

Royal College of Music
ACCESS AGREEMENT 2016-17

Strategic Approach to Access and Student Success and Assessment of Performance

‘Fifty scholarships have been established, of which twenty-five confer a free education in music, and twenty-five provide, not only a free education, but also maintenance for the scholars. Of these scholarships, half are held by boys and half by girls. I observe with pleasure that the various districts from which the scholars are drawn indicate the wide-spread distribution of a taste for music, and an adequate cultivation of music throughout the United Kingdom. London, with its vast population, sends only twelve out of the fifty. The remaining thirty-eight come as follows: twenty-eight from fourteen different counties in England, two from Scotland, six from Ireland, one from Wales, and one from Jersey. The occupations of the scholars are as various as the places from which they come. I find that a mill girl, the daughter of a brickmaker, and the son of a blacksmith, take high places in singing, and the son of a farm labourer in violin playing. The capacity of these candidates has been tested by an examination of unusual severity.’

Extract from speech of HRH The Prince of Wales, at the opening of the Royal College of Music as reported in *The Times*, 8 May 1883.

Drawing on the vision of Prince Albert for the advancement of the Arts and Sciences, the College’s strategic plan sets out a vision for providing access to an inspirational learning experience for the widest possible range of students.

This Access Agreement takes this vision forward in line with key objectives, to:

- encourage applications, enable participation and enable student success and to
- raise aspiration to engage with music and to study at higher education level

The College believes the area for most effective investment is outreach activity delivered by RCM Sparks and other outreach initiatives, in keeping with national priorities articulated by OFFA. The balance of RCM investment of time and other resources has significantly favoured outreach and related activity from the outset and our strategy is for this to continue. The RCM has a good record of success in retaining all students through to graduation - those from disadvantaged backgrounds and other students, as demonstrated by HESA and RCM statistics.

The College’s outreach activities are oriented to support study in music and other subjects in HE generally, as well as to the RCM. Evaluation of this activity has shown young people engaged with sustained activity with the RCM feel more confident within an HE environment, particularly when their families have had no previous experience with HE. The majority of participants also demonstrate an increased level of skills within mixed groups and feel more comfortable working with others.

In executing these strategic priorities, the RCM's approach has always been collaborative. This is demonstrated by its wide range of partners. The approach to collaboration has become more strategic. It is focused on working in partnership with the music services of local authorities. Local authority partners are best able to identify students from disadvantaged backgrounds and are the key to successful projects. In recent years, this has included the establishment of the Tri-Borough Music Hub (comprising the boroughs of Hammersmith and Fulham, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster City Council) and has led to new partnerships with schools at both primary and secondary level as well new partnerships with other arts organisations. This is a major Arts Council funded initiative and is a very significant development in the College's approach to access, which builds on its work over a large number of years with these boroughs.

Other key collaborations include a new partnership with IntoUniversity – which provides a meaningful widening participation partnership that replaces the AccessHE partnership we had formerly which, in our specialist context, did not contribute to widening participation. Following on from the recent application for National Network for Collaborative Outreach we are working more closely with local HEIs, Imperial College and Royal College of Art, to offer an annual event for secondary schools (identified from a cold spot area) that brings together science, art and music in a way that is innovative and engaging.

The RCM is a founder member of CUK, which takes an active interest in access, especially in relation to CUKAS, its on-line admissions service which has grown applications significantly and has just added the remaining UK conservatoires to its membership, which will further enhance access to conservatoire admissions.

It remains the case that the RCM falls below its benchmarks in a number of access areas, as evidenced by HESA statistics in particular. Section 4 below sets out a number of the challenges facing conservatoires.

Where We Have Done Well

- Increasing applications – especially through the CUKAS on-line admissions service
- Increasing recruitment of state school students (including students from state-funded specialist music schools) now exceeds our own target and is approaching our HESA benchmark
- Student success – once recruited, HESA statistics show that students are almost always retained through to graduation and almost always the few students who do not graduate from the RCM transfer to other HEIs
- Graduate destinations – the RCM has an unprecedented record in employability, regularly placed at the head of all UK HEIs, as reported through HESA DLHE data, with 100% or near 100% employability of its students. UNISTATS KIS statistics show 100% going on to work or further study; with 100% in a professional or managerial job; 80% in 'artistic or literary occupations' (ie working as a musician)
- Collaborative approach – the RCM works with a rich range of collaborative partners as set out above and provided in more detail throughout this Access Agreement
- The evidence we have of the impact of outreach shows a clear record of raising aspirations among the most disadvantaged groups – developing in them an interest in music and in higher education generally
- The sheer volume of this activity for an institution of c800 students demonstrates a huge investment
- Steady progression through our Sparks Juniors programme has created a new path which is leading into our mainstream Junior College – creating potential for progression to RCM degree programmes. It remains the case that much of our outreach activity is targeted at primary age students and takes a long time to reap success in terms of HE participation
- High level involvement of RCM degree students in participating in outreach volunteering (paid and unpaid) – 18% of RCM students participate in outreach programmes.

Where We Want to Improve

- Recruitment of students from NS-SEC classes 4, 5, 6 & 7 remains below our HESA benchmark and, although improving, recruitment of students from low participation neighbourhoods (based on POLAR3 method) remains below our HESA benchmark. The RCM is now using contextual data as part of the admissions process and HESA

data show that recruitment of students from low participation neighbourhoods has been steadily improving year-on-year from a low base.

- Recruitment of disabled students – the RCM has a good record of support for disabled students, which was cited in the RCM’s most recent QAA report in 2012 as a feature of good practice: ‘the exemplary support for disabled students including the support offered through the application stage, comprehensive handbooks for students and staff, and the individually tailored learning agreements’. However we are below our HESA benchmark for the number of students reporting they are in receipt of a Disabled Students’ Allowance. The Students Services Manager has undertaken a review of our approach to the recruitment of disabled students and efforts have been made to ensure that all students who receive a DSA actually report it through the College, to ensure our HESA statistics actually reflect all those in receipt of an allowance.
- Evaluation of outreach activity. We have good qualitative evidence of the effectiveness and impact of outreach activity, but we think this could be better. We could also improve reporting and reflection on the evaluation of outreach activity. The plans outlined in section 11, now underway, mark a step change in the effectiveness of evaluation of the full range of activity covered by this Access Agreement.

1. Fees

The Royal College of Music plans to charge fees of £9,000 to home/EU full-time undergraduate degree student entrants in 2016/17, rising by the amount permitted by government as the higher fee cap for each year of the BMus for this cohort.

Today, the RCM has a total student body of around 800, of whom about 420 study on the College’s undergraduate programme – its BMus. We aim for a normal annual intake of 99 Home/EU students, which usually comprises about 74 UK and 25 EU students. This makes for a total BMus Home/EU student body of approximately 324, across all four years of the programme once retention calculations are taken into account.

The BMus is only offered as a full-time programme, although, as part of its student-centred retention strategy, the College sometimes permits students who would not otherwise be able to progress to transfer to a year of part-time study to complete deferred units or to retake failed units. The part-time fee will be £4,500, rising by the same % increase as that for the higher fee cap for each year of the BMus.

2. Expenditure on Additional Access and Retention Measures

We plan to spend more than £1,000 per BMus full-time home/EU student on access and retention measures. In 2016/17, as in previous years, because of the significant scale of our outreach programme, we will be spending significantly in excess of this amount.

3. Successes of the College’s Current Strategy and Assessment of Performance

Collaborative Partners

The RCM has a wealth of collaborative partners, which informs its entire approach to outreach and widening participation generally. This includes:

- being a strategic partner of the Tri-Borough Music Hub (comprising the boroughs of Hammersmith and Fulham, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster City Council) and has led to new partnerships with schools at both primary and secondary level as well new partnerships with other arts organisations. This is a major Arts Council funded initiative and is a very significant development in the College’s approach to access, which builds on its work over a large number of years.
- RCM Springboard Composition Project – a collaboration with local authorities Richmond, Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster

- Regular partnership with IntoUniversity (IU) – nine activities per year across three local IU centre which provide a meaningful widening participation partnership that replaces the AccessHE partnership we had formerly which, in our specialist context, did not contribute to widening participation
- Following on from the recent application for National Network for Collaborative Outreach we are working more closely with local HEIs, Imperial College and Royal College of Art, to offer an annual event for secondary schools (identified from a cold spot area) that brings together science, art and music in a way that is innovative and engaging.
- Collaboration through CUK, especially in relation to CUKAS.

Details of each of these collaborations and the projects they have led to can be found in the sections which follow.

Outreach

A flourishing and growing outreach programme delivered by **RCM Sparks**. Sparks activity is becoming more focused on widening participation through the *Sparks Juniors* initiative that will connect outreach activity with fee-free study in the College's Junior Department and offer access routes through to RCM BMus study. This programme started in September 2009 and is funded by both the College's additional fee income and the College's private funds. In 2012 the programme added an additional extension element to allow the young musicians to access a further three years of specialist tuition – taking participants to GCSE age. The extension programme includes a paired lesson, musicianship support, and involvement in a local gifted and talented choir – all of which takes place at the RCM.

The Continued Development of Two Local Orchestras

Built on the success of the five-year programme *Musicians of the Future* which culminated in 2010, RCM founded two orchestras in partnership with the local authority. The **Young Person's Orchestra** provides a destination for graduates of first access music schemes key stage 2, and the **New Generation Orchestra** for pupils at KS 3 and 4. The establishment of the new tri-Borough local authority structure from September 2013 has meant these ensembles have welcomed players from all schools in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham and also from Westminster. RCM students offer key mentoring roles on a weekly basis for both orchestras. The establishment of the Tri-Borough structure has also meant that RCM students also support ensembles at the Saturday Music School as mentors and an RCM trainee conductor is leading the orchestra. RCM students continue to train in whole-class instrumental tuition as part of the successful FIFTHS programme.

Strong Partnerships

Our strong partnerships continue to flourish particularly due to the RCM's role as a strategic partner as part of the Tri-Borough Music Hub. This has led to new partnerships with schools at both primary and secondary level as well new partnerships with other arts organisations to help deliver the most up to date projects based on local need.

Pre-tertiary Financial Awards

Funded places in the College's Junior Department – through privately funded bursaries and the Music and Dance Scheme (MDS) – providing additional access routes to HE music, including the RCM BMus for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Accessible Resources

A significant increase in the Museum of Music's public opening hours coupled with free admission and a growth in the number of guided tours given to groups of all ages and knowledge levels. The College is investing significantly in a remodelling of the Museum, a key motivation for which is to support outreach activity.

Application Process Streamlined

A significant increase in the applicant base as a result of the CUKAS conservatoire on-line application system, administered by UCAS.

Identifying Talent

The College places an increased emphasis on recognising potential as well as existing executant skill when making admissions decisions; we now use contextual data about educational background in reaching admissions decisions.

Supporting Disabled Students

The strength of learning agreements to support disabled students and strong systems to encourage and support applications from disabled applicants.

Retention Rates

Monitored and reported through Access Agreement targets. These are achieved through a strong system of personalised pastoral support for all students provided by heads/deputy heads of programmes and heads of faculty and through coordination of this support with Student Services. This was extended from 2011, to include a new tutoring system and a specific role for the Counsellor in supporting retention.

4. Ongoing Challenges to Our Approach

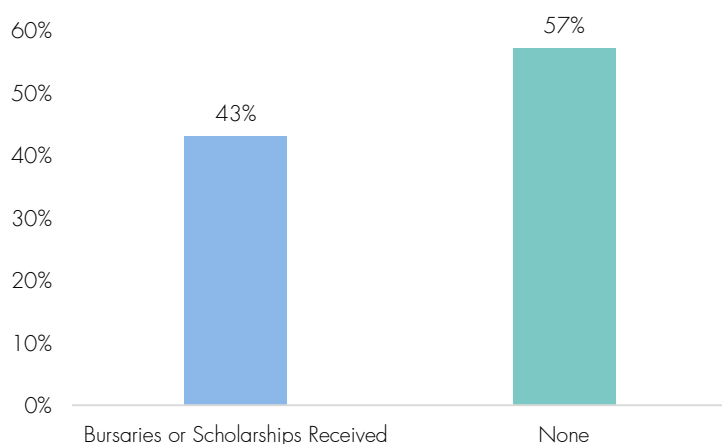
Limited Specialist Music Provision in State Schools

Limited specialist music provision in state schools makes it difficult for the College through its own efforts significantly to change its student mix. However, the College's extensive outreach programme, the success of its *Musicians of the Future* project and current plans in partnership with local boroughs and schools – including local orchestras and ensembles - represent the College's contribution to turning this around.

Specialist State-funded Music Schools and Independent School Specialist Scholarships

The categorisation of these schools in official data as independent schools distorts the data. The College recruits a significant proportion of its BMus UK students from the specialist music schools. Even among independent schools, many RCM students are only able to study at them because of generous scholarships, but this will not be apparent in HESA performance indicators.

RCM Students Who Received Music Bursaries or Scholarships to Attend Non-music Specialist Independent Fee-paying School 11-16 Years



Focus on Undergraduate Students

This disadvantages the College as some students, singers especially, enter the College directly to postgraduate programmes without undergraduate qualifications. Many of these are admitted on the basis of raw potential and from modest backgrounds; they are frequently supported by high value RCM scholarships. They, like EU students, do not figure in official data. For example, the 'world's favourite tenor':



'The world's favourite tenor', Alfie Boe left his local school in Fleetwood, to become a paint sprayer in a Blackpool car workshop. His unique talent was spotted, and a scholarship to the RCM catapulted him to fame. Alfie has appeared at many of the world's major opera houses including Covent Garden, English National Opera and La Scala Milan, and Les Misérables in London.

A Level Point Scores

Official data benchmarks are driven by A level point scores. While many of our students achieve good A level results, we do not require high A level scores for our BMus. What we do need is an exceptionally high standard of performance, as demonstrated through an audition.

Our Global Widening Participation Role

Current performance measures fail to reflect our international widening participation role for low-income and socially disadvantaged students from across Europe and beyond. These students have typically benefited from better state provision of music in those countries' state schools and other structures. Through the College's scholarship and bursary programmes these students are able to study at the RCM. For example, in two EU countries, Finland and France:

FINLAND

Finland's share of internationally acclaimed music professionals seems to be disproportionate compared to its population of only five million. All children have weekly class music lessons and access to instrumental and vocal lessons, group and individual. These are almost invariably free of charge. A student with an interest in music can apply to a special upper secondary school with a focus in music. There are eleven schools, called musiikkilukio, which are located in major cities and often function in conjunction with local music conservatories. Eleven conservatoires, ten polytechnics, and the Sibelius Academy give professional level music education in Finland.

As with other public education, they are free of charge. Conservatoires and the more recently-formed polytechnics offer a Bachelor's Degree in concert music, church music, or pop and jazz music. Conservatories give the vocational degree of a musician, whereas the polytechnics include pedagogical studies, and the graduates also qualify for teaching positions in music institutes.

FRANCE

The National Curriculum in France includes at least one hour of music each week for students up to the age of 16. The rigorous curriculum includes theory, history and performance, including instrumental lessons for many. There is a system of community, inter-community, departmental and regional music schools, (confusingly, also called conservatoires) which supplements the national curriculum offer.

Typically, these music schools operate after school each weekday, and are hubs of music activity for the whole community, though predominantly providing extended music education for school-age pupils.

In 2008-09 there were:

- 36 Regional Conservatoires and 101 Departmental Conservatoires, with a total of 155,000 students of whom 137,000 studied music
- 255 Community Conservatoires, 147,000 students of whom 125,000 study music
- 3,322 other schools with a music specialism, with 513,000 students
- Total of 775,000 studying music in heavily-subsidised state system

Each community (or arondissement) has a music school where individual tuition is offered after school, enabling children to participate in ensembles of various configurations and to continue their music theory and history training.

The schools ask families to contribute to tuition costs for instrumental lessons, which represent a total of 7.4% of schools' running costs. The amounts are fixed by the individual regions and municipalities but remain modest relative to total costs. In addition, these take into consideration the family's means. Some children pay nothing, most make a very modest contribution, and in every case a second child from a family will pay less. Talented musicians can progress to one of the 36 regional conservatoires, or to one of the Conservatoires supérieures (in Paris and Lyon, with Strasbourg soon to achieve the supérieure status).

5. Additional Access Measures

RCM Sparks

RCM Sparks is the Royal College of Music's learning and participation programme, providing opportunities for everyone to make or learn about music at the RCM, regardless of musical ability. From weekend workshops for children to holiday courses for teenagers, vocal days for families to opera matinees for schools, RCM Sparks offers a musically enriching experience for all. RCM Sparks projects aim to break down barriers, real or perceived, and unlock musical opportunity to those who otherwise would have little or no experience of live music.

- Its principal programmes for promoting progression to HE are (i) Instrumental projects and (ii) Springboard Composition Projects.
- 63% places at community workshops are offered free of charge. We actively recruit from the local Borough to allow children from low socio-economic (LSE) backgrounds to take part regardless of means, looked after children, families in receipt of housing benefit and those in social housing.
- In 2013-14, RCM Sparks worked with 2000 school participants and over 41 individual schools. RCM Sparks offered over nearly 1050 community workshop places during the academic year. 23% of young people and families engaged in the Community programme were from lower socio economic backgrounds and approximately 45% of young people and families engaged in the Community programme were non-white ethnic.

Strategic Local Authority Schools Partnerships

Through RCM Sparks the College has regular links with over 60 state schools in local authorities. Pupils participate in creative workshops, learn instruments taught by RCM students, attend concerts and classes at the RCM, have access to RCM Springboard courses, and can participate in the Young Persons' or New Generation Orchestras, and the AKA Choir. The RCM was successful in being made a strategic partner as part of a tri-Borough Music Education Hub. Awarded by the Arts Council to begin in September 2012 for three years, our role is to ensure that every child aged 5-18 has the opportunity to sing and learn a musical instrument, develop their skills, and to play with other children as part of an ensemble or choir. A full music provision audit at the beginning of the academic year 2012 has allowed the RCM to gain a more detailed understanding of the areas of need in the three surrounding Boroughs and plan widening participation work accordingly. The Hub has created a centrally located data system to allow the strategic team to see an overview of the demography of children who access music activities. This will be used to inform planning of future work to address any areas of need.

TRI BOROUGH LOCAL AUTHORITY CONTEXT

The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (LBHF), Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) and Westminster City Council (WCC) are local authorities which display remarkable diversity and contrasts, including ethnic and linguistic diversity and wide socio-economic disparities. There are pockets of high deprivation in all three boroughs.

- In LBHF, 4 super output areas are among the 10 per cent most deprived in England based on the overall Index of Multiple Deprivation. In terms of the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (used as an indicator for child poverty) nearly a third of areas are identified as being in the top 10% most deprived.
- In RBKC, 9 super output areas are among the 10 per cent most deprived in England
- In WCC, 12 super output areas are among the 10 per cent most deprived in England

In the tri-borough where in maintained schools, over half of pupils speak English as an additional language within WCC (69%), with 54% in RBKC and 48% in LBHF, compared to just 15% nationally. Pupils speak over 120 languages other than English, and around a third of pupils on roll are not fully fluent in English and require specialist support. In Westminster schools 34% of children qualify for free school meals (FSM) which is more than double the national average (16%). The figures for LBHF and RBKC are 25% and 28% respectively. Some schools also experience extremely high mobility. This is often the result of the movement of travellers, migrant workers, families in temporary accommodation plus asylum seekers and refugees.

RCM Springboard Composition Project Supporting Progression to GCSE and Beyond

Since 2005, RCM Sparks has collaborated with local authorities on providing a composition project available free of charge to all state school pupils in Years 10-13 in the boroughs of Richmond, Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster who are aspiring to studying Music GCSE, are taking Music GCSE or A-level Music. Six workshop days are run across three weekends, led by a professional composer, RCM composition students and RCM musicians. The programme has been developed in consultation with the Heads of Music in participating schools and is designed to support widening participation by giving an insight into the creative process of writing music, its notation, performance and recording, in order to support the composition aspect of the examination courses as well as inspire them to broaden their musical horizons and raise compositional standards.

IntoUniversity

CM Sparks works in partnership with IntoUniversity (IU). IntoUniversity provides local learning centres where young people are inspired to achieve. At each local centre IU offers an innovative programme that supports young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to attain either a university place or another chosen aspiration. RCM Sparks works closely with IU centres in Hammersmith, North Kensington and Brent and in other boroughs of London to provide inspirational music workshops for young people and their families to discover music and performance with hands-on experiences. Sparks delivers workshops within the local centres and also at the RCM, offering a range of opportunities in a variety of settings for participants to develop and sustain their interest in music. IU education workers actively encourage and support participation and regularly accompany participants to Sparks events, giving the support not always possible at home. Currently 70% of IntoUniversity students progress to university compared with the national average of 43%.

'Just seen one of our regular students at our homework club and he was so enthusiastic about this weekend's experience with RCM Sparks. He said the performance was "awesome". We are so pleased for him. It's the kind of experience he could never have had without the RCM support.'

Paul Wiggins, IntoUni Brent

From September 2013 schools engaging with sustained project work with RCM through either Sparks Juniors or Springboard have been identified **widening participation Partner Schools**. This provides schools and the RCM with a commitment to long term, strategic widening participation activity.

6. Identifying, Monitoring and Nurturing Those with Potential

RCM Sparks Juniors

RCM Sparks Juniors is a collaboration between RCM Junior Department and RCM Sparks, Sparks Juniors is an instrumental teaching programme designed to provide a progression route to RCM Junior Department for children whose potential might otherwise be overlooked. Now in its fourth year, it recruits – eight-ten children each year from Year 4 or 5, for a three-year programme. They attend Junior Department on a Saturday, where their timetable includes instrumental and musicianship lessons, and participation in the JD Junior Choir. Children are recruited in consultation with the school, following a series of whole-class workshops led by the RCM at which exceptional musical promise is identified. 80% are from LSE backgrounds, have English as a second language or have a special learning need. Whole families are encouraged to become involved and many parents and siblings attend Family Days with their children.

In September 2012 the RCM extended this programme to ensure 'graduates' from the scheme had progression to the next musical step and provide them with a high quality, carefully monitored pathway to GCSE. The Sparks Juniors Extension programmes runs on a weekday and offers paired lessons, a group musicianship class and access to a gifted and talented, mixed choir involving young people from the surrounding Boroughs. Both programmes continue to be fully funded.

'In the beginning the family had no intention of sending our children to any music lesson, in part this is due to our financial status and as well as our lack of knowledge in music. When we first knew of the programme we actually need to search for information on "Percussion". But ever since our daughter has engaged in music, her sister has taking up Violin lesson. We are ever thankful the programme had given us as a family opportunity to attend free music workshop and discounted ticket to concerts.

Sparks Junior parent

'Being involve with RCM as parents who are coming from without any music backgrounds from either of us, has not only given an opportunity to our son, it has certainly given all of us in the family a new hope for getting involve with the world of music. Music is heavily embedded into our life style even though it is only one person goes for lesson. We feel like we all are taking part in the programme. Seeing our younger daughter experimenting with instruments from her early stage of life is fabulous and she's now already keen to learn music. The whole experience has added values to our family and we are determined to continue that way.'

Sparks Junior parent

RCM Junior Department

This provides specialist training for talented children aged 8-18. It comprises 320 students who meet on term-time Saturdays. The challenging curriculum, including individual instrumental or vocal lessons, ensembles, choirs and general musicianship, is designed to nurture talented musicians and prepare them for entry to conservatoire or other HEI. Admission is by competitive audition and a bursary system, which includes MDS bursaries, ensures that no talented child is refused a place on financial grounds alone.

7. Collaborative Working Between HE Institutions

Conservatoires UK

CUK is the umbrella organisation which currently represents the collective views of music education and training across the nine major UK conservatoires.

CUK conservatoires have collaborated to establish an on-line admissions service for conservatoire entry. The prime motivation of this collaborative initiative was to provide for more public and accessible conservatoire admissions, especially for those from under-represented groups. Called CUKAS (Conservatoires UK Admissions Service) it is an on-line admissions service, administered by UCAS that started in May 2005: www.cukas.ac.uk. The seven founder member conservatoires, as well as HEFCE, have invested heavily to establish the service (a total of £675,000, of which £365,000 was provided by HEFCE). As a result of the establishment of this new service applications to the RCM have increased significantly – from c1400 a year to over 1800 currently.

Following on from a recent application for National Network for Collaborative Outreach we are working more closely with local HEIs, Imperial College and Royal College of Art, to offer an annual event for secondary schools (identified from a cold spot area) that brings together science, art and music in a way that is innovative and engaging.

9. Student Retention and Success

The College already has good retention rates, monitored and reported through Access Agreement targets. These are achieved through a strong system of personalised pastoral support for all students provided by heads/deputy heads of programmes and heads of faculty and through coordination of this support with Student Services. This has recently been extended to include a new tutorial support system and a specific role for the Counsellor in supporting retention. Great efforts are taken to ensure that those students who do leave the College, for example because they realise that a career as a musician is not for them, nevertheless stay within HE.

Despite the fact that it works against HESA PIs, the RCM coaches students who are not likely to succeed as musicians, to help them transfer to other HEIs.

We have also established systems to support disabled students - an area where we can provide highly personalised support, not least through personal learning agreements.

10. Balancing Financial Support and Non-financial Measures

The College believes it can be most successful in widening participation through outreach activity rather than through financial or retention measures: the College's evidence suggests that bursaries have not been effective in widening participation and has an existing record of success in retaining students through to graduation. Therefore, we believe the area for most investment is outreach activity delivered by RCM Sparks – both to support initiatives that lead to study at the RCM and to support study in music and other subjects at HE level generally.

The College has its own long-standing **scholarship programme**, which provides in excess of £2 million of support each year to undergraduate, postgraduate, Home/EU and international students. While this is primarily a merit-based scheme, need is taken into account and many students from less advantaged backgrounds are only able to study at the RCM because of the support scholarships provide. This is the means through which we intend to provide support for all students, regardless of background, in future, with the demise of the National Scholarship Programme (which we do not believe played any part in decisions to study at the RCM or to progress through the programme). Scholarship offers are made at the point of offer of a place to study at the College, thereby having the most direct influence on a student's likelihood of taking up the offer of a place.

11. Monitoring and Evaluation Arrangements, Consulting Students and Equality & Diversity

Focusing on Output

The College's widening participation targets are now much more oriented to measuring output rather than input. This requires more energy in the strategic prioritisation of monitoring and evaluation than was previously the case, especially in obtaining and then analysing data from partner institutions to measure the success of outreach activity.

All learning and Participation work undergoes ongoing monitoring and evaluation. Projects such as Sparks Juniors involve formative assessment, ongoing evaluation and reporting to parents. We evaluate each project through written evaluation from participants and teachers. Regular photographic and video evidence is also taken to allow reflective evaluation. RCM Sparks & external partners also undertake regular observations of sessions and give feedback to the College and to workshop leaders and students.

In relation to statistical milestones and targets relating to applicants, entrants and the student body, the College reviews performance not just against milestones and targets but also by comparing the RCM's performance with that of the HE sector as a whole and with conservatoire averages. The College considers the further actions that might be taken, if needed, to improve performance through its Student Services Manager and Welfare and Diversity Committee, to ensure effectiveness is monitored. A designated area of the RCM website provides detailed up-to-date information in relation the RCM's commitment to combat prejudice or discrimination in any form, particularly that derived from differences in race, gender, sexuality or disability. New attention will be given to highlight equality and diversity targets from among our widening participation targets and milestones and thereby to monitor this aspect of widening participation more explicitly.

Achievement against the range of targets and milestones will be monitored internally via an annual report by the Head of Junior Programmes and the Head of Learning & Participation to the College's Welfare & Diversity Committee, Staff Student Committee, Senate and governing Council. This report will cover all of the areas described above. The Welfare & Diversity Committee is chaired by the Deputy Director, who has Directorate responsibility for both widening participation and equal opportunities, and the Staff Student Committee is chaired by the Director.

There is student representation on all of these committees and students were consulted in drawing up this Access Agreement via the Students' Union and the Staff Student Committee, including ensuring that it is clear. We have also surveyed our NSP holders to seek their views on the effectiveness of our NSP programme and whether any other measures would have made them more likely to apply to the College, to accept a place, and to support their studies once underway.

In setting targets/milestones we have sought to ensure that these pay attention to the College's responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. The RCM has adopted its Access Agreement targets as one of the mechanisms by which it measures its compliance with the Equality Act and has committed to publishing achievement of/progress with these targets/milestones on its website. As these targets show, they are focused on disability, social deprivation and BME populations. New

initiatives include allocating responsibility for equal opportunities across the institution to the Student Services Manager and establishing new liaison arrangements between the Student Services Manager and the Head of Learning & Participation to ensure that equal opportunities and widening participation initiatives and policies are fully aligned.

Monitoring and Evaluation



The example below highlights how the strategic approach to monitoring and evaluation is put in place from a practical perspective.

RCM Sparks Juniors:

- i. Annual evaluation completed by Sparks Juniors stakeholders including parents, participants and teachers. This is in either written form or through meeting with teaching staff.
 - ii. Results then checked against milestones to ensure correct demographic, retention and examination progress.
 - iii. In the year 2012 it was evaluated that additional support in musicianship was needed in order to support pupils instrumental and theory examination progress – this in turn would also support retention.
 - iv. Set target and complete target to revise timetable to offer better provision in the identified area.
 - v. Continue to monitor throughout the following academic year.
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From September 2015 the RCM is investing in a new database, Paritor. The database will be built with our specific needs in mind - taking into consideration how we collect the relevant data to enable efficient reporting throughout the year. We continue to revise evaluation methods through updating our online evaluation forms to be more streamline therefore quicker and easier for stakeholders to complete - and in turn making the data collection and analysis more focussed to inform future work and progress towards milestones.

12. Providing information to prospective and existing students

Clear, Accessible and Timely Information

Clear, accessible and timely information will be available for applicants and students on the fees that we charge and the financial support that we will offer. This information will make it clear exactly what level of financial support we are offering students in each year of their studies (including for national scholarships, as a one-off benefit rather than a recurrent annual award). This information will be provided on our website and in our prospectus. We will provide timely information to UCAS for the CUKAS admissions service and to the SLC to enable them to populate their applicant-facing web services. A new CUK website launched in 2015 provides information about study at UK conservatoires, including the RCM.

13. Targets and Milestones

The four key drivers of the College's Access Agreement are measures and approaches which

- enable participation
- raise aspiration
- encourage applications
- improve retention.

The table on the following page detail targets and milestones.

Description	Is this a collaborative target?	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones					Commentary on milestones/targets
				2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	
UK RCM BMus entrants from a state school/specialist music school background (three-year rolling average)	No	2014-15	73%	75%	76%	77%	78%	79%	In noting the already high percentage of entrants from state/ specialist music schools, we wish to aspire to enhancing this figure over the forthcoming years
Disability. Number of applicants declaring a disability on applications (three-year rolling average)	No	2012-13	61	75	75	76	77	78	We have used a rolling average because of the low numbers involved and intend on maintaining this level
Continuation rates of UK UG students from year 1 to year 2	No	2013-14	94%	94%	94%	95%	95%	95%	Maintain high continuation rates of UK UG new entrants
Participation of under-represented groups in higher education: Young first time degree entrants (three-year rolling average)	No	2011-12	4.5%	4.4%	4.8%	5.2%	5.6%	6.0%	We have used a rolling average because of the low numbers involved and plan to increase access to LPN entrants
Of those applications declaring their ethnicity, UG UK applicants from Black and Ethnic Minority Community (three-year rolling average)	No	2013-14	99	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	Maintain steady percentage of applications from applicants from Black or Ethnic Minority Communities
UG UK new entrants from Black and Ethnic Minority Community (three-year rolling average)	No	2014-15	77	12%	12%	12%	12%	12%	Maintain steady percentage of new entrants from Black or Ethnic Minority Communities
Raising Aspirations – RCM Sparks Juniors Target: to increase the number of participants working in line with ABRSM graded levels	No	2013-14	58%	59%	60%	61%	62%	63%	RCM Sparks Juniors offers weekly, term-time high level tuition to local young people who would not normally be able to access such an opportunity. 80% of young people on the Sparks Juniors programme come from under-represented backgrounds.
Enabling Participation – Igniting Creativity Target: to increase number of participation engaged in the RCM Sparks Community programme from lower socio-economic by an additional 10% over a five year period. Delivered in partnership with the Royal Albert Hall	Yes	2014-15	23%	25%	27%	29%	31%	33%	
Encouraging Applications – RCM Sparks Juniors Target: to increase the number of participants progressing to RCM Junior Department over a five year rolling period	No	2014-15	1	2	3	3	4	5	RCM Sparks Juniors offers weekly, term-time high level tuition to local young people who would not normally be able to access such an opportunity. Eight places are offered per year for the fully-funded, three-year programme.
Raising Aspirations – RCM Sparks in Schools Target: to increase the number of Tri-Borough Music Hub (TBMH) schools engaging with RCM Sparks, in collaboration with TBMH.	Yes	2013-14	66	68	70	72	74	76	