

Course report 2026

Higher Music Technology, SCQF level 6

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 question paper and 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: 1,263

Number of resulted entries in 2026: 1,253

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

Course award	Number of candidates	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Minimum mark required
A	377	30.1	30.1	70
B	435	34.7	64.8	60
C	301	24.0	88.8	50
D	104	8.3	97.1	40
No award	36	2.9	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

Question paper

The question paper performed as expected. Most of the questioning styles used were similar to those used in previous years. Some questions were straightforward, with some providing more challenge for candidates.

Assignment

Almost all candidates submitted a multi-track within a radio show or film project. Candidates demonstrated their skills through a diverse range of technical and creative approaches.

Almost all centres used the digital coursework submission portal to submit assignments.

How candidates performed

Areas where candidates performed well

Question paper

- Question 1(a): Identifying a genre and associated concept. Most candidates achieved at least 1 mark and many candidates achieved 2 marks.
- Question 1(b): Describing two features of a genre. Many candidates achieved at least 1 mark in this question.
- Question 2(b): Identifying a feature of the excerpt. Most candidates answered this correctly.
- Questions 3(b)(i) and (ii): Identifying a fault present in the recording and giving a solution. Most candidates did well here.
- Question 4(a): Identifying the correct settings used on a delay effect. Many candidates achieved the mark as they identified the correct settings and justified their decision successfully.
- Question 5(a): Identifying a feature present linked to an intellectual property case. Many candidates answered this correctly.
- Question 5(b): Showing understanding of copyright. Most candidates achieved at least 1 mark and many candidates achieved 2 marks.
- Question 6(a): Identifying two features of an excerpt. Most candidates achieved 2 marks.
- Question 7: Giving two features of a chosen technology, naming a key innovator and identifying a genre linked to that technology. Many candidates achieved at least 2 marks, with a few achieving 4 marks.
- Question 8 (part 1): Identifying a type of filter and effect. Many candidates achieved at least 1 mark, mostly linked to identifying the correct type of filter.
- Question 8 (part 4): Identifying a process. Most candidates answered correctly.
- Question 8 (part 5): Identifying tonality. Many candidates answered correctly.
- Question 8 (part 6): Identifying a genre. Many candidates achieved the mark.
- Question 9: Identifying five production features from a list of ten. Most candidates achieved at least 3 marks.

Assignment

Many radio broadcasts demonstrated a high level of creativity. They included the creation and imaginative application of sound beds, a wide range of radio imaging sound effects, and good demonstration of time domain effects and creative equalisation.

Some candidates provided the required information in their evaluation, which was supported by centre devised templates.

Areas where candidates did not perform well

Question paper

- Question 2(a): Identifying a genre and giving features. Although some candidates did not recognise the genre, many candidates achieved at least 2 marks by identifying a music or technology feature.
- Questions 3(a)(i) and (ii): Identifying a solution to a fault. Some candidates identified the fault and suggested a way to correct it.
- Question 4(b): Identifying an effect. Most candidates answered this question poorly.
- Question 4(c): Identify two controls on a reverb effect. A few candidates identified two controls.
- Question 6(b): Describe the mic'ing technique for a bass and snare drum on a drumkit. Most candidates did not provide all the details required to access the full range of marks, including the correct types of microphone, distances and a justification. A few candidates did not identify that two microphones were required. Candidates often did not include justification.
- Question 8 (part 1): Identifying a filter type and effect. Many candidates did not identify the effect.
- Question 8 (part 2): Identifying a sample being triggered. Most candidates did not answer this question correctly.
- Question 8 (part 3): Identifying time expansion being applied to a sample. Most candidates answered this question poorly.

Assignment

A few candidates submitted a radio show containing dialogue followed by a multi-track. For stage 2e, candidates should demonstrate creativity across both aspects of the assignment (the radio show or the sound for the film project and multi-track).

Preparing candidates for assessment

Question paper

You should:

- Encourage candidates to use available past papers for revision and consult the concept grids in the course specification to ensure they understand all concepts.
- Give candidates listening activities, with correctly positioned stereo speakers. This lets them practise identifying different types of panning (left, right and centre).

Assignment

You should:

- Remind candidates to only include information directly linked to the requirements of the course. You can support this by ensuring your centre devised templates for logbooks are well structured.
- Only send one media file for each assignment. This year some centres submitted audio of the completed assignment plus an additional file containing the multi-track. This is not necessary as the multi-track needs to be heard in context with the rest of the assignment. You do not need to send both a wav file and an mp3, as this is unnecessary duplication.
- 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 the assignment, examples are available from the Understanding Standards section of the [Qualifications Scotland secure site](#).

Candidates should:

- Present their planning in the order of the stages and use clear headings. For example, the first section of the log should cover stage 1a: planning sound design, where candidates plan the radio show or sound for film project. The second section should cover stage 1b and planning of the multi-track. Having two clear sections ensures candidates can access the full range of marks.

- For stages 1a and b, include potential control settings of effects and processes. This could include approximate compression ratios, as well as delay times or reverb sizes.
- Include accurate detailed information about microphone placement.