

Royal Northern College of Music
Student Sponsorship Policy
Policy & Procedure
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RNCM
ROYAL NORTHERN
COLLEGE of MUSIC

RNCM Student Sponsorship Policy:

The RNCM as a Student Sponsor, is expected to ensure that it and its students are compliant with the points-based system policy guidance and the immigration rules.

The following policy and procedure has been developed in order to comply with the requirements of the UK Visas & Immigration. (UKVI).

The RNCM's duties to UKVI for all Students sponsored under the Student Route are complying with immigration rules, monitoring, record-keeping and reporting. The specific duties are:

- Monitor RNCM's and students' compliance with immigration rules.
- Ensure that English language requirements are met before assigning Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS), and keep records of this.
- Issue Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies.
- Maintain up-to-date contact details.
- Collect and store passport details and proof of eligibility to study in the UK.
- Ensure that entry onto new courses represents academic progression.
- Notify UKVI of any applicable changes in course of study and/or study status that impact on course end date or mode of attendance.
- Record work placement details and report to UKVI if necessary.
- Report to UKVI any breaches of the immigration rules by sponsored students.

1. Admissions/CAS

The RNCM will only issue CAS to an applicant (valid for 6 months) after receiving evidence of:

- English language ability as per entry criteria as evidenced by an IELTS certificate (or RNCM approved alternative).
- Financial requirement: a non-returnable 25% deposit against course fees owed to the RNCM.
- Receipt of CAS request form confirming course details; immigration history and financial evidence of funds to cover the remainder of fees and maintenance.
- Academic progression, which is defined as follows:
 - Completion of a Bachelor's degree, FHEQ Level 6, from the RNCM or a UK HEI, prior to study for an RNCM Level 7 qualification.
 - Completion of a Master's degree, FHEQ Level 7, from the RNCM or a UK HEI, prior to study for an RNCM Level 8 qualification.

Where sponsorship is being considered for a programme at the same academic level as a student's previous qualification, the RNCM will assess and record in the CAS how the proposed programme represents academic progression, in accordance with UKVI Student Sponsor Guidance.

In order to develop deeper specialisation in a principal study discipline the RNCM may exceptionally permit academic progression to a programme of study at the same level. In such instances the programme will complement a student's previous study and enable the development of skills and knowledge beyond that of the previously undertaken course. Examples might include:

- Completion of a Master's degree, FHEQ Level 7, from the RNCM or a UK HEI, prior to study for an RNCM International Artist Diploma.
- Completion of a Master's degree, FHEQ Level 7, from the RNCM or a UK HEI, prior to study for an RNCM Postgraduate Diploma Advanced Studies (and vice versa).
- Completion of Master's degree, FHEQ Level 7, from the RNCM or a UK HEI, prior to study for the RNCM Master of Performance (and vice versa).

CAS requirements are different from Admissions requirements, and we may ask for applicants to provide specific information on sources of funding, ID, immigration history, etc.

The RNCM is under an obligation to the UKVI and may request this in order to facilitate the application and acceptance of your CAS.

The UKVI will undertake further checks and the RNCM has a responsibility to ensure that all requests for a CAS are legitimate. Therefore, the RNCM undertakes checks to help minimise the risk of a refusal. Each visa refusal is recorded against the individual's immigration record and the RNCM's CAS allocation.

2. RNCM Responsibilities

Responsibility for the admission and monitoring of students sponsored under the Student route resides with Principal Study Schools, Academic Services, Professional Engagements Office and Marketing & Student Recruitment.

The RNCM may engage overseas agents, alumni ambassadors or other third parties to support international student recruitment. Where a third party has been used by the RNCM in the recruitment of a student, the RNCM will record and report the relevant agent details on the CAS in accordance with UKVI requirements.

For the purposes of CAS reporting, an agent or alumni ambassador may include a third party engaged by the RNCM on a formal or informal basis, including one-off recruitment arrangements. Advisors or representatives engaged independently by a student and not used by the RNCM as part of the recruitment process are not considered reportable agents for CAS purposes.

Where a sub-agent has been involved in recruitment activity, the RNCM will record and report the principal agent in accordance with UKVI guidance.

Responsibilities are as follows:

Schools and staff involved in overseas recruitment (Heads of Schools)

- Advise students about potential study at the RNCM in line with academic progression requirements

Marketing & Student Recruitment

- Request CAS allocation from UKVI
- Issue CAS to new applicants
- Support visa extension applications
- Maintain up-to-date immigration and sponsorship information on applicants and student records.
- Ensure students meet entry requirements as per RNCM Admissions Policy.
- Monitor expiry dates of current students' leave to remain.
- Maintain the RNCM's register of contracted education agents and any associated recruitment partners.
- Ensure that all education agent agreements comply with UKVI Student Sponsor Guidance, the UK Agent Quality Framework (AQF), and the National Code of Ethical Practice for UK Education Agents.
- Monitor the performance, conduct and compliance of education agents and undertake appropriate due diligence, review and quality assurance activities.
- Retain evidence of agent governance, monitoring, training, due diligence and compliance activities in accordance with UKVI and AQF requirements.
- Record and maintain accurate information regarding the involvement of education agents and third parties in the recruitment of students and ensure that agent details are correctly reported of the CAS where required by UKVI.

- Maintain and publish an up-to-date list of contracted education agents and information relating to the RNCM's relationships with those agents in accordance with AQF and UKVI requirements.

Academic Services

- Responsible for ensuring that required data is on the student record prior to and during Registration.
- Monitor and record academic engagement, attendance and unauthorised absences in accordance with RNCM attendance and engagement procedures.
- Investigate and follow up instances of non-engagement.
- Report significant non-engagement and non-enrolment to UKVI where required.
- Report changes in student course status, including placements.
- Report termination of studies or withdrawal from studies.
- Report changes in course length or course title.
- Report to UKVI course deferrals.
- Report to UKVI transfers to another course, university or conservatoire.
- Maintain up-to-date student contact information on the Student Records System (Unit-E).
- Provide information to students about their immigration responsibilities and remind them on a termly basis.
- Notify Student Finance and Records Administrator of course transfers, interruptions or withdrawals; inform students of the related impact upon their immigration status; and work with the Admissions department where students will require a new visa to continue their studies.

Professional Engagements Office

- Record professional engagements outside the RNCM and report to UKVI as appropriate.

3. Applicant/ Students' Responsibilities

- Submit an accurate, timely CAS Request Form and any supporting documentation requested by the RNCM, in order to facilitate CAS issue.
- Make sure that all documentation and financial circumstances meet the immigration rules at the time of application.
- Respond promptly to requests to provide evidence of identity and immigration status, including passports, share codes, eVisa records and other documentation required by the RNCM.
- Provide updated evidence of any extension, renewal or change to immigration permission, including access to online immigration status records where required by the RNCM.
- Keep the RNCM updated with any changes to your identity documents, immigration permission or status for example.
 - a new passport
 - an extended visa (not through the RNCM)
 - change in immigration status
 - updated eVisa records or other evidence of immigration status required by the RNCM.
- Register for the course of study **before the late registration deadline at the beginning of each academic year.**
- Engage fully with their programme of study, including attendance at scheduled teaching, tutorials, rehearsals, assessments, performances and any other compulsory academic activities.
- Request and receive permission for any absences and keep the RNCM up to date

on any issues that impact on studies.

- Follow RNCM procedures if planning to suspend/defer or intending to withdraw from studies (please refer to Student Information Handbook).
- Students must seek immigration advice immediately following any interruption, withdrawal or change to their studies. The RNCM will report relevant changes to UKVI in accordance with sponsor guidance. Students must comply with any conditions attached to their immigration permission and any subsequent Home Office decisions.
- Comply with the conditions of their immigration permission, including any restrictions on working hours, self-employment, professional engagements and other activities. Further information can be obtained from Academic Services and current UKVI guidance.
- Keep up to date with the immigration rules
- Apply for visa extension in time.
- Maintain up-to-date term time contact details and inform the RNCM immediately of any change in these details.

Should RNCM become aware that a student has failed to comply with the conditions of their immigration permission, Student Sponsor Guidance, or their responsibilities under RNCM policies and procedures, RNCM reserves the right to withdraw sponsorship as a result and will inform UKVI, as appropriate.

4. Changes during studies

Some changes that occur during period of study at the RNCM may affect students' immigration permission to be in the UK and may have to be reported to the RNCM or the UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI). It is students' responsibility as a Points-based system migrant to report changes in personal information to UKVI; whilst the RNCM has a duty to report any academic changes during their stay.

5. Monitoring, Reporting and Record Keeping

The RNCM will monitor the academic engagement and immigration compliance of students sponsored under the Student route in accordance with UKVI Student Sponsor Guidance and RNCM policies and procedures.

This includes maintaining records relating to sponsored students, including evidence of identity and immigration status, Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) information, contact details, qualifications and English language evidence, academic engagement records, changes to study status, and reports made to UKVI.

The RNCM will report any relevant changes in circumstances to UKVI in accordance with UKVI requirements. Reportable events may include non-enrolment, significant non-engagement, withdrawal, interruption or termination of studies, changes to course details, and other events required to be reported under UKVI Student Sponsor Guidance.

Personal data collected for sponsorship purposes will be processed in accordance with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and Home Office sponsor requirements.