UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER
LEADING THE WAY

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Course record information

Name and level of final award:	**BMus (Hons) Commercial Music Performance**
	The BMus Commercial Music Performance is a degree that is Bologna FQ-EHEA first cycle degree or diploma compatible.
Name and level of intermediate awards:	Diploma of Higher Education Commercial Music Performance
	Certificate of Higher Education Commercial Music Performance
Awarding body/institution:	University of Westminster
Teaching Institution:	University of Westminster
Status of awarding body/institution:	Recognised Body
Location of delivery:	Westminster School of Media Arts and Design (Harrow)
Language of delivery and assessment:	English
Mode, length of study and normal starting month:	Three years full time
[QAA subject benchmarking group](s):	Subject Benchmarks statements – Academic standards – Music QAA 2008
Professional statutory or regulatory body:	This course is recognised and supported in various
	ways by the following organisations:
	Musicians Union Performing Rights Society Black Music Education Trust
	British Academy of Songwriters and Composers British Phonographic Industry
	Black Music Congress Harrow Arts
	Youth Music Access to Music Rock School UK Music
Date of course validation/review:	2015
Date of programme specification approval:	2015
Valid for cohorts :	2017-18
Course Leader	Hussein Boon
UCAS code and URL:	W310 westminster.ac.uk/courses/undergraduate

Course Overview

Commercial Music Performance is a course for those aiming to become part of the music industry. This course will equip students with the necessary skills, whether the entry point is as a performer, songwriter, composer, musicologist, journalist, DJ, technologist or educator or all of them.

The course supports the development of learners who will utilise these skills by making use of state of the art facilities, whilst at the University, to progress in the world of popular music practice. Using innovative teaching and tutoring methods, assessment and teaching take place across both practical and theoretical areas of popular music to produce forward facing graduates equipped to succeed in the fast changing and challenging world of music.

Students on the course develop their instrumental skills in both workshop and individual settings, augmented by the development of group performance skills with composition and songwriting as a focus throughout the three years. Underpinning the degree is a considered and thought-provoking contemporary programme of contextual studies combining musicology, music business and music education. Music industry links allow us to provide guest lectures from leading practitioners and maximise opportunities for graduates to begin their careers in music whilst on the course.

As part of an arts dedicated campus, the course offers unique opportunities to collaborate with students from other academic disciplines including film, TV, radio, fashion and media, and provides networking opportunities to with other Music Department courses while maintaining the student focus on developing a strong portfolio of work and practical experience to launch a career in music or continue on to postgraduate study.

High standards for professional achievement and practice, in line with industry expectations, are an expectation of the course for staff and students alike. The role of the Commercial Music Practitioner requires various types of multi-skilled working in fast moving and demanding environments whilst developing a portfolio based career. Students, and staff, will find themselves in a number of work based situations 'wearing' a variety of hats! The course prepares students for this challenge by creating a vibrant working environment and ethos where the committed student engages in a social practice with awareness and responsibility as a producer and consumer of musical performances and products located within a community of musicians and business people.

Our graduates have a good employment rate but it should always be understood that entry into the Music Industry as a creator is a high risk undertaking with no guarantee of success. Hard work, persistence, innovation, adaptation, opportunities, synergies, collaborations, identity and networking, coupled with sound business sense understanding, are skills that all students must develop and cultivate to be agile in the contemporary world of work.

Admissions requirements

There are standard minimum entry requirements for all undergraduate 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: westminster.ac.uk/courses/undergraduate/how-to-apply

Aims of the course

The BMus (Hons) Commercial Music Performance has been designed to:

- Enable you to develop creative music skills across a range of disciplines, including performance, instrumental/voice development, musicianship, technology, songwriting, composition and arranging, and innovation in music.

- Enable you to develop your own artistic and creative identity and to understand and recognise the need for, advantage of and use, within the field of commercial music.

- Enable you to develop an understanding of the functions of business within the creative industries.

- Nurture your ability to adapt to creative opportunities that emerge either in new music and/or media forms, or in response to new creative partnerships.

- Develop your capacity to participate in contemporary musical, business and cultural debates.

- Develop your awareness of the political, ethical & aesthetic implications of your work and the industry in general.

- Enable you to locate yourself within changing professional music contexts & practices globally, with an emphasis on the benefits of collaboration and interdisciplinarity.

- Enable you to develop transferable skills applicable within a variety of music and other professional working environments.

- Prepare you for postgraduate study in related practical and theoretical disciplines.

What will you be expected to achieve?

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 4 Learning Outcomes: upon completion of level 4 you will be able to

L4.1   Demonstrate adequate command of core instrumental or vocal ability using a range of musicianship skills and with the ability to use notation as appropriate (KU)

L4.2   Explore composing, arranging, devising, catalysing or other forms of creative input in the development of performances (PPP)

L4.3   Provide evidence of outside performance engagement, at non-University events and, to actively develop a network (PPP)

L4.4   Demonstrate the ability to work independently, and to show self-motivation and critical self- awareness as well as working effectively and creatively within groups (KTS)

L4.5   Understand the relationship between commercial music, the nature of musical product, its public reception and critical discourse (KU)

L4.6   Use a range of technological approaches in the main domains of study including music creation, performance, business and musicology (GA)

L4.7   Explore the role of intellectual curiosity and innovation in fostering artistic and creative development (GA)

Level 5 Learning Outcomes: upon completion of level 5 you will be able to

L5.1   Demonstrate an emerging individual musical personality or 'voice', through technical skills, improved command of core instrumental or vocal ability, uses of technology to facilitate music performances and apply a range of musicianship skills effectively (KU)

L5.2   Demonstrate developed ability in composing, arranging devising, catalysing or other forms of creative input in the development of performances and demonstrate uses of technology in relation to extending music performances (PPP)

L5.3   Provide evidence of outside performance engagement, at non-University events to build a fanbase and to develop network opportunities (PPP)

L5.4   Work effectively in groups to extend musical style, appreciate the importance of musical innovation and demonstrate leadership (KTS)

L5.5   Apply critical and analytical skills to specific aspects of commercial music and its socio-cultural place within the contemporary world (GA)

L5.6   Demonstrate practical outcomes of theoretical understanding (KU)

L5.7   Become familiar with the types of contracts and other aspects of administration of the performance industry and understand the importance of applying a professional business approach to carrying out creative work (KTS)

L5.8   Demonstrate artistic and creative development informed by intellectual curiosity and innovation (GA)

Level 6 Learning Outcomes: upon completion of level 6 you will be able to

L6.1   Perform confidently as a musician and engage effectively with professional practice in commercial music (PPP)

L6.2   Manage study time and information, taking responsibility for your own learning, and apply critical reflection to this process (GA)

L6.3   Present evidence of outside performance engagement, at non-University events, further develop network opportunities and fanbase (PPP)

L6.4   Work independently and to show self-motivation and critical self-awareness in relation   to the varied outputs in music, business and musicology (KTS)

L6.5   Employ effective critical strategies for independent research in musicology, music business and music education and be able to develop an extended written argument on subjects directly relevant to the student's career ambitions (GA)

L6.6   Use planning strategies, conceptual development methods and critical tools to produce work that is situated within and critically engages with commercial music performance practices in diverse contexts (KU)

L6.7   Define your own artistic and creative development (GA)

How will you learn?

The learning and the teaching of the course embraces independent learning and a self-motivated student who will respond to informal and formal teaching and learning practices, while continuing to advance their knowledge and understanding by researching and contacting the industries to develop their abilities to high level. Examples of independent learning methods used on the course include:

- Independent Research used for student led project work usually involving finding and researching recordings, videos, performances, publications and other sources of information and making contact with organisations in the music industry

- Learning contracts are used in some modules to formalise the agreement of work plans negotiated between the student and module leader.

Teaching

Teaching on the course is dynamic to the needs of each module with strategies for teaching and learning published in every module handbook. The teaching methods on the course include the following:

- Instrumental/Vocal Workshops for small groups of students to develop instrumental ability and repertoire tutored by specialist instrumental staff

- Ensemble Workshops develop group performance skills and repertoire supporting both the performance aspects and other areas of creative input and output

- Lectures to present information and as a springboard for students' research and discussion on a given subject

- Seminars to support students' learning on the module through small group

- discussions of detailed theoretical content, techniques and ideas

- Individual tutorials are used to support individual projects mostly at level 6

How will you be assessed?

The assessment strategy for the School of Media Arts and Design is intended to develop teaching and learning at all levels and to consolidate the relations between course aims, the curriculum, teaching and learning methods, module learning outcomes and assessment processes in all courses within the School.

Our Assessment Strategy aims to:

- match assessment rationale against module outcomes
- standardise assessment procedures which encourage student involvement and support student learning
- encourage innovation in assessment processes
- commit appropriate resources to assessment processes
- make effective use of staff time
- secure documentation of work for future reference
- formalise the role of External Examiners in our assessment processes
- encourage course teams to engage in critical reviews of these processes
- consolidate how the School monitors the effectiveness of its assessment processes

Assessment Rationale

Assessment methods and processes are intended to identify and evaluate student learning for both students and staff and to encourage a self-reflexive and critical appreciation by students of their own development. Response to student work is a significant aspect of learning and all summative forms of assessment will be accompanied by written feedback conforming to campus guidelines to ensure that students have the opportunity to apply this critique to their subsequent studies.

Particular attention will be given to ensuring feedback on final modules to inform students' professional aspirations.

Assessment is intended to provide an indication of learning for students, staff, higher education authorities, professional bodies and other external organisations.

Assessment Methods

Assessments occur at both formative and summative stages of modular learning and use a variety of methods. What is common to these methods is that module information will detail the assessment requirements, processes and marking criteria and students will be made aware of the relevance of these to the module's teaching methodology and learning outcomes.

The design of a module's assessment methods is related to the type of teaching and learning organised within the module, the learner outcomes and the level of the module. Our

assessment design aims to be inclusive and our methods aim to acknowledge those who have study skills difficulties by providing suitable alternative methods where possible. Courses may use many different methods of assessment, and even modules may use a range of methods if several different pieces of coursework are required. Courses generally use methods from amongst the following:

- oral / visual presentations - to seminar groups, to tutor groups
- formal written reports / essays / dissertations
- proposals, learner contracts
- literature reviews
- informal written material - notebooks, workbooks, logbooks
- written self-evaluation
- time-constrained class tests / examinations
- individual projects / portfolios
- group projects
- presentation of creative work in public
- presentation of creative work to external specialists
- case studies
- work placements

Assessment Processes

The assessment process varies both between courses and within courses depending on student numbers, type of coursework required and opportunities for interaction. Processes vary from that of coursework being assessed by staff without the student being present, to group discussions with the participation of several students and staff. Where possible, students and staff come together for the assessment process as it is considered to be an important aspect of learning and an opportunity to share views regarding the qualities of coursework and the ways in which learning outcomes can be achieved.

Assessment Procedures

During induction week all students are given a Course Handbook that provides details of the assessment criteria and regulations that are applied by the course team. Where the regulations differ from those set by the University, these will be separately validated and referenced as course specific regulations.

At the start of each module students are informed of the following:

- a module programme detailing the content of the module, learning outcomes, 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
- This information is either provided in the Course Handbook or made available as a separate module document available via the University intranet system, Blackboard.

Assessment Criteria

Assessment criteria are used to evaluate the extent to which the student has understood and applied the module syllabus through their achievement of the learning outcomes. These criteria or guidelines will focus on a range of skills, e.g. the development of technical, creative, conceptual and intellectual skills; the application of such skills in the production of coursework relevant to the module; the capacity for self-managed learning and the capacity

for analysis and self-reflection. Assessment criteria are module specific and applied to coursework, tests and exam material submitted for that module. The design of assessment criteria is generally informed by University standards; however, the Course Team or Module Leader will have identified criteria relevant to the particular learning outcomes for the module, and, after validation, these will be published as part of the module information and will form the guidelines for assessing the student's work. Feedback given to students will relate the student's work to the module learning outcomes and the assessment criteria.

Employment and further study opportunities

University of Westminster graduates will be able to demonstrate the following five Graduate Attributes:

- Critical and creative thinkers
- Literate and effective communicator
- Entrepreneurial
- Global in outlook and engaged in communities
- Social, ethically and environmentally aware

University of Westminster courses capitalise on the benefits that London as a global city and as a major creative, intellectual and technology hub has to offer for the learning environment and experience of our students.

These Graduate Attributes are oriented towards your employability after completion of the course, and are aligned to the Course Learning Outcomes.

Course structure

This section shows the core and option modules available as part of the course and their credit value. Full-time Undergraduate students study 120 credits per year. Course structures can be subject to change each academic year following feedback from a variety of sources.

Credit Level 4				
Module code	**Module title**	**Status**	**UK credit**	**ECTS**
4MUSH001W	Instrumental Musicianship 1	Core	20	10
4MUSH002W	Contemporary Practice	Core	20	10
4MUSH003W	Music In Context	Core	20	10
4MUSH006W	Artist Development for Commercial Music Performance	Core	20	10
4MUSH005W	Commercial Music Performance Portfolio 1	Core	20	10
4MUSH004W	Individual & Professional Development 1	Option	20	10
Various	Westminster or Faculty Elective	Option	20	10
Award of Certificate of Higher Education available				

Credit Level 5				
Module code	**Module title**	**Status**	**UK credit**	**ECTS**
5MUSH001W	Instrumental Musicianship 2	Core	20	10
5MUSH002W	Producing Performance	Core	20	10
5MUSH003W	Commercial Music Performance Portfolio 2	Core	20	10
5MUSH004W	Individual and Professional Development 2	Core	20	10
5MUSH005W	Being an Artist - Product and Persona	Option	20	10
5MUSH006W	The Creative Industries and You	Core	20	10
5MUSH007W	Singers and their Songs	Option	20	10
[Various](#)	Westminster or Faculty Elective	Option	20	10
Award of Diploma of Higher Education available				
Credit Level 6				
Module code	**Module title**	**Status**	**UK credit**	**ECTS**
6MUSH001W	Commercial Music: Final Performance Portfolio	Core	40	20
6MUSH002W	Instrumental Musicianship 3	Core	20	10
6MUSH005W	Individual and Professional Development 3	Option	20	10
6MUSH003W	Dissertation	Core	40	20
6MUSH004W	Extended Essay	Core	20	10
6MUSH006W	Research Paper	Core	20	10
[Various](#)	Westminster or Faculty Elective	Option	20	10
Award BMus (Hons), BMus available				

Please note: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year.

Academic regulations

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

How will you be supported in your studies?

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 Faculty Registry Office. 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

Learning Support

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.

Learning support includes four libraries, each holding a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at that site. Students 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 at their Faculty. Students can also securely connect their own laptops and mobile devices to the University wireless network.

Support Services

The University of Westminster Student Affairs 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. The University of Westminster Students' Union also provides a range of facilities to support students during their time at the University.

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

The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel in 2006. The panel included internal peers from the University, academic(s) from another university and a representative from industry. This helps to ensure the comparability of the course to those offered in other universities and the relevance to employers.

The course is also monitored each year by the Faculty 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 outcomes from Course Committees, evidence of student progression and achievement and the reports from external examiners, to evaluate the effectiveness of the course. Each Faculty puts in to place an action plan. This may for example include making changes on the way the module is taught, assessed or even how the course is structured in order to improve the course, in such cases an approval process is in place.

A Course review 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 review panels to provide feedback on their experiences. Student feedback from previous years e.g. from Course Committees 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 Course Committees students have the opportunity to express their voice in the running of their course. Student representatives are elected to Committee

to expressly represent the views of their peer. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the student representatives.

- Each Faculty also has its own Faculty Student Forum with student representatives; this enables wider discussions across the Faculty. Student representatives are also represented on key Faculty 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.

- The University also has an annual Student Experience Survey which seeks the opinions of students about their course and University experience. Final year Undergraduate students will be asked to complete the National Student Survey which helps to inform the national university league tables.