


NORDOFF & ROBBINS

Master of Music Therapy (Nordoff Robbins): Music, Health, Society

Three thick, overlapping wavy lines in pink, orange, and blue flow horizontally across the middle of the page, creating a sense of movement and rhythm.

Prospectus

Validated by:

Goldsmiths
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Approved by:

hcpc health & care
professions
council

Welcome to the Master of Music Therapy (MMT) training programme

Music therapy is a rewarding career path for musicians who want to help people through their work. It requires compassion and commitment, as well as sharply honed listening and musical imagination, but in return it offers the chance to make a real difference in people's lives.

Choosing the right training programme is an important decision. There are multiple ways of thinking about music therapy so it's important to find a training programme that suits you – as a person, and as a musician.

Nordoff and Robbins has been training music therapists since 1974, and we are the UK's biggest music therapy employer, so we know what skills you'll need in your working life. Our services, training and research teams are closely linked to ensure that our internationally renowned, Masters-level MMT programme stays up to date.

Validated by Goldsmiths, University of London, it's a two-year, full-time course run from training bases in London, Manchester and Newcastle. Upon successful completion you will be eligible to apply for registration as a music therapist with the Health and Care Professions Council – the legal prerequisite for working in the profession in the UK.

This prospectus is intended to give you an overview of the programme. Please get in touch if you have any questions, or sign up for one of our open evenings. We look forward to seeing you!

Alison Hornblower,
MMT Programme Convenor



The Nordoff Robbins Approach

At Nordoff and Robbins we see music therapy as a form of social activism. By giving people the chance to express themselves, we challenge society's assumptions about illness, disability and social exclusion.

Our approach to music therapy is "music-centred". It's an interactive process that requires careful listening and considered responses, so you will need to be imaginative, adaptable and self-disciplined.

Music therapy is about accompanying people on a journey that may be unpredictable and, at times, uncomfortable. It draws on everything from improvisation to songwriting, listening to teaching, depending on the needs and abilities of each person.

This requires a high level of musical skill and a wide-ranging understanding of how music can affect people's mental and physical wellbeing.

Our training will help you pay careful attention to the music people make, both individually and in groups, and how they may experience this. We also provide supervision and musicianship workshops in groups of five or less to ensure that everyone gets focused tuition.

You will learn effective ways to work with people whose life experience, illness, disability or social exclusion makes it harder for them to participate in everyday activities. You will also develop musical skills to engage with people both individually and in communal settings, helping them to interact with others and explore their creative potential.

The programme is intended to be challenging, but it develops practical and personal skills to make a difference through music.

Nordoff and Robbins is the name of the UK charity providing this course. The Nordoff Robbins approach refers to the music-centred approach and research that we share with our sister organisations around the world.





How we teach

Each training base has its own tutors, who work as part of an integrated national team headed by the Programme Convenor, who regularly teaches in all three bases. These are the main types of tuition you will receive:

Seminars

About 30% of your time will be spent in groups of up to 15 discussing:

- The underpinning theoretical basis for music therapy.
- Knowledge from related disciplines such as psychology, musicology, sociology, culture and health studies.
- Knowledge related to the experiences and development of the people we work with.
- Presentation skills to communicate the impact of your work.
- Practical skills for setting up and developing your work.
- Talks by visiting speakers, including those with lived experience.
- Group work.

About half of your time will be spent in groups of up to five focusing on:

- Supervision sessions, where you reflect on your work at your music therapy placement by listening to/watching recordings with a tutor and thinking about how you could serve each person better. This includes practical musical workshops.
- Communicative and social musicianship workshops, where you will explore a wide range of musical styles, genres and techniques. We don't expect you to become an expert in any of these – rather, the aim is to stretch your musical imagination and challenge your musical limitations, so that you have the practical tools you need to work in whatever way is most useful to the people you meet in your future career.

Out and about:

- Each week you will also spend a full day on placement, learning to work as a music therapist through well-supported practical experience.
- Twice a year, students from all our bases come together for Intensive Weekends, which enable us to blend learning, music-making and socialising, as well as offering some invaluable experience of working in large groups.

In return, we ask you to be as open as possible with each other and with us so that together we can cultivate a genuine community of learning. This can feel exposing, both personally and musically, but it is essential to the development of understanding and therapeutic imagination.

How the course is structured

The programme is divided into three parts of unequal length over two years, during which you will:

- Spend two consecutive teaching days a week engaging in workshops, seminars and supervision.
- Spend one day a week on a work placement at a school, hospital, hospice, within mental health services or other setting (there are three placements throughout the entire course).
- Attend four Intensive Weekends in training bases around the country.

In addition, we expect you to allocate one day a week for private study.

Part One

One term – September to December

Module 1: Foundation Module

A fully integrated foundation module introduces:

- The core concepts of the Nordoff Robbins approach.
- The practicalities of working in a professional environment.

During your Part One placement, you will be apprenticed to an experienced music therapist. You'll spend a full working day with them each week, during which you'll observe them, joining in as appropriate with the aim of eventually facilitating your own sessions under their guidance. You'll also learn and discuss their ways of working in that particular setting.

Part Two

Three terms – January to December

Module 2a: Music Therapy Competencies and Knowledge

This equips you for the practice of music therapy, including:

- Gaining and consolidating basic skills in communicative and social musicianship.
- Learning to make productive use of supervision.
- An introduction to key literature, resources and concepts relating to the Nordoff Robbins approach.

Module 2b: Professional Competencies and Knowledge

This equips you to practice music therapy in a variety of contexts and supports the development of:

- Understanding of people's conditions and life situations.
- Effective co-operation with other practitioners and professionals.
- Working in different types of organisations with different values.
- Communicating your work effectively in different contexts and to different audiences.
- Essential academic skills, including an introduction to research.

Module 2c: Music, Health, Society: Practical and Critical Perspectives

This equips you with a broad practice-based understanding of how music therapy fits with other forms of provision, including:

- Awareness of where music therapy fits into the broader arts and health spectrum.
- Public policy relating to the arts and health.
- Thinking about community and society and their role in people's experience of health, illness, disability and exclusion.
- Developing the skills to maintain, develop and extend music therapy in the ever-changing work environment.

You will have one day at placement a week throughout part two of the programme. Over this time, you will work towards offering a music therapy service that is appropriate to the institution and its service users.

A member of staff will be assigned to support you as you develop the ability to work independently, display initiative and clear thinking around the value of music within the setting, as well as a real grasp of theoretical learning. Back at the training base, your work will be supervised each week and there will be regular communication between your placement supporter and your tutors.

Part Three

Two terms – January to July

Part Three is divided into three modules: 3a, 3b and 3c. These correspond to the modules in Part Two, but with a higher degree of understanding and competence expected, including the opportunity for you to conduct your own small research project.

At this stage, you will be taking the all important final steps to qualification, where you will have to demonstrate the understanding, skills and competencies you need to work as a professional music therapist.

For your Part Three placement you will get the opportunity to set up a music therapy service in a new setting. We will support you throughout the process, but you will have the creative freedom to make the placement your own, choosing the location and the client group you wish to work with – subject to our approval and your fulfilling of all course requirements.

The aim is to give you the chance to demonstrate the value of music therapy in a new setting.

Our Graduates

Viv Thompson

"The MMT training programme has been the best educational experience of my life, because it's about so much more than just learning what's required to be a qualified music therapist.

So much of being a music therapist is about helping the people we work with connect to their innate musicality, and one of the many unforeseen offshoots of the course is that your own relationship with music undergoes a massive upgrade. This has helped me reconnect with my 16-year-old self, who would write and play music innocently without the pressures of being a professional musician. I am a better person, and a better musician, for it.

I enjoyed how heavily weighted the practical musical elements of the course were, and how purposeful every aspect of the teaching was. The tutors have a genuine dedication to wanting the best for their students. They know an amazing truth about how music can help others that they wholeheartedly want you to understand.

Learning the Nordoff Robbins approach to music therapy was a privilege and was a fundamental moment in my life that I will treasure forever."

Stella Hadjineophytou

"The MMT training programme exceeded my expectations in every way. The course offers a fantastic range of practical experience through weekly placements, which are supported with plenty of group supervision sessions. Alongside this, group music-making sessions help to develop musical skills such as singing, instrument-playing, improvisation, composition, and listening. The seminars provided me with a strong understanding of theoretical frameworks and opportunities for thought-provoking and challenging discussions which encouraged introspection and critical thinking.

The course tutors bring phenomenal knowledge, energy, and passion for music therapy to every aspect of the programme. They are incredibly supportive and responsive, and the bespoke teaching style nurtures each trainee's unique musical and personal strengths.

For me, one of the best aspects of the course was the emphasis on music as a force for social justice, advocacy, and celebration of people and community, and I am grateful to represent these themes in my work now as a music therapist. I also value the range of skills I developed in such a short space of time, such as presenting, researching, writing, and developing music therapy services from start to finish.

In addition to graduating from the course feeling fully equipped to become a professional music therapist, I feel I have grown in my musicianship, my professionalism, and my capacity for compassion and self-reflection. I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to train as a music therapist with Nordoff and Robbins and wholeheartedly recommend the MMT programme to prospective trainees."



Available support

Many of our students are professional musicians and teachers with busy working schedules. Our flexible programme means you can continue to earn a living while you study. We offer:

- A choice of training locations: London, Manchester or Newcastle.
- Convenient placement locations. As the UK's largest single employer of music therapists, we have a huge national network to tap into when organising placements.
- A flexible study timetable. Each week you will spend two consecutive days at your teaching base with a day on placement and a day for private study.
- Fully equipped teaching rooms with a broad range of instruments, recording and AV equipment.
- A stock of core texts at each training base. In addition, texts from our specialist music therapy library in London are available at short notice for students elsewhere.
- Access to the library at Goldsmiths, University of London, including remote access to the electronic library, a huge resource that contains most of the relevant journals and other e-resources you will need.
- Access to The Hub, our student portal for teaching materials. Here, you can submit assignments, use the designated private study area, and connect with other students and tutors.
- The chance to become part of the Nordoff and Robbins community. Wherever you are based, you will be welcomed into our local and national family and given opportunities to join journal clubs, music-making sessions, organisation-wide events and fundraising activities.

Opportunities for career progression

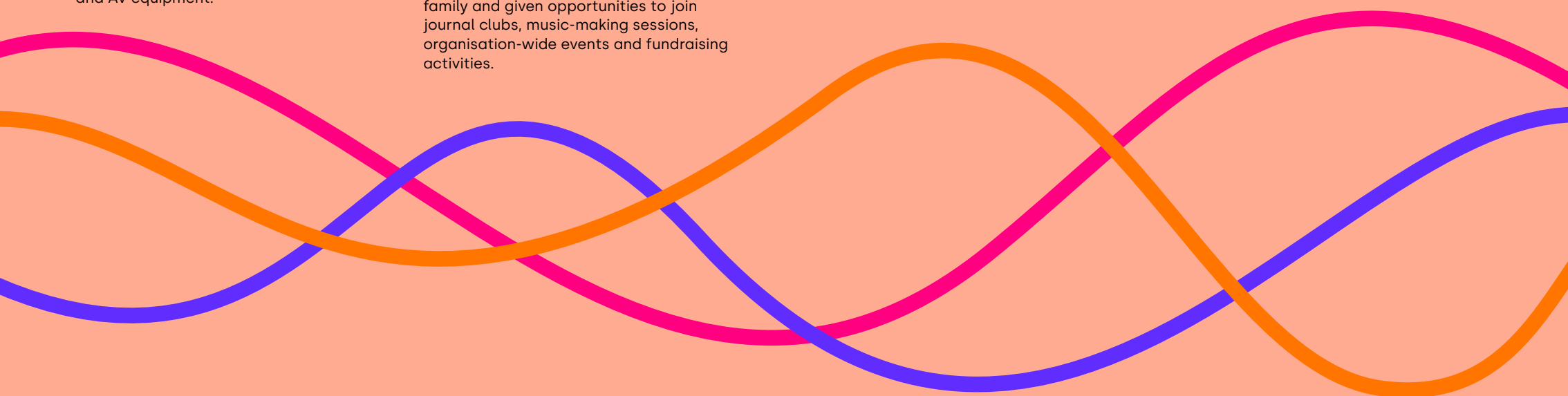
We and the wider music therapy community understand that it is important to support the development of newly qualified music therapist. The BAMT run a newly qualified music therapist development programme and we run our Graduate Employment Scheme (GES), which offers new MMT graduates an opportunity to take a paid role for 1 year within the charity.

The exact number of available roles (and their geographical locations) varies from year to year, and interested graduates are invited to apply competitively for the roles that are available that year. GES decision making is completely separate from the training programme, and a place on the training programme does not guarantee a place on the GES.

Our graduates also work across a wide range of education, health, community and social services, while some work in a self-employed capacity and others set up their own businesses.

There are also opportunities for qualified music therapists to specialise in research or, with more experience, to take up teaching, supervisory or managerial roles.

We give you the tools you need to take your career in the direction you choose.



Who are we looking for?

We welcome applications from musicians of all ages and from all backgrounds. Life experience, and especially experience working with people in a variety of situations, is an advantage. You don't have to be classically trained, and you don't need to be able to read musical notation. But you do need a good ear, strong musical awareness, a readiness to step outside your comfort zone, and the ability to accompany someone and lead them in a new musical direction. This requires a blend of personal and musical skills, as well as the ability to think independently and write effectively.

In your application, we want you to show us that you are:

- A competent musician. We don't require you to have taken any grade exams, as we judge your musicianship, and your capacity for musical companionship with other people, at audition. However, a rough bench-mark is around Grade 8 or equivalent standard on your first instrument. If this is not a harmony instrument, then you'll also need to play a harmony instrument to around Grade 6 or equivalent standard. A good sense of practical harmony – such as being able to accompany someone singing – is an advantage.
- Capable of working at Master's level. You will need to be able to think critically about things you read and hear, as well as your own experiences. A Bachelor-level degree should prepare you for this, although we also assess this in the interview part of the audition. If you don't have a Bachelor-level degree, you will need to demonstrate this skill to us in some other way. We can advise you on this if required.

- Experienced in working with people who might come to music therapy, for example, people living with dementia, people who have experienced brain injury, or people at risk of social exclusion. Working as a music therapist is rewarding but demanding, so it's important that you have some experience of working with the different groups who might access music therapy. You can then make an informed decision about whether it's right for you. Your experience can be professional, personal or voluntary, and we will ask you about it in the audition.
- Passionate about making music with people. Successful applicants will have a long history of this, be passionate about what music and music-making have to offer people, and be able to articulate this clearly.
- Well informed about music therapy and the Nordoff Robbins approach. We want to be sure that you have thought honestly about whether this is the right choice for you, and how it might challenge you in various ways. You can gain this information from reading around the subject, and there is a suggested pre-application reading list on our website. We will ask you about this in the audition.
- Open to having your musical habits and assumptions questioned, to taking musical risks in front of others, and to learning from others from very different musical backgrounds.





How to apply

Complete the electronic application form at nordoff-robbins.org.uk/mmt-online-application. You'll be asked to upload video recordings, and there's also a medical reference form for your doctor.

We accept applications all year round, but we advise you to apply by 20 January to be considered for the first round of auditions for entry the following September.

If we don't fill all our places at the first round of auditions, we will then consider applications submitted after this date.

**For more information,
take a look at the training section of our website,
nordoff-robbins.org.uk/training**

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