Course Report 2018

Subject	Music Technology
Level	Higher

This report provides information on the performance of candidates. Teachers, lecturers and assessors may find it useful when preparing candidates for future assessment. The report is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any Post Results Services.

Section 1: comments on the assessment

Summary of the course assessment

Component 1: assignment

Most candidates responded well to the demands of the Higher Music Technology assignment. Many candidates submitted high-quality material that showcased their creativity, including radio broadcasts, audio books, Foley, and sound design for film, animation or gaming. In most cases candidates successfully followed the sample briefs or briefs adapted by their centre.

Component 2: question paper

The question paper performed as expected this year, with candidates answering a range of questions on music and music technology concepts. All questions proved accessible, with some providing more challenge for candidates.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: assignment

Most candidates completed the Music Technology assignment successfully. Evidence suggests that centres are comfortable implementing a variety of assessment briefs and adapting sample briefs to suit their own candidates.

The majority of candidates demonstrated a secure knowledge of the skills required to complete Stage 2 of the assignment:

- audio capture, including mic placement and techniques
- manipulation and sequencing skills
- creative and appropriate use of sound and/or music

There is strong evidence that teachers and lecturers are preparing candidates well for Stage 2: implementing the production. They are using appropriate resources and providing candidates with good experiences at this level, in working both with hardware and software. Candidates are generally adept at the practical implementation of accrued skills, knowledge and understanding.

Component 2: question paper

The majority of candidates accessed the full range of marks and were well prepared for the following questions:

- question 1 — identifying a musical genre and associated musical concept
- question 3(a) parts (i) and (ii) — identifying a fault and describing a solution
- question 6 part (1) — identifying music technology effects and processes
- question 7 — identifying five music or production features from a list of 10

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: assignment

Stage 1: planning the production and Stage 3: evaluating the production proved demanding for some candidates. Some plans and evaluations lacked sufficient detail and did not meet the criteria contained in the course assessment task and course assessment specification.

Component 2: question paper

Candidates found the following questions demanding:

- question 2(a) — candidates were asked to identify a genre and give two reasons for their choice
- question 3(b) part (i) — candidates were asked to identify a fault
- question 4(b) — candidates were asked to identify a process
- question 6 part (5) — candidates were asked to identify a process

Section 3: advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1: assignment

Teachers and lecturers are preparing candidates well for Stage 2. However, for Stages 1 and 3, teachers and lecturers should remind candidates about the importance of robust planning and incisive evaluative comments.

Teachers and lecturers should continue to ensure that candidates are well prepared for the implementation stage. Candidates should choose a context within which they can showcase their skills in both multi-tracking sound and/or music, and multi-tracking electronic sound and/or music. Appropriate contexts could include Foley and sound design or radio broadcast.

Teachers and lecturers should refer candidates to the 'technology skills' table in the course specification and remind them that they must demonstrate all of the required skills, techniques and processes.

Component 2: question paper

Teachers and lecturers are generally preparing candidates well for the question paper. They should continue to advise candidates on microphone selection, polar pattern, array, placement and justification to prepare for question 5(b).

In session 2018–19, teachers and lecturers should prepare candidates for the new style of questions on technological developments, key innovators and intellectual property issues. Teachers and lecturers should refer to the course specification and the specimen question paper for useful information.

Grade boundary and statistical information:

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2017	639

Number of resulted entries in 2018	669

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of course awards	Percentage	Cumulative %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum mark				
A	39.6%	39.6%	265	70
B	23.0%	62.6%	154	60
C	21.7%	84.3%	145	50
D	6.6%	90.9%	44	45
No award	9.1%	-	61	0

General commentary on grade boundaries

SQA's main aim is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and all levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.

SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions which allow a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary) and a well prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional A boundary).

It is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level.

Therefore SQA holds a grade boundary meeting every year for each subject at each level to bring together all the information available (statistical and judgemental). The Principal Assessor and SQA Qualifications Manager meet with the relevant SQA Business Manager and Statistician to discuss the evidence and make decisions. The meetings are chaired by members of the management team at SQA.

- The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the exam is more challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the exam is less challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- Where standards are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.

Grade boundaries from exam papers in the same subject at the same level tend to be marginally different year to year. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions, are different. This is also the case for exams set by centres. If SQA alters a boundary, this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter their boundary in the corresponding practice exam paper.