

MFA PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

KEY FACTS

Programme:	MFA Creative Practice (Music)
Awarding Institution:	Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance
Teaching Institution:	Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance
Type of study:	Three years full-time; six years part-time; (two years 'intensive')
UK Credits:	380; (350)
ECTS:	190; (175)

OUTLINE

Summary Description

The MFA Creative Practice (Music) programme is aimed at those students wishing to be professional musicians: performers and composers who wish to develop their creative practice through a programme of independent learning through practice-based activity to an exceptional level. In addition to equipping students with the necessary musical skills, insight and and experience required by the contemporary profession in its widest sense but with a focus on the Western Classical and Jazz traditions, the MFA is designed to attract students wishing to develop their skills across the Artist-Producer-Creative nexus. To this end, the programme is specifically constructed to appeal to performer/composers able to produce innovative practice-based outputs which are well-attuned to both their aspired audience and its wider production context.

This is a three-year full-time, six-year part-time, or two-year 'intensive' Level 7 programme which enables graduates to create music as instrumentalists, vocalists or composers at an exceptionally highly professional and employable standard. Students on the MFA programme study concurrently with those on the MMus programme throughout the first two years of their studies (or first year if in 'intensive' mode). Their MFA specific studies take place during their final year of study only.

You will have established a secure artistic personality and developed a range of sophisticated professional skills. As an emerging artist you will have created music – solo, small and large ensemble – in a variety of settings and in relation to a range of audiences. You will have gained understanding of the music profession and its audiences in contemporary society. Through your understanding of audience you will develop collaboration, innovation and entrepreneurial skills in support of a professional career. The programme prepares you to communicate at the highest levels as an artist through your instrument/voice/compositions and to engage audiences through informed discussion and text where appropriate.

Towards its conclusion, this programme enables you to identify and develop your own programme of study, and to spend a considerable period of time developing an analytical stance for your own work within a practice led research environment. It offers the opportunity to develop work in a rigorous yet supportive environment and to gain the intellectual, practical and interpersonal skills needed for a career as a musician or practitioner in a related field. Cumulatively building your knowledge, understandings and

skills through broadly-based M-level studies, you will undertake an extended project (or series of projects), investigating particular aspects of your musical practice with the support of a supervisory team. The work will have the potential to generate a substantial area of research, and is likely to culminate in the form of a performance event or events.

The programme is designed to allow the skills and experience of the individual student to flourish and for new skills and insights to be gained. The programme is structured to enable progressive development through the material studied and the assessments undertaken, leading to your increased autonomy and independence as a learner, in preparation for professional life and/or study on the MPhil/PhD programme.

The programme aims are:

- to provide advanced musical training at postgraduate level which encourages the demonstration of individual musical talent and scholarship, underpinned by articulate, informed and sophisticated critical self-reflection, at a highly professional standard;
- to enable musicians of proven ability, and with the potential for further training, to advance and refine their skills and specialism/s and deepen their professional expertise through focused activity which nurtures your individual development as an artist;
- to acknowledge the significance of musical context, highlighting and taking account of the relationship of music to wider artistic, historical, philosophical, cultural and/or social practices, issues and/or phenomena;
- to cultivate musicians who have the ability to work in a variety of complex musical groupings and multi-disciplinary environments, and to exercise initiative, personal responsibility, and leadership in professional practice;
- to develop you as a reflective practitioner who is critically aware of the reciprocity of theory and practice, to enable you to develop and articulate your individual practice as research and to foster a capacity for substantial and in-depth independent research over an extended period of time;
- to create an environment which encourages risk and nurtures creativity and innovation, reflecting, wherever applicable, cutting-edge thinking within the profession, and taking advantage, where appropriate, of advances in digital and other technologies;
- to develop your ability to address complex issues creatively and systematically, as well as the ability to problem-solve in a variety of artistic contexts through the engagement in practice based research, including – as appropriate – collaborative projects;
- to produce enterprising, entrepreneurial musicians equipped both for existing and developing high-level employment opportunities as performers/ composers/educators in today's diverse, internationalised and ever-changing music profession.

What will I be expected to achieve?

In recognition of the structure of this programme, programme aims and outcomes are expressed in two parts – those relating to the first two years of study (concurrent with the MMus) and those relating explicitly to the final, MFA year of study.

On successful completion of this programme, a student will be expected to be able to demonstrate:

Knowledge and understanding

For the MMus:

- demonstrate through performance and/or composition (and/or other media where appropriate) an in-depth knowledge of the student's principal instrumental/vocal/ composition discipline (including a detailed grasp of appropriate repertoires and texts), familiarity with relevant concepts and issues, and the ability to refer to, apply and/or challenge relevant materials and current research in a range of performing and/or creative contexts;
- demonstrate through performance and/or composition (and/or other media where appropriate) the ability to analyse, manipulate, interrogate or create musical materials (texts, artefacts, phenomena) as a means of expressing individual artistic concepts; present results or findings in a coherent and communicable form; and show critical awareness of areas of uncertainty or contention;
- evidence an advanced understanding of the relationship between theory, practice and theoretical constructs in music; be able to use relevant techniques and methods to explain and demonstrate that interrelationship; and to demonstrate how these relate to its creation, performance and/or transmission;
- demonstrate a broad contextual knowledge appropriate to the specific musical area/s studied, including their relationship to wider artistic, historical, philosophical, cultural and/or social practices, issues and phenomena, and to cognate disciplines (such as dance, multi-media, education etc.) as appropriate and to demonstrate critical engagement with these questions especially in relation to music's creation, performance and/or transmission
- critical and practical engagement with methods for creative practice, documentation and presentation;

And for the MFA:

- critical awareness of techniques and methodologies for creating performance work in order to support originality and creativity in scholarly practice including practice-based research;
- ability to examine music systematically within a performance context, and to make appropriate judgements regarding context, aesthetic and meaning synthesising and interpreting complex ideas from a variety of perspectives;

Skills

For the MMus:

- demonstrate an individual musical personality or 'voice' through advanced technical skills, high levels of interpretative insight, personal expression, and originality in creative work, and to be able to adapt these skills imaginatively for new situations across a broad range of repertoire, whether in a solo or collaborative ensemble context, and in a variety of public performing situations;
- exhibit, either through comprehensive broadening or deepening of specialisation, fluency in stylistic interpretation, composition and/or improvisation across a range of repertoire;
- demonstrate the ability critically to analyse and/or synthesise knowledge of the essential components of musical language and structures through a range of different approaches;
- to be a self-critical and motivated learner, able to produce independent work of high quality (rigorous, defensible, robust, imaginative, etc.), to guide the learning of others, and to manage your own continuing professional development;

- to be able to work creatively and effectively with a group as leader or member, and to exhibit skills in leadership, teamwork, negotiation, organisation and decision-making as appropriate, and handle with confidence conflict, risk and the unexpected;
- The ability to propose, formulate, develop and apply an individual method of practice &/or practice as research

And for the MFA:

- The ability to locate and inform their creative practice through engagement with wider frameworks for artistic methods and practices;
- The ability to articulate and debate creative practice within the public domain, locating and informing your own creative practice through engagement with wider frameworks of artistic practice and existing bodies of knowledge

Values and attitudes

For the MMus:

- A sophisticated understanding of collaborative processes and co-operative working, recognising the role of individual responsibility within the creative process, and an understanding of relevant professional expectations and protocols,
- Autonomy of learning, researching and presentation/communication with others;
- Flexibility and responsiveness to individual and collective innovation and creativity, recognising risk as an element of that creativity.

And for the MFA:

- Engagement in practical research as a means to interrogate and synthesise complex, incomplete or contradictory knowledge and perspectives embedded in arts practice;
- A professional, reflective and responsible attitude to their practice which includes an understanding of the mutually influential relationship between personal endeavour and collaborative enterprise;
- A critical appreciation of the role that art plays in shaping the socio-political and cultural context.

How will I learn?

Learning takes place through a blend of formal tuition, experiential learning and personal study. Instrumental, composition, or vocal tuition is the central element of the provision, consisting of individual one-to-one learning, group tuition, rehearsals, workshops, seminars and masterclasses. Students will develop and contextualize their individual tuition within a broad range of solo, small-group/chamber, and large-ensemble activities. Most tuition within the Research Lab and Electives modules is delivered through formal taught sessions, seminars and tutorials, and consolidated in extensive self-study. CoLab module learning is largely student-led, supported by mentors and interventions from a range of internal and external professional colleagues including staff from the Faculty of Dance. All learning is delivered in small groups, and wherever possible practical experience is blended with theoretical knowledge to develop students' informed musicianship and employability skills. Throughout the programme, visiting artists, ensemble directors and lecturers expose the students to a variety of views and approaches current within the profession.

Certain modules/components in the programme may involve you studying with another student or students in a collaborative way (e.g. with other musicians, dancers or other artists in a working relationship). This may involve you working alongside, and/or undertaking leadership or supervisory responsibilities for other (possibly undergraduate) students engaged in projects with you as, for example, assistant directors or performers. Collaboration is considered to be at the heart of professional artistic life and, as such, opportunities such as these represent valuable learning experiences.

The Personal Project places a significant responsibility on the learner, and shifts the role of the tutor to that of a mentor or facilitator.

Learning within the Extended Project module takes place through a mix of formal tuition (seminars, Laboratory Forum and individual tutorials), experiential learning and personal study, with instrumental, vocal, and/or composition tuition as a central element of the provision. The programme aims to enable you to develop independent learning strategies for lifelong learning. Your supervisory team will regularly encourage you to reflect on learning and to formulate personal programmes of study and targets for learning.

The first two years of the programme aim to enable you to develop independent learning strategies for lifelong learning, prior to your final year of study (MFA year) which is devoted to independent learning through practice-based activity. Your tutors will regularly encourage you to reflect on learning and to formulate personal programmes of study and targets for learning.

This programme assumes 3,800 (3,500) learning and teaching hours with at least 880 hours average contact time.

How will I be assessed?

Overview

Assessment methods as far as possible mirror professional contexts with all aspects of the mode of assessment negotiated directly between the Programme/Module Leader, supervisory team and individual student depending on the material under consideration.

In the assessment for Professional Studies performance/composition activities will include a combination of solo, chamber/small ensemble, large ensemble and technical work. Other programme components, including CoLab, Research Lab, the Electives and the Personal Project will feature a blend of written and practical assessment methods (including, but not exclusive to essay, analysis, composition, improvisation, performance, editions etc.) arrived at through negotiation between the student and tutor depending on the material under consideration. Elective assessments will focus on employability skills and knowledge.

The assessment for the Extended Project module usually comprises a performed event/exhibition/installation/presentation, which may be collaboratively delivered as appropriate, together with the prior submission of substantial supporting visual and written reflective documentation as agreed with your supervisory team and the Programme Leader.

What do I have to do to pass?

You must achieve a pass mark of at least 50% in each module in order to pass the programme. The mark awarded will reflect the extent to which you have met the descriptors set out in the level 7 marking criteria.

Compensation (the award of credit for a failed module) may be awarded for no more than one module of up to 20 credits, provided that a mark of no less than 40% has been achieved in the module to be compensated. Compensation is not permitted for modules of more than 20 credits.

What award can I get?

Successful completion of the MFA programme of study leads to the following postgraduate award:

- Master of Fine Arts Creative Practice (Music)

The minimum percentage in the overall aggregate for recommendation for the award shall normally be:

- With Distinction minimum 70%
- With Merit minimum 60%
- Pass without classification minimum 50%

The Master of Fine Arts Creative Practice (Music) award shall be decided on the overall aggregate of all modules calculated as a weighted average.

Master of Fine Art Degree:

	HE Level	Credits	Weighting (%)
Project	7	140	100

Class **% required**

With Distinction 70

With Merit 60

With Pass 50

Master's Degree (MMus):

	HE Level	Credits	Weighting (%)
Taught	7	210 (180)	87.5%
Personal Project	7	30	12.5%

Class **% required**

With Distinction 70

With Merit 60

With Pass 50

Postgraduate Diploma:

	HE Level	Credits	Weighting (%)
Taught	7	120	100

Class **% required**

With Distinction 70

With Merit 60

With Pass 50

Postgraduate Certificate:

	HE Level	Credits	Weighting (%)
Taught	7	70*	100

Class **% required**

With Distinction	70
With Merit	60
With Pass	50

*These credits must be from the Professional Studies module only.

CONTENT

What will I study?

Key Progression Points (if applicable)

The programme consists of two parts, with an additional progression point at the end of the first year of study. Students who have yet to complete the taught modules (not including The Entrepreneurial Musician) due to failure or deferral may be required to complete any outstanding assessments before embarking on the Personal Project.

Commencement of the MFA Extended Project is only open to students who have satisfactorily completed all elements of the MMus.

Where an assessment component is failed, one resit may be permitted by the Assessment Board. The mark will be capped at the minimum pass mark of 50%. The date and mode of reassessment will be set by the Interim Assessment Panel or by the Assessment Board (depending on the timing of the assessment).

To complete the programme you must attain a pass or better for each module. Please see the full version of the regulations and the generic grade descriptors for further information on where compensation may be granted for an unsatisfactory mark, and for grade thresholds that allow resubmission of assessment tasks for a pass mark.

Structure

Taught Modules

Module Title	Module Code	Module Credits	Core/ Elective	Compensation Yes/No	Level
Professional Studies 1	PGD701	70	Core	No	7
Professional Studies 2	M701	70	Core	No	7
Research Lab	PGD702	20	Core	No	7
CoLab	PGD703	10	Core	Yes	7
Electives	PGD704	20	Elective	Yes	7
The Entrepreneurial Musician	M705	20	Core	Yes	7

Project/Dissertation Modules

Module Title	Module Code	Module Credits	Core/ Elective	Compensation Yes/No	Level
Personal Project	M706	30	Core	No	7
Extended Project	MFA707	140	Core	No	7

You are normally required to complete all the modules except M705 successfully before progressing to the project/dissertation

Elective Component Options

Component Title	Component Code	Component Credits
Arranging	PGD704a	10
Creative Leadership	PGD704b	10
Digital Musician	PGD704c	10
Music Now	PGD704d	10
Contemporary Music Pedagogy	PGD704e	10
Musical Direction	PGD704f	10
Psychology in Music Performance	PGD704g	10

Structure (Intensive)

Year One

Module Title	Module Code	Module Credits	Core/ Elective	Compensation Yes/No	Level
Professional Studies	M701i	110	Core	No	7
Research Lab	PGD702	20	Core	No	7
CoLab	PGD703	10	Core	Yes	7
Electives	PGD704	20	Elective	Yes	7
The Entrepreneurial Musician	M705	20	Core	Yes	7
Personal Project	M706	30	Core	No	7

Year Two

Module Title	Module Code	Module Credits	Core/ Elective	Compensation Yes/No	Level
Professional Studies	M701	NC	Core	No	7
Extended Project	MFA707	140	Core	No	7

Elective Component Options

Component Title	Component Code	Component Credits
Arranging	PGD704a	10
Creative Leadership	PGD704b	10
Digital Musician	PGD704c	10
Music Now	PGD704d	10
Contemporary Music Pedagogy	PGD704e	10
Musical Direction	PGD704f	10
Psychology in Music Performance	PGD704g	10

For full-time 'intensive' mode students, the programme commences in September each academic year, and continues until the end of September two years later (24 months).

For full-time 'standard' mode students, the programme commences in September each academic year, and continues until July of Year 3 (27 months).

For part-time students who remain in part-time mode throughout their studies, the programme commences with registration in September of Year 1 and continues until the completion of all modules/components at the end of July of Year 6 (54 months).

Students commencing study in part-time mode may elect to complete part of their studies on a full-time basis. In such cases the programme commences with registration in September of Year 1 and continues until the completion of all modules/components. Likewise students commencing study in full-time mode may elect to complete part of their studies on a part-time basis. In such cases the programme commences with registration in September of Year 1 and also continues until the completion of all modules/components.

Students in all study modes will sign an individualised learning agreement at the commencement of their final MFA (Year 3 (PT 5; 'Intensive' 2) period of study, developed as appropriate to their circumstances and specific learning needs.

Full-time 'intensive' mode: You will take 210 credits in the first year and 140 credits in the second year. All modules are core except for the Electives. The academic teaching year normally commences in September; for students on the 'intensive' mode study continues on a year round basis until the conclusion of the programme.

Modules may be whole-year or part-year intensive learning. Research Lab, CoLab and Electives will be studied at various points in terms 1 and 2 (blocks A to D), with assessments at the end of each module.

The Professional Studies module learning will be undertaken across all three terms (blocks A to E), with Principal Study lessons continuing throughout the summer period. The major performance/composition element will be assessed in September. Assessments for the minor performance/composition element and ensemble performance/composition element will be completed during term 2 (blocks C to D), as advised by the programme team. Assessment of the Generative Musical Techniques/Analysis Professional Studies components will take place concurrently with the major performance/composition element assessment in September.

The Personal Project and Extended Project module learning will also be undertaken across all three terms (blocks A to E), with the final Personal Project assessment submission taking place in September. The single Extended Project module performance outcome is presented in May/June, with a period for reflection and writing up supporting documentation (including some supervision) continuing throughout the summer period prior to submission in September.

Full-time 'standard' mode: You will take 380 credits in three years. All modules are core except for the Electives. The academic teaching year normally commences in September and finishes in July.

Modules may be whole-year or part-year intensive learning. In year 1 Research Lab and the Electives are studied in terms 1 and 2 (blocks A to D), with assessments at the end of each module. In year 2 The Entrepreneurial Musician is studied in terms 1 and 2 (blocks A to D).

CoLab may be taken in all years of study, but is assessed in the first year of study only; it takes place in term 2 (between blocks C and D).

Professional Studies module learning is undertaken across all nine terms (blocks A to E of all years of study). The major performance/composition element will be assessed in May/June. Assessments for the minor performance/composition element and ensemble performance/composition element will be completed during term 2 (blocks C to D), as advised by the programme team. Assessment of the Generative Musical Techniques/Analysis Professional Studies components will take place concurrently with the major performance/composition element assessment in May/June.

The Personal Project and Extended Project module learning will also be undertaken across all three terms (blocks A to E), with the final Personal Project assessment submission taking place in July. The single Extended Project module performance outcome is presented in May/June, with a period for reflection and writing up supporting documentation (including some supervision) continuing throughout the summer period prior to submission in September.

Part-time mode (6 years): You will take the first 120 credits in the first two years of study, the second 120 credits in the second two years of study, and the final 140 credits in the final two years of study. All modules are core except for the Electives. The academic teaching year normally commences in September and finishes in July. The pattern of learning is normally as follows:

Year 1: Professional Studies I (Minor assessment)

Additional component: 'Teaching and Learning in Practice' (non-assessed component)

Research Lab

CoLab (not assessed)

Elective 1

Year 2: Professional Studies I (Major assessment)

Additional components: 'Generative Music Techniques' and 'Analysis and the Critically Informed Performer' (one of these to be assessed as part of the Major assessment).

CoLab (assessed)

Elective 2

Year 3: Professional Studies II (Minor assessment)

CoLab (not assessed)

The Entrepreneurial Musician

Personal Project (learning for this module over years 3 & 4, not assessed in Year 3)

Year 4: Professional Studies II (Major assessment)

CoLab (not assessed)

Personal Project (assessed)

Year 5: Extended Project (learning for this module over years 5 & 6, not assessed in Year 5)

Year 6: Extended Project (assessed)

CAREERS

Historically, graduates from the MFA programme have considered progression to a PhD programme either in the UK or internationally or alternatively now work in the field as, for example, independent / freelance performers/composers in a wide variety of contexts, music facilitators with professional music ensembles and organisations, as teachers in schools, colleges and universities or as music administrators and project managers.

Alumni profiles can be found on the website: <http://www.trinitylaban.ac.uk/alumni/alumni-profiles?tag=2089>

Comprehensive careers support is available for all Trinity Laban students and recent graduates, supported by a dedicated Careers Coordinator and our careers website: www.trinitylaban.ac.uk/student-experience/careers

STUDY ABROAD / WORK PLACEMENTS

Study Abroad options

Erasmus exchange and/or study abroad is available to students in 'standard' full- / part-time modes of study during their MFA study. Such study may be undertaken for a period of up to 3 months (maximum) by negotiation with the Programme Leader and Head of Department.

Placement options

Not Available

ACCREDITATION AND PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION

Accrediting Body

Not Available

ADMISSIONS

Entry Requirements

For entry to the full-time or part-time PGD programme (or MA, MMus, or MFA programmes), applicants are usually expected to hold a good (II:i) pass in a BMus (Hons) degree, or an equivalent qualification, such as a Performer's Diploma (LTCL, LRAM, LRSM, ARCM etc.). Equivalent entry qualifications or professional experience may be considered for entry to the programme, subject to completing the Institution's RPL procedures.

Admission to the MMus/MA programmes within 'intensive' mode will only be considered for candidates achieving a grade of 70% or above within the performance/composition component of the audition process. During interview, MMus/MA 'intensive' mode candidates will also be required to additionally discuss their ability to dedicate themselves to their studies for the duration of the programme and to demonstrate, through their responses clear academic aptitude and experience. NB It is generally considered that it is not viable for students on the 'intensive' study mode to undertake part-time work concurrently with their studies.

Applicants must demonstrate through the application, audition and interview procedure the potential to carry out detailed investigations of topics in which they have a particular interest, and to communicate their ideas coherently and effectively to others. They will show the capability to deliver at the end of the relevant programme a series of performance, written and/or oral submissions, which display both a critical awareness of the implications of their topic, and the ability to synthesise and communicate their ideas effectively.

Applicants for whom English is not their first language should demonstrate proficiency in English equivalent to IELTS 7.0.