SoM Change of Teacher Policy: Student Version

This policy is about situations where you would like to change your 1:1 teacher. This is a short, student-facing version of the full policy.

Background
When you begin studies in the School of Music, you are allocated to a 1:1 Principal Study teacher by your Head of Department (HoD). We do our best to accommodate requests to study with a particular teacher, where we have advance notice, but we can't promise to fulfil all requests.

You have the option to share your annual allocation of 1:1 lesson time between different teachers – this can be beneficial where you are studying complementary or highly specialised techniques or genres, for example. Sharing of lesson time has to be done with the agreement of your Head of Department.

Our Policy
It is School of Music policy to support requests to change teacher, or to share lesson time between different teachers, so long as your HoD believes that to be in your best interests.

What should I do if I'd like to discuss my progress?
You should speak to your 1:1 teacher in the first instance. If you don't feel able to discuss concerns about your progress directly with your teacher, then speak to your HoD. Concerns about progress do not always result in changing teacher. It's good practice to discuss your progress with your HoD at least once a year, usually after the end-of-year assessments: your HoD may use this meeting to ask you to confirm that you're happy to continue with your current teacher.

I just want an occasional lesson from a different teacher
If you would like the occasional lesson with a different teacher, simply discuss this with your HoD.

But what if I want to change my 1:1 teacher or to share lesson time with another teacher?
The process that follows is for situations where you would like to change teacher, or to share lesson time with another teacher on an ongoing basis.

Here's what to do if you'd like to change teacher or share lesson time on permanent basis:

<u>1. Talk to your Head of Department</u>

- explain why you'd like to change teacher
- talk about your progress to date and your ambitions
- your HoD will also take account of your stage in your studies, your length of time with your current teacher and the availability of other teachers
- your HoD may decide that a change of teacher is not in your best interests at this time. In this case, you should meet with your HoD again after, say, another 4 weeks to review the situation.
- if you are unhappy with this outcome, you can appeal the decision to the Director of Music.

2. You (or your HoD) meet with your current teacher

- if your HoD thinks that changing teacher is in your best interests, they will encourage you to discuss the request directly with your current teacher
- if you feel unable to discuss your request directly with your teacher, tell your HoD and they will discuss the request with your teacher instead. They will explain fully to your teacher the reasons for your request
- your HoD will offer you support through this process, and give you a timeline for changing teacher

3. Approaching new teachers

- **you must not approach a possible new teacher or have a consultation lesson with a new teacher until your HoD gives you permission.** This is because it is courtesy for your current teacher to be aware that you are seeking to change teacher.
- when you approach a possible new teacher, the teacher will check with the HoD that you have permission

4. Conclusion of process

- once a new teacher has agreed to take you, the change needs to be confirmed by your HoD
- the change may be temporary or permanent
- the timing of the change should be made clear by your HoD. Normally, the change will coincide with a natural break in studies (e.g. beginning of a new academic year or a new term)
- it may not always be appropriate for lessons with your current teacher to stop immediately – your HoD may judge that it is best for you to continue with your current teacher for a few more lessons.

What happens after I change teacher?

We will do our best to avoid situations where you might be examined by a former teacher. Teachers are expected to maintain professional objectivity at all times in relation to former students, and to make this clear by their actions, words and conduct.

What if my teacher suggests that I move to a different teacher?

This doesn't happen very often; if it does, your teacher or your HoD will explain the rationale.

Where can I go for support?

If you need support through this process, please contact:

- your Head of Department
- your Head of Programme
- the Students Union (susupport@rcs.ac.uk)
- the Deputy Registrar (m.green@rcs.ac.uk)
- RCS Counsellors (https://portal.rcs.ac.uk/counselling/)

Notes

- References to 'Principal Study' also include 'Additional Performance Study' and 'Second Study' etc.
- If your 1:1 teacher is your HoD, and you don't feel able to discuss the request directly with them, you should contact the Associate HoD, or Head of Programme, or the Director of Music.
- The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland subscribes to the 'Principles of Best Practice in Conservatoire Teaching', which has been adopted by Conservatoires UK. The Conservatoire's Dignity at Work and Study Statement is also relevant in the context of this Policy.