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External Assessment practice paper

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

Paper number: **practice paper** (Practical)

This is NOT a live paper

Time allowed: 10 hours
Total marks: 60

Learner number:	
Forename:	
Surname:	
Centre number:	

Learner declaration:

I confirm that the work contained in this external assessment is all my own work.
I have not copied work from anyone else.
I have not copied work directly from handouts/internet/textbooks or any other publication.
If I have used a quote, then I have referenced this appropriately.

Learner's signature: **Date:**

ncfe.

Time allowed

10 hours of timed external assessment.

Guidance for learners

- Read the tasks carefully and make sure that you understand:
  - what you need to do to complete the assessment
  - what you need to submit
  - how much time you need to allow for each task.

- The Invigilator will explain where you will save your work between each external assessment session.

Instructions for learners

- Complete your personal details on the first page.

- Read the tasks carefully and make sure that you understand what you need to complete.

- The beginning of each section has a recommended amount of time to spend on it.

- All the work you submit must be your own. You may use all of the material given within the external assessment paper but no other resources should be taken into the examination room.

- You're not allowed to use the Internet or any other material to help you complete the tasks.

- You must sign the learner declaration on the front page of this assessment paper to declare that the work produced is your own.

- At the end of the assessment hand all documents over to your Invigilator.

Resources

- You may use all of the material given within the external assessment paper, but no other resources should be taken into the examination room.

- You're not allowed to use the Internet during the external assessment.

- All the evidence you submit must be your own work.

- Make sure that all your work is clearly identified with your name, centre number and learner number.

You will need:

- headphones
- individual workstation with listening capabilities
- provided audio samples
- suggested chord and tempo details.

External assessment

You should record your answers in the spaces provided. You may use extra paper if you need it. Make sure that any extra paper is labelled clearly with your name, centre number and learner number and attached to this external assessment paper.

Scenario

An agency has offered you work to create a remix for a major recording artist. You have been given an audio file containing the lead vocal of the upcoming release.

You have also been given suggested chord charts, as well as tempo details. Your task is to create the remix in a dance style using a combination of software instruments/MIDI and audio tracks. You must use at least 16 tracks.

As you work through the tasks below you must provide evidence of the processes you have applied.

This could include:

- written reports
- annotated screenshots
- spoken commentary.

You should complete both sections of the assessment and all tasks in each section.

These are the tasks you need to do:

Task 1

Using the audio files provided and the suggested chord structure as source material, develop a plan to create your remix in a musical style of your choice.

You should use the source material as creatively as you wish.

Present a plan detailing how the source material will be used and combined with your own original elements to produce a remix.

You must make reference to the style you have chosen, considering each of the following:

- structure
- harmony
- melody
- rhythm
- instrumentation.

Remember that your remix must contain **at least 16 tracks.**

You must provide:

- your plan explaining the choices you have made.

This work should be labelled as 'Task 1 – Plan'.

(10 marks)

Task 2

Using the plan you created in Task 1; start to work on the sounds you will use in your remix.

You must create tracks including a combination of:

- software instruments/MIDI
- audio

Your software instruments must include:

- at least one original sampler patch created using elements of the source material
- at least one original synth patch to be used throughout the remix

You must provide:

- an explanation of your intentions in choosing and creating sounds
- an explanation of the process you used to create your original sounds

This work should be labelled as 'Task 2 – Sounds'.

(10 marks)

Task 3

Using your Task 1 plan and the sounds developed in Task 2, develop your remix and prepare it for mixing.

You must use:

- MIDI editing tools
- audio editing tools.

Remember that your final remix must **contain 16 tracks.**

You must provide:

- an audio file showing your work so far

This should be labelled as 'Task 3 – Rough Mix'

- an explanation of how you have used MIDI and audio editing

This should be labelled as 'Task 3 – Editing'.

(10 marks)

Task 4

Using the arrangement created in Task 3, apply mixing tools and techniques to the remix.

You must provide evidence showing how you have used the following to create the mix:

- EQ
- effects including send/return, inserts and bussing
- dynamics processing
- balance
- automation

You must provide:

- an audio file of your mix

This should be labelled as 'Task 4 – Final Mix'

- an explanation of how you have used mixing tools and techniques

This should be labelled as 'Task 4 – Mixing'.

(10 marks)

Task 5

Using the mix created in Task 4, apply mastering tools and techniques to produce the final audio master.

You must provide:

- mastered audio file for streaming

This should be labelled as 'Task 5 – Stream Master'

- mastered audio file for CD production

This should be labelled as 'Task 5 – CD Master'

- an explanation of how you have used mastering tools and techniques

This should be labelled as 'Task 5 – Mastering'.

(10 marks)

Task 6

You should review your remix.

In your review you should consider the following in regard to the process of creating your remix:

- use of software functions
- selection of musical elements
- progress from unmixed to mixed to mastered track
- success of outcome
- effectiveness of your plan
- plans for future development

This work should be labelled as 'Task 6 – Review'.

(10 marks)

What you need to hand in after your external assessment.

At the end of the timed external assessment you'll hand in:

Task 1	Task 1 - Plan	eg written document, video, screencast
Task 2	Task 2 - Sounds	eg written document, video, screencast
Task 3	Task 3 - Rough Mix	audio file
Task 3	Task 3 - Editing	eg written document, video, screencast
Task 4	Task 4 - Final Mix	audio file
Task 4	Task 4 - Mixing	eg written document, video, screencast
Task 5	Task 5 - Stream Master	audio file
Task 5	Task 5 - CD Master	audio file
Task 5	Task 5 - Mastering	eg written document, video, screencast
Task 6	Task 6 - Review	eg written document, video, screencast

- The work must be saved in an appropriate file format, which can be accessed by the Examiner.

- Do not hand in DAW files or MIDI files.

- Make sure that all your work (including any extra paper) is clearly identified with your name, your centre number and your learner number. Make sure you've signed the learner declaration on the front page of this external assessment paper.

This is the end of the assessment.

Assessment objectives

AO1. Knowledge of tools, processes and creative techniques in music technology.

AO2. Application of technical and creative skills using music technology.

AO3. Evaluation and analysis of the creative use of music technology.

Assessment areas for practical external assessment

1. Planning and stylistic context

2. Development of sounds using sampling and synthesis

3. Use of MIDI and audio editing tools

4. Use of mixing techniques and tools

5. Use of mastering techniques and tools

6. Evaluation

Grade bands

Mark bands and holistic descriptions	1. Planning and stylistic context	2. Development of sounds using sampling and synthesis	3. Use of MIDI and audio editing tools	4. Use of mixing techniques and tools	5. Use of mastering techniques and tools	6. Evaluation
0. No submission	No rewardable material No reference to musical elements No outcome No stylistic intent Outcome makes no use of supplied material	No rewardable material Learner has developed no original sounds No explanation of development	No rewardable material Learner has made no use of MIDI and/or audio editing Has not provided evidence of use of MIDI/Audio editing	No rewardable material No identification of mixing tools or process No mixed track	No rewardable material No mastered version of track No identification of mastering process	No rewardable material Learner does not attempt to review work

Grade bands (cont'd)

Mark bands and holistic descriptions	1. Planning and stylistic context	2. Development of sounds using sampling and synthesis	3. Use of MIDI and audio editing tools	4. Use of mixing techniques and tools	5. Use of mastering techniques and tools	6. Evaluation
1-2. Very limited submission with recorded performance failing to meet brief, omissions in digital audio files. Omissions in presentation of submission *Practical* *Significant Flaws* *Written* *Identification*	Learner's plan may not identify all musical elements. Description is likely to be limited or very inconsistent Outcome shows limited use of creative resources and some inappropriate use of musical elements May not be representatively stylistic Outcome makes some basic use of supplied material	Sound used with limited musical outcome or inconsistently within piece Variety of sounds developed may be limited to 1 synth patch or basic sampler patch Learner may identify sounds developed with limited reference to intention and/or detail of process	Musical outcome may be limited Learner has made use of basic MIDI or audio tools correctively Learner has identified intention and tool but not described process	Usage of some tools is identified Mix tools and techniques used to produce a mix which may have some noticeable and substantial ongoing flaws	Some mastering tools identified Mastering tools used to produce one master which has some noticeable ongoing flaws/or 2 masters which are not saved in appropriate formats Application of mastering may not be appropriate or have negative impact on mix	Learner's review does not cover all areas Review will identify some processes Structure may be limited to simple statements with no conclusion

Grade bands (cont'd)

Mark bands and holistic descriptions	1. Planning and stylistic context	2. Development of sounds using sampling and synthesis	3. Use of MIDI and audio editing tools	4. Use of mixing techniques and tools	5. Use of mastering techniques and tools	6. Evaluation
3-4 Limited submission with noticeable errors throughout in the recorded performance. Errors in technical presentation. Limited presentation of submission with lack of attention to detail *Practical* *Noticeable flaws* *Written* *Simple description*	Learner's plan is likely to be limited or inconsistent in description Outcome shows use of appropriate ideas with some creativity, but this may not be sustained throughout Mostly stylistically recognisable, but some noticeable inconsistencies Outcome makes some structured use of supplied material	Sounds have been used musically, but not consistently Variety of original sounds including at least 1 synth patch and 1 sampler patch Learner produces some description of both intention and development of sounds, but is inconsistent in detail	Musical outcome may be limited in parts Learner has made use of a limited variety of basic MIDI and audio editing tools correctively Learner has stated some intentions, but process and/or technical terms are inconsistent	Usage of tools is identified but response is limited in terms of description Mix tools and techniques used to produce a mix which may have ongoing flaws	Usage of tools is identified but response is limited in terms of description Mastering tools and techniques used to produce two masters with some inconsistency in attention to detail May be limited in terms of improvement from final mix	Learner's review covers all areas through use of descriptive statements Conclusions may be limited to simple statements Structure should be consistent but may not be coherent

Grade bands (cont'd)

Mark bands and holistic descriptions	1. Planning and stylistic context	2. Development of sounds using sampling and synthesis	3. Use of MIDI and audio editing tools	4. Use of mixing techniques and tools	5. Use of mastering techniques and tools	6. Evaluation
5-6 Inconsistent submission with some errors in recorded performance. Some noticeable inconsistencies in technical presentation. Inconsistent presentation of submission, lacking detail in some areas *Practical* *Inconsistent* *Written* *Detailed description with some explanation*	Learner's plan shows detailed description of all musical elements, with some inconsistencies Outcome uses appropriate and creative musical elements throughout Stylistic coherence may have some inconsistencies Outcome makes use of supplied material with some creativity	Sounds have been used musically throughout A variety of sounds have been developed Learner describes intention of sounds and provides description of development but detail may be inconsistent	Musical outcome is generally effective, with some ongoing inconsistencies Learner has made use of MIDI and audio editing techniques effectively Learner has stated intention for use of variety of tools and described process. Technical terms may be inconsistent or detail not always described effectively	Usage of tools and techniques described using appropriate technical terms but some inconsistency in attention to detail Creative use of mixing tools and techniques resulting in mix which is engaging and contains some inconsistencies	Mastering tools and techniques described using appropriate technical terms but some inconsistency in attention to detail Mastering tools and techniques used to produce two masters with some inconsistency in attention to detail Both masters saved in appropriate formats Some limited improvement from final mix to master	Learner reviews all elements with detail in some areas Conclusions lack detail Review is explanative, but contains some inconsistencies, structure is generally coherent

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Grade bands (cont'd)

Mark bands and holistic descriptions	1. Planning and stylistic context	2. Development of sounds using sampling and synthesis	3. Use of MIDI and audio editing tools	4. Use of mixing techniques and tools	5. Use of mastering techniques and tools	6. Evaluation
7-8 Good submission. Some minor inconsistencies in recorded performance. Some minor inconsistencies in technical presentation. Some areas of presentation of submission lacking complex detail *Practical* *Minor inconsistencies* *Written* *Detailed explanation*	Learner's plan shows detailed explanation of all musical elements, with some minor inconsistencies Outcome uses appropriate and creative musical elements throughout Stylistic coherence, may have some inconsistencies Outcome makes use of supplied material with some creativity and attention to detail	Sounds are used creatively and musically throughout A variety of original sounds have been developed Learner explains intention of sounds used and provides consistent explanation of how they were developed	Musical outcome is generally effective, with some minor inconsistencies Learner has made use of MIDI and audio editing techniques creatively Learner has stated intention for use of variety of tools and provided detailed explanation of process. There may be some minor inconsistencies in level of explanation	Usage of tools and techniques explained in detail using appropriate technical terms with minor inconsistencies Creative use of mixing tools and techniques resulting in mix which is engaging and contains only minor inconsistencies	Mastering tools and techniques explained in detail, but with some minor inconsistencies Mastering tools and techniques used to produce 2 masters with some minor inconsistencies Both masters saved in appropriate formats Some broad improvement noticeable from final mix to master	Learner reviews all elements with detail in most areas Conclusions not detailed in terms of evaluation Review is explanative, with some areas of evaluation - but may contain some minor inconsistencies, structure is coherent

Grade bands (cont'd)

Mark bands and holistic descriptions	1. Planning and stylistic context	2. Development of sounds using sampling and synthesis	3. Use of MIDI and audio editing tools	4. Use of mixing techniques and tools	5. Use of mastering techniques and tools	6. Evaluation
9-10 Excellent submission. A successful and engaging recorded performance throughout. Effective technical presentation of all digital files. Effective and engaging presentation of submission *Practical* *Consistent* *Written* *Evaluative*	Learner's plan shows detailed evaluative understanding of all music elements - melody, harmony, rhythm, instrumentation, form Outcome uses appropriate, creative and imaginative musical elements throughout Stylistically coherent throughout Outcome makes detailed, imaginative and creative use of supplied material throughout	Sounds are used creatively, musically and imaginatively throughout A variety of imaginative original sounds have been developed Learner clearly explains intention of sounds used and provides consistent and detailed evaluation of how they were developed	Musical outcome is effective throughout Learner has made extensive use of a variety of sophisticated MIDI and audio editing techniques creatively Learner has clearly stated intention for use of variety of tools in detail and evaluated process using technical terms throughout	Usage of tools and techniques explained and evaluated in detail using appropriate technical terms throughout Creative and sophisticated use of a variety of mixing tools and techniques resulting in dynamic and engaging outcome with no audible issues	Mastering techniques and tools explained and evaluated throughout in detail Mastering tools and techniques used in a sophisticated manner to produce master which is consistent throughout Noticeable improvements made in mastering stage from final mix	Learner effectively reviews all elements in detail Provides detailed evaluative conclusions Learner's review is evaluative throughout, coherently and engagingly structured