



Higher Music Technology Assignment Assessment task

This document provides information for teachers and lecturers about the coursework component of this course in terms of the skills, knowledge and understanding that are assessed.

Valid for session 2020-21 only.

The Higher Music Technology Assignment Assessment Task valid from session 2018-19 is available this session on SQA's secure website. SQA co-ordinators can arrange access.

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Introduction

This document contains instructions for teachers, lecturers and candidates for the Higher Music Technology assignment in session 2020-21.

Audio capture is not assessed due to COVID-19 and the difficulties associated with the safe use of microphones and recording equipment. SQA has published media files for candidates to use in live multi-track, multi-track and radio broadcast contexts allowing them to demonstrate mandatory skills in manipulating and mixing audio files.

These files are provided in 48kHz/32bit format and are raw and unprocessed. Candidates should ensure that they are importing them using the correct settings in their digital audio workstation (DAW) sessions. Candidates must demonstrate their skills in editing and processing these files in this assignment. Centres can download the .wav files from SQA's secure website.

Copyright restrictions prevent SQA from providing audio for film soundtracks, audiobooks, computer games or other similar contexts.

Assignment – session 2020-21

This assignment is worth 70 marks. This is 70% of the overall marks for the course assessment.

This is one of two course assessment components. The other component is a question paper.

The purpose of the assignment is to assess practical application of knowledge and skills from the course to plan, implement and evaluate a creative production using music technology.

The assignment has three stages.

Stage 1 'planning the production' has 20 marks.

Stage 2 'implementing the production' has 40 marks.

Stage 3 'evaluating the production' has 10 marks.

Teachers or lecturers should provide candidates with the instructions for candidates in this document.

Instructions for teachers and lecturers

Task requirements

The media files provided by SQA will help candidates to complete a creative production in a radio broadcast context and will include:

- ◆ recordings of radio broadcast elements, from which candidates will select material to develop into a finished production
- ◆ multi-tracked recordings of music in two different genres, allowing candidates personalisation and choice
- ◆ two live multi-tracked recordings

Candidates must select one of the four multi-tracks to use in their radio broadcast.

SQA will not provide multi-tracked, electronically produced sounds and/or music for the production. Candidates should create their own. Candidates could demonstrate these skills by creating beds and jingles within the radio show or by creating additional tracks within the multi-track.

The production must be at least 4 minutes, but no more than 7 minutes, in length and must involve at least 10 parts.

Candidates must demonstrate all of the required technical skills listed below.

Processing skills

- ◆ editing tracks, including editing a minimum of three takes into a single take
- ◆ applying creative and/or corrective equalisation
- ◆ applying dynamics processing, including the use of compression and/or limiting, and noise gate controllers

Applying effects

- ◆ applying time domain and other effects, including at least two from: delay, echo, reverb, chorus, phase, flange
- ◆ manipulating the controls of virtual and/or MIDI instruments (for example ADSR envelopes, LFO, filter)

Mixing and sequencing skills

- ◆ applying a range of mixing techniques, including using volume, panning, automation, send and insert effects, and grouping/bussing to achieve a balanced and creative mix
- ◆ accurate synchronisation and/or sequencing in complex scenarios involving multiple takes and/or simultaneous events
- ◆ mixing down to an audio master in an appropriate file format

Marking instructions

In line with SQA's normal practice, the following marking instructions for the Higher Music Technology assignment are addressed to the marker. They will also be helpful for those preparing candidates for course assessment.

Candidates' evidence is submitted to SQA for external marking.

General marking principles

Always apply these general principles. Use them in conjunction with the detailed marking instructions, which identify the key features required in candidates' responses.

- a Always use positive marking. This means candidates accumulate marks for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding; marks are not deducted for errors or omissions.
- b Award marks for planning based on the formal plans provided as evidence.
 - If no plans are provided, award 0 marks for planning.
 - If a candidate does not state the source of media files (SQA or their own), award a maximum of 5 marks as planning is lacking detail.
 - Do not award marks for planning audio capture.
- c Award marks for implementing based on the completed audio master and the record of progress:
 - If no audio master is provided, award 0 marks for implementing.
 - If no record of progress is provided, award appropriate marks from the lower bands.
- d Award marks for evaluating based on the evaluation report provided as evidence, which must relate to the audio master provided. If no audio master is provided, award 0 marks for evaluating.
- e For each of the stages, select the band descriptor which most closely describes the evidence presented. Once the best fit has been selected:
 - where the evidence almost matches the level above, award the higher mark from the range
 - where the evidence just meets the standard described, award the lower mark from the range
 - where the evidence completely matches the highest level band descriptor for any stage, award full marks for that stage

Detailed marking instructions

Criteria for stage 1a: planning sound design	Mark range
Fully informative, detailed and complete evidence of planning	9-10
Informative and complete evidence of planning	7-8
Evidence of planning which is mostly complete and appropriate, but lacking in detail in some areas	5-6
Incomplete evidence of planning	3-4
Little evidence of planning	1-2
No evidence of planning	0
<p>For stage 1a, the candidate must provide evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ a detailed sound design map containing each element of the production (for example sound design, dialogue, music) ◆ a detailed production plan itemising each piece of sound design, dialogue, including planning of EQ, effects, processing and automation 	

Criteria for stage 1b: planning the editing and mixing	Mark range
Fully informative, detailed and complete evidence of planning	9-10
Informative and complete evidence of planning	7-8
Evidence of planning which is mostly complete and appropriate, but lacking in detail in some areas	5-6
Incomplete evidence of planning	3-4
Little evidence of planning	1-2
No evidence of planning	0
<p>For stage 1b, the candidate must provide evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ a mixing plan, including intended use of effects, processes and automation, and the reasons for choices 	

Criteria for stage 2a: implementing the production – processing skills	Mark range
Completed to a high standard, demonstrating a comprehensive knowledge of processing skills and technical awareness, fully documented in progress record	9-10
Completed to a reasonable standard, demonstrating a good knowledge of processing skills and technical awareness, and documented in progress record	7-8
Completed to a minimally acceptable standard, demonstrating some knowledge of processing skills and technical awareness, partially documented in progress record	5-6
Completed to a minimally acceptable standard, but with little or no evidence in progress record	3-4
Incomplete	1-2
No evidence of processing skills	0
<p>For stage 2a, the candidate must provide evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ applying creative and/or corrective equalisation ◆ applying dynamics processing, including the use of compression and/or limiting and noise gate ◆ editing tracks, including editing a minimum of three takes into a single take 	

Criteria for stage 2b: implementing the production – applying effects	Mark range
Completed to a high standard, demonstrating a comprehensive knowledge of effects, fully documented in progress record	9-10
Completed to a reasonable standard, demonstrating a good knowledge of effects, and documented in progress record	7-8
Completed to a minimally acceptable standard, demonstrating some knowledge of effects, partially documented in progress record	5-6
Completed to a minimally acceptable standard, but with little or no evidence in progress record	3-4
Incomplete	1-2
No evidence of applying effects	0
<p>For stage 2b, the candidate must provide evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ applying time domain and other effects, including at least two from: delay, echo, reverb, chorus, phase, flange ◆ manipulating the controls of virtual and/or MIDI instruments (for example ADSR envelopes, LFO, filter) 	

Criteria for stage 2c: implementing the production – mixing and sequencing skills	Mark range
Completed to a high standard, demonstrating a comprehensive knowledge of mixing and sequencing skills and technical awareness, fully documented in progress record	9-10
Completed to a reasonable standard, demonstrating a good knowledge of mixing and sequencing skills and technical awareness, and documented in progress record	7-8
Completed to a minimally acceptable standard, demonstrating some knowledge of mixing and sequencing skills and technical awareness, partially documented in progress record	5-6
Completed to a minimally acceptable standard, but with little or no evidence in progress record	3-4
Incomplete	1-2
No evidence of mixing and sequencing skills	0
<p>For stage 2c, the candidate must provide evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ applying a range of mixing techniques, including using volume, panning, automation, send and insert effects and grouping/bussing to achieve a balanced and creative mix ◆ accurate synchronisation and/or sequencing in complex scenarios involving multiple takes and/or simultaneous events ◆ mixing down to an audio master in appropriate file format 	

Criteria for stage 2d: implementing the production – creative and appropriate use of sound and/or music	Mark range
Implementation includes significant creative use of appropriate sounds and/or music, and fully documented in progress record	9-10
Implementation includes some creative use of appropriate sounds and/or music, and well documented in progress record	7-8
Implementation includes some creative use of appropriate sounds and/or music, and partially documented in progress record	5-6
Implementation includes minimal creative use of appropriate sounds and/or music, and with little or no evidence in progress record	3-4
Implementation shows little evidence of appropriate choices of sound and/or music, or with no evidence in progress record	1-2
No evidence of creative and appropriate use of appropriate sounds and/or music	0

Criteria for stage 3: evaluating the production	Mark range
Evaluation report is consistent, detailed and relevant, and with clear, valid evaluation against clearly stated criteria	9-10
Evaluation report is consistent and relevant, and with clear, reasoned evaluation	7-8
Evaluation report is consistent and relevant, with some evaluative comments	5-6
Evaluation report is complete, but lacking in evaluative comments	3-4
Evaluation report is incomplete, unclear or inconsistent	1-2
No evidence of evaluation	0
<p>For stage 3, the candidate report must include evaluation of their:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ planning ◆ creation of the electronic multi-track ◆ editing and processing ◆ final mix, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — justification for significant technical and creative decisions — suggestions for improvements, and information about how these suggestions could be achieved, in both the development and production processes 	

Instructions for candidates

This assessment applies to the assignment for Higher Music Technology in session 2020-21.

This assignment is worth 70 marks. This is 70% of the overall marks for the course assessment.

It assesses the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

- ◆ skills in using music technology hardware and software to manipulate audio
- ◆ application of music technology in creative ways
- ◆ planning, implementing and evaluating a sound production

This assignment has three stages.

Stage 1 'planning the production' has 20 marks.

Stage 2 'implementing the production' has 40 marks.

Stage 3 'evaluating the production' has 10 marks.

Your teacher or lecturer will let you know if there are any specific conditions for doing this assessment.

In this assessment, you have to produce the audio for a radio broadcast context.

The media files provided by SQA will help you to complete your creative production and include:

- ◆ recordings of radio broadcast elements, from which you will select material to develop into a finished production.
- ◆ multi-tracked recordings of music in two different genres
- ◆ two live multi-tracked recordings

You must select one of the four multi-tracks to use in your radio broadcast.

SQA will not provide multi-tracked, electronically produced sounds and/or music for the production. You should create your own. You could demonstrate these skills by creating beds and jingles within the radio show or by creating additional tracks within the multi-track. If you use the live multi-tracks, you will need to demonstrate this skill in another place.

Your production must be at least 4 minutes, but no more than 7 minutes, in length and must involve at least 10 parts.

Throughout the task, you must keep a record of progress. This could be an informal log or diary in handwritten or electronic form.

You should update your record of progress after each stage of the task. It should explain what you have done, describe any help you needed, and list any evidence you have produced (printouts, sketches, photographs, sound files).

After each stage of the task, ask your teacher or lecturer to check your work.

Before you begin

Listen to the media files provided by SQA and decide which multi-tracks you will use, and which elements of the radio broadcast files you will use in your production.

You should discuss the task with your teacher or lecturer before you begin the planning process to ensure that your production will allow you to demonstrate all of the following technical skills:

Processing

- ◆ applying creative and/or corrective equalisation
- ◆ applying dynamics processing, including the use of compression and/or limiting and noise gate controllers
- ◆ editing tracks, including editing a minimum of three takes into a single take. Each of the studio multi-tracks has three lead vocal takes for you to edit into a single take. If you use the live multi-tracks, you will need to demonstrate this skill in another place.

Applying effects

- ◆ applying time domain and other effects, including at least two from: delay, echo, reverb, chorus, phase, flange
- ◆ manipulating the controls of virtual and/or MIDI instruments (for example ADSR envelopes, LFO, filter)

Mixing and sequencing

- ◆ applying a range of mixing techniques, including using volume, panning, automation, send and insert effects, and grouping/bussing to achieve a balanced and creative mix
- ◆ accurate synchronisation and/or sequencing in complex scenarios involving multiple takes and/or simultaneous events
- ◆ mixing down to an audio master in appropriate file format

If you are sure that your production will allow you to demonstrate all of the above technical skills, and have confirmed this with your teacher or lecturer, you are ready to begin planning your production.

Stage 1: planning the production (20 marks)

During the planning stage, you must produce the following:

Planning sound design (10 marks)

- ◆ a detailed sound design map containing each element of the audio (for example sound design, dialogue, music)
- ◆ a detailed production plan, itemising each piece of sound design or dialogue, including planning EQ, effects, processing and automation
- ◆ an updated record of progress, documenting the planning process for this stage

Planning the creating, editing, and mixing (10 marks)

- ◆ a mixing plan, including how you intend to use effects, processes and automation, and the reasons for your choices
- ◆ an updated record of progress, documenting the planning process for this stage

Stage 2: implementing the production (40 marks)

During this stage, you must produce the following:

- ◆ a completed production, including the multi-tracked recordings, bounced to an appropriate audio format
- ◆ an updated record of progress, documenting the techniques used in the development of the production

Stage 3: evaluating the production (10 marks)

Your evaluation must include your:

- ◆ justification for significant technical and creative decisions
- ◆ suggestions of how and where you could make improvements
- ◆ evaluation of the development process and the production process

You must evaluate your:

- ◆ planning
- ◆ electronic multi-track creation
- ◆ editing and processing within your entire production
- ◆ final mix

Final checks

Check your work to make sure you have completed all stages of the assignment. Check that you have collected all the required evidence.

Let your teacher or lecturer know when you have finished the assignment.

Administrative information

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History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date

Note: you are advised to check SQA's website to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of this document.

Security and confidentiality

This document can be used by SQA approved centres for the assessment of National Courses and not for any other purpose.

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