Programme Specification: BA (Hons) Acting

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 http://www.bcu.ac.uk/pme, (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.

Awarding Institution / Body:	**Birmingham City University**
Teaching Institution:	**Birmingham School of Acting**
Interim Awards and Final Award:	**Final Award - BA Honours in Acting 360 Credits Interim Award – Diploma of Higher Education 120 credits Interim Award – Certificate of Higher Education 120 credits**
Programme Title:	**BA Honours in Acting**
Main fields of Study:	**Acting**
Modes of Study:	**Practical based learning**
Language of Study:	**English**
UCAS Code:	**N/A**
JACS Code:	**N/A**

Professional Status of the programme (if applicable):

The BA (Hons) in Acting is accredited by the National Council for Drama Training (NCDT). The accreditation from this statutory body is recognised by the industry as a benchmark to the quality of training received by the student. Therefore students graduating with a qualification from an accredited course may have an advantage in a competitive employment market.

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

The course re-design has been done in accordance with the professional benchmarking criteria of our professional accrediting body, the National Council for Drama Training and against the QAA subject benchmarks for dance and drama.

The programme philosophy and aims are to:

- Realise as fully as possible students' creative gifts and talents within a specialised, taught course of study in acting.

- Synthesise the theory and practice of key acting processes, and integrate professional studies relating to performance and recorded media industries.

- Create a well-informed, personal working process that is supported by theory, practice and reflection.

- Develop an understanding and mastery of a body of core technical skills and the ability to apply these skills in preparation for professional practice.

- Develop the ability to apply background research skills and enquiry methods to support and enrich performance.

- Encourage creative and imaginative responses to source material for performance.

- Equip students with a range of professional skills required by the contemporary actor.

- Develop skills of self-reliance and a pro-active attitude to creating employment opportunities.

- Develop open-minded attitudes to all kinds of drama and performance.

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

Learning Outcomes[1]

On successful completion of the BA (Hons) Acting course, students will be able to:

- Perform as an actor to a professional standard.
- Use a firm, theoretical knowledge and practical skills base to build performance.
- Operate in a professional career environment.
- Be pro-active in the creation of employment opportunities.

Learning teaching and assessment methods used

The work of the 1st year supports and feeds into the second year, and the work in the 2nd year directly supports and feeds into the final year.

The first year is very much a technical year. Students will learn the basic skills in the modules Acting (ACT4011), Voice (ACT4007), Physical Skills (ACT4010), and Singing (ACT4006). These seemingly separate skills are in truth all linked together, and ultimately will facilitate a seamless integration into acting. In the Project module (ACT4009) students work towards a showing of work to an audience of tutors and the other students in the year. The Acting Theory module (ACT4008) covers theatre history, critical and analytical skills and the exploration of acting using the basic principles of the Stanislavski system.

The second year is approximately 50% technical, 50% performance and builds on the work of the first year. The modules Acting 2 (ACT5009), Voice 2 (ACT5010), Physical Skills 2 (ACT5008) and Singing 2 (ACT5006) start to come together, in order to creatively explore the skills learnt, push back boundaries, make new discoveries, and start to see the bigger picture. Work is shown to a public audience in the Workshop (ACT5007) module. Along with exploring acting for the stage, you will also learn important techniques for radio and screen in the Acting 2 module.

The third year is predominantly performance, where the training comes together in live, public performances in the Production module (ACT6005), and in performances for screen and radio in the Recorded Media module (ACT6006). Students will learn the art of preparing audition material and compiling an audition portfolio, performing to an invited audience of industry gatekeepers (agents, casting directors, etc.) in Birmingham and London as part of the Showcase & Audition module (ACT6007). In the Professional Studies module (ACT6008) students receive the help, advice, and professional know-how to run a career, enabling them to set out for their first job with confidence and success.

Assessment processes

The modules on the course employ a variety of assessment methods.

All assessment is seen as part of an aligned and integrated course of study, and the assessment tasks seek to comprise a genuine representation of the objectives of the course and its modules.

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[1] Guidance on the specification of learning outcomes is available from the Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching [CELT].

Assessment may be formative or summative.

- **Formative** assessment points are assigned at specific points during a module to provide students with an opportunity to test their learning and get verbal feedback as to their progress through the module.

- **Summative** assessment instead tends to be at an end point, and is mainly concerned with making a value judgement on a student's achievement. The notes a director gives you in a rehearsal, would be an example of formative assessment, whereas an end of module exam, would be summative assessment.

Inevitably, no form of assessment is purely summative or formative: they are really ends of the same continuum.

All assessed work is subject to the School moderation policy, and all marks are provisional until confirmed by the Examination Board, which meets after the completion of the year.

Unless otherwise notified, students must not present the same material for more than one assessment during the course. If this occurs the student will automatically be awarded a zero mark.

Attendance forms part of the marking procedure. There is a lateness and absence policy that directly impacts on the module marks, so continual lateness or absence could possibly determine pass or failure of a module.

Assessment formats

Assessment events may take various forms, i.e. a practical demonstration in class, a written reflective journal or a performance, either as an individual or with another student or in a larger group. In whatever form the assessments occur they are examinations and as such are compulsory. Absence from an assessment for whatever reason will result in a zero mark and the assessment would most probably have to be re-taken in the summer holidays.

Technical module assessments

In Year 1 the focus is on the development of specific skills, and assessment is by individual departments of acting, voice, movement and singing throughout the modules. The timetable reflects a ratio that is approximately 70% technical to 30% performance.

In Year 2, these technical skills are deepened and developed, and the beginnings of integration between them are expected. They are still assessed by the separate departments, though application and integration are reflected in the assessment. Year 2 is seen as 50% technical and 50% performance.

In Year 3 non-performance modules are assessed by the departments concerned in their delivery.

Performance module assessment

Performance is at the heart of the students' study on the course. It takes place in the modules Projects, Workshops, Productions, Showcase & Auditions and Recorded Media. In Years 1 and 2, the marking of performance is weighted against technical achievement. In Year 3 performance and technical achievement are viewed as a holistic entity.

Year 1 Projects are marked by the director, and are weighted 70% process / technical to 30% performance.

Year 2 Workshops are assessed by the director, whose marks are weighted 50% process / technical to 50% performance.

In Year 3 modules Production, Recorded Media and Showcase & Auditions, the holistic nature of performance is reflected in the assessment strategy where a single mark for acting is given. This is the average of the director's mark, which is weighted 50% process / 50% performance, and the mark of an internal assessor, which is 100% performance and is usually assessed on the first public performance. Representatives of the departments of voice, movement and singing (if appropriate) will give formative feedback to the students.

Reflective diaries/workbooks

These are used in certain modules to assess a student's theoretical understanding, to monitor their private practice and to encourage reflection on the relationship between theory and practice, with plans and future actions undertaken based upon that reflection. They may form part of a module assessment.

Presentations

These are used to demonstrate an understanding of coursework and use presentational skills to:

- Clearly convey a coherent and rational argument.
- Communicate ideas or information to peers and engage in discussion.
- Analyse information and demonstrate its relevance.
- Give verbal expression to both concrete and abstract concepts related to the discipline or field of study.
- Argue rationally.

Self and peer assessment

This may be used to assess assignments as a useful learning experience, but is not part of any formal mark or result.

Coursework

Classroom performances may be used to assess the assimilation of skills taught and their application in a performance context.

Written presentations/ proposals

Professional development requires an ability to make written presentations and proposals. These may take the form, for example, of professional actors CVs, or proposals to managements, or applications for funding. You may be required to present other written work i.e. a written critical analysis of a public performance. Criteria for the assessment of any such written work is given in the syllabus.

Throughout the course students will receive written reports on their module assessments and oral formative feedback from tutors and the Course Director on their progress.

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

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

The course model

The following indicates the minimum number of credits required for each award available through the course and a diagram illustrating the modules for each level and how you progress through the 3 years:

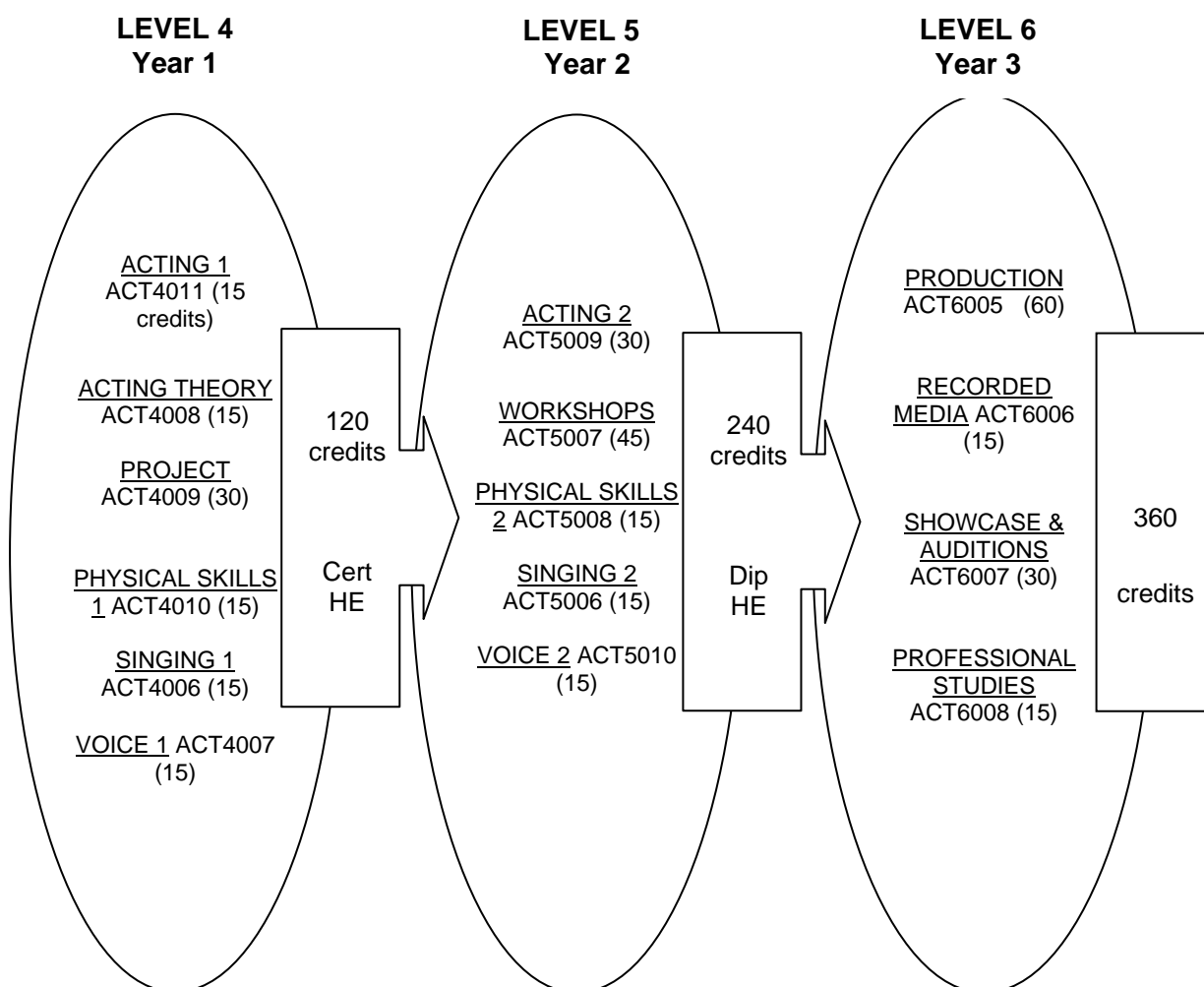|	
Bachelor of Arts with Honours	360 credits, of which 120 must be at Level 6 and not more than 120 at Level 4
Diploma of Higher Education	240 credits, of which at least 120 must be at Level 5
Certificate of Higher Education	a minimum of 120 credits at Level 4

A student who fails or leaves before completing his or her programme of study will be entitled to receive an interim award, as specified above, provided the requirements for that award have already been met. Students proceeding through the programme will not be awarded interim certificates.

LEVEL 4
Year 1

ACTING 1
ACT4011 (15 credits)

ACTING THEORY
ACT4008 (15)

PROJECT
ACT4009 (30)

PHYSICAL SKILLS
1 ACT4010 (15)

SINGING 1
ACT4006 (15)

VOICE 1 ACT4007 (15)

120 credits

Cert HE

LEVEL 5
Year 2

ACTING 2
ACT5009 (30)

WORKSHOPS
ACT5007 (45)

PHYSICAL SKILLS
2 ACT5008 (15)

SINGING 2
ACT5006 (15)

VOICE 2 ACT5010 (15)

240 credits

Dip HE

LEVEL 6
Year 3

PRODUCTION
ACT6005   (60)

RECORDED
MEDIA ACT6006 (15)

SHOWCASE &
AUDITIONS
ACT6007 (30)

PROFESSIONAL
STUDIES
ACT6008 (15)

360 credits

A student who fails or leaves before completing his or her programme of study will be entitled to receive an interim award, as specified above, provided the requirements for that award have already been met.

Students proceeding through the programme will not be awarded interim certificates.

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 those needs:

- An induction period of normally one week.

- Student Handbook and Module guides.

- On site library and computer facilities, plus further facilities through BCU and TID Libraries.

- Staff support through the Course Director. All staff are open to personal access to advise on pastoral and course issues.

- Professional counselling and Student Support through BCU Student Services.

- Medical advice through connected services with experience of performers' needs.

- Dietary advice through a qualified dietician.

- Small Group Classes allow students to gain advice on problems relating to and arising from the training process.

At BSA, we have a very particular approach to PDP which is focussed towards the very particular demands of the acting profession. Throughout your time at the school, you will be encouraged to develop a strong sense of professional conduct and work ethic to prepare you for the profession. This culminates in the 3rd year with the module Professional Studies which is expressly aimed at equipping the student with the necessary knowledge to be able to develop strategies to gain and/or create employment opportunities after graduation. Lectures/seminars would include; careers advise from accountants, casting directors, agents, British Actors Equity, working actors etc. Students also gain access to professional working directors through their other modules, Production and Recorded Media.

PDP is a means by which you can record, evaluate and review all that you are learning. It will:

- Help to keep you motivated.

- Give you a better understanding of how you learn and how to improve your performance.

- Give you clearer ideas about the kind of life and work you want.

- Enable you to be in a better position to compete for jobs.

- Help you to develop a positive, forward-looking approach.

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

Evaluation and improvement of quality and standards

Committees:
- Staff Meetings.
- Ad-Hoc Project groups.
- Departmental meetings.
- Course Monitoring Meetings.
- Academic Directorate meetings.
- Planning Directorate meetings.
- Student Year meetings.
- Whole School Student Assemblies.
- N.U.S. and Academic directorate meetings.
- Course Board.
- Academic Board.
- Examination Board.
- Faculty Board.

Mechanisms for review and evaluation:

Student/Staff Feedback
- Student Feedback Questionnaires.
- Student Feedback meetings with Course Director and Year Head.
- Staff feedback questionnaires.
- All feedback is discussed and evaluated at Course Boards and reported upon in the Annual Course Report written by the Course Director.
- Items arising from meetings between the N.U.S. and Academic Directorate are reported to and evaluated by Course Boards.
- Students are represented on both Course and Academic Boards.

Professional/Academic Monitoring
- Course Accreditation by NCDT.

- External Examiner Reports.

- External assessors are used to give professional benchmarking.

- A consultant careers advisor who maintains regular contact with employers and professional 'gatekeepers'.

- The Examination Board meets to consider marks, progression and awards.

Internal Monitoring

- Peer teaching observation.

- Assessment Workshops.

- A database of graduate destinations is kept and constantly updated. Graduates are regularly contacted to update their CVs.

- Yearly Course Monitoring Meetings allow staff to comprehensively examine the Course in detail across disciplines, and its relationship to training and the profession at large.

Staff Development

- All staff are encouraged and supported to undertake professional and academic Development.