



Royal Conservatoire
of Scotland

Advanced Postgraduate Diploma in Music

Programme Handbook

Welcome

Context

The Advanced Postgraduate Diploma in Music (AdvPGDip) is designed to allow students with an existing Masters qualification to progress further within their discipline. You will have the opportunity to extend and deepen your skills, knowledge and understanding in-and-through performance within a rich conservatoire environment.

Your responsibilities as a student

The AdvPGDip is built on the assumption that you the student are largely responsible for the design and shape of your learning. Why have you chosen further study at Masters level? Which areas of your practice do you wish to expand and deepen this year: what repertoires, genres, techniques? What sources of information can you draw on to support your practice? What professional pathways and opportunities do you intend to explore? How can you document and reflect upon your progress through the year?

We also expect you to contribute actively and generously to the ecology of the Conservatoire: to both support and be supported by your peers. Your responsibility radiates out from your own individual practice to your colleagues within your department, school, the institution as a whole, and the wider world. As a postgraduate student, you will be challenged to preserve and consolidate your autonomy alongside collaborative relationships with multiple networks:

- The intra-disciplinary: engagement with others working in the same discipline
- The inter-disciplinary: engagement with others working in other disciplines
- The historical: interrogation of past theories and practices which inform current work
- The transactional: engagement with a wider population which acts as spectator, learner, co-participant or constructive challenger
- The professional: engagement with professional partners and environments, including the capacity to be agents of change
- The cultural: engagement with diverse communities of practice

- The ecological: engagement with the environment, and others in it
- The digital: engagement with the technological, and virtual, environments

Further information on your responsibilities as a student may be found in the Conservatoire's Regulations, Codes of Procedure and General Rules, which should be read in conjunction with this Handbook.

Programme specification

Summary details

Programme title

Advanced Postgraduate Diploma in Music

Duration and modes of study

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

Awards by level

The Advanced Postgraduate Diploma is at SCQF Level 11.

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

Credit framework

AdvPGDip – 120 credits with a minimum of 100 at level 11

Date of revalidation

June 2025

Start date

September 2025

Next review date

2030

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

Programme aims

The Advanced Postgraduate Diploma in Music is designed to:

- Enable the deepening of an established musical practice at the forefront of the discipline
- Provide opportunities to present solo and/or collaborative performances within a proto-professional musical environment
- Foster the ability to develop as a performer by integrating new skills and perspectives

- Stimulate a critical and reflective musicianship that will prepare the student for the challenges of the profession

Programme learning outcomes

On completion of the AdvPGDip you are expected to be able to:

- **PLO1** Demonstrate comprehensive technical and expressive mastery of your discipline
- **PLO2** Project a secure and distinctive musical personality
- **PLO3** Demonstrate professional attitudes and the ability to engage effectively and creatively with professionals and peers
- **PLO4** Critically evaluate current ideas, debates and issues within your chosen field

Admission criteria

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

Minimum cohort	Maximum cohort
0	16

Programme structure

Module	Level	Credits	Credits	Credits
Advanced Principal Study	11	80	80	80
Advanced Graduate Studies	11	30	20	10
Professional Development	11	10	10	10
Options	7-11	0	10	20
Total		120	120	120

Learning outcomes by module

Module	PLO1	PLO2	PLO3	PLO4
Advanced Principal Study	•	•		

Module	PLO1	PLO2	PLO3	PLO4
Advanced Graduate Studies	•	•	•	
Professional Development			•	•
Options			•	

Benchmarks

The learning outcomes of your programme are aligned with a number of local, national and international standards. The *UK Quality Code for Higher Education* (UKQCHQ, QAA 2024) lays out a series of 'sector-agreed principles', among them that 'the academic standards of awards are consistent with the relevant Qualifications Framework'. In Scotland, these comprise the *Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework* (SCQF 2019) and *The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland* (FQHEIS, QAA 2024).

The programme and module learning outcomes have been benchmarked against the *SCQF Level Descriptors* (SCQF 2019), while the programme as a whole meets the requirements of the *Descriptor for a higher education qualification at Level 7 on the FHEQ and SCQF Level 11 on the FQHEIS* (QAA 2024).

In addition to these standards, the programme aims and learning outcomes also take account of:

- the relevant sections of the Conservatoire's Postgraduate Academic Framework, that are themselves based upon FQHEIS
- The Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area (EHAA 2018)

- the Polifonia/Dublin Descriptors for second cycle awards in higher music education (AEC 2007)
- the AEC Learning Outcomes (AEC 2017)
- The Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research (AEC 2020)

Learning and teaching

Areas of study

The AdvPGDip is available to performers in the following disciplines:

- All string, woodwind and brass instruments, solo, chamber or orchestral
- Guitar and harp
- Timpani and percussion, including marimba
- Piano solo and ensemble, harpsichord, organ, accordion
- Vocal performance
- Traditional performance
- Jazz performance

It is not available for Conducting, Composition, Piano for Dance, and Repetiteurship.

Advanced Principal Study

This core module offers regular individualised tuition in your discipline, which may be split between a number of tutors as appropriate, and offers a range of assessment options including public performances, recordings, practice research, and individual or collaborative negotiated projects. Your learning in this module will be informed by the choices you articulate within the Professional Development module, which will help you identify the areas of your practice you wish to expand and deepen: the repertoires, genres, techniques that you wish to pursue to further your individual artistic aims.

The choice of principal study teacher is made by negotiation with your Head of Department, who will seek to match your individual needs with the expertise of particular teachers. A student may if necessary be re-assigned to an alternative teacher:

it may also be appropriate for your principal study to be shared between a number of teachers.

Advanced Graduate Studies

In this module, you will have the opportunity to take part in a range of negotiated activities in support both of your individual discipline and your development as an emerging professional. This may include: performance classes; seminars, workshops and masterclasses; attendance at concerts; rehearsals; performances, solo or group, where not assessed as part of the principal study; additional study of a related instrument or instruments; and taught classes specific to the discipline/department.

What all of these learning opportunities have in common is that they look beyond your individual development as a musician. This module will give you the opportunity to work collaboratively in a widening circle of peers, potentially encompassing your colleagues within your own discipline, other musicians within the School of Music, fellow students from the Undergraduate and Research cohorts, staff and students from other Schools within the Conservatoire, and professionals from a range of disciplines both close to and far from the discipline of music.

Professional Development

The Professional Development module invites you to articulate a critical and reflective position on your continuing studies in relation to your transition into the profession:

- Why have you chosen further study at Masters level?
- Which areas of your practice do you wish to expand and deepen this year: what repertoires, genres, techniques?
- What sources of information can you draw on to support your practice?
- What professional pathways and opportunities do you intend to explore?

- How can you document and reflect upon your progress through the year?

The module is supported by individual tutorials with your Head of Department, together with a series of seminars bringing together all students on the Advanced Postgraduate Diploma. This module is specifically designed to equip students with the skills for a sustainable career in music, focusing on developing a portfolio career, entrepreneurial skills and the adaptability needed to navigate the evolving professional landscape, including awareness of environmental considerations within the arts industry.

Options

Options give space within the curriculum for you to engage in studies which enhance professional versatility, by pursuing areas of interest either close to or far away from your core discipline. The choice includes modules drawn from the undergraduate programmes in the School of Music as well as Interdisciplinary and Extended Practice (IXP) modules that are collaborative with the School of Stage and Screen and School of Dance.

Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning, forming part of the cycle of performance, evaluation, and reflection that underpins your artistic development. It is also the mechanism which allows for a judgement as to whether you have completed the requirements of the programme, and, in the case of modules which carry a grade, to what standard. Assessment involves gathering, measuring and judging information about your progress.

Each module in the programme states learning outcomes, describing the knowledge, skills and understanding that must be demonstrated in order to pass the module.

The assessment criteria for each module indicate the factors which examiners will look for in order to determine whether the learning outcomes have been met. Depending on the specific context and type of assessment, assessors use their professional judgement to determine which of the assessment criteria are relevant and applicable.

The module descriptor states the assessment modes that will be used and, in the case of a graded module, their weighting.

The quality of the work is judged against an assessment **rubric**, which, in conjunction with the professional judgement of the assessor, is used to determine whether the work is a pass or a fail and, in the case of assessments that carry a grade, to calibrate the level of the achievement according to the common assessment scale.

All learning outcomes must be met in order to pass a module, and all summative assessments must be passed in order to pass a module.

Generative AI

The Conservatoire has produced guidance on the use of generative AI, which can be

found on the intranet:

Generative AI in Education

The AI Assessment Scale is used as a framework for assessments:

AI Assessment Scale (AIAS)

With the Advanced Postgraduate Diploma programme, all assessments – with one exception noted below – must conform to level 3 on the AI Assessment Scale:

3. AI COLLABORATION

AI may be used to help complete the task, including idea generation, drafting, feedback, and refinement. Students should critically evaluate and modify the AI suggested outputs, demonstrating their understanding.

You may use AI to assist with specific tasks such as drafting text, refining and evaluating your work. You must critically evaluate and modify any AI-generated content you use.

In the case of compositions and other original works, it may be permissible to use AI as part of the creative process:

5. AI EXPLORATION

AI is used creatively to enhance problem-solving, generate novel insights, or develop innovative solutions to solve problems. Students and educators co-design assessments to explore unique AI applications within the field of study.

You should use AI creatively to solve the task, potentially co-designing new approaches with your instructor.

Any work submitted that employs this level of AI should be negotiated in advance, and the approach taken clearly outlined and justified in an accompanying contextual statement.

Assessment modes

Module	Mode of Assessment	Outcome
Advanced Principal Study	Negotiated (eg Performance, Portfolio, Dissertation)	Graded
Advanced Graduate Studies	Observation of Working Practice	Pass/Fail
Professional Development	Portfolio	Pass/Fail
Options	Variable	Variable

Submissions of written work through moodle are marked anonymously: however, there is nothing to prevent you from putting your name on the work should you wish.

Feedback on assessment

Feedback is central to learning: its nature and purpose is related to the two main types of assessment, formative and summative:

- **Formative** assessment is concerned with your development during the course of learning: it *informs* you about your progress. In the MMus/MA, particular emphasis is

placed on written formative assessment within the Supporting Studies module.

- **Summative** assessment usually takes place at the end of a programme of work and, in the MMus/MA, often takes the form of a performance, portfolio, or other culmination of learning. It *sums up* your achievement, providing a clear statement of success or failure in meeting the learning outcomes of the module.

Feedback is inherent to both types of assessment. It may take many forms:

- **Verbal**, on an instantaneous basis, such as the formative feedback you receive every week in the Principal Study lesson or in a tutorial with your Head of Department.
- **Written**, as a comment on a performance, portfolio submission, or other summative outcome: you can expect detailed written feedback on all major summative assessments.
- **Mutually Constructed**, where feedback is written collaboratively by you and the tutor: this is used in many departments as an element of Supporting Studies.
- **Grades** are also a form of feedback, including the formative process grades given for Supporting Studies and the summative grades offered in the Principal Study.

For practical reasons, summative written feedback on assessments may be returned to students either through Student Outcomes, through moodle or by email. Final ratified grades do not appear on Student Outcomes until after the relevant exam board.

Assessment scale

Assessment is recorded using the Conservatoire's Common Assessment Scale. The outcome of a module may either be noted as Pass/Fail, or graded alphanumerically:

Common Assessment Scale	Descriptor
A1	Excellent

Common Assessment Scale	Descriptor
A2	Excellent
A3	Excellent
A4	Excellent
A5	Excellent
B1	Very Good
B2	Very Good
B3	Very Good
C1	Good
C2	Good
C3	Good
D1	Satisfactory
D2	Satisfactory
D3	Adequate
PASS	
FAIL	

Common Assessment Scale	Descriptor
E1	Inadequate/Fail
E2	Inadequate/Fail
F	Serious fail
NS	Non-submission/Non-appearance

Assessment regulations

Please read this section in conjunction with the Conservatoire Regulations, Codes of Procedures and General Rules.

You are required to attend all lessons, classes, rehearsals and performances as specified in this handbook or negotiated and recorded on your Student Outcomes. Unauthorised absence is not permitted.

Normally you may progress on the programme of study provided that:

- You have attended classes in accordance with the requirements of programme regulations and have completed all of the work of the programme of study;
- You have met the appropriate assessment requirements to the satisfaction of the appropriate Progress Committee or Board of Examiners.

To obtain a pass in a module you must normally complete all prescribed assessments to the satisfaction of the Board of Examiners. Where a module has a final assessment, you shall be permitted to take that assessment only if there is evidence that you have attended classes in accordance with the requirements of the module and have

completed the work of the module.

If you disagree with the outcome of an assessment, you should in the first instance discuss this with the Head of Programme. If you are still not satisfied then you should follow the Code of Procedure for Appeals that can be found in the Regulations, Codes of Procedures and General Rules.

Repetition of repertoire

Repertoire cannot normally be repeated across assessments unless there is a clear rationale negotiated and agreed with the Head of Department.

Plagiarism and academic misconduct

Academic misconduct includes cheating, collusion, and plagiarism. Essentially, all work submitted for assessment should be yours except in cases where group work is a specific requirement of an assignment.

Plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct are serious disciplinary matters that will incur a £125 financial penalty. Further strictures may include:

- having to resit an assessment
- having to resit the module
- having to retake a year of study
- having to leave the Conservatoire

Further information, including the mechanism for appeal, may be found in the Conservatoire's *Regulations, Codes of Procedure and General Rules*.

Non-submission

Resits due to non-submission or non-attendance will be subject to a fee of £125 per

component per resit within a module. Resits due to cheating or plagiarism shall also be subject to a fee of £125 per component per resit within a module.

Penalties for over- and under-running recitals

In order to ensure that recital schedules run to time, and in fairness to all concerned, grading penalties are applied for recitals which over- or under-run their allotted time:

- Recitals that over-run by 10% will lose 1 increment on the Common Assessment Scale and be stopped in order to try and keep to the published schedule
- Recitals that under-run by 10-19% will lose 1 increment to a minimum of D3
- Recitals that under-run by 20% or more will fail with a grade of F.

The assessment specifications give length of the complete recital, including, where appropriate, entrances and exits, spoken introductions, and resetting of the stage between pieces.

Recital conventions – programme notes and announcements

It is usual practice in many music recitals to provide printed programme notes for the audience. Such practices differ between musical forms and communities – in jazz, for instance, formal programme notes are rare. Where programme notes are indeed expected, these should at a minimum give the name of all the performers, the composers, and full and accurate titles for all the works. You may also wish to include brief contextual notes on each piece. In Traditional Music recitals, such contextual notes are expected.

For vocal classical recitals, it is usual to provide the text of all of the works to be sung, with accompanying English translations where needed. However this is not usual practice for Scots or Scottish Gaelic Song recitals.

In all recitals it is also good practice to plan to address the audience briefly at some point. In Jazz and Traditional Music, always plan to introduce your music and accompanists at some point during the recital. It is not enough to state the title, composer, and musicians' names alone; practice stagecraft and carefully consider how to engage your personality with the audience.

If you are not sure about how to present yourself during an assessed performance, you should seek guidance from your Department.

Graduation costs

There is no fee to graduate and attend the 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.

Learning environment

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](#)
- [Programme Committees](#) – including the PG Music Programme Committee, which meets three times a year
- [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

We value your opinions, and have put in place a number of systems that allow us to both gather feedback and ensure that it is acted on appropriately.

Each year at least two student representatives are elected as members of the Postgraduate Music Programmes Committee, which is responsible for monitoring, evaluation and reviewing how the Programme is being delivered. The Committee meets three times a year, with the third meeting being an Open Forum to which all students on the programme are invited.

- [Programme Committees](#)

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

**TIP**

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

The programme has practice at its core and is delivered in a proto-professional environment. In a very real sense, therefore, all learning will be predicated upon (near) professional experience. Nevertheless, and in that context, external placements may also provide a valuable learning experience.

Placements connected with your core discipline will typically be available on a competitive basis through audition. Such placements may on occasion offer opportunities for assessment.

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, from early years classes to our Masters programmes.



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>

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

Heads of Department

The principal responsibility for creating an individual learning journey through the programme rests with you the student, working closely with your Head of Department. They will negotiate with you your one-to-one tuition, your choice of assessments, and the range of activities to be undertaken.

As well as taking a close interest in your musical and professional development, your Head of Department will be at hand to offer support on any difficulties that may arise

during the course of the programme, 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. In some large Departments there is an Associate Head and/or a Coordinator, who will also work to support you through the programme. You will also be in regular contact with your department's Programme Support Administrator who will, among other duties, manage your Asimut timetable.

Principal Study Tutors

Your individual lessons with your Principal Study tutor are of course at the heart of your programme. Your Head of Department will discuss and agree with you the best person for you to study with: in some cases, this may involve dividing your time between a number of tutors.

Head of Programme

The Head of Programme has overall responsibility for academic leadership across the MMus/MA, AdvPGDip and AdvArtDip programmes. They work in liaison with the Heads of Department to negotiate the structure and content of your programme and offer general support and advice on your progress through the programme. 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 Head of Department. The Heads of Department and 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.

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 on the intranet 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

The [Student Outcomes](#) tab of your online student record 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 module and option 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 an 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.

Negotiation

This programme handbook and module descriptors make reference to matters which are 'negotiated' or 'discussed and agreed'. In the context of this programme, these phrases have important implications. One of the underlying principles of the programme – and one of the defining characteristics of 'mastersness' – is that you should take responsibility for your own learning: the starting point for decisions around such matters as assessment strands and options is a consideration of your individual needs as a student.

This does not mean, of course, that you have a completely free choice as to how to structure your programme. Both students and teachers are constrained on the one hand by both the need on the one to meet the learning outcomes of the programme, and the practicalities of delivery on the other.

In practice, the choices available to you will be made on the basis of an open and two-way discussion between you and your Head of Department.

INFO

If you are unhappy with the outcome of a discussion of your options with your Head of Department or other member of staff, then you should discuss the matter with the Head of Programme. If you are still not satisfied, you can approach the Director of Music. In all cases, whatever has been negotiated should be recorded on Student Outcomes. It is the responsibility of the both the student and relevant members of staff to make sure that this is kept up to date.

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 Head of Department and Head of Programme, and begin to negotiate your individual programme of study through Student Outcomes.

As you approach the end of the programme, you will have the opportunity to meet with your Head of Department 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 tutors will come via your Conservatoire email address. Neither staff nor students should use their private email address for matters relating to Conservatoire business.

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](#)

Priority zones

For the effective management of the complexities of the timetable the School of Music operates a zoning policy whereby specific activities are prioritised:

[SoM_Priority_Zones.pdf](#)

Notable weeks

Welcome and transitions week (w/b Mon 21 Sep 2026)

During this week new students will be involved in induction activities, with normal teaching beginning in week 2. Returning students start back this week.

Undergraduate reading Week (w/b Mon 02 Nov 2026)

For undergraduate students only, this is a week in which no classes or rehearsals are timetabled: it is also used as an auditions week by the School of Music. For this reason, some classes and many option modules will not run during this week. You should check your Asimut calendar for that week on to confirm your schedule. If you are still not sure, please check with your Head of Department, Head of Programme, or, in the case of an option module, the Module Coordinator.

Performance week (w/b Mon 30 Nov 2026)

Priority given to performances; some classes and option modules may not run. You should check your Asimut calendar for that week to confirm your schedule. If you are still not sure, please check with your Head of Department, Head of Programme, or, in the case of an option module, the Module Coordinator.

IXP Winter School (w/b Mon 07 Dec 2026)

Interdisciplinary and Extended Practice (IXP) modules run during this week: regular

undergraduate teaching and performance ceases.

Mid-Session performance assessments (w/b Mon 1 Feb and w/b Mon 8 Feb 2027)

All undergraduate mid-session assessments take place during these two weeks, as will most masters level assessments that are in the nature of recitals.

Many regular classes will not run during this week: please check your schedule.

IXP Spring School (w/b Mon 22 Mar 2027)

Interdisciplinary and Extended Practice (IXP) modules run during this week: regular undergraduate teaching and performance ceases.

Final performance assessments (w/b Mon 24 May - w/b Mon 7 Jun 2027)

The majority of final recitals for both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes will take place during these weeks. This is a busy time of year: some assessments may also be scheduled in the previous and following weeks, and over weekends. In certain cases, postgraduate students may take these examinations at another point in the year.

Bridge week (w/b Mon 14 Jun 2027)

In this final week of term 3 there is unlikely to be teaching or performance activity: some assessments may still be taking place, however. During this week, all students have the opportunity to pitch for self-directed collaborative projects, with successful pitches being resourced by the Conservatoire.

August performance assessments (w/b Mon 16 Aug 2027)

Postponed first-sit assessments, resit assessments, and resubmissions of failed modules typically take place during this week.

Independent learning, autonomy and resilience

The Advanced Postgraduate Diploma programme is built on the assumption that you the student are largely responsible for the design and shape of your learning. Why have you chosen further study at masters level? Which areas of your practice do you wish to expand and deepen this year: what repertoires, genres, techniques? What sources of information can you draw on to support your practice? What professional pathways and opportunities to you intend to explore? How can you document and reflect upon your progress through the year?

This individual focus is counterbalanced by the musician's engagement with an art form which is by its nature highly collaborative. With the possible exception of the concert pianist or solo guitarist, very few musicians build an entire career playing on their own: most are entirely dependent on collaboration with other musicians to pursue their art. At one end of the spectrum, even such a simple matter as a pianist performing with a violinist constitutes an interdisciplinary collaboration: at the other extreme, curious and creative musicians may find themselves drawn to collaborating across the full spectrum of the performing arts and beyond.

We have purposely designed the Advanced Postgraduate Diploma to be flexible, giving you a great deal of autonomy in the design and shape of your studies. With this flexibility comes challenge: we will expect you to take a great deal of responsibility for self-organisation, for setting your own goals and finding the means to achieve them. Our hope is that as well as enabling you to work towards artistic mastery in your chosen field, that you will also develop the resilience to deal with challenges as they arise, both during the course of the programme and after you graduate.

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.

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.

If you are absent from an assessment or unable to submit coursework on time due to illness then you should email the relevant Programme or Departmental PSA. In addition, to avoid a penalty you should submit a PMC (Personal Mitigating Circumstances) form with a medical certificate. The PMC form can be found on the landing page when you sign in to your Student Outcomes.

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. Classes and rehearsals may change, and practical assessments may not be confirmed until three weeks before the exam. 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 classes, activities and assessments 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 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.

Extension Requests

It is expected that you will manage your time to ensure that all assessment deadlines are met. Work submitted late will not be accepted, resulting in the assessment being failed due to non-submission. You will also incur the associated financial penalty of £125 per assessment.

The following are examples of circumstances which the Conservatoire would expect you to manage:

- minor illness or ailment (unless they resulted in you being unable to perform);
- personal/domestic events that could have been planned for;
- choices in personal life (eg attending weddings, holidays etc);
- transport or travel problems (unless caused by a recorded local/national crisis or a natural disaster);
- failure or theft of your computer or other equipment being used to produce the work to be assessed, including work not being backed-up;
- programme demands or misunderstanding of deadlines/dates (including failure of others to submit group assignments).

If you know in advance that you will be unable to meet the submission deadline through good cause, you may apply for an extension to the deadline, using an Extension Request Form. Extensions should normally be requested a minimum of 48 hours in advance of the deadline. Extensions are usually only granted for 1 or 2 working days, exceptionally for a maximum of 7 calendar days.

Personal Mitigating Circumstances

Where a significant and unexpected circumstance beyond your control has affected your studies and temporarily prevents you from undertaking an assessment or significantly

impairs your performance in an assessment, you may submit a Personal Mitigating Circumstances Form. The following are examples of circumstances that would be considered as mitigating circumstances:

- serious or incapacitating injury, illness or medical condition or emergency operation.
- a significant family or personal crisis (eg bereavement or a serious illness affecting a close family member).
- unforeseen, unpreventable events (eg being a victim of a criminal act, natural disaster, including severe weather affecting travel).

The Extension Request form and Personal Mitigating Circumstances form can be found on the Intranet.

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 Artistic Planning, 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.

Graduate destinations

You will graduate from the programme as a highly skilled and well rounded musician. Whether as a performer, composer or conductor, the programme will have equipped you with the skills and abilities needed to take on professional work. You will have developed a critical and autonomous approach to your principal study, which will enable you to continue to develop your musicianship as your career unfolds. Statistically, the prospects are good, with the great majority of graduates from postgraduate programmes in music progressing either to employment or further study.

It is important to remember, however, that the profession of music is continually changing and evolving. For classically trained instrumentalists in particular, the outlook is challenging, with large numbers of extremely well-qualified musicians from around the world chasing a dwindling number of traditional positions.

The portfolio career

'There is no such thing as a typical musician. The blend of roles, patterns of paid and creative work, employment status and working hours vary across musicians and across different periods in their careers. Developing a portfolio career, made up of a number of different jobs, is a necessary characteristic of many musicians' careers; this invariably involves developing non-music skills such as business, marketing, teaching and community engagement.' – *The Working Musician* Musician's Union 2012

The quote above is one of the key findings of an extensive research project recently undertaken by the Musicians' Union. It accords well with the experience reported to us by our recent graduates, and is a realistic picture of the lives of many of the part-time staff who teach on the programme. The AdvPGDip programme is designed to explicitly support the development of a portfolio career as a key sustainable arts practice. This is achieved through modules like Professional Development and opportunities to develop

complementary skills in areas such as writing, arranging, community music, teaching, arts leadership, fundraising, music technology and sound recording, preparing graduates for diverse income streams and long-term professional viability.

Further Study

After completing our programme you may decide to proceed to further study, either here or at another institution. Many students choose to deepen and enrich their artistic practice by further study at a higher level, perhaps through the DPerf offered by the Conservatoire in association with the University of St Andrews, or through a variety of advanced diplomas offered by other institutions.

You may also be interested in pursuing research at PhD level, perhaps as a route to an academic career.

Modules

- [Advanced Principal Study](#)
- [Advanced Graduate Studies 30 Credits](#)
- [Advanced Graduate Studies 20 Credits](#)
- [Advanced Graduate Studies 10 Credits](#)
- [Professional Development](#)

Advanced Principal Study

This core module offers regular of individualised tuition in your discipline, which may be split between a number of tutors as appropriate, and offers a range of assessment options including public performances, recordings, practice research, and individual or collaborative negotiated projects. Your learning in this module will be informed by the choices you articulate within the Professional Development module, which will help you identify the areas of your practice you wish to expand and deepen: the repertoires, genres, techniques that you wish to pursue to further your individual artistic aims.

Module aims

This module is designed to:

- Enable the deepening of an established musical practice at the forefront of the discipline
- Provide opportunities to present solo and/or collaborative performances within a proto-professional musical environment

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module you will be able to:

- **LO1** Demonstrate comprehensive technical and expressive mastery of your discipline
- **LO2** Project a secure and distinctive musical personality

Assessment

Two negotiated assessments (50% or 50%)

Assessed LOs: 1, 2.

The negotiated assessments for this module are usually performances, but may also be live or studio recordings on audio or video, compositions, substantial practice research/ educational projects, for example, role studies, outreach projects or written dissertations. The output would be agreed upon at the start of the academic year.

We normally expect at least one of these outputs to be arranged independently by the student outside the Conservatoire. In many cases, you will be able to take advantage of an existing opportunity, such as an engagement by an existing performing organisation or from connections established with the profession through your own practice.

We will offer advice and information to support you in planning such an event; however, we expect you to take responsibility for matters such as venue hire, marketing, travel, music hire, sets, costumes, risk assessment and technical support. Please note that the Conservatoire is not able to offer direct financial support for such projects but we may be able to provide some support in kind, such as a loan of equipment.

One of the assessments will normally be internal to Conservatoire.

At least one of these assessments will be assessed by an external panel, comprising a Specialist External Examiner, an internal specialist, and a generalist convener: the other assessment will usually be assessed by a panel comprising two internal specialists.

Examples of suitable assessable projects include, but are not limited to:

- A substantial recital, solo, collaborative or mixed
- A study of a number of roles from an opera or operas

- A freelance engagement or series of engagements with an existing professional company, such as an orchestra, opera company, new music ensemble, or theatre company
- A collaborative interdisciplinary devised performance
- A professional CD-length audio recording with associated marketing material
- A practice research project on a specific area of technique or repertoire

Assessment criteria

Assessors will look for:

LO1 – Demonstrate comprehensive technical and expressive mastery of your discipline

- technical control and freedom to fully realise musical intent
- fine understanding of style and idiom
- confident leading and sympathetic support in collaborative and ensemble contexts
- textual accuracy
- consistency and concentration in performance

LO2 – Project a secure and distinctive musical personality

- performances which can challenge both the artist and audience
- effective communication
- committed and engaging response to the music
- awareness of context and trend
- knowledge of the repertoire
- originality and creative imagination
- confidence, stage presence and rapport with the audience

Feedback

You will receive regular formative feedback from your tutor in your lessons, and a written report twice a year. In some departments the tutor report will take the form of a mutually constructed feedback session.

You will receive a written feedback report on each negotiated assessment.

Resources

Essential

Key resources will be recommended by principal study tutors.

Recommended

Rink, J. S., Gaunt, H., & Williamson, A. (Eds.). (2017). *Musicians in the making: Pathways to creative performance* (Vol. 1). Oxford University Press.

Tolmie, D. (2020) 2050 And beyond: A futurist perspective on musicians' livelihoods, *Music Education Research*, 22:5, 596-610, DOI: 10.1080/14613808.2020.1841133

Welch, G., & Papageorgi, I. (Eds.). (2014). *Advanced musical performance: Investigations in higher education learning*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.

Summary details

Module title	Advanced Principal Study
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SCQF level	11
Credit rating	80 SCQF (40 ECTS)
Total notional student effort hours	800
Status	Core
Module coordinator	Head of Department
Pre-requisites	None
Co-requisites	Professional Development, Advanced Graduate Studies
Anti-requisites	None
Learning modes	Indicative hours
Scheduled study	40.5
Independent study	759.5
Total notional student effort	800

Advanced Graduate Studies

30 Credits

In Advanced Graduate Studies you have the opportunity to take part in a wide range of both Departmental and Conservatoire activities that will broaden or complement your studies.

Module aims

- Develop of a range of skills that support your artistic development
- Foster professional attitudes and the skills cooperation and collaboration
- Encourage the integration of new skills and perspectives

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module you will be able to:

- **LO1** In a range of contexts, demonstrate comprehensive technical and expressive mastery of your discipline
- **LO2** In a range of contexts, project a secure and distinctive musical personality
- **LO3** Demonstrate professional attitudes and the ability to engage effectively and creatively with professionals and peers

Assessment

Assessment 1: Observation of Working Practice 100% – Pass/Fail

Feedback relating to all supporting studies activities will be given to students, along with indicative grades, which will be recorded on Student Outcomes.

Prior to the exam board, the indicative grades – and, where necessary, the feedback itself – will be scrutinised by an internal examination board chaired by the Director of Music, leading to an overall module result of Pass or Fail.

Assessed LOs: 1, 2, 3.

Assessment criteria

Assessors will look for:

LO1 – In a range of contexts, demonstrate comprehensive technical and expressive mastery of your discipline

- technical control and freedom to fully realise musical intent
- fine understanding of style and idiom
- confident leading and sympathetic support in collaborative and ensemble contexts
- textual accuracy
- consistency and concentration in performance

LO2 – In a range of contexts, project a secure and distinctive musical personality

- performances which can challenge both the artist and audience
- effective communication

- committed and engaging response to the music
- awareness of context and trend
- knowledge of the repertoire
- originality and creative imagination
- confidence, stage presence and rapport with the audience

LO3 – Demonstrate professional attitudes and the ability to engage effectively and creatively with professionals and peers performances

- maintenance of a professional standard of attendance and timekeeping
- active and generous collaboration with professionals and peers
- an understanding of the shared responsibilities of supporting and leading
- appropriate levels of focus
- discipline and reliability
- openness and sensitivity
- an ability to assimilate advice and criticism

Feedback

You will receive regular formative feedback from your tutors as an integral part of teaching and learning.

Written feedback and indicative grades will be attached to the module profile on your Student Outcomes.

Resources

Key resources will be recommended by tutors, according to instrument and discipline

Summary details

Module title	Advanced Graduate Studies 30 Credits
SCQF level	11
Credit rating	30 SCQF (15 ECTS)
Total notional student effort hours	300
Status	Core
Module coordinator	Head of Department
Pre-requisites	None
Co-requisites	Professional Development, Advanced Principal Study
Anti-requisites	None
Learning modes	Indicative hours
Scheduled study	120
Independent study	180
Total notional student effort	300

Advanced Graduate Studies 20 Credits

This module duplicates [Advanced Graduate Studies 30 Credits](#) at a lower credit value, and is in all other respects identical. An appropriate level of activity will be negotiated and agreed with the Head of Department and recorded on your Student Outcomes.

Module title	Advanced Graduate Studies 20 Credits
SCQF level	11
Credit rating	20 SCQF (10 ECTS)
Learning modes	Indicative hours
Scheduled study	80
Independent study	120
Total notional student effort	200

Advanced Graduate Studies 10 Credits

This module duplicates [Advanced Graduate Studies 30 Credits](#) at a lower credit value, and is in all other respects identical. An appropriate level of activity will be negotiated and agreed with the Head of Department and recorded on Student Outcomes.

Module title	Advanced Graduate Studies 10 Credits
SCQF level	11
Credit rating	10 SCQF (5 ECTS)
Learning modes	Indicative hours
Scheduled study	40
Independent study	60
Total notional student effort	100

Professional Development

The Professional Development module invites you to articulate a critical and reflective position on your continuing studies in relation to your transition into the profession:

- Why have you chosen further study at masters level?
- Which areas of your practice do you wish to expand and deepen this year: what repertoires, genres, techniques?
- What sources of information can you draw on to support your practice?
- What professional pathways and opportunities to you intend to explore?
- How can you document and reflect upon your progress through the year?

The module is supported by individual tutorials with your Head of Department, together with a series of seminars bringing together all students on the Advanced Postgraduate Diploma.

Module aims

This module is designed to:

- Enhance your professional development as a musician
- Offer a range of opportunities in support of your overall artistic development
- Foster skills in critical reflection

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module you will be able to:

- **LO1** Evidence strategies for developing self-identified professional pathways and

opportunities

- **LO2** Articulate a critical account of your professional development in relation to your chosen field

Assessment

Assessment 1: Reflective journal 100% Pass/Fail

Your reflective journal will track your progress through the programme, making particular reference to the tutorials with your Head of Department and discussions with your peers in the group seminars. The final submission will comprise a summative critical account of your work throughout the year, making particular reference to your Advanced Principal Study assessment outputs, and include contextualised documentation in the form of, for example, video, audio, or annotated scores.

Assessed LOs: 1, 2

Assessment criteria

Assessors will look for:

- clarity and depth of critical thinking
- a scholarly approach to reflection and documentation
- effective communication

The final submission will in many cases include audiovisual material in addition to writing: for this reason, no definitive word count can be given. As an indication, the written part of the project should not normally exceed 3000 words.

Feedback

You will receive verbal formative feedback on your reflective journal through the course of the module, and written summative feedback on the final submission.

Resources

Moon, J.A., 2006. Learning journals: a handbook for reflective practice and professional development, 2nd ed. ed. Routledge, Abingdon, Oxon.

Summary details

Module title	Professional Development
SCQF level	11
Credit rating	10 SCQF (5 ECTS)
Total notional student effort hours	100
Status	Core
Module coordinator	Head of Programme
Pre-requisites	None
Co-requisites	None
Anti-requisites	None

Learning modes	Indicative hours
Seminars	5
Tutorials	2
Independent study	93
Total notional student effort	100

Rubrics

- [Performance](#)
- [Supplementary](#)

Performance

	Technical and expressive mastery	Musical personality	Knowledge, understanding and critical thinking in-and-through performance
Exceptional: A1-2	Virtuosic command of the instrument; performances demonstrate profound artistry, emotional intensity and refined control.	An exceptionally imaginative performance displaying remarkable stylistic maturity and a superb level of musical creativity and originality.	A profoundly personal, original and highly sophisticated interpretation with deep stylistic insights.
Excellent: A3-5	Technically accomplished; expressive choices are vivid and convincing	An excellent performance displaying imaginative and sophisticated musical ideas and an original and personal voice.	A deeply compelling, refined interpretation with strong individuality and understanding of musical structure.

	Technical and expressive mastery	Musical personality	Knowledge, understanding and critical thinking in-and-through performance
Very Good: B1-3	Strong technique. Expressively engaging, though with occasional moments lacking depth or conviction.	A very good performance displaying clear musical ideas and an emerging artistic personality.	A well-developed interpretative approach, though not always deeply personal or risk-taking.
Good: C1-3	Technically reliable, with occasional lapses that may slightly affect fluency. Expressive approach is clear present but not always fully sustained or convincing.	A good performance with a degree of imagination and some sense of individuality.	An informed but somewhat conventional interpretation, lacking strong individuality.
Satisfactory: D1-3	A basically secure technique but limitations often affect fluidity and control. Expression is inconsistent; moments of engagement but lacking sustained impact.	A limited performance with occasional insights into the music but not always convincing.	Some understanding of interpretation, but with limited originality or

	Technical and expressive mastery	Musical personality	Knowledge, understanding and critical thinking in-and-through performance
			depth.
Unsatisfactory: E1-2	Significant deficiencies in technique are prominent and hinder expressive communication. Performance lacks consistent musical intent and interpretive choices are limited or unclear.	An unsatisfactory performance with an insufficient sense of musical imagination and communication.	Interpretation lacks conviction, stylistic awareness or depth of engagement.

Supplementary

The supplementary rubric below is to be applied where relevant, according to the academic judgement of the examiners. Examples include:

- Lecture recitals
- Original music: improvisation/devising/composition in performance
- Vocal performance: roles, role study, acting scenes
- Studio recording, composer/performer/engineer collaborations, negotiated projects
- Independent projects involving research, documentation, and performance

	Research	Original music	Acting and physical performance	Artistic collaboration	Editorial collaboration
Exceptional: A1-2	Original in its synthesis and an identifiable contribution to scholarship in the field	Innovative, ambitious and securely founded work that strongly projects an individual creative voice	A masterful performance, fully utilising the resources of voice and movement.	A seamless collaborative approach; fully interdisciplinary	Ownership of and engagement in all aspects of the recording and editing process: exceptional curatorship b/w performer and engineer
Excellent: A3-5	A thorough command of the research area providing insights into complex issues	Boldly original, creative and intelligent work drawing on a well-founded practical and theoretical perspective	A strong characterisation, displaying detailed, effective and imaginative voice and movement choices. Highly articulate, fresh and spontaneous.	Generous, imaginative, decisive and original contribution; sensitive collaboration with other disciplines	Demonstrating informed and well-considered choices of edit points and sound quality throughout, with due reference to other recordings in

	Research	Original music	Acting and physical performance	Artistic collaboration	Editorial collaboration
					the field as appropriate
Very Good: B1-3	A deep understanding of the research area with evidence of originality in a clearly focussed argument, supported by detailed reference to appropriate scholarship	Creative, original, and intelligent work, securely rooted in practice and theory	Confident projection of character, with secure and effective voice and movement choices. Articulate, imaginative, engaging.	Active, co-operative, sustained contribution; openness in collaboration with other disciplines	Demonstrating edit points and decisions on sound quality that have made a significant contribution to the effectiveness of the recordings.
Good: C1-3	A clear understanding of the research area with evidence of independent thinking rooted in appropriate scholarship	Imaginative work with some originality, supported by a practical and theoretical understanding	Secure characterisation enacted through effective voice and movement choices. Consistent and believable, displaying some imagination.	A clear contribution; co-operative relationship maintained with other disciplines	The performer's artistic intent is consistently reflected throughout studio recordings.
Satisfactory: D1-3	An understanding of the research area, with insights mostly drawn from existing	Evidence of originality, drawing on practical experience and basic principles	Some sense of character, with evidence of considered choices in voice and movement. Mainly	An identifiable contribution, minimal interaction with other disciplines	The performer's artistic intent is clearly reflected in studio recordings,

	Research	Original music	Acting and physical performance	Artistic collaboration	Editorial collaboration
	scholarship		consistent focus.		though not without some shortcomings
Unsatisfactory: E1-2	Limited insight into research area and lack of awareness of existing scholarship	Limited evidence of originality and lack of insight into basic principles	Inconsistent characterisation, with poor use of voice and movement. Insecure, lacking focus and conviction.	Unsatisfactory interaction with little contribution	Limited or unsatisfactory evidence of the performer's artistic intent reflected in studio recordings

Appendices

- [Performance Opportunities and Commitments Policy](#)
- [Change of Teacher Policy](#)
- [Referencing and bibliography](#)

Printable version

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

[advpgdip2627-handbook.pdf](#)

Performance opportunities and commitments policy

Productions, performances and collaborative projects are central to your training as a musician and form a vital, practical component of the learning experience offered by the School of Music. This policy sets out the principles that guide the allocation of performance related opportunities and commitments, the professional expectations of all students and the processes for raising concerns or appealing decisions.

The policy also reflects recent student feedback on transparency and equity, and staff feedback on the need for a policy that is both clear and workable in practice. It covers a wide range of activities including (but not limited to) orchestral performances, opera and chorus roles, composing for visiting ensembles, chamber groups, masterclasses and specialised departmental projects.

Communication and awareness of opportunities

The School of Music is committed to supporting students' awareness of performance opportunities and to communicating information in ways that are fair, timely and appropriate to the nature of each project.

Communication principles

Because opportunities arise in different ways – some planned far in advance, others emerging at short notice – the School will aim to:

- share information about opportunities as early as is reasonably possible;

- use communication channels that reach the relevant students effectively;
- provide sufficient information for students to understand the nature of the opportunity and any required commitments;
- ensure that students know how to express interest or raise questions.

Communication channels

Opportunities will normally be communicated through one or more of the following:

- **Artistic Planning (AP)** Many school-wide performance allocations and schedules are coordinated and shared directly by the AP team, who serve as a primary hub for our performance communications.
- **Student Outcomes** For assessment-related performances and core commitments, allocations are often shown on Student Outcomes. Because Heads of Department cannot email every student individually for every assessment, students should regularly check their own profiles and information on Student Outcomes.
- **Email or Microsoft Teams** Direct updates from your Head of Department or Programme Support Administrator (PSA) – note that while some departments use email, others share allocations on departmental Teams channels, so you should monitor both regularly.
- **Direct communication** (e.g. in class or rehearsal) where opportunities arise at short notice or require rapid response.

Because some opportunities are time sensitive or externally driven, the School cannot guarantee uniform notice periods. However, we will always aim to communicate in ways that support fairness, clarity and student preparedness.

Professional expectations

Participation in performances and productions is both an opportunity for artistic

development and a commitment to the Conservatoire community.

Students are expected to demonstrate professionalism by being:

- Present and punctual for all scheduled rehearsals and performances;
- Prepared, with all required materials learned and ready;
- Focused and engaged throughout the rehearsal process;
- Courteous and collaborative, contributing positively to the ensemble and working respectfully with colleagues, staff and visiting artists.

Students are expected to contribute to Conservatoire performances and productions as agreed with their Head of Department.

Principles guiding the allocation of opportunities

Allocation decisions are made by Heads of Department or delegated colleagues, working collaboratively, and guided by the following principles.

Principle 1: Supporting individual learning and development

Opportunities are allocated to enhance each student's learning journey, taking into account:

- degree and assessment requirements;
- readiness to benefit from the experience;
- the suitability of the role for the student's current stage of development.

Principle 2: Equity of experience across the cohort

The School aims to ensure that, over the course of study, students have access to a balanced range of opportunities. This includes consideration of:

- the distribution of opportunities across year groups;
- the needs of the performance or production;
- the needs of other students;
- the overall balance of experience within the cohort.

Principle 3: Professional judgement

Not all opportunities are suitable for audition or open application. Staff will use their professional expertise to determine when:

- an audition or expression of interest is appropriate;
- teacher recommendation is the most suitable route;
- a role requires direct allocation based on readiness, safety or artistic needs. Where an audition or expression of interest process is used, students will be informed of the format and expectations.

Transparency in allocation

When allocation decisions are communicated, students may request a brief explanation of how the decision aligns with the principles above. Explanations will be proportionate, recognising that some decisions involve complex artistic and pedagogical judgement.

Personal Mitigating Circumstances (PMC)

If illness or other serious mitigating circumstances prevent you from fulfilling your obligations, you must contact your Head of Department immediately and submit a PMC form with appropriate evidence to the AAS office as soon as possible.

Resolving concerns and appeals

The School of Music is committed to resolving concerns fairly and promptly.

Stage 1: Initial concern (Head of Department)

If you feel that an allocation decision or lack of awareness of an opportunity has disadvantaged your learning, you should contact your Head of Department within 48 hours of the allocation announcement (or discovery of the missed opportunity).

Your message should explain your concern with reference to the principles above. The Head of Department will review the situation and aim to resolve the concern.

Stage 2: Formal concern (Head of Programme)

If you remain dissatisfied, you may contact your Head of Programme. They will liaise with the Head of Department and provide a rationale for the decision.

Stage 3: Directorial appeal

If you are still dissatisfied, you may appeal in writing to the Director of Music, following the Conservatoire's Regulations, Codes of Procedure and General Rules.

Continuous review

The School recognises that no allocation system can be perfect, and that transparency and fairness require ongoing attention. Student and staff feedback will continue to inform future refinements of this policy.

Change of Teacher Policy : Student Version

This policy is about situations where you would like to change your principal study teacher.

Background

When you begin studies in the School of Music, you are allocated to a principal study teacher by your Head of Department (HoD). We do our best to accommodate requests to study with a particular teacher, where we have advance notice, but we can't promise to fulfil all requests.

You have the option to share your annual allocation of lesson time between different teachers – this can be beneficial where you are studying complementary or highly specialised techniques or genres, for example. Sharing of lesson time has to be done with the agreement of your Head of Department.

Our Policy

It is School of Music policy to support requests to change teacher, or to share lesson time between different teachers, so long as your HoD believes that to be in your best interests.

What should I do if I'd like to discuss my progress?

You should speak to your principal study teacher in the first instance. If you don't feel able to discuss concerns about your progress directly with your teacher, then speak to your HoD. Concerns about progress do not always result in changing teacher. It's good

practice to discuss your progress with your HoD at least once a year, usually after the end-of-year assessments: your HoD may use this meeting to ask you to confirm that you're happy to continue with your current teacher.

I just want an occasional lesson from a different teacher

If you would like the occasional lesson with a different teacher, simply discuss this with your HoD.

But what if I want to change my principal study teacher or to share lesson time with another teacher?

The process that follows is for situations where you would like to change teacher, or to share lesson time with another teacher on an ongoing basis.

Here's what to do if you'd like to change teacher or share lesson time on permanent basis:

1. Talk to your Head of Department

- explain why you'd like to change teacher
- talk about your progress to date and your ambitions
- your HoD will also take account of your stage in your studies, your length of time with your current teacher and the availability of other teachers
- your HoD may decide that a change of teacher is not in your best interests at this time. In this case, you should meet with your HoD again after, say, another 4 weeks to review the situation.
- if you are unhappy with this outcome, you can appeal the decision to the Director of Music.

2. You (or your HoD) meet with your current teacher

- if your HoD thinks that changing teacher is in your best interests, they will encourage you to discuss the request directly with your current teacher
- if you feel unable to discuss your request directly with your teacher, tell your HoD and they will discuss the request with your teacher instead. They will explain fully to your teacher the reasons for your request
- your HoD will offer you support through this process, and give you a timeline for changing teacher

3. Approaching new teachers

- you must not approach a possible new teacher or have a consultation lesson with a new teacher until your HoD gives you permission. This is because it is courtesy for your current teacher to be aware that you are seeking to change teacher.
- when you approach a possible new teacher, the teacher will check with the HoD that you have permission

4. Conclusion of process

- once a new teacher has agreed to take you, the change needs to be confirmed by your HoD
- the change may be temporary or permanent
- the timing of the change should be made clear by your HoD. Normally, the change will coincide with a natural break in studies (e.g. beginning of a new academic year or a new term)
- it may not always be appropriate for lessons with your current teacher to stop immediately – your HoD may judge that it is best for you to continue with your current teacher for a few more lessons.

What happens after I change teacher?

We will do our best to avoid situations where you might be examined by a former teacher. Teachers are expected to maintain professional objectivity at all times in

relation to former students, and to make this clear by their actions, words and conduct.

What if my teacher suggests that I move to a different teacher?

This doesn't happen very often; if it does, your teacher or your HoD will explain the rationale.

Where can I go for support?

If you need support through this process, please contact:

- your Head of Department
- your Head of Programme
- the Students Union susupport@rcs.ac.uk

Notes

- References to 'Principal Study' also include 'Additional Performance Study' and 'Second Study' etc.
- If your principal study teacher is your HoD, and you don't feel able to discuss the request directly with them, you should contact the Associate HoD, or Head of Programme, or the Director of Music.
- The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland subscribes to the '[Principles of Best Practice in Conservatoire Teaching](#)', which has been adopted by Conservatoires UK. The Conservatoire's [Dignity at Work and Study Statement](#) is also relevant in the context of this Policy.