

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Bachelor of Music with Honours (BMus (Hons) Specification

UCAS Code:	300F
Awarding Institution:	Royal Northern College of Music
Course Leader:	Prof. Nicholas Reyland, Head of Undergraduate Programmes

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1. INTRODUCTORY COURSE INFORMATION

Award On successful completion of the course, students will receive:	Duration	Mode of study
Bachelor of Music with Honours (BMus (Hons))	3 or 4 years	Full-time

No part-time study is permitted.

Awarding Institution:	RNCM
Teaching Institution:	RNCM
Period of Registration:	Minimum: 3 Years Maximum: Normally, 5 Years
Academic Year:	September to July

OTHER POTENTIAL AWARDS: Programme levels and qualifications

Level/ Year of study	FHEQ* Level	Credits and Qualification For early departure or non-completion of studies.
Year 1	4	Certificate of Higher Education: 120 Credits
Year 2	5	Diploma of Higher Education: 240 Credits
Year 4	6	Bachelor of Music (Non-honours), 400 Credits

* FHEQ: Framework for Higher Education Qualifications/ Sector Recognised Standards

Date of Writing:	February 2021	
Programme Approval:	From: September 2021	To: August 2026

2. CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION AND ENTRY

Applicants will normally be expected to achieve the following minimum requirements before entry to the BMus programme:

BMus (Hons) Four Year FT

- a successful audition in the year prior to entry demonstrating a high standard of performance/composition ability and potential, of at least ABRSM Grade 8 standard;
- normally be 18 years of age by 31st December in the year of entry;
- have achieved GCE A level pass at Grade E or above in a minimum of two different subjects, and passes in three different subjects at GCSE level (Grades A* -C/9-4), or acceptable equivalent (see notes);
- meet English Language requirements: Applicants who do not speak English as their first language will be required to provide an IELTS certificate demonstrating an appropriate level of English or proof of equivalent capability

Notes: The College will accept recognised equivalents to GCE and GCSE qualifications, such as Scottish or Irish qualifications, BTEC, NVQ, and similar where appropriate and possible. Exceptional applicants without the minimum standard can also be considered on their merits following detailed consideration by the Course Leader or Assistant Course Leader, advised by the V-P (Academic). Equivalence of English Language qualifications shall be determined by reference to UKBA requirements. Any decision to admit an exceptional student who does not meet the minimum age requirement shall be made by the Head of School in liaison with the Head of Academic Services, who shall take into account and put in place appropriate Child Protection measures.

BMus (Hons) Three-Year FT Accelerated Pathway

As well as meeting the standard requirements for the BMus (above), entrants to the three-year BMus shall meet the following additional requirements:

- passes at GCE A Level (or equivalent) at grade A or A* in at least three different subjects, normally including Music (i.e., AAA at A2);
- pass in the Diploma in Music Performance of the ABRSM (DipABRSM), or a Level 4 equivalent, normally in the principal study instrument, to have been achieved by 30 April prior to September in the year of entry

For those requiring English Language qualification, a pass at IELTS Level 7.0 or equivalent (CEFR C1) normally by 1 April prior to September in the year of entry.

* The policy for Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) may be found in the Student Regulations and Associated Information, see Annex for links. All the credits awarded through APL must be endorsed by the Board of Examiners.

3. COURSE OVERVIEW

All areas of the programme are complementary, cross-referencing one another wherever possible. For example, Performance Studies in Year 3 involves students investigating a diversity of research into the art of performance while developing coursework projects exploring their Principal Study interests in ways that will enhance their performing and composition work. The programme is also adaptive: as students progress, they select options enabling them to explore and develop their areas of specialism.

Years 1 & 2:

- You will spend at least one hour per week in your one-to-one lesson with your vocal, instrumental or composition tutor. This study prepares you for a technical assessment (indicative elements might include scales and extracts, quick studies, composition according to a specific brief, etc.), and a final performance assessment in summer. You will take part, and be assessed in, ensemble and collaborative projects.
- Additionally, you will attend various other classes with your school (Composition; Keyboard; Strings; Wind, Brass and Percussion; Vocal and Opera), such as masterclasses with visiting internationally recognized artists, performance classes, and ensemble training.
- You will attend lectures and seminars each week to study music from a diversity of cultural, social, and historically-contextualized perspectives, engaging with topical debates while developing core skills and knowledge by studying a wide range of music.
- You will also attend classes developing your artistic identity as a creative musician, learning about and reflecting on the many tools, skills, and abilities needed for a career in music.

Years 3 & 4:

- You will continue with your weekly one-to-one instrumental / composition / vocal lesson.
- You will choose specialist areas of study each year from a choice of electives, including options exploring education, health and wellbeing, psychology, history, theory and analysis, technology, and the music industry. Students also choose from a wide range of practical and performance electives relating to and complementing their Principal Study work, including options in conducting, chamber music, jazz improvisation, opera, and historical performance. You will also undertake performance studies, including the option to specialize in repertoires of personal interest such as brass band repertoire, jazz, and contemporary music. In Year 4, students have the option to take an additional elective in an area of emerging specialism.
- In year 3, you will complete a work-based learning placement, for example, working with staff and College partners in the field of music and health, arts administration, education, sound engineering, and recording.
- In year 4, you will complete an independent creative project, which is designed by students and mentored throughout the year. Previous projects include organizing a charity concert or music competition, staging a musical in a park, recording an EP, scoring a video game, and undertaking a tour with a musical ensemble or as a soloist. You will receive training in entrepreneurial skills, and you are assigned a mentor to advise on your project.
- Along with this tuition, instrumentalists and singers join a variety of college ensembles and opera cast(s), delivering performances throughout the year. Composers hear their own compositions for any ensemble performed in full. Students have many opportunities to perform as part of their own ensemble(s) or as soloists in a wide range of concerts and productions.

MODULE MAP

Modules	Credit Available	Four Year Route	Three Year Route
Principal Study 1	40 (20 ECTS)	Year 1	APL
Ensembles 1	20 (10 ECTS)	Year 1	APL
Artist Development 1	20 (10 ECTS)	Year 1	Year 1
Music in Context 1	20 (10 ECTS)	Year 1	Year 1
Theory and Musicianship 1	20 (10 ECTS)	Year 1	Year 1
		120 Credits	
Principal Study 2	40 (20 ECTS)	Year 2	Year 1
Ensembles 2	20 (10 ECTS)	Year 2	Year 1
Artist Development 2	20 (10 ECTS)	Year 2	Year 1
			140 Credits
Music in Context 2	20 (10 ECTS)	Year 2	Year 2
Theory and Musicianship 2	20 (10 ECTS)	Year 2	Year 2
		120 Credits	
Principal Study 3	40 (20 ECTS)	Year 3	Year 2
Principal Study Elective	20 (10 ECTS)	Year 3	Year 2
Electives	20 (10 ECTS)	Year 3	Year 2
Performance Studies	20 (10 ECTS)	Year 3	Year 2
Professional Placement	20 (10 ECTS)	Year 3	Year 2
			140 Credits
Principal Study 4	40 or 60 (20 or 30 ECTS)	Year 4	Year 3
Electives	40 or 60 (20 or 30 ECTS)	Year 4	Year 3
Creative Project	20 (10 ECTS)	Year 4	Year 3
		120 Credits	140 Credits
TOTAL Credits	480 (240 ECTS)	480 (240 ECTS)	480 (240 ECTS)

Work-Placement	Compulsory in year 3 (or year 2 for Three Year route), including training and contact with industry partners.
Timetables	Normally available two weeks before each part of the academic year begins, although alterations may be made during the first weeks. Please note that students are expected to schedule their own one-to-one Principal Study tuition with their designated tutor, avoiding any clashes.

4. TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS

Teaching methods aim to support the learning needs of all students. The essential specialist training for performers and composers is necessarily one-to-one, complemented and supported by performance classes, masterclasses and small ensemble coaching. Alongside Principal Study and Ensembles tuition, students attend lectures, seminars, workshops and tutorials for Artist Development, Creative Project, Music in Context, Performance Studies, Professional Placement, and Theory and Musicianship. Electives take many forms, and their teaching includes all of the above approaches.

This variety allows students to learn in numerous different contexts within each year and module of the programme. Most modules include more than one teaching method and all teaching at the RNCM requires students to take responsibility for their own private study, practice, reading, and listening.

The College's virtual learning environment, Moodle, is used to support all areas of study, and includes activities, supporting materials, details of modules, and multimedia content. Moodle is also the repository for student assignment submissions and the return of feedback. It links directly to library resources, including online content, facilitating research and enabling ready access to materials set by tutors for preparation in advance of classes.

INDEPENDENT LEARNING

When not attending lectures, seminars or other timetabled sessions, students are expected to continue learning independently through private study. Typically, this will involve practising or composing, reading journal articles, books and online research resources, working on individual and group projects, undertaking research in the library, preparing coursework assignments and presentations, and preparing for assessments. Independent learning is supported by a range of excellent facilities, including the library, practice rooms, labs, and state-of-the art performance venues.

5. ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK

Assessment methods are designed to develop and evaluate various skills in all students. Feedback is provided on all assessments, enabling students to enhance their learning by acting on constructive criticism and appraisals given in the context of all modules, both formatively and in relation to summative, credit-bearing assessments.

Students constantly receive informal feedback on their progress in each Principal Study lesson, performance classes, and in many other teaching encounters. For formal assessments, we aim for students to receive feedback within three weeks of submission or performance, and often sooner. Feedback is uploaded to the virtual learning environment, Moodle, following moderation.

Assessment methods are diverse, and include the following:

- Live performance or composition portfolio assessment (e.g., Principal Study modules , Ensembles, many Elective options)
- Written assessment (e.g. Music in Context 1 and 2, many Electives)

- Reflective portfolio (e.g., Artist Development 1 and 2, Professional Placement, Creative Project)
- Presentation (Performance Studies, and as an option in many Electives)
- Vlog or blog (Artist Development 1 and 2, Professional Placement)
- Arrangements and theory tests (Theory and Musicianship 1 & 2)
- Aural and improvisation assessment (Theory and Musicianship 1 & 2)

The assessment regulations for the College are contained in the Academic Regulations.

- The pass mark throughout the programme is 40%
- To progress from Years 1 to 2 and Years 2 to 3 the student must have successfully completed 120 credits at FHEQ Levels 4 and 5 respectively
- A student may progress from Year 3 to 4 having failed some credits but will only be eligible for the BMus non-Honours award
- There is no element of compensation for this programme
- For the four-year pathway, module marks from Years 3 and 4 (in the ratio 1:2) contribute to the final degree classification
- The degree classification is based upon both (a) the student's overall performance at FHEQ Level 6 (Years 3 and 4), being an average of marks from modules weighted according to their credit-rating
- Summary of marks and their interpretation for honours degree classification:

First Class: 70% or above

Second Class Division I: 60% and above but less than 70%

Second Class Division II: 50% and above but less than 60%

Third Class: 40% and above but less than 50%

Fail: less than 40%

The RNCM Academic Regulations may be found on the College Website – see References and Further Information in the Annex.

Feedback

You will receive feedback on all formal assessments undertaken by coursework and recital. Feedback is intended to help you learn and you are encouraged to discuss it with relevant tutors.

We aim to provide you with feedback within three weeks of assessment.

Note: You must achieve a pass mark of 40% and above in all modules as a prerequisite, before progression / award.

The RNCM Academic Regulations may be found on the College Website – see References and Further Information in the Annex to this section.

Potential Awards

A student who fails or who elects to leave before the completion of the programme is entitled to the awards of Certificate in Higher Education or Diploma in Higher Education, provided that the requirements for these awards have been successfully completed.

Four-Year Programme

Award Title	Credits Required
Bachelor of Music with Honours:	480 credits: 120 credits at level 4; 120 credits at level 5; 240 credits at level 6
Bachelor of Music (non-Honours):	400 credits: 120 credits at level 4; 120 credits at level 5; 160 credits at level 6
Diploma of Higher Education:	240 credits: 120 credits at level 4; 120 credits at level 5
Certificate of Higher Education:	120 credits at level 4
<p>The award of the Pass Degree is conditional upon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) the candidate submitting herself/ himself for the examination in all 120 credits which constitute Year 4 of the programme; ii) the candidate successfully passing the Principal Study 4: Final Performance or Composition Portfolio (BU4PS). <p>The Certificate of Higher Education, Diploma of Higher Education, BMus and BMus (Hons), at the discretion of the Board of Examiners, are all available as Aegrotat awards.</p>	

Three-Year 'Intensive' Pathway

Award Title	Credits Required
Bachelor of Music with Honours:	480 credits: 60 APCL credits at level 4, 60 credits at level 4, 120 credits at level 5, 240 credits at level 6
Bachelor of Music (non-Honours):	400 credits: 120 credits at level 4, 120 credits at level 5, 160 credits at level 6
Diploma of Higher Education:	240 credits: 120 credits at level 4, 120 credits at level 5
Certificate of Higher Education:	120 credits at level 4
<p>The award of the Pass Degree is conditional upon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) the candidate submitting herself/himself for the examination in all 140 credits which constitute Year 3 of the programme; ii) the candidate successfully passing the Principal Study 4: Final Performance or Composition Portfolio (BU4PS). <p>The Certificate of Higher Education, Diploma of Higher Education, BMus and BMus (Hons), at the discretion of the Examination Board, are all available as Aegrotat awards.</p>	

6. STUDENT SUPPORT, DEVELOPMENT AND WELLBEING

All students receive an induction programme in the week prior to teaching commencing including the following:

- Advice on learning support
- An induction into the Library and IT facilities
- Guidance on Health and Safety
- International Student meetings
- Performance opportunities
- Student Mentoring

Pastoral/Health Care: the College has a Counselling Service and Student Welfare Advisors devoted to the health and wellbeing of students. The College employs a team of Alexander Technique teachers. All students also have a Year Tutor they can consult for advice on accessing support in academic and pastoral matters.

Further details may be found in the RNCM Student Regulations and Associated Information on the College Website – see References and Further Information in the Annex.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

The following network of academic support is available to students:

- Director of Programmes: responsible for the overall education and training of students at the RNCM.
- Head and Deputy Heads of Undergraduate Programmes: responsible for the overall education and training of undergraduate students at the RNCM.
- Heads of Principal Study Schools: responsible for the education of discipline-specific training of students in Principal Study.
- Year Tutors/Course Tutors/Principal Study Tutors: providing teaching and learning support in much of the programme.
- Module Co-ordinators: responsible for the maintenance of modules.
- Learning Support Tutor: responsible for providing additional academic support and guidance to students with a disability.
- Language Tutor: responsible for providing support to students for whom English is not their first language.

Full details of the support you will receive during your programme are contained in the Student Regulations and Associated Information.

All students receive opportunities to meet with their Year Tutors to review progress and provide an opportunity to feedback on their student experience. Such meetings add to the efficient communication between Principal Study School and the Programme Teams in respect of studentships, and help to put additional support in place where it is needed.

Year Tutors invite students to contact them directly to arrange an appointment at the earliest available time. Tutors will clarify arrangements to meet them in person. Appointments with Year Tutors are open to any UG student who requires advice, whether in relation to their studies and progress or any other particular matter. For advice in relation to a particular module, the tutor or module coordinator is normally the first person to approach, followed by the relevant Year Tutor. For Intensive and GRNCM students, the relevant programme leader (Dr Michelle Phillips) can also be consulted.

PASTORAL WELFARE AND WELLBEING

Student Services and Health and Wellbeing includes staff with responsibility for:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alexander Technique• Counselling• Disability/Medical Conditions• Finance• Health Awareness | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learning Support• Police Liaison• Senior Residents• Student Wellbeing |
|--|--|

It is the responsibility of each student to consider whether to disclose a disability or not; the College will only consider whether reasonable adjustments are required from the point of disclosure by the student and adjustments cannot be made retrospectively, e.g., following assessments or at the end of the academic year.

Full details of the support available during your programme are contained in the Student Regulations and Associated Information, see the Annex.

TEACHING STAFF

You will be taught by an experienced teaching team whose expertise and knowledge are closely matched to the content of the modules on the course. The team includes senior academics, practicing musicians and professional practitioners with industry experience.

You can learn more about our staff by visiting our website: [Meet Our Staff](#)

7. EMPLOYMENT

Details of exceptional graduates may be found on the website: [ALUMNI](#) and [Student Stories](#).

8. COURSE COSTS

Current fees may be found on the Fees and Funding home page: [FEES](#)

Accommodation and living costs are not included in the fees:

This information can be obtained from the Accommodation Services home page: [ACCOMMODATION](#)

SOURCES OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Details of fees, and potential funding sources, including bursaries and scholarships, may be found on our website: [FEES](#)

9. THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Students have access to a wealth of resources to help support their studies:

- Students will be taught in specialist teaching rooms
- When teaching rooms are not in use, students will have access to over 70 rooms for their own personal practice, particularly in the evening or early morning. This includes soundproof practice pods
- More than 120 pianos
- Asimut, a state-of-the-art online room booking system
- An IT Studio with PCs with Sibelius software
- Composition students have access to a suite of new iMac machines in the Composition Lab, and resources for electroacoustic composition
- RNCM Moodle, the College's virtual learning environment
- Wi-Fi throughout the College
- A professional recording department which offers student recording services and AV equipment loan
- A richly-stocked, award-winning library with an impressive range of materials and online resources

Students rehearse and perform in state-of-the-art venues. The RNCM recently invested more than £7 million to redevelop the RNCM Concert Hall, and to accommodate the College's diverse teaching, study, rehearsal and performance activities. The College's four main performance venues are:

- A 744-seat redeveloped RNCM Concert Hall, a unique octagonal performance space housing a Hradetsky Four Manual Concert Organ, advanced technical facilities and lighting, new flooring and seating, a balcony and raised floor area
- The 672-seat RNCM Theatre, one of the largest performance and recording spaces in Manchester, which benefitted from the redevelopment programme with a reconfigured backstage area to provide a professional learning environment at industry standard
- The 117-seat Carole Nash Recital Room, a modern performance space with high quality acoustic properties and on-site recording studio

The 150-seat Studio Theatre, a versatile studio space that offers a variety of set ups including theatre style and in the round.

RNCM Library

The RNCM Library has a wide range of materials to support learning, research and performance, and is a key resource for all areas of the degree programme. Our knowledgeable library staff have vast musical expertise and will help students to make the best use of the resources available. Students have access to over 90,000 catalogued items of books and printed music, 96 current journal titles, a significant collection of CDs and DVDs and the College's own archive of recordings. Students also have online access to e-books, databases, selected journals and audio-visual streaming services, as well as the use of PCs with music software, listening stations and a viewing area. Students are encouraged to make use of the library's archives and special collections: the RNCM Archives are of international importance, and the RNCM Collection of Historic Musical Instruments consists of over 300 instruments, bows and miscellaneous items dating from the 16th to the 20th century.

Further details on the booking of Practice Rooms are contained in the Student Regulations and Associated Information, see Annex.

10. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY

Equality and Diversity

In keeping with the College's commitment to, and policy on, equal opportunities, this programme:

- is offered to students with no discrimination in terms of race, age, gender, sexual orientation or family circumstances (where possible every effort is made to accommodate students with special needs as a result of disability or socio-economic disadvantage);
- will, where appropriate, cover issues of equality of opportunity within the curriculum.
- uses a range of learning and teaching methods in recognition of the diversity of students' preferred learning methods and communicative skill strengths.
- uses a range of assessment methods with due care to the needs of different groups. Where individuals are unable to partake of particular activities or modes of assessment due to their circumstances special arrangements will be made where possible to accommodate their needs fairly;
- aims to ensure that every effort is made to provide learning spaces accessible to students with disabilities and to support them throughout their programme.

Further details of the RNCM Equality and Diversity Policy and Ethics Framework may be found, under 'Institutional' policies, on the College website: [RNCM Policies](#)

ANNEX

BENCHMARKING

Programmes are based on national standards for degrees in music through external scrutiny of the programme during development by both academics and professional musicians and by reference to the OfS Conditions and Sector Recognised standards and QAA Benchmarks.

11. REFERENCES AND FURTHER INFORMATION:

Available on the College website: :

[RNCM Policies](#)

[Academic Regulations](#)

[College Policies](#)