

PERFORMING ARTS – BA Acting, BA Set Design and Production

Study Guide 2024/25

This handbook provides you with detailed information about additional procedures and policies operated by Performing Arts. Many of these procedures work in conjunction with those outlined within your Programme of Study Handbook. This handbook is designed to help you by providing additional guidance in areas such as assessment and offer you information we feel is important to day-to-day reality.



As a student on a programme such as this – with the clear objective of developing the skills that might enable you to become a practitioner within the performing arts – it is implicit in your acceptance of a place that you want to be trained in the skills that will eventually equip you to successfully find employment in your chosen field. The classes, projects and rehearsals are rarely optional because they are all considered necessary components of comprehensive education and training. We have carefully created projects that will develop and assess your knowledge and understanding of material, your ability to work with others and your personal commitment level. It is important to note that arts practice is, and will always be, a **collaborative** art form. It follows, therefore, that each one of our students must be willing to embrace the idea of **collaboration**. Many times you will find yourselves working closely with a wide variety of personalities, skill levels and, indeed, commitment levels. You will not be ‘turned loose’ in these endeavours, but will be set tasks by your tutors. However, if

you find that you are unwilling, or incapable, of working in this way, or find it unreasonable that we have asked you to do so, you should think very carefully about whether this programme is right for you.

If it proves necessary to encourage or persuade you to attend and engage fully in classes it suggests that you are ill-equipped for the kinds of employment areas for which the programme seeks to prepare you. In fact it would be difficult to think of *any* such employment areas that do not set great store by disciplined working practices. **Attendance and punctuality** are clearly such skills. If you are frequently late or missing, you will not only fail to progress, but you will fail to make the most of your opportunities for comprehensive training. You also substantially undermine the work of fellow students by demonstrating a lack of collaborative commitment, thereby disrupting the creative energy of the group, and by becoming the kind of person with whom, eventually, no one else wants to work.

For these reasons no student is permitted to be late for, or to miss, any class or rehearsal without good cause. Any unavoidable absence or lateness MUST be communicated directly to your module tutor and your Programme Manager. You must not send a message via a third party.

You attendance and engagement is monitored by the university through registers and Moodle. If you drop below the attendance or engagement thresholds you will be contacted by your Programme Manager and be invited for a meeting.

DEPARTMENT POLICIES

1. ATTENDANCE

What might constitute 'good cause' for missing a class or rehearsal?

The most common reason given for absence is **illness**.

It is clear that people have very different ideas about how ill someone should be before staying at home. How people perceive illness will depend on their own response to it.

It would be wrong of us to suggest that the theatre profession and many of its related employment areas are tolerant towards illness – in fact the reverse is true. It is an extremely rare occurrence, for example, for an actor to be missing from rehearsal, and rarer still for an actor to miss a performance. The nature of rehearsals and performances means that they cannot continue in a meaningful way without everyone being available. Actors and the creative team accept this. They develop a stoical approach towards illness and will only be away from rehearsal when the illness is debilitating to the point when they genuinely, physically, cannot fulfill the tasks being asked of them. The same holds true for musicians, producers, editors and design

practitioners. The nature of this kind of work demands a firm commitment to deadlines and there is no tolerance of inability to produce quality production work in the time available. It would be irresponsible of us to lead you to believe that you will be able to maintain employment if you are not aware of these facts.

You may think it unreasonable of us to expect a similar attitude from you during your training. Yet habits, good and bad, are hard to break. If you study and train in an atmosphere where absence through illness is commonplace, you will find the demands of the world of employment a tremendous shock. You might usefully take the opportunity to test yourself in situations when you are feeling less than 100% and strengthen your resolve to throw off minor illnesses and complaints.

What other 'good' causes are there?

Bereavements, and/or family crisis will affect almost everyone at some point or another during their time at University. No-one will expect you to carry on through difficulties that clearly call upon all of your resources to cope. We would always hope and expect to be of help at such times and only ask to be informed of developments as they occur so that we can put plans and procedures in place if needed. In the end, only you can decide whether an event is serious enough for you to stay away from University. However, once again, it is necessary to point out that Theatre and the Creative Industry as a whole has a tradition of expecting people to continue working through all but the most serious situations (and, even then, many continue to rehearse and perform). If you are unable to develop the resilience to cope with the day to day upsets that most of us are subject to, it is again debatable that you are suited for the demands of this particular subject. After all, you may be required to be at your happiest on stage, when your private life is in turmoil.

Do I have to attend all sessions?

Yes. Attendance at all sessions is integral to success on the programme.

What should I do if my absence is unavoidable?

You must contact the **module tutor and/or Programme Manager via email** and as soon as possible. Preferably before the session begins. All staff emails can be found on the Performing Arts (Carmarthen) Homepage on Moodle. **It is not acceptable to relay messages by word of mouth through other students or via social media.**

If I have unavoidably missed a session, what should be my next step?

You must contact the **module tutor** prior to the next session to discuss your absence. It is **your responsibility** to ensure that any missed work is completed. However, due to the nature of practical sessions, it is most likely that you will not be able to 'catch-up'. It is not acceptable simply to assert that you have spoken to friends and "caught up". **If the module tutor is not satisfied that you have followed the correct procedure**

and completed any missed work possible, you may be unable to attend the next session and therefore unable to complete the module.

What should I do if I arrive late?

You will need to speak to your tutor as soon as you arrive and see whether it is possible to attend the session. Very often these will be practical sessions which entail group activities difficult to join once started.

What do I do if I am ill and cannot attend one or more sessions?

Situations in which you believe your performance in an assessment has been adversely affected by extenuating circumstances are covered by University policy. Please consult the most current Extenuating Circumstances Regulations within the Academic Quality Handbook.

The university has a Student Engagement Policy which you can find here <https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/media/uwtsd-website/content-assets/documents/academic-office/misc-forms/Engagement-Policy.pdf>

The University tracks your engagement with your modules through Moodle as well as your attendance and any lateness.

2. DEADLINES

- Submission dates for assessed work will be provided by your module tutors. Failure to meet any deadline could result in a **fail** mark for the module.

What if I miss a deadline?

Don't. Any deadline given by the module tutor is always the **final point** at which a piece of work can be submitted. Your tutor does not have the power to authorise an extension or different deadline. You can apply for Extenuating Circumstances if you consider that you have been unable to engage with or complete your work by the deadline due to mitigating circumstances. You will need to complete an Extenuating Circumstances form via your MyTsd portal on the HWB app and be able to provide evidence to support your application. There is nothing to stop you submitting the work earlier.

Failure to submit a Process Workbook at the designated times or participate in a final project/assessment would result in a **non-attempt** being logged for your assessment.

What is a non-attempt?

All students must attempt all the assessment components of each module. Failure to do so will result in NA (non-attempt) being recorded for the module. This is not the same as a fail mark (0%-39%) and will most likely mean that you have to repeat the module at a later date. This will probably prevent you from progressing to the next level of study at the end of the year.

What if my attendance and progress is unsatisfactory?

Please refer to Student Engagement Policy, University Regulations Student Guide Section or to the University Academic Quality Handbook on the University intranet.

It is the policy of the School of Performing Arts to implement the Academic Quality Handbook's policies in the educational interests of all of the students within the School.



3. ASSESSMENT METHODS

- At the start of each module, tutors will provide full details of the means by which you will be assessed in that module. This will include clear guidelines on the criteria that will be used for marking your work.
- There is a variety of assessment methods within the School of Performing Arts under the heading of **Practical Projects, Presentations and Process Workbooks**. This includes, for example: Performance Work, Productions, Study Tasks, Written Assignments and Presentations.
- The department will always work to offer the best opportunity for the student(s) to succeed in meeting the learning outcomes when placing you in groups or casts.

- Students must attempt **all** the assessment components of each module. In virtually all modules this means that you must participate from the start of the module's process through to the final presentation/submission.
- Note that any marks released prior to formal approval by the summer Progression / Award Examination Board are provisional until approved by the Exam Board which sits twice a year.

Practical Work on Projects and Productions

Practical work can take various forms depending upon the nature of the module concerned. These include small group performances, set models and design portfolios, presentations and public performance contributions. All of the programmes within the Performing Arts department demand a significant amount of 'hands on' practical work that is carefully integrated with theoretical analysis to ensure the genuine acquisition of skills, understanding and knowledge.

Much of the practical work involves group projects. Students are required to take personal responsibility for their attendance and positive contribution. **If you miss two group meetings, either inside or outside the timetable, you might be excluded from the group, if that is the wish of the other members.** Exclusion from a group project might lead to a fail mark. For further information about how a fail mark might be alleviated in this situation you should contact your Programme Manager.

Your performance or other mode(s) of participation in a project are at the discretion of the Programme Manager. Student work that is deemed by the Programme Manager to be unready for public performance might not be shown. Similarly, the department might determine that it is inappropriate for you to participate in a project or production. In all cases the Programme Manager retains the right to allocate roles that it feels are commensurate with the student's ability and will enable them to successfully achieve the learning outcomes of the module.

No practical project / assessment is over until it is completely cleared up and the workshop/rehearsal/performance space is returned to its original condition.

Process Workbooks (or reflective presentations at Level 6)

In all practical activities and projects a great deal of the learning occurs during the process. Ideas first encountered in sessions will be tested and appraised in the rehearsal room and workshop. The Process Workbooks give each student the opportunity to demonstrate their level of engagement with the subject matter, their acquisition of knowledge through personal exploration and research and their level of personal analysis and understanding.

The marks for the Process Workbook are always integrated with those awarded for the Practical Project as a whole - it is unlikely that you will produce a meaningful project or performance without having participated in a meaningful process. The ability to demonstrate your capacity to integrate theory and practice and to document your thinking and reflection is fundamental to any sort of theatre training within Higher Education. It is impossible either to successfully complete a degree programme or prepare for a professional career, without developing the ability to explicitly demonstrate your knowledge and understanding.

The Workbooks can, over the three years, take on a wide variety of forms, although to assist students at Level Four, tutors often specify the physical nature of the Workbook to be created and will provide regular study tasks to guide you.

A Workbook might include a critical summary of the important ideas, techniques or methodologies discussed in each taught session, as well as providing evidence of personal study and research. Tutors will demand that you avoid the over-dependent inclusion of highlighted photocopies or articles downloaded from the internet. It is important that you demonstrate explicitly that you have directly engaged with, and referenced, any material that you have used for research. Although a personalised response to the taught sessions might be appropriate in some situations, **the Workbook shouldn't simply become a conversational diary**. Whilst we are gratified if you enjoyed the module and disappointed if you didn't, the Workbook isn't really the place to express these opinions. A confidential Module Questionnaire is provided for each student to complete online (accessed through the relevant Moodle page) at the end of every module in which your appraisal of course content and delivery is welcomed and valued. Similarly a Workbook should not be used as a place for personal attacks on colleagues. Peer and Self Assessment are used frequently throughout the Performing Arts courses to monitor group projects and are used for evaluative purposes by tutors when marking. Module tutors will advise you about the sort of approach you should take to their particular process workbook. These will vary slightly from module to module and if you are in any doubt about what is being asked of you then it is important that you speak to the tutor concerned as soon as possible.

Written Assignments and Study Tasks

Although there may be no written examinations on your particular programme of study, there are some occasions when elements of process documentation and certain study tasks take the form of word-processed written submissions. If this is the case you must abide by any given guidelines if you wish tutors to mark your work. If you require further assistance it is important that **you are proactive and take advantage of the support offered through Student Services**, including additional guidance offered elsewhere in University documentation.

Submission of written assignments for assessment

- All written/portfolio submissions must be word-processed use **Harvard Referencing and include a bibliography**.

HOW AM I ASSESSED?

At the beginning of each module you will be given information (either written or in a lecture format) on the module and **learning outcomes** that you will need to achieve if you are to pass the module and gain the credit allocated to it. The module's project(s) and **the assessment criteria**, by which it is assessed, are designed to enable you to demonstrate your level of achievement for each learning outcome. This assessment is relayed to you via the **Marking Feedback** sheet, which indicates your level of achievement of each assessment criteria.



4. ASSESSMENT AT LEVEL 4, 5 and 6

Assessment and feedback is focused upon **five generic assessment criteria which collectively measure the learning outcomes for each module**:

- Engagement with Literature Skills
- Knowledge and Understanding Skills
- Cognitive and Intellectual Skills
- Practical Skills
- Transferrable Skills for Life and Professional Practice.

Each of these assessment criteria are explained in detail on your Module Assessment Specification forms which are made available to you on the MOODLE page of any given module.

Each assessment criteria is given a percentage or 'weighting' which can be different depending on the module.

Your Module Assessment Specification form, which can be found on the Moodle page for each module, gives you information and classification descriptors on the requirements needed to achieve each level of attainment.

The demonstration of an 'Acceptable' level (over 40%) in each of these criteria in each area of study is normally necessary for progression into the following year or for graduation at Level 6.

Assessment and Feedback

Marking Feedback sheets and numeric marks for each module will be prepared for the School's Examination Board which, in turn, makes recommendations to the University's Progression Board with regard to each student's progression from one level to another. **During the summer you will receive a transcript of your marks from the University's Registry.**



What should I do if I don't understand, or disagree with, an individual mark?

If you carefully read the marking sheet alongside the category descriptors it should be clear how your work has been assessed with regard to each specific criterion. If you wish for further clarification, you can make an appointment to see the module tutor or Programme Manager.

By enrolling on the Programme of Study you have accepted that your work will be assessed by those staff employed by the University. The School is also subject to careful scrutiny by External Examiners to ensure that our procedures and standards are in line with other HE institutions.