



Royal Conservatoire
of Scotland

Advanced Artist Diploma

Programme Handbook

September 2026



Programme of study

Introduction

The purpose of the Advanced Artist Diploma is to enable singers and instrumentalists to make a significant and original contribution to their chosen artistic sphere, demonstrating outstanding public performance skills commensurate with those of a professional artist.

There are two strands to the programme. Instrumentalists and concert singers follow the performance route: an opera strand available to students who wish to pursue that specialism. Both strands offer the opportunity to present two significant public performances. In the case of the opera strand, one of these performances will take place in the context of a placement with a professional company.

The performance strand affords students the time and space to develop their artistry through a largely autonomous programme of study, supported by supervision in the principal study. In recognition of the wide range of skills required, the opera strand additionally offers vocal coaching and group work on acting, physical movement and languages.

Structure

The AdvArtDip is a one-year 180 credit award at SCQF level 12. The degree is awarded by the University of St Andrews, in collaboration with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

There are three components to the degree. Each component is credit rated in order to give a sense of the relative proportion of student effort that is anticipated in each:

- Preparatory project – 60 credits
- Final project – 90 credits
- Commentary – 30 credits

All credits must be passed in order to successfully complete the degree. The student's work is ultimately assessed holistically by the external examiners.

This handbook is divided into three sections:

- This section outlines the three main elements of the programme of study: the preparatory project, final project, and commentary.
- The [Learning environment](#) section offers information on learning, teaching and support services available at the respective institutions
- The [Policies and guidance](#) section comprises the formal policies that underpin the programme, that are in turn based on the relevant doctoral policies of the University of St Andrews.

Overview

Supervision

You will normally be supervised by a team of either two or three people:

- The Head of Department, acting as principal supervisor and instrumental/vocal specialist
- An academic tutor, acting as secondary supervisor

Or, where additional specialist subject expertise is necessary:

- The Head of Department, acting as principal supervisor
- An instrumental/vocal specialist, acting as secondary supervisor
- An academic tutor, acting as secondary supervisor

The team are jointly responsible for supervising your work towards the three elements of the programme: the preparatory project, final project, and commentary.

Further details may be found in the [Supervision policy](#).

Research skills

You are required to successfully complete the online Training in Good Academic Practice (TGAP) that is housed in the St Andrews Moodle virtual learning environment.

You will also take part in a series of seminars that will explore practice-based research methodologies in the performing arts.

Further details may be found in the [Research skills policy](#)

Progress review

You will have a formal review of your progress on the programme early in term 2 following the completion of the preparatory project. In the case of opera students this will comprise the performance of a role at the RCS in January: instrumentalists will typically give a recital during the 'mid session' period in early February.

The review will comprise an interview with a panel of two RCS members of staff who are not members of your supervisory team, normally one specialist from the relevant discipline and one generalist academic.

The supporting materials for the interview will comprise:

- reports from each of the supervisors
- the grade and feedback from the preparatory project
- a student self-assessment report and research plan, which you will need to complete and submit in advance

Further details may be found in the [Progress review policy](#) and [Progress review guidance](#)

Assessment

Preparatory project

Your preparatory project will be assessed by two internal assessors from the Conservatoire, neither of whom will be one of your supervisors. The assessors will follow the established Conservatoire practice of independent grading ('blind marking') leading to a single jointly agreed feedback report and a pass/fail grade.

Final project

Your final artistic project will typically take the form of a live performance, which you must also document and submit as a recording.

Submission

There are two different 'submissions':

Submission for examination

After the performance of the final project, you will create and submit a portfolio for examination that comprises the recording of the final project plus your written commentary.

Submission of final copies for graduation

Following a successful outcome of the examination – possibly after corrections – you will re-submit the final portfolio to the St Andrews library, which then allows you to proceed to graduation.

Examination

Examining committee

A committee of three examiners will be appointed:

- an external examiner
- an internal examiner

- convenor, who will also act as an internal examiner

The examining committee will make a holistic judgement of the work, including the evidence of the preparatory project, the final project, and the written commentary.

Viva

Your final assessment for the degree will be an oral examination (viva voce) conducted by the examining committee. You will have the opportunity to discuss your final performance and commentary with the examiners, and explain how the work has enhanced your artistic practice and made a significant and original contribution your chosen artistic sphere.

Outcome

The examining committee will recommend one of a number of outcomes. Summarised briefly, these are:

- approve submission and award degree
- approve submission subject to typographical corrections
- approve submission subject to minor corrections, to be completed within three months
- do not approve submission in its present form: revise and resubmit within six months
- reject submission, no award of degree

Further details may be found in the [Assessment policy](#) and the [Postgraduate Senate Regulations](#).

Graduation

Assuming the examining committee approve the submission you graduate at St Andrews in November, followed by the option to attend a further graduation at the Conservatoire in July of the following year.

Preparatory project

The preparatory project represents the first assessed component of the AdvArtDip.

The University regulations for the degree state that your work must ‘**demonstrate outstanding public performance skills commensurate with those of a professional artist**’ and be capable of making ‘**a significant and original contribution**’ to your chosen artistic sphere.

For students on the instrumental strand, the nature and scope of the work will be discussed and agreed with your principal supervisor. As well as the performance itself, you may choose to include additional assessed elements, such as: arranging; composition; improvisation; editorship; collaboration; academic writing or presentation; musical leadership; or any other appropriate contribution to your specialism.

The project will be supported by up to 9 hours of supervision by an expert in your principal discipline.

The performance will normally take place at the Conservatoire during the mid-session examination diet in February, but may also take place at an external venue.

Assessment

The performance together with any additional elements will be assessed by two internal assessors from the Conservatoire, neither of whom will be one of your supervisors. The assessors will follow the established Conservatoire practice of independent grading (‘blind marking’) leading to a single jointly agreed feedback report and a pass/fail grade.

The preparatory project component carries 60 credits that will be noted on your Student Outcomes page following progress review in February and confirmed by the Research Degrees Committee in April. Credit is awarded for the successful completion of a

substantial artistic project that demonstrates outstanding performance skills.

Assessment criteria

Assessors will look for:

A substantial artistic project (examples)

- a public recital, solo, collaborative or ensemble, 45-60 minutes, presenting significant challenges in performance
- public performance of a significant role in a staged opera
- a novel performance project, individually created/curated by the student, commensurate in scope and challenge to 60 credits at level 12

Outstanding performance skills

- A technically accomplished performance displaying imaginative and sophisticated musical ideas and an original and personal voice.

Preparatory project – opera

The preparatory project represents the first assessed component of the AdvArtDip.

The University regulations for the degree state that your work must ‘**demonstrate outstanding public performance skills commensurate with those of a professional artist**’ and be capable of making ‘**a significant and original contribution**’ to your chosen artistic sphere.

For students on the opera strand, the preparatory project will in almost all cases comprise a performance as part of an opera production at the Conservatoire early in term 2, as discussed and agreed with your principal supervisor.

The project will be supported by up to 13 hours of supervision by an expert in your principal discipline.

In addition to individual supervision, students on the opera strand will have receive vocal coaching and group work on acting, physical movement and languages as appropriate to the production in question.

Assessment

The performance will be assessed by two internal assessors from the Conservatoire, neither of whom will be one of your supervisors. The assessors will follow the established Conservatoire practice of independent grading (‘blind marking’) leading to a single jointly agreed feedback report and a pass/fail grade.

The preparatory project component carries 60 credits that will be noted on your Student Outcomes page following progress review in February and confirmed by the Research Degrees Committee in April. Credit is awarded for the succesful completion of a substantial artistic project that demonstrates outstanding performance skills.

Assessment criteria

Assessors will look for:

A substantial artistic project (examples)

- a public recital, solo, collaborative or ensemble, 45-60 minutes, presenting significant challenges in performance
- public performance of a significant role in a staged opera
- a novel performance project, individually created/curated by the student, commensurate in scope and challenge to 60 credits at level 12

Outstanding performance skills

- A technically accomplished performance displaying imaginative and sophisticated musical ideas and an original and personal voice.

Final project

The final project component is the culmination of the AdvArtDip. It forms the centrepiece of the final submission assessed by the examining committee, alongside the written commentary.

The University regulations for the degree state that your work must 'demonstrate outstanding public performance skills commensurate with those of a professional artist' and be capable of making 'a significant and original contribution' to your chosen artistic sphere.

As with the preparatory project, the nature and scope of the work will be discussed and agreed with your principal supervisor. You may choose to include additional assessed elements beyond the performance itself, such as: arranging; composition; improvisation; editorship; collaboration; academic writing or presentation; musical leadership; or any other appropriate contribution to your specialism.

The project will be supported by up to 13 hours of supervision by an expert in your principal discipline.

The performance may take place at the Conservatoire during the final examination diet in May/June. However, you are also encouraged to seek a public performance opportunity further of the Conservatoire. Advice will be given in seeking external venues and opportunities, and you will have the opportunity to pitch for financial support from the PGT Music Project Fund.

Assessment

The performance will be recorded and submitted as part of your final portfolio. The examining committee will make a holistic judgement of the work, alongside the

evidence of the preparatory project and the written commentary.

The assessment criteria are as [stated in the University regulations](#).

Final project – opera

The final project component is the culmination of the AdvArtDip. It forms the centrepiece of the final submission assessed by the examining committee, alongside the written commentary.

The University regulations for the degree state that your work must 'demonstrate outstanding public performance skills commensurate with those of a professional artist' and be capable of making 'a significant and original contribution' to your chosen artistic sphere.

For students on the opera strand, the final project will in almost all cases comprise a performance in production staged by Scottish Opera. The collaboration will embed vocal coaching and group work on acting, physical movement and languages as appropriate.

The project will be supported by up to 20 hours of supervision by an expert in your principal discipline.

Assessment

The performance will be recorded and submitted as part of your final portfolio. The examining committee will make a holistic judgement of the work, alongside the evidence of the preparatory project and the written commentary.

The assessment criteria are as stated in the University regulations.

Commentary

This component of the programme will require you to write a 5000-7000 word critical evaluation of your contribution to the specialism, encompassing your research methodologies, artistic practice, and professional development. It gives you the opportunity to articulate the artistic intentions that underpin your work and thus lay the groundwork for the oral examination.

The University regulations for the degree state that your work must ‘[demonstrate outstanding public performance skills commensurate with those of a professional artist](#)’ and be capable of making ‘[a significant and original contribution](#)’ to your chosen artistic sphere.

As well as being guided in the preparation of your commentary by your supervisory team, you will take part in a series of seminars that will address such areas as: the philosophy and methodology of practice-based research; critical reflection; research ethics; and scholarly approaches to documentation.

Assessment

The commentary is submitted as part of your final portfolio, and assessed holistically alongside the evidence of the preparatory project and final project.

The assessment criteria are as [stated in the University regulations](#).

Summary details

NOTE

The information below is a technical summary of the programme for the purposes of the Registry at the Conservatoire, incorporating the specification of the degree per the Postgraduate Research Senate Regulations of the University of St Andrews.

University regulations (excerpt)

Requirements

A preparatory performance (60 credits) and a final performance (90 credits) and written work (30 credits – 5000-7000 words).

Required standard

A body of work judged by the examiners to represent outstanding public performance skills commensurate with those of a professional artist, consistent with what may be reasonably expected of a diligent student after one year of full-time study. The candidate will be able to articulate how the work has enhanced their own artistic practice and made a significant and original contribution to their chosen artistic sphere.

Annex 8: Advanced Artist Diploma (Art Dip. (Adv.))

For students pursuing the Art Dip. (Adv.), the following will apply in addition to the regulations for the degree of PhD.

1. The Art Dip. (Adv.), is offered in collaboration with the Royal Conservatoire of

Scotland.

2. All students and supervisors are required to comply with the requirements of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland's Policy for Supervisors and Students in the Advanced Artist Diploma Programme.
3. The work of all students will be reviewed periodically and the results reported to the Research Degrees Committee at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Methods of presentation

4. Candidates for the degree will be examined on the basis of a programme of study comprising (A) a preparatory artistic project, (B) a final artistic project, and (C) written work.
5. The programme of study will take the form of:
 - a. A substantial preparatory artistic project that demonstrates outstanding performance skills; and
 - b. A significant and substantial artistic project in a public and professional or proto-professional context that demonstrates outstanding performance skills commensurate with those of a professional artist; and
 - c. A written self-reflective evaluation of the contribution to the specialism, which articulates the student's artistic practice and professional development. 5,000-7,000 words.
6. The three elements are credit weighted. Successful candidates will gain 60 credits for the preparatory artistic project, 90 credits for the final artistic project, and 30 credits for written work. Credit for the preparatory project will be awarded at progress review, but credits for the final project and the written work will only be awarded following a successful viva voce examination. All credits must be obtained for the degree to be awarded.

Examination

7. The examination of the portfolio shall follow the same rules and procedures as laid down in the Regulations for PhD except that the Research Degrees Committee of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland will appoint two internal examiners, one of whom will convene, and an external examiner. The internal examiners will assess the preparatory artistic project (A); the final artistic project (B) and written component (C) will be assessed by the internal examiners and the external examiner. The convenor will be a member of RCS staff identified as having Significant Responsibility for Research.

Summary details (Conservatoire)

Programme title

Advanced Artist Diploma

Duration and modes of study

One year (four terms) full-time. Part-time study is not available.

Credit framework and award

The Advanced Artist Diploma carries 180 credits at SCQF level 12.

The award is not classified.

No exit award is available to students who do not complete the full programme.

Period of validity

- **Validation** tbc June 2025
- **Start date** tbc September 2026 (nb programme will not run in 25-26)

- **Next review** tbc 2030

Academic entry requirements

Candidates are normally expected to hold an existing Masters degree or its overseas equivalent in a subject area relevant to the demands of the programme.

Language of study

The language of study is English. Applicants whose first language is not English will be required to provide evidence of proficiency in English. We accept the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Level 6.0 (with a minimum score of 5.5 in each component) is required of applicants to the School of Music.

Target numbers

- Performance strand: 1-10 students per cohort
- Opera strand: 1-6 students per cohort

Components

The programme comprises three components, the preparatory project, final project and commentary, that carry notional volumes of credit. These are *not* modules: however, for the purposes of managing the programme through Student Outcomes, they may be summarised as below.

Title	Preparatory Project
Module Coordinator	Head of Programme

Credit Rating	60 SCQF (30 ECTS)
Status	Core
Learning modes	Indicative hours
Supervision	9-13
Directed study	18-30
Independent study	573-557
Total notional student effort	600

Title	Final Project
Module Coordinator	Head of Programme
Credit Rating	90 SCQF (45 ECTS)
Status	Core
Learning modes	Indicative hours
Supervision	13-20
Directed study	26-50
Independent study	861-830

Total notional student effort	900
--------------------------------------	-----

Title	Commentary
Module Coordinator	Head of Programme
Credit Rating	30 SCQF (15 ECTS)
Status	Core
Learning modes	Indicative hours
Scheduled study	8
Directed study	16
Independent study	276
Total notional student effort	300

Learning environment

The Advanced Artist Diploma offered by the Conservatoire leads to an award of the University of St Andrews, and as a doctoral level student you will matriculate at both the Conservatoire and the University. This section of the handbook outlines the facilities available to you at the respective institutions.

Programmes of study will be undertaken at, and administered by, the Conservatoire.

All fees will be payable to the Conservatoire.

- [Conservatoire learning environment](#)
- [St Andrews learning environment](#)
- [Advanced Artist Diploma Committee](#)

Conservatoire

Curriculum principles

The postgraduate curriculum:

1. Is co-created by educators, students and professionals who are shaping the future of artforms, artistry and arts education, recognising RCS, its audiences and collaborators as a community with a shared purpose;
2. Supports rigorous development of craft and creative artistry and the capacity to renew and adapt skills throughout a productive professional life;
3. Ensures relevant professional experience that protects the space to reflect on, experiment with, and evaluate personal milestones of success and learning;
4. Is designed and delivered with a commitment to continuous enhancement of inclusive practices, research and theory, ensuring that design nurtures authentic voices and experiences in the arts;
5. Will critically test assumptions, current discourses and self-appraisals in order to innovate practice.

Graduate attributes

The Conservatoire's Graduate Attributes are aligned to the values of the RCS community. These are:

- Compassion
- Creative courage
- Curiosity
- Craft, rigour and talent
- Community

- Constructive challenge

Graduates of the postgraduate programmes will:

1. Work with care for themselves and others
2. Seek constructive challenge, be prepared to change approach, rework ideas and advocate for their own perspective(s) in diverse contexts
3. Create impact and engagement within and beyond their discipline in a variety of settings
4. Test, re-evaluate and exceed their own expectations through bold creative decision-making and risk taking
5. Own a nuanced aesthetic and emotional intelligence, integrity and ethical practice with an ability to think analytically and critically
6. Draw on theories, research, practice and collaborative opportunities with confidence and resourcefulness
7. Communicate with creativity, compassion and a deep appreciation of how their discipline connects with the world
8. Acquire, adapt, and apply new skills with a commitment to lifelong learning throughout their career, anticipating and responding to major developments in technologies, industry standards and complex global issues

Student support

The Conservatoire provides a wide range of both academic and pastoral support services for students, all of which can be accessed via the RCS Intranet:

- <https://royalconservatoire.sharepoint.com/>

Here are some of the services available:

- [Academic Administration and Support \(AAS\)](#) – advice on areas including attendance,

modules, money, timetables, accommodation, disability and counselling support

- [Accommodation](#)
- [Audiovisual Support](#) – the AV Store will lend out things like recorders, mics and cameras, as well as musical instruments
- [CEDO](#) – the Creative Enterprise Development Office offers advice, guidance, funding opportunities and development programmes to students and graduates
- [Counselling](#)
- [Copyright](#)
- [Digital Development](#)
- [Disability Support](#)
- [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#)
- [Ethics Committee](#)
- [Funding and Finance](#)
- [Health and Safety](#)
- [Health Services – International and Student Experience Team](#)
- [International Students](#)
- [IT – Information Technology](#): Email, Eduroam wifi, Microsoft Teams, OneDrive for Business, Office365
- [Library](#) – also, here's a direct link to the [library catalog](#) and also to [Oxford Music Online](#)
- [Student Exchange – Outbound](#)
- [Student Union](#)
- [Space Planning](#) – information about rooming, risk assessments, using asimut
- [Strings](#) the String Department
- [UniDesk](#) – self-service help portal for information technology questions and problems, network and library technical issues, estates and more (also available at www.rcs.ac.uk/help/)

Improving the programme

One student representative is elected to the [AdvArtDip Committee](#) that manages the programme.

Feedback on the programme can be made via the online [Postgraduate Music Student Suggestion Box](#).



Beyond the programme, all of the Departments within the School of Music have their own feedback mechanisms, and there are also Conservatoire-wide mechanisms such as the Student Experience Project led by the Student Union.

Internationalisation

As musicians we are fortunate to inhabit a discipline that has the potential to transcend linguistic and cultural barriers while at the same time representing our various identities at the deepest level. The postgraduate programmes in the School of Music attract a diverse population of international students from many different countries across the world: in a typical year, roughly one third of the total cohort may be from outside the UK. The programme also offers a range of opportunities for students to take part in international exchange programmes.

As an institution, the Conservatoire is strongly committed to maintaining an international outlook. More information can be found on the intranet sites noted below, or you can contact international@rcs.ac.uk.

- [International and Student Experience Team](#)

- International Students

Work-based learning

Students on the opera strand will normally undertake a 10 week placement at Scottish Opera, starting at the end of term 2 through to week 8 of term 3. The placement constitutes 20% of the programme and is assessed as part of the final project.

In accordance with the Conservatoire Quality Assurance Handbook Chapter 11 'Placement Learning' (QAH11), opera students will be overseen by a Placement Supervisor at Scottish Opera, working in conjunction with a Placement Co-ordinator from the Conservatoire.

Exceptionally, instrumentalists and concert singers on the programme may have the opportunity to undertake a work-based placement on a similar basis to the above.

Health and safety, safe space

The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland is fully committed to creating an environment where all staff and students treat each other fairly and with mutual respect, and to providing an environment where all students and staff are free from discrimination and intimidation.

The following **Safe Space Statement** applies to all activity happening within the Conservatoire:



SAFE SPACE STATEMENT

Everyone working and learning together in this room is entitled to do so in a safe space: a space free of bullying and harassment of any kind. We will honour our

differences and collaborate in the true spirit of ensemble, promoting creative challenge whilst retaining the utmost respect for each other. We will treat one another with courtesy and respect at all times, and if we are subjected to or witness bullying or harassment we will speak out knowing that our voices will be heard and we will be taken seriously. We will actively promote a positive, optimistic and mutually supportive approach to work and study. Together we can create a Safe Space.

The policies and procedures governing the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and students are comprehensive and thorough:

- [Health and Safety](#)

Within the School of Music we take particular care over the risks to hearing. All students are given free personal protection equipment in the form of high-quality earplugs suitable for musical use, as well as specific teaching and learning in this area as part of the programme of study.

Equality and diversity

We welcome a diverse population of staff and students. Further, we are committed to promoting equality in all of our activities and we aim to provide a performing, learning, teaching, working and research environment free from unlawful discrimination against applicants, staff and students on the grounds of gender (actual or perceived), sexual orientation, disability, race, colour, nationality, national or ethnic origin, marital status, age and actual or perceived religious or similar belief.

The Conservatoire fosters a learning, teaching, research and working culture which not only supports diversity, inclusion and equity but indeed requires those principles. We are thoroughly committed to the promotion of equal opportunities across all of our functions and practices including those of learning and teaching, employment,

representation, decision making, and procurement and partnerships.

The Conservatoire is committed to ensuring that those from all backgrounds feel able to apply to study with us. Applicants who have been looked after at home, in residential care, foster care or kinship care can access support via the International and Student Experience team at welfare@rcs.ac.uk. Provisions are also made for Estranged Students and Student Carers.



TIP

More information about the work of the School and the Conservatoire in these areas may be found on both the main RCS website and the RCS Intranet:

- <https://www.rcs.ac.uk/about/policy/#dignity-equality-policy>
- [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#)

Learning resources

The School of Music has access to a large number of purpose-built practice rooms and other rehearsal spaces that are available to students on the programme. You will have a personal quota of practice time that you can book through the Asimut timetable: larger rehearsal rooms may be booked through your Department.

There are three recording studios: studio A is staffed by a professional recording engineer, while studios B and C may be booked for student use following a short induction.

The Whitaker Library offers a comprehensive collection of material in support of the studying musician, including books, scores and audio and video recordings. The School of Music is supported by a dedicated music librarian, who will be able to assist with scores and parts for a wide range of works in the standard repertoire. A very large

number of online study resources are also available through the library catalogue.

The AV store has a wide range of equipment available for students to borrow, including audio and video cameras, sound reinforcement equipment, and similar items.

Each of the instrumental Departments within the School of Music also maintains a stock of instruments of professional quality that may be borrowed and used by students.

Digital technology is not something that is bolted on to learning and teaching, but rather a part of the contemporary landscape that we all inhabit. During the first weeks of the programme you will be introduced to a number of online tools that are in daily use at the Conservatoire for communication, collaboration, and the sharing of information. These include:

- your conservatoire email
- the password self-service facility
- OneDrive for Business
- the Asimut timetabling system
- moodle
- the Student Outcomes
- the Portal
- eduroam wifi
- your ePortfolio
- the library catalogue

 TIP

Of particular interest to music students are the state-of-the-art camera systems that have been installed in the Stevenson Hall and Ledger Recital room. These can be used by students after a short period of training that can be organised on request.

Staff

Departmental

Your Head of Department will normally act as your principal supervisor, and will have the primary responsibility for guiding you through the programme. They will also be at hand to offer support on any difficulties that may arise during the course of your studies, either directly, by offering information and advice themselves, or by referring you on to one of the support mechanisms offered by the Conservatoire as a whole.

You will typically have the opportunity to work with instrumental/vocal specialists pertinent to your particular discipline, one of whom may be appointed to act as a secondary supervisor.

The departmental Programme Support Administrator (PSA) will manage your Asimut timetable and act as a point of contact for practical arrangements within the department.

Programme

The Head of Programme has overall responsibility for academic leadership across the MMus/MA, AdvPGDip and AdvArtDip programmes, working in liaison with the Heads of Department. You are encouraged to speak to the Head of Programme at any time, particularly if there is a matter that cannot be dealt with by your department.

For some students, the Head of Programme will act as a secondary supervisor with particular responsibility for the academic elements of the programme. For other students this role may be taken by other senior members of programme staff.

Heads of Department and the Head of Programme report to the Director of the School

of Music, who will take up any issues that cannot be resolved by the Department or the Programme.

More information on the roles of the principal and secondary supervisor can be found in the [supervision policy](#).

Copyright

The Regulations, Codes of Procedure and General Rules state:

It is the responsibility of all staff and students of the Conservatoire to ensure that they comply with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 ('the Act'). Breach of copyright regulations is a criminal offence and may expose both the individual and the Conservatoire to prosecution.

In simple terms, copyright in a literary, dramatic, musical or artistic work exists during the author's lifetime and for a period of 70 years from the end of the calendar year in which the author dies. During this period, a work may not be copied without the permission of the rights or licence holder. Publishers, editors, artists, photographers and arrangers also have rights over a work.

Practical guidance for students may be found at - [Copyright](#)

Insurance

It is your responsibility to ensure that your musical instrument/s are fully insured against loss or damage whilst on the RCS premises. The Conservatoire is unable to recommend a particular insurance provider. Check first whether your instrument/s are insured through a family home contents insurance policy, and compare premiums from multiple providers before arranging a new policy.

Student outcomes

Student Outcomes is a mechanism that allows you to plan your personal, educational and professional development. It is a dynamic tool to help you navigate through the programme and record the choices agreed with your Head of Department and other members of the programme team.

In specific terms Student Outcomes will:

- Detail programme of study choices within the programme
- Detail, where appropriate, assessment modes, placements, and work based learning
- Detail performance opportunities and other commitments that may be undertaken as part of the programme

Student Outcomes will encourage you to:

- Review, plan and take responsibility for your own learning
- Articulate your personal goals and evaluate progress towards their achievement
- Articulate personal choice and context
- Gain a holistic overview of your learning and its relationship to extra-curricular pursuits and career development
- Improve study and career management skills

You can access Student Outcomes at <https://matric.rcs.ac.uk/> – you should familiarise yourself with this tool at the start of your programme, and make regular reference to it throughout the period of your studies.

Transitions

'Transitions' is a term used to represent two phases of your studies: firstly, when you move into your studies, also known as 'induction'; secondly, when you leave the programme and move into either further study or the wider world.

In the induction phase you will meet your supervisors and Head of Programme, and begin to negotiate your individual programme of study.

As you approach the end of the programme, you will have the opportunity to meet with your principal supervisor to discuss your future plans, either for moving into the profession or further study.

Communication

After face-to-face communication, the most widely used mode of communication is email, which is used for all official correspondence. While in other spheres you may be used to communicating via chat platforms, direct messaging, or social media, it is important that you recognise that, during your studies on the programme, electronic communication with your supervisors and other staff will come via your Conservatoire email address. Neither staff nor students should use their private email address for matters relating to Conservatoire business.

As well as your Conservatoire email, you will also have an email/IT account with the University of St Andrews.

There are a number of useful email addresses that you might wish to be aware of:

- aas@rcs.ac.uk – Academic and Administrative Support
- academicappeal@rcs.ac.uk – Overseen by the Deputy Registrar (Student

Experience) and the Assistant Registrar (Secretariat)

- artisticplanning@rcs.ac.uk
- AVSupport@rcs.ac.uk – AudioVisual Support (to borrow instruments, cameras etc)
- c.client1@rcs.ac.uk – Client Services
- complaint@rcs.ac.uk – overseen by the Deputy Registrar (Student Experience) and the Student Community Conduct Officer
- counselling@rcs.ac.uk
- covidsafe@rcs.ac.uk – anonymous email to report covid related concerns
- els@rcs.ac.uk – Effective Language Services, help with written assignments and English
- disabilityservice@rcs.ac.uk
- domesticservices@rcs.ac.uk
- ethics@rcs.ac.uk
- graduation@rcs.ac.uk
- healthandsafetydepartment@rcs.ac.uk
- international@rcs.ac.uk
- ithelpdesk@rcs.ac.uk
- venuesmain@rcs.ac.uk – raises a help ticket with the Venues department.
- library@rcs.ac.uk
- maintenance@rcs.ac.uk
- pianotuner@rcs.ac.uk
- printerquestions@rcs.ac.uk
- psa@rcs.ac.uk – generic email that goes to all of the Programme Support Administrators
- spaceplanning@rcs.ac.uk
- studentabsences@rcs.ac.uk
- studentfinance@rcs.ac.uk – enquiries about fees
- studentpractice@rcs.ac.uk

- susupport@rcs.ac.uk – Student Union
- welfare@rcs.ac.uk – help with financial issues

Calendar

The School of Music calendar can be viewed in a browser:

[School of Music Calendar – web view](#)

You can also subscribe to this calendar in another application such as your Microsoft 365 calendar, Apple calendar or Google calendar:

[School of Music Calendar – subscription link](#)

(There is a limitation, in that only the next 12 months are displayed: this limit is imposed by Microsoft and there is currently no workaround.)

A printable two-page .pdf version of the calendar is available here:

[Shape_of_the_Year_26-27_SoM.pdf](#)

Attendance

You are expected to attend all classes and rehearsals. Poor attendance and/or poor timekeeping will have a detrimental impact on your learning and the learning of other students. It can also lead to disciplinary action in line with the Conservatoire's Rules and Regulations.

As well as the Conservatoire processes noted below, you must adhere the relevant policies listed on the [Handbook, Policies and Guidance](#) section of the Research and Engagement intranet pages, including those pertaining to Location of Studies, Leave of

Absence, Discounted Time, Parental Leave, and Length of Study.

Illness

Unforeseen absence due to illness should be logged on Asimut no later than 9:30am.

You must not declare illness unless you are actually ill.

If you are involved in a large ensemble activity that day then you should:

- declare illness on Asimut and
- contact Artistic Planning by email (artisticplanning@rcs.ac.uk) or telephone (0141 270 8240) and
- inform your Head of Department

If you are absent from classes due to illness for five consecutive weekdays then on your return you must submit a medical certificate to the AAS Office.

Absence requests

Pre-arranged absence for attending external activities, for instance a scheduled medical appointment or external concert engagement, should be requested at least seven days in advance using the absence request form on your Student Outcomes. You must use this system to request absence: it is not sufficient to speak informally to a member of staff about the request.

We strongly advise that you apply for authorised absence for all term-time external engagements, even if you have no Conservatoire activities listed in your Asimut timetable at the time of checking. If your absence request has been approved, then we will not schedule any activities or assessments during that time.

It is your responsibility to list all affected activities on the absence request form. Once the request is reviewed, your Head of Programme and Head of Department will make a

decision on the outcome (approved, conditionally approved or rejected), which is then posted on your Student Outcomes. Not all requests will be approved, especially if performances or assessments would be affected by the absence. For this reason, you should not make any travel plans until you have received written notification that your request has been approved.

Unauthorised absence

Continued unauthorised absence, including unexplained illness, will have a detrimental impact on your learning and may result in investigation and disciplinary action.

In line with the Conservatoire's Rules and Regulations, students who fail to meet attendance requirements and who fail to respond positively to written warnings on the matter may lose the right to present for examination. In this case you will not be permitted to submit work or attend the examination and the outcome will be recorded as a fail.

Timetabling of music ensembles

Many of the ensemble activities within the School of Music are too complex to be captured in detail using Asimut. These are instead timetabled by the Music Ensembles Manager, including:

- Symphony Orchestra
- Chamber Orchestra
- Wind Orchestra
- Opera Orchestra
- MusicLab
- Contemporary Ensembles involved in the Plug Festival
- Jazz Orchestra
- Ballet Orchestra
- Musical Theatre Pit Orchestras and Pit Bands

- Conductors Ensemble
- Repertoire Orchestra

Asimut should only be used as a guide with regards to these rehearsals. The main point of reference is the Orchestra and Ensembles folder on One Drive. The link to this will be sent to you via email and you can save this to your favourites to reference daily. If you are involved in any activity, you should carefully take down all rehearsal and performance details in your diary. It is compulsory that you attend all rehearsals. If you do not come to a rehearsal because it isn't on Asimut, but is on One Drive, that will not be accepted as an authorised absence.

Conservatoire graduation

There is no fee to attend the Conservatoire graduation ceremony. However, there is a fee to hire a gown which is compulsory. A fee of approximately £50 is payable to an external gown supplier and you will be advised of how to do this as part of the graduation registration process.

St Andrews

Matriculation

As an Advanced Artist Diploma student, you will matriculate at both the Conservatoire and the University. The latter process begins when you receive a new entrant email from the University of St Andrews registry. This email will provide you with a St Andrews username and initial password. You will be asked to go to the following link:

<https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/it-forms/open-student-account/> where a computer account and University email can be created.

The Conservatoire will arrange for students to receive a University of St Andrews matriculation card. This will allow students access into the physical library and provide a form of identification when on site.

Facilities

As a matriculated student of the University of St Andrews, the following services can be accessed:

Careers Service

The [Careers Service](#) provides a wide range of services including one to one appointments with an advisor, details of advertised vacancies, networking opportunities and an application and CV checking service.

International Education and Lifelong Learning Institute

IELLI, the [International Education and Lifelong Learning Institute](#) offers postgraduate

degrees and training in education, multidisciplinary pathway courses for international students, as well as innovative academic courses and support activities for all learners.

University library

When you have your log in details (username and password as provided in the new entrant email), library services can be accessed remotely. You need to be logged into your St Andrews email when accessing the online library resources.

Advice on how to access library resources remotely is available here: <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/library/>

For all enquiries relating to accessing IT facilities and resources, email itservicedesk@st-andrews.ac.uk

Committee

The programme is managed by the Advanced Artist Diploma Committee, which in turn reports to the Research Degrees Committee.

Remit

- To maintain oversight of the delivery, planning and monitoring of the programme
- To contribute to the development of relevant policies
- To undertake relevant aspects of quality assurance and enhancement including:
 - student recruitment and selection
 - the appointment and the effectiveness of supervisors
 - programme development
 - monitoring, enhancement and review
 - student progress, including formal progress review
 - the appointment of examiners and associated assessment processes
- To report to the Research Degrees Committee in accordance with the agreed format.

Frequency of meetings: four per annum

Membership

- Head of Advanced Artist Diploma Programme (Convenor)
- Doctoral Degrees Coordinator
- A member of staff from the School of Music with significant responsibility for research

- One current supervisor (performance strand)
- One current supervisor (opera strand)
- One student representative elected by cohort (unreserved business only)

A conflict of interest may arise where the Convenor is also a member of the student's supervisory team. Under these circumstances the Convenor will withdraw from the discussion, with the meeting chaired at that point by the Doctoral Degrees Coordinator. The same process will be followed in cases where chair's action is required.

Student members do not participate in discussions concerned with individual student progress.

Committee schedule for academic session 2026/27

- November 2026 – reports to January RDC
- February 2027 – reports to April RDC
- May 2027 – reports to June RDC
- August 2027 – reports to October RDC

Policies and guidance

The policy and guidance documents in this section are based on those of the University, in particular the [Postgraduate Senate Regulations](#), amended only where necessary to take account of Conservatoire personnel, structures and the practice-based nature of the Advanced Artist Diploma programme.

While they do not have the force of regulation and should be read in conjunction with the [Postgraduate Senate Regulations](#), they do embody both Conservatoire and University policy on good supervisory practice and have been accepted by the Academic Board of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and the Senate of the University.

In any case where there is a discrepancy between the policies and guidance listed in this section and the [Postgraduate Senate Regulations](#), the latter should be taken as definitive.

AdvArtDip policies and guidance

The following policy and guidance documents are specific to the AdvArtDip:

- [Admissions policy](#)
- [Supervision policy](#)
- [Research skills policy](#)
- [Progress review and termination of studies – policy](#)
- [Progress review – guidance](#)
- [Assessment policy](#)

Policies and guidance for all doctoral students

As well as the policies and guidance linked to above, the AdvArtDip also adheres to a number of policy and guidance documents that are generic to all doctoral programmes delivered by the Conservatoire, including the PhD, MPhil and DPerf.

These are available on the [Handbook, Policies and Guidance](#) section of the Research and Engagement intranet pages.

Appendices

Conservatoire

- [Referencing and bibliography](#)

Printable version

A printable .pdf version of this handbook is also available:

[advartdip2627-handbook.pdf](#)