

NCFE Level 3 Applied General Certificate in Music Technology (601/6779/8)

Assessment Window: 11th March 2022

Paper Number: P001426

This report contains information in relation to the external assessment from the Chief Examiner, with an emphasis on the standard of learner work within this assessment window.

The aim is to highlight where learners generally perform well as well as any areas where further development may be required.

Key points:

- Grade Boundary Information
- administering the external assessment
- standard of learner work
- Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment
- referencing of external assessment tasks
- evidence creation
- interpretation of the tasks and associated assessment criteria
- planning in the external assessment.

It is important to note that learners should not sit the external assessment until they have taken part in the relevant teaching of the full qualification content.

Grade Boundary Information

Each learner's external assessment paper is marked by an Examiner and awarded a raw mark. During the awarding process, a combination of statistical analysis and professional judgement is used to establish the raw marks that represent the minimum required standard to achieve each grade. These raw marks are outlined in the table below.

NYA	Pass	Merit	Distinction
0-31	32-46	47-61	62-80

Grade boundaries represent the minimum raw mark required to achieve a certain grade. For example, if the grade boundary for the Pass grade is 25, a minimum raw mark of 25 is required to achieve a Pass.

Maximum UMS Score*	Level 1 Pass	Level 1 Merit	Level 1 Distinction
150	67.5	82.5	97.5

** In order to ensure that levels of achievement remain comparable for the same assessment across different assessment windows, all raw marks are converted to a points score based on a uniform mark scale (UMS). For more information about UMS and how it is used to determine overall qualification grades, please refer to the qualification specification.*

Administering the external assessment

The external assessment is invigilated and must be conducted in line with our Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment. Learners may require additional pre-release material in order to complete the tasks within the paper. These must be provided to learners in line with our Regulations.

Learners must be given the resources to carry out the tasks and these are highlighted within the Qualification Specific Instructions Document (QSID).

Standard of learner work

This was the first external assessment window following cancellations in 2021. Relatively small numbers of learners were entered for this paper, but number of learner registrations remains steady for the qualification.

The majority of learners had attempted all questions, and many had provided creditable responses across all sections, including those which required application of listening skills.

Learners in this session appeared most comfortable with questions which concerned the Digital Music Business element of the specification and were generally less confident with regards to Sound Recording and Sound Creation.

Knowledge of Live Sound Performance Technology was evident, but this was not as consistent as responses that considered application of DAW tools, for example.

Stylistic areas in relation to Creating Music were clearly understood in many cases, but for some learners musical language was an area of weakness.

Evidence creation

Learners should use the space provided to answer questions. Where answers are typed or additional pages included, the learners name, centre number, centre name and task number must be clearly visible. The additional paper must then be securely attached to the workbook.

Learners adhered to the above conditions well in this session.

Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment

Malpractice

There were no instances of malpractice in this assessment window. The Chief Examiner would like to take this opportunity to advise learners that instances of malpractice (for example, copying of work from another learner) will affect the outcome on the assessment.

Maladministration

No instances of maladministration were reported in this assessment window. The Chief Examiner would like to highlight the importance of adhering to the Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment document in this respect.

Responses of the tasks within the sections of the external assessment paper

Section 1

This section comprised of 5 questions which referred to a supplied short audio example. All learners had successfully accessed the given audio file and the majority of learners responded to all questions in this section.

Q1 demonstrated that learners had some familiarity with the application of MIDI controllers in application, although not all learners attributed changes to controllers.

In Q2 the majority of learners were able to demonstrate knowledge of DAW project templates in context.

In Q3 and Q4 some learners had successfully applied aural skills to identify appropriate track types and time signature changes, with fewer able to apply musical understanding to the latter response.

Learners were often able to identify the threshold control on a given diagram in Q5, showing some understanding of plug-in controls.

Section 2

This section comprised of 6 questions which referred to a supplied short audio

example. All learners had successfully accessed the given audio file and the majority of learners responded to all questions in this section.

Learners who performed well in this section were generally able to demonstrate knowledge of musical terminology and applied listening skills.

Many learners were able to correctly identify the correct musical term in relation to form in Q6, and to identify the correct term in Q10. Learners were less confident in applying musical terms to describe the chromatic melody in Q7 but were often able to give some reasonable account of the sonic effect.

Q8 and Q11 were generally well answered with learners able to demonstrate some knowledge of musical consumption and stylistic ideas.

Learners were more confident notating pitch than rhythm in their responses to Q9, with learners unable to draw or describe a quaver.

Section 3

This section comprised of 6 questions which referred to a supplied short audio example. All learners had successfully accessed the given audio file and the majority of learners responded to all questions in this section.

Learners who performed well in this section tended to be able to demonstrate knowledge of multi-track recording, mixing and mastering and application of listening skills.

Many learners were able to identify the correct response in Q12 from the given choices, which suggested a familiarity with basic recording terminology and process.

DI boxes were familiar to many learners with the majority able to state a function in context in Q13.

Not all learners were confident with regard to sample rates and frequency response in questions 14 and 15 respectively, with some areas of confusion and lack of technical terminology in evidence.

In Q16 most learners were able to identify at least one parameter, although the terms used were not always as per the specification.

Learners were generally able to provide some description of the sonic effect of a poor audio edit but were less capable of explaining the reason behind this in Q17.

Section 4

This section comprised of 6 questions which referred to a supplied short audio example. All learners had successfully accessed the given audio file and the majority

of learners responded to all questions in this section.

Learners who performed well in this section were able to demonstrate knowledge of sampling, synthesis and digital audio in terms of sound creation.

Not all learners appeared to be secure in their knowledge of the harmonic series based the selection of responses to Q18 but were generally more able to describe the aural outcome of a low sample rate in Q19.

Learners were generally able to achieve one or more marks from both Q20 and Q21, showing some knowledge of the effect of a HPF and the function of envelope components. Learners were often less secure in their awareness of the function of velocity switching in Q23, with some lack of knowledge of sampling being in evidence.

Q22 was the first extended question in the paper and learner responses varied considerably in depth and detail. More limited responses tended to show limited knowledge of FM synthesis but be more secure with regards to subtractive synthesis. Learners who achieved well evaluated the two methods in equal depth, from a range of standpoints and in the context required by the question in terms of sound creation.

Section 5

This section comprised of 6 questions. The majority of learners responded to all questions in this section.

Learners who achieved well in this section were generally able to demonstrate knowledge of roles, technology and planning in relation to live performance.

The majority of learners were able to correctly identify the answer from multiple choices in Q24, which suggested familiarity with the role of the performer. Q28 allowed learners to demonstrate set timing via a calculation and was well handled across all submissions.

Stylistic and practical advantages of drum kits and CDs as touring equipment in questions Q25 and Q26 respectively were generally well handled, with the majority of learners being able to provide a creditable response to both. Many learners were able to explain the potential equipment issue from the given stage plan in Q29, which suggests that learners were able to consider this question based on practical experience.

Learners appeared generally comfortable in considering equipment requirements in the context of a touring ensemble in Q27. Many learners were able to consider more obvious aspects of equipment including FOH speakers and mixer in this extended response question. Learners who achieved more highly tended to be able to discuss

more detailed requirements such as additional monitoring, ancillary equipment and specifications for equipment in context.

Section 6

This section comprised of 5 questions. The majority of learners responded to all questions in this section.

Learners who performed well in this section tended to be able to demonstrate knowledge of the digital music business in terms of production, distribution and marketing.

The majority of learners were able to provide credible explanations in regards to streaming in Q30. Similarly, many learners were able identify the correct audio file format in Q31, both of which indicated some understanding of current technology issues in regard to the music business.

PRCS For Music appeared to be familiar to learners, with useful responses regarding the function of the organisation in Q32.

Q33 and Q34 were generally very well handled by learners who appeared comfortable in considering promotion via social media and posters respectively.

Chief Examiner: Graham Lees
Date April 2022
