

# Understanding the Student Contract<sup>1</sup>

The student contract with the RCS establishes the relationship that we have with you and you have with us. You sign this contract when you complete the online declaration at matriculation/enrolment.

**Signing this declaration means that you undertake to abide by the Conservatoire Regulations, Codes of Procedure and General Rules and programme specific regulations.**

The student contract at RCS is primarily formed by a combination of four elements Undergraduate) or three elements (postgraduate taught programmes):

1. **RCS provision Terms and Conditions relevant to your study** – particularly the acceptance of your offer and the commitment to pay required tuition fees (as relevant to your fee status).
2. **Handbook of Regulations, Codes of Procedure and General Rules** associated with your studies which set out the codes of practice, procedures and policies expected to be followed by you as part of your commitment to the contract that you have signed with us. This includes the Royal Conservatoire's Staff-Student Charter and the Student Code of Conduct that sits underneath it.
3. If you are studying on an **undergraduate** programme, the **RCS Student Handbook** is also part of the contract.
4. Your **programme handbook** – our commitment to you in terms of the education we provide in your chosen area of study and the conditions specific to your programme of study.

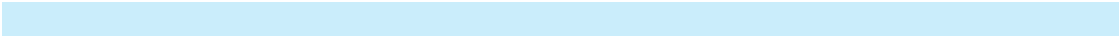
This **Handbook of Regulations, Codes of Procedure and General Rules**, represents element 2 in your student contract.

This handbook sets out key items that you need to pay particular attention to, including:

- The Staff-Student Charter
- The Student Code of Conduct
- Information about enrolment, matriculation, fees, and graduation
- Academic regulations
- Academic appeals
- Use of buildings, space, data management, and IT
- Regulations concerned with our community (including safeguarding)
- Student misconduct
- How to make a complaint

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<sup>1</sup> The Student Contract outlined here is not the same as the **Student Record System (SRS)** tab previously labelled 'student contract' and now named: Student Outcomes. This tab is where your assessment outcomes sit as well as a record of your IXP/ electives modules etc. This is an administrative record not to be confused with the agreement that you have with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.



**As a matriculated higher education student of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (whether on a taught or a research programme), it is your responsibility to consult and be familiar with the regulations set out in this document.**

This document includes our community's student code of conduct and the rules on non-academic behaviour and academic conduct that apply to all students on our higher education programmes of study (named degree awards) including those under 18.

## A. The Staff-Student Charter and the Student Code of Conduct

In matriculating/enrolling as a student at the Conservatoire you are required to agree to abide by the Staff-Student Charter in relation to taking responsibility for your own learning, support provision, respectful conduct, engagement (including extracurricular) and the Students' Union. Underneath this Charter are a number of regulations, policies, and procedures including the Student Code of Conduct.

### 1. The Staff-Student Charter

#### Introduction

##### What is it?

- 1.1 It is a statement that sets out mutual obligations between the Conservatoire's staff (full and part time, professional services and academic, and visiting staff) and you and your fellow students. It sets out the community expectations, underneath which sits a **Student Code of Conduct**. The Student Code of Conduct is described below in section 2.

##### Why do we need it?

- 1.2 It provides a simple way of summarising the principles underpinning the student contract and the associated student code of conduct. It embodies our commitment to help make your study at the Conservatoire worthwhile, recognising that we all play our part in creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

#### The RCS Staff-Student Charter Clauses<sup>2</sup>

##### Learning, Teaching and Assessment

- 1.3 Within our higher education programmes, we commit to providing you with:
- high standards of teaching, support, advice, and guidance
  - appropriate feedback channels to voice concerns
  - a robust and fair assessment system
  - clear information regarding inappropriate assessment / examination conduct, how to avoid them, and the consequences of misconduct
  - opportunities to equip you for the world of work
  - provision of rules and regulations relating to your programme of study at the start of your course
- 1.4 As a student, you commit to:
- participate fully in learning, abiding by the Conservatoire's attendance protocols and monitoring regulations

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<sup>2</sup> This staff-student charter is adapted from the outcome of consultations with the Students' Union, staff, and alumni during 2022. It applies to students who are registered with the Royal Conservatoire as online or distance and in-person learners. The Staff-Student Charter sets out what staff (full and part time, professional services and academic, and visiting staff) and students can expect from each other as partners in a learning community.

- collegial, respectful and civil interactions with both staff and your fellow students, exploring issues openly and constructively
- achievement through taking creative risks with your learning, being prepared to 'fail' before you succeed
- self-professional development based on committing to developing a resilient attitude to constructive criticism
- academic honesty and integrity in relation to assessments

### **Support for Learning Provision**

- 1.5 As a Higher Education Institution (HEI), we commit to:
- high standards of learning materials and resources
  - clear information concerning the level of academic support you will receive
  - learning support including access to counselling, a disability adviser, and associated wellbeing activities, making clear any limitations to the availability of these services
  - providing you with access to online resources required for study; the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE: Moodle), student portal, and the online library
  - fair, transparent, and impartial procedures to resolve student complaints
  - appropriate feedback channels to voice concerns
- 1.6 As a student, you commit to:
- make use of any induction information and exercises offered for your programme
  - inform us in good time of any access requirement so that we can consider how to meet your needs
  - seek advice if you are unhappy with any aspect of your study
  - provide constructive feedback to the Conservatoire in through formal mechanisms

### **Engagement**

- 1.7 As an HEI we will:
- provide you with points of contact in case you have questions or need advice
  - provide opportunities for peer interaction
  - keep you informed of any updates and changes that affect your programme of study
  - Communicate key information with the student body in a timely manner
  - invite you to join the RCS Alumni Network after you have completed your studies
- 1.8 As a student, you commit to:
- regularly check formal RCS communication channels (email, VLE and others as appropriate) and act on requests quickly
  - keep personal data required by the RCS up to date and accurate, particularly current home and term-time addresses, personal email, and mobile number
  - engage in RCS' decision-making through active participation in student engagement activities
  - act ethically and transparently to deal with your concerns and grievances
  - engage with the full range of opportunities provided by RCS.

## Respect

- 1.9 As an HEI, we will:
- ensure all staff are aware of the code of conduct established for them within the [RCS Dignity at Work and Study Statement](#)
  - be courteous and respectful in our interactions with you on all platforms
  - provide equality of treatment for all regardless of sex, age, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, or marriage or civil partnership
  - listen to you if you need to raise concerns about equality issues, and act appropriately
  - respect your right to confidentiality
  - protect all the personal information you provide to us and be aware of all responsibilities in line with the Data Protection, Freedom of Information and Equality Acts
  - act as transparently as possible in all communications and decision-making
- 1.10 As a student, you will:
- make yourself aware of the RCS Student Code of Conduct outlined below [Section A2]
  - be courteous and respectful in your interactions with RCS staff and students on all platforms – virtual and physical
  - agree to support the Conservatoire’s Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion approach, which promotes equality for all staff and students regardless of sex, age, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, or marriage or civil partnership
  - appreciate that RCS is publicly funded and not a political institution and cannot use its platforms to advocate political perspectives but will strive to support individuals and groups experiencing difficulties in line with its responsibilities to safeguarding our community of staff, students, and friends of the Conservatoire.
  - behave in a considerate manner on all occasions in the local community, towards our neighbours and wider public community during your time as a student
  - exercise your right to freedom of speech and expression in all communications and interactions with fellow students, staff and members of the public in a way that is appropriate and that does not represent abuse, bullying, harassment, threat, defamation, slander or libel
  - expect that RCS staff will be consistently fair, courteous, efficient and professional in their interactions with you
  - accept that there may be information that RCS is unable to give to you, or publicly, and that this may be because of legislation or because there are risks to others
  - accept that any conduct which does not align with the Staff-Student Charter and/or the Student Code of Conduct will be taken seriously by the Conservatoire and that action may be instigated as a result in line with the relevant codes and policies.

## 2. The Student Code of Conduct

### Introduction

#### What is it?

- 2.1 The Royal Conservatoire Student Code of Conduct is our statement of the expectations we have about your conduct as part of our learning community. It establishes the principles that need to be followed to provide an inclusive, creative space based on working together productively. As members of the Conservatoire community, we expect the highest standards of behaviour from our students, whether on our premises, our online platforms or elsewhere. All members of our Community have a responsibility to be aware of their own behaviour and how it impacts others.

#### Why do we have it?

- 2.2 Sometimes students find it hard to engage as fully with their studies as is needed. The code of conduct helps us and you to understand what types of behaviour and interaction are required and what to do if these requirements are not met.

#### What is included in the RCS Student Code of Conduct?

- 2.3 The Conservatoire expects all students regardless of the level and type of study to conduct themselves at all times in a collegial, respectful, and civil manner, respecting the rights, privacy, and property of others. This means you are asked to commit to:

2.3.1 Complying with the general and specific rules and regulations of the RCS regarding matriculation, enrolment, fees, graduation [**section B**] as well as regulations governing academic programmes [**section C**].

2.3.2 Complying with the general and specific rules and regulations of the RCS regarding study, particularly but not exclusively:

- a. Using and displaying your ID card (matriculation card) as required [**section E, 1.2**]
- b. Ensuring your personal details in the Student Records system are up-to-date and accurate
- c. Attending all programme defined learning opportunities on time and regularly
- d. Following all assessment related rules and regulations
- e. Submitting work for assessments by the required deadline
- f. Ensuring availability for rehearsals related to assessment processes
- g. Avoiding plagiarism, collusion, and other forms of cheating [**section H**]
- h. Using the authorised absence system when you need to be absent from the institution during term time
- i. Reporting ill-health absences appropriately
- j. Abiding by the rules related to the loan of musical instruments and/or audio-visual equipment [**section E, 6**]

**2.3.3 Complying with the RCS communication requirement: Email is the primary means of communication between the Conservatoire and students regarding the administration of programmes and other administrative matters. **Students must, therefore, check their Conservatoire email account at least twice a day, even if they are outside of the Conservatoire's buildings.****

2.3.4 Taking personal responsibility for our ensemble pedagogy functioning effectively. [We use 'ensemble pedagogy' as the shorthand term to describe the assumption of collaborative engagement that underpins all learning and

teaching at RCS.] As this pedagogy is focused on collaborative creative production through active engagement and community in and out of class, you are expected to comply (at all times) with our requirements of appropriate conduct. In general, this means avoiding lapses into incivility, not mis/using drugs and alcohol, not causing psychological or physical harm to another person or groups of people via harassment, discrimination, sexual misconduct, gender-based violence, hate speech/ incidents, cyber-bullying, or other forms of unacceptable behaviour as identified in **Section H** of this document. It also means complying with the Conservatoire's [Safeguarding Policy](#).

- 2.3.5 Complying with our principle of zero tolerance in relation to both racism and gender-based violence as defined within the **Dignity at Work and Study Statement** and the [Gender Based Violence Guidelines](#)
- 2.3.6 Following the rules relating to buildings and space usage [**section E**]
- 2.3.7 Undertaking and updating yourself via the training on the following statutory items: Health & Safety, Fire Safety, Cyber Security, Child Protection (where relevant to programme)
- 2.3.8 Understanding that freedom of expression interacts with and is limited by other laws which apply within and outside of the RCS, with which you must comply. Also understanding that freedom of expression and academic freedom are two different terms that, nonetheless, relate to each other. Broadly:
  - **Freedom of expression** means everyone has the right to express lawful views and opinions freely, in speech or in writing, without interference.
  - **Academic freedom** means protecting the intellectual independence of academics to question and test received views and wisdom, and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions, without placing themselves in danger of losing their jobs or privileges.<sup>3</sup>

#### **Where does this code apply?**

- 2.4 Failing to follow this code can adversely affect the Conservatoire community and its objectives. This means it can negatively impact on other people's learning experiences but also on the external community with which we engage professionally. Consequently, this code needs to be complied with on and off RCS premises and includes misconduct that:
  - occurs in social spaces outside of RCS but which has a direct effect on the community of learning within RCS
  - occurs online using RCS networks, resources, and through any online or digital platform; or
  - occurs during a Conservatoire-sponsored or sanctioned activity including, without limitation, online courses, programmes, and meetings.

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<sup>3</sup> Definition from UUK HE Sector statement on promoting academic freedom and free speech, 20.12.22: <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/latest/news/higher-education-sector-statement>

**What happens when these requirements are not complied with?**

- 2.5 A student whose behaviour does not meet these expectations (2.3/2.4) will be considered to have interfered with the proper functioning (in the broadest sense) of the RCS, those who work or study within it, and/or its reputation. This behaviour will be regarded as misconduct and investigated under the disciplinary procedure below in section H.

### 3. STUDENTS' UNION CODE OF PRACTICE

- 3.1 This Code of Practice shall be brought to the attention of all students eligible to be members of the Conservatoire's Students' Union at the start of each Academic Session. It shall be reviewed annually by the Board of Governors during the Summer Term.

#### **Membership**

- 3.2 In accordance with Part II of the Education Act 1994, all students eligible to be members of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland Students' Union shall have the right to choose whether they wish to belong to the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland Students' Union without disadvantage.

- 3.3 The **Deputy Registrar** shall, at the start of each Academic Session, inform all eligible students of their rights not to belong to the Conservatoire's Students' Union.

- 3.4 Any student wishing to opt out of the Union at any time shall inform the **Deputy Registrar** who shall inform the **Students' Union President**.

#### **Constitution**

- 3.5 The written Constitution of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland Students' Union is approved by the Board of Governors of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and is reviewed every five years.

- 3.6 It shall be accessible to all members. A copy of the full Constitution can be found [here](#)

- 3.7 The Constitution shall require that appointment to the Executive Committee of the Students' Union shall be by secret ballot in which all members of the Union are entitled to vote.

- 3.8 All elections to the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland Students' Union shall be fairly and properly conducted as set out in Schedule Part One of the Constitution.

- 3.9 The Constitution shall require that no one shall serve as a sabbatical officer for more than two years.

- 3.10 The Constitution shall lay down a fair procedure for allocating resources to **affiliated Societies**.

#### **Accountability**

- 3.11 The Finance and General Purposes Committee of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland shall approve the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland Students' Union budget and monitor its expenditure.

- 3.12 The Union shall publish its audited financial accounts annually and these should be presented to the Finance and General Purposes Committee and to all full members of the Union. These accounts will include a list of affiliations to external organisations and the costs of such affiliations.

- 3.13 The **Students' Union** shall obtain annually the approval of its members to all affiliations.