



POINT BLANK

MUSIC SCHOOL

TEACHING, LEARNING & ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

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TEACHING, LEARNING & ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

Document Revision History

Version Log

Committee / Approval Date	Author	Version	Publication Date	Page Reference & Summary
Academic Board 25 th November 2024	Head of Education & Curriculum	1.2 (updated 29 th October 2024)		<p>The document has been updated to reflect terminology and branding changes</p> <p>The changes are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Point Blank' -> 'pointblank' • 'Lectures' (London) / 'Masterclasses' (Online) -> 'Sessions' • '1-2-1 Tutorials' -> 'Tutorials' <p>Any other type of '1-2-1s' -> 'Meetings'</p>
Academic Board	Head of Education & Curriculum	1.1 (updated 27 th June 2024)	October 2024	<p>Page 10: Change 2.6. title to 'Assessment Design and Feedback'</p> <p>Page 11: 2.6.6 & 2.6.7 were the same, so have removed 2.6.6</p> <p>Page 11: Updated 2.6.6 (previously 2.6.7) to include live assessment opportunities.</p> <p>Page 11: Updated 2.6.7 to include an additional scenario – "those that may find public-facing situations challenging"</p> <p>Page 12: Added four new points to the Assessment Design & Feedback section (2.6.11 – 2.6.14)</p> <p>Page 13: Added new section "Institutional Approach to AI and other emerging technologies"</p>

Related Documentation

Document Reference No. (Policy version / Supporting doc. #)	Document Type	Link or Dept. Owner	Document Title
8	Policy	Education & Curriculum	Assessment Design Policy
	Strategy		Point Blank: The Road Ahead 2018-2023

1. PURPOSE

This strategy outlines pointblank 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'
- Short Course students / Short courses – These are non-HE, non-credit bearing courses.
- VLE – 'Virtual Learning Environment'

2. STRATEGY DETAILS

2.1. pointblank Music School's Strategic Vision

- 2.1.1. pointblank 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.

TEACHING, LEARNING & ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

- 2.1.2. pointblank 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. pointblank 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. pointblank 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 tutorials, feedback should include 'feedforward', where appropriate, to enable students to improve work and avoid repeating mistakes.

TEACHING, LEARNING & ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

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 (lesson plans) for modules which clearly outline the content, learning objectives, teaching strategies, assessment methods, and resources.

2.3. Strategic Outcomes

2.3.1. Graduates from pointblank 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.

TEACHING, LEARNING & ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

- (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.

TEACHING, LEARNING & ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

- (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

pointblank 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

pointblank 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 meetings 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)

The VLE serves as pointblank'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, tutorial sessions with the module leader can be scheduled via the dashboard, 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)

pointblank 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 personalised 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 guided learning hours offered to students are listed as follows:

- **Sessions:** Modules encompass weekly on-campus sessions, lasting 2 to 4 hours. These sessions blend lecturer-led delivery, student exercises, independent research, and group study. They 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 are aimed at supporting higher education students with their assignments, they are not offered to short-course students.
- **Tutorials:** Twice a term, students receive 30-minute individualised meetings with their lecturer, providing formative feedback to support them with their final summative assignments.
- **Additional guest speaker masterclasses & field trips:** To augment the weekly guided learning hours, students regularly benefit from guest

TEACHING, LEARNING & ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

masterclasses given by industry professionals, as well as field trips to radio stations, recording studios, festivals, music industry companies etc.

Note that there may be some variation with the types of guided learning hours offered to students depending on their programme and the FHEQ level. For example, as an alternative to the tutorials and seminars, level 3 Foundation students will receive 4 or 6 hours of contact time in a single day, which will encompass sessions, seminars 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 sessions and also book a series of personalised tutorials.

- **Sessions:** These are 2-hour sessions which are delivered by the module lecturer via Zoom. These can be considered equivalent to London sessions. In the session, the lecturer will build on and augment the VLE content each week, and provide opportunities for student interaction.
- **Tutorials:** Students receive 30-minute individualised meetings 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 tutorial, 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, pointblank 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

TEACHING, LEARNING & ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

- **Academic Success Centre (ASC):** These bookable and walk-in meetings offer a judgement-free space and opportunity for our HE students to receive personalised help, advice and guidance on academic writing and study strategies, 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 11 and 12 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 Design and Feedback

- 2.6.1. pointblank 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

TEACHING, LEARNING & ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

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.

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. 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

Where possible we will aim to offer live assessment opportunities to students. Examples might include:

- Live performance
- Viva voce meetings
- Live presentations

2.6.7. In the event that a student requires an assessment adjustment (i.e. students with a declared disability or those that may find public-facing situations challenging), an alternative assignment brief will be written, often using a different assessment type (i.e. a recorded presentation instead of written work)

2.6.8. pointblank 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.

2.6.9. 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.

TEACHING, LEARNING & ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

2.6.10. For students taking 'Short course' 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.

2.6.11. Where possible we will endeavour to reduce the number of assessment components per module to:

- Avoid overburdening students.
- Provide a more focused and holistic approach to the assessment of learning outcomes.

2.6.12. An assessment planner will be created per programme to analyse the assessment types and number of components presented to students each term to ensure there is range of assessment types and avoid bunching of deadlines.

2.6.13. The Assessment Design policy will be referred to at every stage of the assessment design to ensure consistency of assessment types and weightings across all programmes.

2.6.14. Students will not be penalised for incorrect formatting of references unless there are specific Learning Outcomes related to presentation of research or similar.

2.7. Curriculum Design

2.7.1. pointblank 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. pointblank 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.

TEACHING, LEARNING & ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

2.7.7. pointblank aims to ensure that the curriculum is dynamic enough to reflect new technologies and practices which meet industry needs.

2.7.8. pointblank aims to ensure that the curriculum is intellectually stimulating.

2.7.9. pointblank aims to ensure there is an appropriate balance between directed and independent study dependent on the subject area.

2.8. Institutional Approach to AI and other emerging technologies

2.8.1. pointblank acknowledges AI technologies as an important development within the music industry.

2.8.2. pointblank will endeavour to incorporate the study and use of AI into the curriculum to:

- Ensure pointblank supports students for future careers which may require the use of AI tools.
- Develop the practice of research and innovation amongst students

2.8.3. All modules will be reviewed on a regular basis to see where emerging technologies such as AI can enhance the curriculum.

2.8.4. To mitigate cases of academic misconduct with the use of AI (i.e. ChatGPT), assignment briefs will be written to be more personalised, self-reflective and student-focused.

2.8.5. The ethical use of AI will be built into the curriculum through formative exercises and class discussions.

2.8.6. pointblank will offer additional support sessions for students who have used AI in academic misconduct cases. This will also be supported by a dedicated 'Academic Misconduct' module which all students will be required to take and pass within the first term of their studies.

3. STRATEGY SCOPE

This strategy applies to all students and staff involved in both the Higher Education and Short Course 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

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