

Roo Harrington-Barwick

BTEC Level 3 in Music Technology (Production)



A musical Maestro in the making whose BTEC has helped him thrive creatively

Roo Harrington-Barwick is a music fanatic from the South West of England and is currently in his second year studying both A Levels and a BTEC Music Technology (Production) Level 3 at Richard Huish College. He has just been accepted to study Human Sciences at Oxford University when his course ends. We spoke to him about his BTEC journey in March 2021.

Why did you choose to do a BTEC?

When I was choosing my subjects I decided to only choose those I was genuinely interested in or passionate about. I've always been musical but never had the opportunity to learn how to produce music with technology so BTEC was perfect for me. As music is my main hobby, it also allows me to study it alongside my A Level subjects. Because it's more hands on, my BTEC compliments my other studies and positively impacts my whole study program.

How is your BTEC structured?

I study for at least 3 hours per week on my BTEC and as many as 6 focusing on music technology, skills demonstrations, collaborations, interactive listening, display work and independent work on my music projects. It's been a great experience and I've learned this year how to build music from scratch using my computer which has been such a useful skill to learn.

What was the most enjoyable and engaging project you've worked on as part of your BTEC?

Definitely the 20-minute EP I made! Each student on my course has to produce their own 20-minute-long album and we all have complete freedom – any genre is allowed, the songs can be covers or originals, they can be programmed or live, they can be just yourself or a band recording or you can get in touch with live musicians to record, so long as it is produced yourself. I really enjoyed the freedom and have produced my best work by far in this project, from covers I made by myself to recordings of my friends and their bands.

Do you feel the skills you've learned during your BTEC will help you to succeed in your chosen route?

One thousand per cent. A lot of the work in music consists of large long-term projects and so the course is really great for learning organisational and planning skills that I simply would not have if I didn't take the course. What's more, there are so many opportunities to collaborate on creative ideas with friends and other musicians that teamwork becomes second nature and group projects are built so organically and effectively.

Being in such a healthy, creative environment enables creative innovation to flourish and it really encourages and rewards thinking outside of the box and coming up with new and different solutions to the problems you encounter. Whether music is a hobby or a career aspiration, the musical and technical skills you learn on the course are invaluable and will provide you with the means to exercise your creativity throughout your life in the future.

Would you recommend BTEC to other students?

Without a doubt. It's perfect for providing and honing valuable alternative skills for life that universities also love to see. It can equip you for a future in any route – whether you take the subject further or, like me, you use such transferable skills to go down a completely different road. It definitely does not close any doors, and in my case, it opened more that I could only dream of.

Finally, what advice would you give to a student just starting a BTEC?

Don't be afraid at first when such new things are being thrown at you. Embrace them and welcome new opportunities. Once you've grasped the basics of your course, if that takes weeks or months (and trust me, sometimes it can take a long time), you will begin to fly ahead and really enjoy all the work. Never be afraid to revisit or ask again about the basics – it's so important to grasp these so that you can build with them a foundation on which you can always fall back in your studies.

Our thanks to Roo for speaking to us – we wish him all the best in his studies next year!

This interview took place in March 2021.

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