



## Programme Specification

A statement of the knowledge, understanding and skills that underpin a taught programme of study leading to an award from  
The University of Sheffield

1	<b>Programme Title</b>	Psychology of Music
2	<b>Programme Code</b>	MUST02
3	<b>JACS Code</b>	Not applicable
4	<b>Level of Study</b>	Postgraduate
5a	<b>Final Qualification</b>	Master of Arts (MA)
5b	<b>QAA FHEQ Level</b>	Masters
6	<b>Intermediate Qualifications</b>	None
7	<b>Teaching Institution (if not Sheffield)</b>	Not applicable
8	<b>Faculty</b>	Arts and Humanities
9	<b>Department</b>	Music
10	<b>Other Departments involved in teaching the programme</b>	Students may elect to "sit-in" on modules offered in the Psychology Department. They are not assessed on these modules.
11	<b>Modes of Attendance</b>	Full-time or part-time
12	<b>Duration of the Programme</b>	1 year (Full-time); 2 years (Part-time)
13	<b>Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body</b>	Not applicable
14	<b>Date of production/revision</b>	April 2003 / December 2022 / July 2023

### 15. Background to the programme and subject area

The psychology of music is an area of study which uses psychological theory and methods to better understand musical behaviours, sounds and ideas. The inter-disciplinarity of the subject, along with its use of a wide range of empirical approaches, offers a unique perspective on music and responds to a demand for qualifications in this area.

Sheffield's MA in Psychology of Music welcomed its first students in September 1993, and has since attracted students from a range of countries, as well as from within the UK. The programme focuses on the relationship between psychological research and musical experience and behaviour and is taught through a combination of lectures, seminars, and tutorial contact. In response to the demand for research training, the programme is designed to allow initial intensive training in the knowledge and methods of the field followed by opportunities for increasingly independent research.

The Department of Music is an internationally leading centre for research in this field and draws on the expertise of specialist staff who have published widely in the areas of psychology of music and music education. The inter-disciplinarity of the programme is further enhanced by opportunities for research informed by psychology of music and music analysis; music education; ethnomusicology; historical, analytical and critical musicology; or performance practice. Postgraduate activities in music psychology are well established at Sheffield, with the Department also offering two distance-learning MAs in the area of Psychology of Music (see separate programme specifications), and supporting a number of research students working on projects reflecting these interests.

Further detailed information is available on the Department's website at: <http://www.shef.ac.uk/music/>

## 16. Programme aims

The aims of the programme are consistent with the aims of the Department and the Mission Statement of the University of Sheffield:

1. To enable students to develop an understanding of the nature of postgraduate study and the techniques of postgraduate research in music and psychology, with a view to further research at doctoral level, and future employment;
2. To broaden students' knowledge and understanding of the published literature of the psychology of music, and related areas in psychology and music theory;
3. To equip students with a practical understanding of a range of research methods in the psychology of music;
4. To provide students with the instruction and supervision necessary to undertake and successfully complete a substantial piece of scholarly writing containing an element of originality on a subject, empirical or theoretical, in the psychology of music;
5. To engender in students' broader life skills, including: an ability to engage independently in self-directed study; critical thought and argument exercised through speech and writing in a variety of media; teamwork and leadership skills; and an ability to understand and respect the views of others.

## 17. Programme learning outcomes

<b>Knowledge and understanding - By the end of the programme, students will:</b>	
<b>K1</b>	Have developed an appropriately broad and critical understanding of the literature in music psychology, informed by the most current developments in the field.
<b>K2</b>	Have developed knowledge of a range of research methods, including a critical awareness of their applicability to understanding musical behaviour, and an awareness of the ethical issues involved.
<b>K3</b>	Be able to apply a diverse range of musical and psychological perspectives to music so as to achieve an understanding of music behaviour, ideas and sound.
<b>K4</b>	Be able to undertake and successfully complete a substantial piece of scholarly writing containing an element of originality on a subject, empirical or theoretical, in the psychology of music.
<b>K5</b>	Have developed an attitude of open-minded critical awareness in their pursuit of scholarly enquiry.

<b>Skills and other attributes - By the end of the programme, students will:</b>	
<b>S1</b>	Have developed a range of subject specific skills in research methods (e.g. design of empirical studies, and quantitative and qualitative analysis).
<b>S2</b>	Be able to demonstrate an ability to identify research questions in the psychology of music, and locate sources in which these are addressed.
<b>S3</b>	Be able to respond critically to the research literature, by questioning and evaluating published sources in the psychology of music and related areas.
<b>S4</b>	Be able to apply psychological theory and methods to better understand musical phenomena by generating and analysing new empirical data through a research project of their own design.
<b>S5</b>	Have developed key transferable research and learning skills, including information gathering and management, the ability to work as part of a team as well as individually, the capacity to evaluate source material, the ability to communicate ideas in clear and accurate English as part of a coherent and logical argument, and the ability to present a convincing argument in written form.

## 18. Teaching, learning and assessment

**Development of the learning outcomes is promoted through the following teaching and learning methods:**

**A series of lectures and seminars** runs throughout the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> semesters, providing the primary means through which students and tutors engage with the subject-specific knowledge base of the discipline (K1-3, K5,

S1-5).

6. **Laboratory work and demonstrations** are used in the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester and final period of study when students engage with empirical research methods (K1, K2, K4, K5, S1, S4, S5).
7. **Individual tutorials** are used throughout the programme to respond directly to student-specific interests and needs, and for detailed discussion of literature and ideas. They are the main support for the dissertation in the final semester (K1-5, S1-5).
8. **Independent study** is a crucial element of the programme and encourages the development of all aspects of knowledge, understanding and skills, but in particular it encourages qualities of originality, independence, information collection and management and allows students to pursue an area of their own choice in depth (K4, S4, S5).
9. **Empirical research** is carried out in groups during semester 2 in order to foster team-working skills (S5).

**Opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes are provided through the following assessment methods:**

The assessment methods test an increasingly wide range of skills as the programme progresses and embody a move from small scale and highly structured tasks to larger-scale projects over the duration of the programme. The assessment methods are as follows:

10. An **assessed essay** assesses knowledge of one aspect of the subject-specific literature, skills of evaluation and information organisation and writing skills appropriate to a longer essay (K1, K3, S2, S3, S5).
11. A **portfolio of work** demonstrates generic musicological research skills (K2, S5).
12. **Two research tasks** apply quantitative and qualitative empirical research techniques, allowing assessment of skills in experimental design and analysis (K2, K3, S1-5). Research for these projects is conducted in groups (S5).
13. The **dissertation proposal** assesses the ability of students to design and plan a substantial and original empirical or theoretical study drawing on their knowledge of methods and relevant literature (K2, K3, K4, K5, S1, S2, S4, S5).
14. The **dissertation** is on a subject of the student's own choosing. It assesses the student's ability to identify a research question in psychology of music based on critical knowledge of the field; his/her ability to identify and implement appropriate methods to address that question; and the depth of knowledge, success of written presentation, and the acquisition of further transferable skills (K4, K5, S1-5).

## 19. Reference points

**The learning outcomes have been developed to reflect the following points of reference:**

- In line with the University of Sheffield's mission to maintain the highest standards of excellence in research-led teaching, the MA in Psychology for Music involves department staff who are all internationally recognised researchers in the areas of psychology of music and music education. The MA has also been developed with reference to the Education Pillar of the University of Sheffield.
- Attention has been paid to student needs in the design and subsequent revisions of the degree structure, as articulated by past students in their course evaluation, by incoming postgraduates and by final-year undergraduates considering graduate study in this area.
- The programme is informed by the Master's level qualification descriptors contained in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (Jan 2008).
- The QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Music has also been taken into consideration.

## 20. Programme structure and regulations

The MA in Psychology of Music consists entirely of modules designed to ensure coverage of essential elements of graduate study in music and key learning experiences in the psychology of music itself.

For students studying on a full-time basis, the first period of the programme provides training in generic and subject specific research skills as part of a seminar series focusing on the music psychology literature (60 credits). In the second period, two 30-credit modules provide experience in the planning and design of

collaborative research projects, alongside the design of a substantial and original research project which will become the basis for the dissertation. The third and final period of the programme provides an opportunity for the student to demonstrate their assimilation of this learning through completion of an original piece of research reported as a dissertation (60 credits).

Part-time students follow a pathway that divides these modules across two years of study. There is some flexibility in this, but typically students will take one first semester 30 credit module and the dissertation proposal and dissertation in year 2 and all other modules in year 1.

Detailed information about the structure of programmes, regulations concerning assessment and progression and descriptions of individual modules are published in the [University Calendar](#).

## **21. Student development over the course of study**

The MA in Psychology of Music is structured to facilitate increasing independence and specialisation on the part of students. The first semester is characterised by relatively intensive group tuition, and highly structured formal assessments; in the second semester students begin individual research dissertations supervised on a one-to-one basis, which runs alongside structured group projects; in the final period students concentrate exclusively on an individual thesis. This arrangement allows teaching and learning of essential materials and skills early on, providing the basis on which later, more independent research can build, and culminating in an original thesis of the students' own choice which offers the opportunity for independent and self-determined work by the student. Assessed work is submitted and feedback given at regular intervals throughout the programme which provides a clear basis for students and staff to monitor student progress. Every student is appointed a personal tutor with whom they meet at least twice a semester to review progress.

## **22. Criteria for admission to the programme**

Students are normally expected to have a First or Upper Second Class honours degree in either music or psychology (or equivalent). Candidates are expected to demonstrate in their personal statement an interest in psychology of music and evidence of clear and logical thinking. Where a qualification in a subject other than Music is offered, students must be able to demonstrate ability in musical performance and/or knowledge of music-theory. International students will require a suitable language qualification, such as TOEFL (minimum score 575) or IELTS (minimum score 6.5).

For further information regarding application to the programme, please refer to the Department's website: [http://www.shef.ac.uk/music/prospective\\_pg/applying](http://www.shef.ac.uk/music/prospective_pg/applying)

Detailed information regarding admission to the programme is available at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/prospective/>

## **23. Additional information**

Further information about the wider departmental context within which the MA takes place can be found at [www.shef.ac.uk/music](http://www.shef.ac.uk/music).

This specification represents a concise statement about the main features of the programme and should be considered alongside other sources of information provided by the teaching department(s) and the University. In addition to programme specific information, further information about studying at The University of Sheffield can be accessed via our Student Services web site at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid>.