

## **Undergraduate teaching & learning at Leeds Arts University**

**As a specialist arts University we aim to nurture a community where students and staff engage in creative partnerships that foster learning and development in an inclusive and supportive way.**

Undergraduate degree courses use a range of teaching and learning strategies, as appropriate to the subject of study. Using a variety of approaches contributes to an inclusive educational experience, accessible to students from different backgrounds.

Courses are made up of modules. Modules are elements of study that are taught and assessed separately, but combine to contribute to the progressive and holistic development of learning. Each module carries a clearly identified credit value, the accumulation of which will allow progress onto the next level of the course and ultimately achieve a degree.

Around 100 hours of learning are expected for every 10 credits of the course. These learning hours reflect all of the work that is done towards a degree, including for example timetabled sessions, independent study and research, collaborative projects and individual creative practice. Each of the 3 levels (years) of the course is made up of 120 credits and so requires 1200 hours of study a year. The academic year consists of 30 weeks and 26 of these are teaching weeks. There is therefore an expectation of on average about 40 hours of study and creative practice a week.

Individual courses have their own learning cultures based on their bespoke course design. Each use a variety of the teaching and learning methods listed below. These methods feature differently on every course. They can be experienced through, for example, more intensely programmed weeks which include a significant amount of timetabled sessions. Alternatively, there may be weeks that place more emphasis on providing time and space to make progress with individual and collaborative creative projects. The exact mix will be designed according to the course, level, aims of the module, content of the sessions and progress through the academic year.

Scheduled teaching and learning sessions are carried out in person on the University campus in the studios and workshops. Studios are spaces which provide the home base for teaching and learning activities for each course. Workshops are central resources and facilities. Some supporting activities such as certain lectures, briefings or inductions to facilities and equipment, may be available online or as recordings. This is to enable off-site access to learning and in cases where there are other benefits to students such as previewing/reviewing or catching up on missed sessions. Students are encouraged to use the campus and its facilities for personal and collaborative study, but also have the flexibility to work from home for private study.

Whilst the form of practical work produced varies dependent on the course of study (i.e. designs, artefacts, performances, moving image, spoken and written word), submissions for assessment are all made digitally.

### **COURSE CONTENT**

**Module briefings** are timetabled at the start of each module. These briefings introduce and explain the aims, objectives for the module and provide an initial opportunity to clarify any questions regarding the module content and requirements. Important information will be shared and discussed including:

- Module assessment briefs, and any sub-briefs or tasks where appropriate
- Module submission deadlines, methods & formats including criteria for assessment
- Module timetables, staffing & taught sessions

**Submission briefings** may be timetabled leading up to a module submission deadline and are delivered to the year group or subject group as a whole. The aim of these briefings is to provide a final review, discussion and clarification of the procedures and formats for the submission of work for assessment. This is also an opportunity to update students on the time and method for submitting work and answer any further questions relating to the submission and assessment process.

**Briefings** may also be given at any time and could be delivered to the year group or subject group as a whole to aid students' understanding of the course and the opportunities available to them. They allow the course team to communicate important information relating to:

- The progress of current work/module
- Preparations and updates for timetabled sessions
- Important announcements and events
- Live/competition briefs/exhibitions/performances

These briefings also provide an opportunity to ask questions relating to the current work and/or any other general issues that have arisen in relation to the course.

**Lectures** may involve students from individual year groups or across courses. Lectures are designed to introduce core themes, theories or contextual information relating to the arts in general or more specifically to a subject discipline. Lectures may also be available on video. Lectures will usually be staff-led but can also include opportunity for student questions and discussion.

**Seminars** provide an opportunity for smaller groups of students to discuss specific ideas, theories and/or practices relating to module content. They may be staff or student-led sessions and allow for more in-depth discussion to take place between lecturers and students in order to develop a deeper understanding of module content. Students are usually required to prepare for seminars by reviewing the content of lectures, reading articles or responding to tasks in order to contribute to the discussion and raise questions.

### **For Music students**

**Instrumental/Vocal tuition** provides the opportunity to receive 1 to 1 tuition in a student's main instrument from a specialist. Students develop their technique through exploring repertoires.

**Ensemble performance** provides the opportunity to receive coaching as part of a group. This normally takes place in a performance or studio setting.

## **SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

**Studio workshops and activities** are designed to introduce core practical and conceptual skills such as ideas generation and visual or performative skills. The sessions usually support the development of initial responses to modules and/or briefs. They are timetabled and structured in a variety of ways depending on the course and may feature

one to one guidance or in small or large groups depending on the content of the session and may be supported by more than one tutor.

**Central resource inductions** provide students with essential information about what, how, when and where they can access particular University resources. These depend on the course but will usually include the computer resources. These inductions consist of a general overview of a resource and the health and safety requirements for accessing the facilities. Students are required to attend these in order to be able to use the resource or borrow its equipment for use in the development of their work.

**Central resource workshops**, these sessions enrich course content and support the development of practical skills in technical areas. Where offered, they provide instruction in specific methods of practical development and production. They are usually delivered by specialist workshop staff who may offer guidance and support on the practical development of work as well as provide advice on the selection and use of specific media, processes or approaches. These sessions are supported by instructional videos and support materials.

**Developing cognitive skills** through writing is an integral part of undergraduate study. Essays, project proposals, presentations and reports feature at each level of the course in order to help develop, extend and test analytical and critical skills. These elements are supported through lectures and seminars.

## **FEEDBACK AND SUPPORT**

**Group critiques (crits)** provide an opportunity to receive formative (developmental) feedback on work to date. They are tutor led sessions that usually involve smaller numbers of students presenting their work for discussion and critical feedback on its strengths and areas for improvement. Group crits also help develop skills in presenting, discussing and evaluating students own progress as well as feeding back on the progress of other members of the group.

**Tutorials** are timetabled at key points within the year and offer students the opportunity to discuss their general progress across all modules. Students can raise any questions or issues that relate to their studies and discuss their grades, summative (final) feedback and intended areas of focus as well as any pastoral or support issues that may have arisen. Students are normally assigned to a specific tutor for these tutorials.

## **SUPPORTED STUDY**

**Studio sessions / studio support.** When not put aside for other teaching activities and where circumstances allow, studio sessions provide opportunities for the development of students work. These are typically not formally facilitated sessions, but rather act as a supportive space to make progress on work alongside peers. Support may be available from tutors and will often involve informal discussion and feedback on progress in order to identify any areas for improvement. Studio practice is based around the principle of students maintaining an ongoing dialogue with their peers during the development of their work. This is a key element in the overall learning culture of the course.

**Central resource independent access or 'drop-in'** - This is time in workshops and resources that is not scheduled for classes and is available for students to access facilities independently. As students progress through their course they are able to identify workshops that most support the development of their own individual practice and

demonstrate an increasingly independent approach to managing their time in these areas. Drop-in is indicated on-line by the relevant workshops and requires sign-up to use facilities at specific times dependent on availability.

**Off-site or supported development** - There will be times when students will need to work off-site at specific locations (for example working on location or in external venues) in order to research, develop and/or produce work/perform. The amount of time required is dependent on the course and the module being studied. Whenever University equipment is being used off-site, this is classed as supported development and is considered an essential part of study. As students progress through their degree they are expected to demonstrate an increasingly independent approach to managing their time off-site in order to develop their work. This includes full awareness of the requirements of health and safety at all times.

### **Independent Study**

In addition to the different modes of supported study described above, independent study is any non-timetabled, unsupervised work towards projects including visits conducted as part of research. Independent study can take place at any time.

### **Additional learning support**

Students who are receiving the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) are able to receive support from a nominated provider. This support may help with interpreting assignment briefs, time-management, essay planning and further developing reading and research skills. Guidance for students as to how to go about a diagnosis for DSA is provided by the Academic Support Team who also help students with a variety of learning needs.

Music students are able to access some sessions in the Alexander technique.

### **WORK EXPERIENCE**

At some point during their course, usually at level 5 (second year), most students will source an opportunity to undergo work experience outside of the University. This may be in the form of a short full-time period or spread on a part time basis over a longer period. In some cases this arises from relationships the University has built up with external employers and in others from the students own enquiries. For attendance at work experience events that are linked to a course or are undertaken as part of the academic calendar, a set of health and safety protocols have to be followed. Work experience of this kind can take many forms and may contribute to the assessment of some modules. Periods of full-time work experience should be undertaken outside of timetabled weeks and are considered as additional to the hours of study outlined above.