

NQ Music Verification Summary 2025–26

Verification information

Subject	Music
Verification activity	Event
Round	1
Date published	July 2026

National Units verified

Unit code	Unit level	Unit title
H240 73	National 3	Music: Performing Skills
H23X 73	National 3	Understanding Music
H240 74	National 4	Music: Performing Skills
H23V 74	National 4	Music: Composing Skills
H23X 74	National 4	Understanding Music
J2CE 75	SCQF level 5	Understanding Music with a Scottish Context
JA2F 75	SCQF level 5	Music: Composing Skills
J2AH 75	SCQF level 5	Understanding Music
J2AJ 76	SCQF level 6	Understanding Music
J2B4 77	SCQF level 7	Understanding and Analysing Music

Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

Most centres' approaches to assessment were considered and informed, enabling candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in music. In general, centres used the approach in our unit assessment support, package 1 (unit-by-unit) to allow candidates to demonstrate the requirements of the units.

Music: performing skills

Copies of music are a requirement for verification, and we remind centres to include these for all candidates. Centres must ensure the music submitted reflects what the candidate is performing, for example in terms of repeats, cuts and fades. Centres should include notated melodies in the submitted sheet music for guitar and vocal candidates. Tablature and lyric sheets are not sufficient for verification purposes. Centres should also provide a notated melody in the sheet music for chordal guitar evidence, even if the candidate is performing from tablature.

Understanding (and analysing) music

A question-paper style assessment does not support candidates to achieve assessment standard 1.2. This is due to the requirement that candidates must:

- demonstrate a basic understanding of the factors that influence the distinctive sounds of music styles (National 3)
- identify the social and cultural influences that have helped to shape the distinctive sounds of specific music styles (National 4)

Centres could evidence this assessment standard, for example through oral responses to questions, or by creating a poster or presentation.

Centres should submit marking instructions for any centre-devised assessments along with candidate evidence to inform the verification process.

Music: composing skills

Centres are developing a variety of ways for candidates to explore and develop their composing skills. A range of approaches allowed for personalisation and choice, providing candidates with the opportunity to create music in a genre that they enjoy. Centres used assessment instruments that provided appropriate levels of support and challenge for the qualification level.

We remind centres that for assessment standard 1.1, they should give candidates opportunities to demonstrate a full understanding of compositional methods, music concepts and influences. For example, centres could encourage candidates to identify and reference a range of level-specific concepts relating to melody, rhythm, texture and/or timbre.

Assessment judgements

Centres must clearly indicate 'pass' or 'fail' and show which assessment standards the assessment judgement applies to. Centres should refer to the recording documentation and the candidate assessment record provided in the unit assessment support (UAS) packs for guidance on how to record this.

Music: performing skills

We remind centres that assessment standards in units are judged on a pass or fail basis; therefore, centres should avoid awarding marks for unit assessment purposes. Centres should refer to the judging evidence tables, and the candidate assessment records in the UAS packs for Music: Performing Skills units. Assessment judgements and comments should relate to, and be mapped against, the assessment standards.

Understanding (and analysing) music

When a piece of candidate evidence covers a range of assessment standards, centres should annotate the evidence to show where each assessment standard is being assessed.

Music: composing skills

Centres should clearly identify which assessment standard candidate evidence is being assessed against. Assessment judgements and comments should relate to, and be mapped against, the assessment standards.

General comments

It is essential that:

- centres clearly identify which assessment standards they are submitting evidence for
- assessor comments detail how they have made assessment judgements

A variety of approaches to assessment, supported by high quality audio and video footage, demonstrates the different ways centres gather evidence to satisfy the requirements of the individual assessment standards.

Interim evidence

For round 1 verification, centres should provide complete unit evidence if it is available. However, you can provide interim evidence if complete unit evidence is not yet available.

When presenting interim evidence centres must ensure it is sufficient to allow verification to take place.

Typical indicators of sufficient interim evidence include:

- assessed evidence is available for most assessment standards in a unit
- assessed evidence is available for most assessment standards in a unit across most of the sampled candidates

Examples of sufficient interim evidence could include:

- Music: Performing Skills (SCQF level 5) – candidate performances of one piece on each of two instruments for assessment standard 1.1
- Understanding Music (SCQF level 5) – candidate evidence demonstrating identification of level-specific music concepts in excerpt of music, and understanding of the meaning of music signs, symbols and terms for assessment standards 1.1 and 1.3

Typical indicators of insufficient interim evidence include:

- assessed evidence is available for only a few of the assessment standards in a unit
- assessed evidence is available for only a small number of the candidates in the sample

Examples of insufficient interim evidence could include:

- Music: Performing Skills – candidate performance of only one piece on one instrument for assessment standard 1.1
- Music: Composing Skills – candidate evidence for only one assessment standard
- Understanding Music – candidate evidence for only one assessment standard

If interim evidence is being submitted, centres should make an assessment judgement against each assessment standard, rather than one holistic assessment judgement for the entire unit (which is incomplete at this stage). It is possible for a candidate to achieve an interim pass, indicating that the evidence submitted meets the minimum standard required for the relevant assessment standard but that the candidate has not yet met the requirements of the full unit.

If a candidate has not produced any evidence that can be submitted for verification, centres should contact [NQ Verification](#).

NQ Music Verification Summary 2025–26

Verification information

Subject	Music
Verification activity	Event
Round	2
Date published	July 2026

National Unit verified

Unit code	Unit level	Unit title
H242 74	National 4	Music Performance

Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

In some cases, centres' approaches to assessment were considered and informed, enabling candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in music.

Some centres submitted candidate evidence for verification that had not produced any evidence against the assessment standards. If most candidates do not have evidence to submit for verification, centres should contact [NQ Verification](#).

Assessment standard 1.1

Candidates must provide evidence for this assessment standard. This could be in the form of a brief statement, mind map or an audio recording of the candidate detailing their reasons for their choice of music.

Assessment standards 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4

We remind centres that candidates must perform for a minimum of 8 minutes.

Candidates must perform at least two pieces on each instrument or one instrument and voice. When cuts or changes are made to the performed music, centres should amend and/or annotate scores.

The performance must be completed in no more than two assessment events for both instruments or one instrument and voice.

For the National 4 Music Performance unit, it is not acceptable to:

- provide interim evidence
- collate evidence on a piece by piece basis throughout the session

Candidates should only attempt the assessment when they are ready and have prepared a minimum of 8 minutes of music to perform.

Assessment standard 1.5

Candidates should identify one strength and one area for improvement for each of their instruments or instrument and voice.

When reflecting on their performance the language candidates use should demonstrate their understanding of music and/or music concepts and vocabulary as appropriate to SCQF level 4.

Assessment judgements

Centres must clearly indicate 'pass' or 'fail' and show which assessment standard(s) the assessment judgement applies to. Centres should refer to the recording documentation in the UAS pack for guidance on how to record this.

When submitting evidence for verification, centres should only award an assessment judgement to candidates who have attempted the assessment. A holistic judgement should be made for each instrument in the assessment. Assessors should take account of the quality of all the evidence available for each instrument or voice across the full programme of music. In this unit, assessment standards 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4 assess candidate performance on each instrument or one instrument and voice.

If candidates do not perform for a minimum of 8 minutes, they cannot pass assessment standards 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4. Performances that are less than 8 minutes do not meet the minimum requirements.

Some centres used the external course assessment criteria for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher performance to award marks. This follows the process for course assessment, which is not appropriate for unit assessment. Centres should not award marks for unit assessment. They must use the information in the judging evidence tables in the UAS pack and make assessment judgements on a pass or fail basis.

General comments

It is essential that:

- assessment only takes place when candidates are ready to perform their full 8-minute programme on both instruments, or one instrument and voice
- centres only make assessment judgements when the candidate has attempted the assessment task
- centres provide both audio recordings and sheet music for verification for each candidate performance
- assessor comments detail how assessment judgements were made
- both the centre approach and judgements are internally verified
- if most candidates in the verification sample do not have evidence to submit for verification, the centre should contact [NQ Verification](#)