



VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF
WELLINGTON
TE HERENGA WAKA

PUORO
MUSIC

Bachelor of Music
Bachelor of Popular Music

2026





“Welcome to the New Zealand School of Music—Te Kōkī. We make music in just about every way you can imagine: composing, performing, recording, making sound art, writing about music, and mixing music with film, games, dance, and theatre. Like you, we love music. Our staff members are amazing music teachers, musicians, and music therapists. We would love you to join our community.”

Kim Cunio

Head of school, New Zealand School of Music—Te Kōkī

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Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington has an overall five-stars-plus rating in the QS Stars university rating system, one of only 23 universities worldwide to do so. The University gained a total score of 966 out of a possible 1,000 points across eight audited categories, including maximum points for the employability and inclusiveness categories. Maximum points were awarded for 25 of the more

than 30 indicators, including overall student satisfaction; further study; graduate employment rate; international diversity, support, and collaborations; academic reputation; satisfaction with teaching; campus facilities; accreditations; art and cultural investment and facilities; disabled access; scholarships and bursaries; low-income outreach; and student cohort diversity.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington uses all reasonable skill and care to ensure the information contained here was accurate at the time it was prepared. However, matters covered by this publication are subject to change due to a continuous process of review, and to unanticipated circumstances. The University therefore reserves the right to make any changes without notice. So far as the law permits, the University accepts no responsibility for any loss suffered by any person due to reliance (either whole or in part) on the information contained in this publication, whether direct or indirect, and whether foreseeable or not.

TOHU PAETAHI PUORO

BACHELOR OF MUSIC

Music has the power to create emotions and to connect us to our past, to each other, and to the world. With a Bachelor of Music (BMus) from Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington's New Zealand School of Music—Te Kōkī (NZSM), you'll build on your knowledge of music, and be elevated and inspired. Whether you want to perform, compose, teach, become a music therapist, or get involved in music research, your talent will be nurtured in a creative and collaborative environment.

Make use of the NZSM's array of high-quality music facilities, including practice rooms, keyboard laboratories, and recording and electronic music studios. Discover the NZSM's range of period instruments or borrow something more modern from its collection. Take the opportunity to play one of several exceptional Steinway grand pianos. If you're a performer, you'll have access to excellent performance venues on campus and in the wider Wellington region, including the University's own Adam Concert Room. If you're a composer, you can compose a work for the New Zealand String Quartet, or write a film score to be performed live at the Roxy Cinema by the NZSM Orchestra.

Take full advantage of studying music in creative Wellington, New Zealand's hub of arts and culture. You will enjoy music everywhere, from the buskers of Cuba Street to renowned international performers at the Michael Fowler Centre. Take in Wellington's famous nightlife, or be inspired by its beautiful beaches and bush walks.

We encourage you to get involved in performance events run by the NZSM both on campus and in public venues. Join the NZSM orchestra, choir, jazz vocal ensemble, or annual opera project, or play in one of its big bands, chamber groups, or Indonesian gamelan orchestras.



Note: If you want a broader degree, you could consider the Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Music (see our *Bachelor of Arts* publication). If you would like to expand your knowledge and skills, it is possible to take a conjoint degree combining a BMus with another approved degree.



DEGREE STRUCTURE

Our BMus takes three years of full-time study and requires you to take courses worth 360 points in total.

- ▶ A maximum of 180 points can be at 100 level.
- ▶ At least 180 points must be at 200 and 300 level.
 - ▶ Of the 180 points, at least 75 points must be from 300-level courses in Composition, Music Studies, or Performance.

You'll need to complete the requirements for at least one major. A major is the main subject you'll focus on in your degree. Each subject area has specific courses you need to take to meet the requirements of the major.

In your first year, you're likely to take at least six courses. Most, or all, of these will be core courses you'll need for your major.

In the second year of your degree, you're also likely to take at least six courses. In this year, there are fewer core courses and you'll have more choice to follow your particular interests or career aspirations.

In the third year, you'll study primarily 300-level courses but are likely to take two or three other electives from courses at 200 or 300 level.

Depending on your degree, you may be able to do a:

- ▶ double major—specialise in two subjects in your degree
- ▶ minor—specialise in another BMus subject (Composition, Digital Music and Audio Production, Performance, Popular Music Studies) without doing as many courses as for a major
- ▶ conjoint degree—this intense programme lets you complete two degrees more quickly, usually in four years, by requiring you to do fewer courses.



WHERE CAN YOUR DEGREE TAKE YOU?

Bachelor of Music graduates have transferable skills that are sought after by employers, including the ability to closely analyse and solve problems, work independently and collaboratively, critique their own and others' work, manage events and complex projects, and present and perform confidently. As a result, a variety of employment sectors will be open to you.

After graduating, you might be a composer, cultural entrepreneur, musician, music teacher, music therapist, sound artist, or sound technician. You might work in the music, film, or theatre industries, or social research, communications, arts and culture administration, policy, finance, or events management.

Some of our graduates achieve national and international recognition, becoming full-time performers, educators, scholars, composers, sonic artists, or audio engineers. It is also common for BMus graduates to have portfolio careers that combine various professional music roles with other work.

Music combines well with other disciplines of study and can enhance your learning in areas such as anthropology, English literature, film, history, law, marketing, mathematics, media, Māori studies, Pacific studies, physics, psychology, or software engineering.

 wgtn.ac.nz/music-careers



“I came to the University’s Open Day and I fell in love with the film studios and the campus. I also love the comfortable culture of Wellington—I feel a lot more welcome here than in Auckland where I grew up.

“I came to university with pretty much no music knowledge except for a bit of experimenting, so don’t write yourself off if you haven’t explored something—if you enjoy it then give it a go and you’ll likely have a great time studying. Just make as much music as you can.

“I love the instant nature of creating music. With music, you can just sit down and start playing and create something right then. I also love being able to do everything, from playing the instruments to the technical production side.”

Jeremy McLean

Graduate, Bachelor of Music in Sonic Arts and Music Technology (now called Digital Music and Audio Production)
Graduate, Master of Fine Arts (Creative Practice)
Sound recordist, Park Road Post Production

EXPLORE OUR SUBJECTS

The BMus programme is comprehensive and inspirational and will help you become the musician you want to be. Within the BMus, you can major in a range of disciplines, including Classical Performance, Digital Music and Audio Production, Instrumental/Vocal Composition, Jazz Performance, or Music Studies. Minors are available in Composition, Digital Music and Audio Production, Performance (Jazz, Classical), and Popular Music Studies. The Instrumental/Vocal Composition major also includes a specialisation in Film Scoring.

Majors

Classical Performance

Follow your dream and become an accomplished classical musician. Study Classical Performance at the NZSM and begin your journey to becoming a professional soloist, ensemble performer, or music teacher. You'll have the opportunity to learn from, and work with, some of New Zealand's most acclaimed performers, teachers, and chamber musicians who perform, teach, and record internationally, including members of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. Choose from diverse instruments, including brass, guitar, harp, historical instruments, percussion, piano and keyboard, strings, voice, and woodwinds.

Digital Music and Audio Production

Explore the creative potential of sound and music through the medium of music technology. You'll learn how to record, mix, produce, synthesise, compose, and code in many different styles and creative contexts. Investigate a variety of media such as live electronic music, film sound/audio

post-production, surround sound—and even musical robotics. Your degree will equip you with industry-standard music technology skills, through a programme that has been developed in collaboration with industry partners. You can also include other courses in your degree from areas such as computer science, design, and engineering.

Instrumental/Vocal Composition

Gain the skills to compose fully notated works for live performance that move and excite audiences. The NZSM offers some of the best collaborative opportunities in the country. You can compose for musicians from the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, for ensembles such as the New Zealand String Quartet, Te Kōkī Trio, and NZSM Orchestra, as well as for other professional ensembles that regularly visit the School. You'll learn how to notate your music professionally, write for instruments idiomatically, orchestrate imaginatively, and develop your musical ideas into substantial, coherent works. You can even choose to take a specialisation in film scoring, learning from leading New Zealand film composers.

Jazz Performance

Immerse yourself in the roots of contemporary music through jazz performance, improvisation, and research. Prepare yourself for a career as a performer or composer, and acquire the musical skills you need for the stage and the recording studio. Trace the development of jazz from early-twentieth-century New Orleans to the jazz of today, and use the knowledge to feed your creativity. You'll study with internationally recognised jazz musicians, teachers, and scholars from around the world. Focus on developing your skills on bass, brass, drums and percussion, guitar, piano and keyboards, voice, or woodwinds. You'll hone your performance techniques in one-to-one lessons and in recording projects, and you'll learn about improvisation, ensemble performance, composition, and musicianship.

Music Studies

Explore local and global worlds of music. This innovative and dynamic subject area combines critical, creative, theoretical, cultural, and historical perspectives on music and draws on research from a range of disciplines. Follow your interests or discover new ones, choosing from diverse options including Māori and Pacific music, European art music, film and popular music, jazz, and music theory. Study with internationally renowned scholars, and graduate with skills in critical thinking, listening, research, analysis, writing, and communication that will be valuable in many fields, including the music industry. Music Studies courses complement many subjects in other fields and may also be taken as part of a Music major in the Bachelor of Arts.

Minors

Composition

Composition is available as a minor (except to students doing an Instrumental/Vocal Composition major). The NZSM offers some of the best collaborative opportunities in the country. You can compose for musicians from the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, for ensembles such as the New Zealand String Quartet and NZSM Orchestra, as well as for other professional ensembles that regularly visit the School.

Digital Music and Audio Production

Digital Music and Audio Production is available only as a minor (except to students already doing a Digital Music and Audio Production Technology major). Explore a variety of music technologies and learn the nuts and bolts of recording, mixing, audio production, electronic music, and coding for sound and music. You can learn how to record film sound and create evocative surround soundscapes, how to record and produce bands, or how to develop tools and techniques for making live electronic music.

Performance

Performance is available as a minor (except to students already doing a Classical Performance or Jazz Performance major). Develop your technical and musical ability, and artistic and stylistic insight, in performing instrumental or vocal repertoire. You'll have the opportunity to learn from, or work with, some of New Zealand's most acclaimed performers and teachers. Study classical, jazz, taonga puoro (traditional Māori instruments), and music of the Chinese and Indonesian gamelan traditions.

Popular Music Studies

Popular Music Studies is an interdisciplinary minor taught by both the NZSM and the School of English, Film, Theatre, Media and Communication, and Art History. Explore and critically engage with local and international popular music and gain a 'big picture' understanding of the social, cultural, theoretical, historical, and political contexts of popular music. Learn about the various audiences, scenes, subcultures, and fans, as well as the new technologies and media, behind the music. Cutting across a number of genres, from rock and pop to hip-hop, electronic dance music, and global music, you'll gain a critical understanding of popular music in local and international contexts, as well as its historical and contemporary significance.



“I chose Victoria University of Wellington because it was the only university in the country that offered such a specialist programme in music. I’ve studied music since I was five years old, and began singing lessons when I was nine. Music has always been a huge part of my life, and it seemed only natural that once I graduated from high school, I would go to the New Zealand School of Music.

“I really love the sense of community here, especially in the music and poetry scenes—everyone kind of knows each other. In the music department, we’re all supportive of each other, which I think is important in such a competitive industry. Wellington is my hometown and I love its abundance of arts, culture, and cafés. There are so many little crevices that I’m still uncovering.”

Cadence Chung

Student, Bachelor of Music in
Classical Performance, minoring in
English Literature

TOHU PAETAHI PAO O TE MAREA

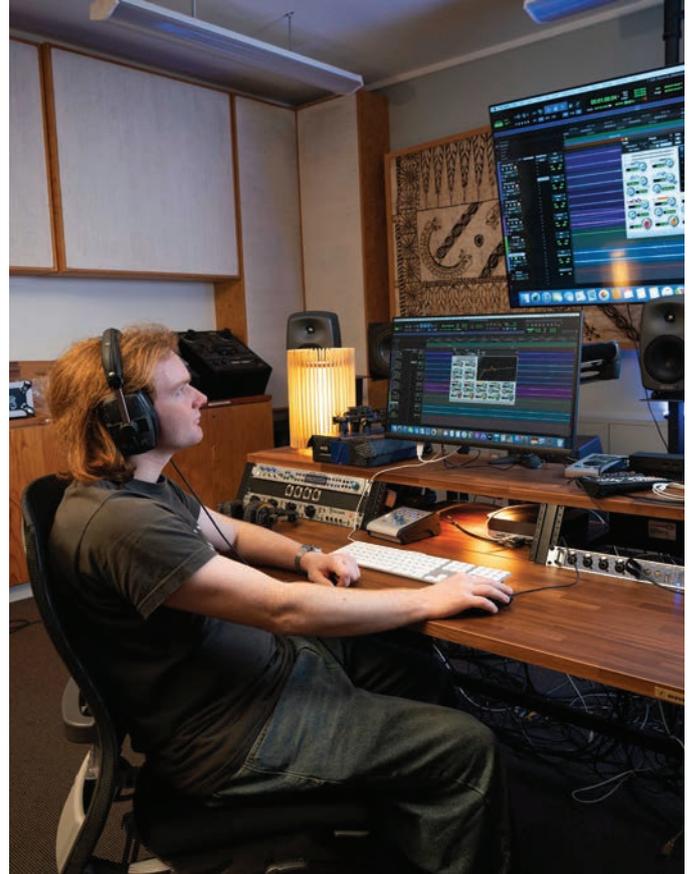
BACHELOR OF POPULAR MUSIC

Popular (pop) music spans the globe. It's one of the most powerful ways we express ourselves and connect with other people. In all its myriad forms, popular music is a dynamic force that shapes contemporary culture and defines musical history.

Through the Bachelor of Popular Music (BPM), you'll develop the creative, technical, and critical skills you need to flourish in the wide-open world of popular music—whether you want to make music, record and produce it, be a singer-songwriter, or communicate about musical experiences and cultures.

Discover new and exciting study areas including Audio Production and Recording, Electronic Music, Popular Music Studies, and Songwriting. Our majors are taught by highly experienced professionals, and the Electronic Music and Popular Music Studies majors are the first of their kind in New Zealand.

Immerse yourself in a world of sound, expression, and innovation. Become a great producer and engineer, a teller of moving musical stories, a creator of immersive sound worlds. You'll be able to combine critical study and creative practice to your advantage in New Zealand's most flexible music degree.



DEGREE STRUCTURE

Our BPM takes three years of full-time study and requires you to take courses worth 360 points in total.

- ▶ At least 230 points must be from courses in the BPM schedule.
- ▶ At least 75 points must be from 300-level courses.

The three-year BPM includes seven core courses that provide a solid foundation in audio production and analysis of popular music. Along with the core courses, you'll need to complete the requirements for at least one major. A major is the main subject you'll focus on in your degree. Each subject area has specific courses you need to take to meet the requirements of the major.

In your first year, you're likely to take at least six courses. Most, or all, of these will be core courses you'll need for your major.

In the second year of your degree, you're also likely to take at least six courses. In this year, there are fewer core courses and you'll have more choice to follow your particular interests or career aspirations.

In the third year, you'll study primarily 300-level courses but are likely to take two or three other electives from courses at 200 or 300 level.

Depending on your degree, you may be able to do a:

- ▶ double major—specialise in two subjects in your degree
- ▶ minor—specialise in a subject from the BMus (Composition, Music Technology, Performance, Popular Music Studies) without doing as many courses as for a major
- ▶ conjoint degree—this intense programme lets you complete two degrees more quickly, usually in four years, by requiring you to do fewer courses overall.

FLEXIBLE STUDY OPTIONS

This exciting new degree is highly flexible. You can combine creative practice and critical study, while also exploring other subjects you're passionate about.

You can take a double major within the BPM or add a major from one of our other Bachelor's degrees. Or you can pursue the BPM alongside a second, 'conjoint' Bachelor's degree.

To enter the BPM programme, you don't need to have any prior musical training—it's open to students from a range of study backgrounds.



WHERE CAN YOUR DEGREE TAKE YOU?

Our BPM graduates will possess the practical skills, creativity, knowledge, and research abilities required to thrive in highly sought-after roles within and beyond popular music. A BPM can open the door to various careers, and graduates might find opportunities in education, journalism, policy and government, research, or within museums and other cultural institutions.

Potential jobs include:

- ▶ artist manager
- ▶ audio engineer
- ▶ event organiser
- ▶ festival director
- ▶ musical artist
- ▶ performer
- ▶ producer
- ▶ publicist
- ▶ talent scout.



EXPLORE OUR SUBJECTS

Majors

Audio Production and Recording

Learn to produce, mix, and master popular music in a range of styles and genres.

Whether you aim to work in commercial studios or produce professional music from your home studio, you'll learn the fundamentals of room acoustics, studio design and monitoring, microphones, editing, and mixing techniques—all with the aim of consistently producing release-ready music.

At 300 level, you can specialise in either advanced stereo mixing and mastering or audio production for film.

Electronic Music

Gain a solid understanding of the techniques, tools, and creative and compositional approaches applicable to a range of electronic music styles.

This major demystifies the innovative technologies used in electronic music. It will also empower you to take full ownership of your creativity as you develop your own instruments and sculpt your individual sonic identity.

The interdisciplinary nature of what you learn in this major is transferable to a range of industry and artistic practices.

Popular Music Studies

By studying a number of genres, styles, and key issues, you'll gain a critical understanding of popular music in local and international contexts. You'll also learn about the historical and contemporary significance of popular music.

Through interdisciplinary courses in music, media studies, political science, and more, you'll explore how and why popular music matters to people and communities in Aotearoa New Zealand and beyond.

This major will help you develop key skills in writing, listening, research, communication, and content creation—all through the study of popular music.

Songwriting

Engage with all facets of creating songs, from writing to producing to performance. This major will develop your skills in writing lyrics and deepen your ability to create captivating melodies and harmonies.

You'll work collaboratively with other musicians in both live and studio settings, while enhancing your insight into the myriad approaches to popular music—including your own.



“Electronic music, along with audio production and recording, underpins just about every aspect of contemporary popular music, offering unparalleled opportunities for sonic and musical creativity.”

Dugal McKinnon

Associate professor, New Zealand School of Music—Te Kōkī

POSTGRADUATE PATHWAYS

Go deeper into your area of musical interest and further explore music from cultural, historical, technical, creative, and performative perspectives. Postgraduate study at Te Herenga Waka will help you build valuable relationships and networks with peers, university staff, and players in the professional music world.

Postgraduate study options

- ▶ Graduate Diploma in Music
- ▶ Postgraduate Diploma in Music
- ▶ Bachelor of Arts with Honours
- ▶ Bachelor of Music with Honours
- ▶ Master of Arts
- ▶ Master of Fine Arts (Creative Practice)
- ▶ Master of Music
- ▶ Master of Music Therapy
- ▶ Master of Musical Arts
- ▶ Artist Diploma
- ▶ PhD in Music
- ▶ Doctor of Musical Arts

You might focus on the creative side of music and study composition, sonic arts, classical or jazz performance (for example, with the Postgraduate Diploma in Music, Master of Fine Arts (Creative Practice), Master of Musical Arts, Artist Diploma, and Doctor of Musical Arts), or you can concentrate on music from a more critical or academic perspective (for example, with the Bachelor of Music with Honours, Master of Music, Master of Arts, and PhD).

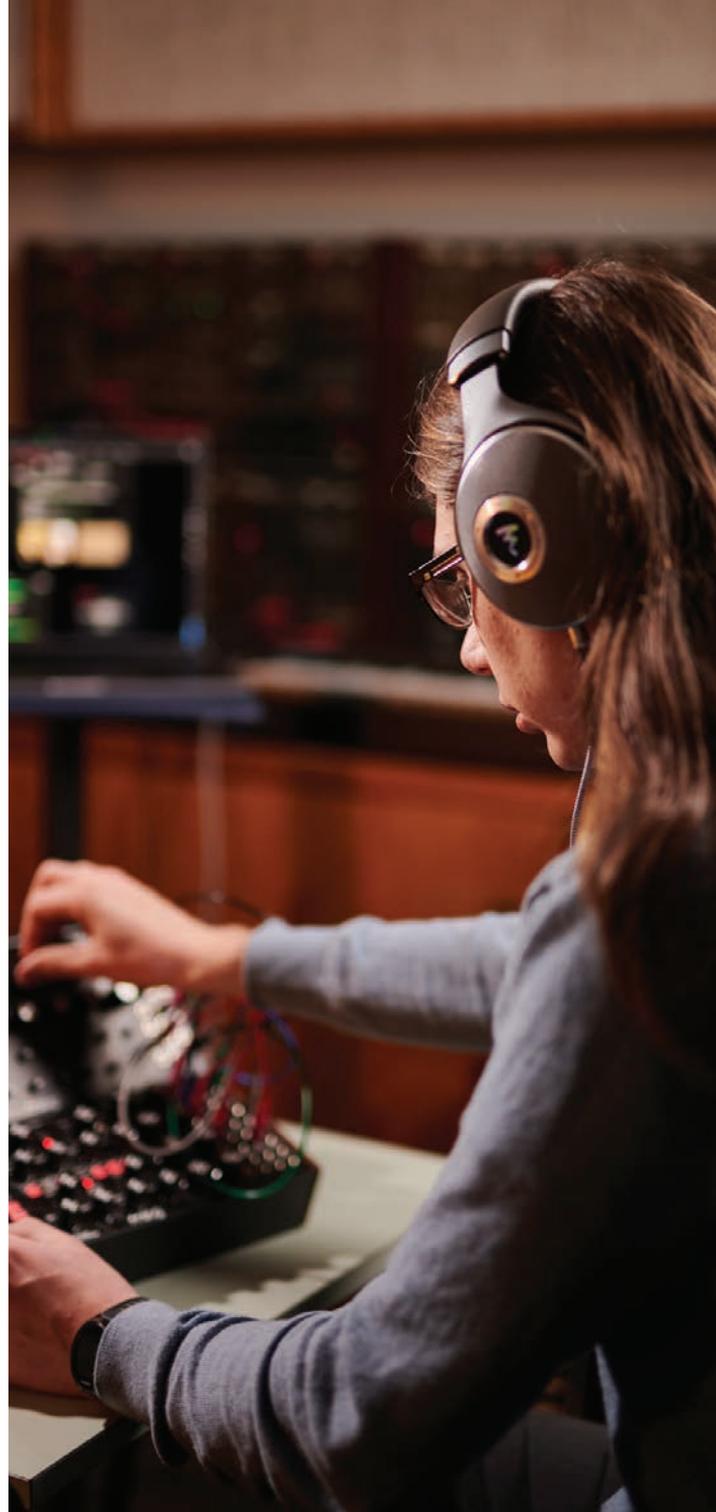
[i wgtn.ac.nz/nzsm-postgraduate](https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/nzsm-postgraduate)



MAKE PROFESSIONAL CONNECTIONS

Study at the NZSM and enjoy opportunities to learn from highly skilled and talented professional musicians. The NZSM maintains strong links with Wellington's music sector, and many of its teaching staff are artist-teachers who perform professionally or as soloists within New Zealand's premier ensembles, including the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, the New Zealand String Quartet, and the Rodger Fox Big Band. Our artist-teachers are committed to the development of younger musicians and composers, and their contribution to your learning offers extraordinary access to the professional world of music.

Gain performance experience by taking part in our many performance events, on campus and in public venues. The NZSM has its own symphony orchestra, two jazz big bands, and a host of smaller ensembles. Classical voice students stage a full opera every other year, and we run a choir that is open to all members of the University's community. You'll attend masterclasses and workshops given by leading international artists. You'll learn from visiting composers featured at weekly composer workshops. And you'll connect with leaders in a variety of fields of musical research at our music forum presentations.



FIND OUT MORE

i wgtn.ac.nz/bmus

i wgtn.ac.nz/nzsm

i wgtn.ac.nz/apply

ADMISSION AND ENROLMENT

You can apply for admission up to two years in advance of the year you plan to start studying. Apply through our student portal, Pūaha. Once you have met the requirements, you will receive either a conditional or an unconditional Offer of Place.

After receiving your Offer of Place, you will be invited to select your courses once course enrolment is open. You select courses for one academic year at a time.

Audition applications for performance and music therapy degrees are due on 20 July to start studying in Trimester 1 of the following year. Late applications are accepted subject to availability of places.

i wgtn.ac.nz/puaha

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Depending on your choice of courses and degree, you may be expected to have a certain level of musical theory before starting your course of study, or you can take the MUSC 160 course to upskill yourself.

A Music major in a Bachelor of Arts, a Digital Music and Audio Production minor, or a Popular Music Studies minor may be taken without having prior knowledge of music theory or passing an audition. The NZSM also offers individual courses that can be taken by interested students who do not have entry requirements.

If performance will be part of your studies, you will also need to pass an audition as part of the application process. For Classical Performance, the standard required is around the equivalent of Grade 8 in ABRSM, TCL, NZMEB, or AMEB exams but talent and potential are the most important qualities. For Jazz Performance, you'll need to show technical and musical competence in a jazz style on your instrument or voice. Auditions are held throughout the year, principally from August to October.

To enter the BPM programme, you don't need to have any prior musical training—it's open to students from a range of study backgrounds.

CONTACT US

Te Wāhanga Aronui

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Tītoko—Student Success

Level 4, Murphy Building, Kelburn Campus

📞 0800 04 04 04

✉ info@vuw.ac.nz

✉ music@vuw.ac.nz

BMus AND BPM SUBJECTS

COURSE PLANNING

For help with course planning, contact Te Kahupapa—
Future Students.

- 📞 0800 04 04 04
- ✉️ future-students@vuw.ac.nz
- 🌐 wgtn.ac.nz/courses

OTHER STUDENT RESOURCES

Disability support

- 🌐 wgtn.ac.nz/disability

Māori student support

- 🌐 wgtn.ac.nz/awhina

Pasifika student success

- 🌐 wgtn.ac.nz/pasifika

Rainbow student support

- 🌐 wgtn.ac.nz/rainbow

Refugee-background student support

- 🌐 wgtn.ac.nz/refugee-background-students

Scholarships

- 🌐 wgtn.ac.nz/scholarships

Student services and support

- 🌐 wgtn.ac.nz/student-support

BMus MAJORS

- Classical Performance
- Digital Music and Audio Production
- Instrumental/Vocal Composition
- Jazz Performance
- Music Studies

BMus MINORS

- Composition
- Digital Music and Audio Production
- Performance
- Popular Music Studies

BPM MAJORS AND MINORS

- Audio Production and Recording
- Electronic Music
- Popular Music Studies
- Songwriting



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Bachelor of Music
Bachelor of Popular Music