



ADMISSIONS POLICY

Procedure owner	Registry
Category	Regulatory Compliance
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1. Scope

- 1.1. This policy applies to all programmes of study delivered by the Royal Academy of Music. Further detail is available in the Academy's Regulations.
- 1.2. Drawing on the Quality Assurance Agency's UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Chapter B2: Recruitment, selection and admission to higher education), 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
 - Policy for students under the age of 18 years

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 Academic Registrar 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 (or, in the case of composition candidates, the portfolio assessment)

- Programme assessment report
- Potential to benefit from the programme
- Academic qualifications
- Music qualifications
- English language proficiency (if appropriate)
- 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. In recruiting and selecting students, the only consideration must be that the applicant meets, or is likely to meet, the requirements of the programme. These requirements being met, 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 normally invited for an audition, or 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 DVD or 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
- Provide audition fee waivers to ensure that applicants from a low income background (meeting specific criteria) are not barred from entrance auditions on grounds of affordability; and,

- Provide a range of financial support measures, including generous fee waiver provision for UK/EU 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 special need are invited to contact the Admissions Manager to discuss their specific requirements, which may include special arrangements for the audition/interview. In any event, the Admissions Officer will, as a matter of course, write to all applicants who declare a disability or special need 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 Academy does not normally admit students under the age of 18 years. In most cases this will be for a temporary period in their first year of undergraduate study during which time they will normally celebrate their 18th birthday before the 1st of January of the following calendar year. 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. UK 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 an individual 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 international applicants requiring a Tier 4 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.

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 NARIC 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. We will also consider Music qualifications at Grade 8 to be equivalent to Music A Level, in order that no applicant with the talent to succeed at the Academy is barred from consideration where they may have non-traditional entry qualifications. 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 language is the medium 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 (<http://www.ram.ac.uk/english-language-requirements>).
- 10.2. The Academy will accept either the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or the Pearson Academic Test. English Language certificates must be verifiable through an online service (as for IELTS and Pearson) 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.

Following the entrance interview, for candidates whose first language is not English usually a language test is required. However, the interviewer's selection of "Language Test = N" indicates their assessment, based on the interview and application documents, that the candidate's English language skills are at least at the minimum level required for entry to the proposed study programme (minimum CEFR B2 in reading, writing, listening and speaking).

11. The application process

- 11.1. All applicants for undergraduate, postgraduate taught and year-in programmes are required to apply via UCAS Conservatoires.
- 11.2. Postgraduate research applicants are required to apply directly to the Academy following the process detailed on the Academy's website.
- 11.3. 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.
- 11.4 Applicants who audition in our Asia centres are strongly advised to seek support from the relevant centre representative with regard to their application and audition.

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. Undergraduate applicants also undergo a diagnostic musicianship assessment and a written paper comprising of a harmonisation exercise and essay question.
- 12.2. Detailed guidance on the audition requirements for specific departments will be provided on the Academy's website and kept up to date via annual review.

13. Communication of decisions

- 13.1. Applicants will receive notification of the decision on his or her audition/application initially via UCAS Conservatoires 'Track'. If he or she is to be made an offer of a place, they will receive an email which specifies any conditions of entry that he or she is 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 and will include confirmation of any entrance scholarship offer made.
- 13.2. An applicant will be expected to respond to an offer using the appropriate method e.g. online through UCAS Conservatoires if this was used as the means of application, or directly to the Academy in the case of postgraduate research applicants.
- 13.3. For offers made before Christmas in any given year, the deadline for accepting or declining an offer is 31 January in the following calendar year. Applicants applying via UCAS Conservatoires should take especial note of the 'Decline by Default' dates which will automatically decline their offer if no response has been received in the system by that date, provided that they are not awaiting the outcome of auditions at other institutions. The Decline by Default dates are published by UCAS Conservatoires on their website and notified to applicants via Track.
- 13.4. The Academy will communicate only with the applicant, unless he or she has given consent for the Academy to discuss his or her 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, and 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. International applicants and visa requirements

- 15.1. As part of the Academy's Home Office Tier 4 Sponsor Licence, the Academy is required to view and maintain copies of all international students' current passports and visas (valid for study at the Royal Academy of Music) along with original 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 international students for their entry visa. We cannot permit an international student to enrol/register at the Academy without undertaking this process. In addition to the documentation required as part of our Home Office Tier 4 Sponsor Licence commitments we will also store any other documentation sent to us in support of an application.
- 15.2. International 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 programme of study. For further information, please see the Academy's guidance for international applicants on our website at: <http://www.ram.ac.uk/immigration-advice>.

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 organizations, 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 Board 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 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. Audition fees

22.1. All applicants must pay the appropriate audition/assessment fee before an audition can be granted. Audition/assessment fees may be waived on grounds of affordability where this is supported by documentary evidence as set out by the Academy. Information on fee waivers is available on request from the Academy's Registry.

22.2. Refunds of audition fees are not normally given except in cases where the Academy has been unable to organise an audition, or reschedule an audition as a result of illness. Any requests for a refund on grounds of illness must be supported by a medical note.

23. Feedback for unsuccessful applicants

23.1. Feedback on the applicant's audition is available under the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation. To request a copy of their audition feedback, a request must be submitted to Registry@ram.ac.uk by 31st January following the auditions period.

23.2 The Academy will not enter into a dialogue with applicants regarding the provision of feedback. Our programmes are highly competitive and feedback may simply state the fact that other applicants were stronger or that the programme is not, in our opinion, suitable for them.

24. Complaints and appeals

24.1. Decisions on the admission of applicants to the Academy by authorised Academy officers are final. There is no appeal against such decisions on the basis of disagreement with the academic 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 and substantive 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 Academic Registrar 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 Academic Registrar or his/her nominee will investigate the complaint and respond formally within fourteen working days of receipt. The terms of such an investigation are at the Academic Registrar's discretion.
- 24.5. The decision of the Academic Registrar shall be final. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education does not handle complaints relating to admissions.

25. Data protection

- 25.1. By submitting an online application or signing the application form applicants give permission to the Academy to process their personal data, including any "sensitive personal data" (as defined under GDPR) including, without limitation, information relating to ethnicity, race and any disability, for the purposes of managing the Academy's recruitment, selection and admissions process.

In addition to maintaining student records, this information will also be used to make statutory returns to bodies such as the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and may be passed to the Home Office in respect of international student admissions.