

MUSPRA Qualifications

Unit Code: 203

Unit Title: Composing Music (Solo) – External Assessment

Credit Level: 2

Credit Value: 8 (80 TQT)

Unit Aim

This unit aims to develop the learner's confidence in creating original musical work individually, through a sound understanding of their musical context. The purpose of the unit is to facilitate the development of a set of original material for recording or performance.

Unit Content

There should be opportunities for learners to develop the following:

Contextual Knowledge

- Knowledge of styles, composers, artists and producers
- Understanding aspects of popular music history and culture
- Origins of popular music e.g. African roots

Composition Skills and Techniques

- Structure and arrangement e.g. verse-chorus
- Instrumentation i.e. range, relevance and suitability
- Analysis of key compositional elements
- Understanding standard harmony
- Use of scales and modes relative to the style being composed
- Riffs/motivic and melodic development
- Modulation, transposition

Knowledge of Instrumentation

- Instrumental ranges and capabilities
- Playing techniques (e.g. fingering, pull off, harmonics)
- Tuning systems
- Intonation
- Facility on an instrument/DAW, as/where appropriate

Practical Knowledge of Music Theory

- Understanding stylistic rhythms and time, tempi, BPM, bars
- Understanding and identification of stylistic form and structure.
- Understanding melodic form
- Understanding and identification of standard chords and harmony
- Understanding transposition

Practical Knowledge of Musical Devices

- Modulation and key change
- Counterpoint
- Pedal notes

Aural Skills

- Identification of hook lines and strong melodic content
- Identification of harmonic relationships

Practical Knowledge of Notation

- Note & Rest Values
- Bar lines & bar line formats (e.g. repeats, double bar line etc.)
- Dynamic/directional symbols and their meanings
- Key Signatures
- Drum Notation
- Clefs - Treble, Bass, plus awareness of Drum, Percussion (e.g. 1 line, 2 lines etc.)

Score Production Skills

- Use of DAW based scoring packages (where applicable)
- Creating a full score
- Creating a lead sheet
- Creating chord charts
- Creating graphic diagrams

Analytical Skills

- The ability to analyse and assess own skills and personal aims
- The ability to evaluate own work and consider ways of improving own performance when composing music
- The ability to assess own skills base and development needs
- The capacity to respond positively to tutor comments and evaluations
- The capacity to assess and act upon Health & Safety considerations

Organisational Skills

- The capacity to plan and prepare effectively for music arrangement activity
- The means to access the personal musical and associated equipment required for composing music, relevant to them
- Time management skills – working to a given time frame, working to deadlines

Suggested Delivery Ideas

Delivery should be a mixture of classroom-based and location based work. Classroom sessions will normally focus on developing theoretical knowledge or be research-oriented. These will be enriched with practical workshop style musical development sessions, with tutor support.

Learners will need to spend time generating and developing ideas within a style. The delivery may involve large group discussions on existing well known compositions and songwriters. The tutor may set smaller groups activities to form small teams who may work together assessing each other's' ideas within a given style.

In order to provide an appropriate and effective learning environment, tutors may wish to consider the following approaches:

- Practical sessions
- Group work
- Workshops
- Audio examples
- Video presentation
- Peer presentation and demonstration
- Lecture
- Seminar, delivering technical and contextual knowledge
- Guest speakers
- Use of articles and books
- Tutorials

Tutors might consider delivery in conjunction with relevant contextual and practical knowledge and skill development such as active listening, use of sequencers/DAW, remixing, instrumental study etc.

Suggested Activity Ideas

For learners to engage in creating effective compositions a diverse range of activities will be required. Learners should have a mainly practical, explorative experience.

Tutors should help learners to put theoretical knowledge into practice and to explore and experiment with the instruments and techniques. The majority of the assessment will be on the final outcomes - the compositions in score and recording/sequence forms. Learners however can also review other learners' work, and there could be practical workshops/demonstrations to reinforce particular concepts and relevant practice.

Learners should be encouraged to engage in a number of activities to support the creation of arrangements, these can be tutor led, independent and group based activities such as those outlined below:

- Analysis of 'classic' album or favourite artist; focusing on the cohesion of the work, its identity, style, compositional factors, production, concept and inception
- Pair work, researching chosen album/artist/style/genre
- Students present research (e.g. classic album or artist) to the group; facilitation of peer feedback and group discussion
- Ear training; listening to pieces of music to identify key artistic/stylistic traits,
- Compositional elements, characteristics and genre etc.
- Analysis and research of modes and scales beyond 'western music' e.g. Maqam Arabic modal system
- Analysis and research of rhythm and dynamics e.g. syncopation and polyrhythms and how they can be used to serve the function of the music.
- Composer's Toolkit; how to implement various compositional techniques and devices
- Tutor presents audio visual examples of relevant music
- Practical composition tasks e.g. learners compose 3 minute piece in specific style which demonstrates knowledge and understanding of chosen style and incorporates key compositional elements
- Interactive handouts for formative and peer assessment
- Group quiz; learners are divided into groups to answer questions presented by tutor or other students (e.g. PowerPoint presentation)

External Assessment

This unit is externally assessed in the form of a task-based controlled assessment. Learners are given an assignment that is set and marked by RockschooL. The assignment provides the opportunity for learners to demonstrate and also integrate their knowledge, understanding and skills from across the area of study. It will also enable learners to develop study skills and to under-pin practical skills with core knowledge and understanding.

Preparation Period

Learners will be given 10 hours of preparation time, which can be spread over several weeks, and can include guided learning and independent work. Learners must include their preparation work for assessment so that Examiners can see the progression from their initial ideas through to the final presentation. Preparation work can include research, ideas, planning notes etc. However, evidence produced to meet the assessment criteria (including statements of aims and work plans) must be undertaken during the controlled assessment period. The preparatory work and timed examination work will be identified separately but considered as a whole in order to arrive at a grade.

Controlled Assessment Period

The controlled assessment period will then take place over 20 hours. The activities in the assignments must take place inside the school community to ensure that the assessment can be administered by centre staff under controlled conditions. Learners should complete all work for the controlled assessment under a limited level of control, but ensuring that plagiarism does not take place. Guidance should be given to learners about availability and choice of materials, health and safety and completion of work in accordance with specification requirements. However, learners are required to reach their own judgments and conclusions and produce their own work. Assessors must be able to authenticate the contributions of individual learners. It is expected that all of the evidence learners provide during the 20 hours controlled assessment will be produced under supervised conditions. However, work during the 10 hours preparation time can be produced in an un-supervised

environment. Learners must sign an Assessment Declaration Sheet on completion of their timed assessment to declare that the work produced is their own.

Time Frame

Centres can choose from two controlled assessment periods per year, and must notify Rockscool of the controlled assessment period they wish to select when entering. Centres will have 6 weeks from the controlled assessment period start date until the assessment deadline. (The assignment will mirror industry practice and learners need to plan their response in a systematic fashion that takes into account contingencies and allows for time to make revisions where necessary.) The assignment papers must be kept secure throughout the duration of the assessment period. Centres must ensure that all assessments are submitted to Rockscool for marking in accordance with the deadlines given.

Working in groups

Learners may work alone or in small groups. Teachers/tutors should identify appropriate opportunities for collaboration to take place (within and/or across the subject areas within this suite of qualifications, i.e., Performance, Composition, Business and Technology for Music Practitioners, as appropriate). Assignments have been designed to enable to collaboration across these areas. Team work should be encouraged so that all participants are actively involved in each stage of the production process and are able to work in co-operation towards a shared end. Each learner must provide their own individual personal response for assessment that can be identified, authenticated and evidenced. It should be noted by teachers that where assessed activity occurs in groups, assessment will be carried out on the individual and their contribution to the group work.

Example Assignments

Assignments are designed so that learners working on different areas within the suite of qualifications can work collaboratively on the same project. Equally, they can be completed by learners taking one area (e.g. performance). However, where this is the case learners taking technology for music practitioners will need to draw on the help of peers who can provide a live performance for them to record. The following are examples of assignments for the externally assessed unit in each of the study areas within this suite:

Performance

Your school's Performing Arts or Music Department has decided to host an awards evening at the end of the year, as a way to recognise the work achieved by its learners. You have been asked to perform at the awards ceremony to entertain the audience between presentation categories. Your task is to work collaboratively with your peers to plan, present and reflect on your performance at the ceremony.

Composition

Your school's Performing Arts or Music Department has decided to host an awards evening at the end of the year, as a way to recognise the work achieved by its learners. You have been asked to create a set of original music for performance at the ceremony, or which can be recorded for use during the event (e.g. as the audience arrives). Your task is to work collaboratively with your peers to plan, present and reflect on your composition at the ceremony.

Technology

Your school's Performing Arts or Music Department has decided to host an awards evening at the end of the year, as a way to recognise the work achieved by its learners. You have been asked to record an ensemble that will be performing live at the awards ceremony. Your task is to work collaboratively with your peers to plan, record the music and reflect on your recording.

Business

Your school's Performing Arts or Music Department has decided to host an awards evening at the end of the year, as a way to recognise the work achieved by its learners. You have been asked to work in a team to organize the event. Your task is to work collaboratively with your peers to plan, realise and reflect on the success of the event in relation to goals.

Grading Criteria

(Please note – this unit is **externally** assessed by RSL. This criterion is provided for guidance purposes.)

Distinction	<p>To achieve a distinction at Level 2, learners should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Display excellent compositional skills at this level to create a 15 minute repertoire which is entirely solo in terms of composition. The repertoire should be highly musical which would demonstrate some excellent harmonic, melodic and rhythmic skills throughout (at this level). They would display excellent skills in working to a brief and the repertoire should be consistent and cohesive. 2. They should demonstrate excellent selection and editing skills when presenting their repertoire and be able to fully discuss the compositional process using score, diagrams and charts where appropriate. 3. They would be fully able to discuss the purpose of this repertoire in relation to their future musical aspiration 4. Describe their development as a composer looking at strengths and areas for development, referencing how effective the repertoire was in relation to the units criteria offering comprehensive self-assessment style view of their skills set in this area. Areas for development would have viable solutions offered.
Merit	<p>To achieve a merit at Level 2, learners should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Display good compositional skills at this level to create a 15 minute repertoire which is entirely solo in terms of composition. The repertoire would be musical which would demonstrate sound harmonic, melodic and rhythmic skills throughout. They would display highly proficient skills in working to a brief and the repertoire should be consistent and cohesive. 2. They should demonstrate good strong selection and editing skills when presenting their repertoire and be able to discuss the compositional process with the aid of score, diagrams and charts where appropriate. 3. They would be able to discuss the purpose of this repertoire in relation to their future musical aspirations showing a good understanding 4. Describe their development as a composer looking at strengths and areas for development, referencing how effective the repertoire was in relation to the units criteria offering go self- assessment style view of their skills set in this area.



Awarding the
Contemporary Arts

Pass	<p>To achieve a pass, all learners must have evidenced all the skills required for level 2, plus:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Display basic compositional skills at this level to create a 15 minute repertoire which is entirely solo in terms of composition. The repertoire would be musical which would demonstrate basic harmonic, melodic and rhythmic skills in most areas. They would display competent skills in working to a brief and the repertoire should be consistent and cohesive.2. They should demonstrate thought out selection and editing skills when presenting their repertoire and be able to give a basic overview of the compositional process with the aid of notation, diagrams and charts where appropriate.3. They would be able to discuss the purpose of this repertoire in relation to their future musical aspirations showing a simple understanding4. Describe their development as a composer looking at strengths and areas for development, referencing how effective the repertoire was in relation to the unit's criteria.
Unclassified	<p>A learner not on course to achieve this unit might evidence the majority of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Display basic compositional skills at this level but fail to create a 15 minute repertoire which is entirely solo. The repertoire may lack a basic harmonic, melodic and rhythmic content in most areas.2. They may not evidence selection and editing skills when presenting their repertoire and not be able to discuss the compositional process with the aid of score, diagrams and charts where appropriate.3. They may not discuss the purpose of this repertoire in relation to their future musical aspirations4. They may not look at either their strengths and areas for development, or both.

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Assessment Framework

Learning Outcomes

The learner will be able to:

1. plan for the composition of original music for performance or recording
2. create a set of finished, original music to be performed or recorded for use at a specific event to a target audience
3. reflect on their composition and consider ways to improve future compositions

Assessment Criteria

The learner can:

- 1.1. describe personal aims in relation to the composition including consideration of own skills, style preference and audience expectation
- 1.2. develop ideas for original material to form a set of songs or pieces
- 1.3. develop a plan to meet the needs of an agreed brief
- 2.1. create original material to form a set of songs/pieces with a minimum duration of 15 minutes including melody, harmony, rhythm and lyrics
- 2.2. describe the musical and structural arrangement processes undertaken to realize each finished song/piece included in the set
- 2.3. describe how the material has been selected and organized to meet the needs of the brief
- 2.4. perform or record the composition for use at an event in front of a target audience
- 3.1. review their composition in the light of feedback, and comment on how well it met the needs of the agreed brief
- 3.2. suggest ways to improve future compositions

Evidence Required

The learner must produce evidence of achievement of the assessment criteria. This must include:

1. a statement of personal aims and proposal of ideas for the composition, giving reasons for their recommendations (written or audio/video presentation)
2. a plan for working towards the finished composition, including time-scales, an assessment of the event, size and make-up of audience, personal equipment needs and health and safety implications (including electrical safety, noise and manual handling issues) (written report or videoed presentation accompanied by notes).
3. audio representations of a body of original compositions
4. an evaluative report of the process, feedback received and review of work in the light of feedback from the audience and/or teacher/tutor, with suggestions for improvement (log/diary and/or audio/video presentation).