

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 Performance Studies
2	Programme Code	LAST026
3	HECoS Code	HECOS 100637
4	Level of Study	Postgraduate
5a	Final Qualification	MA
5b	Position in the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications	M
6	Intermediate Qualification(s)	Postgraduate Certificate in Music Performance Studies (PG Cert), Postgraduate Diploma in Music Performance Studies (PG Dip)
7	Teaching Institution (if not Sheffield)	Not applicable
8	Faculty	Arts and Humanities
9	School	Languages, Arts and Societies
10	Other School(s) involved in teaching the programme	None
11	Mode(s) of Attendance	Full-time or Part-time
12	Duration of the Programme	1 year or 2 years
13	Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body	Not applicable
14	Date of production/revision	October 2015, March 2018, October 2018, February 2020, January 2024, March 2026

15. Background to the programme and subject area

Until comparatively recently the approach to the teaching of music at undergraduate and postgraduate levels was sharply divided between the practical skills provided by conservatoires and music colleges and the more reflective, scholarly, musicological approach adopted by university departments. The shortcomings of each approach have become increasingly obvious, especially in view of the wider acceptance of scholarly approaches to performance practice, with many university music departments recognising the urgent need to reintegrate theory and practice in music education. At Sheffield we have been very successful in our attempts to establish the balance between theory and practice, and the holistic approach to music education is now securely embedded. In the MA practical work will be supported by individual instrumental tuition and complemented by studies in musical analysis, history and research skills, as well as optional modules across Music Management, World Music, Music Psychology and Composition provided by academic specialists in these areas.

The School plays an important role in Sheffield's thriving cultural life, promoting over 60 concerts a year as well as productions of opera in the University's theatre, the Drama Studio. Outside the University, music in Sheffield covers a vast spectrum, ranging from orchestral series in the City Hall to experimental music, opera and oratorio, and jazz, traditional and popular music. We have close links with Music in the Round (based at the Crucible Theatre) with its international chamber music series which brings some of the world's finest musicians to Sheffield.

See further: <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/music/prospective-pg>

16. Programme aims

This programme has the following aims consonant with the Mission Statement of the University of Sheffield:

1. to provide practical and theoretical teaching that instils in students a thorough foundation in the repertoire of their instrument or ensemble.
2. to equip students with direct experience of a range of practical and intellectual research skills and techniques.
3. to train students for further research, and prepare them for professional employment, as teachers, performers or musicologists.
4. to engender in students' broader life skills, including: an ability to engage independently in self-directed study; critical thought and argument exercised through speech, writing in a variety of media and presentations; teamwork and leadership skills; and an ability to understand and respect the views of others.

17. Programme learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding:	
K1	By the end of the programme students will develop a balance of intellectual understanding and practical musical experience through an integrated programme of theory (research-led historical, social and analytical study) and practice.
K2	By the end of the programme students will be able to reflect critically on their experience of music and explore in practice notions about the role of performance in contemporary culture.
K3	By the end of the programme students will have developed a range of subject-specific knowledge informed by current research.
K4	By the end of the programme students will be able to respond sensitively to musical creativity and repertoire.
K5	By the end of the programme students will have inculcated a sense of intellectual self-reliance, such that they can confidently relate and apply knowledge and techniques acquired during their degree to situations in professional life.
K6	Certificate students will have developed the learning outcomes associated with the acquisition of any 60 credits of those available. Diploma students will have developed the learning outcomes associated with the acquisition of any 120 credits of those available.

Skills and other attributes:	
S1	By the end of the programme students will hold a range of subject-specific skills, able to engage in research in repertoire and performance practice.
S2	By the end of the programme students will demonstrate personal and interpersonal skills (personal discipline, creativity, problem solving, organisation and planning, leadership, teamwork, etc.) particularly through research seminars and musical performance.
S3	By the end of the programme students will demonstrate technical and technological competence in using a range of research-related areas, including information gathering and assessment (in libraries, archives, computers and the internet, interviewing and observing, by use of recording equipment, tools for sound analysis and musical instruments).
S4	By the end of the programme students will have prepared themselves for further postgraduate research and employment by developing analytical and presentational skills at professional levels in written and verbal forms.

S5	By the end of the programme students will have prepared themselves for further postgraduate research and employment by developing the presentational skills at professional level as communicative executant musicians.
S6	Certificate students will have developed the learning outcomes associated with the acquisition of any 60 credits of those available. Diploma students will have developed the learning outcomes associated with the acquisition of any 120 credits of those available.

18. Teaching, learning and assessment

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

Seminars and oral presentations offer opportunities to engage in discussion and analysis of musical materials and of ideas and issues emanating from the repertoire under consideration (K1, K2, K3, K4, S1, S2, S3, S4, S5).

Lectures provide a means of delivering information as well as imparting skills (e.g. musical analysis, aspects of performance style) and encouraging critical approaches to the primary musical text and to scholarly commentaries made upon it and its aesthetic and cultural context (K3, K4, S1, S3, S4, S5).

Practical study in performance encourages independence of thought and critical engagement with musical materials (K1, K2, K4, K5, S1, S2, S3, S4, S5).

Independent study is, of course, a vital component of the programme, whether in terms of reflection on ideas presented in the lectures and seminars, or of development of instrumental and interpretative skills in relation to ensemble performance (K1, K2, K3, K4, K5, S1, S2, S3, S4, S5).

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

For the full MA only: Recital and Piano Recital (summative): The principal recital performance of about 45 minutes' duration is the major element of summative assessment in the MA degree, and successful completion is likely to require demonstration of almost all the listed learning outcomes (especially K1, K3, K4, S1, S2 and S4, S5).

The Ensemble Performance Skills module available to MA, PGDip and PGCert candidates invites students to explore performance in a group context, including a Recital to demonstrate skill, and a 2000-word portfolio to show and reflect on learning and skill development (K1, K2, K5, S2, S4, S5).

Students will demonstrate their ability to employ research techniques to gain in-depth knowledge and understanding of specialised music performance in written and oral communication (K1, K3, S1, S4). This includes summative assessment for LAS429 and LAS431, which comprises an academic essay of 1500 words and a spoken presentation which measures student's ability to speak about music and music research in a clear and critical way referring to academic theory and research methods. Furthermore, the 30-credit choice of approved core modules (applicable for MA and PG Dip study and consummately lower for PG Cert study) include assessments of pieces of written work (of 3000 words or more) and/or creative output that demonstrate the application of interdisciplinary research to enhance creativity and performance. The choice of modules depends on the chosen specialisation of the student. Taken as a whole, these assessments will develop and demonstrate knowledge and skills across the range K1-5 and S1-5. Assessment of optional modules varies and meet varied learning outcomes.

19. Reference points

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

The MA in Music Performance Studies has been developed through reference to similar practice-based postgraduate programmes offered by universities and music colleges in the UK and overseas. Reference was made to the Masters' level qualification descriptor contained in the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Internally, reference was made to the University's Mission Statement and to its Learning and Teaching Strategy.

20. Programme structure and regulations

The MA in Music Performance Studies is made up of one unit in practical performance and three units that complement the work of performance with research skills and studies in musical analysis and history. Students select an additional 30 optional credits from a range of modules across the School, to allow tailoring of their programme in line with their specialist interests and skillset.

The three performance modules (Historically Informed Performance, Advanced Ensemble Skills and Recital) provide opportunities for the students to demonstrate – both as individual performers and as members of an ensemble – their assimilation and understanding of practical, theoretical and historical issues through the performance of a wide range of music, from the classical period to the present day.

The degree is based on a modular system. Part-time candidates follow a pathway that divides the modules across two years of study.

Students are eligible for a Postgraduate Certificate providing they have passed at least 60 credits, to include the Research Techniques and Advanced Ensemble Performance Skills as well as a module from the approved core selection. Those wishing to complete the Diploma must complete 120 credits not including the 60-credit recital.

The MA in Music Performance Studies has a specific pathway for pianists. In most respects, this is identical to the MA Music Performance Studies. However, the module Recital is replaced with a module called Piano Recital, and the module Special Studies in Performance is replaced with a module called Special Studies in Piano Performance. Students shall graduate with an MA Music Performance Studies (Piano).

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/>.

21. Student development over the course of study

Progression is ensured by the modular design of the degree and through tutorial support throughout the degree. The School of Languages, Arts and Societies operates a system of supervision record forms that explicitly call for reflection on steps taken so far and those planned for the weeks ahead. Students agree targets with their instrumental tutors during each lesson. Student progress is monitored by the programme director in tutorials, informal concert performances and regular classes associated with performance modules.

Specifically in relation to this degree the core of practical performance and research skills runs throughout the year. The final Recital module forms the culmination of assessment, with students developing their skills throughout the year, and working on material/repertoire leading to the final assessment. The programme is aimed at performing musicians who will assimilate the scholarly and reflective subject-specific material presented to them along with practical skills to produce an integrated approach to performance by the end of the degree.

Part-time MA students spread this degree over two years, and this enables the process of assimilation to take place over a longer period, with the final Recital taking place at the end of the second year.

Students are expected to complete the full MA, with the Postgraduate Certificate and Diploma as leaving points

for those unable to complete all modules.

22. Criteria for admission to the programme

2.1 in music or a combined degree with a substantial music component. Other qualifications may be acceptable depending on your background, for instance a degree in drama, psychology or another subject, equivalent life experience or a performance diploma for a conservatoire or academy.

Applicants that meet the qualifications criteria above will be asked to supply a performance portfolio which will be assessed by the Course Director for admission to the programme.

23. Additional information

See further: <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/music/prospective-pg/taught>

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 School(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 www.shef.ac.uk/ssid.