



Higher National Unit Specification

General information

Unit title: Sound Production: Mixing Project (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: J0L9 34

Superclass: XL

Publication date: August 2018

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 02

Unit purpose

This unit will provide learners the opportunity to plan for and mix a recorded session in response to a client's needs whilst demonstrating good professional practice when working with the client. In producing the mix, learners will be able to enhance mixing skills acquired in other units through the use of technical and creative processes. The learner will then seek and act upon client feedback to produce a mix revision before presenting the final mix. This unit is intended for learners who wish to develop the knowledge and skills required to effectively produce a mix where client interaction is a key component in the creative process.

Outcomes

On successful completion of the unit the learner will be able to:

- 1 Interpret the needs of a client to produce a mix.
- 2 Produce a mix in response to the client needs.
- 3 Produce a final mix in response to client feedback.

Credit points and level

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

Higher National Unit Specification: General information

Unit title: Sound Production: Mixing Project (SCQF level 7)

Recommended entry to the unit

Access to this unit is at the discretion of the centre. However, it is recommended that learners have prior knowledge and skills and/or experience of the equipment used in studio recording and mixing. This could be evidenced through the National Progression Award *Sound Production: Recording*; or NQ units or *Higher Music Technology* (SCQF level 6). The following HN units also provide knowledge and skills development relevant to this unit: *Sound Production: Recording and Mixing* (SCQF level 7) and *Sound Production: Audio Skills* (SCQF level 7).

Core Skills

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following Core Skills component:

Complete Core Skill	Problem Solving at SCQF level 5
---------------------	---------------------------------

Core Skill component	Working Co-operatively with Others at SCQF level 5
----------------------	--

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes for this Unit specification.

Context for delivery

This is an optional unit in the framework for HN Sound Production. It is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the group award to which it contributes.

Equality and inclusion

This unit specification 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 our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

Higher National Unit Specification: Statement of standards

Unit title: Sound Production: Mixing Project (SCQF level 7)

Acceptable performance in this unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

Outcome 1

Interpret the needs of a client to produce a mix.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Communication with client
- ◆ Mix-down plan
- ◆ File formats
- ◆ Reference material

Outcome 2

Produce a mix in response to the client needs.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Implement mix plan
- ◆ Utilise reference material
- ◆ Corrective processing
- ◆ Creative processing
- ◆ Output to final format
- ◆ Project file handling

Outcome 3

Produce a final mix in response to client feedback.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Respond to client feedback
- ◆ Amend mix
- ◆ Project file handling

Evidence requirements for this unit

Learners will need to produce appropriate documentation to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can:

For Outcome 1:

- ◆ Effectively communicate with the client
- ◆ Produce a mix-down plan
- ◆ Define mix output format
- ◆ Identify at least two examples of appropriate reference material within the mix-plan in agreement with the client

Higher National Unit Specification: Statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Sound Production: Mixing Project (SCQF level 7)

The mix-down plan should contain:

- ◆ A brief summary of communication with the client. This could be screenshots of conversations on social media, e-mails, or a written record of the main points of conversation with a client.
- ◆ A brief outline of the overall intended sound of the final mix.
- ◆ An outline of intended approaches to be taken during the mix-down. This could comprise a list of individual tracks within the mix-down and intended approaches to equalisation, dynamic or time domain effect processing.
- ◆ A justification of the mix output format.
- ◆ Identification of at least two appropriate examples of reference material which have been agreed with the client.
- ◆ A description of how the reference material might influence the approaches taken during the mix.

Learners will produce written and/or oral evidence under open-book conditions. Oral presentations should be recorded on a high-quality format.

For Outcome 2:

- ◆ Effectively implement the mix-down
- ◆ Utilise reference material appropriately
- ◆ Perform corrective processing appropriately
- ◆ Perform creative processing appropriately
- ◆ Correctly output reference mix to an appropriate format
- ◆ Perform project file handling appropriately

Evidence for this outcome will be an assessor observation checklist, together with submission of the learner's session project files, reference materials and client mix. Evidence will be produced under open-book conditions.

For Outcome 3:

- ◆ Effectively respond to client feedback
- ◆ Produce at least one mix revision incorporating amendments made as a result of client feedback
- ◆ Correctly output the final mix to the identified final format.
- ◆ Perform project file handling appropriately

Evidence for this outcome will be an assessor observation checklist, together with submission of product evidence in the form of the learner's session project files, and final client mix. The learner should also provide written and/or oral evidence in the form of brief notes of how the learner responded to client feedback and the changes that were made as a result. Evidence will be produced under open-book conditions.



Higher National Unit Support Notes

Unit title: Sound Production: Mixing Project (SCQF level 7)

Unit support notes are offered as guidance and are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this unit

This unit is designed to provide learners the opportunity to develop their interpersonal, organisational and technical skills in planning for, and producing a mix-down of a multi-track recording to an agreed client brief.

In Outcome 1 — the learner will communicate with a client and agree on approaches to implementing their mix. They will learn to approach the mix from a client perspective, with the scope to apply their own technical and creative approaches during the process. The learner will interpret the needs of the client by agreeing a mix-down plan and defining the intended output format for the final mix with consideration being made to the multi-track source format. To assist the mix process, the learner will determine from the client suitable reference material and incorporate strategies in their mix-down plan as a result of analysing the reference material.

In Outcome 2 — the learner will implement the agreed mix-down plan. They will perform initial corrective processing that may, for example, involve removing unwanted areas of tracks using editing and/or processing. The learner will then perform their mix utilising appropriate creative approaches. They will use the reference material throughout the mix process, and produce a reference mix in the agreed format to give to the client. The reference material could provide the learner with guidance as to the level of certain instrumentation, the overall spectral content, time-domain effects or amount of compression. The final format could, for example, be intended for vinyl, streaming, or high quality download and/or physical digital media. The learner will perform appropriate data file handling throughout, including session, track and file naming, and location and storing of project files.

In Outcome 3 — after seeking further communication with their client, the learner will perform appropriate amendments to the mix based on feedback received and a record of client communication and amendments required will be made. The learner will respond effectively and produce a revised final mix to the agreed format that meets the needs of the client. Appropriate data file handling will be performed throughout.

This unit offers the potential for aspects of the following National Occupational Standards to be demonstrated:

CCSMT10	Develop key MIDI and DAW audio techniques
CCSMT16	Operate analogue and digital equalisation for music and audio industries
CCSMT18	Operate analogue and digital dynamics and effects for music and audio industries
CCSMT39	Carry out software sound and audio manipulation
CCSMT42	Use audio mix automation and control surface

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Sound Production: Mixing Project (SCQF level 7)

Guidance on approaches to delivery of this unit

This unit is designed to develop the learner's interpersonal skills, technical skills and knowledge and understanding of sound production.

It is important that an acceptable client brief is formulated from the beginning and an appropriate degree of communication is achieved to produce a suitable mix-down plan, and to provide the learner with clear objectives. Centres should emphasize the importance of effective interaction and communication with the client. The client could be the tutor or assessor, however, ideally a live project would allow the learner to work with a real life client.

From initial client contact learners would benefit from studying mixes relative to the client's needs before further discussion and production of a mix-down plan. This would help learners establish any characteristic production styles or mix approaches to discuss further and include in the plan. From the client discussion, learners could agree approaches to treating individual tracks during the mix, and agree the amount of flexibility allowed for changes. The learner should understand the importance of utilising appropriate commercially recorded reference material throughout the mix process.

Learners would also benefit from an understanding of the technical requirements of file output formats. These could include appropriate sample rate, bit-depth, amount of mid-side information and loudness.

Learners would benefit from studying appropriate methods of preparing for a mix. This could include initial corrective processing, such as removing unwanted sections through editing or processing, and organising the session for easy navigation through appropriate track layout, use of track colours, and grouping of tracks. Learners would also benefit from formative exercises to practice mixing techniques. These could originate from online material or in-class demonstrations.

The learner would benefit from comparing their mix with the agreed reference material and reflecting on and improving their mix before producing their final mix to the agreed file output format and delivering to the client.

Learners will further establish an appropriate form of client communication to determine and act upon client feedback where the client requests may include changes to track levels, changes to use of processing, arrangement or intended output format. Learners will then deliver their revised final mix to their client.

Learners would benefit from producing their mix-down by monitoring on loudspeakers in a studio environment. If this presents a challenge for centres, a preparatory mix-down could be undertaken in a lab setting moving to monitoring their mix on loudspeakers towards the end of the process.

Guidance on approaches to assessment of this unit

Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners. Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Sound Production: Mixing Project (SCQF level 7)

It is recommended that assessment of this unit should be carried out holistically with the learner working on a single mixing project. The client could be an external client as this would aid in providing appropriate evidence for communication aspects of this unit. Where this is not viable, centre teaching staff should assume the role of the client.

Learners could be given a written brief which outlines key facts and information from the client in order to successfully plan the mixing project. The use of deadlines within the client brief is encouraged.

For Outcome 1 — it is suggested that learners provide evidence of client communication, and submit the mix-down plan. A summary of client communication could contain e-mails, text messages and recorded discussions. The mix-down plan should document the approach to the mix on an individual track basis, highlighting any specific processing requirements and production styles, and identifying how the reference material will influence the overall mix in terms of techniques employed. A record of the final mix output format should also be provided. Further information could include technical requirements of the intended final mix format, any corrective processing to be applied and deadlines for submission of mixes.

For Outcome 2 — it is suggested that learners submit session project files, reference materials and the client mix. Learners should be observed using the reference materials appropriately in relation to the mix-down plan. The use of appropriate project file handling, and corrective and creative processing should be evident from the session files. With regards corrective and creative processing, it is expected that the amount, and types of are determined by the client communication, mix-plan and reference material. If the learner has used external hardware processing, details and settings of this should be documented in the session project files. Performance evidence should be observed and recorded on an assessor checklist.

For Outcome 3 — it is suggested that learners submit evidence of further client communication and subsequent feedback, a revised mix-down plan, a revised final mix and an updated session project file. Performance evidence should be observed and recorded on an assessor checklist, accompanied by written and/or oral evidence of further client communication.

Track counts for the mixing project should not be used as assessment criteria. The emphasis should be on effective client communication and responding to the client's needs. However, centres should ensure that assessment briefs are sufficiently demanding to offer scope for the learner to demonstrate achievement of all evidence requirements.

Assessment should be carried out in open-book, supervised conditions to ensure authenticity of learner evidence and to enable assessment of performance evidence.

Opportunities for e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all learner evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the evidence requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Sound Production: Mixing Project (SCQF level 7)

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

Problem Solving: the learner will employ critical thinking when planning for and undertaking the mix-down process.

Communication: the learner will have the opportunity to develop written and/or oral communication during Outcomes 1 and 3 whilst working with a client.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT): the learner could have the opportunity to develop skills in accessing information through use of online tutorial resources during delivery of this unit.

Working with Others: through working with a client, the learner will have the opportunity to develop their skills in working co-operatively with others.

Entrepreneurial skills: the learner will have the opportunity to enhance their career development skills by working on live briefs and being encouraged to work to deadlines. Learners will also develop skills in industry standard techniques and processes.

Employability skills: the learner will have opportunity to develop self-management, problem solving, communication and literacy, team working and IT elements of employability skills.

Critical listening: the learner will have the opportunity to develop their critical listening through analysing reference material.

This Unit has the Working Co-operatively with Others component of Working with Others embedded in it. This means that when learners achieve the Unit, their Core Skills profile will also be updated to show they have achieved Working Co-operatively with Others at SCQF level 5.

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 unit

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Core Skills Component Working Co-operatively with Others at SCQF level 5 embedded. Core Skill Problem Solving at SCQF level 5 embedded	31/08/18

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2018

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.

Additional copies of this unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Please contact the Business Development and Customer Support team, telephone 0303 333 0330.

General information for learners

Unit title: Sound Production: Mixing Project (SCQF level 7)

This section will help you decide whether this is the unit for you by explaining what the unit is about, what you should know or be able to do before you start, what you will need to do during the unit and opportunities for further learning and employment.

This unit will allow you to develop the knowledge and skills to undertake a mix-down session and produce a final product that meets the needs of a client. You will develop the interpersonal and technical skills required to plan and mix a multi-track recording to a client brief.

You will initially communicate with your client to understand their needs, then agree on and produce a mix-down plan that will highlight the approaches you will take to producing the mix. You will utilise commercially recorded reference material to help you in the mix-down process.

Using your mix-down plan and reference material, you will output the mix to a final format requested by the client. Then, from subsequent client feedback, you will produce a final mix.

You will gain knowledge and skills not only in effective communication, but also in the technical aspects of mixing, such as the application of corrective and creative processing.

You will be assessed through your ability to interpret the needs of a client, produce a mix in response to a client's needs, and then with provided client feedback produce a final mix. Assessment will involve both your ability to communicate with a client, and the technical skills required to produce a final mix.

You will have the opportunity to develop elements of the following Core Skills: *Problem Solving, Communication, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Working with Others*.

You will also have the opportunity to develop elements of the following other skills: critical listening skills, employability skills and entrepreneurial skills.

This Unit has the Working Co-operatively with Others component of Working with Others embedded in it. This means that when you achieve the Unit, your Core Skills profile will also be updated to show you have achieved Working Co-operatively with Others at SCQF level 5.

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.