## AN APPLICANT'S GUIDE TO THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC



ROYAL

COLLEGE

OF MUSIC

London



## WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in studying at the Royal College of Music (RCM). The RCM is ranked the Global No. 1 for Music & Performing Arts and in choosing to study here you will join a friendly community of likeminded musicians, study in our beautiful campus opposite the Royal Albert Hall and be taught by leaders in their fields. We have written this guide to help you through the application process, and to direct you to useful information.



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# EXPLORING UNDERGRADUATE MUSIC

## What is a Conservatoire?

A music conservatoire is a higher education institution that provides specialist training in music performance and composition at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Conservatoire education is designed to develop your artistic ability and potential for a flourishing career in music, the creative industries and beyond.

For other helpful definitions, please see our glossary on page 30.

## WHAT DIFFERENTIATES CONSERVATOIRES FROM UNIVERSITIES?

While both institutions offer degrees in music, a conservatoire is distinct in its focus on performing arts as the sole subjects of study on offer. As a result, conservatoires are usually smaller than universities in terms of student population and consist of a very select, specialist faculty of staff – many of whom are professional musicians. Academic study is key for both institutions, however, a conservatoire is a specialist, practical school that places a stronger emphasis on the vocational aspects of the degree and career opportunities available afterwards.

## THE RCM IS RANKED GLOBAL NO.1 FOR MUSIC AND PERFORMING ARTS

(QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS 2024/2023/2022)

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF STUDYING AT A CONSERVATOIRE?

'Every conservatoire is different. Each conservatoire might offer different artistic disciplines, programmes, curricula, or have different locations, sizes, and teaching staff.' (Conservatoires UK). At the Royal College of Music, you will be taught by dedicated and experienced professors who are leaders in their fields. Many are principal players in major orchestras and ensembles, providing you with extraordinary mentorship, networking and career opportunities.

Students at the RCM also benefit from one-toone tuition, performance classes, workshops, masterclasses, lessons from visiting professors, and various ensemble opportunities.

With advanced digital technologies including video production facilities and an innovative new performance laboratory available to students, you will have the space and support to realise your aspirations as a musician and artist.

Find out more about resources available to RCM students on page 13.



## What is a bmus(hons) degree?

Our BMus(Hons) course is a four-year undergraduate degree designed to give you a high level of performance or composition training, alongside studies relevant to your aspirations as a musician.

### **YEARS 1 - 2**

Your principal study is at the heart of your learning experience, and informs the structure of your programme. You will receive one-to-one lessons throughout the year along with a variety of performance opportunities.

Alongside your principal study, the first two years of the programme have core modules in aural, history, musicianship and professional skills, including health and wellbeing for musicians and career management.

YEAR 1	YEAR 2
<ul> <li>Principal Study Level 4 (40/60*)</li> <li>Second Study (20)</li> <li>Related Study (0)</li> <li>Joint Principal Study Level 4 (30/30)</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Principal Study Level 5 (40/50/60)</li> <li>Second Study (20)</li> <li>Related Study (10)</li> <li>Joint Principal Study Level 5 (30/30)</li> </ul>
Musicianship & Improvisation Level 4, 5 or 6 (20)	Musicianship & Improvisation Level 5 or 6 (10)
• Applied Aural Skills Level 4, 5 or 6 (10)	<ul> <li>Applied Aural Skills Level 5 or 6 (10) or</li> <li>Aural in Professional Contexts Level 6 (10)</li> </ul>
Historical Studies Level 4 (20)	Historical Studies Level 5 (20)
Healthy Musician Level 4 (10)	Professional Musician Level 5 (10)
*Numbers in brackets refer to degree credits.	Music Leadership: Learning     & Participation Level 5 (10)

## **YEARS 3 - 4**

YEAR 3

Years three and four are designed to be flexible so that you can tailor your studies to meet your own interests and aspirations.

Throughout your studies you will develop your skills further in ensemble and solo performance, and develop an understanding of music in different contexts.

The RCM's Bachelor of Music BMus(Hons) qualification is a fully accredited and internationally recognised undergraduate degree.

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Please be aware that the availability of modules may be subject to alteration due to staff changes and regular programme reviews.

## **FIND OUT MORE**

You can find a full list of modules on our website at www.rcm.ac.uk/courses

<ul> <li>Principal Study Level 6 (60/70/80)</li> <li>Second Study (20)</li> <li>Related Study (10)</li> <li>Joint Principal Study Level 6 (40/40)</li> </ul>	<ul><li>Principal Study Level 6G (60/70/80)</li><li>Joint Principal Study Level 6G (40/40)</li></ul>
<ul> <li>Strands of options (10 or 20 credits) at Levels 5 and 6</li> <li>Modules are organised across numerous specialisations e.g.</li> <li>Applied Skills [Musicianship, Aural, Analysis, Alexander Technique, Improvisation]</li> <li>Faculty Based Options [Chamber Music, Interpretation of Song]</li> <li>Music in Context [Historical Studies, Intro to Music Tech, Innovation &amp; Enterprise]</li> <li>Music Leadership &amp; Education [Instrumental and Vocal Teaching, Workshop Leadership]</li> <li>Performance Science [Psychology of Music, Musical Care]</li> <li>Open Project (L6G – 30 credits) [in any of the above areas; Y4 only]</li> </ul>	
The Researching Practitioner Level 6 (10)	
Music Leadership: Teaching Skills     & Techniques Level 5 (10)	

YEAR 4

## What can I do With a BMUS(hons) Qualification?

We are here to support your development as an artist. We will encourage you to reach your full potential, provide inspirational opportunities and prepare you for careers across the music industry and beyond.

## **PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

The RCM is a world-leader in career development for musicians. Our students become confident and versatile communicators, not just in their professional engagements but in everything they do.

RCM students and graduates enjoy success in major competitions around the globe and our graduates go on to work in a wide range of careers with some of the most prestigious ensembles, venues, educational institutions and opera companies in the world.

One of the most common career paths for our graduates is as self-employed musicians, which usually includes performing and teaching on a freelance basis. Graduates also work as orchestral musicians, composers, conductors, music administrators and librarians, to name a few.

### **FURTHER STUDY**

Graduates may decide to progress to further study, with around half deciding to return to the RCM. The most popular courses are Master of Music (MMus), Master of Performance (MPerf) and Master of Composition (MComp).

## **CAREER SUPPORT**

In addition to the career management and professional elements of the course, the RCM's Creative Careers Centre offers bespoke advice and guidance throughout your studies and beyond, for five years after graduating. It offers resources, workshops and presentations by industry specialists, plus a broad range of professional opportunities including performances and teaching work.

**FIND OUT MORE** 

www.rcm.ac.uk/creativecareers



MY PROFESSORS STRUCK THE PERFECT
BALANCE OF MAKING EVERY LESSON INFORMATIVE,
CONSTRUCTIVE AND FUN, AND ALWAYS
ENCOURAGED ME TO EXPRESS MY IDEAS.

SINCE LEAVING RCM, I'VE BEEN LUCKY ENOUGH TO PERFORM AROUND EUROPE, AND IN 2022 I BECAME THE THIRD GUITARIST TO WIN THE ROYAL OVER-SEAS LEAGUE GOLD MEDAL AT WIGMORE HALL

Jack Hancher, RCM graduate



## WHY STUDY AT THE RCM?

## PERFORMANCE AND EVENTS

The RCM aims to give students as much performance experience as possible in renowned venues across London, the UK and further afield. The RCM musicians pictured opposite enjoyed performing as a quartet at Wigmore Hall as part of the RCM's String Showcase. Find out more at www.rcm.ac.uk/performance

## **OUTSTANDING TEACHING**

Our exceptional teaching staff are often joined by visiting professors with expertise from across the music industry. Read about our professors for each faculty at www.rcm.ac.uk/faculties

## **EXCELLENT FACILITIES**

Our main building, the Blomfield Building, is home to numerous performance spaces, classrooms, rehearsal and practice facilities and the RCM Students' Union. Our new Performance Hall has variable acoustics and a retractable stage, while our smaller Performance Studio is ideal for solo and chamber performance.

## ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES

Our composition and production suites feature high-spec workstations for tuition and individual project work with a wide range of professional software such as Pro Tools, Logic, Cubase and extensive orchestral sample libraries.

The RCM's new state-of-the-art Digital Innovation Lab allows students to record, mix, master and broadcast material in the most up-to-date formats. The Lab also boasts Dolby Atmos 7.1.4 technology, a spatial audio format that immerses the listener in a dome of sound. This new development is becoming the commercial standard in the film, TV and gaming industries.

## **CAREER SUPPORT**

The RCM is a world leader in career development for musicians. Our Creative Careers Centre enables our student musicians to discover their professional identity through mentoring schemes and programmes like the side-by-side 'sit-in' schemes in place for orchestral students with several major orchestras.

### **BESPOKE ACCOMMODATION**

The RCM has its own dedicated Hall of Residence, Prince Consort Village, which provides high-quality accommodation for music students, featuring acoustically treated bedrooms and practice spaces. It is located in leafy southwest London and within easy travelling distance of the RCM. For more details on accommodation, visit www.rcm.ac.uk/accommodation

## **INSPIRING LOCATION**

London is a fantastic student city with a host of opportunities to explore. The Royal College of Music sits in the heart of South Kensington on Prince Consort Road, near the Royal Albert Hall, V&A Museum and the Royal College of Art. Students can also enjoy the relaxing expanse of Hyde Park, less than five minutes' walk away. Find out more about our inspiring location at www.rcm.ac.uk/location

## STUDENTS' UNION

The RCM Students' Union is here to help you make the most of your time in London. It offers student socials, health and wellbeing services, student feedback, pastoral care and supports student-led music, as well as hosting a variety of societies and events throughout the year. Find out more at www.rcm.ac.uk/rcmsu

## STUDENT SERVICES

### MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

We encourage all students to prioritise their mental health and wellbeing during their studies. Student Services offers confidential, pastoral support and advice on a range of issues including financial concerns, accommodation, musicians' injuries, personal matters and more, in person and online. We also have a counselling service. For more information visit www.rcm.ac.uk/studentsupport

## **DISABILITIES**

The RCM takes pride in being an inclusive place to study and we support equality and diversity in our community. We have experience in supporting students with a range of disabilities and support requirements. Alongside Student Services support, each student who discloses a disability or support need will be offered a tailored learning agreement. To find out more visit www.rcm.ac.uk/disabilities

### INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The RCM welcomes students from all over the world and is a truly global community of friendly, talented musicians. About half of our students come from outside of the UK which makes us an exciting and diverse hub of music making. Our International team can assist you if you have any questions about applying to the RCM. We also provide support with the visa application process and adapting to life in the UK. For more information visit www.rcm.ac.uk/international





# UNDERSTANDING THE APPLICATION PROCESS

## BEFORE YOU APPLY

## **DOWNLOAD A PROSPECTUS**

The RCM prospectus contains further information on our facilities, performance opportunities, student life, faculties and much more. You can download a prospectus at

www.rcm.ac.uk/prospectus

## **EXPLORE OUR CAMPUS**

Our annual Open Day takes place each spring. It gives prospective students, parents and teachers the chance to explore what the College has to offer. For more information visit www.rcm.ac.uk/openday

You can also watch our campus tour video at www.rcm.ac.uk/watchcampustour



## KNOW YOUR STUDY OPTIONS

If you want to apply to study more than one instrument or specialism, there are a variety of options you can consider:

- If you feel you have a high level of ability in two areas you can apply for joint principal study. You will be auditioned in both specialisms and may be offered a place to study either one or both at equal intensity.
- You can pursue a second study, for which you will audition when you commence your studies in September. Or you can choose to take a related study, subject to approval by Head of Faculty. It is not necessary to indicate an interest in second or related study in your application.

For more information about our different study options see page 8.

## **EXPECTED PERFORMANCE STANDARD**

Successful applicants will usually already have achieved a high standard of performance or composition at the time of audition.



While competition is high and we always have more applicants than places available, we don't use ABRSM or other graded exams as a prerequisite for our BMus(Hons) course.

Successful applicants tend to be at a standard equivalent to distinction at ABRSM grade 8 and those who have developed much further.

You can enjoy performances from our students on our YouTube channel www.youtube.com/RCMLondon



SITTING ON THE ALBERT HALL STEPS AND SIMPLY LOOKING AT THE FACADE OF THE RCM HAS BECOME ONE OF MY FAVOURITE PASTIMES.

IF THE OUTSIDE CAN
MAKE YOU FEEL
EXCITED ABOUT
STUDYING MUSIC,
JUST IMAGINE VVHAT
THE INSIDE IS LIKE

Connor Gingell, Master of Performance

## YOUR APPLICATION

## **UCAS CONSERVATOIRES**

Applications to the RCM are made via UCAS Conservatoires, which usually open to applicants in July every year. The conservatoire recruitment cycle is different to universities, with application deadlines usually occurring earlier in October. Please check www.rcm.ac.uk/apply for specific dates.

Your UCAS Conservatoires application will include your personal information, details of your previous education and a personal statement, which is your opportunity to tell us more about your musical experience and achievements.

You must also provide details of two referees and submit them to UCAS by the deadline: a practical referee who will normally be your current principal study teacher, and an academic referee who should be someone who can comment on your academic ability. Further information on the submission of references is available at: www.ucas.com/conservatoires

### **SCHOLARSHIPS**

Currently more than 45% of full-time students receive some financial support. Scholarships are offered on the merits of your performance at audition or interview, with amounts varying from a contribution towards your tuition fees right up to full fees.

You don't have to apply for a scholarship – any student who auditions or interviews for a place in person or by video is automatically considered.

We recognise that the application process can seem stressful and expensive. To avoid putting yourself under too much pressure we recommend that you research your options carefully and consider only preparing auditions for three or four conservatoires.

The RCM offers audition fee waivers to UK BMus(Hons) applicants from low income households. For more information on eligibility and how to request a fee waiver please visit www.rcm.ac.uk/bmus

IN MY FINAL YEAR AS AN UNDERGRADUATE I MADE
MY SOLO OPERATIC DEBUT AS COMMENDATORE IN
DON GIOVANNI; IT WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT
PERFORMANCE OF MY CAREER SO FAR AND I AM
SO GRATEFUL TO THE RCM FOR GIVING ME THIS
OPPORTUNITY. BEING IN A DRESSING ROOM WITH
ALL MY FRIENDS BEFORE THESE SHOWS GAVE ME
THE SAME FEELING I'D HAVE IN THE FOOTBALL
CHANGING ROOM BEFORE A CUP FINAL

**David Fraser, BMus** 



## YOUR AUDITION



### YOUR AUDITION DATE

All applicants who audition in London will be notified of their audition date and time by the end of October. Auditions usually occur between mid-November and mid-December every year.

In addition to our main auditions in London, we also hold auditions in New York, Hong Kong, Singapore, Bangkok, Tokyo, Seoul, Beijing and Shanghai. You can find out more at www.rcm.ac.uk/auditionlocations

Please do your best to attend the audition date given to you as this is a highly complex schedule organised alongside the other UK conservatoires. We try to avoid clashes. If there are mitigating circumstances, we may be able to be flexible but in most cases we ask that you attend at your assigned time.

If you declare a disability in your application, the RCM will contact you to discuss confidentially whether you need any reasonable adjustments to enable you to audition. If you have any specific needs during the audition and interview process, please let us know. Your enquiries will be dealt with confidentially.

### **PRE-SCREENING**

For our auditions in London, we do not pre-screen applications for the BMus(Hons) course. However, for several of our overseas venues we do pre-screen due to the volume of applications. Check the requirements and deadlines for your preferred venue at www.rcm.ac.uk/auditionlocations

### **AUDITION REQUIREMENTS**

The format of your audition will vary depending on your principal study, with audition requirements set by each faculty. For performers, auditions will include prepared pieces, a short sight-reading exercise and interview. Composers are primarily assessed based on their portfolios, and only those whose portfolios demonstrate the kind of potential we're looking for will be invited to attend an interview, which includes a short aural test.

You can check the full audition requirements for performance and composition at www.rcm.ac.uk/apply/auditions

If auditioning at an overseas venue information can be found at www.rcm.ac.uk/auditionlocations

## **ACCOMPANISTS**

If you are auditioning in London, an accompanist will be provided, although you are welcome to bring your own if you prefer. You do not need to send us your music ahead of time unless you are auditioning for percussion. If you are using an RCM accompanist, make sure you bring a hard copy of music for them. For most other audition venues, you will need to bring your own accompanist.

We aim to provide a friendly, welcoming atmosphere when you come to audition at the RCM, but feeling nervous is normal.

For helpful advice on what to expect and how best to prepare, please visit www.rcm.ac.uk/apply/auditions/whattoexpect

### YOUR AUDITION OUTCOME

All applicants who audition during our November – December auditions will be notified of the result before Christmas. This will be communicated to you via your UCAS Conservatoires Track account along with conditions of your offer, so make sure you check your account regularly.

## CHOOSING YOUR PRINCIPAL STUDY PROFESSOR

Some students will have an idea of who they want to study with by the time they audition. Once you are offered a place on the programme you will have until May to submit up to three choices for your principal study professor. Your Head of Faculty will be happy to advise you about which professors may be a good fit.

### **FURTHER SUPPORT**

If you are offered and accept a place at the RCM, you are welcome to discuss any support needs you may have with the Student Services Manager, for example if you have a disability, are estranged from your family or have caring responsibilities. You are welcome to visit the College to assess whether there are any additional needs to accommodate in advance of your arrival on your course.

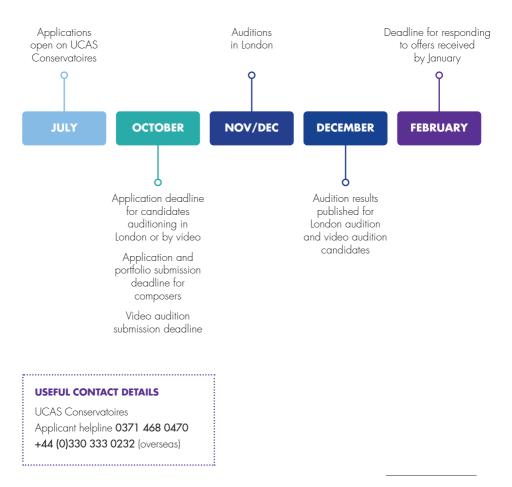
FIND OUT MORE www.rcm.ac.uk/study



## TIMELINE

The deadlines for applying to study at a conservatoire are slightly earlier than those for universities. Below is an outline of important annual dates you should be aware of when applying.

Visit www.rcm.ac.uk/apply for the most up-to-date information.



FIND OUT MORE www.rcm.ac.uk/apply

## **NEXT STEPS**

We hope this guide has provided you with all the information you need to proceed with your application to the Royal College of Music.

Make sure to follow our handy next steps checklist:

01	DOWNLOAD A PROSPECTUS
02	EXPLORE OUR CAMPUS, COURSES AND ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS
03	SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION VIA UCAS CONSERVATOIRES
04	PREPARE AND ATTEND YOUR AUDITION
05	RESPOND TO YOUR OFFER AND CHOOSE YOUR PRINCIPAL STUDY PROFESSOR

## **RCM ADMISSIONS**

If you would like to talk to someone about applying to the Royal College of Music, our audition process or expected standards, feel free to contact our friendly Admissions team who will be happy to advise you.

## **APPLICANTS WITH DISABILITIES**

If you would like to discuss your particular needs in confidence, you are welcome to contact our friendly and supportive Student Services team at studentservices@rcm.ac.uk

## **CONTACT US**

020 7591 4362

admissions@rcm.ac.uk

Further details about applying to the Royal College of Music can be found on our website at www.rcm.ac.uk/study

Good luck and we hope to see you soon!



## APPLICATION GLOSSARY

## **CONDITIONAL OFFER**

If you receive a conditional offer, it means that we are guaranteed to accept you if you meet all of the entry requirements. For example, you will receive a conditional offer if you are waiting for your A Level results.

## **ENTRY REQUIREMENTS**

You must be able to meet the minimum qualifications for your application to be considered by the Royal College of Music. This varies depending on the country you are applying from. For full details visit www.rcm.ac.uk/bmus

## **FACULTIES**

Faculties are the different departments that make up our core teaching and learning at the Royal College of Music. These are: Brass, Composition, Conducting\*, Historical Performance, Keyboard, Percussion, Strings, Vocal & Opera and Woodwind. For more information about our faculties see www.rcm.ac.uk/faculties

## **JOINT PRINCIPAL STUDY**

Students with an equally high level of ability in two areas may undertake joint principal study, in which their two specialisms are taught and assessed with equal weight. Due to the large number of scheduled classes, it is not possible for singers or percussionists to undertake joint principal study.

## **LIVING COSTS**

Your living costs will cover your accommodation, travel, food and lifestyle whilst studying. We cannot say exactly how much money an RCM student needs, but we have broken down the indicative living costs you may need to budget for at www.rcm.ac.uk/livingcosts

### **PRINCIPAL STUDY**

Your principal study is the main specialism that you will pursue during your course, such as violin or composition. Students may want to take up an additional related or second study alongside their principal study, but this is not a requirement.

## **RELATED STUDY**

Related study allows instrumentalists to receive tuition on an instrument closely related to their principal study, such as oboe and cor anglais, or flute and piccolo.

## **SECOND STUDY**

Second study allows students to receive tuition in a second specialism in an area that does not qualify for related study. Second study is taught and assessed at a lower intensity than principal study. Examples include piano with violin, or trumpet with composition.

<sup>\*</sup>Conducting is only available as a principal study specialism at postgraduate level. Second study conducting is available to postgraduates and undergraduates who meet the requirements.

## **SCHOLARSHIPS**

Any student who auditions in person or by video for a place on a performance or composition programme beginning in September annually will automatically be considered for a scholarship or study award. Scholarships are offered on the merits of your performance at audition or interview. Scholarship amounts vary from student to student, from a contribution towards vour tuition fees right up to full fees. For more information please visit www.rcm.ac.uk/ scholarships

## **TUITION FEES**

All students of UK Higher Education institutions are required to make a payment to their institution to cover the cost of their studies. We also provide financial support to many students through an array of awards and scholarships. For up-to-date information on fees and funding see www.rcm.ac.uk/fees

## **UCAS CONSERVATOIRES**

UCAS Conservatoires is the application service for courses at conservatoires in the UK, through which you apply for the RCM's BMus(Hons) course. It is part of UCAS, which is used for most Higher Education applications in the UK. Find out more at www.ucas.com/conservatoires

## UNCONDITIONAL OFFER

An unconditional offer means you are guaranteed a place on the course, as you have already met the entry requirements.

## KEEP IN TOUCH

To find out more about life at the RCM, our students, alumni and events, follow us on social media.

- f royalcollegeofmusic
- @RCMLondon
- @RCMLondon
- @RCMLondon



ROYAL

COLLEGE

OF MUSIC

London

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**MUSIC & PERFORMING ARTS** 

QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS 2024/2023/2022



Paper | Supporting responsible forestry

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