

Options with music

Your skills

As a music student you can build on and develop a fantastically broad base of skills. These may include:

General skills

- analytical, critical, research, writing, communication and presentation skills - through extensive reading, writing essays and dissertations, and seminar discussions;
- IT skills - using standard software packages, the internet and email.

Specific skills and attributes

- powers of memory, physical dexterity and concentration - developed in practice and performance;
- communication skills - performing and engaging listeners;
- teamwork - working in bands or orchestras as a player, leader or manager;
- self-management - physical and mental self-discipline achieved through regular practice;
- performing under pressure - developing nerves of steel in exams, concerts and auditions;
- planning - organising and working towards a project/performance;
- commercial awareness - managing any salary gained from performance or teaching;
- technical skills - using technology to create and record music;
- critical reflection - giving and receiving criticism; learning from your mistakes; striving for improved performance.

Other skills and knowledge

- knowledge of issues and professional ethics in the arts world;
- understanding of different perspectives and cultures. You may have opportunities to study abroad, use music in community projects or study different world/ethnic traditions;
- technical expertise, for example the study of acoustics;
- teaching.

Consider the skills developed on your course as well as through your other activities, such as paid work, volunteering, family responsibilities, sport, membership of societies, leadership roles, etc. Think about how these can be used as evidence of your skills and personal attributes. Then you can start to market and sell who you *really* are, identify what you may be lacking and consider how to improve your profile. Take a look at [applications, CVs and interviews](#) for some useful tips.

Job options

Jobs directly related to your degree

- [Musician](#) - plays, sings, composes, conducts - or a combination. Most musicians are self-employed, maintaining an effective system of contacts from which to source work. In practice, many musicians undertake other work while they are establishing themselves professionally, such as private tutoring.
- [Secondary school teacher](#) - teaches music to students aged 11-18. Teachers develop schemes of work and plan lessons in line with the national curriculum. They encourage, monitor and record the progress of individual pupils, and devise ideas and resources to help students learn.
- [Private music teacher](#) - teaches voice or an instrument to

pupils either in their own or the pupil's home. A peripatetic teacher employed by a local education authority (LEA) will usually work in a number of schools.

- [Music therapist](#) - works in schools, hospitals or prisons, using music as a therapeutic tool with people who have emotional or behavioural difficulties. By using music creatively in a clinical setting, a music therapist seeks to establish an interaction - a shared musical experience - leading to the pursuit of therapeutic goals.

Jobs where your degree would be useful

- [Arts administrator](#) - provides support for events run by arts and cultural organisations such as theatres, galleries, museums, arts festivals, arts centres, arts councils, regional arts boards, dance companies, community arts organisations, disability arts organisations and local authorities.
- [Community arts worker](#) - works alongside teachers, social workers, youth workers, environmental professionals and volunteers using the arts to explore issues, perhaps culminating in a performance. They collaborate with a wide variety of different groups, encouraging the use of artistic activities to support their development and improve their quality of life.
- [Sound technician, broadcasting/film/video](#) - responsible for the assembly, operation and maintenance of technical equipment to amplify, enhance, record, mix or reproduce sound for films, television and live performances. Sound technicians work within a sound team, which aims to interpret the production and artistic requirements of the director.
- [Editorial assistant](#) - working for large publishing houses devoted to the production and sale of printed music. Such work is often done by freelancers with considerable musical knowledge. The editorial assistant gains experience by assisting senior editorial staff in administration, commissioning, planning and production of musical publications.
- [Academic librarian](#) or [Public librarian](#) - supports an academic community, orchestra, or music organisation information service, by managing information or music resources. Increasingly, much of the work involves electronic resources and an increasing amount of time is spent on database and web page development.
- [Event organiser](#) - responsible for all aspects of organising events: from marketing and sponsorship to bookings, catering and equipment hire. A music performance may be the main event, or a part of the event. The role is hands-on and usually involves leading or working in a team.
- [Retail manager](#) - responsible for the day-to-day management of a department or store, which may be a specialist music store. The main focus of any retail manager's job is to improve the commercial performance of the store by increasing its turnover and maximising profitability.

Although some of the jobs listed here might not be first jobs for many graduates, they are among the many realistic possibilities with your degree, provided you can demonstrate you have the attributes employers are looking for. Bear in mind that it's not just your degree discipline that determines your options. Remember that many graduate vacancies don't specify particular degree disciplines, so don't restrict your thinking to the jobs listed here. Look at [your degree... what next?](#) for informed advice on career planning and graduate employment, or take a look at [what jobs would suit me?](#), a helpful starting point for self-analysis.

[Explore types of jobs](#) to find out more about the above options and related jobs.

Career areas

Music graduates work in a wide range of professions inside and outside music. If you choose to follow a music career, be mindful that no two career paths are the same. Approach career planning creatively and be prepared to develop a portfolio of roles; for example, combining teaching with freelance performance work, including contract/session work on particular projects. It is also common for graduates establishing themselves in creative industries to take several years after graduation to establish themselves.

In 2008, six months after graduation, almost half of music graduates had entered full-time employment with a further 20% entering part-time work. Of these, over 20%, entered arts, design and cultural professions, and around 17% went to work in education. About a quarter of graduates took clerical and secretarial positions or went to work in retail or catering jobs, and many of these would have been expecting to move on after gaining experience.

Where are the jobs?

Music graduates can be found working for a wide range of employers on both a freelance and contract basis. Employers include schools and colleges, the National Health Service, orchestras, music retailers, media organisations, the armed forces, commercial organisations and a wide range of employers in the cultural and creative industries.

The most common job sectors in which music graduates are employed are:

- [Creative arts](#) - encompasses music, teaching, therapy, writing and arts administration.
- [Education](#) - this sector includes schools, further education and higher education.
- [Media](#) - a varied sector, including television, radio, film, corporate production and interactive media.

See [industry insights](#) for further information on possibilities in other employment areas.

Statistics are collected every year by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) (<http://www.hesa.ac.uk>) to show what HE students do immediately after graduation. These can be a useful guide but, in reality, with the data being collected within just six months of graduation, many graduates are travelling, waiting to start a course, paying off debts, getting work experience or still deciding what they want to do. For further information about some of the areas of employment commonly entered by graduates of any degree discipline, check out [what do graduates do?](#) and [your degree...what next?](#)

Further study

Almost a third of students who graduated with a music degree in 2007 went on to do postgraduate study, either full time or part time. Some opt for a vocational course like teaching. Others choose to specialise in an area such as performance.

Options include: the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) for teaching, or Scottish Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE); diplomas in performance, composition, law, information management and teaching; and performance licentiateships awarded by bodies such as The Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) (<http://www.abrsm.ac.uk>).

You may consider a purely academic qualification or a Masters in community music, cultural management, or musicology. Others move into music therapy or related fields such as nursing.

These trends show only what previous graduates in your subject did immediately upon graduating. Over the course of their career - the first few years in particular - many others will opt for some form of further study, either part time or full time. If further study

interests you, start by thinking [about postgrad study](#). Find [courses and research](#) of interest to you; you can also [apply for courses online](#).

Look at [funding my further study](#) for details relating to finance and the application process.

What next?

This should have started you thinking about your future. Whether you are in the early stages of career planning, or you have definite ideas about what you want to do, you will find further information to help you in the following sections:

- Analyse your skills, interests and motivations to find out [what jobs would suit me?](#)
- [Explore types of jobs](#) to find out about entry requirements, salaries and working conditions.
- See [industry insights](#) for hints on breaking into various industries.
- [Find graduate employers](#) and see what they have to offer.
- You may want to investigate [self-employment](#) or [flexible working](#).
- Look at the advice on [applications, CVs and interviews](#).
- Get [work experience](#) through vacation work or a work placement.
- [Find courses and research](#) and investigate postgraduate study opportunities.
- If you are thinking about taking time out, volunteering or travelling consider a [gap year](#) or explore [working and studying abroad](#).
- If you have already graduated, get online [interactive advice](#).
- Visit [your university careers service](#) for a wealth of advice and resources to help with your career planning.

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