

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS FOR FINANCIAL AID RECIPIENTS

All students who are in receipt of US Financial Aid whilst studying at the Royal College of Music are required to make satisfactory progress on their course of study. Students register at the beginning of each academic year and undertake to abide by RCM Student Code and Procedures, and to be bound by the programme requirements as defined in the Course Handbook for each programme.

Federal Aid students must maintain the same satisfactory standards as other students. In addition, the US Department of Education requires the RCM to check each student's progress at intervals, to ensure that they are meeting both the Quantitative (multiple regular assessments) and Qualitative requirements (constantly be at or above the average minimum grade C which is also measured cumulatively) and progressing at such pace as to successfully complete the required credits throughout each year and complete the entire course within the timeframe.

Vocabulary

Component of assessment: An individual part of assessment for the programme, such as a repertoire examination, written work or recital. Each component of assessment is all or part of the assessment of a given module. There may be more than one component of assessment in a given module. Passing the component(s) of assessment means that the number of credit points associated with the module will be awarded, contributing to the credits required for the final award.

Course Handbook: A handbook which sets out an individual student's approved selection of modules within a programme which is sufficient to satisfy the programme requirements on successful completion. This specifies the pace such as the number of modules which must be taken at each stage of the programme and in some cases will specify the order in which the modules must be taken.

ECTS credits: The European Credit Transfer Scheme (ECTS) is becoming widely adopted across European institutions, making it easier to compare a student's achievement in one institution with another institution's requirements for entry, transfer etc. The credit system used by the RCM (which is the national UK system) is compatible with the ECTS system. One ECTS credit point corresponds to 2 credit points within the UK system.

Grade: A number assigned by the examiners representing the quality of a student's performance in the assessment of a module.

Level: The level of challenge, both quantitative and qualitative of the work involved in a particular module. The National Credit Framework for the UK ascribes credits at HE Levels 4, 5 and 6 to Honours degrees with a minimum of 120 credits at Level 6 being required for successful graduation at Bachelor level.

Module: The standard component into which a programme is divided and from which students build up their chosen pattern of study. Each module has its own specified learning outcomes, content and assessment scheme. Each module is assigned to a level, which corresponds to The National Credit Framework for the UK. Modules range in size from 10 to 80 credits. The Principal Study modules are the core of the degree and allocated a higher proportion of the credits in all years of study. The individual programme handbook specifies any modules which must be taken prior to study on other modules.

Programme of studies: An individual student's approved selection of modules within a programme which is sufficient to satisfy the programme requirements on successful completion. This may specify the order in which modules must be taken as part of the programme

Student transcript: The annual document which details the modules and the results achieved in each of them for that year.

ALLOWABLE TIMEFRAMES

Students are expected to be in attendance at the RCM and to progress through their programmes at a pace which ensures that they will graduate within the maximum timeframe allowable

DMus and PhD students may have an additional year's writing-up period after three years of full-time study or after six years of part-time study making the maximum duration of seven years assuming 35 hours per week full-time or 18 hours per week part-time.

The following table

Table of Normal Course Length at Minimum Pace and Maximum Allowed Timeframe					
Course	Normal Length	Minimum Pace/Credits	Overall Minimum Credits	Maximum Length	Maximum Credits Allowed
Bachelor	4 years	120 credits per year	480	6 years	720
Master	2 years	120 credits per year	240	3 years	360
Doctor Full time	3 years	35hrs/week	Not Applicable	4 years	Not Applicable
Doctor Part time	6 years	18hrs/week	Not Applicable	7 years	Not Applicable

Periods of interruption also known as "Leave of Absence" will not count towards this calculation. If a student has attended part of the programme below full-time, then this calculation will be based on the Full Time Equivalent of their studies (e.g. 2 years at 50% will count as 1 year full-time study). If a student has attended part of the programme full-time, then this calculation will be based on the Full Time Equivalent of their studies (e.g. 2 years at 50% will count as 1 year full-time study).

Financial aid is suspended from the time the school knows that the student **will exceed** the 150% maximum timeframe, not once he **has used** more than 150% which means that

- the school will cease to originate a loan application for the coming year if we know that the work left to do within the time allowed will take the course over the 150% length allowed
- the school will not disburse any pending disbursements if we know that the pace of progress will take the course over the 150% length allowed

PACE OF PROGRESS

The Pace of completion is 67% for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, where the Pace is the measurement that determines if the student will complete within the maximum timeframe.

Example: 120 credits per year means that to complete within 150% allowed (180 credits attempted), then pace must be at least $120/180=67\%$,

Pace for federal aid recipients is calculated by the credits earned divided by the credits attempted

Grades and Pace are also measured cumulatively

If a student transfers from another institution, then prior study at the previous institution which is to count towards the student's final degree will be used to calculate a student's 'pace' of completion (see 'Quantitative Requirements' above).

QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT - TAUGHT DEGREE COURSES

All students are expected to maintain satisfactory progression through their course of study at the standard required by the RCM Board of Examiners or, in the case of doctoral students, the RCM Research Degrees Committee.

Financial Aid students who maintain the required standard are in good standing for financial aid. However, if their marks or progress do not meet the required standard at the next attempt, students will be suspended for the purpose of financial aid. If students fail at the next attempt and do not proceed with the course of study then Financial Aid will be suspended.

Each year of any programme is based on three terms. Modules range in size from 10 to 80 credits. The Principal Study modules are the core of the degree and allocated a higher proportion of the credits in all years of study. The Components of Assessments of Modules are assessed as they are completed within each term.

Masters courses may have additional points where students must submit proposals concerning specific modules of the programme for approval.

Level 4 (Bachelor) modules may be assessed on a pass/fail basis only. Other components are assessed as

Bachelor Marks	Standard	Grade	Master marks	Standard
70% and above	First Class Honours	A	70–100%	Distinction
60–69%	Upper Second Class Honours	B		
50–59%	Lower Second Class Honours	B	50–69%	Pass
40–49%	Third Class Honours	C		
40%	Capped Pass Mark	C	50%	Pass
39% below	Fail	D E	49% and below	Fail

Capped Assessment

Academic written work submitted late will capped at the pass-mark of 40% for Bachelor and 50% for Masters' courses. Academic written work submitted later than one week after the published deadline will receive a mark of 0%.

Although monitoring occurs throughout the year with inconsistencies or concerns reported to the Academic Registrar,

Disbursements for the Spring and Summer terms are contingent upon students maintaining satisfactory progress and engagement with their courses.

At the start of each term, prior to each disbursement, the grade average will be checked for Federal Aid students.

- The cumulative grade is calculated by dividing the marks by the number of (credit) assessments
- The resulting at grade point average must still be at least C as in the above table
- RCM does not allow incomplete or withdrawn classes, whatever is completed or not will be assessed as though completed
- Repeated classes are included, both the failed and repeated marks, in the Grade Point Average.

ACADEMIC PROGRESSION

The modules through each term and year each earn credits. The minimum credits which must be gained annually to progress to the next year of study are

Course	Year	Credits	National Framework Level	ECTS Level
Bachelor	Year 1	120 credits	4	60 credits
	Year 2	120 credits	5	60 credits
	Year 3	120 credits	5 & 6	60 credits
	Year 4	120 credits including Principal Study	5 or 6 Level 6	60 credits
Bachelor Total credits	Length 4 years, Max 7 years inc. interruptions Graduation total	At least 120 At least 120 At least 180 Min Total 480	Level 4 or above Level 5 or above Level 6	240 credits

Master	Year1	At least 120	N/A	N/A
	Year 2	At least 120	N/A	N/A
Master Total credits	Max 4 years inc. interruptions			

For Federal Aid students, the first disbursement for the second and subsequent years will be made where the relevant approval has been given for continuation on the programme, providing students have not taken more than 150% of the normal duration of the programme to complete their studies.

No progress confirmation is required for the very first disbursement for a student's programme of study.

Students repeating a year or part of a year will need to pass at the next available opportunity in order to regain eligibility for Financial Aid.

Students will be informed by email if they are given a 'Warning' or if Financial Aid is probated or suspended. Students may appeal for extenuating or unforeseen circumstance.

Verification will be required.

ASSESSMENT – RESEARCH DEGREES

DMus and PhD students may have an additional year's writing-up period after three years of full-time study or after six years of part-time study making the maximum duration of seven years assuming 35 hours per week full-time or 18 hours per week part-time.

Federal Aid students are subject to the same limitations. RCM does not extend to the maximum Federal Aid timeframe of 150%

Each student is allocated a team of supervisors and, where relevant, practical advisors, who support their research and the preparation of their degree submission. The total annual amount of supervision is at least 30 hours full-time /15 hours part-time.

All research students have a Directing Supervisor

- to overseeing their progress to maintain oversight of submission dates
- to sign Student Research Reports and submission forms
- to ensure that the individual members of the Supervisory Team have a clear understanding of their roles
- to give timely feedback,

All students keep a record of Supervision Meetings Record & Report using Form 6.2 Supervision Report Form

Student Research Reports

At the beginning and end of the academic year, it is the responsibility of the research student in conjunction with the Directing Supervisor to fill in a Student Research Report [see <https://learn.rcm.ac.uk/courses/763/pages/forms-for-students>]. This form is used to recommend an allocation of hours to a supervisory team for the following year to the Research Degrees Committee.

The SRR also records progress and sets out plans and milestones for the coming year. It is therefore a vital planning and monitoring tool. It will also allow any matters for concern to be flagged up at Research Degree Committee.

For Federal Aid students, the grade and pace are assessed by the student meeting the plans and milestones previously set.

The record of supervisions reports, written up by the student and agreed by the supervisor/s, must be retained by the student and include

- the date of the supervision meeting

- key items of discussion and agreed action points
- agenda for the next meeting

These reports form the basis for surgeries with the Head of Programme.

Prior to each disbursement, the Record of Supervision will be checked to ensure that the supervisors' remarks indicate that the quality of research and writing are such that they are of sufficient quality to gain a Doctorate, and that the volume of work still to be done (milestones set) is estimated to be within the maximum timeframe.

FAILING TO MEET SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

If the RCM cannot satisfy itself that the student is attending at least 50%, or time put into the research is felt by the RCM not to be equal to 50% or above, Financial Aid will be suspended. Once the student meets the requirements for progression on the course of study he or she will be placed in good standing for financial aid.

Financial Aid Warning

- Students that fail to make Satisfactory Academic Progress will firstly be issued with a 'Financial Aid Warning'. This warning will last for 1 payment period (i.e. until the next disbursement), during which time a student can still receive Financial Aid. Students that fail to regain Satisfactory Academic Progress by the next disbursement will no longer be eligible for Aid, unless they are successful in an appeal.

Loan Suspension

- occurs when a student is not permitted by the Board of Examiners to continue but has demonstrated such a commitment to the programme as a means of becoming a musician or has justifiable mitigating circumstances which have been reported to the Board, then study may be interrupted for a term or two or a for a year, during which failed modules will be reassessed according to a scheme approved by the Board of Examiners. During this period, federal loan funding is suspended.
- During this time federal loan funding is suspended until the student regains the academic standards to continue.
- This is subject to the maximum timeframe for the course.

Appeals against Loan Probation or Suspension is the same process as for Academic Appeals

APPEALS PROCEDURE

To appeal the financial aid suspension, a student must, within 14 calendar days of notification, submit to the Academic Registrar a signed and dated letter of appeal explaining why he or she should not have Financial Aid suspended. A student may appeal due to an emergency condition (e.g., health, family, catastrophe, etc.) and state what has changed in their situation that will allow them to meet Satisfactory Progress at the next evaluation date. Documentation verifying the situation may be requested.

The Academic Registrar, in consultation with the Deputy Director will consider the appeal and render a decision, which will be conveyed in writing by the Academic Registrar to the student within two weeks of the student's appeal.

Appeals may be sent to:

Elly Taylor (Academic Registrar)
Royal College of Music
Prince Consort Road
LONDON SW7 2BS

Appeals may not be heard on grounds of the academic or musical judgments of the examiners.

Any challenge to a decision of the Board of Examiners or the provisional result of an Examination Panel must be in writing to the Academic Registrar within 10 working days of the issue of the results.

There are two grounds on which an appeal may be considered:

1. Procedural irregularity in the conduct of the examinations
2. Mitigating circumstances

Students with mitigating circumstances which have affected their performance or caused them to miss deadlines must submit mitigating circumstances either in writing to the Registry Administrator, or by discussing their circumstances confidentially with the Counsellor. These will be considered by a sub-committee of the Board of Examiners, which will decide whether they affect the marks for any components of assessment and or whether to recommend

Reassessment

Students who fail in their first attempt to satisfy the Board of Examiners in the assessment for a module may normally be reassessed once only, and reassessment must be completed successfully prior to progression to any subsequent year of study. Reassessment in practical examinations will normally take place during the next practical examination period. Masters courses reassessment for any Component of Assessment or for the module may be capped at the 50% pass-mark.

Failure

The College's guiding principle shall be to permit reasonable opportunity to redeem failure where the student has demonstrated a commitment to the programme as a means of becoming a musician or has justifiable mitigating circumstances which have been reported to the Board. This is usually by interrupting study for a year, during which failed modules will be reassessed according to a scheme approved by the Board of Examiners. This is subject to the maximum timeframe.

The full documents are at

Undergraduate Handbook

<https://www.rcm.ac.uk/media/BMus%20Programme%20Regulations.pdf>

Taught Masters Handbook

<https://www.rcm.ac.uk/media/Taught%20Masters%20Programmes%20Regulations.pdf>

Research Student Handbook

<https://www.rcm.ac.uk/media/Research%20Degrees%20Handbook.pdf>

Full appeals information

<https://www.rcm.ac.uk/about/governance/strategy/handbooks/RCM%20Student%20Code%20&%20Procedures%2020-21.pdf>

All decisions made are final.

FINANCIAL AID PROBATION

If a student's appeal against suspension is successful then the student's good standing will be placed on probation for the payment period.

A student that has their Financial Aid suspended but continues the course under their own means and subsequently meets Satisfactory Academic Progress standards will be entitled to regain a probationary status and apply for, or receive loans.

Students who fail SAP after a period of probation cannot receive aid unless they are successful in a further appeal and develop an academic plan approved by their supervisor.

Students that have reached the 150% limit on their programme cannot receive Financial Aid and cannot be reinstated at any point. This includes situations where the school knows that the student **will exceed** the 150% maximum timeframe, not once he **has used** more than 150% which means that

- the school will cease to originate a loan application for the coming year if we know

that The work left to do within the time allowed will take the course over the 150% length allowed

- the school will not disburse any pending disbursements if we know that the pace of progress will take the course over the 150% length allowed