

# INCOMING UNDERGRADUATE EXCHANGE STUDENTS

## BMus(Hons) Programme Outline (Course Catalogue)

Last revised November 2025

This document contains important information for prospective exchange students on the RCM's programmes in Performance and Composition. At the start of their exchange, Students will meet with the RCM academic staff to receive personalised advice to help them finalise their study programme.

Exchanges take place in the Autumn Term (September to December).

### Course Content

Exchange placement is typically aligned with the RCM's BMus Year 3, with Exchange students following the same pattern of study as other RCM students. Undergraduate students receive the following tuition during their stay:

- 10 hours of 1-to-1 Principal Study (Applied) lessons
- A diverse programme of Faculty-based classes, workshops, activities, and performance opportunities
- Orchestra (subject to audition in September)
- Faculty supporting studies (depending on your instrument or specialism)
- Up to a maximum of 3 core or optional (elective) modules (see list below), depending on availability

Students typically choose their options (electives) from the relevant year of the BMus. For example, students in their third year of study at their home institution would choose options for year 3. However, we can be flexible for exchange students, so you are welcome to request options from other years to tailor your time at the RCM to your interests and requirements, subject to availability.

This guide provides information on the structure of the BMus programme and lists the modules available for Exchange students. Module descriptions are at the back of the guide.

Please be aware that module availability may be subject to change due to staff changes and regular programme reviews.

Please ensure that any core or option modules you select meet the requirements of your home institution's programme of study.

## Credit Framework

40 FHEQ credits/20 ECTS will be awarded for the successful completion of the exchange period as a whole. This is equivalent to a single term (or trimester) of study. The UK-based FHEQ credit system converts easily into the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), with 2 RCM credits equalling 1 ECTS credit.

This number of ECTS is awarded because undergraduate exchange students cannot normally complete any formal assessment during an Autumn Term exchange. RCM assessments typically occur during the Spring and Summer Terms. The structure of our courses fully complies with the Bologna Process. A standard full-time academic year is worth 120 FHEQ credits (60 ECTS).

At the end of the exchange period, students receive an Exchange Transcript from the RCM. This document will be used by your home institution to recognise your period of study at the RCM and convert the credits you have gained to your country's credit system. Please note that the RCM does not use module codes.

## Faculty Activities

### Brass

As a brass student, your weekly Faculty class will include performance classes, ensemble classes and repertoire classes. In addition, there are instrument-specific masterclasses for trumpet, trombone, French horn and tuba, given by visiting artists and professors throughout each term. There are student-led instrument clubs that are open to all to attend, as well as ensemble performance opportunities.

### Composition

As a composition student, you have a weekly faculty class. During this time, visiting composers give talks exploring their works and occasionally review student compositions. Instrumentalists and groups also visit to explain the various techniques possible on their instruments and offer advice on how to write for them. At various points, there will be opportunities for your works to be performed by a small group of instrumentalists, and you can apply to participate in different projects.

### Historical Performance

As a historical performance student, your weekly Faculty classes include performance classes, repertoire classes, critical listening and cadenzas. There are instrument-specific masterclasses for baroque strings, wind, and keyboards over the course of the year given by visiting artists and professors, as well as collaborative masterclass opportunities with other faculties. There are coaching opportunities from visiting professors for solo and chamber groups and multiple performance opportunities such as baroque ensembles and performances in RCM baroque festivals.

### Keyboard

As a keyboard student, you have a weekly performance class led by an RCM keyboard professor. Throughout the term, there are masterclasses for piano, collaborative piano, and contemporary piano given by visiting artists and professors. There are many performance opportunities, as well as the possibility to perform in the annual Keyboard Festival.

### Percussion

As a percussion student, you can participate in Faculty classes at various points throughout the term. There are masterclasses given by visiting artists and professors, and you can have 1:1 lessons with them while they are with us.

## Strings

As a string student, you can attend instrument-specific performance classes at various points throughout the term. There are weekly Faculty classes for double bass, harp, and guitar students. Masterclasses are available for all instruments (violin, viola, cello, double bass, harp, and guitar) given by visiting artists and professors. Students have opportunities for 1:1 lessons with these visiting artists and professors while they are with us. Additionally, there are orchestral audition classes and orchestral rep sessions for students interested in orchestral performance.

## Voice

As a singer, your Faculty classes will include Italian, German, and French, Song classes (Italian, French *Mélodie*, Lieder), Movement and Speech classes, and Acting and Stagecraft, which culminate in a set of Opera Scenes for students staying for the full academic year. In addition, there are weekly faculty performance classes and Masterclasses with distinguished visiting artists. Vocal students take part in the RCM Chorus Project, and Chamber Choir (by audition), and many other performance opportunities are available for students to audition for, such as the opera chorus, historical performance projects, and weekly RCM concerts.

## Woodwind

As a woodwind student, your weekly Faculty classes include performance classes, ensemble classes, and repertoire classes. Additionally, there are instrument-specific masterclasses for flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, and saxophone, given by visiting artists and professors at various points throughout the term. There are student-led instrument clubs open to all and reed classes for oboe and bassoon students. Many performance opportunities and internal concerts are available for sign-up.

## BMus Programme Structure

*NOTE: As part of the RCM's regular programme review cycle, there will be some changes to the content and delivery pattern of some modules listed below in the 2026/27 academic year. Further details will be available in the spring of 2026.*

### Year 1 (Level 4)

Principal Study (Applied Instrument)

Historical Studies

Music in Our Time, taught in:

- Weekly lectures
- Weekly seminars

Musicianship & Improvisation

Level taken is determined by the result you achieve in your start-of-year Placement Test.

Applied Aural Skills

Level taken is initially determined by the result you achieve in your start-of-year Placement Test, but during the course of the exchange, you can opt to take whichever level you prefer, in consultation with your Aural professor.

Healthy Musician

Provides the knowledge and skills to help you develop healthy, sustainable, and optimal practice habits, performance strategies, lifestyles, and careers.

### Year 2 (Level 5)

Principal Study (Applied Instrument)

Level 5

As for year 1

Historical Studies	Level 5	<p>Choice of courses available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The History of the Orchestra</li> <li>• The History of Theatre Music</li> <li>• The History of Musical Genres</li> <li>• The History of Public Music</li> </ul> <p><i>NOTE: As part of the BMus Review process there will be some changes to the content and delivery pattern of this module. Updates will be available in spring of 2026</i></p>
Musicianship & Improvisation 2	Level 5 & 6	<p>Level 5: Choice of courses available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classical</li> <li>• Jazz</li> </ul> <p>Level 6: Choice of courses available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baroque/Tonal</li> <li>• Modernist/Contemporary</li> <li>• Romantic</li> <li>• Jazz Harmony</li> </ul> <p>The level taken is determined by a Placement Test</p> <p><i>NOTE: As part of the BMus Review process there will be some changes to the content and delivery pattern of this module. Updates will be available in spring of 2026</i></p>
Applied Aural Skills	Level 5 or 6	<p>Level taken is initially determined by the result you achieve in your start-of-year Placement Test, but during the course of the exchange you can opt to take whichever level you prefer, in consultation with your Aural professor.</p> <p><b>OR</b></p>
Aural in Professional Contexts	Level 6	<p>You follow this course if you passed level 6 Aural in year 1. If you passed level 5 Aural in year 1 you can opt to take this course instead of level 6 aural.</p>
Teaching Musician	Level 5	<p>This module focuses on specialist teaching, preparing you to teach your area of performance or composition to learners from beginner to Grade 6 (ABRSM). Delivered in two parts, it combines seminars and subject-specific group work to explore teaching strategies, pedagogy, and practical skills, with assessment by viva voce.</p> <p><i>NOTE: As part of the BMus Review process there will be some changes to the content and delivery pattern of this module. Updates will be available in spring of 2026</i></p>
<b>Year 3 (Level 6)</b>		
Principal Study (Applied Instrument)	Level 6	
Professional Musician	Level 6	<p>Including developing effective communication, engagement with technology, understanding audiences, finances and industry, and development of entrepreneur skills.</p>

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Electives	Levels 5 & 6	Allow you to tailor your studies to your strengths and interests. Select from amongst an array of contextual and practical-based elective modules at levels 5 and 6.
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**Year 4 (Level 6)**

Principal Study (Applied Instrument)	Graduation Level	As for Level 6 (year 3).
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Electives	Level 5 & 6	Choose from a range of level 5 and level 6 elective modules.
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## BMus Core Modules and Electives Available for Exchange Students

*Please note that elective modules may be subject to change depending on student numbers and professor availability. Following the BMus Review process some core and elective modules or their content might also be revised in 2026/27.*

### Year 1 Core Modules

Level 4 & 5 Historical Studies

Level 4 Healthy Musician

Level 4 Musicianship & Improvisation

Level 4 Aural Skills

### Year 2 Core Modules

Level 5 Historical Studies

Level 5 Music Leadership 1

Level 5 & 6 Musicianship & Improvisation

Level 5 & 6 Aural

Level 6 Aural in Professional Contexts

### Y3 Core Modules

Level 6 Professional Musician

### Year 3 and 4 Elective Modules

#### Contextual Studies

Sound Recording and Production

Electronic Music

Introduction to Music Technology

Education Studies (title to be confirmed)

Psychology of Performance

Orchestration & Arrangement

Memorising Music

Musicology Studies

Musical Analysis

#### Applied Skills

Alexander Technique 1 & 2

Contemporary Music Collective

Chamber Music 1 & 2

Collaborative Piano 1 & 2

Contemporary Piano 1 & 2

Conducting 1 & 2

Before you select any of the Core Modules listed, please check with your home institution that the selected modules meet your home institution's requirements for your programme of study.

Please ensure that the electives you select meet your home institution's requirements.

Historical Performance

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Improvisation

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Interpretation of Song 1 & 2 (singers only)

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Opera, Acting & Movement (singers only)

Orchestral Musician (must achieve a score of 55 at audition)

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## Modules Available in Years 1 and 2

Exchange students may select modules typically available to students in years 1 or 2, where needed to fulfill the requirements of their home institution, and subject to sufficient space in classes.

Before selecting any of the Core (Level 4) Modules listed, please check with your home institution to ensure that the chosen modules meet your home institution's requirements for your program of study.

**Please note that core and elective modules may be subject to change depending on student numbers and professor availability. Following the BMus Review process some core and elective modules or their content might also be revised in 2026/27.**

### Historical Studies (Core module)

Level 4 and 5

At Level 4, this module is taught in four topic blocks, building on students' existing practical musical experiences. It teaches critical approaches to repertoire and to performance traditions. It also considers the role of the performer by investigating the historically based social and cultural conditions under which the classical music industry operates. Students engage critically with the boundaries around Western art music and concert culture by studying selected contemporary repertoire.

At Level 5, several different topics are available for exchange students to choose from: orchestra, public music, hands-on, or musical genres. These topics enable you to extend and deepen your knowledge and understanding of music history while gaining a broad and informed awareness of select composers, performers, genres, and artistic ideas. A significant number of representative works will be studied in context and detail. You are encouraged to use both primary and secondary sources in order to gain an understanding of genres, repertoire, context, and performance history.

### Healthy Musician (Core module)

Level 4

At Level 4, this module provides knowledge and skills to help musicians develop healthy and sustainable careers. You will explore various resources available, focusing on your health and well-being, covering the physicality and psychology of performing, protection of hearing, and physical fitness and nutrition for musicians.

### Professional Musician (Core module)

Level 5

This module addresses three critical areas for developing artists: developing effective communication, engagement with technology, understanding audiences, finances and industry, and career management.

### Musicianship & Improvisation (Core module)

Levels 4, 5 and 6

Depending on the level most appropriate for you as determined by a diagnostic placement assessment, these courses enable you to develop and further your understanding of musical materials (melody, harmony and form) through theory and practice. You will explore a range of tonal forms and harmonic techniques through stylistic composition, score analysis and improvisation on your principal study (or second study for composers). By the end of the module, you will have grown in your understanding of music theory with the confidence and skills to apply this in and through your principal study.

### **Applied Aural Skills (Core module)**

Level 4, 5, and 6

This module reviews and develops your aural perception. It will give you insights into why and how aural perception and analysis can assist in understanding and interpretation of the instrumental or vocal music you are studying. At each level, you will be learning to recognise and identify by ear straightforward intervals, rhythms, motifs, textures, and chord progressions in music from a range of styles; recognise, by ear the elements of musical organisation and style; read and perform short melodies and rhythms; and recognise how and why aural perception can assist in interpreting the instrumental or vocal music you are studying.

### **Teaching Musician (Core module)**

Level 5

This module focuses on specialised teaching and is delivered in two parts. The first part involves seminars that explore key topics in teaching and learning within your specific area. In the second part, you work in subject-specific groups to investigate teaching strategies and pedagogical materials. Together, these activities prepare you to teach your area of performance or composition to learners from beginner level to Grade 6 (ABRSM). Assessment takes the form of a short viva voce in the Summer term.

## **Modules Available in Years 3 and 4**

### **Sound Recording and Production (Elective module)**

Level 6

In this module, you will learn the process of producing a professional standard classical CD from the perspective of one of the roles (sound engineer, producer, or editor). You will work as part of a team and apply project management, leadership, teamwork, negotiation, and problem-solving skills. You will learn, in practice, about the roles of engineers, producers, and editors, and you will have opportunities to take part in and learn about all processes.

### **Introduction to Music Technology (Elective module)**

Level 5

Through a series of practical workshops, you will develop fundamental skills in audio editing, sequencing, and recording music using a digital audio workstation. You will apply a range of software techniques to create new compositions using audio samples, sound processing, synthesisers and MIDI instruments. No prior knowledge of audio software is required.

### **Electronic Music (Elective module)**

Level 6

This module will introduce and familiarise you with some advanced hardware and software tools, as well as their applications in producing electroacoustic compositions. You will develop an appreciation for the broader technical and aesthetic issues related to electroacoustic music.

## **Orchestration and Arrangement (Elective module)**

Level 6

This module will concentrate on the orchestration of 20<sup>th</sup>—and 21<sup>st</sup>-century scores. Students will be able to demonstrate a sound working and practical knowledge of the main orchestral and other instruments in terms of their ranges, technical strengths and limitations, and individual qualities. Students will also recognise and apply a fuller range of resources in terms of arranging and instrumental technique to enable the effective and idiomatic transfer of musical material between instrumental media and the effective imitation of different instrumental and orchestral styles.

## **Alexander Technique 1 & 2 (Elective module)**

Level 5 and 6

This module will provide you with an understanding of the historical context of the Technique and FM Alexander's development of the 'Principles'. You will learn to recognise the personal habits that impede the coordination of your mind and body, as well as the means to work on them. Additionally, you will develop insights into how to apply the Alexander Technique to your personal practice and performance. (Subject to availability – these modules are often oversubscribed.)

## **Aural Skills (Elective module)**

Level 6

This module reviews and develops your aural perception. It will provide insights into why and how aural perception and analysis can assist in the understanding and interpretation of the instrumental or vocal music you are studying. At each level, you will learn to recognize and identify by ear, straightforward intervals, rhythms, motifs, textures, and chord progressions in music from a range of styles; recognize, by ear, elements of musical organisation and style; read and perform short melodies and rhythms; and recognise how and why aural perception can assist in the understanding and interpretation of the instrumental or vocal music you are studying.

## **Collaborative Piano 1 & 2 (Elective module)**

Level 5 and Level 6

At Level 5, this module will enable you to deliver an idiomatic performance with a singer, an instrumentalist, or both. You will learn about the duo and song repertoire and receive guidance on interpreting the piano parts. You will gain an understanding of how to collaborate successfully with another instrumentalist or singer. Sight-reading will also play an important role in your development as an accompanist.

At Level 6, you will further develop your sight-reading abilities, allowing you to incorporate a song's vocal line into the piano part at sight. You will be expected to have a deeper understanding of the poetry in songs and be confident in discussing it. Additionally, you will increase your knowledge of both the song and instrumental repertoire. repertoire as well as develop your listening skills in order to collaborate on a higher level.

## **Chamber Music 1 & 2 (Elective module)**

Level 5 and 6

This module offers student ensembles up to 12 hours of chamber music coaching per year. Your group will establish a regular pattern of coaching from the start of the academic year with one or more coaches selected by you. Under the guidance of the coaching tutor, you will choose the appropriate repertoire for detailed work at the relevant level to gain an understanding of the overall extent and character of this repertoire. The program will help you develop self-motivation, discipline, good time management, and the ability to function as a team member while also taking leadership initiative where appropriate. Your coaching will focus on aspects of chamber playing: balance, intonation, ensemble interaction, and rehearsal protocols. You will prepare 50-60 minutes of music to concert standard.

## **Conducting 1 & 2 (Elective module)**

Level 5 and 6

At Level 5, you will be introduced to the art of conducting and provided with a basic technique and the ability to read and prepare scores from a conductor's viewpoint. The course begins with a mixture of specific technique-based sessions and practical classes where you will cover a range of repertoire, learning to adapt and extend your technical and intellectual facilities throughout.

At Level 6, you will learn about the art of decision-making as needed for conductors, specifically on how to make musical (i.e. interpretative) decisions and then put them into practice through rehearsal. (Subject to availability – please note that these modules are often over-subscribed.)

### **Interpretation of Song 1 & 2 (singers only) (Elective module)**

Level 5 and 6

You will perform a wide variety of core art song repertoire with confidence and assurance, demonstrating versatility and flexibility in both performance and in programme planning. You will consolidate your performing skills as applied to art song and encourage the 'communicative impulse' to lie at the heart of all song class performances. This involves demonstrating that at the heart of every performance is an appreciation of the interdependent roles of pianist and singer, as well as showcasing an advanced facility in the correct pronunciation and communication of text.

### **Musicology Module 1 & 2 (Elective module)**

Level 5 and 6

Content and delivery to be confirmed

### **Opera, Acting & Movement (singers only) (Elective module)**

Level 6

You will carry out the various stages of preparation required in order to perform part of a scene from an opera on stage in front of an audience.

### **Historical Performance (Elective module)**

Level 6

Content and delivery to be confirmed

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