

DSA Study Needs Assessment

Course information for assessors: BA (Hons) Music (Songwriting)

Course Overview

The BA (Hons) Music (Songwriting) is usually studied over three years. The degree consists of three strands, Specialist Study, Contextual Studies and Professional Studies, with students receiving individual study tuition and ensemble group tuition in their chosen primary study of either performance or composition. Specialist option modules are undertaken in the second and third years of the course. There are approximately 8-11 guided learning hours per teaching week, and students are advised they should undertake at least a further twenty hours of private study.

Methods of Assessment

In all three years of study, modules are assessed in a variety of ways. Performances, audio recordings, presentations, technical tests, essays, aural exams and portfolios are all methodologies used to assess how students meet the required learning outcomes.

IT Hardware and Software

As a specialist songwriting music course, teaching is exclusively uses the industry-standard Apple Mac platform. There are currently two types of iMac in use: 27" 5k Retina screens, Core i7 quad-core processors, 32GB RAM and 1TB SSD; and 21.5" screens with Core i5 2.7GHz processor, 16GB RAM and 1TB HDD.

The essential core music software package in use on the Songwriting Music pathway is Logic X (music recording and arranging software). Music software applications use a large amount of memory, particularly when run concurrently with accessibility software such as Zoom Text or TextHelp, so extra RAM may be required to avoid slowing down the operating speed of any 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 the Logic software uses a large amount of RAM on its own.

The course software is available in some specialist studios and Apple Mac suites within the conservatoire, but these rooms are heavily timetabled throughout the day, which significantly limits individual student access to these facilities. Leeds Conservatoire recognises that Assessors may therefore wish to consider recommending the course software if they feel the student has sufficient additional needs.

Students with specific learning difficulties that affect their working memory 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 Logic. 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 MacBook so they can access their work and supporting specialist software in all situations.

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-services/disability-support/>

Contacts

The Student Disability Advice Team is located in Student Services in room 401.

Phone 0113 2223421

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