

catalyst

Summer Short Courses 2026

Monday 22 June
→ Friday 17 July



Make space for creativity this summer in Berlin

Build skills, confidence and momentum on our range of Summer short courses. Our intensive short courses are led by industry experts and prioritise hands-on learning. That means you'll learn by making, experimenting, receiving feedback and iterating. You'll be practicing real-world creative skills while connecting with an international community of artists, at our iconic riverside campus in Europe's creative capital.

We provide five specialities in our School of Music & Sound that cater to a range of skill levels. On a campus bustling with activity, you will also meet students exploring one of ten specialist subjects within our School for Film & Visual Media, School for Acting and School for Creative Human Development. Everyone is here for the same reason, and come ready to learn new skills and meet like-minded makers. The creative industries don't operate in isolation, and we reflect that reality.

The courses

Electronic Music Production

Level: Beginner

Learn the core principles of electronic music production and express your creative ideas.

Studio Recording

Level: Beginner

Learn how to record and produce music in a professional studio environment.

Music & Sound Design for Experimental Gaming

Level: Beginner / Intermediate

Explore new approaches to music, sound design and storytelling in games and hybrid media.

Mixing & Mastering Electronic Music

Level: Intermediate / Advanced

Elevate your mixes with the depth, clarity and warmth found in professional releases.

Advanced Sound Design

Level: Intermediate / Advanced

Develop a stronger sonic identity through advanced synthesis and experimental approaches.

Psychology of Creativity

Level: Beginner

Dive deep into creativity's developmental roots and its impact on wellbeing and communities.

We also offer short courses in Music & Sound, as well as Bachelor and Master programmes. If you didn't see what you were looking for, **[please check this directory.](#)**

Why Study at Catalyst?

Learn from practicing artists

Your tutors bring industry knowledge to the workshops they run. They're working professionals actively releasing music, running labels, performing all over the world and engineering tracks. They're navigating the same industry challenges you'll face and they're bringing a passion for passing on knowledge. Who better to learn from?

Professional-grade campus and equipment

You'll be studying at a 3,000m² riverside campus with 30+ production studios, Dolby Atmos suite, mastering studio, recording studios with vintage gear, and extensive hardware including modular synthesisers, drum machines, mixing desks and professional recording equipment. Try saying that in one breath. Equipment is bookable, so your downtime is spent diving deeper into your practice.

Real interdisciplinary collaboration

Interdisciplinary is at the heart of what we do and embedded and embedded throughout our school. Sound and game designers can combine to bring worlds to life. Budding visual effects artists want to know what's possible within sound. Musicians jamming together opens up entirely new possibilities. Your peers aren't just your classmates – there's a whole school of likeminded creative souls sharing this space with you!

Learn more than the tools

All the programmes go beyond using hardware and software. You'll learn how to evaluate what serves your creative vision at any moment. Which tool is serving your aims? When does AI expand your possibilities versus limit your voice? Understanding this critical approach will keep you flexible to change throughout your practice, not just during these four weeks.

Photos taken last summer by students for our [disposable camera project](#)



Our city speaks for itself

Clubs, galleries & street culture

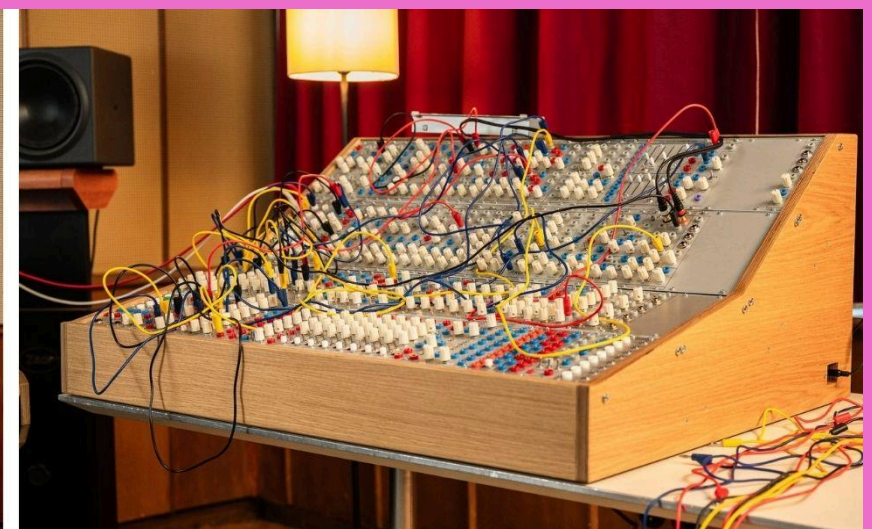
Berlin offers unparalleled creative infrastructure. The club scene includes temples of techno music alongside venues that have won awards for contemporary club music. Venues such as Morphine Raum reflects the city's multiculturalism and cross-pollinates genres. There is also no shortage of opportunities for emerging artists, with plenty of open-mic nights and small venues specialising in one type of music.

You can visit a range of experimental galleries for inspiration or just walk the streets and soak in the graffiti. Corner shops have been known to transform into temporary dance floors. Berlin is an endless inspiration and actively shapes us through its relentless energy.

You'll study during Berlin's most vibrant season

Chilling riverside at the campus. Late-night sessions in our studios. Discovering the city's international food scene. Swimming in lakes just outside the city. Watching sunset from Tempelhofer Feld. Berlin is a city that caters to all your needs and desires.

After an intense month of creation, we celebrate with a showcase and closing party. Expect performances, screenings, DJ sets, installations, dancing. You'll leave with fresh output, new skills, an international network and lasting memories.





/// Electronic Music Production

You're a creative soul with musical ideas bubbling inside, but you're not sure how to express them. This course gives you the keys to unlock that skill. Through hands-on workshops exploring Ableton Live 12, hardware synthesisers, drum machines and mixing techniques, you'll learn to transform your creative vision into finished tracks. Working alongside other aspiring producers in a collaborative environment, you'll develop both technical skills and the confidence to forge your artistic journey.

This course is right for you if:

- ✓ You have musical ideas but don't know how to turn them into tracks
- ✓ You're curious about electronic music production and want to start from the basics
- ✓ You want hands-on time with Ableton Live, synthesisers and drum machines
- ✓ You learn best by doing rather than watching tutorials alone
- ✓ You're ready to spend a focused month developing foundational production skills

Course Schedule

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|--------|---|
| Week 1 | Ableton Live 12 fundamentals, sound design basics, listening skills and analysis. Create your own sound world. |
| Week 2 | Electronic music instruments, software synthesisers, recording techniques, exploring hardware synthesisers and drum machines. Studio feedback sessions. |
| Week 3 | Mixing fundamentals, arranging tracks and making final adjustments, performance and jamming with synths. Studio feedback sessions. |
| Week 4 | Performance techniques, final project development, collaborative work with Filmmaking course students, final presentation and feedback. |

Course Outcomes

- ★ Understand basic principles of sound and operate Ableton Live 12 confidently
- ★ Record MIDI drums, process audio files and undertake basic recording procedures
- ★ Operate hardware synthesisers and drum machines at a basic level
- ★ Arrange a self-written piece of music with understanding of basic mixing principles
- ★ Critically evaluate your work and articulate your creative decisions



/// Studio Recording

Recording music is your passion, and you're ready to take the first professional steps. This course takes you through every step of studio recording within real production environments. You'll spend extensive hands-on time with equipment, learning through doing rather than theory alone. Working with industry professionals and fellow aspiring engineers, you'll discover how to capture great performances, operate professional gear and develop the technical skills that form the foundation of a recording career.

This course is right for you if:

- ✓ You're fascinated by what happens in recording studios and want to work there
- ✓ You want to understand microphones, mixing desks and signal flow
- ✓ You're ready to spend time with professional equipment
- ✓ You want to learn Pro Tools and recording workflows
- ✓ You're considering audio engineering as a career path

Course Schedule

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| Week 1 | Preparation – basic principles of sound engineering, pre-production planning, session management, microphone types and placement, acoustic principles. |
| Week 2 | Recording – analogue mixing desks, signal flow, routing, patching, monitoring, Pro Tools tracking and editing fundamentals. |
| Week 3 | Editing – sound manipulation, experimentation with sources, dynamic processing, spectral processing, spatial techniques. |
| Week 4 | Mixing and Mastering – finalising recordings, mixing techniques, mastering basics, professional workflows. |

Course Outcomes

- ★ Apply pre-production planning, session management and communication skills in recording sessions
- ★ Understand microphone types and placement, acoustic principles and signal flow
- ★ Operate analogue mixing desks including routing, patching and monitoring
- ★ Track, edit and export in Pro Tools 12
- ★ Apply basic dynamic, spectral and spatial processing techniques in mixing and mastering



/// Music & Sound Design for Experimental Gaming

You're curious about how sound shapes interactive experiences. Whether you're beginning your journey or expanding an existing practice, this course explores new approaches to music, sound design and storytelling across games, film and hybrid media. You'll discover how audio creates immersion, conveys emotion and guides players through interactive worlds. Working with contemporary tools and experimental approaches, you'll develop skills that cross boundaries between traditional composition, sound design and interactive audio.

This course is right for you if:

- ✓ You're curious about game audio or interactive sound design
- ✓ You're a musician or sound designer wanting to explore non-linear storytelling
- ✓ You're interested in how sound creates emotion in games and hybrid media
- ✓ You want to explore adaptive music and reactive sound systems
- ✓ You're ready to experiment with the intersection of sound, music and interactivity

Course Schedule

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| Week 1 | Introduction to interactive audio, exploring sound's role in games and hybrid media, fundamental principles of adaptive music and reactive sound design. |
| Week 2 | Compositional techniques for non-linear media, creating layered and modular musical systems, sound design for interactive environments. |
| Week 3 | Working with game audio middleware, implementing audio into interactive projects, spatial audio for immersive experiences. |
| Week 4 | Final project development, integrating music and sound into interactive contexts, presentation and critical feedback. |

Course Outcomes

- ★ Understand fundamental principles of interactive and adaptive audio for games and hybrid media
- ★ Create layered and modular compositional systems for non-linear storytelling
- ★ Design reactive sound for interactive environments and immersive experiences
- ★ Implement audio into interactive projects using contemporary workflows and tools
- ★ Develop creative confidence to explore the intersection of sound, music and interactivity



/// Mixing & Mastering Electronic Music

You've been producing electronic music and have tracks ready to take to the final stage of production. This course shows you how to elevate your mixes with the depth, clarity and warmth found in professional releases. Rather than prescribing formulas, we develop your critical listening skills and creative problem-solving abilities. You'll learn when and why to use tools, how to make confident mixing decisions, and develop your own approach to creating great sound. Working with both hardware and software in professional studios, you'll transform good tracks into finished productions.

This course is right for you if:

- ✓ You've been producing electronic music and have unfinished tracks needing refinement
- ✓ You understand the basics but your mixes lack the clarity and depth of professional releases
- ✓ You want to develop critical listening skills beyond following tutorials
- ✓ You're ready to work with professional hardware and software in real studios
- ✓ You want to learn when and why to use mixing tools, not just how

Course Schedule

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| Week 1 | Exploring revolutionary mixing trends, analysing techniques that changed music, developing critical listening skills, understanding when to break the rules. |
| Week 2 | Practical mixing techniques, dynamic processing, spectral processing, spatial mixing, hands-on practice in professional studios. |
| Week 3 | Advanced mixing workflows, working with stems, automation techniques, creating depth and clarity, refining your approach. |
| Week 4 | Mastering fundamentals, finalising tracks for release, understanding loudness and dynamics, professional presentation standards. |

Course Outcomes

- ★ Develop critical listening abilities to judge what a mix needs and make confident decisions
- ★ Understand when and how to apply mixing tools creatively rather than following formulas
- ★ Establish efficient workflows using both hardware and software for mixing and mastering
- ★ Create mixes with professional depth, clarity and warmth ready for release
- ★ Build a personal approach to mixing that serves your artistic vision



/// Advanced Sound Design

You've been producing electronic music seriously and you're ready to develop a stronger sonic identity. This course helps you expand your palette and break new ground in your productions. Working with advanced synthesis techniques, modular systems, granular processing and experimental approaches, you'll discover new sonic territories. Alongside a community of like-minded artists, you'll explore professional gear and develop workflows that push your creative boundaries. This is about finding your unique sound, not following prescriptive formulas.

This course is right for you if:

- ✓ You're an established producer wanting to develop a more distinctive sonic identity
- ✓ You feel your productions sound generic and want to break new ground
- ✓ You're curious about modular synthesis, granular processing and experimental techniques
- ✓ You want access to professional hardware you can't afford to own
- ✓ You're ready to stretch your capabilities and find your unique sound

Course Schedule

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| Week 1 | Advanced synthesis concepts, exploring modular systems, fundamental patching techniques, developing sound design workflows. |
| Week 2 | Granular synthesis, experimental sampling techniques, re-amping and external processing, combining analogue and digital approaches. |
| Week 3 | Creating complex patches, designing electronic drums and percussion, working with effects processors and stomp boxes, building functional setups. |
| Week 4 | Final project development, integrating advanced techniques into your productions, critical feedback sessions, defining your sonic identity. |

Course Outcomes

- ★ Work with modular and hardware synthesisers at an advanced level, understanding complex patching
- ★ Apply advanced synthesis techniques including granular processing and sample-based sound design
- ★ Process sounds with various effects and analogue gear, including re-amping and external processing
- ★ Combine various electronic devices in functional setups that support your workflow
- ★ Develop a clearer, stronger sonic identity that distinguishes your productions



/// Psychology of Creativity

You're a creative practitioner, coach, or someone deeply curious about creativity itself. This course explores evidence-based psychological theories of creativity through direct application rather than traditional lectures. You'll engage with topics hands-on, applying insights to your own creative practice. Through experiential activities, collaborative exercises and personal reflection, you'll discover how creativity develops across a lifespan, impacts wellbeing, and shapes communities. No previous psychology experience required—you'll find your own limits and apply practices matching your personal style.

This course is right for you if:

- ✓ You're a creative practitioner curious about the psychology behind your process
- ✓ You're a coach wanting evidence-based frameworks for supporting creative clients
- ✓ You want to understand flow, play and how creativity develops across lifespans
- ✓ You prefer experiential learning over traditional lectures
- ✓ You're ready to apply psychological insights directly to your creative practice

Course Schedule

The course alternates between workshop days (learning new topics, engaging activities, planning applications) and application days (creating in your own style, trying out new approaches). Topics include:

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| Weeks 1-2 | Developmental psychology of creativity, systems thinking about creative processes, flow and play in creative work, lifespan development perspectives. |
| Weeks 3-4 | Neuroscience of creativity, embodied creative practices, social psychology of collaboration, creating psychologically safe spaces, applying mindfulness to creative work. |

Course Outcomes

- ★ Use systems thinking to consider multiple developmental factors in your creative process
- ★ Harness flow and play in creative work while building skills confidence
- ★ Create and collaborate with more self-care, compassion and psychological safety
- ★ Implement neuro-aware and embodied practices in your creative processes
- ★ Articulate and foster the most meaningful elements of your own creative process

Entry Requirements and How to Apply

Entry Requirements: Age

We don't have an upper age limit, but we do have a minimum age: 18. To join us you must be 18 years old by the first day of your study programme.

Entry Requirements: Language

All our courses are taught in English and applicants must demonstrate a level equal to IELTS 6. We do not ask for official exam results, but we will assess the standard of English in your application and support materials. We do not require German language skills.

Entry Requirements: Education

No education requirement – only relevant experience for the intermediate and advanced courses.

Admissions Timeline

Summer Short Course applications are normally processed within 2 weeks.

Final deadline

29 May 2026 (subject to availability)

Multi-Course Discount

Enrol in both a Summer Short Course and a degree course with us within two years, and receive a discount of €500 off the total tuition fee.

Application Form

The Summer Short Course application form is just one page. You must submit your personal and contact details, as well as a short statement of motivation (250-300 words). If you're applying for one of our intermediate or advanced level summer courses, be sure to tell us about your previous experience with the subject and related software, if relevant.

Don't wait to create. See you this summer!

A group of people is sitting on a grassy bank by a lake at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright reflection on the water. A small boat is visible on the lake in the distance. The sky is a mix of blue and orange.

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