

BMUS (HONS) PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

2026-27 onwards

This specification provides a concise summary of the structure and intended learning outcomes of the RCM BMus (Hons) programme and the means by which the outcomes are achieved and demonstrated. More detailed information on module learning outcomes, module content and teaching methods, and modes of assessment can be found in the BMus (Hons) Programme Handbook and the RCM Assessment Handbook, which are updated on an annual basis. Progression and award requirements are published in the BMus Programme Regulations.

This document has been prepared with reference to the UK Quality Code 2024 and the QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Music (2025).

Programme Information

Awarding Body and Teaching Institution	Royal College of Music
External Accreditation	Not applicable
Final Award	BMus (Hons)
Programme Title	Bachelor of Music (Honours)
UCAS code	300F
Mode & language of study	Fulltime; English
Relevant QAA Subject Benchmarking Group	Music
Date of validation and subsequent review	June 2006 (reviewed 2013, 2020, February 2026)

Educational Aims of the BMus Programme

The College's BMus programme is a future-facing, research-informed degree that combines world-class artistic training with innovation and entrepreneurial skills, preparing graduates for diverse careers in tomorrow's music industry. This intensive, practice-led programme builds on the College's long tradition of musical excellence and its thriving musical community which, since 1882, has produced outstanding musicians who have shaped musical life in the UK and internationally. The BMus programme combines deep roots in this rich heritage of excellence in performance and composition, whilst embracing artistic innovation and new forms of musical creativity. As an RCM BMus student, you will engage deeply with musical traditions while developing the curiosity, confidence, and adaptability to thrive as a professional musician today.

The distinctive aims of the RCM Bachelor of Music (Hons) degree are to:

- Deliver world-class training for performers and composers.
- Offer a student-centred, holistic musical education that unlocks each student's creative potential.
- Provide opportunities for learning and collaboration with leading professionals and industry organisations
- Inspire curiosity, versatility, and innovation in music-making.
- Foster artistic and intellectual growth through critical enquiry and creativity.
- Develop confident, socially engaged musicians able to connect with diverse audiences.
- Shape RCM graduates as advocates and changemakers able to enrich society
- Equip students with the entrepreneurial skills and independence to develop sustainable careers in the future music industry.

The learning aims and outcomes for the RCM BMus have been developed with reference to the European [Creative and Performing Arts and Design Qualifications Reference Framework](#) (2024) and the UK [QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Music](#) (2025)

Programme Learning Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas:

A Performance and Practical Skills

- A1 Perform or compose at a level demonstrating readiness for the profession
- A2 Apply research, analysis, and critical reflection to enhance your own artistic practice
- A3 Demonstrate effective collaboration with others, underpinned by emerging professionalism, leadership, and effective interpersonal skills
- A4 Generate and develop original musical ideas with creativity and impact
- A5 Critically evaluate and refine your own music-making processes and that of others

B Knowledge and Understanding

- B1 Understand the materials and structures of music, applying specific musical terminology
- B2 Research and evaluate information from diverse sources with insight
- B3 Demonstrate deep knowledge of musical styles, traditions, and interpretation
- B4 Analyse and assess musical materials across a range of media, including live performance, to form persuasive arguments
- B5 Connect artistic practice with a range of historical, cultural, scientific and social contexts
- B6 Work with familiar or unfamiliar sounds, concepts and repertoires, adapting them creatively to create new outcomes

C Professional Skills

- C1 Take initiative and solve problems with flexibility and creativity, demonstrating an entrepreneurial approach
- C2 Understand professional working environments and industry standards
- C3 Work independently with confidence and self-awareness
- C4 Manage time and projects effectively, presenting outcomes to a professional standard
- C5 Use technology fluently for research, communication, musical practice or innovation, and self-promotion
- C6 Communicate ideas persuasively and imaginatively to diverse audiences, including learners
- C7 Recognise the contribution of music in society, with reference to a range of socio-cultural and educational contexts
- C8 Promote healthy, sustainable practices for yourself and the wider music industry

Programme Structure

The BMus degree is offered as a full-time, 4-year programme. At the core of the programme is your specialism in an instrument, voice, or composition (your 'Principal Study'). Exceptionally and subject to successful audition, highly able students may take two specialisms (excluding Voice or Timpani & Percussion) as 'Joint Principal Study'. The programme is structured using modules of 10 credits to 80 credits. 120 credits are taken in each of the four years. Years 1 and 2 are predominantly core (except for Second Study). Elective credits in Years 3 and 4 provide you with the opportunity to expand your interests and/or specialise.

BMus Year 1 and 2 – All Faculties			
Year	Module	FHEQ Level	Credits
Year 1	Principal Study 1*	4	60 (or 50 when taken with 10 credit Second Study)
	Applied Aural Skills	4/5/6	10
	Healthy Musician	4	10
	Improvisation, Theory and Analysis (ITA) 1A/1B/1C	4/5	20
	Musicology 1	4	20
Year 2	Principal Study 2*	4	60 (or 50 when taken with 10 credit Second Study)
	Applied Aural Skills or Aural in Professional Contexts	5/6 6	10
	Improvisation, Theory and Analysis (ITA) 2A/2B/2C	5/6	20
	Musicology 2	5	20
	Teaching Musician	5	10

*Joint Principal Study (JPS) students take two instruments, equally weighted across the 60 Principal Study credits. Second study is not available to JPS, Timpani & Percussion, or Vocal students.

BMus Year 3 and 4 – All Faculties except Vocal

Year	Module	FHEQ Level	Credits
Year 3	Principal Study 3*	6	60
	Faculty Core Requirement* (Brass, Keyboard, Woodwind only)	6	20
	Professional Musician	4	10
	Elective Modules	5 or 6	30 or 50 (if no faculty core requirement)
Year 4	Principal Study 4*	6	60
	Independent Project	6	20
	Elective Module/s	6	20 (Timpani & Percussion) or 40

**Joint Principal Study and Timpani & Percussion students take Principal Study at 80 credits, with no faculty core requirement. There is no faculty core requirement in BMus 3 for Composition, Historical Performance, or Strings students.*

BMus Year 3 and 4 – Vocal Students

Year	Module	FHEQ Level	Credits
Year 3	Principal Study 3	6	60
	Interpretation of Song 1	5	20
	Professional Musician	6	10
	Elective Modules	5 or 6	30
Year 4	Principal Study 4*	6	60
	Interpretation of Song 2	6	20
	Opera, Acting and Movement	6	20
	Independent Project	6	20

All principal study performers must take at least one non-performance elective during their studies.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The Royal College of Music provides a wealth of resources to support students on the BMus programme, including:

Teaching

- One-to-one tuition by expert professors in your Principal Study and, where available, Related or Second studies.
- A focus on small group seminars in core modules in BMus 1 and 2 to support content delivered in large group lectures. Many core and elective modules include access to one-to-one tutorial support, providing formative feedback in advance of assessments.
- A rich programme of over 500 performance activities each year, many delivered in collaboration with international visiting artists (conductors, performers, composers) and to public audiences.
- An online learning environment, Learn.rcm, where key programme and module information is published. Each module has a dedicated set of online course pages where the module specifications, assessment information and learning resources are published.
- Core and elective modules and faculty classes are generally taught across a maximum of 20 weeks; Principal Study teaching and projects take place across c.30 weeks.

Teaching Resources

The College provides sector-leading facilities for students. Teaching facilities include:

- Amaryllis Fleming Concert Hall: our main orchestral venue, with capacity for 400, is equipped with Steinway grand pianos and a custom-built Flentrop organ.
- Performance Hall: a flexible 138-seat space with variable acoustics and advanced technical infrastructure.
- Britten Theatre: an opera theatre with orchestra pit for 50 musicians and seating for 400, equipped with an 80-speaker D&B Soundscape surround sound system.
- Recital Hall: a smaller, 100-seat venue suitable for a range of rehearsals and student-led performances
- Performance Studio, a 'black-box' space equipped with the CPS Performance Simulator: a cutting-edge space for visual and acoustic simulation of performance spaces. The Meyer Constellation system installed can also be used for experimental and multimedia performances.
- RCM Studios: professional audio and video recording facilities, including a specialist video mixing studio to support live broadcasts of performances and a Dolby Atmos studio used for surround sound mixing, in addition to small stereo mixing studios and Mac labs for music production.
- The RCM Library and Museum provide outstanding facilities for research, reference, listening and lending. The RCM Collections includes over 14,000 instruments, portraits, images and engravings, and a range of internationally significant manuscripts. Digital Library resources include access to Nkoda and Henle online score libraries.
- In addition, over 2000 instruments in the College's lending collection
- The RCM Piano Workshop maintains the RCM pianos to a professional standard and a resident luthier supports the maintenance of the College's extensive string instrument collection.
- The Centre for Performance Science (CPS) Performance Simulators are available for students to develop their performance and presentation skills and conduct performance research.
- The purpose-built Prince Consort Village Hall of Residence provides student residents with specialist practice facilities.

Assessment

- Performance examinations generally take place in the late spring and summer examination periods; Composition portfolios are usually due in the summer term.
- Summative assessment deadlines for core modules are published on the module course pages on Learn.rcm. Some modules incorporate continuous assessment, usually assessed through in-class or in-rehearsal contribution.
- In addition to traditional examinations and coursework submissions, core and elective modules may be assessed through professionally focussed tasks such as interviews, pitches, placements, presentations (in-person or video), or practical demonstrations.

Preparation for Employment

- The College maintains close relationships with a wide range of professional orchestras, across London, the wider UK and internationally. Many of these partnerships provide professional side-by-side work placement opportunities for students, with opportunities allocated through competitive audition.
- The RCM Creative Career Centre provides a support service offering advice in career and professional development, publicity, teaching and external engagements, contact with RCM alumni and with external mentors.
- RCM Sparks, the College's thriving learning and participation programme, enables students to train as workshop assistants and undertake paid work in community, school and partnership projects, including through the London West Music Hub (LWMH).

Programme Progression Requirements

BMus 1

All modules must be passed to progress to Year 2. Reassessment may be offered in September, subject to Board of Examiner approval. Students leaving at the end of Year 1 may be awarded a Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) exit award if they have achieved 120 credits. BMus 1 does not count towards the degree classification.

BMus 2

All modules must be passed to progress to Year 3. Reassessment may be offered in September, subject to Board of Examiner approval. Students leaving at the end of Year 2 may be awarded a Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE) exit award if they have accumulated at least 240 credits and successfully completed all Year 2 modules. BMus 2 carries a weighting of **20%** towards the final degree classification.

BMus 3

All modules must be passed to progress to Year 4. Reassessment may be offered in September, subject to Board of Examiner approval. The College does not offer an ordinary degree exit award. Students leaving at the end of Year 3 will be awarded a DipHE if they have accumulated at least 120 credits at Level 4 and at least 120 credits at Level 5 or above.

BMus 3 carries a weighting of **30%** towards the final degree classification, or 40% for students who enter the programme as direct entry students to BMus 3.

BMus 4

All credits taken in Year 4 must be no lower than FHEQ Level 6. BMus 4 carries a weighting of **50%** towards the final degree classification.

Students must gain 120 credits in order to complete the year and 480 credits in total in order to graduate with the BMus (Hons) award. The degree classification is calculated as follows according to a **20:30:50 weighting across BMus 2, 3 and 4**:

Classification	Criteria
1st	Weighted average of 69.5 or higher AND a minimum of 60 credits in BMus 4 at 1
2:1	Weighted average of 59.5 or higher AND a minimum of 60 credits in BMus 4 at 2:1 or higher
2:2	Weighted average of 49.5 or higher AND a minimum of 60 credits in BMus 4 at 2:2 or higher
3rd	Weighted average of 39.5 or higher. (No profiling requirement as all modules must be passed.)

For students entering the programme directly into Year 3 (BMus 3), the weighting used is **40:60** for BMus 3 and 4 with the requirement of 60 credits achieved in the upper classification in Year 4.

Admission Requirements

All offers for the BMus are made on the basis of performance at audition, or portfolio and interview for composers. All students who apply are invited to attend an audition, which may take place at the College or at an international audition location (where available). Alternatively, a recorded audition may be accepted.

Candidates will also require two A Levels at grade E or above, or 1 A Level at grade E or above and two AS Levels, one at grade D and grade E and above. Alternative UK and other international qualifications will be considered.

The English language requirement for entry is to speak English at B2 standard on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in all four components (reading, writing, speaking, listening). This is equivalent to an overall IELTS score of 5.5 in all four components.

Please refer to the [RCM website](#) for more detailed information on admission and audition requirements.

Student Support

- Dedicated Personal Advisors in BMus 1 and 2 meet termly with students to provide academic guidance and signposting to specialist support.
- Dedicated Careers Advising in BMus 3 and 4 provides guidance to inform elective choices, career preparation, future study and signposting to specialist support for managing freelance life, business development, and fundraising.
- RCM Student Services provide specialist support and advice for students with disabilities, mental health difficulties, or experiencing financial hardship. The RCM has a dedicated team of professional counsellors, access to a 24/7 online mental health support through TogetherAll, and all students can access clinical support through the Imperial College Health Centre. The RCM Hardship Fund provides support for students in unexpected financial hardship.

Programme Evaluation and Enhancement

The College applies a continuous enhancement approach to programme quality and standards, which are monitored as follows:

Student Feedback Mechanisms

- Module feedback surveys
- Annual student experience survey (internal)
- National Student Survey (external)
- Termly Student Curriculum and Experience Forum
- Faculty Meetings
- RCM Students' Union and SU President representation on committees

Monitoring and Review

- Annual monitoring report, including statistical analysis of module results, progression, and degree results
- Reports from Programme External Examiners
- Periodic programme review (every 5-6 years), which includes external consultation and feedback
- Peer observation of teaching
- Use of external specialist assessors in practical examinations
- Submission to the OfS Teaching Excellence Framework

Committees responsible for monitoring quality and standards

- Student Curriculum and Experience Forum (reporting to Senate Executive Committee)
- Programmes Forum
- Undergraduate Sub-Board of Examiners
- Undergraduate Board of Examiners
- Senate

Assessment Regulations

The pass mark is 40% for all modules. The overall marks required for the degree classifications are as follows with standard rounding convention applied:

Classification	Mark
First	70 – 100%
Upper Second	60 – 69%
Lower Second	50 – 59%
Third	40 – 49%

External Examiners

The BMus programme has two Programme External Examiners, who are experienced examiners from other conservatoires or universities in the UK and internationally. They are nominated by the Senate Executive Committee and approved by Senate. External Examiners normally serve for a term of four years. Their responsibilities are to:

- Observe a representative sample of recitals during the summer term
- Review a representative sample of other assessments, which may include examination papers, coursework, or recordings of practical assessments.
- Meet with undergraduate students to discuss their experience of the programme
- Attend the main Undergraduate Board of Examiners
- Submit an annual report on quality and standards for the College

APPENDIX A: Skills Mapping (Core Modules)

Year	Module	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
Year 1	Principal Study 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
	Applied Aural Skills		✓				✓		✓	✓										
	Healthy Musician		✓			✓		✓			✓			✓						✓
	Improvisation, Theory and Analysis (ITA)		✓		✓		✓		✓	✓		✓								
	Musicology 1		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							✓	✓	
Year 2	Principal Study 2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
	Applied Aural Skills or Aural in Professional Contexts		✓				✓		✓	✓										
	Improvisation, Theory and Analysis (ITA)		✓		✓		✓		✓	✓		✓								
	Musicology 2		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							✓	✓	
	Teaching Musician							✓			✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Year 3	Principal Study 3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
	Faculty Core Requirement (where applicable)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								✓	✓					
	Professional Musician									✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓			✓
Year 4	Principal Study 4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
	Independent Project							✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		

Appendix B: Competence Standards for the BMus (Hons) Programme

This section of the Programme Specification outlines the competence standards that apply to students enrolled in the BMus (Hons) programme at the College. These standards represent the essential levels of ability and achievement that all BMus students must demonstrate to successfully complete the programme. They are defined in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and have been developed with reference to the Competence Standards Guidance (2025) developed by AdvanceHE and the National Association of Disability Practitioners (NADP).

Competence standards establish the minimum threshold of performance required for academic or professional purposes. While higher education providers must make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled students are not placed at a substantial disadvantage, such adjustments may relate only to the means through which a competence is demonstrated, rather than the competence itself. The adjustments listed below illustrate ways in which the College may remove unnecessary barriers without altering the academic or professional expectations of the BMus programme.

These standards apply across all four years of study and should be read in conjunction with the BMus Programme Specification, Assessment Handbook, and the Disabled Student's Handbook. They are intended to ensure clarity, transparency, and fairness for all students while upholding the academic integrity of the BMus (Hons) award.

Competence Area	Competency Standard	Examples of Reasonable Adjustments to Assessment
1 Aural skills	Perceive, analyse, and respond accurately to musical elements to a level required for effective rehearsal and performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjusted pacing or repeat playings of aural tests Assistive listening devices Additional time during examinations Alternative room for examination
2 Discussion and debate	Engage in real-time academic discussion with others by articulating informed arguments, responding to others, and demonstrating subject knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowances for extended processing and response time Use of assistive technology, for instance notetaking software Adjustments to discussion group size and/or room set-up Some questions or discussion points may be provided in advance for interviews or viva examinations, and/or in writing at the start, for reference. Scheduled rest breaks for longer sessions
3 Ensemble performance	Maintain accurate timing, intonation, coordination, and balance within an ensemble and respond appropriately to musical cues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjusted project placement or role Visual or tactile cueing systems Adjustments to rehearsal schedule (where practicable)
4 Groupwork	Contribute constructively to group tasks by engaging in collaborative activities and fulfilling agreed roles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structured role allocation Reduced group size Additional processing time to complete interim task/s

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of assistive technology, for instance notetaking software • Other assessment options, where appropriate
5	Independent preparation	Prepare repertoire or composition portfolios to a standard appropriate for public performance or publication within set timeframes*, demonstrating self-management and reflective practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistive practice planning tools or support • Permission to record lessons <p><i>*Additional preparation time is not normally a reasonable adjustment for end-of-year assessments for year-long modules (e.g. recitals, portfolios, or projects) due to the extended lead-time already provided.</i></p>
6A	Musical Performance: musical interpretation and expression	Communicate coherent musical intentions through stylistically informed interpretative choices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible performance space • Additional rehearsal time in the venue • Adjusted exam scheduling, for instance at a specific time of day or with additional breaks
6B	Musical Performance: performing to an audience	Present live musical performance demonstrating technical competence, interpretative understanding, and musical communication appropriate for the audience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjusted stage setup or furniture, including stand height • Adjustments to backstage environment
6C	Musical Performance: sight-reading and musical literacy	Read and interpret musical notation at a level necessary for rehearsal and assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Score in an accessible format e.g. Enlarged, braille, or digital • Flexible choice of repertoire within parameters agreed by Head of Faculty • Modified venue environment (e.g. lighting)
6D	Musical Performance: technical proficiency in the principal study	Demonstrate a level of technical control on the principal study instrument/voice sufficient to perform repertoire of an appropriate level of complexity accurately and reliably.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Page-turning technology • Partial recorded assessment • Permitted use of scores where memorisation is affected • Smaller or controlled audience
7	Presenting to an audience	Communicate musical or contextual information clearly and coherently to an audience (which could be a peer or learner) in spoken or multimodal form.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistive communication technology, for instance voice amplification or live captioning • Pre-recorded presentation elements • Additional processing time to complete task/s • Adjusted room layout
8	Professional conduct	Demonstrate reliable, safe, and ethical practice in all performance, rehearsal, and academic contexts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance notice of rehearsal schedules; adjusted rehearsal times where practicable • Assistance or assistive devices for safety when moving on stage