



**Birmingham City University**  
**Faculty of Technology, Engineering and the**  
**Environment**

**Undergraduate Programme**

**Programme Specification**

**BSc (Hons) Sound Engineering and**  
**Production**

<b>Date of Course Approval/Review</b>	<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Version Date</b>
<b>30 March 2011</b>	<b>1.01</b>	<b>17 May 2011</b>

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## Definitive Documents and Version Control

This document has a version number and reference date in the footer.

The process leading to the introduction of new courses, major changes to courses, and minor changes to courses and modules follows the appropriate formal procedure as described in the Faculty's Academic Procedures and Quality Manual.

On the front sheet of this document, the date of course approval/review refers to the most recent full approval/review event. If later, the version date will be that of the most recent subsequent event at which formal consideration was given to course changes.

Further details about the course and document development may be obtained from minutes of the approval or minor changes board. A history of the document since the last full approval/review event is summarised in the table below and further information relating to past versions can be obtained from the Faculty Office.

<b>Version</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Date of event</b>	<b>Authorised by</b>
1.01	Approval meeting	30 March 2011	

## **Programme Specification BSc(Hons) Sound Engineering and Production**

**Date of Publication to Students [September 2011]**

**NOTE:** This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detail on the specific learning outcomes, indicative content and the teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found (1) at [Faculty web site address], (2) in the Module Specifications and (3) in the Student Handbook.

The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be checked within independent review processes undertaken by the Quality Assurance Agency.

<b>Awarding Institution / Body:</b>	Birmingham City University
<b>Teaching Institution:</b>	Technology Engineering and the Environment
<b>Interim Awards and Final Award:</b>	BSc (Hons) Sound Engineering and Production
<b>Programme Title:</b>	BSc (Hons) Sound Engineering and Production
<b>Main fields of Study:</b>	Sound recording, mixing and production, digital audio, acoustics & audio electronics,
<b>Modes of Study:</b>	Sound Engineering and Production is delivered as a full time programme of study. Supporting materials are available via a virtual learning environment and individual module websites.
<b>Language of Study:</b>	English
<b>UCAS Code:</b>	J930
<b>JACS Code:</b>	

### **Professional Status of the programme**

Programme accredited by the Institution of Engineering and Technology to Incorporated Engineer Status

**Relevant subject benchmark statements and other external reference points used to inform programme outcomes:**

QAA Benchmarking Group: Engineering

IEng Accreditation from IET (Institution of Engineering & Technology)

**Programme philosophy and aims**

The BSc Sound Engineering and Production study programme aims to create multi-skilled and versatile graduates who have a strong appreciation of the technology, techniques and aesthetics important in a potential career as a sound engineer. By taking a woven approach to course design technical and creative modules run hand in hand, supporting students in their development.

**The aims of the programme are to:**

- Provide a broad range of subjects within the field of sound engineering to facilitate the development of skills and personal interests in order to promote a wide career choice
- Develop the student intellectually and creatively by combining knowledge of the technology, creative techniques and processes relevant to the audio industry
- Provide an awareness of the legal and ethical issues relating to the music industries
- Employ teaching and learning techniques which place emphasis on active and participative education
- Encourage acquisition of some of the skills necessary for lifelong learning
- Achieve a qualification accredited by the relevant professional bodies

**Intended learning outcomes and the means by which they are achieved and demonstrated:**

### **Learning Outcomes**

On completion of the programme the student should be able to:

#### **1. Knowledge and Understanding**

- KU1. Discuss and debate issues pertinent to the music and related industries
- KU2. Recognise and explain the function of electronic and digital audio systems
- KU3. Demonstrate an understanding of techniques in digital signal processing
- KU4. Identify tools utilised in music recording, production and reproduction

#### **2. Intellectual Skills**

- IS1. Evaluate the performance of systems across a range of sound engineering disciplines
- IS2. Organise and manage the production cycle involved in modern music production
- IS3. Compare and judge performance in a given context and improve performance through reflection
- IS4. Propose and design solutions to problems encountered in the field of sound engineering

#### **3. Practical Skills**

- PS1. Assess requirements and employ techniques in live sound events
- PS2. Appraise and apply a range of recording, mixing and production techniques
- PS3. Design and build systems appropriate for acoustic and electronic analysis
- PS4. Evaluate and employ contemporary synthesis and sequencing techniques in live performance and fixed media reproduction

#### **4. Transferable/Key Skills**

- TS1. Work effectively as an individual and relate to others in the organisation and management of technical, recording, production and other group projects.
- TS2. Give effective oral, written and visual presentations making appropriate use of information and communications technologies
- TS3. Reflect on own learning, being constructively self-critical and demonstrate self-reliance
- TS4. Understand career opportunities and begin to plan a career path

#### **Learning teaching, and assessment methods used**

Knowledge, understanding and intellectual skills are acquired through a wide range of learning outcomes including formal lectures, technical and musical practical areas, laboratory experiments, seminars and directed independent learning activities.

Analytical skills are developed through coursework tasks that encourage creativity and problem solving using a range of systems and technologies relevant to the music and audio industries. Practical applications are a key feature of the course and are emphasised in course design and delivery. Small-group tutorial and practical work comprise up to two thirds of timetabled sessions.

Learners are assessed both formatively and summatively by a number of methods.

Formative assessment occurs in various ways throughout the programme and involves feedback from peers, tutors and individual reflection. In studio based modules students undertake recording projects as a class, performing in defined roles to give an experience of recording through formative assessment in advance of their summative assessment to give one example.

In the live and recorded sound theme there are a number of approaches taken to teaching the subject matter. In the level 4 and 5 modules it is important to equip students with practical skills, spending the first part of the year concentrating on the technology and its use in achieving the best sound possible. The later part of the year in Live Sound and Studio Recording UG1 the nature of delivery changes to more technical information delivery through lectures whilst students are encouraged to use their practical skills in a

number of events and practical tests. In the Commercial Production Techniques module similar skills are used to those embedded in Live Sound and Studio Recording but from a different perspective, with the two modules designed to fully support each other and offer a cohesive education in practical sound technology. The shared lecture across these modules further ties together the content and embeds the learning across the three disciplines.

The second year Recording and Mixing module continues this by allowing students to share their work in later tutorials, with mixing and production tasks undertaken as a group and led by the lecturer to improve work and explore the techniques taught at the outset of the module. It was felt by students and staff alike that these modules gave students an excellent skillset, but did not offer students to explore these techniques with the benefit of the feedback provided through the module. This led to the development of the Application of Sound Systems module as part of the course development process, giving students the opportunity to continue to develop techniques and skills in a professional environment with input from practitioners. This module has met with considerable success and support, and as such the feed forward techniques used in this module will be disseminated into the second year module.

The Audio Systems modules take a different approach due to the technical nature of the modules. Labs and tutorials involve the testing and development of electronic circuits to aid the understanding of the technical content. In the Audio Systems module students test and analyse the equipment that they are using in the studio to give them a stronger technical and practical knowledge of the technologies and tools used in their studies. The digital audio theme continues this approach, making every effort to link technical content and assessments with the interests and practical output of the students. In the Sound Synthesis and Sequencing and Digital Audio FX modules the students are getting behind the tools that they are using in production, developing understanding and improving application. Throughout the course all of the technical modules are underpinned by practical application, giving context to difficult technical material and significantly improving the overall product created by students.

The production and synthesis theme sees students given the opportunity to develop a portfolio of material so important to a career in Sound Engineering. In the sound production module students undertake a number of tasks through the year to develop production techniques, all of which later feed into elements in their portfolio. The second and third year modules help students to develop their own tools, bringing originality to their work and allowing them to explore technical and aesthetic areas that would not have been available to them. The new Commercial Production Techniques module further ties together the production theme into the studio and audio systems themes, bringing the new production and synthesis techniques together with the studio and electronics based elements and providing a strong coherent



course of study. In combination with the Application of Sound Systems module, this theme gives students the opportunity to develop a portfolio of work to a professional standard, allowing demonstration of ability to potential employers and clients.

A range of summative assessment methods are employed involving both individual and group assignments; coursework assignments and practical project work, written coursework, laboratory experimentation, tests and examinations (seen and unseen, open-and closed-book). Assessment methods for each module are identified in a module guide and, for coursework, assessment details and criteria are specified in each assignment brief.

Research and independent learning skills are central to the programme and are developed throughout the course. The Learning Centre provides comprehensive internet and text resources and specialist staff to provide tutorial support for skills development.

As well as developing and applying skills through assignment work, particular emphasis on research work is associated with the year 1 and 2 Music Industry and Production Management modules and the final year project. Independent learning is encouraged through research tasks for assignments and the final year project, and in the requirement to plan work schedules to meet deadlines for coursework submission. We currently have a strong research team within the School and with the development of the MSc Sound Engineering students are able to see the development and importance of high level academic research. The Proposed Journal for the school is also providing opportunities for students to begin careers in published media and research.

Transferable/key skills are core to the learning strategy of the programme. They are pervasive, and are incorporated into modules and assessments as appropriate, e.g. team-working skills are fostered via group, task-based practical projects. Reflection and self awareness are fostered by keeping logbooks and submitting self assessment documentation in support of personal performance.

The use of information technology plays an active role throughout the course

## Programme structure and requirements, levels, modules, credits and awards

The structure of the course, the modules, levels and credit values (ECTS credit values are half the values shown), and the awards which can be gained are shown in the diagram below.

The BSc programme is normally studied over three years full-time or five years part-time. Students may transfer between full and part-time modes of attendance.

The course is divided into taught modules of 15 and 30 credits and a final year project of 45 credits.

Students are made an award based on the credits achieved when they complete or exit the programme. Students complete 120 credits at level 4 (full-time year 1) for Certificate of Higher Education in Sound Engineering and Production, 120 credits at level 5 (full-time year 2) for Diploma of Higher Education in Sound Engineering and Production, 60 credits at level 6 (full-time year 3) for Bachelor of Science in Sound Engineering and Production and 120 credits at level 6 (full-time year 3) for Bachelor of Science with Honours in Sound Engineering and Production.

Each credit represents 10 notional hours of student learning and assessment.

### Level 6

Music and Sound for Visual Media UG3 15	Digital Audio Effects UG3 15	Application of Sound Systems UG3 30	Studio Acoustics UG3 15	Sound Technology Project UG3 45
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### Level 5

Media Production Management UG2 15	Sound Synthesis and Sequencing UG2 15	Recording and Mixing UG2 30	Audio Systems UG2 30	Digital Music Processing UG2 30
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### Level 4

Music Industry UG1 15	Commercial Production Techniques UG1 15	Live Sound and Studio Recording UG1 30	Musical Instrument Acoustics UG1 15	Audio Electronics UG1 15	Digital Audio Technology UG1 30
Shared		Lecture			

Industry and Visual Media Theme

Production and Synthesis Theme

Live and Recorded Sound Theme

Acoustics Theme

Audio Systems Theme

Digital Audio Theme

### **Support for Learning including Personal Development Planning (PDP)**

Students are encouraged to identify and, with guidance, to reflect on their own learning needs and are offered the following support as appropriate to meet those needs:

- A dedicated Learning Centre with open access learning materials, resources and full-time staff specialising in a variety of support areas.
- A Student Handbook, containing information relating to the University, Faculty, course and modules.
- Access to administrative staff and to academic staff, including the Tutors, Module Coordinators, Course Director, Centre Manager and Head of Division, at reasonable times.
- Access to Faculty resources, including the Computer Centre, and a range of supported IT equipment and laboratories.
- Access to the services of the library.
- Access to the University's Student Services, including those offered by the careers service, financial advisers, medical centre, disability service, crèche, counselling service and chaplaincy.

### **Criteria for admission**

Candidates must satisfy the general admission requirements of the programme. The current admission requirements can be found under the 'Entry Requirements' tab of the web page for this course.

### **Methods for evaluation and enhancement of quality and standards including listening and responding to views of students**

The following faculty committees are involved in evaluation and enhancement of quality, standards and student experience: Board of Studies, Faculty Board, Learning and Teaching Committee, Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee.

Review and evaluation processes in which students are involved include annual course and module reviews, course review and re-approval events, professional body accreditation visits and external examiner visits. Mechanisms for student input include meetings with course tutors, feedback questionnaires, faculty and university student satisfaction surveys and representation on the faculty committees referred to above.

External examiners are members of examination boards and their remit includes meeting students and monitoring and reporting on academic standards.