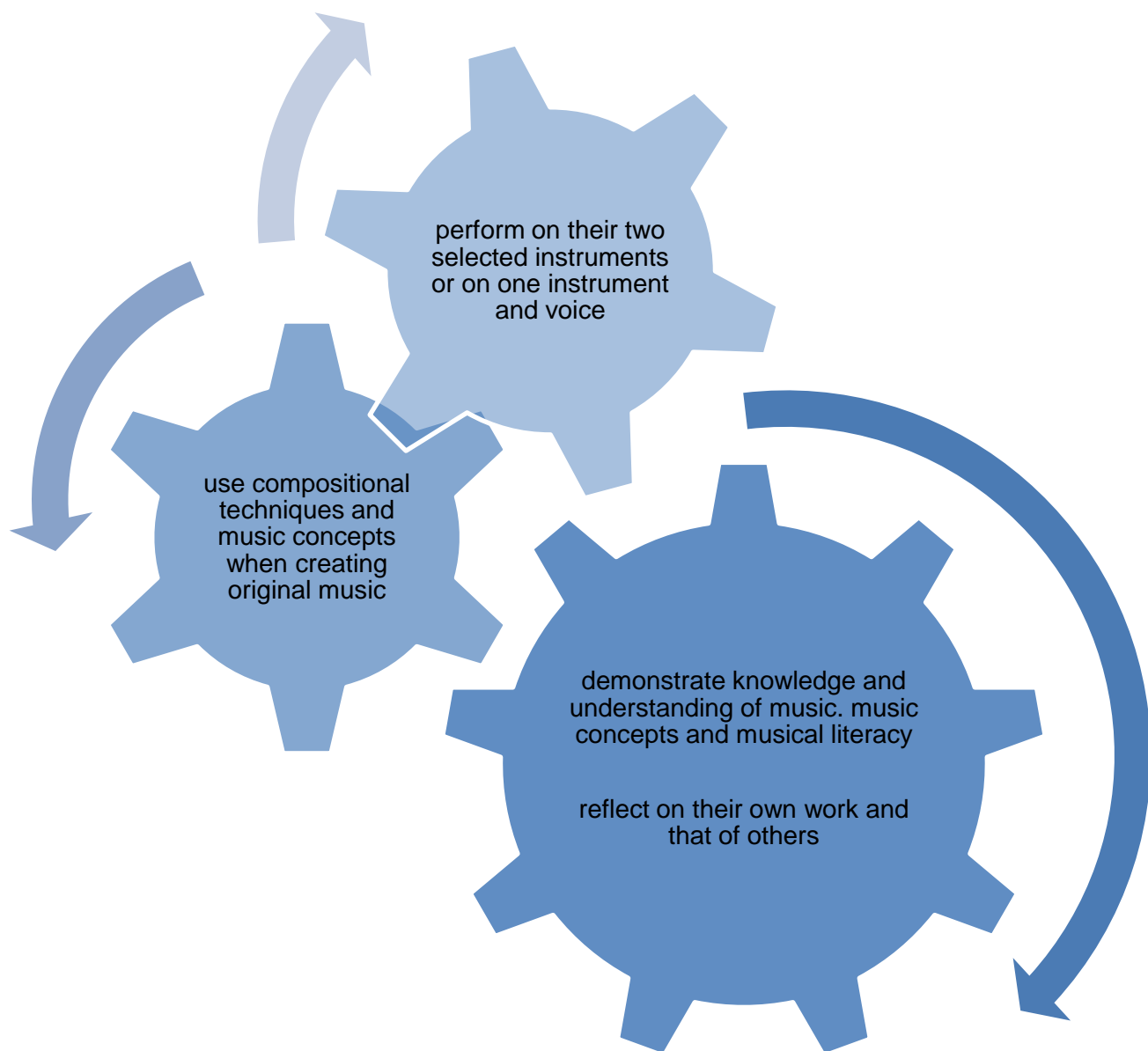
Using technology can be a valuable resource and one approach which can help when creating inclusive learning. Combining these with innovative and teaching approaches can also help the development of musical creativity. Further guidance on how technology can support music learning, teaching and assessment is given in the Unit Support Notes.

This Course has been developed to reflect Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles. The approaches to learning and teaching developed by individual centres should reflect these principles. Learners should spend less time passively listening to the teacher; instead learners, often working together, should talk, listen, write, read or reflect on a topic while the teacher acts as a facilitator.

A wide range of teaching methodologies should be used in the delivery of the Course. These could include whole-class or direct teaching opportunities. These could be balanced by using activity-based learning activities such as peer teaching, individual and group work tasks, performances and/or presentations and problem-based learning to develop learners practical skills.

Throughout their learning teachers/lecturers could encourage learners to reflect on their learning, using for example pupil-generated questions for reflection. These features will be assessed through a combination of Unit and Course assessment.

It is expected that, at this level, learners will already be familiar and have a secure understanding of the mandatory music concepts at National 3 level.



The skills and underpinning knowledge that learners will develop in this qualification are based on developing their understanding of level-specific music concepts and related music literacy. These skills are developed and consolidated across the full range of learning experiences in the Units within the Course. A table of the mandatory Music Concepts and musical literacy for this Course is provided at the end of the National 4 Added Value Unit, Music Performance.

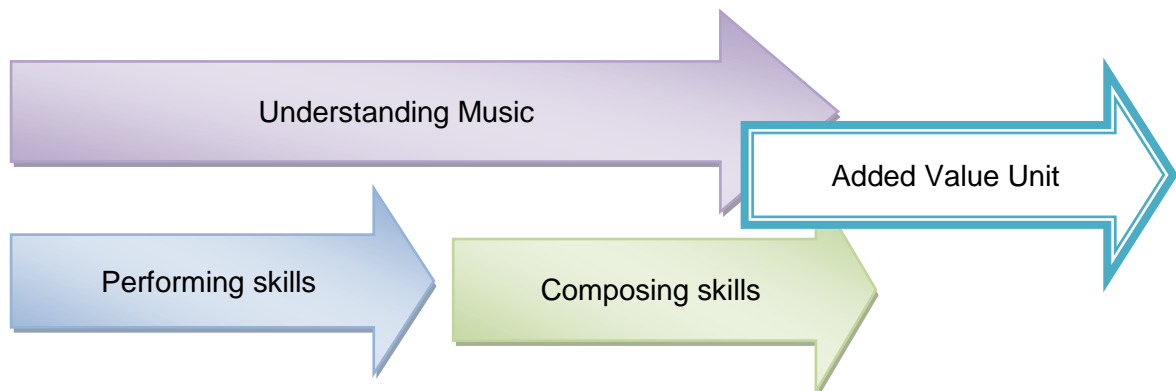
Learning about Scotland and Scottish culture will enrich the learners' learning experience and help them to develop the skills for learning, life and work they will need to prepare them for taking their place in a diverse, inclusive and participative society. Where there are opportunities to contextualise approaches to learning and teaching to Scottish contexts, teachers and lecturers should do this.

### **Sequencing and delivery — Units and the Course**

Centres should be aware that there are many different ways of delivering the National 4 Music Course. The following information provides some advice on possible approaches to developing learning and teaching approaches for the Course:

There are four mandatory Units in the Music National 4 Course including the Added Value Unit. The level of demand in each Unit corresponds with the [Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework at level 4](#).

The Units can be delivered in any order. Although they may be delivered sequentially or concurrently, an integrated approach to delivery is best for promoting effective learning as shown below.



All of the Units in the Course include practical learning activities allowing learners to integrate and apply their knowledge of music concepts and music literacy in a range of contexts. Learners will listen to a variety of music during the Course and will develop discriminatory awareness of a range of music styles and music concepts. These concepts will underpin the study and exploration of music across the Course.

The concepts for the Music Courses are categorised under the following broad headings:

- ◆ styles
- ◆ harmony and melody
- ◆ rhythm and tempo
- ◆ texture, structure and form
- ◆ timbre and dynamics

The Course could be delivered in a variety of learning and teaching ways. In some cases learners may also choose to complete Units on a free-standing basis.

Performing activities in the Course provide opportunities for learners use on-going practice and rehearsal to improve the quality of their technical and performance skills. They may provide useful opportunities for shared listening experiences and may also be used a stimulus for composing activities.

When composing or creating their own original music, learners should be encouraged to investigate the different ways composers develop ideas and music, before beginning to explore and experiment and develop their own ideas and music.

Creating music can be approached in a variety of ways, depending on the skills and abilities of each learner. For some learners this may be by generating musical ideas using a stimulus or theme to develop their ideas or through improvised playing. Other learners may benefit from using more structured creative activities and approaches through composing and arranging activities.

Whichever approach is used, learners should use their knowledge and understanding of music from across the Course when developing their own ideas for music.

### **Integration within and across Units**

A key principle of Curriculum for Excellence qualifications is that they allow learners to acquire skills, knowledge and understanding in a meaningful and integrated way. This not only assists with retention of skills so that they can be applied to new and different contexts, but it also enables delivery time to be used more efficiently, creating more time for learning. This same principle can also be applied to assessment.

This Music Course has been designed to provide opportunities for learning and teaching activities which promote integration and to create opportunities for personalisation and choice for individual learning needs and interests within teaching and learning activities. The teaching of Music readily lends itself to a variety of delivery methods, due to its focus on developing personal expression through music. A variety of integrated approaches to teaching, learning and assessment across the Units of the Course could be used to support effective teaching and learning.

Lists of permitted instruments and combinations of instruments and exemplification of appropriate levels of difficulty are available on SQA's website: [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk).

Teachers/lecturers should encourage learners to critically self-reflect on their learning across the Course. This process could help learners to see the links and interconnectivity between the individual Units in the Course. By reflecting on and encouraging them to record their thoughts and insights, learners will become progressively more able to reach informed choices and to identify opportunities for improving their skills and knowledge of music. They will also learn to more effectively discriminate the strengths and areas for improvement that exist in their creative composing work and in the performances and compositions of others.

## Developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

Teachers/lecturers should try to make learners aware of the skills knowledge and understanding that they are developing throughout the Course. By considering and using tailored teaching and learning approaches, teachers/lecturers can help learners to address and develop their skills more effectively and identify ways they might improve on them.

A variety of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work will be developed in the Course. Some examples of potential opportunities to practise or improve some these skills are provided in the following tables.

<b>Music: Performing Skills</b> <b>Music: Composing Skills</b> <b>Understanding Music</b>		
<b>3 Health and wellbeing</b>		<b>3.1 Personal learning</b>
<b>Personal learning can be developed in this and all other Units in the Course where there are approaches to plan teaching and learning experiences</b>		
<b>Reviewing</b> Evaluating the significance and value of their learning about music, and their developing technical skills and musicality	This could include reviewing personal progress, allowing teachers/lecturers and learners to identify and plan for future learning	This process can be supported by the teacher/lecturer through one or more of the following activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Recording</li><li>◆ Discussing – supported self-reflection</li><li>◆ Explaining – consolidation of learning</li><li>◆ Reporting</li><li>◆ Evaluating</li></ul>

<b>Music: Performing Skills</b> <b>Music: Composing Skills</b> <b>Understanding Music</b>		
<b>5 Thinking skills</b>	<b>5.2 Understanding</b> <b>5.3 Applying</b> <b>5.5 Creating</b>	
<b>In this approach, teaching sessions could be planned to include the following key phases</b>		
	<b>Purposes</b>	<b>Possible processes</b>
<b>Orientation</b>	Developing interest in the subject – increasing learner focus and motivation to learn. This could be supported by technology-based resources.	Introducing Explaining Discussing
<b>Structuring</b>	Clarifying thinking about the topic or subject – helps teachers/lecturers plan next steps for learning.  This approach could include individual target setting for learners.	Questioning techniques. Discussing/predicting – making connections in learning
<b>Restructuring</b>	Encouraging testing and development of ideas and replacement of old ideas/skills with new information/skills – active learning experiences	Practising Observing Measuring progress Recording
<b>Reviewing</b>	Evaluating the significance and value of learned information and skills – taking stock of personal progress and allowing teachers/lecturers and learners identify and plan for future learning	Recording Discussing – supported self-reflection Explaining – consolidation of learning Evaluating
<b>Application</b>	Applying new learning to new situations – reinforcement and consolidation of learning in other contexts	Relating to experience Discussing

# Approaches to assessment

Some suggested approaches to assessment include opportunities where learners:

- ◆ understand clearly what they are trying to learn, and what is expected of them

When Units are being completed as part of the Course, assessment should enable learners to develop skills, knowledge and understanding required for successful completion of the Course assessment.

- ◆ are given feedback about the quality of their work, and what they can do to make it better

Feedback supports learning and assessment. Teachers/lecturers should give learners accurate and regular feedback about their learning and ensure that they are actively involved in the assessment process. More specifically, teachers/lecturers should:

- ◆ clarify their expectations of their learners and offer them high-quality, timely information about their progress
- ◆ encourage the use of self-assessment ensuring feedback
- ◆ enhances learners' motivation and self-esteem

- ◆ are given advice about how to go about making improvements
- ◆ are fully involved in deciding what needs to be done next, and who can give them help if they need it

Suggested approaches to assessment should also:

- ◆ cover subject content at the appropriate level
- ◆ where appropriate, provide a balance of assessment methods and encourage alternative approaches taking account of any specific needs of their learners

A variety of approaches can be used for assessment in this Course. Some examples are provided in the section below. These are general illustrative examples covering the main forms of assessment applicable to this Course. These examples complement information in the earlier sections on teaching and learning and developing subject skills, knowledge and understanding in the Course and in the Unit Support Notes.

<b>Observation</b>	•of naturally occurring skills using an observation checklist.
<b>Product evaluation</b>	•of performances and compositions
<b>Questioning</b>	•checking underpinning knowledge of the subject
<b>Personal interviews</b>	•discussing and identifying next steps for learning

It is recommended that teacher/lecturers involve learners in the identification of assessment opportunities and build in opportunities for feedback on progress. This will ensure that learners are clear about what is expected of them. Interviews with learners could help teachers/lecturers ensure that learners understand and are working through the creative process and are supported to recognise the development of their musical and technical skills and creativity

Teaching strategies in the Course should allow learners to:

- ◆ Learn progressively and independently where appropriate
- ◆ Work co-operatively with others
- ◆ Work creatively and purposefully in a well-ordered manner and supportive atmosphere
- ◆ Develop their musical and technical skills and their knowledge and understanding of music
- ◆ Produce imaginative and creative compositions and music
- ◆ Be involved in self - assessment developing their thinking and personal awareness
- ◆ Be inspired and motivated during tasks and activities
- ◆ Adopt a positive attitude to, and take pride in, their work
- ◆ Make links with their existing knowledge and experience of music and other areas of the curriculum

The [National Assessment Resource](#) will support teachers in developing a shared understanding of standards and expectations.

A range of different approaches can be used for assessment in Music, and some examples of these include:

- ◆ using personal profiles and individualised target setting
- ◆ using logbooks and structured reflection/evaluation to support learning
- ◆ helping learners to develop effective practise and rehearsal routines
- ◆ structured class activities and on-line aural listening quizzes
- ◆ individual and/or small group creative tasks and learning activities
- ◆ using peer and self-review feedback



- ◆ using mind-maps or visual prompts to show interconnectivity across learning about music
- ◆ investigation of music styles
- ◆ listening to and/or attending the performances of other learners and musicians

### **Added value**

Courses from National 4 to Advanced Higher include assessment of added value. At National 4 the added value will be assessed in the Added Value Unit. At National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher, the added value will be assessed in the Course assessment.

Information given in the *Course Specification* and the *Added Value Unit Specification* about the assessment of added value is mandatory.

Learners will draw on, extend and apply the skills they have learned during the Course in the Added Value Unit.

In the Course, added value will be assessed through a performance. The performance will be based on performing an agreed programme of music. It will be underpinned by knowledge and understanding of music. It will be sufficiently open and flexible to allow for personalisation and choice.

When Units are being completed as part of the Music Course, assessment should enable learners to develop skills, knowledge and understanding required for successful completion of the Added Value Unit assessment.

## **Combining assessment across Units**

Where Units are delivered as part of a Course, it is important to ensure that Units prepare learners for Course assessment in terms of the skills; knowledge and understanding which they help develop.

Approaches to the delivery of Units as part of a Course may differ from approaches to delivering the same Unit when it is being delivered on a freestanding basis.

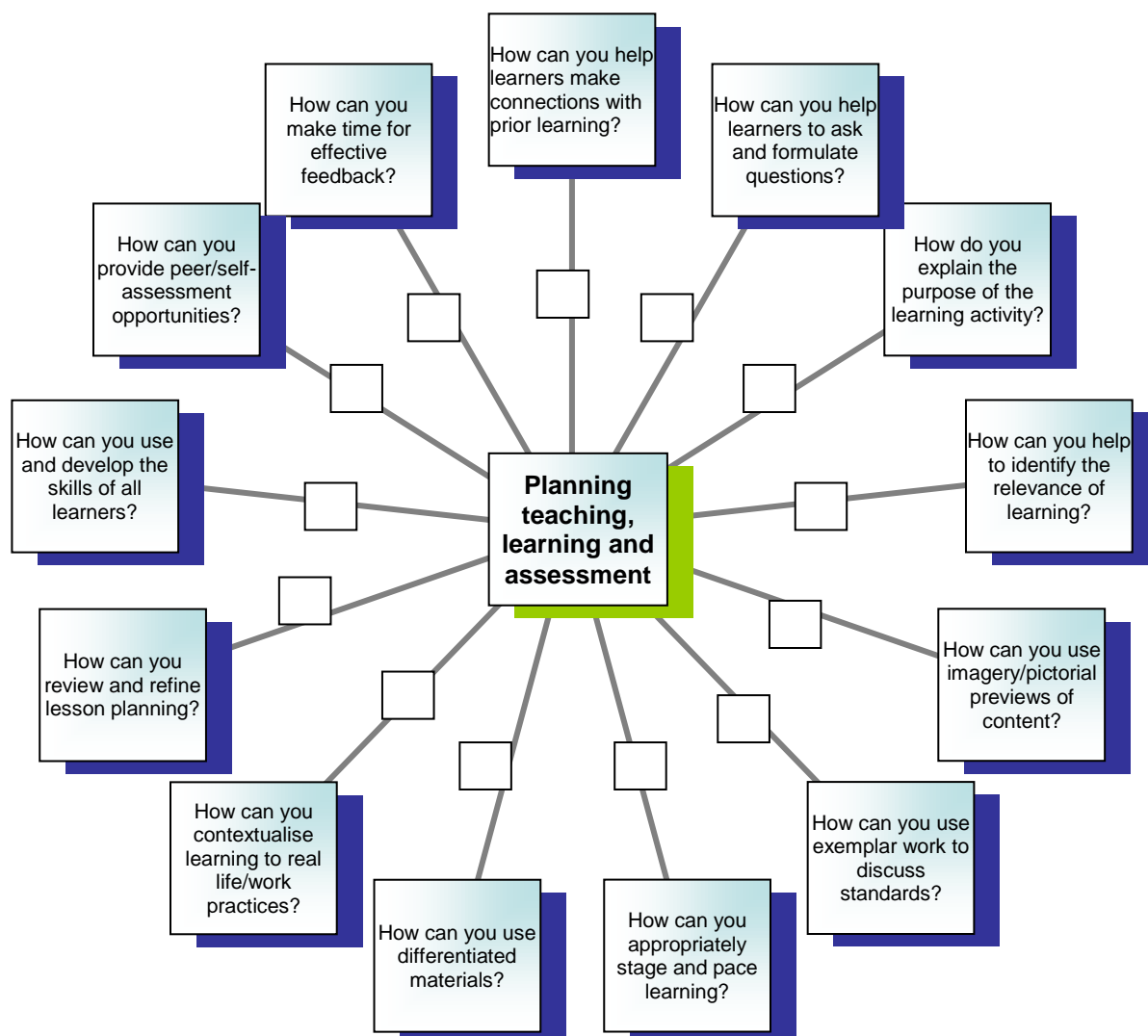
Where Units are delivered on a free-standing basis, teachers/lecturers will have more flexibility to develop approaches to delivering and assessing the Units as these will not need to be related to Course assessment.

If Units are being delivered as part of a Course, teachers/lecturers should consider the benefits of using an integrated approach to teaching, learning and assessment.

Integrating assessment minimises repetition, allows more time for learning across the Course as a whole and allows centres to manage the assessment process more efficiently. Using an integrated approach to assessment will also:

- ◆ enrich the assessment process for the learner and the assessor by bringing together elements of different Units
- ◆ make more sense to the learner and avoid over-assessment and/or duplication of assessment

- ♦ allow for evidence for particular Units to be drawn from a range of activities, for example linking and integrating knowledge and understanding of composers works within performance to listening activities in the Understanding Music Unit
- ♦ provide a rigorous approach to the assessment process



This Course could provide some opportunities for integrating learning and assessment for example by performing to the class group as a creative listening exercise and by developing learner's technical and musical performing skills through playing their own compositions.

When assessment is combined across Units, teachers/lecturers should take particular care to track learners' achievement of the Outcomes and Assessment Standards. Tracking will assist with identifying any necessary reassessment and will also provide evidence of achievement for those learners who do not achieve the whole Course.

Approaches to the assessment of individual Units are given in the *Unit Support Notes*.

# Equality and inclusion

Music Courses are practical and experiential. Learners in this Course will develop their understanding of music and music concepts through a variety of activities including listening. They will also use a variety of sensory skills when performing on their selected instruments or instrument and voice. For this reason, some learners may face difficulties in demonstrating their ability to:

- ◆ create and perform music
- ◆ evaluate and appreciate music particularly in distinguishing and recognising music concepts and sounds

There are many possible adjustments which could be made to support learners in this Course. These include providing support to assist visually impaired learners reading music, using assistive technologies to support performance, and providing support to allow hearing impaired learners to sense rhythm of accompaniment.

The Course structure includes opportunities for personalisation and choice, for example it includes a wide range of instrument choices which could be helpful when selecting instruments for performing by physically impaired learners.

In the Course, the evaluation and appreciation of performances of music requires learners to be able to evaluate both technical aspects of the performing skills, but also musicality. This sense of the music and the emotions and opinions evoked through sensitivity to rhythm, melody, timbre and/or dynamics have to be communicated by the learner.

Evidence of competence in the Units and in the Course can be demonstrated in a variety of ways, and centres may be able to use a range of assessment arrangements to support learners, for example:

- ◆ use of headphones
- ◆ adjustment to volume, and CDs incorporating extra time

Adjustments could also be made to assessment protocols and procedures to help reduce stress for learners with autistic spectrum disorders in this Course.

It is recognised that centres have their own duties under equality and other legislation and policy initiatives. The guidance given in these *Course Support Notes* is designed to sit alongside these duties but is specific to the delivery and assessment of the Course.

It is important that centres are aware of and understand SQA's assessment arrangements for disabled learners, and those with additional support needs, when making requests for adjustments to published assessment arrangements. Centres will find more guidance on this in the series of publications on Assessment Arrangements on SQA's website: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html)

# Appendix 1: Reference documents

The following reference documents will provide useful information and background.

- ◆ Assessment Arrangements (for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs) — various publications are available on SQA's website at: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html).
- ◆ [\*Building the Curriculum 4: Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work\*](#)
- ◆ [\*Building the Curriculum 5: A framework for assessment\*](#)
- ◆ [\*Course Specifications\*](#)
- ◆ [\*Design Principles for National Courses\*](#)
- ◆ [\*Guide to Assessment\* \(June 2008\)](#)
- ◆ [\*Overview of Qualification Reports\*](#)
- ◆ Principles and practice papers for curriculum areas
- ◆ [\*SCQF Handbook: User Guide\*](#) (published 2009) and SCQF level descriptors (to be reviewed during 2011 to 2012): [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/4595.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/4595.html)
- ◆ [\*SQA Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work\*](#)
- ◆ [\*Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work: Using the Curriculum Tool\*](#)

# Administrative information

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**Published:** April 2012 (version 1.0)

**Superclass:** to be advised

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## History of changes to Course Support Notes

Course details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date

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Note: You are advised to check SQA's website (**[www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)**) to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version.

## **Unit Support Notes — Music: Performing Skills (National 4)**



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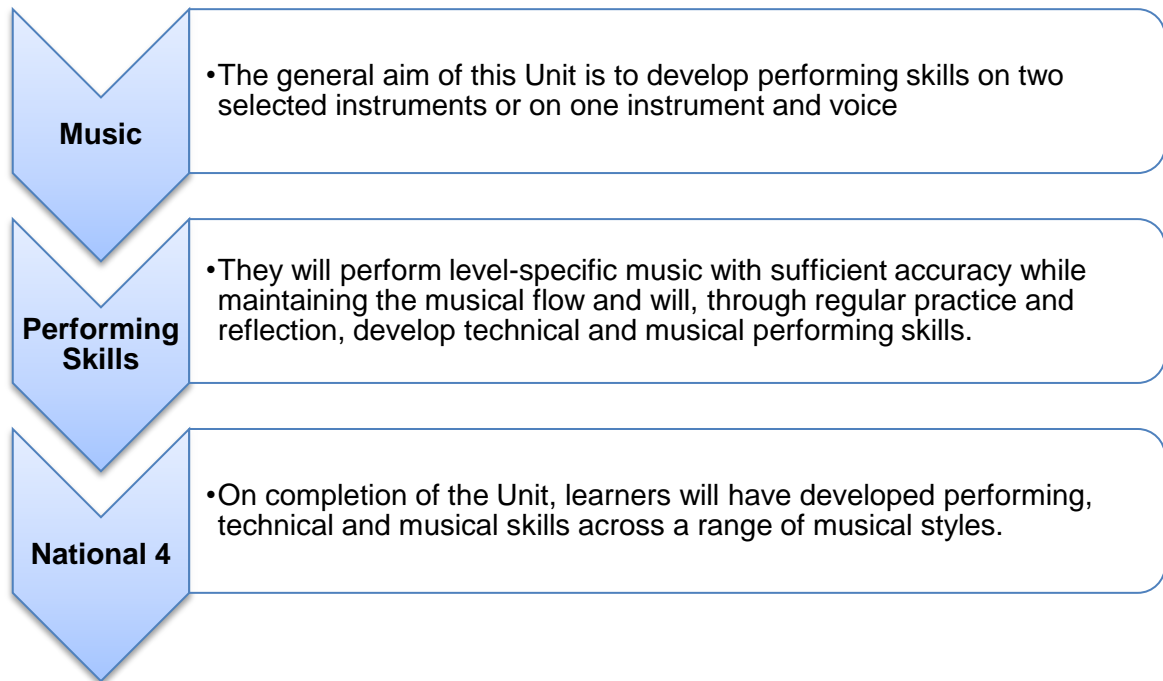
# Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the *Music: Performing Skills* (National 4) Unit. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering this Unit. They should be read in conjunction with:

- ◆ the Unit Specification
- ◆ the Course Specification
- ◆ the Course Support Notes
- ◆ appropriate assessment support materials

# General guidance on the Unit

## Aims



The Unit can be delivered:

- ♦ as a free-standing Unit
- ♦ as a component of the National 4 Music Course

## Progression into this Unit

Entry to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners would benefit from having some or all of the following skills and knowledge before starting this Unit:

- ♦ some experience of performing on a musical instrument or singing

Learners could also have attained the skills and knowledge required by one or more of the following or by equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

- ♦ National 3 Music Course or relevant component Units

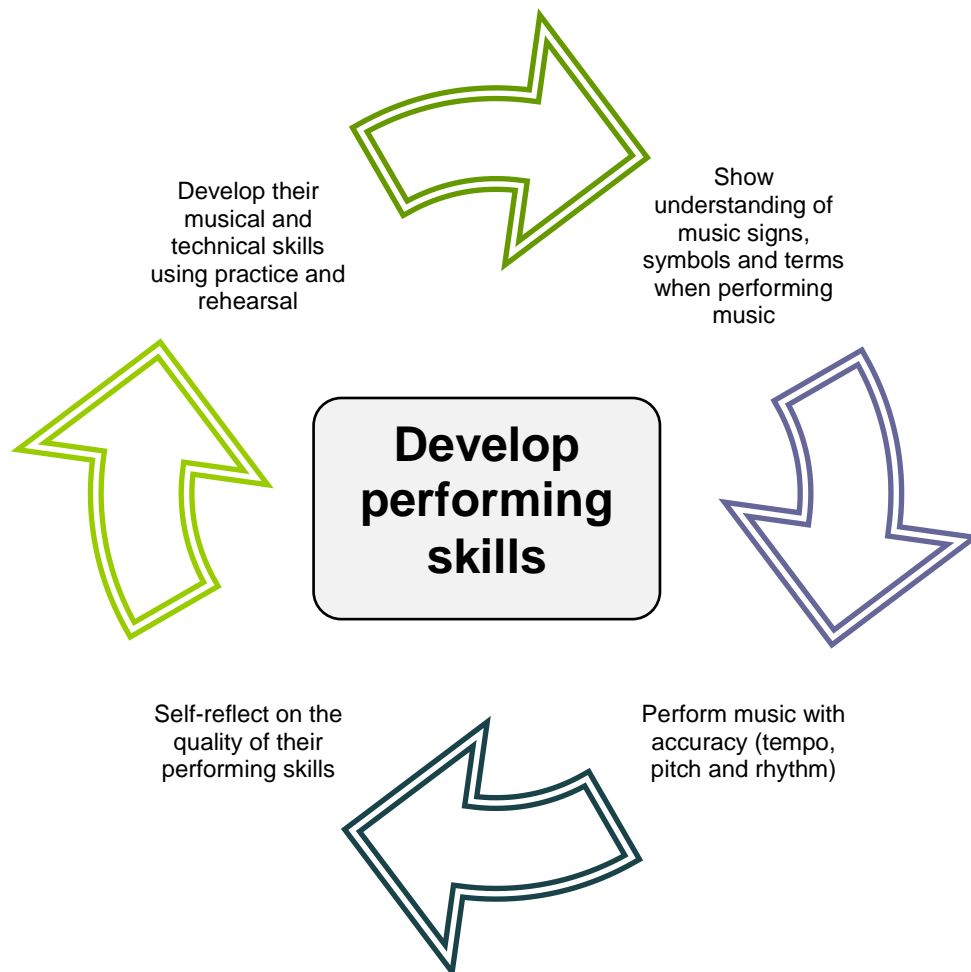


## Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Unit

Additional information about skills, knowledge and understanding is given in the National 3 Music Course Support Notes.

If this Unit is being delivered on a free-standing basis, teachers and lecturers are free to select the skills, knowledge, understanding and contexts which are most appropriate for delivery in their centres.

In this Unit learners will:



## Progression from this Unit

Progression opportunities for learners will vary. They may include further study in a related subject area at the same SQCF level, providing greater breadth to the learner's achievements. Alternatively they could include progression onto the same Course at a higher SCQF level. On completion of this Unit, learners could consider moving on to:

- ◆ other Music Units at SQCF level 4 or SCQF level 5
- ◆ other Music and related SQA qualifications at the same or next SCQF level, for example the National 5 Music Course

# Approaches to learning and teaching

This Unit can be delivered using a wide variety of learning and teaching approaches. They could include, for example:

- ♦ teacher/lecturer demonstration of instrumental and performing skills
- ♦ informal performing either to the teacher/lecturer or to others in the class
- ♦ teacher/lecturer-supported peer review and self-review processes
- ♦ visits from practising musicians and performers

Where practicable, learners should have the opportunity to hear and see live performances. Links with musicians, bands, choirs, orchestras etc. at local and national levels can be an inspiration for learners. The use of digital recordings of performances using the internet can be a great learning tool too.

Creating performing opportunities is to be actively encouraged. In class, mini concerts to classmates can be a great way to perform to an audience, and to develop strategies in a live performance situation. These performances would also allow for self and peer reflection to take place.

At this level teachers/lecturers should be helping learners to manage their learning.

A suggested teaching approach is one which combines traditional face-to-face classroom methods with technology-based approaches to support teaching, learning and assessment. This approach could be used to create a more integrated approach for teachers/lecturers and learners.

It could for example, incorporate self and peer review checklists and activities for developing performing skills, showcase examples of musicians work and performances of a variety of music styles and forms. It could also be used to help to reinforce learners understanding and familiarity with music concepts and music literacy. Through the use of interactive quizzes, aural music excerpts and related listening activities, learners could also make connections between music signs, symbols and terms.

## Developing performing skills

Creativity skills can be developed in this Unit in a number of ways. Some examples include:

- ♦ selecting appropriate keyboard sounds for use when performing which help create the 'mood' for the performance
- ♦ creating their own fills for drum kit
- ♦ working out a solo with a guitar or bass guitar
- ♦ selecting pieces of music

Teachers/lecturers should support learners to consider their practice and rehearsal approaches and to identify where improvements could be made. In the Unit learners will be involved in developing their performing skills with regard to tempo, pitch, rhythm and musical flow.

They will evidence these skills when exploring and performing music in a variety of styles and of relatively short duration throughout the Unit. The level of challenge of this music is detailed in the table below.

Learners may also perform pieces from current or past syllabuses (including graded anthologies) at appropriate grade levels in ABRSM, Trinity Guildhall, Rock school, London College of Music and Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS) Scottish Traditional Music Grade Exams. It is the responsibility of centres to provide documentary evidence to support the grade level as presented.

Detailed below is a list of levels in National Qualifications in Music related to their counterparts in ABRSM, Trinity Guildhall, Rockschoo, and London College of Music.

<b>National Qualifications</b>	<b>ABRSM, Trinity Guildhall, Rockschoo, London College of Music</b>
<b>National 3</b>	Grade 1 and above
<b>National 4</b>	Grade 2 and above
<b>National 5</b>	Grade 3 and above
<b>Higher</b>	Grade 4 and above
<b>Advanced Higher</b>	Grade 5 and above

Learners can choose to perform individually or as part of a group in this Unit. They can perform any music which meets the required standards of challenge for this SCQF level. Where appropriate, backing tracks and accompaniments can be used when performing.

Learners should regularly reflect on their own work and record their progress.

When demonstrating solo performing skills, learners can use a variety of music. These could include for example:

- ◆ an unaccompanied solo
- ◆ an accompanied solo
- ◆ a piece of music where the learner has a substantial solo part

A group performance of music is defined as consisting of two or more learners including the candidate. Where a learner is demonstrating their musical skill within a large group or ensemble, the teacher/lecturer should be able to clearly identify the individual's part and contribution to the piece.

To help learners make best use of their practise time, a good practise regime should be established.

This could include learning how to:

- ◆ tune the instrument
- ◆ use a metronome to practise at a variety of speeds — free metronomes can be accessed on the internet

- ◆ record yourself playing to help hear which parts of the music need further practise
- ◆ break difficult sections into small chunks, practising slowly and repeatedly, and then gradually build the tempo back up again
- ◆ have a variety of music to practise
- ◆ practise counting rests as well as playing notes
- ◆ make a practise timetable for each week
- ◆ set targets in each practise session
- ◆ keep a progress diary to track improvements
- ◆ listen to other professional recordings of performances on your instrument
- ◆ perform in front of other people
- ◆ be aware of assessment/performance dates and prepare in advance for them
- ◆ take good care of your instrument and music
- ◆ ask your teacher/lecturer for help when needed

Teachers/lecturers should observe and record learner progress and achievement throughout the Unit whenever evidence of competence is demonstrated. Observation checklists can be used to track learners' achievement. Digital recordings of performances and rehearsal could also be used to support and record skills development in this Unit.

The categories in the observational checklists should be based on providing comment on the following areas of technical control and musicality:

- ◆ overall technical accuracy — including pitch and rhythm, harmony/melody
- ◆ holistic ability to communicate the composers' intentions for the pieces — including tempo/fluency, timbre/dynamics and musical skill

For example: musical, technical skills and creativity could be developed in the *Music: Performing Skills* Unit as described below.

<b>Keyboard</b>		
	<b>Musical skills/creativity</b>	<b>Technical skills</b>
<b>National 4</b>	Choice of accompaniment style, voice/tone	Single finger chords Major/minor Extended demands on melody and rhythm (compared to National 3)

In this Unit, learners have to review their music and technical skills and identify strengths and areas for improvement in their performing skills. At this level, teachers/lecturers should provide support and guidance to help learners objectively reflect on their skills, using for example questions or prompts to guide discussion.

## Developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

The table below highlights some opportunities to develop these skills during this Unit.

<b>3 Health and wellbeing</b>	
3.1 Personal learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Identifying next steps for learning</li><li>◆ Identifying personal strengths and areas for improvement in their performing skills and work</li></ul>

<b>5 Thinking skills</b>	
5.3 Applying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Applying musical and technical performing skills and understanding of music concepts and level-specific music literacy to realise the composers intentions for the piece</li></ul>
5.5 Creating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Performing music in solo and/or group settings</li></ul>

Information about developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work in this Unit is given in the relevant Course Support Notes.

# Approaches to assessment and gathering evidence

Assessors should use their professional judgement, subject knowledge and experience, and understanding of their learners, to determine the most appropriate ways to generate evidence and the conditions and contexts in which they are used

Assessments must be valid, reliable and fit for purpose for the subject and level, and should fit in with learning and teaching approaches. Teachers and lecturers should also use inclusive approaches to assessment, taking account of the specific needs of their learners.

Assessment approaches and associated tasks used by centres should:

- ◆ cover subject content at the appropriate level
- ◆ use content, resources and assessment materials that recognise the achievements and contributions of different groups
- ◆ where appropriate, provide a balance of assessment methods and permit alternative approaches

In this Unit, learners will provide evidence of:

- ◆ a sufficient level of musical and technical control related to pitch and rhythm, tempo and musical flow
- ◆ performing on their two selected instruments, or one instrument and voice displaying appropriate and consistent tempo and conveying the mood and character of the music
- ◆ reflecting on their performing skills

Additional exemplification of assessment is provided in the *National Assessment Resource*.

Some suggested methods of gathering evidence for this Unit are detailed below.

Performance evidence is required for this Unit. The work could be assessed in different ways depending on the preferences of centres and learners as all essential Evidence Requirements for the Unit are covered.

A continuous assessment approach is recommended for this Unit. Performance evidence could be recorded by the teacher/lecturer using an observational checklist, or by digitally recording learners performing pieces of music individually or in groups. Where digital recordings are used as assessment evidence, these should be able to be played using suitable digital formats.

Assessment of learners can be carried out at any point during teaching and learning.

Whatever approach is used, centres should carefully consider its relative benefits to the wider student learning experience and consider its benefits in preparing learners for future study.

When developing their performing skills on their two selected instruments or on instrument and voice, learners may work either individually or in groups. Regular practice and rehearsal time will allow learners to build up their performing experience and help them master technical control of their two instrument(s), or instrument and voice. A list of approved instruments for this Course is provided on SQA's website: [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)

During this time, teachers/lecturers should observe the learners skills development informally and formally and offer learners constructive feedback, helping them to identify areas for improvement in their performing.

All of the above activities and approaches can be differentiated in order to support the needs of a variety of learners.

# Equality and inclusion

There are many possible adjustments which could be made to support learners in this Course. These include providing support to assist visually impaired learners reading music, using assistive technologies to support performance, and providing support to allow hearing impaired learners to sense rhythm of accompaniment.

The Unit includes opportunities for personalisation and choice, for example it includes a wide range of instrument choices which could be helpful when selecting instruments for performing by physically impaired learners.

Evidence of competence in the Units and in the Course can be demonstrated in a variety of ways, and centres may be able to use a range of assessment arrangements to support learners.

Adjustments could be made to assessment protocols and procedures to help reduce stress for learners with autistic spectrum disorders in this Course.

It is recognised that centres have their own duties under equality and other legislation and policy initiatives. The guidance given in these *Course Support Notes* is designed to sit alongside these duties but is specific to the delivery and assessment of the Course.

It is important that centres are aware of and understand SQA's assessment arrangements for disabled learners, and those with additional support needs, when making requests for adjustments to published assessment arrangements. Centres will find more guidance on this in the series of publications on Assessment Arrangements on SQA's website: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html)



# Appendix 1: Reference documents

The following reference documents will provide useful information and background.

- ◆ Assessment Arrangements (for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs) — various publications on SQA's website: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14976.html>
- ◆ [\*Building the Curriculum 4: Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work\*](#)
- ◆ [\*Building the Curriculum 5: A framework for assessment\*](#)
- ◆ [\*Course Specifications\*](#)
- ◆ [\*Design Principles for National Courses\*](#)
- ◆ [\*Guide to Assessment\* \(June 2008\)](#)
- ◆ [\*Overview of Qualification Reports\*](#)
- ◆ Principles and practice papers for curriculum areas
- ◆ Research Report 4 — Less is More: Good Practice in Reducing Assessment Time
- ◆ Coursework Authenticity — a Guide for Teachers and Lecturers
- ◆ [\*SCQF Handbook: User Guide\* \(published 2009\)](#) and SCQF level descriptors (to be reviewed during 2011 to 2012): [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/4595.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/4595.html)
- ◆ SQA Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work
- ◆ Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work: Using the Curriculum Tool
- ◆ Template and Guidance for Unit Assessment Exemplification
- ◆ SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools
- ◆ SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education
- ◆ SQA e-assessment web page: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/5606.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/5606.html)

# Administrative information

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**Published:** April 2012 (version 1.0)

**Superclass:** to be advised

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## History of changes to Unit Support Notes

Unit details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date

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## **Unit Support Notes — Music: Composing Skills (National 4)**



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

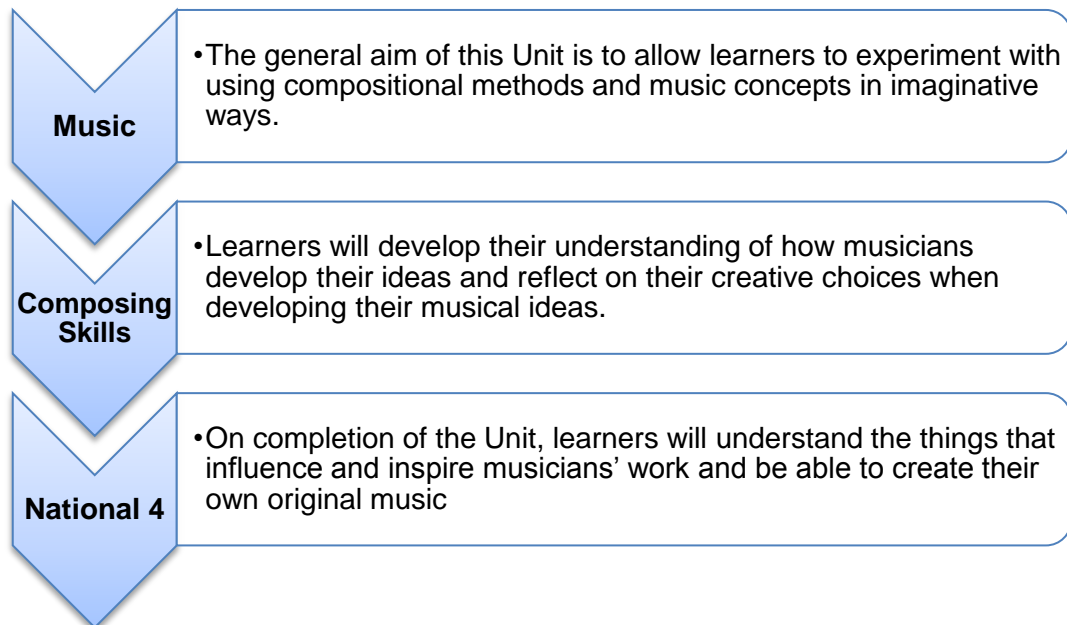
# Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the *Music: Composing Skills* (National 4) Unit. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering this Unit. They should be read in conjunction with:

- ◆ the Unit Specification
- ◆ the Course Specification
- ◆ the Course Support Notes
- ◆ appropriate assessment support materials

# General guidance on the Unit

## Aims



The Unit can be delivered:

- ♦ as a free-standing Unit
- ♦ as a component of the National 4 Music Course

## Progression into this Unit

Entry to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners would benefit from having some or all of the following skills and knowledge before starting this Unit:

- ♦ some prior experience of creating their own music and/or performing music

Learners could also have attained the skills and knowledge required by one or more of the following or by equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

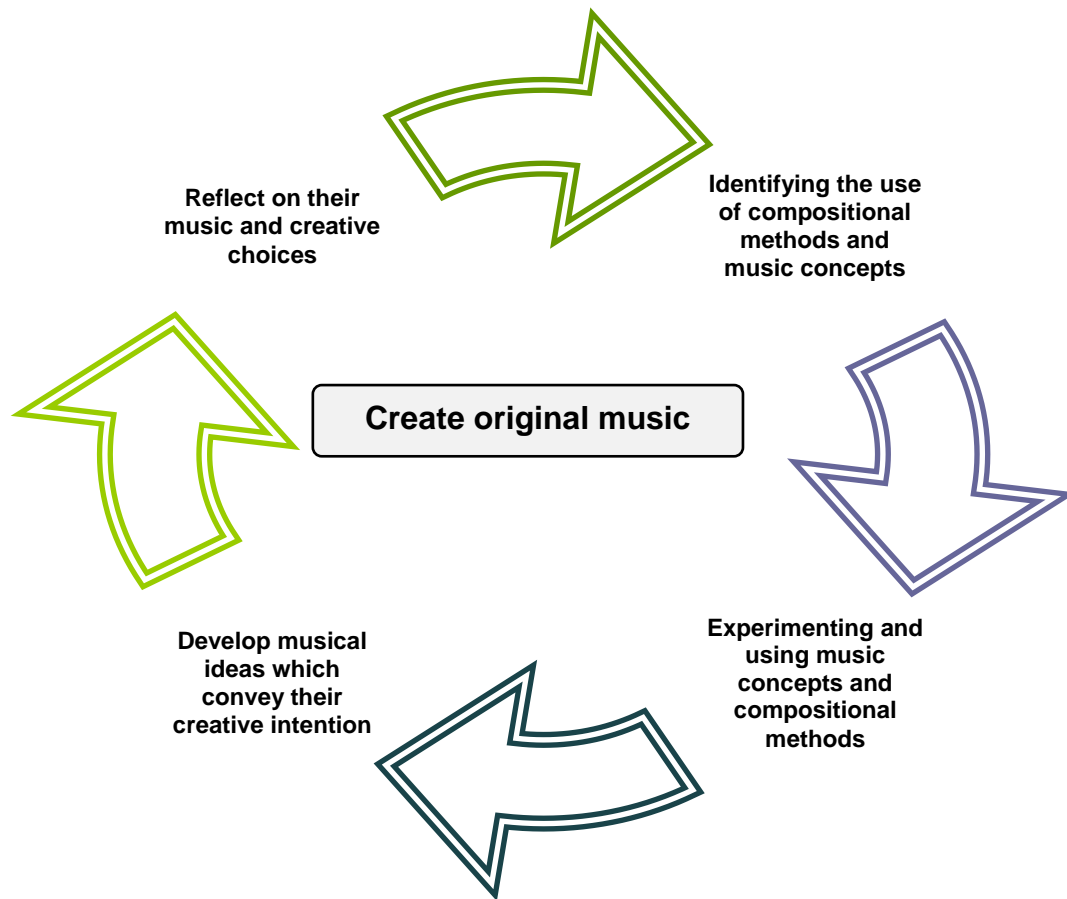
- ♦ National 3 Music Course or relevant component Units

## Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Unit

Additional information about skills, knowledge and understanding is provided in the National 4 Music Course Support Notes.

If this Unit is being delivered on a free-standing basis, teachers and lecturers are free to select the skills, knowledge, understanding and contexts which are most appropriate for delivery in their centres.

In this Unit, learners will:



## Progression from this Unit

Progression opportunities for learners will vary. They may include further study in a related subject area at the same SCQF level, providing greater breadth to the learner's achievements. Alternatively they could include progression onto the same Course at a higher SCQF level. On completion of this Unit, learners could consider moving onto:

- ♦ other Music Units at SCQF level 4
- ♦ other Music and related SQA qualifications at the same or next SCQF level, for example the National 5 Music Course

# Approaches to learning and teaching

This Unit can be delivered using a wide variety of learning and teaching approaches. They could include, for example:

- ♦ teacher/lecturer demonstration of composing skills
- ♦ performing music compositions either to the teacher/lecturer or to others in the class
- ♦ teacher/lecturer-supported peer review and self-review processes
- ♦ visits from practising musicians and performers

A suggested teaching approach is using technology to support teaching, learning and assessment.

This could for example, incorporate self and peer review checklists and activities, showcase examples of composers work and different creative approaches to creating music. It could also be used to help to reinforce learners understanding and familiarity with music concepts and music literacy through the use of interactive quizzes, aural music excerpts and related activities.

At this level teachers/lecturers should be helping learners to manage their learning.

## **Developing composing skills**

Creative self-expression and experimentation are at the heart of this Unit. Throughout the teaching of this Unit, the stimulation of learners' interest and curiosity should be a prime objective. All learners should have opportunities to explore and experience music activities through improvising, arranging and composing music. At this level learners may particularly benefit from developing their own ideas using compositions and improvisations

These experiences should be practical activities where learners can build on prior musical experiences gained through the elements of listening to and/or performing music. An integrated approach makes learning relevant and meaningful to learners. Centres who are delivering this unit as a free standing unit should where possible relate activities to learners' wider musical experience.

During the Unit learners will develop their ideas by experimenting with sound through composing/improvising/arranging for a variety of purposes. These include developing:

- ♦ musicality through experimentation with sound
- ♦ the ability to organise and produce musical ideas using appropriate skills and techniques

Throughout the Unit learners should be introduced to a variety of approaches which can be used for creating music and to a variety of creative stimuli which will inspire learners' creativity. Stimuli could include:

- ◆ audio/live performances in a range of genres
- ◆ workshops exploring rhythm using improvisation
- ◆ pictures, paintings, photographs and films, responding to mood, colour, shape

Stimuli can be explored in a range of contexts including:

- ◆ working with others and sharing ideas
- ◆ interdisciplinary projects

Learners should be introduced to a variety of approaches used for creating music by the teacher/lecturer. This could include structured group activities creating musical ideas through improvising or composing music. At this level, learning activities should be based on structured short activities and assignments prepared by the teacher/lecturer which help learners to work through the creative process.

The following suggested approaches could be used at this level:

- ◆ improvising short melodies and experimenting by playing along to a backing track
- ◆ creating original music for a story or short film clip or animation
- ◆ taking a song or part of a song and adapting it by changing the melody and/or chords and/or rhythm
- ◆ making up a rap to go along to a rhythmic backing selected from a keyboard or computer programme
- ◆ using a chord structure, for example of a 12-bar blues, as a structure to help learners improvise melodic question and answers using notes of the blues scale
- ◆ making up a jingle for an advert using ostinati

At this level, learners may gain particular benefit from developing their creativity through small group working approaches before moving on to more independent ways of working. Teachers/lecturers should help learners to scaffold their learning and to create learning activities that are designed to build on any relevant prior learning and/or skills.

The Unit allows scope for learners to develop their ideas and create their music in a range of ways. Learners can, for example, choose to develop their ideas for music either individually or as part of a small group. This process could include using music technology in creative ways. Learners can experiment, develop and refine their creative ideas using a wide range of creative software packages. Learners can also reflect on and review progress by recording their ideas and then listening to them. This might include creating ideas for music using live performing or playing, music technology or combinations of these.

Teachers/lecturers should encourage learners to consider different approaches that are used by musicians when composing and creating music. There is no minimum overall length required for the piece(s) of music. Teachers/lecturers should make learners aware that they must demonstrate some development of



their musical ideas Learners should be made aware of the success criteria for this Unit.

However at this level teachers/lecturers should help learners to scaffold their learning as they work through the creative process. This could include considering:

- ◆ structure; for example, 12-bar blues, ternary form, canon, theme and variation
- ◆ timbre; for example , effects such as distortion, and playing techniques such as pizzicato and arco
- ◆ rhythm; for example, syncopation, ostinato
- ◆ melody; for example, passing notes, ostinato
- ◆ harmony; for example using the three primary triads, walking bass
- ◆ style; rock/pop, reggae, ragtime

All of these elements can also be explored through related listening and performing activities.

Methods and strategies to encourage the development of creativity should be used when planning teaching and learning activities, for example, project-based learning, collaborative learning, co-operative learning, and active learning. The development of a learner's creative skill can also be supported through the use of questioning techniques. Questions should be used where possible to ascertain a learner's level of understanding and awareness and to help develop their creative decision making abilities. Examples of reflective questions could include:

- ◆ What things influenced your choice of music style?
- ◆ What were your reasons for using these music concepts in your work?
- ◆ How did you approach using and combining your music concepts?
- ◆ Which parts of your composition were successful?
- ◆ Why do you think these worked well?
- ◆ What would you change or do differently and why?
- ◆ Is there anything in your ideas you could explore further? — rhythm, melody, harmony, instruments, and the possible effects and playing techniques

Centres should ensure planning is an integral part of the development of all skills and learners should be made aware of the success criteria required to achieve the outcomes/Unit and be involved in the process where appropriate.

In the Unit learners should be given opportunities to develop and experiment with developing ideas for music in a variety of ways. These could include:

- ◆ composing
- ◆ improvising
- ◆ arranging

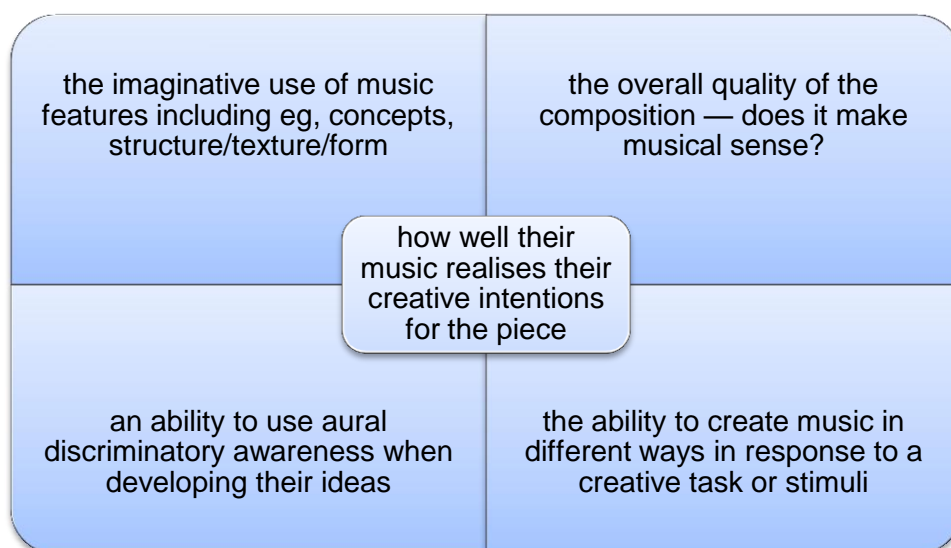
Learners should also be supported by the teacher/lecturer to review their work and to identify areas for improvement. Learners could be encouraged, for example, to consider the overall 'shape' of the music or to consider how they responded to their selected stimuli. They could also produce an associated musical score for assessment purposes. They could produce a performance plan or musical score in a variety of ways, for example:

- ◆ a written or oral account describing the structure and content of the piece(s)
- ◆ simple music notation — staff, graphic or tab as appropriate

However, care should be taken by the teacher/lecturer that the production of such a plan or score does not inhibit the creative process.

Learners will evidence their creativity when exploring and experimenting with combining and using selected music concepts in their work. This work could include working with combinations of music concepts drawn from the music concept list for the Course.

Teachers/lecturers should observe and record learner progress and achievement throughout the Unit whenever evidence of competence is demonstrated. Recordings of work done can document creative activities and progression. Observation checklists can be used to track learners' achievement. The categorisation used within the observational checklists could be based on commenting on the following:



These suggested categories include elements taken from the music concept list for this Course, allowing learners to actively apply knowledge and understanding of music and music literacy when composing and creating music.

At this level there should be evidence of some supported review and simple refinement of their creative and musical skills. Teachers/lecturers could use structured informal discussions to help learners consider how they could develop and further improve their composing skills.

Approximately three quarters of the Unit time should be spent on a variety of structured class-based activities. These should be designed to allow learners to try out a variety of approaches to creating music, either individually or in groups. The remaining time in the Unit should be used for supported reflective discussion and to gather and document formal assessment and reassessment evidence, where this is needed.

## Developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

The table below highlights some opportunities to develop these skills during this Unit.

<b>3 Health and wellbeing</b>	
3.1 Personal learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>♦ identifying areas for improvement and next steps for learning</li><li>♦ reflecting on their creative choices and decisions</li></ul>

<b>5 thinking skills</b>	
5.3 Applying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>♦ Applying their understanding how others develop their ideas and work</li><li>♦ Applying their understanding of music structure and concepts when developing ideas for music</li></ul>
5.5 Creating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>♦ Developing original ideas for music</li></ul>

Information about developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work in this Unit is given in the National 4 Music *Course Support Notes*.

# Approaches to assessment and gathering evidence

Assessors should use their professional judgement, subject knowledge and experience, and understanding of their learners, to determine the most appropriate ways to generate evidence and the conditions and contexts in which they are used.

Assessments must be valid, reliable and fit for purpose for the subject and level, and should fit in with learning and teaching approaches. Teachers and lecturers should also use inclusive approaches to assessment, taking account of the specific needs of their learners.

Assessment approaches and associated tasks used by centres should:

- ◆ cover subject content at the appropriate level
- ◆ use content, resources and assessment materials that recognise the achievements and contributions of different groups
- ◆ where appropriate, provide a balance of assessment methods and permit alternative approaches

In this Unit, learners will provide evidence of:

- ◆ understanding how compositional methods and music concepts are used by others
- ◆ imaginative development and use of music concepts and compositional methods
- ◆ reflecting on their creative decision making

Additional exemplification of assessment is provided in the *National Assessment Resource*.

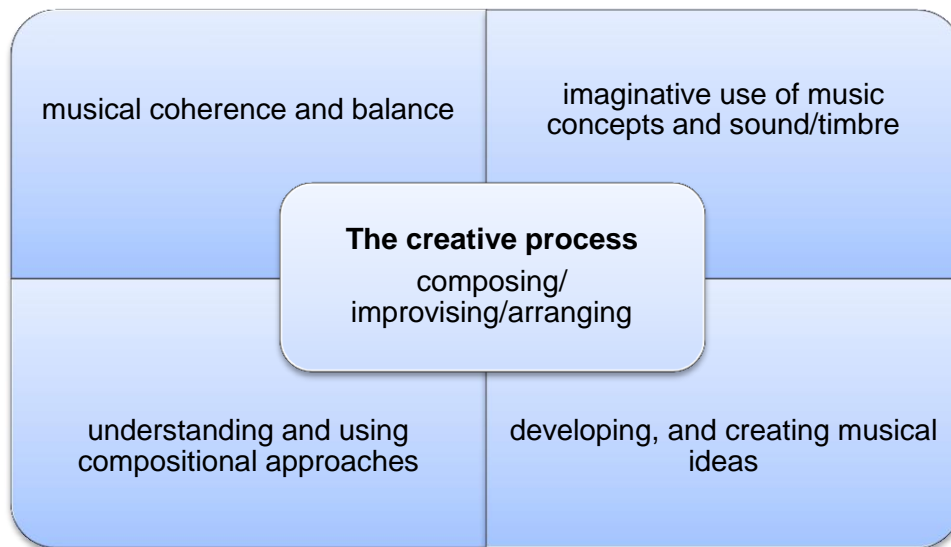
In teaching and learning there may be opportunities in the delivery of the Unit to observe learners providing evidence which satisfies completely or partially, the evidence requirements for an Outcome or all Outcomes. This is naturally occurring evidence and this evidence can be recorded as evidence using an observation checklist.

Some additional methods of gathering evidence for this Unit are detailed below.

A combination of practical and supporting writer or oral recorded evidence is required for this Unit. The work could be assessed in different ways depending on the preferences of centres and learners as all essential evidence requirements for the Unit are covered.

A continuous assessment approach is recommended for this Unit. Practical evidence could be documented by the teacher/lecturer using an observation checklist, or be evidenced by a digital recording of their music. Where digital recordings are being developed for assessment purposes, these should be played back using a suitable digital format.

The composition and supporting evidence of the creative process should demonstrate:



Supporting evidence of the creative development process may be recorded in a teacher/lecturer checklist, supported by oral questioning and discussion with individual learners. Evidence could also be captured in a blog or in a journal kept by the learner. Practical evidence could also be supplemented by a written or oral description of their creative choices and decisions in a programme note or in draft music scores or simple notated music, depending on the compositional approaches used by the learner.

Assessment of learners can be carried out at any point during teaching and learning in this Unit.

When developing their compositions and music learners may work either individually or in groups. During this time, teachers/lecturers should observe the learners skills development informally and formally and offer learners constructive feedback, helping them to identify areas for improvement in their work.

Open-ended questions should be used as these are helpful in guiding learners to think logically and helps them to identify personal strengths and areas for improvement in a more autonomous manner. Learners should also be encouraged to reflect on their own skills and to use feedback to make improvements to their work.

Learners could also create digital recordings of themselves or others in the class performing their own music compositions. All of the above activities and approaches can be differentiated in order to support the needs of a variety of learners.

Where work being presented for Unit assessment has been produced outside the classroom setting, teachers/lecturers must ensure that the work presented has been produced by the individual learner. This process is known as authentication. Additional information on authentication can be found in the SQA publication *A Guide to Assessment*.

# Equality and inclusion

There are many possible adjustments which could be made to support learners in this Course. These include providing support to assist visually impaired learners reading music, using assistive technologies to support performance, and providing support to allow hearing impaired learners to sense rhythm of accompaniment.

Evidence of competence in the Units and in the Course can be demonstrated in a variety of ways, and centres may be able to use a range of assessment arrangements to support learners.

Adjustments could also be made to assessment protocols and procedures to help reduce stress for learners with autistic spectrum disorders in this Course.

It is recognised that centres have their own duties under equality and other legislation and policy initiatives. The guidance given in these *Course Support Notes* is designed to sit alongside these duties but is specific to the delivery and assessment of the Course.

It is important that centres are aware of and understand SQA's assessment arrangements for disabled learners, and those with additional support needs, when making requests for adjustments to published assessment arrangements. Centres will find more guidance on this in the series of publications on Assessment Arrangements on SQA's website: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa//14977.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa//14977.html)

# Appendix 1: Reference documents

The following reference documents will provide useful information and background.

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- ◆ [\*Building the Curriculum 5: A framework for assessment\*](#)
- ◆ [Course Specifications](#)
- ◆ [Design Principles for National Courses](#)
- ◆ [Guide to Assessment \(June 2008\)](#)
- ◆ [Overview of Qualification Reports](#)
- ◆ Principles and practice papers for curriculum areas
- ◆ Research Report 4 — Less is More: Good Practice in Reducing Assessment Time
- ◆ Coursework Authenticity — a Guide for Teachers and Lecturers
- ◆ [SCQF Handbook: User Guide](#) (published 2009) and SCQF level descriptors (to be reviewed during 2011 to 2012): [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/4595.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/4595.html)
- ◆ SQA Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work
- ◆ Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work: Using the Curriculum Tool
- ◆ SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools
- ◆ SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education
- ◆ SQA e-assessment web page: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/5606.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/5606.html)

# Administrative information

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**Published:** April 2012 (version 1.0)

**Superclass:** to be advised

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## History of changes to Unit Support Notes

Unit details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date

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## **Unit Support Notes — Understanding Music (National 4)**



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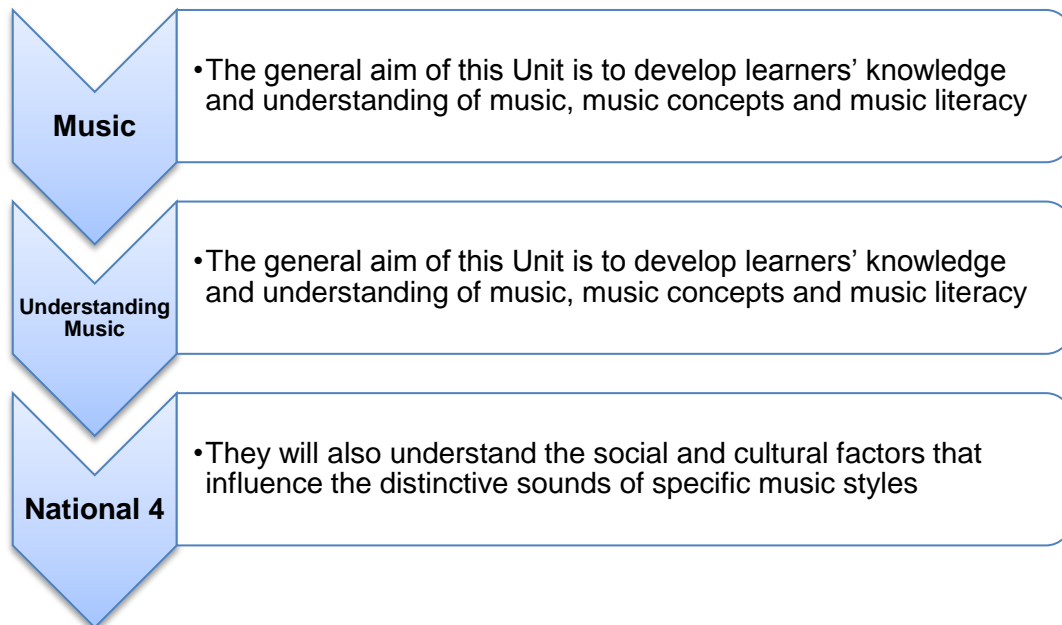
# Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the Understanding Music Unit. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering this Unit. They should be read in conjunction with:

- ◆ the *Unit Specification*
- ◆ the *Course Specification*
- ◆ the *Course Support Notes*
- ◆ appropriate assessment support materials

# General guidance on the Unit

## Aims



The Unit can be delivered:

- ♦ as a free-standing Unit
- ♦ as a component of the National 4 Music Course

## Progression into this Unit

Entry to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners would benefit from having some or all of the following skills and knowledge before starting this Unit:

- ♦ some basic aural discriminatory ability

Learners could also have attained the skills and knowledge required by one or more of the following or by equivalent qualifications and/or experience

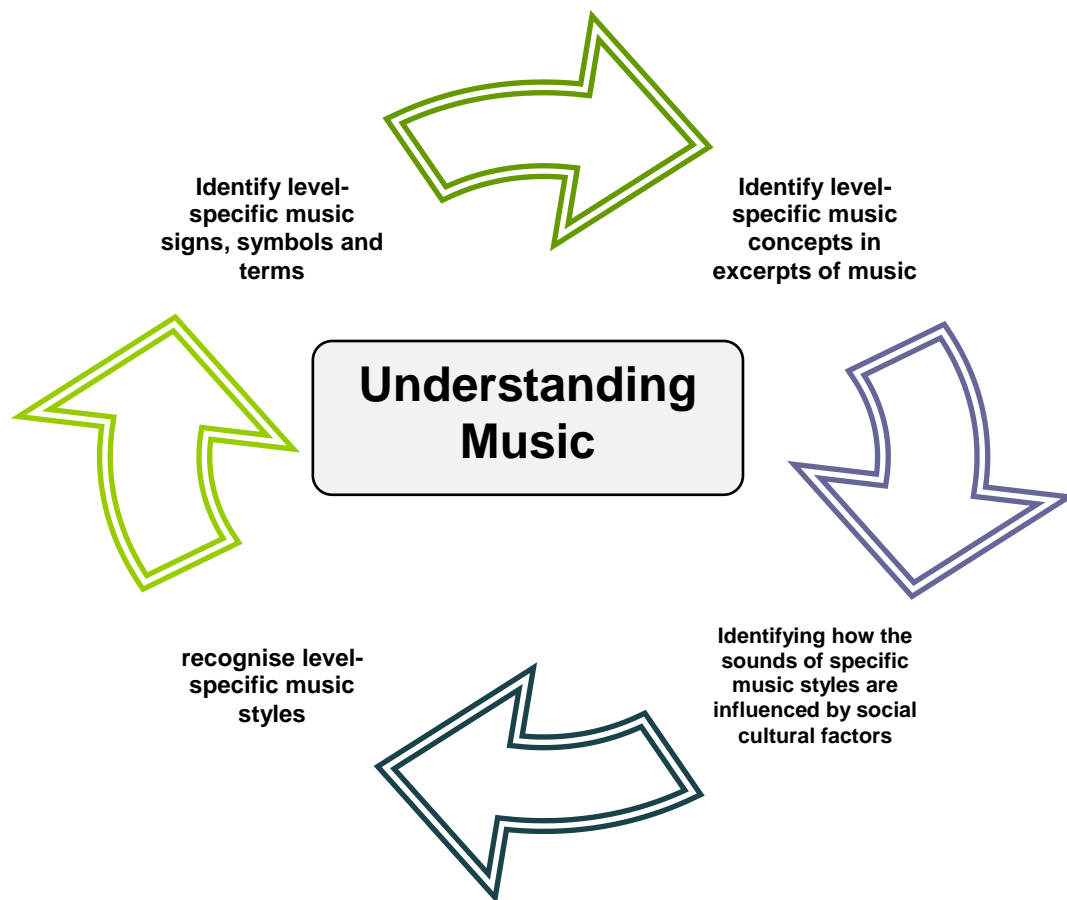
- ♦ National 3 Music Course or relevant component Units

## Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Unit

Additional information about skills, knowledge and understanding is given in the National 4 Music Course Support Notes.

If this Unit is being delivered on a free-standing basis, teachers and lecturers are free to select the skills, knowledge, understanding and contexts which are most appropriate for delivery in their centres.

In this Unit, learners will:



## Progression from this Unit

Progression opportunities for learners will vary. They may include further study in a related subject area at the same SQCF level, providing greater breadth to the learner's achievements. Alternatively they could include progression onto the same Course at a higher SCQF level. On completion of this Unit, learners could consider moving on to:

- ◆ other Music Units at SQCF level 4 or SCQF level 5
- ◆ other Music and related SQA qualifications at the same or next SCQF level, for example the National 5 Music Course

# Approaches to learning and teaching

This Unit can be delivered using a wide variety of learning and teaching approaches. They could include, for example:

- ◆ aural exercises, quizzes or listening activities
- ◆ listening to the performances of others
- ◆ teacher/lecturer-supported discussions or investigative research into the social and cultural influences on music styles and forms
- ◆ visits from practising musicians and performers

A suggested teaching approach is by using technology to support teaching, learning and assessment. This approach could be used to create a more integrated approach for teachers/lecturers and learners and could be used effectively in this Unit.

This could for example, incorporate self and peer review checklists and activities, including online aural listening exercises. It could also be used to help to reinforce learners understanding and familiarity with music concepts and music literacy through the use of interactive quizzes, aural music excerpts and related activities.

At this level teachers/lecturers should be helping learners to manage their learning.

## **Developing understanding of music**

Learners will listen to a variety of music in the Unit and will develop discriminatory awareness of a related range of music and stylistic concepts. Knowledge of these concepts underpins the study and exploration of music across the Course.

The concepts used to develop learners' understanding of music are categorised under the following headings:

- ◆ style
- ◆ harmony and melody
- ◆ rhythm and tempo
- ◆ texture, structure and form
- ◆ timbre and dynamics

Learners will listen to a variety of different styles music in this Unit. This process of learning about music will include opportunities to explore and develop their understanding of Scottish music and music styles.

By listening to and learning to identify and distinguish differences in a variety of audio music, learners will develop their appreciation of music and its expressive and creative potential.

Teachers/lecturers should observe and record learner progress and achievement throughout the Unit whenever evidence of competence is demonstrated. Observation checklists can be used to track learners' achievement, using oral questioning or discussion.

Alternatively learners could complete worksheets or written responses to show their understanding of music. Evidence of competence could also be gathered through e-assessment.

When determining whether learners have sufficient expertise and knowledge of music for this Unit, teachers/lecturers should refer to the mandatory music concepts and related music literacy required for the National 4 qualification. A table of the mandatory music concepts for the Course is provided in the National 4 Added Value Unit, *Music: Performance*.

If delivering this Unit as part of the National 4 Music Course, an integrated approach to delivering the Units and the Outcomes across the Course is recommended. An example of this type of approach is described in the National 3 *Understanding Music* Unit Support Notes.

Teachers/lecturers could construct a wide range of learning experiences to build learners' confidence and ability to aurally distinguish between music concepts and instruments in excerpts of music and to make connections to how these sounds relate in visual terms to signs and symbols used in music scores. Where possible, developing learners' understanding of music literacy should be consolidated and reinforced by applying these skills in practice.

To maximise the benefits of learning, knowledge and understanding of music literacy could be linked to and developed in active ways by learners when performing music or creating their own ideas and music.

This Unit allows learners to develop their abilities to distinguish aurally between different music concepts and to recognise and distinguish the sound of particular music styles.

Music is a creative medium, and a variety of external factors impact on the development and form of the music produced by musicians as they respond creatively to the world around them. Sometimes these differences are the result of the particular 'sound' created by specific instruments or combinations and use of instruments, of rhythmic patterns and use of tempo, or through understanding the differences in music structures which relate to specific music styles.

This Unit creates opportunities for learners to develop their knowledge and understanding of music in context. By considering the impact of external social and cultural influences on the development of music and music styles/forms by exposure to modern and traditional forms of music and their distinctive sounds and musical 'shape', learners can more fully appreciate and recognise the diverse, individual and creative forms of music.

Approximately three quarters of the Unit time should be spent on listening to music from differing styles and genres and identifying what music concepts are being heard and how these are used in the music. Learners should reinforce their understanding by using and making links between aural and visual music signs, symbols and terms. The remaining time should be used for supported self-reflection on learning, for assessment and reassessment where applicable.

## Developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

The table below highlights some opportunities to develop these skills during this Unit.

<b>1 Literacy</b>	
1.3 Listening and talking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ listening to a variety of music</li><li>◆ class discussions about music and music styles and the influence of social and cultural factors on specific music genres/styles</li></ul>

<b>3 Health and wellbeing</b>	
3.1 Personal learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ identifying areas for improvement and next steps for learning</li></ul>

<b>5 Thinking skills</b>	
5.2 Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ understanding of music concepts and basic music literacy through structured listening activities and exercises</li></ul>

Information about developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work in this Unit is given in the relevant Course Support Notes.

# Approaches to assessment and gathering evidence

Assessors should use their professional judgement, subject knowledge and experience, and understanding of their learners, to determine the most appropriate ways to generate evidence and the conditions and contexts in which they are used.

Assessments must be valid, reliable and fit for purpose for the subject and level, and should fit in with learning and teaching approaches. Teachers and lecturers should also use inclusive approaches to assessment, taking account of the specific needs of their learners.

Assessment approaches and associated tasks used by centres should:

- ◆ cover subject content at the appropriate level
- ◆ use content, resources and assessment materials that recognise the achievements and contributions of different groups
- ◆ where appropriate, provide a balance of assessment methods and permit alternative approaches

In this Unit, learners will be required to provide evidence of:

- ◆ understanding of specified music concepts and musical literacy
- ◆ discriminatory aural awareness
- ◆ understanding of the factors which influence the sound of music styles

Additional exemplification of assessment is provided in the *National Assessment Resource*.

Some suggested methods of gathering evidence for this Unit are detailed below.

Performance evidence of active listening skills and aural discriminatory awareness is required for this Unit. The work could be assessed in different ways depending on the preferences of centres and learners as all essential evidence requirements for the Unit are covered.

A continuous assessment approach is recommended for this Unit. Performance evidence could be recorded by the teacher/lecturer using an observation checklist to record oral responses based on audio recordings of extracts of music. Learners could also provide evidence using a variety of question formats which demonstrate competence. E-assessment methods and approaches would also be suitable for this Unit. Teachers/lecturers could introduce timed questions for assessment to help learners develop their active listening skills.

Whatever approach is used, centres should carefully consider its relative benefits to the wider student learning experience. Learners should also be encouraged to reflect on their learning and to use review and group discussions to develop their thinking and understanding of music.

All of the above activities and approaches can be differentiated to support the needs of a variety of learners.



# Equality and inclusion

There are many possible adjustments which could be made to support learners in this Course. These include providing support to assist visually impaired learners reading music, using assistive technologies to support performance, and providing support to allow hearing impaired learners to sense rhythm of accompaniment.

In the Unit, the evaluation and appreciation of performances of music requires learners to be able to evaluate both technical aspects of the performing skills, but also musicality. This sense of the music and the emotions and opinions evoked through sensitivity to rhythm, melody, timbre and/or dynamics have to be communicated by the learner.

Evidence of competence in the Units and in the Course can be demonstrated in a variety of ways, and centres may be able to use a range of assessment arrangements to support learners, for example:

- ◆ use of headphones
- ◆ adjustment to volume, and CDs incorporating extra time

Adjustments could also be made to assessment protocols and procedures to help reduce stress for learners with autistic spectrum disorders in this Course.

It is recognised that centres have their own duties under equality and other legislation and policy initiatives. The guidance given in these *Course Support Notes* is designed to sit alongside these duties but is specific to the delivery and assessment of the Course.

It is important that centres are aware of and understand SQA's assessment arrangements for disabled learners, and those with additional support needs, when making requests for adjustments to published assessment arrangements. Centres will find more guidance on this in the series of publications on Assessment Arrangements on SQA's website: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html)

# Appendix 1: Reference documents

The following reference documents will provide useful information and background.

- ◆ Assessment Arrangements (for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs) — various publications on SQA's website: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14976.html>
- ◆ [\*Building the Curriculum 4: Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work\*](#)
- ◆ [\*Building the Curriculum 5: A framework for assessment\*](#)
- ◆ [Course Specifications](#)
- ◆ [Design Principles for National Courses](#)
- ◆ [Guide to Assessment \(June 2008\)](#)
- ◆ [Overview of Qualification Reports](#)
- ◆ Principles and practice papers for curriculum areas
- ◆ Research Report 4 — Less is More: Good Practice in Reducing Assessment Time
- ◆ Coursework Authenticity — a Guide for Teachers and Lecturers
- ◆ [SCQF Handbook: User Guide](#) (published 2009) and SCQF level descriptors (to be reviewed during 2011 to 2012): [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/4595.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/4595.html)
- ◆ SQA Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work
- ◆ Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work: Using the Curriculum Tool
- ◆ SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools
- ◆ SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education
- ◆ SQA e-assessment web page: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/5606.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/5606.html)

# Administrative information

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**Superclass:** to be advised

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## History of changes to Unit Support Notes

Unit details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date

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