

2019-20 access and participation plan monitoring

Provider impact report

This impact report summarises the progress made by Royal College of Music against targets, objectives and written commitments set out in its 2019-20 access and participation plan. This document is a summary of information submitted by the provider to the OfS. This document is a self-report by the provider only and does not indicate any OfS assessment of compliance.

1. Ambition and strategy

Royal College of Music's ambition and strategy as detailed in the 2019-20 access and participation plan:

For 2019-20 the RCM planned to prioritise its ambition and strategy in the two areas where it believed it faced its greatest challenges/gaps and where the music industry faced most challenges at the time of writing, as was stated in our 2019-20 Access and Participation Plan:

1. The most significant underrepresented group at the RCM is Low HE participation; low household income and/or low socioeconomic status. Therefore, this is the top priority for the RCM in terms of widening participation and access. This group has been targeted most specifically by RCM initiatives over a sustained period of time.
2. The other focus for the College is BAME participation. Although we are only marginally below our benchmark in this area, the classical music industry has very low BAME participation, as set out in the figures in section 1. For this reason it is one of our priority areas. For now, we have not chosen to target specific sub-groups of minority ethnicities owing to the small number of students – students from all non-white ethnicities are encouraged through the BAME scholarship programme, among other initiatives. Also BAME participation is low in all ethnicities across classical music and thus target specific sub-groups of minority ethnicities is not a current priority

Overall we aim to achieve continuous improvement. We have a number of ongoing initiatives aimed at continuous improvement – some targeted at specific groups, such as disability, some addressing multiple and, in some cases, intersecting groups.

The RCM is focussing on areas where we believe we can achieve the greatest impact, notwithstanding external factors. For example, for reasons [outlined in the Assessment of Current Performance section of the 2019-20 Access and Participation Plan], the College has chosen not to focus on care leavers specifically, but other initiatives intersect with this and indirectly support this underrepresented group. Similarly, recruitment of mature students is not a priority.

Our success and progression data are above benchmark. While we have continuing initiatives that support this record, we do not plan new initiatives.

Key new initiatives reflecting our strategic priorities were:

- Research study to explore the social demographics of young people who are on pathways to conservatoire study

an independent research study, collaboratively with another conservatoire, to explore the geographical and social demographics of A-level music students. The research study will inform the Royal College of Music's recruitment policy and enable us to target populations of young people traditionally under-represented in conservatoire study.

- BAME scholarships

UK black and minority ethnic (BAME) musicians are currently under-represented across the performing arts and these scholarships demonstrate the RCM's continued commitment to diversity. The initiative is for scholarships awarded on merit and that provide talented students with the opportunity to study at the UK's leading institution for music education with financial security. The scholarships are to be up to the value of full fees (currently £9,250 a year) and can be used either to cover tuition fees or to help with living costs. Each scholarship to be for the full four years of the BMus programme, providing the student makes satisfactory progress.

Further details of the RCM's planned continuing initiatives are available in the 2019-20 Access and Participation Plan.

2. Self-assessment of targets

The tables that follow provide a self-assessment by Royal College of Music of progress against the targets approved in its 2019-20 access and participation plan.

Please note the tables contain only a summary of target milestones approved in 2019-20 access and participation plans. Full information can be found in **Table 8a – statistical targets and milestones** and **Table 8b – Other milestones and targets** of Royal College of Music’s 2019-20 [access and participation plan](#).

Any optional commentary provided against the targets is given in [Annex B](#).

Statistical targets and milestones

Reference Number (lifecycle stage)	Description	Baseline year	Baseline data	2018-19 milestone	2019-20 milestone	Units of target	Comparison year	Actual performance in comparison year	Target self-assessment
T16a_01 (Access)	UK UG entrants from a state school or specialist music school	2014/15	73%	78%	80%	Percentage	2019-20	77	Limited progress
T16a_02 (Student success)	Continuation rates of UK UG students from Year 1 to Year 2	2011/12	98%	98%	98%	Percentage	2019-20	97	Limited progress
T16a_03 (Progression)	Progression of final year UK UGs to employment or further studies	2014/15	99%	98%	98%	Percentage	2017-18	100	Expected progress
T16a_04 (Access)	Participation of under-represented groups in higher education: young 1st time degree entrants.	2011/12	4.5%	5.6	6%	Percentage	2019-20	5.9	Limited progress
T16a_05 (Access)	Of those applicants who declared their ethnicity, UG UK applicants from BAME groups	2014-15	99	10%	10%	Percentage	2019-20	14	Expected progress
T16a_06 (Access)	UG UK new entrants from BAME	2014-15	77	12%	12%	Percentage	2019-20	18	Expected progress
T16a_07 (Access)	Disability - Number of applicants declaring a disability on application (3 year rolling average)	2012-13	61	77	78	Headcount	2019-20	97	Expected progress
T16a_08 (Multiple)	Number of full fee scholarships supporting UK UG BAME students	2018-19	3	3	6	Headcount	2019-20	6	Expected progress

Other milestones and targets

Reference Number (lifecycle stage)	Description	Baseline year	Baseline data	2018-19 milestone	2019-20 milestone	Units of target	Comparison year	Actual performance in comparison year	Target self-assessment
T16b_01 (Access)	To encourage sustained relationships by increasing the number of children from underrepresented groups to enter the Sparks Juniors programme from a younger age.	2017-18	0	0	8	Headcount	2019-20	19	Expected progress
T16b_02 (Access)	To increase the number of children participating in subsidised music lessons and/or choir membership with the Tri-borough Music Hub (TBMH) following participation in the RCM Sparks community access programme in partnership with the TBMH and Royal Albert Hall.	2017-18	10	12	14	Percentage	2019-20	13	Limited progress
T16b_03 (Access)	To increase the number of children from Tri-borough schools who are engaging with RCM Sparks SEND-specific programmes.	2017-18	0	10	12	Headcount	2019-20	0	No progress
T16b_04 (Access)	Enabling participation - to increase the % number of pupils learning an instrument to a graded level in partner schools.	2016-17	10%	11%	12%	Percentage	2019-20	13	Expected progress

3. Investment commitments

3.1. Access and participation investment for the last audited year

Please note that some differences in predicted vs actual spend may be due to reporting differences between academic and financial years.

Financial year	2019-20		
	Predicted spend (£)	Actual spend (£)	Difference (ppt)
Access investment	£200,000.00	£356,000.00	78%
Financial Support	£62,161.00	£62,000.00	0%

4. Action plan

Where progress was less than expected Royal College of Music has made the following commitments to increase the rate of progress against their targets.

Reference Number	Steps that will be taken in the future to make expected progress against target
T16a_01	Target discontinued subsequent to the implementation of the 2020-25 Access & Participation Plan (see commentary).
T16a_02	The RCM has an exceptionally high level of continuation, which has been maintained. In terms of percentages, when taking into account small student numbers, +/-1% is not statistically significant, and we do not feel that further measures are needed.
T16a_04	From the 2020 recruitment cycle the RCM has also introduced bursaries for students in POLAR4 quintile 1
T16b_02	Continued reflection and evaluation on progress of participants takes place regularly and supports proactive planning to ensure progress against this target.
T16b_03	We expect activities to return to normal once the situation with the pandemic eases.

5. Confirmation

Royal College of Music confirms that:

Student engagement	
Have you worked with your students to help them complete the access and participation plan monitoring student submission?	
Yes	
Have you engaged with your student body in the design, evaluation, and monitoring of the plan?	
Yes	
Verification and sign off	
Royal College of Music has confirmed that the information included in this impact report is accurate, that it has been compiled in line with OfS guidance, and that it is being submitted on behalf of the governing body of the provider.	
Yes	
Accountable officer sign off	
Name	Professor Colin Lawson
Position	Director

Annex A: Commentary on progress against targets

Royal College of Music's commentary where progress against targets was less than expected.

Target reference number: T16a_01
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
Whilst the RCM has made some progress against the baseline data and performance in previous years (e.g. 76% in 2017/18), this has been lower than expected when the target was first set in 2014/15. The key commitment regarding state school access was to complete research to better understand the demographics of potential UK-domiciled applicants for conservatoire study, focusing on the provision of A Level music education in state schools, which was successfully completed.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
For the 2019 admissions cycle details of applicants' school type were included as contextual data in papers for the RCM's Admissions Committee and a state school background taken into account when making decisions on borderline cases.

Target reference number: T16a_02
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
All APP commitments regarding student support have been met, and the RCM's level of continuation remains extremely high for the sector.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
The academic year 2019-20 was affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Additional support measures were implemented, such as enhanced counselling provision and an emergency Covid-19 Hardship Fund (which raised and distributed over £400,000 to students in financial need caused by the pandemic).

Target reference number: T16a_04
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
Whilst progress has been made against the baseline, it is slightly lower than was expected for 2019/20 when the target was set.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
Access for students from low POLAR4 quintiles has been recognised as an area of weakness for the RCM during the work done to develop our 2020-25 APP. Since the recruitment cycle for 2020 the RCM has implemented an enhanced contextual admissions policy to address this.

Target reference number: T16b_02
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
The challenges of the last year in relation to moving all provision online has slightly impacted hitting this target fully.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
All provision was moved online and families we sent bespoke home-learning kits in order for them to still engage with the programme.

Target reference number: T16b_03
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
It was not possible to carry out our planned activity with SEND schools during the Summer term of 2020 due to the considerable affects of the global pandemic.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
We have continued to work with colleagues in partner organisations to remain informed about what the current need is for children with SEND in our area. We have met with colleagues from the Local Offer team and host a termly Musically Inclusive Forum in order to share good practise. We are currently producing online Listening Journey resources for our SEND school partners to be used in schools during the Summer term 2021 - these have been created in consultation with the schools and a parent action group.

Annex B: Optional commentary on targets

Royal College of Music's commentary on any of the targets listed in [Section 2](#).

Reference Number	Optional commentary
T16a_01	As part of the development of its 2020-25 Access and Participation Plan, the RCM carried out an in-depth assessment of its performance and reviewed its targets. In line with the priorities and national KPIs set by the OfS for widening access, the RCM has moved away from focusing on school type and instead has been prioritising individual indicators of disadvantage such as POLAR4 data. As the research carried out on behalf of the RCM shows, provision of music education, including availability of Music A Level, has been decreasing in state schools, reducing the pipeline of potential applicants from this background. We therefore also focused on developing our own pathways to musical success through the RCM's Sparks Juniors programme and Junior Department.
T16a_02	We are pleased to have maintained such a high continuation rate in spite of the pandemic. The very slight fall is due to the pandemic where, in a small number of cases, a period of interruption was agreed to be in students' best interests.
T16a_03	Data provided from the final year of the DLHE survey which is the most recent year of comparable data.
T16a_04	The first year of data since these additional measures were brought in for the 2020 cycle indicate an increase in performance in this area. We will continue to monitor this particularly closely.
T16a_05	Please see note in Column P - for the RCM's 2019-20 APP this target was discontinued and replaced with the target below T16a_08. However, we have nonetheless reviewed progress against this measure and are pleased to see it is ahead of the previous target.
T16a_06	We are pleased to be ahead of target on this measure.
T16a_07	We are pleased to be ahead of target on this measure.
T16a_08	We are pleased to note that BAME recruitment has increased since the introduction of this measure (see note on discontinued target T16a_05).
T16b_01	Development work continues on curriculum, assessment and evaluation to ensure progress continues.
T16b_02	We are pleased that, despite the challenges caused by Covid-19, progress was very close to target.
T16b_03	
T16b_04	Hitting this target and indeed supporting the schools in continuing their provision online has been challenging, so this is pleasing result. We have offered digital supporting courses and online resources to support schools in continuing to engage their students with practical music-making.

