



Course report 2022

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| Subject | Music |
| 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

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| Number of resulted entries in 2022 | 7675 |
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Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including grade boundaries

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|-----------------|------------|------|-----------------------|------|----------------------|------|-----------------------|-----|
| A | Percentage | 56.5 | Cumulative percentage | 56.5 | Number of candidates | 4340 | Minimum mark required | 70 |
| B | Percentage | 24.7 | Cumulative percentage | 81.2 | Number of candidates | 1890 | Minimum mark required | 58 |
| C | Percentage | 11.8 | Cumulative percentage | 93.0 | Number of candidates | 910 | Minimum mark required | 47 |
| D | Percentage | 5.2 | Cumulative percentage | 98.2 | Number of candidates | 395 | Minimum mark required | 35 |
| No award | Percentage | 1.8 | Cumulative percentage | N/A | Number of candidates | 140 | 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 7675.

Section 1: comments on the assessment

Question paper

The question paper performed as expected. Markers felt this was a fair paper with an appropriate mix of accessible and challenging questions and featuring a good range of musical excerpts. The question paper demonstrated good course coverage, comprising concepts from National 3, National 4 and National 5.

Assignment

The requirement to complete the assignment was removed for session 2021–22.

Performance

Most candidates were well prepared for the performance and, as in previous years, most candidates demonstrated a good level of skills in this area.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Question paper

Most candidates demonstrated that they were well prepared for the assessment, showed familiarity with the question types and displayed appropriate exam technique. Most candidates attempted every question.

Candidates completed the following questions well:

- ◆ multiple-choice questions — question 1(a), (b), (c), (e) and (f); question 4(a), (c) and (f)
- ◆ sequential listening question — question 2
- ◆ naming the note written below the stave, identifying the change in dynamic, and recognising the cadence — question 3(b), (c) and (f)
- ◆ identifying scat singing and strathspey — question 7(a)(i) and (b)(i)
- ◆ giving a relevant reason — question 7(a)(ii)
- ◆ recognising prominent features appropriate to the excerpt — question 8

Performance

Most candidates were well prepared, and many performances were of a high standard. Most candidates performing on drum kit used the drum kit style bank.

Candidates performed vocal programmes mainly from memory, although this is not mandatory, and they chose songs that were appropriate for their musical and technical skills.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper

Some candidates found the following questions demanding:

- ◆ question 1(d) — identifying the style of music as minimalist
- ◆ question 3(a) — identifying the tempo as andante and writing this at the appropriate place in the printed music
- ◆ question 3(e) — completing the missing notes; in bar 13, candidates were given the rhythm and asked to identify the pitch of two notes — the missing notes were both at the same pitch as the preceding three notes in the bar
- ◆ question 4(d) — identifying homophonic — the question asked for a concept to describe the texture of the singing; however, many candidates gave responses that were unrelated to texture
- ◆ question 6 — recognising wind band as the ensemble and binary form as the structure

Performance

A few programmes did not meet the minimum time requirements of one instrument, although the overall performance time was appropriate. A few programmes did not meet the minimum time requirement of 6 minutes overall.

Where judicious cuts had been made to accommodate timings, a few candidates were playing sections of music below the minimum requirements (Grade 3 or above).

A few candidates who played chordal guitar or ukulele programmes played the pieces without providing a melody line to allow the performance to be heard in context.

A few chordal guitar and ukulele candidates did not demonstrate the minimum 12 chords required.

A few drum kit programmes did not meet the minimum required number of fills. A few drum kit candidates did not select their three styles from the drum kit style bank and did not demonstrate four-way independence in every style.

A few candidates performed keyboard programmes without left-hand chords.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper

The National 5 question paper always consists of concepts drawn from National 3, National 4 and National 5 concept lists, and candidates should be able to identify concepts from each of the three levels.

The following advice will be helpful to teachers and lecturers when preparing candidates for the question paper:

- ◆ In short-answer questions, candidates should use the information provided, which is designed to guide them towards the answer. For example, in question 4(d), when homophonic was the answer, the stem of the question guided candidates to write a texture concept; however, some candidates' responses were unrelated to texture.
- ◆ When writing notation, candidates should clearly indicate whether a note is on a line or in a space, and it should be very clear if a note head has been filled in (crotchet) or left empty (minim). This year the rhythm was given above the bar; however, some candidates did not accurately copy this, with some missing the dot after the crotchet, or the tail on the quaver. If a candidate has not made their intention clear, then markers cannot award marks.
- ◆ In question 5 and question 8, the table headings may change, as indicated in previous SQA communications. Candidates should carefully read the questions to ensure their answers are relevant. This year, candidates were asked to comment on prominent melody/harmony, rhythm, timbre, and tempo features in question 8; however, some also wrote dynamics that were not asked for, and therefore did not receive marks.
- ◆ In question 8, candidates should give answers related to the excerpt and avoid long lists of unrelated concepts. Lists of concepts unrelated to the music or extensive lists of contradictory concepts will result in candidates not accessing the full range of marks.
- ◆ In multiple-choice questions, candidates should read the question carefully so they are aware of how many responses should be ticked. Some candidates ticked two boxes when only one response was required, or only ticked one box when the question asked for two responses.

If centres need to submit question paper evidence for exceptional circumstances, the question papers used for formal assessments should replicate the course assessment in terms of question type and mark allocation. Centres should also submit a full copy of the marking instructions, even if questions are drawn from SQA specimen or past question papers. When preparing prelim and listening assessments, centres must consider the following information:

- ◆ A past paper or specimen question paper in its entirety cannot be the only evidence submitted for exceptional circumstances consideration.
- ◆ Some questions from Standard Grade or Intermediate 2 may not provide the appropriate scope, coverage or balance, and may need to be amended.

- ◆ The marking instructions used for centre-devised assessments should reflect the marking instructions used in the final exam. Half marks are not used. You can find examples of marking instructions for past papers on SQA's website.
- ◆ Class tests or other forms of evidence must demonstrate that candidates have knowledge and understanding of concepts appropriate to the course assessment, including sufficiently broad coverage of a range of National 5 concepts.

Performance

The following advice may help to prepare candidates for the performance components:

- ◆ Centres should ensure that the overall programme is of the appropriate length. For session 2022–23, a National 5 programme should last a minimum of 6 minutes between the two instruments. The maximum time is 6 minutes and 30 seconds. The performance time on either of the two selected instruments, or instrument and voice, must be a minimum of 1 minute 30 seconds within the overall 6-minute programme. Centres must ensure that candidates adhere to the minimum and maximum time limits. Centres should also ensure that the music performed is at the appropriate level (Grade 3 or above).
- ◆ Carefully timed cuts may be appropriate to keep within the time limit, as long as they do not lower the technical demands. Centres should also consider the length of individual pieces after any cuts have been made. If significant cuts are made to a piece of music, it can become challenging for a candidate to access all the marks available.
- ◆ For guitar and ukulele programmes, centres should specify if the candidate is performing a 'chordal', 'melodic' or 'mixed' programme. Candidates can include chords in a melodic guitar/ukulele programme, but they are not counted if it is not a chordal programme.
- ◆ Chordal guitar and ukulele programmes:
 - include 12 chords minimum
 - be in standard notation — this could simply be a copy of the melodic line that the guitar or ukulele is accompanying, with the chord names printed above or below the stave; TAB alone is not sufficient for assessment purposes, and neither is a lyric sheet with only chord names and no music notation
 - have a melody for candidates to play along with (played, sung or from a backing track) — this is essential to provide a context for the performance of the chords
- ◆ Drum kit programmes should specify each style performed and style bank number. For session 2022–23, a programme must include three different styles, with four different fills within each style. Teachers and lecturers should refer to SQA's style bank for a list of acceptable styles. Drum kit programmes must exhibit four-way independence in every piece. For notated music, the minimum requirement is four bars of the groove and four fills with a performance plan or map.
- ◆ Keyboard programmes must include both the right-hand melody and left-hand accompaniment in the performance. Candidates playing only a right-hand melody are awarded 0 marks for that piece.

To help visiting assessment run smoothly:

- ◆ Candidate mark sheets issued by SQA must be completed in pen (not pencil) by centre staff and be available to the visiting assessor (VA) at the start of each assessment session (morning or afternoon). The candidate mark sheet is the formal record of the assessment event and it is very important that it is completed accurately.
- ◆ Centre staff should give the VA a running order with approximate timings at the start of each session.
- ◆ To avoid unexpected candidate absence disrupting the planned running order, centre staff should have the next two candidates ready to perform. This ensures the maximum use of the VA's time.
- ◆ Timetabling should take account of candidates' chosen performance time on each instrument. It is helpful if centres consider the time allocated for each performance to make the best use of the VA's time in each centre.
- ◆ Details of the instruments, or instrument and voice used, the pieces to be performed, and all timings of pieces should be clearly indicated on the candidate mark sheet. The total length of time for each instrument or voice should also be indicated.
- ◆ Each drum kit style should be clearly named on the candidate mark sheet, irrespective of the title of the piece; for example, 'Download' — rock, bank 1.

If a candidate is absent for the performance exam for health reasons or other unexpected circumstances, SQA will try to arrange an alternative date for the candidate to sit the exam. If this is not possible, centres must submit evidence of the candidate's attainment in performance. Centre staff should submit an audio or video recording of as much of the candidate's programme as possible, along with copies of the music and the marks awarded for all the pieces performed. Many centres routinely make audio or video recordings of formal assessments for this eventuality. If centres do not have an audio or video recording of the candidate's performance programme, they should submit alternative evidence to show that the candidate has demonstrated attainment at National 5 level. Other supplementary evidence may include a certificate from a graded examination at an appropriate level.

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](#).