



Course report 2022

Subject	Music Technology
Level	National 5

This report provides information on candidates' performance. 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 appeals.

Grade boundary and statistical information

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2022	1345
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Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including grade boundaries

A	Percentage	35.5	Cumulative percentage	35.5	Number of candidates	480	Minimum mark required	69
B	Percentage	31.9	Cumulative percentage	67.4	Number of candidates	425	Minimum mark required	58
C	Percentage	17.7	Cumulative percentage	85.1	Number of candidates	240	Minimum mark required	48
D	Percentage	9.8	Cumulative percentage	94.9	Number of candidates	130	Minimum mark required	37
No award	Percentage	5.1	Cumulative percentage	N/A	Number of candidates	70	Minimum mark required	N/A

You can read the general commentary on grade boundaries in appendix 1 of this report.

In this report:

- ◆ 'most' means greater than 70%
- ◆ 'many' means 50% to 69%
- ◆ 'some' means 25% to 49%
- ◆ 'a few' means less than 25%

You can find more statistical reports on the statistics page of [SQA's website](#).

Section 1: comments on the assessment

Question paper

Most candidates responded well to the demands of the question paper and it performed in line with expectations. It contained a wide range of suitably challenging excerpts of music, was positively received by centres, and was fair and accessible for candidates.

Assignment

Most candidates responded well to the demands of the assignment. Many candidates submitted creative material of a good standard, including multi-track recordings, live recordings of a small group performance, sound design and Foley for film, sound design for a computer game, and audiobooks. Many candidates opted to use the files provided by SQA for the radio broadcast task, while some candidates recorded or sourced their own stems for their broadcast recordings.

Some candidates, however, were not able to access the full range of marks for particular stages, as they did not include all of the mandatory skills listed in the assignment assessment task document in either one or both of their chosen productions.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Question paper

Generally, candidates were well prepared for the following questions and responded successfully:

- ◆ Question 1(a), (b), (c), (d)(i) and (d)(ii) — candidates were assessed on styles of music and related concepts.
- ◆ Question 2(a) — candidates were asked to identify a prominent effect, control or process applied to a track.
- ◆ Question 2(b) — candidates were asked to identify a prominent music concept.
- ◆ Question 2(c) — candidates were asked to describe two key features of Punk.
- ◆ Question 2(d)(i), 2(d)(ii), and 2(d)(iii) — candidates were assessed on microphone selection, type of polarity and placement.
- ◆ Question 3(a), (b), (c), and (d) — candidates were assessed on a range of technological and musical concepts.
- ◆ Question 4(a) (ii) — candidates were asked to identify a concept describing the organ part.
- ◆ Question 4(b) — candidates were asked to identify two music or production features.
- ◆ Question 5 — candidates were asked to identify instruments or voices and link these to controls and effects.
- ◆ Question 6(a) — candidates were asked to link an instrument or voice with an effect, and another instrument and voice with panning on two versions of one song.
- ◆ Question 6(b) — candidates were asked to identify the tonality of a piece of music.

Assignment

Generally, candidates completed the assignment successfully. Centres used a variety of assignment briefs for both tasks.

For the assignment brief, most candidates demonstrated a secure knowledge of:

- ◆ Stage 1 — planning the production
- ◆ Stage 2(a) — implementing the production — audio capture (not assessed for task number one)
- ◆ Stage 2(b) — implementing the production — mixing skills
- ◆ Stage 2(c) — implementing the production — creative and appropriate use of sound and/or music

Most candidates were well prepared and had good knowledge of music software programmes and capturing; manipulating sound and applying suitable effects; and processes and controls.

Candidates' assignments demonstrated that centres have appropriate resources and are well placed to provide a good level of support.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper

- ◆ Question 4(a)(i) — some candidates had difficulty describing a texture concept featured on a backing vocal.
- ◆ Question 4(c) — some candidates had difficulty identifying two controls on a chorus unit.
- ◆ Question 4(d) — some candidates had difficulty in describing two ways to correct a 'buzz' in a recording.

Assignment

Most candidates completed stage 1: planning the production to a good standard. However, for the radio broadcast task some candidates did not mention the use of SQA or their stems that they had recorded or sourced. For the second task, some candidates did not include details about microphone placement, microphone distance or included an existing sound map or intended sound map for film Foley briefs. Some candidates also did not mention which controls, effects and processes they intended to use.

Most candidates completed stage 2(a) — implementing the production — audio capture to a good standard. However, some did not record using two live mics or included fewer than the five required tracks.

Most candidates completed stage 2(b) — implementing the production — mixing skills, to a good standard. However, some did not add the required effects, controls and processes, including the two mandatory time domain effects.

Some candidates had challenges with stage 3 — evaluating the production. In some cases, candidates wrote lengthy evaluations with little or no reasoned information or justification.

The candidates' logbooks, which provide supporting documentation for stages 1, 2 and 3, should be clear and succinct. Some candidates submitted logbooks missing key information, including details of audio capture and mixing.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper

To prepare for the question paper, teachers and lecturers should ensure that candidates are familiar with the full range of music concepts, different effects, controllers and processes applied to a section of music.

To complete the question paper, candidates must be able to distinguish between acoustic and electric guitars, use the concept drum kit rather than drums, and distinguish between lead and backing vocals when describing panning.

To prepare for the question paper, teachers and lecturers should give candidates listening activities, with correctly positioned stereo speakers. This gives candidates practice identifying different types of panning (left, right or centre).

Assignment

Teachers and lecturers should ensure that candidates have a full experience of mic'ing other instruments in different situations before they complete the Music Technology assignment.

Teachers and lecturers should also make candidates aware of the requirements of the assignment before they undertake it. Candidates must use at least five tracks at National 5 and work with two microphones. Teachers and lecturers should remind candidates to check and implement the mandatory list of technical skills listed in each assignment brief.

Currently, some logbooks are submitted in a chronological diary format, leading to the inclusion of information that does not attract marks.

Centres should consider reviewing any centre-devised templates for candidate logs and are encouraged to use the list of technical skills detailed in the assignment assessment task document to guide candidates to include all of the required evidence. Doing this will also help candidates meet mandatory requirements and clearly signpost where each skill has been demonstrated.

Candidates should ensure that their logs are clear and concise, to the point where another person could recreate their production using the information they provide.

Teachers and lecturers should remind candidates submitting recordings and logbooks electronically to check that these files are accessible and that they have transferred correctly onto CDs and/or memory sticks. If the files cannot be accessed, it is not possible for marking to be completed.

Appendix 1: general commentary on grade boundaries

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

For most National Courses, SQA aims to set examinations and other external assessments and create marking instructions that allow:

- ◆ a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional grade C boundary)
- ◆ a well-prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional grade 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 for each course to bring together all the information available (statistical and qualitative) and to make final decisions on grade boundaries based on this information. Members of SQA's Executive Management Team normally chair these meetings.

Principal assessors utilise their subject expertise to evaluate the performance of the assessment and propose suitable grade boundaries based on the full range of evidence. SQA can adjust the grade boundaries as a result of the discussion at these meetings. This allows the pass rate to be unaffected in circumstances where there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more, or less, difficult than usual.

- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more difficult than usual.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been less difficult than usual.
- ◆ Where levels of difficulty are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.

Grade boundaries from question papers in the same subject at the same level tend to be marginally different year on year. This is because the specific questions, and the mix of questions, are different and this has an impact on candidate performance.

This year, a package of support measures including assessment modifications and revision support, was introduced to support candidates as they returned to formal national exams and other forms of external assessment. This was designed to address the ongoing disruption to learning and teaching that young people have experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, SQA adopted a more generous approach to grading for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses than it would do in a normal exam year, to help ensure fairness for candidates while maintaining standards. This is in recognition of the fact that those preparing for and sitting exams have done so in very different circumstances from those who sat exams in 2019.

The key difference this year is that decisions about where the grade boundaries have been set have also been influenced, where necessary and where appropriate, by the unique circumstances in 2022. On a course-by-course basis, SQA has determined grade boundaries in a way that is fair to candidates, taking into account how the assessment (exams and coursework) has functioned and the impact of assessment modifications and revision support.

The grade boundaries used in 2022 relate to the specific experience of this year's cohort and should not be used by centres if these assessments are used in the future for exam preparation.

For full details of the approach please refer to the [National Qualifications 2022 Awarding—Methodology Report](#).