

Leeds Conservatoire

Audition Requirements

2026 Entry

MA Popular Music (Performer)
MA Popular Music (Songwriter)
MA Popular Music (Writer Performer)
MA Popular Music (Writer Producer)

Introduction

For all variants of MA Popular Music, applicants must submit their initial audition materials online.

Applicants may choose to complete their audition process by submitting the remaining audition materials online, or by attending an in-person audition day (subject to availability of audition dates.)

Once you have submitted your application, if you meet or are likely to meet our entry requirements, we will contact you with further details of how to submit your audition materials online through our application system, Acceptd, and to request an in-person audition if applicable.

This guide explains what is required for each element of the audition process.

All applicants will need to submit the following materials online.

1. Intended Direction of Study
2. Example of Critical Writing

For the following, applicants may choose between submitting the materials online or attending an in-person audition at our campus (subject to availability of audition dates.)

3. Examples of Your Musical Output
4. Interview

1. Intended Direction of Study (Max 500 words)

To be submitted online via Acceptd

A written submission outlining your intended direction of study on the course.

This should include:

- a brief outline of any relevant musical experience you have acquired
- what area or areas you would like to develop and work on
- an indication of how your time on the course could support your professional development and future goals.

Please note that this is different and in addition to the personal statement submitted as part of your application.

2. Example of Critical Writing (Between 1000 - 2000 words)

To be submitted online via Acceptd

Please submit a 1000-2000 word sample of your academic writing to help us understand how comfortable and competent you are with this type of task. Part of the MA Popular Music programme involves the analytical, critical, and research-based study of music, so it is important that we feel confident in your ability to engage in this type of activity.

The academic writing sample can be a piece of work you have written in the past on a previous course of study, such as an essay, report, or article. If you choose, it can be a newly written piece of writing, though it is not expected that you will produce a brand new piece of writing for this task. Either way, please make sure that it represents the best example of academic writing that you can provide to us.

Please note that you may submit a writing sample that is longer than 1000-2000 words, but we may not read the entire sample in the process of reviewing your application.

3. Examples of Your Musical Output (c. 10-12 minutes)

To be submitted online via **Accepted** or provided at an in-person audition day

We are hoping to hold limited in-person auditions in February, April and June.

Where there is an in-person audition date available, you will have the option to select between an in-person' or 'online submission'. Where there is not an in-person audition date available, only the 'online submission' option will be available.

Please follow the guidance below for your intended choice of pathway within the MA Popular Music.

Please note that you are welcome to submit the same or very similar materials for more than one variant if you wish to apply to more than one pathway.

Performer (UCAS code 807F)

- Please prepare THREE pieces (c.10-12 minutes) you have selected to demonstrate your musical strengths and identity.
- Ensure that the pieces chosen demonstrate both your technical abilities on your instrument and your identity, character and direction as a popular musician.
- It is fine to perform along to a backing track or with a band if you choose to do so, and the pieces you perform do not have to be originals (covers are fine).

Online submission requirements:

- These three pieces can be submitted in either of the following combinations:
 - 1 audio recording (.mp3 or .wav) and 2 live video performances; or
 - 3 live video performances
- The recordings do not have to be of a professional standard, but we do ask that the audio is clear and that you are evidently visible and identifiable in the performances.

In-person audition requirements:

- You will be asked to perform all three pieces
- You may accompany yourself, play unaccompanied or use a backing track for any/all of your audition pieces. Please note: you are unable to bring along any band members or accompanists
- A mini jack will be provided in the audition room for playing backing tracks through a PA. A member of staff will help you set this up.
- The audition room will contain a piano, a selection of amps, a drum kit and PA with microphone which you will be able to use. If you have any additional technical set up requests please email them to admissions@leedsconservatoire.ac.uk with at least one week's notice of your audition.

Songwriter (UCAS code 808F)

- Please prepare THREE songs (c.10-12 minutes) you have written entirely by yourself and that demonstrate your compositional strengths and identity.
- Ensure that the songs chosen demonstrate both your technical ability and also your identity, character and direction as a songwriter.
- The songs can be performed by yourself and/or by other people, and recordings can be of live performances or tracked in a studio environment.
- Please also provide accompanying lyric sheets. You do not need to provide scores of the material.
- Please note that all lyrics should be written and performed in English.

Online submission requirements:

- Please submit audio recordings (.mp3 or .wav) of all three songs along with accompanying lyric sheets.

In-person audition requirements:

- Applicants can choose whether they would prefer to play any and/or all of their songs live, and/or bring in recorded versions on an audio playback device (a phone or laptop are fine).
- You do not need to send us any compositions in advance, we will listen to them in the audition with you.
- If you choose to perform any of your songs live, you may accompany yourself, play unaccompanied or use a backing track for any/all of your audition pieces. Please note: you are unable to bring along any band members or accompanists
- A mini jack will be provided in the audition room for playing backing tracks through a PA. A member of staff will help you set this up.
- The audition room will contain a piano, a selection of amps, and a PA with microphone which you will be able to use. If you have any additional technical set up requests please email them to admissions@leedsconservatoire.ac.uk with at least one week's notice of your audition.

Writer Performer (UCAS code 809F)

- Please prepare performances of THREE songs (c.10-12 minutes) you have written yourself, and that demonstrate your musical and compositional strengths and identity.
- Ensure that the pieces chosen demonstrate both your technical ability as a writer and performer and your identity, character and direction as a popular musician.
- Please also provide accompanying lyric sheets. You do not need to provide scores of the material.
- Please note that all lyrics should be written and performed in English

Online submission requirements:

- These three songs can be submitted in either of the following combinations:
 - 1 audio recording (.mp3 or .wav) and 2 live video performances; or
 - 3 live video performances.
- The recordings do not have to be of a professional standard, but we do ask that the audio is clear and that you are evidently visible and identifiable in the performances.
- It is fine to perform along to a backing track or with a band if you choose to do so.

In-person audition requirements:

- Applicants must perform at least two songs live in the room
- For the remaining song, applicants can choose whether they would prefer to play this live, or bring in recorded versions on an audio playback device (a phone or laptop are fine).
- If you choose to play a recording for your third track, you do not need to send us a copy in advance, we will listen to it in the audition with you.
- You may accompany yourself, play unaccompanied or use a backing track for any/all of your audition pieces. Please note: you are unable to bring along any band members or accompanists
- A mini jack will be provided in the audition room for playing backing tracks through a PA. A member of staff will help you set this up.
- The audition room will contain a piano, a selection of amps, and a PA with microphone which you will be able to use. If you have any additional technical set up requests please email them to admissions@leedsconservatoire.ac.uk with at least one week's notice of your audition.

Writer Producer (UCAS code 810F)

- Please prepare recordings of THREE songs (c.10-12 minutes) you have written and produced yourself, and that demonstrate your musical and compositional strengths and identity.
- Ensure that the pieces chosen demonstrate your technical ability, identity, character and direction as a writer producer.
- The songs can be performed by yourself and/or by other people.
- Please also provide accompanying lyric sheets. You do not need to provide scores of the material.
- Please note that all lyrics should be written and performed in English.

Online submission requirements:

- Please submit audio recordings (.mp3 or .wav) of the songs along with accompanying lyric sheets.

In-person audition requirements:

- Please bring in audio recordings on an audio playback device (a phone or laptop are fine).
- Please also provide accompanying lyric sheets. You do not need to provide scores of the material.
- Please note that all lyrics should be written and performed in English.
- You do not need to send us any compositions in advance, we will listen to them in the audition with you.

4. Interview (No more than 15 minutes)

If all other materials submitted online, this must be submitted online via Accepted
If attending an in-person audition day, this will be conducted in-person only.

The format for your interview will vary depending on if you choose to attend an in-person audition day for your Examples of Musical Output, or submit all of your materials online.

If you are attending in-person, please do not submit an interview video online.

Online submission requirements:

Submit a short video (no more than 15 minutes) with your answers to the following questions (please speak directly to the camera as if to an audition panel)

1. Tell us why you want to study MA Popular Music at Leeds Conservatoire. What is it about this course that will assist you in achieving your career goals?
2. Talk about your experiences as a popular music practitioner, outlining any key projects and your role within them, and what you have learned from them.
3. Tell us about your influences, especially the artists you have studied/listened to the most, and how they inform your creative practice.
4. Provide a brief example of how research and reflective practice has informed your creative output, and how this may inform your development in the future.

Depending on the outcome of your portfolio, you may be contacted by a member of the academic team to schedule an additional Zoom interview where you will be asked a series of short questions exploring your interest, experience and knowledge.

Applicants who receive offers and have further questions about the programme can request an online meeting with the academic team or in-person visit.

In-person audition requirements:

After your in-person audition, you will be asked a series of short questions exploring your interest, experience and knowledge, as well as about your audition pieces. These may cover similar themes to those outlined in the online submission section below.

