

NQ Verification 2016–17

Key Messages Round 1

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Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Music
Verification event/visiting information	Event
Date published:	March 2017

National Courses/Units verified:

H23X 73	National 3	Understanding Music
H23X 76	Higher	Understanding Music
H7X9 77	Advanced Higher	Understanding and Analysing Music
HGNR 74	National 4	Music: Composing Skills in a Scottish Context
H23V 76	Higher	Music: Composing Skills
H23V 77	Advanced Higher	Music: Composing Skills
H240 73	National 3	Music: Performing Skills
H240 74	National 4	Music: Performing Skills
H240 75	National 5	Music: Performing Skills
H240 76	Higher	Music: Performing Skills
H240 77	Advanced Higher	Music: Performing Skills

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Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

Generally, centres have adopted a considered approach to assessment and are commended for the time and care taken in gathering evidence for unit assessment. Centres are also commended for the creative ways they have supported candidates to meet the assessment standards.

Understanding Music unit

There was a wide range of assessment approaches to this unit. Centres presented materials which had been generated in naturally occurring situations. However, some centres are still using, for example, Intermediate 2 and Standard Grade past papers for unit assessment purposes. Centres should take care, when adapting

these past papers, to ensure that they contain the appropriate balance of concepts relevant to the specific level the candidate is being presented for.

Understanding and Analysing Music (Advanced Higher) unit

Centres presented evidence in a variety of formats and are commended for the way in which they supported students to engage with this unit.

Assessment standard 1.1

Centres could evidence this assessment standard, perhaps by annotating a score — identifying concepts/key signatures etc (please see the UASP for further requirements). Candidates must be able to identify and analyse the use of level specific and/or other music concepts, signs and symbols.

Assessment standard 1.2

Generally, the centres verified presented work in a variety of formats and, overall, had an understanding of this assessment standard. Centres encouraged candidates to link the analysis of style/form, harmony and rhythm with the impact of social and cultural influences on the development of music.

Music: Composing Skills unit

Centres submitted a wide range of approaches to composing and this allowed candidates flexibility, personalisation and choice.

In one instance, for the Music: Composing Skills in a Scottish Context unit, a centre provided a framework for assessment which allowed the strengths of the candidate to be captured.

To inform the verification process, centres are encouraged to submit audio recordings for this unit where possible.

Music: Performing Skills unit

Most centres provided good quality audio/video recording for the purposes of verification, although centres should check the balance between candidate and accompaniment/backing track to ensure that the candidate's output can be clearly heard.

Copies of music are a requirement for verification and centres are reminded to include these for all candidates. Care should be taken to ensure the music submitted reflects what the candidate is actually performing, in terms of repeats, cuts and fades etc.

Assessment judgements

Music: Performing Skills unit

Overall assessment judgements made by the centres verified were in line with national standards.

Centres are reminded that complete pieces are not a requirement for unit assessment. Some centres inflate the standard when they make this a requirement, as some candidates would benefit from playing an appropriate section of a piece rather than the complete piece.

Music: Composing Skills unit

For assessment standard 1.1 (Higher and Advanced Higher) — some centres are only partially meeting this assessment standard as candidates do not fully explain the specific influences of the identified concepts on the composer's music. To fully meet the assessment standard, in addition to analysing how a range of compositional methods and music concepts are used by other composers, candidates must then go to explain the influences these concepts had on the music as a whole.

For assessment standard 1.4 at Higher level and Advanced Higher level — candidate reflections should include a brief description of musical choices and decisions, an objective review of the impact of these choices and identification of their chosen approaches to creating music which were successful and those which were less effective musically. Candidates should also identify one area for improvement in the music.

Understanding Music unit

Some centres are over-assessing their candidates for assessment standard 1.1. Submission of naturally occurring evidence is entirely appropriate and is encouraged.

To meet assessment standard 1.2 at National 5 and Higher level, centres are reminded that candidates must show and explain clearly the influence of analysing the impact of social and cultural influences on the development of specific music styles and how this has impacted on the specific sound and structure of the music. Some centres are still focusing on the biographical context without linking these to specific sound and structure of the composer's music.

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Section 3: General comments

Presenting evidence/materials on a USB pen drive is to be considered as this can reduce the need for paper and some centres may find this easier to collate.

Centres are reminded that, for verification purposes, files require to be submitted in a certain format. Please refer to the [List of supported electronic file formats](#) document. Sibelius or Musescore files should not be submitted.

Centres are reminded that SQA provides a [prior verification service](#) for centres which have developed or significantly adapted assessment materials for National Qualifications.