

**“I want to be
a composer”
PORTIA CONN**



PLEASE SEE THE DIPLOMA
SECTION (PAGE 20) FOR THE
CREATIVE AND MEDIA HIGHER
AND ADVANCED DIPLOMAS.

BTEC FIRST DIPLOMA IN MUSIC

1 year full-time, equivalent to 4 GCSEs at grade C or above

Are you a musician who has been playing for a year or two, and wants to develop your skills further? Are you interested in furthering your qualification profile, with a view to progressing to a higher level course of study? If so, the First Diploma in Music is for you.

This course is designed to develop a range of musical skills, while at the same time developing academic and personal skills that will enhance your employability and ability to progress to further study.

Course Units:

Study will combine both practical and theoretical elements, in a range of units including:

- Rehearsal Techniques for Musicians
- Understanding Music
- Exploring Musical Composition
- Exploring the Music Profession
- Producing a Musical Recording
- Planning and Creating a Musical Product
- Functional Skills: Information Technology and Application of Number

There is an opportunity to re-sit GCSE Mathematics or English for those who have achieved a grade D at GCSE.

Facilities:

- iMac computers running Logic music software
- Recording studios and live room
- Rehearsal rooms equipped for band work
- College performance spaces, access to off-site venues including Cox's Yard

Assessment:

A first diploma is a practical, work-related course. You learn by completing projects and assignments based on situations and demands relevant to working as a musician. By completing projects, you will gain grades for the various units, and an overall grade for the qualification is awarded at the end of the year. Attendance and application to all areas is essential for successful completion.

To Join the Course:

You will need to have at least:

- 2 GCSEs at grade D or above including English Language
- Prior to enrolling, all applicants will be required to demonstrate their musical skills in an audition

Mature students without formal qualifications who show a convincing level of musical skill, such that you will be able to manage the demands of the course, may join the course following a successful interview.

Further Opportunities:

- Progression (with an overall merit profile) on to Level 3 courses, e.g. BTEC National Diploma in Music/Music Technology
- Enter employment

BTEC NATIONAL DIPLOMA IN MUSIC

BTEC NATIONAL DIPLOMA IN MUSIC TECHNOLOGY

2 years full-time, equivalent to 3 A Levels

Are you interested in a career in music and do you want to increase your skills in playing, composing, recording and music technology? Do you want to study in a stimulating performing arts environment with a variety of professionals and practitioners? If so, then the BTEC National Diploma in Music or Music Technology is for you. These two courses offer a comprehensive music education for the practical contemporary musician.

BTEC National Diploma in Music:

This course is for students who want to develop their playing/band skills, and to take part in performance projects. It does include some training in the use of Logic software and studio techniques, but the primary focus is on band work, improvisation skills etc. It also includes composition, as well as standard musicianship units relevant to all music careers and to both music courses – music history, aural perception, music theory, music business etc. In other words, a bit of everything.

BTEC National Diploma in Music Technology:

This course is for students who already play, but are more interested in studio work 'on the other side of the desk'. You will get to use your playing skills, but in studio projects rather than gigs and shows. You will focus on composing using Logic and other software, and on completing a range of studio-based recording projects. You will also learn about operating live sound for performances, and explore the use of technology within performance. As with the other course, you will study standard musicianship units relevant to all music careers – music history, aural perception, music theory, music business etc.

Across both courses, you will develop important musicianship skills through working in groups, individual research and composition, and working in studio and live music environments. In addition to the BTEC itself, there are opportunities to complete related music qualifications (e.g. ABRSM Music Theory).

Facilities:

- Rehearsal rooms equipped for band work
- Purpose-built studios running industry-standard recording software

- In-college performance spaces
- Access to off-site performance opportunities

There is an opportunity to re-sit GCSE Mathematics for those who have achieved a grade D at GCSE.

Assessment:

A national diploma is a practical, work-related course. You learn by completing projects and assignments based on situations and demands relevant to working as a musician. By completing projects, you will gain grades for the various units, and an overall grade for the qualification is awarded at the end of two years. The qualification is the equivalent of three A Levels, so there is a considerable academic/written element to the coursework.

To Join the Course:

- A minimum of 4 GCSEs at grade C or above, which must include English Language and preferably Music and Mathematics
- A BTEC First Diploma in Music (or other relevant subject) with an overall merit profile, plus GCSE English at grade C or above
- A proven musical background. Prior to enrolling, you will be required to demonstrate your musical ability and your commitment to studying music, via an audition

Mature students without formal qualifications who show commitment to the subject area may join the course following a successful interview.

Further Opportunities:

- Progression to degrees or higher national diploma courses in subjects including: Performance, Production, Music and Media Applications, Sound Engineering, Music Business/Management, Teaching, Arts Administration etc. Career opportunities are greatly improved by taking this route.
- Enter employment as a performer, or find work in music retail.

Successful applicants who have Mathematics at grade D will be expected to re-take the qualification in their first year. If a student has a grade lower than D, they will be entered for the Functional Skills Application of Number qualification at Level 2.



GUIDANCE FOR MUSIC AUDITIONS

For the BTEC First Diploma and National Diploma Music courses, a certain level of musical ability is required in order for you to be able to meet the requirements of the course. You may be applying for a particular course, but it may be the case that a different course would suit you better. Musicians come in many shapes, sizes, and levels of ability and, through the audition process, we aim to guide you towards the course that will benefit you most, and on which you are most likely to achieve.

Performing:

For the audition, please prepare two contrasting pieces. We are looking for an awareness of different musical styles, so try to reflect this in your choice. They can be original compositions, or your own pieces. You may use backing tracks if you wish, and if you are singing/playing drums then this is recommended. We are also looking for convincing musicianship – attention to dynamics, interpretation, a developed instrumental/vocal technique and good timekeeping – and an ability to answer questions about the pieces you have performed e.g. time signature, key, chords involved, how you approached your interpretation etc. Drummers will be able to use our kits, but will need to bring snare, cymbals, bass pedal etc. Please provide your own sticks. Guitarists/bass players – bring your instrument, plus jackleads and effects if appropriate. We can provide a piano for pianists.

Other Musicianship Skills:

As well as playing, you will be asked to clap back simple rhythms, and to identify whether they are 4 or 3 in a bar; to sing pitches that are played to you; and to recognise the sounds of major and minor chords. You will also be asked to play a major scale on either keyboard or guitar. The above tests apply to all candidates, including drummers.

Written Work:

We would also like you to bring a written account of the pieces you have chosen to perform – write about why you chose them (musical reasons as well as personal taste, e.g. how the piece illustrates areas of your technique/ musical challenges etc) – and a summary of your musical experiences to date and hopes for the future. In addition to your qualifications, an offer of a place on one of the music courses will be based mainly on your performance and presentation at audition, so please make sure that you are organised and professional in your approach. Rehearse your material, think about your presentation, be ready to answer questions and demonstrate your knowledge. Remember, you are being judged on your attitude and behaviour in the rehearsal room as well as your musical ability.