

Browning Street Studios

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Sarah Gall, Director

Dear Teacher,

Thanks for your interest in teaching at Browning Street Studios. We're delighted that you've considered establishing your teaching practice with us. This letter gives an overview of the process of getting started here at the studios, summarises the relationship between you (as a sole proprietor) and the studios (as reflected in key legal agreements including the Operational Agreement¹, Policies and Procedures Manual and Teacher Code of Conduct) and shares some general tips for promotion, practice, insurance and other matters. Keep it as a reference point during your time with us.

1. Who we are

Browning Street Studios is a diverse music and arts business hub located across two buildings at 11 & 17 Browning Street, South Brisbane. Our specialist spaces are used for music teaching, performances, rehearsals, recording, administration, retail, repairs and event production. Here at Browning Street, we aim to do things a little differently to other music businesses. We are a community enterprise managed by volunteers and we're dedicated to providing spaces for local musicians to build sustainable livelihoods. Our teaching department strives to provide quality music education by working together as a community of professionals.

Our location in the inner-city of Australia's fastest growing metropolis is no accident. Musicians and other creative practitioners are often the first to be pushed out of the inner-city when rents rise, but here at Browning Street Studios we recognise West End's role as a long-time hotbed of creativity, activism and battles for space and see no reason why this should change.

¹ See Attachment A for the full Operational Agreement.

This idea of space – space to grow, space to learn, space to be seen and heard in the world – is central to our own business. We believe that space – affordable and accessible space – is vital to our unique West End economy and helps us, as creative practitioners, to strengthen and grow.

Working as a collective also enables us to access possibilities for cross-fertilisation of ideas, group teaching, workshops and professional development. We encourage, support and challenge each other, learn from each other, and work together within a framework of quality alongside possibility.

Our approach to business is also grounded in an embrace of diversity – diverse ways of seeing the world, diverse ways of learning and teaching, and diverse ways of making a livelihood. So while our core business is music tuition, we also offer a range of specialised music studio, performance and rehearsal spaces for general hire, provide professional development and work experience opportunities for local arts practitioners, and manage a music store for music instrument accessories, sheet music and instrument hire and repairs.

2. How we roll

When you start working from the studios, you enter into an agreement with Browning Street Studios as a sole proprietor in your own right. *This means you need an ABN to do business here.* You can use the office here to prepare your application if you do not already have an ABN.

The *Operational Agreement* is the most important document to have a read through. It outlines your obligations and responsibilities in more detail, and also references other documents (namely the Teacher Code of Conduct). We don't *sub-let* to anyone. Because we work with children, because we're committed to shared goals and overall quality, we need persons operating their businesses from our spaces to be regulated by our policies and procedures. Working from our shared space, you are legally and ethically responsible to all of us in the collective. As we work with children, our business practices are regulated by various Acts of Parliament. Our Policies and Procedures Manual has mapped out your obligations both to your clients and to us (in terms of ensuring we

don't break our lease, void our insurance, or do anything that may harm anyone).

Ultimately, though, it's still your business. This means that you, and only you, are ultimately responsible for lesson preparation and materials, timetabling and invoicing of clients. *You* decide how much you want to work, when you want to work, and who you want to teach. Your Head of Area (i.e. strings, piano, guitar etc) is the person who will be referring enquiries to you, so it's important you touch base with them to let them know a bit more about you and the sort of students you'd like to teach.

The studio also has obligations to you, and these are outlined in detail in the Operational Agreement. Basically, we will provide you with a space suited to your business, with a desk, music stands, chairs and a piano or drumkit if required. Your clients will have access to a professional and clean reception space, drinking water, toilets, tea and coffee-making facilities and car-parking. We will do our best (as a group) to keep the place professional and clean, and without major disruptions or distractions to your day-to-day teaching. You'll notice that becoming part of our collective also means assisting us to meet these obligations, generally by helping out with cleaning and administration.

To summarise: You operate as a sole proprietor from the studio premises, but you are not sub-letting space from us. You are providing services to clients under an *Operational Agreement*. This agreement stipulates the nature of this arrangement. You are responsible for the day-to-day financial and logistical matters of your business, and with communicating as required with the right people in our organisation to ensure access to space, uninterrupted teaching time, ability to carry out administrative duties, etc. You also have commitments to other teachers (both those in your "area" and outside of your "area") as well as to the studios themselves. Ultimately, you have commitments to your clients. We have written Policies and Procedures to help you meet all these commitments.

3. Getting Started

Sometimes it's a bit daunting getting started here at the studios – unlike many other music schools we refer new students to you (rather than telling you when you're working) so you can arrange your own schedule and studio policy. While this gives you a lot of control over your teaching practice, lesson planning and your work/life balance, it also means a bit more work up front. Like all start-up businesses, you may find you

need to put in the extra yards in the beginning and you may not feel like you are reaping the rewards for weeks or even a couple of months. It's a good idea to have both short-term and long-term goals for building your teaching practice.

Our advice is – hang in there, plan well, and ask for help! You're not alone!

We have a group of teachers working here who have been through exactly the same thing, and are at various stages of small business success. The most important thing is to have a long-term view.

If you're still not sure about starting a teaching practice here at Browning Street, have a go answering these questions:

1. Do I see myself teaching music in 12 months? 5 years?
2. What do I want to get from a career in music teaching?
3. What resources do I need to start practising as a teacher? Which ones do I have already, which ones are provided by the studios, and what items might need to be invested in?
4. Do I feel confident to speak to new student enquiries in person or on the telephone? If not, what help do I need?
5. What is my studio policy? (e.g. cancellations, fees, invoices, expectations).
6. What is my promotions plan?
7. How will I plan my first lesson with a new student?

Some people find that they're really not sure about being a music teacher. Our advice is that if you feel uncomfortable at the thought of teaching music in 12 months or even five years, it may not be appropriate to take the long-term view (such as becoming self-employed or taking your home-based business to the next level). You may be better off working for an established music school that pays by the hour and writes the syllabus for you.

Browning Street Studios are here for musicians and music teachers: our motto is quality alongside possibility. We value our location, our resources, and our collective of teachers. We value our local community and our student body. We are excited by the opportunities presented by self-employment and by the idea that musicians can make a viable living practising their craft. But we also understand our business model may not

suit everyone.

If you feel you want to give us a go – there are a few things we'll need from you up front to get the ball rolling. In the next week, please:

- ✓ Give a short bio (one paragraph) as well as your contact details to the office. Also let the office know if you mind your number being given out to potential students;
- ✓ The office will then add your details to the website, the Browning Street brochure, and other online directories. Your info will be included in all press releases about the teaching services at the studios, though you are encouraged to do your own promotions as well;
- ✓ On your first day of teaching you should receive a key to the studios. Please don't lose this key – it remains the property of Browning Street Studios at all time. A \$10 replacement key fee applies in the case of lost keys;
- ✓ In this welcome pack you will also have received a copy of the Browning Street Studios Operational Agreement. Have a read through – this is the agreement you will sign before commencing work at the studios. If you have any questions or concerns, now is the time to ask;
- ✓ Make sure your Blue Card Check for working with children is up to date. It is an offence to work with students under the age of 18 if you do not hold a current Blue Card. As we are a registered workplace that works with children, it's actually an offence to work onsite without going through this process, regardless of whether any of your students are under 18 or not;
- ✓ The Operational Agreement also stipulates that you need your own public liability/professional indemnity insurance. If you don't already have a policy, Aon Insurance provides "Music Teachers" Cover. It's a great policy that, for around \$300/year, insures you not only while working at the studios but while teaching or performing anywhere in the world! Ask the office for a brochure if required;
- ✓ Confirm the dates and times you will be teaching with your Head of Area. This person is Sarah Gall. During orientation we will run you through our booking systems. Any 6-week introductory period starts as of your first lesson date.

So, to summarise:

- Give your contact details and a bio to your head of area;
- Finalise and book your initial teaching times/days/room;
- Confirm the rooms are equipped with everything you need;

- Promote yourself!
- Make sure you have a key and a copy of the Operational Agreement;
- Confirm your official start date with the Studio Director (Sarah Gall), this will affect the date by which you must sign the Operational Agreement with Sarah;
- Supply a copy of your insurance certificate and Blue Card to Kym Brown so it can be filed.

4. Professional memberships:

The Operational Agreement also stipulates that you must be a member of at least one professional organisation before you begin permanently teaching at the studios. We recognise the following organisations (and others by negotiation):

Music Teachers Association of Queensland:	\$125
Australian Music Teacher's Register:	\$120
Australian Society for Music Education:	\$66

If you would like us to consider your qualifications and ongoing professional development *in lieu of* professional membership, please let us know. We generally recognise Masters-level or higher qualifications in pedagogy as a suitable qualification for this waiver, provided you are engaged in some form of ongoing professional development with a body outside of the studios (this could be formal e.g. at another workplace, or informal e.g. a group of like-minded professionals who gather to discuss pedagogical issues on an ongoing basis. Being engaged in teaching in the higher education sector also counts here).

Please note we are serious about an ongoing commitment to professional development. For this reason, each instrumental/vocal teaching area has an allocated "Head of Area" - their responsibility is to facilitate professional development opportunities and regular catch-ups in consultation with all teachers in a particular area. The biggest advantage of working within a collective is being able to tap into collective knowledge and the opportunities this presents for group problem-solving.

3. Rents, fees and invoices:

Browning Street Studios was founded on the principle of helping each other out. We couldn't be here without all our teachers, and none of us could afford the facilities we have on our own. The rental that we charge for the space is not to make a profit, it is to cover costs and to maintain accessible, affordable and professional teaching space for music teachers who want to work from West End. You get access to office space, internet, photocopying, kitchen and a resource library. Studio hire does *not* pay staff wages to be your servant, cleaner, personal assistant etc. We make sure basic admin and cleaning is covered via a staff cleaning roster and volunteer task book – which you'll find out more about at your orientation. Part of coming on board here at the studios is inclusion on our volunteer roster. Without this voluntary commitment, we couldn't manage new student enquiries, keep on top of administration or keep spaces tidy and presentable. Helping out ultimately helps your business.

Our studio spaces cost teachers \$15/hour, capped at \$60/day. Larger workshop and rehearsal spaces are \$120/day. Smaller studios without pianos are available at a cheaper rate if hired exclusively by you – these rates are calculated on a room-by-room basis and are subject to availability. Spaces can start from as little as \$50/week for a full-time room!

These amounts are invoiced by the month. You will receive an invoice from the Accounts Department on the 15th of the month, with a 10-day payment term. Casual teachers in their initial period of teaching are required to write casual hours down in a log, and are invoiced for studio hire in arrears. Once you have signed a set rental agreement you will be invoiced for studio hire in advance. ***We don't charge you for your first teaching week.*** You can also use our studio spaces for individual practice or admin free of charge (subject to availability).

How Viable is this Business Model?

In 2010, we spent some time developing the maths behind a “viability curve” for our teachers. This is so we can identify a “magic number” of hours for viability for our teachers.

Many of you have identified the costs of establishing a business (e.g. insurance,

advertising, memberships, building a library) to be a struggle. We have put together these costs (both fixed and variable) into an equation that maps the “profitability” or “viability” of various hours of work.

The equation has assumed that you are charging : *\$60/hour*

The equation has set rental at: *\$15/hour*

Estimated profit per week	Hours of paid teaching per week
BREAK EVEN POINT	0.5 – 1 hour per week
\$100.00	4 hours per week
\$200.00	7 hours per week
\$500.00	15 hours per week
\$820.00	25 hours per week
\$1,200.00	30 hours per week

You will notice that once a teacher reaches 4 hours teaching/week, the increase in earnings per hour rapidly increases. In our opinion, a teaching practice truly becomes viable at around **4 hours** of work a week.

Here's another way of looking at it:

Hours per week	Equivalent hourly rate (profit)
4 hours	\$25.00
7 hours	\$28.60
15 hours	\$33.33

This hourly rate is after just about every conceivable expense, including insurance, memberships, transport, repairs, studio hire and buying sheet music. It is a conservative estimate, because it does not take into consideration the fact that after about 4 hours per week, *reduced studio rental rates apply*. In fact, once you are working 15 hours per week, it is cheaper to hire a studio full time (and thereby cap your rentals). Taking this view, after you work 15 hours a week at a “profit” rate of about \$30/hour, every extra hour will earn you almost the full \$60/hour. For 25 hours work, this works out to net takings of \$1,100.00.

This was an enlightening process, because we've had a sense for some time that start-up costs severely impact your earnings in the early stages of your business. Luckily, break even point is around one student per week. However, you will need to build up to

at least 4 hours per week of teaching if you want it to feel like anything more than a hobby, and at least 15/hours per week (2-3 days) if you want it to be your main occupation.

We've recently changed our recommended rates:

These are \$66/hour or \$35/half hour. You may give a concession discount or reduced rate for monthly or term accounts at your own discretion. Remember, it's important to communicate at least with the other members of your teaching area to ensure noone is "undercutting" as a form of gaining business. Consistency in pricing is important.

4. "It's my teaching day and I don't have any students"

If you're just getting started we recommend you come to the studios on your teaching day, and treat it like a "job". Use this time to research online, order materials (we have a 30-day account as well as discounts with a number of suppliers), photocopy, or print and distribute flyers or press releases. Even just being around is great advertising – other people will see you and get to meet you. You don't *have* to be here but to get the most from your time, make the most of the space and the resources we offer!

5. Who to talk to

Please look through our latest contact list to determine your "key people":

Teaching-related issues:	<i>Head of Area</i> (e.g. strings, guitar, wind)
Access to space and equipment:	<i>Operations Manager</i>
Accounting and paperwork:	<i>Assistant Director</i>
Legal agreements:	<i>Director</i>
Sheet music and instruments:	<i>Head of Retail</i>

Alright, I think that's all from us. Thanks again for your interest in Browning Street Studios and we hope this is the start of something beautiful!

Sarah Gall

Studio Director / Head of Piano