

Programme Specification Definitive Document

1. Basic Information

1.1 Awarding Institution:	Plymouth Marjon University
1.2 Teaching Institution:	Plymouth Marjon University
1.3 Locus of Delivery:	Plymouth Marjon University
1.4 Final Award Title:	BA (Hons)
1.5 FHEQ Level:	4, 5 and 6
1.6 Programme Title:	Musical Theatre
1.7 Mode and Duration of Study:	Full Time – 3 years Part Time – N/A
1.8 School:	Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
1.9 HECoS Code:	100067
1.10 Collaborative Provision Arrangement:	None
1.11 UCAS Code(s):	MST1
1.12 Admission Criteria:	Normal University entrance criteria apply (please refer to the website for further details). Applicants will be expected to pass an audition before being offered a place International students will be expected to meet the English language requirements of IELTS 6.0 or equivalent.
1.13 Accrediting Professional Body/PSRB:	N/A
1.14 QAA Subject Benchmarking Group(s):	Dance, Drama and Performance 2015
1.15 Other External Points of Reference:	Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ); UK Professional Standards Framework
1.16 Language of Study (for learning, teaching and assessment):	English
1.17 Work-Based Learning Arrangements:	N/A
1.18 Foundation Degree Progression Routes:	N/A
1.19 Arrangements for Distance Learning:	N/A
1.20 Original Date of Production:	2019
1.21 Date of Commencement:	1 st September 2019
1.22 Review Date:	By 31 st August 2025

2. Programme Outline

The programme is designed for students interested in combining the creative processes associated with, acting, music, and dance. Students are given support beyond module learning with additional specialist classes in Voice and Speech, Stage Movement, Dance, Movement and Singing to ensure that they are able to meet the demands of the Musical Theatre industry. The

course is characterised by range of opportunities to perform, with the production of a full-length musical directed and designed by industry professionals in the final year. Regular showcase opportunities that incorporate industry conventions and practices are also offered as work-in-progress throughout the modules. Students benefit from a rich mix of skills training and graduate with an intellectual and practical knowledge and understanding of performance, alongside a working CV and the tools necessary to launch a career in Musical Theatre. The BA (Hons) Musical Theatre programme is designed to meet the relevant subject areas of the 2015 QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Dance Drama and Performance. The degree creates strong foundations on which to develop and sustain a career within the performing arts industry as a Musical Theatre performer or Actor Musician.

2.1 Integrating Sustainability into the Curriculum

The programme team are responsible for embedding sustainability into the curriculum. The overarching aim is to empower students to become global citizens while also increasing their employability. We implement this through adherence to the broad term of sustainability which outlines respect for human rights, equality, social and economic justice, intergenerational responsibilities, ethics and cultural diversity and transferrable skills. The programme team work alongside other university-wide agendas such as student engagement to embed these concepts more widely. The curriculum has been thoughtfully aligned and made relevant to ensure these principles are being implemented. As with all performing arts based programmes, the opportunities to perform in public help to build confidence, strengthen oral skills and develop the ability to work within groups with a common aim or goal.

3. Distinctive Features

The approach to the programme is designed to reflect the working world and develop the student's employability skills in relation to the Musical Theatre industry they are studying, with a focus on developing experience of working as a musical theatre ensemble. The students also gain a rich opportunity to develop transferrable and valuable communication skills, confident presentation and positive teamwork and collaboration. The students have a large number of performance opportunities throughout the three-year degree from revues and showcases to full scale, productions directed and designed by industry professionals.

4. Programme Aims

The BA (Hons) Musical Theatre programme trains students for future careers as Musical Theatre performers or Actor Musicians. The degree is designed to foster and facilitate the creative, interpretative, intellectual and practical skills demanded within the industry today. Training performers to a high degree of technical facility and flexibility, so that they possess great individuality and imagination. Producing performers who are self-sufficient, have an ability to create and assess their own work, and who are able to perform solo or as part of an ensemble with a high degree of skill.

General aims:

- To provide a stimulating, focussed and supportive learning environment in which students can become autonomous and self-reflective creative practitioners.
- To develop and broaden students' capacity for critical thought and understanding through processes of research, application of theory to practice, and self-and-peer reflection.

- To develop the student's ability to develop their practice autonomously as self-reflective creative artists.
- To develop a generous collaborative environment in which students from varied cultural and social backgrounds work together with mutual respect for individual beliefs and experiences to explore and share work from a wide repertoire of styles and genres.
- To support students to develop their interests and individual specialisms and fulfil their potential in both intellectual and practical/creative skills.
- To generate a culture of creative experimentation and enquiry, in which students are able to explore and extend creative technical, interpretation and research skills and apply these with understanding to different academic and performance contexts for a variety of audiences.
- To prepare students for employment or postgraduate study by equipping them with a diverse range of transferrable skills and effective communication skills.
- To develop students' knowledge, understanding, reflection, analysis, articulation and ability to learn independently, commensurate with an Honours level award.

Specific Programme aims:

- To equip students with the knowledge, skills and techniques necessary to develop a career as a creative entrepreneur and artist in the field of Musical Theatre through contact with industry professionals, theatre visits, skills training, and the provision of various opportunities to perform within musical theatre showcases and productions.
- To develop students creative interpretation skills of a range of repertoire through analysis, research, practical and self-reflective skills.
- To provide opportunities for students to learn from industry professionals in a variety of practical contexts.
- To develop students' ensemble and solo rehearsal performance skills in dance, music, acting and singing as both individual and integrated disciplines.
- To develop the students' ability to take responsibility for the quality of the creative process and output in individual and group contexts within musical theatre.
- To provide the opportunity for students to develop specialisms in specific areas of the musical theatre actor's craft.
- To develop students' understanding and appreciation of the relationship between theory and practice and how they inform one another.

- To develop students' understanding and appreciation of current and historical ethical and social issues related to the representation of lives within performance, and current industry practices in relation to these.

5. Programme Learning Outcomes

Knowledge & understanding:

By the end of this programme students should be able to demonstrate:

1. An ability to transform book/lyrics/music into live performance through application of a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the range of components, people and disciplines that go in to making a performance and how they interrelate.
2. A comprehensive understanding of how repertoire is informed by technique and performance styles, and an ability to apply this to the selection of suitable repertoire for performance and audition purposes.
3. An ability to apply a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of political, historical, social and cultural contexts to research and the creation of informed Musical Theatre work.
4. A comprehensive understanding of, and facility for, the business requirements of working as a freelance singer-dancer-actor.

Intellectual skills:

By the end of this programme students should be able to demonstrate:

5. An ability to autonomously review, evaluate and learn from own and other's experience to stretch and develop singing, musical, dance, and acting skills.
6. A working process in which theory and practice inform one another, and a comprehensive understanding of how praxis can shape and develop approaches to performance supported by sophisticated and nuanced use of relevant vocabularies in rehearsal, reflection, and research.
7. Confident and flexible application of strategies for developing creative Musical Theatre work within an ensemble process.
8. A comprehensive understanding of how dramaturgical and technical skills in dance, music and acting can be combined to create complex integrated performance work.

Practical skills:

By the end of this programme students should be able to demonstrate:

9. Technical control and creative flair in autonomous application of singing, acting, dance and musical skills to a range of Musical Theatre styles and genres.
10. An ability to select and apply a wide range of singing, dance, and acting techniques to a variety of directorial approaches, including self- and peer-direction, within the production of performance work.
11. An effective and independent working process including warm ups, research and preparation of book/lyrics/music for rehearsal and auditions including analysis, and

strategies to reflect on and monitor progress.

12. Application of sophisticated individual interpretative skills to the creative and sustained communication of character, intention, emotion and narrative through synthesis of song, acting, dance and music skills.

Transferable / key skills:

By the end of this programme students should be able to demonstrate:

13. An ability to confidently create, develop and coherently express complex ideas in performance, spoken and written forms with respect for diverse values and beliefs.
14. An ability to work effectively with advanced organisation, communication and negotiation skills with others within a group, applying creative, reflective and analytical skills flexibly and with confidence to overcome obstacles and successfully complete project goals.
15. Apply creative, analytical and reflective skills to work with complex ideas, making a positive contribution to resolving challenges, making difficult choices where necessary to maintain a sustained focus on the successful realisation of project goals within designated timeframes.
16. Confident and flexible application of a wide range of digital skills to a variety of academic and practical contexts.

6. Learning and Teaching Methods

A range of learning and teaching approaches is utilised on this programme to enable flexible, student-centred learning. Considerable emphasis is placed on critical enquiry and dialogue in relation to learning and development through practice and for advanced scholarship. The programme seeks a balance between teaching and learning methods that include working in small seminar groups; lecture inputs; workshops; independent study and individual supervision. As the programme develops there will be increasing emphasis on blended learning via the University's Virtual Learning Environment.

The learning and teaching approaches employed through the programme contribute directly to the development of key and transferable skills and professional practice skills. Students are encouraged to develop confidence in using their practice as a site of analysis and to enable discussion and enhance their own and others' learning. Practice-based learning is central to the programme and this is integrated into the programme with opportunities to apply those skills within live briefs for external clients.

Lecturers are central to students' learning and professional development where they assist the students' task of relating and integrating theory and practice. In addition to the module leader, students are assigned a Personal Development Tutor who will provide tutorial support. The Lecturer's role contributes to ensuring a holistic approach to professional development supported by module specific support and learning resources. Throughout the programme students are encouraged to identify and engage in independent reading to supplement and consolidate teaching and learning and to broaden individual knowledge and understanding of their subject area/s. University lecturers play a significant role in supporting this dimension of the learning experience.

In line with the University Learning and Teaching Strategy the teaching team is committed to engaging with and developing further new approaches to teaching and learning, including the full and active use of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), the use of open learning resources and audio capture of lectures where appropriate.

Method	Description
Collaborative Work	Students work in groups to achieve a goal or carry out a task. There is usually a feedback session, or a chance to disseminate the results within the larger module group. It can include exercises, activities, debates, preparation of performance work or discussion.
Critical Reflection	Students engage in critical reflective practice and activities to highlight areas of academic, personal and professional strength and weakness.
Directed Study and Reading	Time set aside by the teacher for learners to study a particular subject.
Group Discussions	Company and group discussions to analyse aspects of the rehearsal process and gauge responses to specific stimuli and/or presentation of work in progress to peers and/or staff/professionals in order to gain constructive criticism to enable development.
Group Work	Students work in small groups to achieve a goal or carry out a task. There is usually a feedback session, or a chance to disseminate the results within the larger module group. It can include exercises, activities, debates, and discussion.
Group Seminars	A session conducted in a group following up a topic that has already been introduced on the course, often within a lecture; it can involve reading of a paper or observing a performance followed by discussion.
Independent Study	Self-directed study to fulfil a range of tasks. Commonly used for additional rehearsals for productions.
Individual Tutorials	One-to-one teaching based on the learner's work. Tutorials can also be used for pastoral care.
Lead Lectures	Introduction of a subject or topic delivered by the teacher in a specific time aimed at transmitting key ideas and areas for further enquiry.
Lectures	Subject introduced and delivered by the teacher in a specific time which transmits information.
Practical Sessions	Practical workshops in which students learn, practice and explore creative practical skills and processes.
Rehearsals	Sessions focused on the development of a text-based, non-text based and/or devised production.
Seminars	A group session following up a topic that has already been introduced on the course, often within a lecture; it can involve reading of a paper or observing a performance followed by discussion.
Theory embedded within practice	Combining intensive study, research and practical work in a creative or practical field.

Technique Classes	Practical classes in which students learn and practice the techniques associated with a particular discipline such as dance, music, singing or acting.
Tutorials	One-to-one teaching based on the learner's work. Tutorials can also be used for pastoral care.
Visits	Group or individual visits for cultural enrichment or professional enhancement.
Workshops	A group of people engaged in intensive study or work in a creative or practical field.

6.1 Learning Enhancement

Students have the opportunity to explore performance opportunities within the public arena from an early stage in the programme. They are exposed to a range of Musical Theatre styles to allow the students to develop a specialism or interest in a particular form that can be nurtured through their Professional Profile Module, The Festival Performer and their research.

6.2 e-Learning

The programme team recognise the increasing contribution that digital re-sources make to the learning experiences of students. The team utilises the virtual learning environment to provide access to resources, discussion groups and other learning materials, such as audio files, learning objects, lecture capture, and performance analysis technology. The programme will also have a Twitter feed and Facebook page that encourages collaborations within schools and professional organisations and the development of professional networks. In addition, students have open access to extensive digital and media facilities within the University to support their studies.

7. Modes of Assessment

Assessment methods for this programme are designed to reflect industry practice, and as such have a strong weighting towards the practical project form of assessment. The assessments vary in format in order to effectively link to the learning outcomes; examples of practical project assignments range from group work to individual practice, from professionally directed to peer-led creative work, from one large project to a collection of short projects, from recorded to live performance projects.

The practical project assignments complement the practice-based pedagogy, research and scholarly activity which underpin the whole degree programme. The processes students follow over the course of such projects require them to engage in academic research and to exercise critical judgement. The academic requirements of the project are clearly outlined in module handbooks, and the assessment criteria incorporate evaluation of the level of academic research and critical reflection that has gone into each practical performance.

The practice-based pedagogical approach to learning will be balanced with more conventional written forms of assessment as appropriate. These forms of assessment will gauge students' level of knowledge, understanding, analytical, critical and contextual skills.

The assessment methods of each module are designed to assess achievement of the module and programme learning outcomes; some are weighted heavily on the end product, while, importantly, others place particular emphasis on the elements of process and rehearsal, where continuous assessment is undertaken. Module learning outcomes are explicitly stated in the module descriptors and module guides and are incorporated into assignment marking criteria in

order to guide the student along in their cumulative learning. The nature of the assessments develops as the student progresses through the programme; they are less prescriptive in the later stages in order to encourage and enable student autonomy, independent thought and creative practice. The latter stages have a greater focus on the skills required to develop their own work, be pro-active in gaining employment or places on programmes of further study.

Method	Description
Analysis of a set professional production	A critical response in written or oral form in response to a professional production.
Essay	A critical written response to a question or title related to an aspect of live or pre-recorded performance.
In Class Test	Assessment in class of practical performance skills or techniques such as aural musical skills, the playing or singing of scales, and verbal questioning on theory related to these practices. Students will be given an outline of what they will be tested on at the start of the module and the date and time of the in class examination.
Individual Viva	A verbal examination in students provide a critical reflection of their work in response to questions.
Presentation	Research, development, methodologies and/or critical reflections and analyses presented using oral communication skills, usually but not always accompanied by visual aids.
Portfolio	A collection of assessments covering the learning outcomes of the module, which usually takes several different forms such as a performance, report, evaluation, presentation, tasks utilising various media formats.
Practical Project	Creative practical work, undertaken either in groups or individually. This enables students to apply skills in a range of performance disciplines (signing, music, acting, dancing) either singly or in combination through the creative processes involved in live or recorded performance.
Practical Performance	Creative practical work, either undertaken in groups or individually. This enables students to apply skills in a range of performance disciplines (signing, music, acting, dancing) either singly or in combination through the creative processes involved in various forms of live or recorded performance.
Reflective Journal	A critical account of the work undertaken usually accompanying a Practical Project, which includes personal and group reflection. It will involve explanation, analyses and interpretation of processes and practices under consideration.
Research Project	Detailed individual research or a sustained practical project, which is contextually grounded. All independent projects are negotiated with and supervised by an appropriate lecturer.
Research Proposal	A precise and coherent summary of a proposed research project setting out the central issues to be addressed and the ethical procedures to be followed.
Written Coursework	Research, development, methodologies and/or critical reflections and analyses presented using formal written communication, set out in a style appropriate to the content, purpose and intended reader.

8. Exemptions to University Regulations

Due to the nature of the work, anonymous marking is not possible during the presentation and performance assessments and many of the reflective journal and evaluative write-ups refer to

character which immediately identifies a student. To ensure parity of marking and transparency of grading decisions, all practical work will be marked by two members of staff using 'blind' marking procedures. Rehearsal processes may be delivered over longer or shorter periods of time through intensive rehearsals or longer development time frames rather than the usual weekly sessions.

9. Work-Based Learning/Placement Learning

Students will be immersed within approaches to study that replicate the conditions of the industry. Whilst external work-based learning does not form part of their programme, students have numerous opportunities to produce work through authentic learning within industry-based conditions, including touring to receiving venues.

As the programme is vocationally focussed there will be continual input from industry specialists, regional organisations, and guest inputs from professional companies. Through this input we will actively encourage industry networking and the acquisition of work experience, which would complement the learning and training acquired through participation in the programme.

10. Programme Structure

Full Time

Level 4

Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Assessment	Semester/ Term	Compulsory/ Optional	Condonable/ Non- Condonable
ACTC51	Theory & Practice 1	20	80% Coursework 20% Practical	Semester A	Compulsory	Condonable
ACTC52	Craft & Discipline	20	20% Coursework 80% Practical	Semester A	Compulsory	Condonable
PAEC53	Dance Technique and Improvisation	20	50% Coursework 50% Practical	Semester B	Compulsory	Condonable
ACTC54	Naturalism	20	20% Coursework 80% Practical	Semester B	Compulsory	Condonable
MUTC01	Singing and Music: Theory & Practice 1	20	50% Exam 50% Practical	Semester A	Compulsory	Condonable
MUTC02	Ensemble Performance 1	20	20% Coursework 80% Practical	Semester B	Compulsory	Condonable

Level 5

Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Assessment	Semester/ Term	Compulsory/ Optional	Condonable/ Non- Condonable
ACTD51	Popular Forms	20	100% Practical	Semester A	Compulsory	Condonable

ACTD54	Theory & Practice 2	20	100% Coursework	Semester A	Compulsory	Condonable
MUTD01	Singing and Music: Theory & Practice 2	20	20% Coursework 80% Practical	Semester B	Compulsory	Condonable
MUTD03	Dance and Musical Theatre Styles	20	30% Coursework 70% Practical	Semester B	Compulsory	Condonable
MUTD02	Ensemble Performance 2	40	100% Practical	Semester X	Compulsory	Non-Condonable

Level 6

Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Assessment	Semester/ Term	Compulsory/ Optional	Condonable/ Non-Condonable
ACTH51	The Freelance Artist	20	70% Coursework 30% Practical	Semester A	Compulsory	Condonable
MUTH02	Acting Through Song	20	30% Coursework 70% Practical	Semester A	Compulsory	Condonable
ACTH53	The Festival Performer	40	30% Coursework 70% Practical	Semester X	Compulsory	Non-Condonable
MUTH01	Directed Production	40	100% Coursework	Semester B	Compulsory	Non-Condonable

Key: Semester X = A & B

- A definitive module descriptor is required for each module

The table below shows the various ‘threads’ through the programme. These ‘threads’ provide cohesion and coherence to the programme, so that learning can be developed and built upon in a robust way that makes sense to the students. Links will be forged during learning sessions with content from previous modules, as well as indication of learning on up-coming modules. The ‘threads’ act as a mechanism for students to see how the learning links together in meaningful way and will be made explicit to students throughout the programme.

Threads Level 4

Module Code	Module Title	Thread
ACTC51	Theory & Practice 1	1, 4
ACTC52	Craft & Discipline	3, 6
ACTC54	Naturalism	3, 4, 6
PAEC53	Dance Technique and Improvisation	2, 6
MUTC01	Singing and Music: Theory & Practice 1	2
MUTC02	Ensemble Performance 1	2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Threads Level 5

Module Code	Module Title	Thread
ACTD51	Popular Forms	2, 3, 4, 6
ACTD54	Theory & Practice 2	1, 2, 3, 4
MUTD01	Singing and Music: Theory & Practice 2	2, 6
MUTD03	Dance and Musical Theatre Styles	2, 4, 6
MUTD02	Ensemble Performance 2	2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Threads Level 6

Module Code	Module Title	Thread
ACTH51	The Freelance Artist	1, 2, 3, 6
MUTH02	Acting Through Song	2, 3, 6
ACTH53	The Festival Performer	2, 3, 5, 6
MUTH01	Directed Production	2, 3, 4, 5, 6

1: Critical theory, research perspectives, skills for learning, and employability

2: Development and application of singing, music and dance skills

3: Development and application of characterisation and acting skills

4: Knowledge and understanding of social, historical and cultural contexts

5: Synthesis of dance, music and acting skills with an understanding of the production process

6: Development of critical reflection skills

11. Accrediting Professional Body /Professional Regulatory and Statutory Body (PSRB)

N/A

12. Professional Advisory Group

N/A

13. Academic Progression Opportunities

Graduates will have the opportunity to pursue post-graduate education, notably Masters and PhD research. Students will be made aware that post graduate progression is available within the context of lifelong learning and relationships with the Alumni often results in further study in the future. Performance-based students are actively encouraged to remain part of the Marjon community by utilising rehearsal space, collaborating with undergraduates and sharing performance opportunities.

14. Employability and Career Progression Opportunities

This degree has been designed in consultation with industry professionals. It reflects the changing needs of the performing arts industry and prepares students to enter this highly competitive job market. All modules are designed to promote future employability, and students will have the opportunity to develop networking skills, entrepreneurship, and performance skills as well as a strong understanding of their craft and discipline.

15. Support for Students and for Student Learning

The University recognises the value of the whole student experience within Higher Education and students have full access to the University's facilities for academic and pastoral support and guidance. The Student Support team offers a confidential and comprehensive service to guide

and support students through their studies in the following areas:

- Academic Advice
- Academic Skills
- Accommodation
- Disability and Inclusion Advice Service
- Employability and Careers Development
- Finance and Welfare
- Health
- Student Counselling and Well-being
- Student Volunteering

Student support and guidance is further promoted by the following:

- Personal Development Tutor for every student in the University
- Academic tutorial staff, including programme leaders, module leaders and tutors
- Extensive library, and other learning resources, and facilities
- Library and study skills guidance material
- Programme handbooks, and module guides
- The Chaplaincy Centre which is at the heart of the University and is used for social gathering, quiet reflection and prayer
- On-campus Nursery provision

Personal Development Tutors

Every student in the University is allocated a Personal Development Tutor. Tutors assist in evaluating student's progress and provide appropriate subject advice to support a student's area of study. Tutors will also be aware of guidance services provided by Student Support, the Library, Counsellors, Student Union and IT services.

16. Student Feedback Mechanisms

The programme team seek to develop positive relationships with students to ensure there is an ongoing and continuous dialogue to allow for regular communication and feedback. The team aim to develop a trusting culture where students see that their feedback directly influences the programme to continue to drive improvement and refine the student experience. Student reps will form part of the SSLC for the performance-based programmes and more widely, students are invited to contribute to the University's SEC.

Students will be invited to participate in the National Student Survey (NSS). In addition, feedback at programme level will be encouraged through mid-module and end of semester evaluation surveys.

17. Other Stakeholder Feedback (ie graduates and employers)

Existing performance students that have been contacted feel positively and strongly about the 'company' approach to learning, valuing the high number of performance opportunities to enhance learning and develop networking opportunities. Professional external directors that have worked with current performance-based programmes rate the discipline and work ethic of each year group and acknowledge the approach to the company discipline that is instilled through teaching and learning in this way.

18. Quality and Enhancement Mechanisms

The quality of the student experience and the standards of the awards are managed and quality assured through the University's regulations policies and procedures. Student achievement and progression is managed through the Module Assessment Boards (MABs) and the Progression and Award Boards (PABs). Programmes are reviewed annually through University annual monitoring processes, including external examiner contributions, and incorporate student feedback mechanisms at both modular and the programme level reported formally through the University's annual monitoring and reporting cycle.

