

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION  
(Undergraduate)**



<b>1</b>	<b>Awarding Institution</b>	Newcastle University
<b>2</b>	<b>Teaching Institution</b>	Newcastle University
<b>3</b>	<b>Final Award</b>	BA Hons
<b>4</b>	<b>Programme Title</b>	Music Music (with Year Abroad) Music (with Placement Year)
<b>5</b>	<b>UCAS/Programme Code</b>	W300 1933U 1669U
<b>6</b>	<b>Programme Accreditation</b>	N/A
<b>7</b>	<b>QAA Subject Benchmark(s)</b>	Music
<b>8</b>	<b>FHEQ Level</b>	Level 6
<b>9</b>	<b>Date written/revised</b>	March 2026

**10 Programme Aims**

BA music aims to stimulate the development of thoughtful, well-informed musicians through a wide range of musical experiences. The programme offers a cutting-edge education within the setting of one of the UK's largest university music departments. The Music BA incorporates diverse approaches to the study of music, including performance, composition, music history, theory and analysis, ethnomusicology, and studio techniques, all of which are designed to equip graduates with the versatile set of skills applicable across the performing arts sector and beyond. Students gain a deep understanding of musical principles and research methods, allowing them to critically analyse and interpret musical practices within their cultural, social, historical, and theoretical contexts. By exploring diverse perspectives and engaging with a range of musical practices, students learn to navigate the complexities of the musical world with confidence and insight.

Central to the programme is the cultivation of an undergraduate cohort that is engaged with the musical and wider cultural ecosystem and that recognises the importance of building sustainable relationships in the cultural sector locally, nationally, and internationally. Students are encouraged to engage actively with other musicians, researchers, and audiences, fostering connections that extend beyond the classroom and into the professional musical world. Through individual tuition, collaborative projects, workshops, and masterclasses, students learn the value of collaboration and community-building in varied musical practices. This is augmented by students' participation in the flourishing musical community, which hosts regular performances by university ensembles – including orchestras, choirs, jazz ensembles, bands, folk groups, world music groups and much else – as well as a regular professional concert series designed to complement the diversity of the department.

The programme exposes students to cutting-edge research in musical scholarship, composition, and performance. By engaging with innovative scholarship and musical practices, students develop the critical thinking skills and analytical tools necessary to grapple with the complexities of our contemporary moment. Through interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration, the Music BA empowers students to become active agents of change in a rapidly evolving musical ecosystem.

Placement Year:

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

Facilitate independent self-management and proactive interaction in a non-university setting.

Provide a period of practical work experience that will benefit current academic study and longer term career plans.

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.

## **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**

On completing the programme students should have developed a knowledge and understanding of:

- A1 Cultural approaches to the study of music
- A2 Issues in historical musicology
- A3 Interdisciplinary applications and theoretical approaches relevant to the study of Music
- A4 Samples of musical repertoires of various kinds (including classical, world, folk and traditional, and contemporary and popular)
- A5 Musical processes and structures

For Students Completing a Placement Year, they should be able to:

- A6 Apply personal and professional development strategies to prioritise, plan, and manage their own skills development and learning.
- A7 Research, select and apply relevant knowledge aimed at enhancing their own skills and effectiveness in specific duties at their placement.
- A8 Demonstrate an understanding of a work environment, how it functions and their contribution to it.
- A9 Relate their work-based learning to other areas of personal development, including academic performance.

### **Teaching and Learning Methods**

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 evaluate their learning through discussion and group (or solo) practice. Students are taught material 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. A4-A5 require workshops, rehearsals and 1:1 teaching.

### **Assessment Strategy**

Essay and portfolio assignments; seen, unseen and take-away exam papers; presentations, individual and group assignments for seminars, performance examinations, 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.

<p>B3 Analytical powers.</p> <p>B4 Critical skills (e.g. awareness of ideologies, and the culturally mediated nature of knowledge).</p> <p>B5 The ability to understand and handle non-verbal knowledge and thinking.</p>
<p><b>Teaching and Learning Methods</b></p>
<p>These are acquired and developed in all the expected forums: lectures, seminars, tutorial, workshops and 1:1 teaching. B1 and B2 are addressed at stage 1 in Study Skills teaching. Individual module descriptions give more specific details.</p>
<p><b>Assessment Strategy</b></p>
<p>Essay and portfolio assignments; seen, unseen and take-away exam papers; presentation, individual and group assignments for seminars; live performances, etc.</p>
<p><b>Practical Skills</b></p>
<p>On completing the programme students should be able to engage in:</p> <p>C1 Performance (instrumental, vocal, technologically-mediated).</p> <p>C2 Composition (whether score-based, electronic, or improvisatory).</p> <p>C3 Musicological research skills.</p> <p>C4 Harmony and aural skills.</p> <p>C5 Music-analytical skills.</p> <p>C6 Applied musical skills.</p>
<p><b>Teaching and Learning Methods</b></p>
<p>C1 is taught through a combination of 1:1 and group tuition, with systematic support through Music's series of master classes and workshops.</p> <p>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 delivered through a combination of seminars and 1:1 tutorials</p> <p>Musicological research skills (C3) are fostered within all musicological-based modules. At Stages Two and Three, 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 through a combination of Robinson Library induction and designated Academic Practice for Music sessions (see, under section B).</p> <p>Options in musical analysis and harmony (see A5 above), taken alongside studies in composition and/or performance, enable students to develop their theoretical and notational fluency (C4 and C5).</p> <p>A range of honours level options in Applied Studies helps students to acquire skills in orchestration, conducting and editing (C6). Designated modules in Professional Practice for Music, and Teaching Music in Schools provide training in key aspects of musicians' professional and personal development. Placement options in industry and education build on these skills during the final stage of the programme while providing useful professional experience.</p>
<p><b>Assessment Strategy</b></p>
<p>AS A: plus performances, and portfolios of compositions and assignments.</p>
<p><b>Transferable/Key Skills</b></p>

On completing the programme students should have developed:

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

#### For Students Undertaking a Placement Year

- D8 Reflect on and manage own learning and development within the workplace.
- D9 Use existing and new knowledge to enhance personal performance in a workplace environment, evaluate the impact and communicate this process.
- D10 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.

D2 is practised across the board in ways appropriate to each module, such as coursework assignments, written exams and oral presentations. Some modules offer the opportunity to submit work-in-progress on a formative, rather than summative, basis. Additional support is given through Music's APMS programme, 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 (Dissertation or Project options) in the Finalists Conference which takes place at the end of the first semester of a student's final stage.

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

D4: Time-management training is offered, where appropriate, within the APMS programme. 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 software is given as part of the relevant composition modules; training in the use of research tools (JSTOR, RILM, First Search, Web of Science, etc.) is given to students taking historical/cultural optional modules and those writing dissertations or projects in their final year. In their first Welcome Week, all Music students are given training in the use of Blackboard, RAS, and other essential IT resources; this training is reinforced through the strategic use of Blackboard for the delivery of teaching materials and the electronic submission of assignments during the first stage of study. All submitted work must also be word processed.

D6: Generally (as is typical for an Arts degree) a high a proportion of individual preparation time to class contact time is assumed: students are ultimately expected to be responsible for their own learning. More specifically, opportunities are provided for individual project work – or example, in historical/cultural options, in which a small research project related to material studied on the module forms the main part of the assessment. At least one third of students' final stage is devoted to a specialist study, which is conducted largely through independent learning, with intermittent supervisions or vocal/instrumental lessons.

D7: Students frequently work together in workshops, rehearsal, and peer study-groups, and are often required to produce a collaborative response to seminar assignments: teamwork is integral, for instance, to compositional studies at Stage One.

#### **Assessment Strategy**

D1-D2: See above.

D3: public recital or gig at final stage, 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 normally use note-processing software (e.g. Sibelius).

D6: students take at least one historical/cultural option at each stage, which in most cases is assessed through an independently conducted research project. Students must take at least one Specialist Study, where the emphasis is primarily on independent learning.

D7: mostly not directly assessed, although contributions to team-based submission and effectiveness of team participation, are assessed on certain modules.

## **12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features**

### **Basic structure of the programme**

The BA 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 (identical for BA W300 and BMus with Year Abroad – W304)**

Two routes are offered in the first year of studies: with music modules only or with a foreign language. Foreign language study is regarded as valuable for music students. The option of studying a foreign language for 20 or 40 credits is available. This option is particularly important for students on the BMus with Year Abroad, and even more so for those considering an exchange year at a non-Anglophone destination. Students are introduced to HE level study in areas that include musicology, music theory and analysis, performance, and composition.

#### **Stage 2 (identical for BA and BMus with Year Abroad)**

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.

100 credits are elective, and there is one compulsory module: Music and Cultural Theory (MUS2054). However, students must choose at least one module from the list of Applied or Practical options, and one from the list of Historical and Cultural options.

At Stage 2 students may also take modules to the value of 20 credits in a subject other than Music. You might want, for example, to continue with a foreign language you began in Stage 1, or pursue a cultural, historical or theoretical topic from the complementary perspective of another subject, or gain vocational experience. If this is your intention you should make the necessary enquiries at the appropriate school.

On attainment of a combined stage 1 and semester 1 stage 2 mark average of 60% or higher students may be considered for the option of a Year Abroad. The relevant DPD should be consulted if this is being considered.

#### **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 1669U.

#### **Stage 3: BA**

By the time you reach Stage 3, the final stage of the BA programme, you are in a position to specialise to a considerable extent, building further on your particular strengths and interests. Normally at least a third of your time (40 credits) will be devoted to a Major Specialist Study. In discussion with your Degree Programme Director you may also take a second, Minor Specialist Study.

As at Stage 2, a menu of 20-credit historical/cultural options and a menu of 20-credit applied options is also available. In usual circumstances students will take at least one module from each menu.

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

1. Inclusivity of curriculum and cohort – this degree enables students to experience a broad range of approaches to studying music, and a broad range of music from around the world, both art music and popular and contemporary music.
2. Emphasis on cultural theory.
3. Wide choice of options nearly all of which stem directly from staff research interests.

**Programme regulations (link to on-line version)**

[W300 Programme Regulations 2026/7](#)

**13 Support for Student Learning**

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

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

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

**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.