

Qualification Name	Pearson BTEC Higher National Diploma in Music
Provider's Address and Course Location	Higher Rhythm College of Music and Media 53-57 Nether Hall Road, Doncaster, DN1 2PG
Start Date	September 2024
Duration	2 years
Mode of Study	Full Time with sessions (approx.16 hours per week) spread over 2 days / evenings, in person on site, wherever possible.
Awarding Body	Pearson Education Ltd.
Ofqual Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF) Qualification numbers:	HNC: 603/2275/5 HND: 603/2274/3
Framework for Higher Education Qualification (FHEQ) level of the award:	HNC Level 4 / HND Level 5
Fees	£6,000 per year
Date Programme Spec last updated	First Approved: August 2018 Updated: December 2020 May 2021 January 2023 August 2023
Date Programme Spec to be revised	January 2024
Key contacts	HE Administrator: headmin@higherrhythm.education Telephone: 01302 327769

Programme Design and Overview

What sets this course apart from other similar level courses in the same subject area is the real music industry environment students study in and the wider industry networks to which they will be regularly exposed. Higher Rhythm boasts a vast music industry network, locally, regionally and nationally. We partner with bodies such as the PRS Foundation, delivering regional music artist and enterprise development programmes and running other Music industry initiatives such as Music Industry Yorkshire (the Yorkshire region's Music Industry Development Network) Sine FM (the only licensed radio station in Doncaster) Circuit Records, Higher Rhythm's in-house independent record label, as well as two, multi-room, industry level recording studios.

The Higher Rhythm Higher National Diploma in Music Technology / Sound Engineering aims to develop students as professionally competent, highly-skilled individuals who can meet the demands of employers in the ever-changing world of the music industry and wider creative sectors. The course is aimed at students wanting to continue their education through applied learning. All graduating students will have well-rounded skills and experience gained from studying in a real industry setting, adequately prepared for employment or furthering their education and giving them the depth of knowledge and experience to excel as music industry professionals.

The Level 4 Higher National Certificate in Music offers students an introduction to the subject area via a mandatory core of learning, while allowing for the acquisition of skills and experience through the selection of optional units across a range of occupational themes at Level 4.

This effectively builds underpinning core skills while preparing the student for subject specialisation at Level 5. Students will gain a wide range of sector knowledge tied to practical skills gained in research, independent and directed study, and workplace scenarios.

During the programme, students will be expected to develop the following skills:

- Ability to analyse, synthesise and summarise information critically;
- Ability to read and use appropriate literature with a full and critical understanding;
- Ability to think independently and solve problems;
- Applying subject knowledge and understanding to address familiar and unfamiliar problems.

Entry Requirements

Higher Rhythm is committed to recruitment and admissions processes which are fair, explicit and implemented consistently across its range of provision. As such, Higher Rhythm aims to provide the applicants with the support necessary for them to succeed. The admissions process will encompass a range of services, from the provision of information about programmes and services, to the point of enrolment and beyond.

Higher Rhythm positively encourages applications from candidates from a diverse range of backgrounds, experience and ages, including those with disabilities. In line with government legislation, Higher Rhythm has an Equality Policy to ensure that applicants participate in a fair and equal process for selection, regardless of sex, sexual orientation, race, ethnic origin, age, disability, religious beliefs, or socio-economic background. Through the implementation of these policies, Higher Rhythm will ensure that selection at interview is restricted to the academic ability to succeed on the course.

All applicants will need to attend an interview with a member of the course team who can discuss the course and its requirements with the individual applicant so they can make informed decisions.

In addition to the interview, you will be asked to present a portfolio of music production materials (recordings/compositions etc.).

If you have recently been in education, it is likely that you hold one of the following qualifications which would meet the entry criteria for the course. You will need 64 or more UCAS points from:

- A level 3 qualification in Music Performance or Music Production (A Level, BTEC National Diploma or equivalent)
- An Access to HE qualification in Music
- Other level 3 (or higher) qualification in a related subject (e.g. Creative Media, Radio Production, Performing Arts etc.)

GCSE English grade 4 (or C minimum) or Functional Skills Level 2 in English, GCSE Maths grade 4 or Functional Skills Level 2 in Maths is desirable.

Direct entry into Year 2: We are happy to consider applications for direct entry onto the second year of study from those who have already completed and been certificated on the associated HNC at level 4. Applicants will be asked to supply their Pearson ID number available on their certificate or transcript.

Mature students: if you do not meet the entry requirements as outlined above, we may still consider your application based on previous employment or previous study. We appreciate that mature students may have extensive relevant experience gained through paid or unpaid work or through other types of professional training or sector-related opportunities, and this experience may be used to support an application. Please contact HE Admin at headmin@higherrhythm.education to discuss your options.

Learning Support

Student progression is supported both by subject tutors and also by support staff. New students will undergo comprehensive induction introducing them to the subject, to the course, to the teaching staff and to the college facilities and support services. Student and course handbooks are available in print and electronic format. Personal and academic support are integrated into teaching and provided by approachable lecturers and a course leader who monitors performance. Study and research skills are integrated into the programme.

Higher education students requiring additional learning support may be able to apply for [Disabled Students Allowance](#). Please follow the link for details.

English Language Requirements

Students undertaking higher level education need to have a commensurate level of understanding of the English language so as to be able to achieve their qualification. Higher Rhythm requires higher education students to have a minimum level of 5.5 (IELTS or equivalent) with no score lower than a 5 in listening and speaking and no score lower than a 5.5 in reading and writing.

The Pearson higher national qualifications also require the same level of English language equivalency:

- Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) level B2; or
- Pearson Test of English Academic (PTE Academic) 42; or
- Pearson Test of English General (PTE) Level 3; or
- Pearson Versant English Test 58-68; or
- International English Language Testing System (IELTS) 5.5; with both Reading and Writing elements at 5.5; or
- Having recently completed (i.e. in the last 2 years) a formal programme of study in English at an appropriate level (such as a level 3 BTEC or 'A' level) prior to starting their Higher National

Please note that Higher Rhythm does not hold Tier 4 status for international students seeking approval.

Employer engagement

You'll benefit from workshops led by industry professionals such as our award-winning producer and engineer, Andy Seward, as well as experts in management, live production, mixing & mastering. You'll also get to visit gigs around Yorkshire and festivals (to experience the process of large events from a backstage and production perspective and develop your professional network.

The course has been developed to give you relevant skills and experience for the developing needs of the music industry.

Employability skills

Throughout your studies, you will also develop transferable skills related to problem-solving, critical thinking, teamwork, digital skills & time management to give you a wide range of career prospects upon completion of the course.

You can add employment realism and depth to your learning experience by working for our in-house initiatives such as Music Industry Yorkshire, Circuit Records, and Sine FM Radio.

Programme Structure

A Higher National Diploma is made up of 120 credits at level 4 (year 1) and 120 credits at level 5 (year 2).

Units are usually 15 credits (or multiples thereof) for Higher Nationals.

The Total Qualification Time (TQT) is an estimate of the total amount of time expected to complete the qualification. This includes guided learning, directed learning, and assessment. Each 15-credit unit equates to approximately 150 hours which includes 60 hours of guided learning. As a student, you can expect:

TQT for HNC = 1,200 hours
Including Total Guided Learning = 480 hours

TQT for HND = 2,400 hours
Including Total Guided Learning = 960 hours

That leaves 90 hours per unit of self-study, directed study, and assessment time per 15 credit unit.

Unit structure for HND Music Sound Engineering pathway:

Type of unit (core, specialist, optional)	Unit number	Unit Title	Credit Value	Level
Level 4 HNC Music (Technology) (120 credits at Level 4)				
Core <i>Mandatory</i>	1	The Music Industry	15	4
Core <i>Mandatory</i>	2	Marketing and Promotion (Pearson-set)	15	4

Core <i>Mandatory</i>	3	Professional Development	15	4
Specialist <i>Mandatory</i>	12	Applied Sound Principles	15	4
Specialist <i>Mandatory</i>	13	Recording Technology	15	4
Specialist <i>Mandatory</i>	14	Creative Software Techniques	15	4
Optional	20	Live Sound Techniques	15	4
Optional	17	Sound Engineering Fundamentals	15	4
Total			120	
Level 5 HND Music (Sound Engineering) (120 credits at Level 4 above plus 120 credits at Level 5)				
Core unit <i>Mandatory</i>	31	Creative Research Project (Pearson-set)	30	5
Specialist unit <i>Mandatory</i>	38	Advanced Sound Engineering	15	5
Optional unit	37	Advanced Music Production	15	5
Optional unit	39	Advanced Sound Design for Interactive Media	15	5
Optional unit	40	Mixing and Mastering	15	5
Optional unit	43	Creative Portfolio	15	5
Optional unit	44	Live Mixing	15	5
Total			120	

Learning, teaching and assessment

Your course will be taught using a range of methods to ensure you get the most out of your time here. Sessions include lectures, seminars, practical exercises, group discussions, masterclasses and tutorials. Where future Government restrictions disrupt physical attendance, some of your lessons may be taught online using a combination of live virtual lectures and other offline activities and resources

accessed through our virtual learning environment: Real Smart and Google Classroom.

Your lessons will give you a solid foundation of technical skills, theoretical knowledge and contextual understanding of popular music and its associated disciplines. You'll learn through practical and industry relevant activities building your confidence and encouraging you to explore your chosen path with increasing independence; creating radio shows, composing music, dubbing sound for film, putting on gigs and marketing a music business along the way.

You'll benefit from small class sizes to receive lots of informal and formal advice to support you in your studies from feedback and resources to one-to-one tutorials. You can make use of the course virtual learning environment which will have all the lesson material and lots of extension activities to help you in your studies and broaden your educational horizons. You will have access to practice rooms and technical spaces to undertake your coursework and practice your specialist skills.

You will be assessed through realistic practical projects which will reflect the content and work flow you could expect from real world tasks found in employment in the industry. You will be supported through the process by regular formative feedback from your tutors to help you improve and detailed summative feedback at the end of the units to help you identify your next steps in learning and skills development to meet your goals.

Being in Yorkshire gives access to a wealth of exciting musical events and you will participate in a range of visits, shows and gigs as part of your HND course.

Resources

All of our students have access to our fantastic learning facilities and study spaces.

Higher Rhythm is equipped with the latest technologies for music production, including 2 Mac Learning Labs with the latest software (including Pro Tools and Logic), a state-of-the-art recording studio and an industry-level radio studio which broadcasts live www.sinefm.com

We run two recording studios in two locations. Our main studio, which also functions as a commercial facility, is built around an SSL Origin 32-channel analogue mixing console. Blending the best of analogue with the best of digital, we use Universal Audio Apollo interfaces and an Apple Mac running Pro Tools Ultimate.

Both studios have a wide range of analogue and vintage valve pre-amps and compressors. This includes equipment from Neve, SSL, API, Chandler, Tube-Tech, Manley and more.

The studios also use a combination of Genelec and PMC monitoring, making our comfortable, air-conditioned studios the perfect place to produce outstanding recordings.

We have a live room which is connected to our main studio, available for use by HND students. It is equipped with a high-end drum kit and a choice of pro-level amplification.

We also have a Pro-tools and Universal Audio-based production lab and a 5-camera, 4-microphone podcast suite.

To provide authentic industry links, we use a number of external venues for hosting live events.

Additional Course Costs

There are no additional costs for you to study with us. Remote access to the internet using a laptop or home computer will be essential for completing your coursework and accessing online lectures and resources. Having external access to music production software (Logic) would be useful but not essential.

Programme Outcomes

The aim of this course is to help you develop the skills you need to specialise in your chosen music career through classroom teaching and practical work using industry-standard equipment. Having completed the course, you will have a nationally recognised Level 5 qualification and will be able to progress to further study or develop a career in the music industry.

The Objectives of the Programme are:

- Equipping students with music skills, knowledge and the understanding necessary to achieve high performance in the global music environment.
- Providing insight and understanding into the diversity of roles within the music industry, recognising the importance of collaboration at all levels.
- Equipping students with knowledge and understanding of culturally diverse organisations, cross-cultural issues, diversity and values.
- Providing opportunities for students to enter or progress in employment in the music industry or progress to higher education qualifications such as an Honours degree in music or a related area.
- Providing opportunities for students to develop the skills, techniques and personal attributes essential for successful working lives.
- Supporting students to understand the local, regional and global context of music and, for those students with a global outlook, to aspire to international career pathways.
- Providing students with opportunities to address contemporary issues facing the industry and society at large; with particular emphasis on sustainability and the environment, recognising the role that music plays in addressing these issues.
- Allowing flexibility of study and to meet local or specialist needs.
- Offering a balance between employability skills and the knowledge essential for students with entrepreneurial, employment or academic aspirations.

- Providing students with the context in which to consider professional ethics and their relation to personal, professional and statutory responsibilities within the industry.

The Programme aims to cultivate the practical skills of the students by developing:

- practical skills that can be applied by individuals within the workplace.
- and applying key leadership skills in practical sessions or when building links between theory and application in the workplace.
- organisational skills to respond creatively to assignment briefs, meet deadlines, and prepare presentations, and undertake research.
- ability to showcase their work confidently and well, using different methods of presentation.

The programme aims to cultivate the intellectual skills of the students by:

- communicating research/ findings effectively and appropriately.
- using research skills to obtain and integrate subject specific evidence to formulate test hypothesis.
- using academic protocols to understand and enhance academic writing.
- giving a clear and accurate account of a subject, marshal argument in a mature way and engage in debate and dialogue both with peers and specialists.
- applying and extending communication skills in order to accommodate their own continuing professional development.

Progression opportunities

Following the successful completion of your studies, you will be equipped to work in music industry roles such as studio session musician, live session musician, sound engineer, sound designer, composer for film, TV, games/apps, media, to name a few.

You could alternatively progress into level 6 study (for example, BSc (Hons) in Music Technology) at another institution. Details of entry requirements for BTEC Higher National graduates into degree programmes at institutions in the UK and internationally can be found on the 'Pearson Degree Course Finder' website. Students should always check the entry requirements for degree programmes at specific Higher Education providers.

Quality assurance and methods of improving quality

Higher Rhythm assures that it is meeting its standards by a variety of methods.

The HND Music team has to internally verify its assessments and assessment decisions to ensure that assessment and marking are fair. The course is assessed externally via an External Examiner appointed by the Awarding Body (Pearson).

We hold termly Programme Management Boards, which enable students to consult with the course delivery team on how their course is running.

We have opportunities for students to become representatives of their student cohort and join these Board meetings. We also run surveys across the year to understand how students feel about their place in Higher Rhythm itself and how they are progressing on their course. We use students' feedback to help shape the course in-year (if timing permits) or for future cohorts.

Higher Education Academic Appeals

The Higher Rhythm Higher Education Academic Appeals Code of Practice states that a formal appeal should be made only after the learner has exhausted informal means of resolving issues. This policy is available on the HND page of Higher Rhythm website.

A formal academic appeal must be submitted within 15 working days of the date on which the decision was served on the student in writing to the address currently held on Higher Rhythm's student record system.

Formal Academic Appeals should be made on Form AA1 and should be submitted to the HE Administrator, 53-57 Nether Hall Road, Doncaster, DN1 2PG (headadmin@higherrhythm.education). Acknowledgement of receipt will be provided by the HE Administrator within 5 working days.

Students do have the right to refer a case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), however the rules set by the OIA only permit this once the student has received a completion of procedures letter which confirms that internal procedures relating to the formal, review stage processes are complete. The time limit for referring a case to the OIA is 12 months. Further details regarding the OIA processes could be found via this link: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students/how-to-complain-to-us/>

Useful Contacts

Mat Handley	Administrator	mathandley@higherrhythm.co.uk
Paul Littlewood	Lead Internal Verifier	paullittlewood@higherrhythm.co.uk
Ricky Middleton	BTEC Lead	rickymiddleton@higherrhythm.education
Chrissy Moog	Quality Manager	chrissymoog@higherrhythm.co.uk
Steven Mundin	Head of Centre	stevenmundin@higherrhythm.co.uk
Andy Seward	Tutor	andyseward@higherrhythm.education
Gareth Topliss	Tutor	garethtopliss@higherrhythm.education