

Music Teaching and Learning Experiences at ACU

Core experiences for study in Music:

Since 2021, Primary and Early Childhood/Primary undergraduate and Master of Teaching pre-service teachers at ACU study ONE compulsory core unit in The Arts Education. This unit covers all four Creative Arts disciplines – Dance, Drama, Music and Visual Arts. As ACU is a multi-campus university with campuses across three States and one Territory, this unit addresses both state jurisdictional and Australian Curriculum requirements, hence also includes Media Arts.

The 12-week unit is structured in four equal components: Dance, Drama, Music and Media/Visual Arts. Pre-service teachers rotate through all four disciplines in 3-week rotations. Learning materials are developed by ACU academics with specialist knowledge and backgrounds in Music education. Tutorials are delivered by continuing and casual staff, who all possess relevant post-graduate qualifications in Music Education and have experience teaching Music in schools.

The units are delivered in multi-mode, comprising a combination of engagement with prepared online content, and on-campus practical engagement.

Each Arts discipline provides the following learning experiences:

Taught content:

1. 2 hours/week of pre-recorded lectures and/or lecture-equivalent online activity.
2. 3 hours/week of on-campus tutorials or online equivalent activities.

Self-directed activities:

3. 1 hour/week of discipline-specific set reading.
4. 1 hour/week of tutorial-preparation activities.
5. 4.5 hours/week of revision, discussion and assignment preparation.

This equates to approximately 35 hours of Music, comprising:

- 6 hours of lectures or equivalent.
- 9 hours of practical engagement in tutorials.
- 20 hours of self-directed learning.

It is worth noting that this is a substantial reduction in face-to-face learning in Music since 2020. Previous undergraduate Primary and Early Childhood-Primary ITE programs at ACU provided for pre-service teachers to complete two mandatory core unit in The Arts education. Hence, Music comprised 50% of a unit rather than 25%. This is a common trend across the sector, and is a direct consequence of the pressures on ITE programs from the increase in mandatory units in other curriculum areas.

Tutorial learning experiences:

Tutorials predominantly engage pre-service teachers in practical music-making. Through engagement in these practical activities, analysis and discussion, they develop skills in making and responding to Music, with an emphasis on practical application in the classroom. They build conceptual, pedagogical and curriculum knowledge through developmental learning experiences that are responsive to the needs of diverse learners in school settings.

This unit aims to develop skills and confidence in providing active, developmental and differentiated learning experiences in the Creative Arts for diverse contexts.

Learning how to teach music occurs through active modelling of primary classroom activities, where pre-service teachers engage on two levels:

1. *Experiencing* learning Music through the eyes of young children. They *Listen, Sing, Play, Move,* and *Compose* music appropriate to children.
2. *Analysing* these experiences - as future teacher of Music: developing their understanding of how to design and implement appropriate Music activities to promote children's engagement and build their skills and conceptual understanding.

Lecture and tutorial content focuses on:

- An introduction to Music concepts and activities.
- An introduction to Music syllabus in NSW.
- Music repertoire for children from Early Stage 1 to Stage 3.
- Music methodologies and pedagogies.
- A range of musical styles, cultures and genres, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musics.
- Planning for teaching, learning and assessment in Music.
- Differentiating for learners with diverse backgrounds and characteristics.
- Professional learning opportunities and organisations.

Assessment:

Pre-service teachers complete assessments that require them to analyse the Music syllabus, and apply this in the development of either a resource kit in Music, or a plan for a Music learning sequence.

Opportunities for extended study in Music:

Undergraduate:

Pre-service teachers with space in their programs may opt to study an elective in Music Education. This unit is delivered online, and includes weekly two-hour synchronous Zoom tutorials. Each year, approximately 30 students nationally select this unit, of which approximately 10 being from New South Wales.

In this unit, they engage in an in-depth study of Music practice, curriculum and pedagogy. Unit content builds understanding of the concepts, practices and conventions of Music as a discrete discipline and its role in education. Pre-service teachers' knowledge and skills are developed through engagement in practical music-making and listening/responding experiences, which they then apply in the development of special interest projects. Through the analysis and application of contemporary theoretical and pedagogical frameworks, they develop a comprehensive understanding of the relationships between pedagogical principles, conceptual elements and practices within Music education. These inform the design of authentic Music learning sequences for implementation in diverse primary school classroom and co-curricular settings

Master of Teaching:

Pre-service teachers who enter the Master of Teaching Primary or EC+P with an undergraduate qualification in any area of the Arts study a teaching specialisation in The Arts. Those with a Music qualification are able to make Music their main focus in this specialisation. Each year, a small number of students pursue a specialisation in The Arts – typically two to three students from NSW, of which one or two may focus on Music.

Pre-service teachers' following a specialisation in The Arts complete one unit in *Advanced Pedagogy and Leadership in The Arts*. This unit supports development of curriculum specialist expertise alongside leadership capabilities, and encourages them to take on a leadership role within The Arts. Pre-service teachers examine current literature and practitioner research to critically evaluate successful education programs in the field. They synthesise their specialised knowledge and theories and practices of leading improvement, innovation and change in education to develop a teaching program to extend learners in The Arts. They will further apply their knowledge to develop a professional learning program designed to improve their own practice and that of future colleagues, in order to enhance student learning outcomes in the specialisation. This unit aims to develop pre-service teachers' capacity to act as leaders in curriculum and teaching practice in order to improve student learning outcomes in The Arts.