



# Cam FM Training Handbook

Hello and welcome to Cam FM! By completing training you will become a member of one of Cambridge and ARU's most diverse, active and sociable societies.

Cam FM is by far the most exciting thing to get involved in during your time in Cambridge: you'll meet new people, enjoy some amazing professional opportunities and have buckets of fun producing your own show or working on some of our celebrated outdoor sports and music broadcasts. As Cambridge's only student-run radio station, we are a unique media source and work to create interesting and engaging content. We hope you'll enjoy working with us!

## From 1979 to the 2020s

Originally founded in 1979, Cam FM is now one of the most heavily listened to student radio stations in the UK as well as one of the largest student-run media organisations in Cambridge.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Cam FM continued to broadcast, including achievements such as ADC Online, broadcasting radio theatre; founding an annual 24-hour broadcast to raise money for local mental health charities; and winning the Gold Coronavirus Resilience Award at the Student Radio Association Amplify Awards.

Post-pandemic, the station has continued to produce amazing student radio, as well as continue our fund-raising efforts, for charities such as Cambridge4Ukraine in a 24-hour charity broadcast show.

Cam FM is also famed for its sports coverage, with events in rowing, football, cricket and just about everything in between. If you're interested in commentary, this is the perfect time to join Cam FM, and keep an eye out for call outs to sign up for events such as Bumps throughout the year. As well as sport, we cover diverse genres from specialist music to radio drama, and we hope you'll enjoy getting involved in all kinds of radio at Cam FM.

Whether you're looking to start a career in media, or just to pursue broadcasting as a hobby, there are many ways in which you can get your content recognised - following in the footsteps of our alumni. In the past few years, we've helped shows enter and win at the Student Radio Association awards, Radio Academy prizes and even the pan-European broadcast festival, Prix Europa. Each December, we celebrate all the amazing content on Cam FM with our own Awards Evening - another opportunity for a good party!

## **Professional Acclamation**

The Cam FM Training Programme has been created in conjunction with presenters, producers and managers of commercial and BBC radio services. This programme is award-winning, scoring Gold in the 2024 SRA Amplify Awards for Best Training Initiative. To our knowledge no other student radio association, or indeed media source in Cambridge, offers similarly endorsed training. This spills over into our series of fantastic workshops. Run alongside industry professionals from several media outlets, these can help you to develop ever better content and add to your repertoire of skills as well as giving you insights into the industry. You'll see full details on the members' site dashboard once you become a member, and in our members' Facebook Group.

**Please save a copy of this booklet, and have a read through before coming to your training sessions.**

# The Basics

## Training Structure

When you signed up, you chose your times for a series of T (Training) and S (Sit-in) sessions and an Assessment.

## Training

T sessions are hands-on labs to demonstrate the technical skills you need to make radio and the basics of good content and structure. They last about an hour, depending on how many trainees are present and how long it takes you to cover the content.

## Sit-ins

S sessions are a chance for you to see how a live Cam FM show runs. Ask as many questions as possible and look at how the skills you've learned in T sessions are applied. Most shows last an hour so bear that in mind when scheduling your sit-ins. If a show lasts more than an hour, it is fine for you to leave after the first hour, but you can always stay if you'd like to see more.

## Assessment

In the assessment, you'll present an off-air demo show, so we can check that you're ready to broadcast on your own. Don't worry too much about this though! The format is explained later but the key thing is preparation. You shouldn't turn up without knowing what to do, but your trainers will be happy to hear from you if you have unanswered questions. The Assessment will take no longer than 15 minutes.

## Rescheduling

Your trainers are students themselves, who are giving up their time to help out and share their experience. Please turn up to the sessions that you have chosen for your timetable. If you find you are unable to attend a booked session, you can reschedule online up to 24 hours in advance, but because you need to take the sessions in order, you may need to alter the rest of your schedule as well. If you have any problems or need to cancel a session within 24 hours please contact the Head of Training, at [training@camfm.co.uk](mailto:training@camfm.co.uk).

Sessions are constantly added online so please note you can either push back, or bring forward a session by rescheduling online. Just keep an eye on the training website.

If you miss a training session without notifying anyone, the continuation of Basic Training will be at the discretion of the Head of Training.

## **Where to go & when**

For all sessions please meet 5 minutes before the scheduled start time at the studio, and allow yourself time to find it. There's a lot of content to squeeze in, so you may not be able to join the sessions if you are late. If you are running late, please text your trainer immediately.

We have two studios: one at ARU on East Road, and one at Jesus College on Jesus Lane. Use the QR code (or click the link below) for each respective studio to see our helpful interactive map:



[Map to ARU Studio](#)



[Map to Jesus Studio](#)

For ARU, aim for the Helmore Reception, just beyond Parker's Piece. For Jesus, go to the Porters' Lodge off of Jesus Lane. Once there, use the map to navigate to the studio. If in doubt, ring your trainer or email the Head of Training. You can also arrange with your trainer prior to the session to meet at Reception.

## **What to bring**

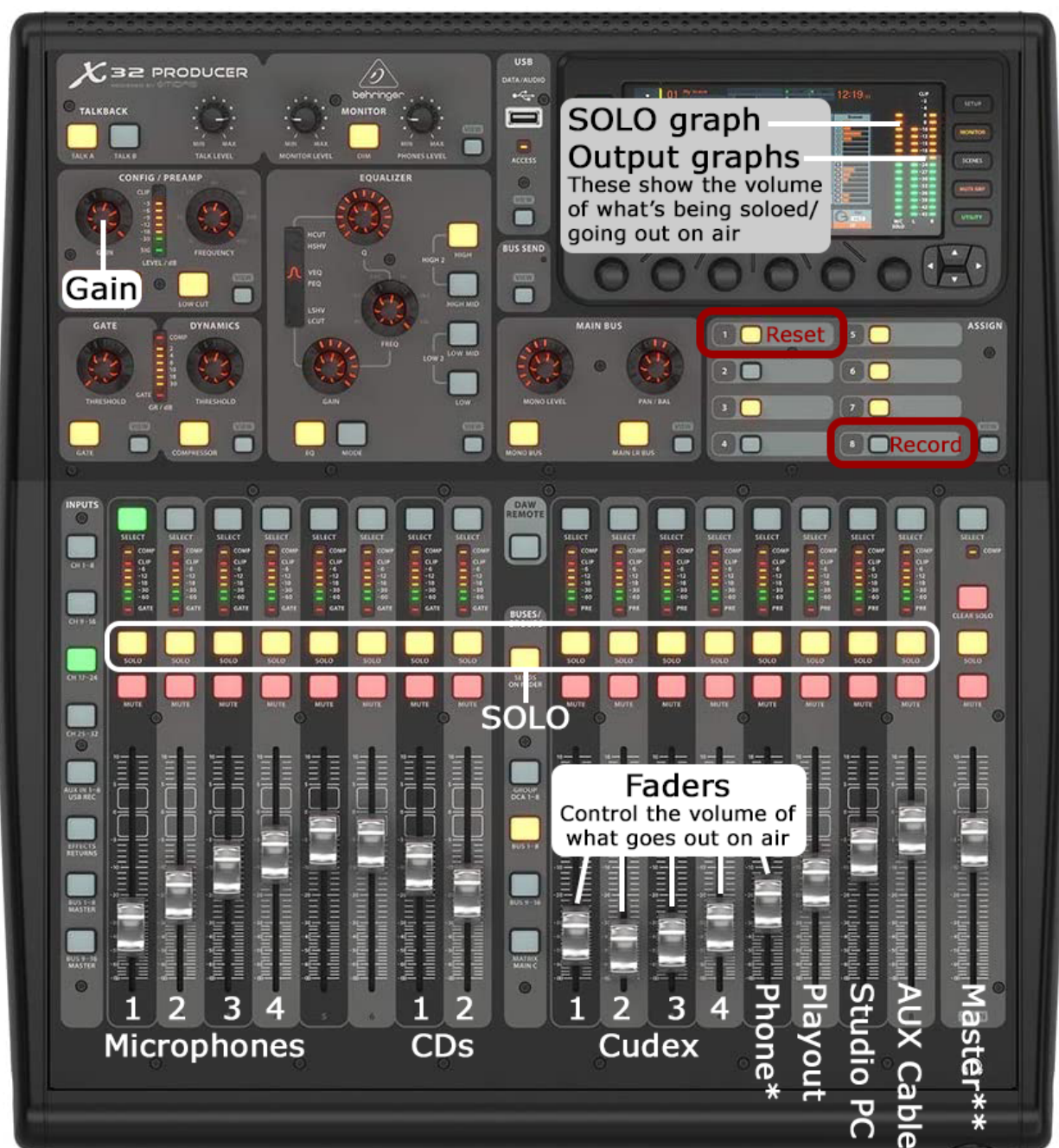
Please bring along:

- 1) This handbook
- 2) A set of headphones (only if you have an existing pair! Over-ear are best, please do not bring wireless headphones)
- 3) Yourself and your enthusiasm

The Cam FM Training Team is really looking forward to meeting you. Turn the page to find out what we'll be looking at together.

# Training Session 1: The Desk

First off, a big welcome to training! In this session, we'll introduce the basics of getting the keys to the studio, and some basic information about the studio and studio etiquette. First off, something really crucial: the desk...



\* calls are taken via Zoiper  
 \*\* make sure this is always at 0

Don't worry about the vast majority of buttons. Although it looks complicated, there are only 4 basic things you need to know how to do.

- 1) We always start off by resetting the desk. This will get rid of gremlins and restore the desk to the basic settings needed to broadcast
- 2) The row of SOLO buttons: these allow you to listen to audio before you play it. We do this to check it is not too quiet or too loud, and contains no expletives
- 3) The GAIN knob: which is used in conjunction with SOLO
- 4) The faders, which act like volume sliders for what is actually broadcasted

# T1: Cuedex

The main focus of the T1 session is Cuedex, our touchscreen system for loading audio. Cuedex works alongside the desk and Broadcast Control (see later) to actually put music, jingles, and other audio on air.



These three controls are hopefully self-explanatory, but note that you must double click a track to 'cue' it before the play button works.



Normally, you will leave this 'cue-next' button highlighted as such - this just means that once a song finishes, it will stay cued.

Press it once and it will have a little pause after it - the next track will be cued automatically once the current one finishes ready for you to press 'play'.

Press again, a small play appears - now the next track will play immediately after.



These three buttons at the bottom of the screen control your ability to select/upload audio, delete it and move it respectively.

You can add content to each of the four channels using the BROWSER. Go through each of the categories and make sure you know the difference between:

- 1) A list
- 2) B list
- 3) C list
- 4) Jingles
- 5) Beds
- 6) Sound Effects
- 7) Show Specific

You should leave T1 understanding how audio gets from the studio to the airwaves, and what roles the desk, Cuedex and Broadcast Control each play. What do you

think would happen if any of these weren't working properly? What effect might that have on what is being broadcast from Cam FM? How would you try and fix a problem affecting the desk, Cuedex or Broadcast Control?



# Training Session 2: Microphones

First off, you'll get a chance to recap from T1 and bring up any questions that were raised in the sit-in.

In T1, we learned how to play songs. But you need more than that to make a good radio show! you need more than that to make a good radio show!

Using microphones is slightly different to playing recorded audio. However, many of the processes are very similar. You still need to use SOLO and use the faders on the desk- just different ones. We'll start off by practicing a simple link.

Presenting radio content and commentating at outside broadcasts is one of the best ways of improving your confidence and proficiency as a public speaker. Remember some basics:

- 1) Be natural, use your own voice, don't try to hide any accent you have
- 2) Speak informally, eg. contract things like "you will" to "you'll"; if you don't say it normally, it won't sound normal when broadcasting
- 3) Speak at a measured pace, not too fast, but not too slow
- 4) Use your voice to pass on emotion: surprise etc.
- 5) Keep links lively, relatable, interesting - links of the form "that was ... this is" with no variety can get really boring; don't make people listen to them!
- 6) By the time you start speaking, have an idea of how you might like your spoken segment to finish - this helps to keep down 'ums' and 'ers' and gives your link a natural structure
- 7) Mention the station name, the contact details and past/upcoming shows to give the station continuity
- 8) Never, ever, ever swear in a radio studio!

Now for something you may find difficult at first, presenting a link over a bed. Here's how you do it:

- 1) While the song is playing, SOLO the bed and the subsequent song, and then prepare them pushing their faders up
- 2) When the first song ends, play the bed on Cuedex
- 3) As the initial part of the bed finishes, bring its fader down to halfway at same time as pushing mic fader up
- 4) Speak
- 5) When you are finished speaking turn the bed fader down
- 6) Press play on your next song on Cuedex
- 7) Finally bring the mic fader down and stop the bed on Cuedex

## T2: Studio Computer and Shows

Computers are an alternative to Cuedex, although you will need to ensure the only sound coming from a device is music (no adverts, pop-ups or autoplay). Make sure you're playing licensed music, and using services which provide streaming and downloading of music.

You can either play from the studio computer or via the aux cable plugged into your own laptop. Some general tips for computer use:

- 1) Ensure none of the songs you are playing are explicit
- 2) Solo the computer/aux like you would a Cuedex channel or a microphone
- 3) Ensure shuffle isn't on when playing a playlist
- 4) Pull down the fader when a song is ending so that if another song plays, it is not heard on the radio
- 5) Always keep track of how long there is left of a song so you are not caught off guard when it ends

The studio computer has some familiar applications to help you present your show. Mozilla Thunderbird allows you to communicate with listeners through the studio email (and online webform), and you can also play content from a web browser (but remember to check it over first!).

Here are some final tips to remember when doing radio so that your show is as good as it can possibly be:

- Always turn up to the studio 15 minutes early so you can acquaint yourself with the studio and have a good handover with the show before (if they're going from the same studio).
- Put some effort into planning your shows: they'll run more smoothly and you'll enjoy them more if you have a carefully considered show plan. You'll quickly gain a natural feel of what sounds good, but always make sure you are prepared! Confidence is key.
- When your hour begins, switch to the studio on Broadcast Control during the Top of the Hour jingle (make sure the studio is on Payout). At the end of your show, remember to switch Broadcast Control back to Payout during the subsequent Top of the Hour jingle - don't run over or under! during the subsequent Top of the Hour jingle - don't run over or under!
- Publicise your show properly: don't just put up a 'listen in now' status on social media, but actively create a presence for your show online. Make sure to utilise Cam FM's social media reach by linking with our own social media. Check out our Publicity Guide on the members area for more information.
- You can email [publicity@camfm.co.uk](mailto:publicity@camfm.co.uk) to help get your show out there

- Don't forget to check with the Committee before having guests into the studio during your show by emailing [committee@camfm.co.uk](mailto:committee@camfm.co.uk) at least 48 hours in advance.
- You should keep [programmecontroller@camfm.co.uk](mailto:programmecontroller@camfm.co.uk) informed of any changes to your show in good time, particularly if you need to miss a show, but also if a problem caused you to start late or finish early, or if you wish to make arrangements for a recording session. Remember that some slots are very popular - please help us share studio time among members fairly!
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That's really it for Training. Make sure you are confident in how to do everything detailed above and ask questions in your remaining S session. From there it's on to the Assessment and broadcasting on live radio!

# Assessment

Don't worry! Take a little preparation time (10 minutes should be ample), and remember the tips from your training sessions, and you will find this an exhilarating experience. Many people find it easiest when they come with a written plan of steps, and bullet points of things they want to say.

The assessment is a role-play where you show us what your show might sound like. You'll need to set up the studio as you would before a show and prepare a segment that goes as follows:

- 1) Opening Link over Bed
- 2) Jingle
- 3) Song from Cuedex
- 4) Link over Bed
- 5) Another song from Cuedex

Things to remember:

- 1) Bring a show plan
- 2) SOLO all audio you use (including your microphone!)
- 3) Mention the station name in the opening link
- 4) Back-announce the first song
- 5) Make your content interesting - if you already have an idea for a show you'd like to present, it's a good opportunity to try out some material
- 6) Mention the contact details correctly during the link over bed
- 7) Try to avoid leaving any gaps between bits of audio
- 8) Always think about your faders: what's 'on' and what's 'off'
- 9) Don't swear!

A tip: there are four bits of recorded audio you need to play and four Cuedex channels, so you can put one in each channel and SOLO them all before you start!

We'll ask some simple questions about simple housekeeping matters that have been discussed during training - such as our guest policy. There are no trick questions, and usually the common sense answer is the right one!

# What next?

After completing your assessment, you will be able to pay the membership fee by logging back into the Members' Area. We ask active members to make an annual contribution towards the running costs of the station because we don't receive direct funding from either university for our activities, and we are permitted to raise only a limited amount by commercial means. If you feel at any time that the pricing is a barrier for you, then please do not hesitate to get in touch with the Head of Sales & Sponsorship at [sales@camfm.co.uk](mailto:sales@camfm.co.uk).

Once you've paid your membership fee, you'll be a Cam FM Member with full entitlement to use our studios according to the Rules & Membership agreement! Membership costs £30 if purchased in Michaelmas Term or Lent Term, and £25 in Easter Term (from 1 April each year).

Creating a radio show is simple:

- 1) Go to <https://members.camfm.co.uk>
- 2) Click on Shows, then Apply for a Show
- 3) For a New Show, fill out all the details (note that only the ARU studio is in use, and Remote shows are made at home)
- 4) Select at least 5 time slots that you would be happy for your show to take place in; if there is one time in particular you want, you can ask for it in the 'Details for the Programme Controller' box

Make sure to join the FB group: '[Cam FM Members!](#)', come to our workshops to further develop your skills and knowledge and of course make sure to come along to our legendary Cam FM Socials.

Congratulations for completing training, and thank you for joining the station - we can't wait to hear you on air!