



**Arrangements for:
National Progression Award in
Sound Production: Recording
at SCQF level 6**

Group Award Code: G9L4 46

Validation date: November 2009

Date of original publication:

Version: 02 (July 2014)

Acknowledgement

SQA acknowledges the valuable contribution that Scotland's colleges have made to the development of National Qualification Group Awards.

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1 Introduction

This is the Arrangements Document for the new NPA in Sound Production: Recording at SCQF level 6 which was validated in November 2009. This document includes: background information on the development of the Group Award, its aims, guidance on access, details of the Group Award structure, and guidance on delivery.

The National Progression Award (NPA) in Sound Production: Recording is part of SQA's national qualification framework in Music. Specifically, it is one of a new suite of small Group Awards which cover a range of aspects of the music industry.

This award is designed to equip candidates with the knowledge, understanding and skills required for success in current and future employment within the creative industries sector or for progression to further academic qualifications. It is designed to bridge the gap between entry level education and professional career development. The NPA will allow candidates to develop a skill-set, linked to National Occupational Standards for Sound, which has a thorough grounding in audio recording practice and also allows individual and personalised skills development through the optional Units.

The National Progression Award in Sound Production: Recording consists of two mandatory NQ Units drawn from the framework of the National Certificates in Music (G978 46) and Sound Production (G977 46) at SCQF level 6. This award is made up of two mandatory single credit Units (12 SCQF points) and one additional single credit Unit (6 SCQF points) from a choice of three optional Units.

2 Rationale for the development of the Group Award

During the development of the new National Certificates (NCs) in Music and Sound Production 2006–2009, it became evident that the main stakeholders — colleges and schools — were interested in the potential for smaller Group Awards which would be appropriate for students seeking alternative or additional pathways from existing NQ or Standard Grade Music Courses or for those already employed in the industry seeking Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

When establishing the need for a new NPA in Sound Production: Recording, sector consultation used a combination of formal and informal mechanisms. A scoping exercise for new NPAs was carried out in August 2009 during which sector comment and feedback was sought. Consultation took place with Scotland's colleges and Scotland's schools and interested groups from the creative industries and education sectors including Musicians' Union, MCPS, Sector Skills Council, Scottish Arts Council and Higher Education.

Responses from the scoping exercise highlighted the need for a new and smaller Group Award which would offer an alternative introductory pathway in the area of sound production.

Developing the candidate

By developing and assessing knowledge and skills in sound production, recording technology, theory, practice and creativity and by providing the opportunity to tailor the award to suit individual and local sector needs, this NPA will allow candidates to acquire an award which reflects the needs identified by key stakeholders in the creative industries where sound is a key component.

Sound plays a central role in the cultural life of Scotland and the UK, be it as music or as part of other cultural art forms such as TV, film or art installations. The importance of the cultural aspects of the creative industries in which sound plays a part has been recognised by many across Scotland, including the Scottish Government:

‘Culture is a part of the way that we understand and project ourselves and Scotland’s place in the world. We have a reputation for unique, accessible and high-quality culture that embraces the traditional and the contemporary. Scotland’s rich heritage and vibrant cultural life play a huge part in making Scotland a great place in which to live, work and invest, and to visit.’ *Linda Fabiani, Minister for Europe, External Affairs and Culture, Nov 2007*¹

From an economic standpoint, the creative industries are a significant contributor to the UK economy accounting for 7% of the overall workforce² and over 7.3% of Gross Value Added (GVA³). Looking at the music industry, the Creative and Cultural Skills Council (CCSC) has established that there are over 95,000 people employed in the music industry and that it has a Gross Value Added of £6 billion, which represents 1% of the overall UK GVA.

In 2003 Scottish Enterprise estimated that the Scottish music industry alone had a turnover of approximately £470 million and employed over 4,000 people⁴. It is recognised that the majority of these people would be working in a freelance or self-employed capacity.

Within the creative industries the audio industry encompasses elements of the:

- ◆ Music industry
- ◆ Film industry
- ◆ Computer Games industry
- ◆ Broadcasting industry

The cultural and economic significance of the audio industry means that it is vital that the industry has access to skilled and knowledgeable people.

¹ <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/officialReports/meetingsParliament/or-07/sor1107-02.html>

² Beyond the creative industries: mapping the creative economy in the United Kingdom, NESTA, 2008

³ GVA measures the contribution to the economy of each individual producer, industry or sector in the United Kingdom and is used in estimating Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

⁴ Mapping the Music Industry in Scotland, Scottish Enterprise, Feb 2003

The National Certificate in Sound Production and the National Progression Award in Sound Production: Recording both contribute to improving opportunities for young people and adults to acquire skills and knowledge relevant to the needs of industry.⁵

A new National Progression Award in Sound Production: Recording responds to and endorses the four capacities of CfE:

- ◆ Successful learners
- ◆ Effective contributors
- ◆ Confident individuals
- ◆ Responsible citizens

Enabling the candidate

The Unit content within the NPA provides a coherent and progressive curriculum which creates and promotes effective articulation and transition into further and higher education, whilst simultaneously recognising and supporting skills for industry and future employment. The successful candidate may be able to undertake further academic studies, seek entry level employment/self-employment or pursue their own recording interests.

The NPA in Sound Production: Recording will provide:

- ◆ a national qualification which is recognised by the creative industries sector, further/higher education, Sector Skills Councils
- ◆ development of the candidate's practical skills, knowledge and understanding which underpins good professional practice
- ◆ the opportunity to recognise and build upon existing professional practice
- ◆ opportunities to develop and underpin relevant National Occupational Standards (NOS)
- ◆ a progression pathway to other qualifications, eg NC Sound Production

Aligning skills

The candidate will acquire key employability skills that have been identified by Skillset as National Occupation Standards for Sound. Skillset is the Sector Skills Council for the creative media industries where sound is a key component, eg Film, Radio, Television, Computer Games, etc.

Newly developed NOS for Sound were published in 2009. They can be found at <http://www.ukstandards.org.uk>.

⁵ Arrangements document for: National Certificate in Sound Production at SCQF level 6
Group Award Code: G977 46 Validation date: November 2008

3 Aims of the Group Award

3.1 Principal aims of the Group Award

The principal aims of the NPA in Sound Production: Recording are to:

- ◆ provide a structured award that uses problem-based learning approaches to develop creative and technical skills and competences for the role of sound recordist /engineer
- ◆ develop a range of creative critical problem-solving and project management skills for the role of sound recording engineer
- ◆ develop the individuality of the candidate through creative process

3.2 General aims of the Group Award

Other more general aims of the National Progression Award are to:

- ◆ provide a structured award that develops new and existing sound production skills and competences in a vocational context
- ◆ allow candidates to develop a range of applied practical skills, competences and understanding of the technical and creative potential using industry standard hardware and software

This award will also develop key transferable and soft skills, eg:

- ◆ Oral, written and communication skills
- ◆ Practical and technical skills
- ◆ Planning, organisational and evaluation skills
- ◆ Problem solving
- ◆ Responsibility for own learning
- ◆ Resource management ability
- ◆ Flexibility and motivation
- ◆ Health and safety

3.3 Target groups

The National Progression Award in Sound Production: Recording is aimed at school and college students and adult returners/learners who have an interest in and/or experience of sound production. The award is also aimed at those already working in the music and performing arts sector of the Creative Industries. It is designed as a starting point for learners who are interested in working in the audio industries or as Continuous Professional Development for those already employed or self-employed.

The following contexts are identified:

- ◆ School–College partnerships; co-delivery of curriculum with wider access to resources.
- ◆ Youth and community group partnerships, eg the YW(M)CA organisations running activities based around youth music initiatives where the NPAs could be used to enhance this cohort’s vocational and educational experience.

- ◆ Alternative curriculum — for those not in mainstream education and would therefore find it difficult to access further education. NPAs could be used as a mechanism for vocational and personal development whilst attracting SCQF points.
- ◆ CPD for staff involved in music education, eg youth/community education workers and teachers wanting or needing to up-skill/cross-skill.
- ◆ Individually tailored curriculum — a collection of vocationally relevant NPAs could allow individuals to develop specific skills areas usually regarded as too diverse within FE full-time courses. For example, accumulation of NPAs in Radio, Sound Production and Technical Theatre may allow skills in Radio Drama to be realised

3.4 Employment opportunities

Upon successful achievement of this NPA, candidates may find employment opportunities in the following areas:

- ◆ at an entry level as sound production/recording assistant in a recording studio or rehearsal facility
- ◆ at entry level in a media production company as sound production/recording assistant, eg multimedia web development
- ◆ as entry level radio station technical operations, particularly community based
- ◆ self-employed sound recording engineer.

Candidates can improve their employment prospects by undertaking further National Progression Awards in their chosen vocational area.

4 Access to Group Award

There are no formal entry requirements to the NPA though access to the NPA is at the discretion of the delivery centre. Candidates would benefit from previous experience of a Sound Production and/or Music Course or related study. Candidates would ideally have an interest and some experience of sound production. For those candidates not in education, relevant work experience would also be useful.

Each Unit of the award states that entry is at the discretion of the centre, however, some of the Units indicate prior attainment that would be useful for candidates to demonstrate. For example, it would be useful if the candidate had completed the optional Unit *Sound Engineering and Production* at SCQF level 5 before attempting the mandatory Unit *Sound Engineering and Production* at SCQF level 6, though this is not essential.

5 Group Award structure

The NPA in Sound Production: Recording is a 120 hour programme of study, which equates to a minimum of three credits. The Units which comprise this award have been taken from the National Certificate in Music and Sound Production (SCQF level 6) frameworks.

There are two mandatory Units — *Sound: Understanding the Signal Path* and *Sound Engineering and Production*. One further credit is required from the optional section.

5.1 Framework

Mandatory Units				
Code	Unit title	SCQF level	SCQF credit points	SQA credit value
*H7F9 46	Sound: Understanding the Signal Path	6	6	1
F58H 12	Sound Engineering and Production	6	6	1

Optional Units — choose one from three				
Code	Unit title	SCQF level	SCQF credit points	SQA credit value
F5E1 12	Sound: Music Remixing	6	6	1
F58F 12	Creative Project	6	6	1
F58M 12	Appreciation of Music	6	6	1

*refer to history of changes for revision details

5.2 Mapping information

The table below shows how the aims expressed in Section 3 map to the mandatory and optional Units as given in Section 5.

Aims	Units				
	Sound Engineering and Production	Sound: Understanding the Signal Path	Appreciation of Music	Creative Project	Sound: Music Remixing
Provide a structured award that uses problem-based learning approaches to develop creative and technical skills and competences for the role of sound recordist/engineer	X	X		X	X
Develop a range of creative critical problem- solving and project management skills for the role of sound recording engineer	X	X		X	X
Develop the individuality of the candidate through creative process	X		X	X	X
Provide a structured award that develops new and existing sound production skills and competences in a vocational context	X	X	X	X	X
Allow candidates to develop a range of applied practical skills, competences and understanding of the technical and creative potential using industry standard hardware and software	X	X		X	X

See Appendix C, Skillset NOS Sound Revised 2009 and Appendix D Skillset NOS Sound Original for how the NPA links to Skillset National Occupational Standards.

5.3 Core Skills

Entry and exit levels of Core Skills for the National Progression Award in Sound Production: Recording will be set by individual centres. Opportunities exist to gather evidence within Units which can contribute towards Core Skills. The table below highlights the Units of the award which can be used to generate evidence for Core Skills.

Core Skill	Developed through
Communication	Creative Project Appreciation of Music Sound: Understanding the Signal Path Sound Engineering and Production Sound: Music Remixing
Problem Solving	Creative Project Appreciation of Music Sound: Understanding the Signal Path Sound Engineering and Production Sound: Music Remixing
Information and Communication Technology	Appreciation of Music Sound: Music Remixing
Working with Others	Creative Project Appreciation of Music Sound: Understanding the Signal Path Sound Engineering and Production

In addition to Core Skills development the NPA in Sound Production: Recording offers candidates the opportunity to develop key transferable skills. The following table illustrates some of these possibilities.

Transferable skill	Developed through
Enterprise skills	Creative Project Sound: Music Remixing
Technology skills	Sound: Understanding the Signal Path Sound: Engineering and Production Sound: Music Remixing Creative Project Appreciation of Music
Employability skills	Sound: Engineering and Production Creative Project Appreciation of Music
Planning/evaluative skills	Creative Project Appreciation of Music Sound: Engineering and Production Sound: Music Remixing

5.4 Articulation, professional recognition and credit transfer

The NPA opens up a very flexible route to progress to full-time courses from school or college to Higher Education (HE). See Appendix F for progression map. Successful completion of this NPA may provide opportunities for the candidate to be considered for entry to other courses, eg National Certificate Sound Production SCQF level 6.

Candidates undertaking the NPA in Sound Production: Recording could also undertake further NPA programmes, for example the NPA in Sound Production: Live. A portfolio of two or more NPAs may provide opportunities to gain entry to a Higher National Course, eg HNC/HND Sound Production SCQF levels 7/8.

6 Approaches to delivery and assessment

Content and context

The nature of this award allows for short course delivery and may be delivered by centres, particularly FE, as a precursor or follow-on to National Certificates in Music or Sound Production at SCQF level 6. NPAs potentially allow for entry at differing points during the academic session which could suit the FE sector where delivering centres may be operating on 2 or 3 semester systems.

Alternatively, centres may wish to develop a non-advanced programme where students can be entered for three NPAs throughout the academic session: NPA Sound Production: Recording, NPA Sound Production: Live and NPA Music Business. This would allow candidates who were uncertain of which area of the music industry to focus upon for a career choice to experience concentrated exposure to elements of each of the areas, thereby informing them more fully of the nature of each area studied.

The method of delivery of this award is at the discretion of individual centres. The structure of the National Progression Award allows centres a high degree of flexibility in the delivery of the Unit content. The award can be offered in a practical setting which could either be within the candidate's current place of employment, a placement scenario or within a simulated practical learning environment in a centre:

- ◆ as a full-time short programme, day release, or evening class
- ◆ using a combination of delivery styles.

For example, students may be able study on a half-day/evening basis or combine evening (or day release) study with some distance learning provision.

The Units which comprise the award take a practical approach to both delivery and assessment, which is reinforced in Assessment Support Packs which will accompany all mandatory Units. These reinforce the practical aspects of the Unit Specification.

The award structure and Unit content has been developed to allow for integrative and cross assessment. The use of an integrated and linked delivery methodology in centres will provide candidates with more meaningful learning experiences and promote an increased coherence between the Units.

Examples of where learning and assessment could be integrated include:

- ◆ *Sound: Understanding the Signal Path*
- ◆ *Sound Engineering and Production*

The assessment strategy for the proposed awards aims for a balanced approach to assessment as well as complementary and supplementary methods of assessment which reflect the nature of the subject area. The majority of assessment is practical based. Candidates should have ample opportunities to develop competence and skills through formative assessment opportunities; ideally these would be in the workplace or a similar environment.

Please refer to appendix E for Assessment Mapping.

Unit Specifications detail all mandatory Evidence Requirements, providing centres with valuable information relating to assessment procedures and conditions for each assessment event. Unit Specifications also provide advice and guidance on different approaches to delivery.

Learning and teaching approaches could include lectures, individual and group work reinforced by handouts and worksheets which should incorporate realistic problem-solving exercises. Candidates should be encouraged to use and become familiar with a wide range of audio sources and resources, including ICT, digital and analogue.

Open learning may be feasible for some Outcomes within some Units and in some cases for entire Units. These opportunities are highlighted within the Unit specifications. Practical activities underpin much of the learning process and so the opportunities for distance learning may be constrained and consideration must be given to authentication of candidate assessment evidence produced outwith supervised conditions. Centres may find it possible to develop solutions for all or parts of some Units provided all Unit and verification requirements are met in full.

7 General information for centres

Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Introduction to Assessment Arrangements for Schools and Colleges* (www.sqa.org.uk).

Internal and external verification

All instruments of assessment used within this Group Award should be internally verified, using the appropriate policy within the centre and the guidelines set by SQA.

External verification will be carried out by SQA to ensure that internal assessment is within the national guidelines for these qualifications.

Further information on internal and external verification can be found in *SQA's Guide to Assessment* (www.sqa.org.uk).

8 General information for candidates

The National Progression Award in Sound Production: Recording at SCQF level 6 will allow you to develop practical skills in recording, from understanding the signal path to choosing and using the correct equipment and editing and mixing the final product.

The National Progression Award consists of two mandatory Units and one further Unit from a range of options which you need to successfully complete in order to gain the award.

There are two mandatory Units (both at SCQF level 6).

- ◆ *Sound: Understanding the Signal Path*
- ◆ *Sound Engineering and Production*

There are three optional Units from which you must choose **one** Unit.

- ◆ *Sound: Music Remixing*
- ◆ *Creative Project*
- ◆ *Appreciation of Music*

You will develop confidence in using equipment and software and be given opportunities to apply and develop your creative skills. You will also have the option to develop wider skills in a related area of the recorded music industry depending on your specific area of interest.

The NPA will also give you a platform which will allow you to progress into potential employment or further education; this could include progressing onto a National Certificate programme such as NC Sound Production or a related HNC/HND programme or degree.

There are no specific entry requirements for the National Progression Award in Sound Production: Recording at SCQF level 6, however, it would be beneficial if you had some previous experience of music and/or sound production either as an amateur, semi-professional or in a professional capacity. Though not essential it would be beneficial for you to have basic IT/computer experience.

9 Glossary of terms

SCQF: This stands for the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, which is a new way of speaking about qualifications and how they inter-relate. We use SCQF terminology throughout this guide to refer to credits and levels. For further information on the SCQF visit the SCQF website at www.scqf.org.uk

SCQF credit points: One SCQF credit point equates to 10 hours of learning. NQ Units at SCQF levels 2–6 are worth 6 SCQF credit points, NQ Units at level 7 are worth 8 SCQF points.

SCQF levels: The SCQF covers 12 levels of learning. National Qualification Group Awards are available at SCQF levels 2–6 and will normally be made up of National Units which are available from SCQF levels 2–7.

Dedicated Unit to cover Core Skills: This is a non-subject Unit that is written to cover one or more particular Core Skills.

Embedded Core Skills: This is where the development of a Core Skill is incorporated into the Unit and where the Unit assessment also covers the requirements of Core Skill assessment at a particular level.

Signposted Core Skills: This refers to the opportunities to develop a particular Core Skill at a specified level that lie outwith automatic certification.

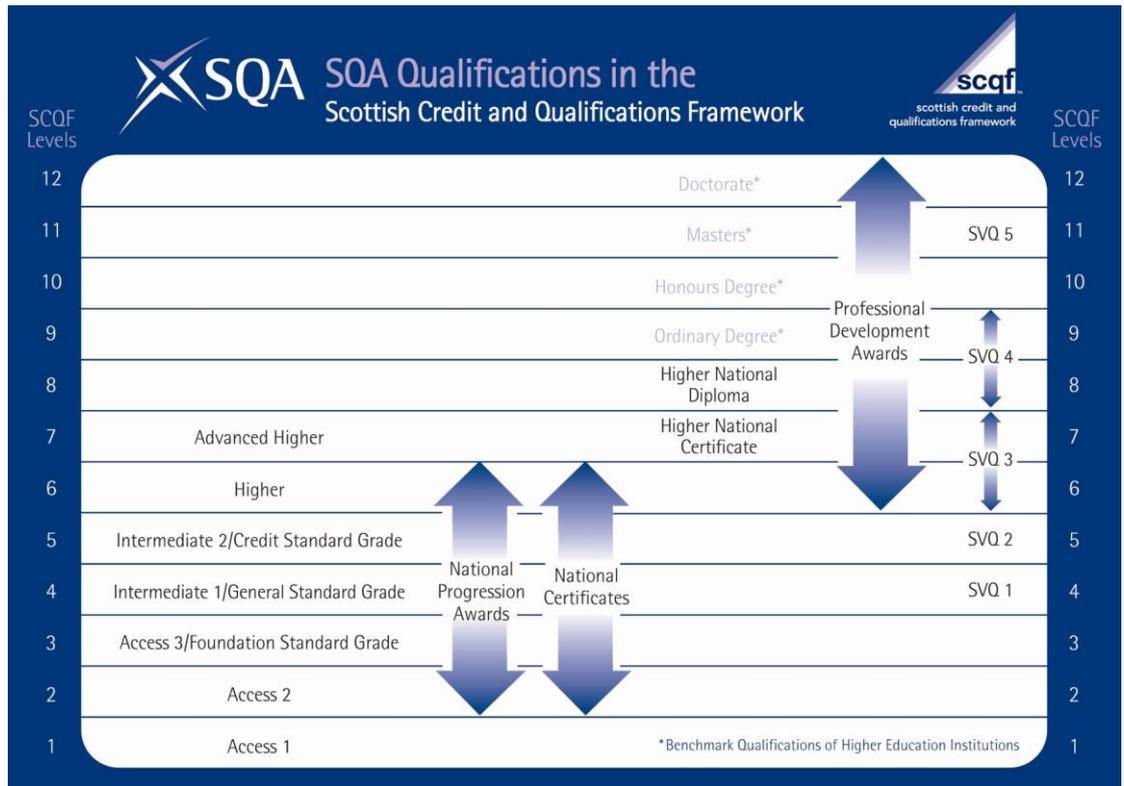
Qualification Design Team: The QDT works in conjunction with a Qualification Manager/Development Manager to steer the development of the National Certificate/National Progression Award from its inception/revision through to validation. The group is made up of key stakeholders representing the interests of centres, employers, universities and other relevant organisations.

Consortium-devised National Certificates/National Progression Awards are those developments or revisions undertaken by a group of centres in partnership with SQA.

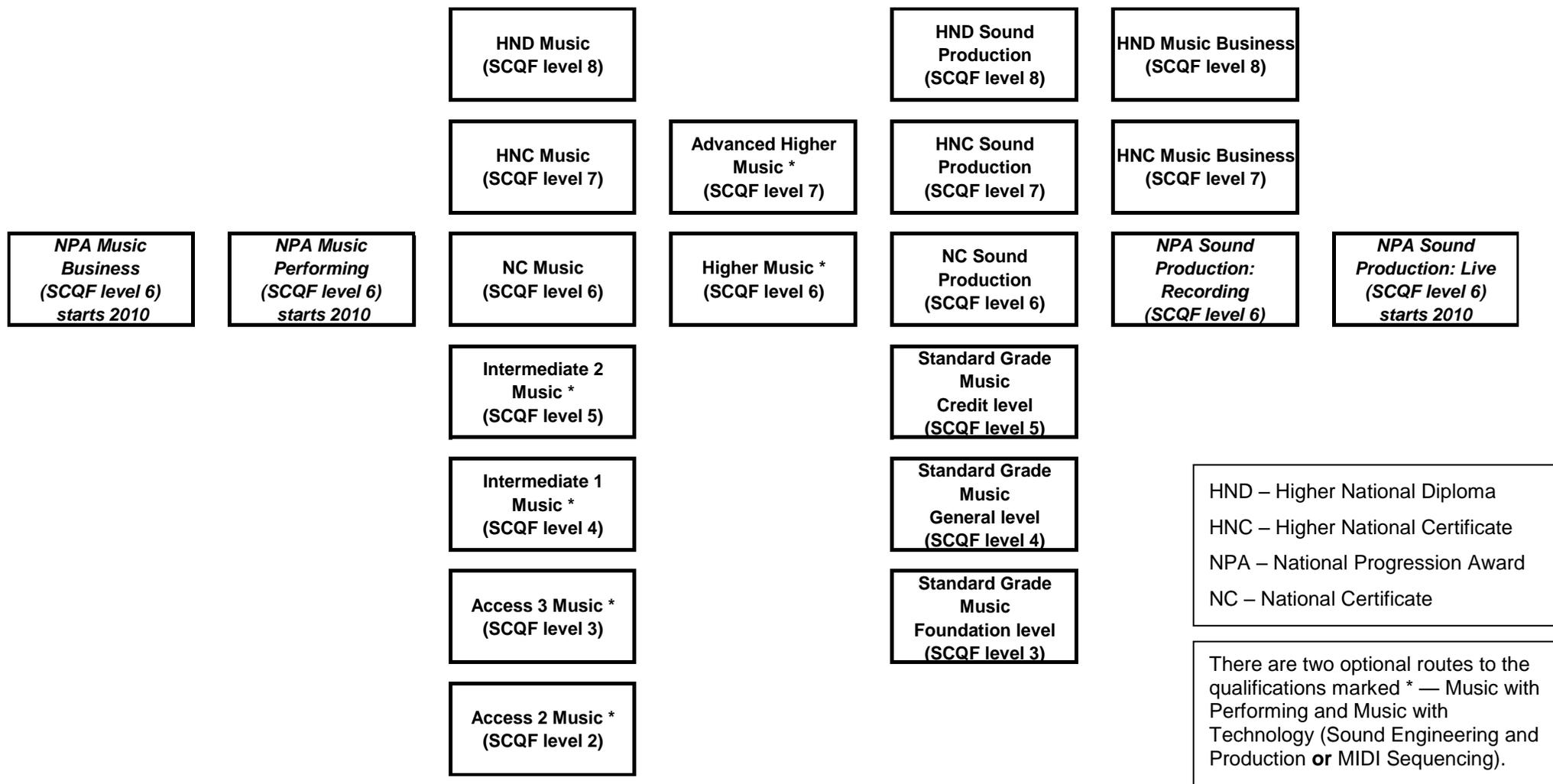
10 Appendices

- Appendix A: SCQF Ready Reckoner
- Appendix B: Music Qualifications Map
- Appendix C: Skillset NOS Sound Revised 2009
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Appendix A: SCQF Ready Reckoner



Appendix B: Music Qualifications Map



Appendix C: Skillset NOS Sound Revised 2009

The following two tables show the range of Skillset NOS applicable to this NPA.

Link to NPA Sound Production: Recording	Selection of 20 New Skillset NOS June 2009
Very High	S1 Work effectively in sound production
High	S2 Identify, devise and manage the sound requirements
Medium	S3 Assess studios and locations
Very Low	S4 Design sound rigs for multi-camera productions
Very High	S5 Rig sound equipment
Low	S6 Set up and maintain external circuits
Medium	S7 Identify and provide local communications
Medium	S8 Align the sound system
Very High	S11 Acquire sound using a microphone
Low	S12 Synchronise sound for playback
Very High	S14 Mix recorded sound
Medium	S15 Work with supplementary sound material
Very High	S16 Make sound recordings
Low/medium	S17 Record sound on location
Very Low	S18 Record sound through single camera operations
Medium	S19 Document and store media
Very High	S20 Edit sound

Appendix D: Skillset NOS Sound Original

The table below is from the earlier 2003 published standards not completely replaced by the newer 2009 version.

	Selection from 38 NOS from 2003 National Occupational Standards Sound Suite
Link to NPA Sound Production: Recording	http://www.ukstandards.org.uk/Find_Occupational_Standards.aspx?NosFindID=4&SuiteID=391
Medium	Rig and position sound equipment
Low	Provide local technical communications
Very High	Optimize sound pick-up with a placed microphone
Low	Synchronize sound and pictures
Very High	Mix sound
High	Assess requirements and mix sound
Low/Medium	Create or obtain supplementary sound material
Low/Medium	Control the use of supplementary material
High	Direct sound operations to create sound balance
Very High	Make sound recordings
Medium	Supervise sound recordings
Very High	Edit sound using a digital editing device
Medium	Supervise sound editing
High	Manage and market yourself as a freelancer
Very Low	Facilitate and manage trainees
High	Co-ordinate your team and performers and collaborate with production colleagues
High	Contribute to good working relationships
Very High	Ensure your own actions reduce risks to health and safety
Very High	Conduct an assessment of risks in the workplace

Appendix E: Assessment mapping

Mandatory Units	SCQF level	No. Credits	Outcomes	Assessment evidence
Sound: Understanding the Signal Path	6	1	1 Explain the path of a sound wave from the performer to the listener.	Written and/or oral evidence.
			2 Connect devices within an audio system in accordance with a given brief.	Performance evidence, observation checklist.
			3 Test given audio systems to ensure correct and safe operation.	Performance evidence, observation checklist.
Sound Engineering and Production	6	1	1 Create a multi-track recording in accordance with a given brief.	Observation checklist. Product evidence (multi-track recording and mixdown stereo master).
			2 Create an edited stereo mix from a multi-track recording in accordance with a given brief.	Product evidence, observation checklist (stereo mix).
Optional Units				
Any one from the following three				
Sound: Music Remixing	6	1	1 Describe the remixing of music.	Written and/or oral evidence.
			2 Remix music tracks in accordance with a given brief.	Completed observation checklist. Product evidence (audio master and software files) and written and/or oral evidence.

Optional Units (cont)	SCQF level	No. Credits	Outcomes	Assessment evidence
Creative Project	6	1	1 Produce a plan for a creative project from a given brief.	Written and/or oral evidence.
			2 Implement the creative project plan.	Product evidence, checklist and logbook.
			3 Evaluate the completed creative project.	Written and/or oral evidence.
Appreciation of Music	6	1	1 Investigate the key musical features of, and the key contributors to, a variety of music genres.	Written and/or oral evidence.
			2 Investigate the distinguishing musical features, background and a key contributor to a music genre.	Written and/or oral evidence.

Appendix F: Progression Map

SCQF levels	NQ Music/ Music with Technology	NC Provision	HN Provision			Degree	SCQF levels
10						BA/BMus	10
9							9
8			HND Music	HND Sound Production	HND Music Business	BA/BSc Sound Production	8
7	AH		HNC Music	HNC Sound Production	HNC Music Business		7
6	H	NC Music NC Sound Production NPA Music/ Sound Production					6
5	Int 2						5
4	Int 1						4
3	Access						3