

This course overview provides a detailed summary of the BMus (Hons) Jazz programme as offered from September 2011. Please note that whilst the information reflects the programme offered to date, it may be subject to amendment and change in future years.

Year One 120 credits

Jazz Repertoire & Style I

Core module
40 credits

Assessment: Two performances (2 x 20%), technical assessment (10%) and performance (50%)

The foundations of instrumental technique and style will be established principally through 1:1 lessons, then broadened through repertoire and style, technical skills and free improvisation classes. You will be encouraged to get as much interactive performance experience as possible – for example, within college through participation in big band or jazz ensemble, and outside through touring and community performance projects.

Jazz Composition Through Performance

Core module
20 credits

Assessment: Open rehearsal (50%) and performance (50%)

This module presents a practically-based introduction to composing for jazz musicians, the technical and creative skills required when arranging music for various jazz ensembles, and how to present work professionally. You will also take part in dedicated ensemble classes to develop relevant techniques and skills. Where possible, you will perform compositions and arrangements as part of the learning experience.

Enhancing Performance

Core module
20 credits

Assessment: Essay (50%) and viva voce (50%)

The module teaches you to make the most of your educational and professional potential. You will be introduced to a wide range of issues relating to physical and psychological health, along with technological and aesthetic matters fundamental to success as a performer or creative musician. Areas covered will include strategies for effective practice, physical fitness for the musician, applications of technology, the physicality of performance, aspects of style and interpretation, and nutrition for the musician. After a series of awareness-raising presentations and workshops, you will be encouraged to establish and maintain effective personal practise regimes.

Approaches to Jazz History & Analysis

Core module
20 credits

Assessment: Two essays (80%) and study skills (20%)

This module develops your awareness of the diversity inherent within musicological enquiry, and gives you the skills to pursue an informed study of music. You will trace the roots and diverse trends associated with the development of jazz during the first decades of the 20th century, focusing on the emergence of New Orleans jazz. You will also consider how jazz developed as a result of parallel movements in artistic, technological, cultural and social forces throughout the 20th century. A number of important case study works will be discussed from historical and analytical perspectives.

Jazz Harmony & Aural

Core module
20 credits

Assessment: Portfolio of harmony exercise (50%) and listening tests (50%)

On this module, you will study the fundamental principles of harmonic progression and elaboration, and the make-up of the idioms lying behind many jazz standards. You will complete non-assessed tasks relating to selected subjects. Linked to this work you will investigate the aural qualities of triads, chords and modes. Listening and responding exercises are designed to help improve your recognition of basic melodic shapes, chord-types, added notes, and the notation of frequently-heard jazz rhythms. Case studies will be drawn from recordings. In order to be eligible for the listening test, you must have maintained a satisfactory engagement within jazz choir rehearsals and performances across the autumn and spring terms.

Year Two 120 credits

In Year Two, you will study one core module worth 40 credits, three core modules each worth 20 credits, plus one optional 20 credit module.

Jazz Repertoire & Style II

Core module

40 credits

Assessment: Two performances (2 x 20%), technical assessment (10%) and performances (50%)

The foundations of instrumental technique and style will be established principally through 1:1 lessons and broadened through repertoire and style, technical skills and free improvisation classes. Repertoire and style ensemble classes will focus on learning both standard and genre/artist specific repertoire. The latter will concentrate on a chronological rehearsal/study of genre/artist starting from BeBop/Parker. You will be encouraged to gain as much interactive performance experience as possible.

The Session Player in the Community

Core module

20 credits

Assessment: Two performances (2x 50%)

Preparatory classes will focus on programming and rehearsal for a variety of performance situations, such as interactive school concerts, the local jazz club and public spaces (like the Wales Millennium Centre or Cardiff Museum). Session requirement classes will include exercises in reading through and rehearsing typical materials used in both theatre and studio settings. Technical classes will explore the differing performance demands between working acoustically and amplified. You will be offered a range of performance opportunities both within college and outside.

Jazz Transcription & Analysis

Core module

20 credits

Assessment: Coursework (100%)

At first, you will study as a group to achieve an understanding of the requirements of the course, the significance of transcription and the principles behind its processes. Later work will be focused on individual coursework and include collaborative exercises and critical analysis.

Advanced Jazz Harmony & Composition

Core module

20 credits

Assessment: Coursework (100%)

A series of ensemble classes focused on the listening, analysis and practical exploration of the work of major artists and developments of harmony, from BeBop to harmonodics, modal to free and contemporary free music.

Outreach Music

Optional module

20 credits

Assessment: Practical assessment (60%) and essay (40%)

Preliminary lectures will prepare you for working within a community group, introducing the skills and exercises necessary for leading exploratory workshops within different media (eg. theatre, dance). Subsequent work with a community art group will involve workshops, leading to the creation of music through improvisation and/or composition. Further development of the music will occur throughout a rehearsal process culminating in public performances.

Music for Theatre

Optional module

20 credits

Assessment: Practical work (50%) and coursework (50%)

This module gives you the opportunity to study the art of devising music for new theatre productions. It will include the analysis of script to understand content, form and dramatic pulse, leading to the generation of a coherent musical score.

Practical exercises will include the selection and placing of existing music, as well as original composition to interpret and enhance text drawn from a range of sources. Presentation of the work will deal with extracts from four works and take the form of rehearsed readings.

Year Three 120 credits

You will study one core module worth 40 credits, plus four core modules each worth 20 credits.

Jazz Repertoire & Style III

Core module

40 credits

Assessment: Two performances (2 x 20%), technical assessment (10%) and performances (50%)

Through 1:1 lessons, you will develop an advanced instrumental technique and stylistic awareness. This will be further broadened through repertoire and style, technical skills and free improvisation classes. Repertoire and style ensemble classes will focus on learning standard and genre/artist specific repertoire – this may include post-bop and aspects of world music crossovers. You will be encouraged to gain as much interactive performance experience as possible.

Band Leadership

Core module

20 credits

Assessment: Open rehearsal (50%) and performance (50%)

This module is made up of weekly ensemble meetings which will help you create the sound you want to communicate to your audience. Subsequent sessions will focus on how to achieve this through discussion, experiment and rehearsal.

Jazz Teaching Skills

Core module

20 credits

Assessment: Practical assessment (50%) and portfolio (50%)

This module covers a range of topics, such as lesson planning, child protection issues, assessing and examining and mixed ability teaching. Seminars and workshops will be geared towards the presentation of material and planning a workshop project for a local school. The teaching project will essentially be student-led, with tutor supervision.

Jazz Arranging

Core module

20 credits

Assessment: Coursework (50%) and rehearsal/performance (50%)

Initial workshops will introduce you to the fundamental processes of arranging music for a range of instrumental and vocal jazz ensembles. Tutorials will offer more targeted guidance, working towards a final performance, where you will produce and rehearse your own arrangement.

Performance Planning

Core module

Credits: 20

Assessment: Coursework (100%)

This module will consider a wide variety of issues and practical considerations, including band organisation, the production of promotional material, preparation of programme material, rehearsal skills, tour planning and dealing with promoters.

Year Four 120 credits

Students can select one of three pathways:

Pathway One

Module Type	Credits
Performance Option	40
Performance Option	40
Professional Development Option	40

Pathway Two

Module Type	Credits
Performance Option	40
Performance Option	20
Professional Development Option	40
Professional Development Option	20

Pathway Three

Module Type	Credits
Performance Option	40
Professional Development Option	40
Professional Development Option	40

Performance Option

Performing in a Multimedia Environment

20 credits Assessment: Performance (50%) and critical account (50%)
or 40 credits Assessment: Two performances (2 x 30%) and critical account (40%)

The module will begin with an investigation into current publicly available works, together with a critical examination of issues affecting contemporary mixed media performance. Growing from this, there will be opportunities to work collaboratively on performances within various media environments.

The Interactive Jazz Performer

20 credits Assessment: Performance (100%)
or 40 credits Assessment: Two performances (2 x 50%)

1:1 lessons (offered by a team of tutors) focus on the development of a fully-formed instrumental technique and stylistic individuality. Ensemble classes, coached rehearsals and department projects (including outreach and touring) encourage collaborative programming and performance, and demand a high level of communication and interaction. Projects may include other art forms such as dance and animation.

The Band Musician

20 credits Assessment: Performance (100%)
or 40 credits Assessment: Two performances (2 x 50%)

1:1 lessons are complemented by band rehearsals and performances. You can participate in one of the three RWCMD large jazz ensembles (or a related theatre piece by negotiation with the module leader).

The Unaccompanied Performer

20 credits Assessment: Performance (100%)
or 40 credits Assessment: Two performances (2 x 50%)

Through individual lessons you will develop a fully-formed instrumental technique, stylistic individuality and the programming of unaccompanied performance projects. These may include collaborations with other performing arts, such as dance and animation.

Contemporary Performing

20 credits Assessment: Performance (100%)
or 40 credits Assessment: Two performances (2 x 50%)

Through 1:1 lessons you will develop of a fully-formed instrumental technique, stylistic individuality and a knowledge of contemporary repertoire, techniques and processes. Ensemble classes, coached rehearsals and department projects (including outreach and touring) encourage collaborative programming and performance. Projects may include other art forms such as dance and animation.

The Illustrated Performance

20 credits
Assessment: Performance (60%) and presentation (40%)

Tutors will help you choose a topic and related repertoire. You will then work independently to devise your presentation, which should use appropriate technological support. The presentation itself will be video recorded, after which you will be required to provide a critique of the effectiveness of their work.

Professional Development Option

Vocational Project

20 credits Assessment: Presentation and written assignment
or 40 credits Assessment: Presentation and two written assignments

Following a meeting with the module leader and tutor, you will be assigned to a potential work placement. You will then be proactive in negotiating with the placement provider and ensuring a smooth interface between the placement schedule and other college commitments. The precise nature of the placement, its requirements, assessment procedures and specific learning outcomes will be established in advance. Typically a 20-credit placement involves five full working days and a 40-credit involves ten full working days (or equivalent). The placement will normally take place within a single term and will be monitored by a designated placement tutor.

Portfolio of Transcriptions

20 or 40 credits
Assessment: Portfolio including written critique

This module gives you the opportunity to further develop your transcription skills and produce a portfolio of work with accompanying recordings. Typically, the 40 credit portfolio will consist of two major works and three smaller transcriptions. You will also produce a written critique focusing on an evaluation of processes and outcomes.

Portfolio of Arrangements

20 or 40 credits
Assessment – Portfolio including written critique

On this module you will develop your skills in arranging and produce a portfolio of original works with accompanying recordings. Typically, the 40 credit portfolio will consist of two major works and three smaller arrangements. The written critique will be an evaluation of the creative processes and outcomes.

Portfolio of Composition

20 or 40 credits
Assessment: Portfolio including written critique

On this module, you will develop your composition skills and produce a portfolio of original works with accompanying recordings. Typically, the 20 credit portfolio will consist of one major work and two smaller pieces. You will also produce a written critique focusing on an evaluation of processes and outcomes.

Dissertation

40 credits
Assessment: Dissertation

Producing a dissertation gives you an opportunity to intensively examine a subject previously addressed during the course, or to apply some of the skills, knowledge and approaches you have developed to a less familiar area. This is a self-directed piece of work, but you will be supported through seminars and tutorials.

Extended Essay

20 credits
Assessment: Essay

The extended essay gives you an opportunity to intensively examine a subject previously addressed during the course, or to apply some of the skills, knowledge and approaches you have developed to a less familiar area. This is a self-directed piece of work, but you will be supported through seminars and tutorials.