

Programme Specification

A Programme Specification provides a concise summary of the main features of a programme and its intended learning outcomes. It is intended to be used by prospective students, current students, academic staff and potential employers.

Programme Title:	
BA (Hons) Songwriting	
Programme (AOS) Code(s):	BM1SNG1 – Three Year BM1SNG4 – Four Years with Foundation Year
UCAS Code:	SON1 SON4
Name of Final Award:	Bachelor of Arts with Honours, BA (Hons)
Level of Qualification:	Level 6
Regime of Delivery:	Attendance
Mode(s) of Delivery:	Full Time
Typical Length of Study (Years):	3 years 4 years (with Foundation Year)
Professional Body Recognition / Accreditation (including specific requirements where applicable):	N/A

Brief Description of the Programme

This degree covers the three main areas essential to building a career as a professional songwriter.

- Students will learn how to develop their songwriting skills to a professional standard by working on their material with our experienced tutors, whilst also exploring a variety of techniques for writing songs to maximise their creative potential.
- They will also study audio production and recording, so they become confident at producing recordings of their own and other people's work.
- The third area of study will enable students to understand how to monetise and promote their creativity. As part of this students will study music publishing, law, A&R and how to build their brand as a professional songwriter. Students will also learn about a number of DIY approaches to the music business, and explore other areas of music entrepreneurship too, such as sources of funding and how to set yourself up as a business.

Over the duration of the programme students will be guided through the art of songwriting, and given opportunities to develop their skills in our music studios. They will take part in shared master classes and attend guest lectures with our industry partners and associates, including professional songwriters and music publishers, who'll share the latest insights and expert knowledge with them. Songwriting is just one part of a bigger music production picture, so students will study modules, and collaborate with students, from our other well-established music courses, such as Audio and Music Production, and Music Management and Studio Production.

Programme Aims

1	Equip students with a comprehensive understanding of the key concepts of songwriting, including music production techniques
2	Provide an inclusive, high quality curriculum that enhances students' prospects either for employment or self-employment within the music industry or for further study within the discipline
3	Provide students with the knowledge, confidence and social awareness to apply a variety of business skills within a professional, music industry environment
4	Develop students' academic skills enabling them to become active and autonomous learners and critical thinkers
5	Enhance students' personal, leadership, creative, and entrepreneurial skills

Programme Learning Outcomes

The Bucks Graduate Attributes focus on the development of innovative leaders in professional and creative capacities, who are equipped to operate in the 21st Century labour market and make a positive impact as global citizens. The attributes are developed through the programme.

ID	Learning Outcome
On successful completion of the programme a graduate will be able to:	
Graduate Attribute: Knowledge and its application (K)	
K1	Demonstrate an ability to be self-motivated to acquire new skills and engage in further learning to keep abreast of developments within the subject discipline
K2	Demonstrate the harnessing of technological resources for the purposes of music composition
K3	Demonstrate the harnessing of technological resources for the purposes of music production
K4	Criticise the dynamic and evolving nature of the music and entertainment industries.
K5	Evaluate the key principles of copyright law in the context of music publishing rights and exploitation of a creative product.
Graduate Attribute: Creativity (C)	
C1	Compose a range of musical outputs in inventive and individual ways
C2	Develop musical compositions into well-formed and coherent musical structures
C3	Utilise a range of recording techniques to enable effective communication of musical compositions to others
C4	Employ a variety of musical styles and materials and manipulate them as desired
C5	Employ professionalism and an effective approach to direction and leadership music performance
Graduate Attribute: Social and ethical awareness and responsibility (S)	
S1	Show resilience in developing and sustaining a career path (including self-employment) taking account of personal health and welfare
S2	Evaluate the effectiveness of intellectual property rights, ethical, legal and other regulatory frameworks relevant to music composition and recording.

S3	Work effectively with others who are different from them, traversing cultural borders with skill and comfort.
S4	Engage in deliberative dialogue, even when there might be divergent views
S5	Apply the concept of personal integrity within the context of this programme
Graduate Attribute: Leadership and self-development (L)	
L1	Illustrate effective verbal and written communication skills.
L2	Demonstrate an understanding of group dynamics and effective teamwork.
L3	Distinguish ways to adjust one's leadership style appropriate to the situation.
L4	Display the critical thinking skills and abilities to lead others toward common goals
L5	Respond positively to criticism while maintaining confidence in one's own creative work

Programme Structure

Programmes are structured in stages. The number of stages will vary depending on the mode (e.g. full-time, part-time), duration and location of study that will be detailed in the Programme Handbook.

Modules are set at a specific academic level and listed as either core (compulsory) or optional. The level indicates the relative academic difficulty that will increase through the programme. Passing modules will reward you with academic credit. The amount of credits will depend on the complexity of the module and the level of effort required, which is measured in 'notional learning hours'.

Our [Academic Advice webpages](#) provide more information on the structure of taught awards offered by the University.

Please note: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year. Other option modules may also be introduced at a later stage enabling the programme to respond to sector developments.

Foundation Level (Optional for students on degree programmes)

Code	Module Title	Credit	Core / Option	Compensable (Normally Yes)
FY014	Introduction to Music Management, Production and Performance	N/A	C	Yes
FY026	Preparing for Success: Knowledge and Creativity	N/A	C	Yes
FY027	Preparing for Success: Self Development and Responsibility	N/A	C	Yes
FY028	Inquiry Based Learning	N/A	C	Yes

Level Four

Code	Module Title	Credit	Core / Option	Compensable (Normally Yes)
AP412	Songwriting Principles	15	C	Yes
AP413	Songwriting Practice	15	C	Yes
AP414	Introduction to Pro Tools	15	C	Yes

AP415	Introduction to Recording	15	C	Yes
AP416	The DIY Musician	15	C	Yes
AP417	Entertainment Industry Framework	15	C	Yes
AP418	Performance Development	15	C	Yes
MC468	Music Composition	15	C	Yes

Level Five

Code	Module Title	Credit	Core / Option	Compensable (Normally Yes)
AP510	Commercial Songwriting Principles	15	C	Yes
AP511	Commercial Songwriting Practice	15	C	Yes
AP517	Recording & Mixing Techniques	15	C	Yes
AP518	Industry Experience	15	C	Yes
AP520	Creative Audio Production	15	C	Yes
MC515	Music Publishing	15	C	Yes
MC524	Research Methods	15	C	Yes
MC548	Intellectual Property & the Music Industry	15	C	Yes

Level Six

Code	Module Title	Credit	Core / Option	Compensable (Normally Yes)
AP606	Professional Skills Audit	15	C	Yes
AP608	Composition for Film	15	C	Yes
AP609	Lyrical Analysis	15	C	Yes
AP611	Professional Production Project	15	C	Yes
AP612	Sonic Installation	15	C	Yes
MC614	Industry Issues	15	C	Yes
MC659	Placement Plus	30	O	No
MC690	Dissertation	30	O	No

Learning and Teaching Activities

Please see the [Academic Advice pages](#) for a description of learning and teaching activities that are recognised by the University. Detailed information on this specific programme is outlined below:

Modes of teaching on the programme will include:

- Large group **lectures** covering core knowledge and linked to wider reading
- **Seminars** or small-group classroom-based teaching where students will be able to engage in discussion with peers
- **Practical workshops** and **master classes** to develop creative skills and techniques
- Individual and small-group **practical instruction** within a recording studio setting
- Visits from **specialists** drawn from the industry

Approaches to learning on the programme will include:

- **Writing and speaking exercises**, developing students' research and communication skills
- **Practical exercises**, developing students' creative and technical skills
- **Project-related teamwork** undertaken with other students or external partners
- Blended learning accessing supportive materials through the University's **Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)**
- **Independent learning**, included directed reading and listening, preparation for lectures and seminars, and engagement in assignments
- **Self-directed learning**, culminating in the production of a Dissertation
- Opportunities for **placements** within a commercial, non-commercial, or voluntary setting, including the Students' Union music venue, recording studios, schools and local arts organisations
- Opportunities for **extracurricular collaboration** with other music and events programmes within the School

Additional Course Costs

There are costs associated with all studies, additional to the tuition fee, which require consideration, when planning and budgeting for expenditure. Costs are indicative and for the total length of the course shown unless otherwise stated and will increase with inflation; depending on the programme they may include equipment, printing, project materials, study trips, placement activities, DBS and/or other security checks.

- Students will be required to purchase texts and journals to support their study programme. The minimum, average **cost of books** for students studying on a degree programme is assumed as £100 per year.
- We also recommend a minimum budget of £50 per year for **printing costs** including dissertation printing and binding.
- **Graduation** costs per student are estimated at £100 - £200 total. This is an optional cost for all students as attending graduation is not a requirement in order to have a degree conferred.

Contact Hours

1 unit of credit is the equivalent of 10 notional learning hours. Full time undergraduate students study 120 credits (1200 hours) and full-time postgraduate students study 180 credits (1800 hours) per year or 'stage' of the course.

Course Stage	Scheduled Activities (Hours)	Guided Independent Study (Hours)	Placement / Study Abroad (Hours)
Foundation Year	336	864	
Year One	348	852	
Year Two	359	841	
Year Three	282	918	

Assessment Methods

The [Assessment and Examination webpages](#) provide further information on how assignments are marked and moderated, including a description of assessment activities. These also include further information about how feedback on assessed work is provided to students, including our

commitment to ensure this is provided to students within 15 working days (the 'three-week turnaround').

The following assessment activities are used on this programme:

- **Creative projects**, often assessed by a mixture of continuous assessment, documentation and final presentation, and especially relevant for interdisciplinary work.
- **Essays** and other coursework which enable students to display a broader knowledge of subject matter than in examination papers, and test their ability to investigate a topic and organise their material and ideas to a prescribed deadline.
- Extended **dissertations**, individual **projects** and **portfolios** as products of advanced understanding, knowledge, research skills and/or creative achievement.
- **Reports** on empirical work, which may take the form of fieldwork or laboratory experiments, might include audio-visual or other documentary evidence, and should demonstrate the student's ability to apply appropriate analytical methods, whether qualitative or quantitative, and to plan and carry out a research project in a manner appropriate to its cultural context.
- **Group and individual portfolios** of written work and audio content that will include research, pre-production, production and post-production work submissions. Where group work is undertaken there will be a requirement for individuals to clearly define their own contribution.
- Critical self-evaluation and role analysis in the form of individual **reflective written evaluations**.
- Peer evaluation in the form of **discussion of work in groups**.
- **Tasks** aimed at the assessment of specific production, programming and composition skills, which will target each individual's career aspirations.

Classification

Calculation of final award:

The calculation of this award will be:

- Level 5 - 33%
- Level 6 - 67%

For full details of assessment regulations for all taught programmes please refer to our [Results webpages](#). These include the criteria for degree classification.

Admissions Requirements

Please see the [Application webpages](#) for more information on how to apply, including a statement on how we support students from a variety of backgrounds. Please also see our [general entry requirements](#) for taught programmes. Applicants who do not meet our published entry requirements are encouraged to contact our admissions team for further advice and guidance.

Typical applicant profile and any programme-specific entry requirements

This programme is aimed primarily at those who have successfully completed A-Levels, a National Diploma or similar on a relevant music programme, and who wish to develop their skills, knowledge and employability profile to provide them with the opportunity to gain employment in the creative industries.

More specifically the programme is oriented towards musicians, performers and songwriters who want to improve their abilities to compose and create music professionally for a range of entertainment mediums.

The Foundation Year route is intended for students who do not feel fully prepared for the three-year programme and will allow them to develop their academic study skills, build confidence in their abilities, and identify their strengths and development needs.

Do applicants required a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check?

No

Opportunities for students on successful completion of the programme

Graduates will pursue careers in numerous areas of music composition, performance and production, dependent on what area they chose to focus on and develop a portfolio in. The programme will cater to the following career pathways:

- Professional songwriter in popular music markets
- Songwriter for interactive media
- Performer, Arranger, Composer for Film, TV, Video Games & Animation
- Sound Designer
- Audio Post Production
- Music Producer
- Music Marketing, A&R, Publishing
- Further postgraduate study or research

Recognition of Prior Learning

Previous study, professional and / or vocational experiences may be recognised as the equivalent learning experience and permit exemption from studying certain modules. Please refer to our [Credit Accumulation webpages](#) for further guidance.

Student Support

During the course of their studies, students will be supported in the following ways:

- At the start of their studies all students will receive a full **induction** to the programme which will include introduction to the staff responsible for delivering the course, and access to library and IT facilities
- The **Programme Handbook** will outline the exact nature of the course and how it is structured, including the availability of option modules
- Each student will be allocated a **Personal Tutor** who will support their academic development, be able to advise and guide them with their studies and, where necessary, give advice on study options
- Students will be able to access our full range of **support services**, including the Learning Development Unit for skills and study support, the Library, the Careers and Employability Team, Student Finance Team, Accommodation and Counselling Services

Appendices

Quality Assurance

Awarding Body:	Buckinghamshire New University
Language of Study:	English
QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s):	Mapped to QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Music (2016)
Assessment Regulations:	<i>Academic Assessment Regulations</i> , accessible via the Academic Advice webpages (https://bucks.ac.uk/students/academicadvice)
Does the Fitness to Practise procedure apply to this programme?	No
Ethics Sub-committee	
Date Published / Updated:	September 2019, September 2020, July 2021
Date programme re-approval required:	2025

Other awards available on programme (Exit Qualifications)

Please refer to the *Academic Qualifications Framework* for Exit Qualifications recognised by the University and credit and module requirements.

Name of Exit Qualification:	Ordinary Degree
Full name of Qualification and Award Title:	Bachelor of Arts Songwriting
Credits requirements:	300 Credits
Module requirements:	ALL 120 Credits at Level 4 ALL 120 Credits at Level 5 60 Credits at Level 6, WITH EXCEPTION OF THE FOLLOWING MODULES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MC659 Placement Plus MC690 Dissertation
Learning Outcome	
Demonstrate an ability to be self-motivated to acquire new skills and engage in further learning to keep abreast of developments within the subject discipline	
Demonstrate the harnessing of technological resources for the purposes of music composition	
Demonstrate the harnessing of technological resources for the purposes of music production	
Criticise the dynamic and evolving nature of the music and entertainment industries.	
Evaluate the key principles of copyright law in the context of music publishing rights and exploitation of a creative product	
Compose a range of musical outputs in inventive and individual ways	
Develop musical compositions into well-formed and coherent musical structures	

- Utilise a range of recording techniques to enable effective communication of musical compositions to others
- Employ a variety of musical styles and materials and manipulate them as desired
- Be resilient in developing and sustaining a career path (including self-employment) taking account of personal health and welfare
- Evaluate the effectiveness of intellectual property rights, ethical, legal and other regulatory frameworks relevant to music composition and recording
- Work effectively with others who are different from them, traversing cultural borders with skill and comfort.
- Engage in deliberative dialogue, even when there might be divergent views
- Illustrate effective verbal and written communication skills.
- Demonstrate an understanding of group dynamics and effective teamwork
- Distinguish ways to adjust one's leadership style appropriate to the situation.
- Display the critical thinking skills and abilities to lead others toward common goals
- Respond positively to criticism while maintaining confidence in one's own creative work

Name of Exit Qualification:	Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE)
Full name of Qualification and Award Title:	DipHE Songwriting
Credits requirements:	240 Credits
Module requirements:	ALL 120 Credits at Level 4 ALL 120 Credits at Level 5
Learning Outcome	
Demonstrate an ability to be self-motivated to acquire new skills and engage in further learning to keep abreast of developments within the subject discipline	
Compose a range of musical outputs in inventive and individual ways	
Engage in deliberative dialogue, even when there might be divergent views	
Illustrate effective verbal and written communication skills	
Demonstrate the harnessing of technological resources for the purposes of music composition	
Employ a variety of musical styles and materials and manipulate them as desired	
Evaluate the effectiveness of intellectual property rights, ethical, legal and other regulatory frameworks relevant to music composition and recording	
Work effectively with others who are different from them, traversing cultural borders with skill and comfort.	
Demonstrate an understanding of group dynamics and effective teamwork	
Respond positively to criticism while maintaining confidence in one's own creative work	

Name of Exit Qualification:	Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE)
Full name of Qualification and Award Title:	CertHE Songwriting
Credits requirements:	120 Credits
Module requirements:	ALL 120 Credits at Level 4
Learning Outcome	
Demonstrate an ability to be self-motivated to acquire new skills and engage in further learning to keep abreast of developments within the subject discipline	
Compose a range of musical outputs in inventive and individual ways	
Engage in deliberative dialogue, even when there might be divergent views	
Illustrate effective verbal and written communication skills	
Employ professionalism and an affective approach to direction and leadership music performance	