Your career options

With such a wide range of skills, it’s not surprising that you will also have a wide range of options open to you at the end of your degree. Here are some of the areas you could consider:

**Performance**
You might dream of being a solo performer or maybe you’d like to play in or even conduct an orchestra. Competition is fierce and to be successful – and we’re not talking fame and fortune but simply being able to survive! – you’ll not have to be technically brilliant but also have drive and determination and a pretty thick skin to deal with the inevitable disappointment and criticism. If you want to follow this route, then it is likely that you’ll have to embark on a postgraduate course in performance at one of the conservatoires after your first degree to continue your training.

**Education**
In your second year at the University of Aberdeen, you can choose the BMus Education route. This will qualify you as a Music Teacher working in secondary schools. But this doesn’t mean you can’t work in Education if you choose the BMus Single Honours. You could work as an Instrumental Tutor in schools or you could decide to become a Private Music Teacher.

**Music Therapy**
Music Therapists use music to help people address their social, emotional or physical problems. This could range from severe disabilities to stress management depending on where you work. To qualify, you’ll need to complete a two-year postgraduate course in addition to your music degree.

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**Careers with Music**

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**careers service**

**Why study Music?**
If you have a serious interest in music, then you probably don’t need to be convinced that a degree in this subject is a good idea. However, studying music is not only fun. The combination of performance, musicology, composition and, if you choose it, education offered at the University of Aberdeen will also equip you with a wide range of skills which employers will be interested, for example:

- **Teamwork** skills from playing or singing in ensembles. Maybe you’ll lead a section or become involved in conducting which will also develop your leadership skills.
- **Communication** skills which you will develop through your academic work such as essays and your final year dissertation. These are essential in any job. You’ll also give presentations, perform and engage your audience which will develop your oral communication skills.
- **IT** skills which you will develop through using specialist music software such as Sibelius.
- **Organisation and self-management** skills – This is an area music student often excel in as they juggle many different commitments such as their studies and assignments, ensembles and part-time work – all on top of motivating yourself to develop your musical skills and practise!
- **Confidence** – Not everyone can stand up in front of an audience and perform. This will come more easily to some students but there will be plenty of opportunities for you to practise.

…not to speak of the [technical and musical skills and knowledge] a music degree will give you.
Arts Administration
This term covers a huge range of jobs from planning the artistic programme for a festival or an arts venue to organising the bookings for an orchestra or even working as an agent for other musicians. Competition for these types of jobs is fierce and if you are interested in this area, you should try to gain as much work experience as possible over the course of your degree such as volunteering at venues, helping out with the organisation of local festivals or even taking on committee roles for the ensembles you are part of.

Libraries and Museums
Most large public and university libraries have a music section and specialist music knowledge is useful to provide the best possible service to your clients and also to look after the music scores and recordings held. Likewise, some large and specialist museums hold interesting collections which are looked after by music librarians or archivists. You usually need to complete a one-year postgraduate qualification in librarianship or museums studies for this career.

Broadcasting and Journalism
Radio 1 or 3, Gramophone or NME – broadcasting and journalism are the dream of many graduates and not just in Music which makes this one of the most competitive career areas of all. If you are interested in presenting, writing or producing (i.e. overseeing the making of programmes) music for TV or radio or the press, then the key is to get work experience and plenty of it! Write music reviews for the student newspaper, the Gaudie, volunteer for hospital radio or other charities, do whatever you can to get experience on your CV and who knows where it will take you?

Music Sales and Retail
Working in a music shop is only the beginning. If you have a flair for dealing with customers and enjoy providing excellent service, then you might want to rise through the ranks and become a manager. However, there are also opportunities in head offices with major retailers and record companies in sales and marketing.

Alternatives to Music?
And these are just some of the options open to you with a Music degree. Many Music graduates also opt for careers which are not directly related to their subject. This might seem odd to you at the moment but, over the course of your degree, you might develop new interests and ideas about what you expect from your career.

Many graduate jobs are open to people from any discipline. Usually a good honours degree is required and some related work experience wouldn’t go amiss either. For example, you could decide to work in HR, tourism or finance.

This is where the fantastic skills you will have developed through your degree and the many other activities on offer to students, for example sports clubs and societies, will come into their own. These can help you to convince employers that you are the right candidate for the job.

If you want to know more about your options, check out some of the tips and resources on the back of this leaflet or speak to someone at the Careers Service. Even if you’re not a student yet, we’d be happy to have a chat with you.

Top Tips
- Check out the Virtual Library on the Careers Service website at www.abdn.ac.uk/careers. You can search this by degree subject to find more information on your options and what Music graduates from previous years have gone on to do.
- Get involved in ensembles, clubs and societies. You’ll develop many skills employers look for while meeting new people and having a whole lot of fun!
- Try to find some work experience early on in your degree and keep adding to it. This is the safest way of getting into the job you really want – apart from getting a good degree, of course!
- Don’t forget, the Careers Service is here to help you achieve your career goals – right from day one.

Opening Hours
Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm
Closed from 1-2pm in vacation only

Confidentiality
Careers interviews and advice are all treated in confidence. Information will not be disclosed without the student’s permission.