

Leeds Conservatoire submission for TEF 2023

1. Provider context

Our ethos

Leeds Conservatoire was established in 1965 as Leeds Music Centre, providing a Light Music course with a significant focus on Jazz. We became Leeds College of Music in 1993 and launched the first Jazz degree in Europe, and in 2004, we became the first UK conservatoire to offer Popular Music and Music Production. Our portfolio has continued to broaden ever since, and in 2020 we became Leeds Conservatoire – reflecting our expertise and specialist approach to music and performing arts training.

We are the largest UK conservatoire in terms of student numbers, with 1400 undergraduates, 50 postgraduates and 100 young people in our Junior Conservatoire (2021/22 figures), and we offer the broadest range of genres of any conservatoire in Europe. Nonetheless, we are small enough to form a close-knit and welcoming community.

Our strategic aims are centred around the themes of *Equity*, *Academic Community* and *Sustainability*. These combine to create an inclusive learning and working environment with support and diversity at its heart, an inventive and artistically challenging curriculum, a huge range of flexible opportunities for students to collaborate and tailor their experience, a community that promotes academic enquiry and artistic experimentation, and a significant contribution to the sustainability of the arts in our region and beyond.

We are committed to widening access to conservatoire study and recruiting our students through audition, interview and portfolio ensures that students can be selected on the basis of their potential, not just their prior attainment. We were the first conservatoire in the UK to remove all audition fees to ensure that talented musicians and performers are not prevented from attending an audition due to their financial position, and we refund travel expenses for applicants from low-income households to reduce financial barriers within the application process. 23.1% of our full time undergraduates are from IMD quintile 1-2 (four year aggregate) compared with an average of 13.5% across other members of Conservatoires UK.

Teaching and learning is characterised by inspirational training with experts in a wide variety of specialisms, supported by bespoke workshops and masterclasses by world-leading visiting practitioners. Our facilities are industry-standard, our curriculum is designed around industry practice, and students have access to a wealth of professional partners and expert knowledge both within and outside our curriculum.

All our programmes have intensive training at their heart, enabling students to attain an elite level of specialism while celebrating individuality that equips students with the confidence and independence to forge their own path. Synergies with extra-curricular activity broaden, deepen and contextualise the curriculum content and add a hugely diverse range of influences.

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We do not prepare our graduates for a specific career path, rather we nurture their independence and support them to find their own path into the creative industries, armed with a range of contemporary skills and experiences, and the energy and confidence to create the industries of the future.

Our curriculum

All of our Higher Education programmes are validated by the University of Hull. The conservatoire is working towards an application for Taught Degree Awarding Powers in 2023.

74% of our students (2021/22 figures) study the BA (Hons) Music, which has pathways in Classical, Jazz, Folk, Popular, Songwriting, Production, Electronic Music Production and Music Business. The BA (Hons) Music (Production) pathway (17% of our students) is accredited by Joint Audio Media Education Support (JAMES), an alliance of music, entertainment and media industry organisations collaborating in the support of education and promotion of excellence.

BA (Hons) Music pathways in Classical, Jazz, Popular, Songwriting and Film Music can be studied in a four-year programme with Foundation Year, for students without the academic or musical entry requirements. The course aims to build their confidence as a conservatoire musician through specialist one-to-one tuition and skills in ensemble work, music theory and musicianship. Around 60 students (4% of our students) join the four-year route each year. We also admit around 25 students per year who do not meet our standard entry requirements but have been assessed as being able to succeed on the programme; these students are as successful (in terms of continuation and completion) as students admitted via the standard route.

We are the only UK conservatoire to offer degrees combining two disciplines from Classical, Jazz, Folk, Popular and Production, reflecting the increasing focus on multidisciplinary practice in the music industry. This is a small part of our offer (5% of students) but has been commended by external examiners and by our partners at Codarts in the Netherlands for its uniqueness and importance in providing student choice.

17% of our students study on Performing Arts courses: BA (Hons) Musical Theatre, BA (Hons) Acting and BA (Hons) Actor Musician. These courses are professionally recognised, which enables students graduates to gain full Equity and Spotlight membership on graduation.

6% of our students are studying at Foundation Degree level: in FdA Music Production and FdA Electronic Music Production. These can be topped-up on the third year of the BA (Hons) Music (Production) pathway, and around 50% of Foundation Degree students progress to the BA.

4% of our students study at postgraduate level. The MA Music is unique in its flexibility, allowing students to focus on different creative specialisms from one trimester to the next. This, as the external examiner notes, *“removes [...] bias in hierarchies between music genres, it also allows students to be more flexible and potentially more experimental in their musical expression”*. In September 2022 we introduced a suite of performing arts MAs, including an MA Dramaturgy delivered in partnership with Leeds Playhouse, bringing our current postgraduate cohort size (2022/23) to 5% of our students.

Our place in the education sector and the creative industries

We are very proud of our location in the Cultural Quarter of Leeds which puts us in the centre of a creative hub, surrounded by producing theatres, dance companies and music venues, as well as the BBC and Channel 4. Leeds has a thriving cultural industry that attracts over 90% of our students from outside the local area, and means that a high proportion stay in Leeds after graduation, contributing significantly to the cultural life of the region. We also have significant international reach; – 10% of our students come from outside the UK and this proportion is growing each year.

We are strengthened by a wide range of partnerships and networks: Leeds Conservatoire is part of the Luminate Education Group, a founding member of Conservatoires UK, a member of Yorkshire Universities, GuildHE, Go Higher West Yorkshire, Leeds Learning Alliance, UK Music and the Association Européenne des Conservatoires (AEC). These influence our development in a number of ways, for example we contribute to the monitoring of local cultural sector employment as part of the Yorkshire Universities Economic Development Group, and use this insight to shape our curriculum to address skills gaps in the region. As a key contributor to the AEC Pop and Jazz Platform and the AEC World, Folk and Traditional Music Working Group, we collaborate on a range of international projects and contribute to the pan-European dialogue on the development of conservatoire training.

We seek to build and maintain partnerships within the creative industries that enhance the student experience and connect us with new audiences and networks.

Our Music provision includes partnerships with Opera North, a national opera company and leading UK arts organisation; Jazz North, a jazz development agency covering the North of England, and the English Folk Dance and Song Society, the national development agency for promoting folk arts. These partnerships offer performance and training opportunities for students, access to events, and masterclasses and collaborative projects that develop both our students' employability skills and the work of the companies.

Our Performing Arts provision benefits from partnerships with Leeds Playhouse, one of the largest producing theatres in the North; Red Ladder Theatre, a radical theatre company and one of Britain's leading national touring companies producing new theatre; Slung Low, an award-winning theatre company specialising in non-theatre production spaces; and The Letter Room, a national touring theatre company creating boundary-breaking music theatre with actor-musicians. These partnerships provide opportunities for postgraduate course development, student placements, delivery of masterclasses and projects, and opportunities for students to get involved in professional devising and performance work.

Development of the TEF submission

We have a small, active Students' Union and have supported them to develop the TEF student submission through joint attendance at briefing events, discussion and explanation of the TEF metrics and discussion of the themes that the conservatoire would be highlighting in the

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institutional submission. Students' Union staff have supported the SU President to generate the content for the student submission by producing an interview and a series of focus groups.

2. Student experience

Curriculum design and development

Our Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy sets out our approach to curriculum design and development, which is characterised by industry relevance and flexibility.

The curriculum is developed and reviewed in consultation with industry practitioners, employers and relevant sector networks. This leads to industry-relevant programmes with strong links to industry, and partners contribute to delivery on the programme. This has been recognised by the University of Hull as a feature of good practice in annual monitoring (IREP 2018).

A recent example is the development of the BA (Hons) Musical Theatre programme throughout 2018/19. Part of this process was to consult with industry specialists in developing the modules, in particular the identification of attributes that graduates need for the industry now and the skills that graduates need to develop the industry of the future. Industry consultation sessions included casting directors, agents, directors and choreographers, many of whom are now directly involved in delivery across the programme. One of the main developments from the process was the inclusion of research and development weeks in the academic calendar, where professional artists and companies can apply to work with Musical Theatre students on a week-long, non-assessed residency to develop new Musical Theatre work. This gives students opportunities to work directly with industry professionals on real-world briefs.

A further example is the annual Industry Forum hosted by the Postgraduate Studies department, which includes round-table discussion with industry partners on themes raised in annual monitoring and developments in the music industry, which then feed back into curriculum review and development.

The curriculum emphasises student-led learning and teaching, rejecting a 'one size fits all' model, helping students to forge their own path and focusing on the individual needs of each students in our community.

Students enjoy a very high level of flexibility. Music students can create their own bespoke programme while developing high-level core skills specific to their pathway. Following student feedback, in 2018/19 we removed all but one pre-requisite module between Levels 5 and 6, further increasing the flexibility of the curriculum design. External examiner reports demonstrate that this combination of core skills and flexibility provides a solid foundation for students from which to explore and experiment, and that this is reflected in the authenticity and creativity of student work.

Teaching and learning

Highly interactive and practice-based teaching and learning strategies are embedded throughout our provision. Teaching methods include one-to-one instrumental/composition tuition, ensemble

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and band coaching, rehearsals, lectures, seminars, placements, performances, recording studio sessions, Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) sessions, dance, movement and voice classes, self-reflection and evaluation, group and individual tutorials. These are supported by learning technologies and resources that encourage student-centred active learning within the classroom and structured independent study.

Students having regular contact with industry professionals is integral to our teaching and learning, commended in our most recent report by the QAA: *"[the] use of connections with the music industry and expert professional practice to enhance the student learning experience"*.

In Music, the focus of the student experience is Specialist Study, whether instrumental/vocal performance, composition, production or business. Specialist Study is taught one-to-one and in small groups, creating a supportive but intensive environment that provides exceptional individual challenge and stretch. There is no set repertoire, enabling students to devise their learning and assessment programmes in partnership with tutors.

Specialist Study makes up a substantial proportion of the programme: 60-80 credits per year, and culminates in two major final projects including public performances, recordings and live events. These projects are negotiated with students, and are often centred around 'real world' professional briefs. As such, they provide an exceptional level of student choice and support for individual career goals, and they are continually shifting to reflect the way that music is made, shared and experienced in the industry.

The rigour of Specialist Study requires students to demonstrate high levels of professionalism and discipline, particularly in contributing to group activities. Following student feedback about variable levels of engagement with ensemble and group project work, contribution targets were added to group assessments, to ensure that all students had equal involvement in the outcomes. These reflect the commitment expected in professional ensembles and are commended by external examiners.

Music students contextualise their Specialist Study through Contextual Studies modules, engaging in repertoire analysis, examination of the sociocultural influences on music and choosing from a wide range of optional modules in which they work cross-pathway, including Collaborative Composition, Intercultural Music, Entrepreneurship, Politics and Art and Musical Direction.

Students are immersed in the mechanisms of the creative industries through Professional Studies modules, delivered in conjunction with industry partners, which focus on legal, commercial, project management and digital literacy skills before broadening out into practical optional modules where students work on live, industry-relevant projects including Business Start-up, Artistic Management, Live Music Management, Self-Promotion and Community Music.

Creative Project gives Music students the opportunity to work collaboratively with students and tutors from other pathways on two week-long, intensive projects, chosen from an extensive list of options. Recent projects have included Crash Course in Big Band Arranging, Practical Crowdfunding, Baroque Song, Perceptions of Race in Music Performance, Debating Music and the History of Horror Film Music.

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In Performing Arts, high contact time and intensive ensemble work mirrors the professional environments of Acting and Musical Theatre. External examiners report exceptional levels of student engagement and commitment, and the industry-relevance of the training.

Musical Theatre is taught in small groups, with tuition in singing, acting, movement, mime, physical theatre and voice. Dance training involves classes in ballet, tap and jazz, inclusive of the varying jazz styles (street, commercial, lyrical and contemporary) found in the modern industry. Students work towards full scale Musical Theatre public performances, including an industry showcase where casting agents and industry practitioners are invited to watch them perform.

Acting students develop skills in acting, movement, voice and performance-based research through practical, physical and intensive training including ensemble skills classes, one-to-one coaching, skills in context, seminars and rehearsals culminating in a final year season of performance that serves as industry introduction. Actor Musician students combine these skills with one-to-one instrumental teaching and training in music and sung voice, exploring the musicality in acting and the drama in music, focusing on where they interconnect.

Students spend their first weeks of training developing an ensemble practice that transforms a cohort into a collaborative theatre company, with the ambition for students to establish a creative network in training, originate live performance and take both with them into the profession. Our acting teaching includes working with a dedicated intimacy coordinator, to provide tools for consent-based practice. This considers the actors' whole experience with a wellbeing focus, integrates ways to provide safer and braver spaces in exploring contemporary performance and prepares our students to be agents for change in the industry.

The importance of practical, interactive learning and teaching strategies to students was brought into sharp focus during the Covid-19 pandemic. While we were able to shift quickly and effectively to online delivery and Covid-safe working, this required significant adjustments to learning and teaching that reduced students' ability to engage in practice-based, collaborative work. The effect of this can be seen in the student experience metrics: student satisfaction with teaching had been consistently high (a range of 81% to 86% between 2018 and 2020), but dropped in 2021 (to 75%), in particular for Classical and Popular pathways, which both have substantial levels of practical performance work.

The challenge of student engagement during the pandemic, the disruption to teaching and learning and its impact on the NSS was noted by the University of Hull in the 2020/21 and 2021/22 annual monitoring exercises, nonetheless the conservatoire was commended for maintaining strong relationships with employers and industry during online delivery.

Assessment and feedback

The assessment process promotes real-world and industry-relevant tasks, academic integrity, reflective learning and timely and effective feedback that enables development. External examiners consistently commend the industry-relevance of assignment briefs, the use of a variety of assessment methods that give students a diverse 'toolkit' of skills and the connection between theory and practice in assessment.

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Practical and professional skills are assessed through performance, composition, installation, production, group work, technical exercises and presentations. External examiners, the University of Hull and the JAMES accreditation panel have identified good practice in assessment from the use of realistic professional scenarios and the production of real-world/real-time professional outputs.

Performance assessment panels at Levels 6 and 7 include distinguished external professionals (external assessors) who bring industry experience to the assessment process and provide an opportunity for students to present their work to a wider audience. External assessors report to the external examiner for each programme, and comment consistently on the fairness of live assessments, the robust use of marking criteria and the detailed panel discussion that takes place to produce a fair overall mark and balanced feedback report.

Critical, analytical and reflective skills are assessed through written submissions, reflective journals and portfolios. Use of learning technologies supports innovative assessment methods including quizzes, vlogs and the development of online portfolios, which enable students to use multimedia to contextualise and record their experiences, enabling richer description and reflection and creating an online resource that can form the basis of a professional portfolio. 29% of assessments include an e-portfolio submission, which are noted by external examiners as fostering strong links between theory and practice, enabling students to synthesize their skills and develop critical analysis of their own work.

Student satisfaction with assessment and feedback is high, and has increased significantly in the National Student Survey over several years, from 49% in 2014 to around 80% from 2018 onwards.

Our external examiners report consistently that feedback is extensive, helpful, accessible and nuanced – in particular, our innovative feedback methods. We have developed the use of audio, video and screencast feedback to support the communication of tone, inflection, emphasis and the contextual use of musical examples. PollEverywhere, live polling software, is used in performance and composition to generate peer feedback: students are guided by the tutor to give free-text feedback during in-class performances, which is discussed at the end of the performance. Each innovation has been piloted by teaching staff in partnership with Technology Enhanced Learning staff before being embedded across our programmes and pathways.

Programme-specific assessment strategies are under continual review and innovation: an example is the reimagining of assessment on the BA (Hons) Music (Popular) pathway by Curriculum Manager Dr Adam Martin, inspired by the experience of the Covid-19 pandemic and a review of pedagogical research into reflective practice and integrating knowledge. Assessment guidelines now recommend the inclusion of authenticity, opportunities for students to demonstrate learning, student choices, interests and ambitions, and tailoring of assessment to address strengths and weaknesses. The revised assessment guidelines are being piloted on the pathway and will be evaluated during annual monitoring.

The perception of fairness in assessment and feedback is a challenge for the performing arts sector due to the inherent subjectivity of judgements, and a key part of our assessment strategy is developing a shared understanding of grading criteria. Initiatives have included staff development sessions that use live ensemble performances for marking and feedback training, mock performance assessments that enable students to receive immediate formative feedback and

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discuss this with the assessment panel, and the development of an extended feedback template that links feedback comments more explicitly to each grading criterion.

Communication with students about assessment and feedback is also an important part of our strategy. One-to-one and small group tuition mean that students receive continual formative feedback, stretch and challenge, and mixed-year small groups provide opportunities for peer feedback, but often we have found that students did not identify these as 'feedback' or recognise that they were a key part of our approach to enabling their artistic and academic development. Teaching staff have focused on communicating this explicitly as feedback, improving students' understanding of the formative assessment process.

We also focus on the communication of our assessment procedures, to raise awareness of second marking and moderation, the inclusion of expert external assessors on all final year recital panels, external examining and audio/video recording of assessment. These all contribute to students' confidence in the robustness and fairness of assessment and feedback. During the Covid-19 pandemic we developed targeted, student-friendly communications about our no-detriment assessment policies, including an interactive marks calculator, in response to student feedback.

Our VLE, *Space*, provides outstanding support for the management of complex assessment processes: online assignment submission, online marking and feedback for all assessments, auto-release of marks and feedback to agreed schedules to manage and meet student expectations, and an assignment dashboard that shows students upcoming deadlines and assignment statuses. Over 99% of marks and feedback are returned within our target of 20 working days (which we have increased from approximately 80% in 2014/15 through improvements in resourcing, management and track of assessment).

The learning environment

Our students have access to an extraordinary range of extracurricular workshops, masterclasses, ensembles, projects and performance opportunities, which both complement the curriculum and provide additional breadth, challenge and stretch to students' experiences.

Our flagship ensembles are open to students from all courses, by audition, and each year we stage around fifteen core ensemble concerts and projects with our Big Band, Chamber Choir, Chamber Orchestra, Contemporary Jazz Orchestra, New Music Collective, Wind Ensemble and Contemporary Pop Choir. These focus on the performance of challenging and contemporary repertoires outside the traditional conservatoire canon, in collaboration with high-profile visiting conductors and musical directors. We also run an annual professional opera production along with numerous Musical Theatre and Acting shows, from sharings to full-scale public productions.

Each year, we stage over 100 workshops, masterclasses and events where students practice, extend and showcase their skills in environments that mirror professional settings, and get feedback from leading industry practitioners. Highlights from recent years include Harry Escott, BAFTA-winning film composer; Imelda Staunton, Olivier Award winning actress; Andrew Lipka, Grammy and Tony nominated theatre composer/producer (and industry partner on the BA (Hons) Musical Theatre programme); Sam Sweeney, BBC Radio 2 Folk Musician of the Year; John Beck,

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BRIT Award winning and Grammy nominated songwriter; Clive Deamer, Double Mercury Prize winning drummer (Portishead, Radiohead) and Nadine Benjamin MBE, opera performer.

Workshops and masterclasses continued online during the Covid-19 pandemic and, as noted in the University of Hull annual monitoring exercise, this had a positive effect on attracting a wider and more diverse pool of professional practitioners, so a combination of in-person and online events has continued post-pandemic.

Ongoing relationships with Liverpool Sound City, Manchester Jazz Festival, BBC Music, Festival Republic and Leeds 2023 provide external performance and events management opportunities for students, and our students regularly perform at major festivals including Live at Leeds, Leeds Festival, Tramlines, Eurosonic and SXSW.

The breadth of genres and expertise across the conservatoire offers unrivalled opportunities for collaboration and genre-spanning work. The diversity of our curriculum means that all aspects of the industry are under one roof: students have instant access to composers, producers, string quartets, brass sections, dancers, managers and promoters to shape their creative direction and build their professional group working skills, reflecting the way that they will work as graduates in the music industry. Our students also work closely with students from other art forms. Music Production students have teamed up to work with students from the Northern Film School, performance students regularly collaborate with dancers from the Northern School of Contemporary Dance and our songwriters and composers work with students from Leeds Arts University.

Regular collaborative performance opportunities include *Crosswire Sessions*, which showcases artists from our Pop and Production pathways in live studio recordings, *B Side*, which brings together staff, students and workshop guests for evenings of both prepared and impromptu performance inspired by vinyl from our extensive jazz archive, *Fusebox*, a public performance bringing together staff and students to perform entirely improvised music, and *Undercurrent*, a public performance of staff and student ensemble projects. Musical Theatre students and staff have collaborated on the development of a new musical *Chisholm 72*, and we have a sharing network with Northern School of Contemporary Dance, leading to a number of collaborative projects in Performing Arts.

We have a strong commitment to inclusivity and creating an environment for collaboration that is “friendly, relaxed [and] not intimidating”, recognising that competitiveness can be an issue for students where the standard of music making is very high (QAA student submission).

Qualitative student feedback (in NSS and internal survey free-text comments) demonstrates consistently that integration with students who are training in a wide range of disciplines is a unique opportunity that mirrors, or even exceeds, the ‘real world’ in terms of access to networking and collaboration. Many students, staff and alumni establish their own bands, projects and ensembles through the conservatoire and we provide opportunities to do this through networking events and our online social space, *Life*.

Staff development, reward and recognition

Students are taught by music industry professionals, giving them a direct link to current professional practice. Part-time staff who are active professionals carry out 90% of undergraduate teaching, and more than half of these have a contract of less than 0.2FTE. A small number of full-time staff undertake curriculum management, and are also active practitioners in their fields. The JAMES accreditation report for the Production pathway in 2018 *“applaud[ed] that this course reflects the professional world in the learning environment, and that students are taught by practising professionals”*.

Our staff profiles include winners of the British Jazz Awards, BBC Radio 2 Jazz and Folk Awards and Jazz FM awards, MOBO and Mercury Prize nominees and recipients of funding from Arts Council England, PRS and the British Council. Performers and composers have worked with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Prague Philharmonic Orchestra, the London Symphony Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra and Vienna State Opera, and have appeared at the London, Manchester, Cork, Berlin, Montreux and New Orleans Jazz Festivals. Production, publishing and sound recording credits include EMI, Sony, Universal, Warner, Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Paul McCartney and Yehudi Menuhin. Collaborative projects with national and international institutions include the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, Royal Northern College of Music, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Goldsmiths, University of York, Malmo Academy of Arts, Conservatorium van Amsterdam, University of Adger in Norway, University of Oslo, HKU Utrecht, Royal Danish Academy of Music and St Louis College of Music in Rome.

Staff are supported in their development through a variety of schemes including development funding to realise artistic and academic projects and undertake higher qualifications, community and networking events for sharing of good practice, and access to the Higher Education Academy (HEA) Fellowship scheme.

Recent artistic and academic projects have included Jazz staff undertaking study with New York based jazz artists, leading to new developments and influences in the Jazz curriculum; multidisciplinary research in improvisation, recording, music production and composition, bringing diverse thinking and experimentation into the Performance with Electronics module and focusing on the historical contributions of people of colour, women and LGBTQ+ artists to the development of electronic music, and a project exploring how digital technologies can facilitate live audience responses for critical peer feedback in performance, submitted for publication as a book chapter.

We recognise and reward excellent teaching through academic promotion, enabling teaching staff to progress from Lecturer to Senior and Principal Lecturer positions. Between 2018/19 and 2021/22, an average of 14 staff per year were awarded academic promotion (around 7% of teaching staff). Staff undertake guided reflection on their teaching, professional and research profile and qualifications. There is no prescribed balance between the criteria; staff gain promotion through formal routes like higher qualifications and/or HEA Fellowship as well as a wide range of other criteria that recognise the diversity of professional practice among our staff. Evidence of professional profile might include regular tours and public performances, media reviews, commissions, publishing contracts, theatre performances, record releases, collaborative projects and festival appearances.

Where staff are recommended for academic promotion on the basis of teaching excellence, they are required to evidence positive feedback from students and peer observation, evidence of teaching development linked to research and professional practice, and evidence of effective assessment and feedback.

Staff who have shown particularly high levels of distinction in teaching and/or professional practice can apply for professorial title. Recent professorial appointments reflect specialisms in sound design, composition and performance; jazz composition and performance; contemporary music; folk performance and composition; music production; and contemporary classical composition.

The output of professorial appointments inform the curriculum, for example, composer Professor Robert Bentall's work feeds directly into our Electroacoustic and Electronic Music optional modules and Professor Damien Harron's contemporary classical composition practice feeds into the direction of the New Music Collective. Associate Professorships are year-long developmental roles aimed at early career staff, in which the conservatoire supports them to develop the profile of their area of specialism. For example, Professor Cat McEvoy's practice and research in sound art has a direct impact on the Final Project module in relation to interdisciplinary and collaborative projects. Other recent areas of specialism in Associate Professorships include European collaboration, vocal health and rehabilitation, and contemporary music.

Staff expertise also directly connects students with music industry professionals, for example Professor Jez Willis is responsible, as part of the Professional Studies team, for making links with high-profile industry partners. Examples have included Bob Harris (Old Grey Whistle Test, BBC Radio), Ann Harrison (Music Business lawyer and author of *Music: The Business*), Sarah Wall (PPL Outreach Head and formerly Rita Ora's manager) and Midge Ure (Live Aid, Ultravox, and assolo artist). The award of Professorships and Associate Professorships is part of the conservatoires strategic approach to ensure that both curriculum and student experience are innovative and industry relevant.

Our most recent annual staff survey, in 2022, was distributed to all 420 staff, with a response rate of 47%. 93% of staff said that they enjoyed working for Leeds Conservatoire, and 99% said that they understood how their role impacted on the student experience.

Staff recognise others' contribution to the conservatoire through our annual staff awards, which include awards for Teaching Excellence and Enhancement of the Student Experience. Students recognise teaching excellence through annual student-led teaching awards, awarded at Graduation. Awards include Most Innovative and Most Inspiring, where teaching has had a transformative effect on the student experience, as well as Best Feedback and Best Support Staff.

Winners of staff and student awards are invited to share their practice at staff development events. We hold two-day staff development events each September and participate in the Luminate Education Group Learning and Teaching Conference each July, which also offers a range of other opportunities for training, development, practice sharing and wellbeing activities.

Academic support

Our commitment to creating a truly individualised experience that supports and stretches students' own development goals is reflected in our academic support. Student comments in the NSS demonstrate that they value the attention paid to them as individuals by teaching and support staff, and our JAMES accreditation panel noted *"the very apparent student focus on the courses and that lecturers are accessible, supportive and socially involved with the student body"*.

We work in partnership with our Students' Union to provide a comprehensive range of academic, pastoral and social induction and transition activities. Induction includes tailored activities for specific groups of students: international students are invited to bespoke welcome activities, and students declaring disabilities and support needs are offered a pre-induction visit at a quieter time so that they have an identified support network before they arrive at registration. Student Support staff and Students' Union representatives are present during students' move in to student accommodation, and use this interaction to identify students who may not be settling in well and would benefit from access to additional support.

Our Learning Enhancement team provides students with a wide variety of skills-based support that complements the curriculum and promotes student progression and success. The Skills for Learning and Digital Learning teams analyse assessment tasks to identify skills that students will need to succeed, for example academic writing, video editing and presentation skills. These are then developed through timetabled workshops, drop-in sessions and online resources, alongside core skills in planning, organisation and digital literacy.

Digital literacy support for students is provided through our Digimentor scheme, an innovative peer support mechanism that also provides paid work experience for students. Digimentors host pop-up support events, provide social media support signposting students to help and resources, work on student-led social media initiatives (for example Instagram takeovers) and produce short video guides to engage students with dry but important topics like assignment hand-in guidelines. The Digimentor scheme has been hugely successful in improving support for students and awareness of digital literacy, and was disseminated at the Jisc Change Agent Network Conference in 2018.

The Digital Learning Team also provides bespoke staff development, identifying needs through student and staff feedback, regular reviews of learning resources and innovation in the sector. The team developed a pedagogically appropriate flipped learning model and delivered an online course to all teaching staff during 2020 to help them identify how to apply these principles in their own delivery, maximising contact time for active learning.

Our Audio-Visual and Music Production Resources team are active practitioners in the creative industries and are integral to supporting learning, teaching and student development in our recording studios, mixing rooms and Mac suites (accessed by around 30% of students). Students receive technical inductions to these resources, as well as the etiquette that is expected in a professional recording studio environment, and students can access both planned and ad-hoc advice and guidance sessions throughout their programme.

Our Student Support and Wellbeing team offers information, advice and support on fees and funding, accommodation, disabilities, and health and wellbeing, including dedicated wellbeing

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support for international students and underrepresented groups. Services are responsive to demand, for example in 2018 we restructured our counselling provision to focus on mental health and wellbeing support, in response to an increase in demand for these services, and in 2022 we expanded our occupational therapy service, including providing placements for student occupational therapists. Leeds Conservatoire is one of the first institutions in the UK to offer occupational therapy, a significant innovation that aims to bridge the gap between disability support and health and wellbeing in promoting student success.

Student Support services are also tailored to the specific needs of musicians and performers: students are offered free hearing protection and hearing checks, physiotherapy clinics, Alexander Technique classes and support and resources on vocal health, performance anxiety and mindfulness.

While students view academic support as effective – the TEF metrics show that student satisfaction is at benchmark – there remains some dissatisfaction among smaller groups of students including mature students, Black and Mixed Ethnicity students and students with disabilities.

A coaching programme has been developed to support students who belong to one or more of our Access and Participation target groups: mature students, students with disabilities, students from minoritized ethnic backgrounds, students from low-income households and non A-Level entry students. Students are matched with a coach, drawn from staff and alumni, who has a similar background to them and who supports them through six coaching sessions. Coaches assess students' strengths and needs, set targets and create an action plan to help students progress in academic studies, artistry and/or wellbeing. The programme was piloted in 2021/22 on our Foundation Degrees, Production and Jazz pathways as these had the highest proportion of students in the target groups. Five students and coaches took part in the pilot, and the programme has been rolled out to all students in 2022/23.

To improve the accessibility of our academic and pastoral support, we launched the Help@ Leeds Conservatoire service during the Covid-19 pandemic, providing a single point of contact for all student enquiries and reducing the need for students to understand and navigate our internal structures to find support. Post-pandemic, Help has expanded to include an in-person enquiries service, and the team undertakes regular reviews of frequently-asked questions to improve the quality and relevance of our information for students online, on information screens and in printed guidance materials.

Learning resources

Our teaching and learning environment is characterised by highly specialised facilities and continuous investment in their development. Providing first class facilities is key to attracting and retaining the most talented students and staff; from 2016/17 to 2019/20 we surveyed new students on entry to find out what influenced them to choose the conservatoire. Each year, the survey was distributed all new students, a population range of 418-581, with a response rate range of 55-85%. On average 24% of new students told us that facilities were their main influence, the second highest influence behind the course itself.

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Music students have access to state of the art, industry-standard facilities on our main campus including recording and songwriting studios, well-equipped practice rooms, six Apple Mac labs, portable recording rigs, a business hub, a postgraduate hub, and individual and group study spaces. Performing Arts training takes place in two purpose-built centres close to the main campus, as well as in rehearsal and dance facilities throughout the city. Playhouse Square, which opened in 2019, contains two large dance studios, three drama rehearsal rooms, a rehearsal studio with staging, performance lighting and sound, a break-out learning zone, a green room and a 180-seat theatre. Mabgate, which opened in 2022, adds a further four large rehearsal studios.

When not in use for teaching, all of our rooms are bookable by students for practice and are open until midnight during term time. We maintain an extensive stock of musical instruments and technical equipment for loan to students.

The Venue, our 350-seat auditorium, features two Steinway Model D grand pianos and state of the art sound and projection systems, and hosts masterclasses, concerts and assessed performances as well as being used regularly by external promoters for conferencing, filming, recordings and concerts. Our 120-seat Recital Room hosts gigs, recitals, workshops, talks, lunchtime concerts and film showcases, as well as regular Live Lounge events, where live sessions are streamed from our recording studios. External examiners and assessors comment that our students benefit from assessment facilities that reflect professional standards.

We were the first English conservatoire to achieve All Steinway School status, meaning that 90% of our pianos come from the Steinway family. As well as being used for daily teaching, practice, concerts and masterclasses they provide rehearsal facilities for competitors in the Leeds International Piano Competition. As one of only three Roland AIRA Academies in Europe, our students have exclusive access to cutting-edge production and performance technologies. Our purpose-designed Music Library, open to the public as well as staff and students, hosts a large and varied collection of books, CDs, LPs, printed music and journals as well as housing an extensive jazz archive with internationally significant collections from Ted Heath and Max Abrams.

The importance of cutting-edge facilities to our students is evident in their engagement with resource development: feedback through the Student-Staff Forum and Students' Union has led to extension of our opening hours in 2018, a review of the Library Collection Development Policy in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion (particularly historical depictions of racial identities) in 2021 and a project in 2022 to enhance our building décor, practice rooms and songwriting spaces to create more stimulating and creative environments.

The importance of physical facilities to students is also evident in the sharp reduction in student satisfaction with learning resources during the Covid-19 pandemic, measured through the National Student Survey (from around 88% between 2018 and 2020, to 65% in 2021). In response, and following national lockdown, we extended our opening hours throughout vacation periods to enable students to catch up on access to facilities. We also extended access to our facilities for recent alumni. These measures were designed in collaboration with the Students' Union and was commended by the University of Hull in the annual monitoring exercises for 2020/21 and 2021/22.

Our digital resources are sector-leading: through our extensive virtual learning environment, *Space*, students have access to a wide range of course resources, audio and video tutorials, audio-visual libraries, e-books, e-journals and music streaming services. Lecture notes are

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provided in advance of teaching sessions, and lecture capture recordings are provided after each session for students to re-watch at their own pace. Student performance activities are also captured and hosted within the virtual learning environment to enable self-review, reflection and inclusion in online portfolio assessments.

Our pioneering Augmented Reality app, created in collaboration with HE information technology provider Jisc, creates an interactive, immersive experience for teaching complex technical concepts. The app enables students to use a smartphone or tablet to access interactive tutorials for independent learning outside of scheduled teaching sessions.

The design and accessibility of Space was a key area for improvement in the 2018/19 annual monitoring exercise, following student feedback that resources could be difficult to locate. We undertook detailed student journey mapping and put in place page templates and content audits to ensure that information on Space was consistent, accurate and easy to find. The resulting improvements have been well-received by students and were a significant advantage in moving quickly to fully online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic.

At the end of 2020/21 we surveyed students about their experiences of online learning during Covid-19. The survey was sent to around 1300 students and we received 207 responses (16%). 57% of respondents agreed that online one to one classes had been effective, 50% agreed that online lectures had been effective, and only 25% agreed that online group performance classes were effective, further underlining the importance of face-to-face collaborative learning.

Student engagement

Students are embedded in discussion and decision-making at all levels of institutional and programme governance, and in planning and evaluating our support provision.

Student voice metrics in the NSS have fluctuated over recent years – in 2019, a fall in the rating from 75% to 62% satisfaction prompted a review of student feedback processes by a working group of the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee, and identification of weaknesses in closing the feedback loop, to make clear how student feedback had been acted upon, and low satisfaction with the Students' Union and how it represented students' academic interests.

Since then, Student Experience Representatives have been recruited from each course and year by the Students' Union in partnership with Programme Leaders. They are trained in student representation, and also trained in supporting students, for example signposting mental health support. Reps are vocal and constructive participants in Pathway Councils (for pathway-level academic issues) and Student Staff Forums (for institution-wide issues). The Student Staff Forum is a student-led initiative, co-chaired by the Students' Union President and the Vice Principal. Actions from the Student-Staff Forum are tracked in annual monitoring exercises to ensure that all actions are completed and that the resulting learning informs review and development of programmes.

The conservatoire was recognised as an early adopter of this approach by the University of Hull in the 2019/20 annual monitoring exercise, and commended for increasing direct communication with students and offering reps the opportunity to build their employability skills. There remain

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improvements to be made in student voice processes, evidenced through some of the TEF split metrics, that show areas of dissatisfaction among smaller groups of students who are more likely to be marginalised. There is further discussion of this in the next section.

The Students' Union President is a member of the Board of Directors, as well as our highest level governing committees: Academic Council and Executive Leadership Committee. The Students' Union has representation on all other deliberative committees, embedding the student voice in all TEF-related discussion. Students are also represented at the Joint Board of Studies (JBoS) with our validating body, the University of Hull; in November 2022, the JBoS noted the increasing visibility of the Students' Union and commended joint working between the conservatoire and the Students' Union during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The wider student body also engages with survey-based feedback, and our internal commissioning process for surveys ensures that feedback is meaningful, comparable and useful, and that a robust student feedback loop is in place. We have used our internal student surveys to provide insight into the National Student Survey question areas as well as the Library, the VLE, students' reasons for transferring courses, student support services, online enrolment and communication with students, and have used the results to plan, implement and evaluate improvements. Due to the small cohort sizes, our postgraduate students do not participate in the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), but they are surveyed annually along similar themes and comparisons are drawn with PTES benchmarks in annual monitoring reports.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

There are a number of areas where the TEF metrics demonstrate that where there are smaller groups of students within our student population, they may lack integration into our community, for example Black students (2.7% of the student population), Mixed Ethnicity students (5.4%), Foundation Degree students (6.0%) and non-UK students (9.3%). These groups report lower satisfaction in a number of areas including teaching and student voice, and have lower rates of continuation and completion.

Our approach to improvement began with an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Change Project, launched in September 2020 to review all of our structures and approaches to EDI. The recommendations set out in the EDI Change Report, published in May 2021, form the basis of a new phase of EDI work at the conservatoire, and act as an action plan for our immediate priorities to create meaningful and sustainable change.

As part of this, we have placed equity at the forefront of our new strategic plan and aim to become sector-leading in EDI. Communication of this commitment has been effective: our most recent annual staff survey, in 2022, was distributed to all 420 staff, with a response rate of 47%. 89% of staff agreed that the conservatoire's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion was embedded in our culture. This question was not asked in previous years and so will form a baseline for future evaluation.

Actions we have taken so far include recruitment of an EDI Lead and a Project Coordinator on a full-time, permanent basis to ensure that the recommendations set out in the Change Report are

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implemented and evaluated. Our aim is to empower our whole community to speak for themselves and to take an active part in shaping how we become a more inclusive community.

We have created student diversity representative roles for students from under-represented backgrounds. These students feed in to the work of the EDI and Access and Participation Committee, and meet regularly with the EDI Projects Coordinator. Together they provide regular opportunities for students to feedback on their student experience, and this feedback is then directed to the appropriate departments or staff members required to ensure that inclusive practice is considered at every opportunity.

We are reviewing our recruitment practices to ensure that they are equitable, with the aim of diversifying our workforce, and in response to feedback from students we are implementing a simple and (optionally) anonymised reporting system to enable students who feel discriminated against to report their concerns. These projects are designed to help build trust with our entire student community. Longer term, we are working on a review of our curriculum with the aim of decentralisation and the inclusion of more marginalised voices, to improve the learning experience and sense of belonging for currently underrepresented groups.

Partnership working and collaboration is also a fundamental part of our EDI work. We work with the National Opera Society on their *Diverse Voices* initiative and we were the first confirmed working partner for Black Lives in Music, which seeks to address the inequalities facing Black people in achieving careers as artists and professionals in the music industry, through research and advocacy, with the goal of dismantling structural racism in the music industry. Guest lectures on Black American Music, a Black Music Matters masterclass series and an in-depth Postgraduate Masterclass series exploring race and music have supported this initiative.

We are a member of the PRS Foundation's Keychange pledge, working to transform the gender balance of the music landscape. We have hosted two Both Sides Now residencies, a partnership with the charity Brighter Sound, which saw award-winning composers lead a group of female students through five days of collaboration culminating in a performance at our Sounds Like THIS festival. The festival won Best Small Festival in the Drum Experience awards in 2018, with a commendation for our "commitment to new and exciting music which is underrepresented in the mainstream".

Our EDI work has been commended by the University of Hull in several annual monitoring exercises, which noted our commitment to questioning existing practice, encouraging change and embracing diversity. Of particular note were 'Open Channel' events, which invite staff and students to share their experience on EDI topics through panel-led discussions.

3. Student Outcomes

Support for continuation and completion

Overall continuation and completion rates are good and at the TEF benchmark. However, as above, there are some groups of students with lower rates of continuation and completion, and we are continually developing our approaches to individually tailored support.

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All new students are assigned a personal tutor who can provide both academic support and signposting to other support services.

Student progress monitoring takes place at an individual level, with the aim of ensuring that all students achieve their potential. Online assessment and feedback enables students to track their grade profile and take ownership of their progress. Individual student attendance and support needs are monitored on a regular basis by academic and support staff working in partnership: all students with less than 70% attendance are identified in progress reports and appropriate interventions are put in place, whether additional academic support from programme teams and/or referrals to our Student Support teams.

The Support to Study procedure provides personal support plans for students identified as being at risk of non-continuation or non-completion. As a minimum this is applied to students who have suspended and returned to study, but as the scheme has developed it has raised students' self-awareness of their own support needs and they have begun to self-refer for Support to Study.

A high proportion of our students declare a disability, on average 25% over the last three years (ten percentage points above the HESA average for Music), and they are supported to achieve excellent outcomes. There is no significant difference between completion and continuation rates for students with disabilities and students without. We engage with students with disabilities from the point of application, to identify their support needs and tailor their support, which includes specialist mentoring, assistive technologies, adjustments to teaching, learning and assessment. Support also extends to social opportunities, for example our Neurodivergent Group, which meets fortnightly in a twilight slot and offers a social atmosphere and occasional masterclass-style sessions from external advocacy groups.

The gender balance among conservatoire students is 64% male and 36% female (a small proportion of students do not identify with either gender). Gender balance varies substantially by pathway, for example only 15% of Production students are female whereas 61% of Classical students are female and 71% of Actor Musician students are female. Songwriting, Folk, Music Business and Acting have a more even gender split. This is a historical and wider sector issue in relation to the gendering of instruments and musical genres; we aim to tackle this on a long-term basis through our Leeds Junior Conservatoire provision, Women in Music initiatives (identified as good practice by the University of Hull in 2018/19 and 2019/20) and the introduction of Performing Arts courses to our portfolio. The proportion of our students who are female increased from 30% to 36% between 2018/19 and 2021/22.

Student progress and outcomes are also monitored at year- and programme-level, at quarterly performance review meetings and as part of the annual monitoring process. Progress and outcomes by student characteristics/equality measures are monitored as part of both of these, as well as by the EDI, Access and Participation Committee, and the reviews feed into the development of our Access and Participation action plans.

Intersectional analysis also forms part of our tailored approach to support, for example our Foundation Degree provision attracts students who are more likely to be male, to be local to Leeds, to be from a low-participation area, to enter with a lower tariff and to leave during their first year. Enhanced academic support has been developed by the programme team to support and continuation, including prizes to incentivise attendance and engagement. This was initially

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successful, increasing achievement (an internal measure) at Level 4 from 71% to 86% between 2018/19 and 2019/20, but the rate dropped to 79% in 2020/21 and to 66% in 2021/22, so there are improvements still to be made.

Support for progression

Progression to employment and further study is outstanding.

As described above, employability is a key feature of our curriculum design: the Professional Studies strand is part of all Music programmes, and assessments, particularly public performance, live project and portfolio work, are based on industry-style briefs. Employability is regularly commended as an area of good practice in University of Hull annual monitoring, and our student outcomes bear out comments from external examiners that final-year students are 'industry ready' and producing work that is at an industry standard.

Alongside the curriculum, our Employability and Enterprise team provides a wide range of employability activities including a monthly CV Clinic, offering one-to-one careers advice and CV development, bookable mentoring and advice sessions and a range of careers guidance made available in partnership with Opera North and the National Careers Service.

We have invested heavily in our Artistry and Enterprise Schemes, which give early-career artists access to industry mentors, release strategy and marketing support, subsidised asset production for photos, videos and merchandise, track development (such as professional mixing and mastering), brand development, tour support, contracting and legal advice. Students can apply for match funding to help progress a new project or idea and experience funds for financial support to attend conferences, training and events. Around 15% of this funding is targeted at underrepresented groups of students, with the aim of encouraging more students in these groups to benefit from employability activity.

Students benefit from a wide range of employment opportunities both within and outside the conservatoire while they are studying. Many of our students take on casual worker roles at the conservatoire, with opportunities available in outreach, technical, events management, customer service, Digimenter and Leeds Junior Conservatoire roles. Many others take on paid employment through opportunities advertised on *Life*, which attracts opportunities from promoters, venues and bands.

Leeds Conservatoire Agency, shortlisted for a Guardian Education Award in 2019, negotiates paid performance opportunities for students and alumni worth around £50,000 per year. Acts have supported major touring artists and undertaken commercial work for high-profile organisations, productions and venues (National Railway Museum, Santander, BBC, Everyman Cinema).

We aim for students to graduate with the skills and tools they need to succeed in the creative industries. The Musicians' Survival Guide has been distributed to final year students and alumni since 2015. The Guide is a professionally designed and printed book full of advice and views from a wide range of professionals in subjects from finance, law, technical language and equipment, to etiquette and professional expectations.

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Since 2020, the Guide has been complemented by a comprehensive Progression Portal on our website, designed to strengthen students' knowledge and understanding of the creative sector and transition from student life to professional life. The Portal also signposts opportunities for postgraduate study, hosts the Survival Guide podcast, encourages graduates to join our alumni community, provides an employability toolkit and a list of jobs and opportunities.

Employability support is tailored to groups of students, for example Performing Arts students are provided with professional headshots at a subsidised rate; the external examiner for Musical Theatre noted in 2021/22 that 50% of these students had signed with independent agents before the end of their course and the remainder were supported by the Leeds Conservatoire Agency, saying *"this is a model other institutions could and should replicate"*. Final year students on all performance courses receive professionally-recorded videos of their performance, enabling them to enter the industry with appropriate showreel material.

Demand from employers is a key indicator of the industry-readiness of our students; numerous employers approach the conservatoire seeking out our students for professional engagements, including Opera North, Hot House Music schools and a wide range of independent agents and promoters. The reputation of our Popular and Songwriting pathways attracts A&R representatives to hold meetings with students in their final year; students meet with major publishers including Warner Chappell, Polydor Records, Universal Publishing and Closer Artists Management. Most recently, Warner Chappell signed one of our Songwriting graduates as a writer and artist, and they have secured a tour support gig with Ed Sheeran.

Industry relationships are developed throughout our Performing Arts programmes, with a resident casting director, Kay Magson CDG, who casts all internal productions and links students with opportunities in the wider industry. Industry contacts are invited to panel and showcase events; this year students have been invited to audition for Hope Mill Theatre, Leeds Playhouse and Leicester Curve, and over the last two years seven Actor Musician students have been cast by Wrongsemble in their Christmas and summer shows.

We are in touch with many of our alumni, and they feature in our workshop and masterclass series as well as celebrating their successes on our website. Our alumni include winners of BAFTAs, ASCAP awards, BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards, Music Producers Guild Awards and British Country Music awards. They tour with world-leading artists including Ed Sheeran, Kylie Minogue, Sam Smith and Blink-182, and appear on global stages including Glastonbury Festival, BBC Proms Live, Madison Square Garden and the Eurovision Song Contest.

Our JAMES accreditation further highlighted our *"excellent links with local industry"* and *"the impression that many ex-students stay in the locale rather than automatically moving to London"*. We know anecdotally that our graduates are making a significant contribution to the local creative economy, and aim to capture metrics that will help us to evidence this.

Educational gains

Our Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy sets out the graduate attributes that we aim to develop during students' time with us. These are, that they will:

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- i) Have acquired expert knowledge and skills as performers, actors, composers and producers, including skills of self-reflection, critical thinking and listening skills and the ability to work independently and collaboratively with others;
- ii) Have acquired the knowledge and skills to be entrepreneurs, complemented by an array of employability skills, including communication and presentation skills, and be digitally literate in academic, social and professional contexts;
- iii) Have learned and developed in partnership with academic staff: musicians, actors, songwriters, composers and producers, with qualifications and active professional profiles;
- iv) Have been given the opportunity to perform at a high level, for example through large ensembles or full-scale productions;
- v) Value collaboration with other professionals from the creative industries as a method to enhance creativity, originality and employability;
- vi) Display confidence and independence, and be inquisitive learners who will have used the Leeds Conservatoire environment to experiment with new ideas and practices;
- vii) Be prepared for the international music and performance industry, and have an appreciation and understanding of wider cultures and communities;
- viii) Have demonstrated the knowledge and skills to progress to further study, and/or to become professional composers, directors, actors, musicians, performers, producers or entrepreneurs who could contribute to the global marketplace.

At the heart of these attributes is a strong focus on the creative industries and the skills that our graduates need to succeed in them now, and shape them for the future.

Our approach to employability is a fundamental part of preparing our students to have an impact in the industry – we instil an entrepreneurial spirit in students from the outset, train them for the realities of the industry through Professional Studies, and embed transferable skills into the curriculum, enabling students to learn about collaboration, about working with people and about developing and maintaining professional relationships. We aim for students to graduate with a strong network of people in place and an understanding of how the industry works, so we provide a huge range of opportunities for students to interact with industry professionals and design our assessment tasks around real-world briefs.

Our strategies to achieve these are set out in this submission, many of them are measurable through assessment, student outcomes, and external scrutiny, and we have some evidence of their success, for example in our progression metrics.

We have limited insight into Graduate Outcomes data at present – until the most recent data release, Leeds Conservatoire students were combined with Luminate Education Group students in statutory returns.

In the transition period between the DLHE and Graduate Outcomes Data (2017) we conducted an alumni survey which aimed to understand what students were doing after they graduated. We surveyed around 8,000 graduates for whom we had contact details (dating back to 1966) and received 390 responses (5%). Although the response rate was low, 78% of respondents told us that they were working in the creative industries, 68% were combining two or more occupations in a portfolio career and 88% agreed that they were using the skills they had gained at the conservatoire in their career.

This provided us with important baseline data and insight which we plan to take forward in our analysis of Graduate Outcomes once more data is available to us. We are looking at ways to segment our alumni data so that we can survey them on a more regular basis, increase response rates and keep contact information up to date. This type of insight is particularly important in comparison with the Longitudinal Educational Outcomes (LEO) data, which is limited in the extent to which it can contextualise the career trajectory of a graduate in a creative portfolio career. Though many of our graduates are actively recording, touring and publishing, and attracting high hourly pay rates, the number of hours they work in a professional occupation (for example, musician) is likely to build slowly, particularly in their early career.

Measurement of other educational gain, in terms of evaluating our graduate attributes, will grow as we develop our understanding of our graduates, the impact they are having in the creative industries and the impact that studying at the conservatoire has on their professional lives.

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