Alternative Certification Model 2020–21: National QA Exercise Key Messages

Subject	Music Technology
Level	Higher

This report provides information on themes emerging from the national quality assurance exercise, which is part of the Alternative Certification Model for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses.

A sample of candidates' assessed work from selected centres was reviewed to determine whether assessment was in line with the national standard. The evidence submitted may have been partial or incomplete and is unlikely to have represented all of the evidence that will be gathered to allow the centre to determine a provisional result.

The centres selected for review in this subject and at this level have been provided with specific feedback on the evidence that they submitted. The comments below highlight key points about the assessment approaches and instruments used and the sampled centres' assessment judgements, for all centres delivering the subject at this level to reflect upon and make any appropriate adjustments.

Section 1: Comments on approach to assessment

This quality assurance exercise has been a success. We hope that the feedback given to centres will support, reassure and give confidence to teachers and lecturers when finalising marks for their candidates. Centres have followed the subject-specific guidance on gathering key evidence in session 2020–21 document for Higher Music Technology.

Almost every centre was able to include sufficient evidence to allow feedback to be given. Centres submitted media files and logbooks. A number of the selected centres also submitted scanned copies of question paper evidence. Most centres included moderation documentation, with some sending local authority policies showing extensive and thorough moderation processes.

The vast majority of centres used SQA's online portal to upload evidence, and it appears that this method of submission has been very effective, especially in Music Technology where most work is produced in a digital format.

Question paper

In most cases, centres used the SQA 2020–21 Higher Music Technology question paper. Some centres devised their own assessments using a range of SQA past papers with appropriate course coverage and level of demand.

Assignment

Most candidates created radio shows with multi-track recordings, and in most cases used the media files provided by SQA for session 2020–21. A range of the radio broadcast files were provided for candidates to select from and use alongside one of the supplied multi-tracks to include in their assignment. Candidates also imported additional audio from various sources to include in their assignments. For electronic multi-track evidence, most candidates created effective beds to use in their radio show or included a second piece of music in an EDM style.

A number of candidates were still able to record their own audio (including multi-track recordings) despite the pandemic. When capture was made, the logbooks regularly detailed the additional steps that were taken to ensure safety surrounding the use of microphones and social distancing.

Although the majority of assignments were incomplete, it was clear that candidate work was progressing well towards being completed by the centre's chosen deadline.

Section 2: Comments on assessment judgements

Question paper

From the evidence submitted, overall, centres marked question paper evidence in line with national standards. Care was taken to mark accurately, and evidence was regularly cross-marked.

Centres have prepared their candidates well for question 7, in which knowledge of technological developments and/or key innovators is assessed. In a few submissions, centres only awarded marks if the candidate gave a response that matched a statement found in the SQA marking instructions. It should be noted that the marking instructions give example responses for this question, and centres should award marks if a candidate gives an alternative valid development or key feature.

Assignment

From the evidence submitted, overall, centres' assessment judgements were in line with national standards.

Where marking was not in line with national standards, this was because of inconsistencies in applying the marking instructions for stage 2.

To access the full range of marks, for stages 2 (a) – (c) all technical skills must be demonstrated as detailed in the revised assignment task document for Higher Music Technology for session 2020–21.

Centres should refer to the Understanding Standards examples available for Higher Music Technology on SQA's secure website. They detail the marks that have been awarded to specific examples of candidate evidence and the reasons why. The examples include the planning and capturing of audio, which is not mandatory in session 2020–21, but remains useful as an indication of the standards required.

For stage 2(d) — implementing the production — creative and appropriate use of sound and/or music — centres are reminded that marks can also be awarded when candidates use technology creatively, for example through clever use of effects and processes. There were a number of good examples of effects being automated to enhance the work.

Some of the selected centres created a progress record template for their candidates that linked to the specific requirements of the course. This was good practice, as it is can be efficient for candidates and helps make sure all mandatory technical skills are included in their assignment.

The majority of centres should be commended for having robust and thorough marking and moderation structures in place. Not only were marks provided, but centres also took the time to write additional comments to explain how they arrived at a mark, which informed this quality assurance exercise.

There was clear evidence that teachers and lecturers are working hard to develop and encourage the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary for this course. Centres are commended for developing a wide range of approaches towards delivery of Music Technology within the Scottish Government's COVID-19 guidance and restrictions.