



# AWVT Audio Standard Creation Guide

Guidance for defining Knowledge, Skills, Behaviours and Assessment Criteria at each AWVT grade

Version 1.4 multi-source, venue-context draft working document

## 1 Purpose of this guide

This document explains how AWVT subject specialists, tutors, assessors and curriculum editors should create a grade standard for the Audio Technician theme. It is a working guide for building the standard; it is not itself a grade standard and does not contain the final curriculum content.

## 2 Educational support requirement

Because the AWVT grade structure uses graded learning outcomes, assessment criteria and prerequisite mapping, each Grade Committee should include at least one person with educational, curriculum design or assessment experience. That person should manage the capture process, check that KSBs are written in assessable language, and ensure the proposed assessment does not test material from a higher grade.

The companion Grade 1 to Grade 8 documents are blank capture templates. Each grade committee should use the relevant document to define the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours required at that grade, the required prior learning, and the assessment evidence needed to confirm competence.

## 3 Scope and starting assumption

The Audio Technician theme assumes that the base audio system is already installed, fully connected and working from input source to output system. A learner may connect or add simple additional items within the agreed grade scope, but the standard should not require permanent installation, working at height, rigging, structural work, mains electrical work, or stage crew duties.

## 4 Grade progression overview

AWVT Grade	Venue role description	Typical venue context	What the person is trusted to do
Grade 1	Technical helper / safe assistant	Small church, village hall, school hall, community meeting, simple pub PA	Help safely with microphones, cables, muting, simple checks and tidying. Knows when not to touch something and when to ask for help.
Grade 2	Basic operator of a known system	Small church service, spoken-word event, rehearsal room, small meeting, simple acoustic act	Operate a familiar system using a checklist. Manage speech, playback and simple inputs without causing noise, feedback or interruption.



<b>AWVT Grade</b>	<b>Venue role description</b>	<b>Typical venue context</b>	<b>What the person is trusted to do</b>
Grade 3	Routine event operator	Small-to-medium church, amateur rehearsal, local performance, small club/pub night	Run a simple event independently where the system is already installed and working. Manage speech, playback, simple music inputs and basic level balance.
Grade 4	Developing live-sound operator	Worship group, amateur theatre rehearsal/performance, open mic, small band, community event	Mix several microphones or instruments, use basic EQ, understand feedback causes, manage simple monitor needs and adapt during a live event.
Grade 5	Competent local venue audio operator	Medium church, amateur theatre show, small music venue, school production, community festival stage	Run the full audio desk for a normal event. Use gain, EQ, groups/scenes, monitors and basic routing responsibly. Communicate well with performers, leaders and venue staff.
Grade 6	Audio team lead / advanced volunteer technician	Larger or more technically developed church, amateur theatre company, multi-use community venue, recurring live-music venue	Lead other operators, diagnose recurring faults, manage wireless basics, support livestream/recording feeds, improve consistency and train lower-grade volunteers.
Grade 7	Senior amateur venue audio technician	Large church, amateur theatre production, conference-style event, multi-room venue, outdoor/community event	Support system optimisation, more complex routing, distributed speakers, delay/zone feeds, RF planning, special events and practical system evaluation.
Grade 8	Pre-professional / technical audio lead	Large church, regional event, amateur arts venue, festival stage, professional supplier interface	Bridge into professional/apprenticeship-level practice. Interpret specifications, advise on system design, lead technical planning, mentor others and work confidently with professional suppliers.

## 5 How to write a KSB item

Each KSB item should be written as a specific, assessable statement. Avoid vague phrases such as “understands sound” or “knows microphones”. Instead, state what the learner must know, do, demonstrate, explain, identify, select, operate, evaluate or respond to.

- Knowledge items should define what the learner must know and be able to explain or recognise.
- Skills items should define what the learner must be able to do safely and repeatably in an appropriate audio context.
- Behaviour items should define how the learner acts: safety, teamwork, reliability, respect, communication, preparation, recovery from error, and willingness to seek help.
- Every KSB should have a defined scope so that assessors do not accidentally assess material that belongs to a higher grade.
- Every KSB should identify required prior learning, either from a lower grade or from an earlier item in the same grade.

## 6 KSB dependency rule

No KSB should depend on knowledge or skill that has not already been placed earlier in the learning pathway. If a Grade 4 KSB requires a Grade 5 concept, the Grade 4 KSB is too advanced or the prerequisite has been placed too late. This dependency rule is essential to maintain an orderly graded curriculum and to define the maximum level at which a certified tutor can teach.



## 7 Assessment design principles

Assessment should be authentic, proportionate and grade-appropriate. The assessment does not need to be complicated; it needs to provide reliable evidence that the learner can perform at the stated grade. For audio, assessment should normally combine observation of practical operation, short oral questioning, inspection of written notes or logs, and assessor judgement against published criteria.

Assessment component	Purpose	Typical evidence
Practical task	Shows that the learner can operate, adjust or respond in a realistic audio situation.	Assessor observation, checklist, live or simulated event evidence.
Oral questioning	Confirms the learner understands why a control, choice or action matters.	Short questions, explanation of decisions, terminology check.
Scenario response	Tests judgement and troubleshooting without requiring a real failure.	Verbal or written response to a described situation.
Portfolio / log	Captures repeated experience, reflection and development over time.	Signed logbook, venue evidence, tutor comments, self-reflection.
Professional behaviour check	Confirms safe, reliable, respectful and team-aware practice.	Assessor observation and structured behavioural criteria.

## 8 Pass, Merit and Distinction language

Band	General meaning in AWT Audio
Pass	The learner meets the required grade standard safely and sufficiently. Errors may occur, but they are not unsafe, not persistent and do not prevent effective completion of the task.
Merit	The learner works with greater consistency, confidence, control and explanation than the minimum standard. They recover well from minor issues and show developing judgement.
Distinction	The learner works with assurance, fluency and mature judgement for the grade. They anticipate issues, communicate clearly and demonstrate secure understanding beyond the minimum requirement, without crossing into the next grade standard.

## 9 Recommended workflow for a grade committee

- Confirm the grade descriptor and boundary with the grade below and above.
- List all candidate knowledge topics, practical skills and behaviours that may belong at that grade.
- Remove or defer anything that clearly belongs at a higher grade.
- Check every item for prerequisite learning and move prerequisites earlier where necessary.
- Write each KSB as a clear learner outcome statement.
- Define the assessment evidence and the Pass standard for each KSB.
- Add Merit and Distinction indicators only where they help the assessor distinguish quality of performance.
- Moderate the completed grade against the adjacent grades and against the overall Audio pathway.

## 10 Blank grade documents in this pack

The separate Grade 1 to Grade 8 documents provide the working forms that grade committees should populate. Each document stands alone so that a committee can work on one grade without needing the full combined template.



## 11 Document control

Field	Entry
Prepared by	
Reviewed by	
AWVT approval / status	
Date	
Next review date	

## 12 Using the Draft-Populated Grade Documents

The eight grade documents in this pack now contain draft KSB and assessment content derived from the earlier HoW Audio Technician occupational standard drafts. The content is not a final AWVT standard. It is intended to give each Grade Committee a practical starting point for review, correction, dependency checking, assessment design and moderation.

Because the templates require educational judgement as well as audio expertise, each Grade Committee should include at least one person with educational, curriculum or assessment-design experience. Their role is to help the committee convert specialist audio knowledge into clear learning outcomes, valid assessment methods, measurable pass criteria and correctly sequenced prerequisites.

## 13 How the Earlier Level 1-3 Material Has Been Split

Earlier draft source	Main AWVT grade range	Reasoning
Level 1 draft	Grades 1-3	Basic facts, routine procedures, following instructions, known-console operation, signal checks and supervised/low-complexity operation.
Level 2 draft	Grades 3-6	Understanding, adaptation, mic choice, basic acoustics, foldback, routing, collaboration and more independent operation.
Level 3 draft	Grades 5-8	Broader technical judgement, advanced processing/routing, system evaluation, leadership, mentoring and preparation for apprenticeship/professional outcomes.
Overview document	All grades	Role context, duties, expected behaviours, safety culture and the original competence topics were used across the whole structure.

## 14 Committee Review Method

- Start with the grade boundary: decide what the learner can reasonably be expected to do at that grade and what must be reserved for the next grade.
- Review each draft KSB: keep it, move it, split it, rewrite it or delete it.
- Check each dependency: no KSB should require knowledge or skill that has not been taught earlier.
- Design the assessment only after the KSBs are stable.
- Moderate against adjacent grades to prevent Grade 3 becoming Grade 5, or Grade 7 collapsing into Grade 4.

## 15 Using 3<sup>rd</sup> party source material as a topic spine

The Yamaha Sound Reinforcement Handbook is suitable as a broad topical reference because it covers the underlying theory and practical application of sound reinforcement from microphones through loudspeakers. The Grade Committees should use it as a subject-matter spine, ideally from a lawfully held copy, rather than copying text into AWVT standards.



Official Yamaha online resources should be used for live links in the AWVT documents, especially Audioversity, PA Beginner's Guide, Self-Training and the official Sound Reinforcement Application Guide PDF. DPA, Shure and Sennheiser sources are useful for microphone, feedback and RF topics.

AWVT Grade range	Topic spine	Example sources	Committee use
Grades 1-2	Basic sound system, device roles, signal flow, level awareness	Yamaha PA Beginner's Guide; Yamaha Sound Reinforcement Handbook	Define basic recognition, safe operation and routine console awareness.
Grades 3-4	Gain/headroom, microphone directionality, feedback, EQ and room acoustics	Yamaha Sound Reinforcement Handbook; DPA Mic University; Shure microphone/feedback articles	Define independent small-system operation and practical problem-solving.
Grades 5-6	Routing, monitors/IEM, dynamics/effects, wireless microphone basics	Yamaha Audioversity; Yamaha Handbook; Sennheiser RF Basics; Shurelead competence.	Define complete event operation and advanced volunteer/team-
Grades 7-8	Coverage, delay, distributed systems, networked audio, specifications and documentation	Yamaha Handbook; Yamaha application guide; Yamaha networked audio quality whitepaper	Define senior technician and pre-professional/apprenticeship-bridge competence.

## 16 Source link register

[Yamaha Sound Reinforcement Handbook \(Davis & Jones, 2nd ed.\)](#)

[Yamaha PA Beginner's Guide](#)

[Yamaha Audioversity Online](#)

[Yamaha Self-Training Resources](#)

[Yamaha Audio Quality in Networked Systems](#)

[Yamaha Sound Reinforcement Application Guide PDF](#)

[DPA Mic University](#)

[DPA Listen to Your Polar Pattern](#)

[Shure Microphone Basics](#)

[Shure Microphone Directionality and Polar Pattern Basics](#)

[Shure Feedback: Fact and Fiction](#)

[Sennheiser Sound Academy / RF Basics](#)

## 17 Venue-context interpretation of the grade pathway

The Audio grades should be understood as levels of trust and responsibility across volunteer and amateur-run venues, not merely as church-sound levels. Houses of Worship remain a major use-case, but the same progression should apply in amateur theatres, small clubs, pubs, schools, village halls, community centres, local festivals and other venues where the technical team is partly or wholly non-professional.

When a Grade Committee writes or reviews a KSB, it should ask: what would a venue leader, event organiser, worship leader, production lead or technical lead reasonably trust this person to do in a live event without creating avoidable risk, confusion or disruption?



## 18 Multi-source reference framework

AWVT Audio standards should not be based on a single textbook, manufacturer course or online video channel. The Yamaha Sound Reinforcement Handbook is a useful broad topic spine, but each topic should be triangulated against other recognised books, professional bodies, manufacturer resources, and structured training materials. Online videos may support learning, but should not by themselves define the AWVT standard.

Reference tier	Example sources	How Grade Committees should use it
Tier 1 - Core technical spine	Yamaha Sound Reinforcement Handbook; Handbook for Sound Engineers; Sound System Engineering; Sound Reinforcement for Audio Engineers; Sound Systems: Design and Optimization	Use to define topic scope, prerequisite sequence and technical terminology. Do not copy text; convert into AWVT learner outcomes.
Tier 2 - Professional validation	AES resources and topic areas; AVIXA CTS and standards; ANSI/AVIXA A102.01 audio coverage; Audinate Dante Certification	Use to validate higher-grade expectations, especially measurement, coverage, networked audio and professional conduct.
Tier 3 - Manufacturer technical resources	Yamaha Audioversity; Shure Academy/guides; DPA Mic University; Sennheiser Sound Academy; Allen & Heath; Martin Audio; d&b; L-Acoustics; Meyer Sound; Q-SYS	Use to inform practical examples while stripping out brand-specific dependence.
Tier 4 - Learning delivery resources	Audio University; Sound Design Live; church-sound channels; LinkedIn Learning; Coursera; local trainers and workshops	Use to support teaching and explanation. These resources should not define the standard by themselves.

## 19 Hidden prerequisite rule for source-derived topics

Training material often assumes that the learner already understands earlier concepts. For example, a video on parametric EQ may assume knowledge of frequency, gain, bandwidth/Q, filters, signal flow and headroom. A Grade Committee must identify these hidden prerequisites and place them in a lower grade or earlier within the same grade before relying on the higher-level topic.



Higher-grade topic	Likely prerequisite topics	Suggested grade-placement check
Feedback control	Microphone/loudspeaker roles; signal path; level awareness; mic directionality; room reflections	Ensure prerequisites appear by Grades 1-3 before assessing feedback correction at Grades 3-4.
Parametric EQ	Frequency, tone, gain, filters, listening skills, signal flow and headroom	Introduce tone/frequency awareness earlier; assess practical EQ decisions from Grades 4-5.
Compression and gates	Signal level, dynamics, noise, gain staging and musical/speech context	Do not assess dynamics processing until level and listening fundamentals are secure.
Wireless microphones / IEMs	Microphone handling, channel routing, basic RF limitations, battery discipline and mute practice	Start with safe routine wireless use before RF coordination or antenna distribution.
Delay speakers / distributed audio	Sound travel time, speaker coverage, routing, zones and audience/listener areas	Place advanced delay/alignment in Grades 6-8 only after coverage and routing basics.
Networked audio	Digital audio, IP/network basics, routing, clocking and device discovery	Use Dante or similar as examples, not as the standard itself.

## 20 Formal source-link register for future grade writing

These links are included to help committees locate the types of primary and supporting material discussed in this guide. Committees should record the specific page, chapter, video or course module that informs each KSB.

Source	Link
Yamaha Sound Reinforcement Handbook - publisher page	<a href="https://www.halleonard.com/product/500964/the-sound-reinforcement-handbook-second-edition">https://www.halleonard.com/product/500964/the-sound-reinforcement-handbook-second-edition</a>
Yamaha Audioversity Online	<a href="https://uk.yamaha.com/en/business/audio/resources/audioversity-online/">https://uk.yamaha.com/en/business/audio/resources/audioversity-online/</a>
Yamaha Self-Training Resources	<a href="https://uk.yamaha.com/en/business/audio/resources/self-training/">https://uk.yamaha.com/en/business/audio/resources/self-training/</a>
Handbook for Sound Engineers - Routledge	<a href="https://www.routledge.com/Handbook-for-Sound-Engineers/Ballou-Jones/p/book/9781032553443">https://www.routledge.com/Handbook-for-Sound-Engineers/Ballou-Jones/p/book/9781032553443</a>
Sound Reinforcement for Audio Engineers - Routledge	<a href="https://www.routledge.com/Sound-Reinforcement-for-Audio-Engineers/Ahnert-Noy/p/book/9781032115177">https://www.routledge.com/Sound-Reinforcement-for-Audio-Engineers/Ahnert-Noy/p/book/9781032115177</a>
AVIXA Audio Coverage Uniformity standard	<a href="https://www.avixa.org/standards/audio-coverage-uniformity-in-listener-area">https://www.avixa.org/standards/audio-coverage-uniformity-in-listener-area</a>
DPA Mic University	<a href="https://www.dpamicrophones.com/mic-university/">https://www.dpamicrophones.com/mic-university/</a>
Shure Academy	<a href="https://www.shure.com/en-GB/shure-academy/online-training">https://www.shure.com/en-GB/shure-academy/online-training</a>
Sennheiser Sound Academy	<a href="https://www.sennheiser.com/en-gb/support/sound-academy">https://www.sennheiser.com/en-gb/support/sound-academy</a>
Audinate Dante Certification	<a href="https://www.getdante.com/resources/training/dante-certification-program/">https://www.getdante.com/resources/training/dante-certification-program/</a>
Audio University	<a href="https://audiouniversityonline.com/">https://audiouniversityonline.com/</a>