Graduate Attributes and Employability

Introduction

The Music and Music Technology degree programmes at Keele University provide our students with the knowledge and skills the need to pursue a wide-range of careers or postgraduate study. While many of these careers draw explicitly on musical and technological skills developed on the degree programmes, a range of core graduate attributes are also developed through the study of Music and Music Technology. Both programmes also have the added advantage of being embedded in a dual honours system that permits the development of interdisciplinary degrees which can dramatically broaden career vistas. And even students taking the single honours route have scope to study modules from a diverse range of non-musical subjects as part of their degree. Possession of a Music or Music Technology degree from Keele can prove a singularly valuable asset in the graduate job market and has certainly enabled many of our students to secure a graduate-level job in the career of their choice. This relates to the careful design of our degree programmes.

Recent external reports on Keele's Music and Music Technology degrees confirm that Keele provides advanced musical training while teaching key intellectual skills, and developing our students’ ability to work independently and as part of a team – skills prized by any employer. External Examiners, for instance, have highlighted an ‘attractive and distinctive research-led programme that not only nurtures critical and creative thinking but also furnishes its students with a range of skills that are both pertinent to the discipline and valuable in the wider professional arena’. Our engaging, challenging and exciting programmes do this by drawing on the variety of our staff's wide-ranging specialities to provide students with training in manifold areas of the subjects, but also by providing students with a range of core graduate capabilities, helping you to prepare for life after undergraduate study, whatever your eventual career path.

This document is intended to assist you in becoming more aware of, and managing, your progress throughout your degree at Keele in terms of your personal career development. You can use this information to track your learning and achievements, both discipline-specific and more universally applicable, and to think about how best to use of the opportunities that will open up for you. Potential employers may want to know what skills you have gained – and when, where and by what means. What follows will help you to recognise and highlight the skills and aptitudes you develop at Keele to best effect, while mapping paths you could take from degree to career through studying Music and Music Technology at Keele.
Core graduate capabilities following the study of Music and Music Technology at Keele University

Your engagement with the undergraduate Music and Music Technology programmes at Keele will give you the opportunity to develop:

1. An open, questioning and critical approach to ideas, demonstrating curiosity, independence of thought and the ability to appreciate a range of perspectives on human experience, in the context of creative activities and academic study relating to a wide range of musics, periods and cultural practices.

2. An appreciation of the value of the study of Music and Music Technology in terms of the broad range of music-related career opportunities in the job market, and also the topic’s links with other subject areas – many of our modules, for instance, are interdisciplinary, placing our students alongside media, psychology, English, sociology, film and other students, or involve areas of study such as computer engineering, history, and the other arts.

3. Information literacy: ranging voraciously across online and offline sources, your studies will develop your crucial ability to locate, evaluate, synthesise and critique large amounts of often contradictory information, ideas and data.

4. The ability creatively to solve problems using a range of different approaches and techniques, and to determine which techniques are appropriate to the issue at hand.

5. An appreciation of the social, environmental and global implications of your studies in Music and Music Technology, including recognition of their ethical implications in technologically and culturally advanced societies facing unprecedented challenges in the near future.

6. The ability to communicate clearly and effectively through opportunities to write and speak about music throughout your degree, but also through acts of composition and performance.

7. The knowledge, skills, self-confidence and awareness actively to pursue your goals.

8. The ability and motivation to participate responsibly, both individually and collaboratively, in the communities within which you live and work. Musicians of all stripes are used to intensive and committed solo work: think of the effort it takes to learn an instrument or create a new track. But musicians are also expert collaborators (or ‘team players’) – because playing and working with other musicians demands the development of enhanced interpersonal skills. Employers value such abilities particularly highly.

9. A professional and reflective approach, including qualities of leadership, responsibility, personal integrity, empathy, care and respect for others, accountability and self-regulation.

10. The flexibility to thrive in rapidly-changing and uncertain external environments and to refresh, renew and update your skills and knowledge as circumstances demand.
How are these capabilities realised?

1 and 2: We will guide you to study the historical development and changing nature of the disciplines of Music and Music Technology, offering you different approaches to recognise and understand the manifold nature of these subjects. You will receive a firm grounding in the topics, but also advanced training in the areas of music study and music-making which fascinate you the most – not least as you develop your career plans. For more details about the range of our programmes, and how they will enable you to develop a unique programme of study tailored to your own future plans, click here for Music and here for Music Technology.

3: Your information literacy skills will be developed throughout the programme. You will learn how to locate, evaluate and use to best advantage the resources in the dedicated Music Library and wider collections at Keele, including its books, journals, scores, dictionaries, CDs and DVDs. You will also learn to reference these sources correctly, and to prepare accurate and comprehensive bibliographies. Crucially, you will learn critically to review this information: in an era when information is at our fingertips, developing your skills in critically assessing resources is perhaps the greatest attribute of any graduate employee.

4: Creative problem-solving is a vital skill for all musicians studying Music and Music Technology, whether in the context of identifying, analysing and solving problems in composition, in project and analysis work, when working on group tasks, or performing as a soloist, in a group or an ensemble. Music and Music Technology at Keele will provide you with the relevant high levels of musical and technical training to overcome many challenges, but also encourage the development of critical thinking skills, to help you find ways of thinking through problems on your own.

5: There are many opportunities in Music and Music Technology to develop your appreciation of the social and global implications of your studies, including related ethical issues. An understanding of social responsibility is fostered directly by modules addressing aspects of current practice in the music industry, for instance, or which send students out into the community to work alongside local adults and children, and in performance and group work contexts where you study alongside people with different cultural backgrounds and ways of perceiving the world. The Music and Music Technology degrees also emphasise the value of music from a wide variety of cultures throughout history. Obvious examples include the Indian Music and Paris modules, but from our core first-year modules through to final-year specialisms such as Colloquia in Electroacoustic Music and Contextual Studies, music’s integral role in human culture necessitates our fostering of your ability to respond sympathetically yet critically to all perspectives. Our students also have the opportunity to undertake a semester studying abroad at a wide range of partner institutions throughout the world, immersed in another culture.

6: The ability to communicate clearly and effectively to different audiences and for different purposes is a central skill that will be progressively strengthened during your time on the Music or Music Technology programmes. Persuasively communicating our thoughts and emotions is obviously central to many aspects of musicianship, and developing this core musical capability is cardinal to most modules on our programmes. But you will also have the opportunity to develop your spoken and written communication skills, to become an exceptional listener, and to write with power and precision. You will develop these skills on our modules, and we will test them rigorously through assessments including performances, essays, portfolios of creative work, projects, online tests, composition portfolios, dissertations and examinations. You will also participate in group discussions (including blogs and discussion threads in the online learning environment Blackboard), perform individual and group presentations, and submit coursework ranging from
weekly assignments to substantial dissertations on topics of your own choosing. On arriving at Keele, be prepared to engage in the development of your communication skills with your fellow students and tutors from week 1!

7: All of our graduates share a broad range of interests and abilities attractive to employers. Keele Music and Music Technology students have found careers in arts administration, the BBC (as researchers and studio engineers), orchestras, recording companies, publishing, game design, film and television, the regional authorities, teaching music and music technology at all levels, music therapy, librarianship, further research and postgraduate study, sound design and software design. Our performers, composers, creatives and music scholars also benefit greatly from developing their hands-on experience of technologies ranging from ancient harpsichords to state-of-the-art mixing desks. Some students, of course, choose to pursue careers outside music, and Keele’s Music and Music Technology graduates often find themselves highly prized for their unique transferable skill sets by professions including accountancy, law, IT development, actuarial work and journalism. Together with the Keele Careers and Employability team, we run a programme of visiting speakers and workshops designed to focus your attention on the opportunities open to you, and to help you step into your future after your studies at Keele.

8 and 9: There are many opportunities as a Music or Music Technology student to participate in local and community events at the University and in the wider area. This is hard wired into the activities on many of our modules (see 5. above), and is something our students also experience through their active involvement in music-making ensembles ranging from recorder ensembles to death metal bands, gospel choirs to the symphony orchestra. Our students also have opportunities to act as ambassadors for Keele University, for instance through Widening Participation activities with school and college students from across the country, by representing us while studying abroad, by assisting staff in Open and Visit Days for prospective students, and through the scholarship and fellowship opportunities with local schools and performing organizations.

10: The broad range of academic, interpersonal and creative capabilities that you will develop during your Music or Music Technology degree mean that you will be well-equipped with adaptable skills necessary to thrive in rapidly-changing environments.

Top tip

Think about career options as soon as possible, by considering the above information carefully, and by talking to the Music and Music Technology tutors, who will be happy to discuss the musical and other employability skills embedded in your learning at Keele, and your future career options.

And above all, embrace every single musical and learning experience at Keele as a chance to take a step towards your future in the music world—and beyond.

Music and Music Technology Programme Directors
(on behalf of the teaching and administration staff)
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