



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

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Music</b>
<b>Level</b>	<b>National 5</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

## Performance

All centres chose to submit evidence for the performance component, submitting audio and/or video recordings, sheet music and assessors' mark sheets. Most centres submitted evidence of complete candidate programmes. For programmes that were incomplete, most centres provided details of the pieces that would be added to meet the programme time requirement of a minimum of 6 minutes and a maximum of 6 minutes and 30 seconds.

Most candidates chose to perform on two instruments or one instrument and voice, however there were some who availed of the one instrument or voice option for their complete programme. Centres had referred to the guidance document on gathering key evidence in session 2020–21 for [National 5 Music](#) and 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](#).

Most candidates performed with accompaniment, although there were some candidates who opted to perform without. All centres in the sample provided accompaniment for chordal guitar and ukulele, and drum kit as appropriate. All complete drum kit programmes exemplified the required minimum number of styles and fills.

Many centres are commended for submitting well organised and clearly labelled resources for recordings, sheet music and candidate assessment records/marketing grids. In the sampled centres, there was evidence that all had used the SQA marking grids and performance summary statements to assess candidates, and most complete programmes clearly indicated total marks and appropriate scaling to award a final mark out of 60. 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.

Almost all centres provided detailed comments on the candidate assessment records to support the placing of ticks.

All sampled centres used valid approaches to assessment for the performance component.

## Question paper

Around half of the centres also submitted evidence for the question paper component. Most of those centres submitted a question paper comprising past SQA exam questions, with some centres using the 2020–21 SQA paper.

Most centres had followed pages two to four of the [Guidance on gathering key evidence for session 2020–21 for National 5 Music](#) document which details the required structure and content of a valid question paper.

Most centre-devised question papers in the sample demonstrated complete and valid evidence, using assessments that replicated the standard, duration, and format of SQA question papers. Some centres submitted end of topic tests and/or class assessments in addition to complete question paper evidence, and these were appropriate supplementary evidence.

A small number of centres included evidence of pre-assessment standardisation of question papers and cross-marking of candidate responses.

Almost all of the sampled centres used valid approaches to assessment for the question paper component.

## Section 2: Comments on assessment judgements

### Performance

In most sampled centres, assessment judgements for performance were mainly in line with national standards. Many centres evidenced valid assessment decisions using the performance summary statements and candidate marks grids and added informative comments to indicate why marks had been awarded.

Centres are reminded to enter a tick for each performance category, if applicable, on the candidate assessment record. However, drum kit pieces have no melodic component, so do not tick the melodic accuracy and/or intonation category; and if there are no dynamic markings on the sheet music, do not tick the dynamics category — this applies even if the candidate performs contrasting dynamic levels in a piece.

Some centres were, however, lenient in making assessment decisions. For example, mood and character can be adversely affected by a vocalist's poor intonation, or in a keyboard performance where a player hesitates before every chord change. Summary statements should be used in addition to the placement of ticks to guide assessors to an appropriate overall mark for each piece. A small number of candidates had been severely marked.

Complete evidence for some candidates fell below the minimum 6 minute programme duration, and most centres appropriately applied a marks penalty in accordance with page 13 of the [Information for Teachers and Lecturers — National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher Music — Performance Assessment 2020–21](#) document.

Centres are reminded that performing resources and commentaries to support practitioners' assessment decisions are available from the SQA Academy course: [NQ Music Performance Assessment 2020–21](#) (the enrolment key is 'music21').

### Question paper

Centres' assessment judgements for the question paper component were mostly in line with national standards.

In most cases, marks were accurately awarded for candidates' responses. There were some instances, however, where marks were incorrectly allocated, for example:

- ◆ half marks are not used in SQA National 5, Higher or Advanced Higher Music
- ◆ question 3 — awarding a mark for a time signature written below the stave
- ◆ question 3 — not crediting Adagio as an answer when it appears as an accepted response in the additional guidance column of the marking instructions
- ◆ question 7, part ii — awarding a mark for an answer that is not in the marking instructions, eg Spanish is not accepted for a Latin American excerpt
- ◆ question 8 — awarding a mark for 'violin' when the marking instructions state 'violins' (plural) is the acceptable answer

When using past paper questions, centres should refer to the marking instructions and only award marks for acceptable responses detailed in the expected answer or additional guidance columns.

## **General comments**

Evidence of centre and/or local authority moderation for both the performance and question paper components was included by some centres.

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.

Centres and candidates are commended for their approach, adaptability, and resilience towards assessment this year, while faced with the unprecedented challenges of COVID-19 restrictions.