



BA(Hons) Creative Music Performance
Pursuing Excellence in Bass

Course Overview

Studying for your degree at DIME means you will have a bass in your hands everyday for the duration of the course. We recognize that if you want to compete as a player and be the best you can be, you will need intensive instruction along with the time to practice and develop your technique, own style, and form a realistic and achievable career plan. This course is for musicians who are serious about their music and focused on a career in today's fast-paced and ever-changing music business environment. You will study in a bass group for most of your classes, and in shared mixed discipline groups for performance and music business studies.

The classes are scheduled as follows:

Semesters 1 & 2	Semesters 3 & 4
1. Technical Development	6. Advanced Techniques
2. Improvisation (including theory of music and ear training)	7. Advanced Improvisation (including theory of music and ear training)
3. Artist Studies (including live performance workshops)	8. Artist Analysis (including gig preparation and live performance)
4. Rhythm Studies (incorporating rhythm section workouts)	9. Composition and Arrangement
5. Practice Planning	10. Music Business Studies and Self Employment Skills*

Semester 5	Semester 6
11. Developing Your Own Style (including band MD skills and ensemble performance)	13. Solo Performance
12. Applied Techniques (including theory of music and ear training)	14. Professional Practice Portfolio (including gig diary, tour management and career planning)

1. Technical Development

This class is about understanding the bass neck inside and out, and realizing your technical and creative potential. Ultimately, the goal is to be able to forget all about scales and exercises and just play the music you hear in your head. This takes time and dedicated practice. Throughout the course, you will study technical exercises, scales, harmonic concepts, feel, groove and tone production. This vocabulary will fuel your creative expression on the instrument. At DIME, an exercise is immediately applied to a musical context. There is a place for speed and flashy technique, but as working players we also value taste and creativity very highly.

2. Improvisation

The material you learn in Technical Development will be applied immediately to the Improvisation class. Only by spending hundreds, if not thousands, of hours jamming will you become 'at one' with the instrument. A scale could be likened to a warm-up, like a boxer skipping or working with a punch bag. In this class, we will go far beyond mere scale practice and develop your ear to ensure you are comfortable with chords, riffs and grooves. We will provide you with chord sequences of varying complexity and challenge you to create parts, hook lines and improvised bass solos and fills. Tone is important, so we will work on your bass rig and sound. We will investigate how you can gain the authority of a professional player through solid timing and great phrasing.

We will also cover ear training and theory of music (for those of you who have learned to play by ear), but we will progress quite rapidly through to a logical study path that will help you make sense of the music you hear from sophisticated progressive rock to modern jazz fusion and everything in between. Do not fear theory, it is the musician's friend. It is a good idea to have access to an electric keyboard so you can visualize the harmonic structures we talk about in a very clear way. With a small amount of daily effort you will become fully musically literate.

3. Artist Studies

In this class, *you* set the direction of your studies by choosing professional bass players to study in detail as negotiated with your instructor. You will be expected to play several tunes by these artists to the highest standards. This will include generating an authentic tone, fully committing to the performance with accurate execution and showing solid timing and groove. You will be asked to provide a critical analysis of your chosen artists that demonstrates a contextual understanding of the historical, social and cultural factors that shaped their unique sound and style.

We will then back this up with a series of intense live performance workshops where you will develop your ensemble playing skills. You will become confident and consistent on stage and learn to play in a tight band unit, locking as a rhythm section, being sensitive to arrangement and the importance of getting the part exactly right. You will focus on nuances such as playing in front, on top, or behind the beat when appropriate. You can take part in DIME sponsored gigs and get supported in raising your live performances to professional standards.

4. Rhythm Studies

Developing consistency and control of timing is the single most important aspect of your playing if you want to be a truly excellent musician. In this class, you will work on a variety of material and musical challenges in a disciplined way, always to a click track, loop or live drummer in order to tighten up your band sound and make your lines more authoritative. A wide variety of genres will be covered to inspire you and make you a more versatile musician. We will reinforce harmonic structures to provide you with the solid background you need to create an infinite variety of chord inversions, parts and single note lines.

You will apply this learning in the context of a live rhythm section, taking charts and grooves and jamming under the direction of an experienced producer who will encourage you to be disciplined in laying down solid grooves. You will be encouraged to push the level of experimentation and innovation in your ideas for parts and improvisations.

5. Practice Planning

In this class, you will use time management, goal setting and reflective thinking to form clear and effective practice methodologies in the development of your area of specialism. In addition to the construction of a coherent practice strategy, you will be asked to provide critical analysis of your own abilities as compared to industry professionals and how the concepts you have studied will be applied in the wider musical context of your performances and other musical endeavors.

6. Advanced Techniques

This class builds on your study of the specialist skills covered in the Technical Development class in semesters 1 and 2. The techniques are designed to consolidate and expand your existing vocabulary on the instrument. There will be a greater emphasis on how to apply the skills learned in a broader musical context in preparation for the next level of study.

7. Advanced Improvisation

This class builds on your work in semesters 1 & 2 and continues with the study of improvisational skills, the theory of music and ear training, alongside the methodologies that are ultimately designed to enable creative musical expression in your specialist area. The skills and vocabulary learned in these lectures will be applied and contextualized within performance scenarios and that means gigs and lots of them! Some will be organized and sponsored by DIME and some you will organize your self, from acoustic and jam nights to club nights and festivals.

You will be encouraged to develop your own learning methodologies including self-devised exercises and practice routines that will enhance your technical abilities. The application of these skills into a broader musical context will develop you into an individual player. DIME does not aspire to turn out bassists who all sound the same, let us help you to find your own voice and your own musical niche.

8. Artist Analysis

This class builds on your work in Artist Studies in semesters 1 & 2 and continues to examine the techniques, methodologies and repertoire of iconic bass players. The concepts examined in this class are intended to support you in the development of your own individual approach and should ideally be applied to a broader musical context. In addition to learning a portion of their repertoire, you will be asked to provide critical analysis of your chosen artists that demonstrates a contextual understanding of the historical, social and cultural factors that shaped their unique sound and style. You will extend your critical analysis through the inclusion of musical notation, commenting on how the unique voice of the artist is evident within the transcription.

You will need to showcase this material in band performances that will take place in both timetabled live performance workshops and gigs. This will get you used to the feel of stages, venues and playing through different PA systems so that you gain the authority and consistency of a professional player.

9. Composition and Arrangement

This class provides you with the opportunity to study and apply methodologies for composing and arranging original music. The outcomes of this class will see you producing original compositions to a specified brief. The concepts examined will provide an integrated understanding of the broader musical context and will support the development of your work throughout the course. This class deals largely with instrumental composition and you may choose to take an optional additional class in songwriting methodology. *Additional fees may apply.*

10. *Music Business Studies and Self Employment Skills

This class is an overview of the music industry's history and how it operates. We will examine the key roles, opportunities available and how music professionals manage their careers. You will think about your own personal situation and the opportunities that are available to you. This will enable you to formulate a realistic and achievable career plan. **This class will not be accredited.*

11. Developing Your Own Style

This class asks you to amalgamate and apply concepts studied throughout the program in the development of your own unique sound and style. You will explain and demonstrate your critical approach to your instrument. You will be pushed to do this through live performance in both timetabled lectures and real world gig situations. This will be done under the critical direction of experienced producers and music directors. By this stage in the course you will have gained enough knowledge and confidence to lead and musically direct your band.

12. Applied Techniques

This class builds on the material covered in the Technical Development and Improvisation classes, and continues with the intensive study of specialist skills, techniques and methodologies. The content of the class will play a key role in the continued development of your artistic voice and provide creative direction for the Solo Performance in semester 6.

13. Solo Performance

This class is the culmination of your time spent on the program developing technical and musical skills. During this self directed study you will demonstrate your solo performance and the totality of your musical skills. You will use your knowledge of theory, notation and ear training to produce charts, transcriptions and program notes for your performances. You will also have the choice of presenting your solo material using a backing band or backing tracks.

14. Professional Practice Portfolio

After preparing for three years, this is the point where you, the musician, can make the successful transition from student to professional player. No one is saying that this will be easy, but long-term careers are available for musicians who have worked hard and planned carefully for success.

This class requires you to research and report on the career opportunities available for you as a bassist, taking into account the range of skills you have. You will use this study to investigate and describe how your craft can be contextualized in professional opportunities. Being inspired by examples of entrepreneurial practice and artistic excellence you will make your own plans and strategy. We will help you refine career goals as they need to be realistic and achievable. Your portfolio will also include a personal website and various forms of social media to support your professional work.

Entry Requirements

The BA (Honors) course is delivered by DIME in association with Falmouth University* (based in the UK, it is one of the world's leading international universities of the arts).

At DIME, given our emphasis on professional musicianship and quality, we will ask you to audition for us. You will need to prepare two pieces of music that are each approximately 4 minutes long. These can be played to backing tracks or self-accompanied. We will also ask you to play scales and exercises. You will be given immediate feedback on your strengths and weaknesses.

We audition strong musicians who are entirely self-taught alongside students who have had formal training. We welcome anyone with the passion, ability, and dedication, because having a great work ethic is important to being a DIME student.

Please also bring evidence of any music qualifications and experience you may have. Links to online performance material would be useful and relevant.

You will need to submit official high school transcripts with a minimum 2.5 grade point average. Official GED results will be accepted in place of transcripts. A minimum 401 composite score is required.

You will also need to submit your ACT or SAT scores. The average expected ACT score of DIME students is 22. The expected average SAT score of DIME students is 1059.

* Subject to validation