

This course overview provides a summary of the BA (Hons) Acting programme as offered from September 2023. Please note that whilst the information reflects the programme offered to date, it may be subject to amendment and change in future years. Students are always consulted on such change and details are made available to applicants holding offers. Each year of the course is worth 120 credits. In order to progress through each year students will *normally* have to pass all modules.

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Acting Methods 20 credits	Acting Projects 30 credits	Bridge 20 credits
Recorded Media 1 20 credits	Voice, Speech and Text [Part 2] 20 credits	Public Performances 1-2 40 credits
Voice, Speech and Text [Part 1] 20 credits	Movement [Part 2] 20 credits	Public Performances 3-4 40 credits
Movement [Part 1] 20 credits	Foundation Studies 2 20 credits	Public Performance 5 or Self-Led 3 20 credits
Foundation Studies 1 20 credits	Recorded Media 2 20 credits	
Self-Led 1 10 credits	Self-Led 2 10 credits	
Acting Genres 20 credits		

Year 1

Acting Methods

Credits: 20

The module has two components:

1) Approaches to Acting

Assessment: 40% Continuous Assessment

Through several weeks of practical class work, the student will use improvisation and exercises as a tool to enable the actor to build an awareness of connection, space, impulse, bravery, truth, imagination and generosity.

The student will explore the fundamental concept of acting from “self” and what that means for them both as an individual and ensemble member.

2) Approaches to Text and Character

Assessment: 60% Continuous Assessment

Through several weeks of practical class work and scene exploration, the student will explore the basic principles and techniques utilised by professional actors in the understanding and creation of a role for performance.

Using post-Stanislavskian methodologies, the student will investigate their own human behaviour and later the playwright’s text to facilitate the creation of believable, dynamic characters.

Recorded Media 1

20 credits

Assessment: 100% Rehearsal and filming of scenes in a professional environment

A series of practical classes over the course of five weeks beginning with an introduction to the fundamental skills required for performing on camera - through critical analysis of different screen acting styles and practical experimentation in the studio. Using text and improvisation, the student becomes aware of the characteristics of his/her own voice and image and goes on to discover its potential.

This is followed by the rehearsal and production of a short scene in which the skills acquired through previous weeks are tested under conditions which approximate normal industry practice.

Voice / Speech / Text [Part 1]

Credits: 20

Assessment: 30% Preparation and Personal Practice, 40% Voice and Text, 30% Group Singing

The module starts with group classwork where the physiological, psychological, and imaginative processes of speaking are explored through practical exercises, observation, and discussion.

Practical understanding and application of how to prepare and maintain a healthy, efficient, and expressive use of voice are demonstrated through practice toward the middle of the year.

Subsequent classes build on these fundamentals in the same manner, applying them more specifically to text and to the individual actor’s needs with the addition of one-to-one tutorials. Application of the voice work to text and their creativity with language are developed and demonstrated in a sharing of a piece of text.

Simultaneously, student will engage in group singing classes following a parallel scheme of work where the emphasis is on physical skills, singing technique, and the structure of sound in order to develop the student’s confidence and musicianship when singing.

Students will be given the opportunity to integrate basic singing technique through group and chorus work in class and through a regular sharing of work each term.

Independent preparation, singing exercises and rehearsals form a key part of the development of the student's voice.

Movement [Part 1]

Credits: 20

Assessment: 40% Preparation and Personal Practice, 60% Communicating Body

This module establishes the body as a legible and "writeable" text to be investigated through artistic, physical, psychological, and imaginative stimuli in practical classwork, observation, and discussion and through one-to-one and independent practice.

It begins with a personal exploration of applied anatomy, which will explore habitual body use and develop a more integrated, fluid and responsive body able to fulfil the needs of the actor.

As the work continues the student will integrate the individual with the ensemble and in relationship to others, as well as to a range of materials and ideas.

Foundation Studies 1

Credits: 20

Assessment: 50% Presentation Reflective Dialogue, 50% Presentation Key Practitioners

Foundation Studies is a term used to describe an ongoing series of practical and theoretical sessions which are designed to orientate the students towards the world of professional acting. Much of this module is assimilated by applying the strategies developed to the larger course. This module has three components:

1) Contextual Studies 1

A series of seminars will explore a number of theatre practitioners and theorists whose work has significantly changed existing theatrical and dramatic forms, conventions, and practice. The emphasis is on 'active learning' with students taking responsibility for solo and small group research projects which are then presented to the rest of the group.

2) Professional Lab 1

A series of practical sessions that are designed to provide a toolkit of techniques and skills to complement and feed the actor's process.

3) Reflective Practice 1

This module explores a wide range of topics related to what it means to be a drama student and actor. Sessions will engage in interactive and practical workshops which explore the notion of who they are and how they relate to each other as drama practitioners.

Self-Led 1

Credits: 10

Assessment: 100% Performance of a self-authored work

This module is designed to give students an introduction to key aspects of performance making. The classes in year 1 focus on literary approaches to self-led work, inviting students to explore their practice as writers.

This majority of the module explores the artistic craft of writing. Through a series of practical workshops and group discussions, students will develop their own authorial voice and begin to put it into practice through writing, developing and sharing their own unique performance piece, which will be performed and assessed at the culmination of the process. Students will learn how to ask pertinent questions and gather useful feedback from their peers when developing their work and sharing it informally throughout the module, taking responsibility for their own development.

Students will learn about traditional narrative forms; autobiographical performance; the ethics of telling someone else's story and consciously apply this learning to their writing. Tutors will signpost students to a diverse selection of contemporary plays and performances accessible through digital and live platforms. Students are encouraged to develop confidence in articulating their own critical response to other people's work through group discussion.

They will also develop rudimentary production and directing skills to bring the piece to life for an audience.

Acting Genres

Credits: 20

Assessment: 50% Naturalism: Rehearsal and sharing of scenes from a play, 50% Epic: Rehearsal and sharing of work in progress

This module builds upon discoveries made in Acting Methods, allowing the students to further explore the methods developed in the context of key stylistic performance movements in the fields of acting and is divided up into two components.

1) Naturalism

Through a series of practical classes and rehearsals and using dramatic texts from 19th and 20th century naturalistic writers, students are encouraged to explore the ideas of "Naturalism" "Realism" and "Period Drama" in relation to their acting.

The student will explore not only the creation of a role but also of the world of the play and their character's journey within it, including the role of research in the actors craft and consideration of the relationships found within the play.

A sharing of work with the rest of the group and staff enables the student to explore the nature of "truth" within "fourth wall" performance.

2) Epic

Through a series of practical classes and exercises this component invites students to extend their emotional, vocal, and physical energy, range and power - exploring the difference between "truthful" and "normal" behaviour.

Material is likely to include a range of epic, political and stylised texts that ask the student to step beyond conventional narrative forms and naturalistic performance styles.

Year 2

Acting Projects

Credits: 30

Assessment: 33% Shakespeare: Rehearsal and performance of a verse scene, 33% Collaborative Piece: Creation and performance of a piece of accessible drama, 34% Rehearsal and performance of performative scenes.

The module is designed to build upon and expand the skills introduced and explored in Acting Methods and Acting Genres.

Shakespeare: A series of group classes, observed scene work and rehearsal calls where the context of Shakespeare's plays, the means of analysing and realising the text, and the relationships to other acting methodologies are explored leading to the rehearsal and performance of a selection of scenes in verse.

Collaboration: A series of practical classes and rehearsals which explore the creation of a piece of work, through a devising methodology, that seeks to focus on collaboration between artists and working as an ensemble. This will be a collaboration between acting students and those from other disciplines, most notably music. The project will lead towards a presentation of a short piece to an invited audience.

Performative: Through a series of practical classes and rehearsals and using period and contemporary texts, the student is encouraged to explore the specific demands placed upon the actor in a heightened performative context. Particular regard is given to the observation and appreciation of the actor/audience relationship and to the social conventions of the period where class, status and gender play a part. Using modern and period comedy, heightened text, contemporary drama and group song, the student will explore the skills required for greater "theatricality," virtuosity, and bravura in acting.

Voice, Speech and Text [Part 2]

Credits: 20

Assessment: 30% Acting through Song, 60% Voice, Speech and Text Appraisal, 10% Dialect Study

This module is designed to build upon and enhance the skills introduced and explored in Voice, Speech and Text part 1.

Voice: This component starts with group classwork where the physiological, psychological, and imaginative processes of speaking are refined through practical exercises, observation, demonstration, and discussion.

The use of language is critically explored through engagement with a range of demanding texts in differing styles and performance conditions.

Increasingly through the year students are expected to undertake independent work in support of their learning, alongside one-to-one tutorials addressing specific needs.

A series of informal sharings will take place where students and staff can map progress through the year, culminating in the presentation of a programme of text before an external assessor.

Accent and Dialect: Alongside this work students will study a range of accents appropriate to their casting, using these opportunities to learn how to analyse and reproduce an accent independently.

Singing: Simultaneously, the students will undertake a series of individual sessions which seek to consolidate and strengthen the student's singing technique whilst developing their individual repertoire. There is particular focus on the singing actor and how to communicate a narrative through song.

This work culminates in a week-long intensive of practical sessions in which the student explores the demands of communicating character and situation through the demands of text and score leading to the presentation of a solo to staff and students on the course.

Movement [Part 2]

Credits: 20

Assessment: 50% Style and Form, 50% Movement Practice

The module is designed to build upon and enhance the skills introduced and explored in Movement part 1.

This begins with group classwork where the physiological, psychological, and imaginative processes of moving are connected and refined. The use of the body is critically explored through engagement with a range of demanding movement and dance styles from different traditions, practices and performance conditions.

This module progressively engages the actor as an individual, a partner and as part of an ensemble and chorus. A series of small-scale showings will take place to map their progress through the year.

Foundation Studies 2

Credits: 20

Assessment: 33% Mock interview, 34% Mock Audition, 33% Pitch

This module has three components:

1) Contextual Studies 2

Continuing from work undertaken in Contextual Studies 1, students will be invited to explore further the conventions of drama, particularly through exploration of period, genre, medium and their associated movements, practitioners and works. They will also develop their knowledge of the systems and functioning of the contemporary drama industry.

2) Professional Lab 2

Builds on the work of last year by focusing on approaches to gaining employment, chiefly through audition technique. Students experiment with appropriate strategies, techniques, and establish an overview of the audition processes they are likely to encounter in theatre and recorded media. Students will be asked to take part in auditions held by professional casting directors.

They will also address play reading and discussion of a modern canon of plays to develop greater confidence in handling text through enhancing their understanding of how playscripts are constructed and extending their appreciation of the concept of authorial content. This will broaden the student's exposure to the dramatic canon by exposing them to plays which have significance in the development of modern drama, improve their sight-reading skills through script in hand

performances and give a broad context to the history, geography, sociology and politics of the plays presented.

3) Reflective Practice 2

The aim of the module is to build on the reflective work of Year 1 and deepen reflective practice as an autonomous and self-sustainable practice. With a special focus on their Self-Led work, the student will also place themselves and their learning into a wider critical context, looking at the ethics and purpose of the artist and their role as a cultural citizen within the arts and wider community. The gap between actual and ideal practice will be explored, enabling the student to consider how they wish to navigate through the industry.

This component also encompasses the Creative Forum which gathers students and staff together to discuss the content, themes, impact and ethics of potential production material proposed by staff and cohort.

Recorded Media 2

Credits: 20

Assessment: 50% Film-shoot, 50% Radio Play

The module is designed to build upon and enhance the skills introduced in Recorded Media 1:

Acting for Screen: A series of practical classes run over the course of five weeks beginning with a reintroduction to the fundamental skills required for performing on camera before extending to an exploration of film acting, script analysis tools, voice and movement, green screen work, & motion capture amongst others.

This is followed by the rehearsal for and production of a short scene in which the skills acquired through Acting for Screen 2 are tested under conditions which approximate normal industry practice.

Audio: A series of classes where the techniques required for recorded audio performance - through critical analysis of professional broadcasts and practical experimentation in the studio – are acquired and developed. Aspects of microphone technique, solo and ensemble work, preparation of texts, good studio practice, lifting the text from the page, truthful delivery and creating character and mood are explored through genres of radio drama, commercial voiceover, narration, and gaming amongst others.

The component culminates with the recording of a piece of radio drama in a professional studio and with a professional crew.

Self-Led 2

Credits: 10

Assessment: 100% performance of a self-authored work

This module is designed to further develop and expand the skills explored in Self-Led 1.

It explores new approaches to making dramatic work, where students develop greater insight into the skills and autonomy required for generating their own project. The work may involve both writing and non-literary approaches to making new work.

In part two, students are expected to display a greater command and authority over the material used such as non-linear narrative forms and styles, whilst the material itself should necessitate a significantly higher level of skill and curiosity about the world around them than that required in part one. The student is encouraged to consider the effect their material will have on the world, making it socially engaged.

Students undertake research, rehearsal and production in order to perform a self-generated piece that makes full use of the training undertaken in year 2 for their training. Students will normally be expected to present their work as a live performance or digital submission, culminating in a piece of no less than 25 mins for theatre / 10 mins for film / 15 mins radio.

Year 3

Bridge Project

Credits: 20

Assessment: 100% Rehearsal and Performance of a play

A rehearsal and production process which builds and links learning from previous acting projects and skills sessions by applying them to detailed work on a complex text within a rehearsal environment. Acting, movement, voice and other staff support the process to ensure integration of the work.

Emphasis will be placed on understanding the process and working with the ensemble, including the responsibilities of the professional actor and their role alongside the director, and other departments such as stage management, lighting, sound and design.

The process will culminate in a short run of the play in front of an invited audience.

Public Performance 1-2 and Public Performance 3-4

Credits: 40

Assessment:

50% Public Performance 1, 50% Public Performance 2, 50% Public Performance 3, 50% Public Performance 4

Students work with a range of professional and in-house directors in the production of four consecutive performances – each of which entails the rehearsal and performance of a full-length play in front of a public audience. Students will encounter a variety of roles, styles, and venues and exacting critical scrutiny through which they can incrementally develop their craft and ready themselves for professional work.

Productions will involve a range engagement activity such as workshops for schools and audience groups, question and answer sessions, and research tasks preparing the student for the role of facilitator and socially responsible artist.

Work with Drama therapists, in formalised feedback and through creative forum on each production and season of work enables students to continue to reflect on their journey and wellbeing as an artist.

As other professionals visit to see productions students get to work with a range of industry professionals such as casting directors, agents, established actors and others to make them industry ready.

Public Performance 5 or Self-Led 3

Credits: 20

Public Performance 5: NEW

Assessment: 100% Development, rehearsal and production of a new play for a public audience

Students work with a professional writer, dramaturge, and director within the process of a commissioned play. They will interrogate and workshop the writing over the course of the year before, entering an intensive five-week rehearsal process where the piece is rehearsed and staged. They will then perform in Cardiff before touring to a London venue.

The students are expected to contribute fully to the process, engaging college teams for support, promoting their work to industry and thinking proactively about the work's place within the community and audiences it is performing to.

OR

Self-Led 3

Assessment: 100% Public production of original work

This module is elective and builds on the work of the Self-led modules in Year 1 and 2.

Students select, in consultation with tutors, an area of performance to explore and make into a new piece of work. They will place themselves in the central performance role, though they may collaborate as they see fit. The piece will be made for theatre performance.

They will then be able to develop, rehearse and perform their piece to a public audience independently, using carefully employed staff mentorship over a sustained period before an intensive 5-week period of rehearsals leading to a series of performances in a small-scale venue and production, opposite the NEW writing season.

The students are expected to contribute fully to the process, engaging college teams for support, promoting their work to industry and thinking proactively about the work's place within the community and audiences it is performing to. After performing the piece there will be a discussion led by the student about its success and potential for future exploitation.