**COURSE PROPOSAL**

Please complete this form in consultation with your contact in the Digital Education Service. Please provide as much detail as possible in order for us to clearly understand the course to be offered.

# SECTION 1: PROPOSER DETAILS

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| Name of Course Proposer and email address: |
| Name and email of Lead Educator:(If different to above.) |
| Department / School: |
| Faculty: |
| Other course contributors: (Including School, Faculty, University, External.)  Possible Student volunteers for design and review:  Eszter Vida [en22ebv];  Ruth Allen [mc22rja];  Edward Cooper [RPG] |

# SECTION 2: COURSE CONTENT DETAILS

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| Course title:(Indicative only.) Words and Music | | | | |
| Course description:(200 words max outlining the main elements of the course.) This four-week programme introduces learners to some of the key skills needed for independent academic work in music: from critical listening to research and academic writing.  In this course learners will build key skills in critical and creative thinking about music, textual analysis, and written communication, as well as developing confidence and enhancing academic preparedness. They will learn to think critically about the relationship between music and language by reading and evaluating the accounts of others, as well as by articulating their own experiences of listening closely. Through a series of exercises, alongside guided discussions, learners will be shown how to formulate their own views on music and to express these with confidence and enthusiasm. In addition, this course will foster their research skills, further preparing you them for independent academic study across a range of disciplines. Taken together, this will enable learners to engage deeply with musical materials and address the challenges to which they give rise—including the challenge of putting words to a phenomenon that remains inexpressible.  **INDICATIVE COURSE STRUCTURE**  **Week 1**  What’s that noise? Critical listening, or understanding and evaluating the sounds that you hear, is at the centre of musical study. Following a brief explanation of the concept of critical listening, learners will engage in some everyday applications.  Finding the Right Words. In this session, learners will focus on how to accurately and vividly describe and analyse musical sounds and will extend their technical and aesthetic musical vocabulary. Using examples drawn from academic and non-academic sources, learners will compare ways of talking about music and begin to develop their own style.  **Week 2**   1. Is that on Spotify? In a digital world where we can listen to almost any style of music at the touch of a button – and where anyone with an internet connection can share their opinions about a piece widely – how do we find sources that will help us understand what we hear? In this session, learners will explore ways of finding appropriate sources about music and use them in preparation for their first written exercise. 2. Writing Activity 1: Learners will prepare a short written description of a musical experience. These will be shared with other learners/facilitators for feedback.   **Week 3**   1. Getting Beyond ‘I Like It’: Everyone has an opinion, but in this session learners will develop their skills in building a persuasive argument by working through advice and guidance on crafting a thesis. 2. She Said, He Said: In this session, learners will delve deeper into how to use evidence gained from listening to music, watching music videos, and reading about music to support an argument.   **Week 4**   1. Writing Activity 2: Everyone’s a Critic: In this session, learners will choose a piece of music journalism as a model for writing a review of a musical work or artist. These will be shared with other learners/facilitators for feedback. 2. Next steps – Where study in Leeds might lead. An explanation of what further study and research might be available at Leeds and what career opportunities are available. | | | | |
| Primary objective of the course:(Select **one** from the list below.) | | | | |
| Recruitment: Going to University | | | |  |
| Recruitment: Transition to Masters | | | |  |
| Discovery Theme | | | |  |
| Academic skills | | | |  |
| Research dissemination | | | |  |
| Continuing Professional Development (CPD) | | | |  |
| Bespoke course | | | |  |
| Learning outcomes:(Provide up to four clear learning outcomes which describe the skills, knowledge and competence a learner will develop from completing the course.) By the end of this course, you will be able to:   1. Develop skills in critically evaluating music 2. Identify reference materials that help to shape your opinions on music 3. Express your own views on music confidently 4. Apply the transferable academic research skills of critical listening, research and academic writing | | | | |
| Intended academic level of the course, with justification:(Select **one** from the list below.) | | | | |
| Secondary education level (e.g GCSE level) | | | |  |
| Further education (e.g. A level) | | | |  |
| Qualified/skilled worker level | | | |  |
| Specialised education and training | | | |  |
| Advanced skills training | | | |  |
| Higher education (undergraduate) | | | |  |
| Professional or postgraduate education | | | |  |
| Research | | | |  |
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| Target audience:(Describe the characteristics of the target audience which will benefit from completing your course, in terms of: profession, career stage, interests and geographic region. Provide any research or information you have about the size of the target audience or location.) The course will target A-level and BTec students with the aim of recruitment into relevant undergraduate degrees in music. Other programmes, including joint honours, might also benefit from this course.  In terms of recruitment, the School of Music needs to:   * maintain high quality applicants from the UG home market and, * grow the number of high-quality applicants from international markets.   The anticipation is that the course will support recruitment from the above audiences by having a broad appeal.  Target countries   * The home market:   The ‘talent pipeline’ in music in the UK is significantly threatened by the challenges faced at the level of secondary education. According to the Joint Council for Qualifications, just 5493 students sat A-Level Music in 2023, a 7% fall on 2022. The reasons for this fall are complex and include the exclusion of arts subjects from the English Baccalaureate since 2010 and pressures on school budgets which have led to significant numbers of schools being unable to offer A-level Music at all.  Beyond A-level study, increasing numbers of UK students are taking BTecs; however, students on this pathway often require additional support for skills needed for the academic study of music. In a recent meeting between Pearson and a panel of FE and HE educators discussing the further development of the Music BTec, panellists noted an ongoing need to develop students’ writing and research skills in ways that are not currently met in the BTec programme.  In their 2021 analysis of the data around ‘[A-level decline and disadvantage attainment gaps’](https://bcuassets.blob.core.windows.net/docs/a-level-report-290621-pdf-132695100641559063.pdf), Adam Whittaker and Martin Faultley suggest that the issue is more one of access than of uptake. The squeeze on music education is especially notable in maintained schools in areas of low socio-economic attainment, and there are significant geographical differences in provision. It is well-established that university Music students are more likely than average to have come from independent schools and from higher socio-economic backgrounds, a phenomenon which is borne out by the application statistics for 24-25 at UoL shown below. This suggests that widening participation initiatives at the tertiary level must engage with the declining state of secondary music education in creative ways.     * International students   One of the historic challenges around international recruitment is the ability of international students to demonstrate their academic capabilities in music. This was in part due to the UK-focused nature of the previous set of admissions standards which included graded exams (ABRSM or equivalent) that are difficult and expensive to access from abroad. In the most recent update to our admissions policy, we have both dropped one certification requirement and expanded the type of exam we will consider to address this issue. However, the change in admissions requirements does not obviate the need to support the development of specific skills which may be less well-supported in international educational contexts.  The School is receiving increasing numbers of undergraduate applications to study Music from international students. At the moment, by far the largest number of these applications come from China, but there are also students coming from Japan, India, Europe, and the United States. Through focusing on the key skills for engaging in academic music (research/writing), we hope to support a wide range of students in their transition to tertiary academic study.  In both of these populations, the courses will serve as tools for recruitment amongst populations which are currently underrepresented in Music HE and may also appeal to post-offer students who are transitioning to university study at Leeds and who wish to improve their academic skills.  **Comments from marketing and digital marketing team:**  There is a large and relatively stable market for Music, in which Leeds recruits well, although the numbers are smaller for the more specific programmes and combinations.  The School of Music is working to enhance Widening Participation (WP) on its undergraduate programmes as it is not currently achieving the University Target Ratio for WP.  The challenge of WP in the context of reduced Music provision in state schools has been well summarised by the academic lead (above). Introducing the new BA Music and Music Technology programme for 2024 entry has seen an increase in applications from and offers to WP students.  This MOOC is intended both to further enhance this positive progress in WP appeal and also to maximise support for students from a WP background (confidence and student success) as part of their transition to university. Working with the Educational Engagement team and their network of teachers to ensure the MOOC is useful and of interest to secondary school teachers could raise awareness of Leeds and Music as options for WP students which could help recruitment.  From an international perspective the School recruits predominantly from China. The MOOC could be used in conversion for international students to help their transition as it will introduce UK teaching style and vocabulary.  It’s uncertain how well this MOOC would perform as a recruitment tool beyond the UK but there are clearly ways it could be used at conversion stage.  Competitive situation:  In the sphere of online music education, our "Words and Music" course on FutureLearn offers a unique blend of academic skills tailored for music studies, focusing on critical thinking, textual analysis, written communication, and research. When compared to offerings on various platforms, including Coursera, edX, Udemy, and LinkedIn Learning, our course stands out for its emphasis on academic preparedness rather than traditional music theory or performance.  On FutureLearn specifically, while each course provides unique perspectives within music education, several competitors may draw interest away from ours. For instance, specialised courses like "Discovering Korean Music" and "English Electronic Music" offer insights into specific musical genres and aspects, appealing to learners interested in cultural exploration or digital music production. Additionally, courses like "Music and Intelligence" and "Music Moves" delve into the psychological dimensions of music, attracting learners intrigued by its cognitive and emotional effects.  Furthermore, offerings such as "Becoming a Better Music Teacher" target music educators seeking professional development opportunities, directly competing with our course for this niche audience. Similarly, courses focusing on practical music skills and theoretical understanding, like "From Notation to Performance" and "How to Write Your First Song," cater to learners interested in performance and composition aspects of music education.  Despite the competition, our course distinguishes itself by offering a comprehensive approach to music education, emphasising critical thinking, creative expression, and research skills. Its focus on understanding music's cultural, historical, and emotional dimensions sets it apart, appealing to learners seeking a deeper understanding of music beyond performance or theory. Effectively positioning your course's unique value proposition will be essential in attracting and retaining learners in this competitive landscape.  Demand for our course:  I utilised the following keywords in Google Trends to gauge interest in this course:  - Music education  - Academic music studies  - Academic music skills  - Critical listening  - Research skills in music  - Textual analysis in music  - Written communication in music  - Academic preparedness  - Music and language  - Music online course  - Music theory online course  - Critical thinking in music  - Music research methods  Among these, "music education," "critical listening," and "music and language" emerged as the most searched terms, suggesting potential interest in these aspects of the course. Analysis indicates that demand for music education has gradually declined since 2004 but has stabilised in recent years, both in the UK and internationally. Additionally, the research suggests that demand for these topics, and consequently for our course, may originate from countries such as Zambia, Greece, Finland, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, Zimbabwe, Australia, and Ireland.  Unfortunately, the keyword search volume for all these terms is relatively low, indicating a small niche market for this course. The majority of searches originate from countries such as the UK, Australia, Ireland, Hong Kong, and Greece. | | | | |
| Is the course primarily new material or conversion of existing material to a new format? Primarily new material, with adaption of some existing material | | | | |
| Length of course and number of core hours of learning:(Select the length of course based on course type, **OR** provide details where applicable.) | | | | |
| Recruitment: Going to University | | 2 weeks, 4 core hours | |  |
| Recruitment: Transition to Masters | | 2 or 3 weeks, 8 or 9 core hours | |  |
| Discovery Theme | | 2 weeks, 8 core hours | |  |
| Academic skills | | 2 weeks, 8 core hours | |  |
| Research dissemination | |  | | |
| Continuing Professional Development (CPD) | |  | | |
| Bespoke | | 4 weeks, 8 core hours | | |
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| Is the course funded or sponsored by an external organisation? | | | | |
| No  | Sponsored  | | Funded  | |
| If ‘yes’, provide the name of funding/sponsoring body: | | | | |

# SECTION 3: STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND ALIGNMENT

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| Which strategic objective of your school/faculty will the course contribute to? The course aims to   * Capture the imagination of pre-university students interested in music. * Diversify recruitment to undergraduate level programmes * Increase skills and confidence of incoming undergraduate students * Promote the world-leading research and education in music at the University of Leeds   The School of Music has developed a suite of programmes that allow students with an interest in a wide range of musics to pursue study in practical, theoretical, and applied areas. As part of Curriculum Redefined, we have also reframed our course offerings and admissions requirements to allow for a greater range of students to demonstrate their capabilities in music. In particular, we have brought a new course (BA in Music and Music Technology) onstream and removed the requirement to attain the ABRSM Grade 5 Theory for most other undergraduate degrees. This contributes to making Leeds an attractive place to study music for students with a wider variety of interests and backgrounds, but also lowers some of the current barriers to tertiary music study. These structural changes will have an impact on the School’s widening participation KPI, where we have a target to recruit 9 students from POLAR4 Quintile 1 within an overall ration of Q5:Q1 of 3.5.  Beyond recruitment targets, however, we wish to improve our continuation rates and the overall student experience in line with student voice. We know from current data that both continuation rates and attainment are lower for students who have limited experience with critical academic skills – including both international students and those from a broadly widening participation background. This can have significant impacts on students’ perceptions of belonging at Leeds and their post-University prospects. The online short course will help students to know what to expect from university study and will increase students’ confidence that Leeds is the right place for them. It will also increase a sense of belonging on arrival at the University of Leeds, by introducing several ‘friendly faces’ – amongst staff and students. This should make the beginning of university less daunting.  Even as we acknowledge the ongoing importance of traditional skills in academic study we wish to avoid instituting a deficit model. While students from a variety of backgrounds would benefit from enhancing skills in critical listening, reading, and writing, this course aims to help close existing gaps through innovative and engaging teaching material that makes it clear the support that is available at UoL. This course thus contributes to the University’s [Student Success Strategy](https://www.leeds.ac.uk/student-success/doc/access-student-success-strategy), which recommends online taster courses and flexible CPD to support access for diverse students. As a School, we see the provision of these types of courses as a key part of promoting this new-look Leeds on a broad scale as well as providing support for students who may have had limited access to the skills necessary for studying academic music at the tertiary level. |
| Strategic alignment: (Provide an overview of the rationale for your course e.g. research impact, recruitment, lifelong learning, professional development, impact on society)  The School of Music Strategy has 6 strategic priority areas. Many of these align with the aims of this course, but among the most relevant areas are International, in which we have the objective of increasing and diversifying international student recruitment, and Digital Transformation, which includes our aim to enhance our educational provision and grow our fully online education portfolio. More broadly, this course fits within the priority area of Education and contributes to objectives such as developing and maintaining a dynamic curriculum that challenges students intellectually and that supports them in their personal and professional growth.  As this suggests, for the School of Music, maintaining the quality and diversity of home UG numbers and increasing international applications is important. The course will need to inspire UG home and international prospective applicants and give them an appreciation of the wider opportunities within the field of music, thereby linking the study of Music with the kinds of skills they might use in the wide variety of careers/further study our graduates progress on to. It should also raise the profile of the University of Leeds and promote the University’s research and expertise in the area.  The course will also underscore the role of the University of Leeds as a digital leader in providing fully online education and introduce potential learners to some of the ways they might experience mixed mode delivery on Leeds UG programmes of study.  By focusing on building confidence and skills through a variety of engaging and future-focused activities, rather than on delivering specific content, this course offers a broad preparation for studying music at university level. It will also showcase the approach that we take to teaching and supporting students at the School of Music. By actively developing students’ skills and sense of confidence, we hope to encourage a greater variety of students to believe not only that studying Music is the right path for them, but also that Leeds can offer an exciting and supportive environment in which to reach their potential. |

# SECTION 4: COURSE DELIVERY

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| Digital platform: (Select all of the digital channels which you think the materials would be used on) | | | | |
| FutureLearn | | | |  |
| Coursera | | | |  |
| Blackboard Open Education (open to invited learners) | | | |  |
| Blackboard Minerva (open to registered students) | | | |  |
|  | | | | |
| Will the course be free for learners to join? | | | | |
| Free  | | Paid for  | | |
| Will the course be open for learners to join or will learners be selected or invited to join the course? | | | | |
| Open  | Join by invitation  | | Join by application and selection  | |
| Ideal course launch date and reason: (Include reasons for ideal launch date e.g. availability; recruitment cycle for degrees; global trends/events; seasonality of professions.)  January 2025, to take advantage of the recruitment/conversion cycle in schools. | | | | |
| How often will the course run? Monthly/ termly/ other? (please specify)  Every 6 weeks. | | | | |
| Will there be educator involvement in delivery of the course? | | | | |
| Yes  | | No  | | |
| If ‘yes’, what type of educator involvement do you envisage? Educators (likely PGRTAs) will need to be involved to guide discussions. This might take the form of a mediated group discussion board or some short online discussions. The numbers of educators would be dependent on numbers of students. | | | | |
| Digital material re-use (Select the digital channels which you think the materials would be used on) | | | | |
| VideoLeeds | | | |  |
| Virtual Learning Environment (for registered students) | | | |  |
| Other online course platforms | | | |  |
| iTunes (as learning assets) | | | |  |
| YouTube/Vimeo (as learning assets) | | | |  |
| Other | | | |  |
| OERs? | | | | |

# SECTION 4: COURSE ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION

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| Will your course be assessed? |  |
| Yes  | No  |
| If ‘Yes’, provide details of how the course will be assessed: Formative assessment only, with feedback given in online discussion boards and (briefly) in written format. | |
| If summative assessment, how will the assessment be marked? | |
| Is the course accredited? | |
| Yes  | No  |
| If ‘Yes’, provide the name of the accreditation body: | |
| Do you intend to present an award or certificate? | |
| Yes  | No  |
| If ‘Yes’, provide details of the award or certificate: We are considering providing a certificate after the course for a small fee. This would allow students to demonstrate their commitment to developing their skills. | |

# SECTION 6: ENDORSEMENTS

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| Has this course proposal been discussed and agreed with Head of School/Service? | |
| Yes  | No  |
| If ‘Yes’, provide the name and e-mail address of the Head of School/Service: | |
| Has this course proposal been discussed and agreed with the Pro-Dean for Student Education? | |
| Yes  | No  |
| If ‘Yes’, provide the name and e-mail address of the Pro-Dean for Student Education: | |

# SECTION 7: MARKETING INFORMATION

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| Has this course proposal been discussed and agreed with the Marketing Manager? | |
| Yes  | No  |
| If ‘Yes’, provide the name and e-mail address of the Marketing Manager: | |
| Provide details of how the course will be promoted:  * Course page * Dedicated going to university pages under online courses at the corporate website * Online courses social media channels * Open day presentation/drop-ins * Offer holder communications * Schools Outreach (EE team) * CTA on advertising landing page (digital campaign running for **BA Music and Technology** which is also aimed at increasing WP) | |
| Marketing objectives: (Up to four marketing objectives aligned to your strategic goal, together with your target and proposed KPI)   1. Increase brand awareness and engagement among pre-university students interested in music. 2. Implement targeted marketing campaigns to attract a more diverse pool of undergraduate applicants. 3. Widening Participation – increasing confidence of potential applicants (or new starters) and feeling of accessibility of Leeds for those who may not have had access to same tertiary music options as non-WP students. 4. Showcase the University of Leeds as a hub for world-leading research and education in music through marketing initiatives. | |

**SECTION 8: FURTHER INFORMATION**

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| Please add any further details about your proposed project: (Include any technical or copyright concerns that may need to be addressed in order to develop the course content)  After the discussions with Simon Vallance (DES) regarding copyright and fair use, many of the initial concerns have been addressed. Careful development of material will still need to be undertaken. |

Please send the completed form to the Digital Education Service:

Once approved, Lead Educators will be asked to review and agree Terms and Conditions for working with the Digital Education Service. Heads of School must provide their formal approval before course development commences.