

A LEVEL MUSIC FAQs

Q: Do I need to have taken Music GCSE to take the A-Level Music Course?

No – while GCSE Music is useful it is not essential. We understand that some schools don't offer Music in Year 11. If you have not studied GCSE Music you must be confident that you have a good understanding of traditional Music Theory – treble clef, bass clef, rhythmic notation, score reading etc. to be successful on the course.

Q: Do I need a Grade 5 certificate in performance to take the course?

If you have taken graded examinations then you will have a good idea of how developed your skills are in performance. Students must be able to play pieces of at least a Grade 5 standard to pass the course. If you have not taken graded exams then you must be confident that you can perform to a Grade 5 standard. We typically have many students who are self-taught who do very well on the course without ever having taken graded exams. If in doubt you can get more advice from college staff upon arrival.

Q: Do I need to buy anything for the course?

No – most resources for the course are provided by college. You will need a USB drive to store your electronic work during the course and potentially you may have to pay a professional accompanist for your final recital in the second year if you need one. There is financial assistance for this if you are a bursary student.

Q: Are there instrumental teachers at Bilborough, like I had at school?

No – Bilborough does not offer individual instrumental teaching in college. Most Music students have instrumental/vocal tuition outside college to support their performance work. Bilborough staff can help students organise teachers in the Nottingham/Derby area, but this is funded by individual students.

Q: Can I choose what I learn on the course?

The course has mandatory elements of performance, composition and composers from the Western Classical tradition, but students can choose two Areas of Study from the following topics: Jazz, Music Theatre, Music for Film and TV, Art Music, Contemporary Traditional Music.

Q: Does Bilborough have performance opportunities?

The department holds regular concerts and works on a full college production each year with the Drama department. Smaller student-led ensembles take place during lunchtimes such as Jazz Band and students are encouraged to organise their own ensembles and collaborate with other musicians on the course and from the wider college community.

Q: Will this course get me onto a music course at university or conservatoire?

The department specialises in progression to top UK universities and conservatoires. Staff will support you every step of the way if you wish to take music to the next level.

Q: How many people will be in my class?

We are a small department with one group per year, with typically around 12-16 students in a group.

Q: What styles of music can be performed and composed on the course?

The AQA A-Level course allows music from any style to be explored in the performance and composition components. The department usually has a lively mix of classical, jazz and pop musicians each year and differentiates teaching to accommodate such diversity of musical backgrounds.