DSA Study Needs Assessment
Course information for assessors: BA (Hons) Music (Folk)

Course Overview

The BA (Hons) Music (Folk) degree is usually studied over three years. As a performer, composer, or both, students explore folk music from its origins in oral tradition and its interpretation through different cultures and musicians. They will discover how different folk styles evolved in different communities and nations, and how traditions have been created and preserved. From this grounding in traditional music students experiment with other genres and cultural identities, forming and joining innovative ensembles, building a repertoire in performance or composition, capturing field recordings and collaborating with students from other pathways. Alongside a strong foundation in ensemble performance or composition, issues of style and repertoire will be discussed and taught. Composers will be specifically composing for group ensembles.

Methods of Assessment

Assessment is through a combination of performance recitals, musical portfolios, technical tests, spoken analysis (pre-recorded and submitted as an mp3 audio file), one 1000-word essay, one 2000-word essay, presentations and written work. (No examinations take place.)

IT Hardware and Software

Core music-software packages used on the Folk pathway are Logic Pro (music recording and arranging software) and Pro-Tools. Students can work on either Microsoft or Apple platforms when using Pro-Tools. Logic will only run on the Apple platform but it is not a prerequisite for students to use this software. The majority of Apple hardware at the conservatoire is made up of iMac M1 Chip 8-Core CPU + 8-Core GPU, 16GB RAM and 2TB SSD storage models, supplemented by Mac Studio M1 Max 10-core CPU + 24-core GPU models with 32GB RAM and 4TB SSD storage.

We have a number of Apple Mac and PC computer suites that students can access throughout the conservatoire. These facilities are available until 3am on weekdays and during the daytime at weekends.

Due to the restricted networking capabilities of Apple products and software licensing restrictions, Leeds Conservatoire is unable to provide students with individual licenses of all the course-specific software that they require for their pathway of study. All students are expected to take advantage of in-house facilities as much as possible to complete their studies during term-time, as these facilities are of a professional standard across the conservatoire. These facilities are provided in-house so each student is not required to own an Apple Mac at a professional level specification to run all of the additional software and hardware needed.

Students with learning difficulties/conditions that affect their working memory, co-ordination, focus or information processing speed often experience extra difficulty in reading music, accurately handwriting musical scores or inputting information into music writing software Sibelius, and coping with the high density multiple screen setup of information in professional music software like Logic Pro. This is similar to the difficulties experienced when producing word-processed written work, and the process of working with music goes alongside working with other written information as a core part of the learning process on this course. Mental health or other difficulties causing concentration problems can also make specialist music software more difficult to use due to the volume and complexity of information the user is required to input and manipulate.

This course involves a significant amount of moving between different studios and performance venues in and out of the conservatoire, and for this reason, we have found that many of our disabled students benefit from having a laptop to allow them to access their assistive technology and course materials on the move.

Music software applications use a large amount of memory, particularly when run concurrently with accessibility software, so extra RAM may be required to avoid slowing down the operating speed of any DSA recommended computer system. It is preferable to specify a machine with a smaller core hard drive but greater additional memory rather than vice versa, as music software uses a large amount of RAM on its own.

For notetaking and lecture recording purposes, a digital recording device with a built-in two-way microphone is recommended as a useful aid to learning to enable the recording of music excerpts used alongside orally and visually presented information in lectures.

All course information and lecture notes are accessed only via Space, the online Virtual Learning Environment. The majority of assignments are submitted online via the VLE and use of the internet for research is also required.

Further information on the support available at Leeds Conservatoire is available on our website: https://www.leedsconservatoire.ac.uk/student-life/student-support/disability-support/

Contact information

The Disability Support Team is located in the Student Support room (4th floor) of the Leeds Conservatoire St Peter's Square building.

Email: disability@leedsconservatoire.ac.uk