



Non-Exam Assessment (NEA)

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

Centre version

October 2024 release

v1.0

Past paper

Contents

Introduction	3
Information for learners	4
Marking guidelines	5
Declaration of authenticity	7
GDPR consent	8
Preparation and research task	10
Project brief	11
Task 1	12
Task 2	16
Task 3	23
Task 4	31
Task 5	38

Introduction

The non-exam assessment (NEA) is a formal synoptic assessment that requires learners 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 NEA will contribute **60%** towards the overall qualification grade; therefore, it is important that the learner produces work to the highest standard that they can. The learner must not start the NEA until they have been taught the full course, 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 (AOs) 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 they 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

Introduction

The NEA will be assessed holistically using a levels of response marking grid and against five integrated AOs. These AOs and their weightings are shown below.

Assessment objectives (AOs)
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 technical skills, techniques and processes 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 (26.67%)

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 AOs 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 internal quality assurer.

Guidelines for using extended-response marking grids

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

Band-based descriptors

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

The grids are broken down into bands, with each band having an associated descriptor indicating the performance at that band. You should determine the band 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 to guide 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 band, you should use a bottom-up approach. If the response meets all the descriptors in the lowest band, you should move to the next one, and so on, until the response matches the band 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 in different bands, you should use a best-fit approach at this stage and use the available marks within the bands 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.

Past paper

Documentation

Declaration of authenticity

The learner and assessor **must** complete the form at the end of the assessment and before any marking takes place. The assessor **must** check the number of tasks submitted by the learner is accurate.

The completed form **must** be retained within the centre and is not to be sent to the moderator or NCFE unless specifically requested.

Learner name:	
Tasks submitted:	
Learner declaration:	
I certify that the work submitted for this NEA is my own. I have clearly referenced any sources used in the work. I understand that false declaration is a form of malpractice.	
Learner signature:	
Date:	

Assessor name:	
Assessor declaration:	
I certify that the work submitted is the learner's own. The learner has clearly referenced any sources used in the work. I confirm that all work was conducted under conditions designed to assure the authenticity of the learner's work.	
Assessor signature:	
Date:	

Note: once completed, the declaration of authenticity **must** be stored securely within the centre, in line with NCFE Regulations for Conduct of NEA – Non-Exam Assessment. A copy of this declaration form **must** be made available to NCFE upon request.

GDPR consent

Section A: this section must be completed by the learner

- NCFE may select your work for use at teacher training or standardisation events. Your work will be anonymised by removing your name. All materials will be reviewed regularly and will be removed if no longer required.
- NCFE may select your work at some point in the future for use in teaching and learning resources published on the NCFE website. Your work would be anonymised by removing your name. All materials will be reviewed regularly and will be removed if no longer required.
- You understand that this agreement may be terminated at any time through written request.
- For further details about how we process your data, please refer to the [legal information section on the NCFE website](#).

Please tick the option that applies, and sign and date the boxes below:

		Tick one only
I consent to my work being used in the manner detailed in section A		
I do not consent to my work being used in the manner detailed in section A		
Learner signature:		
Date:		

Section B: this section must be completed by any participants who feature in the work

Over 13 years old

- I am over 13 and I give my permission for my video and / or photographic image to be used as detailed in section A (above).

Under 13 years old

- I give my permission for my child's video and / or photographic image to be used as detailed in section A (above).

Name of participant (printed)	Participant / Parent / Carer signature	Date

If any of the participants have declined permission, please tick here: ☐

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

Non-exam assessment (NEA)

October 2024 release

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 NEA will assess your knowledge and understanding from across the qualification.
- The maximum mark for this NEA is **120**.
- The maximum completion time for this NEA is **17 hours** (plus **2 hours** preparation and research time).
- 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

Preparation and research task

Maximum time: 2 hours

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

You should use this time to create your own research 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 of the task instructions).

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

- the use of quotation marks to clearly identify any passages not of your own words
- date accessed (websites only)
- 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 assessor at the end of each task / session and submitted with the completed NEA.

Formal non-exam assessment (NEA)

Maximum completion time

You have been provided with a total of **17 hours** to complete this NEA (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 any remaining time allocated to one task to rework previous tasks up to the maximum time allowed.

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.

Project brief

You have been asked to write the introductory theme music to be played during the opening credits of a new TV drama series. The series is set in the UK in the 1960s. It is based around the character of a fictional police detective.

Your piece **must** be written in the style of soul.

Your final piece **must**:

- be produced using digital audio workstation (DAW) software and accompanying hardware
- be between 45 seconds and 1 minute 15 seconds long
- be submitted as exported stereo audio files
- use MIDI software instruments
- use audio recordings, including **at least one** audio source you have recorded.

You may capture and use performances from other musicians as part of your composition process. If other musicians have been involved in creating audio as part of your production, you **must** clearly explain who was involved and how they were involved.

Assessment tasks and mark schemes

Task 1

Responding to the brief	
Maximum time	2 hours
Content areas assessed	1. Introduction to music technology and the music business 3. Musical elements, musical style and music technology 4. Sound creation
Assessment objectives (AOs)	AO1 – 4 marks AO2 – 4 marks AO3 – 4 marks
The producer wants you to consider all requirements of the brief. You are required to: create a proposal for your piece. To meet the needs of the brief, your proposal must include the following: - the musical elements of soul music - definitions of the elements based on the findings of your research - explanations of how you will apply these elements to your piece - reasons for your choices. You are permitted to use the internet for this task. You must reference all sources used. [12 marks]	
Evidence	You should present your work as a word-processed document. If you want to provide supporting evidence for your proposal, you may use the following formats: - written report - mind maps - technical notes - digital presentation - annotated diagrams. You must also submit your internet browsing history of sites used to support your response to the task.

Task 1: responding to the brief

Band	Mark	Descriptor
4	10 to 12	AO3 – Excellent analysis of the brief, that is highly detailed and highly relevant, showing analytical thinking skills, with highly reasoned judgements and decisions. The learner has offered well-considered approaches in order to meet the brief. AO2 – Excellent application of knowledge in relation to the brief. The 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.
3	7 to 9	AO3 – Good analysis of the brief, that is mostly detailed and mostly relevant, showing analytical thinking skills, with mostly reasoned judgements and decisions. The learner has offered considered approaches in order to meet the brief. AO2 – Good application of knowledge in relation to the brief. The 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.
2	4 to 6	AO3 – Reasonable analysis of the brief, that has some detail and some relevance, with some reasoned judgements and decisions. The learner has offered some considered approaches in order to meet the brief, although these may contain errors. AO2 – Reasonable application of knowledge in relation to the brief. The 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, although this 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, although this may be underdeveloped.

Band	Mark	Descriptor
1	1 to 3	AO3 – Limited analysis of the brief, that has limited detail and minimal relevance, with limited judgements and decisions. The learner has offered limited consideration of the approaches in order to meet the brief. AO2 – Limited application of knowledge in relation to the brief. The 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 and may be underdeveloped.
	0	No rewardable material

Note: it is not a requirement that the learner formulates a response in their portfolio specifically against each AO as laid out in the indicative content. The evidence provided by the learner for each AO may be embedded throughout the evidence submitted for the task. Whilst it is likely that the responses will be illustrated by the indicative content points below, credit should be given for different approaches, providing they meet the key requirements of the task and mark scheme.

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.

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 the use of structural elements that suit the requirements of the brief
- **form** – may refer to section structure, such as AAA, AB, ABA and so on, appropriate to the brief
- **melody** – scales, intervals, melodic form and devices appropriate to the brief
- **harmony** – chords and chord progressions create an appropriate harmonic structure

- **rhythm** – a time signature and a tempo chosen to meet the style of music specified in the brief
- **instrumentation** – use of instrument combinations that suit the requirements of the brief
- **musical style** – knowledge of style characteristics and traits to suit the brief
- **arrangement** – use of musical elements with indication of how the learner will build the track to meet the brief requirements
- **sound creation** – could reference samples, audio recordings, library sounds and loops.

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

- **structure** – reasoning for structural arrangements in the context of developing the piece to meet stylistic and time requirements
- **form** – reasoning for arrangement choices with reference to the length, tempo and duration of piece
- **melody** – reasoning for melodic choices, perhaps using research into existing pieces, or referencing specific artists / composers
- **harmony** – reasoning, perhaps based on research, for choices of specific chords or chord progressions
- **rhythm** – reasoning for rhythm choices that meet the requirements of the brief, perhaps with reference to current knowledge or research
- **instrumentation** – reasoning for a choice of instrument combinations to meet the requirements of the brief and be consistent with the stated style. There may be reference to the instruments that are expected within the style specified in the brief. There may be reasoning offered to qualify or disqualify instrument choices, or how they are going to be captured, designed or created
- **musical style** – references to the structure, form, rhythm, instrumentation, melody, harmony and arrangement that are typically used within the specified style
- **arrangement** – could be a descriptive or diagrammatic response. Key concepts may include layering, texture, style, and ensuring that the piece represents one that is complete and representative of soul music
- **sound creation** – reasoning for sound creation choices, with reference to the suitability of the brief and / or the accessibility of the resources needed. Could include references to working with another musician due to their skill level, or references to choosing the recording of instrumentation that is typical of soul. There also may be reference to the selection of software instrumentation, as well as the use of samplers or synthesisers, that have specific instruments or presets that suit the brief.

Task 2

Planning for production	
Maximum time	2 hours
Content areas assessed	2. The digital audio workstation (DAW) 3. Musical elements, musical style and music technology 4. Sound creation 5. Multitrack recording
Assessment objectives (AOs)	AO2 – 8 marks AO3 – 8 marks AO5 – 8 marks
You are required to: create a plan to produce your piece of music which evaluates the skills, processes, tools and techniques you intend to use. 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 - a plan for recording audio materials - health and safety considerations of the production - evaluation of the skills, processes, tools and techniques referred to in the planning process. You are permitted to use the internet for this task. You must reference all sources used. [24 marks]	
Evidence	You could use the following formats to provide evidence for your plan: - written report - mind maps - technical notes - digital presentation - flow chart - annotated screenshots. You must also submit your internet browsing history of sites used to support your response to the task.

Task 2: planning for production

Band	Mark	Descriptor
4	7 to 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. AO5 – 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 to 6	AO5 – Good analysis and evaluation of skills, processes, tools and techniques used in the planning process that is mostly detailed and mostly relevant. AO5 – 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 to 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. AO5 – A reasonable rationale of the approaches taken to create the plan is offered that shows some relevance and some consideration to the brief. Justification of some of the approaches taken is attempted.
1	1 to 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. AO5 – 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	No rewardable material

Task 2: planning for production

Band	Mark	Descriptor
4	7 to 8	AO3 – Excellent analysis and evaluation of the brief showing excellent analytical thinking skills, with highly reasoned judgements and decisions that are reflected in the plan. AO3 – The learner has offered well considered and highly relevant approaches in order to meet the brief throughout their plan.
3	5 to 6	AO3 – Good analysis of the brief, showing good analytical thinking skills, with mostly reasoned judgements and decisions that are reflected in the plan. AO3 – The learner has offered considered and mostly relevant approaches in order to meet the brief throughout their plan.
2	3 to 4	AO3 – Reasonable analysis of the brief, showing some analytical thinking skills, with some considered judgements and decisions that are reflected in the plan. AO3 – The learner has offered some suitable approaches that have some relevance in order to meet the brief within their plan.
1	1 to 2	AO3 – Limited analysis of the brief, showing limited analytical thinking skills, with limited judgements and decisions that are reflected in the plan. AO3 – The learner has offered minimal suitable approaches with limited relevance in order to meet the brief within their plan.
	0	No rewardable material

Task 2: planning for production

Band	Mark	Descriptor
4	7 to 8	AO2 – Excellent application of knowledge in relation to the brief. The 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 to 6	AO2 – Good application of knowledge in relation to the brief. The 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 to 4	AO2 – Reasonable application of knowledge in relation to the brief. The 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 to 2	AO2 – Limited application of knowledge in relation to the brief. The 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	No rewardable material

Note: it is not a requirement that the learner formulates a response in their portfolio specifically against each AO as laid out in the indicative content. The evidence provided by the learner for each AO may be embedded throughout the evidence submitted for the task. Whilst it is likely that the responses will be illustrated by the indicative content points below, credit should be given for different approaches, providing they meet the key requirements of the task and mark scheme.

Indicative content

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

- timelines of production
- the hardware requirements, including:
 - recording equipment (for example, microphone(s), cables, amplification, instruments)

- DAW hardware (including computer, interface(s), inter-connectivity, mixing equipment, audio monitors)
- the software requirements including
 - DAW software features
 - software instruments (samplers, synthesisers and so on)
 - processing plug-ins (effects, dynamics, correction and so on)
- a plan for recording audio materials
- health and safety considerations of the production, including:
 - DAW set-up
 - live instrument recording environment
 - safe volume levels for monitoring / listening
 - context-specific safety issues.

To be able to record via MIDI, learners may suggest the use of MIDI controllers, or other equipment to input MIDI data. This may be based on the accessibility of the equipment or learner abilities and preference. To be able to record chords for soul, for example, they may suggest that a MIDI keyboard is the appropriate option.

There may be reference to the editing tools that allow for learners to copy sections or audio files, as well as adjusting MIDI or audio recordings. There may also be references to quantisation, velocity changes and other MIDI editing functions that will lend themselves to creating soul to a professional standard.

Learners may reference how they will use real instruments, samples of real instruments or synthesisers to create sounds suitable for creating a soul piece. Learners may also discuss the use of specific effects and dynamic processors that may be appropriate to this style. When recording specific instruments into the DAW software, learners may also reference other effects that would be suitable. There may be references to audio material that they would want to use for their production, such as samples, one-shots, loops, or other relevant material. There might also be suggestions for existing pieces as references for creating specific sounds.

For planning for the recording of audio materials learners may indicate the processes and equipment that they intend to use in order to capture audio material, for example microphone selection and placement and the use of direct input (DI).

AO3 – Analysis of hardware and software solutions, with judgements and decisions. Learners will be expected to offer explanations 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 plug-ins
 - effect plug-ins
- MIDI and audio tracks
- **software instruments:**
 - software instrument choice
 - suitability and reasoning for selection
 - synthesisers
 - sampling, with links to software and hardware
- **required audio materials:**
 - audio capture
 - methods of recording
 - use of software instrumentation and sampling
 - editing and processing the recorded sounds.

When giving reasons for their choices for hardware, learners may reference usability, accessibility and suitability. Choices may be made based on what is available to them, and what they are able to work efficiently with.

Where physical instruments are not available, learners can reference software instruments that provide a suitable alternative. They may have knowledge of specific software instruments that they already use, or they may suggest that they will need to find one when they are creating the sound. For example, when considering the use of a bass guitar, learners may already be aware of a software instrument that will allow them to create an authentic sounding part.

Learners may suggest the number of tracks that they will use to create the music. There may be further reference to the use of a bus to be able to apply global effects to a group of tracks. For example, adding reverb to a bus featuring drum tracks may be justified because it makes the drums sound like they are in the same room, even if they were recorded in separate spaces. Learners may also justify how they will add effects and dynamic processors to the master track to achieve a certain effect or result.

AO5 – Learners will analyse and evaluate their own plan. 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:**
 - 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:**
 - 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:**
 - reference to a choice of DAW software features including:
 - processing plug-ins
 - effect plug-ins
 - MIDI and audio tracks
- **health and safety considerations:**
 - 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 the recording within the studio / surrounding the DAW.

- **software instruments:**
 - software instrument choice
 - suitability and reasoning for selection in reference to the brief
 - synthesisers
 - sampling, with links to software and hardware
- **required audio materials:**
 - audio capture
 - methods of recording
 - use of software instrumentation and sampling
 - editing and processing the recorded sounds (where appropriate).

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

Task 3

Production of the piece	
Maximum time	7 hours
Content areas assessed	2. The digital audio workstation (DAW) 3. Musical elements, musical style and music technology 4. Sound creation 5. Multitrack recording
Assessment objectives (AOs)	AO1 – 4 marks AO2 – 4 marks AO4 – 24 marks AO5 – 4 marks
You are required to: • use your plan from Task 2 to create the piece and export it as a stereo audio file • evaluate the production processes you have used and decisions you made during your production • submit your Task 3 stereo audio file. You must consider: • set-up of equipment • configuration of software • use of hardware • use of software • use of musical elements • use of sound creation • capture of recorded audio • export of stereo audio file. [36 marks]	
Evidence	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. You must include your Task 3 stereo audio file.

Task 3: production of the piece – use of hardware and software

Band	Mark	Descriptor
4	10 to 12	AO5 – Excellent analysis and evaluation of the processes used and decisions made as the learner progresses in producing the piece. A comprehensive and highly detailed evaluation of all processes and tools used that is highly relevant to the brief, showing clear understanding of being used in context. AO2 – Excellent application of knowledge and understanding of the creative use of hardware and software. The piece of music 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 to 9	AO5 – Good analysis and evaluation of the processes used and decisions made as the learner progress in producing the piece. 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 piece of music 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 to 6	AO5 – Reasonable analysis and evaluation of the processes used and decisions made as they progress in producing the piece. 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 piece of music 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.

Band	Mark	Descriptor
1	1 to 3	AO5 – Limited analysis and evaluation of the processes used, and decisions made as they progress in producing the piece. 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 of music meets limited requirements of the brief with limited execution. 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	No rewardable material

Note: it is not a requirement that the learner formulates a response in their portfolio specifically against each AO as laid out in the indicative content. The evidence provided by the learner for each AO may be embedded throughout the evidence submitted for the task. Whilst it is likely that the responses will be illustrated by the indicative content points below, credit should be given for different approaches, providing they meet the key requirements of the task and mark scheme.

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 (for example Pro Tools, Logic, Ableton, Reaper, Reason)
- configuration of DAW software projects
- software instruments
- loops
- editing tools
- processing plug-ins.

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 (type, configuration, storage, processing power)s

- computer peripherals / hardware (configuration, technical capabilities / limitations, components)
- MIDI controllers (configuration, technical, components)
- audio interface (sample rate, buffer size)
- MIDI interface (configuration, connections, components)
- mixing desk (signal path, routing choices)
- types of DAW software
- configuration of DAW software projects
- software instruments
- loops
- editing tools
- processing plug-ins.

When applying knowledge and understanding to the requirements of the brief, learners may seek to link their choices of hardware and software use to the production of either soul, or the relevance to a TV show. When referencing the configuration of the DAW, learners could give an indication of an appropriate time signature, select a suitable tempo, and choose relevant and suitable track types.

Within the evaluation, learners should be referencing suitable software instruments for the production of soul, which are likely to lean towards choices such as piano and bass and other instruments linked to the genre.

When considering the recording of audio, relevant and suitable use of hardware can be discussed, with indication of suitability for the genre and format of the brief.

Appropriate choices of plug-ins may be made with reference to the genre, showing clear indication of the stylistic traits and associated software that could achieve this, such as, but not limited to, tape delay, wah-wah, reverb, flanger and distortion.

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

Task 3: production of the piece – musical elements

Band	Mark	Descriptor
4	7 to 8	AO4 – Excellent demonstration of technical skills to create the musical elements required to meet the expectations of the brief. AO4 – The learner has shown a comprehensive ability to apply music production techniques and processes to the creation of appropriate musical elements, with a highly successful result.
3	5 to 6	AO4 – Good demonstration of technical skills to create the musical elements required to meet the expectations of the brief. AO4 – The learner has shown a clear and detailed ability to apply music production techniques and processes to the creation of appropriate musical elements, with a successful result.
2	3 to 4	AO4 – Reasonable demonstration of technical skills to create the musical elements required to meet the expectations of the brief. AO4 – The learner has shown some ability to apply music production techniques and processes to the creation of appropriate musical elements, with a satisfactory result.
1	1 to 2	AO4 – Limited demonstration of technical skills to create the musical elements required to meet the expectations of the brief. AO4 – The learner has shown minimal ability to apply music production techniques and processes to the creation of appropriate musical elements, with a limited result.
	0	No rewardable material

Task 3: production of the piece – sound creation

Band	Mark	Descriptor
4	7 to 8	AO4 – Excellent demonstration of technical skills in sound creation using music production software and hardware. AO4 – The learner has shown a comprehensive ability to apply music production techniques and processes to sound creation, with a highly successful result.
3	5 to 6	AO4 – Good demonstration of technical skills sound creation using music production software and hardware. AO4 – The learner has shown a clear and detailed ability to apply music production techniques and processes to sound creation, with a successful result.
2	3 to 4	AO4 – Reasonable demonstration of technical skills in sound creation using music production software and hardware. AO4 – The learner has shown some ability to apply music production techniques and processes to sound creation, with a satisfactory result.
1	1 to 2	AO4 – Limited demonstration of technical skills in sound creation using music production software and hardware. AO4 – The learner has shown minimal ability to apply music production techniques and processes to sound creation, with a limited result.
	0	No rewardable material

Task 3: production of the piece – multitrack recording

Band	Mark	Descriptor
4	7 to 8	AO4 – Excellent demonstration of technical skills used in multitrack recording. AO4 – The learner has shown a comprehensive ability to apply relevant multitrack recording techniques and processes, with a highly successful result.
3	5 to 6	AO4 – Good application and demonstration of technical skills used in multitrack recording. AO4 – The learner has shown a clear ability to apply relevant multitrack recording techniques and processes, with a successful result.
2	3 to 4	AO4 – Reasonable application and demonstration of technical skills used in multitrack recording. AO4 – The learner has shown some ability to apply relevant multitrack recording techniques and processes, with a satisfactory result.
1	1 to 2	AO4 – Limited application and demonstration of technical skills used in multitrack recording. AO4 – The learner has shown minimal ability to apply relevant multitrack recording techniques and processes, with a limited result.
	0	No rewardable material

Note: it is not a requirement that the learner formulates a response in their portfolio specifically against each AO as laid out in the indicative content. The evidence provided by the learner for each AO may be embedded throughout the evidence submitted for the task. Whilst it is likely that the responses will be illustrated by the indicative content points below, credit should be given for different approaches, providing they meet the key requirements of the task and mark scheme.

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** (microphones, DI, audio interfaces, multitrack recorder, testing equipment)
- **configuration of software** (creating new tracks, setting audio bit depth, sample rate, audio output, tempo time signature, saving projects)
- **application and creative use of hardware and software** (the use of a computer, peripherals, data input devices, audio output, portable devices, MIDI controllers, audio interface, MIDI interface, mixing desk, microphones, recording devices, instruments, DAW)

software, software instruments, processing plug-ins, effect plug-ins, MIDI tracks, synthesisers editing, sampling, loops, editing tools, dynamic processing, capturing audio)

To respond to the set brief: audio would be 45 seconds to 1-minute 15 seconds in length and in the style of soul. Audible elements should mainly include the use of instruments appropriate to the genre, rather than be completely synthetic. A slow to mid-range tempo may be used, typically 70 to 100 BPM, and an appropriate time signature. Learners may choose to go higher or lower in tempo, however this may limit their stylistic approach to the genre of soul. Learners may double the tempo if working in the 6/8 time signature or may choose to double their BPM but record vocals at half time. Responses may reference, for example:

- configuration
- recording audio
- MIDI use and editing of software instruments
- selection of sounds suitable to the style of soul music
- arranging the composition
- details of layering
- texture
- sampling.

Task 4

Mixing	
Maximum time	4 hours
Content areas assessed	2. The digital audio workstation (DAW) 5. Multitrack recording
Assessment objectives (AOs)	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 • submit your Task 4 stereo audio file • evaluate the mixing processes you have used and decisions you made during your mix. When mixing your final piece, you must consider the following: • placement in the sound stage • balance • editing • EQ • effects • dynamics processing • export to stereo audio. [32 marks]	
Evidence	You could use the following formats to provide evidence of your mixing process: • digital presentation • written report • blog / vlog • annotated screenshots • annotated images • video / screencast with commentary. You must include your Task 4 stereo audio file.

Task 4: mixing – technical skills

Band	Mark	Descriptor
4	7 to 8	AO4 – Excellent application and demonstration of technical mixing skills. The learner has shown a comprehensive understanding of each technical skill 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 to 6	AO4 – Good application and demonstration of technical mixing skills. The learner has shown a good understanding of each technical skill with a successful result. AO4 – Good technical mixing skills used that are mostly appropriate, meet the brief successfully and are well executed. The piece is mostly realistic and would be suitable for submission in a real-life context.
2	3 to 4	AO4 – Reasonable application and demonstration of technical mixing skills. The learner has shown a satisfactory understanding of each technical skill with a reasonably successful result. AO4 – Reasonable mixing techniques used that are reasonably appropriate to the brief and show some reasonable execution. The piece is reasonably realistic and satisfactory for submission in a real-life context.
1	1 to 2	AO4 – Limited application and demonstration of technical mixing skills. The learner has shown a limited understanding of some technical skills with limited success. 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 not be suitable for submission in a real-life context.
	0	No rewardable material

Task 4: mixing – techniques

Band	Mark	Descriptor
4	7 to 8	AO4 – Excellent application and demonstration of technical mixing techniques. The learner has shown a comprehensive understanding of each technique with a highly successful result. AO4 – Excellent technical 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 to 6	AO4 – Good application and demonstration of mixing techniques. The learner has shown a good understanding of each process with a successful result. AO4 – Good technical mixing techniques used that are mostly appropriate and meet the brief successfully and are well executed. The piece is mostly realistic and would be suitable for submission in a real-life context.
2	3 to 4	AO4 – Reasonable application and demonstration of technical mixing techniques. The learner has shown a satisfactory understanding of each technique with a reasonably successful result. AO4 – Reasonable mixing techniques used that are reasonably appropriate to the brief and show some reasonable execution. The piece is reasonably realistic and satisfactory for submission in a real-life context.
1	1 to 2	AO4 – Limited application and demonstration of technical mixing techniques. The learner has shown a limited understanding of some techniques with limited success. AO4 – Limited technical 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 not be suitable for submission in a real-life context.
	0	No rewardable material

Task 4: mixing – processes

Band	Mark	Descriptor
4	7 to 8	AO4 – Excellent application and demonstration of mixing processes. The 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 to 6	AO4 – Good application and demonstration of mixing processes. The 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 to 4	AO4 – Reasonable application and demonstration of mixing processes. The learner has shown a satisfactory understanding of each process with a reasonably successful result. 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 satisfactory for submission in a real-life context.
1	1 to 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 not be suitable for submission in a real-life context.
	0	No rewardable material

Note: it is not a requirement that the learner formulates a response in their portfolio specifically against each AO as laid out in the indicative content. The evidence provided by the learner for each AO may be embedded throughout the evidence submitted for the task. Whilst it is likely that the responses will be illustrated by the indicative content points below, credit should be given for different approaches, providing they meet the key requirements of the task and mark scheme.

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 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) as appropriate to the musical style given in the brief
- dynamics processing may be demonstrated and evidenced by the use of compression, limiting, expanders and gates, as appropriate
- exported stereo mixdown would be demonstrated by the evidence of a suitable audio file, such as WAV, MP3 or AIFF.

Task 4: mixing – knowledge, understanding, analysis and evaluation

Band	Mark	Descriptor
4	7 to 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 to 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.

Band	Mark	Descriptor
2	3 to 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 to 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	No rewardable material

Note: it is not a requirement that the learner formulates a response in their portfolio specifically against each AO as laid out in the indicative content. The evidence provided by the learner for each AO may be embedded throughout the evidence submitted for the task. Whilst it is likely that the responses will be illustrated by the indicative content points below, credit should be given for different approaches, providing they meet the key requirements of the task and mark scheme.

AO1 – Learners will recall knowledge and show understanding of technical skills, techniques and processes in relation to mixing audio that may include the following:

- balance of audio (level, panning)
- placement (positioning within the sound stage)
- editing (tools, techniques, processes)
- EQ
- effects
- dynamics processing
- exported stereo mixdown.

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 may include the following:

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

Past paper

Task 5

Summative evaluation of the piece of music	
Maximum time	2 hours
Content areas assessed	1. Introduction to music technology and the music business 2. The digital audio workstation (DAW) 3. Musical elements, musical style and music technology 4. Sound creation 5. Multitrack recording
Assessment objectives (AOs)	AO5 – 16 marks
You are required to: evaluate the technical skills, processes, tools and techniques used to create, produce and mix your piece of music. In your evaluation of your piece of music, you should consider: - the ways that your final piece of music demonstrates the use of skills, processes, tools and techniques - how did your piece of music meet the project brief - the ways that you could improve your final piece of music in relation to the brief - any alternative approaches to the brief you might have used. [16 marks]	
Evidence	You could use the following formats to provide evidence of your evaluation: - annotated screenshots - written responses - video / screencast with commentary - digital presentation.

Task 5: summative evaluation of the piece of music

Band	Mark	Descriptor
4	13 to 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. AO5 – 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 piece of music 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.
3	9 to 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. AO5 – Good analysis and evaluation of a range of thoughtful suggestions of how the finished piece of music 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.
2	5 to 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. AO5 – Reasonable analysis and evaluation of how the finished product has met the brief with some reasoning. Satisfactory suggestions of how the finished piece of music could have been improved in order to further meet the brief. Supported by at least one example of an alternative approach to the brief that has some relevance.
1	1 to 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. AO5 – Limited analysis and evaluation of how the finished piece of music could be improved in order to further meet the brief. Supported by at least one example of an alternative approach to the brief that has minimal relevance.
	0	No rewardable material

Note: it is not a requirement that the learner formulates a response in their portfolio specifically against each AO as laid out in the indicative content. The evidence provided by the learner for each AO may be embedded throughout the evidence submitted for the task. Whilst it is likely that the responses will be illustrated by the indicative content points below, credit should be given for different approaches, providing they meet the key requirements of the task and mark scheme.

Indicative content

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

- references to both the brief and their final piece, detailing how the skills, processes, tools and techniques used successfully facilitated meeting the requirements of the brief
- an evaluation of each of the skills, processes and techniques used to meet the requirements, analysing the degree to which the brief was met
- reference to ways they could 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 sounds that could be improved, effects that could have been better applied, and positioning of instruments, sounds voices and effects in the sound stage and so on
- they may reference the style of the brief, in comparison to the style they have developed – they may discuss links to the length of the piece, the authenticity of the genre / style, as well as how they ensured that the sounds would be suitable for a TV detective series
- alternative approaches to the brief that might 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).