

ADVANCED ARTIST DIPLOMA HANDBOOK 2026-27

The Royal Academy of Music moves music forward by inspiring successive generations of musicians to connect, collaborate and create.
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INTRODUCTION

The one-year Advanced Artist Diploma in Performance is for students who are on the cusp of an international career and who wish to undertake a year of intensive study demanding a high level of autonomy and initiative. The course aims to support your development as an interpreter and to broaden your experience of professional practice, including the completion of a studio recording driven by your own goals and repertoire interests.

KEY STAFF

Please refer to your Department Handbook for the contact details of your Head of Principal Study and other instrumental teaching and support staff.

Senior Postgraduate Tutor: Dr Sarah Callis

Room 178, ext 347, s.callis@ram.ac.uk

Sarah has an overview of research degree programmes and advanced diplomas. She is Tutor for harp, jazz, conducting, advanced artist diploma, advanced opera diploma and research degree students.

Head of Postgraduate Programmes: Professor Neil Heyde

Room G81, ext 452, n.heyde@ram.ac.uk

Neil is responsible for all of the postgraduate programmes.

Postgraduate Programmes and Research Administrator: Tom Reid

Room 511, ext 316 TReid@ram.ac.uk

Tom provides administrative support for the postgraduate and research degree programmes, and manages some of the public research events.

PROGRAMME AIMS

- To provide high-level professional training in performance skills
- To enhance students' employability by developing professional standards in attitude, work patterns, preparation and performance
- To enable students to develop as interpreters capable of synthesising complex musical concepts and technical strategies
- To broaden students' experience of professional musical practices, and to enable them to shape and reflect on their own developing practice
- To develop students' knowledge and understanding of their chosen field through professional contacts and through artist development advice and guidance

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of the programme students should be able to demonstrate:

- The ability to communicate artistic insight at a level that meets professional expectations
- An authoritative synthesis in performance of a complex body of knowledge
- Command of the technical skills necessary to deliver performances at an appropriate level and an understanding of the resources available to continue developing these skills
- The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and initiative in complex and unpredictable situations
- An understanding of self-promotion that meets professional expectations

COURSE CONTENT

The programme of study is highly flexible so that it can meet the specific and individual needs of students at this advanced stage of development. You will be expected to pursue a series of goals identified at the beginning of the year which might include a range of concerts, recordings, competitions and/or other projects. You will be encouraged to think innovatively about your work, and will be required to self-manage the implementation of your plans. You will also work with a professional producer to deliver a studio recording. You will select your own repertoire and will be supported by relevant mentoring and by a professional production team to complete and release the project.

Your studies will be supported by regular one-to-one tuition with those who can best help you to develop your artistic and professional goals; this might include regular teaching from within your instrumental department, and/or sessions with teachers/coaches from other departments. Provision will be individually discussed and agreed in consultation with your Head of Department and the Course Tutor at the beginning of the year. You will be provided with the necessary support to complete the AAD recording as described above, and you will also be provided with supervision to support the completion of the Portfolio element of the assessment and to prepare for the viva. You will be given the opportunity to meet and discuss your work with other Advanced Artist Diploma students and also (where appropriate) offered the chance to take part in masterclasses with international visitors.

The Advanced Artist Diploma in Performance is a twelve-month full-time programme of study. There is no provision for part-time study and the course has no credit structure. Teaching will cease at the end of the summer term but submission for assessment will not take place until mid-

September, with vivas at the end of September/beginning of October. The extended time frame will allow for the initial edit of your recording in preparation for assessment (if required), and to allow sufficient opportunity to generate other suitable Portfolio material (see assessment details below). Portfolio tutorials will be available before submission. The Postgraduate Examination Board that meets in November will confirm your result at the end of your studies, and the Graduation Ceremony will take place at the end of the following summer term.

ASSESSMENT

The Advanced Diploma is set at level 8 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in order to recognize the stage at which students usually enter the programme and to provide an appropriate framework for assessment (masters courses are at level 7). In keeping with other programmes at FHEQ level 8 the course is pass/fail only. The course will be formally assessed through the following:

PORTFOLIO

You will submit a Portfolio of 60-90 minutes of performances drawn from work undertaken as part of the programme. You will select the material with the aim of demonstrating your artistry and technical command.

The Portfolio will normally comprise:

- At least 45 minutes of recording(s) of live performance. (This may include broadcasts and material from public performances recorded specifically for the Portfolio.)
- Material drawn from a produced studio recording. (This may be from your AAD recording or other studio recordings made during the programme.)

The Portfolio will also include the following contextual documents:

- A link to your professional website OR copies of your CV and Biography
- An annotated list of live performances, recordings and broadcasts undertaken as part of the programme.

The Portfolio will be submitted to Moodle by **Friday 1 October 2027**.

VIVA VOCE EXAMINATION AND FINAL REPORT

To contextualise your Portfolio materials the assessment panel (see below) will hold a viva voce examination of up to 30 minutes to discuss your submission and your wider work. A short panel report will be completed by the Chair that summarises the viva voce discussion and which is the final acknowledgement that all of the ILOs have been met.

PANEL

The Standing Committee of Academic Board, in consultation with your Head of Department, will appoint a panel of three examiners of appropriate experience, expertise and standing to assess the Portfolio at level 8. The panel will include a Chair (internal), and at least one external examiner.

INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION

COMMUNICATION

The Academy will communicate with you via your @ram email address only, so you will need to check this account every day. This will ensure that you receive all the information you need to undertake the programme. It is easy to ensure that you can access your Academy emails on your own phone/laptop/tablet – visit the IT helpdesk to set this up. Advanced Diploma students are not required to apply for Leave of Absence, but they should inform the course Tutor (Sarah Callis) if they are going to be absent for more than a week.

CONCERTS

Students are able to arrange their own concerts within the Academy, as well as become involved in external bookings. Details of these are available from the concerts department.

STUDENT RECORDINGS

For information about making recordings please see the Recordings Department information page at <https://royalacademyofmusic.sharepoint.com/sites/TheRecordingDepartment>

ACADEMY RECORDINGS

You can access recordings or large-scale public performances from the Library for educational purposes. The Academy cannot provide you with your own copies of these performances for copyright and resource reasons. Exceptions may be made in the case of performances with rarity value such as concertos, but requests must be submitted to the Concerts Department at least **one calendar month** in advance of the performance. This will allow the Concerts Department time to consider any copyright clearance issues/licences/costs involved and for the Recording Studio staff to allocate time in their schedule and recording equipment.

If the Academy is not planning to record a performance that you are involved in (e.g. Tuesday lunchtime concerts), requests may be made by students to record it but in audio format. In order to request this you will need to ensure that all relevant consent forms and copyright clearance are completed at least one calendar month in advance of the performance. You are allowed to record yourselves on Academy premises (in practice rooms and concert venues) either using your own or loaned equipment (in this case you would retain the copyright on the recordings and accept all responsibility for any necessary copyright clearance required). You are advised to check the Academy's guidelines '**Recording Academy concerts and students' private performances; IPR considerations**' on the Copyright and Intellectual Property page on the RAM SharePoint for more information. <https://royalacademyofmusic.sharepoint.com/sites/copyrightandipr>

STUDENT SUPPORT

Students receive an enrolment programme which includes: an induction for library and IT facilities; guidance on health and safety (including audiometric testing); registration; international student meetings; introduction to senior staff with programme responsibilities, and a tutorial meeting. Students are supported in all aspects of their subsequent life and work at the Academy throughout the duration of the programme.

Further information, including our Belonging Policy is available at

[Belonging - Home](#)
[Belonging | Royal Academy of Music](#)

DISABILITY

The Academy offers a wide range of support for students who have disabilities and specific learning difficulties, including exam arrangements and specialist tuition, so that all students can participate fully in the life of the Academy.

The term 'disability' covers a wide range of conditions and impairments. These include specific learning difficulties, sensory impairments, mobility impairments, certain ongoing medical conditions, and long-term mental health conditions. Further details about disability and the support available to students are available on our website at [Access and Disability | Royal Academy of Music](#) or by request from the Disability Advisor (see below).

If you would like to discuss any issues relating to disability, please contact the Disability Advisor (email disability@ram.ac.uk) and, once enrolled, your Programme Tutor. Please contact us as early as possible in order that appropriate support can be agreed and coordinated. Information disclosed to the Academy by students is treated in confidence.

EXTENSION OR DEFERRAL PROCEDURE

Requests for an extension or deferral are considered according to the [Extension and Deferral Process Regulations](#). You may make an application for one of the following reasons:

- extenuating circumstances which may have affected your performance in an assessment
- to request an extension to the deadline for submission of assessment work
- to defer an assessment
- to appeal against penalty marks where the reasons were beyond your control.

Your application will be reviewed by the Registrar and Director of Student Operations (Chair), the Head of Undergraduate Programmes, the Head of Postgraduate Programmes and the Senior Tutor in Undergraduate Pastoral Support & Head of Year, B2.

Please see the guidelines on the [Student Information Hub](#) for further information on making applications.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

The Academy is committed to improving the motivation of students to engage in learning and to learn independently; and the participation of students in quality enhancement and quality assurance processes, resulting in the improvement of their educational experience.

It is widely accepted that the views of students, individually and collectively, should inform quality systems with the purpose of improving the student educational experience both for current and future cohorts. Student involvement in quality can have a positive influence on the delivery and

development of any aspect of the student educational experience, whether implemented by the Academy, your programme, your department, or an individual member of staff.

STUDENT FEEDBACK

The Academy's Senior Managers, Programme Teams, Heads of Department and those delivering the programme will always welcome informal feedback from you on any aspect of the programme and your studies. Student Union members and student representatives are part of Academy committees and students are encouraged to use their representatives and let them know of any matters of concern that you wish to be raised at these committees. At the start of the Summer term each year, you will also be given the opportunity to complete an online survey covering the Academy as a whole, your Programme and Department. You are asked to be open, honest and constructive in your evaluation and comments. This is a vital component in the Academy's mechanism for developing the quality of our students' experiences and planning for the effective future delivery of the programmes of study.

STUDENT REPRESENTATION

Student representatives are the voice of the student body and sit on all of the Academy's academic committees. Find out who your year/department representative is through the SU Team if you want to pass on some comments or feedback, or ask to become a student representative if you want to act on behalf of other students.