Non-Exam Assessment

NCFE Level 1/2 Technical Award in Music Technology (603/7008/7)

Centre copy

SAMPLE

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Contents

Introduction

The internal non-exam assessment (NEA) is a formal internal synoptic assessment that requires the learner to independently apply an appropriate selection of knowledge, understanding, skills and techniques, developed through the full course of study, in response to a real-world situation, to enable them to demonstrate an integrated connection and coherence between the different elements of the qualification.

The non-exam assessment will contribute **60%** towards the overall qualification grade and therefore it is important that the learner produces work to the highest standard that they can. The learner, therefore, should not be entered for the NEA until they have been taught the full course of study, to ensure that they are in the best position to complete the NEA successfully.

What is synoptic assessment?

Synoptic assessment is an important part of a high-quality vocational qualification because it shows that learners have achieved a holistic understanding of the sector and that they can make effective connections between different aspects of the subject content and across the breadth of the assessment objectives in an integrated way. The Department for Education (DfE) has consulted with Awarding Organisations and agreed the following definition for synoptic assessment:

'**A form of assessment which requires a candidate to demonstrate that s/he can identify and use effectively in an integrated way an appropriate selection of skills, techniques, concepts, theories, and knowledge from across the whole vocational area, which are relevant to a key task.**'

Synoptic assessment enables learners to show that they can transfer knowledge and skills learnt in one context to resolve problems raised in another. To support the development of a synoptic approach, the qualification encourages learners to make links between elements of the course and to demonstrate how they have integrated and applied their increasing knowledge and skills.

As learners progress through the course, they will use and build upon knowledge and skills learnt across units. The NEA will test the learners' ability to respond to a real-world situation.

Information for learners

Assessment Objectives (AO)
AO1 – Recall knowledge and show understanding The emphasis here is for learners to recall and communicate the fundamental elements of knowledge and understanding. **12 marks (10%)**
AO2 – Apply knowledge and understanding The emphasis here is for learners to apply their knowledge and understanding to real-world contexts and novel situations. **16 marks (13.33%)**
AO3 – Analyse and evaluate knowledge and understanding The emphasis here is for learners to develop analytical thinking skills to make reasoned judgements and reach conclusions. **12 marks (10%)**
AO4 – Demonstrate and apply relevant technical skills, techniques, and processes The emphasis here is for learners to demonstrate the essential technical skills relevant to the vocational sector, by applying the appropriate processes, tools, and techniques. **48 marks (40%)**
AO5 – Analyse and evaluate the demonstration of relevant skills and techniques. The emphasis here is for learners to analyse and evaluate the essential technical skills, processes, tools and techniques relevant to the vocational sector. **32 marks (26.66%)**

Introduction

The internal non-exam assessment is a formal assessment that will contribute **60%** towards your overall qualification grade. It takes the form of a synoptic project that will requires you to draw on your knowledge and understanding of the entire qualification, it is therefore important that you produce work to the highest standard that you can.

You will be assessed on your ability to independently select, apply and bring together the appropriate knowledge, understanding, skills and techniques you have learnt throughout your course of study, in response to a brief, set in a real-world-situation.

The non-exam assessment will be assessed holistically using a levels of response mark grid and against five integrated assessment objectives. These assessment objectives and their weightings are shown below.

Preparation and research task

Maximum time: 2 hours

In addition to the allocated assessment time for this non-exam assessment (NEA), you are permitted to spend a maximum of **2** hours to undertake research and develop a pack of resources that you can refer to during the formal NEA assessment time. During this 2 hour period, you may access all learning materials, internet access and other published materials.

You should use this time to create your own resource pack and it is this pack alone that you may use during the allocated time given to the NEA. This is the only support material that is permitted during the completion of NEA tasks (unless otherwise stated within each task instructions).

All research or data used in your final NEA **must** be referenced appropriately. As a minimum this should include the following:

- the use of quotation marks to clearly identify any passages not of your own words
- date accessed
- name of source / author.

Evidence requirements: research pack of no more than four sides of A4, font size 12 (if word processed) to be returned to your tutor at the end of each task / session and submitted with the completed NEA.

Maximum completion time

You have been provided with a total of **17** hours to complete this non-examined assessment (plus 2 hours for preparation and research).

You may use some or all of the time provided for each task.

You are allowed to use time given to one task on another task where required.

You are not allowed to exceed the total number of hours.

You should not start your NEA until you have been taught the full course of study. This will ensure that you are in the best position to complete the NEA successfully.

NCFE Level 1/2 Technical Award in Music Technology (603/7008/7)

Non-Exam Assessment
Sample

To be given to learners on or after XX XXXX XX.

Learner instructions

- Read the project brief carefully before you start the work.
- You **must** clearly identify and label all of the work you produce during the supervised time.
- You **must** hand in all of your work to the supervisor at the end of each timed session.

Learner information

- This non-exam assessment will assess your knowledge and understanding from across the qualification.
- Total marks **120.**
- The maximum completion time for this non-exam assessment is **17 hours** (plus 2 hours for the preparation and research task).
- All of the work you submit **must** be your own.

Please complete the details below clearly and in BLOCK CAPITALS.

Learner name _____

Centre name _____

Centre number _____   Learner number _____

Learner signature _____

Project brief

Sounds for Your New Content (S.Y.N.C)

You are a music producer running your own company called Sounds for Your New Content (S.Y.N.C).

S.Y.N.C specialises in sound creation and music for use in TV shows, adverts, film and games. A well-known sports brand has sent you a brief requesting original music and sounds to be used in an advert for a new range of running shoes.

The brief states that the final piece **must:**

- be produced using DAW software and hardware
- be between 1 and 2 minutes in length
- be submitted as a stereo audio file
- include sounds which create the atmosphere of a sporting event
- include music written in the style of 21st century pop
  - the music must be energetic and recreate the excitement of a race
  - the music must use a four to the floor rhythm
  - the music must use a drop in the structure
  - the music must use audio recordings and software instrument.

You have a total of **17 hours** to complete the brief.

Guidelines for using level of performance marking grids

Level of performance marking grids have been designed to award a learner's response holistically and should follow a best-fit approach. The grids are broken down into levels, with each level having an associated descriptor indicating the performance at that level. You should determine the level before determining the mark.

When determining a level, you should use a bottom-up approach. If the response meets all the descriptors in the lowest level, you should move to the next one, and so on, until the response matches the level descriptor. Remember to look at the overall quality of the performance/response and reward learners positively, rather than focussing on small omissions. If the response covers aspects at different levels, you should use a best-fit approach at this stage and use the available marks within the level to credit the response appropriately.

When determining a mark, your decision should be based on the quality of the response in relation to the descriptors. You must also consider the relative weightings of the assessment objectives, so as not to over/under credit a response.

Assessment tasks and mark scheme

Task 1 – Responding to the brief	
Maximum time:	**2 hours**
Content areas assessed:	1.1.1 – Roles and responsibilities 3.1 – Musical elements 3.2 – Musical styles 4.1 – Sound creation
Assessment objectives:	AO1 – 4 marks AO2 – 4 marks AO3 – 4 marks

Sounds for Your New Content (S.Y.N.C) want you to consider all requirements of the brief.

You are required to:

- produce a proposal for your piece.

[12 marks]

Evidence	You **must** provide:
	- your proposal for the piece - your internet browsing history used for research and planning purposes. Your proposal **must** include the following to meet the requirements of the brief: - the musical elements of your piece including: - melody - harmony - rhythm - structure - instrumentation - style - the sound creation elements of your piece - your reasoning for the decisions made. You should present your work as a word document but may use the following formats to provide supporting evidence for your proposal: - written report - mind maps - technical notes - digital presentation - annotated diagrams.

Responding to the brief		
Band	**Marks**	**Descriptors**
4	10–12	**AO3 – Excellent** analysis of the brief, that is **highly detailed** and **highly relevant**, showing analytical thinking skills, with **highly reasoned** judgments and decisions. Learner has offered **well considered** approaches in order to meet the brief. **AO2 – Excellent** application of knowledge in relation to the brief. Learner has produced a **highly comprehensive** proposal, with **clear** and **highly detailed** evidence of the proposed production, **highly relevant** to the brief. The learner responds to each area demonstrating an **excellent** understanding of what the brief has asked. **AO1 – Excellent** recall of knowledge and understanding of music and sound creation elements in relation to the brief that is **comprehensive** and **highly detailed**. Technical terminology used is **fully accurate** and **appropriate**.
3	7–9	**AO3 – Good** analysis of the brief, that is **mostly detailed** and **mostly relevant**, showing analytical thinking skills, with **mostly reasoned** judgments and decisions. Learner has offered **considered** approaches in order to meet the brief. **AO2 – Good** application of knowledge in relation to the brief. Learner has produced a **comprehensive** proposal, with **mostly detailed** evidence of the proposed production, **mostly relevant** to the brief. The learner responds to **most** areas demonstrating a **good** understanding of what the brief has asked. **AO1 – Good** recall of knowledge and understanding of music and sound creation elements in relation to the brief that is **mostly comprehensive** and **mostly detailed**. Technical terminology used is **mostly accurate** and **appropriate**.
2	4–6	**AO3 – Reasonable** analysis of the brief, that has **some detail** and **some relevance**, with **some reasoned** judgments and decisions. Learner has offered **some considered** approaches in order to meet the brief, **these may contain errors.** **AO2 – Reasonable** application of knowledge in relation to the brief. Learner has produced a proposal with **some detailed** evidence of the proposed production that has **some relevance** to the brief. The learner responds to **some** areas demonstrating **some** understanding of what the brief has asked **though may be underdeveloped**. **AO1 – Reasonable** recall of knowledge and understanding of music and sound creation elements in relation to the brief that has **some detail** though **may be underdeveloped**. Technical terminology used is **accurate** and **appropriate** in **some** parts.

1	1–3	**AO3 – Limited** analysis of the brief, that has **limited detail** and **minimal relevance**, with **limited** judgments and decisions. Learner has offered **limited consideration** of the approaches in order to meet the brief.
		AO2 – Limited application of knowledge in relation to the brief. Learner has produced a proposal with **limited detailed** evidence of the proposed production with **minimal relevance** to the brief. The learner responds to **minimal** areas demonstrating a **limited** understanding of what the brief has asked.
		AO1 – Limited recall of knowledge and understanding of music and sound creation elements in relation to the brief that has **limited detail** though **may be underdeveloped**.
		Technical terminology used is **limited** in **accuracy** and **appropriateness.**
0	**0**	No rewardable material

Indicative Content

AO1 – Learners will recall key terms in relation to musical elements, showing their understanding of each term that may include the following:

- structure
- form
- melody
- harmony
- rhythm
- instrumentation
- musical style
- arrangement
- sound creation.

Learners may use the following formats as evidence of knowledge and understanding:

- mind maps
- technical notes
- digital presentation
- flow chart
- annotated screenshots
- Word document.

AO2 – Learners will apply knowledge and understanding of key terms and demonstrate their understanding in relation to the brief that may include the following:

- **structure** could refer to: intro, drop, riser, breakdown. Expectations would be that the learners suggest they will create a particular structure. Learners may include reference to a verse and chorus. Expectations would be that the learners suggest a song structure that is coherent to the brief

- **form:** AAA, AB, ABA, ABCBA, ABACA. Higher-level learners may include a thorough composed form for the composition
- **melody:** scales, intervals, melodic form and devices. Expectations would be that the learners suggest a melodic structure coherent to the brief
- **harmony:** chords and chord progressions. Expectations would be that the learners apply contextually appropriate harmonic structure
- **rhythm:** 4/4 time signature to meet the four on the floor brief specification and 120–140bpm being chosen to meet the style of music requested
- **instrumentation:** use of instrument combinations to meet brief and acknowledge style Expectations would be a mixture of synthesised and sampled sounds making use of software instruments
- **musical style:** knowledge of style characteristics and traits to suit the style of the brief
- **arrangement:** use of musical elements with indication of how the learner will build the track to meet the brief requirements. This could be a descriptive or diagrammatic response. Key concepts may include layering, texture, mood, style, impact, build, drop
- **sound creation** for specified environment could reference samples, location recordings, library sounds and loops.

Learners may use the following formats as evidence of applying knowledge and understanding of key terms and demonstrate their understanding in relation to the brief:

- mind maps
- technical notes
- digital presentation
- flow chart
- annotated screenshots
- Word document.

AO3 – Learners will provide reasoned judgment based on their analysis and evaluation of the brief that may include the following:

- **structure** could refer to: intro, drop, riser, breakdown. Expectations would be that the learners suggest they will create a structure which reflects the brief. Learners may include reference to a verse and chorus with reasoning
- **form** AAA, AB, ABA, ABCBA, ABACA. Higher level learners may consider a through-composed approach to suit the style of the brief
- **melody**: scales, intervals, melodic form and devices that suit the style of the brief.
- **harmony:** chords and chord progressions that suit the style of the brief
- **rhythm:** 4/4 time signature to meet the four on the floor brief specification. Tempo could be detailed, with an expectation of 120 – 140bpm being chosen to meet the style of music requested
- **instrumentation:** use of instrument combinations to meet brief and acknowledge style.
- **musical style**: style characteristics and traits to suit the style of the brief
- **arrangement:** use of musical elements with indication of how the learner will build the track to meet the brief requirements. This could be a descriptive or diagrammatic response. Key concepts may include layering, texture, mood, style, impact, build, drop
- **sound creation** for specified environment could reference samples, location recordings, library sounds and loops.

Learners may use the following formats as evidence of applying knowledge and understanding of key terms and demonstrate their understanding in relation to the brief:

- mind maps
- technical notes
- digital presentation
- flow chart
- annotated screenshots
- Word document.

Task 2 – Planning for production	
Maximum time	**2 hours**
Content areas assessed	2.1.1 – Hardware components 2.1.2 – Software functions 2.2.2 – Health and safety 3.1.6 – Instrumentation 4.1 – Sound creation 5.1 – Multitrack recording 5.2 – Multitrack recording sessions
Assessment objectives	AO2 – 8 marks AO3 – 8 marks AO5 – 8 marks

You are required to:

- produce a plan to produce your music piece
- evaluate the skills, processes tools and techniques used in the planning process.

You must detail how you are going to apply your plan to undertake the production.

[24 marks]

Evidence	You **must** provide: - your **plan** for the musical piece - your internet browsing history used for research and planning purposes. Your **plan** must include: - a timeline for your production - the hardware requirements including recording equipment and DAW hardware - the software requirements including DAW software features and software instruments - required audio materials - health and safety considerations of the production - evaluation of the skills, processes tools and techniques used in the planning process. You could use the following formats to provide evidence for your plan: - written report - mind maps - technical notes - digital presentation - flow chart - annotated screenshots.

Planning for production		
Band	**Marks**	**Descriptors**
4	7–8	**AO5 – Excellent** analysis and evaluation of the skills, processes tools and techniques used in the planning process that is **highly detailed** and **highly relevant**. An **excellent** rationale of the approaches taken to create the plan is offered that is **highly relevant**, shows consideration to the brief and **highly** justifies the approaches taken.
3	5–6	**AO5 – Good** analysis and evaluation of skills, processes tools and techniques used in the planning process that is **mostly detailed** and **mostly relevant**. A **good** rationale of the approaches taken to create the plan is offered that is **mostly relevant,** shows consideration to the brief and **mostly** justifies the approaches taken.
2	3–4	**AO5 – Reasonable** analysis and evaluation of the skills, processes tools and techniques used in the planning process that has **some detail** and **some relevance** but can be narrative in some places. A satisfactory rationale of the approaches taken to create the plan is offered that shows some relevance and some consideration to the brief. Justifying some of the approaches taken is attempted.
1	1–2	**AO5 – Limited** analysis and evaluation of the skills, processes tools and techniques used in the planning process that has **limited detail** and **limited relevance**. A limited rationale of the approaches taken to create the plan is offered that shows little relevance or consideration to the brief. Very limited if any justification is offered.
0	0	No rewardable material

	Planning for production	
Band	**Marks**	**Descriptors**
4	7–8	**AO3 – Excellent** analysis and evaluation of the brief showing **excellent** analytical thinking skills, with **highly reasoned** judgments and decisions that are reflected in the plan. **AO3 –** Learner has offered **well considered** and **highly relevant** approaches in order to meet the brief throughout their plan.
3	5–6	**AO3 – Good** analysis of the brief, showing **good** analytical thinking skills, with **mostly reasoned** judgments and decisions that are reflected in the plan. **AO3 –** Learner has offered **considered** and **mostly relevant** approaches in order to meet the brief throughout their plan.

2	3–4	**AO3 – Reasonable** analysis of the brief, showing **some** analytical thinking skills, with **some considered** judgments and decisions that are reflected in the plan. **AO3 –** Learner has offered **some** suitable approaches that have **some relevance** in order to meet the brief within their plan.
1	1–2	**AO3 – Limited** analysis of the brief, showing **limited** analytical thinking skill, with **limited** judgments and decisions that are reflected in the plan. **AO3 –** Learner has offered **minimal** suitable approaches with **limited relevance** in order to meet the brief within their plan.
0	0	No rewardable material

Planning for production		
Band	**Marks**	**Descriptors**
4	7–8	**AO2 – Excellent** application of knowledge in relation to the brief. Learner has offered a **highly comprehensive** plan, with **clear** and **highly detailed** evidence of the proposed production, responding to each area with strong understanding. **AO2 – Excellent** technical terminology is used **consistently** and **accurately** throughout.
3	5–6	**AO2 – Good** application of knowledge in relation to the brief. Learner has offered a **mostly detailed** plan, with **mostly clear** evidence of the proposed production, responding to **most** areas with understanding. **AO2 – Good** technical terminology is used **accurately** throughout with few errors.
2	3–4	**AO2 – Reasonable** application of knowledge in relation to the brief. Learner has offered a **reasonable** plan that has **some detail**, with evidence of the proposed production, responding to **some** areas with understanding. **AO2 – Reasonable** use of technical terminology but contains **some** errors.
1	1–2	**AO2 – Limited** application of knowledge in relation to the brief. Learner has offered a **limited** plan, with **limited** evidence of the proposed production, responding to **minimal** areas with **limited** understanding. **AO2 – Limited** use of technical terminology that will contain errors.
0	0	No rewardable material

Indicative content

AO2 – Learners will apply of knowledge and understanding of the hardware, software and audio materials required in relation to the brief. Learners will offer a plan, with evidence of the proposed production that may include the following:

- timelines of production
- the hardware requirements
  - o including recording equipment
  - o DAW hardware

- the software requirements including
  - DAW software features
  - software instruments
- required audio materials
- health and safety considerations of the production.

Learners may use the following formats to provide evidence for the application of hardware, software and audio materials required in relation to the brief:

- mind maps
- technical notes
- digital presentation
- flow chart
- annotated screenshots.

AO3 – Analysis of hardware and software solutions, with judgments and decisions. Learners will be expected to offer explanation of the hardware and software that they will use in order to complete the brief that may include the following:

- **hardware requirements:**
  - use of a computer
  - peripherals
  - data input devices
  - audio output
  - portable recording devices
  - MIDI controllers
  - audio interface
  - MIDI interface
  - microphones
- **software requirements:**
  - choice of DAW software features including:
    - processing plugins
    - effect plugins
    - MIDI and audio tracks
- **software instruments:**
  - software instrument choice
  - suitability and reasoning for section
  - synthesizers
  - sampling and links to software and hardware
- **required audio materials:**
  - foley
  - ambience
  - instrumentation environmental sounds
  - audio capture
  - methods of recording
  - use of software instrumentation and sampling
  - editing and processing the recorded sounds.

Learners may use the following formats as evidence in supporting their analysis:

- mind maps
- technical notes
- digital presentation
- flow chart
- annotated screenshots
- Word document.

AO5 – Learners will analyse and evaluate their own proposal. Learners show analysis of the planning process, evaluating how they will use skills, processes, tools and techniques to create their proposed product that may include the following:

- **time constraints and timeline** will likely include:
  - overall time of production
  - production processes and relative timeframes
  - allocated times for processes such as:
    - recording and editing
    - awareness of limitations when using resources
- **hardware requirements** will be expected to include:
  - references to the use of a computer
  - peripherals
  - data input devices
  - audio output
  - portable recording devices
  - MIDI controllers
  - audio Interface
  - MIDI interface
  - microphones
- **software requirements** will be expected to include:
  - reference to a choice of DAW software features including:
    - processing plugins
    - effect plugins
    - MIDI and audio tracks
- **health and safety considerations** will be expected to include reference to:
  - identification of hazards
  - risks associated with hazards
  - risk assessment
  - control measures
  - reporting of hazards and reporting of accidents.

These will all be applied in context to either the recording within the studio/surrounding the DAW, or externally, should the learner record the natural environment.

- **software instruments** will be expected to include reference to:
  - software instrument choice
  - suitability and reasoning for section in reference to the brief
  - synthesizers
  - sampling and links to software and hardware will be expected to be linked here
- **required audio materials** will be expected to include reference to:
  - Foley
  - Ambience
  - instrumentation environmental sounds
  - audio capture

- o methods of recording
- o use of software instrumentation and sampling
- o with possible reference to editing and processing the recorded sounds.

The response may be interlinked to provide a cohesive plan. Learner responses are to address all areas.

Learners may use the following formats as evidence in supporting their analysis and evaluation:

- mind maps
- technical notes
- digital presentation
- flow chart
- annotated screenshots
- Word document.

Task 3 – Production of the piece	
Maximum time:	**7 hours**
Content areas assessed:	2.1.1 – Hardware components 2.1.2 – Software functions 2.2.1 – Creating audio using a DAW 3.1 – Musical elements 4.1 – Sound creation 5.1 – Multitrack recording 5.2 – Multitrack recording sessions
Assessment objectives:	AO1 – 4 marks AO2 – 4 marks AO4 – 24 marks AO5 – 4 marks

You are required to:

- create the piece
- evaluate the processes you have used and decisions you made during your production.

[36 marks]

Evidence	You **must** provide: - an exported stereo audio file - evaluation of the production process. You **must** consider: - set up of equipment - configuration of software - use of hardware - use of software - use of musical elements - creative use of sound creation - export of stereo audio file. You could use any of the following formats to provide evidence of your production process: - digital presentation - written report - blog/vlog - annotated screenshots - annotated images - video/screencast with commentary.

Production of the piece		
Band	**Marks**	**Descriptors**
4	10–12	**AO5 – Excellent** analysis and evaluation of the processes used and decisions made as they progress in producing the piece, providing a **comprehensive and highly detailed** evaluation of all processes and tools used that is **highly relevant** to the brief, showing understanding of all being used in context. **AO2 – Excellent** application of knowledge and understanding of the creative use of hardware and software. The musical piece **fully** meets the requirements of the brief, **successfully** and with **highly accomplished** execution. The piece is **fully** realistic and would be suitable for submission in a real-life context. **AO1 – Excellent** recall of knowledge and understanding of the creative use of hardware and software that is **comprehensive** and **highly detailed**.
3	7–9	**AO5 – Good** analysis and evaluation of the processes used and decisions made as they progress in producing the piece, providing a **mostly detailed** evaluation of **most** processes and tools used that is **mostly relevant** to the brief, showing understanding of being used in context. **AO2 – Good** application of knowledge and understanding of the creative use of hardware and software. The musical piece **mostly** meets the requirements of the brief and with some **accomplished** execution. The piece is **mostly** realistic and would be suitable for submission in a real-life context. **AO1 – Good** recall of knowledge and understanding of the creative use of hardware and software that is **mostly detailed**.
2	4–6	**AO5 – Reasonable** analysis and evaluation of the processes used and decisions made as they progress in producing the piece, providing a **reasonably detailed** evaluation of **some** processes and tools used that has **some relevance** to the brief, showing **some** understanding of being used in context. **AO2 – Reasonable** application of knowledge and understanding of the creative use of hardware and software. The musical piece meets **some** requirements of the brief and with **reasonable** execution. The piece is **reasonably** realistic and would be **reasonable** suitable for submission in a real-life context. **AO1 – Reasonable** recall of knowledge and understanding of the creative use of hardware and software that has **some detail.**

1	1–3	**AO5 – Limited** analysis and evaluation of the processes used and decisions made as they progress in producing the piece, providing a **minimally detailed** evaluation of **limited** processes and tools used that has **minimal relevance** to the brief, showing **limited** understanding of being used in context.
		AO2 – Limited application of knowledge and understanding of the creative use of hardware and software in meeting the brief. The piece is **limited** in terms of its suitability for submission in a real-life context.
		AO1 – Limited recall of knowledge and understanding of the creative use of hardware and software that has **limited detail.**
0	0	No rewardable material

Indicative content

AO1 – Learners will recall knowledge and understanding of the creative use of hardware and software that may include the following:

- the computer
  - type
  - configuration
  - storage
  - processing power
- computer peripherals/hardware
  - configuration
  - technical capabilities/limitations
  - components
- MIDI controllers
  - configuration
  - technical capabilities/limitations
  - components
- audio interface
  - type
  - components
  - specification
- MIDI interface
  - configuration
  - connections
  - type
  - components
- mixing desk
  - type
  - signal path
  - components
- types of DAW software
  - Pro Tools
  - Logic
  - Ableton
  - Reaper

- o   Reason
- configuration of DAW software projects
- software instruments
- loops
- editing tools
- processing plug-ins.

Learners may use any of the following formats to provide evidence of knowledge and understanding of the creative use of hardware and software:

- digital presentation
- written report
- blog/vlog
- annotated screenshots
- annotated images
- video/screencast with commentary.

AO2 – Learners will apply knowledge and understanding of the creative use of hardware and software to the requirements of the brief that may include the following:

- the computer
  - o   configuration
  - o   storage
  - o   processing power
- computer peripherals/hardware
  - o   configuration
  - o   technical
  - o   components
- MIDI controllers
  - o   configuration
  - o   technical
  - o   components
- audio interface
  - o   sample rate
  - o   buffer size
- MIDI interface
  - o   configuration
  - o   connections
  - o   components
- mixing desk
  - o   signal path
  - o   routing choices
    - bussing
    - auxiliaries
- types of DAW software
- configuration of DAW software projects
- software instruments
- loops

- editing tools
- processing plug-ins.

Learners may use any of the following formats to provide evidence of the application of the creative use of hardware and software to the requirements of the brief:

- digital presentation
- written report
- blog/vlog
- annotated screenshots
- annotated images
- video/screencast with commentary.

AO5 – Learners will analyse and evaluate their demonstration of the processes and decisions made as they progress in producing the piece, that may include commentary relating to use of the following equipment technically and creatively:

- the computer – technical and/or artistic reasons for:
  o configuration
  o connections
  o components
- computer peripherals/hardware
  o configuration
  o technical and creative capabilities/limitations
  o components
- MIDI controllers
  o configuration
  o technical and creative capabilities/limitations
  o components
- audio interface – technical and artistic reasons for:
  o sample rate
  o buffer size
- MIDI interface
  o configuration
  o connections
  o components
- mixing desk – technical and/or artistic reasons for choice of:
  o signal path
  o routing choices
    ▪ bussing
    ▪ auxiliaries
- technical and artistic reasons for choice of:
  o types of DAW software
  o configuration of DAW software projects
  o use of software instruments
  o use of loops
  o use of editing tools
  o use of processing plug-ins.

Learners may use any of the following formats to provide additional evidence of their evaluation:

- digital presentation
- written report
- blog/vlog
- annotated screenshots
- annotated images
- video/screencast with commentary.

		Production of the piece – technical skills
Band	**Marks**	**Descriptors**
4	7–8	**AO4 – Excellent** application and demonstration of technical skills used in **multi-track recording**. Learner has shown a **comprehensive** understanding of each process with a **highly successful** result. **AO4 – Excellent** application and demonstration of technical skills used in **mixing audio** to balance the track during production. Learner has shown a **comprehensive** understanding of each process with a **highly successful** result.
3	5–6	**AO4 – Good** application and demonstration of technical skills used in **multi-track recording**. Learner has shown a **clear** understanding of each process with a **successful** result. **AO4 – Good** application and demonstration of technical skills used in **mixing audio** to balance the track during production. Learner has shown a **clear** understanding of each process with a **successful** result
2	3–4	**AO4 – Reasonable** application and demonstration of technical skills used in **multi-track recording**. Learner has shown an understanding of each process with a **satisfactory** result. **AO4 – Reasonable** application and demonstration of technical skills used in **mixing audio** to balance the track during production. Learner has shown an understanding of each process with a **satisfactory** result.
1	1–2	**AO4 – Limited** application and demonstration of technical skills used in **multi-track recording**. Learner has shown some **limited** understanding of each process with a **limited** result. **AO4 – Limited** application and demonstration of technical skills used in **mixing audio** to balance the track during production. Learner has shown some **limited** understanding of each process with a **limited** result.
0	0	No rewardable material

Production of the piece – techniques		
Band	**Marks**	**Descriptors**
4	7–8	AO4 – **Excellent** application and demonstration of **multi-track recording techniques**. Learner has shown a **comprehensive** understanding of each technique with a **highly successful** result. AO4 – **Excellent** application and demonstration of **mixing recording techniques** to balance the track during production. Learner has shown a **comprehensive** understanding of each technique with a **highly successful** result.
3	5–6	AO4 – **Good** application and demonstration of **multi-track recording techniques**. Learner has shown a **clear** understanding of each technique with a **successful** result. AO4 – **Good** application and demonstration of **mixing techniques** to balance the track during production. Learner has shown a **clear** and **detailed** understanding of each technique with a **successful** result.
2	3–4	AO4 – **Reasonable** application and demonstration of **multi-track recording techniques**. Learner has shown **some** understanding of each technique with a **satisfactory** result. AO4 – **Reasonable** application and demonstration of **mixing techniques** to balance the track during production. Learner has shown **some** understanding of each technique with a **satisfactory** result.
1	1–2	AO4 – **Limited** application and demonstration of **multi-track recording techniques**. Learner has shown **limited** understanding of each technique with a **limited** result. AO4 – **Limited** application and demonstration of **mixing techniques** to balance the track during production. Learner has shown **minimal** understanding of each technique with a **limited** result.
0	0	No rewardable material

Production of the piece – processes		
Band	**Marks**	**Descriptors**
4	7–8	AO4 – **Excellent** application and demonstration of **multi-track recording** processes that is **comprehensive, highly effective,** and **successful.** AO4 – **Excellent** application and demonstration of **mixing** processes, to balance the track during production, that is **comprehensive** and **highly effective,** and **successful.** AO4 – The response shows a **highly comprehensive** understanding.
3	5–6	AO4 – **Good** application and demonstration of **multi-track recording** processes that is **mostly comprehensive** and **mostly effective.**

		AO4 – **Good** application and demonstration of **mixing** processes, to balance the track during production, that is **mostly comprehensive** and **mostly effective.** AO4 – The response shows a **mostly comprehensive** understanding.
2	3–4	AO4 – **Reasonable** application and demonstration of **multi-track recording** processes that has some detail and is in **some parts effective.** AO4 – **Reasonable** application and demonstration of **mixing** processes, to balance the track during production, that has some detail and is in **some parts effective.** AO4 – The response shows **some detailed** understanding of each process.
1	1–2	AO4 – **Reasonable** application and demonstration of **multi-track recording** processes that has some detail and is in **limited parts effective.** AO4 – **Reasonable** application and demonstration of **mixing** processes, to balance the track during production, that has some detail and is in **limited parts effective.** AO4 – The response shows **limited detailed** understanding of each process.
0	0	No rewardable material

Indicative content

AO4 – Learners will demonstrate the application of technical skills, techniques and processes in the creation of a piece that may include the following:

- **setting up of equipment** may include**:**
  - microphones
  - DI
  - audio interfaces
  - multi-track recorder
  - testing equipment
- **configuration of software** may include:
  - creating new tracks
  - setting audio bit depth
  - sample rate
  - audio output
  - tempo time signature
  - saving projects
- **application and creative use of hardware and software** may include:
  - the use of a computer
  - peripherals
  - data input devices
  - audio output
  - portable devices
  - MIDI controllers
  - audio interface
  - MIDI interface

- o mixing desk
- o microphones
- o recording devices
- o instruments
- o DAW software
- o software instruments
- o processing plugins
- o effect plugins
- o MIDI tracks
- o synthesisers editing
- o sampling
- o loops
- o editing tools
- o dynamic processing
- o capturing audio
- the piece should be responding to the set brief
- audio should be 1–2 minutes in length
- audible elements should include the sound of a sporting event and a suitable 'drop'
- learners may have chosen to use a sample for the sporting event, or recorded sound externally to capture the sounds
- an energetic tempo choice, most likely to be of 120–140 bpm is expected. Learners may have chosen to go higher, however this may have limited their stylistic approach to 21st century pop
- instrumentation will most likely be electronic, in line with the brief
- written responses referencing their choices should be evident
- a four on the floor drum pattern is expected. Learners who have not achieved this pattern will fall into the lower bands
- written responses may reference:
  - o configuration
  - o recording audio
  - o MIDI use and editing of software instruments
  - o selection of sounds suitable to the style
  - o arranging the composition
  - o deciding on where the 'drop' may be
  - o details of layering
  - o texture
  - o impact and build
  - o sampling
- justification of choices will push learners into the higher banding, as well as the level of explanation when using the tools, processes and functions within the DAW.

Task 4 – Mixing	
Maximum time:	**4 hours**
Content areas assessed:	2.1.2 – Software functions 5.2.3 – Mixing 5.3 – Stereo mixdowns
Assessment objectives:	AO1 – 4 marks AO4 – 24 marks AO5 – 4 marks

You are required to:

• **mix** your completed piece and **export** it as a stereo audio file.

[32 marks]

Evidence	You **must** provide: • a stereo audio file • evaluation and evidence of the mixing process. When mixing your music, you **must** consider the following: • placement in the sound stage • balance • editing • EQ • effects • dynamics processing • export to stereo audio. You **could** use the following formats to provide evidence of your mixing process: • digital presentation • written report • blog/vlog • annotated screenshots • annotated images • video with commentary.

Mixing – Technical skills		
Band	**Marks**	**Descriptors**
4	7–8	**AO4 – Excellent** application and demonstration of technical mixing skills. Learner has shown a **comprehensive** understanding of each technique with a **highly successful** result. **AO4 – Excellent** technical mixing skills used that are **highly** appropriate and **comprehensively** meet the requirements of the brief and are **accomplished** in execution. The piece is realistic and would be **highly suitable** for submission in a real-life context.
3	5–6	**AO4 – Good** application and demonstration of mixing techniques. Learner has shown a **good** understanding of each process with a **successful** result. **AO4 – Good** technical mixing skills used that are **mostly** appropriate and meet the brief successfully and is well executed. The piece is **mostly** realistic and would be suitable for submission in a real-life context.
2	3–4	**AO4 – Reasonable** application and demonstration of technical mixing skills. A **satisfactory** understanding of each technique with a **reasonably successful** result is demonstrated. **AO4 – Reasonable** mixing techniques used that are **reasonably** appropriate to the brief and show some **reasonable** execution. The piece is **reasonably** realistic and is **satisfactorily suitable** for submission in a real-life context.
1	1–2	**AO4 – Limited** application and demonstration of technical mixing skills. A **limited** understanding of some techniques with **limited** success is shown. **AO4 – Limited** technical mixing skills used, that are **limited** in terms of their appropriateness to meet the requirements of the brief and with **limited** success in execution. The piece is not realistic and would be not be suitable for submission in a real-life context.
	0	No rewardable material

Mixing techniques		
Band	**Marks**	**Descriptors**
4	**7–8**	**AO4 – Excellent** application and demonstration of mixing techniques. Learner has shown a **comprehensive** understanding of each technique with a **highly successful** result. **AO4 – Excellent** mixing techniques used, that are **highly** appropriate and **comprehensively** meet the requirements of the brief and are **accomplished** in execution. The piece is realistic and would be **highly suitable** for submission in a real-life context.
3	**5–6**	**AO4 – Good** application and demonstration of mixing techniques. Learner has shown a **good** understanding of each process with a **successful** result. **AO4 – Good** mixing techniques used, that are **mostly** appropriate and meet the requirements of the brief successfully and is well executed. The piece is **mostly** realistic and would be suitable for submission in a real-life context.
2	**3–4**	**AO4 – Reasonable** application and demonstration of mixing techniques. A **satisfactory** understanding of each technique with a **reasonably successful** result is demonstrated. **AO4 – Reasonable** mixing techniques used, that are **reasonably** appropriate to the brief and show some **reasonable** execution. The piece is **reasonably** realistic and is **satisfactorily** suitable for submission in a real-life context.
1	**1–2**	**AO4 – Limited** application and demonstration of mixing techniques. A **limited** understanding of some techniques with **limited** success is shown. **AO4 – Limited** mixing techniques used, that are **limited** in terms of their appropriateness to meet the requirements of the brief and with **limited** success in execution. The piece is not realistic and would be not be suitable for submission in a real-life context.
0	**0**	No rewardable material

Mixing processes		
Band	Marks	Descriptors
4	7–8	AO4 – **Excellent** application and demonstration of mixing processes. Learner has shown a **comprehensive** understanding of each process with a **highly successful** result. AO4 – **Excellent** mixing processes used, that **comprehensively** meet the requirements of the brief and are **accomplished** in execution. The piece is realistic and would be **highly suitable** for submission in a real-life context.
3	5–6	AO4 – **Good** application and demonstration of mixing processes. Learner has shown a **good** understanding of each process with a **successful** result. AO4 – **Good** mixing processes used, that meet **most** of the requirements of the brief **successfully** and is **well executed**. The piece is **mostly** realistic and would be suitable for submission in a real-life context.
2	3–4	AO4 – **Reasonable** application and demonstration of mixing processes. A **satisfactory** understanding of each process with a **reasonably successful** result is demonstrated. AO4 – **Reasonable** mixing processes used, that **reasonably** meet the requirements of the brief to a degree and with **some reasonable** execution. The piece is **reasonably** realistic and is **satisfactorily suitable** for submission in a real-life context.
1	1–2	AO4 – **Limited** application and demonstration of mixing processes. A **limited** understanding of some process with **limited** success is shown. AO4 – **Limited** mixing processes used, that are **limited** in terms of meeting the requirements of the brief and with **limited** success in execution. The piece is not realistic and would be not be suitable for submission in a real-life context.
0	0	No rewardable material

Indicative Content

AO4 – Learners will demonstrate the application of mixing technical skills, processes, tools and techniques that may include the following:

- balance of audio may be demonstrated and evidenced by the application of relative volume of tracks, as well as the stereo field or panning
- placement in the sound stage may be demonstrated and evidenced by the application of effects and microphone placement to achieve height, width and depth
- editing may be demonstrated and evidenced by the removal of unwanted audio, correction of pitch errors, correction of rhythmic errors
- EQ may be demonstrated and evidenced by the use of low and high pass filters, frequency selection, Q, gain and attenuation
- effects may be demonstrated and evidenced by the use of time-based effects (reverb, delay), modulation effects (chorus, flanging, phasing), filter effects (wah-wah) or distortion effects (amp simulation, overdrive)

- dynamics processing may be demonstrated and evidenced by the use of compression, limiting, expanders and gates
- exported stereo mixdown would be demonstrated by the evidence of a suitable audio file, such as WAV, MP3 and AIF.

Learners may use the following formats to provide evidence of your mixing process:

- digital presentation
- written report
- blog/vlog
- annotated screenshots
- annotated images
- video with commentary.

Mixing – knowledge, understanding, analysis and evaluation		
Band	Marks	Descriptors
4	7–8	**AO5 – Excellent** analysis and evaluation of the essential technical skills, processes, tools and techniques that is **highly comprehensive** and **highly relevant** to mixing and tools used, showing **comprehensive** understanding of all processes and tools being used in context. **AO1 – Excellent** recall of knowledge and understanding of the mixing process that is shown through evidence of a stereo mixdown that is **highly comprehensive** and **highly relevant.**
3	5–6	**AO5 – Good** analysis and evaluation of the essential technical skills, processes, tools and techniques that is **mostly detailed** and **mostly relevant** to mixing and tools used, showing **good** understanding of all processes and tools being used in context. **AO1 – Good** recall of knowledge and understanding of the mixing process that is shown through evidence of a stereo mixdown that is **mostly detailed** and **mostly relevant.**
2	3–4	**AO5 – Reasonable** analysis and evaluation of the essential technical skills, processes, tools and techniques that has **some detail** and **some relevance** to mixing and tools used, showing **reasonable** understanding of them being used in context. **AO1 – Reasonable** recall of knowledge and understanding of the mixing process that is shown through evidence of a stereo mixdown that has **some detail** and **some relevance.**
1	1–2	**AO5 – Limited** analysis and evaluation of the essential technical skills, processes, tools and techniques that has **limited detail** and **minimal relevance** to mixing and tools used, showing **limited** understanding of them being used in context. **AO1 – Limited** recall of knowledge and understanding of the mixing process that has **limited detail** and **minimal relevance** shown through **limited** evidence of a stereo mixdown that has **some detail** and **some relevance.**
0	0	No rewardable material

AO1 – Learners will recall knowledge of technical skills, techniques and processes in relation to mixing audio, showing their understanding of each of the following:

- balance of audio
  - level
  - panning
- placement
  - positioning within the sound stage
- editing
  - tools
  - techniques
  - processes
- EQ
- effects
- dynamics processing
  - gating
  - compression
- exported stereo mixdown
  - interleaved
  - split stereo.

Learners may choose to present their evidence in a range of formats including audio, written and video.

AO5 – Learners will analyse and evaluate their demonstration and application of mixing techniques, processes and tools that will include analysis and evaluation of the following:

- balance of audio
  - level
  - panning
    - to create width
- placement
  - positioning within the sound stage
- editing
  - tools
  - techniques
  - processes
- EQ
  - creating height
- effects
  - to create depth
- dynamics processing
  - to create depth
- exported stereo mixdown
  - output format
  - sample rate
  - bit depth.

Learners may choose to present their evidence in a range of formats including audio, written and video.

Task 5 – Summative evaluation of musical piece	
Maximum time:	**2 hours**
Content areas assessed:	1.1.1 – Roles and responsibilities 2.1.1 – Hardware components 2.1.2 – Software functions 2.2.2 – Health and safety 3.1 – Musical elements 3.2 – Musical styles 4.1 – Sound creation 5.1 – Multitrack recording 5.2 – Multitrack recording sessions 5.3 – Stereo mixdowns
Assessment objectives:	AO5 – 16 marks

You are required to:

- evaluate the technical skills, processes, tools and techniques used to create your musical piece in relation to the brief.

[16 marks]

Evidence	You **must** provide: - your evaluation. You should consider the following when evaluating your practice: - how the demonstration of essential skills, processes, tools and techniques used in your finished musical piece met the brief - how you could improve your finished musical piece in relation to the brief - an alternative approach to the brief. You could use the following formats to provide evidence of your evaluation: - annotated screenshots - written responses - video with commentary - digital presentation.

Evaluation of musical piece		
Band	Marks	Descriptors
4	13–16	**AO5 – Excellent** analysis and evaluation of their demonstration of essential skills, processes, tools and techniques used in realising the finished product in relation to the brief, that is **comprehensive**, **highly detailed** and **highly relevant**. **Excellent** analysis and evaluation of a wide range of **imaginative** and **thoughtful** suggestions that is **comprehensive**, **highly detailed** and **highly relevant** in how the finished musical piece could have been improved in order to further meet the brief. Supported by **thoughtful**, **imaginative and highly relevant** examples of an alternative approaches to the brief are provided.
3	9–12	**AO5 – Good** analysis and evaluation of their demonstration of relevant skills and techniques used in realising the finished product in relation to the brief, that is **mostly comprehensive**, **mostly detailed** and **mostly relevant**. **Good** analysis and evaluation of a range of **thoughtful** suggestions of how the finished musical piece could have been improved in order to further meet the brief. Supported by **thoughtful, useful** and **mostly relevant** examples of an alternative approach to the brief are provided.
2	5–8	**AO5 – Reasonable** analysis and evaluation of their demonstration of relevant skills and techniques used in realising the finished product in relation to the brief, that has **some detail** and **some relevance that may be underdeveloped.** **Reasonable** analysis and evaluation of how the finished product has met the brief with some reasoning. **Satisfactory** suggestions of how the finished musical piece could have been improved in order to further meet the brief. Supported by at **least one** example of an alternative approach to the brief is provided that has **some relevance**.
1	1–4	**AO5 – Limited** analysis and evaluation of their demonstration of relevant skills and techniques used in realising the finished product in relation to the brief, that has **minimal relevance** and is **mostly superficial** and **underdeveloped**. **Limited** analysis and evaluation of how the finished musical piece could be improved in order to further meet the brief. Supported by at **least one** example of an alternative approach to the brief is provided that has **minimal relevance**.
0	0	No rewardable material

Indicative Content

AO5 – Learners analyse and evaluate their demonstration of relevant skills and techniques, analysing how their finished product has met the brief with reasoning. They will offer suggestions of how they could have improved their finished musical piece in order to further meet the brief that may include the following:

- learners will reference both the brief and their final musical piece detailing how the skills, processes, tools and techniques used successfully facilitated meeting the requirements of the brief
- learners will be expected to offer an evaluation on each of the skills, processes and techniques used to meet the requirements, analysing the degree to which the brief was met
- learners will then be expected to highlight which of these areas they did not meet and how they could further improve their finished piece by adapting their practice. This could include analysis of their piece, identifying areas that were not effective or successful, such as audible sounds that could be improved, effects that could have been better applied, positioning of instruments, sounds voices and effects in the soundstage etc
- they may reference the style of the brief, in comparison to the style they have made. Links to the length of the song, the authenticity of the environmental sounds, effectiveness of the 'drop', suitability of the impact sound effect, their understanding of the style of music and its components.

Alternative approach to the brief that may include the following:

- changes of choice of proposal (task 1)
- changes to planning process (task 2)
- changes to production process (task 3)
- changes to mixing process (task 4).

Learners may use the following formats to provide additional evidence of your evaluation:

- annotated screenshots
- written responses
- video with commentary
- digital presentation.

Mark scheme

The purpose of this mark scheme is to give you:

- examples and criteria of the types of response expected from a learner
- information on how individual marks are to be awarded
- the allocated assessment objective(s) and total marks for each question.

Marking guidelines

General guidelines

You must apply the following marking guidelines to all marking undertaken. This is to ensure fairness to all learners, who must receive the same treatment. You must mark the first learner in exactly the same way as you mark the last.

- The mark scheme must be referred to throughout the marking period and applied consistently, do not change your approach to marking once you have been standardised.
- Reward learners positively, giving credit for what they have shown, rather than what they might have omitted.
- Utilise the whole mark range and always award full marks when the response merits them.
- Be prepared to award zero marks if the learner's response has no creditworthy material.
- Do not credit irrelevant material that does not answer the question, no matter how impressive the response might be.
- If you are in any doubt about the application of the mark scheme, you must consult with your centre's internal quality assurer.

Guidelines for using extended response marking grids

Extended response mark grids have been designed to assess learners' work holistically. They consist of levels-based descriptors and indicative content.

Levels-based descriptors

Each level is made up of several descriptors for across the AO range – AO1 to AO5, which when combined provide the quality of response that a learner needs to demonstrate. Each level-based descriptor is worth varying marks.

The grids are broken down into levels, with each level having an associated descriptor indicating the performance at that level. You should determine the level before determining the mark.

Indicative content reflects content-related points that a learner may make but is not an exhaustive list, nor is it a model answer. Learners may make all, some or none of the points included in the indicative content, as its purpose is as a guide for the relevance and expectation of the responses. Learners must be credited for any other appropriate response.

Application of extended response marking grids

When determining a level, you should use a bottom-up approach. If the response meets all the descriptors in the lowest level, you should move to the next one, and so on, until the response matches the level descriptor. Remember to look at the overall quality of the response and reward learners positively, rather than focussing on small omissions. If the response covers aspects at different levels, you should use a best-fit approach at this stage and use the available marks within the level to credit the response appropriately.

When determining a mark, your decision should be based on the quality of the response in relation to the descriptors.