

# Royal College of Music Access agreement

## Fee limits

- 1 The Royal College of Music plans to charge new starting home/EU undergraduate degree students fees of £3,000 from September 2006, rising by inflation, as permitted by government. The College does not normally permit home/EU undergraduate degree applicants to defer entry because of the pressure of demand for its relatively small number of places and thus would not normally have gap year students. However, any applicant who is exceptionally permitted to take a gap year in 2005/06 would not be charged the variable fee.
- 2 The bursaries and outreach activity described below will be funded from the extra income received from variable fees.

## RCM context

- 3 Since its establishment in 1882, the Royal College of Music has had a strong commitment to fair access. At the time it was founded the intention was that it should offer scholarships to home students (the College also had overseas students amongst its earliest students). The aim was to ensure access for the very best regardless of means. Foundation Scholarships are still offered at entry to talented students to help with the payment of undergraduate tuition fees.
- 4 Today, the RCM has a total student body of c600, of whom about 360 study on the College's undergraduate programme – its BMus. We aim for an annual intake of 65 Home/EU students, which usually comprises about 45 UK and 20 EU students.
- 5 The College also has a Junior Department (JD), which is a Saturday music school for about 320 school-age students. The JD is a key feeder institution for the RCM's higher education provision, including those from under-represented groups. The JD was established in 1926 as a scheme to provide teaching for children from London schools who were otherwise deprived of the opportunity to learn a musical instrument. A system of Junior Exhibitions was established to assist students to study in the JD: a means test-based system of bursaries still exists, supported through private funds.
- 6 For all applicants to the senior College, performance at audition is taken as the primary determinant for offers of places (subject to student number constraints). The RCM does not screen any applications for undergraduate study and, thus, all applicants are invited to audition. Audition panels are strongly encouraged, through Notes of Guidance, to take account of unrealised potential that can result from poor teaching, which is often, although by no means always, the case for those from under-represented groups.
- 7 The RCM is a specialist institution offering intensive education and training for musicians. Graduates undertake careers working as music professionals, as performers or composers. In order to prepare for entry to the RCM applicants need to have studied their chosen instrument for an extended period, usually

from a young age. Successful pianists and violinists have usually begun regular lessons by the age of seven, usually with private teachers. There are some exceptions to this, where study often starts later, such as brass instruments and singing. Many local education authorities no longer provide peripatetic music teaching in schools without charge and this severely limits access to such provision for groups under-represented in HE generally, as well at the RCM specifically. Although some significant steps have recently been taken in order to reverse this trend, the past decade or so has seen a steady decline in the number of opportunities for young people to learn musical instruments in school. As a result, only small numbers of students from under-represented groups have an opportunity during their formative years to study a musical instrument to a level sufficient to be likely to be offered a place to study at the RCM. This is an obstacle faced by very few other subject areas. Necessarily, therefore, the College's access objectives must take account of these circumstances. It is unlikely that the College would be able to increase significantly the numbers of students from under-represented groups recruited to its higher education courses in the foreseeable future, given the long lead time from start of study to application to the College.

- 8 Given this context, the RCM believes that its activities should be focused on maximising the number of appropriately qualified students who do apply to the RCM and, to achieve this, to take action at every stage at which it can influence applicant behaviour – from registration, back to the points when a student may be first starting to think about higher education study. At the earlier stages in this cycle, we will aim to raise aspirations and attainment more generally to encourage applications to HE from those from under represented groups, as we believe there is more that we can do to encourage those beyond the groups most likely to succeed in an application to the RCM, whether because of ability or because of the types of music or instruments they wish to study. The overall cycle may be described as follows:

- Study support for BMus students, especially in the first two years of the BMus (*additional*)
- Bursaries to remove financial barriers to RCM study – enhanced by access to a quality instrument, if appropriate/available (*additional*)
- Audition preparation and advice days, *Tune-up days*, to support students from state schools without a track record of conservatoire entry (*additional*)
- RCM regional roadshows and auditions (*additional*)
- CUKAS – a more accessible means of applying to conservatoires (see paragraph 19, below) (*collaborative/additional*)
- Partnerships and access compacts with state specialist arts colleges/FE providers (*collaborative/additional*)
- Extended JD bursary scheme to fund study in the JD, plus audition fee waivers for bursary holders (*extended and additional*)
- Visually Impaired Musician Scheme, run in the RCM Junior Department in collaboration with *Musicians in Focus* (*extended*)
- RCM Specialist Summer School (*extended*)
- Alumni ambassador network (*additional*)
- Gamelan workshops for GCSE students (*additional*)
- Outreach projects in London schools (*current and additional*)

- 9 In order to fund these activities, the RCM will set aside 20% of the additional income from variable tuition fees. The largest slice of this funding will be used to fund bursaries, as the College wishes to prioritise the removal of financial barriers to RCM study for those from under-represented groups, but the funding for outreach will also significantly increase the volume of activity by the College in this area. The details of planned activity and of the current baseline positions are set out in the following sections, followed by milestones by which we will measure our success in achieving our plans and definitions of the target groups for each activity.

### **Bursaries and other financial support**

- 10 The College already awards a significant number of merit-based scholarships. These are worth up to full-fees and all applicants are considered for them – undergraduate, postgraduate, home/EU and overseas. About £800,000 is awarded each year from the RCM's private scholarship fund for this purpose, of which, in 2004/05, £100,600 has been awarded to home/EU BMus degree students. In 2004/05, this has meant that a total of 108 out of 296 home/EU BMus students are scholars – ie somewhat more than a third. These awards are made during the audition process, usually in December of the year prior to entry. The College is limited in how much of its endowment funding can be targeted to reflect the financial circumstances of students and to fund living costs as well as fees, because of the terms on which these endowments were accepted.
- 11 Home/EU BMus scholars are expected to apply for state support, and hence to be means-tested by their local education authority (or DfES in the case of EU students), to ensure that the element of their scholarship actually funded by the RCM is only that necessary to make up the student's funding gap (up to the value of the scholarship), rather than replacing public funding. This means that a student whose fees are currently paid in full by the SLC, because their family income is low, does not receive direct financial benefit from their RCM scholarship. Nevertheless, a student who is required to contribute some or all of their fees benefits directly from their scholarship. These awards thus provide an important plank of support for students from lower income families not eligible for full fee support via the SLC, as well as for talented students of more fortunate means. In 2004/05, the College had 50 students who received full fee support from SLC or DfES, of whom eight were scholars, and 33 who received some fee support, of whom ten were scholars.
- 12 From 2006/07, in addition to the scholarships described above, the College will fund new bursaries for students in receipt of the full higher education maintenance grant to ensure that no student in this category needs to pay fees personally, whether they are scholars or not. The College expects to spend more than £60,000 from its additional fee income on bursaries. The College will offer three types of bursary - all of which are aimed at removing financial barriers to RCM study and the first two, additionally, will help with the extra living costs in London:
- **Major RCM bursaries.** Non-standard bursaries of £820 per year (at least a £3,280 total across the four years of the BMus), comprising £300 a year plus funding for a nine month two zone student travelcard season ticket (current value c£520 – this element will rise to match the cost of such a travelcard). These bursaries will be awarded to all students assessed to receive the maximum state support for tuition fees (estimated as 13 per year

out of a UK cohort of c60 per year, ie over 20%). These will be assessed using the residual income information from SLC.

- **RCM bursaries.** Non-standard bursaries of £520 per year (at least a £2,080 total across the four years of the BMus) for a nine month two zone student travelcard season ticket (rising to match the cost of such a travelcard) for those UK students from lower income families, who just miss eligibility for the maximum state support for tuition fees. In order to be eligible, students will need to receive 90% or higher support for tuition fees (eg £2,430 in 2006/07). These will be assessed using the residual income information from SLC.

*The above two bursary schemes taken together will mean that about a third of all UK BMus students will be bursary holders.*

*A UK student who is entitled to the maximum state support, ie who has family residual income of under c£15,000, would have a package of funding available for each year of study as follows:*

£2,700	<i>non-repayable maintenance grant</i>
£6,170	<i>student loan</i>
<u>£820</u>	<i>major RCM bursary</i>
£9,690	<i>total per annum</i>

- **RCM Euro bursaries.** Minimum standard bursaries of £300 for all non-UK EU students assessed by the DfES to receive the maximum state support for tuition fees
- 13 The RCM has a valuable collection of instruments (mainly stringed instruments) available for students to use, sometimes for the duration of their study – for example, a student who does not own a quality violin may be loaned one from the RCM collection, which they can then use as their primary instrument throughout their RCM studies. Although already available on a needs basis, from September 2006 these will be explicitly targeted for both UK and overseas students who cannot afford a quality instrument, with priority given to RCM bursary holders.
  - 14 The RCM, through its alumni association - the RCM Society - has a fund to make interest-free financial loans to assist students and recent graduates to buy their own instruments. From September 2006, if demand for loans exceeds the funds available, priority in allocating these loans will be given to RCM bursary holders (subject to the terms and conditions of the loan agreement).
  - 15 The College plans to administer its bursaries in accordance with the model scheme devised by UUK/SCOP, once it has had the opportunity to assess its operational effectiveness. The value of bursaries will rise with inflation each year to ensure they at least cover any funding gap.
  - 16 Where bursary holders have also been awarded a scholarship, they will retain their scholarship, which will be added to their bursary, up to a maximum of the full fees, plus, where applicable the travelcard funding.
  - 17 The RCM has set the following milestones in relation to bursaries:

- To have successfully awarded bursaries to all eligible students, using the criteria set, annually by October of each academic year (to be paid in January each year).
- In monitoring progression rates of BMus home/EU students, to have ensured that the proportion of bursary holders among those who fail to progress is no more than 25% of the total. The progression rate for 2003/04 was 91% (aside from failure, which is rare, students may choose to interrupt their study or leave the programme for personal reasons).
- In monitoring completion rates of BMus home/EU students, to have ensured that the proportion of bursary holders among those who fail to complete the year is no more than 25% of the total. The completion rate for 2003/04 was 95%. In this definition, the completion rate is the rate of students successfully completing the academic year, even if they do not progress to the next year (aside from failure, which is rare, students may transfer to another HE institution or exit with an intermediate award).

## Outreach

18 The College has a significant track record in organising outreach activities – both to excite an interest in music in the target groups for the activity and to provide professional experience for its students. Many of these activities are aimed at raising aspirations and attainment and encouraging students from under-represented groups to apply to higher education. The College now plans to focus more of its outreach activity on improving access to the RCM and to higher education, especially from under-represented groups. In achieving this, the College has looked at each point in the recruitment and application cycle from the point at which a potential student is considering whether to apply to higher education, through to the point when they are considering where to apply, through to audition preparation and, ultimately, to the point they are studying on the BMus .

19 Most of the music conservatoires have collaborated to establish a new admissions service for conservatoire entry (Royal College of Music, Royal Northern College of Music, Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, Trinity College of Music, Birmingham Conservatoire, and Leeds College of Music). The prime motivation of this collaborative initiative is to provide for more public and accessible conservatoire admissions, especially for those from under represented groups. Called CUKAS - Conservatoires UK Admissions Service - it will be an on-line application service and will be administered by UCAS, to start in May 2005 in time for the 2006 entry (from February 2005, see [www.cukas.ac.uk](http://www.cukas.ac.uk)). The seven member conservatoires, as well as HEFCE, have invested heavily to establish the service (a total of £675,000, of which £365,000 has been provided by HEFCE).

20 The College's outreach plans and milestones are set out in the table below:

Outreach activities	Target groups/Milestones
1. <b>Study support provision</b> for	Target group: bursary holders, but

<p>BMus students, especially in the first two years of the BMus <i>(additional)</i></p>	<p>available to all BMus students</p> <p>New support arrangements for Year 1 and 2 BMus students in place within revised BMus by 2006/07</p>
<p>2. Audition preparation and advice days, <b>'Tune-up days'</b>, to support students from state schools without a record of conservatoire entry <i>(additional)</i></p>	<p>Target group: state school applicants</p> <p>Places for 20 applicants in autumn 2006, 2007 and 2008, rising to 40 places in autumn 2009 and beyond</p>
<p><b>3. RCM regional roadshows and auditions</b> <i>(collaborative/ additional)</i> A team of three, including at least one professor and one current student, travelling to regional centres to promote applications to the RCM through music workshops and to hold audition experience sessions and/or full auditions.</p> <p>Wherever possible, the College will work collaboratively in undertaking this activity, whether by working with other conservatoires, Aimhigher, and/or the Federation of Music Services. Such collaboration could result in variations to the model for the activity described above.</p>	<p>Target group: state school applicants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One roadshow in 2007;</li> <li>• Two roadshows in 2008;</li> <li>• Three roadshows in 2009 and each year thereafter</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Partnerships and access compacts with state specialist arts/music schools/FE providers</b> <i>(additional)</i> Partnerships will have the goal of providing support for pre-HE students of music, to provide added value for schools/providers, and to raise aspirations and attainment and encourage students from under-represented to apply to RCM or higher education more widely. Those that do apply will have facilitated access routes, including audition fee waivers.</p> <p>Where appropriate, partnerships will include masterclasses and other activity conducted by video-conferencing</p> <p>The College will build on existing links, where possible.</p>	<p>Target group: under-represented groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To have established a minimum of one such partnership by 2007;</li> <li>• To have increased the number of partnerships to at least two by 2009</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Junior Department bursary scheme</b> <i>(extended and additional)</i> The Junior Department currently</p>	<p>Target group: lower income families</p> <p>The College will allocate up to £10,000</p>

<p>allocates about £75,000 per annum in privately-funded bursaries for JD study. Families are means-tested for support of up to full fees, currently £2,610 per annum. The primary criterion for the bursaries is financial need. There is always unmet need with which this initiative is intended to help.</p> <p>In addition, access routes for JD bursary holders will be established to facilitate entry to senior College BMus. This will include audition fee waivers for such students.</p>	<p>extra funding for the JD bursary scheme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £2,500 for allocation for study in 2007/08</li> <li>• £5,000 for allocation for study in 2008/09</li> <li>• £7,500 for allocation for study in 2009/10</li> <li>• £10,000 for allocation for study in 2010/11</li> </ul> <p>Access routes for JD bursary holders to be established by 2006/07</p>
<p><b>7. Visually Impaired Musician Scheme</b> <i>(extended)</i></p> <p>A Junior Department-based project in collaboration with <i>Musicians in Focus</i> to facilitate access by visually impaired students, started in 2000. Students are normally accepted from the age of 8. Entry requirements for this special preparatory course are possession of good natural rhythm and pitch coupled with a strong desire to learn music. Tuition is provided at the RCM on Saturdays. Each place costs £1,700 and the current six students are funded by private funds raised by the College.</p>	<p>Target group: disabled students</p> <p>Increase the number of places by a third to 8 by 2008, at a cost of £3,400</p>
<p><b>8. RCM Specialist Summer School</b> <i>(extended)</i></p> <p>This has been held each year since 2000, for 30 students a year. As a result, over a hundred students have now experienced an RCM Summer School. Although HEFCE funds the summer school, the RCM also subsidises it, because it has relatively high residential costs and because the range of activities it provides is broader than usual.</p>	<p>Target group: under-represented groups</p> <p>Number of places to be extended by 20% by 2007/08</p>
<p><b>9. Alumni ambassador network</b> <i>(additional)</i></p> <p>An alumni network to act as regional and local 'eyes and ears' for the RCM and to support applicants from their area.</p>	<p>Target group: under-represented groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 Alumni ambassadors appointed by 2008</li> <li>20 Alumni ambassadors appointed by 2010</li> </ul>
<p><b>10. Gamelan workshops</b> <i>(additional)</i></p> <p>Opportunities for GCSE students to have a session playing the RCM gamelan (gamelan purchased with HEFCE capital funding).</p>	<p>Target group: state school applicants</p> <p>Five workshops for groups of 15-20 students each annually from 2006/07, ongoing</p>

<p>11. <b>Outreach projects in London schools</b> (<i>current</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Composition project</b> with the London Boroughs of Hammersmith &amp; Fulham and Richmond for state school students (supported by local authority funding) (<i>current</i>)</li> <li>• <b>Ensembles in Residence</b> in state secondary schools in local boroughs, focussed particularly on state schools in North Kensington with high proportions of students from lower income families (supported by local authority funding) (<i>current</i>)</li> <li>• <b>Prince Consort Percussion and Elastic Band</b> visits to primary schools (supported by corporate sponsorship) (<i>current</i>)</li> </ul>	<p>Target group: state school applicants</p> <p>Operate at least three projects annually from 2006/07, ongoing</p>
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### Provision of information on financial and other support

- 21 Information on what students have to pay and the financial and other support that will be available to them will describe the annual and aggregate costs of students' tuition, the RCM's bursary scheme and scholarships, its scheme for loan instruments, and the RCM Society financial loan scheme to assist students in buying instruments. Additional information will be provided on living costs through illustrations of the net costs of studying. The information will be targeted at all students, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- 22 Full information will be provided on the RCM website from April 2005 or earlier and in the prospectus for the 2006 entry (due for publication in April 2005) in sections on 'fees and funding' as part of the section on 'how to apply'. This information will also be provided on campus during our Open Day in April 2005 and during the December 2005 auditions. The RCM will then follow this pattern in subsequent years. In every case, the information will be clearly headlined for overseas students, home/EU students and for those home/EU students eligible for the full higher education maintenance grant.
- 23 In addition, the CUKAS website will act as a key medium to promote music conservatoire education and will be the key route that the RCM and other member conservatoires will use to provide information on the financial support available to students and to promote it to all, including under-represented groups.

### Monitoring arrangements

- 24 Achievement against the milestones set will be monitored internally via an annual report by the Secretary & Registrar to the College's academic board (Board of Professors) and to the Council.