Introduction and Special Features

This practice based MA offers students the opportunity to develop advanced skills and knowledge in the use of theatre and performance in participatory, community and social contexts.

Through workshops, studio practice and community-based projects, the MA will provide students with compositional, reflective and research strategies through which to develop their portfolio as thinking practitioners. Seminars and staff-led workshops will provide opportunities for students to widen and enhance their conceptual and reflective abilities.

MA Applied Theatre is located within the School's Creative Practice suite and shares delivery of elements of curriculum with parallel MA programmes in Theatre and Performance, Music Composition and Fine Arts. Students taking the programme will follow both discipline specific and cross-disciplinary modules, with teaching constituted as most appropriate.

While discipline specific modules ensure depth and sustained investigation, the cross-disciplinary modules allow opportunities for new insights, widened horizons and lateral thinking.

The MA is designed to address dynamic interrelationships between theory and practice, with all modules delivered in seminar, workshop, studio and virtual environments. Theoretical concepts will be explored in relation to practice; practice will inform conceptualisations. The aspirations of the programme are to provide students with the opportunity to develop their own practice, their own thinking, their skills and methodologies.

Special features

Key features of provision are:

- opportunities to explore the social, ethical and aesthetic implications of applied theatre practice;
- opportunities for students to place their own practice within compositional, critical and methodological frameworks;
- opportunities for students to develop cross-disciplinary awareness;
• opportunities for students to pursue community-based project-led work and produce artefacts, events or products according to a range of impulses within applied theatre practice;
• a combination of intensive periods of activity and periods of supported independent reflection;
• a platform for students to present their work to a range of audiences.

Project work
Central to the programme will be students’ reflective engagement with community-based projects, examples of which might include work in health contexts, in education, in prisons or with young offenders, with local communities or other interest groups. MA Applied Theatre aims to provide students with the opportunity to make, do and think about their practice, about their methodologies and about the social, ethical and aesthetic implications of their work.

The School has established a formal relationship with local mental health services. An Education Support Worker employed by the NHS works with students to offer theatre opportunities to people who use mental health services. Students on the MA in Applied Theatre will have the opportunity to run courses and workshops for mental health service users. They may also be involved in supporting Out of Character, a theatre company comprising service users and students.

Specialist Input
The postgraduate programme hosts an active series of lunchtime artists’ talks and visiting lecturers, with previous speakers including Andre Stitt, Gary Winters, Adrian Howells, Tim Wheeler and Mat Fraser among others.

Admissions Criteria
Candidates for the MA programme are considered on the combination of all elements of their application, including existing arts practice, evidence of critical and reflective engagement and academic qualifications.

For all candidates there will be an interview and consideration of a portfolio of work, consisting of examples of their previous and current theatre and performance practice. The portfolio is a central element of our consideration of applications and also an opportunity for the candidate to find out more about the programme. In interviews, all candidates will be asked to give a presentation. The criteria for this are as follows:
• demonstration of readiness for graduate level practice;
• evidence of engagement with critical thinking.

We are happy to arrange skype interviews for overseas students.

Candidates would normally be considered for interview if they meet the following criteria:
• graduates with an honours degree at 2:1 or above in a related subject (e.g. Drama, Theatre, Community Art, Dance, Applied Theatre) will normally register for the MA;

OR
• experience of working in a professional arts environment or substantial on-going arts practice. In these circumstances, the interview process will include consideration of the suitability for Masters level study in accordance with University APEL procedures.

Applicants not meeting the above criteria may be considered for initial registration on the Postgraduate Certificate. If successful in work at postgraduate level, the student may be permitted to enrol for the Masters’ degree. In particular applicants with a 2:2 degree may be considered according to relevant practice based or professional experience.
Admissions tutors will consider all applications on an individual basis. If they are an international student, they will need to demonstrate that they have equivalent experience/qualifications as above. If your first language is not English, you need to take an IELTS test or an equivalent qualification accepted by the University (see https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/international/how-to-apply/english-language-requirements/).

Applications from candidates with disabilities are always considered. The programme adheres to York St John University’s disability policy.

Decisions on Applications
Decisions on individual applicants will be made by the Head of Programme in consultation with subject specialists, the Admissions Manager and International Office, as appropriate.

Programme Aims
The benchmark aim for the suite of MA awards in Creative Practice is:
- to provide a stimulating environment and appropriate critical interventions that enable students to operate with self-direction, professionalism and originality as reflexive practitioners.

The programme aim for the MA Applied Theatre is:
- to develop practitioners able to respond to complex issues within their discipline with criticality, reflexivity and creativity.

Programme Learning Outcomes
Level 7 / FHEQ L7
Students who gain the award specified will have demonstrated the following learning outcomes:

Level 7 (MA / Postgraduate Diploma / Postgraduate Certificate)
On successful completion of the Postgraduate Diploma students will have demonstrated:

Knowledge and Understanding.
1. Systematic understanding of the issues of facilitation, empowerment and participation as they relate to applied theatre practice.
2. Critical awareness of current issues, agendas and methodologies in applied theatre practice and research.
3. Advanced knowledge of creative, reflective and research strategies in applied theatre practice.

Cognitive/Thinking Skills.
1. Ability to reflect critically and creatively both in and on practice and to use appropriate strategies for reflection.
2. Ability to apply new knowledge and skills to develop new practices.
3. Ability to engage critically and creatively in the development of arts knowledge and practice.

Practical/Professional Skills.
1. Originality in the application of knowledge as appropriate to their own applied theatre practice.
2. Application of relevant knowledge and strategies to their own practice.
3. Ability to communicate effectively and clearly in appropriate contexts about their own artistic practices and their impact upon the lives and experiences of others.

Key Transferable Skills.
1. Ability to critically evaluate their own achievements and that of others.
2. Self-direction and effective decision making in creative situations. Independent learning and the ability to work in a way that ensures continuing professional development.
3. Ability to apply a reflective approach to professional relationships.

These outcomes also apply to students exiting with a Pg. Cert, who will have completed 60 credits rather than the 120 required for Pg. Dip.

To complete the MA, student will in addition to the above be able to:
1. Formulate a systematic research trajectory of practice, from inception to completion.
2. Demonstrate originality in the application of an independent body of practice-based research.
3. Articulate with complexity and clarity the knowledge generated through their own practice and research activity.

Programme Structure

Students on MA Applied Theatre follow a programme of taught modules designed to enhance their abilities, knowledge and understanding of issues of applied theatre practice, reflection on and in practice and research methodologies. These taught modules lead MA students into the final 'Independent Project' module, where students undertake an extended period of supervised practice-based research where they are expected to draw together and implement the resources provided to them earlier in the programme.

Structures of peer and tutor supervision, responsive to students’ experience and individual learning requirements, are utilised throughout the degree.

Creativity and Knowledge 1 and Creativity and Knowledge 2
This element of the MA award consists of two 20-credit modules which are shared by all MAs in the Creative Practice suite.

The first of these modules, ‘Creativity and Knowledge 1’, is designed to invite students to explore a range of key themes relating to the relationship between art and the wider cultural, social, economic circumstances of its production and reception. For MA Applied Theatre students this module will enable them to place their own practice and disciplines within wider frameworks and debates.

The second module, ‘Creativity and Knowledge 2’, is located prior to the final practice-based ‘Independent Project’ (MPR140). This module provides students with a structured investigation of ideas and methodologies of practice-based research.

Through a combination of lectures, discussion and reflective practice, students will explore, test and model approaches to the theory/practice nexus. It will interrogate the possibilities for the generation and communication of knowledge in and through practice and, by doing so, will deepen and broaden students’ understanding of the interrelationship between arts practice, knowledge and research.

Applied Theatre Practice and Critical Concepts in Applied Theatre
This element of the MA award consists of two 40 credit modules, which are discipline specific modules particular to MA Applied Theatre. These modules will be primarily focused around students’ own practice, contextualised by examination of various key practitioners, modes or epistemologies.

The first of these modules, ‘Applied Theatre Practice’, invites students to interrogate the processes – from conception and implementation to evaluation and analysis – employed in applied theatre practice. Students will be invited to critically consider and evaluate a range of methodological strategies of making, thinking and doing as utilised in applied theatre practice. Emphasis will be placed on reflexive approaches to practice in order to heighten students’ appreciation of the impact of their work. Accordingly the political, ethical and aesthetic
dimensions of applied theatre work will be foregrounded so that students deepen their awareness of the contexts in which their work takes place and the implications of the choices made in their own practice.

For certain project or community activities within this module a Criminal Record Board (CRB) check may be required (for instance if working in schools or with young people). It is the responsibility of the student to obtain CRB checks as appropriate.

The second module in this element, ‘Critical Concepts in Applied Theatre’, provides students with the opportunity to critically explore, test and model approaches to applied and community arts practice. Students will engage in the claims made for the ‘efficacy’ of applied theatre practices seeking to understand their underlying assumptions. The focus will be on the exploration of how the concepts and rationales at play in applied and community practice manifest themselves in the ethics, impacts and aesthetics of applied practice. This module will provide students with the opportunity to engage with conceptual and theoretical issues relating to applied theatre at an advanced level.

This module will provide students with opportunities to encounter and question a range of models and methodologies in applied and community practice. It will deepen and broaden students’ understanding of the interrelationship between arts practice, ethics, impact and aesthetics. An additional focus of the module will be the importance of research and evaluation findings in applied theatre being disseminated in appropriate fashions to appropriate audiences.

For full-time students these modules run in parallel. For part-time students they run in sequence.

**Independent Project**

The final element of this MA is a practice-based Independent Project’ of 60 credits. This is intended to synthesise the practical, reflective and conceptual developments in students’ work over the course of the programme.

The ‘Independent Project’ module provides a structure shared by students on all the Creative Practice MAs and is undertaken by both full and part-time students. Within this structure the form and timetable for each individual project is negotiated. This process of negotiation starts with individual students beginning to formulate a research proposal, assisted by the exploration of research methodologies contained within taught modules. These proposals are submitted to the Head of Programme and appropriate tutors for consideration.

To recognise the different work loads of full and part time students there will be slightly different schedules and supervisory periods. Part time students will be briefed on the Independent Project module during semester 1 of their second year of study and will be expected to submit a proposal by the beginning of semester 2. Except in cases of mitigating circumstances, part time students will submit their Independent Project by the end of September of their second year of study.

Full time students will be briefed on the Independent Project during their second semester and submit a proposal by the end of the semester. Full time students will submit their Independent Project by the end of September.

The exact nature of the ‘Independent Project’ is open to negotiation, which will take place between each student and the supervisor/Head of Programme, but it is anticipated it will take the form of a performance, event, workshop series, installation or artefact, which will be supported by a reflective document. When a student is developing a topic of study the negotiation process will refer to the programme content, student’s areas of interest and staff expertise. When the proposal is agreed, a supervisor is appointed. The work is carried out as an independent piece of research, with the guidance of the supervisor.

**Modules for the Programme**


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<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Creativity and Knowledge 1</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>Creativity and Knowledge 2</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>40</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1 and 2</td>
<td>Critical Concepts in Applied Theatre</td>
<td>40</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Independent Project</td>
<td>60</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*C: Compulsory, **CP**: Compulsory for progression to the next level, **CA**: Compulsory for award, **O**: option or **E**: elective.

### Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The programme has been designed to meet the needs of both students who have just finished undergraduate programmes, and returners to learning who may have already developed their own applied theatre practice. Programme delivery will utilise a blended approach incorporating contact hours, including group work and individual tutorials, SOL and learning supported by VLEs.

The programme is concerned with ensuring that students have the opportunity to experience a wide range of teaching and learning strategies across the modules offered within its programme of study. These are structured to facilitate successful achievements of the learning outcomes of each module.

Students will be provided with a range of teaching and learning strategies across the modules, including:

- reflective learning;
- independent learning;
- collaborative learning;
- facilitated learning.

This process will be achieved through the use of a wide and varied range of teaching and learning methods, including workshop and studio sessions, seminar discussions, supervised projects and supported VLE learning. It is anticipated that semesters will be divided between periods of intense activity (extended weekends, a series of weekly sessions) and periods of independent reflection, supported by specific tasks, technician supported SOL, reading and proactive use of VLE (including forums, discussion groups and web publication).

Formative assessment of generic skills will be maintained throughout the programme through a range of tasks, projects and presentations. Summative assessment will take a variety of forms, including presentations of art works, reports, essays, catalogue documents, case studies, annotated documentations.

### Progression and Graduation Requirements

The University’s [general regulations for postgraduate awards](#) apply to this programme.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the Programme Structure section.
In addition, the following programme-specific regulations apply in respect of progression and graduation:

- 180 credits must be passed at M Level in order to gain the award of Master of Arts.

### Internal and External Reference Points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

- [University Mission Statement](#) [see page two]
- School strategic aims
- [Strategic Plan 2015-20](#) [see page four]
- [QAA subject benchmark statement](#)
- [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#)
- MA Creative Practice review report

### Further Information

Further information on the programme of study may be obtained from:

- Admissions entry profile (Admissions)
- Programme validation document (Registry – Academic Quality Support)
- Regulations (Registry – Academic Quality Support)
- Student programme handbook (school)
- Module handbooks (school)

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