



Royal Conservatoire
of Scotland

Welcome to the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

August 2023

Dear New BMus (Traditional Music) Student,

We are delighted to welcome you to your studies in Traditional Music at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. We're looking forward to seeing you in person and helping you to settle into the RCS, your course and your department. Please find below some important information for you to review before you arrive at the Conservatoire.

Everyone is always a bit nervous about starting something new and that's both completely natural and also a good sign – it means it's important to you! You should discover quickly that everyone at RCS is very friendly and happy to help if you have questions; we want to help you make the most of all opportunities that will be available to you here over the next four years.

About BMus (Trad) Year 1

The structure of a Conservatoire BMus is quite distinctive, as you are part of both an overall programme and pathway but also part of a department. In the case of Traditional Music, we are all three.

The BMus (Traditional Music) in fact consists of two formal pathways – Traditional Music, and Traditional Music – Piping. They share a great deal of classes, but there are some differences as well. Our pathways share a range of core modules, all equally important and fundamental. The **Performance** module comprises your individual Principal Study lesson and a range of Supporting Classes that engage you in a broad range of knowledge, skills and competencies fundamental to Scottish traditional music and your ability to craft your place in it. Your individual timetable of classes will differ depending on whether you are on the Trad or the Piping pathway. Most Supporting Classes are shared between both pathways, but Piping students engage with some studies more specific to Scottish Highland piping, such as light music, piobaireachd and the fundamentals of piping history. More details will be provided during Induction Week.

In addition to your Performance module (worth 60 credits), you will study the following contextual modules in your first year:

- **Concepts in Traditional Music** (10 credits)

This module allows you to discover and articulate your personal starting point as a critical and creative artist in traditional music. You will reflect on, and engage critically with, the fundamental concepts and methods underpinning traditional Scottish music as a framework through which to explore 'your' tradition or practice.

- **Scottish Traditional Repertoire 1: Songs and Sources** (10 credits)

This series of modules positions Scottish traditional music within its broad idiomatic, historical and cultural contexts through the lens of specific repertoire, enabling students to develop and demonstrate, singly and collectively, a common foundational understanding of the root traditions/repertoires in Scottish music.

- **Creative Skills in Traditional Music 1** (10 credits)

This module aims to help you develop an integrated understanding of fundamental form and structure in Scottish traditional music and to equip you with the skills to apply it in a range of creative, practical, and performed contexts. You will participate in whole-group and small or individual classes to improve your overall musicianship.

- **Music Leadership** (10 credits)

Music Leadership introduces you to outreach work in a variety of community contexts and equips you with the skills to devise and lead participatory music activities within the wider community. You will explore strategies for communicating, programming, and performing with and for a variety of non-specialist audiences and participate in a placement.

- **Introduction to Professional Skills for Musicians** (10 credits)

This module introduces you to essential skills for developing a successful and sustainable career in music. It blends the study of self-promotion, musicians' health and wellbeing, and digital technology skills to develop an understanding of your professional identity as a portfolio musician.

- **Creative Citizenship** (10 credits)

This module introduces you to the cultural, artistic, political, and educational context of learning in a conservatoire and is concerned with equipping you with understandings and skills which enable you to be resilient, pro-active, compassionate, and ethical collaborators and peers within the Conservatoire context.

Level Up, and the Departmental Handbook

In the meantime, there is a **pre-enrolment exercise** that we ask you to do before things officially begin in September, and some useful information about how things work at RCS is to be found within that. You can find that back on the main page, in the "Level Up" materials just underneath the link to this letter. You will also find access to the Traditional Music Dept's Handbook, which we urge you to review. You should read through the Level Up guides and complete the exercise before you arrive for the start of Welcome Week.

Finally we would like to wish you the best of luck for the start of your course. You are now a part of the RCS community, and we look forward to working with you as you develop and grow as a musician.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JD', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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