

Subject: Level 2 Technical Award in Music Technology

Exam Board: NCFE

Written Exam

2 Hours

Unit 1 - Hardware and Software of the DAW

Hardware Components

- Components of the computer, role of the computer within the DAW
- Peripherals, how they are used and how they connect
- Audio interface. Function, controls and inputs/outputs.
- MIDI controllers.
- Cables and sockets (e.g. XLR, jack, MIDI, USB)

Software Features

- Features and advantages of different track types.
- Software instruments. Synthesisers vs samplers.
- Editing tools. Names and functions.
- Effects plug-ins. Functions and parameters.

Unit 2 - Musical Features of Genres

- Using musical vocabulary to describe structure, rhythm, harmony, melody and instrumentation.
- Musical features of a range of styles.
- Instrumentation of a range of styles.
- Key artists from a range of styles.

Unit 3 - Recording and Mixing

- Microphone selection.
 - Dynamic vs condenser
 - Frequency response.
 - Polar pattern (cardioid).
- Microphone placement.
- DI boxes.
- Health and safety in the studio.
- Setting up the audio interface.
- Setting up the DAW software.

Unit 4 - Sound Creation in Media

- Describe types of sound creation.
- Describe methods of sound creation.
- Describe use of sound in a particular medium (e.g. animation)

Practical Exam

2 hours

Your marks will be allocated for:

- 1) Explanations of processes
- 2) Use of technical vocabulary
- 3) Completion of practical tasks
- 4) Exporting of audio file (bouncing tracks)

Therefore, you must be able to complete and confidently explain the following:

Task 1 - Configuration

- Set up a blank session/master fader/tempo.
- Create audio and instrument tracks.
- Import audio and MIDI files.
- Choose a preset sound for the MIDI track.

Task 2 - Editing

- Audio Editing Tas
- MIDI Editing
- Export audio file

Task 3 - Creative Development

Removed from exam

Task 4 - Mixing

- Volume automation/fades
- Pan automation/fades
- Adding reverb/delay
- Create a final mix using compression/EQ/effects
- Export audio file

Useful revision resources (all available on Google Classroom):

Quizlet revision cards to revise key terms.

Past papers / mark schemes.

Read through your coursework.

Written Exam:

Recordings of live lessons from January and February 2020

Work produced during live lessons in January and February 2020.

Practical Exam:

Video resources in the 'Practical Exam' folder (e.g. 'How to Get Full Marks on the Practical Exam' video)

Revision Tips

Step 1: Know the key vocabulary. Revise using the Quizlet cards. This will help you in both exams.

Step 2: Read the revision notes, watch the videos. For the practical exam, exam technique is key. You will need to use your time really efficiently to complete the exam within the two hours. There are also some 'hacks', quick techniques can gain you lots of marks very quickly.

Step 3: Practise exam style questions.

Tips:

- Take a highlighter into the exam. Know how to approach 'identify', 'describe', 'explain' and 'evaluate' questions and how much detail each one requires.
- Learn chunks of information that can be reused in multiple situations (e.g. a detailed description of how to bounce a track can be copied into task 2, 3 and 4 and will gain you marks for all three).
- For the practical exam, set out time limits for each question and stick to them. It's very easy to get intimidated by a difficult task, spend too much time on it, then run out of time at the end. Marks-wise it's better to have some work for all four tasks than perfect work for only two.
- Learn to edit, compose and mix quickly for the practical exam.
- The practical exam awards equal marks for your practical work and your documentation. Give equal attention to both.