



External Assessment

NCFE Level 1 Technical Award in Music Technology (601/6777/4)
NCFE Level 2 Technical Award in Music Technology (601/6774/9)

Paper number: Practice paper (practical)

Assessment window: **This is NOT a live paper**

Time allowed: 2 hours

Total marks: 36

Centre name		Centre number	
Learner name		Learner number	
Learner declaration: I confirm that the work contained in this external assessment is all my own work. I have not copied work directly from handouts/internet/textbooks or any other publication. If I have used a quote, then I have referenced this appropriately. My full name above is my registered name with NCFE.			
Learner signature:		Date:	

Learner instructions

- Complete all tasks.
- Read the scenario and each task carefully.
- The marks available for each question are shown in brackets.
- Use black or blue ink.

Resources

- Word processor or pen
- Headphones
- Individual workstation/device with:
 - listening capabilities
 - access to DAW software & associated hardware (eg audio interface, MIDI controller)
 - capacity to save/store digital files.
- Audio and MIDI files provided to you:
 - Drums.wav
 - Synth.wav
 - Vocals.wav
 - Bass.mid

To be completed by the examiner	Score
Task 1	
Task 2	
Task 3	
Task 4	
TOTAL	

Instructions continue on the next page, please turn over.

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Evidence Requirements

The specific evidence requirements are detailed on each task. The following types of evidence will be required:

- written responses, either on a separate word processed document or in the answer space provided after each task
- screenshots. If required, you may ask the Invigilator to show you how to take and save screenshots
- audio files.

Electronic Evidence

All screenshots (and written responses, where provided electronically) should be provided in a single electronic document. Each piece of evidence should be clearly labelled as instructed in each task. The document should be saved with the following file name:

- Surname_Initial_learner number
- eg. Smith_J_123456789.

The preferred format for this document is Pdf. Your Invigilator will be able to advise you of other acceptable file formats, if required.

Audio files should be saved with the following file name:

- Surname_Initial_learner number_evidence reference
- eg. Smith_J_123456789_Mix 1

The audio files should be saved as .wav, .mp3 or .aiff files. Do not submit DAW files or MIDI files as evidence.

The Invigilator will provide you with your learner number and the evidence reference is detailed in bold on each task.

To help you ensure that you have included all required evidence, a checklist has been included at the end of the assessment.

You should remember to save your work regularly during the assessment.

DO NOT TURN OVER UNTIL YOU ARE INSTRUCTED TO DO SO BY THE INVIGILATOR.

Scenario

You work as a producer in a studio.

In your role you have been given the recording session files from an up-and-coming artist.

The artist has asked you to edit and mix their new song.

Task 1 – Configuration (9 marks)

1a. Describe the DAW software and any other equipment you are using.

1b. Complete the following steps:

- create a new project in your DAW software
- set the tempo to 128 bpm
- create 3 stereo audio tracks
- create 2 software instrument tracks
- set the audio output for your monitoring equipment.

Explain how you completed these tasks.

1c. Complete the following steps:

- import the 3 audio files (**Drums.wav**, **Synth.wav** and **Vocals.wav**) onto the audio tracks so that all files start at bar 1
- import the MIDI file (**Bass.mid**) onto 1 of the software instrument tracks so that it starts at bar 1
- select a pre-set software instrument bass sound of your choice for the **Bass** track.

Explain how you completed these tasks.

Evidence required:

- a screenshot showing your whole project at this point, labelled as **Screenshot 1**
- written response, labelled **Task 1:**
 - describing the DAW software and any other equipment you are using
 - explaining how you completed the tasks in 1b and 1c.

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Task 2 – Editing (9 marks)

2a. Use audio editing to silence the **Drum** audio track between bar 2 and bar 10.

Explain how you completed this task.

2b. The **Bass** MIDI part has some timing errors. Correct the timing of the **Bass** MIDI part using quantization.

Explain how you completed this task.

2c. Use audio editing to remove the unwanted noises on the **Vocal** track between bars 42 and 47.

Explain how you completed this task.

2d. Complete the following steps:

- export the song at this point to a suitable stereo format
- ensure that start and finish markers leave no more than 1 second of silence at the beginning and end of the track
- save the stereo audio file as '**Surname_Initial_learner number_Mix 1**'.

Explain how you completed these tasks.

Evidence required:

- a screenshot showing your whole project at this point, labelled **Screenshot 2**
- written response explaining how you completed tasks 2a, 2b, 2c and 2d, labelled **Task 2**
- '**Mix 1**' stereo audio file.

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Task 3 – Musical Development (9 marks)

3a. Complete the following steps:

- move the **Bass** MIDI part so that it starts at bar 14
- copy the **Bass** MIDI part so that it continues from bar 14 until bar 66.

Explain how you completed these tasks.

3b. Create a new sound for your **Bass** MIDI part by editing a software instrument.

Explain the following:

- your choice of software instrument type
- your use of timbre editing in the software instrument
- your use of envelope editing in the software instrument.

3c. Complete the following steps:

- select a percussion sound for your empty software instrument track
- create an original MIDI percussion part. The part should start at bar 32 and continue until bar 66.

Explain the following:

- how you selected the sound for the percussion part
- your musical ideas for the MIDI percussion part.

3d. Complete the following steps:

- export the song at this point to a suitable stereo format
- ensure that start and finish markers leave no more than 1 second of silence at the beginning and end of the track
- save the stereo audio file as '**Surname_Initial_learner number_Mix 2**'.

Explain how you completed these tasks.

Evidence required:

- a screenshot showing your whole project at this point, labelled **Screenshot 3**
- written response explaining how you completed tasks 3a, 3b, 3c and 3d, labelled **Task 3**
- '**Mix 2**' stereo audio file.

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Task 4 – Mixing (9 marks)

4a. Complete the following steps:

- using automation, pan the **Synth** track gradually between bar 10 and bar 14 hard left to centre, and then from bar 14 to 18 hard right to centre
- create a fade out for the song from bar 62 to the end of the song.

Explain how you completed these tasks.

4b. Apply a suitable reverb to the **Vocals** track.

Explain how you completed this task.

4c. Create a final mix using volume balance, panning, dynamics processing, automation and any additional effects processing that you wish to apply creatively.

Explain how you completed this task.

4d. Complete the following steps:

- export the song at this point to a suitable stereo format
- ensure that start and finish markers leave no more than 1 second of silence at the beginning and end of the track
- save the stereo audio file as '**Surname_Initial_learner number_Mix 3**'.

Explain how you completed these tasks.

Evidence required:

- a screenshot showing your whole project at this point, labelled as **Screenshot 4**
- written response explaining how you completed tasks 4a, 4b, 4c and 4d, labelled **Task 4**
- '**Mix 3**' stereo audio file.

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Evidence Checklist

Task Number	Evidence Type	Please tick (✓) one	
		Handwritten	Electronic
Task 1	Screenshot		
Task 1	Written response		
Task 2	Screenshot		
Task 2	Written response		
Task 2	Audio file		
Task 3	Screenshot		
Task 3	Written response		
Task 3	Audio file		
Task 4	Screenshot		
Task 4	Written response		
Task 4	Audio file		

This is the end of the external assessment

Assessment objectives

AO1 Configuration

Learner should be able to configure the DAW correctly for a given project including creation of a new project, setting tempo, setting audio outputs and creating suitable track types. Learners should be able to save mixdowns to a suitable stereo format, label and organise work into a folder.

AO2 Editing

Learner should be able to use DAW tools to effectively edit and manipulate given audio and MIDI material.

AO3 Musical development

Learner should be able to add parts, edit software instruments and develop a musical arrangement based on given material.

AO4 Mixing

Learner should be able to apply mixing skills including the use of balance, panning, application of effects and dynamics processing to create a stereo mixdown.

Grade bands

Task 1. Configuration

Mark range	Description
0	Insufficient evidence for a mark to be awarded.
1-3	Limited DAW software and other related equipment is identified, but with limited or no description. Limited description of DAW configuration processes, with no explanation. Technical terminology is occasionally used, but with limited success. Tempo and track settings applied, and files imported and organised in DAW, but with significant errors and/or omissions.
4-6	Sound A description of DAW software and other related equipment, which is detailed in parts. Description of DAW configuration processes, with some areas of explanation. Technical terminology is used, with some inconsistencies. Tempo and track settings applied, and files imported and organised in DAW, but with minor errors and/or omissions.
7-9	Detailed A description of DAW software and other related equipment which is accurate and detailed. A comprehensive explanation of DAW configuration processes. Technical terminology used appropriately and accurately throughout. Tempo and track settings applied correctly, and files imported and organised in DAW accurately.

Task 2. Editing

Mark range	Description
0	Insufficient evidence for a mark to be awarded.
1-3	<p>Limited</p> <p>Limited description of editing processes, with no explanation.</p> <p>Technical terminology is occasionally used, but with limited success.</p> <p>Editing undertaken, but with significant errors and/or omissions.</p> <p>Audio file created but with significant errors.</p>
4-6	<p>Sound</p> <p>Description of editing processes, with some areas of explanation.</p> <p>Technical terminology is used, with some inconsistencies.</p> <p>Editing undertaken with some minor errors and/or omissions.</p> <p>Audio file created but with some minor errors.</p>
7-9	<p>Detailed</p> <p>A comprehensive explanation of all editing processes, showing knowledge of tools used in context.</p> <p>Appropriate technical terminology used accurately throughout.</p> <p>Editing musically handled and technically accurate throughout.</p> <p>Audio file created with no audible errors.</p>

Task 3. Musical development

Mark range	Description
0	Insufficient evidence for a mark to be awarded
1-3	<p>Limited</p> <p>Limited description of development processes, with no explanation.</p> <p>Technical terminology occasionally used but with limited success.</p> <p>Tasks undertaken, but with significant errors/omissions.</p> <p>Some limited development of musical ideas and instrument timbres.</p> <p>Audio file created but with significant errors.</p>
4-6	<p>Sound</p> <p>Description of development processes, with some areas of explanation.</p> <p>Technical terminology is used, with some inconsistencies.</p> <p>Tasks undertaken with some minor errors and/or omissions.</p> <p>Contextually appropriate development of musical ideas and instrument timbres, but with inconsistent creative application.</p> <p>Audio file created but with some minor errors.</p>
7-9	<p>Detailed</p> <p>A comprehensive explanation of all development processes.</p> <p>Technical terminology used appropriately and accurately throughout.</p> <p>Tasks completed accurately and fully.</p> <p>Creative contextual development of musical ideas and instrument timbres.</p> <p>Audio file created with no audible errors.</p>

Task 4. Mixing

Mark range	Description
0	Insufficient evidence for a mark to be awarded
1-3	<p>Limited</p> <p>No attempt to explain mixing processes and only a limited description present.</p> <p>Technical terminology is occasionally used but with limited success.</p> <p>Application of mix skills and processes, but with significant errors and/or omissions.</p> <p>Audio file of mix created but with significant errors.</p>
4-6	<p>Sound</p> <p>Description of mix processes, with some areas of explanation.</p> <p>Technical terminology is used, with some inconsistencies.</p> <p>Application of appropriate mix skills and processes but with some minor errors and/or omissions.</p> <p>Audio file of mix created but with minor errors.</p>
7-9	<p>Detailed</p> <p>A comprehensive explanation of all mixing processes.</p> <p>Technical terminology used appropriately and accurately throughout.</p> <p>Creative contextual application of mixing skills and processes to well-balanced result throughout.</p> <p>Audio file of mix created with no audible errors.</p>