

Royal College of Music Knowledge Exchange Concordat Action Plan

July 2021

Section 1: Summary of institutional strategic objectives for knowledge exchange

Please summarise your institutional strategic objectives for knowledge exchange.

At the highest institutional level, the RCM's recently refreshed Vision Statement – 2027 lays out our mission:

'The Royal College of Music provides music education and professional training at the highest international level, through commitment to the transformative power of music and its own founding principles of excellence, advocacy and access. As a natural first choice for the most talented students from around the world, RCM is consistently recognised as an international leader in developing versatile, innovative and influential creators, communicators and curators within the world of music and beyond. It embraces the ideals of an inclusive, open and just society, supporting students from diverse social, economic and ethnic backgrounds. It fulfils its obligation as a relevant, persuasive and world-leading advocate for the future of music, as an agent for positive and meaningful cultural change.'

This overarching mission directly informs the College's strategic objectives for KE, which are set out in the College's Research & KE Strategy (updated 2020) and the College's Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy as follows:

1. Connecting in meaningful and sustainable ways with more diverse audiences and learners
2. Developing the College's role as a vibrant cultural hub that has a positive impact on its local community

A core aim of the College's Research and KE Strategy is 'to maximise the beneficial impact of RCM research for the wider public good.' In the latest refresh of the RKE policy the following action was added:

'the RCM will develop and sustain a cross-institutional Public Engagement policy that ensures it provides innovation, leadership and high-quality support in a wide range of KE activities that enhance the communities and organisations it works with.'

3. Providing sector-leading employability opportunities for our students

From the RCM Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy: 'Our HE programmes foster an entrepreneurial mindset by embedding career development training opportunities in the formal curriculum and informally through the RCM's Creative Careers Centre.' 'Furthermore, we connect our programmes with RCM's Research and Knowledge Exchange expertise, enabling students at all levels to engage with and learn from cutting-edge research, active researchers, and professional insights.'

4. Maximising the KE potential of our staff community, which includes a high number of industry professionals and internationally-leading researchers.

In the RKE Strategy the College sets out its ambitions to 'harness and exploit the potential of the RCM's communities of musicians, educators, production professionals, public artistic programme, outreach work, etc. and its physical and digital resources...to support excellent research.' This includes support for developing and sustaining collaborative research relationships with national and international HEIs, non- HE organisations and industry organisations, including those outside music and the performing arts.

The Strategy recognises the need for 'clear policies on the types of KE that we undertake working with staff, students,

collaborators and beneficiaries so that KE policies are understood and operationalised.'

The College is also committed to supporting 'Category A staff to solicit and undertake relevant professional external consultancy work on a commercial basis, contracted through the RCM Research Office.'

Supplemental Materials

[Vision Statement.pdf](#)

Filename: Vision Statement.pdf **Size:** 59.6 kB [Research Strategy.pdf](#)

Filename: Research Strategy.pdf **Size:** 171.1 kB [RCM Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy.pdf](#)

Filename: RCM Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy.pdf **Size:** 128.9 kB [RCM Institutional Strategic Objectives Summary.pdf](#)

Filename: [RCM Institutional Strategic Objectives Summary](#).pdf **Size:** 60.2 kB

Section 2: Self-evaluation summary (including gap analysis)

Approach:

The self-evaluation exercise was carried out during and post the KEF2021 submission process, when gaps in the RCM's articulation and embedding of KE strategy and evaluation processes were identified. The gap analysis was drawn up by the Research & Knowledge Exchange Manager and the Director of Programmes using comparisons with other institutions in our KEF cluster.

Factors emerging from the KEF exercise (see <https://kef.ac.uk/data/10007778>):

The RCM scored well in public engagement (drawn from HEBCI data), but needs to articulate a holistic institutional approach to public engagement, bringing together underlying strategies under an umbrella Public Engagement Strategy that drives key priority actions below.

We work closely with local schools and families through outreach programmes, but it is not clear how and why the College positions itself in the locality. Taking inspiration from the civic university movement, we propose becoming a 'civic conservatoire' as part of our EDI agenda, to enhance our work with and for local communities.

Some departments are very strong in self-evaluation but others can develop or improve. We need to develop a stronger evidence base to assess the impact and potential of KE activities and communicate this to a wider audience.

Key priority actions:

We have aligned these to our institutional strategic objectives and our institutional vision for KE, specifically drawing on the gap analysis. The development of an RCM Public Engagement Strategy and an internal KE Group were included in the latest update of the Research & KE Strategy, giving a clear indication of our intention to create a robust KE environment at the RCM over the next six years.

Aligned to our strategic objectives, the RCM's 5 priority actions across the 8 KEC Principles are to:

1. Design and implement an integrated, institution-wide approach to public engagement [aligned with 'Mission', 'Policies and Processes' and 'Engagement']
2. Develop the College's role as a 'civic conservatoire' by strengthening our relationships with the local community, reaching out to under-represented groups and making a positive contribution to local regeneration ['Engagement']
3. Prepare students for professional life through high-quality, integrated professional and entrepreneurial opportunities ['Capacity Building']
4. Maximise staff engagement with KE across the RCM community ['Capacity Building', 'Recognition and Rewards']
5. Strengthen KE data collection, monitoring and evaluation to evidence impact and share good practice internally and externally ['Continuous Improvement', 'Evaluating Success']

Recent successes:

Our recent KEF results demonstrated our success in achieving higher than average scores in the Arts cluster for skills development/student entrepreneurship and public engagement.

Performance is the driving force of the College and with up to 500 public events in a normal year, we are a busy public venue and an HEI. Interactions with public audiences provide our students with vital professional performance experiences. During Covid we worked quickly to move performance activity online, with many hundreds of live-streamed and recorded events reaching a global audience.

Partnerships: We maintain strong relationships with leading professional partners including formal 'sit-in' schemes with London Orchestras such as the LSO, Philharmonia Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, RPO and ENO Orchestra. Students regularly perform at professional venues including the Wigmore Hall, Cadogan Hall, Southbank Centre, National Trust Hatchlands Park, and the Royal Albert Hall.

Entrepreneurship and innovation: The Creative Careers Centre (CCC) recently launched the RCM Accelerate Scheme to support graduating students through the challenges of starting a post-COVID performing arts career, providing financial support for innovative and sustainable music start-up businesses.

Pathways to engage in KE: Opportunities, including the internal KE Projects Fund are now being actively promoted to the hourly paid instrumental/vocal professors in a number of ways, as set out in the refreshed Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy.

Academic incentives: consultancy is encouraged by the distribution of a portion of such income back into a cost code earmarked for staff members undertaking consultancy, which they can use for KE and research activities.

Support for project development: The discrete KE Projects Fund annually uses £8,000 of HEIF funding which is managed and monitored by the Research & KE Manager (RKEM), and ensuring projects meet HEIF and equality, diversity and inclusion criteria.

Outreach: the RCM Sparks learning and participation programme continues to expand and deepen its relationships with partner organisations including local schools and the TriBorough Music Hub, as evidenced in the KEF (see Principle 3 of Action Plan). During Covid Sparks has delivered innovative online community projects, training and student placements.

The RCM Junior Department recently established a partnership with Future Talent to support promising young musicians from underrepresented groups to transition to study at the Junior Department, complementing a range of existing work in progress as part of the College's Access and Participation Plan.

In 2021 the College added two new performance venues, a public cafe and a state-of-the-art Museum (opening to the public in October 2021: see <https://www.rcm.ac.uk/museum/about/lookingtothefuture/>) to its existing facilities.

Challenges:

Although the College is a small institution, there is frequently a siloed approach to events planning and partnership development. A more centralised, strategic approach to public engagement would help us to identify and realise KE potential that cross-references the expertise of multiple departments.

Our research-active salaried staff engage strongly in KE, especially those associated with the Centre for Performance Science, a collaboration with Imperial College London. We know that there is excellent KE potential among our staff, 350 of whom are freelance professional musicians. However communicating the concept of KE is a challenge and it is frequently misunderstood.

The College has an extensive portfolio of industry partners which could be developed to explore deeper and more interactive connections.

A truly civic conservatoire needs to appeal to as wide a demographic as possible with a focus on the local community as well as international reach.

The College has focussed on learning and participation projects in schools, but there is scope to cultivate relationships with a wider variety of local organisations, including grassroots organisations, local businesses, and informal venues in the community.

Although all students have access to the Creative Careers Centre services, there is currently no formal professional skills training in our Masters Performance programmes.

Supplemental Materials

[RCM Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy.pdf](#)

Filename: RCM Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy.pdf **Size:** 128.9 kB [Access and Participation Plan.pdf](#)

Filename: Access and Participation Plan.pdf **Size:** 805.3 kB [RCM KEF overview.pdf](#)

Filename: RCM KEF overview.pdf **Size:** 160.1 kB
[2202-UPP-Foundation-A-Guide-to-preparing-Civic-University-Agreements-Booklet-A4-digital.pdf](#)

Filename: 2202-UPP-Foundation-A-Guide-to-preparing-Civic-University-Agreements-Booklet-A4-digital.pdf
Size: 1.1 MB

Section 3A: Principle 1 - Clarity of Mission

Knowledge exchange is a recognised part of the overall institutional strategy and is valued for the social, cultural and economic outcomes it helps us achieve. We have a clear understanding of the institutional role and the purpose of KE, including the recognition of the needs and interests of potential and current partners and beneficiaries, ensuring a commitment to inclusivity and equality. Clarity of mission is essential for efficient and effective KE. Staff, students and external organisations need to understand the aims and priorities of the institution's senior leaders and governors in relation to the whole range of KE activities undertaken by the institution.

To what extent does your higher education provider meet this principle (1 being 'not at all' and 4 being 'entirely')

2

Please provide examples of innovative practices that demonstrate how your higher education provider meets this principle.

Example 1

The RCM Creative Careers Centre's mission statement demonstrates good practice that can be developed in other areas. This service offers 'a broad range of professional contacts and services, which will enable musicians to discover their own identity, gain hands-on experience and new skills, develop an entrepreneurial mind-set, and ultimately build a successful and fulfilling career.'

Example 2

The College's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy was refreshed in 2021 and now recognises Knowledge Exchange activity. Responsibility for KE strategy sits with the Director of Programmes, who works in close collaboration with the RKE Manager. This structure ensures strong lines of communication and effective reporting to Directorate, Council and the RKE Committee.

Where gaps have been identified in the self-evaluation exercise, please provide details of your improvement plan for meeting the requirements of this principle. Please indicate the resources to support the plan.

The overall mission of the RCM needs to reflect our commitment to KE, the reasons behind this, and the impact of our activities in this area. An Interim review of the 2017-27 Strategic Plan will include KE for the first time, with specific reference to the Civic Conservatoire mandate.

Given the imminent Government cuts to Higher Education Arts subjects including music (<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/jul/20/funding-cuts-to-go-ahead-for-university-arts-courses-in-england-despite-opposition>), the RCM has even more of a need to make a case for the need for our institution. We need to elucidate how we benefit society above and beyond our role in producing elite musicians.

We will take inspiration from the Civic University movement, adapting its principles for a small and specialist arts institution. These principles will help us to "provide a clear strategy, rooted in a robust and shared analysis of local needs and opportunities" and "to ensure 'place', 'public' and 'partnerships' are at the heart of [your] civic strategy." (Page 22 of UPP Foundation Guide to Preparing Civic University Agreements, July 2019, <https://upp-foundation.org/publications/>).

The engagement of an external evaluator to help us prepare our Public Engagement Strategy will give us the expertise we need to make this a reality.

Section 3B: Policies and Processes

Where appropriate, we have clear policies on all types of KE that we undertake and work with staff, students, collaborators and beneficiaries so that the policies are understood and operationalised. A well-defined set of relevant policies ensures that all parties engaged in KE have a good mutual understanding of how the institution values KE activity. Institutions should provide evidence of a clear set of policies covering those areas of KE central to the institution's mission and values, and consistent with its charitable status and aims.

To what extent does your higher education provider meet this principle (1 being 'not at all' and 4 being 'entirely')
2

Please provide examples of innovative practices that demonstrate how your higher education provider meets this principle.

Example 1

The shortly to be published Intellectual Property Policy will be an innovative example of our approach to KE. It is awaiting ratification by Senate.

Where gaps have been identified in the self-evaluation exercise, please provide details of your improvement plan for meeting the requirements of this principle. Please indicate the resources to support the plan.

The Artistic Strategy and Museum Strategy will be refreshed to recognise and develop KE activity in these areas. This will involve consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. A new Public Engagement policy will also be developed, which will be actioned and monitored by a new Public Engagement Committee. A new Intellectual Property policy is to be published shortly, which will encompass IP arising from KE.

Section 3C: Engagement

We build effective relationships by having clear routes to access information and expertise in the university with engagement mechanisms and policies developed to suit the needs of a wide range of beneficiaries and partners working with institutions as publicly funded bodies.

To what extent does your higher education provider meet this principle (1 being 'not at all' and 4 being 'entirely')
3

Please provide examples of innovative practices that demonstrate how your higher education provider meets this principle.

Example 1

The RCM Sparks learning and participation programme <https://www.rcm.ac.uk/sparks/> was cited in the KEF as an example of good practice. Undergraduate and postgraduate programmes were recently updated to include stronger links between Sparks and the curriculum through increased placement activity in school and community settings. The community strand of the programme continues to grow through its projects and partnerships, including the partnership with the Tri-Borough Music Hub.

Example 2

The College delivers an extensive programme of over 500 public-facing concerts and events each year: <https://www.rcm.ac.uk/events/>. During Covid our audience reach has expanded internationally through a series of live streamed concerts and video productions: <https://www.youtube.com/rcmlondon>

Example 3

The RCM Museum's internationally renowned collection of musical materials was awarded Designated Status by Arts Council England in January 2021; a mark of distinction celebrating a collection's outstanding cultural value, uniqueness and national importance. A new Wolfson-funded Research Centre for Material Culture will cement the Museum's role as an international hub for the study of musical instruments.

The collections are to be made more widely available for both the public and scholars when the new spaces open in October 2021, see the YouTube virtual launch in July 2021: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=IvpUcOVQjb0&feature=youtu.be>

The College is a member of the Great Exhibition Road Cultural Group (<https://gcdn.net/member/exhibition-road-cultural-group/>) which aims to develop and promote South Kensington as a world-class centre of learning, innovation and inspiration in the arts and sciences. As part of this network the College contributes annually to the Great Exhibition Road Festival: <https://www.greatexhibitionroadfestival.co.uk/>

Where gaps have been identified in the self-evaluation exercise, please provide details of your improvement plan for meeting the requirements of this principle. Please indicate the resources to support the plan.

A comprehensive Public Engagement Strategy is required to bring together the policies mentioned in Principle 2 as a statement of intent. We will engage an external evaluator to help us devise the Strategy, to include place-making and participatory arts activities which are embedded across the College.

A cross-College Knowledge Exchange Group will be formed to create a more unified approach to public engagement and KE, including the needs of stakeholders, promoting the notion of the RCM as a 'civic conservatoire'. This central KE Working Group will monitor and maximise partner relationships where we have multiple institutional touch points.

Section 3D: Working Transparently and Ethically

We make sure that our partners and beneficiaries understand the ethical and charitable regulatory environments in which our institution operates, including a commitment to inclusivity and equality, and we take steps to maximise the benefit to them within that context.

To what extent does your higher education provider meet this principle (1 being 'not at all' and 4 being 'entirely')

4

Please provide examples of innovative practices that demonstrate how your higher education provider meets this principle.

Example 1:

The RCM has an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, which informs all other strategies. The EDI Committee has met since February 2021 to ensure that EDI across the College is evaluated and monitored:

<https://www.rcm.ac.uk/media/RCM%20Equality%20Diversity%20and%20Inclusion%20Policy.pdf>

Example 2

The Research Ethics web page lists the RCM's processes, policies and expectations for students and staff: Staff and students engaged in research foster good practice and intellectual integrity in all professional circumstances. Principles emphasised by researchers at all levels are:

- Care and avoidance of harm
- Honesty and openness
- Accountability and appropriate documentation
- Confidentiality
- Informed consent
- Avoidance of conflicts of interest
- Compliance with the law and relevant codes of conduct
- Due acknowledgement of collaborators, informants, participants or other contributors

Example 3

A new Research Ethics Committee with accompanying Policy was formed in September 2020, which guides students and staff on ethical working practices: <https://www.rcm.ac.uk/media/RCM%20Research%20Ethics%20Policy.pdf>

Example 4

The College has documented agreements with its external partners e.g. TriBorough Music Hub, to maintain clear and transparent relationships (example agreements available upon request).

Section 3E: Capacity Building

We ensure that our staff and students are developed and trained appropriately to understand and undertake their roles and responsibilities in the delivery of successful KE.

To what extent does your higher education provider meet this principle (1 being 'not at all' and 4 being 'entirely')

3

Please provide examples of innovative practices that demonstrate how your higher education provider meets this principle.

Example 1

The internal KE Fund is supported by our HEIF allocation which is open to all staff and provides a vital springboard for KE project development. Projects to date have included Early Years Music CPD for practitioners in Southampton, audience experience mapping for the RCM Museum, and an interactive public facing video series, 'Musical care through the lifespan'.

Example 2

The Research & KE Manager keeps abreast of KE developments through regular attendance at conferences and briefings (e.g. PraxisAuril, ARMA) and participation in national networks (e.g. CUK Research and KE Forum). Key information is disseminated promptly to staff and internal committees.

Example 3

The College's strong partnership with Imperial College has resulted in several innovative and impactful projects supporting ERC skills development. These include a new CPD programme for United Nations Development Programme executives and the MedTech Superconnector Programme: <https://medtechsuperconnector.com/>

Example 4

HEIF also supports the work of the Creative Careers Centre, which provides an indispensable lifeline of support and opportunities for students to develop their professional skills. The Creative Careers Centre's comprehensive packages of employability support includes work experience and advice for business start-ups: <https://www.rcm.ac.uk/life/preparingforprofession/creativecareers/>

KE activities, including industry placements, are embedded into UG and PG curricula.

Where gaps have been identified in the self-evaluation exercise, please provide details of your improvement plan for meeting the requirements of this principle. Please indicate the resources to support the plan.

We recognise that among our 350+ hourly-paid staff, understanding of and engagement with KE is poor.

The College's new KE Working Group will implement a staff development plan. This will include more regular paid training and activities to support staff networking and partnership development, supported by HEIF funding and coordinated by the R&KE Manager in collaboration with the Creative Careers Centre and Human Resources.

We will also incorporate KE into our doctoral training programme.

Section 3F: Recognition and Rewards

We recognise and reward the achievements of staff and students who perform high quality KE activities.

To what extent does your higher education provider meet this principle (1 being 'not at all' and 4 being 'entirely')
2

Please provide examples of innovative practices that demonstrate how your higher education provider meets this principle.

Example 1

A KE time allocation model for salaried staff has been established. This recognises KE activity on an equivalent basis as research activity.

Example 2

The RCM has an established Consultancy Policy including a financial incentive, whereby income is earmarked for individual researchers to develop their own KE/research projects.

Where gaps have been identified in the self-evaluation exercise, please provide details of your improvement plan for meeting the requirements of this principle. Please indicate the resources to support the plan.

Publish definitions of KE and examples of case studies on the Research/KE web pages - Research & KE Manager.

Provide regular and consistent College-wide messaging to celebrate KE successes. - Research & Knowledge Exchange Manager/KE Working Group in collaboration with MarComms.

Update the Appraisal process and the Reward and Recognition policy to recognise achievement in KE. (Review of both processes was paused due to Covid.) - Deputy Director and Head of HR.

Section 3G: Continuous Improvement

We proactively strive to share best practice with our peers and have established processes for learning from this.

To what extent does your higher education provider meet this principle (1 being 'not at all' and 4 being 'entirely')

2

Please provide examples of innovative practices that demonstrate how your higher education provider meets this principle.

Example 1

The Conservatoires UK Research and KE Forum is an important forum for sharing of good practice between UK specialist performing arts institutions.

Where gaps have been identified in the self-evaluation exercise, please provide details of your improvement plan for meeting the requirements of this principle. Please indicate the resources to support the plan.

A new KE Working Group will help to define KE roles and responsibilities in the wider College. The KE Working Group, led by the RKE Manager and Director of Programmes, will be essential for implementing the Action Plan.

The KE Working Group will bring together key individuals from across the College to encourage stronger collaboration and alignment between different departments. A central point for KE planning, monitoring and evaluation, it will report to the RKE Committee and Directorate.

Section 3H: Evaluating Success

We undertake regular institutional and collective monitoring and review of our strengthening KE performance using this concordat and through regional, national or international benchmarks to inform the development and execution of a programme of continuous improvement so that KE becomes more effective.

To what extent does your higher education provider meet this principle (1 being 'not at all' and 4 being 'entirely')

2

Please provide examples of innovative practices that demonstrate how your higher education provider meets this principle.

Example 1

The Sparks learning and participation programme undertakes regular evaluation exercises. An external evaluation by Sound Connections in 2019 led to significant improvements in data collection and monitoring of projects. A further external evaluation in 2021 will focus on embedding more inclusive working practices in all areas of Sparks activity, including RCM student training.

Example 2

The Museum's Outreach team carry out regular visitor experience evaluations to monitor how their audiences are interacting with the collections and exhibitions, as evidenced in the current project funded by the internal KE Fund, which is using eye-tracking technology and surveying techniques to monitor how the new Museum layout is being experienced by visitors.

Where gaps have been identified in the self-evaluation exercise, please provide details of your improvement plan for meeting the requirements of this principle. Please indicate the resources to support the plan.

We recognise that not all KE activity is documented and evaluated at present.

Furthermore there is scope to publicise examples of good practice with a view to developing shared understanding of KE and successful KE projects.

We plan to develop more robust data collection and monitoring systems for KE projects, which will be embedded via the external evaluator's suggested processes as part of the RCM's KE review. This will include a standard requirement for project reports, which can become KE case studies on the RCM web pages. This, along with regular MarComms messaging about KE (through the KE Working Group), will increase awareness of KE activity.

Section 4: Priority Actions

Please identify the top five priority actions for your Higher Education Provider.

Priority Action 1

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Description | Design and implement an integrated, institution-wide approach to public engagement. |
| Name of Responsible Party | Diana Salazar, Emma Hewett |
| Position | Director of Programmes, Research & Knowledge Exchange Manager |
| Department | Programmes/Research & KE |
| Related Principle | 2. Policies and Processes |
| Timescale | 6-12 months |

Priority Action 2

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Description | <p>Develop the College's role as a civic conservatoire by strengthening our relationships with the local community, reaching out to under-represented groups and making a positive contribution to local regeneration.</p> <p>Activities in all of these areas should be aligned with relevant institutional strategies, using the Strategic Plan to inform KE approaches in the Artistic Strategy, Learning and Teaching Strategy and Public Engagement Strategy. Consultation with a wider range of stakeholders, including the general public, should inform goal-setting.</p> |
| Name of Responsible Party | Colin Lawson |
| Position | Director of the RCM |
| Department | Directorate |
| Related Principle | 1. Clarity of Mission |
| Timescale | 12-18 months |

Priority Action 3

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Description | Prepare students for professional life through high-quality, integrated professional and entrepreneurial opportunities |
| Name of Responsible Party | Diana Salazar |
| Position | Director of Programmes |
| Department | Programmes |
| Related Principle | 5. Capacity building |
| Timescale | 12-18 months |

Priority Action 4

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Description | Maximise staff engagement with KE across the RCM community |
| Name of Responsible Party | Diana Salazar, Emma Hewett |
| Position | Director of Programmes, Research & Knowledge Exchange Manager |
| Department | Programmes/Research & KE |
| Related Principle | 3. Engagement |
| Timescale | 6-12 months |

Priority Action 5

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Description | Strengthen KE data collection, monitoring and evaluation to evidence impact and share good practice internally and externally. |
| Name of Responsible Party | Emma Hewett/Talia Hull |
| Position | Research & Knowledge Exchange Manager/KE Working Group in collaboration with MarComms |
| Department | Research/MarComms |
| Related Principle | 8. Evaluating Success |
| Timescale | 12-18 months |

Please tick the box below to confirm that this action plan has been approved for submission to the evaluation panel by the head of the Higher Education Provider:

Responses Selected:

I confirm that this action plan has been approved for submission.