



Course Report 2018

Subject	Music Technology
Level	National 5

This report provides information on the performance of candidates. Teachers, lecturers and assessors may find it useful when preparing candidates for future assessment. The report is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any Post Results Services.

Section 1: comments on the assessment

Summary of the course assessment

Component 1: question paper

Most candidates responded well to the demands of the question paper. It performed in line with expectations and received positive feedback from the marking team. The revised question paper tested the areas of the course previously assessed by unit assessment. It contained a wide range of suitably challenging music excerpts.

Component 2: assignment

Most candidates responded well to the demands of the assignment. Many candidates submitted creative material of a high standard including multi-track recordings, live recordings of a small group performance, radio broadcasts, sound design and Foley for film, sound design for a computer game, and audio books.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: question paper

Generally, candidates were well prepared for the following questions and responded successfully:

- ◆ Question 1(a), (b), (c), (d)(i), and (d)(ii) — candidates were assessed on styles of music and related concepts.
- ◆ Question 2(a) — candidates were asked to identify a prominent effect applied to a guitar riff.
- ◆ Question 2(d)(i), 2(d)(ii), and 2(d)(ii) — candidates were assessed on microphone selection, type of polarity and placement.
- ◆ Question 3(a), (b), (c), (d) and (e) — candidates were assessed on a range of technological and musical concepts.
- ◆ Question 4(b) — candidates were asked to identify two music or production features.
- ◆ Question 4(d) — candidates were asked to identify two ways to prevent feedback.
- ◆ Question 5 — candidates were asked to identify instruments or voices and to link these to controls and effects.
- ◆ Question 6(a), (b) and (c) — candidates were given a case study and asked to answer three questions from the text provided.
- ◆ Question 7(a) — candidates were asked to link an instrument or voice with an effect, and another instrument and voice with panning on two versions of one song.
- ◆ Question 7(b) — candidates were asked if an anacrusis was present.

Component 2: assignment

Generally, candidates completed the assignment successfully. Centres used a variety of assignment briefs for both tasks.

For the assignment brief, most candidates demonstrated a secure knowledge of:

- ◆ Stage 1 — planning the production
- ◆ Stage 2(a) — implementing the production — audio capture
- ◆ Stage 2(c) — creative and appropriate use of sound and/or music

Candidates were well prepared and had a good knowledge of music software programmes and capturing; manipulating sound and applying suitable effects; and processes and controls.

Most candidates submitted logbooks electronically as Word documents or PowerPoint presentations saved onto memory sticks or CDs, but some candidates submitted logbooks in paper form.

Candidates' assignments demonstrated that centres have appropriate resources, and are well placed to provide a good level of support.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: question paper

- ◆ Question 2(b) — some candidates had difficulty identifying the correct music concept describing a melodic feature played on the electric guitar.
- ◆ Question 2(c) — some candidates had difficulty describing a musical or technological feature typical of the genre or style of disco.
- ◆ Question 4(a)(i) and 4(a)(ii) — some candidates had difficulty identifying the correct time signature and tonality of the music.
- ◆ Question 4(c) — some candidates had difficulty describing two reasons for selecting a cardioid polar pattern while recording a vocalist.

Component 2: assignment

Most candidates completed stage 2(b) — mixing skills to a good standard. However, some did not add the required effects, controls and processes.

Some candidates had difficulty with stage 3 — evaluating the production. In some cases, candidates wrote lengthy evaluations with little or no reasoned information or justification.

Section 3: advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1: question paper

To prepare for the question paper, teachers and lecturers should ensure that candidates are familiar with the full range of music concepts, different effects, controllers, and processes applied to a section of music.

Teachers and lecturers should work with candidates on case studies about intellectual property to ensure that they can identify the full range of technological terms.

To complete the question paper, candidates must be able to distinguish between acoustic and electric guitars, use the concept drum kit rather than drums, and distinguish between lead and backing vocals when describing panning.

To prepare for the question paper, teachers and lecturers should give candidates listening activities, with correctly positioned stereo speakers. This gives candidates practice identifying different types of panning (left, right or centre).

Component 2: assignment

Teachers and lecturers should ensure that candidates have experience of mic'ing other instruments in different situations before they complete the Music Technology assignment.

Teachers and lecturers should make candidates aware of the requirements of the assignment before they undertake it. Candidates must use at least five tracks at National 5 and work with two microphones.

Teachers and lecturers should remind candidates to check and implement the mandatory list of technical skills listed in each assignment brief.

Teachers and lecturers should refer to the marking instructions in the National 5 Music Technology Course Specification to ensure that candidates are fully prepared to complete the supporting documentation for the assignment. Candidates' supporting documentation for Stages 1 and 3 should show evidence of formal planning, progress reporting and evaluating to access the full range of marks available.

Teachers and lecturers should remind candidates submitting recordings and logbooks electronically to check that these files are accessible and that they have transferred correctly onto CDs and/or memory sticks. If markers cannot access these files, candidates can be penalised.

Grade boundary and statistical information:

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2017	852
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Number of resulted entries in 2018	883
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Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of course awards	Percentage	Cumulative %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum mark				
A	43.9%	43.9%	388	68
B	24.1%	68.1%	213	59
C	17.1%	85.2%	151	50
D	10.2%	95.4%	90	41
No award	4.6%	-	41	-

General commentary on grade boundaries

SQA's main aim is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and all levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.

SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions which allow a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary) and a well prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional A boundary).

It is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level.

Therefore SQA holds a grade boundary meeting every year for each subject at each level to bring together all the information available (statistical and judgemental). The Principal Assessor and SQA Qualifications Manager meet with the relevant SQA Business Manager and Statistician to discuss the evidence and make decisions. The meetings are chaired by members of the management team at SQA.

- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the exam is more challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the exam is less challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ Where standards are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.

Grade boundaries from exam papers in the same subject at the same level tend to be marginally different year to year. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions, are different. This is also the case for exams set by centres. If SQA alters a boundary, this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter their boundary in the corresponding practice exam paper.