

Unit Title	DAW Software Techniques
FHEQ Level	UG 1 - L4
Unit Code	MSD18103
Credit Value	30
Unit Type	Subject

Learning Hours			
Staff – Student Contact Hours		Independent Study Hours	
Classes	45	Independent Study	50
Supervised access to resources	45	Preparation for Assessment	90
		Unsupervised Access to Resources	70
Total			300

Unit Description

The rise of the Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) as a modern day tool for recording and manipulating audio has had an undeniable impact on the music and sound industries over the last thirty years. DAWs form a key part of most commercial recording studios and are fundamental to the work of composers, producers and sound designers working today.

This unit introduces students to techniques within DAW environments, building their skills in key software packages which they will use throughout their career. Many of these skills are transferable and will be applicable to alternative DAWs that the student wishes to utilise in future. As well as learning the associated technical skills, students will begin to explore how they can use these resources to bring their music and sound ideas to life, translating creative ideas into working practice. They will learn to work with MIDI, recorded audio, virtual instruments and plugins which will enhance the quality of their work. They will also master the fundamentals of DAW-based mixing and post-production techniques, developing skills which they will carry forward into subsequent units, particularly the *Studio, Live and Location Recording* unit at Level 4.

The Five Principles underpin the Mindsets and Skillsets Manifesto and are the foundation upon which all course curriculum frameworks and unit specifications are based. The relevant following principles have been mapped against the Learning Outcomes relevant to each course unit and at each level. 1. Cultivate: Where the individual thrives. 2. Collaborate: where disciplines evolve. 3. Integrate: where education engages industry. 4. Advocate where purpose meets practice. 5. Originate: where creativity meets technology.

Unit Indicative Content

- MIDI sequencing, including quantizing and manipulating MIDI data
- Recording and editing original audio
- Loading and configuring virtual instruments
- Programming synthesisers
- DAW-based mixing and post-production workflow

- Audio and MIDI formats
- Basic audio restoration and repair

Unit Aims

- To introduce students to technical skills on a number of professional-level DAWs commonly used in industry.
- To develop a fundamental understanding of MIDI and audio, including the use of virtual instruments, synthesisers and plugins.
- To learn basic rules of mixing and post-production repair and enhancement.
- To allow students to create stereo recordings using the MIDI and audio techniques developed throughout the unit.
- To provide experience working on computers and software that are vital for successful progression to subsequent units.

Unit Learning Outcomes

LO 2 Concept/Ideation

Generate first concept ideas or strategic project themes drawing upon reference to acquired research materials

ORIGINATE

LO 3 Development/Prototyping

Demonstrate a range of tests and solutions, informed by knowledge of the principles of the creative process.

INTEGRATE

LO 4 (Pre) Production

Identify, select and apply an appropriate selection of processes, materials and methods that inform creative and academic practice.

COLLABORATE

LO 6 Critical and creative mindsets

Demonstrate enquiry into what makes good practice - both creatively and academically

ORIGINATE

Learning and Teaching Methods

This unit will be delivered using a combination of:

- Workshops
- Technical demonstrations
- Lectures
- Briefings
- Project work
- Online learning

- Self-directed independent study

Assessment methods and tasks

More detailed assessment tasks will be specified in the brief

1. Detailed DAW sequences of original pieces of music or sound design using MIDI, audio and post-production techniques
2. A reflective report or video which critically reflects upon the creative and production process
3. In-class DAW practical test

Assessment tasks	Weighting (%) <i>(one grade or multi-grade unit)</i>
1. Practical Project and Reflective	100%

Indicative Assessment Criteria

Assessment criteria are the basis on which the judgment of the adequacy of the work is made. A more detailed assessment criteria will be specified in the brief.

- IAC 1: Illustrates ability to construct music or sound design ideas using DAW software (LO2).
- IAC 2: Demonstrates an ability to select and configure appropriate virtual instruments, plugins and post-production resources (LO3).
- IAC 3: Demonstrates an understanding and execution of DAW-based skills in the creation of project work (LO4).
- IAC 4: Demonstrates appropriate critical reflection regarding key processes (LO6).

Essential Reading list

1. Aikin, J. (2015). *Power Tools for Synthesizer Programming: The Ultimate Reference for Sound Design (Power Tools Series)*. 2nd ed. Milwaukee: Applause Theatre Book Publishers.
2. Bell, A.P. (2018) *Dawn of the DAW: The Studio as Musical Instrument*. New York:OUP USA.
3. Cook, F. (2013). *Pro Tools 101: An Introduction to Pro Tools 11 (with DVD)* (Avid Learning). Independence: Cengage Learning PTR.
4. McGuire, S. (2014) *Modern MIDI: Sequencing and Performing Using Traditional and Mobile Tools*. Boca Raton: CRC Press.
5. Nahmani, D. (2017). *Logic Pro X 10.3 - Apple Pro Training Series: Professional Music Production*. San Francisco: Peachpit Press.
6. Pejrolo, A. and DeRosa, R. (2017). *Acoustic and MIDI orchestration for the contemporary composer*. New York: Routledgess.
7. White, P. (2010). *Basic Mixing Techniques*. London: Music Sales.