

FET Innovation & Enterprise Studio II

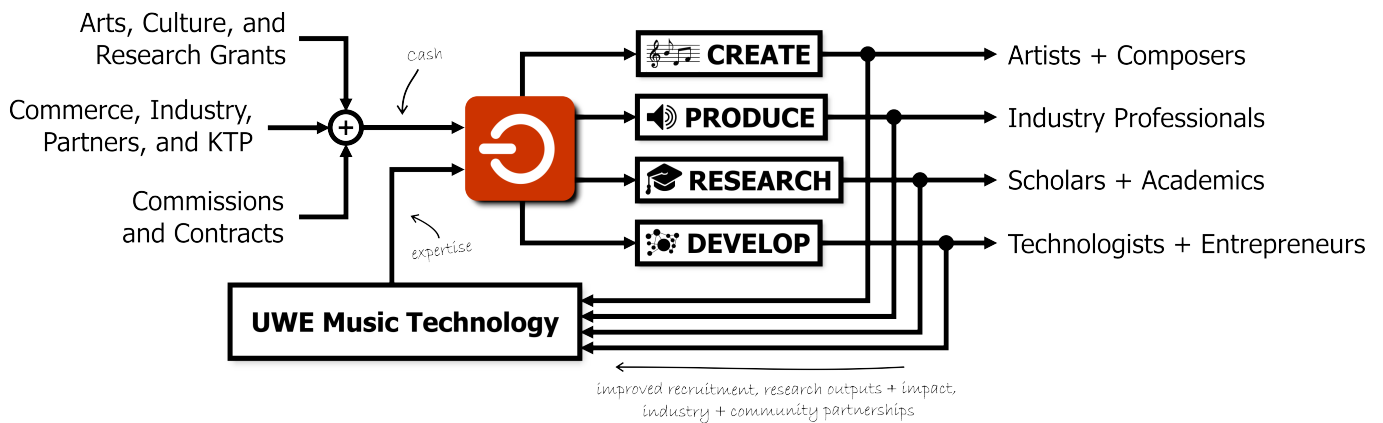


studioWEST

a proposal by the **Music Technology** team
(developed by **Chris Nash** and **Luke Reed**)

“a unique opportunity to provide our music technology students and graduates with practical skills and professional experience; the competitive edge needed for a career in digital audio...”

– Dr David Coward (Head of Department, CSCT)



Introduction

Pursuing UWE’s Strategy 2020 and inspired by the success of PlayWest, FET’s Music Technology (MT) team proposes a high impact, interdisciplinary approach to enterprise and careers development centred on the audio sector¹. With studioWEST, we seek to build upon the success of our MT programmes, people, and projects – promoting the development of new practices, partnerships, and technology through initiatives for enterprising graduates and a unified, outward-facing brand identity to engage prospective students, industry, and the wider community.

“amongst the best in the UK and of international standing”

– JAMES Accreditation Report (UWE Music Technology)

The combined audio-related industries – both creative and digital – represent a changing, challenging and competitive sector, in which industry experts estimate only 5% of graduates end up in roles related to their chosen area of study (Source: JAMES). For UWE MT students, owing to the quality, depth, and diversity of our courses and graduates, the equivalent figure exceeds 60% – from composers and audio professionals to software developers and researchers. Yet there are many challenges and opportunities for future graduates, practitioners, and prospective students.

Drawing together existing partnerships with leading broadcast and technology organisations, both locally and nationally, studioWEST will unify, expand, and expose UWE’s significant impact on music technology practice, development, and culture through four coordinated streams:

CREATE	Supporting artistic practice, such as commissions for live, recorded, and electronic sound or music for TV/film, concerts, festivals and events. (key partners: Arcomis, Colston Hall, St George’s Bristol, BBC)
PRODUCE	Supporting live and studio-based professional practice, such as recording, mixing, dubbing, live sound, post-production, and asset creation. (key partners: BBC, Wounded Buffalo, Films@59, Big Bang, PlayWest)
RESEARCH	Supporting reflective or experimental engagement with new technologies and techniques, a bridge to post-graduate study or later entrepreneurship. (key partners: UWE, Innovate UK, Pervasive Media Studio, BBC R&D, RCUK)
DEVELOP	Supporting the development of technologies for audio, sound, and music industries, including consultancy, software contracts, and entrepreneurship. (key partners: ROLI/JUCE, nu:desine, Focusrite/Novation, BBC R&D)

¹ “Audio sector” identifies a community of practice that intersects more commonly used “creative” and “digital” sectors, encompassing arts, media, and technology (Source: Department of Culture, Media and Sport, 2016).

Principles and Goals

“low threshold, high ceiling, wide walls, and many paths”

– the principles for supporting digital creativity (MIT Media Lab)

- To enhance MT programmes, moving from industry orientated to **industry active**, allowing students to develop portfolios and gain professional experience, as a stepping-stone to careers.
- To offer a **unified identity** for both new and existing industry engagement and innovation in MT, acting as a flagship initiative across teaching, research, and professional practice, and a conduit for connecting with local and national audio industries to develop new partnerships and opportunities for knowledge transfer, cultivating a respected **professional brand** for UWE staff and students.
- To **support graduates** moving into difficult sectors, including:
 - an increasingly independent and self-employed **media sector**, through advice on business skills for freelance security², networking opportunities, and real-world studio experience.
 - the competitive and challenging world of **entrepreneurship and start-ups**, providing an accessible and professional hub for enterprising graduates and student projects, with small initial funds and workspace, acting as an incubator for new technologies and practices.

Core Strategy

- **Multiple streams** across multiple specialisms that reflect the diversity of skills and careers, supporting different paths to professional practice, while supporting and encouraging cross-disciplinary collaborations and the cross-fertilisation of ideas and working methods.
- **Foster, recognise, and develop** upon **innovative student work** in assignments and projects, providing additional support to bring new ideas, products, or practices to wider audiences:
 - digital distribution of new software applications (e.g. apps, plugins, programs).
 - digital licensing of original audio assets (e.g. samples, mixes, FX – through MCPS/PRS).
 - media distribution and events for new artistic works (e.g. concerts, festivals).
 - prototype and post-project development for pitching to investors.
- An **integrated approach** to both academic and professional development, supporting undergraduates, graduates, postgraduates, and staff without compromising student learning:
 - integration with placement years, and Professional Practice/Experience modules.
 - internships to provide a bridge to further study, research, and academic careers.
 - industry participation in teaching and learning (expert speakers, guest lecturers, industry talks, technology demos, research seminars) and consultation on curriculum development.
 - extra-curricular work opportunities, including evening and weekend opportunities with studios, events, projects, festivals, charities, volunteering, schools, and technology firms.
 - annual studioWEST-sponsored student competitions and prizes (in music and technology), designed to foster team working and motivate deeper engagement beyond the subject.
 - personal profile and portfolio development, supporting digital showcasing of achievements in students' curricular and non-curricular activities to improve industry visibility.
- Harness UWE's **extensive support mechanisms** including student, professional, and financial services, optimised and streamlined for the music technology student and industry, working with:
 - **PlayWest**, on matters of Enterprise Studio strategy as well as student praxis, with collaborations in shared areas such as game audio and digital creativity.
 - UWE Careers, PowerUp!, Enterprise Zone, RBI, and other outreach and student services, supporting internships, enterprise, and studentship programmes, funding and competitions.
 - **Collaborations** with staff and students across the CT cluster and CSCT department.
- Provide the foundation for developing UWE music technology teaching, practice, innovation, and research as a future **centre of excellence** – with regional, national, and international recognition and impact, eligible for development and infrastructure awards from UK and EU funding bodies.

² Opportunities for expanding such support were explicitly noted in UWE's 2015/16 JAMES accreditation report.

Industry and Community Partnerships

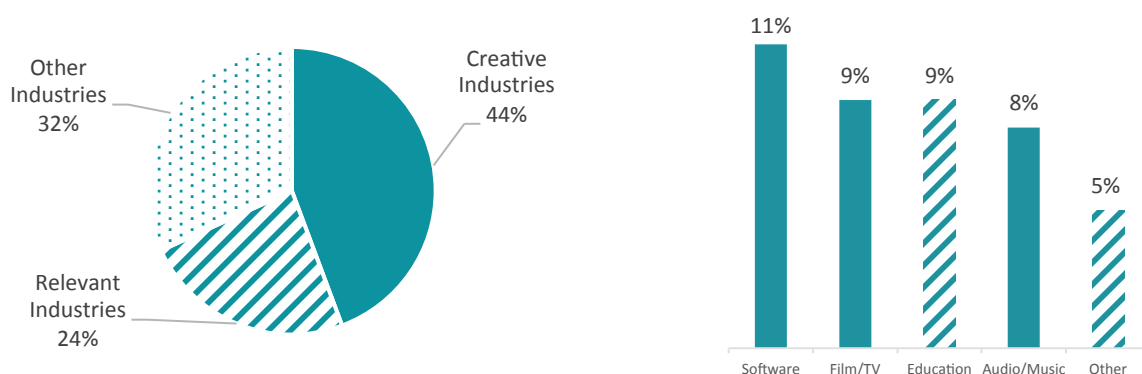
Music Technology staff and graduates have an established and extensive network of existing industry and community ties, from local venues to the BBC, as well as leading technology developers and companies. Long-standing and developing partnerships with these organisations, which recognise the quality of our students and teaching, provide the foundation for studioWEST, through projects, work opportunities, placements, events, festivals, and support for developing our students as professional practitioners. In recent years, the music technology team have secured significant funding for research and cultural projects, including Innovate UK, AHRC (REACT), I4G, iNets, Welsh Government, National Lottery and UWE itself – which studioWEST will enable us to consolidate and expand.

- **Professional bodies:** JAMES, AMPS, APRS, AES, ICMA, BCS, HEA, NUS.
- **Broadcasters:** BBC (including Partnerships; BBC Bristol; Academy; R&D (Salford); Natural History Unit; Radio & Music Operations; Introducing), The Guardian Media & Special Projects, RTÉ, SiS.
- **Studios:** Real World, Films@59, Evolutions, Audio Uproar, Wounded Buffalo, Hackenbacker.
- **Venues:** Colston Hall, St. George’s Hall, Arnolfini, UWESU, Watershed, local clubs & venues.
- **Licensing and Distribution:** MCPS, PRS, IMRO, Boost Music, Pump Audio, SoundSnap.
- **Technology:** Dolby, ROLI/JUCE, nu:desine, Focusrite/Novation, Raspberry Pi Foundation, Steinberg, Ableton, Spitfire Audio, SongKick, X-IO, Mi.Mu, Bristol Robotics Laboratory (BRL).
- **Arts, Outreach, and Culture:** CPA, OpenUp Music, Arcomis, Project Zulu, London Symphony Orchestra, British Paraorchestra, South-West Open Youth Orch., Welsh National Opera, @Bristol
- **Academic and Education:** University of Bristol, City of Bristol College, Bristol Cathedral Choir School, Henbury School, Pervasive Media Studio, School of Sound, MESH, DMU / EARS 2.

Professional Landscape

The audio industries encompass diverse areas of activity including (but not limited to): live music and studio engineering; A/V installation and acoustic design; game audio development; media and broadcast production; training and education; and R&D of new hardware and software technologies. This creates many avenues for the modern graduate to enter professional. However, as a growth subject, the UK’s music technology courses have produced a surplus of graduates for existing entry-level positions (Source: Born and Devine, 2015), making it key to highlight UWE’s leading position in the field, and in delivering industry-ready graduates with deep technical and practical understandings.

Moreover, there is a growing need to develop more independent, industrious graduates, prepared for freelance, self-employed, and entrepreneurial career paths. It is estimated that “around a half of the available workforce in the audio-visual industries are freelance” (Source: Spilsbury Research), reflecting a decentralisation of creative and digital sectors with increased emergence of small studios that sub-contract freelancers and the erosion of institutional production (such as the BBC). Self-employment, as sole traders and small businesses, is thus a practical necessity for many in the audio industries. Research suggests that up to 88% of music graduates make their income from a portfolio career (Source: Dannhauer, 2016). For technical roles, including software development, portfolios and experience are likewise key factors in recruitment (Source: Datascope), but can also open paths to start-ups and investment – where digital audio has enjoyed significant attention in recent years.



UWE Music Technology Graduate Destinations 2011-2015 (Source: DLHE)

Financing and Planning

YEAR 1 *Infrastructure, Publicity, and Pilot Projects*

- Budget: £30,000 as pump-priming fund, targeting minimum 50% for pilot student projects.
- Early bid for Innovate UK matched-funding to increase initial operating budget.
- Establishing Revenue and Income Streams, including:
 - Studio and equipment hire (outside term; e.g. studio with gear £100 per 3hr session)
 - Recording and production services (student-led audio professionals; £100+ a day)
 - Live event support services (live sound, lighting, DJ, MC, and VJ; £200+ per event team)
 - Library music and content generation (student advert music and idents; £100-500 per track)
 - Technology and acoustic consulting (e.g. software contracts from £500, higher for team dev.)
 - Additional funding sources (I4G, RCUK, National Lottery, regional bodies; small grants £3k-30k)
- Initial Costs, Administration, and Management⁴:
 - Digital platforms – open/affordable third-party platforms for distribution (App/plugin stores, e.g. KVR), web infrastructure, communication, and project management (e.g. Slack™).
 - PR/Marketing – branding, advertising, networking events.
- Coordinating Curriculum Integration
 - Adapting existing innovation and activity on academic programmes and student work.
 - Establishing studioWEST Enterprise annual prizes and team competitions.
- New Project Models – pilot studentships, technology projects, industry/KTP investment.
 - 1/2 x Technology start-up studentship/fund, based on final year project (£2500³).
 - 1/2 x Research studentship, based on call for proposals (£2500³).
 - One high-visibility, student-managed live concert event (e.g. Graduate Show), showcasing new artists, works, technology, and production talent (up to £5000 – with Colston Hall).
 - Additional digital release and distribution support/funding (up to £500 each).
 - Further responsive investment model for emerging partnerships and opportunities.
- Developing reputation and relationships with industry, identifying key partners.

YEAR 2 *Towards Sustainable Projects and Partnerships*

- Budget: £30,000 for maximising investment in students and projects, growing income generation.
- Focusing on Sustainable Practices, Funding Sources, and Profitability:
 - Increased licensing income from growing content and software libraries.
 - Repeat business from local clients, such as venues and events.
 - With brand recognition and reputation, exploration of subscription-based digital and professional services, moving from ad-hoc contracting/projects to service provider.
 - Developing future large-scale development/infrastructure bids (e.g. Horizon 2020, RCUK).
- Reviewing and Expanding Successful Project Models:
 - Targeting equal investment in each stream, with respective target annual incomes:
 - CREATE: commercial music (£2k), commissioning (£1k), arts funding (£5k)
 - PRODUCE: events (£1k), services (£3k), hire (£1k)
 - RESEARCH: funding (min. £10k, internal⁴ + external)
 - DEVELOP: software/app sales (£2k), services (£2k), private investment (min. £5k)
 - Broadening participation with innovation competitions (based on £1000 grants), leading to more significant financial support (up to £5000 – developing on FET Innovation model).
- Minimising Overheads and Running Costs:
 - Improved economy and efficiency in resource use (e.g. tools and technologies).
 - Increased investment and contribution from key partners (e.g. Colston Hall).

³ Average estimate. Representative 8-week undergraduate summer internship, paid at Grade B: £1441 plus equipment, assuming standard £1000 UWE Enterprise matched-funding subsidy. Fixed-cost funding models also possible (via Purchase Order) – e.g. up to £1000 per project, awarded depending on proposal, requirements, feasibility, track record, and scope. Alternative flexible-funding model, paid hourly at Grade B (e.g. "Entertainment Software/Undergraduate/Graduate Developer").

⁴ With support from David Coward (HoD, CSCT) for studentships, equipment, and staff workload (2 x 55 WLB), plus other internal and regional awards from UWE Careers, RBI, and UWE's links with the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership.