This MA offers students the opportunity to investigate the interrelationships between their own arts practice and questions arising about knowledge, composition and reflection in performance. The MA will provide students with compositional, reflective and research strategies through which to develop their portfolio as thinking practitioners.

The MA Music Composition is located within the School’s MA Creative Practice suite and shares delivery of core curriculum regarding practice-led research methodology with parallel degrees in MA Fine Arts, Applied Theatre and Theatre and Performance. Students taking the programme will follow both discipline specific and cross-disciplinary modules, with teaching constituted as most appropriate - this allows the possibility of cross-disciplinary study, opportunities for new insights, lateral thinking, and an in-depth and sustained investigation.

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 and provide them with a platform from which to disseminate their work.

Special features

Key features of provision are:

- opportunities to explore the interrelationships between practice, reflection and knowledge;
- opportunities for students to place their practice within compositional and critical frameworks;
- opportunities for students to develop cross-disciplinary awareness;
- opportunities for students to produce artefacts, events or products related to the above;
- 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.
Opportunities for Performance and Dissemination
There will be many opportunities for composition students to have their music rehearsed and performed as part of the programme. Our undergraduate degree includes both Solo Performance and Ensemble Performance modules each semester, both at levels 2 and 3 of the programme and the Composers’ Group (‘Opus 10’) facilitates links between composers and performers. There are weekly lunchtime concerts during term-time in which students are encouraged to present their own work and the larger ensembles within the university regularly present evening performances, both on and off the campus. Music staff collaborate on performance projects with York’s ‘Late Music’ series of concerts and workshops which allow composition students to access professional performers and participate in composers’ workshop events which often culminate in performances and recordings of their work.

Additional Resources
Music resources include a recording studio, two technology suites (which include PC and Apple computers), several grand pianos, percussion equipment (including pedal timpani, marimba and concert xylophone) pipe organ and two harpsichords. The Fountains Learning Centre contains an excellent music library which comprises books, scores and recordings; this includes a considerable part of the York City Library Music collection which is held by the University and comprises a considerable number of twentieth century orchestral scores alongside performance materials for soloists and chamber ensembles.

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 music related subject 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/](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.

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**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 Music Composition is:

- to develop practitioners able to respond to complex issues within their discipline with criticality, reflexivity and creativity.

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**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 composition, reflection and knowledge as they relate to music practice.
2. Critical awareness of current issues, agendas and methodologies in practice and research.
3. Advanced knowledge of compositional and dissemination strategies in composition.

**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. Original application of knowledge as appropriate to their own composition 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 knowledge.

**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.
3. Independent learning and the ability to work in a way which ensures continuing professional development.
4. Ability to apply a reflective approach to professional relationships.

These outcomes also apply to students exiting with a PgCert, who will have completed 60 credits rather than the 120 required for PgDip.
On successful completion of the MA, students 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

MA Music Composition is structured to enable students who already have some experience of performance practice to expand their artistic horizons, develop their reflective abilities and expand their portfolio as thinking practitioners. Students follow two strands of modules through the programme: one concerned with ‘Creativity and Knowledge'; the other ‘Reflective Practice’.

Creativity and Knowledge Strand

This strand, consisting of two 20 credit modules, is designed to deepen students' understanding of key interdisciplinary questions, concepts and methodologies in the arts.

‘Creativity and Knowledge 1’ invites students to interrogate a range of key themes relating to the relationship between art and the wider cultural, social, economic circumstances of its production and reception. ‘Creativity and Knowledge 2’ consists of investigation into concepts of practice-based research in the arts and the examination of the epistemological and ideological implications of the widening of traditional concepts of research that such developments entail.

In both modules students will be invited to place their own practices into dialogue with the practices of others and critical and conceptual discourses.

This strand of modules is compulsory for all students and is taught cross-disciplinarily with students on the MA programmes within Creative Practice.

Reflective Practice Strand

This strand, consisting of two 40 credit modules, is designed to enhance students' abilities as self-reflective practitioners. It recognises the deep interrelationship between reflection, documentation and production, both in terms of the development of an artists' work and in terms of the work's critical and public dissemination.

‘Composition and Reflection (Music Composition)’ will be taught almost exclusively within the discipline of MA Music Composition, but will have moments of interconnection with the other MA programmes in Creative Practice where such interaction is appropriate and dynamic (e.g. cross-disciplinary group critiques, seminars, etc). This module will be primarily brief-led, with students responding as individuals or as a group to stimuli and inspirations. Through this activity students will be encouraged to produce work and think about the inspirations, contexts and meanings of the work they produce.

In ‘Practice and Dissemination (Music Composition)’ students will be expected to identify and develop the framework of their own practice, developing work in a reflective environment. The module is structured through individual, group and peer-to-peer tutorials, with students developing, showing and redeveloping their practice over the course of the module. Alongside this, students will interrogate the relationship between performance and dissemination of performance, using this to enhance their abilities to generate a professional portfolio, and a fulcrum through which to see their own work and as generative material in their on-going practice.

The relationship between the ‘Composition and Reflection’ and ‘Practice and Dissemination’ modules within MA Music Composition allows the possibility for students to construct sequential
or simultaneous relationships between the two, allowing the MA experience to become an integrated whole rather than a segmented/modular experience.

**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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Status of Module*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MPR080</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Creativity &amp; Knowledge 1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>O C C</td>
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<tr>
<td>MPR090</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Creativity &amp; Knowledge 2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>O C C</td>
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<td>MPR170</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1 and 2</td>
<td>Composition and Reflection (Music Composition)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>O C C</td>
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<tr>
<td>MPR180</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1 and 2</td>
<td>Practice and Dissemination (Music Composition)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>O C C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPR140</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Independent Project</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</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 arts practice. Programme delivery will utilise a blended approach incorporating contact hours, 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 achievement 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 publishing of documents).

This process will be achieved by the use of a wide and varied range of teaching methods, including:

- lectures;
- demonstrations;
- seminars;
- individual and group tutorials;
- group (peer-to-peer) crits (i.e. discussions about work in a studio context);
- group and individual presentations;
- visiting speakers/lecturers;
- visits to appropriate arts venues and performances;
- use of audio-visual material;
- use of e-learning;
- use of appropriate IT;
- workshops with key practitioners;
- supported open learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSESSMENT STRATEGY</th>
<th>MODULE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>MPR080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>MPR090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio</td>
<td>MPR170, MPR180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio (practical work and documentation incorporating reflective and contextual analysis)</td>
<td>MPR140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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)

Date written / revised: 03/13. Reviewed: October 2014 (no change), July 2017