



Royal Conservatoire  
*of* Scotland

**Information for Disabled  
Students and Applicants**

# **Our Mission Statement**

**The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland's mission is to:**

Be the place where developing artists from across the world converge to become the artistic leaders of tomorrow;

Create, in Scotland, a crucible for artistic innovation and creativity in performance and production;

Become integral to evolving national strategies and initiatives for widening access to life-long learning in and through the performing arts.

## **Equality & Diversity Statement**

The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland welcomes a diverse population of students and staff. We believe that excellence can be achieved through recognising and celebrating the value of every individual, and are committed to promoting equality in all of our activities.

We are committed to equality of opportunity both as an educational institution and as an employer.

Equality of opportunity means striving to ensure that no student or member of staff receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, actual or perceived religion or belief, sex and actual or perceived sexual orientation.

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
Students' Experiences	5
Welcome!	6
About Glasgow	8
Access to the RCS	9
Applications and Admissions	11
Support for your studies	12
Counselling & Disability Service	13
Academic Registrar	15
Learning Support	16
Equipment Provision	17
The Whittaker Library	19
Accommodation	21
Financial Support	22
The Students' Union	23
Careers Advice	24
Medical Services	25
Students with Disabilities	27
Equal Opportunities at RCS	29
Useful Contacts	31

***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.'

(1<sup>st</sup> year DDPF 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.'

(3<sup>rd</sup> 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 DDPF 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.

(3<sup>rd</sup> year DDPF student)

# Welcome!

We hope that you will find the information in this booklet useful. If you have any questions about the information please contact Dr Jane Balmforth, the Counsellor & Disability Adviser, on 0141 270 8282 or [j.balmforth@rcs.ac.uk](mailto:j.balmforth@rcs.ac.uk) in the first instance. (Please see page 13 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 and that all disabled students 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/medical condition at application 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 your application. 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!

Glasgow City Council has produced a comprehensive guide to accessible venues:  
<https://www.disabledgo.com/organisations/glasgow-city-council>

Euan's Guide also has thousands of disabled access reviews and listings for Glasgow, the UK and beyond:  
<https://www.euansguide.com/reviews/scotland/glasgow-city-of/glasgow/>



## **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, Dance, Production and Film (DDPF)
- 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.
- A hoist and changing plinth are provided in the accessible toilet on Level 2 (2.71).
- All Client Services staff receive disability awareness training as part of their induction training programme.

See page 17 **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 who apply before the deadline 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 31.)

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 (DSA).

## **Support for your studies**

When you have been accepted onto a course at RCS, a meeting will be arranged for you by the Counsellor & Disability Adviser to draw up an agreement of support, known as a Learning Agreement (LA).

The Learning Agreement may include, for example, extra time for sight reading assessments, specific times for recitals and performances or extended deadlines for written work. The LA is based on the recommendations stated by the specialist who has carried out an assessment e.g. an Educational Psychologist, GP or consultant. Alternatively, you may have a needs assessment as part of applying for Disabled Students Allowance (DSA; see page 22), and this will also contain suggestions for support.

You have the opportunity to review the Learning Agreement during the year and at the start of every academic session. Adjustments agreed for your studies are uploaded to your electronic file for reference.

## **Counselling & Disability Service**

Dr Jane Balmforth, is the Counsellor and Disability Adviser at the Royal Conservatoire. Jane is a Senior Accredited Counsellor with the British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy (BACP)

Jane's room is located on the ground floor (Renfrew Street campus) 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 phone Jane on 0141 270 8282 or contact her by e-mail to arrange a time to meet.

E-mail: [j.balmforth@rcs.ac.uk](mailto: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 confidential (unless there is a danger of harm to anyone.)

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 11.)

## **Academic Registrar**

The Academic 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](mailto: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 Braille if required.

# Effective Learning

The Royal Conservatoire provides an Effective Learning Service (ELS) and tutors are available to assist all students. The service includes:

- Essay writing techniques
- Critical analysis
- Effective reading skills
- Tips for note-taking
- Revision and preparation for exams
- Organising study schedules
- Research skills for assignments and dissertations, including referencing and bibliographies
- Organisation and prioritisation skills

If you would like to arrange a meeting with the Effective Learning Tutors please email [els@rcs.ac.uk](mailto:els@rcs.ac.uk)



## Equipment Provision

The Royal Conservatoire has a range of equipment for use by disabled students:

- 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 54 PCs split between the Library and the AGOS facilities and 36 Macs in two dedicated teaching labs.
- Assistive software available includes:

- Read and Write Version 9
  - Inspiration Version 9
  - Cerevoice SAPI Heather 3.0.1
  - Cerevoice SAPI Stuart 3.0.1
  - My StudyBar V3
- If you need any help with these technologies, please speak to the IT Trainer, Julie Halstead, located in the AGOS or [j.halstead@rcs.ac.uk](mailto:j.halstead@rcs.ac.uk) .

## 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](mailto:j.halstead@rcs.ac.uk)).

Our VLE, Moodle <http://inspire.rcs.ac.uk> has also been designed with a range of options to improve accessibility, including a "Clean" theme design that students can set on their account so whenever they use Moodle, most of the graphics are stripped, providing a more accessible version. 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 Steven Dunn, our Learning Technologist.

T: 0141 270 8285 E: [S.Dunn@rcs.ac.uk](mailto:S.Dunn@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](mailto: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 Base Glasgow, the Conservatoire's preferred accommodation provider in the centre of Glasgow. All students will receive a link to the Base Glasgow application website 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.glasgowpad.org](http://www.glasgowpad.org)

If you would like more information on suitable accommodation please contact Academic Administration and Support on [welfare@rcs.ac.uk](mailto:welfare@rcs.ac.uk)

## **Financial support**

The Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) is the main source of 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. Most 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.

The Discretionary Fund is 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.nus.org.uk](http://www.nus.org.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 (Renfrew Street campus), 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 [supresident@rcs.ac.uk](mailto:supresident@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 Programme in the first instance.



## Medical Services

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

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

Drs Leslie, Ojo and Chetty  
Woodside Health and Care Centre  
891 Garscube Road  
Glasgow G20 7ER  
Tel: 0141 201 5560

<https://www.drleslieandpartners.com/>

Staff from Drs Leslie, Ojo and Chetty will visit the Royal Conservatoire during Freshers' Week to register new first year students staying in Base Glasgow. Besides the GP service, the Health and Care Centre provides a wide range of other services including Dentists, Physiotherapists and an X-Ray department.

If you are not staying at Base Glasgow you should find your nearest GP via the Services Directory at <https://www.nhsinform.scot/>

The Royal Conservatoire has preferred medical specialists in the fields of physiotherapy, Ear Nose and Throat and Oral Surgery. If you have a medical problem in one of these three areas that is causing difficulties in your studies and which cannot easily be resolved through NHS treatment, arrangements can be made for you to see one of the above-mentioned specialists for a free one-off consultation. You should first consult your Head of Programme 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 [http://www.bapam.org.uk/perf\\_clinics.html](http://www.bapam.org.uk/perf_clinics.html) for more information or phone the Helpline on 0207 404 8444.

## **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 2018/19, a total of 371 students, or 30% of the student population, declared a disability or medical condition. The largest single grouping was dyslexia, dyspraxia and specific learning disabilities, followed by mental health disabilities (depression, anxiety, OCD, PTSD) and unseen disabilities, including AD(H)D, asthma, epilepsy, MS, rheumatoid arthritis, IBS and diabetes. Students with an ASD and with multiple disabilities also study at RCS.

The Counsellor & Disability Adviser feeds back any issues regarding disabled students to the Equality & Diversity Forum (EDF). The EDF has 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 Programme Committees, where 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 Equality & Diversity 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 8384 or [r.caplan@rcs.ac.uk](mailto:r.caplan@rcs.ac.uk)

The Equality & Diversity Forum includes monitoring provision for students with disabilities within its remit. 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 for disabled students, including via the Disability Survey which is sent to all disabled students; she presents her annual report to the Schools' Management Committees and the report and the Schools' responses are then discussed at Academic Board.

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](mailto:j.balmforth@rcs.ac.uk)

## Useful Contacts

Suzanne Daly, Academic Registrar.

Tel: 0141 270 8206

E: [s.daly@rcs.ac.uk](mailto:s.daly@rcs.ac.uk)

Jane Balmforth, Counsellor & Disability Adviser. Tel: 0141 270 8282

E: [j.balmforth@rcs.ac.uk](mailto:j.balmforth@rcs.ac.uk)

Sarah Ward, Assistant Registrar, International & Student Experience. Tel: 0141 270 8281

E: [s.ward@rcs.ac.uk](mailto:s.ward@rcs.ac.uk)

Roz Caplan, Equality & Diversity Officer.

Tel: 0141 270 8384 E: [r.caplan@rcs.ac.uk](mailto:r.caplan@rcs.ac.uk)

Relevant sections of the Statement are also incorporated in other publications including the Prospectus. Applicants may access the booklet through this link:

<https://www.rcs.ac.uk/studyhere/studentsupport/>

The UCAS Conservatoires website also has further information:

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/conservatoires/finance-and-support/individual-needs>

**(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.)**

