



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	Programme Title	Music Psychology in Education, Performance and Wellbeing
2	Programme Code	LAST023
3	JACS Code	W355
4	Level of Study	Postgraduate
5	Final Qualification	Master of Arts (MA)
6	Intermediate Qualification	Postgraduate Certificate in Music Psychology in Education, Performance and Wellbeing (PG Cert); Postgraduate Diploma in Music Psychology in Education, Performance and Wellbeing (PG Dip)
7	Teaching Institution (if not Sheffield)	Not applicable
8	Faculty	Arts and Humanities
9	Department	Music
10	Other Departments involved in teaching the programme	None
11	Mode of Attendance	Part-time by distance learning
12	Duration of the Programme	2 years
13	Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body	Not applicable
14	Date of production/revision	June 2020, March 2026

15. Background to the programme and subject area

The Department of Music has been running a successful distance learning MA in *Psychology for Musicians* since August 1997, with the aim of making research in the psychology of music accessible and relevant for practising musicians and music educators, and in response to a demand for qualifications in this area. In 2006, this distance learning MA was complemented by the MA in *Music Psychology in Education*. The two programmes were taught in parallel and shared the first year. A considerable part of the second year material was also shared in so far it focussed on research techniques and stepping stones towards the dissertation. As the two programmes are closely associated, the decision was made to fully integrate them – offering one MA in *Music Psychology in Education, Performance and Wellbeing* that is rigorous in training, rich in content and allows students to specialise in a chosen direction. Interim qualifications (PGCert and PGDip) will be targeted at the Continuing Professional Development market of musicians seeking a named qualification that develops their skills in researching and critiquing their own musical practice.

The programme is taught through specially written online materials delivered through MOLE, and students are supported through e-mail and telephone tutorials as well as having peer contact through discussion boards. Students attend an annual residential course in Sheffield, where they participate in lectures, seminars and tutorials with the Department's teaching staff and visiting experts. They are also invited to optional one day study events during the academic year, allowing those students within travelling distance to become more integrated with the department and to benefit from contact with the rest of the postgraduate community. Materials from the study days and residential courses are delivered online for students who are unable to attend.

The programme draws on the Department of Music's research and teaching strengths in the psychology of music and music education. The course tutors have published widely on related topics, and the Department is internationally recognised as a leading centre for research in these areas. Postgraduate activities in music psychology and music education are well established at Sheffield, with an on-campus MA in the Psychology of Music (see separate programme specification), and a large number of research students. Recent graduates of the *Psychology for Musicians* and *Music Psychology in Education* distance-learning programmes have continued with postgraduate research, embarked on vocational training in counselling and therapy, or used their studies to inform and enhance their existing roles as teachers and music professionals.

Further detailed information is available on the Department's website at: www.sheffield.ac.uk/music

16. Programme aims

The aims of the programme are consistent with the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy at departmental and university level:

1. To make the Department's research and teaching expertise in the psychology of music and music education available to those whose circumstances prevent them from studying full-time.
2. To introduce students to the techniques and skills of postgraduate study, by equipping them with a working knowledge of the research skills used by psychologists, and enabling them to apply these methods to their areas of interest.
3. To enrich and inform students' professional lives by increasing their psychological understanding of musical processes, events and activities, including teaching and learning.
4. To give students an awareness and understanding of the research literature in the psychology of music and music education, and to stimulate critical enquiry.
5. To teach and assess through varied and appropriate methods, including online delivery and inquiry based learning.
6. To provide Continuing Professional Development opportunities for musicians and music educators through relevant and accessible courses.

17. Programme learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding

By the end of the programme, students awarded either the PG Cert, PG Dip or MA year will:

K1	Have a broad knowledge of the research literature in the psychology of music and music education, informed by current developments in the field.
K2	Have specific expertise in the areas of musical development, psychology of performance, and music in wellbeing and everyday life.
K3	Have an awareness of the applications of research to everyday musical life, including in classrooms and teaching studios.
K4	Have knowledge of the terms and procedures used in psychological investigations, and be able to critique and evaluate these.

Certificate students will have developed the learning outcomes associated with the acquisition of any 60 credits of those available. Students awarded the MA will additionally:

K5	Have knowledge of qualitative and quantitative research methods in the psychology of music and music education, and will be able to apply these appropriately in a research project of their own design.
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Skills and other attributes

By the end of the programme, students awarded either the PG Cert, PG Dip or MA year will:

S1	Be able to demonstrate an ability to identify research questions in music education, and locate sources in which these are addressed.
S2	Be able to respond critically to the research literature, by questioning and evaluating published sources in the psychology of music, music education and related areas.
S3	Be able to write clearly and knowledgeably on a variety of psychological, educational and musical topics.
S4	Have developed the skills of independent learning, organisation and motivation necessary for the successful completion of a distance-learning programme.
S5	Be able to evaluate and discuss the relevance of their knowledge of psychology of music to their own musical and professional circumstances.

Certificate students will have developed the learning outcomes associated with the acquisition of any 60 credits of those available. Students awarded the MA will additionally:

S6	Be able to generate and analyse new empirical data through a research project of their own design.
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18. Teaching, learning and assessment

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

Distance-learning online materials, including reading, reflection and discussion tasks, are designed to introduce students to the key concepts and literature of each topic and to facilitate additional independent study (K1-5; S1-6).

1. Residential courses (2 x 4 days), consisting of lectures, seminars, individual tutorials and group discussion, encourage concentrated focus on subject topics, with opportunities for the development of critical and independent thought through discussion and tutorials (K1-5; S1-6).
2. Optional study days (4 per year) will allow students within travelling distance to become more integrated with the onsite postgraduate community. Provision will be made for web broadcast of the study day content for students who are unable to attend. (K1-5; S1-6).
3. E-mail and telephone tutorial support encourages students to keep in regular contact with their tutor, so as to develop ideas within a supportive framework and maintain consistent progress throughout the programme. These are complemented by online group tutorials (K1-5; S1, S2, S5, S6).
4. Written and oral feedback on drafts of essays and other assignments is intended to encourage depth of critical thought and independent study skills (S2, S3, S6).
5. The use of online discussion boards enables students to exchange ideas and information through a supportive peer community (S3, S5, S6).
6. Independent study, which is a vital part of any distance learning programme, allows students to develop ideas of interest and relevance to their own musical experiences at a pace that suits their employment and personal circumstances (S6).

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

Three 3,000 word essays, in which students address a research question or debate related to the module they have studied (K1, K2, K4, K5; S2, S3, S5, S6).

7. Three small-scale research or reflection tasks, in which students demonstrate their understanding of the module material through an annotated bibliography, or a research-informed analysis of a specified musical situation.
8. A portfolio of critical reading tasks, including an accurately referenced bibliography, a description of the search strategies used to locate those texts, and a critical reflection on the skills acquired through the 'Readings' module and their relevance to academic research.
9. Dissertation of c.16,000 words, including a detailed proposal, and showing a critical awareness of data collection and analysis, and/or sustained theoretical argument (K1, K3, K4, K5; S1-S6).

19. Reference points

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

The MA was developed with reference to the Department's existing site-based MA in the Psychology of Music, to be of a similarly rigorous postgraduate standard, whilst being more focused on areas of direct relevance to working musicians. In recent years, applications of music performance and psychology for wellbeing has seen a considerable increase, and the scope of the course is adjusted accordingly. It is responsive to student needs in creating a named qualification that includes music education and wellbeing, with advantages for those seeking Continuing Professional Development qualifications. No other such programme currently exists in the UK or elsewhere.

In line with the University of Sheffield's mission to maintain the highest standards of excellence in research-led teaching, the MA in *Music Psychology in Education, Performance and Wellbeing* involves members of staff who are all internationally recognised researchers in the areas of psychology of music and music education. The programme is also consistent with the University's Teaching and Learning Strategy.

The programme is informed by the Masters level qualification descriptors contained in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (Oct 14).

20. Programme structure and regulations

Music Psychology in Education, Performance and Wellbeing consists of three taught modules in the first year which provide a foundation of knowledge and skills for the Psychological Research Methods and Dissertation modules in the second year.

All three taught modules are compulsory for the MA, but only two need to be passed to achieve the 60 credits needed for successful completion of the Postgraduate Certificate in Music Psychology in Education, Performance and Wellbeing and Education. These taught modules comprise the following: MUS 6080 *Musical Development*, MUS6090 *Psychology of Performance*, MUS6025 *Researching Music in Everyday Life and Wellbeing*. Students continuing to the MA receive research methods training at the second residential, and also complete MUS6xxx *Psychological Research Methods*, at which point students have the option of completing the 120 credit Diploma in Music Psychology in Education, Performance and Wellbeing. Completion of the MA is achieved through the *Dissertation in Music Psychology* (MUS 6026), an independent study supported through individual tutorials.

Students who withdraw at the end of the first year, for whatever reason, will be eligible for a Postgraduate Certificate, providing they have passed two out of the three first year modules (accumulating 60 credits). Those wishing to complete the Diploma (120 credits) must proceed with the Psychological Research Methods module. The awards are not cumulative, and a decision to continue must be made in consultation with tutors towards the end of the first year.

Detailed information about the structure of programmes, regulations concerning assessment and progression and descriptions of individual modules are published in the University Calendar available on-line at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/calendar/regs>.

21. Student development over the course of study

Music Psychology in Education, Performance and Wellbeing is divided into two parts, designed to move from an introductory overview to a more detailed and student-directed conclusion.

The first year introduces relevant literature in music psychology and helps students to develop skills in writing, critical evaluation and enquiry; the second year then consolidates this work and provides training in research methods to support the dissertation research which occupies much of that year. Students become increasingly self-directed in their work, selecting from a choice of essay titles in the first year modules before progressing to a research project of their own for the dissertation.

The leaving point of the Postgraduate Certificate takes account of adult students' changing personal circumstances by allowing recognition for the successful completion of two first year modules. Similarly, the Postgraduate Diploma offers an advanced qualification for students who are unable to complete the dissertation module for whatever reason. Registration for these courses with the aim of Continuing Professional Development will be encouraged through targeted marketing, and students will have the option of transferring between courses after consultation with their tutor. Students are also able to take leave of absence where appropriate, and a number of recent students have successfully completed the MA after such a course of action.

22. Criteria for admission to the programme

Applicants will usually have an Upper Second Class honours degree or above (or the equivalent) in Music, Psychology or Music Education, and will be able to demonstrate interest or experience in the psychology of music. Students should demonstrate the potential to write and think clearly about relevant questions in the psychology of music and music education, and relevant work experience will also be considered favourably. International students will require a suitable language qualification, such as TOEFL (minimum score 550) or IELTS (minimum score 6.0).

For further information regarding application to the programme, please refer to the Department's website: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/music/prospective-pg/distance-learning>

23. Additional information

Further information about the wider departmental context within which the MA takes place can be found at <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>.