

catalyst

2027

BACHELOR OF ARTS / HE CERTIFICATE

Creative Audio Production & Sound Engineering

Discover your sonic fingerprint as a music
producer and sound engineer

Overview

Where you'll learn

How you'll learn

What you'll learn: programme syllabus

Admissions Guide

Teaching Institution: Catalyst – Institute of Creative Arts and Technology

Final Award Title: Certificate of Higher Education (1 year)

Bachelor of Arts (Hons) (3 years)

Location: Berlin

Course start: September 2027

Mode of study: Full time

Language of instruction: English

Awarding Institution: Plymouth Marjon University

Overview

Expand your sonic profile as a music producer and sound engineer

The Creative Audio Production & Sound Engineering BA (Hons) takes you through the whole process of making recorded music, for yourself and for other artists. You capture studio performances then produce, mix, master and release them. Over three years you do that repeatedly, at increasing scale, until the process is second nature.

Most people who apply here taught themselves part of the process. A DAW, a pair of headphones, YouTube, a bedroom, and a point somewhere along the way where the mix stopped improving and there was nobody to ask why. What changes here are the resources and support. You work in professional studios with analogue and digital signal paths, alongside specialist technicians who keep it all running, and with tutors who will open your session, listen to your decisions and tell you what is not working.

In the first year you organise and run live recording sessions with Berlin musicians, tracking guitar, bass, drums, piano and vocals in a full studio. In the second year the projects get bigger: bands, albums and EPs, mixed and mastered to brief. By the third year you are managing a self-led project from concept to public release.

The programme is genre-neutral, and it treats the artist and the engineer as one practice rather than two. Students arrive from techno, metal, neo-soul, house, jazz, bass, singer-songwriter, club music, and their own creative combinations. Recording, sequencing, sampling, sound design, acoustics, mixing, mastering and critical listening are taught as an overarching craft that you apply to whatever you are making.

Where that craft takes you is your decision, and the programme keeps several routes open. You can build towards records and releases, towards live sound in venues and festivals, towards sound for picture and games, or towards producing and engineering for other artists.

By the end of the Bachelor's, you'll have:

- A professional portfolio of finished work: studio recordings, mixes, an album or EP project and a self-directed major project released publicly
- The ability to run a recording session, from setting up the room to delivering the master
- Fluency across Pro Tools, Ableton Live, analogue outboard and hybrid signal chains, and the judgement to know which of them a given project needs
- Mixing and mastering skills applied across genres, formats and client briefs
- Experience of sound design and composition for film, games and performance, made with the people making those projects
- A working knowledge of the commercial side: self-releasing, publishing, contracts and intellectual property
- Critical listening developed deliberately over three years, which is the skill everything else rests on
- Working relationships with the musicians, composers, filmmakers and actors who trained alongside you
- A future-facing mindset built on adaptability, leadership and creative growth

"Before I moved to Berlin, I was a somewhat dissonant, young, crazy, nomadic fool... Catalyst provided an environment where I could learn but could also be my authentic self. I still study constantly. Catalyst was just the first big step."

Jon Doig, Kiss Your Ears founder and Creative Audio Production & Sound Engineering alumnus

Where you'll learn

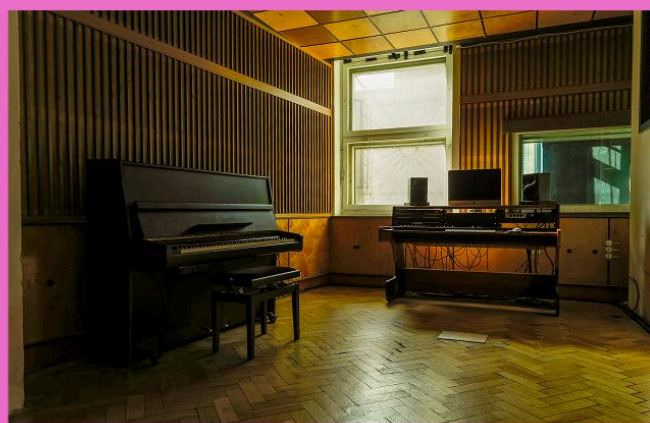
Our creative campus

The programme sits within Catalyst's School of Music & Sound, on a 4,500m² campus in central Berlin shared with the Schools of Film & Visual Media, Acting and Creative Human Development.

You work across 35 music and sound studios, including live rooms and control rooms built for tracking full bands, mixing suites, and a Dolby Atmos suite for spatial work. Etikett Radio, our student-run station, also broadcasts from campus.

Collaboration at Catalyst is built into the curriculum rather than left to chance, and over 70 nationalities work across the campus. Film Production students need location sound, sound design and a score. Visual Effects students need audio for interactive work and installations. The campus is your source of inspiration and collaboration.

[[Click here to book a visit](#) →]



"A great space for learning with amazing networking opportunities with people from all around the world. Top end facilities for film and music production, with a comfortable and stylish kitchen/lounge area which is constantly beaming with life. I love this place."

Sasha Dawe, Electronic Music Production & Performance alumnus

In Berlin

Berlin is where many of the tools you love to use were built. Ableton, Native Instruments and Bitwig have headquarters here. SchneidersLaden supplies the modular and hardware scene in Kreuzberg. That proximity is practical: the companies, shops and engineers are in the same city as your studio.

Music scenes run wider than its reputation suggests. From the techno scene that earned UNESCO cultural heritage status, to pop and indie circuit venues like Lido and Privatclub, the experimental and sound art scene at KM28, Morphine Raum and Ausland, festivals like CTM and Berlin Atonal, and the Berliner Philharmoniker leading a classical scene that keeps developing new work. For an engineer, the relevant point is the sheer number of venues and musicians looking for audio experts.

How you'll learn

Our learning method

There are no traditional exams at Catalyst. Every project is assessed through the work itself, which means progress is measured by what you make, how you develop it and how you respond to critique.

The method is practice-based and built around sustained projects with real deadlines and real outcomes. You learn gain staging by setting levels on a session that has to be delivered, and you learn microphone placement by placing microphones in front of a band who have turned up to play. Knowledge that arrives this way tends to stay, and it transfers when the situation changes.

The briefs set challenges rather than prescribing outcomes, so your influences and your questions shape what you end up with. You leave with a body of finished work that shows how you developed, which is a more useful thing to put in front of a studio, a label or a client than a transcript.



We've got you every step of the way

Your **tutors** are practising artists, producers and engineers, working in the field alongside teaching it. That shows in the feedback: specific, honest and usually harder than you expected. They will ask you difficult questions about your decisions rather than hand you a preset answer.

Your Programme Lead

Florian Zwiernig has over two decades of experience as a musician, producer and performer. He released five albums on labels such as Mute, EMI and Staatsakt as part of the duo Mediengruppe Telekommander. Today he works in sound scoring for film and advertising.



Your Certificate Lead

Georg Hilmarsson is a composer, educator and performer. He brings a blend of artistic experience and academic depth to his teaching, having had string compositions performed around the world, led large choirs and performed and toured with Icelandic band Sprengjuhollinn for many years.



[\[Click here to see more programme tutors→\]](#)

One-to-one tutorials run throughout the programme, giving you space to reflect on your progress, set goals that suit your practice and work out where to push next.

Our **specialist music technicians** are part of your day-to-day experience, and their job is to stop the technology getting in the way of the work. They help you set up advanced studio configurations for tracking, mixing or mastering, integrate hybrid workflows across analogue gear and digital tools, choose the right microphones and signal chains for what you are trying to capture, and keep the rooms maintained so your sessions run.

Our **wellbeing team** is visible and approachable, and part of everyday campus life. That includes confidential one-to-one counselling and coaching for creative blocks, anxiety, conflict and life transitions, help accessing medical resources and referrals, plus self-development workshops on collaboration, boundaries, communication, self-awareness and leadership.

Skills that outlast any console

Technological shifts have redefined the music industry over the past decade, and they will keep doing it after you graduate. So the emphasis throughout, in the critique sessions, the tutorials and the studio work, is on the things that carry you through that change: self-direction, creative resilience, critical thinking and the ability to learn through iteration and reflection.

You will work with Pro Tools and Ableton Live, outboard hardware, multi-microphone recording, hybrid rigs, spatial audio and AI-assisted production tools. The aim is not proficiency in any one platform. It is the judgement to hear what a project actually needs and to assess a new tool on whether it serves the work. Critical listening is the through-line: it runs as a taught strand across the first two years, because every decision you make in a studio depends on it.

A typical week at Catalyst

This example week is taken from February, 2026. Free creative time runs throughout the week: book a studio, track an idea, edit, mix or engineer on somebody else's session. Most of your portfolio gets made in those hours.

Monday

Development (3 hour workshop)

The week starts with group reviews of your personal projects, then moves to a one-to-one to work through next steps

Tuesday

Composition and Arrangement I (2 hour workshop)

In this workshop, you'll learn how compositional sections are built, held and released, what an arrangement leaves out and why the same chord sequence reads differently depending on what surrounds it.

Research & Context (2 hours workshop)

Where your work sits in relation to other films and media art. You research references, build your vocabulary and learn to pitch.

Wednesday

Studio Recording Practice (3 hour workshop)

Full session in the live room. Multi-microphone technique on a drum kit: close mics, overheads and room, phase relationships between them, and what moving a single microphone by fifteen centimetres does to the whole kit. Set the room up, run the session and explore your own decisions in the playback.

Sound in Space (2 hours workshop)

Reverberation and the room you are recording in. Measuring decay, hearing room modes, and the difference between a space you want on the recording vs. a space you are fighting.

Thursday

Sound Perspectives (2 hour workshop)

Guest tutor workshop.

Friday

Production Aesthetics (2 hour workshop)

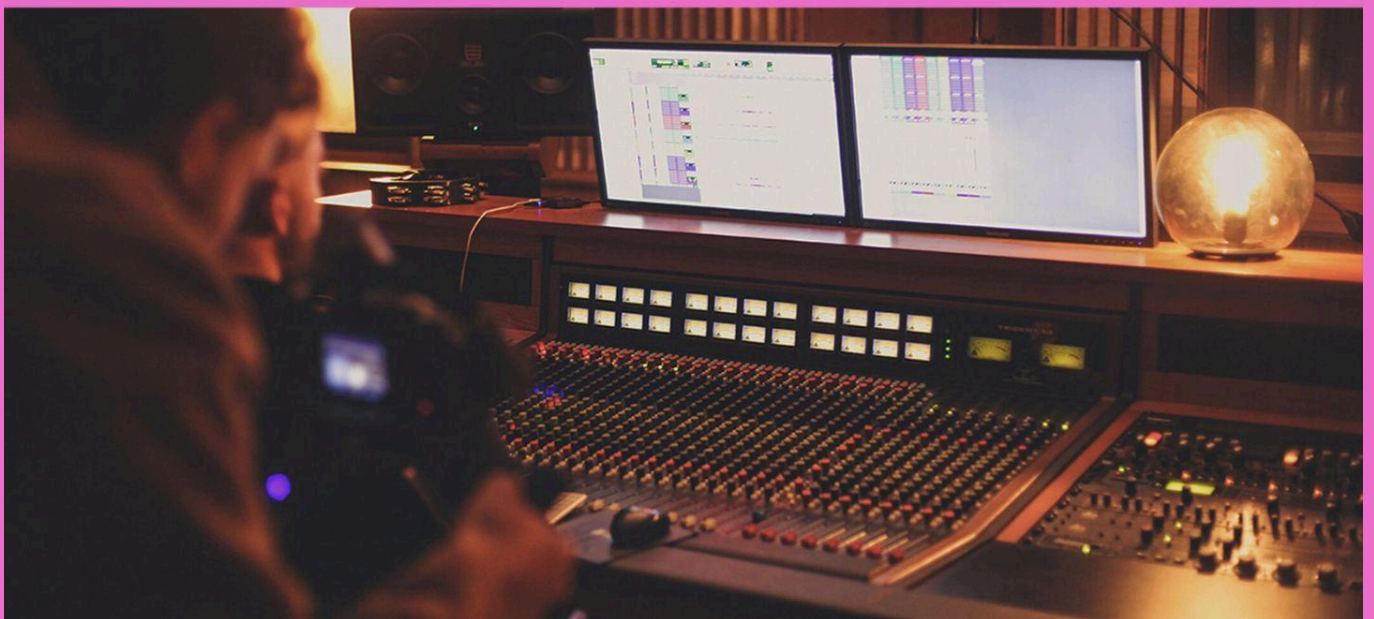
This session asks why records sound the way they do. Reference listening across genres, identifying the production choices that create a recognisable sound, and testing those choices on your own material.

Saturday

Free creative time

Our campus is open on Saturday during the semester if you need to pick-up some equipment or make use of an editing suite.

Please note: programme timetables and content are subject to change.



What you'll learn

Course structure & learning outcomes

The Creative Audio Production & Sound Engineering programme unfolds over 3 years:

Year 1 introduces studio fundamentals, audio production tools, critical listening, composition, and sound design. You'll build a portfolio of recording & mixing projects.

Year 2 deepens your understanding of mixing, mastering, production for media, studio workflows and sound aesthetics. You'll take on more ambitious projects and begin defining your personal style.

Year 3 is about consolidating your skills, focusing your artistic direction and preparing to enter the industry. You'll manage a major self-led project from concept to release, supported by mentoring and peer review.

You can study this programme either as a full three-year BA degree or the first year only as a one-year HE Certificate, with the option to continue afterwards. Please note that the following curriculum is non-binding and subject to change.

Year One - HE Certificate

Semester One		Semester Two
SYNC1: Create (20 CATS) SYNC2: Craft (20 CATS) SYNC3: Explore (20 CATS)		SYNC4: Shape (20 CATS) SYNC5: Form (20 CATS) SYNC6: Locate (20 CATS)
Development		
Studio Recording Principles		Studio Recording Practice & Mixing
Audio Production		Production Aesthetics
Sequencing, Synthesis & Sampling		Sound in Space
Critical Listening I	Composition & Arrangement I	Industry Profile

Please note our credit system. Our courses are validated in the UK, meaning we use CATS (Credit Accumulation Transfer System), rather than ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System). Generally, the number is doubled: 20 CATS = 10 ECTS.

The course content in your first year will focus on:

- Studio recording principles and practice... and more practice....and more practice!
- The ability to develop, produce and complete a creative product.
- The essentials of audio production, sampling and sequencing.
- Utilising room and psychoacoustics for music production and creating unique timbres.
- Familiarising yourself with various DAW systems and audio production tools.
- Recording and mixing your own tracks, songs and compositions.
- Making your first steps towards a career in the music industry.

Year 1 Workshops

Studio Recording Principles and Studio Recording Practice & Mixing

Begin with foundational recording concepts and studio skills. Learn the operation of equipment in order to perform recordings, explore techniques and consider musical aesthetics with the ultimate aim of creating professional recordings. Build upon your understanding by exploring technical and creative techniques in the process of recording guitar, bass, drums, piano and vocals. Consolidate your skills by organising and running live recording sessions with Berlin musicians. Finish the process by using contemporary tonal, dynamic and panoramic mixing techniques in your workflow while also considering the context of musical genre and the expectations of the client.

Audio Production, Sequencing, Synthesis & Sampling and Production Aesthetics

Study the operating tools for audio production using DAWs (Pro Tools and Ableton Live) and diverse hardware, developing your grasp of the production tools. Learn to transform audio, create unique timbres and the creative strategies that help you start and develop the material to complete your musical projects. Here, you'll build your own toolkit to use in the production process, helping you make decisions on the creative aesthetic of your musical projects.

Critical Listening I and Composition & Arrangement I

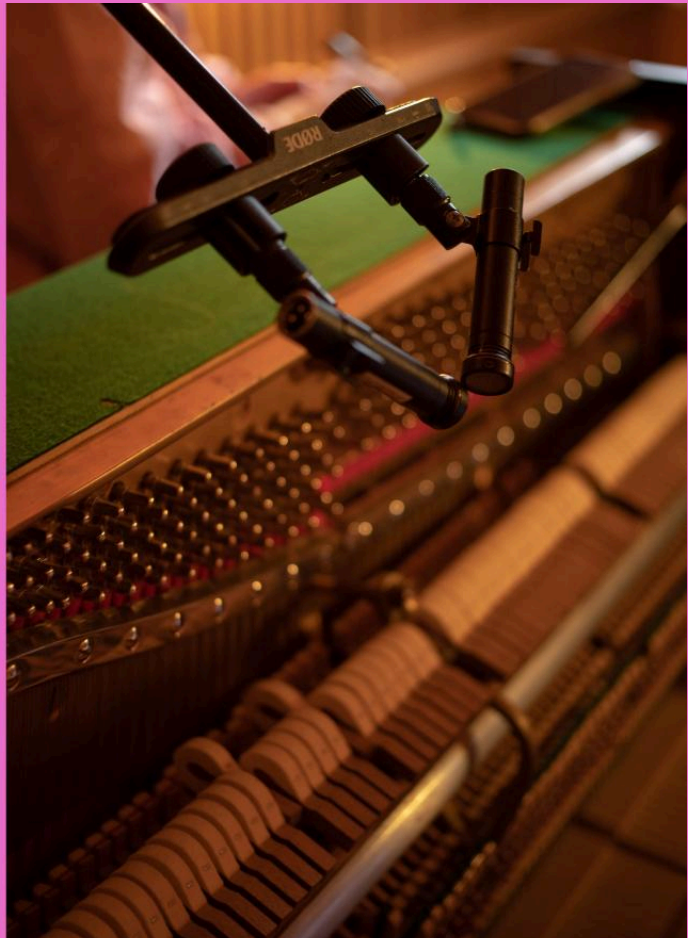
Bring together critical listening, theoretical study and time invested into applying these skills to your own practice. You'll engage in a variety of genres, production nuances and styles.

Sound In Space

Combine theoretical concepts with practical examples through listening, making, measuring and recording. Experience the links between music production decisions and our hearing system, explore reverberation, create instruments, experiment with mixing techniques and spatialisation as well as discovering and changing the sound variables that alter our perception of music production spaces.

Industry Profile

Using your own music as content, these workshop sessions will support you in discovering your musical values, defining your visual aesthetic, optimising your presence in the musical world and growing a network through communication. Investigate what it means to self-release, navigate the world of music publishing, get a feel for common contracts and understand the issues surrounding intellectual property.



Year Two - HE Diploma

Semester One		Semester Two	
BIND1: Develop (40 CATS) BIND1: Refine (20 CATS)		BIND3: Apply (40 CATS) BIND4: Venture (20 CATS)	
Development			
Mixing Practice		Mastering	
Production Concepts & Practice		Sound Design for Media	
Composition & Arrangement II		Composition for Media	
Music & Society	Critical Listening & Decision Making	Creative Practitioner	Audio Production & AI

The course content in your second year will focus on:

- Advanced studio recording techniques.
- Recording, mixing and mastering large-scale projects (albums, EPs).
- Band recording and producing larger studios.
- Comprehensive knowledge of audio production operation tools for different DAW.
- Audio production and composition techniques for multimedia.
- Use of diverse techniques to explore the expansive concepts of sequencing, synthesis and sampling.
- Building a comprehensive knowledge of industry standard tools and techniques.

Year 2 Workshops

Mixing Practice and Mastering

Develop your core understanding of foundational mixing methods by exploring the use of tools and techniques that can enhance and refine a musical product. You will practise the process of preparing a mix, investigating workflow and produce mixes toward a predefined vision. Then learn how to create professional masters of musical products – exploring studio requirements, tools, techniques and client communication, all in the context of running a mastering session.

Production Concepts & Practice and Composition & Arrangement II

Broaden the horizons of what is possible when combining traditional methods and tools of music production with modern approaches. You will get a rich insight into creative tools ranging from conceptual approaches to music production to hands-on practical tools. Investigate more complex ideas within composition, like the significance of form and methods for devising and utilising unique musical systems.

Music & Society and Creative Practitioner

Work towards understanding and defining yourself as an artist or producer and your position within a social and economic environment. Explore niche markets and study the broader developments of social phenomena and their musical realities. These workshops help you understand the commercial and academic aspects of the industry.

Audio Production & AI

Learn about how the most up to date technologies are used within music production and practice using them.

Sound Design for Media and Composition for Media

These workshops look across the board, preparing you for collaborations working with film as well as interactive/performative media like gaming. Develop the conceptual framework needed for media scoring by exploring contemporary and historic examples as well as the creative and technical skills for commercial work. You'll finish with a portfolio that shows a personal perspective while developing your own workflows.

Critical Listening & Decision Making

Develop your most important tool – your listening skills. Learn to identify and analyse fundamental elements of sound such as frequency, dynamics, and spatial properties. Develop the ability to discern subtle differences in audio quality, enhancing your ability to make informed decisions in your projects.

Year Three - Bachelors Degree

Semester One		Semester Two	
PUSH1: Frame (20 CATS)	PUSH2: Invent (40 CATS)	PUSH3: Launch (20 CATS)	
Option I - PUSH4: Process (40 CATS)			
Option II - PUSH5: Dissertation (40 CATS)			

The course content in your third year will focus on:

- Managing your own creative projects from conceptualisation to realisation.
- Fine-tuning and defining your focus and approach to your creative work.
- Presenting your work to the public and establish yourself within the industry in Berlin and beyond.
- Providing creative input to others' work (sound design, tracks, composition, etc).
- Discovering and developing new and innovative music production methods.

Major Project

The module descriptions below provide a starting point for how your major project will look and feel. However, the full picture is entirely reliant on your individual choices, made as a result of your time with us. Your major project is covered by the following modules:

PUSH1: Frame – Research and Development

Produce and refine a proposal for your major project. Utilising skills and knowledge you've already acquired, set new challenges you don't yet know how to overcome. Be bold, be ambitious and take risks. Become a specialist in the area you are working in, whilst producing a tangible outcome in a medium you can share with the world.

PUSH2: Invent – Advanced Production

An intensive production period working on practical and artistic research, exploration, production, refinement and completion of your project. Overcome inevitable roadblocks and issues along the way in order to complete a finished artefact. This module includes weekly critique and feedback sessions to support your journey.

PUSH3: Launch

Develop and employ an appropriate strategy for getting your work out into the world. We want your project to connect with people in a way that is meaningful for you and that sets potential creative and practical foundations for your life after Catalyst.

Minor Project

Alongside your major project, you'll have a choice to make between two minor projects (PUSH4 or PUSH5) which will complete your honours year.

PUSH4: Process (Option A)

Define, develop and provide a service or skill for an external client or collaborator. Document and reflect on the process in relation to professionalism, communication, self-development, standards and expectations. Engage in real-life collaboration, networking, client acquisition, communication and negotiation to further your own professional growth. Thought of in another way, imagine your work life starts now. What do you need to start out in a profession of your choice as a creative professional?

PUSH5: Dissertation (Option B)

A large-scale research and investigation project culminating in a 10,000-word (+/-10%) written thesis. Define a topic or area that you're passionate about and explore it with as much depth as possible, demonstrating an ability to understand the ideas of others, form your own ideas and opinions and present them coherently in a long-form essay.

By the end of the course, you'll have a strong creative identity, a wide-ranging skill set and a portfolio of work that showcases your evolution as a musician.



Admissions Guide

Here's everything you need to take the next step in your application:

Get to know us better

Virtual Open Days → Get a virtual overview of what we're all about, held online.

In-Person Open Day → Get a first-hand feel of our school and community.

Campus Tours → Come see our facilities at one of our weekly tours.

Virtual Taster Workshops → Join a programme-specific info event or masterclass

Admissions Open Hours → Book your one-to-one application support on-demand.

Admissions Guidance

1. Course fees & payment plans
2. Early enrolment bonus
3. Funding opportunities
4. Application deadlines
5. Visa requirements
6. How to apply

1. Course fees & payment plans

We believe creative education should be accessible, transparent and free from hidden costs. Our tuition plans are flexible – you decide to pay monthly, per semester, annually or in full with discounts. Extended payment options let you spread costs beyond your programme.

2027-28 / Plan type	Standard fee	Early Enrolment Bonus €1,000/Year	Duration	Notes
By semester	€6,000	€5,500	3 years / 6 sem.	Annual enrolment fee €895
Annually	€11,640	€10,640	3 years	3% discount by paying each year upfront. Annual enrolment fee €895
Total tuition upfront	€33,120	€30,120	One-time	8% discount by paying total tuition upfront. Annual enrolment fee €895
12 instalments per year	€1,083	€1,000	3 years	Annual enrolment fee €895
Extended yearly	€9,540	€8,790	4 years	Payments continue 1 year after graduation. No enrolment fee for the fourth year.
Extended instalments	€855	€793	4 years	Payments continue 1 year after graduation. No enrolment fee for the fourth year.

Enrolment fee

This non-refundable fee of €895 per study year is due before the start of each academic year and secures your place. No enrolment fee is charged in the post-graduation year if you choose an Extended Payment Plan.

Extended payment plans

In addition to single or installment payment options, we offer Extended Payment Plans. This spreads tuition payments over an additional year, resulting in smaller monthly payments that continue for one year after graduation.

Enrolment confirmation & billing

- Enrolment fee: due within 14 days of receiving your offer.
- Billing cycle: tuition installments begin 1 July 2027 and are billed on the first of each month until your chosen plan ends.

2. Early enrolment bonus

Apply by our **early enrolment deadline** to secure your place, save €3,000 off your total BA tuition (€1,000 per study year).

- **Visa-required applicants:** apply by 26 February 2027
- **EU/visa-exempt or post-arrival applicants:** apply by 31 March 2027

Please note that to be eligible for the **early enrolment bonus**, you must pay the enrolment fee within the two week deadline as presented in your offer letter.

Apply before the new year for an extra goodie!

Whatever your applicant category, apply by 31 December 2026 to secure a guaranteed spot and a free hoodie when classes start, on top of your early enrolment bonus above.

3. Funding opportunities

As an accredited higher education provider, our students are eligible for a variety of national and international financial aid schemes. This includes the German state funding stream BAföG, which is open to citizens of Germany, EU countries and some non-EU citizens too. Depending on which country you are a citizen of, this may also open up funding from other programmes supporting further-education. **Read more about the various funding opportunities on our website.**

4. Application deadlines

Visa-required applicants

- Priority: 26 February 2027 (includes early enrolment bonus)
- General: 30 April 2027 (subject to processing time and availability)

EU/visa-exempt or post-arrival applicants

- Priority: 31 March 2027 (includes bonus & guaranteed spot on preferred course)
- General: 4 June 2027 (granted on a rolling basis)
- Late: until 31 August 2027 (subject to availability)

5. Visa requirements

- **Visa-required:** If you require a visa before entering Germany (e.g. citizens of India, Russia, Brazil, Mexico, China, Turkey), you must apply at a German embassy before arrival. After enrolment, we send you a guide which helps you through the visa application process. Visa processing can take 3–6 months, so early application is essential.
- **Post-arrival visa:** If you're from a country that allows visa-free entry (e.g. USA, Canada, Japan, South Korea), you can enter Germany without a visa and apply for your student residence permit after arrival. After enrolment, we send you a guide to help you secure an appointment.
- **Visa-exempt (EU/EEA/Switzerland):** If you're a citizen of the EU, EEA or Switzerland, you don't need a visa or residence permit to study in Germany.

6. How to apply

Our application process is straightforward – just follow these seven steps:

1. **Check deadlines** – especially if you need a visa to enter Germany or financial support.
2. **Check entry requirements** – including age, English language level and educational qualifications. You can [find these on the Admissions FAQ page](#) on our website.
3. **Prepare your work sample(s)** – When you're ready to apply, you'll need to upload your work to an online platform (such as Vimeo, Youtube, Tumblr, Soundcloud) so that we can review it online. We do not accept file download links. For each work, you'll also need to add a short description in the application form (telling us the inspiration behind it and how you made it).

For Creative Audio Production & Sound Engineering we ask you to:

Share two pieces of original work that you have created using a DAW program.

These tracks can be composed from new recordings, samples, or a combination of both, and should demonstrate that you can perform basic DAW operations (such as applying plug-in effects).

We welcome music in any genre, sound art or other audio production, but we do not accept DJ mixes.

4. **Submit your application** at catalyst-berlin.com/apply, including personal and educational details, a motivation statement, your work sample(s) and supporting documents such as transcripts or proof of language ability.
5. **Wait for our response** – we'll be in touch within around two weeks. Sometimes we'll ask for follow-up information or invite you for an interview. Keep an eye on your inbox.
6. **Confirm your place** – once you receive an offer letter, secure it by paying the enrolment fee within 14 days.
7. **Get ready for Berlin** – once your enrolment fee is paid, you're officially enrolled. Next you'll set up your payment plan, receive your welcome pack and access preparation materials for your studies. We recommend finding accommodation as soon as you're sure that you're studying with us, and arriving one month before your classes begin. The welcome pack has lots of information to help you find accommodation and get settled in Berlin.

Get in touch. We're here to help.

Reach out to our Admissions team by email at admissions@catalyst-berlin.com or book a call [here](#).

