



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.

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

1. ACCESS TO TEACHING & LEARNING

Recruitment

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)

2. PUBLIC BENEFIT

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

5. TECHNOLOGY

