Synoptic connections

NCFE Level 1/2 Technical Award in Music Technology
QN: 603/7008/7

Synoptic connections

Synoptic assessment requires learners to combine elements of their learning and show accumulated knowledge and understanding across the qualification content. It enables learners to evidence their capability to integrate and apply knowledge, understanding and skills gained with breadth and depth in context.

It is therefore essential when planning for teaching and throughout delivery that the interdependencies and links build across the content of the qualification and are highlighted and reinforced.

The qualification comprises 5 mandatory content areas. All content is mandatory and must be taught.

The teaching content does not have to be delivered in a linear way; content areas are interdependent in knowledge, skills and concepts.

Teachers may take a synoptic approach across the qualification. This will enable learners to be able to apply theories and concepts from across the qualification specification in context to skills-based situations. Through combining content and developing holistic connections, learners will be able to demonstrate and evidence their full knowledge and understanding of the subject area and the music technology industry.

Learners will have the opportunity to identify relevant study skills and reflect upon their preferred learning style throughout the qualification.

Content area 1: Introduction to music technology and the music business

Content area 1.1: Introduction to music technology and the music business
 	
This content area supports learners in understanding the wide variety of roles within the music technology sector. Being able to identify and define the roles will allow learners to plan for future development in the field, as well as learn how each role plays an important part in the music business as a whole.
 	
Learners will explore the interaction and professional relationships between the roles, giving them an understanding of the roles in context. Through practical work, learners will be able to take on these responsibilities including engineering, creation and production.
 	
Content areas that link synoptically to content area 1.1 include:
 	
1. Introduction to music technology and the music business:
    • 1.2. Development of music technology
    • 1.3. Music business
 	
2. The digital audio workstation (DAW):
    • 2.1 The digital audio workstation
    • 2.2 Using DAW software functions
 	
3. Musical elements, musical style and music technology:
    • 3.1 Musical elements
    • 3.2 Musical style

4. Sound creation:
- 4.1 Sound creation

5. Multitrack recording:
- 5.1 Multitrack recording
- 5.2 Multitrack recording sessions

Content area 1.2: Development of music technology

This content area allows learners to understand how music technology has developed over time, including how this has affected creative practice, music production and consumer access.

Learners will explore the technology that has been used for recording and mixing, creation and production, as well as the evolution of consumer audio formats.

Learners will understand how each type of technology applies to their roles within the industry and in education, being able to make reasoned decisions on their future use.

Content areas that link synoptically to content area 1.2 include:

1. Introduction to music technology and the music business:
- 1.1 Introduction to music technology and the music business
- 1.3 Music business

2. The digital audio workstation (DAW):
- 2.1 The digital audio workstation (DAW)
- 2.2 Using DAW software functions

3. Musical elements, musical style and music technology:
- 3.1 Musical elements
- 3.2 Musical styles

4. Sound creation:
- 4.1 Sound creation

5. Multitrack recording:
- 5.1 Multitrack recording
- 5.2 Multitrack recording sessions

Content area 1.3: Music business

This content area supports learners in understanding how musical artists use tools to promote and develop their career within the industry. Learning how to market their own products, develop their branding and create promotional material will be covered, supporting their artistic development and future careers in music. In understanding these areas, learners will be able to apply the tools and techniques learned to their own projects, or when working to a brief.

Learners will gain knowledge of the fundamental promotional methods, as used within the professional industry. With digital media being a primary area of promotion, special focus will be on using social media platforms and creating suitable digital content, both audio and visual, ensuring learners are aware of current industry standards and expectations.

Content areas that link synoptically to content area 1.3 include:

1. Introduction to music technology and the music business:
   - 1.1 Introduction to music technology and the music business
   - 1.2 Development of music technology

2. The digital audio workstation (DAW):
   - 2.1 The digital audio workstation (DAW)
   - 2.2 Using DAW software functions

3. Musical elements, musical style and music technology:
   - 3.1 Musical elements
   - 3.2 Musical style

4. Sound creation:
   - 4.1 Sound creation

5. Multitrack recording:
   - 5.1 Multitrack recording
   - 5.2 Multitrack recording sessions

Content area 2: The digital audio workstation (DAW)

Content area 2.1: The digital audio workstation

This content area is designed to introduce the learners to the hardware and software used within music technology. This area covers the fundamental areas of the DAW including all hardware, from the computer and the peripherals to the audio specific components.

Learners will understand how hardware is used in conjunction with DAW software, for effective audio and MIDI recording and editing and mixing.

Practical sessions delivered to cover this content area will allow learners to understand their DAW, including how to configure projects, use software instruments and create audio files, as well as apply effects and other processing tools. This area serves as a basis for all further learning within the qualification.

Content areas that link synoptically to content area 2.1 include:

1. Introduction to music technology and the music business:
   - 1.1 Introduction to music technology and the music business
   - 1.2 Development of music technology
   - 1.3 Music business

2. The digital audio workstation (DAW):
   - 2.2 Using DAW software functions (DAW)

3. Musical elements, musical style and music technology:
   - 3.1 Musical elements
   - 3.2 Musical style

4. Sound creation:
   - 4.1 Sound creation

5. Multitrack recording:
   - 5.1 Multitrack recording
   - 5.2 Multitrack recording sessions

Content area 2.2: Using DAW software functions

This content area focuses on the practice of using the DAW software, as explored in content area 2.1.

Learners will be able to apply their knowledge and understanding to effectively use their DAW to configure projects, capture audio and MIDI, as well as be able to edit, process and export their own creations.

Health and safety are introduced here to ensure that learners are following best practice when using their DAW. They will learn how to identify potential hazards, show knowledge of the associated risks, be able to complete a risk assessment, understand the control measures, as well as know the reporting process for hazards and accidents.

Content areas that link synoptically to content area 2.2 include:

1. Introduction to music technology and the music business:
   • 1.1 Introduction to music technology and the music business
   • 1.2 Development of music technology
   • 1.3 Music business

2. The digital audio workstation (DAW):
   • 2.1 The digital audio workstation

3. Musical elements, musical style and music technology:
   • 3.1 Musical elements
   • 3.2 Musical style

4. Sound creation:
   • 4.1 Sound creation

5. Multitrack recording:
   • 5.1 Multitrack recording
   • 5.2 Multitrack recording sessions

Content area 3: Musical elements, musical style and music technology

Content area 3.1: Musical elements

This content area allows learners to explore how music is composed using musical elements such as structure, form, melody, harmony, rhythm and instrumentation. Learners will become familiar with musical language in the context of composition. Within this content, it is expected that learners will recognise musical elements and be able to link them to specific musical styles.

Learners will apply musical elements to their own compositions, using their DAW. When working to a brief learners will be able to understand the various elements in context, working to create a determined stylistic outcome.

Content areas that link synoptically to content area 3.1:

1. Introduction to music technology and the music business:
    • 1.1 Introduction to music technology and the music business
    • 1.3 Music business

2. The digital audio workstation (DAW):
    • 2.1 The digital audio workstation
    • 2.2 Using DAW software functions

3. Musical elements, musical style and music technology:
    • 3.2 Musical style

4. Sound creation:
    • 4.1 Sound creation

5. Multitrack recording:
    • 5.1 Multitrack recording
    • 5.2 Multitrack recording sessions

Content area 3.2: Musical styles

This content area focuses on how specific music elements form to create the wide variety of styles consumed by the audience, both past and present. Key music styles include rock and roll, soul, disco, hip hop, dance and 21st century pop.

Learners will explore the evolution of technology, and how it has contributed to the development of musical styles, including the progression from analogue to digital, hardware to software and the introduction of the modern DAW.

This content area promotes the composition of a variety of styles, through practical work, such as briefs and learner-selected projects. Learners may explore key musical works, artists and sub-styles within each area, further refining their own style through composition and production.

Content areas that link synoptically to content area 3.2 include:

1. Introduction to music technology and the music business:
   - 1.1 Introduction to music technology and the music business
   - 1.2 Development of music technology

2. The digital audio workstation (DAW):
   - 2.1 The digital audio workstation (DAW)
   - 2.2 Using DAW software functions

3. Musical elements, musical style and music technology:
   - 3.1 Musical elements

4. Sound creation:
   - 4.1 Sound creation

5. Multitrack recording:
   - 5.1 Multitrack recording
   - 5.2 Multitrack recording sessions

Content area 4: Sound creation

Content area 4.1: Sound creation

This content area supports learners in understanding how it is used in a variety of forms of media. Learners will be able to explore the different types of methods that are used to create sound for different forms of media, including movies, TV shows, advertisements and jingles.

Methods such as sound capture, synthesis, and sample manipulation will be discussed, as well as the arrangement techniques required to make them suitable for different media.

Application of these methods is a feature of this area, allowing learners to build a varied portfolio of compositional work using their DAW and apply it to variety of contexts.

Content areas that link synoptically to content area 4.1 include:

1. Introduction to music technology and the music business:
   - 1.1 Introduction to music technology and the music business
   - 1.2 Development of music technology
   - 1.3 Music business

2. The digital audio workstation (DAW):
   - 2.1 The digital audio workstation (DAW)
   - 2.2 Using DAW software functions

3. Musical elements, musical style and music technology:
   - 3.1 Musical elements
   - 3.2 Musical style

5. Multitrack recording:
   - 5.1 Multitrack recording
   - 5.2 Multitrack recording sessions

Content area 5: Multitrack recording

Content area 5.1: Multitrack recording

This content area supports learners in understanding the recording studio environment and how to use it safely to produce and mix audio recordings. Learners will be encouraged to use their existing knowledge of their DAW, exploring how a recording studio can further enhance their recording and mixing process.

Details of audio hardware will be covered, such as microphones, DI, audio interfaces, multitrack recorders and monitoring equipment. Additionally, learners will gain knowledge of the recording techniques and processes used within the studio environment.

Health and safety are features of this area ensuring that learners are able to work safely within the recording studio. Learners will be able to apply prior learning from content area 2, reinforcing their knowledge and understanding.

Content areas that link synoptically to content area 5.1 include:

1. Introduction to music technology and the music business:
   - 1.1 Introduction to music technology and the music business
   - 1.2 Development of music technology

2. The digital audio workstation (DAW):
   - 2.1 The digital audio workstation
   - 2.2 Using DAW software functions

3. Musical elements, musical style and music technology:
   - 3.2 Musical styles

4. Sound creation:
   - 4.1 Sound creation

5. Multitrack recording:
   - 5.2 Multitrack recording sessions

Content area 5.2: Multitrack recording sessions

This content area supports learners in understanding how to plan and undertake multitrack recording sessions and produce mixdowns. This area will allow learners to apply skills in the wider context of interacting with artists within recording sessions. Learners are encouraged to work on an agreed project, where they will be able to fulfil their roles within the recording and mixing process.

Building on and applying their knowledge from previous areas, learners will follow their plan, including the setting up, testing and application of equipment for their recording session. They will then use the recording techniques learned to capture their audio.

Once captured, learners will develop their skills and knowledge of the mixing process, to include the use of balance, sound placement, corrective editing, EQ, effects, dynamic processing and automation.

Learners will understand how to create a stereo mixdown of their audio files, which can then be added to their portfolios.

Content areas that link synoptically to content area 5.2 include:

1. Introduction to music technology and the music business:
   - 1.1 Introduction to music technology and the music business
   - 1.2 Development of music technology
   - 1.3 Music business

2. The digital audio workstation (DAW):
   - 2.1 The digital audio workstation (DAW)
   - 2.2 Using DAW software functions

3. Musical elements, musical style and music technology:
   - 3.1 Musical elements
   - 3.2 Musical style

4. Sound creation:
   - 4.1 Sound creation

5. Multitrack recording:
   - 5.1 Multitrack recording