



UNIVERSITY OF
LIVERPOOL

BA (Hons)

Music and Popular Music

UCAS code W301

Entry requirements

A level: ABB

Study mode

Full-time

Duration

3 years

Apply by: **30 June 2026**

Starts on: **28 September 2026**

About this course

This degree offers you a great deal of flexibility and allows you to select from both our classical and popular music modules. There is no better place to study music than Liverpool: we work closely with musical venues and organisations throughout the city, including the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic; and we established the world's first specialist centre for its study – the Institute of Popular Music – in 1988.

Introduction

The modules on this programme vary, with some being practical – concerned with musical performance, composition and orchestration, song-writing or creative music technology – while others focus on music history topics or music analysis and theory. Our studio and performance modules cater for both classical and popular musical styles, allowing you to choose the route best suited to you; and a generous range of optional modules includes specialist topics such as music psychology, audio-visual media (films and videogames), and vocational modules. Throughout, you will learn to write about music from a historical, critical, sociological, or philosophical viewpoint.

Year in industry

Undergraduate students in the Department of Music have the opportunity to spend a year in industry, either in their third year, or by adding a 'follow-on year' at the end of their academic studies. These are paid placements within an organisation in industry, broadly defined, and you will receive support from the Department and the School of the Arts to source and apply for opportunities. [Find out more about the difference between these options](#), including how to apply.

What you'll learn

- A critical understanding of music from a wide range of aesthetic, cultural and social perspectives
- A detailed understanding of Western (and some other) music repertoires
- Advanced proficiency in performance, and composition
- Academic research skills
- Critical and cultural awareness
- The ability to devise and sustain complex arguments
- Written and oral communication and presentation
- Creativity
- Time management and organisations skills

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Course content

Discover what you'll learn, what you'll study, and how you'll be taught and assessed.

Year one

You will take two compulsory modules, and choose the rest of your modules from a range of options.

In year 1, students:

- Must take at least one of the following: **MUSI130, MUSI140**
- Must take at least one of the following: **MUSI180, MUSI181**.
- May not take both **Classical Performance (MUSI102)** and **Popular Performance (MUSI104)**.

Modules

Compulsory modules	Credits
MUSIC AS AN INDUSTRY (MUSI150)	15
MAKING MUSIC IN CULTURE (MUSI121)	15
Optional modules	Credits
FOUNDATIONS OF MUSIC THEORY (MUSI181)	15
INTRODUCTION TO CLASSICAL MUSIC HISTORY (MUSI130)	15
INTRODUCTION TO DIGITAL AUDIO WORKSTATIONS (MUSI109)	15
INTRODUCTION TO POPULAR MUSIC HISTORY (MUSI140)	15

Optional modules	Credits
INTRODUCTION TO SOUND AND TECHNOLOGY (MUS1171)	15
WRITING FOR INSTRUMENTS (MUS1105)	15
CLASSICAL COMPOSITION 1 (MUS1106)	15
INTRODUCTION TO SOUND AND MUSIC IN AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA (MUS1170)	15
INTRODUCTION TO SOUND RECORDING AND PRODUCTION (MUS1108)	15
POPULAR COMPOSITION 1 (MUS1107)	15
THEORY IN PRACTICE: EXPLORING MUSIC'S CONSTRUCTION (MUS1180)	15
CLASSICAL PERFORMANCE 1 (MUS1102)	15
POPULAR PERFORMANCE 1 (MUS1104)	15

Programme details and modules listed are illustrative only and subject to change.

Year two

You will choose from entirely optional modules, the range of which balances classical and popular modules, and ensures coverage of repertoire, contexts and praxis.

There may be some restrictions on which modules can be taken in conjunction with others, which will be explained during module registration.

Modules

Optional modules	Credits
CLASSICAL PERFORMANCE 2A (MUSI201)	15
EARLY MUSICAL CULTURES FROM THE ISLAMICATE COURT TO THE ENGLISH REFORMATION (MUSI219)	15
EXPLORING HARMONY, CHORD PROGRESSION AND PITCH (MUSI280)	15
FOLEY AND SOUND DESIGN (MUSI208)	15
GLOBAL POP: POPULAR MUSICS OF THE WORLD (MUSI261)	15
MAX AND ABLETON LIVE (MUSI209)	15
MUSIC IN GAMING (MUSI273)	15
OPERA AND POLITICS (MUSI232)	15
POPULAR MUSIC COMPOSITION 2 (MUSI210)	15
POPULAR PERFORMANCE 2A (MUSI203)	15
PROFESSIONAL AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT (SOTA260)	15
SOUND RECORDING AND PRODUCTION 2 (MUSI243)	15
WORKING IN MUSIC INDUSTRY (MUSI252)	15
BECOMING ENTREPRENEURIAL (ULMS254)	15
CLASSICAL COMPOSITION 2 (MUSI207)	15
CLASSICAL PERFORMANCE 2B (MUSI202)	15

Optional modules	Credits
COMPOSITION FOR DIGITAL GAMES (MUSI206)	15
COMPOSITION FOR FILM AND TELEVISION (MUSI205)	15
CONTEMPORARY GENRES (MUSI263)	15
INTRODUCTION TO CONDUCTING (MUSI200)	15
INTRODUCTION TO MUSIC PSYCHOLOGY (MUSI290)	15
LIVE IMPROVISATION WITH ABLETON (MUSI217)	15
MUSIC AND HUMAN EXPERIENCE (MUSI291)	15
MUSIC IN WORLD CINEMA (MUSI270)	15
MUSIC, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY (MUSI220)	15
MUSICAL THEATRE (MUSI274)	15
ORCHESTRATION (MUSI216)	15
POPULAR PERFORMANCE 2B (MUSI204)	15
SAMPLING AND REMIXING (MUSI213)	15
SOUND, TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIETY (MUSI241)	15
SCHOOL OF THE ARTS WORK PLACEMENTS MODULE (SOTA300)	30

Programme details and modules listed are illustrative only and subject to change.

Final year

In your final year, you will undertake a major independent project in research, performance, composition or technology. The rest of your modules will be taken from a range of options.

Specialist topics can be studied alongside advanced level analysis, performance or composition modules. There is a particular emphasis in the final year on specialism, including an extended or independent project (such as a research project, a composition portfolio or a music technology project).

There may be some restrictions on which modules can be taken in conjunction with others, which will be explained during module registration.

Modules

Optional modules	Credits
AESTHETICS OF MUSIC (MUSI320)	15
COMPOSING ELECTRONIC MUSIC (MUSI308)	15
FROM HARDWARE-HACKING TO HYPER-INSTRUMENTS (MUSI318)	15
JAZZ (MUSI341)	15
POPULAR PERFORMANCE CONTEXTS (MUSI303)	15
RECORD LABEL RECORDING, PRODUCTION AND PROJECT PLANNING (MUSI314)	15
SELF-MANAGEMENT FOR THE MUSIC INDUSTRIES (MUSI319)	15
ADVANCED LIVE SOUND (MUSI316)	15
BETWEEN ROMANTICISM AND MODERNISM (MUSI332)	15

Optional modules	Credits
CURATION AND HERITAGE (MUSI353)	15
EXPLORING RHYTHM, FORM, AND MUSICAL TIME (MUSI380)	15
POPULAR MUSIC COMPOSITION 3 (MUSI310)	15
RECORD LABEL MANAGEMENT, MARKETING AND DISTRIBUTION (MUSI315)	15
THE FILM MUSIC OF JOHN WILLIAMS (MUSI370)	15
INDEPENDENT PROJECT: CLASSICAL PERFORMANCE (MUSI395)	30
INDEPENDENT PROJECT: COMPOSITION (MUSI397)	30
INDEPENDENT PROJECT: CREATIVE MUSIC TECHNOLOGY (MUSI396)	30
INDEPENDENT PROJECT: POPULAR COMPOSITION (MUSI394)	30
INDEPENDENT PROJECT: POPULAR PERFORMANCE (MUSI398)	30
INDEPENDENT PROJECT: RESEARCH (MUSI399)	30
SCHOOL OF THE ARTS WORK PLACEMENTS MODULE (SOTA300)	30

Programme details and modules listed are illustrative only and subject to change.

Teaching and assessment

How you'll learn

We employ a range of teaching methods, including lectures, seminars, tutorials, workshops, master classes, 1-2-1 instrumental lessons, ensemble coaching, and online tasks and

projects. The emphasis is on student participation and interaction. We fit the most appropriate mode of teaching to the particular subject, conscious that the learning process needs to be enjoyable, enabling you to acquire useful and marketable skills and knowledge.

How you're assessed

Each module has an individually determined system of assessment (by coursework, written paper, test, recital, composition or technology portfolio, presentation or podcast, examination, and combinations of these), and we select the method that best suits the nature of the module.

Liverpool Hallmarks

We have a distinctive approach to education, the Liverpool Curriculum Framework, which focuses on research-connected teaching, active learning, and authentic assessment to ensure our students graduate as digitally fluent and confident global citizens.

The Liverpool Curriculum framework sets out our distinctive approach to education. Our teaching staff support our students to develop academic knowledge, skills, and understanding alongside our **graduate attributes**:

- Digital fluency
- Confidence
- Global citizenship

Our curriculum is characterised by the three **Liverpool Hallmarks**:

- Research-connected teaching
- Active learning
- Authentic assessment

All this is underpinned by our core value of **inclusivity** and commitment to providing a curriculum that is accessible to all students.

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Careers and employability

Studying music opens up many career opportunities. As well as jobs in music (from performance, composition, and production, through to teaching, music therapy and community arts), employers in many sectors are increasingly seeking arts and humanities graduates for their transferable skills.

As a music student you will achieve creative flair and imagination, confidence in expressing yourself, an openness to new ideas, a capacity for hard work and an ability to analyse data. You will learn the value of working with others towards a shared, finished product and a whole range of flexible, professional skills.

As a student in the School of the Arts, you will be supported to maximise your employability from day one.

The School has its own placements and employability officer, and you will have the opportunity to undertake the following work experience opportunities:

- Work placement or a year in industry as part of your programme
- Work in our student-run record label to gain practical experience of all aspects of the music industry – from contract negotiation and project planning, through to promotion and distribution.

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Fees and funding

Your tuition fees, funding your studies, and other costs to consider.

Tuition fees

UK fees (applies to Channel Islands, Isle of Man and Republic of Ireland)

Full-time place, per year - £9,790

Year in industry fee - £1,955

Year abroad fee - £1,465 (applies to year in China)

International fees

Full-time place, per year - £27,000

Year in industry fee - £1,955

Year abroad fee - £13,500 (applies to year in China)

The fees shown are for the academic year 2026/27. Please be advised that tuition fees may increase each year for both UK and international students. For UK students, this will be subject to the government's regulated fee limits.

Tuition fees cover the cost of your teaching and assessment, operating facilities such as libraries, IT equipment, and access to academic and personal support. [Learn more about paying for your studies.](#)

Additional costs

We understand that budgeting for your time at university is important, and we want to make sure you understand any course-related costs that are not covered by your tuition fee. This could include buying a laptop, books, or stationery.

Find out more about the [additional study costs](#) that may apply to this course.

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Entry requirements

The qualifications and exam results you'll need to apply for this course.

As part of our application process, applicants are normally required to attend an Applicant Interview and Music Experience Day where you will either have an interview or a short audition with an academic member of staff. This is your chance to demonstrate your passion for the subject and allow us to make a decision on your application. (There is an option for phone or Skype interviews).

A levels

ABB

including A level grade B in Music or ABRSM Grade 8 in Music Theory at Pass. If an applicant is taking Grade 8 in any instrument (or singing) a dual offer can be made: ABB or BBB with Grade 8 Distinction.

Applicants with the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) are eligible for a reduction in grade requirements. For this course, the offer is **BBB** from A levels, with **A** in the EPQ.

You may automatically qualify for reduced entry requirements through our contextual offers scheme. Based on your personal circumstances, you may automatically qualify for up to a two-grade reduction in the entry requirements needed for this course. When you apply, we consider a range of factors – such as where you live – to assess if you're eligible for a grade reduction. You don't have to make an application for a grade reduction – we'll do all the work.

Find out more about [how we make reduced grade offers](#).

T levels

T levels are not currently accepted.

GCSE

4/C in English and 4/C in Mathematics

BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma

BTEC applications are encouraged. We evaluate each BTEC application on its merits and may make offers at DDM.

International Baccalaureate

33 including Higher Level 6 in Music, with no score less than 4

Irish Leaving Certificate

H1, H2, H2, H2, H3, H3 including H2 in Music

Scottish Higher/Advanced Higher

Scottish Highers at AABBB plus Scottish Advanced Highers grade B in Music, combinations are also welcome.

Welsh Baccalaureate Advanced

B in the Welsh Baccalaureate, plus AB at A level to include Music or ABRSM grade 8 in Music Theory.

Access

Not acceptable without an A level in Music or ABRSM Theory Grade 8.

International qualifications

[Select your country or region to view specific entry requirements.](#)

Many countries have a different education system to that of the UK, meaning your qualifications may not meet our direct entry requirements. Although there is no direct Foundation Certificate route to this course, completing a Foundation Certificate, such as that offered by the [University of Liverpool International College](#), can guarantee you a place on a number of similar courses which may interest you.

Alternative entry requirements

- If your qualification isn't listed here, or you're taking a combination of qualifications, [contact us](#) for advice
- If you are returning to learning, have had a disrupted education or are switching career pathways, the one-year [Go Higher diploma](#) qualifies you to apply for University of Liverpool arts, humanities and social sciences programmes
- [Applications from mature students](#) are welcome.

English language requirements

You'll need to demonstrate competence in the use of English language, unless you're from a [majority English speaking country](#).

We accept a variety of [international language tests](#) and [country-specific qualifications](#).

International applicants who do not meet the minimum required standard of English language can complete one of our [Pre-Sessional English courses](#) to achieve the required level.

IELTS

6.5 overall, with no component below 5.5

TOEFL iBT

If you took a TOEFL test on or before 20 January 2026, you'll need 88 overall, with minimum scores of listening 17, writing 17, reading 17 and speaking 19. If you took a TOEFL test from 21 January 2026 onwards, when a new scoring system was introduced, you'll need 4.5 overall, with 4 or above in all components. TOEFL Home Edition not accepted.

Duolingo English Test

125 overall, with speaking, reading and writing not less than 105, and listening not below 100

Pearson PTE Academic

61 overall, with no component below 59

LanguageCert Academic

70 overall, with no skill below 60

Cambridge IGCSE First Language English 0500

Grade C overall, with a minimum of grade 2 in speaking and listening. Speaking and listening must be separately endorsed on the certificate.

Cambridge IGCSE First Language English 0990

Grade 4 overall, with Merit in speaking and listening

Cambridge IGCSE Second Language English 0510/0511

0510: Grade B overall, with a minimum of grade 2 in speaking. Speaking must be separately endorsed on the certificate. 0511: Grade B overall.

Cambridge IGCSE Second Language English 0993/0991

0993: Grade 6 overall, with a minimum of grade 2 in speaking. Speaking must be separately endorsed on the certificate. 0991: Grade 6 overall.

Cambridge ESOL Level 2/3 Advanced

176 overall, with no paper below 162

International Baccalaureate English A: Literature or Language & Literature

Grade 5 at Standard Level or grade 5 at Higher Level

International Baccalaureate English B

Grade 7 at Standard Level or grade 6 at Higher Level

Pre-sessional English

Do you need to complete a Pre-sessional English course to meet the English language requirements for this course?

The length of Pre-sessional English course you'll need to take depends on your current level of English language ability.

Pre-sessional English in detail

If you don't meet our English language requirements, we can use your most recent IELTS score, or [the equivalent score in selected other English language tests](#), to determine the length of Pre-sessional English course you require.

Use the table below to check the course length you're likely to require for your current English language ability and see whether the course is available on campus or online.

Your most recent IELTS score	Pre-sessional English course length	On campus or online
6.0 overall, with no component below 5.5	6 weeks	On campus or online
5.5 overall, with no more than one component at 5.0	10 weeks	On campus or online
5.5 overall, with no component below 5.0	12 weeks	Online
5.0 overall, with no component below 5.0	20 weeks	On campus
5.0 overall, with no component below 4.5	30 weeks	On campus
4.5 overall, with no more than one component at 4.0	40 weeks	On campus

If you've completed an alternative English language test to IELTS, we may be able to use this to assess your English language ability and determine the Pre-sessional English course

length you require.

Please see our guide to [Pre-sessional English entry requirements](#) for IELTS 6.5 overall, with no component below 5.5, for further details.

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