

Unit 44: Music-Based Programming

Unit code:	A/600/6652
QCF Level 3:	BTEC National
Credit value:	10
Guided learning hours:	60

● Aim and purpose

This unit aims to develop learners' understanding of the styles, purpose and content of music-based programming on contemporary radio stations in the UK. Learners will develop music sequences for a range of different audiences or clients, exploring how speech and feature material can be incorporated into these sequences.

● Unit introduction

Jobs in the radio industry often involve planning, producing or presenting music sequences, or all three. There are literally hundreds of music radio stations – national, regional, local, student, hospital, community and internet stations – which organise their output within lengthy sequence programmes of three to five hours duration. In-store audio, once distributed exclusively by recorded means, is increasingly being delivered live. As a result, differences in content between in-store audio and radio broadcasting have become less marked than ever before. Specialist production companies make in-store programming for supermarkets and other retailers.

Music-based programming in radio and for in-store use requires a number of pre-production skills, including selection and scheduling according to the purpose of the material and the contexts within which it is to be heard. In both cases, its impact can be considerably enhanced by the incorporation of other elements, from branding to infotainment. Sometimes an element of audience interaction can make such programming even more interesting.

This unit will enable learners to develop skills in music-based programming for two different but closely related contexts in the radio and sound recording industries: radio broadcasting and in-store audio. Learners will develop an understanding of this type of programming in order to inform their production work and will also develop their ability to explain how the production choices made are suitable for the intended audiences.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Understand different types and styles of music-based programming
- 2 Be able to create music sequences for different audiences
- 3 Be able to incorporate added speech and feature content into music sequences
- 4 Be able to review own music-based programmes with reference to purpose and audience.

Unit content

1 Understand different types and styles of music-based programming

Music-based programming: within a format, eg Contemporary Hit Radio (CHR), Adult Contemporary (AC), gold, recurrent, easy listening, classical, specialist; from chosen eras, eg rock 'n' roll, seventies, current; selection criteria, eg aesthetics, target audience, constructing a narrative, audience interactivity, Top 40 charts

Types: broadcast radio (public service, commercial); internet radio; in-store audio (promotional, ambient)

Styles: ratio of speech or other audio to music; branding and identification; content chosen for aesthetic reasons; suitability for target audience; presentation, eg personality, anonymous; vocal delivery, eg conversational, informative

2 Be able to create music sequences for different audiences

Content: specific formats, eg CHR, AC, gold, recurrent, easy listening; appropriate to time period (breakfast, daytime, drive-time, evening); duration (for broadcasting, for internet, for in-store); planning and pre-production documentation (playlists, running orders and scripts); copyright and fair dealing; production, eg microphone placement, live mixing and processing

Audiences: eg age group, social class, gender, lifestyle, sexual orientation, geodemographics, local, regional, national

Context: eg broadcasting, internet, in-store (using sales techniques and promotion, point-of-sale advertising, brand awareness, general promotion, ambient music); targeting demographic groups (age, social class, gender)

3 Be able to incorporate added speech and feature content into music sequences

Content: live reads, eg dry, over beds; links into pre-recorded material; for radio, eg interviews, feature items, traffic bulletins, competitions; for in-store, eg sales and promotion, commercial messages, infotainment; transitional material as punctuation, eg jingles, stings; audio mixing and editing techniques, eg balancing levels, panning, transitions, effects

Purpose: radio, eg ratings, format, public service, commercial, regulatory issues, sponsorship; in-store, eg increased sales, brand awareness, customer retention

4 Be able to review own music-based programmes with reference to purpose and audience

Purpose: fitness for purpose; compared with original intentions; technical qualities; aesthetic qualities; accessibility to target audience

Audience response: quantitative, eg ratings; qualitative, eg by appreciation index (AI); questionnaires; focus groups; peer reviews

Assessment and grading criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
P1 describe different types and styles of music-based programming with some appropriate use of subject terminology [IE]	M1 explain different types and styles of music-based programming with reference to detailed illustrative examples and with generally correct use of subject terminology	D1 critically evaluate different types and styles of music-based programming with supporting arguments and elucidated examples, consistently using subject terminology correctly
P2 produce music sequences for different audiences working within appropriate conventions and with some assistance [CT; TW; SM]	M2 produce music sequences for different audiences to a good technical standard showing some imagination and with only occasional assistance	D2 produce music sequences of a technical quality that reflects near-professional standards, showing creativity and flair and working independently to professional expectations
P3 incorporate added speech and feature content into music sequences working within appropriate conventions and with some assistance [CT; TW; SM]	M3 incorporate added speech and feature content into music sequences to a good technical standard showing some imagination and with only occasional assistance	D3 incorporate added speech and feature content into music sequences to a technical quality that reflects near-professional standards, showing creativity and flair and working independently to professional expectations
P4 identify strengths and weaknesses of own music-based programmes with reference to purpose and audience, with some appropriate use of subject terminology. [RL]	M4 discuss strengths and weaknesses of own music-based programmes with reference to purpose and audience, with reference to detailed illustrative examples and generally correct use of subject terminology.	D4 critically evaluate strengths and weaknesses of own music-based programmes with reference to purpose and audience, with supporting arguments and elucidated examples, consistently using subject terminology correctly.

PLTS: This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills applicable in the pass criteria. It identifies opportunities for learners to demonstrate effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

Key	IE – independent enquirers	RL – reflective learners	SM – self-managers
	CT – creative thinkers	TW – team workers	EP – effective participators

Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

This unit is likely to be taught through a variety of lectures, tutorials, workshops and demonstrations. Both teaching and learning in this unit can be stimulating and rewarding, as the focus on music programming and presentation tends to appeal to learners from all backgrounds.

Learners should begin their study of music-based programming by listening to selected examples of sequence programmes from the radio and in-store productions. A systematic approach to the use of examples would most effectively promote learning, and relevant conclusions can be drawn without listening to complete songs between links and feature material. Learners could combine their investigation into professional practice with their own skill development by preparing and practising links, then comparing them with found examples.

They should then go on to produce their own sequences, providing evidence of planning and pre-production decisions as well as audio extracts as exemplar material.

It is important to note that the most rewarding approaches to understanding and producing work in the genre reflect programming for different audiences and using a number of styles. Therefore, tutors and learners are advised to investigate and work within different formats and contexts, rather than just concentrating on the learner's preferred musical repertoire, which often rather limits the development of systematic knowledge and understanding. In vocational contexts, programmers readily work for audiences other than their peer group.

Similarly, the incorporation of added speech and feature content should reflect a range of interests, depending on the purpose and target audience for the sequences produced. Content relating to audience demographics should cover what are seen as conventional sub-sets, for example 15-24, 18-35, 25-34, ABC1, C2DE.

As well as relating their material selection to established, published audience research, learners should be encouraged to carry out their own audience research among different age groups. This might include both quantitative and qualitative data, potential sources for the latter being focus groups. If this unit is run in conjunction with a short-term RSL run by the centre, then texts, emails and social networking comments will provide evidence for learners of audience response and appreciation.

Visits to radio stations and talks from relevant station personnel will be helpful, as will personally experiencing in-store audio, and responses to it from shoppers and staff. Playlists, running orders and scripts for typical sequences using different musical formats will help learners understand how, in professional practice, music and other material is successfully integrated. Some of this could be presented as output from a music-scheduling software system. Where possible, it is recommended that centres make contact and build relationships with community radio which could provide facilities, experiences and a real output for learners' work.

Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way of planning the teaching and assessment of this unit.

Topics and suggested assignments and activities
Introduction to unit and unit assessment.
Introductory discussions on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• structure of the radio industry• connections between music programming, news, and speech content.
Classes on structure, purpose and process covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• style and content of music programmes• formatting• types of programming – terrestrial, in-store, internet• presentation styles and vocal delivery• target audiences and expectations• sourcing and using production music – copyright and royalties• running orders and production.
Classes to compare and critically assess: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• two radio stations aimed at similar audiences• different in-store radio stations• different speech and feature content and requirements in programmes including interviews, packages, cues and news.
Assignment 1 – Music Programme Types and Styles
Learner has been asked to develop a new programme for a defined audience and is doing a review of existing programmes in preparation.
Learner will produce a report on music-based programme formats covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• types of music-based programming• styles of music-based programming• how they serve audiences.
Visiting speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• presenter or producer from a commercial or community radio station• presenter or producer from a BBC local radio station.

Topics and suggested assignments and activities

Simulation exercise producing scripts for a programme:

- audience research
 - ◊ likes and dislikes
 - ◊ socio-economic class
 - ◊ cultural influences and expectations
- content research
 - ◊ music selection
 - ◊ speech and feature content
- prepare draft scripts including programme intro, menu, running order.

Tutorial to feed back on simulation exercise.

Workshops:

- interview techniques and styles
- microphone techniques
- digital audio editing
- mixing.

Simulation exercise recording and editing a speech insert:

- sourcing contributor
- recording speech insert
- editing speech insert.

Assignment 2 – Create Radio Programme Demos

Learner has been asked to produce sampler demos for three new music-based programmes intended for three different audiences.

Stage 1:

- develop ideas for programmes in relation to specified audiences
- tutorial to evaluate ideas

Stage 2:

- complete pre-production for music content

Stage 3:

- complete pre-production for speech content
- tutorial to evaluate pre-production

Stage 4:

- record programmes
- tutorial to evaluate recording process.

Topics and suggested assignments and activities

Assignment 3 – Post-production Review

Learners will:

- prepare report on programme in preparation for meeting with station management
- meet with management.

Unit learning and assessment review.

Assessment

Evidence for assessment

Evidence for the achievement of learning outcomes 1 and 4 will be a combination of evaluative and critical comment, which does not necessarily have to be provided by the learner exclusively in written forms, but could also be presented orally. Some evidence for outcome 1 might be compiled through production of an audio sampler containing different examples with a commentary, and supported by an accompanying logbook containing explanations and analysis. Learners should be encouraged to sample, investigate and evaluate a wide range of music sequences.

The production of a number of music sequences is required as evidence for the achievement of learning outcomes 2 and 3. Portfolios should include complete running orders, scripts and audio demos which provide illustrative samples of links, branding and the integration of speech material, rather than longer recordings including large amounts of music played in full.

For some elements of this unit, and for some learners, a formal viva voce assessment might be appropriate. When more than one learner in a cohort is assessed in this way care must be taken to ensure that all learners are asked equivalent questions, and that all are given equal opportunities to expand or clarify their answers. Interviewers must also ensure that questions are not phrased in such a way as to provide or suggest an answer. Formal vivas should be recorded for the purposes of internal and external verification and at least 50 per cent of such assessments must be internally verified.

Because the focus of this unit is on the integration of pre-recorded material into sequences rather than creating it, material produced for *Unit 40: Speech Package Production* may be incorporated within sequences produced for learning outcomes 2 and 3, as long as there is also a substantial amount of new material in the form of live presentation and script reads.

Application of grading criteria

When applying the grading criteria, tutors should follow the advice given below. Please note that any examples of evidence given here are indicative only. This advice is not exhaustive and the examples need not specifically be included in a learner's work in order for that learner to achieve the exemplified grade.

Pass

To achieve a pass grade, learners must achieve all the criteria at pass level. For each of the criteria learners must present evidence that addresses each italicised sub-heading of the content for the learning outcome.

P1: learners will describe substantially and accurately the key characteristics of different genres in music-based programming, focusing on different types and styles. Learners will give an accurate outline of the ways in which the various elements of music-based programming are used to engage with target audiences of different kinds, covering the relevant ground substantially though not necessarily completely.

P2: learners will combine a number of the key characteristics in simple and unelaborated ways to demonstrate skills in the pre-production and production of sequence programmes for at least two different audiences. The selection of music and other audio material for inclusion will lack justification. Ideas will be simple, often derivative and sometimes only partially related to the target audience. Pre-production paperwork will not be extensive or even, in places, accurate, and the audio exemplar material produced will demonstrate only basic presentation and technical skills, while there may be occasional faults, such as the inappropriate balancing of sound levels, unclear or unsophisticated linking material. There will be only weak evidence of engagement with the target audience.

P3: learners will incorporate simple added speech and feature content within music sequences. Generally production values will be basic, as will technical quality, and the material may be heavily reliant on live reads of scripted information and ad libs. There will be only limited evidence of research and planning, and the added content may be only partially relevant to the intended audience. Transitions from music to speech may be awkward, and there will be little, if any, signposting of upcoming material. Where packaged speech material produced for another unit is used, its selection and incorporation within sequences may be unsophisticated and inappropriate. Work that relies exclusively on such 'found' material will not meet the pass grade for this criterion.

P2 and P3: in terms of the imaginative qualities of their work, learners will not move beyond the conventional, but the conventions applied will be appropriate to the form or genre within which they are working. Pass grade learners will need frequent assistance and support, though they will take note of and make use of this help when it is given. If they are in frequent need of such help but fail to make positive use of it, they should not be considered for a pass grade for this unit.

P4: learners will describe their practical work in terms that show a basic awareness of its suitability for the intended contexts and target audiences. They should be able to identify a small number of negative and positive aspects of the processes and products, without necessarily making appropriate connections between decisions taken and outcomes produced. Where they make evaluative comments upon what they have done, these comments will be assertions that are not supported by evidence or exemplification. Accounts that are unnecessarily preoccupied with detail of technical hitches and inadequacies of resources that are peripheral to their engagement with the subject matter should not be considered as meeting the pass criterion (for example, long descriptions of problems accessing research material needed for speech content).

P1 and P4: evidence will show a basic understanding of technical terminology but learners will generally be unsure about this vocabulary and will make fairly frequent mistakes when they do use it.

Merit

To achieve a merit grade, learners must achieve all the pass and all the merit grade criteria. For each of the criteria learners must present evidence that addresses each italicised sub-heading of the content for the learning outcome.

M1: learners will explain the key characteristics of the different genres in music-based programming, focusing on a number of different types and styles and providing relevant and detailed illustrative examples. Examples will be chosen with care, and will exemplify most of the points being made. Learners will explain many of the ways in which the various elements of music-based programming are used to engage with target audiences of different kinds, although their work will lack detailed and systematic analysis.

M2: learners will be able to combine several of the key characteristics in a number of ways to demonstrate skills and understanding in the pre-production and production of sequence programmes for at least two different audiences. The selection of most music and other audio material for inclusion will be explained. Ideas will be better developed than at pass grade, not always derivative and will relate well to the target audience. Pre-production paperwork will be detailed and accurate, and the audio exemplar material produced will demonstrate good presentation and technical skills, exhibiting some fluency of speech and production elements. While there may be occasional minor faults, such as inconsistent sound levels, or unclear or unsophisticated linking material, these will not predominate. There will be evidence of good engagement with the target audience.

M3: learners will incorporate well-developed added speech and feature content within music sequences showing care in the choice of material and the linkage. Generally, production values may be unsophisticated, but technical quality will be good, and the material will be only partially reliant on live reads of scripted information and ad libs. There will be clear evidence of detailed research and planning, and the added content will be mostly relevant to the intended audience. Transitions from music to speech will be effective though they may still be unsophisticated, and there will be some signposting of upcoming material. Where packaged speech material produced for another unit is used, its selection and incorporation within sequences will be appropriate. Work that relies extensively on 'found' material should not be considered for the merit grade.

M2 and M3: learners will still be working within recognisable generic conventions, but there will be some imaginative thought behind the work so that technical skills and codes and conventions will be employed with some inventiveness. Merit grade learners will need occasional support, particularly when dealing with more complex technology or trying to apply more sophisticated techniques. Like the pass grade learner, they will benefit from it.

M4: learners will explain thoughtfully the suitability of their practical work in terms that show a well-developed awareness of its intended contexts and target audiences. They should be able to identify a number of negative and positive aspects of the processes and products, making some appropriate connections between decisions taken and outcomes produced. Learners will explain what they have tried to accomplish and how they have worked to try to achieve what they have set out to do. They will explain decisions made and will be able to exemplify these explanations through relevant and detailed reference to their own work, though the examples they give will not be further elucidated.

M1 and M4: learners will use technical vocabulary for the most part correctly, but may make mistakes or be unsure about usages at times.

Distinction

To achieve a distinction grade, learners must achieve all the pass, all the merit and all the distinction grade criteria. For each of the criteria learners must present evidence that addresses each italicised sub-heading of the content for the learning outcome.

D1: learners will justify all ideas and points made in detailed genre analyses and thorough critical reviews of the processes and products, using supporting arguments and elucidated examples. The conclusions drawn will demonstrate breadth of research and depth of understanding. The choice of examples will show sophistication, and learners will draw out of an example precisely what it is about it that exemplifies the point it illustrates. Learners will be able to critically analyse any negative and positive aspects of the processes and products, making well-reasoned connections between decisions taken and outcomes produced. Analysis will predominate over description.

D2: learners will achieve near-professional standards of work in the pre-production and production of sequence programmes for at least two different audiences, exhibiting considerable fluency of speech and production elements. The selection of music and other audio material for inclusion will be clearly justified in terms of the context and target audience. All ideas and skills used in pre-production and production will be appropriate to the target audience. Pre-production paperwork will be accurate and produced to near-professional standards, and the audio exemplar material produced will demonstrate excellent presentation and technical skills without obvious faults, such as the inappropriate balancing of sound levels. Technical quality will be close to professional levels.

D3: transitions from music to speech will be effective, and there will be clear and frequent signposting of upcoming material. There will be extensive evidence of research and planning, and the added content will be highly relevant to the intended audience. Where packaged speech material produced for another unit is used, its selection and incorporation within sequences will demonstrate high levels of sophistication, although work that uses more than a small proportion of 'found' material should not be considered for the distinction grade. There will be clear evidence of engagement with the target audience. Production values will be high, and the material will balance live reads of scripted information and ad libs with appropriately packaged speech content and linking material.

D2 and D3: learners will apply their technical skills not just with imagination but with ingenuity, and codes and conventions will be used with occasionally surprising results. Learners will be capable of working autonomously and effectively. The term 'working independently' means that they are able to work on their own initiative, do not need constant support or supervision, give the work their full commitment, work positively and cooperatively with others, and meet deadlines. In other words, they have the kind of self-management skills that would be expected of them in a professional context. Note also that this criterion should not be taken to mean that learners do not seek advice or that they work without discussing things with their tutor, but rather that they are not dependent upon the support of others and that when they take advice they weigh it carefully for themselves.

D4: learners will make an accurate and critically objective assessment of their own achievement with detailed reference to elucidated examples taken from that work. They will be able to make critical comparisons of their own work with current or past practice in a relevant area (that is, the same genre or format as they have worked in).

D1 and D4: technical vocabulary will be secure and used correctly and confidently at all times.

Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the assessment and grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Pearson assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1, M1, D1	Assignment 1 – Music Programme Types and Styles	Learner has been asked to develop ideas for new programmes and is doing a review of existing programmes in preparation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All research notes (research log). Written report.
P2, M2, D2 P3, M3, D3	Assignment 2 – Create Radio Programme Demos	Learner has been asked to produce sampler demos for three new music-based programmes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All notes and ideas (production log). All pre-production documentation. All production documentation. Completed programme demo.
P4, M4, D4	Assignment 3 – Post-production Review	Preparation for feedback from station management following the introduction of the new programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All listener research (research log). Written report.

Links to other BTEC units

This unit forms part of the BTEC Creative Media Production suite. This unit has particular links with the following units in the BTEC Creative Media Production suite:

Level 2	Level 3
	Audio Production Processes and Techniques
	Presentation Techniques for Broadcasting
	Radio Studies
	Scriptwriting for Radio
	Speech Package Production

Essential resources

Learners will need access to professional-standard radio or audio production and post-production facilities.

The vast majority of radio stations, music or speech-based, have websites with Listen Now buttons giving centres access to a vast range of programming outside their usual FM terrestrial catchment area. Podcasts featured on station websites are another good source of speech content ideas. For copyright and royalty reasons, music will not be included. Access to computers and the internet is essential, with the option for the learner to use headphones desirable.

A radio studio or portable digital audio recorders equipped with appropriate microphones could be used to record programmes and features. PC or MAC workstations are both acceptable platforms for digital audio editing and mixing software.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Learners will benefit greatly from contact with industry practitioners with recent experience in producing music-based programming.

Learners will also be able to find information through ScreenSkills, the Sector Skills Council for the creative media sector.

Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills

The table below identifies the opportunities for personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that have been included within the pass assessment criteria of this unit.

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	planning and carrying out research to identify resources or audiences for a production or to investigate music programming styles supporting conclusions, using reasoned arguments and evidence when presenting results of research
Creative thinkers	generating ideas and exploring possibilities, and adapting ideas as circumstances change when producing music-based programmes
Reflective learners	reviewing progress, and acting on the outcomes when producing music-based programmes
Team workers	collaborating with others to work towards common goals taking a role within a radio production
Self-managers	working towards goals, showing initiative, commitment and perseverance when taking responsibility for a production or production role organising time and resources, prioritising actions when implementing a production schedule or running order.

Although PLTS are identified within this unit as an inherent part of the assessment criteria, there are further opportunities to develop a range of PLTS through various approaches to teaching and learning.

Skill	When learners are ...
Effective participators	acting as an advocate for views and beliefs that may differ from their own when taking part in a radio production which aims to benefit the community.

● Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are ...
ICT – Use ICT systems	
Select, interact with and use ICT systems independently for a complex task to meet a variety of needs	researching materials and resources for pre-production and speech content
Use ICT to effectively plan work and evaluate the effectiveness of the ICT system they have used	presenting reports on radio programme pre-production techniques
Manage information storage to enable efficient retrieval	using spreadsheets within production management
Follow and understand the need for safety and security practices	identifying potential risks from trailing cables and potentially inappropriate locations
Troubleshoot	identifying solutions for technical issues such as recording and editing difficulties
ICT – Develop, present and communicate information	
Enter, develop and format information independently to suit its meaning and purpose including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • text and tables • images • numbers • records 	presenting a report on how audiences interact or relate to programme content on an identified radio station
Bring together information to suit content and purpose	preparing reports on audience expectations at different radio stations
Present information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience	producing schedules and budgets for programme production
Mathematics	
Understand routine and non-routine problems in a wide range of familiar and unfamiliar contexts and situations	planning schedules and budgets that fall within the resources available and analysing costs for materials and resources
Identify the situation or problem and the mathematical methods needed to tackle it	
Select and apply a range of skills to find solutions	
Use appropriate checking procedures and evaluate their effectiveness at each stage	
Interpret and communicate solutions to practical problems in familiar and unfamiliar routine contexts and situations	
Draw conclusions and provide mathematical justifications	

Skill	When learners are ...
English	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	taking part in meetings and presenting production ideas and information to others
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	researching the techniques and conventions of music formats and styles and audience demographics
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	writing treatments, scripts, schedules, cues and running orders for defined radio audiences.