

## Programme Specification

### Award and title: BA (Hons) Drama: Education & Community

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|--|---|
| <i>School:</i>                                 | School of the Arts  |
| <i>Subject area:</i>                           | Performance   |
| <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>                   | York St John University   |
| <i>Delivery location:</i>                      | York St John University   |
| <i>Programme/s accredited by:</i>              | Not Applicable  |
| <i>Exit awards:</i>                            | Certificate of Higher Education Drama & Theatre<br>Diploma of Higher Education Drama & Theatre<br>BA (Ord) Drama: Education & Community |
| <i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>               |   |
| <i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>             | Not applicable  |
| <i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>     | Dance, Drama and Performance (2019)   |
| <i>Mode/s of study:</i>                        | full time 3 years<br>part time 6 years  |
| <i>Language of study:</i>                      | English   |
| <i>Paired with Foundation Year</i>             | No  |
| <i>Study abroad opportunities:</i>             | Yes   |
| <i>Opt-in YSJU Placement Year opportunity:</i> | Yes   |

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## Introduction and special features

This course is a unique opportunity to engage in applied drama and theatre in a practice-led, creative and socially engaged programme. BA Drama: Education & Community at York St John is a creative, contemporary and outward facing programme offering students the opportunity to develop their skills and understanding of theatre and its application across a wide range of community and educational settings. Our practice-led taught course offers an opportunity to engage in a rich and diverse range of contemporary practices.

You will work on placement alongside various and diverse communities and with marginalised groups in different localities; facilitating others to make work, participate in drama and write for theatre. You will work in community settings locally and regionally and in primary and secondary school settings and in youth provisions; working to a brief shaped by the host provider. Students get to work alongside drama teachers, youth theatre practitioners, drama facilitators and early years theatre specialists in the planning, development, delivery, reflection and evaluation of practice; facilitating a live and real world understanding of theatre and drama in education and in a community context.

You will explore theory on the histories and practices of performance with particular focus on educational and community practice and politically, socially and environmentally engaged theatre practice as you proceed through the programme. You will become an expert in drama processes and how they can be adapted and made accessible for a range of different groups and communities.

We have long-standing partnerships with a wide range of organisations across the city and region. We work with people across the life span in schools and youth groups, health and social care settings, in prisons and with older people. Central to our practice is good theatre adapted to the particular setting in which we are working. You will learn how to design and facilitate workshops and performances suited to people with very different needs and abilities.

During your time with us you will have the opportunity of collaborating with organisations in the city and in the region. Wherever you work you will learn how to facilitate people to engage in drama, design performances for particular audiences and broaden your understanding of the groups you work with.

A few examples will give you a flavour of the work:

*York Theatre Royal Youth Theatre* - where students have the opportunity to work on weekly youth theatre workshops and performances in the theatre.

*Connaught Court Care Home* - we work in a range of care homes that provide accommodation and support to older people with dementia and/or physical disabilities, with particular partnership work with this care home. Our students regularly visit these homes and make reminiscence theatre for residents.

*Changing Lives* is a charity that provides accommodation and support to homeless men and women in York. You may work with residents to make theatre or offer drama workshops.

*Mind the Gap* is one of Europe's leading learning disability theatre company's specialising in working alongside artists with learning disabilities to create exciting, surprising and challenging theatre experiences and performances. You will work alongside artists delivering theatre workshops and performances.

Students may deliver drama workshops at York High School and Park Grove Primary School developing approaches to Theatre in Education and Drama in Education.

## **Special Features**

We have long term established partnerships working across campus and beyond, where staff on the programme deliver nationally acclaimed projects for the University, such as

- *The YSJU Prison Partnership Project*

This project aims to bring two different kinds of communities together – university students and staff and female prisoners and prison staff and aims to enable each to encounter each other across profound social barriers; the intention is for both communities to be part of a transformative and educational learning experience that emphasises creative collaboration and addresses issues of social concern.

- *Converge*

You will have an opportunity to work alongside people with mental health problems within Converge, a partnership between York St John University and mental health service providers in the York region. It offers arts educational opportunities on campus to those who use NHS and non-statutory mental health services and who are 18 years and over. It also provides work-based experience for university students since our creative courses are taught by university staff and students and take place on the campus. You can find out more about Converge by going to [www.yorks.ac.uk/converge](http://www.yorks.ac.uk/converge)

- *Moving Minds*

You will get the opportunity to work alongside this YSJ project exploring dance and creative movement sessions for those affected by dementia and their carers and families.

- *Out of Character Theatre Company*

You will have the opportunity to support and perform with Out of Character. Out of Character is a theatre company comprising people who use mental health services. They perform in educational and community settings across the North of England and in local theatres.

- *On the Out*

An arts programme that involves facilitating a regular series of arts-based workshops in the educational setting of York St John University with groups of women who have lived experience of the criminal justice system or who are at risk of experiencing it. The women may have at some point used some of the services provided in York or the surrounding areas which help vulnerable and marginalised women. Some of these services include homeless hostels, addiction advice through to women's refuges and support groups.

- Visiting Artists

Students are offered opportunities to work with visiting artists/practitioners in the field of applied theatre.

- Performing House

A receiving venue programmed between drama and dance, providing you with an opportunity to see contemporary touring work of an international standard that is not accessible with the locale.

- Study Abroad

You will have an opportunity to study abroad as part of the University exchange programme (semester 1 of Level 5). In recent years students have gone on to exchange at: University of Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada; Pacific University, Oregon, USA; Keene State College, New Hampshire, USA; Juniata College, Pennsylvania, USA; Metropolia University, Helsinki, Finland.

- Field trips

Field trips are a valuable part of your learning that ensures you are immersed in the real world of work. Please note that if you wish to attend field trips then you may be required to fund, or part fund your trip, particularly if these trips are abroad.

First Year - semester 1 you will be encouraged to go on an 'expedition' for 1 or 2 days, where you will work in small groups to make a series and sequence of site-specific works. Recently, this has taken place at Featherstone Castle, Cober Hill and has been a highly successful and memorable experience.

In your second year you will be encouraged to gain insight into different cultures and histories through field trips. This will raise issues of justice, memory and human rights that are central to our concerns on this programme. For many years our students have been on an expedition to Krakow Poland where they have spent a day at Auschwitz.

Third year – semester 1 you will be encouraged to go on a 2/3 day field trip (e.g. London) where you will have organised a series of viewings, interviews, meetings in order to further develop and underpin your 3<sup>rd</sup> year research practice. For example, you may wish to visit a project working with the homeless or an organisation offering theatre work to young people in socially deprived areas and taking part in specialised theatre company workshops.

- E-Portfolio

As part of developing your professional practice, you will be introduced to the e-portfolio in Level 4 and continue to build this digital platform throughout your degree. The integration of an e-portfolio into different modules as a learning and reflective tool demonstrates how virtual material can be transformed from a product for consumption to an area of critical discussion, exploration, exchange, dissemination of work and ultimately, the creation of a community.

- Dialogue day

Dialogue days are held between staff and students each year. These provide a valuable space for academics and you, the student, to think about and discuss issues that concern us all, e.g. assessment, feedback, learning outcomes, module choices, future careers and the next steps after graduation.

- Drama, Theatre and Dance blog & twitter

This initiative offers you the opportunity to post items that are of interest to the community. This works alongside a twitter feed that is particularly active during performance festivals. It is proving useful for disseminating news and for sharing with candidates and stakeholders.

- Theatre Pages

Theatre Pages is a high-quality magazine incorporating students in areas such as writing, editing and design. For every issue the majority of the material is written by students and staff, whether on their work, research or interviewing artists, for example.

- **Transferable skills**

The learning activities you will take part in during your time on the degree will also present the opportunity to accumulate a set of skills which are highly valuable to employers, such as; creativity, team work, the ability to collaborate, contextual awareness, problem solving, independence, the ability to meet deadlines.

In the 1<sup>st</sup> year you will be asked to compile an audit of transferable skills you already have, then to consider your long-term career plan and construct other skills you need to acquire and where on the programme you can get them.

## **Admissions criteria**

You must meet the minimum entry requirements which are published on the programme specific webpage.

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.yorks.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)**

1. Develop the students' practical and theoretical interest, knowledge and understanding of established, new and emergent drama practice in educational and community contexts.
2. Facilitate students' understanding of the political, social, environmental and cultural significance of making and spectating drama in education and community contexts through the analysis of historical and contemporary practices.
3. Encourage individuals and groups to creatively harness their intellectual skills and making skills to compose thoughtful, imaginative and articulate performance and workshops for diverse audiences/spectators/participants.
4. Produce motivated graduates capable of contributing, individually or collaboratively, in drama in education and community contexts, theatre practice, allied fields as well as employing their skills in a wide variety of presentational and interactive contexts.
5. Foster the continued desirability and significance of embracing new learning opportunities and in making positive, creative contributions to the world around them.

## **Programme learning outcomes**

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

### **Level 4**

- 4.1 Demonstrate knowledge of underlying concepts and principles of drama and theatre practices and evaluate and interpret these concepts within performance contexts.
- 4.2 Evaluate performances, as visual and textual artefacts within a historical and practical context, communicating results in a coherent manner.
- 4.3 Develop new dramatic and performance skills within a structured and managed environment and apply these skills and approaches in making and critiquing theatre.
- 4.4 Reflect on skills, processes and evaluation of their own performance practices in order to refine, select and present further work.

4.5 Demonstrate understanding of professional attitudes, disciplinary boundaries, and cultural frameworks that impact on theatre making.

## Level 5

5.1. Apply established principles and concepts outside the context in which they were first studied, across discipline and discourses of performance in community and educational contexts.

5.2. Critically analyse performances, workshops and applied theatre practice within a social and political context.

5.3. Apply a range of workshop techniques and approaches to performance engaging with the interplay between theory and practice.

5.4. Reflect critically on their own learning, on the appropriateness of different approaches and on the limitations of their knowledge and skills.

5.5. Exercise personal responsibility and decision-making skills with regard to professional attitudes, disciplinary boundaries, community needs, within the cultural framework of drama in its social and political contexts.

## Level 6

6.1. Demonstrate a systematic understanding of theatre performance in educational and community contexts and critically evaluate arguments, assumptions and concepts in order to make judgements and frame appropriate questions.

6.2. Critically evaluate and cultivate uncertainty, ambiguity and contingency in the knowledge and practice of drama, theatre and performance in the contexts of education and community discourses.

6.3. Engage creatively and critically with the creation of performance and workshops through a sensitive understanding of vocabularies, techniques, crafts, structures and methods used in drama in community and educational contexts.

6.4. Apply the practices of reflection, reviewing, consolidation and extending knowledge and understanding to the initiation and execution of projects.

6.5. Demonstrate an independent, agile and professional deployment of approaches to performance making in community environments exercising personal responsibility and effective decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts.

## Programme structure

| Code     | Level | Semester | Title                           | Credits | Module status                  |   |
|----------|-------|----------|---------------------------------|---------|--------------------------------|---|
|          |       |          |                                 |         | Compulsory (C) or optional (O) | non-compensatable (NC) or compensatable (X) |
| PER4005M | 4     | 1        | Acting                          | 20      | C                              | X   |
| PER4010M | 4     | 1        | Making Ensemble Performance     | 20      | C                              | X   |
| PER4012M | 4     | 1        | Workshop Facilitation           | 20      | C                              | X   |
| PER4009M | 4     | 2        | Big Ideas in Performance        | 20      | C                              | X   |
| PER4011M | 4     | 2        | Ensemble: Political Performance | 20      | C                              | X   |
| PER4022M | 4     | 2        | Performance Methods             | 20      | C                              | X   |
| PER5001M | 5     | 1        | Politically Engaged Practice 1  | 20      | C                              | X   |
| PER5002M | 5     | 2        | Politically Engaged Practice 2  | 20      | C                              | X   |
| PER5004M | 5     | 1        | Children and Young People       | 20      | C                              | X   |
| PER5009M | 5     | 2        | Performance in Social Context   | 20      | C                              | X   |

| You must choose two of the following modules: |   |        |  |    |   |    |
|---|---|--------|--|----|---|----|
| PER5014M                                      | 5 | 1 or 2 | Contemporary Storytelling                    | 20 | O | X  |
| PER5006M                                      | 5 | 2      | Acting for Screen: The Performer as Auteur   | 20 | O | X  |
| PER5008M                                      | 5 | 2      | Artist as Witness                            | 20 | O | X  |
| PER5003M                                      | 5 | 1      | Auto/biography & Performance                 | 20 | O | X  |
| PER5012M                                      | 5 | 1 or 2 | Funny Bones                                  | 20 | O | X  |
| PER5015M                                      | 5 | 1 or 2 | Performance and Digital Media                | 20 | O | X  |
| PER5016M                                      | 5 | 1 or 2 | Performance & Ecology                        | 20 | O | X  |
| PER5005M                                      | 5 | 1 or 2 | Physical Theatre                             | 20 | O | X  |
| PER5007M                                      | 5 | 1 or 2 | Politics and the Play                        | 20 | O | X  |
| PER5013M                                      | 5 | 1 or 2 | Re-Performing Dance Archives                 | 20 | O | X  |
| PER5010M                                      | 5 | 2      | Site Specific Dance                          | 20 | O | X  |
| PER5017M                                      | 5 | 1 or 2 | Writing after Beckett                        | 20 | O | X  |
| PER5011M                                      | 5 | 1 or 2 | Acting Vignettes                             | 20 | O | X  |
|   |   |        |  |    |   |    |
| PER6001M                                      | 6 | 1&2    | Dissertation                                 | 20 | C | X  |
| PER6002M                                      | 6 | 1      | Company: Research and Development            | 20 | C | X  |
| PER6003M                                      | 6 | 2      | Company: Commission and Actualisation        | 40 | C | NC |
| PER6007M                                      | 6 | 1 & 2  | Independent Project: Education and Community | 40 | C | NC |

Please note that not all options may be available every year as they depend on student demand and staff availability.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the table above as non-compensatable. A non-compensatable module is one that must be passed at the relevant level (with a mark of 40) in order to progress.

## Learning, teaching and assessment

Central to teaching drama, education and community is the focus on you as a maker, performer and facilitator of drama and theatre within a diverse educational and community settings. You will develop your skills in, and understanding of drama and theatre, to make real change in the world. For all drama students learning takes place through physical, intellectual and emotional engagement. The objective being the creation of drama processes, theatre images and experiences that are resonant with meanings for an audience. The creation, composition, performance and documentation of these images occur with a strong sense of social engagement, i.e. these images and experiences have a purpose. On this programme you will develop your understanding through a feeling-thinking-action loop embracing critical enquiry, contextual awareness and creative actualisation.

The programme is designed so you, the student, can work, create and study alongside the tutors through project-based and co-creating your learning, and take charge of developing the individual direction of your learning. This will be captured through the creation of live works for public consumption, field trips, meeting and working with various 'community' groups and creating documents. You will be required to think and analyse practical and theoretical texts in order to deepen your own learning and bring this understanding to bear on the creation of drama processes, theatre images and experiences.

You will experience a range of teaching styles: workshops; seminars; lectures; tutorials; ethnographic field trips; technical demonstrations; tutorials; peer-to-peer collaborative learning; etc. You will be taught through practical workshop, lectures, seminars in small groups, tutorials, ethnographic field trips, and visiting guest artists (such as Mind the Gap, AtomR, Clean Break, Cardboard citizens, York Theatre Royal, Instant Dissidence, Shonaleigh see *Performing House*).

Building your CV and gaining valuable real-world experience and technique is central to the course. There are optional modules where you will be able to go on work placements with guest artists and community values such as those listed above. All teaching staff are research active and/or produce professional theatre, so there are frequent opportunities for students to assist with professional practice and research in theatre through our Student Internships scheme. We also offer students the opportunity to publish their written work in our very own publication, Theatre Pages, that we distribute throughout the UK. There are study abroad opportunities in the U.S. for those students who wish to expand their connections internationally. We encourage and support festival and competition entry and have professional technicians

who can support these activities, including the development of individual design ideas for theatre, lighting and sound operation training.

Embedded in select modules are weekly dance and movement classes, such as Yoga, Contemporary dance and various other styles such as Street, Jazz, taught by our staff and visiting lecturers. Our curation of professional touring theatre artists in *Performing House* will also offer professional workshops in the company's particular house style. Finally, you can showcase all of these skills through your final projects that can be presented in our professional 200+ seater theatre venue in the heart of York.

The complementary combination of practice and theory enriches the learning experience allowing skills and knowledge introduced in year one to evolve throughout the duration of the programme. This will be delivered through:

- Developing skills as a workshop practitioner, a key skill when working with communities or young people to running a rehearsal with professional actors.
- Acting (voice and movement techniques) normally assessed through an extended small group piece from a pre-existing play text and taught in collaboration with York Theatre Royal.
- Working as an ensemble in bringing a dramatic text to performance, this has recently included Hamlet by William Shakespeare and the Birthday Party by Harold Pinter. This work will conclude with an ensemble performance of the chosen text.
- Practice as an ensemble in devising a large outdoor piece of drama & theatre for the opening of the School of Performance and Media Production's Create festival at the end of the academic year.
- Engage in writing for theatre which will allow you to find your 'voice' as a writer across many modes (monologues, dialogues, plays, spoken word). Within this module you will perform in a venue in the city of York as part of a 'soirée' and also produce a 'zine of your writings'.

These activities support you to focus on specific specialisms in the 2nd year of your study. They may include:

- Devising for performance
- Writing for theatre
- Community and performance
- Performance making (in collaboration with Dance)

Note on DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service): Some modules may require DBS checks to be carried out, the cost of this is normally paid for by the student.

#### Level 4 - Orientation

The first year of the programme will take your existing knowledge and skills and develop them in a variety of ways. You will develop key crafts in contemporary drama and theatre (including acting, writing, devising and workshop practices) and learn to work creatively in groups. You will also gain an understanding of how contemporary practice sits within historical contexts. The first year of the BA Drama: Education & Community programme includes modules taught with students from other degrees (e.g. BA Acting, BA Drama and Theatre; BA Drama and Dance). This allows you to become part of a wider performance community and form connections that will support you throughout your degree.

| Semester 1                  |        | Semester 2                     |        |
|-----------------------------|--------|--------------------------------|--------|
| Workshop Facilitation       | 20 – C | Big Ideas in Performance       | 20 – C |
| Making Ensemble Performance | 20 – C | Ensemble Political Performance | 20 – C |
| Acting                      | 20 – C | Theatre for Social Change      | 20 – O |

#### Level 5 – Application and Specialism

In your second year you apply the techniques and knowledge learned in the first year and deepen your skills through increasing specialism; allowing you to develop expertise in your own areas of interest. You apply these abilities to drama, theatre and performance making in a range of contexts whilst considering its relationship to the world around you. During this year you will specialise in drama: education & community



via the two out of the following modules: Children & Young People, Performance and Social Context, Contemporary Storytelling.

The following is an indicative route for a BA Drama: Education & Community student (specific module choices may vary):

| Semester 1                     |        | Semester 2                     |        |
|--------------------------------|--------|--------------------------------|--------|
| Politically Engaged Practice 1 | 20 – C | Politically Engaged Practice 2 | 20 – C |
| Children and Young People      | 20 – C | Performance in Social Context  | 20 – C |
| Physical Theatre               | 20 – O | Artist as Witness              | 20 – O |

### Level 6 - Independence and Industry

In your final year you will work as both an independent artist and as a member of a performance company, developing work from research and development to actualisation. You will be supported in positioning yourself and your portfolio of skills as you prepare to for your chosen career.

This year offers you the opportunity to further develop your own practice as a thinker, writer maker of drama and theatre. Semester 1 in your third year is focussed on developing ideas and practices that in semester 2 will become drama & theatre works. These works will become key part to your future career aspirations which will be fully articulated in the portfolio of skills you will have been developing over the three years. You will receive support from tutors to build your contacts and practice within your chosen areas of education and community practice.

As part of the enhancement of your experience in the third year you will be encouraged to go on a residential field trip to a major cultural hub (i.e. London, Berlin, Paris) to fulfil your own individual and small group research tasks. These might comprise of interviewing a particular artist or company, going to see a performance work or accessing an archive. This year offers you the opportunity to further develop your own practice as a thinker, writer maker, facilitator of drama in educational & community contexts. Semester 1 in your third year is focussed on developing ideas and practices that in semester 2 will become drama works. Working in a project in community/young people setting; for example, you may work with people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities or with mental health problems. You may work in prisons, schools or in local theatres. These works will become key part to your future career aspirations which will be fully articulated in the portfolio of skills you will have been developing over the 3 years.

| Semester 1  |        | Semester 2                                       |        |
|---|--------|--|--------|
| Dissertation  |        | 20 – C   |        |
| Independent Practice and Professional Portfolio: Drama: Education and Community |        | 40 – C   |        |
| Contemporary Performance Practice: Research & Development                       | 20 – C | Contemporary Performance Practice: Actualisation | 40 – C |

### Assessment

The purpose of assessment on BA Drama: Community & Education is to offer structures through which you learn (assessment as learning; rather than assessment of learning). Assessment has to be of value to you as a student and should reflect the real world.

These assessments take the form of performances (large group, small group, duet and solo), drama workshops, reflective documents, 'zines, reports & articles, essays and performance lectures. This range of assessment intends to cover possible scenarios which prepare you to pursue your professional or academic aspirations. The assessments on the programme are carefully considered to be of value to you, the student, and reflect experiences and situations beyond the classroom.

### Progression and graduation requirements

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

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the Programme Structure section as non-compensatable.



## 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](#)

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*Date written / revised:*

*Programme originally approved:*