

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION**

for the award of

**MA Sound Arts**

**Managed by the Faculty of Technology, Design and Environment**

**delivered by School of Arts**

<b>Date approved:</b>	Date approval confirmed, on recommendation of University validation panel or other authorised body.
<b>Applies to students commencing study in:</b>	September 2018

**RECORD OF UPDATES**

<b>Date amended*</b>	<b>Nature of amendment**</b>	<b>Reason for amendment**</b>
July 2016	Transferred to new template	CMA Compliance

**SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION**

<b>Awarding body:</b>	Oxford Brookes University
<b>Teaching institution and location:</b>	Oxford Brookes University, Headington Campus
<b>Language of study:</b>	English
<b>Final award:</b>	MA
<b>Programme title:</b>	Sound Arts
<b>Interim exit awards and award titles available:</b>	Postgraduate Diploma
<b>Brookes course code:</b>	VA52 - MA-SAR/PGD-SAR
<b>UCAS code:</b>	P060043
<b>JACS code:</b>	W382
<b>HECoS code:</b>	100862
<b>Mode of delivery:</b>	Full-time (face to face/on-campus) Part-time (face to face/on-campus)
<b>Mode/s and duration of study:</b>	Full time: MA: 12 months; PGDip: 9 months Part time: MA: 24 months; PGDip 18 months
<b>QAA subject benchmark statement/s which apply to the programme:</b>	NA
<b>Professional accreditation attached to the programme:</b>	NA
<b>University Regulations:</b>	The programme conforms to the University Regulations for the year of entry as published/archived at: <a href="http://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations/">http://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations/</a>

## **SECTION 2: WHY STUDY THIS PROGRAMME?**

The Masters in Sound Arts is a distinctive postgraduate degree linked to a thriving and exploratory research culture at Oxford Brookes. It has a particular connection with SARU (Sonic Art Research Unit). The MA Sound Arts enables students to work in a highly experimental but structured way to uncover and develop their own 'agendas', and to do this with expert support and encouragement in their chosen field. At the core of the programme is the development and promotion of *active listening*. Students are encouraged and equipped to develop their understanding of the soundscapes they create through their; the soundscapes they encounter in the work of existing practitioners; and the soundscapes that they inhabit in their everyday lives. The approach to listening is investigative and experimental.

One distinctive feature of the degree is a focus on *creative strategies*: exploring the way we come to ideas and generate work, and the development of our own 'agenda'. Another is the way we do feedback – replacing the old style 'crit' with a participatory *feedback forum* approach in which staff and students share their experience with the maker to uncover the value of an exploration, as opposed to feedback becoming a kind of 'trial'. Another very strong feature of this programme is the relationship between 'reflection' and *practice-based research* and how reflective methods employed in the process of 'doing' allow one to uncover ones 'research questions'. This provides an excellent basis for ongoing practice-based research. The self-reflective written reports at the end of each module ensure that writing relates to and supports practice. The shared methodologies enable students to push the boundaries of their practice and build on pre-existing skills and experience, and to explore and develop collaborative work.

The MA Sound Arts programme is enhanced by a group of internationally active Sound Artists, Composers and Field Recordists who curate and participate in the activities of the SARU (Sonic Art Research Unit) and the annual festival *audiograft*. The weekly *Listening Group* and monthly *Sound I'm Particular* seminar series complement the core provision and introduce students to the vibrant research culture around Sound Arts.

Students develop their own and collaborative practice-based work in a stimulating environment that encourages dialogue and the growth of a reflective community of engaged and active listeners. This is a good basis for the intensive, fascinating and challenging work that thrives in this supportive, innovative and creative context.

### Programme aims

- i. To provide a practice-based interdisciplinary Sound Arts curriculum that encourages students to push the boundaries of their practice and thinking, to develop skills in active listening, to develop an understanding of creative agency, to be ambitious in the creation of new work and to develop a voice as an engaged, creative practitioner.
- ii. To equip students with the appropriate practice-based research methodologies, academic resources and skills, by providing a productive learning and teaching environment with the availability of specialist expertise and supervision.
- iii. To provide a supportive and reflective environment for students to address their work towards specific constituencies and publics, to work as part of an interdisciplinary team, or to collaborate with their peers in experimental and interdisciplinary sound arts projects.
- iv. To enable students to experiment with innovative and appropriate strategies for generating and developing interdisciplinary Sound Arts projects and to acquire analytical and critical abilities in the interrogation of their work.
- v. To enable students to engage with issues and debates relevant to Sound Arts practices.
- vi. To prepare students to undertake further practice-based research at MPhil or PhD level.

- vii. Foster a critical awareness of social location including how this impacts the soundscape and the listener, the role of the audience and performance/site context in relation to the researching and realising of a major creative project.

Please refer to the following link to view the staff profiles within the School of Arts:

<http://arts.brookes.ac.uk/staff/index.html>

### **SECTION 3: PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES**

On successful completion of the programme, graduates will demonstrate the following Brookes Attributes:

#### **3.1 ACADEMIC LITERACY**

- 3.1 Identify, evaluate and apply a systematic and comprehensive understanding of technical concerns in Sound Arts including the role of active listening.
- 3.2 Employ a critical awareness, and systematic ability to synthesise, current concerns at the forefront of the field appropriate to their practice.
- 3.3 Identify, evaluate and apply advanced knowledge and experience of Sound Arts practices using appropriate resources.
- 3.4 Demonstrate appropriate specialist skills relevant to their own Sound Arts practice.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH LITERACY**

- 3.1 Demonstrate originality in application of their advanced knowledge and experience of Sound Art practices, together with a practical understanding of how appropriate research methodologies are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline.
- 3.2 Employ a comprehensive understanding of appropriate research methodologies for practice-based research and critically evaluate their research methodologies and process.
- 3.3 Employ creative and other research strategies to conceptualise, articulate and structure a major Sound Art project that articulates the interdisciplinary, experimental and original nature of the practice

#### **3.3 CRITICAL SELF-AWARENESS AND PERSONAL LITERACY**

- 3.1 Articulate the concerns in their evolving creative practice, and demonstrate appropriate analytical and critical skills in reflecting upon and evaluating their own practice-based research in the context of current research in the field.
- 3.2 Realise and present a major Sound Art project, demonstrating an advanced conceptual understanding and originality, at a professional level in a public context.

#### **3.4 DIGITAL AND INFORMATION LITERACY**

- 3.1 Demonstrate appropriate skills and an advanced conceptual understanding of new technologies relevant to their own creative practice.

#### **3.5 ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP**

- 3.1 Employ a critical awareness of global concerns at the forefront of the field appropriate to their Sound Art practice.

## SECTION 4: CURRICULUM CONTENT & STRUCTURE

### 4.1 PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND REQUIREMENTS:

Code	Module Title	Credits	Level	Status	Coursework: Exam ratio
P65901/A RTD7006	Creative Strategies 1	30	7	Compulsory MA and PGDip	100% coursework
P65905/A RTD7008	Creative Strategies 2	30	7	Compulsory MA and PGDip	100% coursework
P66012/M USC7006	Approaches to experimental composition and Sound Arts	30	7	Compulsory MA and PGDip	100% coursework
P65906/A RTD7009	Sound Art and Interdisciplinary Arts Practice	30	7	Compulsory MA and PGDip	100% coursework
P65908/A RTD7010	Major project	60	7	Compulsory MA	100% coursework

### 4.2 PROGRESSION AND AWARD REQUIREMENTS

*MA in Sound Arts (180 Credits)*

*PGDip in Sound Arts (120 credits)*

### 4.3 PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS

None.

## SECTION 5: TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

There are a good variety of teaching, learning and assessment methods used across the programme that enable our students to achieve the aims and outcomes of the programme and utilise the Post- graduate Attributes as follows.

Academic Literacy (AL)

Research Literacy (RL)

Critical Self-awareness and Personal Literacy (CSAPL)

Digital Information Literacy (DIL)

Active Citizenship (AC)

#### The teaching methods include:

- Lectures and seminars held by staff on specialised topics (AL, AC)
- Team teaching in group seminars involving generic issues in the research methodologies for practice based research (AL, RL, CSAPL)
- Feedback to students from staff during group feedback sessions, where staff make comments and provide constructive criticism and analysis of individual students work (CSAPL)
- Staff led group discussions arising out of the student's practical work presentations (CSAPL)
- Individual tutorials that address students individual research concerns (RL, CSAPL)
- Specialised introductions to creative strategies for generating and making practice based work (RL)
- Specialised introductions to the School of Art's Art and Music technical facilities (CSAPL, DIL)
- Specialised induction sessions with subject librarians (DIL)

#### The learning methods include:

- Regular forums where staff and students formulate and articulate responses to work (CSAPL).
- Creative methodologies and practice presentations (RL, CSAPL).
- Presentations of practical research (AL, CSAPL).
- The researching and writing of reports, assignments and evaluations (AL, RL).
- Private research and study (RL).
- Peer review through the presentation of and giving feedback on each other's work (CSAPL).

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- Independent study From the outset of the programme, independent work is supported.

Independent study accounts for by far the biggest amount of time that students will spend on research, development and production activities within their various modules. The amount of time spent engaged with independent study will vary from module to module, as contact time is higher for some modules than others.

**The assessment methods include:**

- Practical presentations of resolved 'artworks' and regular summative work-in-progress feedbacks.
- Regular in-module formative feedback and formative feedback tutorials to ensure students are aware of their progress.
- Written self evaluations for each creative project that reflect on all that has been achieved in the module, and how relevant insights will be carried forward. This self reflective process is integral to the programme and in developing an understanding of practice-based research.
- A written reflection at the culmination of the programme that reflects on all that has been achieved on the programme and in particular the Major Project and how these insights will be carried forward. This summative self reflective process is integral to the programme and in developing the necessary skills for ongoing focused practice-based research and/or ongoing independent.
- Written case-studies, assignments and reports.
- A final presentation of practical works as part of the MA exhibition/event/festival

**Assessment methodology**

All modules are assessed by coursework and are assessed summatively at their conclusion. Formative feedback is also given during the module to advise students on their progress. However, it is integral to the programme's structure of progression that all summative assessment on individual modules provides valuable formative feedback for future modules. For example, students on Creative Strategies I will, in addition to the verbal feedback given at the time of presentation, receive written summative feedback that will be of direct relevance to their work in Creative Strategies II and so on. No modules are assessed by examination.

All assessed work is double marked and moderated internally according to the School of Arts Moderation Policy and the assessment procedures are moderated by the external examiners subject to the Oxford Brookes University Codes of practice for External Examiners.

**Relationship to Oxford Brookes' Assessment compact**

The integration of different methods of study and research as well as an integrated approach to assessment and feedback is central to our programme and has a strong relationship to Brookes' Assessment Compact.

There is a good balance of individual and group work, which is echoed by individual and group reflection:

- A weekly meeting creates a 'forum' for exchange and group teaching; for the introduction and exploration of creative methodologies; for group feedback on work-in-progress and for emerging questions and reflections.
- This is complemented by the group feedback forum at the end of every module, which provides each student with detailed individual feedback from both peers and tutors.
- This feedback in turn forms the basis of their further individual reflections. This written self evaluation is marked in conjunction with the practice previously responded to, enabling the

assessment of the overall work of the module to incorporate their own understandings and reflections on the practice.

## **SECTION 6: ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAMME**

### **6.1 ENTRY REQUIREMENTS**

Prior qualifications necessary for entry to the programme, including English language requirements.

A good honours degree, an upper second or first, in any subject or:

An internationally recognised qualification equivalent to a good British honours degree.

Applicants without a first degree, but with extensive experience may also be considered and individual courses may have additional entry requirements to these. See the university's general entry requirements: <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/studying-at-brookes/how-to-apply/entry-requirements/postgraduate-courses/>

Standard Oxford Brookes University English requirements

IELTS 6.0-7.0 (normally with 6.0 in reading and writing and a minimum of 5.5 in listening and speaking). See the university's general English language requirements:

<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/international/applying-to-arriving/how-to-apply/english-language-requirements/>

## **SECTION 7: PREPARATION FOR EMPLOYMENT**

The programme offers access to a wide range of professions within the music and arts industries as well as opportunities to specialise further on postgraduate level. Previous graduates from the programme have developed careers as:

- Practicing Sound Artists, Composers, Cross Arts form practitioners
- Performers
- Teachers in the Arts, Music and related areas
- Music Events Coordinators
- Festival Coordinators
- Arts and Culture Workers - working for Local Authorities; Arts and Culture organisations
- Writers on Sound Art and Contemporary Composition

Individual career paths have included:

- A student who went on to complete a PhD studying the Domestic Soundscape, who was a collaborator on several SARU projects; took up a post as an early career fellow; and received commissions from Arts Council England and the Wellcome Trust.
- A student who went on to participate in the Arts Council England funded touring project audible forces supported by OCM and who is now an internationally recognised artist.
- A graduate who went on to create a series of ground-breaking kinetic sculptures using lego that have received international media attention.
- Several students have continued to develop and direct the Oxford Improvisors – a nationally recognised improvisors orchestra (<http://oxfordimprovisers.com>).
- Many graduates have gone on to work in the Arts as both practitioners, enablers, administrators and curators.

Many graduates choose to continue studying Sound Arts and relate practices at PhD level. The course team have extensive experience of supervising PhD projects to completion and are able to support students in the development of potential research proposals through one to one guidance sessions. Previous PhD topics developed by graduates of the programmes have included:

- The study of everyday life in Sound focussing particularly on the Domestic Soundscape.
- An exploration of the way that sound travels through different materials including soil, air and tarmac; through the development of a series of Sound Art works.
- Experimental and conceptual music composition concentrating on the development of audible processes.
- The history, culture and phenomenology of field recording.
- Kinetic sound installations.
- New notational strategies including reading landscapes as scores.

The programme enjoys a wide range of guest speakers, who work nationally and internationally in the field of interdisciplinary sound and sonic arts, music practice and cross art-form work. Other guest speakers are from local and national commissioning bodies, festivals, community projects, sound art and music publications.

The School of Arts has an annual 'Careers in Music and Media' Day where alumni and employers meet students.

The Sonic Art Research Unit (SARU) works regularly with local organisations including Oxford Contemporary Music (OCM) and Oxford Visual Arts Development Agency (OVADA) and with national organisations, including Sound and Music.

The annual festival *audiograft* provides a live arena for students work including opportunities to create performance and installation work and to develop projects that promote audience interaction and participation including sound walks, documentation workshops and participatory art works.