**FAQs – MA Music Psychology in Education, Performance and Wellbeing (Distance Learning)**

**Do I have to attend the annual online summer school?**

We strongly recommend attending the online summer school, since this is the part of the course in which each year’s work is introduced and tuition is provided in the necessary academic skills. The timetable includes practical workshops, introductions to research methods, guided research experiences and the opportunity to build a supportive learning community for the ensuing months of remote study.

The annual summer school is entirely online and the scheduled teaching, group workshops and tutorials replicate an onsite learning experience as closely as possible. The online teaching will take place during the scheduled week at the end of August each year, and you would need to participate then so that you can be involved in the group workshops and discussions. If participation with the rest of the cohort is impossible for you, you will be able to access most teaching materials online after the event. You will also be able to arrange to have a one-to-one tutorial at another time.

**I am a teacher living overseas, and the online summer school dates are not in my school holidays. Are the dates flexible?**

The online summer schools are usually held during a set week in the second half of August, so that they happen during the in UK school holiday period. Unfortunately for some overseas students, the dates are not compatible with their academic calendars, but we cannot rearrange the dates or provide additional summer schools for a small number of students.

**Do I need to have an undergraduate degree in music before I can get a place on the course?**

No, this is not a requirement if you can provide other evidence of substantial experience in music. Skill in performance is welcome but not required. For this course it is sufficient to have some competence in engaging with music intellectually, alongside an understanding of musical processes and socio-cultural functions. For the MA Music Psychology in Education, Performance and Wellbeing, the level of musical knowledge that is needed is approximately equivalent to the ABRSM Grade 5 Music Theory exam.

You will also need a firm foundation of academic skills in finding and processing information, in writing clearly and in supporting an argument with evidence. For this, a Bachelor’s degree in a humanities or social science subject, at or above the British 2:i standard or an international equivalent, is usually a sufficient qualification. Applications are evaluated on a case by case basis, and there is some flexibility in treating relevant life or work experience as ‘equivalent’ to formal credentials. Such experience might need to be demonstrated through additional application materials.

**I am a retired music teacher and am very interested in the course, but I have not studied for over 40 years. Is it too late for me to do an MA?**

Not at all. If you haven't studied for many years you may need to re-acclimatise to academic life, but we are accustomed to working with such students and have had many mature students who have successfully completed distance learning MA courses. The University has a variety of online resources to help students to develop efficient study habits, writing skills and proficiency in research methods.

**How good does my English have to be?**

On the MA in Psychology in Education, Performance and Wellbeing, assessment is based on extended essays and an original research project which is reported in a 9,500-word dissertation, so achieving an appropriate standard of academic writing for this will be necessary. The University and the UK immigration authorities require overseas applicants to hold a suitable English language qualification. For our distance learning courses this is an overall IELTS score of 6.5 with a minimum of 6.0 in each component, or equivalent. Exceptions can sometimes be made where students have already studied in English elsewhere. For registered students at the University of Sheffield, our English Language Teaching Centre provides an English language support service with online help that is accessible for distance learners.

Further information can be found here regarding English language entry requirements:

[www.sheffield.ac.uk/postgraduate/info/englang](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/postgraduate/info/englang)

**What is the closing date for applications?**

Applications are accepted until the course is fully subscribed, but you are advised to apply at least by June of the year of entry, and earlier if possible.

**How much time will I need to study per week?**

You should expect to spend several evenings, or two or three half days on your course work each week. This may increase as assignment deadlines approach or at pivotal points in your research project and dissertation writing. Keeping in regular contact with your cohort and tutors is important, and students will need to establish a routine that protects time for study whilst balancing other commitments.

**Do I need a computer to do the course?**

Yes. All assignments must be word processed and submitted online, so you will need a computer (or sufficient access to one) to enable you to complete the essays and dissertation. All of the modular material is accessed through an online portal and you will need internet access for this, as well as for using other online resources.

**How much will I spend on books?**

There are few ‘set’ books for the course, but we do recommend certain key texts. It is possible to rely on libraries if you have a good local source, otherwise many students purchase books through internet bookshops at reduced rates. Most of the recent research that you will need to consult is available in online journals and ebooks, which will either be linked through the course materials, available via Google Scholar, or accessible through the University’s extensive library catalogue.

**Is it likely that I would need to borrow books from my local university library?**

Yes, establishing a link with your local library is definitely a good idea so that you can access the interlibrary loan service, where available. It is also possible to register as a guest member with some of the other university libraries. Whilst membership of our library is free for registered students at the University of Sheffield, other universities vary in the resources and services they provide for guest members of their libraries. Some guest memberships confer reading rights but borrowing rights are often limited, and universities often charge guest members for using their libraries.

The University of Sheffield University is a member of the SCONUL Access scheme, which is a co-operative venture between most of the higher education libraries of the UK and Ireland. It is a reciprocal arrangement, enabling staff, research students, full time postgraduates and part-time, distance learning and placement students to borrow material from other participating university libraries. Registered students who wish to use the SCONUL scheme should apply for individual membership.

**Can the University Library send me items I need through the post?**

The library is constantly increasing its collection of eBooks and other digital resources, so it is always checking those before buying or ordering books for your course. The University library offers a postal request service for distance learning students so books can be posted to your home address, if in the UK. There is no administration charge, but you will need to pay for the cost of return postage.

**What additional support is provided for distance learning students?**

The University provides access to a range of online support services for distance learning students:

* The Academic Skills Centre provides online resources and services to help
* support you through your studies
* The English Language Teaching Centre helps with developing writing skills
* Library Services provide online tutorials in finding literature and using databases
* The Disability & Dyslexia Support Service offers a wide range of support and advice
* to students with disabilities
* The Student Wellbeing Service helps support students’ emotional health and
* wellbeing
* The Student Support Service for a wide range of advice and support during your course

**When I have completed my MA studies, can I continue to a PhD also by distance learning?**

Yes. Each year, several of our students go on to PhD studies, either straight away or after a few years’ break. We are experienced in supervising PhDs at a distance, and the University has ‘joint location’ and ‘remote location’ schemes. More information about these is available here: Research Away from the University. It might also be useful for you to view our student and alumni profiles.

**Do I become a qualified Music Therapist after completing the Music Psychology in Education, Performance and Wellbeing?**

Many of our distance learners have an interest in Music Therapy and some have used the degree to move in that direction. Our MA will not qualify you as a music therapist, but it can offer a useful foundation in readiness for a music therapy specialisation. Further courses and experience would be necessary to qualify as a practicing music therapist.

The difference between our degree and an MA in Music Therapy is that music therapy is clinical and practical, with music making with patients as a central part of it. In contrast, our MA is academic and research oriented, providing a grounding in relevant psychological frameworks and research methods. The modular content focuses on the uses of music, responses to music, and music perception primarily in healthy participants. However, we do explore research on the therapeutic uses of music and examine the impact of music on ‘wellbeing’ in various contexts.

Our MA provides a solid basis from which you can begin to specialise in areas that relate to music therapy or ‘music medicine’. For example, you could use the dissertation to do research that includes an area of music therapy or more general therapeutic uses of music. There are also opportunities to discuss music therapy research and practices in some of the modular assignments.

**What kind of work or opportunities could the MA lead to ?**

Developing areas of expertise in music psychology, research methods and academic writing can lead to opportunities for more specialised work or to extend into other related professional fields. Many graduates from this programme have changed the focus of their existing work, for example moving from primary to secondary teaching, or from teaching in schools to training teachers. Others have used their research skills with arts organisations and advocacy groups including Youth Music, Yorkshire Youth Music and Making Music. Several students each year go on to study at PhD level, leading into an academic career of research, teaching and/or publishing.