

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION (Undergraduate)



1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	BA (Hons)
4	Programme Title	Folk and Traditional Music Folk and Traditional Music (with Year Abroad) Folk and Traditional Music (with Placement Year)
5	UCAS/Programme Code	W344 1344U (with Year Abroad) 1672U (with Placement Year)
6	Programme Accreditation	N/A
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	Music
8	FHEQ Level	Level 6
9	Date written/revised	May 2025

10 Programme Aims

The BA(Hons) in Folk and Traditional Music is the leading performance-based folk music course in England, enabling students to develop as thoughtful, skilled and well-informed musicians. A student's individual folk and traditional performance practice is supported and developed via solo and ensemble-based performance modules and this applied study is underpinned by an awareness of traditional areas of academic research, recent and current developments in musical thinking, intellectual inquiry and an understanding of the socio-cultural context(s) of traditional music from historical and contemporary perspectives. Focusing on the folk music of Britain, Ireland and connected musical traditions this programme offers a sound musical and academic training within a diverse music department where students can engage with a variety of historical, cultural, ethnographic, theoretical, technical and creative research approaches contained within a well-defined curricular structure. Connected to the vibrant living tradition and folk music communities of England's North-East, the course offers networking opportunities that feed into a variety of performance opportunities and prepare students for careers across the Creative Arts sector. Graduates will leave with a wide-ranging set of skills - intellectual, practical, and collaborative - that are valuable in themselves, relevant to a variety of professional contexts, and provide a strong foundation for postgraduate study.

In brief the programme aims are:

1. To stimulate the development of thoughtful, well-informed traditional musicians possessing a wide range of musical experiences
2. To facilitate the critical understanding and engagement with traditional music from around the world with a specialist focus upon the music of Britain and Ireland
3. To foster a supportive and excellent educational environment for the development of leading performers of Folk and Traditional music
3. To facilitate the development of higher order analytical skills in students
4. To provide an outstanding educational and research environment that contributes to a key component of regional identity in the North-East of England and the rest of the UK
5. To offer structured choice and flexibility so that students can pursue their own interests and aptitudes within a determined curricular structure
6. To provide a sustainable and intellectually challenging environment for the first specialist, undergraduate programme for traditional music in England and Wales

For Students Completing a Placement Year

7. Provide students with the experience of seeking and securing a position with an employer.

8. Facilitate independent self-management and proactive interaction in a non-university setting.
9. Provide a period of practical work experience that will benefit current academic study and longer-term career plans
10. Enable students to ethically apply their knowledge and skills in the workplace, reflect upon their development and effectively evidence and articulate their learning in relevant future settings.

For Students Completing a Year Abroad

11. Offer students the opportunity to develop graduate attributes which increase employability, particularly communication and (where applicable) language skills, intercultural competencies, adaptability, resilience and global awareness.
12. Gain insight into international Higher Education and experience differences in academic approach and learning environment.
13. Provide the opportunity to experience new areas of study outside of their usual programme of study at Newcastle University.

11 Learning Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas. The programme outcomes have references to the benchmark statements for Music.

Knowledge and Understanding

A Knowledge and understanding

- A1 Broad understanding of traditional music in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales and areas with connected traditions.
- A2 Issues in music history and the study of folk and popular music.
- A3 Interdisciplinary applications and theoretical approaches relevant to the study of music.
- A4 Critical understanding of, and approaches to, music of various historical contexts and cultures.
- A5 Sonic and performative understanding of traditional music performance practices across a range of instrumental and vocal styles.

For Students Completing a Year Abroad

- A6 Demonstrate the ability to adapt to different learning environments.

For Students Completing a Placement Year

- A7 Apply personal and professional development strategies to prioritise, plan, and manage their own skills development and learning.
- A8 Research, select and apply relevant knowledge aimed at enhancing their own skills and effectiveness in specific duties at their placement.
- A9 Demonstrate an understanding of a work environment, how it functions and their contribution to it.
- A10 Relate their work-based learning to other areas of personal development, including academic performance.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Performance practice is developed through one-to-one lessons, tutorials, recitals and workshops. Lectures, and related student reading and seminar tasks, are the primary means of developing students' knowledge and understanding. These are supplemented by seminars and/or tutorials where students can develop their learning through discussion and group (and solo) presentations. Students learn through independent reading and listening, with close

readings/listening of set texts/pieces as required, in preparation for lectures and seminars. In some cases, learning is also peer-assisted by means of student study groups which focus on a lecture or seminar assignment. A1-A5 require workshops, rehearsals and 1:1 teaching.
Assessment Strategy
Recital examinations, group work recitals, essay, and project assignments and individual and group assignments for seminars, etc.
Intellectual Skills
On completing the programme students should have: B1 the ability to evaluate evidence from different sources; B2 the ability to present coherent arguments and an independent viewpoint; B3 Higher order analytical skills; B4 critical skills (e.g. awareness of ideologies, and the culturally mediated nature of knowledge); B5 the ability to understand and handle non-verbal, musical and aesthetic knowledge and thinking.
Teaching and Learning Methods
These are acquired and developed in all the expected forums: workshops, lectures, seminars and tutorials. Individual module descriptions give more specific details. B1-B3 are embedded within musicological studies; B4 is inculcated through core historical-cultural modules; B5 is developed through one-to-one lessons, tutorials, recitals and workshops.
Assessment Strategy
Essay and project assignments; and individual and group assignments for seminars; live performances, recitals etc.

Practical Skills
On completing the programme students should have acquired the following skills: C1 Performance (instrumental, vocal, technologically-mediated) C2 Composition (whether score-based, electronic, or improvisatory) C3 Musicological research skills C4 Harmony and aural skills C5 Music-analytical skills C6 Applied musical skills
Teaching and Learning Methods
C1 is taught through a combination of 1:1 and group tuition, with systematic support through the department's series of masterclasses and workshops. C2 is taught through a mixture of lectures (demonstrating relevant techniques and approaches), seminars, group projects and tutorials, particularly through Stage 1 and 2 theory and creative practice modules, and the Stage 3 Specialist Studies in Composition modules, where large-scale student-defined composition projects are delivered through a combination of seminars and 1:1 supervisions. Musicological research skills (C3) are fostered within all musicological-based modules. At stages 2 and 3, students choose at least one historical-cultural option, taught in lectures and seminars, which considers recent research in the relevant field, and whose assessment is normally via an independently conducted research project. As appropriate, training in bibliographical techniques and musicological methodologies is given either through a

combination of Robinson Library induction sessions and online toolkit provision. This sits alongside designated Academic Practice for Music Studies elements embedded in stage 1 musicology modules. (see, under section B).

A range of honours level options in Applied Studies helps students to acquire skills in arranging, orchestration, and editing (C5).

Assessment Strategy

As (A): plus performances, portfolios of compositions and assignments, and documentation relating to music business placements.

Transferable/Key Skills

On completing the programme students should have the following skills:

- D1 Research skills;
- D2 Communication through both spoken and written word;
- D3 Public presentation;
- D4 Time management;
- D5 IT skills;
- D6 Independent Learning;
- D7 Teamwork;

For Students Completing a Year Abroad

- D8 Adapt and operate in a different cultural environment.

For Students Completing a Placement Year

- D9 Reflect on and manage own learning and development within the workplace;
- D10 Use existing and new knowledge to enhance personal performance in a workplace environment, evaluate the impact and communicate this process;
- D11 Use graduate skills in a professional manner in a workplace environment, evaluate the impact and communicate the personal development that has taken place.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Research skills (D1) are embedded within musicological studies (see B3 above).

D2 is practised across the board in ways appropriate to each module, such as coursework assignments. Some modules offer the opportunity to submit work-in-progress on a formative, rather than summative, basis. Additional support is given through Music's Academic Practice for Music Studies programme (APMS), which is core for all students in their first stage. Spoken presentations are given in seminars, tutorials and peer study groups; final-stage students are required to give presentations on their on-going Specialist Study projects (Composition, Dissertation, Performance or Project) in the Finalists Conference which takes place at the beginning of a student's final semester of study.

D3 is inherent within all performance, which is integral to all undergraduate music degrees, either by way of public concerts, gigs or within rehearsals.

D4: time-management training is offered, where appropriate, in supervisory tutorials. In any case, effective time management is integral to a music student's *modus operandi* – in the maintenance of a balanced and sustainable schedule of rehearsals, lectures, seminars, independent study, and vocal/instrumental practice.

D5: IT skills are ubiquitously used within music degrees. Training in the use of music notation and DAW is given as part of the relevant music skills and composition modules; training in the use of research tools (JSTOR, RILM, FirstSearch, Web of Science, etc.) is given to students writing dissertations. In their first Induction Week, all Music students are given training in the use of Canvas, and other essential IT resources; this training is reinforced through the strategic use of Canvas for the delivery of teaching materials and the electronic submission of assignments.

D6: students frequently work together in workshops, rehearsal, ensemble and peer study-groups, and are often required to produce a collaborative response to seminar assignments: teamwork is integral, for instance, to ensemble studies at all stages.

Assessment Strategy

D1-D2: see A above.

D3: public recital or gig at final stage public performances at other stages; presentations in seminars

D4: mostly indirectly assessed (success/failure in time-management is usually self-evident)

D5: all students are required to produce word-processed essays and to demonstrate internet and general IT literacy as part of their research assignments. Students undertaking studio-based composition submit their work digitally via Canvas; students submitting score-based compositions and course work normally use note-processing software (e.g. Sibelius).

D6: mostly not directly assessed, although contributions to team-based submissions, and effectiveness of team participation, are assessed in ensemble-based performance assessments.

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features

Basic structure of the programme

The BA in Folk and Traditional Music has three 'stages', each equivalent to one academic year of full-time study. For full-time students 'Stage 1' means 'first year', 'Stage 2' means 'second year' and so on. You will find full descriptions of each module in the module outlines website

Stage 1

In the first Stage students are required to take 120 credits of modules that work towards Music's ethic of encouraging an agile thinker and an accomplished practical musician. The student is exposed to various aspects of folk and traditional music culture in performance and academic modules. The modules in the first stage can be divided into the following broad topics of solo and ensemble performance, music theory, studio skills and musicology. MUS1018 is the only Core module in this pathway.

Stage 2

The second stage has among its aims: exposing students to more diverse musical experiences; developing their research skills; encouraging more in-depth practical, creative and academic activity. All this prepares students for their final stage with its emphasis on greater specialisation and independent learning. All stage 2 modules are Honours modules. For the purposes of final average and degree classification, stage 2 modules count as one third of the final total weighting.

Students must take the modules Performance Studies (MUS2058), Folk Ensemble 2 (MUS2092) and then choose modules from the Historical and Cultural and Applied Options lists in order to make their total credits up to 120.

At Stage 2 the student may also take modules to the value of 20 credits in a subject other than Music. They might want, for example, to continue with a foreign language, or pursue a cultural, historical or theoretical topic from the complementary perspective of another subject or gain vocational experience. If this is their intention you should make the necessary enquiries at the appropriate school and discuss this with W344 DPD.

Year Abroad

Students wishing to spend a year abroad as part of their degree can do so in consultation with and at the discretion of the DPD in a partner institution. This is also subject to a threshold of at least 60% in the first three semesters of study. These candidates will be transferred to the internal degree programme code 1344U.

Placement Year

Students have the option to take part in a Careers Placement Year in-between Stage 2 and 3 of their programme. They will be transferred on to programme code 1672U.

Stage 3

By the time the student reaches Stage 3, the final stage of the BA programme, they are in a position to specialise to a considerable extent, building further on their particular strengths and interests. Normally at least a third of their time (40 credits) will be devoted to a Major Specialist Study. You may also take a second, Minor Specialist Study.

As at Stage 2, a menu of 20-credit historical/cultural, and applied options are also available, from which the student choose a selection of 20 credit modules to make their total credits up to 120.

Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)

Public performance is a requirement built into the honours stages of the degree.

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

[Programme Regulations 2025-26](#)

13 Support for Student Learning

Generic information regarding University provision is available [here](#).

Performance resources

These are available in the Armstrong Building by way of practice rooms, band rehearsal rooms, drum studios, the Recital Room and the Kings' Hall; and in the Music Studios by means of two studios, a suite of practice and teaching rooms, and a gig space in the basement.

14 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

Generic information regarding University provision is available [here](#).

Accreditation reports

N/A

Additional mechanisms

N/A

15 Regulation of assessment

Generic information regarding University provision is available [here](#).

In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

The University Prospectus: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/degrees/#subject>

Degree Programme and University Regulations: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/>

Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if they take full advantage of the learning opportunities provided.

