Introduction and Special Features

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. Whether their practice is located within traditions of theatre, dance, music or live art, the MA will provide students with compositional, reflective and research strategies through which to develop their portfolio as thinking practitioners.

The MA Theatre and Performance is located within the School’s MA Creative Practice suite and shares delivery of core curriculum regarding practice-led research methodology with the parallel degrees in MA Fine Arts, Applied Theatre and Music Composition. Students taking the programme will follow both discipline specific and cross-disciplinary modules, with teaching constituted as most appropriate. This allows the potential for in-depth and sustained investigation within disciplines, and subsequently, opportunities for new insights 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 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.
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, Live Art, Dance, Music, Place/Space/Time Based Art) 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 Theatre and Performance is:

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

Programme Learning Outcomes

Level M / FHEQ L7

Students who gain the award specified will have demonstrated the following learning outcomes:

Level M (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 theatre and performance practice.
2. Critical awareness of current issues, agendas and methodologies in theatre and performance practice and research.
3. Advanced knowledge of creative and reflective strategies in theatre and performance practice.

Cognitive/Thinking Skills

1. Ability to reflect critically and creatively both in and on practice and 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 appropriate to their own performance 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.
5. 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

This degree 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’. These are designed to enhance students’ abilities, knowledge and understanding of issues of creative practice, reflection on and in practice and arts research. Together they 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.

Creativity and Knowledge
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 and economic circumstances of its production and reception. For MA Theatre and Performance 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.

Reflective Practice
This strand, consisting of two 40 credit modules is designed to enhance students’ abilities as self-reflective practitioners. It recognises the deep interrelationship between making, doing, reflecting and performing, in terms of the development of an artist’s work and practice and in terms of its function and operation within critical and public domains. Students will be introduced to contemporary concerns in theatre and performance practice, particularly as related to questions of composition, collaboration and criticality. This module strand will be primarily focused around students’ own practice, contextualised by examination of various key practitioners, modes or epistemologies.

‘Composition and Reflection (Performance)’ is a practice-based module that aims to enhance students’ abilities to think and reflect through the making of creative work while considering the compositional strategies that emerge in practice. It aims to give students opportunities and encouragement to generate and share performance material, and to enhance the conceptual, reflective and technical strategies that they employ in their practice.

The module ‘Commissions and Collaboration’ engages with how theatre and performance practice often entails working with others and in response to others; it involves working in context and in response to context. This practice-based module engages students, as increasingly sophisticated individual practitioners, in processes whereby they are required to engage with others through acts of collaborations and/or commission. The module aims to provide students with experiences of working as individual practitioners with collaborative and commission based structures.

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.

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>M</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Creativity and Knowledge 1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>O C C</td>
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<tr>
<td>MPR090</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Creativity and Knowledge 2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>O C C</td>
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<td>MPR120**</td>
<td>M 1 and 2</td>
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<td>Composition and Reflection (Performance)</td>
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<td>O C C</td>
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<tr>
<td>MPR190**</td>
<td>M 1 and 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Commissions and Collaborations</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>O C C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPR140</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Independent Project</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></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.

** It is likely that the modules MPR120 and MPR190 will be delivered in alternate years. The Head of Programme may revise this for full-time students or intercalation purposes.

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 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;
- 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, 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.
**Assessment Strategy**

<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>Performance + reflection</td>
<td>MPR120, MPR190</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, July 2017