



# ADMISSIONS POLICY

## JUNE 2024

Registry  
Version 1

The Royal Academy of Music moves music forward by inspiring successive generations of musicians to connect, collaborate and create.  
Charity number 310007  
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**UNIVERSITY  
OF LONDON**

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## 1. SCOPE

- 1.1 This policy applies to all courses delivered by the Royal Academy of Music. Further detail is available in the Academy's Regulations.
- 1.2 With reference to information, legislation and guidance from the Office for Students, Quality Assurance Agency and UUK this policy contains information on admissions requirements and processes, including where responsibility for decision-making lies within the Academy.
- 1.3 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Academy's regulations and with other supporting policies which are available on the Academy's website, including:
  - Royal Academy of Music Access and Participation Plan
  - Equality and Diversity Policy
  - Safeguarding policies

## 2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 The Admissions Board has overall responsibility for making decisions about admissions to the Academy. Occasionally the Admissions Board will delegate responsibility to the Principal or another member of the Senior Management Team to make offers to candidates but these decisions will always be formally ratified by the Admissions Board in line with the appropriate entry criteria.
- 2.2 The operation of admissions is overseen by the Registrar and Director of Student Operations and carried out by the Admissions Team. This includes but is not limited to: providing up to date information on the Academy's educational information, dealing with programme-related enquiries, arranging the London and International auditions, processing applications, communication of offers, supporting applicants and offer holders, providing financial advice, visa advice and assisting with any queries, complaints and appeals that may arise.
- 2.3 In arriving at an admissions decision, the Admissions Board will give consideration to all aspects of an applicant's profile, including:
  - Performance at audition
  - The quality of the portfolio (composition candidates)
  - Research degrees: the research proposal and accompanying recordings (performance candidates), coupled with performance at interview (shortlisted candidates).
  - Programme assessment report
  - Potential to benefit from the programme
  - Academic qualifications
  - Music qualifications
  - Previous performance experience
  - References

### 3. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 3.1 The Royal Academy of Music is committed to operating a fair, transparent and professional admissions process which runs in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. No applicant will be discriminated against on the basis of their gender, race, ethnic origin, nationality, disability, sexuality, marital status, caring or parental responsibility, age or beliefs on any matters such as religion or politics.

### 4. FAIR ADMISSIONS

- 4.1 Because of the practical and performance-nature of the Academy's programmes, all applicants are considered via a practice-based assessment, or are required to submit work for assessment, in the case of composition. This approach to highly-tailored admissions decisions, based on a thorough assessment of each applicant – in person in the vast majority of cases – ensures that the primary consideration for entry to the Academy is evidence of professional performing potential and every applicant is assessed equally and in-depth.
- 4.2 In supporting fair admissions to the Academy and in compliance with the principles of consumer protection law, as set out by the Competitions and Markets Authority we will:
- Accurately describe programmes on the website, in the prospectus and through other marketing and promotional material
  - Provide up-to-date information for all programmes on the Academy's website
  - Encourage applications from those with the motivation and ability to succeed in our programmes
  - Assess each application individually against the agreed entry criteria
  - Provide transparency in the admissions process
  - Provide a means of auditioning for Academy programmes which reflects the international profile of our applicant base, including international audition locations and, where appropriate, opportunities to audition via the online application management system (Accept'd) for international applicants who cannot access a live audition
  - Ensure that all auditions are normally assessed by a minimum of two people who are appropriately trained in admissions procedures for taught programmes; and for research degrees a minimum of six on the shortlist review panel and a minimum of three staff for the interview.
  - Provide application fee waivers and subsidise travel costs to ensure that applicants from a low-income background (meeting relevant criteria) are not prevented from auditioning on grounds of affordability; and,
  - Provide a range of financial support measures, including bursary provision for Home undergraduate students from low-income households and bursary support to eligible international and postgraduate students, to ensure that affordability does not become a barrier to enrolment.

## 5. APPLICANTS WITH DISABILITIES

- 5.1 The Academy encourages and welcomes applications from those with disabilities. Applicants are invited to disclose any disabilities at the point of application. This information will be held within the Registry for the purposes of planning support and data monitoring.
- 5.2 Other than entry criteria that are essential skills, experience, knowledge or understanding for a programme, the Academy will make reasonable adjustments for disabled candidates in accordance with the Equality Act (2010).
- 5.3 Applicants who have a disability or specific additional needs in order to audition or apply are invited to contact the Admissions Team to discuss their specific requirements, which may include special arrangements for the audition/interview. In any event, the Admissions Team will, as a matter of course, write to all applicants who declare a disability or additional needs on the application form, and may refer the applicant to the Academy's Disability Advisor for additional support and guidance where appropriate.

## 6. STUDENTS UNDER THE AGE OF 18

- 6.1 The minimum age for study is 18 by 1 September in the year of joining the Academy and the Academy does not normally admit students under the age of 18 years. All students, irrespective of age, are treated equally and provided with the same support facilities, both academic and pastoral.
- 6.2 However, where it is felt that special arrangements need to be put in place for students under 18, the Academy will ensure that these are provided. The Academy has a duty of care to protect such students from abuse. In all cases such abuse will be reported to the appropriate authorities both within and outside the institution.
- 6.3 The law considers that everyone under the age of 18 is a child, and the Academy therefore requires the permission of the student's parent or legal guardian for them to attend a study programme here.

## 7. APPLICANTS WITH CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS

- 7.1 The Academy believes that an unspent criminal conviction should not automatically prevent someone from studying. Disclosure is not a requirement of the application process, but we do encourage applicants to disclose information pre-enrolment so that they can be fully supported throughout their studies. Please note that applicants requiring a Student Visa are required to disclose this to the Academy as part of the visa application process, as it may impact on their ability to study in the UK.
- 7.2 Applicants whose conviction may mean that they require additional support in order to apply or to study should contact a member of the Admissions Team so that appropriate arrangements can be discussed and put in place.
- 7.3 If a DBS check is required for a course or part of a course and identifies a criminal conviction, the Academy will consider, based on the evidence, whether the nature of the conviction may prevent an applicant from undertaking their course, and whether an applicant poses an unacceptable risk to the Academy community. In most cases a conviction is unlikely to be a barrier to study. However, if the risk is assessed as too high then a place may not be offered or may be rescinded.

- 7.4 Information on criminal convictions will be treated in strict confidence as sensitive personal data, and only seen by staff directly involved in the decision on admission (normally the Deputy Principal or Dean of Students, Registrar and Director of Student Operations, and Assistant Registrar (Admissions and Student Financial Awards)).

## 8. MATURE STUDENTS

- 8.1 Applications from mature students, i.e. over the age of 21 at entry to undergraduate programmes or over the age of 25 to postgraduate programmes, are welcomed. Successful mature applicants, as all other applicants, must satisfy the auditioning/interviewing panels that they have the ability and potential to cope with the demands of the course which they wish to pursue.
- 8.2 Whilst selection procedures will still be applied, consideration will be given to relevant experience in accordance with the Academy's Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning policy.

## 9. ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

- 9.1 The Academy welcomes applications from students holding a broad range of qualifications and will use independently published guidelines recognised within the United Kingdom such as ENIC when considering the equivalence of qualifications.
- 9.2 The Academy's entrance criteria are reviewed on a regular basis and up-to-date entrance criteria for all programmes are publicly available on the Academy's website.
- 9.3 As a minimum, applicants for full time undergraduate programmes will be expected to have been educated to General Certificate of Education Advanced level (GCE A Level) or equivalent. Postgraduate applicants will normally have achieved, or be working towards achieving, an honours degree, although equivalent professional experience will also be taken into account.

## 10. ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

- 10.1 English is the language of instruction at the Academy, and an acceptable command of the English language is essential for all programmes. Applicants whose first language is not English may be required to demonstrate their language proficiency in accordance with the requirements set out for Academy programmes (<https://www.ram.ac.uk/study/next-step/entry-requirements>).
- 10.2 The tests that the Academy will accept are published on our website. English Language certificates must be verifiable through an online service (as for IELTS, Pearson and TOEFL) or else must be provided as an original certificate. English language certificates will not be accepted if they are more than two years old.
- 10.3 The Academy's English Language entry requirements are published on our website.

## 11. THE APPLICATION PROCESS

- 11.1 All applicants are required to apply via UCAS Conservatoires.
- 11.2 Applicants are encouraged to observe the 'on time' deadlines in order to ensure equal consideration of their application. Late applications will be considered on an individual

basis if there are still places available on the relevant programme and within the relevant principal study department.

## 12. THE AUDITION

- 12.1 Auditions at the Academy normally comprise of a performance/portfolio assessment and a programme assessment (interview) for candidates who achieve the required standard in their performance or portfolio assessment.
- 12.2 Detailed guidance on additional department-specific requirements will be provided on the Academy's website and kept up to date via annual review.
- 12.3 Research degree applicants are normally assessed on the submitted portfolio of materials and research proposal, followed by an interview for shortlisted candidates. An audition may be required for performance candidates.

## 13. COMMUNICATION OF DECISIONS

- 13.1 Applicants will receive notification of the decision on their audition/application initially via their UCAS Conservatoires Hub. If they are to be made an offer of a place, the Hub details will specify any conditions of entry that they are expected to meet and the date by which these conditions must be met in order to take up that place. The conditions of entry may include, but are not limited to, academic; non-academic; and English language proficiency. The offer will also detail the tuition fee, confirm fee status and will include confirmation of any entrance scholarship offer made.
- 13.2 An applicant will be expected to respond to an offer through UCAS Conservatoires.
- 13.3 For offers made before Christmas in any given year, the deadline for accepting or declining an offer will usually be the end of January in the following year if the applicant has received decisions from all their UCAS Conservatoire choices. Applicants should note the 'Decline by Default' dates which will automatically decline their offer if no response has been received in the system by that date. The Decline by Default dates are published by UCAS Conservatoires on their website and notified to applicants via their Hub.
- 13.4 The Academy will communicate only with the applicant, unless they have given consent for the Academy to discuss their application/audition with another person (e.g. a parent or guardian).

## 14. UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

- 14.1 Entry to the Royal Academy of Music is extremely competitive with limited places in particular departments and which will vary in number year on year, The Academy gives no undertaking to admit every suitably qualified applicant to a programme of study.
- 14.2 All applications are considered by the Admissions Board.
- 14.3 Unsuccessful applicants, or those who do not take up their place, may reapply to the Royal Academy of Music in a subsequent year. It is not normally possible to audition for the same principal study more than once in the same audition session.

## 15. VISA REQUIREMENTS

- 15.1 As part of the Academy's Home Office Student Visa Sponsor Licence, the Academy is required to view and maintain copies of all students' current passports and visas (valid for study at the Royal Academy of Music) along with qualification documents (including certified translations if these are not in English) on the basis of which admission was granted. The Royal Academy of Music undertakes these checks as part of the enrolment process upon arrival, although copies may be requested in order to sponsor students for their entry visa. We cannot permit a student who requires a student visa to enrol/register at the Academy without undertaking this process. In addition to the documentation required as part of our Home Office Student Visa Sponsor Licence commitments we will also store any other documentation sent to us in support of an application.
- 15.2 Applicants whose first language is not English may be required to undertake an English language assessment in order to satisfy Home Office visa regulations for entry into the UK onto a course. For further information, please see the Academy's guidance for applicants requiring a student visa on our website at: <https://www.ram.ac.uk/student-life/international/visas-and-immigration>.

## 16. DEFERRED ENTRY

- 16.1 The Academy does not normally permit applicants who have been made an offer to defer their place to the following year. It is expected that the candidate would re-audition the following year.

## 17. CHANGES TO THE PROGRAMME OFFER

- 17.1 Rarely, the Academy may withdraw or amend a programme/module. Where such changes occur, the Academy undertakes to inform applicants who are likely to be affected in as timely a manner as possible, and to suggest alternatives where this is possible, in accordance with legislation published by the Competitions and Markets Authority.

## 18. RESPONSIBILITY OF APPLICANTS IN THE APPLICATION PROCESS

- 18.1 It is the responsibility of applicants to provide full and accurate information in an application and to notify the Academy of any changes or corrections to the original application.
- 18.2 By accepting an offer of admission, the applicant agrees to abide by the Regulations of the Academy.
- 18.3 In the light of additional information which was not available at the time of selection, an offer may be amended or, in exceptional circumstances, withdrawn. The Academy also reserves the right to correct errors where they have been made in the communication of decisions and offers. However, an offer made in error where all conditions have already been satisfied will only be withdrawn with the applicant's consent.



- 18.4 The Academy reserves the right to exclude a candidate who is considered on justifiable grounds to be unsuitable for a place on a particular programme according to individual circumstances.

## 19. CHANGES OF APPLICANT CIRCUMSTANCE

- 19.1 The Academy's decisions on applications are made in good faith on the basis that all of the information provided by applicants is complete and accurate. Should there be any change in circumstances after an application is submitted, it is the applicant's responsibility to inform the Academy as soon as possible.
- 19.2 Applicants are also required to inform the Academy in writing should their personal details (such as email address, name, contact address, telephone number) change and to update their UCAS Conservatoires record accordingly. Failure to update the Academy on any changes may result in candidates missing important correspondence. The Academy will not be held liable for any correspondence which fails due to incomplete or incorrect contact details which have been provided by an applicant.

## 20. MISREPRESENTATION BY AN APPLICANT/ FRAUD

- 20.1 The Academy reserves the right to dismiss an application, withdraw an offer of a place and/or revoke a student's registration should it be discovered that a false statement has been made or significant information has been omitted from the application.
- 20.2 The Academy is vigilant against fraud, and has the right to give outside organisations, including the Police, the Home Office and local authorities, information from the applicant's form if legally required to do so.
- 20.3 Applications which have been flagged via the UCAS Conservatoires similarity detection service will be annotated in the student application file which will be available to the Admissions Meeting when making their decision. Any applicants whose application is identified as having similarities with other sources will be contacted to discuss the reasons for the similarities and may be asked to resubmit before an offer can be made.

## 21. ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING (APEL)

- 21.1 The Royal Academy of Music recognises that significant knowledge, skills and understanding relevant to our core programmes of study can be developed as a result of learning opportunities outside formal educational frameworks such as through employment, voluntary work, or individual activities and interests.
- 21.2 This recognition promotes lifelong learning, social inclusion and wider participation; above all, it ensures that the Academy provides equal access opportunities to gifted and motivated applicants from all backgrounds.
- 21.3 The Academy has developed strong and clear mechanisms for identifying, assessing and formally acknowledging prior learning, including prior certificated learning and prior experiential learning. Prior certificated learning refers to learning and achievement that was assessed and certificated before the start of the programme of study. Prior experiential learning refers to learning and achievement through experience and critical reflection outside the context of a formal programme of study.

It is crucial that proper consideration be given in the accreditation process to the extent of learning and achievement through experience, not just the relevance of the experience alone

- 21.4 The Academy's APEL policy provides the framework by which requests for APEL are considered.

## 22. ASSESSMENT FEES

- 22.1 All applicants must pay the appropriate assessment fee before an audition or interview can be granted. Assessment fees may be waived following proof of receipt of one of the applicable Government benefits prior to application. We can also support audition/interview travel costs for UK domiciled students under 27 years old and who are receiving the assessment fee waiver. This is for one person's standard-class public transport return travel from their home to the Academy. Applications for assessment fee waivers or travel costs cannot be made after the audition/interview has taken place. Please see our website for further information.
- 22.2 Refunds of on-time assessment fees are not normally given except in cases where the Academy has been unable to organise an audition/interview or reschedule an audition/interview as a result of illness. Any requests for a refund on grounds of illness must be supported by a medical note.
- 22.3 Your application is processed as soon as you pay your assessment fee. It is therefore non-refundable if you decide to withdraw at a later date.
- 22.4 The assessment fee covers a range of costs associated with the process either live or online, including the preparation of audition and portfolio submissions for assessment by panels, staffing of panels, and the processing of audition/interview outcomes to every applicant (at least 2500 auditions and interviews every year).

## 23. UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS

- 23.1 Applicants can request a copy of their assessment data as recorded in Accepted, via an email to [registry@ram.ac.uk](mailto:registry@ram.ac.uk).
- 23.2 We assess everyone who submits a complete on-time application, and our assessment process is a diagnostic one, to enable the Academy to make decisions about the offer of places, rather than a consultative one. We are therefore unable to provide detailed feedback to applicants.

## 24. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

- 24.1 Decisions by the Admissions Board on the admission of applicants to the Academy are final. There is no appeal against such decisions on the basis of disagreement with the judgement of the relevant panel in reaching their decision.
- 24.2 The Academy will consider a complaint relating to an application for admission only if there is clear evidence of a procedural irregularity in the way the application has been processed.
- 24.3 Complaints falling within the scope of paragraph 23.2 above should be addressed to the Registrar and Director of Student Operations in the first instance, and should be submitted within seven working days of receipt of the outcome of an application. Complaints received after that period will not be considered.

- 24.4 The Registrar and Director of Student Operations or their nominee will investigate the complaint and respond formally within fourteen working days of receipt. The terms of such an investigation are at the Registrar and Director of Student Operations' discretion.
- 24.5 The decision of the Registrar and Director of Student Operations shall be final. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education does not handle complaints relating to admissions.

## 25. DATA PROTECTION

- 25.1 For information on how the Academy processes candidates' personal data, please see our Privacy Statement, which is available at <https://www.ram.ac.uk/privacy-policy>