Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Specification

General information

This graded unit has been validated as part of the HND Sound Production. Centres are required to develop a project-based assessment in accordance with this validated specification.

Graded unit title: Sound Production: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

Graded unit code: J0J0 34

Type of Project: Practical assignment

Publication date: April 2020

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 05

Graded unit purpose

This graded unit is designed to provide evidence that the learner has achieved the following principal aims of the HNC Sound Production:

♦ an ability to analyse and synthesise knowledge and skills acquired through study
♦ an ability to develop study, organisational and research skills
♦ an ability to integrate sound production skills in practical and/or employability contexts
♦ to enable progression to further study in sound production or a related discipline
♦ an ability to develop personal skills and follow evolving industry practices

Learners will plan and produce a portfolio of work that could be used to showcase their ability in, for example, a job application or interview situation for either employment or further study. They will also evaluate their effectiveness when planning and producing the portfolio.

Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7)

Higher National Project-based Graded unit Specification: General Information (cont)

Recommended entry to the graded unit

It is recommended that the learner should have completed or be in the process of completing the following units relating to the above principal aims prior to undertaking this graded unit:

HNC Sound Production

J018 34   *Sound Production: Audio Skills (SCQF level 7)*
J01B 34   *Sound Production: Skills for Business (SCQF level 7)*
J01C 34   *Sound Production: Sound for Live Events (SCQF level 7)*
J019 34   *Sound Production: Digital Audio Workstations (SCQF level 7)*
J01A 34   *Sound Production: Recording and Mixing (SCQF level 7)*

Core Skills

Achievement of this unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill   *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 5

Core Skill component   None

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the support notes of this graded unit specification.

Assessment support pack

The Assessment Support Pack (ASP) for this unit provides assessment and marking guidelines that exemplify the national standard for achievement. It is a valid, reliable and practicable assessment. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the ASP to ensure a comparable standard. A list of existing ASPs is available to download from SQA's website (**http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/46233.2769.html**).

Equality and inclusion

This graded unit has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice can be found on SQA's website:
www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements

Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Specification: Designing the project and assessing learners

Graded unit title: Sound Production: Graded Unit 1(SCQF level 7)

Assessment

This graded unit will be assessed by the use of a project-based practical assignment. The project should provide the learner with the opportunity to produce evidence that demonstrates she/he has met the aims of this graded unit.

The project undertaken by the learner must be a complex task which involves:

♦   variables which are complex or unfamiliar
♦   relationships which need to be clarified
♦   a context which may be unfamiliar to the learner

The project must require the learner to interpret, apply and evaluate the knowledge and skills developed in the mandatory units and in so doing they should:

♦   analyse the task and decide on a course of action for undertaking the project
♦   plan and organise work and carry it through to completion
♦   reflect on what has been done and draw conclusions for the future
♦   produce evidence of meeting the aims which this graded unit has been designed to cover

HNC Sound Production Assessment task: The project must require the learner to plan, develop and evaluate a portfolio of material which will demonstrate and enhance their employability or potential for further study within a chosen sound production role (selected by the learner). Examples of suitable roles may include music re-mixer, music recording, audio post for film/tv/games and live sound.

Conditions of assessment

The learner should be given a date for completion of the project. However, the instructions for the project should be distributed to allow the learner sufficient time to assimilate the details and carry out the project.

During the time between the distribution of the project instructions and the completion date, assessors may answer questions; provide clarification, guidance and reasonable assistance. Reasonable assistance is the term used by SQA to describe the difference between providing learners with some direction to generate the required evidence for assessment and providing too much support which would compromise the integrity of the assessment. Reasonable assistance is part of all learning and teaching processes. In relation to the assessment of Higher National Project-based Graded Units, assessors may provide advice, clarification, and guidance during the time between the distribution of the project instructions and the completion date, ie at each stage of the project.

Each learner will be entitled to five mentoring sessions; two during the planning stage, two during the developing stage and one during the evaluation stage. During the mentoring sessions learners will present their ideas for each of the three stages and receive appropriate guidance.

Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Specification: Designing the project and assessing learners (cont)

Graded unit title: Sound Production: Graded Unit 1(SCQF level 7)

Remediation allows an assessor to clarify learner responses, either by requiring a written amendment or by oral questioning, where there is a minor shortfall or omission in evidence requirements. In either case, such instances must be formally noted by the assessor, either in writing or recording, and be made available to the internal and external verifier. In relation to Higher National Project-based Graded Units, learners must be given the opportunity for remediation at each stage of the project.

The evidence for a Higher National Project-based Graded Unit is generated over time and involves three distinct stages, each of which has to be achieved before the next is undertaken. This means that any reassessment of stages must be undertaken before proceeding to the next stage. The overall grade is derived from the total number of marks *across all* sections, and should reflect the ability of the learner to work autonomously and the amount of support required. In relation to Higher National Project-based Graded Units, learners who have failed any stage of the project and have been unable to provide the necessary evidence through remediation must be given the opportunity for reassessment of that stage.

The project should be marked as soon as possible after the completion date. The final grading given should reflect the quality of the learner's evidence at the time of the completion date.

Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Specification: Designing the project and assessing learners (cont)

Graded unit title: Sound Production: Graded Unit 1

Evidence requirements for this graded unit

The project undertaken by learners will consist of three stages: planning; developing; and evaluating. The following table specifies the minimum evidence required to pass each stage.

Project stage	Minimum evidence requirements	% Mark allocation
Stage 1 — Planning	**The plan should consist of:** 1 The portfolio proposal detailing the overall aims of the assignment. 2 A description of the role of the chosen specialism including information gathered from research. 3 Identification of the intended artefacts for inclusion, justifying why they have been selected with reference to the chosen role and how knowledge and skills from the mandatory units of the group award will be reflected. 4 A method statement or production plan for the creation of each artefact which includes identification of resources required. 5 Identification of timescales for the creation the portfolio. *The learner **must** achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Planning stage.*	20%

Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Specification: Designing the project and assessing learners (cont)

Graded unit title: Sound Production: Graded Unit 1

Project stage	Minimum evidence requirements	% Mark allocation

Stage 2 — Developing	**The portfolio should consist of:**
	
	1 An Introduction and cover sheet.
	
	2 Contents and brief description of portfolio items.
	
	3 Artefacts outlined in the planning stage which must include:
	    ♦ Biography/CV
	    ♦ A minimum of three audio or audio/visual artefacts in an agreed delivery format
	
	4 Relevant supporting documentation. This must consist of:
	    ♦ Evidence of research and the application of findings to the creation of the artefacts.
	    ♦ Examples of relevant documentation which may include:
	        ♦ production logs
	        ♦ sound maps
	        ♦ cue sheets
	        ♦ stage plans
	        ♦ live performance tech specs
	        ♦ microphone techniques
	        ♦ floor plans detailing microphone placements
	        ♦ statements concerning contracts
	        ♦ copyright clearance statements/release forms
	
	The portfolio should be presented to a standard that would be acceptable to prospective employers or further study institutions.
	
	*The learner **must** achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Developing stage.*
		70%
		
		(54% for portfolio and 16% supporting documentation)

Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Specification: Designing the project and assessing learners (cont)

Graded unit title: Sound Production: Graded Unit 1

Project stage	Minimum evidence requirements	% Mark allocation
Stage 3 — Evaluating	**Learners must evaluate the planning, development process and the final portfolio.** **The evaluation should:** 1 Outline the assignment. 2 Comment on the effectiveness of the key stages of the assignment, highlighting any unforeseen events and how they were handled. 3 Identify any knowledge and skills which have been gained and/or developed. 4 Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the planning and development stages. 5 Determine to what extent the assignment met the original brief and make recommendations for future projects. *The learner **must** achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Evaluating stage.*	10%

Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Specification: Designing the project and assessing learners (cont)

Graded unit title: Sound Production: Graded Unit 1(SCQF level 7)

Assessing and grading learners

The overall project will be marked out of **100**. Only whole marks should be used.

The percentage of marks allocated to each stage of the project is outlined in the **evidence requirements**.

It is a requirement that learners must meet the minimum evidence requirements for the Planning stage before progressing to the Developing stage before progressing to the Evaluating stage. Learners may produce evidence over and above that specified in the minimum evidence requirements and deserve more than half the available marks for that stage. Assessors should use the Grade Related Criteria outlined below to judge learner performance.

Learners are required to work independently to meet the evidence requirements of the graded unit. At the same time, learners need appropriate support. SQA uses the term 'reasonable assistance' to describe the balance between supporting learners in their project and not providing too much assistance.

At the end of each stage there should be opportunities for remediation and re-assessment of learners for that particular stage. This includes the final Evaluation stage. Any re-assessment should be carried out in line with the centre's own assessment policy.

Guidance on grading learners

Stage 1 — Planning

Stage 1 of this graded unit is designed to allow learners the opportunity to plan for the production of a portfolio.

The following is intended to distinguish a Grade A learner from a Grade C learner.

A Grade A learner will produce a high standard of planning where the artefacts identified for inclusion are highly focused and relevant to a chosen role. The 'role' may be quite generic and one which encompasses skills and knowledge from across the mandatory section of the framework. Examples of roles may include: recording engineer; live sound engineer; sound designer; music re-mixer. Detailed timescales and comprehensive consideration where appropriate, of working methods and/or resource requirements, will be evident. The plan will also identify all appropriate accompanying documentation for each artefact as detailed in the evidence requirements. In addition, the learner will have identified comprehensive relevant documentation that will be completed during the development stage.

By contrast, a Grade C learner will produce a satisfactory standard of planning where the artefacts identified for inclusion are somewhat focused and relevant to a chosen role. Overall timescales are outlined and some consideration is given to working methods and/or resource requirements. The plan will identify accompanying documentation which is limited in detail or scope. The learner will have identified some relevant documentation that will be completed during the development stage.

Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Specification: Designing the project and assessing learners (cont)

Stage 2 — Developing (Portfolio production)

Stage 2 of this graded unit is designed to allow the learners the opportunity to develop and complete the portfolio that was planned in Stage 1. All learners are expected to produce a portfolio that demonstrates the knowledge and skills of the mandatory units of the group award and, as such, the emphasis would be on demonstrating their skills in sound production. It is expected that the portfolio will be presented appropriately which could be in an electronic or physical format. The supporting documentation should be appropriate. In the evidence requirements section a list of potential supporting documentation is provided.

The following is intended to distinguish a Grade A learner from a Grade C learner.

A Grade A learner will produce a portfolio which demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the chosen role. The learner will select, create and present material that clearly demonstrates the skills required for that role. The learner will create comprehensive relevant documentation as suggested in the evidence requirements in addition to, for example, high quality audio material or a cohesive solution to the requirements of the chosen role.

A Grade C learner by contrast will produce a portfolio which demonstrates some understanding of the chosen role. The learner will select or create material that demonstrates adequate skills required for that role to an acceptable standard. A Grade C learner would create some relevant documentation as suggested in the evidence requirements in addition to, for example, satisfactory audio material, or a satisfactory solution to the requirements of the chosen role.

Stage 3 — Evaluating

Stage 3 of this graded unit is designed to allow learners to reflect on and evaluate the activity of the planning and development stages and the final portfolio itself.

A Grade A learner will provide a comprehensive outline of the assignment. Attention will be given to all of the key stages of the project and in so doing the learner will highlight the effectiveness of each stage. Any unforeseen events will be highlighted and explanations given as to how these were overcome. The skills and knowledge gained during the planning and development stages will be clearly identified, as will the strengths and weaknesses, and recommendations for future projects. A conclusion will be made that determines to what extent the assignment has met the original brief.

A Grade C learner will provide a basic outline of the assignment. Attention will be given to some of the key stages of the project and in so doing the learner will highlight the effectiveness of each stage. Any unforeseen events will be highlighted and a brief explanation will be given as to how these were overcome. Some skills and knowledge gained during the planning and development stages will be identified as will the strengths and weaknesses, and recommendations for future projects. A conclusion will be made that determines to what extent the assignment has met the original brief.

Grade Related Criteria	
Grade A	**Grade C**
Is a seamless, coherent piece of work which consistently meets deadlines set for each stage of the project without the need for prompting and:	Is a co-ordinated piece of work which may not consistently meet the deadlines set but:
♦ has sufficient evidence for the three essential phases of the project, is produced to a high standard, and is quite clearly inter-related	♦ has sufficient evidence of the three essential phases of the project, is produced to an adequate standard
♦ demonstrates an accurate and insightful interpretation of the project brief	♦ demonstrates an acceptable interpretation of the project brief
♦ is highly focused and relevant to the tasks associated with the project brief	♦ is focused and relevant to the tasks associated with the project brief
♦ is clear and well-structured throughout and language used is of a high standard in terms of level, accuracy and technical content	♦ is satisfactorily structured and language used is adequate in terms of level, accuracy and technical content
♦ effectively consolidates and integrates required knowledge and skills	♦ consolidates and integrates knowledge and skills but this may lack some continuity and consistency
♦ demonstrates a high degree of autonomy during all stages of the project	♦ demonstrates independent learning with minimum support and revision during all stages of the project

Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Specification: Designing the project and assessing learners (cont)

Graded unit title: Sound Production: Graded Unit 1(SCQF level 7)

The marks allocated to each stage will then be aggregated to arrive at an overall mark for the project. Assessors will then assign an overall grade to the learner for this Graded unit based on the following grade boundaries.

A = 70%–100%
B = 60%–69%
C = 50%–59%

Any learner who has failed their graded unit or wishes to upgrade their award must be given a reassessment opportunity, or in exceptional circumstances, two reassessment opportunities. In the case of project-based graded units, this must be done using a substantially different project.

The final grading given must reflect the quality of the learner's evidence at the time of the completion of the graded unit. Learners must be awarded the highest grade achieved — whether through first submission or through any reassessment, remediation, and/or reasonable assistance provided.

These grade boundaries are fixed and should **not** be amended.

Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Support Notes

Graded unit title: Sound Production: Graded Unit 1(SCQF level 7)

Guidance on approaches to delivery and assessment of this Graded unit

As this unit is learner initiated and learner driven, it requires only guidance and direction on the part of the assessor. The same staff member may undertake the roles of Assessor and Mentor. Alternatively, each role may be undertaken by a different staff-member. The learner is expected to work independently in a creative, expressive and professional manner, displaying time management skills in order to successfully complete the unit.

It is envisaged that this graded unit would be delivered in the second half of the academic year. This would mean that the mandatory units will ideally have already been completed or nearing completion. However, if a centre wishes to issue the brief towards the beginning of the academic year then attention should be paid to what knowledge and/or skills will have been gained prior to the submission of the planning stage. This should ensure that learners are able to fully consider all aspects of the mandatory units when planning for their portfolio.

Centres should consider timing delivery of this graded unit to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for any remediation and re-assessment and subsequent internal and external verification. This is likely to mean that in a 'standard' academic year, the graded unit could be completed by late May.

During the five formal mentoring sessions learners will present their ideas for each of the three stages. Assessors should ensure that plans are clear and realistic. For the Development stage, learners should be able to demonstrate ideas relating to portfolio content and processes. Assessors should encourage the learner to explain and justify their actions by asking questions about the development of the portfolio and the techniques and methods chosen. The mentoring session for the Evaluation stage should be held prior to its submission and should encourage the learner to reflect on all aspects of the graded unit.

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

Problem Solving: Planning and Organising at SCQF level 6

Learners will develop a plan to complete a complex task and then identify and obtain the resources to carry it out. The task will involve a number of variables. Many will be in a context unfamiliar to the learner and some relationships will also be unfamiliar. The plan will include taking account of information, issues, aspects or situations and will need to be reviewed as work progresses. The learner will know that the strategy will need to be adjusted if/when circumstances change.

Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Support Notes (cont)

Graded unit title: Sound Production: Graded Unit 1(SCQF level 7)

The learner will identify and obtain resources which s/he must select from a wide range of familiar and unfamiliar sources, probably by means of various searching techniques. The resources must be appropriate to the task and will include sources of information, set procedures, people, equipment and physical resources. The learner must decide how to manage and carry out the task, possibly allocating some of the sub-tasks to others in a group situation.

Problem Solving: Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6

The unit requires learners to analyse a complex task, identify and assess the relevance of the factors involved, and develop and justify an approach which will ensure its successful completion.

The variables may be complex or unfamiliar to the learner and relationships may need to be explained or simplified. The learner must identify the variables associated with the task and ascertain their relevance, significance and any relationships between them. Thereafter the learner must evaluate the situation (by summarising, explaining or drawing conclusions) and identify a strategy to deal with it. A new approach may then be devised or an existing one modified. The revised approach must be justified by the learner's taking account of the factors involved, the resources available and/or by comparing various possible alternatives.

Problem Solving: Reviewing and Evaluating at SCQF level 6

This unit requires learners to evaluate their own problem solving activity by reviewing the effectiveness of their techniques/strategies in meeting the aims of the task once the work has been completed. The learner will analyse the effectiveness of all aspects of their problem solving strategies, including any actual or considered modifications to it during the course of the activities. They may devise their own or adopt other established evaluation criteria.

Appropriate evidence to support the learner's conclusions must be gathered from a suitable range of sources and coherent conclusions must be drawn taking account of all the evidence. Recommendations could include suggestions by the learner for further investigation or the use of a different strategy to improve her/his future performance.

Communication: Written Communication (Reading) at SCQF level 6

This unit involves reading a wide range of materials which may present complex ideas and arguments and which will require the learner to be able to understand and identify key and linked facts, arguments and issues. Learners will read text concerned with the analysis and synthesis of information. Learners will be aware that the text may include images and will often serve more than one purpose, eg to inform, persuade or recommend. Learners will extract information from the text and synthesise ideas and information to support their own arguments or points of view.

Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Support Notes (cont)

Communication: Written Communication (Writing) at SCQF level 6

Learners will undertake research and use their analytical skills to find, select and interpret the information needed to produce documentation which has a clearly defined purpose and structure. The information presented must be analysed and evaluated and relevant ideas developed. The task involves some complex research, and will involve a large number of related ideas and detail which will need to be analysed and evaluated clearly and end with logical conclusions.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT): Accessing Information at SCQF level 6

Learners will use a range of ICT equipment independently, carry out complex searches and manage the organisation and security of their work. They will present relevant, accurate information effectively using media appropriate to their specialist area.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT): Providing/Creating Information at SCQF level 6

Learners will be expected to use a range of processing tasks independently. They will extract and present information from local or remote data sources which may be textual, graphical, audio, etc. They will use *ICT* to gather and evaluate information and present findings in an appropriate format.

This Unit has the Core Skill of Problem Solving embedded in it, so when learners achieve this Unit their Core Skills profile will be updated to show that they have achieved Problem Solving at SCQF level 5.

History of changes to graded unit

Version	Description of change	Date
05	Grade related criteria clarified for grade C.	06/04/20
04	Update to allocation of marks and grade related criteria.	27/11/19
03	Core Skill Problem Solving at SCQF level 6 embedded.	31/08/18
02	Update to Conditions of Assessment.	26/07/18

General information for learners

Graded unit title: Sound Production: Graded Unit 1(SCQF level 7)

This graded unit integrates the main knowledge and skills gained in the mandatory units of the HNC in Sound Production.

It is therefore expected that you will have either completed or be in the process of completing the mandatory units of your HNC in Sound Production.

This graded unit is based on a project and the assessment is a practical assignment, with three stages (planning, developing and evaluating) which give you the opportunity to show that you possess the skills and knowledge needed to undertake employment or further study within the areas of Sound Production. You will plan and produce a portfolio of related items that demonstrate your employability or potential for further study in a chosen specialist role in the Sound Production industry. At the end of the process you will evaluate the effectiveness of your planning and development stages.

There are three stages to this graded unit and the main activities in each stage are:

Stage 1 — Planning

You are required to produce a plan where you will identify a chosen specialist role, select items for inclusion in your portfolio and plan for their development.

Stage 2 — Developing

The stage of the project deals with the creation of the items for the portfolio that was planned in Stage 1. In addition, you are required to keep a file of supporting documentation which will contain any relevant documentation and evidence of research and the application of your findings to the creation of the items in your portfolio.

Stage 3 — Evaluating

In this final stage, you are to carry out an evaluation of your project in which you will comment on the effectiveness of your activities during the planning and development stages, and make recommendations for future projects.

Your project will be marked out of 100 and you must pass each stage before moving onto the next stage. Each stage has the following marks:

Planning — 20 marks
Developing — 70 marks (54 marks for the portfolio and 16 marks for the supporting documentation)
Evaluating — 10 marks

You will be assigned an overall grade which will be based on the following boundaries:

Grade A = 70%–100%
Grade B = 60%–69%
Grade C = 50%–59%

General information for learners (cont)

Graded unit title: Sound Production: Graded Unit 1(SCQF level 7)

This unit has the Core Skill of *Problem Solving* embedded in it, so when you achieve this unit your Core Skills profile will be updated to show that you have achieved *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 5.