

BA (Hons) Popular Music

2025/26

Full-Time

L4 Entry

DE L5

Top Up

About this document: This Key Information Document gives you a summary of the core characteristics of the BA (Hons) Popular Music degree at HCA. Students may have learnt about this course from multiple sources: the college website, the college prospectus, and from conversations with staff and students for example, but we want to ensure that students have this overview for reference at any time during their studies with us as a record of the service we are agreeing to provide when a student accepts our offer of a place.

Award: The qualification that a student will receive upon successful completion of the programme is a BA (Hons) Popular Music. This means that the award will be a Bachelor of Arts 'with honours'.

If a student does not complete the course, they may be eligible for a Certificate or Diploma of Higher Education.

Validating Body: The BA (Hons) Popular Music Degree is validated by the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. However, the course is designed and delivered by Hereford College of Arts.

Regulatory Body: Hereford College of Arts is registered with the Office for Students (OfS) to deliver Higher Education. The OfS is an independent public body which reports to Parliament through the Department for Education <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk>. (Their aim is to ensure that every student, whatever their background, has a fulfilling experience of higher education that enriches their lives and careers.)

Length of Course: The standard and minimum length of this course is as follows:

Course	Standard/Minimum Length of the Course
BA (Hons) Popular Music <i>Full-time</i>	3 years
BA (Hons) Popular Music Top Up <i>Full-time</i>	1 year

Students will need to complete the course to gain the award.

Entry Requirements

All students need to be at least 18 years of age at the start of the course.

Applicants will submit an audition video of themselves demonstrating and discussing their work and may be invited for a further interview. The interview can be conducted in person or remotely. This will be a supportive process where guidance will be provided on the strengths and areas for improvement.

We usually expect applicants to have achieved a minimum of 96 UCAS points at entry. Whilst qualifications are important, our offers are not solely based on academic results. We may make offers based on other evidence of talent or suitability for the course.

Applicants who do not satisfy the standard entry requirement but offer other qualifications and or relevant experience will be considered on an individual basis subject to satisfactory information being provided at interview.

Applicants whose first language is not English and require a student visa must achieve Level B2 in an approved Secure English Language Test (SELT) prior to enrolment. For further guidance, please visit the UK Visa and Immigration website <https://www.gov.uk/student-visa>

Your offer letter will outline any specific requirements associated with your offer.

Our Admissions Policy can be found [here](#)

Core Modules

All programmes of study are made up of modules. Some modules comprise two or more assignments. Modules have a credit value that contributes to the achievement of the qualification. Each module has its own syllabus, handbook and assessment. To pass each year, you need to achieve 120 credits. Modules vary in size from 20 credits to 40 credits.

Programme Structure

From your first day at HCA, you will work as a creative, developing your skills and your own voice through a series of projects. You will develop your creative practice, practical skills, alongside your critical awareness and theoretical knowledge. You will study a range of modules that build your knowledge and confidence, totalling 120 credits each year.

Over the course of your studies, you will work towards emerging as a creative, agile, resilient and adaptable graduate with excellent problem-solving and transferable skills who can confidently apply research skills to keep themselves up-to-date with emerging developments and technologies in the field.

BA (Hons) Popular Music Level 4 (Year 1) Full time

Module Title	Credits	Module Description
Live Performance Workshop	40	<p>This module will enable students to establish and strengthen a range of essential skills of a live musician. The main focus will be on practical sessions as part of ensemble and students will work on repertoire towards performance opportunities. They will have the opportunity to work in a range of genres using a combination of original and cover material.</p> <p>They will develop their <i>personal practice</i> with specialist guidance, dedicated practice routine and performance clinics in order to advance technique, confidence and knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sound basis in instrumental skill and technique • Personal practice, discipline and routines for sustained improvement • Live performance or presentation of work <p>They will also develop their <i>professional practice</i> through workshops, rehearsal and performance clinics in order to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rehearse professionally and efficiently with others • Discuss ideas in a creative environment • To effectively set up equipment in order to support live performance in a variety of contexts • Critique and Feedback on performance
Popular Music, Culture & Identity 1	20	<p>The module provides an introduction to the work of key bands and practitioners in popular music, both past and present, across various styles and genres, to provide a broad overview of the development of popular music and of the contexts that enable the work to be understood and assessed. You will be expected to attend teaching sessions and to engage in independent research.</p>
In the Studio	40	<p>The module will provide students access to recording facilities and experiences that reflect a range of recording studio contexts.</p> <p>By working in a recording studio on projects that will enable creative and technical development as a producer, engineer and musician, the aim is for students to have a balanced foundation of all aspects of the studio; from which they can later focus toward their own specialist practice.</p> <p>The importance and potential of home studio recording to musicians is key to them creating, sharing and publishing content and individual workstations provide the essential home studio context for producers, writers and session players.</p>
Song writing Studies	20	<p>The importance of songs and songwriters to popular music cannot be overstated and the module allows students to develop their skills and</p>

		<p>understanding of this initially through study of significant work and working methods to inform their own practice.</p> <p>Students will then work towards a final body of work which could include evidence of individual or collaborative writing, artistry, writing to a brief, critical analysis, theory, pastiche, remix and arrangement.</p> <p>Topics covered may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study of significant practitioners • Study of a variety of methods and traditions • Individual research and presentation of ideas • Writing to a brief
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BA (Hons) Popular Music Level 5 (Year 2) Full time

Module Title	Credits	Module Description
The Creative Musician	40	<p>This module follows on from the previous level (especially LPW) and provides the opportunity for students to develop their own sense of style or focus on an aspect of their work. A more critical approach to their own personal practice is encouraged via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A focused personal approach to instrumental work • The opportunity to incorporate other disciplines into their musicianship (writing, composing, video, sound installation)
Popular Music, Culture & Identity 2	20	<p>This module is a continuation of the method and process contained in the previous <i>Popular Music Culture and Identity</i> module and requires students' greater freedom to select an area or aspect from popular music culture to research.</p> <p>They will engage in a more in-depth, focused case study that examines a specific area of music.</p> <p>Discussion of ideas is central to developing a more critical stance and you will be supported and guided by tutor advice through class sessions and tutorials.</p>
Music Events & Promotion	40	<p>This module aims to introduce and develop understanding of keys aspects of marketing and promotion for individual artists and for the management of music events.</p> <p>The module includes basic principles and methods for promotion and also gives the opportunity to operate as part of an events company, working closely as a team with venues and artists to help deliver a tailored marketing package for clients.</p> <p>You will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods of promotion using different medias (traditional and digital) • Professional standards in communication and presentation • Safe working practice • Organisational skills and process <p>This will be realised in a series of live briefs such as local gigs, product launches, college events and festivals</p> <p>Sessions cover a range of music marketing and promotion tools and offer the skills which can apply to their own future practice or transferable to other industries, enterprise and employment.</p>
Sound & Vision	20	<p>Students will have an opportunity to work in a broader framework combining their musical focus with an aspect(s) from visual media.</p> <p>They can work <i>in response</i> to visual stimulus using song-writing and composition, critical writing, or production skills creatively. This could include writing to a commercial brief, or a creative response to visual</p>

		<p>source material. It could also include a greater focus on analysis of the impact and methods of visual aspects in music.</p> <p>They can work <i>towards</i> a music project with a prominent visual element such as a sound installation, music video, theatre/dance performance, or working alongside, to produce promotional material used in marketing and branding.</p> <p>During this module, students may need to develop technical skills to support their work. They may also need to develop their abilities in subject specific practice and process whilst working alongside other disciplines found in the visual workplace.</p>
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BA (Hons) Popular Music Level 6 (Year 3) Full time

Module Title	Credits	Module Description
Specialist Practice	40	<p>This module provides students with the framework to explore their own specialist area of music with a high level of awareness and commitment to their own creative aspirations and future career.</p> <p>They can focus on their existing specialism or integrate other disciplines in order to create an individual route, culminating in a final demonstration(s) of their work. It is anticipated (though not expected), that the module will be practical in nature and areas of study could include composition, artist development, performance, technical development, production, education and business.</p> <p>By devising and employing a bespoke Professional Development Plan they will be able to track and control the process using a strategy of ongoing reflection.</p> <p>Students will be provided with advice and guidance through tutorial and may access specialist mentoring to help define, shape and realise their ambitions.</p>
Practice in Context	20	<p>The content of this module differs for each student, as each undertakes a research project into a self-selected topic designed to help them make sense of their own specialist area of studio practice in terms of culture, context and critical theory.</p> <p>Working closely with an individual supervisor, students are guided to select a research topic that is both manageable and appropriate to their studio interests and are helped both to locate and organise relevant sources and to construct a critical position informed by theory.</p> <p>The project is an exercise in largely self-directed academic research, but students receive tailored individual support and are given a series of target dates for reaching set stages of the project (e.g., delivery of title and synopsis, first draft, and so on) to ensure they stay on track as they progress towards the final deadline.</p>
In the City	20	<p>This module gives level 6 students an opportunity to work on a project(s) directly in an industry setting. This could be in the form of work placement, enterprise, or engaging with the industry through considerable contact or collaboration with established industry specialists.</p> <p>Students will be able to test their existing skillset and attitudes, using reflection and feedback to help make informed choices as to their future direction and potential.</p> <p>At the end of the module students will be able to gain an in-depth insight into their potential standing in their chosen area. Students can use this knowledge to take greater ownership of their creative identity, authenticity and inform their professional portfolio.</p>

Professional Portfolio	40	<p>This module enables students to establish their place in a professional creative environment and have confidence in presenting work and discussing it with others.</p> <p>In doing so you will generate and compile the necessary materials and strategies to launch the next stage of their professional journey.</p> <p>It is expected that students will generate the necessary collateral to curate a diverse portfolio of work which could include recorded work, web site, social media, CV, merchandise, testimonials and references, agency profiles, ongoing freelance work, and final project performances.</p> <p>The professional portfolio can be holistic and serve as a live document for individuals as skilled professionals. Alternatively, the professional portfolio can reflect a highly focused part of their practice, with a greater emphasis on product and artistic identity.</p>
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Course Composition & Delivery:

The course is modular and is managed on a two-semester schedule totalling 31 weeks of tuition. The academic year begins in September and ends in June.

Level 4: the course defines Level 4 as induction and core generic skills acquisition

Level 5: applies the new skills gained at Level 4 in a range of appropriate contexts

Level 6: students specialise through individual learning programmes

The total length of the academic year is 33 weeks (including enrolment, induction and a research week), with breaks for Christmas, Easter and Summer.

Students will have access to college resources (studios, library, workshops, social areas) on weekdays during normal working hours and later on some days and at certain times of the year. Students may also have access to some resources during vacations, and current information on this is available upon request.

Students are awarded 'credits' for the successful completion of a module, totalling 120 in each academic year. A single credit is defined as ten hours of study, so a 20-credit module requires a total of 200 hours of study. A student must successfully achieve 120 credits. 1200 hours of study in total.

The percentage of contact time devoted to differing learning environments depends on the individual module content, but the course seeks to use a wide variety of teaching methods wherever possible. Examples of teaching methods include process inductions and workshops, demonstrations, lectures, presentations, master-classes, online learning activities, tutorials and seminar discussion groups.

Assessment is almost exclusively made by submission of coursework in the form of a portfolio, although written essays and reviews, plus presentations, are also used. There are no timed, written examinations.

Blended Learning

Hereford College of Arts is completely committed to face-to-face learning and the vast majority of our education takes place on campus in our workshops, studios, library, lecture rooms.

We do use online learning when it's the best mode of delivery, for example an international artist delivering a live stream from their studio or where a student has an agreed exceptional circumstance that warrants online learning in that instance.

Typical Delivery Plan

The tables below indicate the typical delivery schedules for the programme for each pattern of attendance. The team reserves the right to re-organise the delivery of modules per semester, in accord with resource availability and student requests (which will be accommodated where feasible).

Full-time study

Level 4

Semester 1	Live Performance Workshop 40 Credits	Popular Music, Culture & Identity 1 20 credits	In The Studio 40 credits	Songwriting Studies 20 credits
Semester 2				

Level 5

Semester 1	The Creative Musician 40 Credits	Popular Music, Culture & Identity 2 20 credits	Music Events & Promotion 40 credits	Sound & Vision 20 credits
Semester 2				

Level 6/Top Up degree

Semester 1	Specialist practice 40 Credits	Practice in Context (Popular Music) 20 credits	In The City 20 credits
Semester 2		Professional Portfolio 40 credits	

Tuition Fees

The tuition fees for 2025/26 are outlined in the table below. For more information about applying for a tuition fee loan, please visit www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance.

Please note that this annual fee will remain unchanged for the 3-year duration of your course. However, following enrolment, students transferring to an alternative mode of study, repeating or retaking modules or suspending their studies, will need to confirm fees with the Finance Department.

Course	Level	Year	Fees
BA (Hons) Popular Music full-time (Home students)	4	Year 1	£9275
BA (Hons) Popular Music full-time (Home students)	5 (Direct entrants)	Year 2	£9000
BA (Hons) Popular Music Top Up full-time (Home students)	6	Year 1	£9000

EU students who have pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme will be eligible for a tuition fee loan only. Please note that the Higher Education Student Finance portal normally opens in mid-February. The College would encourage students to submit their student finance application as soon as possible so funding is in place for when they start their course

All students need to ensure that the funding is in place for their tuition fees and living costs prior to enrolment.

Payment, Service Delivery & Performance Arrangements:

- If the tuition fee is paid to the College via the Student Loans Company, it will be paid in 3 instalments – 25% in term 1, 25% in term 2 and 50% in term 3.
- If a student is paying their own tuition fees, students can pay in instalments by direct debit only. Students will be required to pay 1/3 of their annual tuition fees each term.
- Any of the additional costs (see additional costs section) are collected via an online secure payment system.

Additional Costs

Additional costs are directly related to your study but exclude accommodation and student's personal living costs. Further information about halls of residence and other accommodation available in Hereford is available on our website.

The courses at HCA have been designed to minimise the impact of additional costs; some trips and materials will be fully funded by the college or heavily subsidised. However, typically, a student will choose to spend around an additional £130-£830 in the first year, £130-£480 in the second year and £180-£480 in their final year, depending on the scale of work and materials chosen or other related costs.

Students spend different amounts depending on the areas in which they specialise and individual choices. We appreciate that not all students will be able to invest the same money in their work, and staff assessing it will not judge work by the cost of materials or other resources.

The college shop stocks specialist materials at competitive prices and digital equipment can be loaned from the media stores at no extra cost to students.

Students on all courses will also have the chance to take part in optional trips that require additional payment. Non – attendance on the trips will not incur assessment penalties, though trips are designed to help students develop their practice. There is an optional annual cross-course overseas residential trip. In the 2023-24 academic year, the trip was a four-day visit to Paris at a cost to students of £425. This fee included a shared dorm room and all travel costs from Hereford to Paris including Eurostar tickets.

Places on the optional trips are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

On completion of Level 6 (the final level of study), some students also choose to take part in an optional residential trip to London for one of the various graduate showcases (for instance New Designers). Decisions about these showcases are made by the college with students on an annual basis and costed according to differing showcase fees, numbers of students taking part and ambition of display. Students are required to contribute to financing this activity and are encouraged to take part in fundraising events and grant applications.

The College is committed to ensuring that students considering studying at HCA are fully aware of the possible additional costs.

Following enrolment, students that face genuine financial hardship may apply to the College Hardship Fund.

Average Cost Breakdown

This table is an estimate of the minimum costs a typical student may face during the course.

The nature of creative study means it is difficult to be precise with material costs. We encourage students to source sustainable materials and recycle where they can however students are free to invest in additional resources pertinent to their emerging practice.

Unless specified the cost listed refers to the whole three-years of study.

Item	Minimum Cost	Notes
Musical Instruments	See above	The college provide use of Drum kits and Keyboard instruments. It is expected that students have their own instrument and cables if they are portable – However, college have electric guitars, acoustic guitars, basses and percussion for use when playing a second instrument or when required.
Vocal Microphone	£60 - 150	College provides microphones but expectation is that first study singers should have their own dynamic mic (such as SM58 or equivalent) for rehearsal and live performance
Strings, Sticks, Skins	£50	Students to maintain their own instruments where necessary
Microsoft Office 365	£0	The College provides a free subscription to Microsoft 365 with all Office applications and 1TB of cloud storage upon enrolment.
Laptop/Tablet	£400+	
Print Charges for course Work	£75	The College charges 4p per page for A4 B&W printing, 20p for colour. A3 is 6p per page for standard B&W printing and 40p for colour.
Transport costs on city visits	£50	Reduced ticket pricing is available through 16-25 National Rail card. Most local/countywide trips are funded through the course budget. This example considers self-directed research trips by train to Birmingham and/or London etc
Gigs & Tickets	£100	College provide some as part of the course but you would be encouraged to attend gigs as part of your personal and professional development. Some will have transport and ticket costs.
Promoting own art practice (Webhosting, Domain name registration, business cards etc)	£50	
Academic texts, books, magazines & subscriptions		As well as subscribing to a wide range of magazines and journals HCA's Library is home to an extensive back catalogue of printed material. So, while students are encouraged to subscribe to course-related material it is likely that it will be freely available in our library.
Amps & Speakers	£0	College provide PA and amps. However, practice amps would be useful in their accommodation
External music lessons	£25+ per hour	You will be provided with instrumental tuition on your first-choice instrument. However, you may wish to engage others privately

Location of Study

Our degree courses are all based at our College Road Campus but several specialist workshops and performing spaces are located nearby on our Folly Lane Campus and degree level students often work between both sites. Much of a student's study will also involve working in different locations in the city and surrounding area.

Locations & Contact Details

- **College Road Campus:** Hereford College of Arts, College Road, Hereford. HR1 1EB.
- **Folly Lane Campus:** Hereford College of Arts, Folly Lane, Hereford. HR1 1LT.
- **Telephone:** 01432 273359

If you have any enquiries, please contact our registry department: registry@hca.ac.uk

Complaint Handling Process

Our full complaints policy can be found here; Our full complaints policy can be found [here](#).

Information relating to all academic regulations, including complaints procedures can be found via the UWTSD public website [here](#).