

## Part 1: Managing your time

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Understanding how you use your time and learning to manage it well are going to be very important not just for your success as a student but for your long-term career development. After graduation, a high proportion of Conservatoire graduates have a *portfolio career*, one made up of several different types of activity – typically, some performing/ composing work, but also running workshops in schools or in other parts of the community, some teaching for a Music Service or private teaching, and other income streams too such as arts administration work, music publishing and retail, or web-based businesses. Juggling several different jobs as a self-employed musician requires an excellent awareness of where your time is going.

Start thinking about all the different parts of your life that are going to make demands on your time: principal study and department work, core curriculum work, domestic life, sleeping, social life, and part time jobs. There are 168 hours in a week, quite a bit of which you will spend asleep, but most of which is available to you for all the things you need to be doing – including doing nothing at all. Everyone needs to have some ‘down-time’, so that needs to be included too when you are working out how to organize your time.

Until you get here and know your timetable, there is a lot you simply cannot know about what you will need to make time for, but below are some notes to help you start thinking about this. Take some time to observe yourself and how long you spend doing the types of things that normally you might not think are part of managing your time (how long do you spend in the shower every day? How much time do you spend on social media?). If you have never lived away from home before, then you may be surprised at all the things you are likely to have to do on a day-to-day basis once you arrive here (e.g. cooking and cleaning!)

### Study time and module credits

You are expected to spend 35-40 hours a week during term time on your studies,

including private practice/ composing time for your Principal study. You can, obviously do more if you wish but you should not be doing less. It is worth noting that in the official, national way that study hours are calculated, the assumption is that as a full-time student, you are effectively doing a “full-time job” – so the hours for full-time study were originally worked out to reflect the type of hours someone might work in an office, Monday to Friday, 9-5. However, being a musician is, rather obviously, not much like working in an office! No account is taken of whether or not you also practice (for example) at the weekends or during vacations: the ‘official’ calculation is that you work for 40 hours a week for 30 weeks of the year, and even as a student, you will undoubtedly be working on your performing or composing for more than 30 weeks each year! So, the hours assigned to different modules are, at most, a rough guide, and are referred to as “notional” hours because of that. Not everyone works at the same rate. For some modules, the notational hours may well be an under-estimate of how much time you personally will need; for others they may turn out to be an over-estimate.

### **Scheduled time versus directed study and independent learning**

All your modules will give you a guide to how much time you should spend doing things outside the classes over the course of the year. There are three main types of activity involved in each of your modules: scheduled teaching (classes, lectures, seminars etc); directed study (work you are asked to do to prepare for or follow up on a class), and independent study (mostly, this is work you undertake to prepare an assessment). In almost all modules, the amount of directed and independent study we expect you to do is more than the amount of class time. That’s an important aspect of higher education: you are expected to take a lot more responsibility for what you are learning, and to manage your time accordingly. On your Principal Study module, the expectation is that you will do a total of 600 notional hours (perhaps more helpful to think of this as 50% of your study time) during term time and most of that will be independent study – individual practice, including working on things after classes and rehearsals that need to be prepared for next time.

### **Practical versus academic**

If you wanted to spend your days writing essays, you would have chosen a traditional university music course, not a Conservatoire: the focus of your time here is always going to be principal study work. However, there are good reasons why we also ask you to do some more conventionally academic work in your core curriculum studies, to do with not just the knowledge of music that this will bring you, but also the transferable/ employability skills you will need after you graduate. You normally only write one formal essay a year on this programme; but just because there is not much academic work in comparison to principal study, don’t let it slip off your radar: one of the rules at RCS is that **you have to pass all your assessments in order to move on to the next year of the course**. Look at the module guide for the work you should be doing on a weekly basis, and build time each week into your plans to do this. As a rule of thumb, for each academic class you are in, you should be doing

up to two hours of work outside class, either to prepare for the class beforehand or to do follow-up work afterwards. Most of this is not homework in a way you may be used to – you won't necessarily get any grades for it, but if you do not do the work, you may not be able to participate in the class properly or develop the skills and knowledge you need to pass the final assessments. Sometimes, tutors will set specific work to be done for next time; sometimes, they will make suggestions about the work you might do as a general follow-up.

### **Listening to music**

Listening to music is different from having music on. Listening means that the music is the main focus of your attention, rather than something on in the background whilst you are doing something else. You should spend some time each week listening to music – for example, following a score in the library or on [www.IMSLP.org](http://www.IMSLP.org). As part of the Contextual Studies module, we recommend you spend at least an hour a week listening to music related to what was covered in that week's lecture. This is also useful in terms of exploring new repertoire, whatever your principal study area.

### **Part-time jobs**

Most students will have income from a part time job at some point in their course, and some students work throughout their time here. As a rule, we would not recommend that you work for more than 10-15 hours a week during term time as this is likely to have an impact on your studies. If you find yourself experiencing serious financial difficulties, talk to the welfare team ([welfare@rcs.ac.uk](mailto:welfare@rcs.ac.uk)).

### **Social Life**

Yes, part of the Conservatoire experience is the social life. You must allow yourself some time off – nobody can work all the time; but if it starts getting in the way of your studies, then it's fairly self-defeating and a waste of both time and money. Developing a good work/life balance means being aware of how much time you need to prioritize for work in order to get the most out of your studies here, and how much time off from work you need to allow yourself in order to stay happy and healthy.

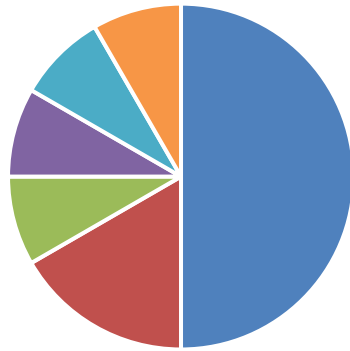
## A quick guide to the year 1 course

This is a rough guide to how much of your time you should expect (and plan) to spend on each of your modules)

Module	Credits	Notional hours per year	Activities
Principal study	60	600	One to one lessons, private practice/ composition work
Performance or Composition Studies	20	200	Departmental classes, rehearsals and workshops; personal reflection on progress.
Contextual Studies 1	10	100	History lectures, writing and research skills seminars; personal research and writing.
Musicianship 1	10	100	Musicianship seminars (harmony and aural skills), choir; personal work on harmony exercises and listening skills.
Introduction to Professional Skills for Musicians	10	100	Lectures and talks from visiting practitioners, career development seminars, music technology workshops; personal work on career planning.
Creative Citizenship	10	100	Lectures and workshops, collaborative discussion and activities.
Music Leadership	10	100	Lectures and workshops, collaborative work on planning and devising workshop activities for a specific external group.
	<b>120</b>	<b>1200</b>	

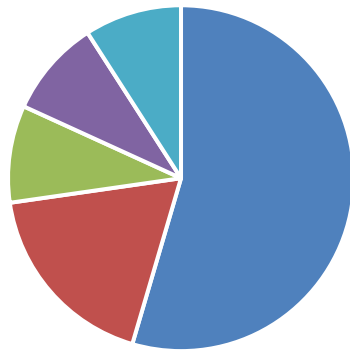
On the next page are two pie charts which give a sense of how much of your time will be spent on each module in term 1 and term 2 (as you have fewer modules in term 2)

Term 1



- Principal study
- Supporting Studies
- Contextual Studies 1
- Musicianship 1
- IPSM
- Creative Citizenship

Term 2



- Principal study
- Supporting Studies
- Contextual Studies 1
- Musicianship 1
- Music Leadership