



WISEAMP (Women in Sound Engineering and Music Production)

Phase 2 Evaluation Report

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the report

WISEAMP (Women in Sound Engineering and Music Production) is a training programme for women in the north-west of England, based at the School of Sound Recording (SSR) in Manchester and supported by the European Social Fund (ESF). An introduction to the WISEAMP training programme, an outline of its aims, and a full description of the evaluation and the evaluation methodology were provided in the first evaluation report (October 2006) and are therefore not repeated here.

This second report details the findings from the evaluation of the second phase of the WISEAMP training. The first report contained the findings of the evaluation of Phase 1 of the WISEAMP training and a third report will provide the findings from Phase 3.

1.2 Structure of the WISEAMP training

The WISEAMP training was set up in 2005. It consisted of three phases. Phases 1 and 2 were the main training programmes and Phase 3 was a set of supplementary activities.

The Phase 1 training ran for twenty-six weeks, from October 2005 to May 2006, on a part-time basis. It offered modules to thirty women in digital sound production, studio techniques and studio design.

The Phase 2 training ran for twenty-six weeks from May to October 2006 (also part-time), providing a similar training programme to an entirely different cohort of thirty women, offering similar modules in digital sound production, studio techniques, and synthesis and MIDI.

The Phase 3 training was the business-oriented component of the course, centred around a series of business sessions, a re-mixing demonstration, and an all-day live sound workshop given by various speakers and facilitators in November 2006. It was offered to participants from both cohorts (Phase 1 and Phase 2) who returned for sessions of their own choosing.

1.3 Evaluation of the Phase 2 training

1.3.1 Questionnaire design

The method chosen for evaluating each of the phases of the WISEAMP training was the semi-structured self-completion questionnaire (containing a mixture of closed and open-ended questions). This method provides an efficient means of reaching a good

proportion of participants and is well suited to the collection of factual data about participants and their training, as well as opinions about the training and its impact.

Two questionnaires were designed for Phase 1 of the training; the same two questionnaires were also used for Phase 2. The first questionnaire was an expanded version of the internal WISEAMP course evaluation form created by Vicky Hipkiss at the School of Sound Recording. Into this were inserted some new questions designed at Lancaster. This questionnaire was used both by Vicky Hipkiss for internal evaluation purposes and by the Lancaster team for the external evaluation. The Lancaster evaluation team also wanted to ask participants some confidential questions, particularly relating to the important topics of employability, employment experience and gender. Therefore, a second questionnaire was created at Lancaster and approved by Vicky Hipkiss before the two questionnaires were distributed by the SSR. An envelope was provided to enable participants to return the Lancaster questionnaire anonymously.

1.3.2 Phase 2 data collection

Response rates were not high for Phase 1, where participants had been given the questionnaires to take away and return by post. For Phase 2, it was therefore decided that the questionnaires should be distributed and returned in person, in an attempt to achieve a higher response rate. Time was allowed in two of the final training sessions so that the purpose of the evaluation could be introduced to the participants and they were then asked to complete the questionnaires during the session.

However, attendance at the sessions was not high and only nine of the eighteen participants who completed Phase 2 attended on that day. All these nine completed and returned the questionnaires. Questionnaires were also distributed to course participants who had not attended. Questionnaires were also received from two additional participants who had started but not completed the training. This gave a total number of responses of fourteen for the first questionnaire and fifteen for the second (one participant only completed the second questionnaire), out of the thirty who had started the course (response rates of 47% and 50%).

1.3.3 Phase 2 impact study

An impact study of Phase 1 was undertaken four months after the completion of the Phase 1 training and the findings were incorporated in the Phase 1 report. A similar impact study will be undertaken for Phase 2. This will use the same short questionnaire as was used in Phase 1. A supplementary report on the findings will be presented in April 2007.

2. Executive summary

2.1 Overview

The findings of the evaluation of the Phase 2 training confirm those of the Phase 1 training. The results of both surveys were very similar and indicate that the WISEAMP training has been successful overall and is valued by the women who took

part. They gained new skills, greater confidence and had the opportunity to network with other women and with those from the profession. The course has also had a positive impact on their career development and career prospects.

There are however some improvements which could be made to the course, particularly in terms of facilities and equipment.

2.2 Aspects of the training

2.2.1 Operational success of the programme

The operational target of recruiting thirty participants to Phase 1 and thirty participants to Phase 2 was met. There was a high number of applications and many had to be rejected. This indicates that there is a considerable level of unmet demand. Completion rates for both phases were around two thirds of those who started.

2.2.2 Expectations of the training

The most common reasons for taking part in the course were a desire to gain technical skills (especially in recording, production and sound engineering) and a desire for social or networking contacts as a result of the training. Most of the respondents found that these expectations were fulfilled and that they got what they wanted out of the training.

2.2.3 Gender issues

More than half the respondents felt it was important to be part of a female-only student body and some would have preferred to have female-only tutors. However, many respondents liked having both male and female tutors.

2.2.4 Career development

Nearly all respondents felt that WISEAMP had helped them learn technical skills that they could apply to their careers. They also felt that the course had given them confidence to pursue work in sound technology and had helped them progress towards their career aims.

About half the respondents were using their newly acquired skills in their current work. The remainder were in the process of developing “portfolio” careers in a mixture of paid and voluntary areas of work and intended to use the skills they had gained from WISEAMP in the future.

2.3 Meeting the objectives

2.3.1 Objectives 1 and 2: Considerations in venue choice and scheduling

The locations were easily accessible and the training was scheduled at convenient times for participants. The timing was flexible and participants valued the opportunity to attend in the morning or the evening. Where there were difficulties in attendance, these were because of other work or family commitments.

The staff at the Ina Centre were seen to be helpful and the environment of the course was felt to be a safe one.

There were however several complaints about the quality of the toilet areas and eating area, including cleanliness, décor and inadequate vending machines. Car parking was also a problem.

There were also some problems reported with the learning and teaching facilities. Nearly half the respondents were unhappy with the classroom as a learning environment, and there were problems with the software and the studio equipment not always functioning properly.

2.3.2 Objective 3: Instructional considerations

Most respondents were very positive about the design of the course, the range of subjects taught, the assessment methods and the overall content. There were however some difficulties with the pace of the course, which many found too fast, and the demands of covering a large amount of material within the time. Participants also felt that they did not have enough hands-on, practical sessions.

In addition, they would have liked to receive the handbooks earlier in the course, to have had more training in aspects of sampling, mixing, editing, and DJ-ing skills generally, and more in-depth training in sound software packages.

The course materials and resources were highly valued and were seen as a useful reference, easy to understand and complementing the learning objectives. Respondents would also however have liked course information to have been available via a website. The online forum was not found to be particularly useful and was in fact only used by two respondents.

Most respondents would plan to take part if there were any future activities and a third were considering doing a foundation degree to build on what they had learned from WISEAMP. More than half the respondents thought that they would have benefited from a professional placement during the training, but for some this would have been impractical.

It should be noted that some of the instructional objectives ('Courses should incorporate information about self-employment, professional development, potential funding opportunities and networking') were not included in Phase 2. These formed part of the third phase of the project and are discussed in the Phase 3 evaluation report.

2.3.3 Objectives 4 (post-course support), 5 (networking and mentoring) and 6 (student resource packs)

These objectives did not form part of the activity and aims of Phase 2 and are further discussed in the Phase 3 evaluation report.

3. Operational success of the project and characteristics of respondents to Phase 2 survey

3.1 Operational success of the project

3.1.1 Recruitment

The SSR target was to recruit thirty participants to Phase 1 and thirty participants to Phase 2. This was achieved for both phases.

3.1.2 Application and acceptance onto the training

The table below shows the number of applications and acceptances onto the training for both phases. The high number of applications indicates that there is considerable demand for the WISEAMP programme.

Table 1: Application and acceptance

	Applications	Acceptances
Phase 1	52 (100%)	30 (58%)
Phase 2	80 (100%)	30 (38%)
Total	132 (100%)	60 (45%)

3.1.3 Completion of the training

The table below shows the completion rates for the training. Completion for Phase 1 was just over two thirds of those who started. Completion for Phase 2 was just under two thirds.

Table 2: Completion

	Starters	Leavers	Completers
Phase 1	30 (100%)	9 (30%)	21 (70%)
Phase 2	30 (100%)	12 (40%)	18 (60%)
Total	60 (100%)	21 (35%)	39 (65%)

3.2 Characteristics of respondents to Phase 2 survey

3.2.1 Geographic area

Nearly all the respondents came from the Greater Manchester area. Out of fourteen respondents, ten came from Greater Manchester, one from Lancashire and three from Cheshire.

3.2.2 Gender

This was a course for women only and all respondents were therefore female.

3.2.3 Age

Respondents were spread across the age groups, the largest being 25-34 with about half the respondents in this group.

Table 3: Ages of respondents

<25	25-34	35-44	45+	Not known	Total
3	7	2	1	2	15

3.2.4 Disability

None of the respondents reported having any disability, apart from one who identified herself as suffering from seasonal affective disorder (SAD).

3.2.5 Current occupation

Less than half the respondents were in full-time paid employment. The remainder were in a variety of part-time, voluntary and caring roles.

Table 4: Current employment status

	No.
In full-time paid employment	6
Doing voluntary/ unpaid work	3
Self-employed	2
Caring for children or other dependents	2
Education	2
In part-time paid employment	1
Unemployed	1

Note: Some respondents had more than one occupation and some had none

Respondents were asked what their current or last paid employment was. Many had portfolio careers with elements of freelance work, rather than a single profession that can be clearly categorised. Overall, the largest category of work was in areas of broadcasting, events management or production (including sound-related work that was not specifically musical). The second largest category was music-related (especially music education).

Table 5: Current or last paid employment

	No.
Broadcasting/ sound production/ events	6
Music-related (including teaching/ education)	5
Student	2
Solicitor	1
Youth work	1
Disability support work	1
Business administration	1

Note: Some respondents had more than one occupation and some had none

3.2.6 Qualifications

Of the fifteen respondents, thirteen were graduates, of whom three also had a Masters degree and one had a doctorate. Three stated that they had other professional qualifications (a PGCE, a legal qualification and a diploma relating to youth and community work).

3.2.7 Ethnicity

Eleven respondents identified themselves as “white (British)”, one identified herself as “white (Irish)”, one as “Asian or Asian British (Indian)” and one as “Black or Black British (Caribbean)”.

4. Findings from the survey (first questionnaire)

There were fourteen respondents to the first questionnaire (see Section 1.3 for details of the methods used).

4.1 Reasons for taking part in the course

Respondents were asked what their main reasons were for coming on the course. Responses are summarised in the table below. The most common reason for taking part in the course was a desire to gain technical skills (especially in recording, sound engineering and production). Four respondents mentioned a desire for social or networking contacts as a result of the training.

Table 6: Reasons for taking part in the course

	No.
Develop recording/ sound engineering/ production skills/ technical knowledge (especially ProTools)	14
Networking/ meeting people	4
Develop confidence	2
To help get a job in the music industry	1
Working in a male environment	1
Encourage students	1
Make music	1

4.2 Aspects of the course

4.2.1 Venues and timing

All respondents found the locations easily accessible and all found that the training was scheduled at convenient times. Many respondents valued the opportunity to attend in the evening and some were grateful for the flexibility to swap between morning and evening sessions when one or other was not possible. Around a third of respondents (five out of fourteen) stated that they had encountered other barriers to attendance; comments indicated that these were nearly all related to their work commitments. One additional comment highlighted the difficulty of attending during

school holidays (due to child-care commitments). This respondent expressed a desire for a break in the training during half-term holidays.

There were several complaints about the quality of the toilet areas and eating area, including cleanliness, décor and inadequate vending machines. Two respondents also stated that they found car parking to be problematic in the area.

Table 7: Venues and timing

	Yes	No	Neither/ not sure	No reply	Total
Locations of the training were easily accessible for me	14 (100%)	-	-	-	14 (100%)
The training was scheduled at times that were convenient to me	14 (100%)	-	-	-	14 (100%)
The provision of the training was family-friendly	7 (50%)	-	6 (43%)	1 (7%)	14 (100%)
There were other barriers that made my attendance difficult/ impossible	5 (36%)	6 (43%)	1 (7%)	2 (14%)	14 (100%)

4.2.2 Gender aspects of the course

As shown in the table below, just over half the respondents (57%) felt it was important to be part of a female-only student body. Exactly half the respondents also felt that it was important to have female tutors.

Table 8: Gender issues

	Agree/ agree strongly	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree/ disagree strongly	Total
Being part of a female-only student body was important to me	8 (57%)	3 (21%)	3 (21%)	14 (100%)
Having a female tutor was important to me	7 (50%)	3 (21%)	4 (29%)	14 (100%)

The comments show that the atmosphere of an all-women group was valued by several of the participants; others did not feel that this was an important aspect of the training. One respondent raised the question of whether it would be better to have experience of working with both men and women because the industry is full of men, but she also felt that the training had provided a good background for starting in the industry. Having at least some women tutors as mentors was also valued, but many respondents liked having both men and women tutors.

The comments below exemplify the range of responses:

It was a comfortable working atmosphere and I felt confident asking questions that I might not have asked in a mixed class.

I feel the environment suited me more than being the only female in a male class.

I enjoyed learning in a female-only environment as I feel that I learnt more from having that (after experiencing negativity trying to learn music tech in a male-dominated environment).

I'm not bothered either way as I have worked in both predominantly female and predominantly male environments.

Having a female tutor is good because it gives you confidence – they are working in the environment already so you can see it can be done – it's encouraging.

I was not bothered about the sex of the tutor, but being in an all-female environment helped to create a full-on learning atmosphere.

4.2.3 Design of the course

Most respondents were very positive about the design of the course. The majority found the range of subjects to be appropriate and reported that the course fulfilled their expectations and met their objectives. Most were also satisfied with the assessment methods and felt that the course content suited their needs. Respondents were less satisfied with the pace of the course, the intensity of the timetable and the balance between presentation and practical exercises. The comments from this part of the questionnaire reiterated the demanding pace of the large amount of material covered and the desire for additional hands-on, practical sessions.

Table 9: Design of the course

	Agree/ agree strongly	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree/ disagree strongly	No reply	Total
The range of subjects/ topics was appropriate	12 (86%)	1 (7%)	-	1 (7%)	14 (100%)
The course met my expectations	11 (79%)	2 (14%)	-	1 (7%)	14 (100%)
The course met the objectives I had at the start of the course	11 (79%)	2 (14%)	-	1 (7%)	14 (100%)
I feel that the assessment methods were fair and accurate	10 (71%)	2 (14%)	-	2 (14%)	14 (100%)
The course content suited my needs	9 (64%)	3 (21%)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)	14 (100%)
The pace of the course was correct	5 (36%)	7 (50%)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)	14 (100%)
The timetable provided enough time to meet the course objectives	5 (36%)	6 (43%)	2 (14%)	1 (7%)	14 (100%)
The balance between presentation and practical exercises was effective	4 (29%)	5 (36%)	4 (29%)	1 (7%)	14 (100%)

4.2.4 Tutor skills

Most respondents felt that the tutors were well prepared and knowledgeable and that they provided sufficient support, taught to the right level of skill and gave clear, well-organised presentations.

Table 10: Tutor skills

	Agree/ agree strongly	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree/ disagree strongly	No reply	Total
The tutors were well prepared for the class	12 (86%)	-	1 (7%)	1 (7%)	14 (100%)
The tutors were knowledgeable in the subject matter	11 (79%)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)	14 (100%)
I feel I received sufficient additional support from my tutor	10 (71%)	2 (14%)	-	2 (14%)	14 (100%)
There was sufficient assistance offered during classes	9 (64%)	4 (29%)	-	1 (7%)	14 (100%)
The tutors taught to my level of skill	9 (64%)	4 (29%)	-	1 (7%)	14 (100%)
All tutors gave clear, well-organised presentations	8 (57%)	5 (36%)	-	1 (7%)	14 (100%)

4.2.5 Ratings of course modules

All three modules were rated highly. (The non-responses for this question include some students who did not take a particular module.)

Table 11: Ratings of course modules in terms of quality of delivery and relevance to participants' career aims (scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is low and 5 is high)

Module Title	1 (Low)	2	3	4	5 (High)	No reply	Total
Digital Sound Production	1	-	1	8	4	-	14
Studio Techniques	-	-	3	2	5	4	14
Introduction to Synthesis and MIDI	-	-	3	2	4	5	14

4.2.6 Most valued aspects of the training

Respondents were asked what they liked most about their training experience. The most common responses were related to developing skills and knowledge and meeting new contacts. Gaining hands-on experience in a studio environment and learning with women were also valued. Responses are summarised in the table below.

Table 12: Things they liked most about their training experience

	No.
Developing skills/ knowledge/ learning	10
Meeting people/ networking	4
Access to studio/ equipment/ software/ hands-on experience	3
Learning with women	2
Developing confidence	1

4.2.7 Least valued aspects of the training

Respondents were also asked what they liked least about their training experience. The biggest area of concern was a lack of time to cover the material in the course and difficulties with the pace of the course, especially at the beginning when two students mentioned a sense of confusion or frustration. Students also found the ProTools exam difficult and said they would have liked having the handbooks earlier in the course.

Table 13: Things they liked least about their training experience

	No.
Lack of time/ pressure of pace	5
ProTools exam too difficult	2
Not having ProTools books when needed	2
Not enough time for practical work	2
Confusion/ frustration at beginning of course	2
Assessments (“I just wanted to learn”)	1
Theory sessions (layout of sessions and difficult to understand)	1
More recording/ studio techniques	1
Unreliable equipment	1
Challenge of long day and having to concentrate on studying after a day’s work	1
Toilets	1

4.2.8 Suggestions for additional topics

Respondents were asked what additional topics they would have liked to be included on the course. There were very few suggestions. Five respondents indicated a desire for more training in aspects of sampling, mixing, editing, or DJ-ing skills generally. Two said they would have liked more in-depth training in sound software packages.

Table 14: Additional topics they would have liked to be included in the course

	No.
Sampling, DJ-ing, re-mixing, editing	5
More depth into uses of software (such as Logic, Ableton, Reason, ProTools)	2
Sound for live events	1
More recording as a group	1
Editing for video	1
More theory	1
History of sound recording	1

Respondents also gave some very positive additional comments, such as:

I have thoroughly enjoyed it!

The course was fantastic. Helped me enormously and opened up new opportunities for me in the future.

4.2.10 Facilitating learning

Seven of the respondents (50%) stated that they had, as a result of the project, facilitated the learning of others, especially in uses of ProTools. Three (21%) had also work-shadowed others.

Table 15: Facilitating learning

	Agree/ agree strongly	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree/ disagree strongly	Total
As a result of the project I have facilitated the learning of others e.g. allowed others to work shadow me, instructed others on Pro Tools etc.	7 (50%)	4 (29%)	3 (21%)	14 (100%)
As a result of the project I have work shadowed individuals	3 (21%)	3 (21%)	8 (57%)	14 (100%)

4.3 Resources and facilities

4.3.1 Use of course materials/ resources

Nearly all respondents were very positive about the course materials and resources, agreeing that they were a useful reference, easy to understand and complemented the learning objectives.

Table 16: Course materials/ resources

	Agree/ agree strongly	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree/ disagree strongly	Total
I used the workbooks/ handouts as a reference	13 (93%)	1 (7%)	-	14 (100%)
The workbooks/ handouts were easy to understand	13 (93%)	-	1 (7%)	14 (100%)
The workbooks/ handouts complemented the learning objectives	11 (79%)	3 (21%)	-	14 (100%)

4.3.2 Accessibility of course materials

Respondents were asked if the course materials/ resource packs were made available to them in a way that was accessible and useful. Nearly two-thirds of respondents (64%) agreed that they were. Most (71%) also would have liked course information to have been available via a website.

Table 17: Accessibility of course materials

	Yes	No	Neither/ not sure	Total
Course materials were made available in a way that was accessible and useful	9 (64%)	1 (7%)	4 (29%)	14 (100%)
It would have been useful for more course information to have been available via a website	10 (71%)	1 (7%)	3 (21%)	14 (100%)

Respondents' comments reinforced the view that, while the handouts were valued, more online material would have been appreciated. There also appears to have been a delay in distributing the ProTools handbooks, which students found problematic.

4.3.3 Usage of online forum

Only two respondents had used the online forum.

Table 18: Usage of online forum

	Yes	No	No reply	Total
Used online forum	2 (14%)	11 (79%)	1 (7%)	14 (100%)

4.3.4 Training facilities

Opinion was divided about the adequacy of the facilities. Nearly half the respondents (43%) were unhappy with the classroom environment, 21% found that the software did not always work as it should, and over a third (36%) reported that the studio equipment did not always function properly.

Table 19: Training facilities

	Agree/ agree strongly	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree/ disagree strongly	No reply	Total
The classroom was a suitable environment for learning	7 (50%)	-	6 (43%)	1 (7%)	14 (100%)
The equipment used was kept in good working order	6 (43%)	5 (36%)	2 (14%)	1 (7%)	14 (100%)
The software functioned properly	5 (36%)	5 (36%)	3 (21%)	1 (7%)	14 (100%)
The studio equipment always functioned properly	4 (29%)	4 (29%)	5 (36%)	1 (7%)	14 (100%)

Over 90% of the respondents found that the staff at the Ina Centre were helpful, that the environment felt safe and that they were treated fairly.

Table 20: Staff and working environments

	Agree/ agree strongly	No reply	Total
Generally, I feel that the staff at the Ina Centre were helpful	13	1	14
I feel that I worked in a safe environment	13	1	14
I feel that the staff treated me fairly and without discrimination.	13	1	14

There were some very positive comments:

The staff were always fair and helpful.

Staff were very helpful and the building security was good in an area which has a bad reputation.

At first I thought women would be treated light-heartedly, but found the opposite to be true. We were treated seriously and well supported.

4.4 Effects of the course

4.4.1 Activity arising from the course

Half the respondents were aware that there would be further activities in connection with the training and nearly all (86%) said they would plan to take part if there were activities. Five respondents (36%) were considering doing a foundation degree to build on what they had learned from WISEAMP. Two of these mentioned the SSR as a possible institution (which presumably would mean Bolton University, which is building a partnership with the SSR). However, two of the respondents who were considering a foundation degree also mentioned financial barriers.

Table 21: Ongoing activity

	Yes	No	Don't know	Total
As far as you are aware, will any further activities be available in connection with the training after the course has finished?	7 (50%)	1 (7%)	6 (43%)	14 (100%)
If there are further activities in relation to the training, will you plan to take part?	12 (86%)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)	14 (100%)
Are you considering doing a Foundation Degree to further the knowledge, skills and techniques you developed through WISEAMP?	5 (36%)	8 (57%)	1 (7%)	14 (100%)

4.4.2 Anticipated effects of WISEAMP on future careers

Nearly all respondents felt that WISEAMP had helped them learn technical skills that they could apply to their career. The main skills mentioned were general engineering,

MIDI and software techniques involving recording, editing, mixing, the use of ProTools and learning about the Cubase and Reason software.

Most also felt that the course had given them confidence to pursue work in sound technology and had helped them progress towards their career aims.

Table 22: *Effects of WISEAMP on future careers*

	<i>Agree/ agree strongly</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree/ disagree strongly</i>	<i>Total</i>
I have learnt technical skills which I can apply to my future career	13 (92%)	-	1 (7%)	14 (100%)
The course has given me confidence to pursue work in the areas of sound technology	11 (79%)	2 (14%)	1 (7%)	14 (100%)
The course has helped me progress towards my career aims	11 (79%)	2 (14%)	1 (7%)	14 (100%)

5. Findings from the survey (second questionnaire)

There were fifteen respondents to the second questionnaire (see Section 1.3 for details of the methodology used).

5.1 Ways in which WISEAMP might be improved for the future

Respondents were asked an open-ended question about whether there were any ways in which WISEAMP could be improved in the future. There were a number of suggestions which are summarised in the table below. More practical training and a slower pace to the course were by far the most common suggestions.

Table 23: *Ways in which WISEAMP could be improved*

	No.
More practical training	5
Longer modules or more time needed/ too intense	4
Placement opportunities	2
More group interaction	2
Tutors with better teaching/ communication skills	2
Live music experience	1
Better use of website	1
Better air-conditioning in rooms	1
Individual tutorials for written work	1
Experience in animation as well as music	1
Better organisation	1
Someone answering the telephone more for studio time cancellation	1

5.2 Benefits of the course

5.2.1 Achievement of aims

Respondents were asked if the course had given them what they wanted. Nine (60%) felt that it had, and a further five (33%) that it had done so at least in part. Only one person felt that it had not. Comments showed that many respondents had gained knowledge, skills and confidence. They had also gained an awareness of how they needed to develop professionally. Those who were only partly satisfied repeated their concerns about the fast pace of the course and the desire for more time for practical experience. The remaining respondent had dropped out from the training due to full-time academic study.

5.2.2 Skills gained

Respondents were asked what were the main knowledge, skills and techniques that they had developed through WISEAMP. All fifteen respondents provided positive comments to this question. Seven mentioned ProTools as an important area of skills they had gained. All fifteen listed various technical skills or the confidence to use these skills. The skills related to various areas of sound engineering work including recording, editing, MIDI, learning new software, understanding microphones and cables, and understanding the physics of sound.

5.2.3 Relationship of course to current work

Respondents were asked if they were using any of these skills in their current work. Seven (47%) said that they were; two (13%) said that they were partly using the skills; six (40%) said that they were not. The comments showed that while some respondents were already using the skills in, for example, their recording or teaching work, others were in the process of developing “portfolio” careers in a mixture of paid and voluntary areas of work and expected to use their skills later. Many had clear plans about how they intended to use the skills gained from WISEAMP in the future.

5.2.4 Value of a professional placement

Respondents were asked if they thought they would have benefited from a professional placement opportunity during the training. More than half the respondents thought that they would have benefited from a professional placement. However, for some participants taking part in a placement would have been difficult due to their personal circumstances.

Some comments were:

I find practical learning beneficial.

A placement would have been an excellent way of applying and developing skills. However, it would have been difficult for those of us who have to earn a living while studying.

5.2.5 Gains from participating in the course

All respondents agreed that they had gained knowledge and skills, learnt a lot from the tutors on the course and benefited from sharing experiences with other students. Nearly all said that they had gained confidence, planned to keep in touch with the people they had met on the course, and that what they had learnt had been useful when looking for work. More than half reported that they had gained confidence in applying for work and a third had made useful contacts in the industry. This is an excellent endorsement of the value of the course as whole.

Table 24: Gains from participating in the course

	<i>Agree/ agree strongly</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree/ disagree strongly</i>	<i>Total</i>
I have gained knowledge/ skills	15 (100%)	-	-	15 (100%)
I have learnt a lot from the tutors on the course	15 (100%)	-	-	15 (100%)
I have benefited from sharing experiences with the other students	15 (100%)	-	-	15 (100%)
I have gained confidence in myself	13 (87%)	2 (13%)	-	15 (100%)
I plan to keep in touch with some of the people I met on the course	13 (87%)	2 (13%)	-	15 (100%)
What I learnt on the course has been useful to me when looking for work	12 (80%)	1 (7%)	2 (13%)	15 (100%)
I have gained confidence in applying for work	8 (53%)	6 (40%)	1 (7%)	15 (100%)
I have made some useful contacts in the industry while I have been on the course	5 (33%)	7 (47%)	3 (20%)	15 (100%)

5.2.6 Main benefits

Respondents were also asked an open-ended question about what had been the main benefits to them of the WISEAMP course. The main benefits mentioned were knowledge and skills (and learning generally about sound engineering and music production) followed by gaining confidence, meeting like-minded women and using the equipment at the SSR.

Table 25: Main benefits

	No.
Knowledge/ skills/ learning	13
Confidence	4
All-female element/ like-minded women	2
Use of equipment	2
Comfortable environment for asking questions	1
Meeting people	1
New opportunities	1
Free of charge	1

Some typical comments were:

Much more knowledgeable; am more confident; am excited about what I've learned and want to use my skills.

Confidence in my ability to learn the technical aspects of sound engineering. A new pair of ears! I now listen to music very differently and have the skills to know how to manipulate it to best effect using technology.

Meeting other like-minded women (so I'm not a freak!) and learning new stuff.

Having the opportunity to use the newest and industry standard software and having the chance to be shown more detailed operations than I had attempted on my own. Receiving proper explanations about principles of sound recording. Having a comfortable environment in which to ask questions in the lessons.

5.3 Employment-related issues

5.3.1 Applying for work in sound technology

Respondents were asked if they were currently applying for work in sound technology. Only three said they were currently applying for work. The remaining twelve said that they were not. All three of those who were in the process of applying for work were applying in areas of sound engineering.

Those who were not applying for work were asked why they were not applying. The reasons given were:

- Currently engaged in other employment or study
- Currently developing sound technology skills through voluntary work
- Family commitments
- Lack of confidence in existing skills or a desire for further training

Those who were applying for work were asked if they would have applied for these posts if they had not been doing the course. Of the three who stated that they were applying for work, one said that she would have applied anyway (as she already had ProTools experience), one said that she would not have applied, and the third said she might have done, feeling that her administrative skills were already very good but that she now has more knowledge to separate her from others when applying for work in the music industry.

5.4 Gender issues

5.4.1 Views about gender issues

Like their colleagues in the Phase 1 group, nearly all Phase 2 respondents felt that a course such as WISEAMP can help to reduce the male dominance of the profession. Most also felt that it is lack of the right skills rather than other barriers that makes it harder for women to succeed in sound technology than for men. 60% felt that women

do not have the same opportunities as men to develop skills, that gender issues are a barrier when trying to gain entry to work in sound technology and that prejudice in the workplace makes it harder for women to succeed in sound technology. About half (47%) felt that family responsibilities make success in sound technology harder for women. Respondents were divided on whether they found it difficult being in a male-dominated workplace (40% did and 47% did not). None of the women felt that there was a disadvantage to having male instructors.

Table 26: Views about gender issues

	Agree/ agree strongly	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree/ disagree strongly	Total
I think that courses such as WISEAMP will help to reduce the male-dominance of the profession	14 (93%)	1 (7%)	-	15 (100%)
It is lack of the right skills that makes it harder for women to succeed in sound technology than for men	12 (80%)	3 (20%)	-	15 (100%)
I think women do not generally have the same opportunities to develop skills in sound technology as men do	9 (60%)	6 (40%)	-	15 (100%)
I think gender issues are a barrier when trying to gain entry to work in sound technology	9 (60%)	6 (40%)	-	15 (100%)
It is prejudice in the workplace that makes it harder for women to succeed in sound technology than for men	9 (60%)	6 (40%)	-	15 (100%)
It is having family responsibilities that makes it harder for women to succeed in sound technology than for men	7 (47%)	5 (33%)	3 (20%)	15 (100%)
I find it difficult when I am in a male-dominated workplace	6 (40%)	2 (13%)	7 (47%)	15 (100%)
I feel that it was a disadvantage that some of the instructors were male	-	3 (20%)	12 (80%)	15 (100%)

5.4.2 Personal experience of gender barriers

Respondents were asked if, during their training or work in any area of sound technology, they had ever felt that their experience of the work or training had been different because of being a woman. Of the fifteen respondents, eight indicated that they had experienced this kind of difference. Several of them wrote about how they feel they are treated differently in terms of their perceived capabilities – both physical (heavy lifting and so on) and intellectual (technical knowledge and understanding). One respondent wrote that men sometimes over-simplify their answers to technical questions from women. Others acknowledged that women are sometimes not taken seriously or are simply “pushed aside” or “overlooked” by men in a male environment, regardless of their skills.

One respondent with professional experience from a major music venue, commented that, while women are still treated different by “old school industry people” the number of women sound engineers is “definitely increasing.”

5.4.3 Reasons for sound technology being a largely male occupation

Respondents were asked what they thought were the reasons for work in sound technology being male-dominated. All but one of the respondents had something to say about this.

Almost of all of these respondents wrote about the perception that technical roles are more suited to men (and of the tradition for men to occupy these roles) or about the reproduction of gender roles in early childhood (including academic subjects being gendered at school) or in the media. Here are some quotations to illustrate these responses:

Most technology jobs have been male-oriented over the years. This is probably just a trend that began years ago when men were seen as better at science and technology subjects and women were encouraged to enter clerical, domestic or caring professions.

At school I wasn't allowed to do graphic design because it was a boy's option only. Women are still the ones who do all the house and care work. As much as men deny it, it's true. Women feel defeated before they begin.

Guys and gadgets. It's an image thing. But male-domination pervades the WHOLE industry.

Related to this, one respondent made the observation that women are assumed to have family commitments that will prevent them from being able to sustain the unsociable hours and regular travel of a career in sound technology. She added that “not all women have families and [they] can be as committed as men.”

Other responses included comments about the lack of female-only training courses in particular, and lack of opportunities in general. For example:

Not enough opportunities for women to learn what the job is about. Not enough female ambassadors to encourage other women that it is a job that they can do that can give great job satisfaction and that is not “nerdy” or difficult to learn!

5.4.4 Barriers facing women in sound technology

Respondents were asked what they thought were the biggest barriers that women face in succeeding in sound technology. All fifteen women responded and the barriers they reported fall into three clear categories:

- Lack of knowledge, skills or experience
- Lack of confidence
- Attitudes (especially problems of sexism, including the pre-conceived idea that sound technology is a “male thing to do”)

These issues are of course deeply intertwined. One respondent succinctly expressed the barriers women face:

The practical skills and confidence in those skills to convince others that they are equally capable of doing the job as men.

Additionally, one also raised the issue of contacts, arguing that gaining success can be related to who you know:

It's about who you know and it strikes me that people who possess the skills and the right attitude but do not have the existing contacts in the industry are sometimes denied the chance at jobs. I think the WISEAMP course is really addressing that problem.

5.5 Other comments

Finally, there were some very positive comments about the training in general:

I enjoyed the course as a whole.

Fantastic course – when will there be more?