



Queen Margaret University

EDINBURGH



## Programme Specification

1. Awarding Institution : Queen Margaret University and Edinburgh Napier University
2. Teaching Institution : Queen Margaret University and Edinburgh Napier University
3. Professional Body accreditation : n/a
4. Final Award : BA (Hons) Acting for Stage and Screen
5. Subsidiary Exit Points : BA Acting for Stage and Screen
6. UCAS CODE : W401
7. SCQF Level : 10
8. Mode of Delivery and duration : Full Time / Two years
9. Date of validation/review : 28<sup>th</sup> May 2015

### 10. Educational Aims of the programme

The BA (Hons) Acting for Stage and Screen is designed to provide the practical and technical skills needed to provide graduates with the skills required to work as professional actors in the live and recorded media, with vocal, acting and movement techniques backed up by a broad knowledge of modern and contemporary repertoire. It provides classes in textual interpretation and practical work on texts, students will gain critical and theoretical skills in acting and performance theories, which will encourage a deep understanding of the relationship between theory, the written word and performance.

The aims of the programme are therefore to:

- To provide the student with the knowledge and understanding of the skills required to pursue and sustain a career in acting for stage and screen
- To enable students to demonstrate learned performing skills at professional-level standards, in an integrated and creative context
- To enable the student to demonstrate initiative and creativity within the area of acting for stage and screen
- To provide the opportunity for the student to take responsibility for his/her own work within this context
- To provide opportunities for the practical consolidation of acquired skills in performance, and for some self-directed choices in terms of repertoire and media
- To encourage the student to relate critical reflection to artistic practice.

### 11. Benchmark statements/professional and statutory body requirements covered by the programme

The School of Arts, Social Sciences & Management (QMU) and The School of Arts and Creative Industries (ENU) both aim to provide the highest quality of programme and learning experience and to review and enhance their procedures on a regular basis. The quality assurance procedures adopted conform to the policies, regulations and codes of practice of Queen Margaret

University and all external reference points relevant to the suite of programmes delivered in this school: QAA codes of practice; subject specific benchmarks; Scottish Credit and Qualifications Network; HE Academy Subject guides to good practice. The processes and procedures adopted are designed to both assure and enhance the quality of the student experience via a reflective iterative cycle.

## **12. Learning Outcomes of the Programme**

Upon completion of this programme students will:

- Critically understand the industry and its changing context, and his/her contribution to it
- Effectively employ skills and strategies that can sustain a career in performance or performance-aligned industries
- Work professionally as an actor in stage and screen, with a wide range of knowledge and experience in varied performance contexts
- Recognise a range professional opportunities open to him/her within the theatre and television industry, and demonstrate the ability to produce their own work.
- Actively demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the distinct but related skills and approaches to live and screen acting.

### **Knowledge and understanding:**

On completion of this programme of study students will have:

- A1 Enhanced knowledge of acting theory and practice, and techniques appropriate to collaborative contexts
- A2 Enhanced knowledge and skills in performance, suited to a variety of specific contexts
- A3 Extended knowledge of professional practice within the theatre and television industry, along with a network of professional contacts
- A4 Extended knowledge of theatre and television repertoire
- A5 Enhanced abilities to analyse texts, performances and to synthesise ideas and research
- A6 Knowledge and abilities to conceptualise and employ abstract thinking in creative problem solving
- A7 Increased capacity for complex thought and expressive skills in the creative environment
- A8 Enhanced ability to employ and apply critical self-reflection
- A9 A critical understanding of what is required to produce, programme or direct small scale performance, the requirements for creating successful artistic/business/marketing plans, and the fundamentals of entrepreneurship in the performing arts sector

### **Skills and other attributes:**

On completion of this programme of study students will have:

- B1 Enhanced vocal freedom and expressive ability
- B2 Increased physical strength, stamina, flexibility and 'neutrality'
- B3 A practical grasp of the actor's process and preparation
- B4 An enhanced ability to sustain and inhabit an imagined world
- B5 The ability to demonstrate strong contribution and engagement with others
- B6 The ability to demonstrate substantial autonomy in pursuing artistic goals
- B7 The ability to lead in creative, collaborative contexts
- B8 The ability to conceive, plan and execute small scale performance and have the requisite knowledge to research, analyse and create business / production / marketing plans
- B9 Extended skills for working within a highly pressurised collaborative creative context
- B10 Show capability in managing yourself as a freelance artist and business person, identifying employment opportunities and the skills necessary to find work in the industry

B11 Demonstrate ability to carry out various forms of research for assignments, projects, or creative productions requiring sustained independent inquiry

### **13. Teaching and learning methods and strategies**

The programme is structured around a tripartite method of delivery, which is composed of taught, shared and heuristic modes of learning. The guiding principle underlying the delivery of the programme is concerned with progressively enhancing a sense of autonomy and initiative. It is understood that the aim of the programme is to train students to a high vocational level and a significant part of assuring employability lies enhancing knowledge of how the industry works and how one can, as a self-managed artist, make the most of every opportunity that presents itself.

#### Workshop/Practical Sessions

The core of the course lies in the Performance Skills, Technique and Production units. These core sessions are designed to enhance your critical and technical skills, to allow healthy debate and discussion on the nature of the work, and to extend your abilities in a practical setting. These sessions allow students to focus closely on structure, style, character, and integration of technique and imagination in performance form, and to experiment, exchange, and to build a healthy self-critical/analytical ability.

#### Team taught sessions

These are most appropriate for areas where team approaches are an efficient way of covering the demands of specific texts or performance activities.

#### Seminars and Master Classes

These take place at points where there is a large body of information to be conveyed prior to the student's engagement in practice in specific areas, or where there are practitioners of great experience/knowledge whose input is best structured as an intensive master class session.  
Independent

#### Student-Led Workshops

One of the overall aims of the programme requires that students are given opportunities to lead and initiate in a workshop setting. These workshops are mentored and observed by designated staff members.

The intellectual rigour demanded of any truly skilled performing artist is great indeed. It is agreed by the Programme Team that the test of intellectual skills needed (critical analysis, innovative problem-solving, leadership ability, etc.) is best located in assignments that can assess research, analysis and presentation in practical ways. The abilities to deal with complex issues, to demonstrate creativity and originality, to exhibit critical awareness of the professional environment, to make informed and confident contributions to group discussions and to lead practical work, are best measured in long-term practical observation and post-project tutorials. However, skills in research, business and market planning and self-assessment will be tested throughout the programme. Assessment patterns throughout the 2 years reflect these beliefs.

### **14. Assessment strategies**

Forms of assessment include:

- coursework (which might include annotated bibliographies, short observational essays, and reviews);
- project work and performance work (much of which will be collaborative);
- formal assessment of live performances and observed classes

- practical projects requiring evidence of considerable scholarly research;
- oral assessment (including formal presentations, performances, etc.);
- tasks aimed at the development of specific skills (including IT and bibliographical exercises, acting skills);
- portfolio work (including creative writing, essay plans, story boards, design plans, annotated bibliographies, created resources, business plans, marketing plans, etc.).

**Assessment on the programme rewards achievement in the following areas:**

- breadth and depth of subject knowledge, including relevant contextual knowledge and the demonstration of powers of textual analysis with respect to playing a role or directing a scene;
- the management of discursive analysis and argument, including the awareness of alternative or contextualising lines of argument;
- independence of mind, leadership ability and originality of approach in interpretative and written practice;
- fluent and effective communication of ideas; and ability to contribute significantly to collaborative, creative problem solving;
- critical acumen;
- sound knowledge of the industry and ability to respond with some originality in terms of planning, programming or producing;
- informed engagement with theoretical debates in the realm of performance theory and practice.

Assessment criteria are specified in relation to the module as appropriate, and specific variations, for example, in relation to oral assessment or performance-related reports, are made explicit.

**15. Programme structures and features, curriculum units (modules), credits and award requirements (including any periods of placement)**

The course is structured as an intensive two-year course. Year three is composed of 6 twenty credit modules and year four is composed of 4 twenty credit modules and a single forty credit module which is delivered across two trimesters. Modules are delivered at SCQF levels 9 and 10. All modules are constructed in compliance with the SCQF indicative level descriptors as set out within their documentation for guidance. The modules extend and enhance skills in three main areas: technical performance skills, including acting, voice and movement, performance technique and production in live and recorded contexts, and business/leadership skills for the performing arts industry.

Owing to its intensive delivery structure, the BA (Hons) Acting for Stage and Screen is not designed for part-time delivery, although it is envisioned that at some point in the future, some modules of the course may be grouped and delivered separately as Certificates in Professional Development. These certificates will be designed specifically for part-time delivery.

It is recognised that owing to the time frame of the programme delivery, all modules are compulsory. However, in the spirit of ensuring student choice within the course, Level 10 modules in particular

allow a wide range of opportunity for students to elect the kinds of projects and repertoire that they will pursue.

### Programme Structure

YEAR 3 LEVEL 9	Tri 1	Performance Skills 1 (Compulsory) 20 credits	Interpreting Text (Compulsory) 20 credits	Performance Technique 1 (Compulsory) 20 credits
	Tri 2	Performance Skills 2 (Compulsory) 20 credits	Leadership in the Creative Industries (Compulsory) 20 credits	Performance Technique 2 (Compulsory) 20 credits
YEAR 4 LEVEL 10	Tri 1	Performance Skills 3 (Compulsory) 20 credits	Festival Production 1 (Compulsory) 20 credits	Advanced Performance (Stage) (Compulsory) 20 credits Or Advanced Performance (Screen) (Compulsory) 20 credits
	Tri 2	Performance Skills for Professional Practice (Compulsory) 20 credits	Festival Production 2 (Compulsory) 20 credits	Advanced Performance (Stage) (Compulsory) 20 credits Or Advanced Performance (Screen) (Compulsory) 20 credits

### 16. Criteria for admission

The standard precepts of Queen Margaret University Admissions Regulations apply. Admission to the BA (Hons) Acting for Stage and Screen is provided on the basis that there must be a reasonable expectation that the student will be able to attain the award for which he or she has registered. The minimum requirement for admission to a programme of study leading to an award of the University is the possession of prior learning deemed sufficient to allow the applicant to be able to succeed and benefit from the programme of study.

#### Entry requirements

Typically an HND, Foundation Degree or completion of SCQF level 8 in an appropriate subject for entry to year 3. An acting audition will be required for entry onto this programme. Other qualifications and/or experience will be considered on an individual basis.

Entrance procedures will include an audition consisting of prepared and unprepared elements. The audition panel will consist of staff from both institutions. The audition process will include:

- Set audition texts
- 1 Devised piece (constructed as directed in the audition guidelines),

- Group Workshop: this will take the form of work with other candidates in responding quickly to set creative problems

## **17. Support for students and their learning**

Both institutions and the Schools place much emphasis on supporting and guiding students through their time at university. To support and guide students the Schools use and build upon both universities' mechanisms and central support services.

### **Transition Support**

Due to a highly mixed incoming cohort, there are specific intensive sessions in matriculation week that are designed to work both as diagnostic sessions as well as learning opportunities, in which students can begin to work through a common understanding and vocabulary of the practical business of performing. There are also sessions on time management, research skills, and general writing/communication skills. Perhaps more importantly, however, there are regular contacts between the course delivery team and staff from various FE institutions in Scotland to ensure a continued coherence of provision on both sides that can ease and strengthen the articulation for students.

### **Induction and Week One Activities**

An induction programme is offered by both universities to ensure students are familiar with the facilities and support on offer to them. The Induction Programme at the start of each academic year seeks to ensure that new Level 3 students settle in with a minimum of anxiety. All new arrivals are invited to attend Induction days, during which orientation sessions are delivered to familiarise students with the institution, with the campus and its facilities, with the location of key members of staff, and with programme timetables. Familiarisation sessions in IT and the facilities provided by both universities are also provided, and representatives from the Students' Union(s) are invited to address the new arrivals. In addition week one follows Queen Margaret University and Edinburgh Napier University's pattern of being a non-teaching week. Instead it is used to provide activities which support students into higher education study.

### **Personal Development Planning (PDP)**

The development of personal development planning for students is an essential component of 21<sup>st</sup> century Higher Education student experience. It is based on advice of The Dearing Report, 1997, The National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education and the ensuing Quality Assurance Agency (2001) Guidelines for Higher Education Progress Files, Gloucester, QAA.

It is a critical element within Edinburgh Napier University's Strategy for Learning, Teaching and Assessment: promoting learning for achieving potential as well as a central element of Edinburgh Napier's Employability Skills and Attributes Model and a key strand of its draft Employability Strategy. It builds on Napier University's emphasis on providing high quality vocational and professional education for its students. It is for this reason that Edinburgh Napier's interpretation includes an additional emphasis on personal and professional development planning for all students.

It is also viewed as a critical element at Queen Margaret University where the policy on personal development planning states "QMU will actively promote the values of PDP to its students. We will provide all students at QMU with the opportunity and support to develop a personal development portfolio which will allow a student to reflect on their performance and to plan for their personal, academic and professional development." (QMU Policy on Personal Development Planning)

PDP and employability is also embedded throughout the programme in the development of not only professional skills, but also of critical knowledge and understanding of the industry and the student's place within it.

### **Personal Academic Tutor**

Central to the support and guidance offered, PATs (known at ENU as Personal Development Tutors - PDTs) are academic members of staff, allocated to each student to act with and for that student in an advisory capacity. The student is at liberty at any time to request a change of PAT/PDT, should s/he so desire. Student and PAT/PDT must meet at least once a semester to discuss the student's

academic performance. In the case of new students in Semester 1, this meeting is expected to take place within the first few weeks of the academic year. Further meetings are arranged on request from the student.

The tutor maintains a record of all meetings and their contents, and files any material documentation which may affect the student's performance and progression; where appropriate, this may be made available to the Examination Board. This information may be consulted by the student on request.

### **Disabled Student Support**

Staff in both institutions have experience of assisting students with a wide range of disabilities (especially Dyslexia) and are committed to helping students achieve their educational potential, regardless of disability, wherever this is reasonably possible. All members of staff are responsible for ensuring the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act are implemented and 'reasonable adjustments' are made to provide for students' needs.

The universities provide free testing, with an educational psychologist, for all undergraduate students who demonstrate dyslexic tendencies. The Universities' Special Needs Advisors provide learning support, and guidance with funding applications for scribes and computer hardware.

Both Schools have designated members of staff who have responsibility for coordinating and communicating special needs requirements and for liaison between students with special needs and the students' module leaders throughout their period of study.

### **Programme Leaders**

The Programme Leaders oversee the day to day running of programmes. In the event of a module tutor being absent, or a PAT/PDT being unable to advise a student on issues relating to the subject or programme, a Programme Leader will offer support. Where students feel that there is an issue which affects the learning experience enjoyed while studying a programme, they are free to approach either Programme Leader and voice their concern.

### **Central Support Services at both Institutions**

At Queen Margaret University Student Services provide a range of advice, information and support to students. At Edinburgh Napier University, Student Affairs provide the same facility.

This includes:

- advice, information and support to students with a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia or any kind of disability, medical condition or special need
- A student counselling service
- Information, advice and support about extra sources of funding, including the Discretionary and Childcare Funds
- Skills and learner development support to support students in learning, personal development and employability including academic skills workshops, careers guidance, mentoring and support for PDP.

Also offered is Confident Futures, an innovative programme designed to enable students to take responsibility for their personal and professional development, engage with their programme and relate to their career and future aspirations.

At Queen Margaret University, Student Services provide a range of advice, information and support to students, this includes:

- The Effective Learning Service offers workshops and individual consultations to provide guidance and tuition in a wide range of academic skills areas, from critical thinking and analysis through time-management to examination techniques.

- Student Counsellor
- Job Shop and Finance advice
- International office

The following resources are also available:

- 24 hour access to the 500-seat Jack Kilby computer centre at Edinburgh Napier University and the Learning Resource Centre at Queen Margaret University
- Student Handbook and Module Guides
- Student Diary containing the Survival Guide
- Access to Learning Support Services
- VLE support for the programme and the modules
- Staff/Student Liaison Committees
- E-mail accounts
- Access to Educational Development Services
- Edinburgh Napier and Queen Margaret Students Association
- University Careers Services for guidance on career options, interview techniques etc.

#### **18. Quality Assurance arrangements**

- The programme will work within the regulations and processes of Queen Margaret University. See the QMU website for more detail: <http://www.gmu.ac.uk/quality/> This includes standard QMU processes for on-going evaluation, student representation and feedback and annual programme monitoring. All processes also need to satisfy Edinburgh Napier University's quality procedures.
- There will be a joint programme board held at Queen Margaret University with representatives of both institutions.
- All modules are shared modules.
- There will be a Joint Board of Examiners for the programme.
- The External Examiner will be appointed through the lead institution's processes, however agreement on who this is will be needed from both institutions in case there are any conflicts of interest.