



National  
Qualifications

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# Music

# Portfolio

# General assessment information

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This pack contains general assessment information for centres preparing candidates for the portfolio Component of Advanced Higher Music Course assessment.

It must be read in conjunction with the specific assessment task(s) for this Component of Course assessment which may only be downloaded from SQA's designated secure website by authorised personnel.

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# Introduction

The Course assessment will consist of two Components: either a performance or a portfolio of music, and a question paper.

This is the general assessment information for the Advanced Higher Music portfolio.

This portfolio is worth 60 marks out of a total of 100 marks. This is 60% of the overall marks for the Course assessment. The Course will be graded A-D.

Marks for all Course Components are added up to give a total Course assessment mark which is then used as the basis for grading decisions.

This is one of two Components of Course assessment. The other Component is a question paper.

This document describes the general requirements for the assessment of the portfolio Component for this Course. It gives general information and instructions for assessors.

It must be read in conjunction with the assessment task for this Component of Course assessment.

## Equality and inclusion

This Course assessment has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to assessment. Assessments have been designed to promote equal opportunities while maintaining the integrity of the qualification.

For guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs, please follow the link to the Assessment Arrangements web page: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html)

Guidance on inclusive approaches to delivery and assessment in this Course is provided in the *Course/Unit Support Notes*.

# What this assessment covers

This assessment contributes 60% of the total marks for the Course.

This assessment will assess the skills, knowledge and understanding specified for the portfolio in the *Course Assessment Specification*.

The purpose of the portfolio is to allow candidates to demonstrate their creativity when applying their knowledge and understanding of music to create a portfolio of music. The portfolio will assess candidates' ability to create original music. This optional Course assessment Component may provide opportunities for progression from the Higher Music Technology Course.

The pieces that make up the portfolio may be produced in a variety of ways and this may include using music technology.

The pieces may be in any appropriate musical context and in a wide variety of genres and styles.

# Assessment

## Purpose

The purpose of this assessment is to generate evidence for the added value of this Course by means of a portfolio.

The added value for the Course will address the key purposes and aims of the Course, as defined in the Course rationale.

The portfolio will allow candidates to demonstrate their creativity when applying their advanced knowledge and understanding of music to create a portfolio of music. The portfolio will assess candidates' ability to compose original music.

In this assessment, added value will focus on the following:

- ◆ challenge – requiring greater depth or extension of knowledge and/or skills
- ◆ application – requiring application of knowledge and/or skills in a practical context

This Course assessment Component allows candidates to demonstrate their compositional skills.

## Assessment overview

The portfolio allows candidates to demonstrate their musical and compositional skills in a new and appropriately challenging context. The requirements for the portfolio will be set by centres within SQA guidelines.

The portfolio will:

- ◆ include for each piece an audio recording and a score/performance plan and programme notes/session logs
- ◆ last for 12 minutes (the overall duration must not exceed 14 minutes)
- ◆ contain a minimum of two pieces

The music in the 12-minute portfolio should allow the candidate to demonstrate sufficient levels of compositional and musical skills. It should include complete pieces of music and be of an appropriate level in terms of the complexity of the musical content. The total number of pieces within the portfolio can vary from candidate to candidate. Candidates can produce the composing portfolio in a variety of ways and this may include using music technology, elements of improvisation and/or arranging.

The candidate's work in the portfolio will be underpinned by knowledge and understanding of music, developed in the *Understanding Music* and the *Music: Composing Skills* Units.

The production of the portfolio will be:

- ◆ set by centres within SQA guidelines
- ◆ the candidate's own work
- ◆ agreed by the assessor and the candidate following discussion on the scope and nature of the pieces of music to be included
- ◆ subject to some supervision and control

In the portfolio, candidates will consolidate and refine the skills developed in the Units of the Course. This option will allow candidates to demonstrate advanced creative, technical and musical skills and their applied understanding of music concepts when making personal decisions about genre/style and compositional methods.

Musical ideas should be coherent and compositional methods will be used convincingly and in a consistent style. Well-considered and imaginative use of timbre – instrumentation/voices – will be integral to the candidate's use of compositional methods.

## Assessment conditions

Assessors must exercise their professional responsibility in ensuring that evidence submitted by a candidate is the candidate's own work.

This assessment task will be carried out over a period of time. Candidates should start at an appropriate point in the Course. This will normally be when they have completed most of the work on the *Music: Composing Skills* Unit.

The portfolio will be conducted under some supervision and control. This means that although candidates may complete part of the work outwith the learning and teaching setting, assessors should put in place processes for monitoring progress and ensuring that the work is the candidate's own and that plagiarism has not taken place.

Assessors should put in place mechanisms to authenticate candidate evidence, for example:

- ◆ regular checkpoint/progress meetings with candidates
- ◆ short spot-check personal interviews
- ◆ checklists which record activity/progress

For each piece in the portfolio, the candidate will produce the following:

- ◆ an audio recording
- ◆ a score/performance plan
- ◆ programme notes/session logs, as appropriate to genre/style
- ◆ original source materials used for an arrangement (where appropriate)

The portfolio should include 12 minutes (and not exceed 14 minutes) of music that is original to the candidate. The portfolio will have 60 marks (60% of the total mark).

Marks will be awarded for the following:

- ◆ selecting and applying music concepts in a sophisticated way: melody, harmony, rhythm, structure, timbre
- ◆ creative and assured use of compositional methods
- ◆ creating music that is original to the candidate

## **Reasonable assistance**

Candidates must undertake the assessment, whatever the nature, independently. However, reasonable assistance may be provided prior to the formal assessment process taking place. The term ‘reasonable assistance’ is used to try to balance the need for support with the need to avoid giving too much assistance. If any candidates require more than what is deemed to be ‘reasonable assistance’, they may not be ready for assessment or it may be that they have been entered for the wrong level of qualification.

Coursework in Advanced Higher may involve candidates undertaking a larger amount of autonomous work without close supervision than they have previously undertaken. Assessors may provide guidance and support as part of the normal teaching and learning process. However, assessors should not adopt a directive role or provide specific advice on how to re-phrase, improve responses or provide model answers.

## **Evidence to be gathered**

The following candidate evidence is required for this assessment:

- ◆ evidence of the candidate’s ability to compose a minimum of two contrasting pieces of music, presented in the form of an audio folio lasting 12 minutes (and not exceeding 14 minutes)

The pieces that make up the portfolio may be produced in a variety of ways and this may include using music technology. Evidence supporting the compositional process must also be included, and this will take the form of programme note(s), session log(s) and performance plan(s)/score(s), as directed by the assessment task.

If a candidate submits an arrangement as part of the portfolio, a copy of the source materials used must be included and details of the candidate’s input clarified in the accompanying programme note. There must always be clear evidence of the specific content created by the candidate rather than a basic transcription from an available score.

# General Marking Instructions

In line with SQA's normal practice, the following General Marking Instructions are addressed to the marker. They will also be helpful for those preparing candidates for Course assessment.

Evidence will be submitted to SQA for external marking.

All marking will be quality assured by SQA.

## General Marking Principles for the Advanced Higher Music portfolio

*This information is provided to help you understand the general principles the Assessor must apply when marking candidate responses to this portfolio. These principles must be read in conjunction with the Detailed Marking Instructions, which identify the key features required in candidate responses.*

- (a) Marks for each candidate response must always be assigned in line with these General Marking Principles and the Detailed Marking Instructions for this assessment.
- (b) Marking should always be positive. This means that, for each candidate response, marks are accumulated for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding: they are not deducted from a maximum on the basis of errors or omissions.

## Detailed Marking Instructions for the Advanced Higher Music portfolio

Marks in the portfolio will be awarded for the following, as appropriate:

- ◆ Candidates will be assessed on their ability to compose a minimum of two contrasting pieces of music presented in the form of an audio folio lasting approximately 12 minutes, and not exceeding 14 minutes. The pieces that make up the portfolio may be produced in a variety of ways and this may include using music technology.
- ◆ As the number of pieces of music in each individual candidate's portfolio will be variable, the marks for each piece of music will be added together by the SQA Assessor, and scaling will be used to determine a final overall mark out of 60 for the portfolio.
- ◆ For each of the Sections – melody, harmony, rhythm, structure, timbre, programme note/session log – the Assessor will select the band descriptor which most closely describes the portfolio. Once the best fit has been selected:
  - where the portfolio almost matches the level above, the higher available mark from the range should be awarded
  - where the candidate's portfolio just meets the standard described, the lower available mark from the range should be awarded



## Music portfolio – summary statements

<b>Mark range 18–20: excellent</b>	
<b>Melody</b>	Melodic concepts are skilfully selected and used artistically in a thoroughly convincing musical shape. Original ideas are refined and polished.
<b>Harmony</b>	Harmonic concepts are selected and developed in a highly skilful way resulting in a composition which displays flair and originality.
<b>Rhythm</b>	Rhythmic concepts are selected and developed with sophistication in a highly original and imaginative way.
<b>Structure</b>	Structural concepts are skilfully selected and developed in depth within a securely controlled and balanced framework.
<b>Timbre</b>	Chosen instruments/effects/performers are used in a thoroughly convincing and imaginative way.
<b>Programme note/session log</b>	Completed to a high standard, containing a detailed, relevant explanation of the piece of music.
<b>Mark range 15–17: very good</b>	
<b>Melody</b>	Melodic concepts are skilfully selected and developed, resulting in a convincing melodic shape with evidence of originality.
<b>Harmony</b>	Harmonic concepts are selected and deployed in a skilful and convincing way.
<b>Rhythm</b>	Rhythmic concepts are developed convincingly in an original and imaginative way.
<b>Structure</b>	Structural concepts are developed convincingly in an imaginative way.
<b>Timbre</b>	An obvious understanding is evident in the use of the chosen instruments/effects/performers.
<b>Programme note/session log</b>	Completed to a reasonable standard, containing details and a relevant explanation of the piece of music.
<b>Mark range 12–14: good</b>	
<b>Melody</b>	Melodic concepts are adequately developed and display an ongoing, effective melodic shape with some originality.
<b>Harmony</b>	Harmonic concepts are appropriately used.
<b>Rhythm</b>	Rhythmic concepts are developed with evidence of some originality.
<b>Structure</b>	Structural concepts are developed effectively in an imaginative way.
<b>Timbre</b>	Chosen instruments/effects/performers are used with an adequate understanding of potential.
<b>Programme note/session log</b>	Completed to a reasonable standard, containing details and a sufficient explanation of the piece of music.

<b>Mark range 10–11: satisfactory</b>	
<b>Melody</b>	Melodic concepts are used in a straightforward way resulting in a satisfactory musical shape. Some ideas are misjudged but there is limited evidence of originality.
<b>Harmony</b>	Harmonic concepts are used in a generally appropriate, but predictable way.
<b>Rhythm</b>	Simple rhythmic concepts are used in an appropriate, if predictable, way.
<b>Structure</b>	Simple structural concepts are used and there is evidence of a planned framework.
<b>Timbre</b>	Some understanding is evident in the use of the chosen instruments/effects/performers.
<b>Programme note/session log</b>	Completed to a minimally acceptable standard with valid attempts to explain the piece of music.
<b>Mark range 7–9: inconsistent</b>	
<b>Melody</b>	Melodic concepts used are not sufficiently understood to ensure a satisfactory melodic shape.
<b>Harmony</b>	There is evidence of a rudimentary harmonic vocabulary being used.
<b>Rhythm</b>	Rhythmic concepts are used inconsistently.
<b>Structure</b>	Structural concepts are used ineffectively although there is some evidence of a planned framework.
<b>Timbre</b>	Inconsistent understanding is evident in the use of the chosen instruments/effects/performers.
<b>Programme note/session log</b>	Not completed satisfactorily, although partially explain the piece of music.
<b>Mark range 4–6: poor</b>	
<b>Melody</b>	The use of melodic concepts shows a lack of understanding.
<b>Harmony</b>	The use of harmonic concepts shows a lack of understanding.
<b>Rhythm</b>	The use of rhythmic concepts shows a lack of understanding.
<b>Structure</b>	Structural concepts are used in an unplanned way.
<b>Timbre</b>	Inappropriate use of the chosen instruments/effects/performers.
<b>Programme note/session log</b>	Includes little evidence of the piece of music.
<b>Mark range 1–3: very poor</b>	
<b>Melody</b>	Little or no melodic concepts are understood.
<b>Harmony</b>	Little or no harmonic concepts are understood.
<b>Rhythm</b>	Little or no understanding of rhythmic concepts.
<b>Structure</b>	Little or understanding of structural concepts.
<b>Timbre</b>	Very poor use of the chosen instruments/effects/performers.
<b>Programme note/session log</b>	Includes no real evidence of the piece of music.
<b>Mark range 0: no evidence submitted</b>	

# Administrative information

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## History of changes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
1.1	Clarification of requirements for arranging added to the 'Evidence to be gathered' section.  Summary statements amended to clarify mark ranges.	Qualifications Manager	September 2016

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