

MSC IN PERFORMANCE SCIENCE

Programme Overview

Updated July 2025

The information in this document is relevant to prospective applicants and current students studying for the MSc qualification on the RCM's Master of Science in Performance Science programme.

Master of Science in Performance Science Study Routes

The RCM Master of Science programme is designed as a one calendar-year intensive programme of full-time study or a two academic-year programme of part-time study. There is also a modular flexi-route to enable students to study individual modules or work towards the full MSc qualification over a maximum period of four years.

The MSc programme consists of six core modules, which are designed to train critical, analytical, and research skills, as well as an ability to express ideas and concepts verbally and in written form to a high level. The programme also consists of one elective module from a list of available postgraduate options. Owing to the emphasis on research, the MSc requires an ability to speak and write confidently in English.

Exchange Students

The Master of Science is not available for exchange students.

Programme Structure

Overview

- All full-time and part-time students take the six core modules outlined below, totalling 165 credits, plus one 15 credit elective module.
- Part-time students choose between Performers' Health and Wellbeing or Arts in Health and Care in Year 1. Part-time students are automatically enrolled on the remaining module in Year 2.
- Students on the modular flexi-route enrol on and pay for individual modules on a case-by-case basis. Students accumulating a minimum of 120 credits over a maximum duration of three academic years would be eligible for the award of PGDip. Those accumulating 60 credits over a maximum duration of two academic years would be eligible for the award of PGCert. The Performing Research II: Project and Dissertation module is typically not available for modular study until all other modules are complete.

Breakdown of Programme Structure

| MSc Full-time | | |
|--|---------|-------------|
| Performance Psychology (Autumn term) | Level 7 | 15 credits |
| Performance Education (Autumn term) | Level 7 | 15 credits |
| Performers' Health and Wellbeing (Spring term) | Level 7 | 15 credits |
| Arts in Health and Care (Spring term) | Level 7 | 15 credits |
| Performing Research I: Methods (Autumn+Spring terms) | Level 7 | 45 credits |
| Performing Research II: Project and Dissertation (Spring+Summer terms) | Level 7 | 60 credits |
| Elective module from list of available postgraduate modules | Level 7 | 15 credits |
| Overall credits: 180 | | 180 credits |
| Year 1: 180 credits required to obtain degree, equivalent to 1800 learning hours | | |

| MSc Part-time Year 1 | | |
|---|---------|------------|
| Performance Psychology (Autumn term) | Level 7 | 15 credits |
| Performers' Health and Wellbeing <u>or</u> Arts in Health and Care (Spring term) | Level 7 | 15 credits |
| Performing Research I: Methods (Autumn+Spring terms) | Level 7 | 45 credits |
| | | 75 credits |
| Year 1: 75 credits required for progression to Year 2, equivalent to 750 learning hours | | |

| MSc Part-time Year 2 | | |
|---|---------|-------------|
| Performance Education (Autumn term) | Level 7 | 15 credits |
| Performers' Health and Wellbeing <u>or</u> Arts in Health and Care (Spring term) | Level 7 | 15 credits |
| Performing Research II: Project and Dissertation (all terms*) | Level 7 | 60 credits |
| *Students are required to successfully propose their dissertation topic in Yr1 | | |
| Elective module from list of available postgraduate modules | Level 7 | 15 credits |
| Overall credits: 180 | | 105 credits |
| Year 2: 105 credits required to obtain degree, equivalent to 1050 learning hours | | |

Learning and Teaching Hours

Learning and teaching hours are calculated as 100 hours per ten credits studied. For MSc students this equates to 1,800 hours, which is split between self-directed study and contact hours with tutors. Contact hours include lectures, seminars, workshops, tutorials, and supervisions.

Levels of Study

Each module within our postgraduate programmes is assigned a level according to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) credit system. All MSc modules are taken at level 7.

MSc Core Module Descriptions

Performance Psychology

This module introduces you to processes and perspectives that define and underpin performance psychology, covering principles derived from interdisciplinary research. The module aims to enable you to develop critical and analytical resourcefulness and to gain broad awareness of the psychological skills and processes that facilitate effective practice and successful performance. You should develop the means to manipulate and integrate knowledge gained from a variety of psychological and other scientific sources.

Performance Education

This module provides insight into fundamental principles of performance education and expertise, as elucidated through current scientific research and educational practice. Drawing on your own experience, we explore music perception and production throughout the lifespan and engage directly with implications for learning and teaching. Emphasis is placed on enhancing your ability to develop and critique related practice and research, informed by relevant educational, professional, and policy issues.

Performers' Health and Wellbeing

This module considers how physical and mental health can shape how musicians pursue their art and the pleasure they take from it. Seminars and tutorials examine results from recent research into the physical and mental demands of music making, and you are encouraged to explore critically and systematically the ways in which musicians meet those demands, both through their own personal means and via support mechanisms available within educational and professional settings.

Arts in Health and Care

This module explores the field of performing arts in health and wellbeing. We examine results from recent research about the psychological, social, and physiological impact of music and other arts engagement on mental and physical health. You are encouraged to consider the ways in which the performing arts can support specific challenges or needs within health, how the arts can be implemented effectively in health contexts, and how the arts can be integrated into healthcare systems to benefit individuals and societies as well as artists.

Performing Research I: Methods

This module covers methodological approaches and scientific methods appropriate to conducting independent research in performance science. You will be introduced to intellectual, methodological, and ethical perspectives within the field, with emphasis on the processes of generating research questions, designing research studies, and collecting, analysing, interpreting, and writing up research data.

Performing Research II: Project and Dissertation

This module builds on your knowledge and understanding of performance science to develop and demonstrate the critical, analytical, and scientific skills necessary to conduct independent research. Individual tutorials help you develop the necessary means to carry out your own research project and to communicate and defend the rationale and results of your research. In addition, seminars provide an overview of the ethical considerations of performance science research, as well as the processes involved in applying for and securing ethical approval for your research.

Indicative Elective Modules

Alongside the core MSc modules, MSc students can choose one 1.5 credit module from a list of eligible elective modules. Please note that elective modules may be subject to change according to student numbers and availability of professors. This list is indicative only, and not all modules run every year. Some modules require an audition prior to enrolment.

Alexander Technique

This module explores the application of Alexander Technique to practice, and processes of decision-making in performance. You will critically observe and analyse your own performance.

Aural Analysis

Explore the theory and practice of analysing a broad range of music from an aural perspective, focusing on coherence and expression in form, harmony, melody, tonality, and syntax, as well as practical applications.

Composition (auditioned)

Work one-to-one with a tutor to refine your compositional techniques and gain an enhanced understanding of the art, craft, and technique of composition.

Composition for Screen (auditioned)

Work one-to-one with a tutor to refine your compositional techniques and gain an enhanced understanding of the art, craft, and technique of screen composition.

Conducting (auditioned)

You will have practical classes on key works, including attention to directing ensemble, rehearsal techniques, comparative interpretations, and developing/communicating personal interpretations.

Contemporary Music in Action (auditioned)

Explore the collaborative process of creating a new work between composer and performer and learn how to articulate in detail the process involved.

Dissertation add-on (Performing Research II Extension)

Add on a 1.5-minute individual presentation to your Dissertation, allowing you to explore the implications of your findings in terms of future research and/or practice.

Improvisation (auditioned)

Develop improvisation skills on your Principal Study instrument through individualised coaching focussing on technical and theoretical aspects of improvisation. You can choose to focus on baroque, classical, jazz, or experimental approaches.

Memorising Music

Learn the theory and practice of memorising music successfully.

Musicianship & Improvisation

Explore musicianship and stylistic improvisation skills to an advanced level.

Orchestration Portfolio (auditioned)

These modules explore how to write imaginatively and effectively for orchestra and other large ensembles.

Online Global Conservatoire electives

Selection of online modules offered by RCM in collaboration with international partner institutions.

Practical Teaching Portfolio

In this module you will develop your teaching practice through self-reflection, self-assessment and guided self-critique. You will discuss current teaching activities with an allocated mentor and observe your mentor and your peers in a teaching situation.

Professional Musician

This student-led module prepares you for a healthy, proactive, and sustainable career in music through individual career coaching, cross-faculty group workshops, and industry knowledge and insights.

Professional Project

In this module you will develop and deliver a self-directed project with a professional focus. With the support of a supervisor, you will develop an innovative project that builds on your musical strengths, interests, and professional aspirations.

Stylistic Composition (auditioned)

Learn the art and craft of compositional technique in a variety of styles. There are two routes: classical (broadly early baroque to early twentieth century) and jazz.

Teaching Music

This module enables students to engage with the concept of music teaching as a sociocultural practice, develop skills relating to lesson planning and delivery and explore modes of assessment and progression in music education.

Techniques of Analysis

This module explores a range of different technical approaches to analysing a broad range of music, focusing on coherence and expression in form, harmony, melody, tonality, and syntax.

Women in Music

You will gain understanding of women's role in music, past and present, through a research-based performance project and a professional placement alongside a female mentor.