



POINT BLANK

MUSIC SCHOOL

TEACHING, LEARNING & ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

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TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGY

Document Revision History

Version Log

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TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGY

1. PURPOSE

This strategy outlines Point Blank Music School's strategic vision, priorities, and objectives for teaching, learning and assessment. It sets out to create an environment that fosters academic excellence, facilitates creative expression, encourages student engagement, and promotes inclusive and equal learning opportunities. The strategy encapsulates the following core pedagogical principles of the school:

- 1.1. **Collaboration and community:** Students are encouraged to work together, share insights, and build a supportive learning community where each individual's experiences and perspectives are valued and leveraged to enhance collective understanding.
- 1.2. **Problem-based learning:** Opportunities are created for students to actively engage with real-world problems. This methodology not only deepens understanding but also fosters critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and the ability to apply knowledge in practical contexts.
- 1.3. **Situated and experiential learning:** Opportunities for students to learn in situations that mirror real-life scenarios, ensuring that theoretical knowledge is seamlessly tied with practical application.
- 1.4. **Theory into practice:** We ensure that students grasp the foundational theories in their fields while also gaining hands-on experience to put those theories into practice. Students will have the opportunity to experience, reflect, conceptualise, and experiment with each topic to deepen the learning process, which will facilitate a range of learning styles.
- 1.5. **Equality, diversity and inclusivity:** We aim to develop strategies to recruit and retain students and staff from a diverse range of backgrounds and promote a teaching and learning environment that values and celebrates diverse perspectives.

Terminology used in this document:

- HE – 'Higher Education'.
- Professional students / Professional courses – These are non-HE, non-credit bearing courses.
- VLE – 'Virtual Learning Environment'

2. STRATEGY DETAILS

2.1. Point Blank Music School's Strategic Vision

- 2.1.1. Point Blank aims to foster a dynamic learning environment that inspires student engagement, aspiration, and potential realisation. Our teaching strategy focuses on equipping students with skills relevant to global culture, economy, and environment, and empowering them with the confidence to employ them effectively.

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- 2.1.2. Point Blank aims to provide an internal 'ecosystem' which recreates real-life music industry scenarios and work environments, allowing students to gain confidence through cross-disciplinary collaboration and experimentation, develop networking skills, and ensure they have the best chance of fulfilling their potential upon graduation.
- 2.1.3. This Teaching and Learning Strategy aligns with our strategic roadmap, Point Blank: The Road Ahead 2018-2023, ensuring we stay at the forefront of contemporary pedagogical practice.

2.2. Point Blank Music School's Strategic Priorities

- 2.2.1. We endeavour to elevate the student learning experience through active collaboration and engagement, focusing on teaching enhancement and course development. Our strategies are data-driven, responding to student feedback, forums, and predictive analytics.
- 2.2.2. Our curriculum is informed by the industry, prioritising employability, creative expression, and the latest sector-specific innovations. Point Blank students benefit from an exhaustive list of industry partners, who provide discounts, workshops, industry insight and consultation on curriculum design.
- 2.2.3. We foster an innovative, supportive learning environment where students can express their creativity, test their boundaries, and grow their abilities. This is facilitated by industry-based guidance within a challenging, collaborative curriculum.
- 2.2.4. We strive to maintain a diverse, inclusive curriculum that accommodates the unique needs of our students. This is made possible through access to supportive learning resources and inclusive assessment and teaching methodologies.
- 2.2.5. Our teaching and student services staff are empowered with the latest skills, training, and qualifications to meet the needs of our evolving curriculum and the diverse student population.
- 2.2.6. We employ the principle of 'Assessment for Learning' (AfL) as a tool to enhance and support student learning, empowering students to take ownership of their learning, reflect on their progress, and set goals for future development.
- 2.2.7. We aim to ensure students clearly understand how they are being assessed, are given timely, accurate, and meaningful feedback, and are supported in all aspects of the assessment process. Provided in classes and 1-2-1s, feedback should include 'feedforward', where appropriate, to enable students to improve work and avoid repeating mistakes.

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2.2.8. We foster a positive community of learners by creating opportunities to collaborate and study together, ensuring there is the appropriate space for these activities to take place.

2.2.9. To foster a positive community of academic staff who are willing to share pedagogical best practice.

2.2.10. To employ differentiation, where teaching is tailored to meet the individual needs, abilities, and learning preferences of diverse students within the same classroom.

2.2.11. To ensure consistency of quality of teaching across programmes by providing academic staff with schemes of work for modules which clearly outline the content, learning objectives, teaching strategies, assessment methods, and resources.

2.3. Strategic Outcomes

2.3.1. Graduates from Point Blank Music School will be competent in their chosen disciplines, ready to adapt and expand their skillset post-graduation. With a strong focus on cross-disciplinary collaboration and employability, our commitment to inclusivity and equality allows all students to gain insight into the latest practices in the music and creative arts industry.

2.3.2. Objectives

2.3.2.1. Enhanced student support, progression, and achievement

- (1) Engage students in continuous dialogue, utilising feedback and data analysis to enhance student learning, progression, and achievement.
- (2) Equip students with academic resources that foster independence and confidence, enabling them to identify and achieve their career aspirations.
- (3) Ensure learning experiences facilitate opportunities for students to prepare for future employment and professional practice.
- (4) Foster a synergistic relationship between learning, teaching, industry engagement, and employability.

Key Performance Indicators

- Above HESA benchmark continuation and completion rates.
- Above benchmark graduate outcomes
- Above benchmark National Student Survey scores.

2.3.2.2. Enhanced student and staff performance

- (1) Equip students with employability skills and industry knowledge to build a successful career in their chosen field.

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- (2) Provide students with a supportive, innovative learning environment facilitated by dedicated staff, promoting creative exploration and personal growth.
- (3) Establish structured checkpoints for self-reflection, performance review, and wellbeing support.
- (4) Recognise and appreciate staff contributions to the overall learning experience of students.

Key Performance Indicators

- Successful appraisal of student learning opportunities, teaching, and assessment by external agencies.
- Above benchmark continuation, completion, and progression rates.
- Appropriate rates of staff recognition aligned with academic and professional career paths.

2.3.2.3. Enhanced student satisfaction with their learning and personal development

- (1) Aim for high student satisfaction rates in feedback mechanisms.
- (2) Provide students with timely, constructive assessment and personal development feedback.
- (3) Ensure rapid identification and resolution of student concerns through efficient Student Representative and feedback processes.

Key Performance Indicators

- Increased student satisfaction as measured by module feedback and Programme Voice Groups.
- Above benchmark National Student Survey and internal survey scores.
- A prospective bronze, silver, or gold rating through the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)

2.3.2.4. Data-Driven Quality Assurance and Enhancement

- (1) Utilise collected data to monitor and enhance student services, academic support, and the overall student experience.
- (2) Through comprehensive data collection and analysis, we will ensure compliance with current and future regulatory data requirements and metrics.
- (3) Triangulate quantitative data against qualitative data and industry feedback to ensure our student experience is innovative, fulfilling, and supportive of graduate success.

2.3.2.5. Enhanced teaching and learning through staff development activity

- (1) Enhance academic and professional skills through provision of training programmes, workshops and other developmental activities.

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- (2) Promote innovation and best practices that enhance the overall quality of education and student experience
- (3) Support staff members in their career advancement through the provision of opportunities for personal growth, skill development and progression
- (4) Foster a research and scholarly culture among academic staff, encouraging participation in research projects, publications and other activities that contribute to the wider academic community
- (5) Foster collaboration, knowledge sharing, and network opportunities among staff enabling them to learn from each other and build professional relationships

Key Performance Indicators

- Staff engagement in scholarship and research activity
- Above benchmark scores for NSS Teaching on my course
- A prospective bronze, silver, or gold rating through the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)

2.4. Strategy Review

2.4.1. This Strategy will be reviewed annually via the Academic Board meeting. Any required updates will be recorded via Academic Board and formally approved by the Board of Directors.

2.5. Learning and Teaching Methods

Point Blank Music School's commitment to delivering a high-quality educational experience is evident in its diverse teaching methods catering to both on-campus and distance learners.

2.5.1. Course Delivery

The syllabus and module activities span over ten weeks, culminating in summative assessments that determine module grades. Formative assessments, comprising both in-class activities and seminars, are conducted throughout the module duration.

2.5.2. The student dashboard

Point Blank utilises bespoke digital technology to enhance teaching and learning, and to accommodate a diverse range of learning needs. Students have access to an online 'dashboard' where they can view their timetable, access course materials, upload assignments, receive feedback, interact with their peers, book 1-2-1 and practice sessions, receive support and register for events. All students also benefit from lecture capture, allowing them to watch back classes for up to two years after a module is completed.

2.5.3. Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

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The VLE serves as Point Blank's online hub, offering students access to weekly notes, video content, resources, assignment uploads, and peer interaction on forums. It's imperative for students to engage with the VLE content weekly, which supports and supplements in-class sessions. Communication through the VLE is facilitated via internal messaging, forums, or personal emails.

For students needing to resubmit assignments due to module failures, 1-2-1 tutorial sessions with the module leader can be scheduled via the VLE, offering feedback. These tutorials are conducted via Zoom, and students have the option to record them for future reference.

Additionally, module learning materials such as books and journals are linked to entries in our online library cataloguing system. Both hard and digital copies of these materials can be borrowed from the school library.

Alongside the study of their core programme modules, students are further supported with 'Study Essentials modules' which act as both a foundation curriculum and general reference material. These cover a wide range of subjects such as introduction to software applications, industry talks and masterclasses, EDI and employability.

2.5.4. On-Campus Learning (London Students)

Point Blank offer small class sizes of a maximum of 16 or 20 students, which aim to encourage collaboration and discussion, as well as allowing for tailored in-class 1-2-1 lecturer support. The classrooms are usually referred to as 'studios' and are designed to mimic typical music industry workplace environments with comfortable lighting and accessible workstations. The décor of the rooms is often tailored to specific subject areas i.e. recording studios, clubs, rehearsal rooms etc. The different types of sessions offered to students are listed as follows:

- **Lectures:** Modules encompass weekly on-campus lectures, lasting 2 to 4 hours. These lectures blend lecturer-led delivery, student exercises, independent research, and group study. Lectures are also live streamed via Zoom for students with extenuating circumstances, and recordings are archived on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).
- **Seminars:** Virtual seminars occur weekly, led by the module leader or lecturer, aiming to reinforce previous learnings and assist with assignments through formative exercises, discussions, guest speaker sessions, and demonstrations. As these sessions are aimed at supporting higher education students with their assignments, they are not offered to professional students.
- **1-2-1 Sessions:** Twice a term, students receive 30-minute individualised sessions with their lecturer, providing formative feedback to support them with their final summative assignments.
- **Additional guest speaker masterclasses & field trips:** To augment the weekly sessions, students regularly benefit from guest masterclasses given by industry professionals, as well as field trips to radio stations, recording studios, festivals, music industry companies etc.

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Note that there may be some variation with the types of sessions offered to students depending on their programme and the FHEQ level. For example, as an alternative to the 1-2-1 sessions and seminars, level 3 Foundation students will receive 4 or 6 hours of contact time in a single day, which will encompass lectures and supervised study. This approach aims to provide a more directed study environment for students transitioning into level 4.

2.5.5. Distance Learning (Online Students)

For distance learning (online) students, the weekly content can be studied in their own time via the VLE, where they can access course notes, video tutorials, weekly live streamed masterclasses and also book a series of 1-2-1 tutorials.

- **Masterclasses:** These are 2-hour sessions which are delivered by the module lecturer via Zoom. These can be considered equivalent to London lectures. In the masterclass, the lecturer will build on and augment the VLE content each week, and provide opportunities for student interaction.
- **1-2-1s:** Students receive 30-minute individualised sessions with their lecturer, focusing on providing formative feedback to augment their final summative assignments. These happen in weeks 2, 4, 6, 8 and 11 and take place over Zoom. The lecturer will propose some slots in the week before the 1-2-1 session, which students will be able to book on a first come first served basis.

There are multiple ways students can communicate with their lecturer and peers via the VLE, either by the internal messaging system, the Forum, or personal email.

2.5.6. Additional academic support

Alongside the programme delivery, Point Blank offers a range of additional academic support mechanisms. Attendance is not mandatory, but often highly recommended to students at risk of non-continuation.

- **Academic workshops:** These bookable sessions run every term to support areas of the curriculum where we have traditionally found students needed extra support. In cases where students need to resubmit after failing an assignment, support staff will often signpost them to these sessions. Examples of the subject areas include:
 - Academic writing
 - Music Theory
 - Sound Engineering
 - Audio for Games
 - VJ Skills
- **Academic Success Centre (ASC):** These bookable and walk-in sessions offer a judgement-free space and opportunity for our HE students to receive help, advice and guidance on academic writing and study strategies,

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regardless of the level or subject they are studying. Examples of guidance include:

- Writing in an academic context
 - Planning for deadlines and organising your workflow
 - Study skills (e.g. note taking, time management and exam revision)
 - Research skills
 - Referencing
 - Written assignments
 - Understanding feedback
 - Presentation skills
 - Basic English language help* and other study issues
- **Accelerator modules:** These modules are designed to enhance a student's programme and will enable them to develop skills and knowledge in a range of relevant subject areas. They do not count towards the final grade of the overall degree qualification, but provide students added value in terms of their learning and development. They are delivered via Zoom in weeks 10 and 11 of each term and archived on the student dashboard. Examples of subjects covered include:
 - Understanding taxation
 - Reflective writing and referencing
 - Collection societies and networking
 - Branding and graphics in the music industry

2.6. Assessment & Feedback

- 2.6.1. Point Blank provides multiple opportunities for formative feedback and activities throughout the term, which focus on the module learning outcomes and scaffold towards final summative assignments. If students engage with the valuable formative feedback opportunities, they should feel confident they can meet the learning outcomes to pass their modules.
- 2.6.2. Wherever possible, assignment briefs are rotated and scrutinised each term to ensure they stay relevant, minimise the risk of plagiarism and encourage students to think creatively and develop original responses to new questions.
- 2.6.3. Where possible, for written work and presentations, assessment briefs are designed to be more evaluative of students' own work and practice, to avoid academic misconduct with the use of AI tools such as ChatGPT.
- 2.6.4. Assignment briefs are designed to be clear and concise, provide industry context, and map to learning outcomes. To facilitate this, a standardised assignment brief template is used to provide consistency. The brief outlines the task, the purpose of the assessment, the requirements (artifacts), and provides general guidance and expectations. Finally, there is a submission checklist to ensure students clearly understand what they need to submit. To further support students, video tutorials are often linked to the brief which explain topics such as academic referencing or project size optimisation.

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- 2.6.5. Each assignment brief is also linked to a rubrics document/grading criteria grid which provides transparency to the student on how they will be assessed. The document displays the assessment criteria for each associated learning outcome, mapped to grade boundary descriptors. These are also used by markers to ensure feedback is consistent and appropriate grades are awarded.
- 2.6.6. A range of feedback methods can be used, including written word, audio recording, and video recording. Video feedback can be particularly useful when providing feedback on PowerPoint presentations or computer software-based submissions.
- 2.6.7. To make it possible for students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills to the best of their abilities, a wide range of assessment types is offered across programmes. Each type demands a necessary graduate skill which will help the student to become more employable, whilst they hone their abilities to professional levels. Students will be asked to produce work in a wide variety of formats including:
- Projects, Reflective Critiques.
 - Written work.
 - Event Management, Reports on activities or events.
 - Presentations.
 - Media Artefacts or portfolios of work.
 - One-to-one discussions with the lecturer
 - Performances.
- 2.6.8. In the event that a student with a declared disability requires an assessment adjustment, an alternative assignment brief will be written, often using a different assessment type (i.e. a recorded presentation instead of written work)
- 2.6.9. Point Blank ensures there is consistency of word counts and project lengths appropriate to the FHEQ level. These are outlined in the Assessment Design Policy and referred to as part of the programme design process.
- 2.6.10. Where possible, formative and summative assessment deadlines are staggered within a term to avoid bunching. This also applies to the number of assessment components which are minimised to avoid over-assessment. For example, we may ask students to annotate their project submission within the particular software platform they are using rather than provide a separate written commentary.
- 2.6.11. For students taking 'Professional' modules (non-credit bearing), final assessment is geared towards feedback on practical work. For example, the degree-focussed 'academic' written assessment types will not be allocated.

2.7. Curriculum Design

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- 2.7.1. Point Blank ensures that the curriculum is relevant and aligned to industry, and is designed in consultation with external industry professionals, as well as internal academic staff who are active within the music industry.
- 2.7.2. All curriculum design utilises and references frameworks used across the HE sector such as QAA FHEQ level descriptors, subject benchmark statements and Bloom's taxonomy
- 2.7.3. Programme and module learning outcomes are always concise and use verbs appropriate to the FHEQ level.
- 2.7.4. Curriculum is appropriately scaffolded to ensure knowledge and skills are built upon throughout the programme.
- 2.7.5. A student-centric approach is taken to curriculum design which responds to feedback and aims to meet the needs and aspirations of our students.
- 2.7.6. Point Blank aims to ensure that the curriculum is culturally inclusive, not gender biased and accessible to students with a range of disabilities. This is done through regular student consultation sessions, termly module feedback, and lecturer training.
- 2.7.7. Point Blank aims to ensure that the curriculum is dynamic enough to reflect new technologies and practices which meet industry needs.
- 2.7.8. Point Blank aims to ensure that the curriculum is intellectually stimulating.
- 2.7.9. Point Blank aims to ensure there is an appropriate balance between directed and independent study dependent on the subject area.

3. STRATEGY SCOPE

This strategy applies to all students and staff involved in both the Higher Education and Professional programmes across all campuses as well as those undertaking Distance Education (online) programmes.

4. RELATED POLICIES

- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy
- Student Feedback Policy
- Student Support Policy
- Employability and Career Development Policy
- Staff Development Policy (Academic)

5. STRATEGY OWNER

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This strategy is under the responsibility of the Academic Board. The operational responsibility of this strategy is delegated to the:

- Head of Education and Curriculum
- Head of Quality
- The academic staff (Programme Leaders, Module Leaders & Lecturers)

6. PROCEDURES

There are no related procedures to this strategy.

7. EXHIBITS, APPENDICES AND FORMS

There are no further relevant exhibits, appendices, or forms.

8. REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

8.1. Internal

- Lecturer Handbook
- Module Leader Handbook

8.2. External

- Quality Assurance Framework
- OfS B Conditions for Quality and Standards

9. DOCUMENT HISTORY AND NEXT REVIEW

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