

# UNDERGRADUATE APPLICANTS' GUIDE 2024-2025



ROYAL  
COLLEGE  
OF MUSIC  
*London*





# WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in the Royal College of Music. This useful guide will help you with the next steps in applying to study here, and to direct you to other information you may need.



- 
- 02** Welcome
  - 04** Why study at a conservatoire?
  - 06** What is a BMus(Hons) degree?
  - 11** Useful dates
  - 12** Understanding application vocabulary
  - 14** Things you should know about the RCM
  - 18** Before you apply
  - 22** Applying
  - 24** Auditions
  - 26** Next steps checklist
  - 27** How to keep in touch

**GLOBAL**  
**NO. 1**  
**FOR PERFORMING ARTS**

QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS BY SUBJECT 2023 & 2022



# WHY STUDY AT A CONSERVATOIRE?

At the Royal College of Music you can study performance and composition programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate level.

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Your principal study is at the heart of your learning experience and informs the structure of your programme. You will receive one-to-one lessons throughout the year as well as a variety of performance opportunities.

Successful applicants will usually have achieved a high standard in performance or composition at the time of assessment for admission.

Our Bachelor of Music BMus(Hons) programme blends tradition, creativity and innovation. It focuses on performance training or composition alongside modules in contextual subjects and professional skills.

The RCM's BMus(Hons) qualification is a fully accredited and internationally recognised undergraduate degree, enabling you to tailor your studies around your own skills and interests.

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There is a strong emphasis on independent learning. We believe that the more you put into your studies at the Royal College of Music, the more you will get out of your time here. There are plenty of opportunities to make the most of your time studying, such as taking part in projects, attending masterclasses and using our wonderful resources, collections and facilities.





# WHAT IS A BMUS(HONS) DEGREE?

The BMus(Hons) is a four-year undergraduate degree designed to offer you a high level of performance or composition training, alongside studies relevant to your aspirations as a musician.

Teaching at the Royal College of Music consists of one-to-one tuition, performance classes, workshops, masterclasses, lessons from distinguished visiting artists and professors, ensemble activities, seminars and lectures, including online learning and teaching. Our world-class professors offer students not only first-rate teaching, but also mentorship and networking opportunities.

Alongside your principal study, the first two years of the programme have core modules in aural, history, musicianship and professional skills, including health and wellbeing for musicians, and career management. Years three and four are designed to be flexible so that you can tailor your studies to meet your own interests and aspirations. Throughout your studies you will develop your skills further in ensemble and solo performance and develop an understanding of music in diverse contexts.

Modules on offer currently include Conducting, Musician in the Digital Age, Innovation and Enterprise, Psychology of Performance, Sound Recording and Production, Investigating Music, Alexander Technique, Instrumental and Vocal Teaching, Orchestration and Arrangement and many others. You can find a full list of modules in our BMus Programme Overview which is available on our website at [www.rcm.ac.uk/courses](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/courses)

## WHAT CAN I DO WITH A BMUS(HONS) QUALIFICATION?

Our priority is supporting you to reach your full potential as a musician, ensuring you have the resources you need to succeed.

Your studies here will allow you to follow a diverse array of career paths. RCM students and graduates enjoy success in major competitions around the globe and our graduates go on to work in a wide range of careers at some of the most prestigious ensembles, venues, educational institutions and opera companies in the world.

Many of our graduates go on to develop portfolio careers, combining freelance performance or composition with regular teaching and outreach work. Graduates also work as orchestral musicians, musicians in the armed forces, composers, conductors, music administrators and librarians, to name a few.

Graduates who decide to progress to further study do so both in London and abroad, with around half deciding to return to the RCM. The most popular courses are Master of Music (MMus), Master of Performance (MPerf) and Master of Composition (MComp). RCM graduates also go on to study for other postgraduate courses and qualifications, as well as conducting their own private study.

## RCM CREATIVE CAREERS CENTRE

In addition to the career management and professional elements of the course, our Creative Careers Centre offers bespoke advice and guidance throughout your studies and for five years after graduating. It offers resources, workshops and presentations by industry specialists, plus a broad range of professional opportunities including performances and teaching work. For orchestral musicians we also provide side-by-side sit-in schemes with several major orchestras. For many students, the Creative Careers Centre helps pave the way to a successful lifelong career in music.

## FIND OUT MORE

[www.rcm.ac.uk/creativecareers](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/creativecareers)







“THE RCM IS A WELCOMING INSTITUTION WHERE I CAN LET MY PASSION FOR PERFORMING THRIVE.”

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**CONNOR HARGREAVES**

Bachelor of Music (Hons)

“Before coming to the RCM I studied at a state comprehensive school and discovered my love of ensemble performance when I joined Suffolk Youth Orchestra. I am hugely grateful for the grants and bursaries that supported my journey to the RCM and continue to support my studies. The RCM is a welcoming institution where I can let my passion for performing thrive in a comfortable environment.”





# USEFUL DATES

The deadlines for applying to study at a conservatoire are slightly earlier than those for universities. Below is a table of the main dates you should be aware of when applying to the Royal College of Music.

## DATES

12 July 2023	Applications open on UCAS Conservatoires
2 October 2023	Application deadline for candidates auditioning in London or by video
2 October 2023	Application and portfolio submission deadline for composers
Mid November – mid December 2023	Auditions in London
December 2023	Audition results published for London audition and video audition candidates
31 January 2024	Deadline for responding to offers received by 3 January 2024

As well as our London auditions, the Royal College of Music regularly holds auditions in New York, Hong Kong, Singapore, Bangkok, Tokyo, Seoul, Beijing and Shanghai. Information about auditions is correct at time of going to print, the latest information on audition venues can be found at [www.rcm.ac.uk/auditionlocations](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/auditionlocations)

It is preferable to audition live where possible but if you are unable to attend an audition venue in person, the option of auditioning by video recording will be available. For more information about video auditions and submitting a recording please visit [www.rcm.ac.uk/auditionsbyrecording](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/auditionsbyrecording)

**FIND OUT MORE**  
[www.rcm.ac.uk/apply](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/apply)

# UNDERSTANDING APPLICATION VOCABULARY

## UCAS CONSERVATOIRES

UCAS Conservatoires is the application service for courses at conservatoires in the UK, through which you apply for the RCM's BMus(Hons) course. It is part of UCAS, which is used for most Higher Education applications in the UK. You can use UCAS Hub to follow the stages of your application, find out when your audition is, see your results and confirm your decision. Find out more at [www.ucas.com/conservatoires](http://www.ucas.com/conservatoires)

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

You must be able to meet the minimum qualifications in order for your application to be considered by the Royal College of Music. This varies depending on the country you are applying from. For full details visit [www.rcm.ac.uk/bmus](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/bmus)

## FACULTIES

Faculties are the different departments that make up our core teaching and learning at the Royal College of Music. These are: Brass, Composition, Conducting\*, Historical Performance, Keyboard, Percussion, Strings, Vocal & Opera and Woodwind. For more information about our faculties see [www.rcm.ac.uk/faculties](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/faculties)

## PRINCIPAL STUDY

Your principal study is the main specialism that you will pursue during your course, such as violin, voice or composition. Students may want to take up an additional related or second study alongside their principal study, but this is not a requirement.

## JOINT PRINCIPAL STUDY

Students with an equally high level of ability in two areas may undertake joint principal study, in which their two specialisms are taught and assessed with equal weight. This is a demanding option, requiring an exceptional level of practical skill. Due to the large number of scheduled classes, it is not possible for singers or percussionists to undertake joint principal study.

## RELATED STUDY

Related study allows instrumentalists to receive tuition on an instrument closely related to their principal study, such as oboe and cor anglais, or violin and historical violin.

## SECOND STUDY

Second study allows students to receive tuition in a second specialism in an area that does not qualify for related study. Second study is taught and assessed at a lower intensity than principal study. Examples include piano with violin, or trumpet with composition.

## UNCONDITIONAL OFFER

An unconditional offer means you are guaranteed a place on the course, as you have already met the entry requirements.

## CONDITIONAL OFFER

If you receive a conditional offer it means that we are guaranteed to accept you if you meet all of the entry requirements. For example, you will receive a conditional offer if you are waiting for your A Level results.

## TUITION FEES

All students of UK Higher Education institutions are required to make a payment to their institution to cover the cost of their studies. Studying at a world-class conservatoire can be expensive, but we provide financial support to our most talented students through an array of awards and scholarships. For up-to-date information on fees and funding see [www.rcm.ac.uk/fees](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/fees)

## LIVING COSTS

Your living costs will cover your accommodation, travel, food and lifestyle whilst studying. We cannot say exactly how much money you will need while studying at the RCM, as different students have different needs, preferences and lifestyles. We have broken down the indicative living costs you may need to budget for at [www.rcm.ac.uk/livingcosts](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/livingcosts)

## SCHOLARSHIPS

Any student who auditions in person or by video for a place on a performance or composition programme beginning in September 2024 will automatically be considered for a scholarship or study award. Scholarships are offered on the merits of your performance at audition or interview. Scholarship amounts vary from student to student, from a contribution towards your tuition fees right up to full fees. For more information please visit [www.rcm.ac.uk/scholarships](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/scholarships)



\*Conducting is only available as a principal study specialism at postgraduate level. Second study conducting is available to postgraduates and undergraduates who meet the requirements.



# THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE RCM

The Royal College of Music has been ranked the global top institution for performing arts for two consecutive years (QS World University Rankings by Subject 2023 & 2022), training gifted musicians from all over the globe for a range of international careers. If you are interested in studying at one of the world's greatest conservatoires, here are a few things we think you should know about us...

## PERFORMANCE AND EVENTS

The RCM aims to give students as much performance experience as possible in venues across London and further afield. Find out more at [www.rcm.ac.uk/performance](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/performance)

## OUTSTANDING TEACHING

Our exceptional teaching staff are often joined by visiting professors from across the music industry. Recent visiting artists have included Boris Berman, Dame Sarah Connolly, Jessica Cottis, Anna Meredith and Sakari Oramo. Explore our professors for each faculty at [www.rcm.ac.uk/faculties](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/faculties)

## EXCELLENT FACILITIES

Our main building, the Blomfield Building, sits on Prince Consort Road opposite the Royal Albert Hall, and is home to performance spaces, classrooms, rehearsal and practice facilities and the RCM Students' Union. We have recently opened two new performance spaces; the Performance Hall which has variable acoustics and a retractable stage suitable for a range of performance and the smaller Performance Studio, ideal for solo and chamber performance.

A new home for the Royal College of Music Museum opened in October 2021 and showcases our extensive collection of historical instruments, artwork and manuscripts.

The RCM Library houses a physical collection of over 200,000 items including music and scores, books, music journals and recordings and gives students access to a wide range of online resources including e-books, e-scores and e-journals.

Our audio, video and composition technology facilities in the RCM Studios enable performers and composers to work in professional studio conditions. The RCM's studio facilities are used in a range of technology-based modules and the video production suite allows for broadcasts and recordings of RCM concerts.

The South Building adjoins the Blomfield Building and houses a performance space, practice facilities, the percussion suite and the RCM Students' Union.

A short walk away is RCM Jay Mews. It provides two large orchestra and opera rehearsal spaces and further practice rooms and is located next to the Royal Albert Hall. Find out more about our facilities at [www.rcm.ac.uk/facilities](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/facilities)







### ACCOMMODATION

Our hall of residence, Prince Consort Village, provides high-quality accommodation for music students, featuring acoustically treated bedrooms and practice spaces. It is located in leafy west London and within easy travelling distance of the RCM. For more details on accommodation, visit [www.rcm.ac.uk/accommodation](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/accommodation)

### INSPIRING LOCATION

London is a fantastic student city with a host of opportunities to explore. The Royal College of Music sits in the heart of South Kensington. We stand proudly opposite the Royal Albert Hall and enjoy fruitful partnerships with our neighbours, such as the Victoria and Albert Museum and Royal College of Art. Students can also enjoy the relaxing expanse of Hyde Park, less than five minutes' walk away. Find out more about our inspiring location at [www.rcm.ac.uk/location](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/location)

### STUDENT SUPPORT

The College takes pride in being an inclusive place to study and we support equality and diversity within our community. We promote a range of teaching, activities and resources to support student health and wellbeing during their studies. Our experienced and supportive Student Services Team offers a confidential and impartial advice service to all students, dealing with a range of issues including financial concerns, private accommodation, musicians' injuries, personal matters and more, in person and online. For more information visit [www.rcm.ac.uk/studentssupport](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/studentssupport)

### CREATIVE CAREERS CENTRE

The RCM is a world-leader in career development for musicians. We emphasise the need for students to be confident and versatile communicators, not just in their professional engagements but in everything they do. Our Creative Careers Centre enables our musicians to discover their professional identity, gain new skills and more. For more details see page 7 or go to [www.rcm.ac.uk/creativecareers](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/creativecareers)

### DISABILITIES & NEURODIVERSITY

We welcome and encourage the participation of neurodiverse students and students with disabilities in all aspects of life at the RCM, and we have particular experience in supporting students with dyslexia and visual impairment.

Our Student Services are designed to support you in a way that enables you to be an independent member of our student community. If you find that you need some extra support while you are studying at the RCM the Student Services Team can help you. Each student who discloses a disability or support need will be offered a tailored learning agreement. To find out more visit [www.rcm.ac.uk/disabilities](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/disabilities)

### STUDENTS' UNION

The RCM Students' Union is here to help you make the most of your time in London. It offers student socials, health and wellbeing services, student feedback, pastoral care and supports student-led music, as well as hosting a variety of societies and events throughout the year. Find out more at [www.rcm.ac.uk/rcmsu](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/rcmsu)

### SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The RCM welcomes students from all over the world. About half of our students come from outside of the UK which makes the RCM an exciting and diverse hub of creative music making. Our friendly International Team can assist you if you have any questions about applying to the RCM and provide support with visa applications. For more information visit [www.rcm.ac.uk/international](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/international)

### OUR COMMUNITY

We understand that living away from home and studying independently can feel like a big step. The RCM prides itself on its nurturing environment and friendly, vibrant and collaborative student community. There is a strong focus on healthy practice and wellbeing. Our staff are here to support you on each stage of your journey, from practical support with your application, to study skills and future career planning.



# BEFORE YOU APPLY

## REQUEST A PROSPECTUS

If you have not already, we recommend that you read the RCM prospectus, which contains further information on our facilities, performance opportunities, student life, faculties and much more. You can request or download a prospectus at [www.rcm.ac.uk/prospectus](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/prospectus)

## EXPLORE OUR CAMPUS

Our Open Days take place each spring and are designed to give prospective students, parents and teachers the chance to explore what the College has to offer, and to speak directly with Heads of Faculty and programme leaders. For more information visit [www.rcm.ac.uk/openday](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/openday)

You can also watch our campus tour video at [www.rcm.ac.uk/watchcampustour](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/watchcampustour)

## EXPECTED PERFORMANCE STANDARD

Successful applicants to the Royal College of Music will usually have already achieved a high standard of performance or composition at the time of audition. Competition is high and we always have more applicants than places available. We do not use ABRSM or other graded exams as a pre-requisite for our BMus(Hons) course. However, as a guide, successful applicants tend to be at a standard equivalent to distinction at ABRSM grade 8 and those who have developed much further.

You can see performances from our students from across different year groups and faculties on our YouTube channel [www.youtube.com/RCMLondon](http://www.youtube.com/RCMLondon)





# THE FLEXIBLE CURRICULUM HAS ALLOWED ME TO TAILOR MY STUDIES TO FIT MY NEEDS.

## RIANNA HENRIQUES

Bachelor of Music (Hons)

- I previously studied at the RCM's Junior Department which helped me transition into studying at the RCM full-time. College has so much to offer. I've been involved in many orchestral projects, masterclasses and chamber concerts while studying here. The flexible curriculum has allowed me to tailor my studies to fit my needs.





# APPLYING

## UCAS CONSERVATOIRES

Applications to the RCM are made via UCAS Conservatoires. The conservatoire recruitment cycle is different to universities and you will need to apply by 2 October 2023 for entry in September 2024. Applications open in July 2023, see page 11 for specific dates. There is a useful guide to completing your application on the UCAS Conservatoires website:

[www.ucas.com/conservatoires](http://www.ucas.com/conservatoires)

We recognise that the audition process can seem stressful and expensive. To avoid putting yourself under too much pressure we recommend that you research your options carefully and consider only preparing auditions for three or four conservatoires.

The RCM offers audition fee waivers to UK BMus(Hons) applicants from low income households. For more information on eligibility and how to request a fee waiver please visit [www.rcm.ac.uk/bmus](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/bmus)

## APPLICATION

Your UCAS Conservatoires application will include your personal information, details of your previous education and a personal statement, which is your opportunity to tell us more about your musical experience and achievements.

You must also provide two references. The practical reference should be written by your current principal study teacher, and the academic reference should be from someone who can comment on your academic ability. You will be asked to enter your referees' contact details into the application form, and an automated request for a reference will be sent to them. If it is not possible to obtain your references by the application deadline, you can ask your referees to email them directly to the RCM. However, you should aim to submit them to UCAS by the deadline if possible.

## STUDY OPTIONS

If you want to apply to study more than one instrument or specialism, there are a variety of options you can consider:

- If you feel you have a high level of ability in two areas you can apply for joint principal study. You will need to select this option in your application. You will be auditioned in both specialisms and may be offered a place to study both at equal intensity. Depending on your performance at audition, the RCM may decide to offer a place on only one of the two principal studies.
- You can pursue a second study which you will audition for when you commence your studies in September. Or you can choose to take a related study, this is subject to the approval of the relevant Head of Faculty when you start your course. You do not need to indicate an interest in second or related study in your application.

For more information about our different study options see page 12.

## SCHOLARSHIPS

More than 50% of current students receive some financial support, thanks to the generosity of individuals, legators, companies and charitable trusts. Scholarships are offered on the merits of your performance at audition or interview. Scholarship amounts vary from student to student, from a contribution towards your tuition fees right up to full fees.

You do not have to apply for a scholarship – any student who auditions or interviews for a place in person or by video for September 2024 entry is automatically considered. If you are offered a scholarship or study award you will receive a confirmation letter following your offer of a place.

**FIND OUT MORE**  
[www.rcm.ac.uk/apply](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/apply)





# AUDITIONS



In addition to our main auditions in London, we also hold auditions in the USA and at a number of venues in Asia.\* You can find out more at [www.rcm.ac.uk/auditionlocations](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/auditionlocations)

## DISABILITY & NEURODIVERSITY SUPPORT

If you declare a disability or learning support need (dyslexia, dyspraxia, autism, etc.) in your application, the RCM will contact you to discuss confidentially whether you need any reasonable adjustments to enable you to audition.

## YOUR AUDITION DATE

Once the application deadline has passed we collate all the applications and make our schedule for auditions and interviews. All applicants who are auditioning in London will be notified of their audition date and time by the end of October.

Please do your best to attend the audition date given to you as this is a highly complex schedule organised alongside the other UK conservatoires to try to avoid clashes. If there are mitigating circumstances we may be able to be flexible but in most cases we ask that you attend at your assigned time.

## PERFORMERS

The format of your audition will vary depending on your principal study. It will generally last approximately 15–20 minutes and you will need to prepare pieces in advance. There will also be a short sight reading exercise (instrumentalists only) and interview, to allow the panel to get to know you and answer any questions you may have. For some principal studies there may be a second audition or workshop which will happen on the same day. All those auditioning will be given 15–20 minutes to warm up before their audition. There is no theory test.

You can check the audition requirements for your principal study at [www.rcm.ac.uk/auditions](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/auditions)

If auditioning at an overseas venue information can be found at [www.rcm.ac.uk/auditionlocations](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/auditionlocations)

\*Audition information correct at time of publication. See [www.rcm.ac.uk/auditions](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/auditions) for latest information.

## COMPOSERS

Composers are primarily assessed on the basis of their portfolios, and only those whose portfolios demonstrate potential will be invited to attend an interview. A portfolio of between two and five contrasting examples of your work should be submitted by the application deadline. Portfolios should include scores, and you may also submit recordings if they are available. If you are invited for interview, your interview will last around 15 minutes. You do not have to perform but there will be a short aural test. For more information on submitting your portfolio visit [www.rcm.ac.uk/comprequirements](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/comprequirements)

## PRE-SCREENING

For our auditions in London we do not pre-screen applications for the B/Mus(Hons) course. If you apply on time you will be guaranteed an assessment, so please ensure that your application is submitted by the deadline.

For several of our overseas venues we do pre-screen due to the volume of applications. Check the requirements for your preferred venue at [www.rcm.ac.uk/auditionlocations](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/auditionlocations)

Pre-screening videos must be submitted by the application deadline for the relevant audition venue.

## ACCOMPANISTS

If you are auditioning in London, an accompanist will be provided for your audition, although you are welcome to bring your own if you prefer. You do not need to request this service or send us your music ahead of time, unless you are auditioning for percussion.

If you are using an RCM accompanist make sure you bring a hard copy of music for them. For most other audition venues you will need to bring your own accompanist.

## AUDITION ADVICE

Audition nerves are completely normal. Our best advice is to make sure you have prepared your repertoire thoroughly. Make sure that you leave enough time for your journey to the RCM and arrive in plenty of time to get to your warm up room. It may also be useful to think of a few questions to ask the panel, as they will be happy to answer any queries you may have. Most of all, try to relax, breathe and enjoy your experience of auditioning at the Royal College of Music.

## YOUR AUDITION OUTCOME

All applicants auditioning during our November–December auditions will be notified of the result before Christmas. This will be available to view in your UCAS Hub along with conditions of your offer, so make sure you check your account regularly.

## CHOOSING YOUR PRINCIPAL STUDY PROFESSOR

You may have an idea of who you want to study with by the time you audition. Once you are offered a place on the programme you will have until May 2024 to submit up to three choices for your principal study professor. If you are unsure about who you want to study with, you can organise consultation lessons with any of your choices prior to making this decision. Your Head of Faculty will be happy to advise you on your choice.

## FURTHER SUPPORT

If you are successful in your application and decide to accept a place at the RCM, you are welcome to discuss any support needs you may have with the Student Services Manager, for example if you have a disability, are estranged from your family or have caring responsibilities.

You may want to visit the College to assess whether there are any needs you have which you might not have thought of already. Arrangements can then be made in advance of your arrival on your course, to give you the best start possible.

**FIND OUT MORE**  
[www.rcm.ac.uk/study](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/study)



# NEXT STEPS CHECKLIST

Make sure you follow our handy next steps checklist, and tick them off as you make your way through the application process. Good luck and we hope to see you soon!



01	ORDER OR DOWNLOAD A PROSPECTUS	<input type="checkbox"/>
02	EXPLORE OUR CAMPUS	<input type="checkbox"/>
03	DISCOVER THE CITY AND ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS	<input type="checkbox"/>
04	LEARN ABOUT PROFESSORS, FACILITIES AND PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES	<input type="checkbox"/>
05	CHECK THE APPLICATION DEADLINES	<input type="checkbox"/>
06	APPLY VIA UCAS CONSERVATOIRES	<input type="checkbox"/>
07	PREPARE FOR YOUR AUDITION OR INTERVIEW	<input type="checkbox"/>
08	RESPOND TO YOUR OFFER	<input type="checkbox"/>
09	CHOOSE YOUR PRINCIPAL STUDY PROFESSOR	<input type="checkbox"/>

# HOW TO KEEP IN TOUCH

If you would like to talk to someone about applying to the Royal College of Music, our audition process or expected standards, feel free to contact our friendly Admissions team who will be happy to advise you.

## RCM ADMISSIONS

020 7591 4362

admissions@rcm.ac.uk

 /royalcollegeofmusic

 @RCMLondon

 /RCMLondon

 @RCMLondon







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