

catalyst

2026

MASTER OF ARTS

Creative Production (Music)

Reshape your creative practice through
artistic research

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Teaching Institution: Catalyst – Institute of Creative Arts and Technology

Final Award Title: Master of Arts

Location: Berlin

Mode of study: Full time (1 year) or Part time (2 years)

Language of instruction: English

Awarding Institution: Plymouth Marjon University

Overview

Reshape your music practice through artistic research

The Creative Production (Music) MA is a practice-led artistic research degree centred on exploratory music and sound practice. It sits between experimental music culture, artistic research and performance practice.

You define your project, develop your method and determine what to make and how to make it. The programme provides a clear but flexible framework for negotiated, self-directed learning: workshops, guest sessions, seminars and individual supervision support a sustained period of substantial creative work, while a diverse cohort of peers acts as collaborators, critics, audience and fellow travellers throughout.

The approach is iterative. You widen and deepen your frames of musical and conceptual reference, situate your work within current artistic discourse, and develop a personal research methodology that connects practice with critical reflection. The aim is not mastery of a given technique or medium but the development of a distinct artistic voice, pursued with rigour and supported at every stage.

This is not a studio engineering degree, a vocational production course or a genre-based music programme. It is postgraduate artistic research: demanding, self-directed and built around your own creative vision.

Designed for composers, sound artists, experimental musicians, improvisers, performers and interdisciplinary practitioners seeking structured freedom to develop their practice at postgraduate level, the programme draws students from a wide range of backgrounds. The central question it asks of each of them is a simple one: what will you use this time to create?



What is creative production?

Creative production is an intentionally broad term. Within music, it covers composition, recording, programming, performance, sound design, improvisation, instrument design, sound art, field recording, creative coding, spatial audio and interdisciplinary practice. For this programme, it refers to the iterative process of production and reflection, rather than any specific outcome or medium.

Your postgraduate journey - Five modules, one arc

The MA takes you through a cycle of imagination, creation, critique and growth through five main modules: Imagine, Contextualise, Investigate, Present and Synthesise. Together they form a complete arc from research proposal through to a final body of publicly presented work.

Imagine (Proposal)

→ Develop a detailed research proposal, a research contract and a work plan agreed between you and your supervisor. This is where your project takes its first real shape.

Contextualise

→ A comprehensive review and exploration of current practices within your field. You will critically examine existing concepts, literature, practices and methods, then place your own research in that context while identifying themes and trajectories for your own research.

Investigate

→ Go further in depth in one or more aspects of practice-based artistic research by diving deeper into activity relating to your own negotiated project's unique needs. You'll devise unique or iterative approaches and are expected to show significant development of some core elements of your project.

Present

→ Hone in on the creation, presentation and documentation of performance-based or other other public-facing work. You'll engage in practice-led research directly integrated into your creative professional practice; experimenting, observing, and refining your practices, techniques and methods in outward-facing, real-world contexts. This module bridges previous output with the final Synthesise module

Synthesise

→ For this final module you are required to engage in an extended and focused production period in order to bring your year's research and experience together into a Master's-level artistic project. This as a final piece (or pieces) of work, represents, in a tangible artistic form, the culmination of your prior learning, the research and artistic work undertaken

Module breakdown

1-Year (Full time)

Semester A		Semester B	Semester C
CRPM01 Imagine (30 CATS)	CRPM02 Contextualise (30 CATS)	CRPM03 Investigate (30 CATS)	CRPM05 Synthesise (60 CATS)
		CRPM04 Present (30 CATS)	

2-Year (Part time)

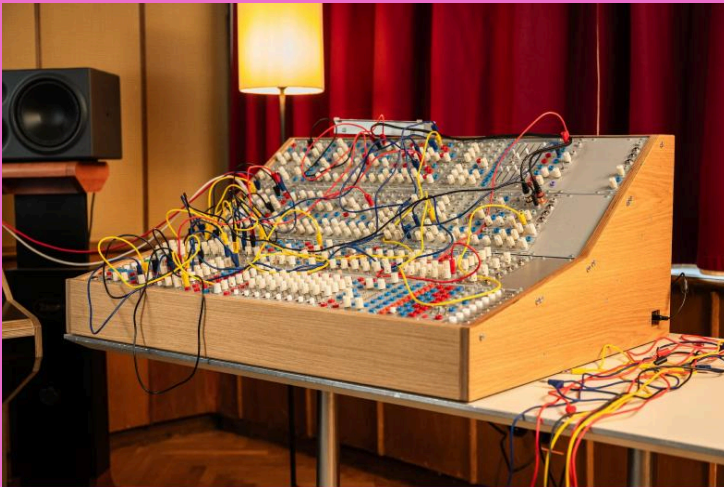
First year:

Semester A	Semester B	Semester C
CRPM01 Imagine (30 CATS)	CRPM02 Contextualise (30 CATS)	CRPM03 Investigate (30 CATS)

Second year:

CRPM04 Present (30 CATS)	CRPM05 Synthesise (60 CATS)
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Please note our credit system. Our courses are validated in the UK, meaning we use CATS (Credit Accumulation Transfer System), rather than ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System). Generally, the number is doubled: 30 CATS = 15 ECTS.



Supporting workshops and modules

Besides the guiding three pillars of Proposal, Investigation and Final Project, you will deepen your understanding of musical theory and practice in workshops. Rather than a one off event or single class, our workshops continue throughout the semester. They facilitate you approaching your project from multiple perspectives.

Creative Sound Practices

Three semester module

This is the practical backbone of the programme. In weekly sessions you will test unfamiliar tools, perform without over-preparation and push past your habits to discover new possibilities in your work. The aim is not perfection but curiosity: using play, collaboration and improvisation to feed directly into your individual research and artistic development.

Across the three semesters, you will take part in a mix of workshops, labs, discussions, performances and field trips. Themes move fluidly between modular synthesis, spatial sound, creative coding, field recording, improvisation and sound installation. Rather than mastering one technique, you will learn how tools, ideas and processes can themselves become creative materials, to be bent, hacked and reimaged. By embracing experimentation and collective feedback, you will build a personal methodology that connects technical exploration with critical reflection and helps shape your evolving artistic identity.

Professional Practice I

Half semester module

This opening module lays the groundwork for your studies, introducing you to the language, tools and mindset of artistic research. Through reading, discussion and hands-on experimentation, you will learn how to shape ideas into structured inquiries that bridge theory and practice. You will analyse case studies, encounter the work of other practitioner-researchers and test methodologies that fit your own creative process.

By the end of the module you will be able to:

- Design and execute independent inquiries that connect your creative vision with rigorous research methods
- Critically analyse your field, synthesising knowledge from diverse sources to situate your work within contemporary artistic and theoretical conversations
- Formulate and structure your research questions, aligning them with your artistic aims and desired impact
- Evaluate and apply creative and technical approaches that strengthen your process and advance your outcomes
- Use documentation, mapping and self-tracking techniques to assess your progress and identify new directions

Contexts of Listening

One and a half semester module

This is the theoretical context of the programme. It provides conceptual tools to analyse and articulate your creative practice, drawing on musicology, sound studies, philosophy and critical theory. Through collective listening, reading and dialogue, you will explore how sound and music exist within cultural, social and technological contexts and how these frameworks can inform, challenge and expand your own artistic thinking.

The class engages with thinkers including Pauline Oliveros, George Lewis, Jacques Derrida, Walter Benjamin, Rosi Braidotti, Roland Barthes, Nina Eidsheim, George Lipsitz, Isabella van Elferen, Jacques Attali, Judith Butler, Mark Fisher, Pierre Schaeffer, Suzanne Cusick and many others. Theory is treated as a living resource. Sessions evolve in response to student research, and you are encouraged to experiment with reflective writing, autoethnography and creative documentation, finding ways to let ideas resonate through your practice rather than sit alongside it.

By the end of the module you will be able to:

- Analyse how music and sound operate within cultural, social and philosophical frameworks
- Connect theoretical ideas with your own creative work, transforming reflection into artistic development
- Engage critically with the key thinkers and debates shaping contemporary sound and music studies
- Position your work within global artistic and theoretical conversations
- Select and apply diverse methodologies and perspectives in service of your own research aims

Professional Practice II

Half semester module

This module prepares you to share your work with the world. You will learn to communicate your ideas clearly, connect with professional audiences and chart the next stage of your artistic career: defining your identity as an artist, creating strong proposals and presenting your research across symposia, live performances, festivals and residencies. The module also covers the practical realities of sustaining a creative practice, from invoicing and licensing to self-promotion and the freelance ecosystem.

By the end of the module you will be able to:

- Articulate and showcase your work for festivals, residencies, funding bodies and academic contexts

- Create artist statements, portfolios and digital materials that express your identity and creative intent
- Write funding applications and manage the practical and financial realities of a freelance creative career
- Discuss your practice clearly and persuasively across different professional and public settings
- Identify opportunities for further collaboration, funding and study, and position yourself within the wider creative landscape

Beyond the workshops

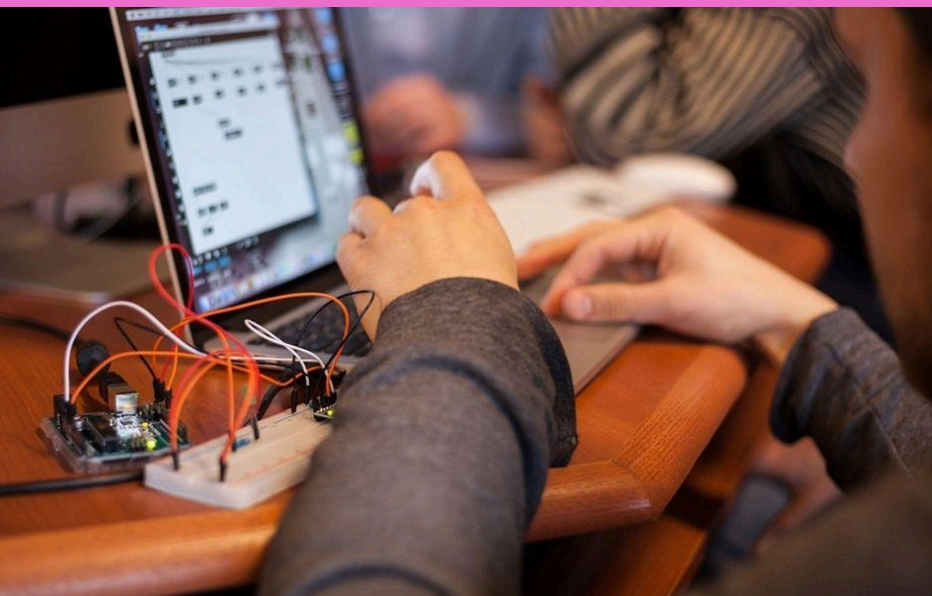
The MA is built on practice-based learning with a postgraduate dimension: greater autonomy, higher responsibility and genuine potential for research that contributes to your field.

You define and pursue your own research proposal. You lead self-directed projects that reflect your artistic vision. You engage in advanced critique with tutors and peers. You build a sustainable, research-informed practice through making, not through passive study.

Supervision

One-to-one and group meetings with your supervisor are the core of the programme. Individual sessions support your research and keep your project on track. Group sessions function as forums for project development, peer critique, production management and invited seminars.

The MA is supervised by Richard Scott (PhD), Renée Coulombe (PhD), Doron Sadja and Andrea Perkins (MFA): active composers, performers and researchers with combined breadth across experimental music, spatial sound, improvisation, electronic arts and artistic research methodologies.



Guest artists

Presentations from guest artists have included Nicolas Collins (composer, improviser, master hacker), Sabine Vogel (flute, electronics, composer, installation), Insa Langhorst (filmmaker, visual anthropologist), Bob Ostertag (synthesist, composer, improviser, theorist, activist), Kaffe Matthews (electroacoustic composer, sound artist), Sanja Starvic (live visual improviser), Marta Zapparoli (experimental sound artist, researcher), Kazuhisa Uchihashi (guitar and daxofone virtuoso).

Technology as artistic material

This programme treats tools as compositional material: to inspire and enable, and to bend, hack and reimagine. Students engage with modular synthesis, spatial sound systems, creative coding, DIY microphones, feedback systems, field recording and installation practice. The question is always what serves the work, not which platform to master.

When new technologies emerge, as AI has, students who have developed critical thinking about tools already have the framework to approach them. Not as novelty, not as threat, but as potential extension of creative possibility.

Annual MA Symposium

The MA Symposium is an annual public research event held at the Funkhaus each spring. Current students present their work alongside visiting researchers, international practitioners and PhD candidates from partner institutions across Europe. Sessions take place across two days and include presentations, performances, listening sessions and installations. The event is open to the public and free to attend, placing student research in genuine dialogue with the wider experimental arts community. Past themes have explored the relationship between artistic practice and place, collective listening, and the politics of sound.

“I think sometimes we engage in art in a very individualistic way, but discovering how this MA creates a sense of community... it has been a superb experience”

– Alexei Galar, composer, sound designer and Creative Production (Music) MA alumnus

Course structure and learning outcomes

1-Year (Full time) workshop structure

Semester A		Semester B	Semester C	
Creative Sound Practices			Professional Practice II	
Professional Practice I	Contexts of Listening			
Supervision				

2-Year (part time) workshop structure

First year

Semester A		Semester B	Semester C	
Creative Sound Practices			Professional Practice II	
Professional Practice I	Contexts of Listening			
Supervision				

2-Year (part time) workshop structure

Second year

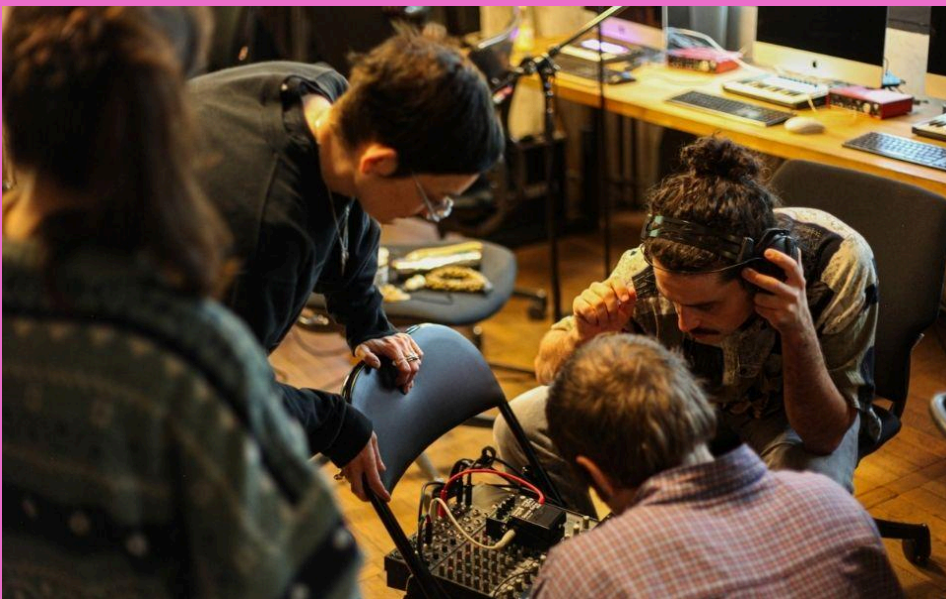
Semester A		Semester B	Semester C	
Creative Sound Practices (optional)			Professional Practice II	
Professional Practice I		Contexts of Listening		
		Supervision		

By the end of the course, you'll have:

- A completed body of artistic research work presented publicly
- A refined and clearly articulated artistic vision and methodology
- Advanced practice-led research skills applicable across any subsequent project or context
- The ability to position your work critically within wider artistic, cultural and technological conversations
- Professional skills for sustaining practice: funding applications, artist statements, portfolio presentation, residency applications
- A network of peers, supervisors and collaborators who continue to be part of your creative life after graduation
- Access to further doctoral study if that is your direction

“Most importantly, it is what you do with the resources that are given to you that makes each study experience unique. This is a space where [you] have a certain autonomy and can explore [your] creative desires. You're in charge!”

– Pablo Diserens aka Òtone, music producer and Creative Production (Music) MA alum





Learning by doing

The MA is built on practice-based learning with a postgraduate dimension: greater autonomy, higher responsibility and genuine potential for research that contributes to your field. It is a framework that challenges you to take creative risks while giving you the support to turn them into meaningful outcomes. You define and pursue your own research proposal, lead self-directed projects that reflect your artistic vision, engage in advanced critique with tutors and peers, and build a sustainable, research-informed practice through making rather than passive study.

You'll:

- Define and pursue your own **research proposal and plan**
- Lead **self-directed projects** that reflect your artistic vision
- Engage in **advanced critique** with tutors and peers to refine your ideas
- Build a **sustainable, research-informed practice**
- **Make connections for yourself** instead of gaining knowledge passively

A community of practitioners

You study alongside a small cohort of advanced practitioners from around the world: musicians, composers, sound artists, improvisers and interdisciplinary artists. Your peers are collaborators, critics and fellow travellers, functioning as both audience and sounding board throughout the year and beyond. MA students are also part of Catalyst's wider campus community. The campus brings together students from the School of Music and Sound, School of Film and Visual Media, School of Acting and School of Creative Human Development under one roof. Cross-disciplinary collaboration is part of how the building works, not a scheduled activity.

Expert guidance, support and peer network

You are supported by a team of practising artists, producers and researchers. They are not primarily educators: they are active professionals who bring current practice directly into the programme, ask difficult questions and offer honest feedback. One-to-one tutorials give you the space to reflect, set goals and keep your project on track.

Specialist music technicians are also part of your day-to-day experience, ensuring technology never holds back your creative work. They are available to help with:

- Advanced studio configurations for tracking, mixing or mastering
- Hybrid workflows integrating analogue gear and digital tools
- Microphone selection, signal chains and equipment recommendations
- Studio maintenance and troubleshooting
- Advice on gear, routing and acoustics



Berlin as your context and campus

The programme is based at Berlin's iconic GDR-era broadcasting complex on the banks of the Spree. The building now hosts events and provides studios for musicians from around the world, and Catalyst's campus occupies a significant part of it. MA students have access to over 30 recording and production spaces, from modular synth labs and live rooms to dedicated performance venues and editing suites, with fast-tracked inductions ensuring you can focus on your project from the start.

Because all four of Catalyst's schools share the same building, your next collaborator is often just down the hallway. You will be working alongside actors, filmmakers, visual artists and

writers. Cross-disciplinary exchange is part of how the campus operates, not an organised activity. The student-run Etikett Radio broadcasts from the campus and connects students and alumni to Berlin's wider broadcasting community through partnerships with Refuge Worldwide and Cashmere Radio.

Berlin is not incidental to this programme. The city's experimental music scene, from Atonal and CTM to small venue performances and artist-run spaces, is where your work will be tested and presented. Each year the programme engages with major experimental arts contexts including Atonal, CTM, Floating University and MANIFEST:IO. The annual MA Symposium is a public research event where current students present alongside visiting researchers and international practitioners, placing your work in genuine discourse with the wider experimental arts community.

Funding opportunities exist through Goethe Institut, artist foundations and international residency programmes. Berlin is one of the few cities where these resources exist in proximity to a working experimental music culture. That combination is part of what the programme offers.

“My favourite part of learning here was the access to the incredible studios and events. It helped uncover my creativity and explore different aspects of my musical and artistic journey.”

– Sofi Paez, pianist and Creative Production (Music) MA alumna

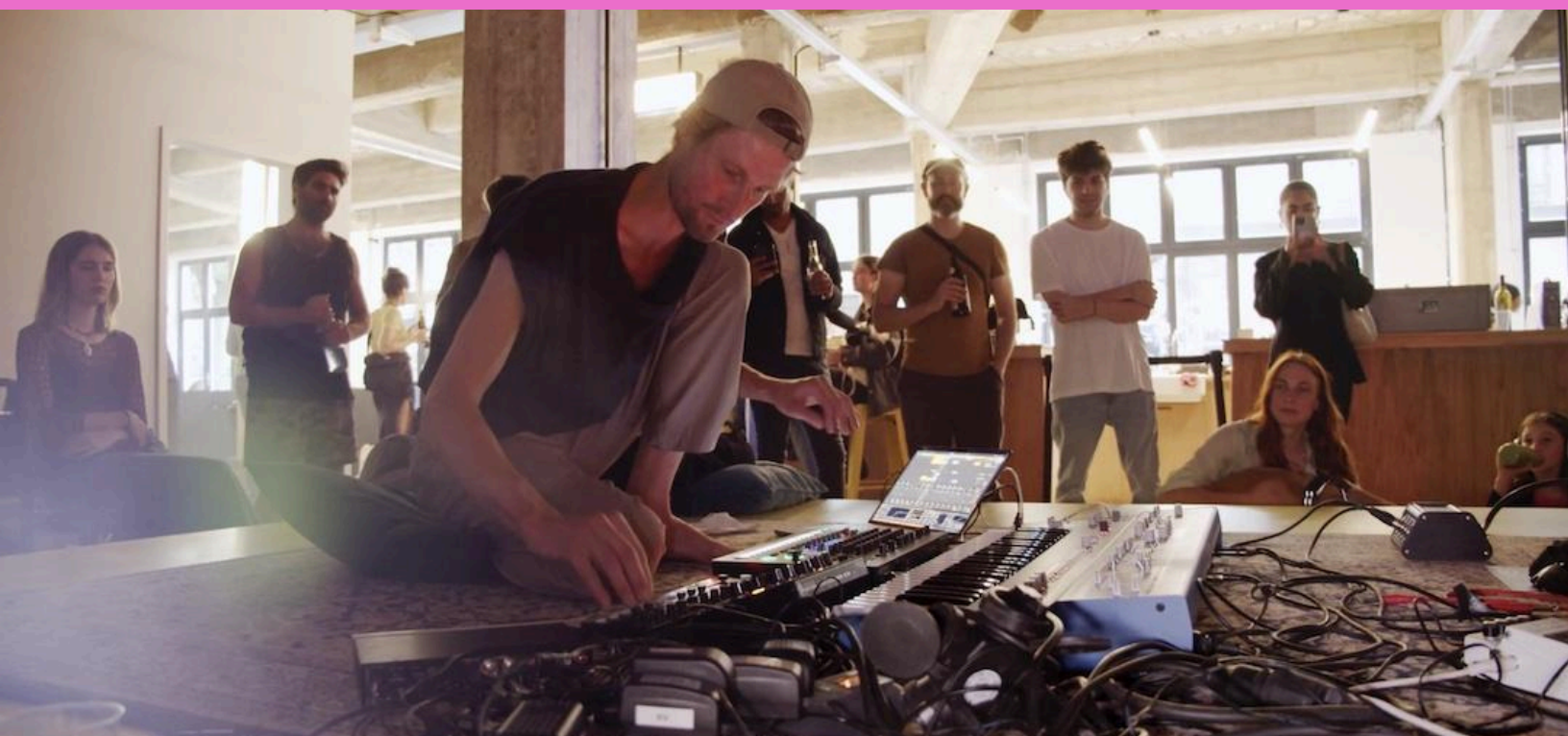
[[Click here to book a visit →](#)]



Our school also helps develop the soft-skills and mindset that help you grow sustainably as an artist. These soft-skills are some of the most valuable tools you'll gain while with us, and transferable to any challenge or creative direction you decide to pursue.

Alongside your academic and creative development, Catalyst offers a range of support services to help you navigate challenges, build confidence and stay creatively focused:

- **One-to-one counselling and coaching** – confidential sessions with qualified professionals to support emotional wellbeing, anxiety, creative blocks, conflict resolution and life transitions
- **Flourishing Fortnights** – immersive two-week workshop series focused on topics like creative collaboration, healthy boundaries, communication and emotional self-awareness
- **Self-Development & Leadership Course** – an optional deep dive into how you perceive yourself, others and your creative role in the world
- **Practical wellbeing support** – help accessing medical resources, therapy referrals, diagnosis pathways and other essential life services
- **Everyday check-ins** – a wellbeing team that's visible, approachable and part of the day-to-day campus life





Admissions Guide

Here's everything you need to take the next step in your application:

Get to know us better

Virtual Open Days → Get a virtual overview of what we're all about, held over Zoom.

In-Person Open Day → Get a first-hand feel of our school and educational programmes.

Campus Tours → Come see our facilities and creative spaces at one of our regular tours.

Virtual Taster Workshops → Join a programme-specific info event or masterclass

Admissions Open Hours → Book your one-to-one application support on-demand.

Admissions Guidance

1. **Course fees & payment plans**
2. **Early Enrolment Bonus – save €3,000 off total tuition**
3. **Additional funding opportunities**

4. Application deadlines & Visa requirements
5. How to apply
6. Contact us

1. Course fees & payment plans

We believe creative education should be accessible, transparent and free from hidden costs. Our tuition plans are flexible – you decide to pay monthly, per semester, annually or in full with discounts. Extended payment options let you spread costs beyond your programme.

Creative Production (Music) MA (Full-Time) Tuition Plans 2026-27				
Plan type - Full Time	Standard	€1,000 Early Enrolment Bonus	Payment Plan Duration	Notes
per Semester	€6,028	€5,528	1 year 2 instalments	Enrolment fee €895 per year applies
Annually	€11,693	€10,693	1 year	3% discount by paying each year upfront. Enrolment fee €895 per year applies
12 Instalments per Year	€1,088	€1,005	1 year	Enrolment fee €895 per year applies
Extended Yearly	€6,278	€5,778	2 years	Payments continue 1 year after graduation. No enrolment fee in final year
Extended Instalments	€565	€523	2 years	Payments continue 1 year after graduation. No enrolment fee in final year
Creative Production (Music) MA (Part-Time) Tuition Plans 2026-27				
Plan type - Part Time	Standard	€1,000 Early Enrolment Bonus	Payment Plan Duration	Notes
per Semester	€3,678	€3,428	2 years 4 instalments	Enrolment fee €895 per year applies
Annually	€7,134	€6,634	2 years	3% discount by paying each year upfront. Enrolment fee €895 per year applies
Total tuition upfront	€13,533	€12,533	One-time	8% discount by paying total tuition upfront. Enrolment fee €895 per year applies
12 instalments per year	€696	€655	2 years	Enrolment fee €895 per year applies
Extended yearly	€5,237	€4,903	3 years	Payments continue 1 year after graduation. No enrolment fee in final year
Extended instalments	€478	€450	3 years	Payments continue 1 year after graduation. No enrolment fee in final year

Enrolment fee

This non-refundable fee of €895 per study year is due before the start of each academic year and secures your place. No enrolment fee is charged in the post-graduation year if you choose

an Extended Payment Plan.

Extended payment plans

In addition to single or installment payment options, we offer Extended Payment Plans. This spreads tuition payments over an additional year, resulting in smaller monthly payments that continue for one year after graduation.

Enrolment confirmation & billing

- **Enrolment fee:** due within 14 days of receiving your offer.
- **Billing cycle:** tuition installments begin **1 July 2026** and are billed on the first of each month until your chosen plan ends.

2. Early enrolment bonus

Apply by our **priority deadline** to secure your place, save €1,000 off your total tuition and access visa support sooner.

- **Visa-required applicants:** apply by 28 February 2026
- **EU/visa-exempt or post-arrival applicants:** apply by 31 March 2026

3. Funding opportunities

As an accredited higher education provider, our students are eligible for a variety of national and international financial aid schemes. This includes the German state funding stream BAföG, which is open to citizens of Germany, EU countries and some non-EU citizens too. Depending on which country you are a citizen of, this may also open up funding from other programmes supporting further-education. **[Read more about the various funding opportunities on our website.](#)**

4. Application deadlines

Visa-required applicants

- Priority: 28 February 2026 (includes bonus & visa support)
- General: 30 April 2026 (subject to processing time and availability)

EU/visa-exempt or post-arrival applicants

- Priority: 31 March 2026 (includes bonus & guaranteed spot on preferred course)
- General: 5 June 2026 (granted on a rolling basis)

- Late: until 28 August 2026 (subject to availability)

Visa requirements

- **Visa-required:** If you require a visa before entering Germany (e.g. citizens of India, Brazil, Mexico, China, Turkey), you must apply at a German embassy before arrival. Our Visa Support Service (included in the enrolment fee) supports you with paperwork, appointments and timelines. Visa processing can take 3–6 months, so early application is essential.
- **Post-arrival visa:** If you're from a country that allows visa-free entry (e.g. USA, Canada, Japan, South Korea), you can enter Germany without a visa and apply for your student residence permit after arrival.
- **Visa-exempt (EU/EEA/Switzerland):** If you're a citizen of the EU, EEA or Switzerland, you don't need a visa or residence permit to study in Germany.

5. How to apply

Our application process is straightforward – just follow these seven steps:

1. **Check deadlines** – especially if you need a visa to enter Germany or financial support.
2. **Prepare your portfolio** – requirements vary by course, check our “How to apply” page.
3. **Submit your application** at catalyst-berlin.com/apply, including personal and educational details, a motivation statement, your portfolio and supporting documents such as transcripts or proof of language ability.
4. **Wait for our response** – we'll be in touch within around two weeks. Sometimes we'll ask for follow-up information or invite you for an interview. Keep an eye on your inbox.
5. **Confirm your place** – once you receive an offer letter, secure it by paying the enrollment fee within 14 days.
6. **Get ready for Berlin** – once your enrolment fee is paid, you're officially enrolled. Next you'll set up your payment plan, receive your welcome package and access preparation materials for your studies. We recommend finding accommodation as soon as you're sure that you're studying with us, and arriving one month before your classes begin.

Contact & resources

Reach out to our Admissions team by email at admissions@catalyst-berlin.com or book a call [here](#).