

Programme Specification

| | |
|--|--|
| <i>Award and title:</i> | Certificate of Higher Education in Performing Arts |
| <i>School:</i> | Arts |
| <i>Subject area:</i> | Performing Arts |
| <i>Entry from academic year:</i> | 2025-26 |
| <i>in the month(s) of</i> | September |
| <i>Awarding institution:</i> | York St John University |
| <i>Teaching institution:</i> | Mind the Gap |
| <i>Delivery location:</i> | Mind the Gap Studios, Bradford |
| <i>Programme/s accredited by:</i> | N/A |
| <i>Exit awards:</i> | N/A |
| <i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i> | |
| <i>Joint Honours combinations:</i> | N/A |
| <i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i> | N/A |
| <i>Mode/s of study:</i> | Part-Time - 3 years |
| <i>Language of study:</i> | English |
| <i>Paired with Foundation Year</i> | No |
| <i>Study abroad opportunities:</i> | No |
| <i>Opt-in YSJU Placement Year opportunity:</i> | No |

Introduction and Special Features

Mind the Gap's Performing Arts programme is a 3-year part-time training programme for adults with a Learning Disability and/or Autism. The company has been running vocational training courses for Learning-Disabled artists for over 20 years, and the current programme is amongst the most established and internationally recognised training programmes for adults with learning disabilities, who want to develop a career in performance. The programme also offers integrated learning support in all sessions, by trained support workers, to enable you to develop skills in an accessible learning environment.

The performing arts programme is delivered at Mind the Gap Studios in Bradford, a fully accessible, making space and performance venue with 3 fully equipped studios. The Academy runs in parallel with the company making live and digital performance work for the arts and creative industries, giving you the opportunity to learn with experienced artists and where appropriate audition for Mind the Gap productions. In addition, you will have the opportunity to meet and work with other professional companies along with receiving specific training in industry knowledge, preparing you for employment in the arts.

The Programme provides training in four areas: Theatre, Music, Dance (through 3 x 2 term long modules plus an intensive Performance Project) and Industry Studies (through a single module, informed by material across all three years).

The programme strives to create professional opportunities to equip you for a career in the arts and creative industries and you are often exposed to professional experiences as well as employment.

Special features include:

- All your training will happen at Mind the Gap Studios, a making space and performance venue with 3 fully equipped studios.
- High levels of contact time, typically 4-days a week, 4.5 hours-a-day.
- You will be able to see both rehearsals and performances within Mind the Gap's current artistic programme, allowing you to gain valuable industry experience.
- You will have the opportunity to see work by other professional companies.
- You will participate in workshops led by industry professionals.
- You will perform your final performance project in your third year at a large theatre/arts venue in Yorkshire.
- To ensure all your learning needs are in place, you will take part in an Access Needs Assessment before the programme begins.
- With student numbers never exceeding 15 per programme, it allows for each student's learning needs to be met.
- All teaching by our highly experienced tutors is person centred, so that you can develop skills at a speed that is accessible for them and your learning style.
- If you require a 1:1 support worker, this can be accommodated on the programme. You must fund your own 1:1 Support Worker for the programme.
- You and support staff meet regularly to discuss progression, targets and any additional support you may need to put in place.
- You will get the opportunity to work with Mind the Gap's core team of Artists and gain valuable experience from them.
- You may get the opportunity over the three years, to work on professional projects within Mind the Gap's artistic programme.

This programme focuses on your development as skilled and professional performers, through structured practical sessions, along with masterclass workshops hosted by other professional theatre companies. You will also get to see a range of professional dance, theatre and music performances during the three years of your study.

Throughout the three years you are encouraged to take part in additional performances/arts opportunities that maybe on offer within the theatre company. Examples include performing a small role in professional productions that Mind the Gap produces, delivering creative workshops and/or taking part in arts events.

Admissions Criteria:

To apply for the Performance Academy Programme, applicants must be over 18 and identify as having a learning disability and/or autism.

Applicants applying will also have some experience of the performing arts.

Application Process:

Recruitment for the programme occurs every 3 years, between October and May.

The Performance Academy Programme is advertised in a variety of places which include schools, colleges and community groups.

As part of the recruitment process, we host 'Taster Sessions' which invites potential applicants in to experience the performance Academy Programme and look at their options before making an application.

We also work in Schools and Colleges, delivering workshops and taster sessions.

Stage 1:

Applicants make a written or video application.

Stage 2:

Applicants are invited to take part in both a group workshop, where they will be given the opportunity to share their performance skills, followed by a short interview which includes a set of questions we ask all applicants about their experience, skills and long-term ambitions.

Stage 3:

Applicants are invited to take part in an individual audition.

Applicants are considered for a place on the programme depending on how successful they are during the audition process in these four main areas:

- Engagement
- Teamwork
- Creativity
- Taking direction

Decisions for places are decided between the Academy Director, programme delivery team and support workers.

Programme Aim(s):

The Performing Arts Programme aims to help you develop:

1. Your skills as a learning-disabled performer in an accessible and structured learning environment.
2. Your knowledge and understanding of a range of Theatre, Dance and Music theories and practices.
3. The tools you need to gain employment in the arts industry.

Programme Learning Outcomes:

Level 4:

- 4.1 Demonstrate and apply an understanding of various performance techniques in practice
- 4.2 Demonstrate an understanding of how to operate both solo and as part of an ensemble (group)
- 4.3 Analyse and reflect on your own learning
- 4.4 Understand and apply performance making skills to the development of an ensemble performance project
- 4.5 Analyse and apply the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment in the arts

Programme Structure:

| Code | Level | Year | Title | Credits | Module status | |
|----------|-------|------------|--|---------|--------------------------------|---|
| | | | | | Compulsory (C) or optional (O) | non-compensatable (NC) or compensatable (X) |
| VMG4001M | 4 | 1 | Dance Techniques | 10 | C | NC |
| VMG4002M | 4 | 1 | Approaches to Text | 10 | C | NC |
| VMG4003M | 4 | 1 | Music Performance | 10 | C | NC |
| VMG4004M | 4 | 2 | Dance Choreography | 10 | C | NC |
| VMG4005M | 4 | 2 | Physical Theatre | 10 | C | NC |
| VMG4009M | 4 | 2 | Music Production | 10 | C | NC |
| VMG4006M | 4 | 3 | Music Composition | 10 | C | NC |
| VMG4007M | 4 | 3 | Creating Dance | 10 | C | NC |
| VMG4008M | 4 | 3 | Devising Theatre | 10 | C | NC |
| VMG4010M | 4 | 1, 2 3 | Industry Studies (Pathways to Employability) | 10 | C | NC |
| VMG4011M | 4 | 1, 2, 3 | Performance Project | 20 | C | NC |

All modules are compulsory, and students must have passed all modules before the end of their three years. For students with exceptional circumstances or requiring resits, there will be an opportunity to re-sit portfolio work in the third term of each year.

The following chart indicates the schedule of modules across three years, including how the two final modules – Industry Studies (Pathways to Employability) and Performance Project – accumulate experience and formative feedback across the whole programme.

| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 |
|--|---|---|--|
| Term 1&2 (September- December and January to March) | Dance Techniques (10 credits) | Dance Choreography (10 credits) | Creating Dance (10 credits) |
| | Approaches to Text (10 credits) | Physical Theatre (10 credits) | Devising Theatre (10 credits) |
| | Music Performance (10 credits) | Music Composition (10 credits) | Music Production (10 credits) |
| | <i>Industry Studies (Pathways to Employability) (formative)</i> | <i>Industry Studies (Pathways to Employability) (formative)</i> | Industry Studies (Pathways to Employability) (10 credits) |
| Term 3 (April-July) | <i>End of year performance project (formative)</i> | <i>End of year performance project (formative)</i> | Performance Project (20 credits) |

Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Learning

You will learn through practical activity in Theatre, Dance and Music. Your practice will be supported by reflection of your own work and work of others. The programme embeds the 'Creative Doodle Book' into its delivery. These resources, developed in collaboration with learning disabled artists and performance makers, is designed to support critical and creative reflection.

Teaching

Teaching is student centred and offers various ways for you to learn. Your learning methods are considered, through an access needs assessment before you start. The programme provides a support worker to guide and support you through your study.

Most of the teaching is done through practical sessions.

Year 1:

You will complete modules in **Approaches to Text**; looking at Classic and Contemporary plays, **Dance Techniques**; understanding the basics of dance and **Music Performance**, where you will develop skills in listening and performing. You will also begin to learn about how professional theatre and performance companies operate.

Year 2

In your second-year you will explore **Physical Theatre**, looking at work of other physical theatre companies. You will also build upon their **Dance Choreography** skills as well as studying **Music Composition**, developing skills in music for screen and stage. You will also have the opportunity to identify your skills in a wider industry context, as you continue to build on your practice and wider understanding of performance.

Year 3

In your final year you will study **Music Production**, investigating song writing, choreographing your own dance piece in the **Creating Dance** module and developing your **Devising Theatre** skills. The final year concludes with a 20 credit final **Performance Project** that draws together learning and performance skills across theatre, music and dance.

Throughout the three years training, you will also create a portfolio of work that focuses on pathways to employability with the Industry Studies module.

The module will support you to learn about the arts industry with a particular focus on Learning disability practice and understanding the role or impact of the learning-disabled presence within the arts. You will research and reflect on work of disabled artists and/or companies, as well as engaging with local artists and/or companies to support your development and knowledge in this area of work.

Assessment

There are no formal examinations. Portfolio assessment will take place during the programme through observations in practical sessions, informal sharing's, performances, presentations, individual and group reflections and a portfolio in your final year.

Mind The Gap assessment objectives are as follows:

- Assessment processes should be accessible and understandable to Mind the Gap students with a diversity of learning needs.
- Assessment processes should align with the Academy's strong focus upon engaging with process and individual learning goals.
- Assessment processes should be meaningful to you, providing you with the ability to recognise your own achievements.
- Assessment processes should avoid terminology, language or concepts and avoid replicating negative or deficit models.

Reflecting these objectives, Mind The Gap follow a three-point marking scale mapped against four accessible criteria:

| | Improving I am working towards... | Achieving I have reached... | Exceeding I have exceeded... |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| Knowledge and understanding of ideas from the programme | | | |
| Communication of ideas effectively and creatively. | | | |
| Quality of contributions both verbally and non-verbally. | | | |
| Personal Goals negotiated at the start of the programme. | | | |

Improving indicates that a student needs more time to reach their desired goals.

Achieving indicates that a student has reached the expecting learning outcomes.

Excelling indicates that a student has surpassed expected levels of achievement.

Progression and graduation requirements

All modules are compulsory, and students must have reached an 'achieving' assessment in all their modules before the end of the three years.

Students will have two academic terms (September to December and January to April) to complete their modules.

Students who are indicated as 'improving' will be provided with additional time in their final term (April to July) to reach the required result.

Graduating students will be awarded a Certificate of Higher Education with either a record of 'Achievement' or, if they have achieved a grade of excelled in modules equalling 60 credits or more, 'Excellled'.

Late result modules

The final module on the programme titled 'Performance Project will take place in the students' final term in their final year. Assessment for this would not take place until after July.

Internal and external reference points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

Mind the Gap Students and Alumni Focus Group – focus group held with current and ex Mind the Gap students exploring assessment processes.

Mind the Gap Business Plan – this key strategy document summarises the company's artistic and business priorities, and as such informs all our major programmes including courses that are delivered within MTG Academy. This ensures training course content and objectives are aligned with key company ones.

Historical training accreditation documentation and resources – this Programme is the successor to previous accreditation methodologies adopted by MTG, and as such some documents relating to OCN accreditation and Arts Award (Trinity London) have been referred to in developing this programme.

Let's Create – Arts Council England's current strategy document setting out its vision for 2020-2030; as a key investor and influencer of arts and creative practice in England, this has informed our plans for ensuring Mind the Gap's Performance Academy Programme is relevant and fit for purpose in today's cultural context. <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/letscreate>

Bradford Cultural Strategy – Bradford Council's strategy document currently in development – as a key partner and investor in Mind the Gap the Local Authority's vision and aims are also relevant to ensure this Programme is reflective of local priorities and opportunities. An updated plan is currently in development. <https://www.bradford.gov.uk/media/2708/bradfordculturalstrategyjune2014.pdf>

Date written / revised: 06/01/21

Programme originally approved: 30/04/2021