

DSA Study Needs Assessment

Course information for assessors: MA Music

Course Overview and Methods of Assessment

Studying on the MA Music is a uniquely flexible course which allows focus on different creative specialisms from one trimester to the next. The PGDip level can be studied from Sep to June or the MA level from Sep to Sep.

Specialist Study

Each trimester, students enrolled on both the PGDip and MA programmes are, subject to a suitable level of existing proficiency, able to request that their tuition incorporate one or more of the following specialisms: composition, performance and production. Students then choose to be assessed either through recorded/scored work submitted as a portfolio, or by live performance or installation.

In the final trimester, all students progressing to Masters Level are required to present their work publicly rather than through portfolio. Students develop this work with the guidance of one to one tutors, course tutors, professional guests and fellow group members.

Creative Practice in Context

All students conduct critical and analytical research into their own practice as it relates to relevant surrounding creative and professional cultures, and are assessed either through submitted written essay or spoken exam. Materials will be gathered and developed in group-taught sessions, tutorials and through individual research.

IT Hardware and Software

Hardware and software requirements will depend upon student choice. The conservatoire primarily uses the Apple Mac platform as this is music industry standard. There are two types of iMac used: 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. Software packages most commonly used are Avid Sibelius Educational v8 (musical score writing software), which operates on both Windows and Apple Mac platforms and Logic X (music recording and arranging software) which runs exclusively on Apple Mac platforms.

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

Email disability@leedsconservatoire.ac.uk.