

# ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC

## SUMMARY OF ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN 2020-21 TO 2024-25

### What is an access and participation plan?

Access and participation plans set out how higher education providers will improve equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups to access, succeed in and progress from higher education.

You can see the full access and participation plan for the Royal College of Music (RCM) at <https://www.rcm.ac.uk/about/strategies-values/people-equality-diversity/>

### Key points

See pages 2-14 of the full Plan

The focus of the RCM's Access and Participation Plan is on improving access for students from groups that our data analysis shows are currently under-represented at the RCM and in the wider conservatoire sector:

- Students from areas with low participation in higher education ("POLAR4 quintile 1" areas)
- Students from Black, Asian and Ethnically Diverse backgrounds

Our data show that RCM students from all backgrounds are highly likely to complete their course and go on to further study or skilled employment. However, we are continuing to work hard to ensure students feel supported during their studies.

### Fees we charge

See page 29 of the full Plan

For UK Undergraduate students the maximum fees charged are:

- £9,250 for full time students
- £5,000 for part time students (£5,250 from 2023/24 onwards)

You can see a full list of the RCM's tuition fees at <https://www.rcm.ac.uk/apply/feesandfunding/>

### Financial help available

See page 24 of the full Plan

Audition fee waivers are available for BMus applicants from low income households or who are care experienced. See <https://www.rcm.ac.uk/courses/undergraduate/bmus/>

More than 50% of the RCM's students receive some level of financial support thanks to our Scholarship Programme. Every student who applies for our undergraduate course is considered; there is no separate application process. Eligibility is based on performance at audition or the strength of the portfolio and interview for composers.

In addition, the RCM offers some awards specifically for students from under-represented groups:

- At least two bursaries per year to students from POLAR4 quintile 1 areas, worth at least £4,625 (half fees) for each year of the course
- At least three scholarships per year to students from BAME backgrounds, worth full tuition fees for each year of the course.

A hardship fund is also available for students who encounter financial difficulties during their studies.

For further information see <https://www.rcm.ac.uk/apply/feesandfunding/scholarships/>

## Information for students

Prospective students receive information about fees and financial support via our website, e-mail communications and in-person sessions at our Open Day.

Current students receive information at in-person events during Induction Week and our student portal Learn.RCM. Individual meetings are available with our Student Services team. The RCM's Creative Careers Centre offers fundraising and financial management advice for musicians.

For more information see <https://www.rcm.ac.uk/apply/feesandfunding/>

## What we are aiming to achieve

See pages 15-16 of the full Plan

Our overall aim is to improve access for students from under-represented groups to conservatoire education and consequently the wider music profession.

Based on our assessment of our performance, by 2024-25 we aim:

- To reduce the gap in participation between students from areas with the highest and lowest levels of participation in higher education (POLAR4 quintiles 5 and 1) from 11.6:1 to 8:1. This will almost double the percentage of new students from quintile 1 backgrounds.
- To increase participation of students from Black, Asian and other ethnically diverse backgrounds from 10% to 14%.
- To contribute to increasing access to high-quality music tuition by offering a free pathway of learning for young children from under-represented groups through our RCM Sparks Juniors programme.

## What we are doing to achieve our aims

See pages 23-25 of the full Plan

There are four key activity strands to the RCM's work:

- Using contextual data to identify applicants who may have been disadvantaged in their musical development.
- Providing support packages to students from under-represented groups. This may include scholarships and bursaries (see above), supplementary lessons, additional academic or pastoral support, or welfare support from our Student Services team, as appropriate.
- Identifying potential applicants from under-represented groups and offering additional support and mentoring to encourage them to apply. This includes diversifying the intake to our Junior Department.
- Participants for the Sparks Juniors programme will be identified from local schools as having musical potential through our pre-primary Sparkles programme. They will be supported to learn an instrument and reach benchmarks in their music study, such as passing grade exams or progressing to future music study.

Much work is also taking place across the RCM and in the wider community, including:

- Working with young musicians and their families from the local area, especially those from disadvantaged and under-represented backgrounds. The RCM is a partner of the Tri-Borough Music Hub, delivering music education in local schools. We also run workshops and courses for learners of all ages.
- Providing access bursaries for our Junior Department (for 8 to 18 year olds).
- Collaborating with access partners such as IntoUniversity and [Nucleo](#).
- Offering reasonable adjustments to make auditions accessible to applicants with disabilities.
- Providing tailored study support to help students succeed, including a personal advisor for every BMus student and mental health support.
- Diversifying the curriculum to make it more inclusive.
- Providing specialist career support for musicians throughout their course and for five years after graduation through our Creative Careers Centre.
- Collaborating with Conservatoires UK to share best practice and promote fair access to music education.

## How students can get involved

See pages 25-26 of the full Plan

The RCM worked with the RCM Students' Union to gather input when writing the Plan. Students are represented on the RCM's committees, including the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee. As part of the BMus course students help to deliver our RCM Sparks school and community outreach programmes, whilst developing valuable teaching and workshop leadership skills.

To get involved in our work to promote greater diversity in all aspects of RCM life, contact:

- Chair of RCM Diversity Action Group: [diana.salazar@rcm.ac.uk](mailto:diana.salazar@rcm.ac.uk)
- RCM Sparks [sparks@rcm.ac.uk](mailto:sparks@rcm.ac.uk)
- Students' Union President: [su.president@rcm.ac.uk](mailto:su.president@rcm.ac.uk)

## Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

See pages 26-28 of the full Plan

We collect data and feedback to monitor the effectiveness of our activities, and assess our progress against our annual benchmarks. This includes working with external consultants to help us design and implement evaluation processes for our Sparks Juniors programme.

The RCM's Access and Participation Plan Working Group meets on a termly basis to ensure delivery of the plan and to review its effectiveness. Progress is monitored by several committees, each with Student representation, including the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee and Council, the RCM's governing body. Where appropriate, we will adjust our interventions in the best interests of our students.

## Contact details for further information

You can contact RCM's Access and Participation Plan lead for further information:

- Nicola Peacock, Deputy Academic Registrar, [nicola.peacock@rcm.ac.uk](mailto:nicola.peacock@rcm.ac.uk)