Our Vision

To be Scotland’s globally-recognised and inspirational leader in learning for the performing arts, attracting and nurturing the best Scottish and international creative talent.

As a Board of Governors, staff and student team, we embrace and are motivated by:

- inclusivity, diversity and individuality
- disciplinary excellence and innovative cross-disciplinary collaboration
- breaking down barriers and challenging boundaries
- the advancement of creative citizenship and leadership across the performing arts for our nation and for the world

Lauren Macdonald – the first female jazz drummer to study at RCS.
Driving focused excellence

Promoting equality and diversity

Advancing lifelong learning

Embracing our role as a national and international performing arts institution

The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland is a national and international centre of excellence for the performing arts. Building on our roots in 1847 as the national academy of music, we are now one of Europe's most multi-disciplinary centres of performing arts education. Through our innovative curriculum, we offer highly-specialised education in and across the art forms of music, drama, dance, film and production.

With a focus on the future, Defining Performance outlines our ambitions and strategic priorities for the period 2015 to 2020 and provides a structured approach for their delivery. The cornerstones of this strategic plan are our 'Four Pillars': Focused Excellence, Equality and Diversity, Lifelong Learning, and being a National and International Conservatoire - all of which are aligned with our vision and values.

As a unique national institution, we recognise the importance of the performing arts to the cultural, economic and social well-being of Scotland, as well as to our profile internationally.

We are committed to and excited by our role in nurturing talent, creativity and active citizenship through encouraging engagement in the performing arts, from pre-school to third age, and from across communities in Scotland, the United Kingdom and internationally.

We also seek to build our reputation as a destination of choice for some of the most talented performing artists from across the world who stand to benefit from our innovative trans-disciplinary curriculum and outstanding teaching and research.

This plan builds on the strategic ambition which has seen the Royal Conservatoire transformed, particularly over the past decade. In the past ten years, our student numbers have more than doubled and, in 2011, to reflect the extraordinary breadth of our curricular offer, we changed our name to the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Within this period, as well as introducing new programmes and genres into the curriculum - most notably Modern Ballet and the newly-designed Production Arts and Design and Production Technology and Management programmes - we have significantly extended our estate to include the Wallace Studios at Speirs Locks (funded largely by philanthropic giving) and refurbished our Renfrew Street estate.

We have introduced innovative undergraduate and postgraduate curricula which combine intense specialist study of the highest quality with opportunities for student choice and artistic collaboration. This significant change was designed to reflect the changing performing arts professions and to take account of the need to educate our graduates as versatile, employable professionals. As a result, collaborative practice is now embedded as a core shared module for every student in RCS, and our widely-respected Bridge Week has created space for students to be creative and to devise their own learning in and through performance.

We have also improved the quality and volume of our research, extended our reach and underscored our relevance through the introduction of initiatives which promote access for all who might benefit, irrespective of background. In addition, we have significantly extended our lifelong learning.

RCS has delivered across all these areas while maintaining our position as one of Scotland's busiest performing arts venues, with around 500 public performances each year.

In recognition of the challenges of the financial climate, the RCS is planning for controlled growth. This will be crucial in the achievement of financial sustainability and the delivery of the strategic plan. We will think creatively around how we deploy existing resources and space, and plan for the new space and resources we will require to accommodate future ambitions.

Defining Performance embraces a leadership role for RCS in the rapidly-changing landscape of the arts. We are bold, ambitious and optimistic about our future as a truly 21st century conservatoire. As we work towards 2020, our goal - through our students - is to raise the transformative power and reach of the performing arts within Scotland and project our distinctiveness to the wider world.

Professor Jeffrey Sharkey
Principal, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Our strategic plan is based on four pillars:
focused driving excellence
In the pursuit of focused excellence we will:

- Create a culture of continuous professional development to enhance and enrich the student and staff experience across the Royal Conservatoire, maintaining and enhancing delivery of our degree and pre-HE programmes, as well as ensuring excellence and sustainability.
- Deliver enhanced choice and flexibility to our students and embed pedagogical skills throughout our curriculum.
- Attract outstanding teachers and artists who will act as a magnet for outstanding students.
- Deliver a planned incremental increase in student numbers.
- Apply technology to enhance our students’ learning experience and to make us more efficient and effective.
- Develop and deliver effective capital and scholarship/bursary campaigns to support the development of a world-class creative campus which will attract and retain artists of greatest potential, establishing RCS within the cultural vibrancy of Glasgow, as well as enhancing our reputation nationally and internationally.
- Embed research across our artistic and academic community to further enhance the vitality of our work, and achieve sustainability.
- Develop a sector-leading approach to improvisation and to the creation of new work and employability through performance and research, embracing students and staff, and the rich and unique opportunities of our multi-disciplinary environment.

“\textit{I never had drama when I was younger but I did have two exceptional music teachers and what they did for me turned my life around.}”

James McAvoy, Class of 2000
diversity and equality
In pursuit of the advancement and celebration of diversity and equality we will:

• Embed equality and diversity within the pre-HE, undergraduate and postgraduate curricula by maximising opportunities to diversify art forms and disciplines, contributing to sectoral and social change and further learning, enriching the pool of talent, and connecting more widely and deeply with communities.

• Prioritise the sustainability and effectiveness of the Transitions 20/40 programme and other related widening access and participation and social justice initiatives that lead to positive destinations in the performing arts for the most marginalised, and/or those from a care-experienced background. We will also ensure that these programmes connect effectively and positively into RCS at undergraduate level, with students guided and supported throughout.

• Enhance opportunities for under-16s across music, drama, dance, production and screen to ensure that a greater range of individuals and communities connect with the Junior Conservatoire experience. We will play our part in nurturing the potential of more of Scotland's young people, widening the talent pool, increasing the pathways to higher education and employment, and creating positive participation in the performing arts.

Promoting Equality and Diversity

“Young people are our future musicians, our future virtuosi and future audiences. We must look at what we are doing now in education and plan for the future; for the good of our culture and societies we must not delay in embracing young people in the arts.”

Sir James MacMillan
advancing lifelong learning
In the promotion of lifelong learning we will:

• Develop ground-breaking RCS community-based Centres of Excellence to enrich the talent pool and connect more effectively with communities through partnership and in providing excellent graduates to teach in key areas.

• Nurture potential, creativity and active citizenship, encouraging engagement with a diverse range of individuals - from pre-school to third age - as well as groups, organisations and communities across Scotland and, through online learning, across the world.

• Develop excellence in the Junior Conservatoire by creating a Young Artists Programme which connects us to young people with potential through focused and active partnerships with schools and key stakeholders.

• Innovate RCS’s lifelong learning programme portfolio, making it accessible and relevant to the needs and aspirations of increasingly diverse participants.

• Contribute to the well-being and fulfilment of individuals and communities through providing opportunities for RCS students to learn and apply skills in pedagogy; maximising our capacity for enriched performance and knowledge exchange; embedding RCS within communities and engaging the third-age population.

• Create a new strategic framework and activate:
  - Innovative learning opportunities that advance employability, workforce development and credit-bearing programmes
  - CPD teaching programmes to assist local authorities to improve attainment levels through enhanced arts teaching provision in schools
  - CPD programmes to support the specific professional development needs of Scotland’s national companies and artistic professions

“Immersion in cultural activity can help bolster the future resilience and well-being of communities and individuals and nowhere is this more important than in our children and young people.”

Fiona Hyslop, *Time to Shine: Scotland’s Youth Arts Strategy*
national and international
In fulfilling our role as a national and international conservatoire we will:

• Inspire and engage Scotland’s young people through creating a flagship Teach Arts for Scotland programme to promote excellence in performing arts learning and teaching in schools.

• Recognise and celebrate excellent arts teaching in Scotland’s schools by delivering an ‘Inspirational Arts Teaching’ award.

• Establish an International Advisory Board to help realise our vision and advance our values on the world stage.

• Build and maximise academic and institutional partnerships, and key stakeholder relationships nationally and internationally, across areas including conferences, research, staff and student exchange opportunities, touring opportunities and recruitment to enhance both the student experience and reputation of RCS.

• Be a national and international advocate and ambassador for education in the performing arts.

“*It’s an exciting place to be and has evolved into a dynamic, beautiful arts hub representing Scotland.*”

Billy Boyd, Class of 1995
Established in Glasgow. 1847

1847

People a year attending performances.

60k

Given in scholarships to RCS students in 2015/16.

£1.4m

Public performances each year.

500

In the UK top 10 for graduate employment.*

No. 6

In UK top 10 for graduate employment.*

92%

Graduate employability.***

50

Different nationalities of students study at RCS.

3rd

In the UK conservatoire sector for music research.**

500

Public performances each year.

£1.4m

Given in scholarships to RCS students in 2015/16.