

THE MITCHELL SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Peter Mitchell has finally achieved his ambition to provide a total, inclusive music service to the public. After much research and planning, Peter spent eighteen months establishing the first phase of his plan. He facilitated private lessons for the public, in a range of instruments, provided by suitably qualified professional musicians.

Peter has many contacts, musicians just like himself who have expertise in a particular area of music. He contracted out their services and started his business initially working from his own home. This Victorian residence has lots of rooms over three floors and six practice rooms could be available at any one time. He made the tuition service available from 1pm until 8pm Monday to Friday and from 9-1 on Saturdays.

Peter has now moved the business to new premises and implemented the second phase of his plan a specialist weekend school and a specialist summer school. He has now established three clear strands to his business:

Private Tuition;

Specialist Weekend School;

Specialist Summer School.

In the new premises, there are 12 practice rooms, four classroom sized rooms and a hall.

The specialist weekend school provides intensive tuition to selected students on Saturday 9-4 or Sunday 9-4. The Specialist Summer School provides fortnightly tuition for selected groups in July and August (Monday – Friday 9-4).

As all private lessons are now running at the school, the resources are completely utilised. However because of the need to use the facilities for the Specialist Weekend School on a Saturday and Sunday, Peter has now extended the hours during the week from 1-9, Monday – Thursday and 1-8 on Fridays. Because there are twelve practice rooms, Peter has effectively doubled the number of private lessons available. Private lessons are not available in July and August as the facilities are totally used for the specialist summer provision.

PRIVATE TUITION

Private lessons during the week are open to everyone.

Private lessons include one to one tuition for string instruments, some woodwind and brass as well as a limited range of percussion. Individual singing lessons are also available.

All students must pay an initial non-refundable one off tuition fee of £30, even those held on the waiting list. Students are classified as Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced or Diploma level. The fee structure for lessons reflects this. Students are encouraged to enter Grade Examinations aligned with their ability level.

Fee Structure

	Grade levels	Fee/30 min weekly lesson
Tuition Fee (No discounts)		£30
Beginner	Initial, Grade 1 Grade 2	£12
Intermediate	Grade 3, Grade 4, Grade 5	£15
Advanced	Grade 6, Grade 7, Grade 8	£18
Diploma		£20
Concessionary – (over 60 or special circumstances)		20% discount for all levels

Students sign up for blocks of ten lessons, twenty lessons or thirty lessons. These are scheduled in a similar manner to school terms. However a student can commence their block of lessons at any time providing a place becomes available. It is difficult to track payments when this arises and problems have arisen with billing. Lessons may have to carry on to the next term. Private tuition is available for all age ranges but lessons in the early afternoon are mostly reserved for adults who can attend during school hours.

Any student wishing to have more than thirty minutes tuition in any one week must pay for a further block of lessons as required. All fees are payable in advance. Those signed up for twenty lessons (either one half hour lesson over twenty weeks or two half hour lessons over ten weeks), are given a 5% discount while those signed for

thirty lessons (either thirty half hour lessons over thirty weeks or two half hour lessons over fifteen weeks) are given a 10% discount.

For example an Intermediate student signing up for two blocks of lessons would get a discount of £15, while a Diploma student signing up for three blocks of lessons would get a discount of £60.

Because of the demand for tuition, Peter has a policy that if a student is absent for more than three lessons, their place will be forfeited and allocated to someone else on the waiting list. All advance fees are non-refundable unless there are exceptional circumstances. Care must be taken in reallocating places in order to be fair to all applicants. There is also a lot of paperwork involved removing old records, creating new ones, checking fees and amending timetables. Peter has difficulty keeping track of when a student has started blocks of lessons

Peter retains all initial tuition fees and 20% of all lesson fees. Tutors are reasonably happy with their 80% fee as they do not have to advertise source students or pay overhead costs. They are advised to maintain all records of earnings for tax purposes.

Peter maintains paper based files for all students. These should contain all contact details, current payment status and lesson schedules for each student.

Peter creates a timetable of all lessons, tutor allocation and room allocation. He finds this challenging as he must identify the time slots, make sure that a suitable tutor is available and that there is a room free.

Peter expects all tutors to maintain and submit a weekly attendance register to ensure that student records are properly updated. He tries to transfer all data himself at the weekends. The reality of this data transfer is less than perfect and close examination of these records shows initial information only partially completed and attendance poorly recorded. There have been cases where a student has been asked to leave because records have not been accurate.

Tutors are also required to submit termly reports for each student along with any recommendations for examination entries. Students enter for examinations at Initial Grade, Grade 1-8 or Diploma level depending on their degree of competence.

Managing the examination entries is very time consuming. These are recorded based on recommendations from tutors. Examinations occur twice each year and require the student, Parent/Guardian to complete an entry form and pay the examination entry fee. Some students are allowed to attempt an examination twice. In this instance the whole process is repeated again so the student record is duplicated. Care must be taken to update the result in case an incorrect one is maintained. Peter sends the entries to the Examination Board himself and makes one single payment. His rule is neither to accept late entries nor send an entry for which he has not received payment. However both of these events happen on occasion and the cost is seldom recovered. The fee structure for examinations can change annually and is based on the level of entry.

When results come in, they must be photocopied and filed and the Certificates signed for by the student or Parent/Guardian. These records must be maintained properly but sometimes correct records are not available, certificates are missing and disputes arise.

Poor student records and examination entry procedures inevitably lead to a loss of profit and cause lots of problems with billing. Peter has struggled with invoicing and receipts using this system and on moving to the new premises he appointed a Secretary and a Manager.

THE SPECIALIST WEEKEND SCHOOL

The age range for students attending the specialist weekend school is limited to 6-18 years old.

Students attend the specialist weekend school on either Saturday or Sunday during term time.

Peter has now established part time contracts with a complete range of tutors who can supply tuition in the school. Tuition is available in a wide range of instruments, covering strings, brass, woodwind and percussion. Musicianship tuition and singing lessons are also available. All tutors must commit to particular time slots throughout the year. For each orchestral section, Strings, Brass, Woodwind and Percussion, there is a Section Director who manages that section. There is also a Choral

Director. Musicianship is taught by two tutors in group sessions on Saturdays and Sundays.

Anyone wishing to join the specialist weekend school must audition for a place. Auditions are held in March each year and are very carefully managed. Applicants must submit an application form accompanied by a £25 audition fee. Applicants must perform two pieces for which they must submit music in advance. All of these details must be recorded. Applicants must also demonstrate competence in sight reading and complete a musicianship written test. Managing the auditions is a major task. Two members of staff must attend the individual part of each audition. The written test can be done in groups and just requires one supervisor.

Results of auditions and tests must be compiled and all applicants notified of the outcomes. Applicants are recorded as Successful, Unsuccessful or Waiting List according to their performance. Students held on the Waiting List must return an acknowledgement slip along with a £30 deposit. Only twenty applicants are retained on the Waiting List at any one time. This has proved to be a realistic estimate of the possibility of securing a place and avoids unnecessary disappointment.

Successful students must return an Acceptance Slip along with a £50 fee deposit. This deposit will be deducted from their overall termly fee on completion of their enrolment. The current rate for all students is £600 per term. Payment for each term should be made in advance, although in special cases, three instalments may be permitted. Some students pay the full annual fee in advance. **All examination fees are additional to this cost.** Students can apply for bursaries from organisations like the Arts Council or their area boards or from private sponsors. Some students, who travel to the school, have been awarded travel bursaries. This is of great benefit to some talented students who would otherwise be unable to attend. All information relating to funding and fees must be thoroughly documented and maintained. Sometimes a sponsor will approach the school directly to make an award to a particular student. Billing must take account of these types of payments and the value of a bursary must be noted and deducted from the overall bill.

The school itself awards two annual bursaries for full payment of **all fees** to students who have demonstrated exceptional promise. These students are selected at audition.

Services provided by the specialist school include the following.

Individual Instrumental tuition

Individual tuition is carefully scheduled for each student on their day of attendance with several slots assigned to each individual throughout the day.

Ensemble playing

All students playing an instrument are given opportunity to play with others in relevant groupings. Ensemble slots take place between 2pm and 4pm in the afternoon. Players are selected from a range of ability levels.

Orchestral membership

Students are selected for membership of the school orchestra based on their ability. Positions in the orchestra are subject to auditions which take place before the start of the first term each year. It is important for the orchestra to have performance opportunities and the Manager sources these well in advance of the academic year.

Group musicianship classes

All students attending the school have scheduled group classes on their day of attendance. Students are required to enter for theory examinations according to their designated level.

Junior and Senior choir

The Junior and Senior choirs have been a great success. They participate in competitive events throughout the year. These are again organised by the Manager. Membership of the choirs means additional commitment as all students involved play another instrument as well. Selection for the choirs is again a matter of scheduled audition before the start of the first term.

Performances are held at the end of each term, with solo and ensemble concerts held in the local theatre and other venues. There is also a special Christmas concert and an Easter performance. All enrolled students must participate in at least two events.

The Manager must ensure the selection of students for all events and should maintain appropriate records. However this is not well done and Peter does not have a proper overview of these operations. The Manager must also source suitable venues and provide reports on capacity, cost, availability and facilities. Clearly

events like the Christmas concert attract large audiences and require larger accommodation.

Keeping track of all individuals, groups and events is very time consuming. Participation in events involves a great deal of organisation and scheduling for the Manager, with letters, agreements, venues and permissions to take care of.

Instrument rental

Students are allowed to rent instruments for an annual fee of £100. Again this involves record keeping and agreements. Instruments must be returned in pristine condition otherwise students will be charged for any necessary repairs.

SPECIALIST SUMMER SCHOOL

The age range for students attending the specialist summer school is limited to 6-18 years old.

Specialist summer provision is for groups of students who follow a two week intense programme

In July and August, four two weekly summer school programmes are available for potential students.

It is not possible to manage auditions for places in these groups. However applicants must provide evidence of their level of competence and a reference from their school in order to be considered. An application form must be submitted indicating a first and second preference date for a two week slot. Applications are considered and students are selected. The fee for the two week programme is £200 and is payable in full on acceptance of the place. The two week schedule is fully timetabled with individual, ensemble, orchestral and choir tuition. Each of the four two week programmes culminates in a performance in the theatre. This is organised by the Manager. Students are given two complimentary tickets for this event and are expected to sell two other tickets. Records of all costs and profits must be maintained

SUMMARY

Managing the entire provision is extremely difficult and Peter needs a complete review of his administrative systems. He would like to introduce a system that could be built with separate strands and sub systems that could be implemented over a period of time. Some areas he has considered are:

Private Tuition (Scheduling, student records, reallocation of places, billing);
Specialist Weekend School (scheduling, auditions, student records, groups, events, billing);
Specialist **Summer** School (Scheduling, applications, billing, concerts ;)
Event Management;
Instrument Rental.
Implementation of any of these subsystems would be very welcome.

PROBLEM

Peter recognises the administrative deficiencies in his business. He would ultimately like a computer system that could be built with elements of each different strand of the business managed separately but linked into an overall structure.

He believes this would allow him to add on new developments in a gradual way and lead to a comprehensive system that would enable the efficient management of the Mitchell School of Music.

TASK

You must provide a solution presented on appropriate electronic media, such as CD and Podcast, to the specified problem that includes the following:

- A detailed project plan that reflects the actual project development;
- An explanation and justification of your approach to the development and design of your solution;
- A detailed User Requirements Specification;
- The design of your solution;
- An explanation of how you tested the design;
- An explanation of how you developed a desktop solution using a RDMS;
- The development and implementation of your solution using a selected software tool to connect the required database to the GUI for the specified problem;
- Documentation of the solution including the code to create and populate the supporting database; code to develop the solution; and an instructional user guide;
- A test plan;

- Sample documented test outcomes;
- An evaluation of your test procedures;
- A critical evaluation of your solution to the problem;