

Introduction to CUKAS



Introduction

Conservatoires in the UK provide specialist, performance-based training at degree and diploma level, enabling graduates to enter and influence the music, dance and drama professions. The UK is well-served by conservatoires, most of which are members of Conservatoires UK (CUK) – the network of British music colleges – and Drama UK – the network of British drama schools. Together, UK conservatoires cover a wide range of performance, production and screen disciplines drawn from all corners of the professional performing arts industry. These include solo orchestral and chamber music instruments, piano and other keyboard instruments, vocal studies, jazz, early music, music technology, traditional music, composition, conducting, community music and popular music; acting, acting for stage, screen and radio, directing, digital film and television, theatre design; and modern ballet.

Students come from all over the world to study in the unique atmosphere offered by UK conservatoires, with the aim of taking the skills they have learned into the wider professional world. Several UK conservatoires are members of the Association of European Conservatoires (AEC), a European cultural and educational network representing the interests of 280 institutions in 57 countries, all of which are concerned with the professional training of performers (see www.aecinfo.org).

Many conservatoires hold auditions outside the UK, offering international applicants the chance to talk to conservatoire staff about their particular institution and its courses. Questions about the application process and auditions should be addressed to the conservatoires' admissions staff in advance of the audition. Information relating to international audition centres or alternative arrangements is available on the CUKAS (Conservatoires UK Admissions Service) website at www.cukas.ac.uk/students/applying/howtoapply/fees.

Choosing which conservatoire to go to is a life-changing decision and our aim is to make the process as flexible and accessible as possible for our international applicants. You should aim to do as much research as possible so that you choose the right course for the right reasons. The decisions you make in the next few months will greatly influence your future. But now is the time to start your research and to find out more about CUKAS.

What is CUKAS?

CUKAS is the admissions service responsible for managing applications to practice-based music, dance and drama courses at the following UK conservatoires:

- Birmingham Conservatoire
- Leeds College of Music
- Royal Academy of Music
- Royal College of Music
- Royal Northern College of Music
- Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
- Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama
- Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance

We process applications for the following types of full-time and part-time courses in music, dance and drama:

- undergraduate degree level courses
- postgraduate degree level courses
- postgraduate certificate and diploma courses
- courses with no award

The Guildhall School of Music and Drama is a member of CUK but does not recruit through CUKAS. Applicants should apply directly to this conservatoire.

On our website, www.cukas.ac.uk, you can search for courses, find out more about conservatoires and their entry requirements and selection procedures, make your application (using Apply) and follow its progress (using Track).

There is a non-UK students' section on our website at www.cukas.ac.uk/students/wheretostart/nonukstudents. If you need further help or advice, your school, college, adviser, or local British Council may be able to assist you. You can also contact the CUKAS Customer Contact Centre on +44 330 333 0232 (international call rates apply) (or +44 871 468 0 470 - this number may have a higher call rate).

CUKAS and UCAS (which is responsible for applications to almost all other full-time applications to university and college courses in the UK; see www.ucas.com) function independently, so if you want to, you can apply through both systems simultaneously. If, at any stage of the application cycle, our records show that you have firmly accepted unconditional places through both CUKAS and UCAS, we will send you a letter asking you to accept one place and withdraw from the other.

Step 1: Choosing courses

Your first step is to find out about the conservatoires and the courses they offer.

OUR SEARCH TOOL

You can research courses at www.cukas.ac.uk. You can search by instrument, study area or conservatoire. The search results displays information about the provider(s) and the course(s); including entry requirements, fees, and how to apply.

You can also contact your chosen conservatoires for course information, and your local British Council office for help. Contact details for the conservatoires are given at the end of this guide.

Step 2: Applying

You apply online through www.cukas.ac.uk and can start to complete your application from early July onwards, to make an application for admission in September of the next calendar year. If you apply by 1 October (midnight UK time), your application is 'on-time' and all your chosen conservatoires will consider you. Our application system is a secure, web-based service that is designed for applicants anywhere in the world.

For dance, drama and screen production courses, there may be a different deadline in relation to being considered 'on-time'. Please refer to the website for the deadline applicable for your conservatoire or contact them direct.

Once you have applied, you can track the progress of your application through our website. You can make only one application in each year's application cycle.

HOW MANY CHOICES?

You can apply for a maximum of six choices. A 'choice' is defined as a single course at a single conservatoire.

You need apply only to the highest level of course in which you are interested. If you are not sure which level of course you should apply for, please contact the conservatoire to discuss.

In general, there is no need to apply for more than one course at any particular conservatoire. So, if you want to study at postgraduate level and are not sure if you are qualified to apply for a postgraduate diploma or a master's degree, you should apply only for the master's degree course. Similarly, if you want to study at undergraduate level and are not sure if you are qualified to apply for a foundation degree or a BMus degree, you should apply only for the BMus degree course. The conservatoire will be able to advise you before you apply and also make the final decision about which course would be the most appropriate for you at audition or interview.

HOW MUCH WILL THE APPLICATION COST?

Application fee: All applicants have to pay an application fee of £16 to CUKAS to cover the processing of their application. This fee applies whether you have only one, or more choices, up to the maximum of six.

Audition fees: All the conservatoires in the CUKAS application system, except Leeds College of Music, require you to pay your audition fees at the time of application. For some auditions held abroad, an audition fee is collected locally at or before the time of the audition. Leeds College of Music requires you to pay direct to them once you have been invited to audition.

The amount of the audition fee varies depending on the conservatoire(s), the type of course and whether:

- the audition is a live performance or a recording
- separate auditions are required for two study areas, for example, different instruments, singing or drama performance
- the audition is held in the UK or abroad
- the application is 'on-time' or 'late'

More information about audition fees and locations can be found at www.cukas.ac.uk/students/applying/howtoapply/fees.

QUALIFICATIONS

When filling in your application, you must give full details of all qualifications you have already gained or are currently taking. You should include:

1. full details of all your qualifications, including exams you took when you left school, exams you took to get into higher education, vocational exams, music, dance and drama exams and any other qualifications or awards. Please do not try to give a UK equivalent
2. details of any English proficiency tests, such as IELTS, TOEFL or Pearson that you have taken or will be taking before you start your university course
3. in your personal statement, details of any qualifications that were taught wholly or partly in English

If your first language is not English you should pay particular attention to points 2 and 3 above.

YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

This is your chance to tell the conservatoires why you are applying, and why they should want you as a student. The audition panel will want to know why you are interested in the courses that you have chosen and what you hope to do after your studies. A good personal statement is important - it could influence whether the audition panel offers you a place or not.

YOUR REFERENCES

You must provide details of two referees:

- one to comment on your academic ability

- the other to comment on your practical ability

You should ask your referees if they are prepared to provide a reference before you enter their details. The conservatoires will not accept references from immediate family, other relatives or friends. We cannot process your application without full details of your referees.

You will need to email or post reference forms for each of your choices to your referees (and provide them with a stamped addressed envelope for each conservatoire). Your referees will then be required to send a copy of your references by post to each conservatoire you have chosen.

More detailed information and guidance for each section is available in the Apply help text and at www.cukas.ac.uk/students/applying/howtoapply.

Step 3: Auditions and offers

After we have received a completed application, we process it and send it to your chosen conservatoires. You will normally need to demonstrate your practical ability before a conservatoire can make a decision. If a conservatoire would like to audition you, they will send you an invitation which will include the date and time you should attend. The audition invitation will be shown on Track at www.cukas.ac.uk, so it is important you regularly check your application progress online.

AUDITIONS

If you live outside the UK and cannot attend an audition at the conservatoire, you will normally audition in one of two ways:

- in person at an international audition centre, if available
- through an audition recording (usually DVD – check with the individual conservatoires)

Many conservatoires have one or more international audition centres where you may be invited to audition in person. The audition requirements for students attending an international audition centre are normally similar to those for attending an audition at the conservatoire. When conservatoires invite you to audition they will provide advice on what the audition will include and what kind of performances you should prepare.

The requirements for auditioning through a recording can vary from live audition requirements. The conservatoire will give you advice on what you will need to prepare, what kind of recording formats are acceptable and any other requirements. If you are accepted on the basis of an audition recording, you may be asked to give a live confirmation audition prior to registering - check with your chosen conservatoire(s).

You need to be aware that some conservatoires cannot consider recorded auditions for scholarship funding. Check with your chosen institution.

NON-PERFORMANCE APPLICANTS

Composers, screen production applicants, theatre design applicants and applicants in other non-performance areas are usually asked to submit a portfolio, video or other evidence of ability in place of an audition. If you are applying from overseas, you may not be required to attend an interview, but you may be asked to submit additional work to support your portfolio. The conservatoires will specify what is required depending on your specialist area.

More information about auditions can be found at www.cukas.ac.uk/students/wheretostart/nonukstudents/auditions.

OFFERS

After you have attended an audition, conservatoires can make different types of offers:

- **Guaranteed conditional**
The conservatoire has made the offer subject to your meeting certain conditions, usually examination results.
- **Guaranteed unconditional**
The conservatoire is satisfied, from the information you have given, that you have already met the conditions for entry.
- **Reserve conditional**
The conservatoire has offered a place on its reserve list subject to your meeting certain conditions, usually examination results.
- **Reserve unconditional**
The conservatoire is satisfied, from the information you have given, that you have already met the conditions for entry and have offered a place on their reserve list.

Any offers the conservatoires make will be shown on Track. More information about the different decisions conservatoires can make is available at

www.cukas.ac.uk/students/auditionsandoffers/youroffers/.

Step 4: Results

At www.cukas.ac.uk, we list all the qualifications for which we receive results direct from the exam boards. We send these results to the conservatoires where you have accepted offers. If your qualification is not on the list, you need to send your results to the conservatoires where you are holding offers. In addition, after you apply, your chosen conservatoires will normally ask you to send them transcripts for qualifications you have already completed. Please do not send these to CUKAS, but wait for the conservatoires to contact you after they have received your application.

When the conservatoires receive your final exam results, they tell us whether or not you have your place. Use Track at www.cukas.ac.uk to check.

Step 5: Next steps

If you have a definite (guaranteed unconditional) place, we send you a Confirmation letter. CUKAS does not operate a Clearing system. If you are unsuccessful you may choose to apply for a performance course offered through UCAS (see www.ucas.com) or reapply through CUKAS next year.

Step 6: Starting at a conservatoire

Once you have a guaranteed unconditional place, you can go ahead with making your visa arrangements and travel plans. You also need to plan your finances to cover the cost of course fees, books and equipment for your course, accommodation, living and travel costs. UNIAID provides an international student finance calculator at www.studentcalculator.org.uk/international.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT FEES

If you are planning to study in the United Kingdom and want to attend a publicly funded conservatoire, your fee status (whether you pay full-cost

fees or a subsidised fee rate) will be determined by the UK institution you plan to attend.

Before you decide which conservatoire to attend, you need to be absolutely certain that you can pay the full cost of:

- your tuition fees (the amount is set by the conservatoire, so contact them for more information - visit the websites of conservatoires that you are considering because many list their fees)
- the everyday living expenses for you (and your family if you are bringing them with you) for the whole time that you are in the UK, including accommodation, food, music and instruments or costumes, shoes etc for your performance specialism, heat, light, clothes and travel
- books and equipment for your course
- travel to and from your country

You must include everything when you work out how much it will cost. You can get information to help you work this out accurately from the international offices at the conservatoires and from the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) - www.ukcisa.org.uk.

In addition, the UK Border Agency (UKBA) has specific financial and English language requirements you must meet before being granted a visa. Information can be found at www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/studying/.

There may also be scholarships available. Your local British Council office may have information about general scholarships. Conservatoires normally put information about their own scholarships on their websites.

LEGAL DOCUMENTS YOU WILL NEED

As you prepare to study in the UK, it is very important to think about the legal documents you will need. Everyone who comes to study in the UK needs a valid passport. You may also need a visa.

You can check the most up-to-date guidance and information about the United Kingdom's visa requirements by visiting the UK Border Agency's website at www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk.

The UK now collects biometric data (fingerprints and a full-face digital photograph) from all visa applicants, irrespective of nationality. When you apply for your visa, you will need a valid passport and evidence from the Government-registered conservatoire that confirms you have been accepted unconditionally for a full-time course. All conservatoires who want to recruit international students must be on the UK Border Agency Register of Sponsors. You will also need to show that you can pay for your course and your living costs in the UK.

For more information on how to apply for a student visa see www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk.

COLLECTION OF PASSPORT DETAILS FROM CUKAS APPLICANTS

Applicants requiring a visa need to provide their passport details so that the conservatoire can advise the UKBA that the particular applicant is holding a confirmed place at their institution.

Where relevant, CUKAS collects applicants' passport information on behalf of the conservatoires in CUKAS Apply and Track.

The passport details that we are collecting are:

- passport number
- issue date
- expiry date
- place of issue
- whether a student visa is required

Additional resources

guidance and information as you prepare to study in the UK:

- Prepare for Success: www.prepareforsuccess.org.uk
- Association of European Conservatoires (AEC): www.aec-music.eu
- Education UK: www.educationuk.org
- British Council: www.britishcouncil.org
- UK Border Agency: www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk
- UKCISA (UK Council for International Student Affairs): www.ukcisa.org.uk
- English UK: www.englishuk.com
- British Foreign & Commonwealth Office: www.fco.gov.uk
- Disability Rights UK www.disabilityrightsuk.org

Where to study

The map on the following page shows the locations of the conservatoires in the CUKAS scheme. For details of courses offered at the conservatoires, please go to our search tool at www.cukas.ac.uk.

Conservatoire contact details

Birmingham Conservatoire

Birmingham City University
Paradise Place
Birmingham
B3 3HG

tel: +44 121 331 5901
e: conservatoire.admissions@bcu.ac.uk
www.bcu.ac.uk/pme/conservatoire

Leeds College of Music

3 Quarry Hill
Leeds
LS2 7PD

tel: +44 113 222 3400
e: MAadmissions@lcm.ac.uk
fax: +44 113 243 8798
www.lcm.ac.uk

Royal Academy of Music

Marylebone Road
London
NW1 5HT

tel: +44 20 7873 7357
e: admissions@ram.ac.uk
www.ram.ac.uk

Royal College of Music

Prince Consort Road
London
SW7 2BS

tel: +44 20 7591 4300
e: admissions@rcm.ac.uk
fax: +44 20 7589 7740
www.rcm.ac.uk

Royal Northern College of Music

124 Oxford Road
Manchester
M13 9RD

tel: +44 161 907 5220
e: international@rncm.ac.uk
fax: +44 161 907 5330
www.rncm.ac.uk

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

100 Renfrew Street
Glasgow
G2 3DB

tel: +44 141 332 4101
e: musicadmissions@rsamd.ac.uk, dramaadmissions@rcs.ac.uk,
danceadmissions@rcs.ac.uk
fax: +44 141 332 8901
www.rcs.ac.uk

Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama

Castle Grounds
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3ER

tel: +44 29 2034 2854
e: admissions@rwcmd.ac.uk
www.rwcmd.ac.uk

Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Drama

King Charles Court
Old Royal Naval College
Greenwich
London
SE10 9JF

Contact: Admissions
tel: +44 20 8305 4444
e: admissions@trinitylaban.ac.uk
www.trinitylaban.ac.uk

