



Royal Conservatoire
of Scotland

**Information for Disabled
Students and Applicants**

Our Mission Statement

The Mission Statement of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland is to produce musicians, actors and other professionals in music and drama well equipped to pursue a diversity of careers at national and international level.

Equal Opportunities Statement

The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland welcomes a diverse population of staff and students. The Conservatoire is committed to promoting equality in its activities and it aims to provide a performing, learning, teaching, working and research environment free from unlawful discrimination against applicants, staff and students on the grounds of gender, actual or perceived, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, national or ethnic origin, disability, marital status, age and actual or perceived religious or similar belief.

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***Please note: this information has been written
with a primary audience of students in mind.***

Students' Experiences

'The service offers help and guidance for [disabled] students and treats them as equally as any other person without the disability.'

(1st year Drama student)

'I was really impressed with the support that the RCS provided. I declared my condition earlier this year and was offered a lot of help in the meeting I had.'

(3rd year Music student)

'I think RCS have an excellent range of help services: if I've ever got a problem in any area there's always someone I can go and speak to for advice.'

(2nd year Drama student)

Since my diagnosis [of dyslexia] I have found that my confidence in my written work has soared which in turn has made me happier within my arts practice. The feeling that I was lazy and just didn't try hard enough has left me and for this I am very grateful. Everyone involved has been supportive and generous and this has made a huge difference to me.

(3rd year Drama student)

Welcome!

We hope that you will find the information in this booklet useful. If you have any questions about the information please contact the Counsellor & Disability Adviser on 0141 270 8282 or j.balmforth@rcs.ac.uk in the first instance. (Please see page 14 for full contact details.)

The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland aims to ensure that equality of opportunity in all areas of its activities is extended to applicants and students who have a disability or special needs and that all students with special needs are fully supported

If you are thinking of applying to the Royal Conservatoire and wondering whether to declare a disability, we encourage you to declare any disability/special needs on your application form so that we can contact you and discuss any support that might be helpful at audition or interview.

Alternatively, you may wish to contact the Counsellor & Disability Adviser to discuss any concerns or questions you may have before you complete the application form. If you would like to visit the Royal Conservatoire

before (or after) applying, we can arrange for you to meet staff and take a tour round the building.

We welcome feedback from students on provision in the Royal Conservatoire and on the information contained in this booklet.

About Glasgow

Glasgow is a historic city of around 600,000 people, which has grown from a hamlet on the banks of the River Clyde in the sixth century to become the commercial and industrial capital of western Scotland.

Many parts of the city centre are now pedestrianised and a Shopmobility scheme operates from the main shopping centres (Buchanan Galleries and St Enoch's Centre). Some of the streets are quite steep, as Glasgow was built on several hills!

A comprehensive guide, *The Ultimate Guide to Disability Access & Transport within Glasgow*, is available from the Greater Glasgow and Clyde Valley Tourist Board at 11 George Square in the centre of the city. Tel: 0141 204 4400. You can also find this information on the website www.glasgowaccesspanel.org.uk

You can find out more information about Glasgow on www.seeglasgow.org.uk and about Scotland on www.visitscotland.com

If you would like further details on the range of facilities and resources in the city, please

contact the Counsellor's office on 0141 2708
282 or j.balmforth@rcs.ac.uk

Access to the Royal Conservatoire

The Royal Conservatoire is located in the heart of Glasgow close to the Theatre Royal and the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall. As well as being a centre for music and drama students, the Royal Conservatoire is also a public building and provides access for audiences who attend the many plays, operas and concerts performed by students and guest performers.

We strongly encourage you to visit the Royal Conservatoire at an early stage in your application to assess the suitability/accessibility of facilities available.

As a general guide:

- There is accessible parking for disabled students at the Hope Street entrance.
- There is level access with an automatic sliding door on the ground floor on Renfrew Street. An accessible lift serves all floors.
- Accessible toilets are located on the first floor (main building and Opera School) and the second floor (Opera School.)

- There are fully accessible dressing rooms in the School of Drama
- The Fyfe lecture theatre, all auditoria and many teaching rooms are fitted with induction loops.
- Wheelchair spaces are provided in all three concert halls and two theatres.
- All Client Services staff receive disability awareness training as part of their induction training programme.

See page 20 **Equipment Provision** for more details of equipment available.

Applications and Admissions

The Royal Conservatoire welcomes applications from disabled people - if you would like further information about facilities and access please contact the Counsellor & Disability Adviser on 0141 270 8282. All applicants are auditioned and interviewed.

If you would like to discuss arrangements for your audition or interview, you can contact the Counsellor & Disability Adviser either by e-mail or by telephone. (See contact list on page 33.)

The Counsellor & Disability Adviser contacts all applicants who declare a disability on their application form – this is to give you the opportunity to discuss any arrangements for your audition/interview.

The Counsellor & Disability Adviser is also available to meet you when you come for audition/interview to discuss particular requirements, sources of further information and any special funding that might be available, for example the Disabled Students' Allowance.

When you have been accepted onto a course here, a meeting will be arranged for you by the

Counsellor & Disability Adviser with your Head of Department or Course Leader to draw up a written agreement of support, known as a Learning Agreement. The Learning Agreement is a statement of support including, for example, arrangements for exams, a note-taker for lectures, extended deadlines for written work etc. The Learning Agreement is reviewed every academic session.

Counselling & Disability Service

Jane Balmforth, is the Counsellor and Disability Adviser at the Royal Conservatoire. Jane's room is located on the ground floor near the lift and is fully accessible.

Jane has an open door policy, so it is not always necessary to have an appointment. Alternatively, you can leave a note at the office or phone Jane on 0141 270 8282 or contact her by e-mail.

E-mail: j.balmforth@rcs.ac.uk

The Counsellor & Disability Adviser is available to provide:

- counselling for students about any issue that may be causing anxiety
- individual support for students with disabilities, medical conditions or specific learning difficulties

Jane is happy to meet any student who wishes to discuss personal matters that may be causing uncertainty or unhappiness and all consultations are strictly confidential.

If you have a disability or medical condition, you are encouraged to contact the Counsellor to discuss any issues you may have, whether with your application, audition/interview or the course in general.

The Counsellor & Disability Adviser will contact you at the beginning of each academic session to ensure that effective provision is made to assist your studies. (See Applications & Admissions page 12.)

Registrar and the Personal Academic Tutorial System (PAT)

The Registrar, Suzanne Daly, is the manager who has responsibility for the service levels for students with disabilities. Suzanne can be contacted on 0141 270 8206 and is based in Academic Administration and Support on the ground floor. E-mail: s.daly@rcs.ac.uk

If you have a complaint about the service or information provided by the Royal Conservatoire you should consult the Complaints Procedure, which is included in the Regulations, Codes of Procedure and General Rules.

The Regulations, including the Complaints Procedure, are distributed to all students at the start of each session or a copy may be obtained from Academic Administration and Support. These can be made available in large print, Braille, tape, etc if required.

A team of Personal Academic Tutors (PAT) is available in the School of Music and the School of Drama for consultation at specified times. Under the PAT system students will meet their tutors a minimum of four times in an academic year. The tutor will offer:

- guidance and support in academic matters
- assistance with the process of Personal Development Planning
- assistance with reflecting on and planning for learning, employability and personal development
- help to identify learning goals and become an independent learner

More information on the PAT system is available from the individual school.

Learning Support

The Royal Conservatoire provides a learning support service: the Effective Learning Tutor is available to assist all students. The service includes:

- Essay writing techniques
- Critical analysis
- Effective reading skills
- Note-taking
- Revision and preparation for exams
- Organising study schedules
- Research skills for assignments and dissertations
- “Life skills” – timetables, organisation skills

If you would like to arrange a meeting with the Effective Learning Tutor please contact Academic Administration and Support for details.

For students with disabilities, arrangements for exams and assessments are included in your Learning Agreement (see page 13). These arrangements will be based on the recommendations stated by the specialist who has carried out a needs assessment e.g. an Educational Psychologist, GP or consultant.

If you would like details of arrangements that can be made for support in meeting the examination and assessment requirements of your course you should contact the Counsellor & Disability Adviser.

Use of lap tops, scribes, extra reading and writing time and large print exams on different coloured paper are examples of what can be arranged as appropriate.

Equipment Provision

The Royal Conservatoire has a range of equipment for use by students with special needs:

- Vibrating pager fire alarms. In the event of a fire alarm being triggered, a signal is sent to the pager which vibrates to alert the wearer. This facility is useful for students who may find themselves alone in practice rooms in the remotest part of the building during a fire alarm.
- All performance spaces and the Fyfe lecture theatre are fitted with induction loops; the Whittaker Library and all public reception areas are also fitted with induction loops. A small portable induction loop is available for students to borrow.
- An infra red system for audio description is available for the Opera School and the New Athenaeum Theatre.
- We have 64 PCs split between the Library and the AGOS facilities.
Assistive software available includes:

- Read and Write Version 9
- Inspiration Version 8
- MyStudyBar
- Cerevoice SAPI Heather 2.1.1

- If you need any help with these technologies, please speak to the IT Trainer, Julie Halstead, located in the AGOS (see p.22).

The Whittaker Library

The Information Services staff will endeavour to provide a fully equitable service to its users, regardless of ability. We aim to make all reasonable adjustments necessary to improve the learning experience of users, and have a number of measures in place to assist those with disabilities to make the most of their library and IT use.

We offer extended loan periods to dyslexic and other students, and offer a range of assistive technologies in both the research and the student IT suites as outlined above. Training on these packages is available to students on a one to one basis and can be arranged by contacting our IT Trainer, Julie Halstead (T: 0141 270 8202, E: j.halstead@rcs.ac.uk).

Our VLE, Moodle <http://moodle.rcs.ac.uk/> has also been designed with a range of options to improve accessibility, including an online study toolbar. Moodle is designed to provide information about your course, your welfare and other related issues, as well as providing an online learning platform. We welcome feedback and suggestions, which can be directed to Gordon McLeod, our Learning

Technologist(T:0141 270 8406 E:
g.mcleod1@rcs.ac.uk)

The Whittaker Library is located on Level 3 of the Royal Conservatoire, accessible via the lift located on the ground floor of the building near the reception desk. The majority of the IT facilities are located in the AGOS area at the rear of the building on the ground floor.

We hope we can anticipate all our students' needs, and will endeavour to review our services to take into account advances in technology and changing needs. If you require any further information or assistance, please talk to any member of staff, or contact Caroline Cochrane, Head of Information Services (T: 0141 270 8269, E: c.cochrane@rcs.ac.uk)

Accommodation

The Royal Conservatoire aims to offer all first year students a place in a hall of residence; accommodation is also available for students with disabilities.

Currently, it is possible to offer places in a private hall of residence in the centre of Glasgow. All students will be sent details and an application form for the hall of residence when they have accepted the offer of a place on a course.

In addition, the Royal Conservatoire is able to offer advice to students seeking accommodation in the private sector and subscribes to PAD, a database of properties available for let in the city. This database may be accessed on www.accom.gla.ac.uk/pad

If you would like more information on suitable accommodation please contact Academic Administration and Support on registry@rcs.ac.uk

Financial support

The Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) is the main source of financial assistance for UK undergraduates whose disability means that specialist equipment or additional personal help is required to enable them to pursue a course of study. All UK postgraduate students are also eligible to apply for DSA.

The Counsellor & Disability Adviser will help you complete the application form for a Disabled Students' Allowance and can arrange for an assessment of needs at a local Access Centre, if required.

If you require an up to date dyslexia assessment please contact the Counsellor. The assessment is paid for by the Royal Conservatoire.

Discretionary Funds are also available to help UK students facing financial hardship, and you can obtain an application form from Academic Administration & Support on Level 1.

The Students' Union

The Students' Union (SU) of the Royal Conservatoire is able to provide support and information. The SU runs campaigns and keeps leaflets on various topics of interest to students and you can drop in to the SU office to request information.

The SU is affiliated to the National Union of Students (NUS) which has a very informative website with links to NUS Scotland www.nusonline.co.uk

The SU also runs clubs such as the hill-walking club, yoga and contemporary dance, and organises the annual Summer Ball.

The SU office is on the ground floor of the Royal Conservatoire, near the reception desk. If you would like to contact the SU, you can drop by the office or phone on 0141 2708 296 or e-mail on SUOffice@rcs.ac.uk

Careers Advice

Careers and vocational advice in the Royal Conservatoire should be seen in the context of a student body which, from enrolment, has fairly clear ideas as to career aspirations.

The same students, throughout their various courses, have daily contact with teachers from the Music and Drama professions and therefore have access to the most meaningful form of career advice. This advice will take account of the whole range of individual needs. There is also provision of careers advice built into courses in both Schools.

If you have any questions on careers you should consult your Head of Department in the first instance.

Medical Services

Please note: it is essential that all students register with a GP in Glasgow.

Woodside Health Centre is only a short distance from the Royal Conservatoire at:

Woodside Health Centre
Barr Street
Glasgow
G20 7LR

Tel: (0141) 531 9560

<http://www.drloveandpartners.com/>

Staff from Woodside Health Centre will visit the Royal Conservatoire during Freshers' Week to register new first year students staying in the hall of residence. The Health Centre provides a wide range of services including Dentists, Physiotherapists and an X-Ray department.

If you are not staying at the hall of residence you should contact your local medical centre to register with a GP. You can call the NHS helpline on 0800 224 488 for help finding your nearest GP.

The Royal Conservatoire has a register of medical specialists in all fields relevant to performance in Music and Drama. If you have a medical problem that is causing difficulties in your studies, arrangements can be made by the Registrar for you to see a specialist. It is the current policy for the Royal Conservatoire to pay for the first consultation.

You should first consult your Head of Department about this service if you feel you would like to see a specialist.

The Royal Conservatoire is also a member of the British Association of Performing Arts Medicine (BAPAM), which provides specialist care and advice for performers. See www.bapam.org.uk for more information or phone the Helpline on 0845 602 0235.

Students with Disabilities

Students with a range of sensory and mobility impairments, as well as unseen disabilities, have successfully completed courses at the Royal Conservatoire.

In 2010/11 a total of 163 students declared a disability or medical condition. The largest single grouping was dyslexia, dyspraxia and specific learning issues (115 students), followed by unseen disabilities, which includes mental health issues, asthma, epilepsy, ME, rheumatoid arthritis and diabetes.

The Counsellor & Disability Adviser holds regular informal meetings with students to discuss provision for students with special needs and feeds back issues to the Equality & Diversity Forum (EDF). The EDF has 3 student representatives, and is responsible for monitoring equal opportunities and access to all aspects of the Royal Conservatoire.

Students may also take academic issues to the Monitoring, Evaluation and Review Board (MER); provision for students with disabilities is specified in the remit of the MER, and student representatives are selected by student nomination.

Equal Opportunities

The Royal Conservatoire is committed to equality of opportunity for all members of the community, as declared in the Equal Opportunities statement on page 2. Roz Caplan, the Equality & Diversity Officer is responsible for ensuring that the Royal Conservatoire's environment and facilities are fully accessible and that any barriers to equal opportunity are removed. You can contact Roz on 0141 270 8397 or r.caplan@rcs.ac.uk

The Equality & Diversity Forum monitors provision for students with disabilities. Membership of the Committee includes representatives from throughout the Royal Conservatoire, including disabled students and staff.

The Counsellor & Disability Adviser reviews annually the provision and service to students with specific additional needs and reports her findings and recommendations to the Teaching & Learning Committee. The report is also submitted to the Development Committee, which has a responsibility for the preliminary consideration of policy in regard to strategic planning and is involved in the initial

drafting of the institution's strategic planning documentation.

If you would like any further information or would like to discuss any of the information in this booklet, please contact Jane Balmforth on 0141 2708 282 or j.balmforth@rcs.ac.uk

Useful Contacts

The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
Tel: 0141 332 4101 www.rcs.ac.uk

Suzanne Daly, Registrar. Tel: 0141 270 8206
E: s.daly@rcs.ac.uk

Jane Balmforth, Counsellor & Disability
Adviser. Tel: 0141 270 8282
E: j.balmforth@rcs.ac.uk

Sarah Ward, Welfare & International Student
Adviser. Tel: 0141 270 8281
E: s.ward@rcs.ac.uk

Roz Caplan, Equality & Diversity Officer.
Tel: 0141 270 8397 E: r.caplan@rcs.ac.uk

The Royal Conservatoire publishes this
Disability booklet on its Web Page:
<http://www.rcs.ac.uk/studyhere/>

Relevant sections of the Statement are also
incorporated in other publications including the
Prospectus. Applicants may access the booklet
through www.rcs.ac.uk and the CUKAS website
also has further information: www.cukas.ac.uk

(Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this publication at the time of going to press, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland wishes to stress that information given may be subject to alteration. Applicants and students should check the up to date position when they need to know it.)

