



From l-r: Professor David Smith, Kris Thomsett, Dr Katherine Butler and Dr Rachael Durkin, from Northumbria University's new Music degree.

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## A music degree designed for the 21st century

**A brand-new music degree, which will give aspiring musicians the skills they need to succeed, will launch at Northumbria University, in Newcastle upon Tyne, in September next year.**

This new initiative bucks a trend which has seen the closure of music departments in higher education institutions in recent years, and cuts to creative subjects in schools, due in part to the introduction of the EBacc.

The programme offered by Northumbria is designed to allow access to Music in higher education to pupils who have not had opportunities to develop their passion at school, through the provision of a Foundation Year option.

Thought to be one of the first new music degrees established in several decades, Northumbria's [Foundation Year](#) and [Music BA \(Hons\)](#) degrees have been specifically designed with a strong focus on employability.

Particularly distinctive is the focus on training for aspiring instrumental and vocal teachers, as well as providing students with both the theoretical knowledge and the practical skills required to work across the music industry.

The unique programmes include traditional modules, such as music history, theory and harmony, as well as performance – which includes a generous allocation of one-to-one instrument or vocal tuition.

In addition, they will include the business-related skills students need to forge successful careers as freelance musicians, such as tax and finance, contract management, copyright, and promotion and marketing.

Working with Northumbria's education department and the music hubs in the area, course leaders have designed modules in instrumental/vocal teaching that are embedded within the BA (Hons) Music degree at all levels.

Students will have the opportunity to teach their instruments to their peers, as well as spending time on placements in local schools where they will learn from experienced music teachers.

The degrees will also make the most of Northumbria University's partnerships with key cultural institutions in Newcastle. Students will be given access to the [Literary and Philosophical Society's](#) (Lit & Phil's) historical library, as well as learning and performance spaces at [Newcastle Cathedral](#), with which Northumbria has a long-standing relationship.

The new Foundation Year and BA (Hons) Music degrees will be led by Northumbria University's Founding Head of Music, [Professor David J Smith](#), former Head of Music and Master of Chapel and Ceremonial Music at Aberdeen University.

Speaking about the programme, Professor Smith explained: “Northumbria’s new music degree has been created to meet the current need for creative graduates. Pressures faced by schools mean opportunities to study Music at A-level are disappearing.

“We are therefore aiming to do something different with our Foundation Year degree and reach out to those school pupils who might not have had the opportunity to study Music A Level but who are still passionate about pursuing a career in the subject.

“What makes our Foundation and BA (Hons) degrees distinctive is the way we prepare our students for their real-life work as musicians. In addition to performing and musicological studies, students will also learn how to teach their instrument and how to manage in their career as musicians and musical entrepreneurs.”

To mark the launch of the new Music degree, two new scholarship opportunities have been announced, for students from any undergraduate course with a passion for music and singing.

The new Choral and Instrumental Scholarships are now open to applications, offering funding of £700 per year as well as opportunities to make a real impact on the musical life of the University.

The [Choral Scholarship](#) will provide four experienced singers with the chance to work with professional musicians from St Nicholas Cathedral in Newcastle, as part of a newly formed Northumbria cathedral choir, as well as singing with the main choir one day a week

Meanwhile musicians who have reached Grade 7 standard and above can apply for the [Instrumental Scholarship](#), which will see the successful recipient contributing to musical life on campus, including taking part in performances throughout the year.

There are four places available for the Choral Scholarship and one for the Instrumental. Places are open to first year students starting any undergraduate course at Northumbria University.

Find out more about Northumbria University’s [Music Foundation Year](#) and

[Music BA \(Hons\) degree.](#)

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If you have a media enquiry please contact our Media and Communications team at [media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk) or call 0191 227 4604.

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