

ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC STUDENT PROTECTION PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 2021/22

1 SEPTEMBER 2021

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Version 1

UKPRN 10007835

The Royal Academy of Music moves music forward by inspiring successive generations of musicians to connect, collaborate and create.
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Company registration number RC000438

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**UNIVERSITY
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A Student Protection Plan is a document which aims to ensure that students can continue and complete their studies, or can be compensated if this is not possible.

All registered higher education providers must have a Student Protection Plan in place, which has been approved by the **Office for Students** (OfS).

The Student Protection Plan may come into force in serious instances when it would not be possible for the Academy to continue its educational delivery. It details the steps we would take to manage this and to protect students' interests. Our terms and conditions (Quality Assurance Procedures) set out how we manage smaller changes to programmes that are continuing (including how we consult students). These terms and conditions apply to applicants who have accepted an offer and to enrolled continuing students.

The Academy is committed to informing the student body of any such changes, the reasons for them and action to be taken as early as possible. We will provide relevant options, to allow students to make informed decisions about their studies.

1. ASSESSMENT OF RISKS TO THE CONTINUATION OF YOUR STUDIES AT THE ACADEMY

We have identified the following main risks to the continuation of study for our students, that might require this plan to come into force:

1.1 CLOSURE OF THE ACADEMY OR LOSS OF ACCESS TO FACILITIES

The risk that the Academy as a whole is unable to operate is **very low**.

Our financial performance is strong and we have robust measures in place to monitor this. Cash and general reserves are scrutinised on a termly basis by the Finance & General Purposes Committee to ensure the continuing financial stability of the Academy. We have up to date business continuity procedures in place to respond quickly and flexibly in the event of a catastrophe in order to maintain core learning and teaching and business activities.

1.2 LOSS OR RESTRICTION OF DEGREE AWARDING POWERS

The risk that we would lose the ability to award our own degree is **very low**.

We enjoy stability in terms of our facilities and services to students and we have robust quality assurance procedures in place and embedded throughout our academic framework to monitor academic standards.

1.3 DECISION TO CLOSE A PROGRAMME OF STUDY

The risk that a programme of study would close is **low**.

We operate a small range of programmes for which demand is consistently high. We evaluate our programmes on a 5-year rolling basis to ensure that they remain appropriate to meet the demands of the student market and the profession.

1.4 REMOVAL OF THE STUDENT ROUTE SPONSOR LICENCE

The risk of our losing our student route sponsor licence is **low**.

We have robust monitoring procedures in place with regard to student route compliance. We assure ourselves that we are compliant with UKVI legislation via the appointment of dedicated Admissions Team staff to monitor student route compliance, regular attendance at sector briefings, staff training and internal audits of our controls. Changes to legislation under the student route present a very small risk, however we are able to scale up resource to meet this demand provided we are given sufficient notice.

1.5 DISRUPTION TO TERM TIME ACTIVITY

The risk of disruption to term time activity has been reassessed as **medium** in light of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, which began in March 2020.

1.6 UNEXPECTED DEPARTURE OF KEY MEMBERS OF ACADEMY STAFF

The risk of unexpected departure of key members of staff is **low**.

We generally have a very low staff turnover and departments are structured so that work can be covered by other members of staff as required. Our recruitment processes are swift and effective when we do need to replace members of staff.

2. PROTECTION MEASURES FOR ACADEMY STUDENTS

The measures that we have in place to preserve continuation of study for our students in the event of any of the risks above taking place are as follows:

2.1 CLOSURE OF THE ACADEMY OR LOSS OF ACCESS TO FACILITIES

We have sufficient financial reserves which would enable us to complete an academic year, thereby allowing us time to put in place any necessary mitigations. We also undertake rolling 5-year financial forecasts which provide us with an understanding of our expected financial position in sufficient time to take action to ensure financial stability.

If possible, arrangements would be made to honour our commitment to existing students and teach out the remaining enrolled students if possible, or to transfer them to another institution and refund and compensate according to our terms and conditions.

In the case of an unexpected disaster our business continuity plans would be triggered. We have a shared business continuity plan with other members of the Conservatoires UK network, and we would seek their support in circumstances that did not affect the other members. We have other buildings that we occupy in the local vicinity and these would be part of our continuity arrangements.

In the event that a wider incident (such as a pandemic) meant that the above measures were not appropriate or feasible, we would transfer all teaching provision, (including academic classes and one-to-one teaching) and student support online until we were able to return to normal.

2.2 LOSS OR RESTRICTION OF DEGREE AWARDING POWERS

In the event that this took place we would look to transfer affected students to a different provider and compensate them for any fee differences as necessary. The UK Conservatoires' suite of programmes is very similar and in this respect it is highly likely that an equivalent programme of study could be found at another provider, subject to the availability of places.

2.3 DECISION TO CLOSE A PROGRAMME OF STUDY

We would make arrangements to honour our commitment to existing students, teach out existing students and either transfer new students to an alternative programme within the institution or to a similar programme at another institution. We would refund any tuition fees and compensate students where necessary according to our terms and conditions were this not possible.

In the event that this took place we would look to transfer affected students to a different provider and compensate them for any fee differences as necessary. The UK Conservatoires' suite of programmes is very similar and in this respect it is highly likely that an equivalent programme of study could be found, subject to the availability of places.

2.4 REMOVAL OF THE GRADUATE ROUTE SPONSOR LICENCE

In the event that this took place we would endeavour to temporarily relocate the affected students to an alternative provider, ideally within the network of London-based conservatoires and cover any additional costs incurred as a result of this change.

2.5 DISRUPTION TO TERM TIME ACTIVITY

The Academy's Business Continuity Group oversees the response to major incidents, such as the pandemic with the two key priorities of safety and support, and the continuation of educational delivery. We have robust contingency plans in place to support agile action to ensure business

continuity and that educational delivery can continue. The members of the Business Continuity Group represent a range of stakeholders across the institution and receive training to support their roles in decision-making and action in emergency circumstances.

The Student Union President is a member of the Business Continuity Group and is part of the decision-making process in terms of educational contingency planning and agreement of any necessary changes to Academy operations in response to government guidance.

During the full lockdowns, we adapted to online and blended learning models, ensuring that incoming and continuing students were consulted on and aware of any changes that had to be made to the delivery of classes and other activities.

Provided we are given sufficient warning, we can quickly adapt to ensure that learning and teaching can continue. Measures that we are able to implement to preserve the continuation of learning and teaching are: Online/blended lessons, online tutorial support, changes to repertoire and creative programming to ensure that students could continue to safely participate in ensemble activities, live streamed concerts and final recitals where audiences were not permitted.

In instances where for some reason we had been unable to maintain of quality and teaching quality and standards and enable adequate exams and assessment we would ensure that students received any contact time owed to them, potentially by alternative arrangements which allowed for delivery at an appropriate level and enabled students to meet the learning outcomes of any modules.

Exceptionally we would offer a partial tuition fee refund to cover any missed contact time for which we were unable to make alternative arrangements. In the event that a key department such as the Library was completely inaccessible, we would make arrangements to use the facilities of either one of the other London Conservatoires or the University of London.

In the event of further lockdowns as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, or another issue of similar severity, we now have established mechanisms to quickly transfer learning, teaching and support services online.

2.6 UNEXPECTED DEPARTURE OF KEY MEMBERS OF ACADEMY STAFF

As our teaching model is heavily weighted towards one-to-one tuition and small group classes, there is, in all areas of programme delivery, significant overlap of teaching expertise. This ensures that expertise in particular specialist areas is protected against single points of failure were a member of staff to be unable to teach at short notice. We recognise that some students will have applied to and enrolled at the Academy in order to study with a particular instrumental teacher and with this in mind we have a coherent and transparent system to transfer students to other teachers in consultation with the student.

3. REFUNDS AND COMPENSATION

The Academy has Tuition fee refund and compensation terms and conditions which can be found [here](#).

We consider there is a very small chance that the Academy will be unable to preserve continuation of study. If this did arise it is extremely unlikely that it would impact on a significant number of students. As a result we believe the Academy has sufficient cash reserves to provide refunds and compensation where necessary.

4. COMMUNICATION OF THIS PLAN

We publicise our Student Protection Plan to current and future students by publishing it on the [Policies and Procedures](#) area of our website. We make reference to the Student Protection Plan in our Quality Assurance Procedures, which set out the processes for approving changes to programmes of study, to ensure that due consideration is given to aspects of consumer protection law when proposing changes.

We will review the Student Protection Plan annually by adding it as a standing item on the agenda for Academic Board, which will also ensure that student representatives are involved in the review of this document.

In the event that any aspects of the student protection plan needed to be implemented, we would communicate with relevant students as soon as possible in order to inform them of the situation, any implications and available options, making clear reference to our terms and conditions. In the events that consent needed to be obtained from students we would give them due notice and a reasonable time frame in which to respond.