

Performing Arts (Musical Theatre) National Foundation Diploma level 3

Course Overview

Our level 3 musical theatre course is a exciting vocational course packed with performance opportunities and a high standard of training in singing, dancing and acting. This course is delivered as a one year plus one year programme. You start by studying the National Foundation Diploma in the first year and then top up to the extended diploma in year 2. Students must pass year 1 to progress to year 2. Both years carry UCAS points and universities recognise the qualification as a method of progressing to relevant degree courses.

 You will explore a range of subjects in order to best understand the demands of the profession and make you a 'triple threat' performer. You will perform in two major productions each year as well as presenting small performance projects throughout the course. You will be taught by a range of lecturers and practitioners who are experienced specialists in their field. Many are dance artists, dance school principals, performers and vocal coaches with accredited teaching qualifications bringing their extensive experience and network of professional contacts into the studio.

 Our aim is to equip you with the skills and knowledge to progress into your 3-year professional training at conservatoires and universities across the country. We currently have students studying at Bird College, Performers, GSA, Mountview, MADD, Arts Ed, Italia Conti, Wilkes Academy, LMA as examples. We currently have students working in the industry on the West End and touring nationally in productions including Frozen, Grease and Heathers.

 If you are aged 16 to 18, you will be enrolled on a study programme. This will include retaking GCSEs or undertaking Functional Skills in English and maths if you haven't already achieved a grade 4 or above.

 You will take part in activities that help you to develop your personal skills, such as building your character and confidence. This will help you to live well and move into your chosen career. If you are 16-19 years old these activities will be timetabled as will work experience.

What you will learn

The emphasis of this course is about the development of your skills, techniques, and performance qualities for a career in musical theatre. You will study a broad variety of skills which will include classes in singing, voice, musical theatre performance, jazz dance, acting techniques, ballet, urban dance, tap and improvisation. You will engage in small performance projects throughout the year and have opportunities to create your own work. In addition to the practical study of musical theatre, you will explore it socially, culturally and historically through research projects as well as exploring methods of self-promotion for the industry and higher education.

 Alongside the coursework there are abundant opportunities to perform in musical theatre shows and events including professional cabaret evenings, charity concerts, ceremonies, flash mob events and Christmas carol concerts. Professional performers visit us frequently to take West End musical theatre workshops and master classes.

 You will be taught in our modern dance studios, large campus theatre and city centre venue the Sue Townsend Theatre.

Students that continue onto the extended diploma in year two will focus on developing work for performance as a group and as an individual. You will continue to develop your technical skills in dance, singing and acting through studio based classes. In addition, you will explore your own work and create a portfolio of performances and research around your own personal interests and specialisms which can be used for audition and progression after the programme.

 Additionally, in this year students work towards a full-scale production at our professional city centre theatre. Performances include familiar musicals as well as cabaret evenings and showcases of work. Examples include; Chicago, Godspell, We Will Rock You, Pippin, Little Shops of Horrors and The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee.

 Students will also be supported in this year to produce audition pieces for application to university and conservatoire.

Entry Requirements

All applicants should have some experience of musical theatre / performing arts whether that be studying it as a subject as school, college, community group or dance school.

 Entry to this course requires five GCSEs at grade 4 (C). English and maths are desirable. You will be required to provide one reference and it is desirable that you can demonstrate 90% attendance at your last place of work or study. Should you not achieve English and maths, you will be supported to study them with us.

 Should you not meet these entry grades, then we have a 1-year level 2 performing arts programme (C0162) which can provide an excellent platform to develop your performance skills and academic confidence. We encourage anyone with dance experience to apply and our specialist tutors will guide you to the correct level of study.

 You will be invited to an audition workshop. Additionally, you will be required to prepare and present audition pieces and attend an interview:
 1. Song with backing track
 2. A dance solo lasting 1-2 minutes or a monologue lasting 1 -2 minutes from a musical theatre show
 This is to support your careers choice and ensure that we place you on the right programme for you.

 Consideration will be given to all applicants over the age of 19 who do not hold formal English and maths qualifications.

Course Fees

If you are 18 or above when starting this course, you may incur fees if you continue to the second year of the programme.

 Please see our guidance on 19+ fees on our website.

 There are theatre trips and workshops throughout the year which form part of the course and come at an additional expense. There is a kit list which will be supplied on acceptance on the course which includes practical clothing and dance footwear.

Course Details

Course Code	P00187
Start Date	07/09/2026
Study Hours	Full Time
Duration	1 year
Campus	Abbey Park Campus
Level	3

Apply Here

Course Progression

Whether you want to become a West End performer or take a performing arts degree at university, this course will fulfil your needs and much more. No one can guarantee you success in this business, but your hard work and dedication can take you a long way towards some exciting goals.

Once you have successfully completed your full level 3 course you will be eligible to study for a degree at a university or attend drama school or be employed in a wide range of subject-related jobs in the industry. Many of our past learners are studying, performing and teaching.

Recent course leavers have gone on to study at Emil Dale, Arts Educational, Guildford, Mountview, L.I.P.A., London Studio Centre, Urdang, Rose Bruford, Bodyworks, Performers College, Italia Conti, Wilkes Academy and M.A.D.D.

Future pathways include: performance, opportunities in musical theatre companies, cruise ships, theme parks, TV, holiday centres and teaching plus a wide range of jobs in the creative industry. We currently have students working professionally in London's West End and touring nationally.

What Happens Next

Apply online via the college website, or if your school uses the Positive Steps @16 (PS16) application system please apply through this and speak to your careers advisor if you are unsure. You will need details of your qualifications, a reference, and a personal statement to complete your application. Once your application has been successfully processed, you will be sent a conditional offer and be invited to an audition at the college to meet your tutors, learn more about your chosen course of study and tour the facilities. You will then need to confirm your acceptance of the course offered to you.