

APPENDIX 4
PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Programme Title: Postgraduate Diploma: Advance Studies in Composition, Conducting or Performance

UCAS Code: Composition: 620F
Musical Performance: 601F

Awarding Institution: Royal Northern College of Music

Course Leader: Head of Graduate School

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1. INTRODUCTORY COURSE INFORMATION

Award On successful completion of the course, students will receive:	Duration	Mode of study
Postgraduate Diploma in Advanced Studies in: Composition Conducting Performance	12 months	Full-time

No part-time study is permitted.

Awarding Institution: RNCM

Teaching Institution: RNCM

Period of Registration: **Minimum:** 1 Year **Maximum:** 2 Years

Academic Year: September to July

OTHER POTENTIAL AWARDS: Programme levels and qualifications

FHEQ* Level	Credits and Qualification For early departure or non-completion of studies.
7	Postgraduate Certificate

* FHEQ: Framework for Higher Education Qualifications

Date of Writing:	October 2018	
Programme Approval:	From: September 2019	To: August 2024

Programme Aims

The programme aims to:

1	Prepare and assist students' entry into professional practice, providing professionally competitive musical training in the Principal Study discipline
2	Enhance significantly the breadth and depth of students' musical experience leading to a thorough understanding, realisation and application of the techniques pertinent to their chosen discipline, and the capacity to contribute reflective, mature and confident leadership in the profession as creative and adaptable practitioners.
3	Build on previous FHEQ Level 7 work through a flexible range of modules reflecting the realities of a dynamic and evolving profession, including industry-focused, enquiry-based learning and the application of professional standards in musicianship, personal and corporate responsibility and self-presentation.
4	Provide the framework for a critical appraisal of current challenges, insights and practices immediately relevant to the music profession, and an understanding of knowledge, techniques and career-strategies to enable students to contribute at the forefront of the discipline.
5	Offer access, at an advanced level, to the RNCM's programme of corporate performance activities and opportunities, working in collaboration with professional partners as relevant and appropriate to the student's needs, promoting independent learning and the advancement of their professional development.
6	Consolidate the student's specialised transferable skills necessary for employment, continuing professional development, advancement and leadership within the profession.

A	Knowledge and Understanding - <i>on successful completion of the programme students will be able to:</i>
A1	Understand comprehensively the scope of experience of the professional performer, conductor or composer, from the inception of projects through to their execution at a level commensurate with entry to, and sustained excellence within, the profession
A2	Demonstrate originality and enterprise in the selection and realization of coherent, broad-ranging repertoire lists, reflecting a systematic understanding of complementary musical styles and performance practices
A3	Apply the knowledge gained from practical interaction with a variety of professionals together with a thorough understanding of a wide range of performance or composition contexts (for example solo work, ensemble work and corporate musical responsibilities) to create and develop ongoing professional relationships and opportunities.
A4	Demonstrate advanced understanding, and qualities, of leadership, self-direction and personal insight relevant to the practical and organizational demands of the profession
A5	Evaluate critically the most advanced current practices and knowledge (including pedagogical methodologies, where appropriate) in the discipline, in order to propose new hypotheses and approaches to performance and composition, their interpretation and dissemination.

A6	Continue to develop their knowledge and understanding of the relevant range of musical styles and the most advanced techniques, professional practices and technologies once employed.
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B	Specialised Subject Skills - <i>on successful completion of the programme students will be able to:</i>
B1	Perform, compose or conduct to a professional level of musical insight, critical maturity, individuality and technical assurance consistent with the competitive ability to enter the profession in the chosen discipline
B2	Govern their own learning/creation of a substantial volume of wide-ranging repertoire, ensuring its readiness for performance in a limited time, responding in a professional manner to the particular demands of concert programmers and audiences.
B3	Articulate a rationale in support of specific musical-stylistic preferences, the application of techniques and technologies in performance, and draw on highly developed and current learning methodologies in order to communicate knowledge effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences
B4	Lead and to follow, in a variety of practical musical contexts (ensemble performance or direction, relationship with collaborative performers), as appropriate to the variety of professional scenarios encountered in a portfolio career.

C	Generic, Intellectual and Graduate Skills – <i>on successful completion of the programme students will be able to:</i>
C1	Negotiate complex and unpredictable situations, propose solutions and apply them, both as a leader and a member of a team
C2	Present themselves competitively in the fullest range of professional contexts
C3	Conceive, research and realise individual projects at an advanced level, harnessing independent learning skills for continuous career development.
C4	Negotiate unpredictable situations and assume responsibility for making complex decisions within a range of forums, either individually or as part of a team
C5	Demonstrate initiative, independence and creativity in devising career opportunities and the ability to promote them successfully through relevant media and technologies

2. CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION AND ENTRY

Admission is by competitive audition. A Masters' degree in a relevant field is a prerequisite, and for applicants whose first language is not English, an IELTS score of 6.0 (with at least 5.5 in each of component, as required by the UKBA) is normally required, exceptions being at the discretion of HGS

Language of Study

All learning, teaching, and assessment in the Graduate School is conducted in English.

Accreditation of Prior Learning

Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) does not normally apply to the Postgraduate Diploma in Advanced Studies

3. COURSE OVERVIEW

The programme is focused on the major Principal Study component. Two optional 30-credit modules or a 60-credit Dissertation will complete the 120 credits for the degree.

MODULE MAP

	Credits/ Total Hours	ECTS* Credits	Contact Hours (approx.)	Total Learning Hours
<i>Principal Study</i>				
Composition, Conducting, Performance	60	30	40	600
<i>Optional Modules</i>				
Module 1	30	15	20	300
Module 2	30	15	20	300
TOTAL	120	60	80	1200

*European Credit Transfer System

Optional Modules

- Accompaniment
- Arrangement
- Aural Analysis and Critique
- Composition Elective
- Conducting
- Contemporary Songwriting
- Dissertation (Major/Minor)
- Electronic Experimental Ensemble
- Freelance Musician and Entrepreneurship
- Musicianship for Instrumentalists
- Musicianship for Vocalists: Consort Singing
- Performing Arts Leadership: Creative Learning in the Classroom
- Practical Pedagogy
- Professional Audition
- Professional Placement
- Research Lecture Recital
- Small Ensemble Performance

Work-Placement	The optional Professional Placement module involves various self-directed work-placement opportunities.
Timetables	Normally available one week before term begins, although enrolment figures may lead to alterations being made during the first week of term. Students are expected to schedule their own one-to-one tuition with designated tutors and receive information on tutor and supervision allocation.

4. TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS

The Graduate School is guided by a central aim of the College's Strategic Plan to offer programmes that are defined by their 'quality, breadth and contemporary relevance.' The Strategic Plan's aspiration that 'performance and research will be fully integrated with all aspects of students' learning is underpinned by practically-oriented learning and teaching informed by research throughout the programme. This aim is further supported by the broadest range of expert tutorial staff active in the fields of performance, composition and research.

The College's position as a vibrant performing arts centre in the North West permeates all areas of the Graduate School programmes and promotes the first aim of the College's Learning and Teaching Strategy through developing "the highest quality performance-based learning experience". The teaching and learning in Principal Study and other practical modules encourage student engagement with the widest possible range of the College's performance programme as part of their degree.

Students are advised at all stages of their study to plan for future careers in the music profession and to seek out relevant opportunities and collaborations, fulfilling the second aim of the Learning and Teaching Strategy to "inspire in students an entrepreneurial and professional ethos". Modules including Professional Placement and Freelance Musician allow students to build and reflect on these activities substantively as part of their degree, while other modules in areas such as Accompaniment, Arrangement, Composition, Conducting, Contemporary Song-writing, Dalcroze Eurythmics and Musicianship strengthen complementary practical skills relevant to the profession.

The Graduate School promotes a diverse, innovative, and student-centred approach to learning, with the learning and teaching methods used in the delivery of the programmes designed to reflect the diversity of student experience and to meet their individual learning needs. Responding positively to the Office for Students' most recent guidance on improving access and participation, the Graduate School meets the needs of students with non-traditional qualifications and/or from overseas by providing a non-credit module which supports and updates students' theoretical knowledge of music. The Language Support Tutor offers seminar-based and individual support throughout the academic year across the full range of modules and a Pre-session course offers incoming students an opportunity to develop the necessary language skills for successful postgraduate study. The Learning Support Tutor assists students through the design of bespoke learning plans where appropriate, gives individual guidance and further advises the Graduate School on any necessary accommodation for disabled students ensuring that all reasonable adjustments be made in accordance with the 2010 Equality Act. The Graduate School programmes are designed wherever possible to offer flexible routes in learning and teaching, including assessment. The flexible modes of delivery in various modules promotes student choice and control over their scheduled commitments.

The Principal Study module reflects the College's Learning and Teaching Strategy aspirations through promoting student-teacher partnership and collaboration from the outset through bespoke learning routes and artistic decision-making.

The variety of modes of delivery reflects the practically-based pedagogical principles and values of the Graduate School's learning and teaching strategy, informed by experiential, reflective and communicative approaches to learning and teaching. The commitment to inclusive learning and teaching, where diversity of experience is valued and utilised, is acknowledged in the creation of opportunities for peer collaboration and support for learning permeating the delivery of the curriculum. Peer collaboration and problem solving are embedded in both the delivery and formative assessment processes of various Principal Study modules, while several modules make use of participant-led activity, independent study, reflective practice, and the compilation of evidence-based portfolios.

The majority of optional modules are practical and vocational in nature, complementing the core Principal Study. As students on the PGDipAS will already possess a Master's degree there is no requirement for core research modules, although they are offered a range of research modules in tandem with the MMus programme. The range of optional modules in the PGDipAS therefore encourages students to take ownership of their own course of study, from a more practical orientation to training directed towards higher research degrees study.

The following learning and teaching methods are used:

- **One-to-one Principal Study Tuition** remains the epitome of practical training in music. The student negotiates with the specialist tutor(s) the content and style of the Principal Study learning and assessments. The lesson provides a forum for students to enhance key technical and expressive skills as well as make informed choices regarding repertoire, format of recital presentations, preparing for the professional application of their musical training.
- **Specialist Classes and Workshops** include team-teaching directed towards particular areas of the Principal Study and focusses upon specialised practical areas.
- **Masterclasses** with visiting national and international tutors offer alternative expert insights and perspectives on issues related to Principal Study.
- **Solo and Small Ensemble Performance Opportunities** consolidate core skills and techniques in support of the various solo and ensemble performance assessments of the programme
- **Full-Cohort Lectures** ensure a parity of learning in knowledge and techniques considered essential to particular course modules.
- **Seminars** or other forms of group discussion involve individual or group presentations to develop oral presentation and communication skills, providing opportunities for students to work collaboratively.
- **Essay-Writing** develops specific research techniques, acquiring knowledge and presenting ideas and arguments in written form, from short reports on performance events to major research dissertations
- **Practical Exercises** promote the development of creative, analytical, and aural skills, such as those needed for audition assessments
- **Independent Learning** forms the majority of the study within the programme, including preparation for and reflection on Principal Study lessons, directed reading, listening, portfolio and written work, and as practice for developing creative skills.
- **One-to-One Supervision** on research-related projects is delivered by an active researcher with expertise in the broad subject area
- **One-to-One Interaction through Mentoring** with particular reference to professional placements and work-based learning support the development of self-direction, intellectual independence, and creative skills through analysis, self-reflection, and individual projects
- **Computer-Assisted Learning** involves electronic communication and online forums, tutorial supervision, online submission of work, access to research and audio-visual library resources, via the VLE (RNCM Moodle) and other forms of ICT
- **Fieldwork Projects** enable students to study a musical culture in situ by such methods as attending, observing and participating in events and by interviewing performers, patrons or listeners
- **Colloquia** are delivered by visiting speakers, offering insights into musical life in the profession and at other institutions, and alternative perspectives on diverse issues of scholarship, research, and performance practice
- **Peer-Learning** arises from students' interaction with their colleagues, critically discussing their colleagues' work, practice, and ideas, whether in Principal Study or related disciplines
- A variety of **extracurricular activities**, notably engagement with concerts organised by the College, enable students to participate fully in the life of the institution and its sense of musical community, benefitting from the experience of observing music-making by a wide range of practitioners
- Interaction with the College's **Performance and Programming** Team similarly offers students an insight into a key area of musical activity, drawing on the College's position as a fully-functioning Arts Centre

CONTACT HOURS

You are taught through a combination of one-to-one tuition, seminars and lectures. Principal study one-to-one tuition is at the core of the student experience, typically offering 30-40 hours during the academic year. The contact time for other modules is generally 20 hours for seminars and lectures and 3 hours for individual supervision. In addition, a large number of activities are offered throughout the year which do not directly contribute towards credits, such as orchestral rehearsals and concerts, class-specific

classes, masterclasses and seminars, opera rehearsals and productions and other internal and external performance events.

INDEPENDENT LEARNING

It is envisaged that a student will be involved in teaching or study for up to 10 hours for each credit awarded. When not attending lessons, tutorials, lectures, seminars or other timetabled sessions you will be expected to continue learning independently through self-study. Typically, this will involve practicing for your Principal Study, studying music through listening and/or reading scores, working on individual and group projects, reading books and journal articles in addition to undertaking research in the library, preparing coursework assignments and presentations, and preparing for examinations. Your independent learning is supported by a range of excellent facilities, including the library, practice rooms and state-of-the-art performance venues. Part of your college commitments may also include rehearsals, performances and internal and external work placements.

5. ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK

Percentage of the course assessed by coursework:

Summative Assessment

Summative Assessment is undertaken through live examinations and submitted coursework. The balance of assessment through either mode depends on the optional modules you choose.

Principal Study, Conducting, and Performance is normally assessed through examination, and Composition is assessed through coursework (final portfolio) with a viva voce.

The following modules are assessed primarily through coursework, though may have examination components (such as a viva voce).

Dalcroze in Context
Dissertation (minor/major)
Research Methods: Artistic Research, Musicology, Music Education or Music Psychology
Repertoire Project
Arrangement
Composition Elective
Contemporary Songwriting
Freelance Musician and Entrepreneurship
Musicianship for Instrumentalists
Performing Arts Leadership: Creative Learning in the Classroom
Practical Pedagogy
Professional Placement

The following modules are assessed primarily through coursework, though may have coursework components (such as an annotated bibliography).

Research Lecture Recital
Accompanying
Aural Analysis and Critique
Conducting Elective
Dalcroze Eurhythmics and Dynamic Rehearsal
Electronic Experimental Ensemble
Musicianship for Vocalists: Consort Singing
Professional Audition
Small Ensemble Performance

In all cases assessments are undertaken or submitted at the end of the module. Examinations and coursework submissions normally occur once in a module.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment and feedback underpins the Principal Study 1-2-1 model, with students receiving feedback from their tutors on a weekly basis.

In Principal Study there is also a timetabled formative assessment half way through the degree, normally in the second term for a 1-year programme and at the end of the first year of a 2-year programme. Feedback will normally be given verbally.

Throughout the programme opportunities for formative feedback arise in the practically-oriented modules, and through individual supervision in the research modules. The mentor system further enables formative feedback to be given to students in support of their learning across the programme, seeking to integrate a student's practical proficiency with their aptitude and motivation for research-informed music-making.

The Graduate School Assessment Strategy is underpinned by the following concepts:

- The purpose of assessment is to enable students to demonstrate that they have achieved the intended learning outcomes of the programme at the appropriate standard set for the award.
- Assessment must promote and support learning and therefore occurs in both formative and summative contexts.
- Assessment in the Graduate School should seek to promote independence and innovation among students, preparing them for the demands of the profession.
- Assessment is intended to provide an indication of the level of learning for students, staff, external scrutinisers, Higher Education authorities, professional bodies and other external organisations.

The assessment strategy is designed to emphasise assessment for learning. A student is expected to play a significant role in the determination of their own assessment (for example, determining the type of performance/composition assessment to be undertaken), and therefore it is essential that tutors and students are aware of the criteria by which marks are differentiated, the learning outcomes that these assessments measure and the potential for achieving the highest marks by creative enterprise, initiative and commitment to the chosen course of study.

Summative assessment is designed to meet the needs of students' real-world professional skills: in each case the student should perceive the relevance of the assessment activity to their career aspirations. Despite the flexibility at the core of the programme, the equity of assessment is assured by a rigorous process involving Principal Study panels (three examiners 'blind marking' and arriving at a mark agreed by all, one to be a specialist external), moderators (module co-ordinators), External Examiners (who observe the marking process and sample work across the programme of study) and appropriate observance of the College's Assessment Regulations.

The Graduate School will adopt a variety of different methods of assessment consistent with and appropriate to its variety of modes of learning and teaching. The purpose of using a range of methods is to:

- Provide the most appropriate and direct means of measuring the extent to which students achieve the intended learning outcomes of the programme and its constituent modules
- Allow students to demonstrate their strengths, considering the varied nature of their prior learning experiences and their individual learning needs
- Promote, support and develop different learning experiences and ensure that all students have fair access to the college's PGT programmes
- Encourage student involvement
- Encourage recognition of a range of cultural and musical values

- Avoid excessive/ inappropriate formal examinations

In addition, the programme assessment strategy aims to:

- Encourage the development of fair, innovative and rigorous approaches to assessing student work, considering the need for innovation to be underpinned by the concepts listed above
- Ensure consistency and parity of assessment standards through marking, moderation and standardisation procedures, as well as the involvement of specialist external assessors and external examiners
- Engage in regular reviews of assessment procedures through the mechanism of the Annual Review of Programmes of Study (ARPoS)
- Archive documentation of work for future reference, including training, standardisation and calibration, thereby ensuring diachronic as well as synchronic parity and consistency. The development of a dedicated system of electronic storage is currently underway.
- Provide regular staff training for those involved in the assessment of the programme
- Allow for student views on assessment to be articulated and considered by the Programme Team
- Offer appropriate training for students in any non-standard modes of assessment
- Employ assessment for diagnostic purposes, e.g., at the audition stage, in order to ensure that the programme accommodates the needs of students with a diversity of needs and backgrounds

The programmes' assessment methods have been designed so that they will relate explicitly to the intended learning outcomes, levels, and learning and teaching methods in the modules. They aim to be inclusive, acknowledging those who are returning to formal study after a break and those who may have challenges in the area of study skills by providing creative alternative methods of presenting work wherever possible (see Modes of Assessment below).

Each Course module relates to a series of generic descriptive marking guidelines, which are summarised below. The use of marking guidelines is intended to ensure comparability of standards internally within the RNCM, to demonstrate these standards externally, and to promote transparency to the student body. Full Marking Guidelines can be found in Section 6.4 of this Postgraduate Student Handbook.

Modes of Assessment

Assessment tasks map onto the learning outcomes of modules and the programme(s), and cover a range of assessment types appropriate to FHEQ level 7, enabling students to demonstrate a variety of skills and to capitalise on their strengths.

The principal methods of assessment in the Graduate School are as follows:

(a) **Recital:** The final recital is the practical focal point of the programme for conductors and performers. The College's Schools have specific syllabus requirements within these modules which may differ from each other in certain details; this is unavoidable when dealing with such specialised sub-disciplines, although the Course Leader monitors the requirements to ensure parity between different schools.

The 'Recital or Performance Assessment' marking criteria are applicable.

No repertoire which has been performed in any College assessment as part of your postgraduate course may be repeated. The only exceptions to this are if a student has performed one piece from a set, or a movement from a multiple-movement work, and subsequently wishes to offer the complete set / work (this must be discussed with, and approved by, the Head of School); or if either the module aims, learning outcomes, or modes of assessment are significantly different from those pertaining to the module in which the repeated material was first presented. Modules such as Research Lecture Recital may involve

performance in the examination, but the performance itself is not assessed, allowing for an overlap with repertoire presented in a final recital.

(b) **Composition Portfolio:** The portfolio submission is the practical focal point of programmes for composers. The School of Composition sets out its syllabus requirements in Section 8, involving detailed guidance on the contents of the portfolio. The assessment of the portfolio includes a viva voce examination (see (i) below).

The 'Composition Portfolio', 'Lecture Recital', and 'Viva Voce' marking guidelines are applicable.

(c) **Dissertation, and Other Written Project Work:** including literature review. These elements of programmes assess students' ability to engage at a high intellectual level with relevant musicological thinking on a chosen topic, and demonstrate their ability to use research training creatively to assimilate published scholarship and present independent conclusions based on a rigorous, analytical and critical approach to relevant discourses. Detailed Guidelines are distributed to all students commencing the Major Project option of the MMus programmes, and made available on Moodle, where detailed guidance on the preparation and layout of dissertations is provided in Sections 9.5 and 9.7 of this Handbook. Written reports are also required in the assessment of certain experiential options within the programmes.

The 'Dissertation and Written Project Work' marking guidelines are applicable.

(d) **Small Ensemble Performance:** Assessment of an individual's achievement within the context of a chamber recital (including performance in a jazz ensemble), competition, or other forum (for example under the rubric of Small Ensemble Option).

The 'Ensemble Recital and Performance Assessment' marking guidelines are applicable.

(e) **Practical Examination:** Assessment of a range of other performance or project-based activities in the Options strand of the programmes.

The 'Ensemble Recital and Performance Assessment', 'Musicianship' and 'Practical Assessment: Audition' marking guidelines are applicable, as appropriate.

(f) **Research Lecture Recital:** Assessment of a student's ability to develop presentational skills, communicate ideas to their peers, engage in discussion, argue rationally, and give verbal expression to concepts related to the chosen subject matter. This also constitutes an important forum for training in research methods and scholarly information retrieval, in preparation for the submission of dissertations and other academic project work (Dissertations, Repertoire Project).

The 'Research Lecture Recital', and 'Viva Voce' marking guidelines are applicable.

(g) **Self-Evaluation Reports and Portfolios,** including critical commentaries on practice-based work, evidence-based portfolios informed by tutors' reports, and reports on seminar presentations and/or performances or pedagogical practice (MMus).

The 'Self-Evaluation and Evidence-Based Portfolio' marking guidelines are applicable.

(h) **Viva Voce Examinations** are undertaken by students on the Major Composition Portfolio and/or Practical Pedagogy Options. Guidelines on the conduct of Viva Voce Examinations are set out in Section 9.8 of this Handbook.

The 'Viva Voce' marking guidelines are applicable.

Formative Assessments

Towards the end of the first year of two-year programmes, or at the beginning of term 2 of one-year award, students are assessed through a formative mid-course performance (or equivalent: e.g.,

conducting skills) or composition assessment (viva voce) of 10-20 minutes duration (or equivalent) (0% weighting).

Formative mid-course assessments are marked by a panel of two internal staff members; no Specialist External Assessor is involved. There is no requirement to pass the formative mid-course assessment, which is instead intended to offer students an opportunity to take stock of progress and to receive formative feedback. The learning process may thus be tailored to students' individual needs as appropriate.

Progression:

The core Principal Study (60 credits) and Research Module Elective (30-60 credits) are the only core modules in the programme.

Students on the 1-year MMus must pass all modules to achieve 180 credits.

Students on the 2-year MMus must pass all modules (60 credits) in the first year.

It is possible to progress to the 2nd year provided 30 credits have been passed. This will only permit the student to achieve a PGDip exit award without classification or Research Specialism. Exit awards are detailed in the Introductory Course Information above.

Students who fail to pass any modules in the 1st year of a 2-year MMus will not normally be allowed to progress to the 2nd year of study, and the studentship will be terminated.

The pass mark in all modules is 50%. The Board of Examiners will permit one opportunity for re-sitting any module, to be capped at 50%.

The college takes academic malpractice seriously and the Academic Malpractice Committee meets periodically to consider any cases that arise. Penalties can vary with the most serious cases leading to termination of the studentship. The Student Information Handbook outlines the relevant procedures and policies.

Feedback

Feedback on summative assessments is given in written form and is normally delivered electronically, either through email or via Moodle. Feedback is delivered within three weeks of work being submitted, the exception being final Principal Study assessments where assessments may take place over an extended period of time and where students should not receive marks until the current examination period has been completed.

All assessment is either double marked, or single marked with moderation. 60-credit assessments (Principal Study, Major Dissertations) are marked by a panel of three. In such cases, either as a live panel (Principal Study) or via correspondence (Major Dissertations) the panel initially submit blind marks and subsequently enter discussion to reach a final agreed mark.

Final recitals and portfolios involve an external examiner in the marking process. All marking is scrutinised by an overall external examiner who samples work and monitors the examination process while visiting college.