

Course report 2026

Advanced Higher Music Technology, SCQF level 7

We've written this report for teachers and lecturers. We recommend you read this with the published course assessment documents and marking instructions.

The report:

- provides a summary of how each course component performed
- highlights areas of the coursework where candidates performed well and areas where they did not perform well
- has advice you might find useful when preparing candidates for assessment

We collect and prepare the statistics in course reports before we complete the appeals process.

Statistical and grade boundary information

Course entries

Number of resulted entries in 2025: 73

Number of resulted entries in 2026: 59

Distribution of course awards (including minimum mark to achieve each grade)

Course award	Number of candidates	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Minimum mark required
A	18	30.5	30.5	94
B	18	30.5	61.0	80
C	13	22.0	83.1	67
D	5	8.5	91.5	53
No award	5	8.5	100	Not applicable

We've not applied rounding to these statistics.

In this report:

- 'Most' means greater than or equal to 70%.
- 'Many' means 50% to 69%.
- 'Some' means 25% to 49%.
- 'Few' or 'a few' means less than 25%.

You can find [statistical reports](#) on our website.

General commentary on grade boundaries

Our main aim when setting grade boundaries is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and levels, and to maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.

For most National Courses, we aim to set examinations and other external assessments and create marking instructions that allow:

- a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional grade C boundary)
- a well-prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional grade A boundary)

It's very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject, at every level. Therefore, we hold a grade boundary meeting for each course to bring together all the information available (statistical and qualitative) and make final decisions on grade boundaries based on this information. Senior Qualifications Scotland staff normally chair these meetings.

Principal assessors use their subject expertise to evaluate the performance of the assessment and propose suitable grade boundaries based on the full range of evidence. We can adjust the grade boundaries as a result of the discussion at these meetings. This allows the pass rate to be unaffected in circumstances where there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more, or less, difficult than usual.

- We can adjust the grade boundaries downwards if there's evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more difficult than usual.
- We can adjust the grade boundaries upwards if there's evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been less difficult than usual.
- If levels of difficulty are comparable to previous years, we maintain similar grade boundaries.

Every year, we evaluate the performance of our assessments in a fair way, while ensuring standards are maintained so that our qualifications remain credible. To do

this, we measure evidence of candidates' knowledge and skills against the national standard.

For full details of the approach, please refer to the [Awarding and Grading for National Courses Policy](#).

How the course assessment performed

Project–research and project–production

The projects performed as intended. Candidates demonstrated personalisation and choice.

How candidates performed

Project–research

Candidate performance in the research element of the project was mixed.

In stage 1: identifying an appropriate topic in a music technology context, and produce an outline specification:

- Some candidates chose contexts that were too broad or did not provide sufficient scope for the research project.
- Candidates who performed well in stage 1 often went on to complete stage 2 more successfully.

In stage 2a: investigating and analysing technology skills, techniques, and processes, and relevant musical analysis as appropriate:

- Candidates often completed in-depth investigation of identified skills, techniques and processes, but a few candidates did not complete any analysis.
- A few candidates did not include the media files they investigated and analysed.
- Most candidates provided links to videos as citations for their investigation, but a few did not annotate precise timings.

Most candidates performed well, providing the required evidence for stage 2b: experimenting with music technology skills, techniques and processes.

In stage 2c: synthesising investigation, analysis, experimentation, and drawing conclusions, a few candidates drew conclusions and completed synthesis based solely on their experimentation and did not fully detail the impact on their own practice.

In stage 3: organising and presenting, many candidates used information from a range of sources well. Some candidates, however, included synthesis as part of stage 2b.

Project–production

In stage 1: defining a project brief:

- Many candidates completed project briefs that were appropriate, including details of their intended use of new skills, techniques and processes.
- Some candidates did not provide an executive summary of their research.

In stage 2: planning the production, many candidates performed to a good standard.

Candidate performance was strongest in stage 3: implementing the production, however, a few candidates provided evidence of using plug-in presets. The course assessment task states that ‘candidates must not use presets’ for stages 4b, c and d.

In stage 4a: mastering the production — analysis and critical listening skills:

- Many candidates provided only one reference recording.
- Many candidates did not complete a sufficiently robust analysis and critical listening commentary, including detailed comparisons with reference recordings and proposed mastering decisions.

In stage 4b: mastering the production — finalising and mastering techniques:

- Many candidates completed this stage reasonably well.
- Many candidates provided evidence of using plug-in presets. The course assessment task states that ‘candidates must not use presets in their mastering chain’.

For stage 5: evaluating and reflecting, many candidates completed the evaluation report but lacked evaluative comments.

Preparing candidates for assessment

Project–research

Stage 1

Candidates must include an outline specification for the research project that is sufficiently detailed and provides sufficient scope for the project.

Stage 2

You should:

- Discourage candidates from selecting contexts that lack scope, such as ‘Foley mic’ing techniques’, as they limit their ability to investigate and analyse, experiment, and synthesise in the research element of the project.
- Steer candidates away from contexts that do not allow them to research technology skills, techniques and processes; for example, manipulation of Foley props.
- Ensure candidates are both investigating and analysing in stage 2a, and that they have clearly identified investigation and analysis skills, techniques and processes. You should also ensure candidates provide the media files they have investigated and analysed.
- In stage 2b, ensure candidates focus on the clearly identified skills, techniques and processes they investigated and analysed in stage 2a. In this stage, candidates often embedded the required media files in their log. Candidates who choose not to do this should clearly and correctly label their media files before submission.
- For stage 2c, ensure candidates are synthesising their investigation and analysis, and experimentation; that the conclusions they draw are based on evidence generated in stage 2a and stage 2b; and that they are detailing the impact on their own practice.
- For stage 3, encourage candidates to structure and present their work to the best of their ability, and cite their sources throughout using an appropriate referencing system. If candidates use video references, they must provide precise timings in their referencing.

- Encourage candidates to work sequentially, presenting evidence for stage 2a, followed by 2b, then 2c.

Project–production

Given the size of the project, you should encourage candidates to provide a log format that evidences the requirements in a logical way. Candidates who use a diary approach often omit aspects of the requirements, and produce large and unwieldy logs.

Stage 2

Candidates should ensure they provide all the evidence required for this stage; in particular, for their mixing plan (for the production element) and the production plan (for Foley/sound design contexts). Where required, they must provide reasons for their choices.

Stage 3

Candidates should experiment with microphone and capture techniques (for example, using multi-mic'ing and ambient or room mic'ing) and document them under the audio capture section of their logs.

For stages 3b, c and d, candidates must not use presets.

Stage 4

As mastering will still be a relatively new skill for most candidates, teaching and learning should give them opportunities to prepare for this stage of the project.

You should develop candidates' analysis and critical listening ability to prepare for stage 4a, and guide them towards providing the required evidence.

Examples of model mastering chains may be useful to candidates for stage 4b. Candidates must not use presets.

Stage 5

You should encourage candidates to use technical language, demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the music technology skills, techniques and processes they employ in their project.

You should review previous course reports and refer to Understanding Standards examples to help prepare candidates. The examples of candidate evidence are accompanied by a commentary written by a senior examiner, explaining why we awarded marks. For both projects, examples are available from the Understanding Standards section of the [Qualifications Scotland secure site](#).