



# An access and engagement framework for the Royal College of Music

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# INTRODUCTION

The Royal College of Music has demonstrated a strong commitment to fair access since its foundation in 1882. When it was founded, the RCM offered scholarships to ensure access for the very best students regardless of means. Foundation Scholarships are still offered at entry to talented students to help with the payment of undergraduate tuition fees.

Supporting the nurturing of music experiences is an important role for UK conservatoires, and the RCM does this in a number of ways. Its Junior Department provides around 320 talented school children with a rigorous musical training every Saturday during term. Many of its students teach and coach in schools. There are education and outreach projects featuring individuals and ensembles that travel far and wide to schools, hospitals, prisons and other community settings to make music with people whose experience of live music would otherwise be nil.

## **Why does the RCM need an Access and Engagement Framework?**

The framework aims to break down unhelpful barriers - real, perceived, physical, educational or social - within the RCM and to nurture mutually fruitful alliances with external groups and individuals. This can be done in a way that continues to respect, reflect and build on the best of the conservatoire tradition, where performance-based training at the highest international level is the central core. This approach will be achieved by creating, positioning, marketing and delivering a programme of diverse activities – existing and new - in a way that makes them attractive and accessible to new audiences: individuals and groups from different backgrounds, irrespective of age or educational experience.

## **What is the Access and Engagement Framework and who is it for?**

The Access Framework is built on the core values of the Royal College of Music and its achievements. It should be useful across the RCM, in line with the belief that an active approach to widening access is a collective responsibility of the College as a whole, therefore should be used as a catalyst for all departments when planning future work or evaluating current practice.

The Access and Engagement Framework is part of a larger Public Benefit agenda which demonstrates the RCM's commitment to offering wide-ranging Access initiatives.

## **Who are the stakeholders?**

The main areas this framework considers are:

- Learners and teachers
- **Engagement with Audiences and Visitors**
- Collaborators and partners

These groups were identified through evaluation of current activity and consultation with RCM staff and external partners.

## **RCM's commitment to widening access**

The RCM is committed to widening access and continues to work towards a solid agenda across all areas of college which build upon our strengths embedding the Access and Engagement Framework within RCM life. It works towards making a significant contribution to local, regional, national and international partnership activities which promote wider access, lifelong learning and social inclusion.

The RCM aims to integrate as diverse a group as possible in its activities and employs a full-time Access Development Manager, an Outreach Officer and Audience Development Officer to initiate and oversee this activity. The posts sit within the RCM's Woodhouse Centre which provides current students and recent alumni with careers advice and numerous opportunities to undertake external performance engagements or take part in activities that will broaden their professional skills, such as education and access work. The ethos of the Woodhouse Centre is enabling students

to take the initiative and to support them in their professional development as well as encouraging the broadest possible range of integration of live music into the community.

# AN ACCESS AND ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC 2007-2017

## **Vision**

To remove invisible barriers that stand between the Royal College of Music and a range of stakeholders by developing appropriate points of access to its core mission: providing inspiring musical education and training at the highest international level.

## **Objectives**

To offer appropriate musical activities, training, insights and experiences to foster lifelong expert practitioners, effective leaders, influential ambassadors, active participants, knowledgeable enthusiasts and informed auditors

## **Guiding principles**

All activity should be:

- i. in line with the institutional mission and overarching strategic plan
- ii. predicated on excellence
- iii. of defined benefit, direct or indirect, to current students
- iv. built on and reflecting core curriculum values and learning objectives
- v. connecting existing activity intelligently into one coherent picture
- vi. developed in partnership with appropriate external organisations
- vii. informed by current good practice
- viii. underpinned by relevant complementary research
- ix. badged appropriately
- x. subject to FEC

## **Key stakeholder areas**

### 1. Teachers and learners:

Current, potential students and alumni, distance and lifelong learners

### 2. Audiences and other visitors

Performance audiences, web audiences/visitors, tourists visitors, alumni

### 3. Collaborators and partners:

External organisations and individuals; employers, professional organisations and associations, supporters and funders - public, private, corporate, individual

## 1. ACCESS TO TEACHING & LEARNING

### Recruitment

#### Objectives

To encourage all young musicians to understand and be excited by how the RCM can contribute to their development as musicians and artistic leaders

#### Approach

- To ensure that undergraduate courses are sufficiently flexible to admit learners whose background, experience and aspirations may vary from those of the traditional RCM student
- To consider a repositioning of the Junior Department to produce a pre-College Centre or similar, through which all pre-18 activity is delivered
- To provide a range of pre-entry activities including open days, road shows, taster sessions, short courses, visits to the RCM, regional and international masterclasses/workshops
- To ensure that courses and programmes are promoted effectively and efficiently, using local networks, partners and contacts, including alumni
- Given the RCM's global market, plan recruitment campaigns and supporting materials respecting and acknowledging cultural differences and expectations

#### Indicative activity

Virtual open days – including resources such as online masterclasses, web forums and 'Meet the faculty' chat room platforms.

#### Measure

Increased numbers of high-quality acceptances for core programmes

### Widening participation

#### Objectives

To encourage engagement between the RCM and young learners whose entry routes are non-traditional

#### Approach

- Target promotion of courses intelligently and appropriately
- Strengthen existing feeder routes and nurture new sources of students
- Ensure that bursary funding is adequate to meet the needs of a range of students
- Provide pre-registration web and print materials and access to a network of contacts including 'buddies' and blogs
- Through a pre-College Centre\* (see Appendix A), in collaboration with partners wherever possible, devise a range of activities across selected musical genres, at different levels, and by appropriate delivery modes, locations duration and frequency, under the RCM banner
- Support widening participation activity with research on learning and behaviour that is both fed back into the curriculum and promulgated more widely
- Create transparent progression paths into FE, HE or lifelong learning activity with a range of identified partners

#### Indicative activity

Vacation courses for school-aged children as part of the RCM Sparks programme

#### Measures

Numbers of pre-18s engaged formally and over a sustained period with musical activity co-ordinated or generated by the RCM;

Numbers progressing to training or participation opportunities offered by a recognised provider.

## Current students

### Objective

To provide an inclusive, dynamic environment where learners of all kinds are encouraged to interact freely and benefit in appropriate ways from the unique resources of the RCM and its community

### Approach

- Provide relevant courses and programmes for a range of new students, and a user-friendly, accessible environment in which to learn
- Ensure that all materials are available in appropriate formats, electronically where possible
- Consolidate the diverse activity and invest in resources to ensure that the RCM remains first choice for visually impaired musicians
- Ensure that access and outreach activity is rooted in, and connected to, the day-to-day working life of the RCM so that undergraduate and graduate students may witness the broader community in action, and thus be reminded of their responsibility and potential to be artistic catalysts in the future
- Encourage students to be involved in the access activity of the RCM, thus engaging with the wider community in which they will one day work
- Develop the Creative Leadership Programme as a graduate pathway, and connect the students on this course with access units for undergraduate students and pre-College pupils through a programme of activity and mentorship

### Indicative activity

Continue to embed education and outreach training in the RCM curriculum at under-graduate and postgraduate level eg current BMus2 outreach placements

### Measure

Numbers participating;  
Take-up of Creative Leadership unit;  
Leavers' aspirations and destinations via DLHE survey and phone follow-ups

## Alumni

### Objective

To encourage graduates to stay connected to, and act as ambassadors for, the RCM

### Approach

- Continue to provide alumni with professional development opportunities via regular information, workshops and continuing use of facilities
- Develop specific alumni masterclass and performance series
- Continue to develop international alumni network
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### Indicative activity

Provision of workshops, networking events and on-line professional development delivered, where possible, by alumni for alumni

### Measure

Increased numbers of alumni active on alumni network

## **Distance learners**

### *Objective*

To encourage new learners (non-traditional students) to partake of selected aspects of the RCM's core curriculum, appropriately inflected, packaged, delivered and credited

### *Approach*

- Create and promote paid-for distance learning modules leading to qualifications, delivered through a range of media including one-to-many web-based materials and video-conferencing, one-to-one mentoring and individual learning packages, and vacation courses

### *Indicative activity*

Create a one-year credited programme for non-traditional students, related to existing curriculum, delivered virtually and face-to-face

### *Measure*

Courses established, take-up increasing, demographics widening

## **Lifelong learners**

### *Objective*

To encourage members of the public to nurture their interest and participate in music, regardless of age, gender, ability, background or financial means

### *Approach*

- With partners where necessary, develop occasional/short-course activity offering tuition and participation/performance opportunities both on and off-site
- Continue to open up the RCM's unique resources to the public, through a programme of occasional events and short courses, lectures, workshops, masterclasses and associated access to the collections where appropriate eg Explore a Score, Museum visits
- Pioneer new work with the socially disadvantaged elderly, with associated research

### *Indicative activity*

A programme of participatory activity for non-registered students.

### *Measure*

Participation figures and numbers of partnerships

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## 2. PUBLIC BENEFIT

### Engagement with audiences and visitors

#### Audience development

##### *Objective*

To enrich the experience of attending an RCM event or other western art music performance

##### *Approach*

- Develop further contextual activity around performances including through talks, lectures, workshops, web-based pre- and post-performance materials (programmes available in advance with images etc)
- Include access to the RCM's unique resources into contextual activity
- Improve web-based marketing
- Introduce message board for concert reviews
- Improve audience feedback mechanisms

##### *Indicative activity*

Develop and publicise a coherent programme of contextual activity around the annual performance schedule

##### *Measure*

Increase in numbers of repeat and new bookers and visitors; improved visitor feedback

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## 3. COLLABORATIONS and PARTNERSHIPS with EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS, INDIVIDUALS, and SUPPORTERS

##### *Objective*

Working with partners of proven excellence: to share good practice; to benefit from the experience and contacts of others; to improve the content and delivery of RCM work; and to enhance the profile of all involved.

##### *Approach*

- Identify high-quality, sympathetic and active new partners or collaborators, and make best use of their experience and good practice
- Clarify and celebrate to external stakeholders the synergy between elite provision and widening access through performance events and workshops, visits and appropriate 'messages' via the media
- To collaborate with individuals and external agencies who are already leaders in their field
- Provide opportunities for engagement with non-traditional RCM activity (eg invite to hands-on workshops rather than performances)

##### *Indicative activity*

Strengthen existing partnership with London Sinfonietta by deeper engagement with their performance programme

##### *Measures*

More confident and productive relationships with externals; improved profile (media mentions) and funding; range of partners and size/sustainability of funding

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#### 4. RESEARCH

##### *Objective*

To complement and underpin access and engagement programmes and inform future activity

##### *Approach*

Create specific research projects around current RCM activity and develop new activity based on findings

##### *Indicative activity*

To create a piece of research in conjunction with CPS that examines the Musicians of the Future scheme and its effect on social and academic behaviour.

##### *Measure*

Data analysis;  
Research outcomes

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#### 5. TECHNOLOGY

##### *Objective*

To capitalise on new technology to promote easier links between the RCM and a range of stakeholders

##### *Approach*

- Ensure full accessibility of website and all web and print materials
- Redevelop the architecture of the website to achieve more intuitive navigation
- Adopt new content management system, to ensure smarter use of information and full accessibility in all formats
- Provide appropriate platforms for all web-based materials
- Facilitate interactive media for pre-registrands, distance and lifelong learners and alumni, including portals, blogs, downloads and podcasts
- Lead the integration of media that link the RCM with the external environment: ICT (including VOIP), a-v and video-conferencing
- Become recognised European leader on assistive technology for visually-impaired musicians, including the development of specialist scripts
- Lead CUK's ICT group
- Digitalise the collections
- Develop RCM recording label

##### *Indicative activity*

Develop web-based pre-registration materials

##### *Measure*

Feedback from freshers on quality of pre-registration engagement with the RCM  
Sales of recordings, VI script licences and related consultancy

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## 6. ESTATE AND RESOURCES

### *Objectives*

To provide fitting surroundings and resources for the RCM's access and engagement activities

### *Approach*

- Ensure that existing and new buildings are fully accessible and welcoming
- Develop new site to include dedicated access/community space

### *Indicative activity*

Secure funding for a new access space to house the growing RCM access activity

### *Measure*

Dedicated space for access and engagement activity funded, built and operational

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## APPENDICES

- A. Towards a pre-College Centre: the evolution of the existing Junior Department
- B. RCM Access Agreement 2007-08
- C. RCM Strategic Plan 2007-2017