

Admissions Policy

2019-21



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Introduction

Admissions procedures conform to the guiding principles relating to admissions, recruitment and widening access in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education:

Policies and procedures for application, selection and admission to higher education courses are transparent and accessible;

Higher education providers use fair, reliable and appropriate assessment methods that enable them to select students with the potential to complete the course successfully;

Higher education providers reduce or remove unnecessary barriers for prospective students;

Information provided to prospective students for recruitment and widening access purposes supports students in making informed decisions;

All staff, representatives and partners engaged in the delivery of admissions, recruitment and widening access are appropriately trained and resourced;

Providers continually develop widening access strategies and policies in line with local and national guidance.

Equality Impact Assessment Information

- N/A

Definitions

- N/A

Policy

Leeds College of Music is committed to admitting prospective students who are most likely to benefit from our courses and aims to:

- Sustain high academic standards consistent with the requirements of the conservatoire's validating body;
- Commit to equality of opportunity. There will be no discrimination against prospective students on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010;
- Create a working culture that respects, welcomes and harnesses differences for the benefit of the organisation and the individual.

The conservatoire will achieve these aims by:

- Encouraging applications from all those with the talent, academic ability and motivation to succeed at Leeds College of Music;
- Assessing each application individually and equitably;
- Offering places to those who meet or have the potential to meet the course entry criteria and who therefore have the potential to complete their course successfully;
- Maintaining integrity and transparency in its admission process;
- Striving to create a working environment in which students are enabled to develop and progress to their full potential.

The conservatoire recognises that it may need to be flexible during the recruitment process in order to provide fair and equal access to all prospective students. The conservatoire also recognises the need to make adjustments for individual prospective students where appropriate - for example, prospective students with a long term health condition, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty – to allow them to demonstrate their potential.

Procedure

1. Overview

- 1.1. These principles outline how applications will be processed from receipt by the conservatoire to communication of the outcome. It is intended as an over-arching description, supported by more in-depth procedural or policy documents covering particular issues.
- 1.2. All communication regarding applications will be conducted directly with the prospective student and not a third party, including relatives, unless the conservatoire receives specific instructions to allow such correspondence (*NB this covers a prospective student who may be unable to communicate directly with the conservatoire but needs to progress an application*).
- 1.3. The conservatoire receives a large volume of applications which exceeds the number of places available so cannot offer places to all prospective students who meet or are predicted to meet the minimum entry requirements. Consideration also has to be given during the recruitment process to ensure an appropriate mix of instruments within each cohort and pathway or course where applicable.
- 1.4. The conservatoire has a target for offers and a target for registrations. The offer target is higher than the registration target as it must be assumed that some offer-holders will fail to meet the conditions of their offer and that a number will choose to accept offers at other institutions.
- 1.5. The conservatoire's prospectuses and website www.lcm.ac.uk provide information on entry requirements and admissions procedures.
- 1.6. Information regarding the UCAS tariff and guidance on the application processes can be found at www.ucas.com
- 1.7. Notwithstanding the published entry criteria, the conservatoire has the discretion to vary the standard offer where a particular prospective student's profile merits this: it may be

appropriate to judge talent and potential to succeed in ways other than by academic achievement, for example performance at audition or prior practical experience or achievement. The decision to make a prospective student a non-standard offer will be authorised by the Head of School for undergraduate courses or the Head of Postgraduate Studies. This is exceptional practice and is not a means to circumvent the published admissions tariffs, rather to ensure that we do not turn away prospective students with the potential to succeed who have demonstrated this strongly in other ways than by being able to meet the standard entry requirement. The ability to cope with both the academic and musical aspects of the programme will be evaluated when considering making an exceptional prospective student a non-standard offer.

- 1.8. If a prospective student wishes to discuss re-applying or re-admission e.g. following withdrawal, in the first instance they should contact the Admissions and Registration Team.
- 1.9. All Leeds City College BTEC Music and BTEC Music Technology students who apply for an undergraduate course at the conservatoire are guaranteed an audition/interview/portfolio request.
- 1.10. All Leeds College of Music current Foundation Degree students are guaranteed an interview if they apply for the BA Music (Production) Top-Up. Current Foundation Degree students apply for the Top-Up via an internal mechanism. This has been agreed with UCAS.
- 1.11. Under the terms of the Leeds College of Music Access and Participation Plan, in order to ensure that no prospective students are deterred from applying to the conservatoire, we do not charge audition fees for any of our courses plus we refund the cost of travel to the audition/interview for UK prospective students from the lowest income families (on submission of appropriate evidence and receipts). All prospective students are informed about this when invited for audition/interview and it is advertised on our website and in open day materials.
- 1.12. If the conservatoire has any reason to believe that a prospective student or referee has left out any information, given false or misleading information, or supplied a personal statement that the prospective student has not written themselves, the conservatoire may take any necessary steps to check whether it is accurate or complete and has the right to cancel the prospective student's application.
- 1.13. Whilst minor amendments to programmes of study are highly likely year on year, major changes are less likely to be implemented during students' studies. Where major changes are to be introduced, the existing programme will usually be taught out in its original form and the new programme phased in. If changes are made to a programme following the offer of a place on that programme, prospective students will be informed at the earliest opportunity of the changes, in line with the Student Protection Plan. The conservatoire will take all reasonable and necessary steps to support prospective students and ensure that they are advised of proposed amendments and arrangements and/or alternative options available.
- 1.14. Reasons for rejection of prospective students will be recorded and kept for the period of the application cycle in which the application was received. Anonymised data may be kept for a longer period for statistical analysis.

- 1.15. Data on non-standard offers will be recorded each cycle. This will allow the volume of such offers and the success and achievement of students admitted via this route to be monitored.
- 1.16. Admissions statistical data on all applications received, success/rejection etc. will be collected, analysed and reported annually to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group. This will allow monitoring of our widening participation initiatives.
- 1.17. Admissions staff ensure they are up-to-date regarding changes to application processes through engaging with UCAS communications, sessions, conferences and in-house training.
- 1.18. For further clarification on any aspect of this policy, please contact the Head of Registry.

2. Admissions process

- 2.1. Applications are normally made through the online UCAS system www.ucas.com. The conservatoire appears three times on UCAS under the 'Conservatoires' filter (Classical, Jazz and Classical and Jazz major combinations), the 'Undergraduate' filter (all other undergraduate pathways/courses), and the 'Postgraduate' filter (postgraduate programmes). Information on how to apply is available at www.lcm.ac.uk
- 2.2. The Direct Application process may be used where the UCAS system may present a barrier to the prospective student or where this route better suits a recruitment initiative. This route neither increases nor decreases the likelihood of receiving an offer.
- 2.3. All applications received by the published UCAS/UCAS Conservatoires deadlines will be given equal consideration.
- 2.4. All applications will undergo preliminary screening by the Admissions and Registration Team, focusing primarily on identifying and requesting missing information.
- 2.5. Applications are assessed in a variety of ways, as appropriate to the pathway/course. For example a decision may be made on just the application form, or a prospective student may be invited for audition or interview, or to submit a portfolio or recordings. Guidance is provided about portfolio and/or audition/interview requirements.
- 2.6. If a prospective student wishes to inform us confidentially of key issues that are not outlined in their application, they may contact the Admissions and Registration Team.
- 2.7. The Head of School for undergraduate courses / Head of Postgraduate Studies is the final arbiter in any unresolved application and may vary the conditions of individual offers if he/she considers it appropriate to do so.
- 2.8. Prospective students invited to an audition and/or interview must reply to the conservatoire by the date stated in the audition/interview invitation. No audition/interview will be scheduled if a reply is not received by the given date.
- 2.9. The conservatoire does not encourage prospective students to re-arrange audition/interview days except in the most exceptional circumstances.

- 2.10. Prospective students who do not attend an audition and/or interview will have their application withdrawn.
- 2.11. Undergraduate and postgraduate auditions held at the conservatoire will, where appropriate, be conducted by a minimum of two members of staff (e.g. one performance specialist and one academic staff member). Interviews will normally be conducted by one member of staff.
- 2.12. Prospective students invited to submit a portfolio must do so by the deadline indicated in their invitation to submit. Prospective students who do not submit a portfolio by the specified deadline will have their application withdrawn.
- 2.13. All decisions made by the conservatoire will be confirmed in writing. Decisions following audition/interview will normally be made by the panel within two weeks after the audition/interview week and communicated to prospective students. If a decision cannot be reached within this period, prospective students will be informed of the delay.
- 2.14. A conditional offer means that the prospective student is offered a place subject to their achievement of certain qualifications/grades in forthcoming examinations. Should the prospective student fail to meet the conditions of the offer, the offer will be reviewed in the context of the application as a whole, i.e. the application form itself along with the examination results, portfolio/interview/audition reports. To discuss such circumstances, prospective students should contact the Admissions and Registration Team in the first instance.
- 2.15. An unconditional offer is made where a prospective student has already satisfied the entry requirements at the point of application. It guarantees the prospective student a place, unless unforeseen circumstances lead to the closure of the course.
- 2.16. Where the delivery of a course/programme is uncertain because it is subject to final approval, this will be made clear in publicity materials. Every effort will be made to identify a suitable alternative in the event the course/programme is subsequently not approved.
- 2.17. Where the delivery of a course/programme is uncertain because of low prospective student numbers, this will be communicated to prospective students at the earliest stage and every effort will be made to identify a suitable alternative in the event the course/programme is subsequently cancelled.
- 2.18. For applications submitted via UCAS/UCAS Conservatoires, if an offer is made, prospective students are required to communicate their decision through the relevant online system before the decline by default date notified to them by UCAS.
- 2.19. By accepting an offer, the prospective student agrees to abide by the rules and regulations of the conservatoire and its validating body, as outlined in the Terms and Conditions for Prospective students and Students.
- 2.20. An offer made and accepted cannot be withdrawn without the prospective student's consent, except in the case of the cancellation of the course or where relevant information supplied by the prospective student is found to be incorrect or false.

- 2.21. Successful prospective students are notified of their statutory right to cancel in their offer letter: if they firmly accept the conservatoire's offer of a place, they have 14 days from the date on which they accept the place in which they can change their mind and withdraw their acceptance without providing a reason.
- 2.22. If a prospective student is rejected, this will be communicated to them in writing and via the UCAS system.
- 2.23. If any pathways or courses are entered into Clearing (UCAS Undergraduate pathways/courses only), normal Clearing procedures will be followed. See the UCAS website for further details.
- 2.24. Students who exceed their conditional offer and choose to utilise the 'adjustment period' to explore other options, i.e. have five calendar days to register and secure a new course, are welcome to contact the Admissions and Registration Team for advice.

3. Undergraduate entry requirements

- 3.1. The Academic Council sets the minimum entry level for undergraduate programmes of study at the conservatoire, taking into consideration requirements of the validating body, and this is reviewed regularly.
- 3.2. Details of the standard specific entry requirements for each course will be contained in all available course material.
- 3.3. The conservatoire defines its admission requirements in terms of academic achievement. It is unlikely that prospective students will have achieved the entry requirements before reaching the age of 18 on entry, however circumstances may arise from time to time where a prospective student would be under 18 on entry to the conservatoire and in these situations advice will be sought from the Head of Student Services to ensure that safeguarding obligations are met. Prospective students under 18 who would require a Tier 4 visa to study will not be considered for admission.
- 3.4. Details of the standard specific entry requirements for each course will be contained in all available course material.

4. Postgraduate entry requirements

- 4.1. The Academic Council sets the minimum entry level for postgraduate programmes of study at the conservatoire, taking into consideration requirements of the validating body, and this is reviewed regularly.
- 4.2. Postgraduate prospective students will be required to present a formal written submission after application and before audition/interview summarising their proposed direction of study for the course.

5. EU and International entry requirements

- 5.1. EU and International prospective students will be made an offer at an equivalent level to UK prospective students.

- 5.2. Guidance on the equivalence of various international qualifications can be obtained from The National Recognition Information Centre (UKNARIC) by visiting www.naric.org.uk

6. Deferred entry

- 6.1. Deferred entry may be permitted in some circumstances / for some courses. Prospective students who wish to discuss this are advised to contact the Admissions and Registration Team prior to application.
- 6.2. The relevant Programme Leader and the Head of School / Head of Postgraduate Studies will make the final decision on whether to permit an application for deferred entry.

7. Prospective students with a criminal conviction

- 7.1. Leeds College of Music believes that an unspent criminal conviction should not automatically prevent an individual from studying with us. Disclosing a criminal conviction is not a requirement of an application to study at the conservatoire and prospective students will only ever be assessed on their application, audition/interview and suitability for the course (subject to 7.2 below).
- 7.2. The exception to this applies to prospective students who would require a visa to study in the UK as they are required to disclose this information as part of the visa application process.
- 7.3. Although there is no need to declare a conviction as part of an application, prospective students currently on licence are expected to make the conservatoire aware of any conditions which may prevent them from fully engaging with their course and the broader conservatoire community.
- 7.4. Leeds College of Music is able to give specialist advice and support for students entering our community from many different backgrounds. Students coming to the conservatoire with a spent or unspent conviction may find it useful to connect with these services and gain additional support with studying at the conservatoire.
- 7.5. Prospective students who would like further information on the range of services, or to confidentially discuss a licence condition which they believe may prevent them from fully engaging with their proposed studies, are advised to contact the Head of Student Services.

8. Prospective students with a long term health condition, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty

- 8.1. Leeds College of Music is committed to complying with disability discrimination legislation.
- 8.2. Prospective students who declare a long term health condition, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty will be considered according to the same principles, and will be required to meet the same criteria for entry, as other prospective students.
- 8.3. The conservatoire recognises that, in order to provide fair and equal access to all prospective students, it may need to be flexible and, where appropriate, make adjustments for individual prospective students. Should a prospective student have

particular support needs during the audition/interview process, they are encouraged to contact the Disability Advisers to discuss any reasonable adjustments that can be made.

- 8.4. After an offer is made, a Disability Adviser will contact successful prospective students individually to assess the level of support that may be required throughout the course.

9. EU and International Prospective students

- 9.1. EU and International prospective students who are unable to attend an audition and/or interview are required to send audio-visual material in support of their application. Prospective students are provided with guidance. Prospective students are also required to submit verifiable documentary evidence in English of achieved qualifications. Prospective students are responsible for any financial charges incurred, e.g. in having documents translated into English.
- 9.2. All prospective students whose first language is not English must have achieved an appropriate level of competence in that language, demonstrated by a recognised proficiency test or qualification. Academic Council sets the minimum level required (subject to 9.4 below).
- 9.3. International prospective students should familiarise themselves with the requirements of the UK immigration system. For information and guidance, contact the UK Council for International Student Affairs at www.ukcisa.org.uk, or telephone the advice line on **+44 20 7788 9214**. Information can also be found at www.lcm.ac.uk/international.
- 9.4. Prospective students who will require a Tier 4 visa to study are governed by the immigration rules of the UK Government and admissions procedures comply with those requirements.

10. Prospective students with prior experience and/or academic credit

- 10.1. The Academic Council sets the minimum entry level for programmes of study at the conservatoire, taking into consideration requirements of the validating body.
- 10.2. It is the policy of Leeds College of Music to promote lifelong learning and support widening participation. The conservatoire acknowledges that many potential students already possess a range of skills and knowledge gained through a wide range of experiences, and this policy allows appropriate prior learning and/or experience to be formally recognised.
- 10.3. The conservatoire recognises prior learning/experience, also referred to as APL (accreditation of prior learning) or RPL (recognition of prior learning), in two situations:
- for entry at the beginning of a course;
 - for entry with advanced standing, i.e. with exemption from specific modules or to a later stage of a course.
- 10.4. In both situations, although academic guidance will be given with respect to the nature of appropriate materials, the prospective student is responsible for making their claim for the recognition of prior learning or experience by providing the conservatoire with all relevant evidence to support the claim.

- 10.5. Entry with advanced standing will be permitted in line with the regulations of the validating body.
- 10.6. Evidence must accord with the following principles:
- Acceptability: there must be an appropriate match (in terms of breadth and depth of content) between the evidenced learning/experience and the entry requirements of the course or the modules against which credit is being claimed. This is a matter of academic judgement.
 - Sufficiency: the quality and quantity of the evidenced prior learning/experience must be sufficient to support the volume of credit claimed at the correct level. This is a matter of academic judgement.
 - Authenticated: through objective evidence from a source other than the prospective student - such as an official transcript or programme specification.
 - Currency: the prior learning must be no greater than nine years old, and within that timescale, sufficiently contemporaneous to be still relevant to the subject.
- 10.7. Prior to an application being submitted, informal discussion should take place between the conservatoire and the prospective student to clarify the range and type of evidence likely to be available and its potential appropriateness bearing in mind that collating such evidence, and evaluating it, is likely to be time consuming both for the prospective student and for the conservatoire.
- 10.8. In the case of applications for entry with advanced standing, during such informal discussion the conservatoire should ensure that the prospective student is directed to the relevant module specifications on the website.
- 10.9. In evaluating evidence of prior experience or uncertificated learning particular attention should be paid to:
- Identifying relevant experience and the learning achieved from that experience;
 - Ensuring that if accreditation is granted it is likely that the prospective student will be able to cope with the demands of the programme.
- 10.10. In addition, in the case of applications for entry at the beginning of a course, particular attention should be paid to:
- Assessing the comparability of learning to the programme entry requirements.
- 10.11. In addition, in the case of applications for entry with advanced standing, particular attention should be paid to:
- Assessing the comparability of learning to the module learning outcomes (taking into account module content, level and temporal equivalence bearing in mind the notional 10 learning hours per credit of academic programmes).

11. Mature prospective students

- 11.1. The Office for Students classifies students who will be 21 or over when they start their course as 'mature'.

11.2. Mature prospective students will be considered according to the same principles, and will be required to meet the same criteria for entry, as other prospective students.

11.3. Where mature prospective students do not offer formal or standard qualifications, they will be invited to use the APL route (see section 10 above).

12. Requests for feedback and admissions appeals

12.1. At the written request of an unsuccessful prospective student, the conservatoire will provide feedback which outlines the reasons for rejection or for making an alternative course offer.

12.2. If, after receiving feedback from the conservatoire, a prospective student feels an error has occurred, an Admissions Appeal can be made. Details of grounds for appeal and timescales can be found in the Admissions Appeals Policy, available on the website or from the Admissions and Registration Team.

Breach of Policy

Admissions Appeals:

If a prospective student feels an error has occurred they have the right to request a review of the selection decision on one of the following grounds:

- 1) relevant information was missing from the original application (with good reason);
- 2) there has been a misinterpretation of information or data contained within the original application;
- 3) there is evidence of bias or prejudice;
- 4) there was a procedural irregularity in the handling of the application.

Appeals that question the academic judgement or integrity of academic staff will not be considered.

To request a copy of the Admissions Appeals Policy, contact the Admissions and Registration Team, Room 406, Leeds College of Music, 3 Quarry Hill, Leeds, LS2 7PD

Other complaints:

If the prospective student wishes to make a complaint about the conduct of a member of staff or other issue not covered by the Admissions Appeals Policy outlined above, they should use the Complaints Policy, available at www.lcm.ac.uk or by writing to the Senior Quality & Compliance Officer, complaints@lcm.ac.uk, Leeds College of Music, 3 Quarry Hill, Leeds, LS2 7PD