BSc (Hons) Studio & Live Music Production

COURSE OVERVIEW

Sound checking, monitoring, mixing and mastering.

Whether it’s recording up-and-coming talent in the studios, working FOH at your favourite venues, or planning tours and living on the road that makes you excited to be a part of this industry, Spirit Studios will help you develop the skills that will make you invaluable to any session, gig or tour you work on.

From the very beginning of your course, you will be taught using industry-standard equipment in our professional studios. And with access to both studios and our purpose-built live venue in your own time, you will have every opportunity here to perfect your skills and become confident in running sessions and dealing with artists, as well as build up a strong understanding of acoustics, stage monitoring and live event production.

So whether you find yourself back stage managing a band’s tour, front of house monitoring sound for their shows, or in the studio recording their next album, you will be able to use your broad skillset to make the most of every possible opportunity when you graduate.

COURSE CONTENT

Year 1 Modules (HE4):

Studio Recording Techniques

Providing you with a strong foundation of studio recording skills, this module will introduce you to standard techniques and procedures used in professional recording sessions. Learning through practical sessions in our studios, your study will cover the technical aspects of signal flow, analogue mixing consoles and microphone types and techniques, while also working towards your Pro Tools 101.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Investigate practices involved within modern recording techniques.
2. Successfully record and playback audio signals.
3. Select microphones and identify effective microphone techniques.
4. Plan and conduct a basic recording session.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of signal flow while effectively operating professional recording software and hardware.

Assessment: A studio practical test, a recording project, and the Pro Tools 101 online exam.

Live Sound Engineering

Introducing you to the world of live sound, throughout this module you will be working with industry standard software and equipment in our on-site live venue. Covering everything from live signal flow and live mixing consoles, to PA components and mains distribution, you will also gain a British Safety Council Health & Safety Level 2 qualification, making this the perfect starting point for you as a live sound engineer.

Learning Outcomes:
1. Examine practices and roles involved within live sound reinforcement industry.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of signal flow within PA systems.
3. Identify PA system components.
4. Identify potential hazards and risks involved in constructing and operating a PA system.

Assessment: A live practical test, an essay, and a British Safety Council Level 2 Certification exam.

Music Production Analysis

Developing an awareness of various arrangement, instrumentation and production styles, while also evaluating the impact of digital systems and processing, you will gain key contextual knowledge of trends in music production, which you can then apply to your own creative work, while developing your overall critical listening skills.

Learning Outcomes:
1. Examine and appraise compositional arrangement and instrumentation techniques.
2. Identify current and past trends in music production.
3. Distinguish between different instruments within a mix.
4. Describe the impact of computers and digital systems and processing on modern production techniques.

Assessment: A research essay, and in-class presentation.
Sound Wave Theory

Introducing you to the physics, characteristics and fundamentals of sound, the knowledge you gain during this module will be used to inform almost all of your decisions as a professional engineer. From frequency and amplitude, to phase, harmonics and psychoacoustics, through this module, you will learn the key aspects of audio theory, and learn to apply them in a practical studio setting.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Identify and define the characteristics of sound waves.
2. Illustrate sound wave interaction by practical example.
3. Explain the process of hearing and psychoacoustic phenomena.
4. Recognise and define subject specific terminology.

Assessment: An in-class written test and 2 practical tests using Pro Tools.

Studio Production and Mixing

Through the use of signal processing and dynamic controllers, you will expand on your existing recording skills, and begin to build up your knowledge of professional mixing techniques. You will also put your knowledge of session procedure to the test, dealing with artists and other engineers while recording and mixing music to demo standard. You will also gain your Pro Tools 110 certification during this module.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Record and mix music to a level suitable for ‘demo’ use, rather than commercial release.
2. Effectively operate audio processing software and hardware.
3. Effectively apply dynamic control and equalisation techniques in recording and mixing.
4. Communicate effectively with artists and other engineers.

Assessment: A recording & mixing project, a studio log & essay, and the Pro Tools 110 online exam.

Live Music Production

Focussing on technical specifications of a live music event, you will gain skills in line checking and sound checking, PA voicing, stage monitoring and wireless systems, audio processing, front of house (FOH) mixing techniques, and communication and artist liaison. Through this module, you will interpret technical specifications to plan and prepare for a live music event, and set up and operate effective monitoring systems for the artists.
Learning Outcomes:

1. Plan and prepare effectively for the production of a live sound event.
2. Identify and interpret technical specifications.
3. Effectively apply audio processing within a FOH mix.
4. Set up and operate effective monitoring systems for artists.
5. Communicate effectively with artists and other engineers.

Assessment: A technical specification report, and a practical live mixing assignment.

Study Skills

Supporting your study across the rest of your course, this module will help you to develop your report writing and presentation skills, while also helping you to reflect on your practical work in other modules. This work will help to improve your time-management, goal setting and communication skills, which will support the rest of your degree study as well as your external projects when you graduate.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Apply academic conventions to essay writing.
2. Identify and implement appropriate research techniques.
3. Deliver a presentation which demonstrates reflective practice.

Assessment: An in-class presentation, and a written essay.

Year 2 Modules (HE5):

Studio Production Techniques

Progressing into some of our more advanced studios, you will develop a range skills in advanced microphone techniques, control surfaces and digital platforms, mixing automation and advanced audio processing techniques, including time correcting, tuning and pitch correction. You will then learn to integrate these into your recording and mixing sessions, working to a professional standard.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Record music to professional engineer standard.
2. Integrate advanced audio processing software and hardware in a recording and mix session.
3. Mix music to professional engineer standard.
4. Examine digital and analogue platforms.
5. Document a studio session and evaluate studio techniques.

Assessment: A research essay, a recording project and a mixing project.

**Music Production and Remixing**

This module will introduce you to Logic Pro X as a DAW, while also providing you with new skills in editing, sequencing and remixing across various platforms. Your sessions will focus on MIDI processes and professional remixing techniques, while also researching leading practitioners in the field to inspire your own remixing projects.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Examine and apply effective editing techniques with current music sequencing software.
2. Compare and contrast various music sequencing software applications.
3. Analyse and evaluate the art of the remixer, and the leading practitioners in the field.
4. Remix a pre-recorded track in a specific genre to a professional standard.
5. Creatively apply MIDI controllers to enhance the MIDI signal.

Assessment: An essay and a practical assignment.

**Sound Synthesis**

Providing you with a strong understanding of the creation, synthesis and manipulation of sounds in composition, this module encourages you to be creative and use innovative techniques in your practical work. Using samplers and synthesisers, you will explore the use of found sounds across a range of visual media, and work towards a creative composition using a combination of both hardware and software applications.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Effectively operate hardware and software samplers and synthesisers.
2. Analyse compositional techniques in relation to their use within visual media.
3. Employ various methods of sound synthesis in a creative composition.

Assessment: A compositional project.

**Events Planning**

Focussing on the key aspects of live events, from budgeting and event safety, to stage management and tour management, you will work as part of a team to plan, organise and manage a live event, while effectively using networking and communication skills gained through your study on other modules.
Learning Outcomes:

1. Identify roles and responsibilities within event management.
2. Discuss and assess event management strategies.
3. Plan, organise and manage an event as part of a team.
4. Recognise and utilise effective scheduling and troubleshooting techniques.
5. Communicate effectively with artists and other professionals.

Assessment: A research project, and a group presentation.

**Music for Games**

Exploring both composition and production techniques for music within the games industry, this module will highlight the role of music as an integral part of the overall gaming experience. It will also identify the synchronisation opportunities open to music producers in the games industry, while also discussing the issues and processes of music publishing and intellectual property rights (IPR).

Learning Outcomes:

1. Create musical compositions and motifs suitable for computer games.
2. Effectively apply music compositions to visual material.
3. Investigate synchronisation opportunities for music in the games industry.

Assessment: A report, and a composition for a game.

**Digital Systems for Live Events**

Introducing you to digital systems within live sound, you will learn to design virtual PA systems using industry-standard software, while also developing skills in virtual sound checking and audio networking systems. Through this study, you will work towards operating a digital live sound system, and recording and mixing a live gig to a professional standard.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Apply software to design a system and create effective audio networking solutions.
2. Investigate and evaluate best working practice associated with digital sound systems.
3. Effectively operate a digital live sound system.
4. Record a live gig to a professional standard.
5. Mix music in a live environment to a professional standard.

Assessment: A network design exercise with a report, and a practical live mixing project.
Work Based Learning

Using the knowledge and skills gained through previous modules, you will now gain practical experience working within the music and audio industries. Through this module, you will secure employment at an appropriate level, to ensure you develop practical skills that are relevant to your chosen career path, making it the perfect opportunity to build up your professional network and put your study into context.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Identify personal strengths and weaknesses and plan strategies for development around these.
2. Plan and organise, and prepare effectively, for a period of work experience.
3. Evaluate and appraise your own performance.
4. Present information to a group in a professional and effective manner.
5. Perform assigned tasks successfully to professional standards.

Assessment: A proposal document, a period of work placement, and a portfolio presented within the class.

Year 3 Modules (HE5):

PA Design

Building on your skills in PA design, you will research into current PA system design trends to work towards designing one of your own for a real venue, while considering a number of factors that affect the resulting sound. From acoustics, frequency balance and environmental factors, to client specifics such as noise sensitivity and audience coverage, you will learn to design professional PAs and account for various issues in your set up.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Apply predictive and modelling software to simulate a PA system.
2. Investigate and create innovative solutions to PA design problems.
3. Evaluate and appraise current PA system designs and components and their compatibility.
4. Utilise, and draw conclusions from, spectrum analysis.

Assessment: A design report and a practical exercise.

Applied Music Production

Introducing you to new media to enhance your mixing skills, sessions will focus on the variety of playback options available to consumers and how to account for this in your mixes.
From data compression for MP3 encoding, to 5.1 surround sound mixing to a commercial standard, through this module you will gain valuable knowledge in this area and have the opportunity to expand your professional portfolio.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Investigate and evaluate current and emerging media for playback of music.
2. Mix music in 5.1 surround sound to a professional, commercial standard.
3. Summarise the requirements of data compression in producing music for emerging technologies.
4. Analyse and evaluate mixing styles and procedures in producing music for a range of media.

Assessment: A portfolio of mix exercises, and a research report.

**Mastering Techniques**

Advancing from stereo mixing, to producing the final production master, this module will introduce you to current mastering software and develop your skills in compression and EQ to a professional standard. You will also compare the creativity and sonic quality achieved through both digital and analogue workflows, and develop technical knowledge of track listing and compatibility before producing a production master audio recording in a range of formats.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Analyse and evaluate the role of compression and limiting within current audio mastering.
2. Assess the sonic properties of analogue and digital processing within audio mastering.
3. Produce a professional standard production master audio recording in a range of formats.
4. Apply and evaluate creative and corrective solutions in equalisation and compression techniques.
5. Document workflows and self-evaluate skills and techniques used.

Assessment: A portfolio of mastered audio which includes an evaluative report.

**Entrepreneurial Skills**

During this module, you will research the music and creative industries, to source an entrepreneurial project that could be developed into a business or additional income stream. This will then highlight the range of career paths that are open to you, while also making you aware of issues surrounding self-employment. Sessions will cover key topics including market research, business types and legalities, project planning, professional ethics and more.
Learning Outcomes:

1. Analyse and investigate career opportunities within the music and creative industries business environment.
2. Propose an entrepreneurial project and argue for its feasibility in the market place.
3. Critically evaluate the outcome of the entrepreneurial project.

Assessment: A personal portfolio which documents a proposed entrepreneurial project and an in-class presentation.

Project

Centred around you and your creative goals, this module will give you the freedom to plan and produce a project, relevant to the music and creative industries. Making use of knowledge and skills gained throughout your course, this will be your most substantial piece of work, and will allow you to develop a professional portfolio within a specialist field that really shows what you can do.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Produce a portfolio of work within a specialist field of study.
2. Integrate knowledge gained in a range of areas (e.g. social, legal, commercial, creative aspects).
3. Design and evaluate solutions to resolve technical, creative and personal issues.
4. Apply professional values to all aspects of the development and presentation of the project.
5. Manage and administrate work to make it suitable for public presentation.
6. Articulate arguments to a high standard.

Assessment: A portfolio of work, and a viva voce.

KEY INFORMATION

Qualifications

BSc (Hons) Studio and Live Music Production
(Awarding body: University of Central Lancashire)

Pro Tools 101 and 110 (AVID User Certification)
(Awarding body: AVID)

British Safety Council Level 2 Award.
Tuition Fees

£9,250 per year (full time), and £1,540 per 20 credit module (part time). Total costs for the course are £27,750 (full time), and £27,720 (part time).

Funding

Information on funding for this course can be found here.

Duration

3 years full time, or 5 years part time

Start Date

September 2019

Entry Requirements

80 UCAS points from at least two A-level passes (or equivalent) including one science or technology-based subject and one music or design-related subject. Applicants for these courses must also have five GCSE passes at grade C or above (or equivalent) including mathematics and English. Applicants will be required to attend for interview.

European applicants may not be able to attend an interview in the UK; once your application has been processed, you should submit an e-portfolio of your recent work by arrangement with us; this will be followed by a telephone interview. If English is not your first language, English at IELTS 6.0 (or equivalent) will be required. Please ask for details.

This course is open to UK and EU students. Applications from International students cannot usually be accepted because Spirit Studios does not have a Tier 4 licence. Therefore, if you require sponsorship under Tier 4 (i.e. a Tier 4 international student visa to study in the UK) then unfortunately we will be unable to consider your application for this course.

Contact Hours

Generally, for each 20 credit module you undertake, you will be required to spend 200 studying; these hours will be divided between contact hours (time spent at Spirit Studios with staff) and independent study hours. On average, 60-70 hours of contact time is timetabled per module and each module might be split like this:
Direct contact hours (per module):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lectures / workshops / demonstrations</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial support</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total direct contact hours</strong></td>
<td><strong>70</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Independent study (per module):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation for assessments</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study to support practical &amp; written work</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total independent learning hours</strong></td>
<td><strong>130</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total student learning hours (per module): 200 hours**

**Associated costs**

We will not charge you any additional fees or ask you to pay any additional costs that are mandatory for the completion of your course, with the exception of:

- While AVID Pro Tools accreditation is embedded into the course, and accreditation to 110 level is required to pass, both 101 and 110 each offer two free attempts at the exam. If a third or more attempt is required to pass an exam, the student will incur a cost for each attempt of $29.00. (Approximately £22.50.)
- USB/flash/pen drives; some submissions will require work to be submitted on these (buying in bulk will save money and an 8GB might be as little as £2-£3). These are not returnable to students once submitted.

In addition to the course fees, there are some further costs which you may incur as a student on this course. These costs are optional and are not mandatory to your studies. These might involve buying for example:

- A pair of headphones, something like Sennheiser HD201 (£15-£25), or perhaps if you require something more robust, Sennheiser HD25 (around £120)
- An external hard drive for backing up your work (a 1TB drive might cost around £40)
- Generic ear protection, like the ACS ER20 ear plugs, around £11

The purchase of books, stationery and computer consumables is an additional cost and so we suggest a minimum budget of £80 per term to cover these purposes.
Contact details

For an informal discussion and further details about the course please contact Daniel Buxton (daniel.buxton@spiritstudios.ac.uk) Tel: +44 (0)161 276 2100

APPLY

Applications to this course are made via the UCAS system.

You will need this information for your application:

UCAS Code: J931
UCAS Institution: C30
Campus code: Z

If you need any further help or advice on the application process, please contact: callum.croston@spiritstudios.ac.uk or call us on 0161 276 2100.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In addition to your degree, as a student at Spirit Studios, you will eligible for discounts on a range of professional qualifications that we deliver. This may include accreditations in Avid Pro Tools (101, 110, 201, 210M, 210P and 301S6), Apple Logic Pro X and Steinberg Cubase.