



EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ESD) STRATEGY

June 2022

Introduction

The RCM aims to be a centre of excellence for sustainability leadership in arts higher education, globally. The College acknowledges that our planet faces a climate emergency, ecological crisis and significant socio-economic challenges on a global scale, such as those the UN Sustainable Development Goals seek to address.

Sustainable Development aspires to address environmental, social and economic challenges with the ultimate aim of creating a better future for our world. Education for Sustainable Development is concerned with creating curriculum structures and subject content which deliver Sustainable Development (see Advance HE and QAA Education for Sustainable Development Guidance).

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals



As a specialist higher education institution and leading voice in the performing arts, the RCM is uniquely positioned to champion sustainability and, in particular, to provide an environment that promotes the role of the arts in creating a more sustainable world. We aim for all of our students to be equipped as 'global artist-citizens' and to be able to contribute to the development of a better future for the planet through music, their careers and their everyday lives.

This document provides:

- examples of the way in which ESD topics relate to RCM programmes and the curriculum;
- examples of how ESD is facilitated through curricular and extra-curricular activities at the College;
- an analysis of ESD intended learning outcomes, with suggestions of outcomes that might be further enhanced through RCM formal and informal education.

Example sustainability themes

- **Understanding the environmental impacts of music making** and what opportunities exist to partially or entirely mitigate negative effects;
- **Examining the use of natural resources** in the manufacture and/or maintenance of instruments and exploring how to manufacture more sustainable instruments;
- Recognising the cultural and social benefits of music making and **empowering students and staff to enact positive societal change through their musical practices**. Examples include:
 - Music and social justice
 - Inclusive musical practices, including work with participants with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
 - Musical projects that address issues of equality, diversity and inclusion, including representation in classical music and improving access to classical music
 - Musical care and music therapy
 - Performance health and wellbeing

Creating and sharing music that engages with representations of society and the natural world. **In doing so music can raise awareness or offer commentary on environmental and social issues**. Examples might include:

- Art as activism
- New creative work e.g., musical compositions, that respond to sustainability themes
- Interdisciplinary practices
- Site-specific performance or installation

The research and study of music/sound and its meanings in a range of physical, geographical, and cultural spaces:

- Ecomusicology (as defined by Allen, 2013) and phonomusicology
- The field of sound studies, including acoustic ecology, urban studies, communication science and psychoacoustics

As the RCM's core work involves the production of several hundreds of professional standard concerts, operas, events and tours each year, there is an opportunity to study the environmental and social impacts of music-making first-hand and use these as a test-bed for evaluating the potential of more sustainable solutions.

Implementing the strategy

Annual and Periodic Programme Monitoring

All RCM programmes are subject to annual review and enhancement in response to student and examiner feedback. A more thorough 'periodic' review is undertaken every five to six years, at which point more substantial changes may be implemented to ensure that the programme meets the current needs of students, employers and the wider cultural industries. Our review process is part of the RCM's continued commitment to provide the best possible education and music training. From the academic year 2022/23, Education for Sustainable Development will be included as a review criterion for all course reviews in order to evaluate where and how ESD knowledge, competencies and abilities can be taught through the College's existing academic programmes.

Artistic Projects

Artistic projects are excellent vehicles for embedding ESD, especially in the conservatoire environment, as they provide an opportunity to study sustainable development themes in depth using various artistic approaches.

Faculty projects have proven a useful tool for exploring sustainability themes through teaching and music-making activities. A recent example, entitled 'Treephonia', tasked 17 composition students to develop original music inspired by 190 trees in nearby Kensington Gardens. The project resulted in the development of an immersive soundscape that invited listeners to engage meaningfully with the trees of Kensington Gardens as well as raise public awareness of the importance of the environment and the threats it faces. It is hoped that through 'Treephonia', listeners will forge stronger relationships with their surrounding environment.

Student Projects

Through self-directed student projects such as the BMus Open Project and the Masters Professional Project, the College provides resources and mentoring for students to devise and develop their own new work. Through these modules we encourage students to reflect on their creative practice in relation to contemporary audiences and society. We will continue to develop this outward-looking approach among our students, with particular reference to the sustainable development goals of good health and wellbeing, quality education, gender equality, reduced inequalities, sustainable communities, and peace, justice and strong institutions.

A further example of RCM students developing their socially-engaged practice is the Creative Careers Accelerate Scheme, where students compete to be awarded start-up funding for businesses or social enterprises that address the needs of society today. In 2021 the successful projects tackled on issues including violence against women, access to classical music, and the environment.

'Living lab' approach

The College supports opportunities to use its campus and operations as a 'living lab' in order to study the sustainability impacts of music making activities such as concerts, opera performances and tours as well as wider public and space interactions. Such studies can be useful in developing a better understanding of the impacts of these activities and as a test-bed to assess the viability of solutions and innovations. The RCM's forthcoming Sustainability Strategy will aim to coordinate and consolidate these kinds of learning opportunities across the College's operations.

Extra-curricular activities

The RCM also runs a programme of informal ESD learning opportunities outside of the curriculum. Many of these opportunities are featured as part of the RCM's Green Week. For example, in January 2022, students and staff took part in a Zero Waste Challenge which provided an opportunity to learn about the environmental impact of waste and packaging, and how circular economy principles can be used to reduce our individual impact on the planet. The Creative Careers Centre produced a webinar for students, staff and alumni entitled 'Music and Our Planet' which explored the environmental impacts of music festivals, how to run a more sustainable orchestra and how music and performance can be used for environmental activism. The student voice is a key driver for the College's sustainability programme and the Student Union is involved in the planning of ESD-themed extra-curricular activities. In 2022, the SU contributed to Green Week by developing a plant-based cook book and running a thrift store, supporting learning and action about reducing our individual impact on the planet and circular economy principles.

The RCM will continue to provide resource and funding to these initiatives which help to deliver our sustainability programme.

Supporting staff

The RCM recognises that as a small and specialist performing arts institution there are limits to internal knowledge of sustainable development topics. As such, the College recognises the need to support academic staff in order to be able to implement the teaching of SD. The RCM will create spaces for dialogue, collaboration and participation around ESD such as the use of staff development days to increase staff awareness and knowledge of ESD. The College also provides professional development opportunities and will support staff to undertake professional development in delivering ESD. As a specialist monotechnic the RCM needs to develop bespoke approaches to equip staff to deliver ESD tailored to a conservatoire environment.

Learning outcomes

The QAA and Advance HE Education for Sustainable Development Guidance sets out the intended learning outcomes for ESD. Music and performance higher education inherently equips students with a range of skills and attributes that prepare them to pursue sustainable visions of the future and contribute to positive change. Many RCM courses already address ESD knowledge and programme reviews have updated course material to strengthen learning relating to social awareness and ethical practices. In particular, the MEd and MSc programmes have seen significant development in these areas.

However, it is recognised that our programmes can be further enhanced in how they address ESD. The below table gives some examples of ESD intended learning outcomes that could be further developed in addition to the knowledge, skills and attributes relating to ESD that students already get from their education at the RCM.

Education for Sustainable Development learning outcomes

Sources: QAA and Advance HE Education for Sustainable Development Guidance, QAA Music Subject Benchmark Statement, Royal College of Music BMus Overview.

Competency	A student who displays this competency can:	ESD competencies that RCM courses already address	ESD competencies that could be further enhanced
Ways of thinking			
Systems thinking competency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognise and understand relationships Analyse complex systems Consider how systems are embedded within different domains and scales Deal with uncertainty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analytical skills to recognise and understand relationships Resilience and the ability to deal with uncertainty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the interconnectivity of environmental, social and economic systems at varying scales Identify the tensions between the 17 SDGs and recognise their interconnections To be able to extend analytical skills to understand complex, global systems. Understand the root causes of unsustainable development.
Anticipatory competency (Future thinking)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand and evaluate multiple outcomes Create their own visions for the future Apply the precautionary principle Assess the consequences of actions Deal with risks and changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create their own visions for the future Demonstrate confidence in project planning and management. The ability to organise and manage a timetable of work effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use historical knowledge and an understanding of the consequences of past actions to envision how futures may be shaped Forecasting and backcasting skills Identify that natural systems have finite limits

Competency	A student who displays this competency can:	ESD competencies that RCM courses already address	ESD competencies that could be further enhanced
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate risks, their potential impacts and mitigation strategies 	<p>and may collapse if subject to excessive pressures or changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify that decision-making about natural resources require judgements about the risks to future ecological, social and cultural wellbeing. Evaluate the impacts and interconnections between the activities of different generations, demographic groups and cultures, recognising that there may be tensions and competing factors between them.
Critical thinking competency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Question norms, practices and opinions Reflect on one's own values, perceptions and actions Take a position in the sustainable development discourse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intellectual curiosity and the potential for continuing artistic and creative development. Present a simplified view of a concept Identify and formulate critical questions and problems Assess new information and continuously incorporate it into existing models as they develop Analyse, synthesise and evaluate data and information and reach well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, testing them against relevant criteria and standards Differentiate evidence-based conclusions from opinion and conjecture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take an evidence-based position in the SD discourse Critically assess and analyse SD issues within the context of their own discipline/subject area or future profession/career intentions Identify the rationale for encouraging behavioural change, where existing practices are shown to have a negative impact on the human and natural environment Identify change makers who have made positive contributions and draw upon their practices to enhance understanding
Ways of practicing			
Strategic competency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement innovative actions that further sustainable development at the local level and further afield 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate the potential for artistic and creative leadership and innovation. Awareness of different professional and cultural contexts. Demonstrate the ability to adapt and respond creatively to different professional and cultural environments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appreciate how aspects of their own discipline contribute positively or negatively to SD Identify then enact changes to actions or behaviours where existing practices have a negative impact Identify SD strategies to facilitate and mediate progressive discussions among interested parties

Competency	A student who displays this competency can:	ESD competencies that RCM courses already address	ESD competencies that could be further enhanced
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate thinking as a foundation for developing their personal ethical code 	<p>(stakeholders) to help resolve dilemmas and conflicts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement innovative actions that further SD at the local level and beyond Practise decision-making and analyse consequences of decisions made
Collaboration competency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn from others (including peers, and others inside and outside of their institution) Understand and respect the needs, perspectives and actions of others Deal with conflicts in a group Facilitate collaborative and participatory problem solving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ability to work in combination with others on joint projects or activities. Demonstrate advanced skills of teamwork, negotiation, organisation and decision-making. Understand the value of collaborating with others offering different knowledge, views and experiences Communicate effectively through listening, clarity of expression and constructive inquiry Utilise appropriate leadership styles Listen actively and critically Connect, adapt and synthesise what they learn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in interdisciplinary discussion to inform their thinking about sustainable futures and seek holistic, creative solutions to problems Clearly communicate complex SD issues to others Collaborate equitably across gender, ethnicity and other groups Address conflict and develop mediation skills
Integrated problem-solving competency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply different problem-solving frameworks to complex sustainable development problems Develop viable, inclusive and equitable solutions Utilise appropriate competencies to solve problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands the academic norms of a discipline and explore disciplinary integrity Work effectively in multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary groups Utilise appropriate competencies to identify and solve problems Communicate effectively with others to identify solutions to complex problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use and apply established frameworks and methodologies for analysing the impact(s) of a behaviour or process, utilising the skills and expertise developed through their own area(s) of study Combine different sources and types of evidence, drawing from different disciplines, to view and address a problem Consider academic norms and ways of thinking across different disciplines and subject areas, bringing them into play as appropriate Apply different problem-solving frameworks to complex SD problems

Competency	A student who displays this competency can:	ESD competencies that RCM courses already address	ESD competencies that could be further enhanced
Ways of being			
Self-awareness competency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on their own values, perceptions and actions • Reflect on their own role in the local community and global society • Continually evaluate and further motivate their actions • Deal with their feelings and desires 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to work independently, and to show self-motivation and critical self-awareness. • Demonstrate the ability to produce independent work of high quality (rigorous, defensible, robust, imaginative). • Awareness of different professional and cultural contexts. • Demonstrate the ability to adapt and respond creatively to different professional and cultural environments. • Identify and evaluate their own competences and learning needs • Take responsibility for their own learning and skills development • Maintain healthy mental and emotional state and be aware of their mental and emotional health • Understand their own heritages and cultures • Access and engage with their own and other cultures and heritages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop viable, inclusive and equitable solutions • Effectively engage with real-life problems relevant to SD • Understand how power structures and political systems influence SD • Identify the wide range of human cultures in existence and understand both the benefits and the challenges that these cultures present for SD • Employ leadership for SD by challenging assumptions and negotiating alternatives to unsustainable current practices, especially within their own discipline or subject area • Actively implement or contribute to changes that promote SD within the scope of their own learning experience and study environment • Clarify their own views on ways that SD can be achieved in different local and global communities and circumstances
Normative competency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and reflect on the norms and values that underlie one's actions • Negotiate sustainable development values, principles, goals and targets, in a context of conflicts of interests and trade-offs, uncertain knowledge and contradictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and reflect on the norms and values that underlie one's actions • Engage with and understand different world views • Appreciate, critique and value different cultural contexts • Identify ethical questions and use ethical frameworks • Identify the opportunities to support and develop a progressive and resilient culture that encourages citizens, professions and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the wide range of human cultures in existence, and understand both the benefits and the challenges that these cultures present in terms of SD • Demonstrate that both unsustainable and sustainable practices take place in an evolving context, necessitating adaptability in policy and planning responses • Identify the interactions between human

Competency	A student who displays this competency can:	ESD competencies that RCM courses already address	ESD competencies that could be further enhanced
		institutions to put learning into practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debate and explore fairness and justice, including social justice 	communities and ecological systems, and be able to assess the potential impacts upon each other <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify practical interventions for sustainability challenges

Reporting

Progress will be reported at least annually to the Environmental Management Committee.

Education for Sustainable Development is lead at senior level by Diana Salazar, Director of Programmes.

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