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# MMus Composition

Dr Gareth Williams - Programme Director

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# MMus in Composition

- Who is this programme for?
- What kind of compositional experience/background do you need?
- In brief, what does the MMus in Composition offer?



# MMus in Composition (Cont)

- We offer broad skills training in a highly flexible bespoke programme. As a student on the programme you'll explore a range of compositional practices and approaches that will stand you in good stead for a successful career as a composer/songwriter.





# A Multidisciplinary Programme leading to an Interdisciplinary Practice

During this Programme you will have opportunity to make:

- Acoustic and instrumental music
- Screen/film/animation music
- Interactive game audio
- Sound installations and sonic art
- Songs – in studio and live contexts
- A variety of other options such as opera, dance, work for specific communities, work engaging with new technologies.
- Graduates will have professional, practical, analytical and intellectual skills to take into music-related industries or on towards further academic study, such as a PhD.



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# Programme Structure

- The programme is the MMus Composition Degree, made up of different courses –some compulsory, some chosen.
- Classes and teaching happen over two semesters (September to December; January to April) with a supervised final Project over the summer months (May to September)



# Structure (cont)

- Across five taught courses, and an extensive final project, you will attend a combinations of
  - Lectures
  - Seminars
  - Tutorials
  - Workshops
  - Events
- These interactions are supported and led by Composition staff as well as visiting external professionals and ensembles – such as the current Ensemble in Residence, Sequoia Duo
- Activities that are running as we speak today include...





# Courses

- The **MMus in Composition** is part of a suite of Masters programmes offered here at the Reid School of Music. We have the **MSc in Sound Design**, the **MA in Musicology**, and the **MSc in Acoustics and Music Technology**
- These parallel programmes mean that you can access a wide variety of courses and teaching...



## Degree Programme Table: Composition (MMus) (Full-time) (PTMUSCMPST1F)

Jump to: [Year 1](#)

### Year 1 Academic year: 2024/25, Starting in: September

NOTES:

Your course options selections should result in 40 credits worth of selected courses in each of Semesters 1 and 2, whether you draw from container A1 only, or across containers A1, A2, and A3.

### Compulsory courses

You must take these courses

Music Masters Final Project

Must be passed at 50% and taken during Block 5 (Sem 2) and beyond

MUSI11061 60 credits

Portfolio of Compositions (Level 11)

Must be taken during Full Year

MUSI11077 40 credits



# Course options

## Group A

Select exactly 80 credits in this group.

### Course Collection 1

Select between 40 and 80 credits of the following courses

#### NOTES:

Please ensure that you select at most 40 credits worth of courses in each Semester

#### Digital Media Studio Project

ARCH11006

20 credits

#### Interactive Sound Environments

ARCH11010

20 credits

#### Music on Screen

MUSI11045

20 credits

#### Introduction to Community Arts Practice: Modes, Methods and Meanings

MUSI11053

20 credits

#### Audio Crafting

MUSI11063

20 credits

#### Soundtracks for Screen

MUSI11065

20 credits

#### Creative Coding for Sound

MUSI11067

20 credits

#### Instrumentation and Timbre

MUSI11068

20 credits

#### Composing for Screen

MUSI11071

20 credits



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# Courses (Cont)

- Other courses include:
- Jazz Studies, Research Methods, Improvisation as social process, Studies in Popular music, Notation and editing, Music and Human Communication, Music Philosophy and Politics, as well as a host of level 10 and 11 courses across the University in places such as the Futures Institute.



# Example Course: Portfolio of Compositions (Full Year)

- Across semesters 1 and 2
- Lectures – fortnightly (2hrs)
- Seminars – Fortnightly (1hr)
- Tutorials – Fortnightly in small groups of 3
- Workshops - examples this year include No Input Mixing, piano composition, opera making etc...
- This class is the backbone of the programme – opportunities to hear different approaches, and to get to know the composition staff and your peers.
- Leads to a final submission of a portfolio of work in April, which will underpin your **Final Project**.



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# ■ Faculty Staff at the Reid School of Music

## ■ Dr Martin Parker

■ Professor Benedict Taylor

■ Professor Elaine Kelly

■ Dr Morag Grant

■ Professor Annette Davidson

■ Dr Anne Desler

## ■ Professor Raymond MacDonald

■ Dr Marian Jago

■ Professor Katie Overy

■ Dr James Cook

## ■ Dr Gareth Williams

## ■ Dr Jules Rawlinson

## ■ Dee Isaacs

## ■ Roderick Buchanan-Dunlop

■ Dr Nikki Moran

## ■ Dr Tom Mudd

## ■ Dr Chris Letcher

■ Dr Mike Newton

■ Professor Stefan Bilbao

■ Dr Phil Alexander

■ Richard Craig

■ Dr Una Macglone

## ■ Dr Neil Smith

■ A collective of external/visiting tutors



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# Venues/ Facilities/ Equipment

- The Reid Concert hall is a 19th Century 250-seat concert space with professional recording facilities attached.
- The West Court is a large public art and performance venue ideal for experimental and new musical work.
- The Wee Red Bar is a perfect venue for singer songwriters, jazz, bands, electronic and other forms of amplified music.
- St Cecilia's Hall is Scotland's oldest concert hall and features an extraordinary collection of rare musical instruments and a unique acoustic.
- Five production studios in stereo or 5.1 configurations currently based in Alison House, the home of the Reid School of Music, enhance these spaces.



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# Venues/Facilities/Equipment

- There are numerous labs and maker-spaces across the campus and various bookable spaces available for recording experiments and installations. There is also a bank of music practice rooms available in the basement of Alison House.
- We have developed two 360-degree audio mixing spaces which are available for experiments in VR, AR, Dolby Atmos and ambisonics.
- We have stocked our studio cupboard with a wealth of microphones, location recorders, cameras, speakers, cables and VR equipment available for booking and flexible use.
- The Reid School of Music is an All Steinway School with 28 pianos available for performance and rehearsal across the campus.



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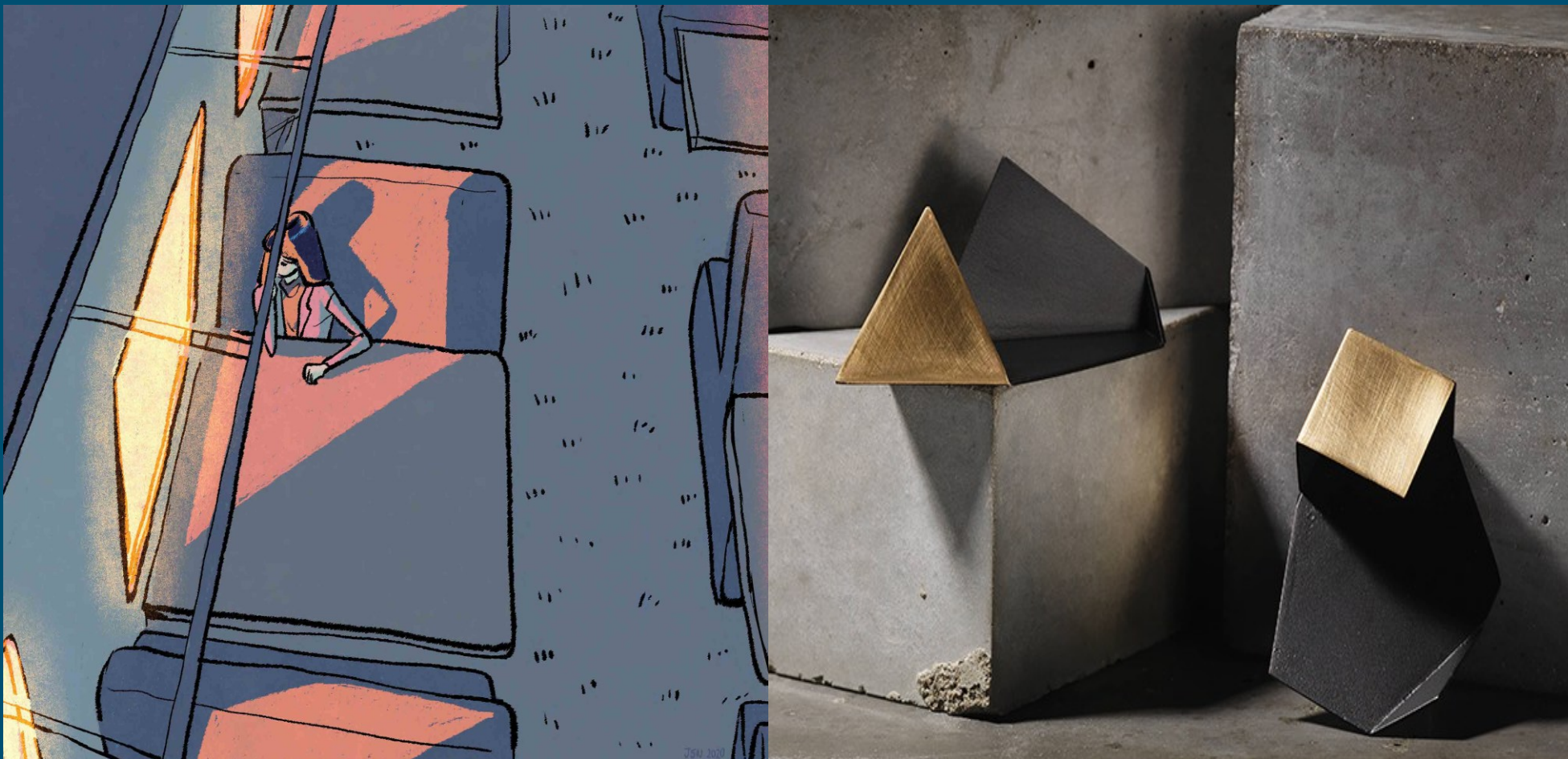
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# ECA DEGREE SHOW



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# Career Opportunities

The rich, cross-disciplinary programme of study we offer provides graduates with advanced skills in composing across formats and in a range of contexts from film and game music through to music for theatre and music for the concert hall, album, mobile phone or studio.

As a graduate of this programme you will feel empowered to take on commissions in professional compositional areas and to pursue your own creative path as an independent composer.

Graduates from our composition degrees are now working in the following industries:

- theatre
- radio
- TV and video games
- sound recording
- live performance
- gigging singer-songwriting



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# Career Opportunities

- And many are active on the global music scene as composers in residences with:
  - orchestras
  - ensembles
  - educational projects
  - other art spaces
- Many are running successful music-related businesses around the world, and several have PhDs and are pursuing academic careers.
- You will gain a wide variety of transferable skills, such as the ability to research & analyse music, structure & manage your time, work and communicate effectively as part of an arts production team. These skills will increase your employability across the arts and further afield.



# Entry Requirements

- These entry requirements are for the 2025/26 academic year.
- Normally a UK 2:1 honours degree, or its international equivalent, in a relevant subject such as music, sound design, sonic arts, media arts, film and animation music, radio, accompanied by a portfolio introducing us to some recent work that you are proud of.
- Your portfolio should include three pieces of work and can include a range of items such as acoustic, electronic, score-based or media music, a small collection of sound recordings, performances or documentation of a sound-based project, such as an installation, film or animation.
- Whatever you include, it should clearly be your own work. A short explanation of your role in collaborative projects is required. Your portfolio is best uploaded with the application as a PDF file with explanations about the projects and links to the work hosted on a reliable and accessible online platform.
- If you do not meet the academic entry requirements or if you do not have a music-related degree, we may still consider your application if you have significant professional composition-related experience supported by a substantial portfolio. Please contact us to check before you apply.



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# International Students

Students from China

This degree is Band C

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/international/postgraduate-entry/asia/china>

International qualifications

Check whether your international qualifications meet our general entry requirements:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/international/postgraduate-entry>

English language requirements

Regardless of your nationality or country of residence, you must demonstrate a level of English language competency which will enable you to succeed in your studies.

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/postgraduate/applying/your-application/entry-requirements>



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## Students who follow this programme will:

- obtain a broad foundation in music composition across multiple genres, contexts and fields
- explore the use of techniques and technologies involved in contemporary composition in a creative way
- be able to analyse and think deeply about new musical composition and its role in a wider creative arts environment
- develop understanding of the scope and limitations of music-related technologies and techniques as they apply to composition
- engage in cross-disciplinary collaboration in the context of audiovisual and media practice
- discover new creative uses of advanced technologies and compositional techniques





**“The MMus in Composition has been a real joy. I’ve seen a significant improvement in the depth and the breadth of my work throughout, and found new appreciation for paths untrodden, as supported by their wonderful faculty.”**

Jack Hinks, MMus Composition alumna 2025



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# Next steps...

<https://student-chat-pgedin.ac>



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# Contact details for follow-up questions

- We apologise if we did not get through all of your questions in the time allotted for this session. If you have further questions that have not been answered, please email: [futurestudents@ed.ac.uk](mailto:futurestudents@ed.ac.uk)
- Perhaps your questions haven't fully formed yet, or perhaps they will come up if you look at other institutions or attend other online/open days. Email me directly at [Gareth.Williams@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Gareth.Williams@ed.ac.uk).





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# Thank you

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