# Programme Specification

UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER⌘

## Course record information

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| **Name and level of final award** | • Master of Arts - Audio Production<br><br>The award is Bologna FQ-EHEA second cycle degree or diploma compatible |
| **Name and level of intermediate awards** | • Postgraduate Diploma (Pg Dip) - Audio Production<br>• Postgraduate Certificate (Pg Cert) - Audio Production |
| **Awarding body/institution** | University of Westminster |
| **Teaching institution** | University of Westminster |
| **Status of awarding body/institution** | Recognised Body |
| **Location of delivery** | Primary: Harrow |
| **Language of delivery and assessment** | English |
| **QAA subject benchmarking group(s)** | Music |
| **Professional statutory or regulatory body** | The course is currently accredited by Joint Audio Media Education Support (JAMES) until 2027. Accreditation Renewal will be applied for prior to the ending of the current accreditation period. |
| **Westminster course title, mode of attendance and standard length** | • MA Audio Production FT, Full-time, September start - 1 year standard length<br>• MA Audio Production PT, Part-time day, September start - 2 years standard length |
| **Valid for cohorts** | From 2025/6 |

## Admissions requirements

There are standard minimum entry requirements for all postgraduate courses. Students are advised to check the standard requirements for the most up-to-date information. For most courses a decision will be made on the basis of your application form alone. However, for some courses the selection process may include an interview to demonstrate your strengths in addition to any formal entry requirements. More information can be found here: https://www.westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/how-to-apply.

## Aims of the programme

The MA Audio Production course has been designed to:

- Provide the opportunity for students at postgraduate level to articulate creative ideas using relevant audio production tools, processes, and related visual and interactive technologies.

- Develop specialist knowledge and ability within audio and audio-visual production as a foundation for future professional practice.

- Provide a forum for the artistic exploration of converging technologies and the changing function and meaning of audio production within the creative industries environments.

- Develop specialist knowledge of the entrepreneurial character of the audio and audio-related industries and the challenges of operating both independently or as part of a team or larger business structures.

- Provide the opportunity to study, research and evaluate a specialist area within audio production through a large-scale independent and original creative project, informed by current professional standards.

- Prepare students for appropriate study at postgraduate research level.

Students begin this mode of study with a view to gaining a comprehensive knowledge of the audio industry and its various sectors, incorporating professional standards of production and an in-depth knowledge of areas of specialisation. They will be able to apply abstract knowledge and concepts to specific purposes and find innovative solutions to complex problems. They will demonstrate leadership and team management skills with the ability to apply critical approaches to information and to their own work. They will also be able to negotiate the scale and scope of the self-directed period of study in a preferred area of specialism.

## Employment and further study opportunities

Today's organisations need graduates with both good degrees and skills relevant to the workplace, i.e. employability skills. The University of Westminster is committed to developing employable graduates by ensuring that:

- Career development skills are embedded in all courses

- Opportunities for part-time work, placements and work-related learning activities are widely available to students

- Staff continue to widen and strengthen the University's links with employers in all sectors, involving them in curriculum design and encouraging their participation in other aspects of the University's career education and guidance provision

- Staff are provided with up-to-date data on labour market trends and employers' requirements, which will inform the service delivered to students.

The MA Audio Production course aims to meet the needs of industry, preparing you for a diverse range of roles in audio production, including creative production, interactive sound and production for media. In your career it is likely you will take the lead on the creation and execution of music related projects.

MA Audio graduates find employment is in a variety of destinations including Music production, Film and Television Production and Post, sound design for interactive games, media and mobile devices, AV location recording & Foley, production management for international corporations, education, new media production, film sound production, research and design, higher programmes of study (including doctoral research and supplementary Masters programmes).

Our teaching team all have industry experience alongside their academic practice which they use to inform their approach to the course and curriculum, ensuring that it is fully relevant to the industry. Our industry accreditations and long-standing recognition of the course put graduates in more favourable position with employers.

We recognise that in production many careers are freelance and rely on a strong portfolio. Our students build a portfolio of production work throughout their assessments which can be used professional to demonstrate skills and creative work when applying to industry roles. We have embedded entrepreneurship into the course to support audio producers to build a sustainable professional career.

As a graduate of the MA Audio Production course, you will develop skills and knowledge that will enable you to progress in the music industries or to develop your own freelance career. You will join a well-established alumni network which filters a number of work and career opportunities to current students and former graduates alike many occupying senior industry roles.

## What will you be expected to achieve?

# Course learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements on what successful students have achieved as the result of learning.

These are threshold statements of achievement the learning outcomes broadly fall into four categories:

The overall knowledge and understanding you will gain from your course (KU)

Graduate attributes are characteristics that you will have developed during the duration of your course (GA)

Professional and personal practice learning outcomes are specific skills that you will be expected to have gained on successful completion of the course (PPP)

Key transferable skills that you will be expected to have gained on successful completion of the course. (KTS)

**Level 7 course learning outcomes:** upon completion of Level 7 you will be able to:

- 001 Apply a systematic understanding of advanced audio recording, sound design, mixing, manipulation and post-production techniques in the process of creating original audio and/or audio-visual artworks, incorporating interrelationships with other relevant disciplines in abstract and unpredictably complex contexts, and adhering to professional release/broadcast standards. ( KU PPP SS )

- 002 Select and apply an advanced range of digital, analogue and hybrid approaches in software and hardware, mastering contemporary industry practice models of work in a variety of studio environments and media formats. ( KU PPP SS )

- 003 Systematically synthesise converging technologies and production approaches in the creation of interactive and interdisciplinary media works, demonstrating advanced problem-solving strategies by critically evaluating specialist information and data in unpredictable and complex contexts. ( KU SS CS )

- 004 Take responsibility for leading the systematic and critical evaluation of your own and others' capabilities, performance, and development in order to complete independently produced and industry-focused creative projects, demonstrating a high level of artistic innovation and technical specialism during the process of a client brief. ( KTS CS )

- 005 Systematically and critically analyse and evaluate the complex relationships between sonic art forms, technologies, and audience, identifying stylistic signatures and critically evaluating creative productions in their social context. ( KTS CS )

- 006 Critically examine, analyse, and evaluate branding, marketing, and project management structures in the global context of the creative industries, demonstrating effective autonomous, strategic leadership, networking, and team management skills. ( KU PPP CS )

- 007 Select and apply theoretical frameworks in order to develop sustainable business plans with a particular emphasis on music and audio-related industries, exploring innovative revenue models and financial planning. ( PPP KTS CS )

- 008 Research, discuss and subsequently demonstrate a broad understanding of the historical, sociological, and cultural contexts surrounding audio production and the musicology of record production in the context of the global creative industries. ( KU CS )

- 009 Demonstrate a readiness to work in teams, accept responsibility, flexibility, and adaptability, to tolerate uncertainty, challenge assumptions, manage unpredictable complexity, be resilient, self-starting and appropriately assertive. ( KU PPP KTS )

# How will you learn?

## Learning methods

**Learning and Assessment Strategy**

The music industry is constantly evolving with changes in society and technology. We are committed to ensuring that our students are prepared for the industry now and to influence how the industry develops in the future.

Our courses are designed to ensure students develop:

- Technical skills

- Critical skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Organisation skills
- Entrepreneurial skills

Students across all courses work as they would in industry and we use authentic assessment so that students are able to practice skills and approaches that they will use as professionals. This is supported by developing academic and research skills that will allow them to challenge and improve the industry of the future.

Learning on the course is defined to be appropriate to the needs of each module, and strategies for teaching and learning are published in every module handbook.

Within the course, we balance technical skills and knowledge through practical workshops and demonstrations with theoretical frameworks and knowledge that help students build their creative instincts and expertise as audio producers.

Students learn technical skills and knowledge using industry standard studios, hardware and software. Having learned the core techniques they are given space to experiment and develop production skills, developing their personal approach as an audio producer.

Skills and knowledge are assessed through real world authentic assessments that build to create a portfolio of work to support the student in industry.

## Equality and Diversity

We are proud to teach such a diverse range of students in the MA Audio Production Course at Westminster. Students are at the core of everything we do, and we encourage everyone to draw on their own experience when approaching creative work, centring their practice at the heart of their and our communities.

Through our teaching, we support our students in developing skills to contribute to a more equal and diverse society and improve and develop music industry practices. Within the course we discuss and interrogate themes around representation, aesthetics, and power. By studying audio production, our students are equipped with the skills and knowledge to critically engage with the music industry, and its social and cultural meanings, and to produce work that reflects diverse perspectives and experiences.

## Under-represented Groups in Audio Production

We recognise that certain demographics and protected characters are traditionally under-represented in audio production. We are committed throughout the course to reviewing our case studies and musical examples so that they represent a range of characteristics and backgrounds and ensure that we are not perpetuating stereotypes of the role of audio producers.

## Community and Collaboration

We are actively working to decolonise our curriculum and to include diverse voices, perspectives, and histories in course materials and curricula. We listen to our students and support them in all aspects the programme to develop their own creative practice and shape their individual journey through the course. Students come to Westminster from many different and varied backgrounds, and this rich cultural heritage enables an exciting atmosphere of mutual support, where students learn about other communities as well as find the space to explore their own. The course design ensures that students can take charge of their projects, based on their own knowledge and cultural interests. Students have the opportunity to collaborate with peers and participate in community-oriented spaces, as we seek to expand education beyond the classroom and to contribute to society in a meaningful way.

## Inclusion and Equality

Our commitment to inclusivity drives us to address inequality wherever we find it. We welcome applications from students of all backgrounds and needs. We provide a safe and inclusive environment for all, so that everyone feels valued and contributes to our program, and throughout the program we embed diversity and inclusion in all that we do. This goes right from students' first day on the course to well beyond graduation, as the course is designed to enhance career options for everyone.

We provide career enhancement opportunities that allow our community of students to flourish well beyond graduation. Our course provides opportunities for students to gain practical experience through regular contact with industry professionals, such as work placements, guest talks by industry experts, and participation in music events. These experiences help students to become familiar with industry practices and provide them with a sense of agency and confidence, while also enhancing their employability prospects. This can be particularly beneficial for students who may

not have access to wider networks.

**Neurodiversity and Disability**

Creative courses often attract a wide range of students and staff members, including those who are neurodiverse. Our course team is experienced in providing the necessary support to meet the unique needs of our students and we are committed to creating course materials and assessments that are accessible to all students, regardless of their learning style or ability. We work closely with the disability team to ensure that our course is structured in a way that is truly inclusive, with sessions that cater for a range of learning styles and needs, and we ensure that our assessments and teaching formats are adapted to fully accommodate our diverse student body.

**Active Learning Strategies**

We use active learning strategies that encourage students to participate in group work, discussions, and collaborative projects. We provide multiple modes of content delivery, including audio-visual and written materials. We encourage student feedback throughout the course to ensure that their needs and concerns are being met. We also offer mentorship and support to students, particularly those from under-represented groups, to help them succeed in their studies and future careers.

**Technology and Inclusion; assessment**

We support and celebrate diversity as something that contributes to individual and collective development. We embrace change and technological developments to bring these to students from all backgrounds, promoting social mobility in the music industries. We are committed to removing any barriers that prevent students from succeeding. Our assessment methods – including presentations, live briefs, group working, and publications – are designed to contribute to building equality for all. When possible, we include 'authentic' assessment methods that replicate real-world scenarios and tasks that students might encounter in their future careers or professional lives.

**UN Sustainable Development Goals**

On the MA Audio production Course students will interpret and apply their knowledge and understanding of audio production and music culture with respect to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is addressed through curriculum content, discussion and choice of industry guests across the SDG themes.

Future music professionals need to embed sustainability in all aspects of their work aligned to each of the SDG's to ensure a fairer and more sustainable future for the music industry.

# Teaching methods

The teaching methods used on the course include the following:

- Lectures: to present information and act as a springboard for students' research and discussion on a given subject; to build on the assigned readings and explore and examine contextual issues and present an opportunity to engage with the key themes of the module.
- Seminars: to support students' learning on the module through small group discussions of detailed theoretical content, techniques, and ideas.
- Workshops: small and medium-sized groups of students develop work in progress tutored by specialist staff; practical demonstrations: small and medium-sized groups of students attend demonstrations of techniques and technologies with active student participation.
- Individual projects: projects devised by students and with outcomes and criteria agreed with a tutor.
- Tutorials: one to one contact between a specialist member of academic staff and a student conducting independent research; they aim to support individual research and reflection on issues that are presented through the process of module delivery, and also support practical development.
- Production Group Tutorials: Aimed to supporting group projects, joint research and provide regular checkpoints on progress of various stages of group productions.
- Independent research: student led project work involving interviews and other external contact and research activity, leading to assessed project work.
- Learning contracts: negotiated plans of learning agreed by the module leader to tailor the student's experience of a module or of specified learning outcomes.

# Assessment methods

MA Audio Production students will engage in all aspects of the production process utilising team-working skills where appropriate or working individually in the production of practical works and pieces of research. The summative assessment tasks include:

**Core modules:**

- Audiobook and podcast production.
- Animation sound design.
- Spatial film sound production. (Audio-Visual Production and Sound Design)
- Music production with live recording.
- Spatial remix. (Creative Music Production)
- Interactive audio tool programming.
- Game audio design and implementation. (Interactive Audio for Games)
- Research essay.
- Video documentary. (Research Methods: Theory and Practice)
- Business Pitch & Plan (Entrepreneurship and Innovation)
- Guided independent study; major project productions and analysis. (Major Project)

**Option modules:**

- Portfolio of productions.
- Critical reflection. (Experimental Production)
- Portfolio of compositions.
- Critical reflection. (Composition for Media)
- Immersive project proposal.
- Immersive portfolio. (Advanced Immersive Audio)
- Research report. (Acoustics)

Assessments are authentic and carried out through formative and summative feedback, which is delivered on the modules through a series of assessment events as part of the teaching and learning methods. Assessment checkpoints are also integrated within the programme of study to ensure that feedback given to students is incorporated through a summative and integrated process.

**Assessment events**

The practical works in music, business, audio, audio-visual and the interactive productions are assessed through a process of peer group presentation - known as assessment events. These involve students individually, and /or in teams presenting their work to their tutors and peers and discussing it. This supports students' ability to present their work in public, and to develop their critical judgement in relation to their own and others' work. In addition, it promotes a culture within the course which regards the completion, and practical realisation of work within tight deadlines as normal and acts to improve overall work standards through a benchmarking process.

Peer Review: Peer review is a particularly important part of the assessment process with students formally presenting their work to their peer group with feedback being presented by the tutor and group. This presents the student with an opportunity to defend the work under scrutiny and assess the level of personal input and understanding.

Assessment Procedures: A module programme detailing the content of the module, learning outcomes, and coursework requirement and assessment methods. Details of the assessment methods and criteria for each part of the coursework, the schedule of coursework assignments, including methods and dates of submission, coursework return, and tutor feedback deadlines are provided in a separate module document.

The course offers a variety of assessment methods which have been designed to link with the learning outcomes.

| Graduate Attribute | Evident in Course Outcomes |
|---|---|
| Critical and creative thinker | 003, 004, 005, 006, 008 |
| Literate and effective communicator | 004, 005, 006, 007, 008, 009 |
| Entrepreneurial | 004, 006, 007, 009 |
| Global in outlook and engaged in communities | 005, 006, 007, 009 |
| Socially, ethically and environmentally aware | 005, 006, 007, 009 |

## Course Structure

This section shows the core and option modules available as part of the course and their credit value. Full-time Postgraduate students study 180 credits per year. Additional free text information on the choices may also be included, for example where students must choose one of two modules.. Course structures can be subject to change each academic year following feedback from a variety of sources.

## Modules

### Level 7

Award of Masters of Art: 180 credits required
Award of Postgraduate Diploma: Minimum 120 credits required
Award of Postgraduate Certificate: Minimum 60 credits required

To enter the dissertation stage of the programme students must successfully complete all taught modules.

| Module Code | Module Title | Status | PT Year (where applicable) | UK credit | ECTS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7MUPR012W | Creative Music Production | Core | 1 | 20 | 10 |
| 7MUMN002W | Entrepreneurship and Innovation | Core | 1 | 20 | 10 |
| 7MUPR013W | Interactive Audio for Games | Core | 1 | 20 | 10 |
| 7MUPR014W | Audio-visual Production and Sound Design | Core | 2 | 20 | 10 |
| 7MUPR004W | Major Project | Core | 2 | 60 | 30 |
| 7MUPR015W | Research Methods: Theory and Practice | Core | 2 | 20 | 10 |
| 7MUPR019W | Acoustics | Option | 2 | 20 | 10 |
| 7MUPR016W | Advanced Immersive Audio | Option | 2 | 20 | 10 |
| 7MUPR017W | Composition for Media | Option | 2 | 20 | 10 |
| 7MUPR018W | Experimental Production | Option | 2 | 20 | 10 |

Please note: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year. In addition, timetabling and limited spaces may mean you cannot register for your first choice of option modules.

## Professional body accreditation or other external references

MA Audio Production is the first course of its kind to be accredited by the industry in UK in recognition of its excellence and industry relevance.

The course is currently accredited by Joint Audio Media Education Support (JAMES) until 2027. Accreditation Renewal will be applied for prior to the ending of the current accreditation period.

JAMES accredits education on behalf of the APRS (Association of Professional Recording Services), MPG (Music Producers Guild) and the UK Screen Association.

SKILLSET is the industry body which supports skills and training for people and businesses to ensure the UK audio visual and publishing industries maintain their world class position.

# Course management

The MA Audio Production is taught within Westminster School of Arts, part of the DCDI College. The management structure supporting the course is as follows:

The course is managed through a Course Leader and Module Leaders. All members of the team have office hours when you can arrange to meet them. Course Representatives are elected in the first few weeks. This is a really valuable role and as a rep you would have regular formal meetings with the course team and less formally throughout the course in reflecting the student voice. This helps us work together to communicate and respond to any issues as they arise, to provide a strong course community.

## Academic regulations

The current Handbook of Academic Regulations is available at westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations.

Course specific regulations apply to some courses.

## Academic Support

Upon arrival, an induction programme will introduce you to the staff responsible for the course, the campus on which you will be studying, the Library and IT facilities, additional support available and to your Campus Registry.  You will be provided with the Course Handbook, which provides detailed information about the course. Each course has a course leader or Director of Studies. All students enrolled on a full-time course and part time students registered for more than 60 credits a year have a personal tutor, who provides advice and guidance on academic matters. The University uses a Virtual Learning Environment called Blackboard where students access their course materials, and can communicate and collaborate with staff and other students.  Further information on Blackboard can be found at https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/studies/your-student-journey/when-you-arrive/blackboard

The Academic Learning Development Centre supports students in developing the skills required for higher education.  As well as online resources in Blackboard, students have the opportunity to attend Study Skills workshops and one to one appointments. Further information on the Academic Learning Development Centre can be found at westminster.ac.uk/academic-learning-development.

Learning support includes four libraries, each holding a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at that site. Students1 can search the entire library collection online through the Library Search service to find and reserve printed books, and access electronic resources (databases, e-journals, e-books).  Students can choose to study in the libraries, which have areas for silent and group study, desktop computers, laptops for loan, photocopying and printing services. They can also choose from several computer rooms at each campus where desktop computers are available with the general and specialist software that supports the courses taught in their College. Students can also securely connect their own laptops and mobile devices to the University wireless network.

## Support Services

The University of Westminster Student and Academic Services department provide advice and guidance on accommodation, financial and legal matters, personal counselling, health and disability issues, careers, specialist advice for international students and the chaplaincy providing multi-faith guidance. Further information on the advice available to students can be found at https://www.westminster.ac.uk/student-advice

The University of Westminster Students' Union also provides a range of facilities to support students during their time at the University. Further information on UWSU can be found at https://www.westminster.ac.uk/students-union

## How do we ensure the quality of our courses and continuous improvement?

The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel.  University Panels normally include internal peers from the University, academic(s) from another university. a representative from industry and a Student Advisor.

The course is also monitored each year by the College to ensure it is running effectively and that issues which might affect the student experience have been appropriately addressed. Staff will consider evidence about the course, including the evidence of student surveys, student progression and achievement and reports from external examiners, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the course and make changes where necessary.

A Course revalidation takes place periodically to ensure that the curriculum is up-to-date and that the skills gained on the course continue to be relevant to employers. Students meet with revalidation panels to provide feedback on their experiences. Student feedback from previous years is also part of the evidence used to assess how the course has been running.

# How do we act on student feedback?

Student feedback is important to the University and student views are taken seriously. Student feedback is gathered in a variety of ways.

- Through student engagement activities at Course/Module level, students have the opportunity to express their voice in the running of their course. Course representatives are elected to expressly represent the views of their peers. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the course representatives.

- There are also School Representatives appointed jointly by the University and the Students' Union who meet with senior School staff to discuss wider issues affecting student experience across the School. Student representatives are also represented on key College and University committees.;

- All students are invited to complete a questionnaire before the end of each module. The feedback from this will inform the module leader on the effectiveness of the module and highlight areas that could be enhanced.

- Final year Undergraduate students will be asked to complete the National Student Survey which helps to inform the national university league tables.

This programme specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate, if they take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided.  This specification is supplemented by the Course Handbook, Module proforma and Module Handbooks provided to students.   Copyright in this document belongs to the University of Westminster. All rights are reserved. This document is for personal use only and may not be reproduced or used for any other purpose, either in whole or in part, without the prior written consent of the University of Westminster. All copies of this document must incorporate this Copyright Notice – 2022©