

PGDip in Instrumental Teaching: Audition/interview requirements

Guidance to applicants

The audition/interview for admission to the PGDip in Instrumental Teaching consists of the following components:

Performance

Perform one piece of your own choice on your first instrument (minimum Grade 8 standard), and one on your chosen family/secondary instrument (minimum Grade 5 standard) lasting no more than 5 minutes each. Playing from memory is optional, but encouraged where possible, since this often enhances performance.

Creative Task

Either:

Take a particular musical concept (e.g. subdivisions of the beat, dynamic contrast, rests) as your starting point. Compose or choose a piece of music lasting about half a minute to illustrate it. Devise a series of activities suitable for introducing it in a group lesson with 3 students of about grade 1 standard.

Or:

Choose or compose / improvise a simple piece roughly 16 – 32 bars in length. Show how you would develop a series of activities for a group of 4 students who have been learning for about two years, focussing on the development of ensemble skills.

Please allow 5 minutes for this activity. A piano and CD player will be available. If any of the activities require resources (such as rhythm cards, picture stimuli, pre-recorded accompaniments), including original ones created by you, please bring these with you to the audition. You are strongly encouraged to explore work both on and away from the instrument, including vocal and movement work.

Vocal Task

Sing a short unaccompanied song of your choice, lasting approximately 30 seconds. At an early stage in the course you will be required to use your voice in a teaching situation. The purpose of this task, therefore, is to allow you to demonstrate vocal confidence rather than for us to assess evidence of prior training and / or experience.

Interview and discussion with the audition panel

This is a chance for you to put forward your reasons for wanting to join the course, your experience with young people to date, and your knowledge of the issues surrounding instrumental teaching in the UK. The panel will ask questions based on your application form, your creative task, and anything which arises during the interview itself. At the end there will be an opportunity for you to ask any further questions you may have about the course.

General notes

Throughout the audition you should demonstrate your own musicianship and high level of technical competence on your first instrument. The repertoire you choose should allow you to do this. The audition panel is seeking to select candidates who are creative and imaginative musicians with excellent communication skills.

Sample Questions

1. Give us a brief description of yourself and your musical experiences to date.
2. Why do you want to train to be an instrumental teacher?
3. Why did you choose this particular course?
4. Tell us about some work you have done with young people of which you are particularly proud. What insights did you gain from this experience?
5. What do you think are the personal qualities and professional capabilities of a really good instrumental teacher?
6. What are your strongest and weakest points as a musician who wants to be an instrumental teacher?

7. Are there any potential gaps in your knowledge of repertoire and musical styles? What can you do to fill these gaps in the coming months?
8. What do you know about the Government's agenda to give all children in primary schools the opportunity to learn a musical instrument, sometimes referred to as Wider Opportunities? What are the implications for children in schools and for us as instrumental teachers?
9. What do you know about the National Curriculum for Music? How does it affect us as instrumental teachers working in schools?
10. Could you outline how you would introduce *a specific instrumental technique*? (An appropriate technique to be chosen for each candidate. e.g. spiccato, crossing the break on the clarinet.)
11. What do you know about the musical uses of Information and Communication Technologies? How could ICT be used as a tool to facilitate instrumental teaching and learning?
12. What is special about learning to play a musical instrument and what contributions can it make to young people's education?
13. What types of experiences do you think young people should have when they are learning to play a musical instrument?
14. Imagine that you have a group of 3 year 9 pupils who are still turning up to your lesson but are not practising very much. They are marking time rather than make any real progress. How would you motivate them to work hard and reignite their enthusiasm?
15. How do you think you can help your students to develop musicianship skills alongside technical skills on their instrument?
16. What particular strengths do you think you will bring to this course?
17. What areas would be new to you or would require further development?
18. What challenges do you anticipate as an instrumental teacher in schools?
19. What do you think are the significant features of a successful instrumental music programme?
20. Do you have any questions that you would like to ask us?

NB: Supplementary questions may follow either from answers to the above or from issues identified in part 1 of the audition.