

Programme Specification

Award and title: MA Theatre

<i>School:</i>	Arts
<i>Subject area:</i>	Performance
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2026-27
<i>in the month(s) of</i>	September
<i>Awarding institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Teaching institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Delivery location:</i>	York St John University, York campus
<i>Programme/s accredited by:</i>	Not applicable
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Postgraduate Certificate in Theatre Postgraduate Diploma in Theatre
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	Not applicable
<i>Mode/s of study:</i>	Postgraduate periods of study ¹ for full time / part time 1
<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
<i>Excluding a year-long placement/professional experience, are there placement/field trip/work experience(s) totalling 20 days or more?</i>	No

Introduction and special features

The MA Theatre offers you an innovative programme led by leaders in the fields of Live Art, Contemporary Theatre and Applied Drama. The development of new creative practices is at the heart of the programme, where you will facilitate or produce creative work for professional creative industries, communities and the third sector. We will offer you a dynamic and authentic real-world learning experience where research and practice come together in a knowledge exchange with communities and local, regional and national partners. We welcome all theatre makers, facilitators, producers, educators, actors, creative writers or Fine Artists who wish to expand their work in performance platforms, and those wishing to start as professionals in any of these areas. Such a broad spectrum in our offer maintains specialist focus by offering you two preparatory options in your first semester that support the specialist skillset you will need for your independent research, placements and final project.

In joining our taught postgraduate community at York St John University, you will be part of a local, national and global creative community that connects you to a network of artists through projects and experiences that prepare you for successful careers in the arts. Community, collaboration and real-world learning

experience are integral to our design, meaning you will benefit from cross-disciplinary peer-to-peer learning and shared creative industry networks. All our postgraduate degrees operate within the heart of the city of York, which is the only UNESCO city of Media Arts in the UK and one of twenty-two globally. York St John University is also the home for the International Centre for Community Music whose projects operate in various locations globally. These locations have included Solomon Islands, New Zealand, Malawi, Brazil and North America and many more. The MA Theatre captures the importance of cross-cultural and transmedia approaches for today's artists and supports students' aspirations to collaborate with projects in film, digital production, live performance and more.

This degree comes as part of a suite of creative MAs in the Performance department that offers more opportunities for you to collaborate creatively and to develop as a creator and producer in ways that more accurately reflect the interconnected worlds of work you will graduate into. Students from both Theatre and Music share key modules that support creative careers and open the possibilities for collaborations right from the start of the degree. These MAs will support careers as a freelance and portfolio artist and provide the skillset to work across varied fields including the third sector, educational organisations, national portfolio organisations, and commercial enterprises. As students' routes into postgraduate degrees are becoming increasingly varied, we recognise the importance of supporting students on part-time routes.

Special Features

- Professional and internationally recognised theatre practitioners leading and contributing to the programme
- Community placements in various settings
- Career focussed and practice based

Admissions criteria

You must meet the University's general entry criteria for [postgraduate](#) study. In addition:

- 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 short 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 interviews by distance for overseas students.

Candidates would normally be considered for interview if they meet the following criteria:

- Graduates with an Honours degree at 2:2 or above in a related subject (e.g. Drama, Theatre, Live Art, Dance, Music, Place/Space/Time Based Art, Creative Writing) will normally register for the MA

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/>).

If you do not have traditional qualifications, you may be eligible for entry on the basis of [Recognition of prior learning \(RPL\)](#). We also consider applications for entry with advanced standing.

Programme aim(s)

To support the professionalisation of your developing theatre practice within a community of leading international artists, and connect your work with a local, regional and international innovative artistic community.

To make or facilitate new work through the development and application of your creative skills that engages audiences and/or communities.

Programme learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of the programme students will be able to:

Level 7

- 7.1 Demonstrate a systematic understanding and a critical awareness of current research, scholarship, practice and problems and/or new insights in theatre, locally, nationally and globally.
- 7.2 Manage complex issues through methodological and creative approaches, to make sound judgements and communicate conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences.
- 7.3 Evidence a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own practice-led research in theatre.
- 7.4 Advance subject knowledge and understanding independently, developing new skills to a high level.
- 7.5 Demonstrate originality in the application of knowledge in theatre, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the field.
- 7.6 Apply self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional level.
- 7.7 Appraise qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment, requiring the exercise of initiative, personal responsibility and decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations along with the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

Programme structure

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
					Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensable (NC) or compensable (X)
PER7006M	7	1	Methods of Reflective Practice	30	C	X
PER7007M	7	1	Theatre Environments	30	C	X
PER7009M	7	2	Creative Entrepreneurship	30	C	X
PER7010M	7	3	Independent Research	30	C	X
PER7011M	7	2, 3	Theatre Independent Project	60	C	NC

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the table above as non-compensable. A non-compensable module is one that must be passed at the relevant level with a mark of 50 in order to progress.

Learning, teaching 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 (Supported Open Learning) and learning supported by visiting practitioners and placements.

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.

You 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 supporting virtual learning environments (VLE) such as Moodle and Teams. It is anticipated that semesters will be divided between periods of intense activity and periods of independent reflection, supported by specific tasks, technician supported open learning, reading and proactive use of VLE (including forums, discussion groups, web publishing of documents). Examples include:

- Lectures
- Demonstrations
- Seminars
- Individual and group tutorials
- Group (peer-to-peer) critiques
- 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

Within modules, teaching will consist of a mixture of group seminars and individual tutorials as appropriate. The additional tutorial hours attached to each module will similarly be used flexibly, including bringing onto the module a wider range of staff input from tutors not timetabled to deliver taught contact.

The degree offers practical workshops that cover industry standard techniques detailing how to creatively develop and perform contemporary theatre for public audiences. The artistic processes detail distinct learning experiences for both live and mediated theatre through improvisation, devising, creative writing, and are taught by internationally renowned practitioners and researchers. Your performance work will develop a distinctive identity through critical engagement with dramaturgical processes, where the performer is also the theatre maker of the work they produce. You will be given the opportunity to develop this work for festivals, studio touring and gallery exhibition. The world leading theatre makers that support the programme, offer creative producing advice as well as witnessing the ideas and refining your work for specialist practice. Not only does YSJU offer excellent facilities (our Creative Centre has a new theatre equipped with the most up-to-date technologies, rehearsal rooms, drama and dance studios and a black-box theatre), but York as a city is also an exciting space to continue to be a learner, professionalise your practice, and develop site specific practice as well as studio based work that connects with local industries who think creatively and have long standing partnerships with YSJU.

You may also combine your passion for innovative, engaging theatre making with workshop facilitation, to utilise theatre as a tool for community empowerment and social change. You will have the opportunity to focus on the development of advanced skills in the use of theatre and participatory drama facilitation and performance making in community, educational and social contexts, such as schools, prisons, mental health settings, intergenerational community projects, health and addiction recovery programmes, learning disability and dementia settings.

Workshop practice will encourage a deeper understanding of the compositional practices of theatre making; devising, writing, dramaturgy, directing and acting. You will shape a clear artistic, and autonomous identity to feel professionally confident to be a performer-maker, writer-performer, director-performer, dramaturgical practitioner, performer-thinker, performer-workshop facilitator.

There are potential placement opportunities with York Theatre Royal, Third Angel Performance Company, the Festival of Thrift, SLAP, York Art Gallery, City Screen, and The Laurence Sterne Trust at Shandy Hall, Mind the Gap, Converge, Living Lab and Dancing for Wellbeing are to name but a few of the exciting opportunities to collaborate with.

You will develop compositional, reflective, and research strategies that will enhance your creative practice, making it accessible, inclusive, participatory, relational and, if applicable, trauma informed. You will have the opportunity to tour your work in YSJ's Creative Centre, York Theatre Royal, and/or various local and regional community venues and festivals and can further develop your work for digital platforms.

The programme recognises your status as a graduate student and, therefore, places a significant emphasis on independent learning. The programme, therefore, aims to provide an environment in which you are encouraged to take responsibility for your role in managing your learning and its outcomes.

The programme will be drawing its students from a variety of arts practice and theoretical backgrounds and will actively seek to foster modes of collaborative learning, in which knowledge, skills, and practical and critical experiences can be shared and exchanged.

The programme is underpinned by a requirement to engage in self-reflective learning, as a means of locating your own creative practice within a broader professional context. It will also facilitate an understanding of your own learning processes and your relationship with other creative practices.

Finally, through facilitated learning within a variety of contexts, the programme will both consolidate and challenge acquired research methodologies and modes of critical inquiry, in order to encourage the development of new and innovative forms of learning.

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 as non-compensable.

Internal and external reference points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

- [University mission and values](#)
- [University 2026 Strategy](#)
- [QAA subject benchmark statements](#)
- [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#)