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**Programme Specification**

**Title of Course: MMus in the Production of Popular Music**

**Date Specification Produced: September 2012**

**Date Specification Last Revised: July 2020**

This Programme Specification is designed for prospective students, current students, academic staff and employers. It provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the intended learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if they take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the teaching, learning and assessment methods, learning outcomes and content of each module can be found in the Course Handbook on Canvas and in individual Module Descriptors.

**SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION**

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| **Title:** | MMus Production of Popular Music |
| **Awarding Institution:** | Kingston University |
| **Teaching Institution:** | Kingston University |
| **Location:** | Kingston Hill |
| **Programme Accredited by:** |  |

**SECTION2: THE PROGRAMME**

1. **Programme Introduction**

The MA/MMus in Music was established in 1994 and has produced well over two hundred graduates, many of whom are leaders in the fields of popular music, composition, performance and music education. Students from the UK and overseas are attracted by the breadth of the programme, by the excellent accommodation and facilities provided within the Coombehurst complex and by the wide-ranging expertise of the Music staff.

In addition to taking a core module (Researching Music) followed by all MA/MMus students which teaches research skills and present topics of current interest within music, students take two core modules concerned with the production of popular music, each of which has a distinctive focus. Together they cover recording techniques, the composition and production of popular music and its marketing. Students also choose one option from a range of modules associated with three main areas of study: performance; composition (including composing for film and television) and music education plus some level 6 modules.

The variety of skills and knowledge offered across modules of the programme is reflected in the variety of forms of assessment employed. The major project, undertaken under the guidance of a supervisor, involves an extended folio of recordings; work on the project is supported by seminars which teach project planning and development.

Music at Kingston is part of the Department of Performing Arts: Music, Dance, and Drama within the School Arts, Culture and Communication. Students can benefit from informal collaborations with students from these other areas.

The course includes an integrated work placement or placements, which enables students to further develop their professional skills and enhance their employability. From the start of the course, students will begin to work to secure (a) placement(s) suitable for their course and career, supported and advised by the Careers and Employability Services team and the Professional Placement Module Leader. Workshops are provided on CV creation, interview techniques and placement searching, with drop-in sessions to provide additional support. In order to take the Professional Placement module, students need to have arranged a placement, approved by the Course Leader, by the end the preceding teaching block. Students undertake the placement either before the final module or following the completion of the final module. During the placement students will be supervised (online) by a tutor who, if possible, will visit during the placement. Depending on the location of the placement, meetings might take place face-to-face or via video platforms. The placement module will make use of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Canvas for communication and dissemination of information between students and staff as well as making online learning materials available. Students will be required to keep a critical diary of the tasks and duties undertaken during their placement, to provide a framework for a reflective essay and work placement report, which is submitted for assessment at the end of the placement. They will also assemble and collate samples of work and evidence of achievement produced during their placement which will also be submitted for assessment. Placement providers will be asked to appraise the students’ work and this feedback will be made available to the student. The placement module will be assessed on a pass/fail basis.

This integrated placement(s) provides students with a valuable opportunity to apply and develop their knowledge and skills in a professional working environment, enabling them to deepen their knowledge of the industry, develop their self-confidence, and strengthen their CV. Students undertaking placement activities are in a stronger position to gain the skills and experience which are valued by employers.

1. **Aims of the Programme**

* To provide a coherent but flexible two-year part-time or one-year full-time Master’s programme for popular music producers/composers, which will develop their musical and critical skills and knowledge, to a level beyond that of first degree study.
* To stimulate an inquiring mind and encourage initiative, creativity, critical evaluation and independence of thought which will allow the students to continue to develop their musical expertise and knowledge after they have graduated.
* To develop a systematic understanding of relevant musical knowledge, and a critical awareness of contemporary issues which is at, or informed by, the forefront of the discipline of music scholarship or professional practice/performance.
* To provide a postgraduate programme which addresses the changing demands of popular music composition and production, and which deals with the creation of popular music alongside its cultural and business contexts.
* The 2-year programme with integrated placement(s) also provides students with an opportunity to enhance their professional skills, preparing them for higher levels of employment, further study and lifelong learning

1. **Intended Learning Outcomes**

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, skills and other attributes in the following areas. The programme outcomes are referenced to the QAA subject benchmarks for music and the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (2014 and relate to the typical student.

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| **Programme Learning Outcomes** | | | | | |
|  | **Knowledge and Understanding**  **On completion of the course students will be able to:** |  | **Intellectual skills**  **On completion of the course students will be able to:** |  | **Subject Practical skills**  **On completion of the course students will be able to:** |
| A1 | demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the nature of popular music which will enable them to work innovatively in its production and composition; | B1 | handle complex issues both systematically and creatively, and communicate their findings clearly and succinctly; | C1 | demonstrate high level practical and technical skills in relation to popular music composition and studio production; |
| A2 | demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the techniques of production of popular music; | B2 | demonstrate a high degree of critical awareness in relation to their own work and that of others; | C2 | demonstrate a high level of presentational competence in both audio-visual and written work; |
| A3 | demonstrate a thorough knowledge and understanding of the industry-standard technology used for the production of popular music; | B3 | demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing production projects at a professional level; | C3 | create, develop and manage a production project, and engage in full professional communication with their peers in a studio setting. |
| A4 | demonstrate knowledge of techniques for marketing and disseminating popular music and understand the changing nature of these techniques; | B4 | analyse popular music and critically evaluate its effectiveness, and apply knowledge and understanding of musical contexts to their work; | C4 | demonstrate professional skills (including self-presentation, communication, interpersonal/teamwork, research and information literacy, numeracy, time-management and project-planning, management and leadership skills, and ethical practice). |
| A5 | demonstrate a thorough understanding of research methods in music and knowledge of some current issues in music research. | B5 | apply imagination and originality to the composition and production of popular music and link theory to practice. |  |  |

In addition to the programme learning outcomes identified overleaf, the programme of study defined in this programme specification will allow students to develop a range of Key Skills as follows:

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| **Key Skills** | | | | | | |
| **Self-Awareness Skills** | **Communication Skills** | **Interpersonal Skills** | **Research and information Literacy Skills** | **Numeracy Skills** | **Management & Leadership Skills** | **Creativity and Problem Solving Skills** |
| Take responsibility for own learning and plan for and record own personal development | Express ideas clearly and unambiguously in writing and the spoken work | Work well with others in a group or team | Search for and select relevant sources of information | Collect data from primary and secondary sources and use appropriate methods to manipulate and analyse this data | Determine the scope of a task (or project) | Apply scientific and other knowledge to analyse and evaluate information and data and to find solutions to problems |
| Recognise own academic strengths and weaknesses, reflect on performance and progress and respond to feedback | Present, challenge and defend ideas and results effectively orally and in writing | Work flexibly and respond to change | Critically evaluate information and use it appropriately | Present and record data in appropriate formats | Identify resources needed to undertake the task (or project) and to schedule and manage the resources | Work with complex ideas and justify judgements made through effective use of evidence |
| Organise self effectively, agreeing and setting realistic targets, accessing support where appropriate and managing time to achieve targets | Actively listen and respond appropriately to ideas of others | Discuss and debate with others and make concession to reach agreement | Apply the ethical and legal requirements in both the access and use of information | Interpret and evaluate data to inform and justify arguments | Evidence ability to successfully complete and evaluate a task (or project), revising the plan where necessary |  |
| Work effectively with limited supervision in unfamiliar contexts |  | Give, accept and respond to constructive feedback | Accurately cite and reference information sources | Be aware of issues of selection, accuracy and uncertainty in the collection and analysis of data | Motivate and direct others to enable an effective contribution from all participants |  |
|  |  | Show sensitivity and respect for diverse values and beliefs | Use software and IT technology as appropriate |  |  |  |

1. **Entry Requirements**

The minimum entry qualifications for the programme are:

A good honours degree in music or another relevant subject. Where an applicant can produce evidence of relevant experiential learning (e.g., work as a professional performer, composer, producer), it may be possible to consider in lieu of a music degree a good honours degree in a subject other than music or advanced study in a conservatoire which has not led to a degree

Applicants will also need to demonstrate a high level of compositional ability in popular music and technical knowledge through the submission of a folio of work (three contrasting produced popular music works on CD).

A minimum IELTS score of 6.5, TOEFL 88 (iBT) or equivalent is required for those for whom English is not their first language.

It may be necessary to get DBS clearance if the student chooses one of the music education modules as an option.

1. **Programme Structure**

This programme is offered in full-time, part-time and ‘with Professional Placement’ mode, and leads to the award of MMus in the Production of Popular Music. Entry is at level 7 with honours degree or equivalent qualifications (See section D). Transfer from a similar programme is possible with passes in comparable level 7 modules – but is at the discretion of the course team. Intake is normally in September.

**E1. Professional and Statutory Regulatory Bodies**

None

**E2. Work-based learning**

Work placement is an integral part of the 2-year programme and students will receive support from the award-winning Careers and Employability Services team.

While it is the responsibility of individual students to secure appropriate placements, the Careers and Employability Services team offer each student support at all stages of the application process, including writing CVs, completing application forms, participating in mock interviews, assessment centre activities and psychometric tests. Sourcing and applying for placement(s) give students the opportunity to experience a competitive job application process.

The experience of the work placement period enables students to apply their learning in the professional work environment, to reflect upon their own personal experience of working in an applied setting, to focus on aspects of this experience that they can clearly relate to their prior learning, and to evaluate the relationships between academic skills and employers’ expectations. Students will be assessed during and at the end of this period, through a portfolio of work, which will be marked as pass/fail.

**E3. Outline Programme Structure**

The programme is made up of four modules each worth 30 credit points and the Major Project which is 60 credits. Part time students take 3 X 30 credit core modules in year1 and 1 X 30 credit optional module and the Major Project (60 credits) in their second year. All students will be provided with the University regulations. Full details of each module will be provided in module descriptors and student module guides.

Students on the 2-year programme (with integrated placement) must complete all modules except the final ‘capstone project’ module, by the end of TB2, and then work in their placement(s) for a maximum of 12 months. The student should confirm that their placement opportunity is available by the end of May, and the course team will confirm whether this is acceptable within two weeks. Students on placement(s) must complete a portfolio assessment which includes a reflection on how they have applied the skills they have developed during the previous year, within a professional working environment.

A comprehensive list of all possible options is provided here. The option list in any given year will be carefully constructed to ensure that the course curriculum is coherent, enabling students to achieve the programme learning outcomes via their chosen selection of modules.

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| **Level 7** | | | | |
| **Compulsory modules** | **Module code** | **Credit**  **Value** | **Level** | **Teaching Block** |
| Researching Music | MU7001 | 30 | 7 | 1&2 |
| Advanced Production of Popular Music | MU7006 | 30 | 7 | 1 |
| Composing and Marketing Popular Music | MU7007 | 30 | 7 | 2 |
| Major Project | MU7012 | 60 | 7 | 2 |
| **Option modules** | | | | |
| Special Study: Experimental Music: Derbyshire, the BBC Radiophonic Workshop and Beyond | MU6201 | 30 | 6 | 1&2 |
| Special Study: Instrument Building, Bending, and Breaking | MU6202 | 30 | 6 | 1&2 |
| The Analogue Studio | MU6302 | 30 | 6 | 1&2 |
| Special Study: Arranging and Scoring | MU6303 | 30 | 6 | 1&2 |
| Live Sound and Event Management | MU6307 | 30 | 6 | 1&2 |
| Performance Studies | MU7003 | 30 | 7 | 1&2 |
| International Music Education: Psychology, Culture and Philosophy | MU7004 | 30 | 7 | 1 |
| Constructing Music Education in the UK | MU7005 | 30 | 7 | 2 |
| Techniques and Technology for Composing for Film and Television | MU7008 | 30 | 7 | 1 |
| Professional and Live Aspects of Composing for Film and TV | MU7009 | 30 | 7 | 2 |
| Critical Aspects of Musical Performance | MU7016 | 30 | 7 | 1&2 |
| Professional Placement | HU7100 | 120 | 7 | TB3 (Year 1) and TB1&TB2 (Yr 2) |

Students exiting the programme with 60 credits are eligible for the award of PG Certificate in Production of Popular Music.

Students exiting the programme with 120 credits are eligible for the award of PG Diploma in Production of Popular Music.

**F. Principles of Teaching Learning and Assessment**

**Teaching and Learning**

The teaching and learning strategies are designed to enable the students to enhance their skills, knowledge and understanding of popular music production by undertaking study in popular music composition, recording, music production and marketing within a popular music context. Students will also study a common core of research skills and select one optional module chosen from a wide range of music topics and /or closely related subjects. The learning experience will culminate in a substantial research project in the form of a CD or DVD of original compositions or cover versions. Tutor guidance will be provided to support module selection, to ensure a balanced programme.

The philosophy of the learning and teaching strategy is based on the notion of the integration of theory and practice, with student participation central to course delivery. Students are encouraged to engage in debate, critique and to enhance their skills as independent learners through individual research. The main foci of the teaching are on the development of the students' research skills, creative approaches, practical studio skills and critical analytical tools, so that they can develop autonomy in their learning. In addition, students will be supported in the development of their own informed and original creative voice, through compositions, recording and studio production, informed by recent and current research as well as industry and artistic practices.

Variety in learning and teaching methods is central to the delivery of the MMus Production of Popular Music at Kingston. Strategies include:

* Lectures and demonstrations;
* Seminars ;
* Guided laboratory work;
* Live recording and digital editing workshops;
* Workshops;
* Individual tutorials.

Keynote lectures will be used to introduce topics and to disseminate key information, both theoretical and practical. These will be complemented by seminars where students will be involved in the discussion and critique of controversial issues, enabling them to clarify their understanding and engage with the material. Students will also be encouraged to undertake informal presentations which will enhance communication, analysis and synthesis skills, and prepare them for assessment. Guided laboratory, live recordings and digital editing workshops will be central to the delivery of the practical modules focussing on recording techniques and studio production, where hands-on, concrete experience is the key learning strategy. Students will, in addition, be supported in the enhancement of their compositional skills in workshops, through critiquing their own work and that of others. This process has the added benefit of offering continual formative feedback.

On all the MMus production of Popular Music a high level of independent-guided study is expected of the students on both taught modules and the more research-based Major Project. This outcome, in the form of a CD or DVD of 15 minutes duration of original popular music compositions, or 30 minutes of cover versions, with a written critical commentary involves a high level of independent creative study by the student. In the Major Project students are allocated a specialist supervisor, who will support them through the implementation and write up of their project through seminars and individual tutorials. The composition specific seminars will address issues that are common to the cohort e.g. presentation and management, and progress reporting, where students will be expected to discuss and critically analyse their work. Individual tutorial will provide advice, for example, on the compositional process, critical self-evaluation, music technology skill and notational practices in popular music. The tutorials will be tailored to meet the individual needs of the student and will be arranged at times to meet the needs of both students and supervisor. A written record will be made by the supervisor, agreed by the student and a copy kept by both. The Major Project enables the student to specialise in popular music composition and production and to demonstrate originality. Students are expected to take responsibility for their own learning in terms of background research, practical preparation and analysis, and to work independently and self critically.

In addition to face-to-face contact between students and teaching staff, a virtual learning environment (Canvas) will provide students with access to a range of materials for each module. These materials will typically include the module guide, lecture slides and handouts, audio-visual material and links to useful web-resources. Use of the collaborative tools offered by Canvas (e.g. discussion boards, blogs, wikis etc) will be encouraged to facilitate team-working and interactive problem-solving skills, to prepare for and follow up taught sessions and to prepare for assessment for Researching Music where online interaction with staff and other students will be an integral part of the assessment strategy. Canvas can be used from any networked personal computer in the University as well as from most personal computers connected to the Internet.

**Assessment**

The assessment strategies address the key aims of the programme: to develop students’ musical and critical skills and knowledge, to stimulate an inquiring mind and encourage initiative, creativity, critical evaluation and independence of thought, to develop a systematic understanding of relevant musical knowledge, and a critical awareness of contemporary issues in music, to provide knowledge of research practices in music and to enable students to undertake a substantial individual research project. The strategies are also designed to facilitate the acquisition of transferable skills that will enhance the students’ employability in a range of sectors, and to enable students to proceed to research degrees.

Assessment is by coursework. A wide variety of summative assessment strategies will be used which have been selected to match the diversity of the learning outcomes to be tested and the nature of the work to be assessed. The tasks have been designed to offer a set of stimulating challenges, many of which reflect demands likely to be imposed on students in the workplace. Alongside the summative assessment there will be many opportunities for students to receive formative feedback from their tutors through seminar discussions, informal presentations, composition, performance and studio-based workshops and group and one-to-one tutorials.

In summary, the nature of the assessment of the course will utilise a combination of:

* Annotated bibliography;
* Contributions to academic debate on Canvas;
* Critique /Critical review;
* Essay;
* Performance;
* Portfolio of Compositions / Recordings;
* Position paper;
* Practical project: planning, implementation and evaluation;
* Presentation;
* Recording Project (proposal, documentation and recordings);
* Research paper.

Written and oral presentations are central to the assessment strategy. Through these modes of assessment students demonstrate the ability to undertake independent reading and research, to analyse, critique, challenge and synthesise ideas, to offer a personal viewpoint and to communicate with competence and clarity to the audience.

On the MMus Production of Popular Music a high level of independent-guided study is expected of the students on both taught modules and the more research-based Major Project. This outcome, in the form of a CD or DVD of 15 minutes duration of original compositions, or 30 minutes of cover versions, with a written commentary involves a high level of independent creative study by the student. In the Major Project students are allocated a specialist supervisor, who will support them through the implementation and commentary of their project through seminars and individual tutorials. The composition specific seminars will address issues that are common to the cohort e.g. presentation and management, and progress reporting, where students will be expected to discuss and critically analyse their work. Individual tutorials will provide advice, for example, on the compositional process, critical self-evaluation, music technology skills and notational practices in popular music. The tutorials will be tailored to meet the individual needs of the student and will be arranged at times to meet the needs of both students and supervisor. A written record will be made by the supervisor, agreed by the student and a copy kept by both. The Major Project enables the student to specialise in popular music production and to demonstrate originality. Students are expected to take responsibility for their own learning in terms of background research, practical preparation and analysis, and to work independently and self critically.

1. **Support for Students and their Learning**

Students are supported by:

* A Module Leader for each module
* A Course Director to help students understand the programme structure
* Personal Tutors to provide academic and personal support
* Pre-sessional and year-long English language development programme
* Technical support to advise students on IT, the use of software and the technical operation of the studios and to advise and support them in the creation of curricular and extra-curricular studio projects
* A designated Course Administrator
* An induction week at the beginning of each new academic session
* Staff Student Consultative Committee
* Canvas – a versatile on-line interactive intranet an learning environment accessible both on and off-site
* LinkedIn Learning – an online platform offering self-paced software tutorials
* The Academic Success Centre that provides academic skills support for UG and PG students
* Student support facilities that provide advice on issues such as finance, regulations, legal matters, accommodation, international student support etc.
* A Student Achievement Officer who provides pastoral support
* Disabled student support
* The Union of Kingston Students
* Careers and Employability Service team, who will provide support for students prior to undertaking work placement(s)
* Faculty-aligned Careers Advisers who run workshops, weekly drop-ins and 1:1 appointments

1. **Ensuring and Enhancing the Quality of the Course**

The University has several methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of its provision. These include:

* External Examiners
* Boards of Study with student representation
* Annual Monitoring and Enhancement
* Periodic review undertaken at subject level
* Student evaluation including MEQs (Module Evaluation Questionnaires) and Postgraduate Survey
* Moderation policies
* Feedback from employers

1. **Employability Statement**

A high proportion of full-time MMus Production of Popular Music students obtain employment on graduation, finding posts either in the music industry, subjects allied to music, teaching or enrol for a MPhil/PhD either at home, or abroad. For those students who are already in employment and are undertaking the MMus in a part-time mode, the award may accelerate promotion and open up new opportunities.

The MMus Production of Popular music combines theoretical knowledge and practical skills, and is designed to equip graduates to enter the music industry undertaking studio-based technical and creative work. Others may develop a portfolio career, common in the popular music industry, as composer, performer/composer and producer and be self-employed. The high level of research and transferable skills that students acquire during their studies also makes available to them careers in both the wider commercial and business environment.

The 2-year integrated work placement programme is designed to provide students with enhanced opportunities for securing professional employment at the end of their degree, providing skills and experience that employers are looking for in their work force. These are supported by the services of the Careers and Employability Services team, providing drop-in and scheduled events to support students in the preparation of CVs, applications, and preparation for interviews and assessment centres.

1. **Approved Variants from the Postgraduate Regulations**

None**.**

1. **Other sources of information that you may wish to consult**

**Course page on the KU website:**

<https://www.kingston.ac.uk/postgraduate-course/production-popular-music-mmus/>

**Development of Programme Learning Outcomes in Modules**

This map identifies where the field/course learning outcomes are **summatively** assessed across the modules for this field/course. It provides an aid to academic staff in understanding how individual modules contribute to the field/course aims, a means to help students monitor their own learning, personal and professional development as the field/course progresses and a checklist for quality assurance purposes.

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|  |  |  | **Level 7**  **Compulsory Modules** | | | | **Level 6**  **Option Modules** | | | | | **Level 7**  **Option Modules** | | | | | |
|  | **Module Code** |  | MU7001 | MU7006 | MU7007 | MU7012 | MU6201 | MU6202 | MU6302 | MU6303 | MU6307 | MU7003 | MU7008 | MU7009 | MU7016 | HU7100 |
| **Programme Learning Outcomes** | **Knowledge & Understanding** | A1 |  | S | S | S | S |  |  | S | S | S |  |  |  |  |
| A2 |  | S | S | S |  |  |  | S | S |  |  |  |  |  |
| A3 |  | S | S | S |  |  |  |  | S |  |  |  |  |  |
| A4 |  | S | S | S |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| A5 | S | S | S |  | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| **Intellectual Skills** | B1 | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| B2 | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| B3 | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| B4 |  | S | S | S |  |  | S |  | S |  |  | S | S |  |
| B5 |  | S | S | S |  |  |  | S | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| **Practical Skills** | C1 |  | S | S | S |  |  |  |  | S | S |  | S |  |  |
| C2 |  | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |  | S |  | S |  |
| C3 |  | S | S |  | S | S | S | S | S |  |  | S |  |  |
| C4 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | S |

**Students will be provided with formative assessment opportunities throughout the course to practise and develop their proficiency in the range of assessment methods utilised.**

**Technical Annex**

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| **Final Award(s):** | MMus in Production of Popular Music |
| **Intermediate Award(s):** | Post Graduate Diploma in Production of Popular Music  Post Graduate Certificate in Production of Popular Music |
| **Minimum period of registration:** | 1 year full-time, 2 years full-time (with Professional Placement); 2 years part-time |
| **Maximum period of registration:** | 2 years full-time, 3 years full-time (with Professional Placement); 4 years part-time |
| **FHEQ Level for the Final Award:** | Masters |
| **QAA Subject Benchmark:** | Music |
| **Modes of Delivery:** | Full-time, Part Time and ‘with Professional Placement’ |
| **Language of Delivery:** | English |
| **Faculty:** | Kingston |
| **School:** | Arts, Culture and Communication |
| **Department:** | Performing Arts |
| **Course/Route Code:** | PFPPM1PPM01 (Full-time)  PPPPM1PPM01 (Part-time) |
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