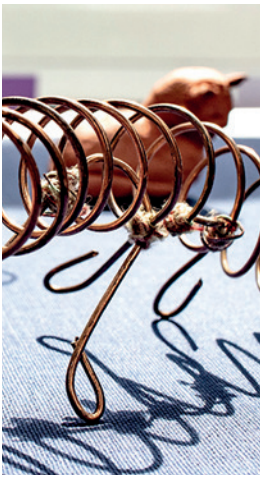


CONVERGE

www.yorksj.ac.uk/converge



Prospectus: Autumn Term 2022 & Spring Term 2023

Est.
1841 | YORK
ST JOHN
UNIVERSITY

 Northumbria
University
NEWCASTLE

 CONVERGE
CONNECTED
CREATE
CHALLENGE
INSPIRE

 NHS
Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys
NHS Foundation Trust



“Develop a passion for living through a love of learning”

Laurie Farnell



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WELCOME TO CONVERGE

We hope that you will find something interesting and inspiring in our 2022/2023 prospectus.

The aim of Converge is to open up York St John University and everything that it can offer to people who, for a time in their lives, have experienced mental ill health. We aim to offer informative and stimulating courses which may awaken past interests or create new ones. Education is one of the best ways that we can bring about change in our lives particularly when we are learning with others.

This will be our second-year offering Converge Connected, our online and postal learning service where we aim to extend our courses to those who want to learn from home, or do a mix of face-to-face classes and distance learning. We are also coordinating a series of Converge courses at Foss Park Hospital and at The Haven in York. This prospectus is also a showcase of our sister projects – Converge at Northumbria and Converge at Pacific University in Oregon. Finally, we include information about projects that have been born from the work at Converge including Out of Character Theatre Company, and Emerging Voices. We hope that you will seize the opportunity we offer in this prospectus and join our community of learners.

Best wishes, **Nick and Emma**



THE PRINCIPLES OF CONVERGE

- To work together as artists and students.
- To build a community where we learn from each other.
- To engage and enhance the university and wider community.
- To provide a supportive and inclusive environment.
- Respect others, value yourself.

*And above all
'...be ordinary,
be extraordinary,
be yourself.'*



About Converge

Courses are provided free of charge and are open to adults (18 years of age and older) currently receiving support for their mental health or who have experienced mental health issues.

Our courses are supported by university students as part of their degree programme, and we run across the academic year from September through to June. Courses are taught by university students and graduates, as well as people who have come through Converge following an experience of mental ill health and progressed to become tutors on our programme.

For more information about Converge, please visit the website www.yorks.ac.uk/converge.

ABOUT CONVERGE NORTHUMBRIA



Converge at Northumbria University sits in the heart of the bustling campus and Newcastle city centre, bursting with creativity. Our courses are free and open to anyone 18+ in the local community who receive current support for a mental health issue or have experienced mental health issues in the past. Alongside academics, university students and industry professionals, we deliver a rich and diverse range of courses across Drama and Performance, Movement and Dance, Fashion, Fine Art, Creative Writing, and other opportunities. We work in partnership with local mental health organisations and cultural venues to offer bespoke and collaborative creative learning opportunities.

To find out more about the courses we are running this academic year, please get in touch with our coordinator: **Ally Hunter-Byron** at **Ally2.hunter@northumbria.ac.uk**

facebook.com/convergeNU

[@duconverge](https://www.instagram.com/duconverge)

[@convergeNU](https://twitter.com/convergeNU)

convergenu.wordpress.com



Converge at Northumbria Team



Ally Hunter-Byron

ABOUT CONVERGE CONNECTED

Converge Connected provides online and postal courses for Converge. Students learn through online activities, postal materials and/or Zoom sessions. We also offer 'mini courses' which you can study on your own with a little email support from a tutor. This will allow you to explore a new topic with some bite-sized learning, whilst providing a flavour of Converge courses.

More info and current courses can be found at our website: **converge.yorks.ac.uk**

"My life has been transformed from feeling like being dumped on the scrapheap of humanity, to a life filled with meaning and endless creative possibilities! I am part of such a wonderful creative community and I have made the most wonderful friends. Converge's response during the pandemic was incredible, moving things online and through the post. Converge Connected and Converge at the Haven [see page 31] is such a brilliant idea for those of us who find the university too overwhelming."

Charley Perryn
Converge Student



MEET THE TEAM



Professor Nick Rowe
MBE
Director of Converge

Nick is the director and founder of Converge, and is responsible for the overall development of the project. He has worked at York St John for nearly 30 years as a lecturer in health and latterly in theatre.



Emma McKenzie
Converge & Discovery Hub Team Lead

Emma supports the leadership of Converge and manages The Discovery Hub; the individual support team within Converge. The Discovery Hub supports people to make steps into the university as part of a recovery journey, as well as assisting with opportunities for future progression. Emma is also completing a PhD in Humanities.



Holly Sloan
Converge Office Coordinator

Holly graduated from York St John with a 1.1 in Drama: Education and Community (BA Hons). The focus of her work was on theatre and mental health, where she volunteered for Converge before joining the team as a staff member in 2018. Holly is responsible for overseeing the administration of Converge.



Helen Kenwright
Converge Creative Writing & Tutor Lead

Helen has been with Converge since 2016 and currently leads the Creative Writing team. She also leads our Converge Connected project and facilitates tutor training and support. She co-ordinates Converge's publications programme, including our annual Creative Writing Heals collection.



Lucy Coleman
Study Development Coordinator

Lucy coordinates the music courses at Converge working with individual students to progress through Emerging Voices music charity. Additionally, she coordinates workshops and exhibitions at Foss Park Mental Health Hospital as part of Foss Park Arts. Lucy came to Converge as an occupational therapy student in 2011. Previously, she was a music teacher and toured across the UK and Ireland as a classical singer.

MEET THE TEAM



Elaine Kelly

*Converge at the Haven
Coordinator*

Elaine began working with Converge while studying at York St John and has been a Creative writing tutor since 2017. She is also the coordinator for Converge at The Haven and is studying for her MA in Creative Writing.



Roisin Blackburn

*Converge Administrator
& Volunteers
Coordinator*

Roisin volunteered with the Converge Evaluation and Research Team in 2020 as a YSJ Psychology student, before joining the team as a staff member in June 2021. Roisin provides administrative support to Converge, The Discovery Hub, and coordinates the YSJ Volunteers programme. Roisin is also doing a part-time Master of Research in Psychology, with plans to focus her dissertation on Converge.



Janine Yardley

*Converge Admin
Assistant*

Janine formed part of the Converge Evaluation and Research Team and Playback Theatre group as a Converge student in 2019, before joining the team as a staff member in September 2021. Janine works alongside Elaine at Converge at The Haven and provides administrative support to the wider Converge team.



Louise Raw

*Converge Admin
Assistant*

Louise has been a Converge student since 2016, participating in our Creative Writing courses. In 2021 she joined the staff team on a casual basis, providing weekly admin support to the Converge office.



Hazel Rowe

*Student Support
Practitioner*

Hazel has worked with Converge since 2019 and works in the Discovery Hub in supporting Converge students and is a qualified Occupational Therapist. Hazel is employed by Tees Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation trust and is seconded to Converge.

MEET THE TEAM



Paul Botting

Associate Practitioner

Paul joined Converge as part of the TEWV partnership in 2017. He has run horticultural therapy in many different locations over the last 40 years and is currently working out of Poppleton Community Railway Nursery, providing supportive volunteering experiences in all sorts of media (craft, woodwork and gardening).



Karen Wilson

Learning and Access Worker

Karen joined the team in 2015 and has been actively involved as a Learning and Access Worker for the Discovery Hub since. Karen also supports the Ambassador Programme at Converge and takes a keen interest in connecting people to training, education and employment.



Ellie King

Learning and Access Worker

Ellie joined the Discovery Hub team as a Learning and Access worker in 2022. She also teaches our Origami course and supports the Leaded Glass course.



Lee King

Learning and Access Worker

Lee joined The Discovery Hub as a Learning and Access Worker in 2018. Lee supports people to access Converge courses as well as outreach work assisting people to get involved at Poppleton Community Railway Nursery. Lee has also taught Leaded Glass Making for Converge in the past.



Aaron Soon

Learning and Access Worker

Aaron joined Converge in 2017 as a YSJ Student Volunteer, while studying BA (Hons) Music: Education and Community. He progressed to becoming a music tutor for both Converge and Emerging Voices Music Charity, whilst also competing an MA in Music Education at the University of York. In 2022, Aaron joined the Discovery Hub as a Learning and Access Worker.

MEET THE TEAM



Robert Bennett

Learning and Access Worker

Robert joined Converge in 2019 and helps individuals to access Converge courses as well as further opportunities within the broader community. He is also a member of the Converge Evaluation and Research Team and is passionate about answering some of the big questions about mental health and wellbeing. Independent of Converge, he also runs Brighter Futures, a Selby based group supporting people with mental health issues.



Ruth Lambley

CERT Coordinator

Ruth is the co-ordinator for the Converge Evaluation and Research Team (CERT), a group of researchers/evaluators with lived experience of mental health difficulties. Ruth has been involved with Converge since 2017. She is also a PhD researcher at York St John exploring co-production in mental health research. In her free time, she enjoys baking and running in the countryside.



Ally Hunter-Byron

Converge Lead

Not a native Geordie, Ally has worked in the North East as an Arts Development Worker, Performer and Community Worker for the last 19 years. She is a graduate from Northumbria University and is the Project Coordinator for Converge at Northumbria.



Heather Robson

University Lead

Heather is the Head of the School of Design, and Converge at Northumbria University Lead, at Northumbria University. Heather has been involved with Converge since its beginnings in the North East. Creative practice is her passion, and she believes everyone should have the opportunity to engage and explore the arts and creativity as part of their everyday lives.



Steve Nash

Chair of the Steering Group

Steve chairs the Steering Group for Converge at Northumbria and was involved in helping to bring the model to the North East. He has a long career in mental health services both in the NHS and in the voluntary sector. He currently works as the VCSE lead at the Mental Health workstream of North East and North Cumbria ICS. He is also an actor and musician.



MEET THE TEAM



Dr Toby Brandon
Research Lead

Toby is an academic at Northumbria University and his lack of any natural creative ability has not stopped him being a long-standing fan of Converge. He supports all aspects of Converge in terms of developing research, conducting ongoing evaluations and is committed to its long-term development.



Cat Catizone
Converge at Northumbria Facilitator

Cat first volunteered for Converge at Northumbria's pilot in 2017, during her BA (Hons) in Performance at Northumbria University. She has since gone on to get her MA in Theatre and Performance and is Converge at Northumbria's Sessional Facilitator, as well as a Converge Connected Tutor. Her work focuses on creating performances and community-based theatre.



Freya Kelly
Student in Residence

A new member of the Converge team, Freya is studying BA (Hons) Theatre and Performance at Northumbria University, and is currently on a placement year with Converge. She is driven by helping the community through the best way she knows how; creativity!

'I would wish to say how amazing the tutors are. How much time they give. How they make everyone welcome. It's a fantastic place full of great people.'

Converge Student

'The tutors are approachable and encouraging. I have felt supported by all and it has been a pleasure to be part of such a creative group.'



APPLYING FOR COURSES



As with any course of study, it is essential that Converge students complete an application process to enrol on our courses, so that we have all relevant details prior to the start of the course. With support from our team, this process is easy and as stress free as possible.

How Our Courses Work

Courses are offered on-campus, as well as online and by post as part of our Converge Connected programme. For more information about Converge Connected, see page 4. Next to each course in this prospectus, we have included symbols to indicate whether or not the course is available through Converge Connected, takes place on-campus, or both. Please refer to the key below:



On Campus



Converge Connected

Procedure

- Contact the Converge office to be added to our mailing list by emailing converge@yorks.ac.uk or calling 07764 337 116 for Holly, or 07779 544 874 for Roisin.
- Each term, a publicity pack containing a confirmed list of courses taking place is sent out by post and email to our mailing list. When you receive this, choose the courses that interest you and complete an application form.
- List your chosen courses in order of preference, so that we can aim to give you your first choices. There is no limit on how many times you can apply for a course, however if you have already completed a course once we may prioritise new applicants to give everyone a fair chance to get involved with different subjects.
- Once you have completed your application form, return it to Converge either by post, email or by bringing it with you to one of our Open Days. See page 30 for more information about Open Days.
- You can also download the form from our website and email or post this back to us.

What Happens Once I Have Completed an Application Form?

- We will process all returned forms and count how many people want to do each course. We receive around 160 forms each term, so please don't worry if you don't hear from us straight away. It usually takes a few weeks to complete the course allocations process.
- Once we have finished the allocating places on courses, we will get in touch with you via email, text, or post to let you know which courses you have been allocated a place on. This is done on a course-by-course basis, in order of course start dates. We will aim to let you know at least 1 week prior to the course starting.
- Please note that, due to limited places, you may not be offered first choice of course but we will do our best to make sure you get a place on one of your first two choices. For this reason, you are expected to make a real commitment to attend your courses, and to let us know if there are any sessions you cannot attend.
- Where students join after the start of the course, one-to-one enrolment appointments can be arranged by contacting us. We also reserve the right to conduct individual interviews with students.

'Once enrolled onto a Converge course, students are classed as associate students of York St John University'

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR TIME AT CONVERGE

Support in Class

We understand that it can be stressful to join a new course and meet new people. We can offer you in-class support from our dedicated team of Converge Ambassadors and University Volunteers.

Where appropriate we are happy for students to attend courses with a mental health support worker or peer mentor, although this must be agreed in advance. Please note that any support person attending a course must be willing to be actively engaged with the sessions

Support to Progress

Converge is a steppingstone to many opportunities. Since 2008 we have helped the people accessing our courses to get into further/higher education, find employment and become performers and artists. We run an active Converge Ambassador scheme as well as offering individual support to help people achieve their personal goals and aspirations as a result of attending courses.

Library Membership

Once enrolled onto a Converge course, students are classed as associate students of York St John University and may choose to have borrowing rights to the university library, located in the Fountains Learning Centre. If you are interested in having a library card, please contact us. Should you already have a university library card from previous terms, you can ask the office to extend the expiry date of this as long as you are currently enrolled to the most recent term.

Wi-Fi Access

Converge students can access Eduroam, which is York St John Universities Wi-Fi provider. To do this, you will need a library card which enables you to request 24-hour computer log in details at Services Desk in the Fountains Learning Centre. This will provide you with access to both the computers and the Wi-Fi.



CONNECTING TO THE COMMUNITY: THE DISCOVERY HUB

Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust have partnered with Converge to offer The Discovery Hub – The Converge Student Support Team. Running since 2015 The Discovery Hub is a small team of Learning Access Workers who provide individual support to Converge Students as part of their recovery journey. We support people to make steps to access Converge, as well as to connect to opportunities in the local community as part of their recovery journey. This can involve assistance to progress to higher education, training and employment opportunities.

The Discovery Hub team will help to mentor you through taking those first steps on to courses as well as exploring a longer-term journey of recovery via accessing learning and educational opportunities in the wider community. We can also support Converge students to connect back into mental health support when they need it. We have long standing partnerships with Poppleton Railway Nursery and St Nicks Environment Centre in York where we also help people to access supported volunteering opportunities in horticulture as part of a wider programme of recovery journey.

The Discovery Hub support is not time limited; it is available throughout your journey with Converge and might be as simple as mentoring behind the scenes of your courses, through to accessing specific coaching support to achieve your educational goals.

If you feel you would benefit from the support of the Discovery Hub team, please contact Discovery Hub team leader Emma McKenzie on 07785 607 771 or email discoveryhub@yorks.ac.uk.

Students may also be referred to the Discovery Hub by a health worker.

Supported Volunteering in Horticulture

Converge are proud to work in partnership with Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust to offer supported horticultural volunteering opportunities at Poppleton Community Railway Nursery (www.poppletonrailwaynursery.co.uk)

These sessions support the benefits of green spaces for mental health and wellbeing and offer a varied and ongoing programme of supported volunteering. No previous experience of horticulture is required to join these programmes, just enthusiasm to get involved. Poppleton Railway Nursery is Britain's last surviving railway nursery. It is operated as a charitable group as a non-profit organisation. Supported sessions at Poppleton Railway Nursery operate on a Monday all day, Tuesday afternoons (craft session) and Thursday mornings (horticulture and wood work training). Please email the discoveryhub@yorks.ac.uk for more information.

"Poppleton is a haven. It's so safe and comfortable there. When I get home, I feel like I've done something good, achieved something, and had social contact with other people".

The Discovery Hub also have links with St Nicks Nature reserve in York. The charity started as 'Friends of St Nicks' in the 1990's by transforming a former landfill site into a thriving local nature reserve. Today St Nick's centre is home to a thriving ecotherapy project. The Discovery Hub are happy to support individuals accessing Converge to make steps to St Nicks in support of a wider recovery journey.

Please email: discoveryhub@yorks.ac.uk if you wish to get involved.

'Very friendly and accepting atmosphere'



CONVERGE AMBASSADORS SCHEME

The Converge Ambassador Scheme is an opportunity for Converge students who have attended one academic year of Converge to support our programme in a voluntary role, and to support the Converge student community. You can become a Converge Ambassador whilst still attending courses.

Opportunities include:

- Supporting new Converge students to settle into Converge classes.
- Acting as support to tutors. Helping in classes and assisting with discussion and delivery of class material.
- Supporting Converge at events. This can include practical help to meet and greet people, distributing information, setting up and putting away equipment.

- Representing Converge: public speaking. We often need people who are willing to share their story and help us to promote Converge, training in public speaking available.
- Opportunities to access wider development schemes, for example working towards becoming a Converge tutor or a Converge graduate intern.

“The thing I love most about being a Converge Ambassador is seeing the growth of other students. It’s great to see people start to come out of their shells.”

Paul *Converge Ambassador*

To find out more about the Converge Ambassador Scheme, contact Karen Wilson via 07584 597 510 or email converge@yorks.ac.uk

*‘I cannot
thank
Converge for
the help
I have
received in
my time of
need.’*

OPPORTUNITIES FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: STUDENT VOLUNTEERS

Converge is centred on the opportunity for university students to get actively involved in the project as a partnership of knowledge exchange.

Converge provides vocational experience to York St John University students and Northumbria University students that can enhance future employment opportunities. Some of the benefits of volunteering for Converge are:

- To gain valuable work experience which can be included in a professional reference.
- Personal development
- Career opportunities, some of our volunteers to progress to become paid tutors, or use their experience to help secure future employment.
- Access to training – we offer regular training and support to our volunteers to help them develop employment skills in working with the public and mental health awareness.
- Opportunity to connect to a professional network. Being part of Converge can help you to make other links relevant to your chosen subject field and act as part of a professional network.

There are three key roles for volunteers:

Student participant: Modelling ideal student behaviour by taking part in the workshop alongside Converge Students as a community of learners. Volunteers become active participants helping to bring new ideas and energy to Converge classes. Volunteer participants also support Converge Students to engage in course material and to access learning opportunities.

Shared leadership role: Under the guidance of the tutor, student volunteers are empowered to run and lead parts of the session. This is a great way to develop practical skills in workshop facilitation and leadership.

Course facilitator: Experienced university student volunteers are welcome to submit course proposals to Converge. If accepted this will give you the opportunity to volunteer to lead a course, as well as the opportunity to be considered to progress to paid tutoring roles.

Case studies:

Caroline Salter, Occupational Therapy (BSc Hons):

My experience with Converge has been very fun, rewarding and enlightening. It has allowed me to witness first-hand the impact music therapy has upon people's wellbeing, by creating a sense of connectedness, purpose and belonging. I am extremely thankful and appreciative to be given this opportunity as it has been and will be invaluable as my degree and future career in Occupational Therapy progresses.

Tom Marton, Drama (BA Hons): *My experience with Converge at Northumbria was a positive one. I felt a great sense of achievement in actually 'doing' Applied Theatre and it was a great opportunity for work experience. I was nervous at first however once I got settled, I found myself learning new things and having a lot of fun. I would love to volunteer further with Converge and gain some more experience to develop my practise as an Applied Theatre practitioner.*

If you would like to know more about becoming a student volunteer, please contact:
convergevolunteering@yorks.ac.uk or
T: 07779 544 874

'There are no obstacles as there's always a way around any challenges you may have'



Converge Evaluation and Research Team
insight through experience

CONVERGE EVALUATION AND RESEARCH TEAM

The Converge Evaluation and Research Team (CERT) is a small and friendly group of Converge students who carry out research and evaluations of mental health related community projects and areas of interest to members. We welcome new members who are interested in what we do, and no experience of research is needed to join - we run a research methods course in the Autumn term and offer on-going training in the methods we use.

To find out more, email cert@yorks.ac.uk



COURSE INFORMATION

Disclaimer: This prospectus is a showcase of the core components of our work. Some courses listed here may not run this academic year. For a full list of courses running each term, including dates,

times and locations, please contact the Converge office via converge@yorks.ac.uk or call 07764 337116 and our team will add you to our mailing list.

THEATRE AND PERFORMANCE COURSES

'Genuine support from tutors and students alike.'

Introduction to Theatre

This course introduces the different styles of theatre, staging, character, devising, monologues and script work. The course is practical in nature and is held in a drama space at York St John University. No previous experience of theatre is necessary. This course leads on to the Working Towards Performance course where students can develop their skills and technique.

Working Towards Performance

Working Towards Performance takes all the skills learned and developed in the Introduction to Theatre course and utilises them to make an original piece of work. Starting with just an idea, we will work week-on-week to create characters, devise a script with the ultimate aim of staging our very own production at the end of term: possibilities for this could be via a recorded video on the Converge YouTube site or similar, on Zoom, as an outdoor, socially distanced performance or even, should circumstances allow, as a face-to-face audience event in one of York St John University's performance spaces!

Open to students who completed Introduction to Theatre in Autumn term and to new students with an interest in making a piece of theatre to share.

Improv Comedy

This is a fun and accessible course if you want to learn the tips and tricks of making things up as you go along! No experience is necessary for this introduction to Improv Comedy where you don't need to worry about being funny, but you can be sure of having plenty of laughs along the way.

Together we will use many different and playful games to release and rediscover creativity and confidence.









Playback Theatre

If you are a theatre-maker, improviser or storyteller or just want to find out more, come and learn the basics of performing and conducting this exciting improvisational theatre form. Playback focuses on creating a unique experience between performers and audience to collaborate on telling a shared story.

Welcome to Drama

Welcome to Drama is a 6-week taster drama course exploring the basics of theatre, looking at script writing, improvisation, and characterization, amongst other techniques. Escape from the 'everyday' using drama as the creative outlet and means of expression on this exciting course with one of our Converge at Northumbria tutors.

Dance and Movement

Converge Dance is for all abilities and levels. Our focus is about having fun, being playful and creating self-expression through movement in a non-judgemental environment. You will be supported within the course to achieve your own goals, whether that is to play creatively and have fun, or to enhance your dance skills and making. The course will be

underpinned by contemporary dance technique as a core but is flexible to explore in and around this and always open to suggestions! The course is supported by York St John University dance students and is open to all, both new and established Converge Dance/Creative Movement students.

Movement Improvisation to Live Music

The aim of the course is for people to respond emotionally to live music in order to discover their innate ability to dance. Our hope is that the sensitive coupling of music and movement will create an exciting and unpredictable result for each student who attends our classes, but in a safe and nurturing environment. Working with a dance tutor and a live pianist, whatever the students are inspired to create is valid and unique, whether it is tiny movements using only the toes, or much bigger, more dramatic gestures. All of it is worthwhile and creative. Open to all – no experience required.

Film

Converge film courses are structured in two phases. The first part of the course is dedicated to exploring the basics of filmmaking techniques and styles (camera work, editing, scripting for documentary, fiction, and experimental films), watching examples, and testing some of these techniques through creative exercises. During the second part of the course, students have the chance to put in practice the techniques learnt by writing, planning, and shooting their own short film. Films produced by the Converge film course students have been previously used for promotional work within Converge and shared at conferences and events as part of our ongoing development and celebrations. We are proud to produce films in a creative and innovative way that support involvement from all levels of interest.



MUSIC COURSES

Communitas Choir

Everyone can sing. Communitas is a community choir, which will allow you to sing as a part of a group in a welcoming and supportive environment. The songs will be taught orally so there is no requirement to read music, just a willingness to sing with others. There are opportunities available for choir members to progress and develop their singing skills beyond the choir's standard work:

- Song leading: an opportunity to train with the choir director as a song leader, learning how to lead warm-ups and simple songs.
- Soloing: for those who wish, we provide an opportunity to be supported in learning and singing solos with the choir.

Gamelan

This course offers a rare opportunity to play genuine Indonesian gamelan instruments (a set of beautiful iron gongs and metallophones from the island of Java). No prior experience is necessary, just a willingness to try something new.

During the course you will have the chance to explore the gamelan's relaxing sound-world and develop your own creative ideas through a mixture of traditional Javanese music and improvisation, as well as finding out about the rich and vibrant culture surrounding gamelan music. Playing the gamelan traditionally involves

removing your shoes (feel free to showcase your coolest socks!) and sitting on the floor, though



alternative arrangements can be easily made if you are not able to sit on the floor.

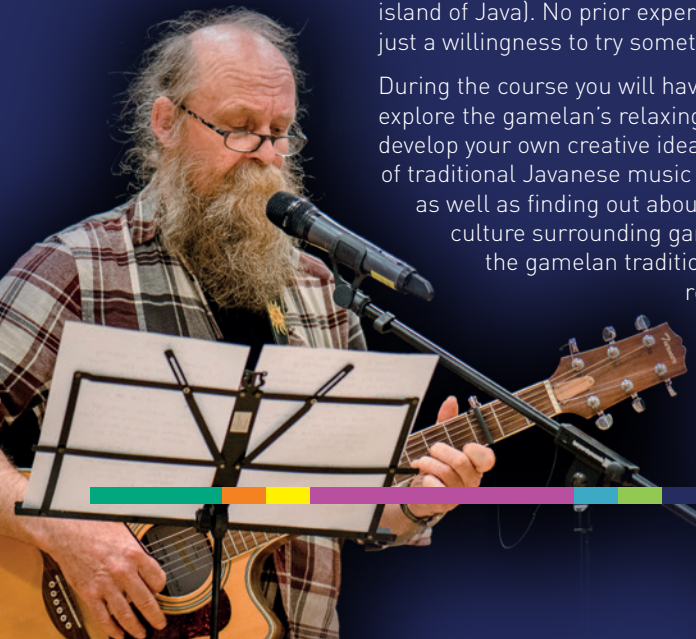
Everyone welcome, no need to bring anything except your curiosity.

Instrumental Tuition

Converge offers 1-2-1 instrumental tuition on campus or via virtual learning for a range of instruments including piano, vocals, guitar, and percussion. Tutors are Converge staff and university music students. For more information, please contact us at converge@yorks.ac.uk or 07764 337116 or indicate your interest on your application form, stating which instrument/s you are interested in.

Introduction to Songwriting

This course aims to inspire you to write your own songs, building confidence through weekly songwriting challenges. The course focuses on finding sources of inspiration and looking closely at songwriting techniques. We listen to music and discuss meaning, story, structure and songwriting hooks. It is a relaxed, fun course with group exercises and discussions, as well as individual one-to-one time to work on your songs with the tutor. There will also be the opportunity to record your own song at the end of the course to a professional standard.





Continuing Songwriting

This course is a supportive, songwriting circle for people who have completed introduction to songwriting, or anyone with some experience of songwriting. We practice creative warm-ups, listen to songs, and work on material for your songs through various forms of inspiration. There is plenty of chance to perform your own songs in front of the group, or to email your songs to the group to gain constructive feedback. It is a small group, and these fortnightly sessions are relaxed and open. It is a safe space to share ideas, discuss songs and look closely at the craft of songwriting.

Sing Your Story

Sing Your Story provides students a platform to share their original songs or any songs that have significant meaning behind, by singing, playing, storytelling, and/or reflective writing. This course is hoped to increase students' confidence, emotional wellbeing, reflective thinking, and to build an inclusive environment where everyone learns from each other. A new theme will be introduced in each session. Anyone who enjoys solo singing and/or playing musical instruments and/or has inspiring stories to share is welcome to join. No prior knowledge needed!



Music Appreciation

Music Appreciation is an introductory course to music for deeper understanding and appreciation. Students will explore music's various functionalities and social influences from western classical to contemporary, and music around the world (Indonesian, Chinese, Indian etc). Students will also explore a wide range of repertoires, musical instruments, and styles.

Music Production

This hands-on 8-week course enables you to express yourself and allows for creativity through learning music production skills to produce your own track. The aim of the course is to create a track based on a particular feeling or emotion of your choice, which then will be showcased through Soundcloud for you to share with others. The course will include using Logic Pro X, where you will learn basic editing techniques as well as getting the chance to record your own sounds. Throughout the lessons, there will be plenty of chances for group and one to one support allowing you to connect with others as well as concentrating on your own work. Open to all students who haven't already done this course before.

Music Production Listening

Our aim for this course is to help students develop key listening skills that will help aid their productions in key areas such as Songwriting, Arrangement, Recording & Mixing! In each session we will have examples of songs (both of our own and other artists) and deconstruct them to highlight elements of importance within the song. During the sessions we have relevant points of topics for the group to discuss. We will be setting tasks each week to help improve their analytical listening skills. There will also be a chance in each session to chat 1 to 1 with the tutors about the previous week's task and/ or ask for advice on your own work.

Piano Improvisation

This course is for anyone who wants to learn the basics of improvisation on the piano, regardless of what experience they may have. Whether a complete beginner or a more advanced player, this will be a relaxed and fun way of creating music. We will cover well known chord structures that can act as a foundation to write your own pieces as well as simple patterns that can be adapted to your unique style, musical instruments, and styles.



Composing to Moving Image

In this 6-session group activity, we will cover a wide range of topics that lead to writing suitable and effective music for various moving images, e.g., adverts or documentaries. These sessions will largely be practical and give you an insight into writing scores that support the stories on screen. No theoretical knowledge or ability to read music is needed, but for this course you will need to play an instrument and bring it to each session. If you play piano, there will be one provided.

Priority will be given to students who have already participated in our 'Piano Improvisation' sessions but will also be open to anyone who has an interest in the subject and would like to learn more. Please indicate on your application form which instrument you have or whether you will be using the piano in the teaching room. Each session will be 2 hours long.

Applied Music Theory for Singers

Applied Music Theory for Singers is an introductory course to music theory for anyone who enjoys singing. Students will learn and understand the vocal part in music score and be able to read and sing the notations using a piano or keyboard as reference. Paper materials will be provided. No prior singing and music theory knowledge needed!

Continuing Applied Music Theory for Singers

Continuing Applied Music Theory for Singers is an intermediate course for those who have completed the introductory music theory course or have the foundational knowledge of basic music theory. Students will take their understanding of pitch, rhythm, harmony, and notation to the next level, and be able to better sight-sing using a piano or keyboard as reference. Paper materials will be provided.

International Drumming

International Drumming will introduce beginners to the world of drumming using instruments and rhythmical music from West African and South American countries such as Ghana, Gambia and Brazil and Cuba. No previous experience is needed as the tutor will start with the basics and help each student achieve the best they can in a creative, group environment, with the aim of a short performance at the end of each term. Bang stuff and feel good about it. Individual tuition on specific drums will also be available on request.



CREATIVE WRITING COURSES

Whether you're an experienced writer or a complete novice, Converge will help you develop new skills and explore different ideas and techniques about writing.

We don't: force you to share if you don't want to; worry about spelling; expect you to write a certain thing in a certain way.

We do: encourage you to try new things; show you how to get ideas and develop them into a full piece of work; enjoy your writing and grow your confidence as the writer you want to be.

At the centre of Converge Creative Writing is our 'Creative Writing: Inspiration' course. This is the foundation for all the other writing courses we

offer, so we ask that everyone starts here, whatever their previous experience. All Converge creative writers are welcome to submit a piece for 'Creative Writing Heals', a collection of writing we publish every summer.

Creative Writing: Inspirations

This course is an ideal introduction to creative writing for new writers or a refresher for those with more experience. The course is made up of four modules which each last five weeks. Our tutors will help you overcome the challenges that many writers face. This includes how to fit writing into a busy life and overcoming writer's block.

This course provides the foundation for our other Converge creative writing courses. It is strongly recommended that you complete all four modules before progressing to other courses.

Module 1: Finding inspiration

Find inspiration and turn it into creative writing. Explore the foundations of writing practice. Overcome writer's block.

Module 2: Using inspiration

Develop creative and observational skills. Create characters, settings and atmosphere.

Module 3: Exploring form

Look at how to write in different forms, including poetry, script, novels, short fiction and creative non-fiction.

Module 4: Creating finished pieces

Transform a rough first draft into a polished piece. Receive 1 to 1 support from a mentor to help you to develop your work and submit it for publication in Converge's annual anthology, Creative Writing Heals.



'I have found Converge to be a tremendous help in my darkest hours'

Creative Writing: Develop Your Skills

This two-year course covers a range of skills through seven different modules (one module repeats every year). Students can start in any year.

We ask that all Converge Creative Writing students complete the 'Inspirations' course as a foundation for 'Developing Your Skills', regardless of previous experience. This course provides students with a comprehensive overview of creative writing skills with plenty of opportunity to practise and develop new skills.

The modules on offer this year are as follows:

Module 1: Critical Reading

How to 'read like a writer' so you can learn techniques and 'dos and don'ts' from other writers.

Module 2: Looking Closer: Poetry, Script, Short Fiction

Novels – an examination of different forms of writing, and techniques specific to each.

Module 3: Genre and audience

How to write with particular readers in mind.

Module 4: The Craft of Writing

We go through the writing cycle of drafting, editing, and polishing. Each student will have a writing mentor from the Creative Writing team to work with them 1:1 to help them prepare a piece for submission to our annual anthology.



'If your dream is to write, this is the place.'

Creative Writing: Life Writing

Everybody has a story to tell. This course is suitable for people who have already completed a creative writing course with Converge, or who have some experience of writing and are interested in exploring the craft of memoir and autobiography. The course provides an opportunity to consider the different types of memoir and autobiographical styles and explores how to begin telling your own story.

This ten- week course includes an introduction to the theory of memoir and autobiographical writing. We will consider a wide variety of forms and extracts from published works. Practical tasks are designed to develop your own skill and writing style. Students attending the full course are invited to share a sample of their work with Converge as part of the learning experience.

Creative Writing Workshops

Converge Creative Writing Workshops are held each June. We will begin with practising the skills of giving and receiving feedback before we move on to discussing each other's work. We will also set our personal writing goals for the month and encourage each other to meet them.

This course is designed to give students the experience of working as a writing group, so they can feel more confident about joining a writing group elsewhere or forming one with their own Converge friends.

This course will only be available to students who have already completed our 'Inspirations' course or our 'Develop Your Skills' course who are willing to have their work discussed in class and read and give feedback on the work of others.

A Closer Look At Poetry

This five-week course will enable students to develop their skills in writing poetry, aided by an exploration of poetical techniques and focusing on the different forms and possibilities of poetry.

This course will only be available to students who have already completed our 'Inspirations' course or at least one module of our 'Develop Your Skills' course.

'Converge, is the best thing that has happened to me in years. Since joining it has made some of my dreams come true...And I'm not finished yet!!'

Art: Drawing on Life 0C

Art: Mixed Media 

Leaded Glass OC

Origami



(flower ball) and origami cranes. Those who welcome a challenge can make tiny crane earrings! As the course progresses, students will learn about the history and culture behind these patterns. Students will also have the opportunity to make kanzashi fabric flowers, traditional folded cloth bags (furoshiki) and beautiful little notebooks constructed using an ancient Japanese book binding technique. All materials are provided, and no previous experience is required as students can work at their own pace with individual instruction given whenever required. There will be ample supplies and printed diagrams provided each week so that students will have the option of working on their projects at home between lessons if they choose to do so.

Wet Felting

An introduction to the ancient craft of felt making. From learning the basics and other techniques the course progresses through different projects where students can experiment with colour and wool fibres to create beautiful and original designs.

Your Art Through World Art

This course takes you on a world tour through different art traditions. You'll learn about different artists and practice different styles and art techniques. No previous art experience is needed, and you will be provided with a pack of materials so you can complete all the class projects.

Art and the Environment

Are you interested in the environment or recycling? Does creating art from recycled objects around your home sound like fun? Learn about artists who are inspired by the environment and recycling and why.



'Attending a Converge Course has made a massive positive difference in my life.'

STUDY SKILLS COURSES

Research Methods

Are you interested in getting involved in mental health research and evaluation?

You will explore a wide range of approaches to research by working with members of the Converge Evaluation and Research Team (CERT). You will learn how to ask and answer questions during the research process.

No previous experience is necessary - just a curious and inquiring mind.

Academic Skills

This course is for anyone who is considering taking a degree or Postgraduate qualification.

During the course you will learn the skills needed for successful study at this level. You will explore critical reading, academic writing, presentation skills, group work and secondary research techniques. The course will also include advice on applying for undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

There are no set dates for this course. It will run when we have enough numbers to make a group.

Critical Thinking

Being able to think critically about the information we consume is becoming more and more important. This course will help you develop critical thinking skills and build a portfolio to demonstrate these. We will practice reading both academic and media articles and critically reflecting on them, as well as how to form effective arguments and consider the reliability of the information around us. We will collaboratively decide the kind of topics we'd like to cover, using a social justice lens to explore different skills. Classes will be interactive with lots of chances to discuss different ideas and share perspectives.

SOCIAL SCIENCE COURSES

Introduction to Feminism

This course covers the history and principles of feminism in a unique way - students will have the opportunity to respond creatively to the material through writing, art, music, or another art form of their choosing.

Exploring Spirituality

This six-week course will offer students a chance to explore the meaning of spirituality. Spirituality touches so much of our lives, whether through the things that give us meaning and purpose, or the things that lift out spirits and bring us hope and connection. The course will include learning about major world religions as well as exploring the many nonreligious paths to the spiritual, for example creativity and nature. Everyone is welcome to attend, you don't need to be religious.



CONVERGE EVENTS

Open Days

Open days are held twice a year, in September for the Autumn term and January for the Spring Term. It is an opportunity for new and potential Converge students to meet the tutors, speak to Converge staff, find out more about courses and complete an application form. Our team are also on hand to offer plenty of advice about our Converge Ambassadors scheme, student support and can even help you to complete your form. Please contact the Converge office to find out about the next available open day.

Christmas Sharing and Summer Festival

Twice a year, at the end of each term, we hold a special event to celebrate the wonderful achievements of our Converge students. Our Christmas Sharing and Summer Festival is an afternoon of performances and presentations by Converge students, staff, and university volunteers, showcasing the amazing work and projects our community has worked on during the year. We also host an exhibition put together by the tutors of our visual arts courses. Family and friends are invited to both events, as well as the wider community and people who are considering applying for our courses in the future.

Summer School

In June, we host a summer school in partnership with visiting Occupational Therapy students from Pacific University, Oregon (USA). The OT students work with Converge Ambassadors and University volunteers to create a programme of one-off sessions and activities, ranging from yoga to art, sport, theatre, scavenger hunts, 'play in a day' and creative writing. We also host an Open Mic Night, as well as offer the opportunity to watch a Playback Theatre performance. Summer School is open to all Converge students who enrolled for the Spring term. **Further information about our partnership with Pacific University can be found on page 34.**



'The tutors are approachable and encouraging. I have felt supported by all and it has been a pleasure to be part of such a creative group.'

FOSS PARK ARTS



In 2021, Converge were asked by Tees Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust to lead the arts strategy at Foss Park mental health hospital in York. The remit was to provide rolling exhibitions in the main reception area that included both visual and performing arts. In addition to this Converge was asked to provide arts-based workshops and performances on the wards.

A group of curators comprising of TEWV staff and volunteers, Converge staff, including people with lived experience of mental ill health, and York St John University arts lecturers meet regularly throughout the year to decide exhibition themes and content.

If you are interested in finding out more, please contact fossparkarts@yorks.ac.uk

CONVERGE AT THE HAVEN

Converge at The Haven began delivering courses in January 2021. Courses are available to adults aged 18 and over, who have experienced mental health issues and who use, or have used, mental health services. Classes take place on Saturday afternoons and weekday evenings. One-off taster sessions and longer duration courses include a wide variety of subjects such as art, creative writing, introduction to philosophy, exercise and fitness.

Courses are provided by Converge Tutors and experts from organisations from the City of York, such as York Museums. All courses are free to attend.

The Haven is based at 30 Clarence Street, adjacent to York St John University. This service offers out of hours mental health support to anyone aged 16 or over in York and Selby.

For further information and to apply for courses contact:

Email – convergeatthehaven@yorks.ac.uk

Tel -The Haven 07483 141 310 Monday- Friday
6pm-10pm Saturdays 12-10pm.



OUT OF CHARACTER

THEATRE COMPANY

Registered Charity Number 1161399



Out of Character was formed in 2009 as a theatre company of artists and performers comprising of people who access, or have accessed, mental health services. We are based at York St John and our company includes students who get involved as both actors and supporting volunteers. Our company is made up of a diverse range of ages, backgrounds and interests. Our interest in creating theatre and respecting every individual's skills, binds us together. We always work collaboratively and with ambition.

We devise and write a range of projects both in York and nationally. Some of our work, but not all of it, is about mental health. Over time, we've created very personal pieces specifically for audiences interested in mental illness as well as devising site-specific durational performances and performing scripted works and audio stories. Collaboration is really important to us, and we have recently worked with York Theatre Royal, Love Arts, Arts & Minds, the Wy-Fi project, other universities, the NHS and many medical schools. The company was the proud winner of the Excellence in Equality and Cultural Diversity in the York Culture Awards in 2018.

The company is led by Artistic Director Kate Veysey and Associate Director Jane Allanach and supported by Assistant Director

Hannah Munro. Sessions are split into two sections on the same evening; Out of Character Prepares, a workshop style skills focused session, and then (after an all-important tea break) Out of Character Production where we work towards a production or project. We are currently working towards a site-specific modern-day production of *A Christmas Carol* which will be performed in various spaces in the new Creative Centre, York St John in December 2022. This production will be supported by writers and composers from Converge courses.

For more information about Out of Character, please email k.veysey@yorks.ac.uk



EMERGING VOICES: MUSIC, EMPOWERMENT, INCLUSION



Emerging Voices is a music charity that supports students of Converge to reach their musical aspirations in a collaborative and friendly environment.

We work with Converge to provide quality music making opportunities supporting students through one-to-one mentoring in performance, recording, song writing, composition and instrumental tuition.

Emerging Voices offers performance opportunities for students of Converge through regular concerts and open mic nights. We also help to support Communitas choir and a choir in Harrogate.

Working with Converge Records, an inhouse record label, students can record, produce and release their work.

To find out more please contact:

Email: admin@emergingvoicescharity.co.uk

Tel: 07984 535 629

Website: www.emergingvoicescharity.co.uk

Registered Charity Number: 1183043

'A pleasure to be around like-minded people, students and tutors'

"The concert was a source of pride for my son as the audience were very appreciative and he and his family cannot thank Aaron (tutor) enough for the effort, empathy and compassion he put into the project and the lessons"

Converge student

"I love to sing, and the choir gives me a space to feel comfortable doing so without judgment. They're so fun and I look forward to them every week."

Harrogate choir member



CONVERGE OREGON

Converge York have created a fantastic partnership with Pacific University School of Occupational Therapy (PUSOT) in Oregon, USA. Beginning in 2016, an exchange programme was initiated during which students from the occupational therapy programme visit the UK to learn about Converge York. Pacific University students also partner with Converge Ambassadors to lead educational sessions with Converge Students during their 2-week visit. Prior to the pandemic, 55 students from PUSOT have participated over 4 years. Although the exchange was interrupted by the pandemic, visits resumed with 17 students from Oregon in June 2022.

Converge Oregon provided a very successful pilot course, Theatre in Social Context, in the summer of 2019 but had to be put on hold during the pandemic. Converge Oregon plans to resume development of services in the USA post-pandemic in order to build on the profound impact that the program has had on traditional college/university students and mental health service users alike.

The impact of Converge is best summed up by a quote from a PUSOT student:

"My experience with Converge exceeded all of my expectations, truly changed me as a person and professionally, and opened my eyes to a whole new perspective on occupational therapy and mental health. I felt myself grow immensely in my confidence and ability to run group sessions and work with people one on one, developing my creativity and broadening my understanding of culture and meaningful occupation. Moving forward, I am excited to work in mental health and apply the knowledge and experiences gained during my fieldwork. The staff, mentors, and students created a welcoming environment and were always more than willing to engage in conversation, discuss deep topics, and engage in learning from each other."



NEW APPLICANT INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

As with any place of educational study, we ask you to make a real commitment to attend any course you have a place on. If for any reason you cannot attend a session, please make sure you inform the Converge office at the earliest opportunity. This includes for any prior appointments or arrangements (for example, a hospital appointment or holiday), or if you are feeling unwell. This is to ensure that you, and any other Converge students in your class, get the most from the course.

We are aware that, sometimes, other things in life can affect how you feel and that this can make it hard for you to motivate yourself to attend the course. We do understand and are always happy to speak with you to see if we can help. If you feel overwhelmed or are finding it difficult to attend, please contact us so that we know that you are okay and can explore options for further support.

If you find that you are attending a course but are not enjoying it, please let us know that you don't want to continue so that we can offer your place to another student; we do recommend, however, that you attend for more than one session before you decide. You might want to consider a change to another course which you might enjoy more. This is usually possible for most Converge courses, but we do need to know as some courses have a limit on how many students they can take.

Please don't forget to keep us up to date if any of your contact or support details change so we can make sure information goes to the right place. It's also a good idea to save the Converge mobile number to your contacts so that you know it's us contacting you.

We hope you enjoy your time with Converge.

'Success for one person might just be getting out of the house for a session or keeping regular attendance. For the next person it might be increasing confidence or learning new skills.'



CONVERGE OFFICE

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Main Website: www.yorks.ac.uk/converge

Converge Connected Website: <https://converge.yorks.ac.uk/home/>



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