



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

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Music</b>
<b>Level</b>	<b>Higher</b>

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

From the centres selected for review:

- ◆ a majority submitted question paper and performance evidence
- ◆ a small number submitted only question paper evidence
- ◆ a very small number submitted only performance evidence

There was a range of complete and incomplete evidence submitted across both components.

### Question paper

From the evidence submitted, the majority of centres used the 2020–21 SQA Higher Music question paper or intended to use it later in the term. Some centres devised their own question papers using a range of SQA past papers which had appropriate course coverage of concepts, music literacy concepts and level of demand. A small number of centres created their own question paper, which replicated the approach, level of demand and structure of SQA Higher Music question papers.

While most centres' approach to assessment was valid, there was a small number whose approach to assessment for the question paper was partially valid. For example, if a centre devises:

- ◆ a prominent concept question, they should ensure that concepts are listed under the appropriate heading
- ◆ a music literacy question, they should ensure that questions are assessing music literacy skills, and that the level of demand is appropriate for Higher

### Performance

From the evidence submitted, most centres submitted audio or video recordings of candidates' performances, sheet music and completed candidate assessment records.

While most centres' approach to assessment was valid, there was a small number whose approach to assessment for performance was partially valid.

Centres are reminded that for chordal guitar or chordal ukulele, sheet music for the assessor must include a copy of the melodic line that the chordal instrument is accompanying. This provides a context for the chords.

It is recommended that the sheet music matches what is performed by a candidate. In a very small number of centres, some sheet music was provided which did not sufficiently indicate what the candidate was performing.

A very small number of centres inserted numbers for each performance aspect in candidate assessment records. Centres should use ticks rather than numbers. The ticks inform the mark range for each performance aspect, which in turn assists in focusing on a summary statement and selecting a mark.

Most centres correctly marked the performance component out of 60 marks which is required for session 2020–21. Please note that if candidates have chosen to perform on two instruments, or one instrument and voice, centres must not mark each instrument or voice out of 30 marks.

## Section 2: Comments on assessment judgements

### Question paper

From the sample of evidence, the majority of centres' assessment judgements about the question paper were consistently in line with national standards.

Some centres were partially valid in their assessment judgements for the question paper. The key issues were in the inconsistent application of the marking instructions, for example:

- ◆ in the prominent concepts question, centres must only award marks for concepts listed in the marking instructions
- ◆ in the music literacy question, centres should ensure that they follow all details shown in the marking instructions. For example, if a candidate is asked to transpose a section of music containing a tie, down an octave, a mark should be awarded only when the pitch, rhythm and tie are correct. The additional guidance column in the marking instructions provides full information about what is required
- ◆ when a candidate writes two answers when only one is required, the correct answer should be awarded 1 mark and the additional incorrect answer should result in 1 mark being deducted, giving an overall mark of 0

Centres can refer to the [Understanding Standards materials for the question paper](#). These materials include candidate evidence and commentaries for National 5, Higher, and Advanced Higher question papers.

### Performance

From the sample of evidence, the majority of centres' assessment judgements about performance were consistently in line with national standards. However, there were instances in some centres where marking instructions had been applied too leniently or too severely. Centres should refer to the Understanding Standards materials available from the SQA Academy course: [NQ Music Performance Assessment 2020–21](#) (the enrolment key is: 'music21'). These materials include candidate evidence and commentaries for National 5, Higher, and Advanced Higher.

When marking candidates' performances, centres are strongly encouraged to check that:

- ◆ the ticks for performance aspects on the candidate assessment record match the mark
- ◆ the mark and summary statement match, for example a mark of 7 is a secure performance, musically and technically

Centres should refer to the *Information for Teachers and Lecturers — National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher Music — Performance Assessment 2020–21* document published in January 2021 which is available from [SQA's secure website](#).

## **General comments**

Some centres included informative background information about the submission, including details about further planning for question paper and performance assessments. Some centres submitted clearly labelled files which greatly assisted the quality assurance procedure.

There was clear evidence that teachers and lecturers are working hard within the COVID-19 restrictions this session to develop and to encourage the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary for this course.

In most centres, there was clear evidence of thorough, detailed and highly effective moderation procedures in the centre and local authority.

To support any remaining moderation procedures, centres may wish to refer to the [Assessment resources for NQ Music](#) document which details and provides links to the range of documents available for session 2020–21.