



## Course Report 2016

Subject	Music
Level	National 5

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

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers, lecturers and assessors in their preparation of candidates for future assessment. It 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.

## **Section 1: Comments on the Assessment**

### **Component 1: Performance**

In 2016 candidate entries for the National 5 Music Course were consistent with 2015, with approximately 7500 presentations.

SQAs annual training of visiting assessors (VAs) uses a wide variety of instrumental and vocal exemplification at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher levels, ensuring a consistent national approach when VAs are examining in centres.

Centres continue to prepare candidates well for the Performance component and, as in previous years, most candidates demonstrated good levels of skill in this area.

### **Component 2: Question Paper**

The question paper consisted of question types that are consistent with the format of previous National 5 papers, and included a variety of musical excerpts across a range of genres.

Most candidates demonstrated that they had been well prepared, showing familiarity and knowledge of question types and appropriate exam technique.

The question paper was at the appropriate standard and in line with previous question papers, reflecting good course coverage and clearly worded questions.

## **Section 2: Comments on candidate performance**

### **Areas in which candidates performed well**

#### **Component 1: Performance**

Visiting assessors noted that candidates were well prepared and there were many performances of a high standard.

Some candidates opted to play pieces above the minimum level standard and played well. Most centres were well organised, with Candidate Mark Sheets completed accurately with details of each programme.

In most centres, there was clear evidence of personalisation and choice in varied programmes selected by their candidates.

Many candidates demonstrated that they had practised with backing tracks or live accompaniment prior to their exam, which helped them to deliver confident and assured performances.

## Component 2: Question paper

Most centres are preparing candidates with robust knowledge and understanding of concepts, and preparing them well for the variety of question types featured in the question paper.

Many candidates attempted all questions and, where multiple choice questions required more than one answer, most candidates gave the appropriate number of responses. There is evidence that candidates are more familiar with Italian terms, with many using these appropriately in answers.

Questions that were completed well include:

- ◆ Most parts of the literacy question – Question 3
- ◆ Chord change question
- ◆ Multiple choice questions
- ◆ Instrument recognition
- ◆ Identification of styles in Question 7 (a)(i) and 7 (b)(i)
- ◆ Recognising prominent features – Question 8

## Areas which candidates found demanding

### Component 1: Performance

Many candidates performed proficiently in the external assessment demonstrating good preparation of programmes of pieces.

However, areas of difficulty for some candidates included maintaining flow in keyboard pieces when changing accompanying chords; playing drumkit programmes in time with recorded backing tracks; and performing songs that are not in a suitable range for the candidate's voice.

### Component 2: Question paper

Some candidates found the following areas of the question paper to be demanding:

- ◆ Question 2: Recognising the concepts of syncopation and glissando. Despite the careful construction of these questions to lead candidates to the appropriate answers, some candidates were unable to identify the correct concepts.
- ◆ Question 3(b): Identifying the tempo — although *moderato* was the correct answer, some candidates mistakenly considered the tempo to be *adagio*.
- ◆ Question 3(d): The expected answers of 'tone' or '2nd' required candidates to take account of the key signature of the printed music. However, some candidates wrote 'semitone' as their response, not recognising that the pitch of the B had been flattened in the key signature.
- ◆ Question 3(f): Completing the missing notes. Some candidates did not identify that the missing notes were a sequence of the previous bar.

- ◆ Question 7: Providing appropriate reasons in part (a)(ii) and (b)(ii). Although most candidates attempted these questions, many were not able to identify an appropriate musical feature of the music.

## **Section 3: Advice for the preparation of future candidates**

### **Component 1: Performance**

Most centres prepared candidates well for Performance assessments. However, all centres should ensure the following points are considered when preparing programmes for presentation:

- ◆ Keyboard performance must include left-hand accompaniment in each piece.
- ◆ Drumkit programmes should demonstrate four different styles from the Drumkit Style Bank — see pages 5 and 6 of the June 2013 Update Letter  
[http://www.sqa.org.uk/files\\_ccc/MusicUpdateDrumkitRequirementsAppendixJune2013.pdf](http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/MusicUpdateDrumkitRequirementsAppendixJune2013.pdf)
- ◆ 12 chords minimum are required when presenting a National 5 guitar programme of pieces which is a mixture of lead/melodic guitar and chordal/rhythm guitar — see page 11 of the Common Questions document for further information  
[http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files\\_ccc/CQ\\_Music.pdf](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/CQ_Music.pdf)
- ◆ The total time of the National 5 programme should not be less than eight minutes, and not exceed eight minutes 30 seconds.
- ◆ The Candidate Mark Sheet should be completed with accurate timings which include the repeats, fade outs etc, specific to individual candidates.
- ◆ There must be a minimum of two pieces presented for each instrument or voice.

### **Component 2: Question Paper**

It is evident that many teachers are confident and familiar with question formats and appropriate exam technique, and are preparing their candidates well for the question paper.

To assist centres in their future preparation of candidates, please take account of the following advice:

- ◆ In Question 2 (the sequential listening question) candidates should use the information provided within the question, which is designed to guide them towards the answer, eg a rhythmic concept was asked for when syncopation was the answer, but some candidates did not provide a rhythmic concept as their answer.

- ◆ In Question 3, candidates should take account of the key signature of the excerpt and its impact on relevant notes. When completing missing notes, candidates should look elsewhere in the printed music to see if there are similar patterns in pitch and rhythm that may assist them in their answer.
- ◆ In Question 7, answers should be quite specific to demonstrate that the candidate understands the definition of the style, eg an acceptable reason for Jig would be the identification of '6/8' or 'compound time', whereas 'Scottish music' is not a specific enough reason to distinguish Jig from other Scottish dances.
- ◆ In Question 8, there was an increase in the number of instances where long lists of unrelated concepts are being provided in questions where candidates are asked to identify the prominent features in the music; this is neither the purpose of, nor in the spirit of, this type of question.

Candidates' responses should give the prominent concepts under each heading relating to the music heard. From 2017 onwards, lists of concepts unrelated to the music and/or extensive lists of contradictory concepts will result in a loss of marks.

**Example 1:** The excerpt is in 4/4 time throughout, the candidate correctly identifies this and is awarded 1 mark. If the candidate then goes on to list, eg 3/4, 6/8, 12/8 and 5/4 and these are not present in the music, the candidate loses the original mark awarded for this part of the question.

**Example 2:** The candidate correctly identifies the style of the excerpt as Impressionist and is awarded 1 mark. If the candidate goes on to list, eg Baroque and Classical and Minimalist and these are not applicable to the music heard, the candidate loses the original mark for this part of the question.

## Grade Boundary and Statistical information:

### Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2015	7620
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Number of resulted entries in 2016	7542
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### Statistical information: Performance of candidates

#### Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark -				
A	61.5%	61.5%	4636	70
B	21.9%	83.3%	1650	60
C	11.1%	94.4%	834	50
D	2.4%	96.8%	179	45
No award	3.2%	-	243	-

## General commentary on grade boundaries

- ◆ While SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions which will 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.
- ◆ Each year, SQA therefore holds a grade boundary meeting for each subject at each level where it brings 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.
- ◆ An exam paper at a particular level in a subject in one year tends to have a marginally different set of grade boundaries from exam papers in that subject at that level in other years. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions, are different. This is also the case for exams set in centres. If SQA has already altered a boundary in a particular year in, say, Higher Chemistry, this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter boundaries in their prelim exam in Higher Chemistry. The two are not that closely related, as they do not contain identical questions.
- ◆ 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.