

# Programme Specifications: Professional Diploma (Performance or Composition)

Updated May 2020

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## HE LEVEL 7

1	Awarding Institution:	Royal Academy of Music
2	Teaching Institution:	Royal Academy of Music
3	Final Award:	Prof Dip in Performance or Composition
4	Programme Title:	Professional Diploma in Performance or Composition
5	Date of Production:	2014

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## 6 Programme Aims

- a) To provide musicians with a bridge to a successful career in performance/composition.
- b) To encourage the development of particular professional specialisms.
- c) To provide a programme of study appropriate to the specialised needs of individual students.
- d) To encourage the development of performers/composers with distinctive and original artistic personalities.
- e) To create an artistic and educational environment where performers/composers can reach the highest possible standards and consolidate their technical skills.
- f) To give regular opportunities for performance in wide range of contexts, both competitive and non-competitive or to give regular opportunities for students' works to be performed and for them to collaborate with other artists.
- g) To stimulate habits of self-awareness and self-criticism that will prepare students for the challenges of the music profession.
- h) To encourage students to develop repertoire interests that will help promote their performance careers or to help students become aware of current compositional trends and how these connect to their own interests.

## 7 Programme Intended Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the programme students should be able to demonstrate the following:

- 7.1 Knowledge and Understanding – a student will be able to:
- a) demonstrate specific knowledge of the repertoire related to their chosen specialism, and an understanding of appropriate performance practices and traditions or demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of a specific range of compositional techniques.
  - b) demonstrate an understanding of specific principles of style and interpretation as demanded by performance at the highest level or demonstrate knowledge of specific compositional practices.
  - c) show awareness of the standards and demands of a specific area (or of specific areas) of the musical profession.
  - d) show awareness of the demands of concert-giving as related to the chosen specialism, including, as appropriate, those relating to performance, music publication, recording, and promotion.
- 7.2 Subject-Specific Skills and Other Attributes (Performers) – a student will be able to:
- e) design and deliver a recital programme (or its equivalent) to a high professional standard
  - f) demonstrate a distinctive interpretative personality which is convincing in live performance
  - g) demonstrate confidence in adapting presentational skills to the demands of different performance and presentation contexts.
  - h) participate actively in organising and delivering concerts to a high professional standard.
  - i) show efficiency in organising and prioritising a busy performance and practice schedule.
  - j) to participate actively in a range of specific professional development activities.
- 7.3 Subject-Specific Skills and Other Attributes (Composers) – student will be able to:
- k) deliver a specific portfolio of compositions to a high professional standard.
  - l) demonstrate a distinctive compositional personality in a specific musical context, or contexts.
  - m) demonstrate confidence in adapting compositional processes to the demands of different performance contexts.
  - n) participate actively in organising and delivering performances to a high professional standard.
  - o) show skills in producing scores, performance parts, and, where appropriate, recordings of their compositions to a high professional level.

- p) show confidence in articulating compositional choices, both in verbal and non-verbal ways.
- q) to participate actively in a range of specific professional development activities.

7.4 Key and Transferable Skills – a student will be able to:

- r) communicate intentions effectively whether working one-to-one or in a team.
- s) respond to criticism in a positive fashion, while maintaining confidence in their own creative work.
- t) take responsibility for managing their own learning and professional development.
- u) evaluate and assess their own abilities, and to know when to seek advice or feedback.
- v) be aware of key career opportunities and the need for forward planning.

8 Delivery and Assessment of the Programme

8.1 Learning, Teaching and Assessment Map (and their ILOs)

Learning and Teaching Processes (designed to allow students to achieve the intended learning outcomes)	Assessment methods (designed to allow students to demonstrate that they have achieved the intended learning outcomes)
One-to-one Principal Study Lessons (a,b,c,d,e,f,g,h,i,j,k,l,m,n,o,p,q,r,s,t,u,v)	Final Assessment (Recital, Composition Portfolio or Other format) (a,b,c,d,e,f,g,h,i,j,k,l,m,n,o,p,q,r,s,t,u,v)
Performance Classes (a,b,c,d,e,f,i,r,s)	Professional Skills Profile (varies according to department)
Directed Ensemble Coaching (orchestra, etc.) (a,b,c,d,g,h,i,j,s,u)	
Ensemble Coaching (a,b,c,d,f,g,i,j,r,s,t,u)	
Masterclasses (a,b,c,d,f,g,r,s)	
Lectures/Seminars (a,b,c,d,e,k,l,m,o,p,t,v)	

8.2 Learning and Teaching Processes

The programme uses a range of teaching methods to ensure that students' learning processes are stimulating, challenging, diverse and complementary. The principal modes of teaching are described below (composers and performers will have different needs):

- Individual lessons for Principal Study. Regular one-to-one work with a Principal Study teacher underpins the core aims of the programme. This working 'environment' (which is a defining feature of specialist conservatoire training) is designed to foster the passing on of discipline-specific professional/artistic practices, and to enable students to develop key professional skills that relate directly to their individual abilities and artistry: musical technique, interpretation skills, repertoire building, programme/portfolio building; audition techniques, and so on. The reflective nature of the relationship between teacher and student is a key element in the development of reflective, critical and informed attitudes to performance.
- Performance classes provide a bridge between one-to-one tuition, masterclasses, and concert performances. They allow students to present work-in-progress and receive informal feedback from departmental staff and from their peers. They are designed to enable students to gain insights into technical and interpretative issues, and to develop their critical faculties in relation to their own creative processes and performances, and those of others.
- Lectures provide a forum for the dissemination of ideas, information and skills to the end of establishing a sound and sustainable knowledge base. They serve as models for organizing materials into a coherent argument.
- Seminars are designed to encourage the sharing of ideas and the development of structured arguments and debating skills. They encourage students to develop their critical faculties and presentational skills through the presentation and defence of their own views, together with the opportunity to critique the views of their peers and tutor.
- Masterclasses provide students with opportunities to present work to a leading visiting artist, normally in an 'open' setting (open to other students and members of the public). Like performance classes, masterclasses complement one-to-one tuition by widening the range of interpretative judgment to which the students are subject. They are designed to expose students to the very highest international professional standards and provide additional high-profile performance opportunities.
- Ensemble and Directed Ensemble coaching is the means by which small or large groups of performers receive tuition in preparation for concert performances. Rehearsals and performances in large ensembles are designed to develop: (i). an ability to work co-operatively; (ii). a sense of professional discipline and rigour; (iii). the particular technical and musical skills of large ensemble performance; (iv). knowledge of the repertoire. Small ensemble work is mostly student-directed, with periodic coaching by a member of staff. This mode of study is designed to develop: (i). close working relationships that are essential for high-level chamber music-making; (ii). ability to work autonomously; (iii). ability to solve interpretative and technical issues to the end of developing coherent performances; (iv). knowledge of the repertoire. Lectures/Seminars provide a forum for the dissemination of ideas, information and skills to the end of establishing a

sound and sustainable knowledge base. They serve as models for organising materials into a coherent argument.

### 8.3 Assessment

Two precepts underpin the programme's assessment strategy: (i). the function of assessment is to enable students to demonstrate that they have achieved the programme's intended learning outcomes at an appropriate level; (ii). assessment promotes and supports student learning. All components have appropriate descriptive marking guidelines whose function is to ensure comparability of standards across all levels and activities within the programme, to demonstrate these standards to external bodies, and to promote transparency within the Academy. The varied assessment methods used in the programme are designed to provide the most appropriate means of evaluating student achievement, to promote different types of learning experience, and to avoid excessive formal examining.

- Final Assessment (Recital, Composition Portfolio or Other format). This is the culmination of the programme and is the primary assessment method for the Principal Study component. It enables students to demonstrate their achievements in relation to a broad range of the intended learning outcomes, including those concerned with technical and interpretative skills, communication and presentational skills, and programme design skills; as such it is the 'acid test' of their summative achievement as creative musicians during the programme. The assessment strategy for each student is approved individually at Postgraduate Programmes Board.
- Professional Skills Profile. This is formatively assessed (feedback marks only) and activities vary according to students' individual specialisms. The principal aim of assessment here is to ensure students understand the requirements of the profession. The various assessment strategies are designed to complement the summative assessment of the Final Assessment and to represent the full range of Principal Study skills required in the profession. The Professional Skills Profile is also vital to the monitoring the development of key and transferable skills.

## 9 Programme Structure

The Prof.Dip in Performance or Composition is a one-year (9 month) full-time programme. There is no provision for part-time study. Students will normally have already received a master's degree or equivalent.

Summative assessment is based on a Final Assessment (Recital, Composition Portfolio or Other format). A formatively assessed Professional Skills Profile mark will also be given. Credits are awarded as follows: 60 for Professional Skills, and 60 for Principal Study.

## 10 Student Support

Students receive an induction programme which includes: diagnostic testing for placement in appropriate tutorial groups; advice on learning support; an induction into library and IT facilities; guidance on health and safety (including audiometric testing); registration; international student meetings; introduction to senior staff with programme responsibilities; tutorial meeting. Students are supported in all aspects of their subsequent life and work at the Academy throughout the duration of the programme in the following dedicated ways:

- 10.1 Designated Tutor (with responsibility for academic and pastoral support)
- 10.2 Head of Department (with responsibility for the student's Principal Study Department and for overseeing the specific needs of the student in consultation with the Tutor)
- 10.3 Dean of Students (oversees student support, learning resources, recruitment and admissions plus our access and participation activities)
- 10.4 Library (staffed by subject specialists who can advise on sheet music, instrumental and vocal parts, musicological materials, reference works, on-line resources, and materials from the Academy's special collections)
- 10.5 IT Helpdesk
- 10.6 Counsellors (who provide confidential pastoral support as trained professionals)
- 10.7 Disability Advisor: the Disability Advisor and support team are responsible for the implementation of the Academy's Disability Equality Policy and Action Plan
- 10.8 Alexander Technique co-ordinator: The Alexander Technique co-ordinator and support team teach Alexander Technique – an established method to improve posture and prevent repetitive strain injury.
- 10.9 Artist Development Lecturers; provide one-to-one consultations with students and can help with issues such as creating a biography or CV, writing letters to promoters, sourcing funding and contractual issues.
- 10.10 Estates Manager, who advises on student accommodation issues
- 10.11 The Royal Academy of Music Students' Union
- 10.12 The English Language Support team and Helpdesk

## 11 Distinctive Aspects of the Programme

The Academy's focus on excellence in musical performance and creativity is reflected in four distinctive aspects of the programme:

- 11.1 Owing to its competitive entry and international reputation, the programme attracts a cosmopolitan, strongly motivated, and very talented student body which gives participants a realistic sense of the demands required to be at the top of the profession.
- 11.2 The Academy's teaching is delivered by leading professional figures, whether in weekly lessons or in high-profile public masterclasses, so that students are

educated in a culture that engenders the highest professional standards in relation to artistic interpretation and technical discipline.

- 11.3 The programme is designed to enable students to make the most of the educational opportunities afforded by being at the cultural heart of Europe's leading city for musical theatre. This is reflected in the outward looking aspects of the Academy's musical life (including public concerts, research events and the work of Open Academy).
- 11.4 The Academy's world-class collections of string and keyboard instruments, music manuscripts, early printed materials, and other musical artefacts, together with the Galleries and Collections programme of exhibitions and events, provide a rich resource to support and enhance the student learning experience.