



ACCESS COURSE

HANDBOOK 2025-2026

Undergraduate Course in Music Performance

The Royal Irish Academy of Music

Access Course

Undergraduate course title:	Access Course
Duration of the Access Course:	Full time 1 year
Closing date for applications:	1 st December (Direct application to RIAM)
No. of students min/max:	5/16
Institution delivering the course:	The Royal Irish Academy of Music
Head of Institution:	Deborah Kelleher, Director

A Note on this Handbook

This handbook will provide a guide to what is expected of you on this programme. Compliance with the requirements found in this handbook is the responsibility of the student. Please retain for future reference.

The information provided in is accurate at the time of preparation, but the RIAM reserves the right to make small amendments to the handbook and small changes to the composition of audition and examination panels if circumstances require. The lecturer reserves the right to alter the content of individual modules during the year.

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About this Handbook

This handbook is designed to guide you in your Access Course at the Royal Irish Academy of Music. It includes:

- The overall aims of the programme
- A description of all years of study
- The academic calendar for all years of study
- Information on academic, personal and administrative support
- Attendance and assessment regulations
- The assessment criteria for academic and performance work
- A detailed description of all modules

Important - this Handbook must be complemented by:

- [The academic calendar](#), which outlines key dates and deadlines
- [RIAM's policies and procedures](#), that include, amongst others:
 - [Disability Support Services](#)
 - [Mental wellness and health standards](#)
 - [Plagiarism](#)
 - [Student Code of Conduct](#)
 - [Student Complaints](#)

If you need more information about this Handbook, or clarification on its content, please don't hesitate to contact Padraig Rynn, Senior Staff Officer (Registry), 3rd and 4th Level Office, on padraigrynn@riam.ie

This Handbook is available on Moodle and alternative formats upon request (e.g. large print)

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Key Programme Dates

Further information on RIAM programme dates can be accessed at [College Calendar | RIAM](#)

Further supporting information on programme dates can be accessed on Moodle under the 3rd& 4th Level Office, at [RIAM: All courses](#) under sub section Academic Calendar.

Examination Dates

End-of-year examinations are held in May/June

Supplemental periods for repeat exams is normally last week in August and first week in September.

Further information on confirmed exam dates can be accessed on Moodle under the 3rd& 4th Level Office, at RIAM: All courses under sub section Exams Information.

Personal Support and Counselling for students

If you wish to reach out to anyone during your studies, RIAM has two services:

Counselling Support

Contact directly for up to 4 **free** Confidential Sessions

Clanwilliam Institute office@clanwilliam.ie / 01 6761363

Virginia Kerr virginiakerr@riam.ie

Mentoring / Coaching Support

Contact directly for up to 4 **free** Confidential Sessions

Clanwilliam Institute office@clanwilliam.ie / 01 6761363

Paul Roe paulroe@riam.ie

A list of student support leaders can be accessed on Moodle under the 3rd & 4TH Level Office:

<https://www.riam.ie/support-services-for-students>

EQuita Resolution Pathway (ERP)

The Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM) is dedicated to fostering a safe and respectful learning environment for all students. We are now working with EQuita Consulting Limited, providing an independent and confidential process called the EQuita Resolution Pathway (ERP).

Students can now address complaints as defined by the RIAM Dignity and Respect policy through the EQuita Resolution Pathway (ERP), which is also reflected in our Student Code of Conduct and Student Complaints Policy.

The EQuita Resolution Pathway Service (ERP) is a three-stage process offered to help students resolve conflicts or grievances with an independent expert.

- Stage One: Facilitated Conversation - An informal meeting with a psychologist or conflict resolution expert to discuss the issue and explore solutions.
- Stage Two: Mediation - A neutral mediator helps both parties communicate and reach a mutually agreeable resolution.
- Stage Three: Full Investigation - If the issue is serious, an external investigator conducts a formal investigation to determine the facts.

Contact: talktous@equita.ie

Additional Resources:

[RIAM Dignity and Respect Policy](#)

[Student Code of Conduct](#)

[Students Complaints Procedure](#)

Information on Special Educational Needs

The Royal Irish Academy of Music encourages students with particular needs to disclose information on their disability/specific learning difficulty to the RIAM Disability Support Service roisinmurphy@riam.ie before they apply to college or at any point during their studies. Such disclosure is encouraged so that any reasonable accommodation required is identified and facilitated to assist the student. All disclosures by students are treated in strict professional confidence, and relayed to relevant staff in order to provide whatever supports are required.

Access Course - General Information

Programme aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of the Access Course are:

- To improve the musicianship, technique and repertoire of its students to the standard required for entry to a degree/diploma course
- To significantly expand performing skills and steer the candidate towards higher artistic goals
- To strengthen theoretical knowledge and musicianship skills we consider vital for all professional musicians today
- To expose burgeoning musicians to the professional standards of the modern musical world and to instill in them working methods to help achieve those standards
- To expand and enrich the candidate's appreciation of music whilst enlarging their knowledge and understanding of the repertoire

Important information on attendance at lectures, and penalties associated with assessments:

The components of this programme connect with each other and are designed to give you a comprehensive foundation for a career in the musical performing arts. As such, 100% attendance is expected in all modules or components within modules. Additionally, assignments with deadlines are expected to be done on time, and as outlined by your lecturer and the handbook.

- Students who fail to attend without a certified and sanctioned excuse will have marks deducted as follows: -

Instrumental/Keyboard Performance Classes; Group classes; Languages classes etc.

The following penalties will apply to the relevant module/component within a module:

2½% for any 2 unexplained absences; 5% for any 4 unexplained absences; 7½% for any 6 unexplained absences etc. Penalties incurred for Performance Classes [Keyboard/Instrumental] will be deducted from the overall Performance mark [weighted at 60% of their year's total marks].

Such deductions shall be made for all absences [without a certified and sanctioned excuse] without limit, and persistent non-attendance could result in failing the year.

Supporting Studies

100% attendance is expected in **all** Academic lectures. Failure to do so will result in the following penalties: 5% will be deducted from the relevant module/component where students only attend a minimum of 75%; an additional 1 mark for each lecture missed thereafter will be deducted from the relevant module/component.

RIAM Holistic

Students should attend all Holistic lectures. Failure to do so will result in the following penalties: If on aggregate, a student's attendance drops to 75% a 5% deduction will be applied to the weighted

Performance Electives

Chorale and Non-orchestral Protocol: -

- Full (100%) attendance is compulsory for all RIAM ensembles. Performance projects may include weekends and evening hours.
- Except where there is duly certified or other approved reason, students who miss a rehearsal or performance will be removed from the ensemble for that specific performance project and will bear a 10% deduction off their overall performance mark (weighted at 60% of their year's total marks)
- A further unexplained absence in a further performance project will bear an additional 10% deduction and the student will again be removed from that project.
- Such deductions shall be made for all absences without limit, and persistent non-attendance could result in failing the year.

Orchestral Protocol

- 100% attendance is expected. All musicians must attend all rehearsals. Performance projects may include weekends and evening hours.
- If too ill to attend, students must contact the Orchestra Manager and must provide a doctor's note certifying illness.
- Rehearsals begin at the stated times and students are expected to be in their seat, warmed up and ready to tune 5 minutes before the start of each rehearsal.
- If a student is late for a rehearsal or performance they will bear a 10% deduction off their overall performance mark (weighted at 60% of their year's total marks)
- A second lateness for rehearsal or performance will bear an additional 10% deduction
- Such deductions shall be made for each lateness without limit, and persistent lateness could result in failing the year.
- Except where there is duly certified or other approved reason, student absence may result in failure of the Performance Elective following referral to the Undergraduate Committee and ratification at the Exam Board.

- All programmes must adhere to syllabus requirements and must be created in agreement with the principal study teacher. Deadlines for submission can be found in the [academic calendar](#).

- Where a student does not submit their exam programme by the given deadline [please refer to the [academic calendar](#)] and as required by the Undergraduate Committee a deduction of 5 marks for that exam will be imposed as a penalty.
- Repertoire may be substituted [on the relevant form] subject to approval by the relevant Head of Faculty.
- Where a student does not satisfactorily present Programme Notes for a performance exam, a penalty reduction of 5 marks will be imposed.
- Use of sheet music: -
 - **Pianoforte** students have no memory requirements, except for the Quick Memorisation tests in the Mid-Year Examination.
 - **Harpsichord** students have no memory requirements.
 - **Accordion** students have no memory requirements for End-of-Year Performance.
 - **Organ** students have no memory requirements in the mid-year or End-of-Year Examination.
 - **String students** have no specific memory requirements, however are advised to perform works from memory where this is standard practice, for example concerti, virtuoso pieces and solo Bach. Playing works from sheet music when it is standard practice to perform from memory may indicate to the panel a lower level of preparation, and this will be taken into account when awarding the overall mark.
 - **Wind, Brass, Percussion students** are not required to perform their examination programmes from memory but are encouraged to do so.
 - **Vocal students** will be required to perform all examinations from memory. Those who choose to use the sheet music without prior permission will incur the following penalties:
 - Up to 5 minutes of platform time students will incur a deduction of 1 mark
 - Up to 10 minutes of platform time students will incur a deduction of 2 marks
 - Up to 20 minutes of platform time students will incur a deduction of 3 marks
 - Up to 30 minutes of platform time students will incur a deduction of 4 marks
 - Over 30 minutes of platform time students will incur a deduction of 5 marks
 Students may apply to the Undergraduate Committee for an exemption from this sanction, and this request will be reviewed in light of the demands of the works in question.
- Students who play **over** the maximum duration of a performance exam will incur the following penalties: -
 - 3 minute latitude and then an initial 3 marks will be deducted followed by an increase of 1 mark per minute up to a max of 10 marks.
- Students who play **under** the maximum duration of a performance exam will incur the following penalties: -
 - 3 minute latitude and then an initial 3 marks will be deducted followed by an increase of 1 mark per minute up to a max of 10 marks.
- Students must submit all work assigned for academic modules in the RIAM. Should a student require an extension for any academic piece of work they must contact Prof. Marie Moran. Extensions are not automatically granted. The particular circumstances pertaining to the extension request will be discussed with the student and carefully considered before a determination is reached.
- Any academic work that is received up to one week after the official due date for submission will receive a deduction of 10% of the mark from that assignment.
- Any academic work that is received between one week and up to two weeks following the official due date will receive a deduction of 20% of the mark from that assignment.
- Any academic work that is received later than two weeks from the official due date will receive a mark of zero for that assignment.
- In all examinations, the examiners' decision is final. Please consult RIAM Rules and Regulations handbook for appeals criteria

Appeals procedure

Please refer to the [RIAM Appeals Policy and Procedure](#) for full-time students

Awards

The final overall percentages will be graded as follows:

- Distinction 70% +
- Honours 60% - 69%
- Merit 50% - 59%
- Pass 40% - 49%
- Fail 0% - 39%

Course Structure

Students will be required to successfully complete the following components:

Performance

Principal study

1 hour a week is devoted to the study of the student's principal instrument/voice. The course includes all aspects of instrumental/vocal technique i.e. scales, studies and exercises where relevant, together with an introduction to the standard performance repertoire required for proceeding towards a Diploma/Degree course.

With their Principal Study teacher, Access students will develop practice strategies to work independently and improve in fundamental technical and musical areas. The course is designed to allow Access students time for intensive individual study

Performance Classes

Performance class is a two hour session each week which is aimed at developing the student's performance demeanor on stage. Regular performance classes offer students the opportunity to perform in front of their peers and, through discussion and feedback, develop performance strategies and stagecraft. Occasional visiting artists, arts professionals and performance psychologists join the class on occasion to stimulate conversations about good practice on stage.

With their Principal Study teacher, Access students will develop practice strategies to work independently and improve in fundamental technical and musical areas. The course is designed to allow Access students time for intensive individual study. See Appendix for details of String Performance Classes

Supporting Studies:

3 hours a week are devoted to 3 Modules:

- Rudiments, Harmony and Counterpoint
- Music History/Score study and Style
- Aural Training and Sight Singing

Rudiments - the following topics will be covered:

- Key Scales
- Intervals
- Triads
- Time-signatures
- Clefs
- Transposition

Harmony and Counterpoint - this will involve consolidation of basic harmonic vocabulary and will include the following:

- Arrangement of chords for Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Bass voices
 - Primary and Secondary chords in root position and first inversion
 - Diminished chords in first inversion
 - The dominant seventh and its inversions
 - Unaccented passing note
- The above resources will be used in:
- Harmonising a given melody by adding A.T.B.
 - Harmonising a given bass line by adding S.A.T.
 - An introduction to simple counterpoint in two parts (instrumental) using available harmonic technique
 - Composition of melodies in major and minor keys

Aural Training and Sight Singing - this will be conducted on a written and practical level and will include the following:

- Sight singing ranging from simple pentatonic melodies to diatonic melodies in major and minor keys. Modulation to relative major/minor.
- Rhythm sight-clapping
- Recognition of intervals, triads, chords and cadences
- Rhythmic and melodic dictation

History of music - this will be conducted through lectures which survey the following:

- Baroque Era
- Classical Era
- Romantic Era
- Modern Era

Performing Electives [See Appendix 1]

Attendance at orchestra is obligatory for all full-time students of orchestral instruments and Chorale is obligatory for all full-time vocal students and non-orchestral who study at the Academy. Vocal students will also be required to attend Junior Song Class, Junior Oratorio and Italian Diction.

Contact Hours

The course is of 30 weeks duration. Students must satisfy all course regulations, and pass all assessment procedures. The distribution of the contact hours is as follows

Contact Hours Table

Modules	Hours
Principal Study	30
Accompaniment/Coaching	
Instrumental	07
Vocal	07
Performance Classes	20
Academic Supporting Studies:	90
• Rudiments/Harmony and Counterpoint [1 Hour x 24 weeks]	24
• Aural Training and Sight Singing [1 Hour x 24 weeks]	24
• Music History/Analysis and Style [1 Hour x 24 weeks]	24
Performance Electives	
Chorale [Compulsory for all non-orchestral students and vocalists]	48
RIAM Orchestras /Ensembles [Compulsory for all orchestral students]	80
Compulsory for Vocal Students	
Junior Song Class	40
Baroque and Oratorio	40
Italian Diction	24

Note: -

- Each lecturer reserves the right to alter the course module at any stage during the Academic year.
- Rudiments/Harmony and Counterpoint lessons are conducted in tutorials, [maximum number of students 16].
- Aural Training, Sight Singing, Music History, Score study and Style are conducted in classes [maximum number of students 16].
- All non-orchestral students (including keyboard and singers) must attend chorale; all orchestral instrumentalists must attend the relevant Performing Ensemble appropriate to their standard. Students are encouraged to attend both where possible.
- Students assigned to Chorale/RIAM Symphony Orchestra/Ensembles must attend **all** rehearsals and concerts of the performing group to which they have been assigned.

Appendix 1: Performing Electives

RIAM Chorale

Conductor - Blánaid Murphy

The RIAM Chorale consists of 50 singers, all of whom are students of the Academy, and its repertoire spans the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries, ranging from madrigals and motets to oratorios and operas. Emphasis is placed on the student's ability to sing at sight, and the development of a sense of ensemble. Membership is open to students whose Principal Study is not necessarily singing but who demonstrate a high degree of musicianship. Members of the chorale and senior singing students are given the opportunity to perform as soloists in the concerts which the chorale gives throughout the year. The Chorale has performed on RTE radio and television and at many venues around the country.

Junior Song Class

Director: - Sylvia O'Regan

The class focuses on the interpretation and performance of English Art Songs by 19th and 20th century composers; Irish folksongs; and German Lieder by Mozart, Schubert, Schumann and Mendelssohn. Students are encouraged to develop their sense of imagination in the interpretation of songs. They will learn how to express the meaning of the text through sensitivity of emotional expression and nuances of language. They will develop skills in translating and understanding poetic language. Students observe the structure of the vocal and piano parts in the songs performed and will learn how to collaborate with a pianist as a duo partner in the performance of songs. Students will learn presentation skills and the ability to critique their own and other's performances.

Baroque/Oratorio Class

Director - Lynda Lee

Through performance in class students will examine a broad array of practical issues relating to the performance of baroque vocal repertoire. This will include English song from Purcell and Arne; English lute songs; 16th, 17th and 18th century Italian arias; arias and recitatives from the oratorios of Hand and the Passions of Bach; and baroque ornamentation and style.

The following are the senior orchestras and ensembles:

In 2016 the RIAM inaugurated RIAM Podium, Ireland's first Centre for Performing Ensembles in a conservatoire setting. Participation in an officially recognised ensemble performance activity is compulsory for all students. Performance projects and concerts are devised each year to explore representative repertoire for the following groupings:

Non-Orchestral

Non-orchestral players will perform in:

- RIAM Chorale (compulsory for non-orchestral players)

Orchestral players

Orchestral players are placed in projects following compulsory Orchestral auditions held at the beginning of the academic year.

Orchestral players perform in:

- RIAM Philharmonia
- RIAM Opera Orchestra
- RIAM Early Music Ensemble (priority given to Historical Performance students)
- Ensemble Interforma

RIAM Percussion Ensemble

Director - Richard O'Donnell

Under the directorship of the National Symphony Orchestra's Principal Percussionist, Richard O'Donnell, the RIAM Percussion Ensemble is one of Ireland's leading exponents of music for the medium. It has a strong commitment to presenting contemporary music to a wide audience in venues from Dublin's National Concert Hall to The Helix, as well as other leading venues around the country. The Ensemble has also broadcast on lyric fm. In addition to an annual exchange programme with the Brooklyn College of Music in New York, the Ensemble has also travelled to Spain and South America to participate in international music festivals. Future plans include a return visit to New York and a series of concerts at The Helix in Dublin.



GuitaRIAM**Director - Marion Hyland**

The Royal Irish Academy of Music guitar ensemble was formed in late 2011 by its director and head of guitar studies Marion Hyland. The ensemble is made up of past and present guitar students, ranging from senior to masters level, and many are prizewinners in the Academy and the Feis Ceoil. Its aim is to explore the possibilities of a larger guitar group and its repertoire. As the guitar is generally a solo instrument, it gives the players the opportunity to experience larger scale works and have a positive and educational musical experience. GuitaRIAM gave its first very successful performance of the ensemble version of Steve Reich's *Electric Counterpoint* for the RIAM's 2012 chamber music programme last April, followed by a performance at the Kevin Barry Room of the National Concert Hall at the invitation of the Great Music in Irish Houses Festival. The ensemble has been given the great honour of presenting the first performance of a new work by composer and guitarist Roland Dyens, commissioned by the Guitar Festival of Ireland to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the festival. So, in honour of the occasion the programme will have three Roland Dyens works, all getting their first Irish Performance!

Appendix 2: Marking Criteria

Distinction	
80% - 99%	Technique • An extremely assured and technically accomplished performance • Maintained a totally convincing sense of control throughout the performance • Highly polished and accomplished; always convincing in this regard Interpretation • A profound understanding of style and of the pieces performed • A richly imagined and memorable performance with great individuality always in abundance • A deeply insightful performance; thoroughly convincing Performance • Totally committed and convincing throughout; a gripping account • Profoundly communicative and effective; a confident and highly professional performance full of élan • Full of flair and polish; a strong sense of artistry
70% - 79%	Technique • Very technically assured • Hardly any lapses of control or none of any significance • Highly polished and accomplished; always convincing in this regard Interpretation • A deep understanding of style and of the pieces performed • A high degree of individuality with a significantly imaginative interpretation • Showed a continuously high degree of insight throughout the performance; wholly convincing in this regard Performance • A highly committed and convincing performance • Great poise and confidence in evidence; always communicative • A significant degree of flair and polish
Honours	
66% - 69%	Technique • Mostly technically assured • Some issues/lapses of control but not many • In some short passages the performance may have been slightly marred by technical glitches Interpretation • Good understanding of style • Has individuality but more subtlety of imagination required • Has some degree of insight; quite convincing in this regard Performance • Demonstrates commitment and concentration • Displays confidence and poise and was communicative • Evidence of some flair
60% - 65%	Technique • Fairly technically assured • Some technical issues and perhaps limitations in control • Slightly marred the performance overall Interpretation • More individuality and awareness of musical style needed • Requires a wider variety of expression • Requires more insight; somewhat convincing though Performance • Generally confident with some sense of involvement • Displayed some poise and was mostly communicative • Signs of some restriction which limits a sense of flair; shows good potential though

Merit	
56% - 59%	Technique • Reliable technically but lacks versatility and ease • Flaws in technical control • Marred performance overall Interpretation • Displayed some stylistic understanding • A rather standard approach; lacks individuality • Limited in insight into the music and not always convincing Performance • Reasonably confident (most of the time) with some sense of involvement • Though communicative it lacked poise • Shows potential and demonstrates solid preparation though lacking in flair
50% - 55%	Technique • Reasonable technically, though this restricted the musical interpretation • The technique marred the overall impression somewhat • Notable flaws in technical control Interpretation • Displayed a somewhat narrow stylistic understanding • Overall a rather standard approach • Occasional insights into the music but overall unconvincing in this regard Performance • Fairly confident but lacking in involvement • Not always communicative • Preparation in evidence but not always solid

Pass	
46% - 49%	Technique • Technically limited • Maintained a sense of continuity despite technical problems • Conspicuous flaws in technical control Interpretation • Displays some musical understanding though lacking in stylistic variety • An unconvincing approach • Quite limited in terms of insight into the music Performance • Somewhat hesitant throughout and lacking in engagement • Though it maintained a sense of coherence, it lacked a sense of communication
40% - 45%	Technique • Some significant technical limitations • Lacked continuity • Technically somewhat weak Interpretation • A limited and somewhat basic level of stylistic understanding • An unsatisfactory and unconvincing approach • Displayed little or no sense of direction or plan Performance • Very hesitant throughout; lacking assurance • Little or no communication and limited coherence • Inadequate preparation in evidence

Fail	
0% - 39%	Technique • Serious technical limitations • Disjointed and little or no continuity • Not really in control; significant flaws everywhere in evidence Interpretation • Little evidence of musical understanding or interpretation • The performance may have been technically weak to the extent that it became difficult to judge interpretation • Somewhat incoherent Performance • A disjointed and faltering performance • Neither properly communicative nor coherent • Little or no evidence of adequate preparation

Appendix 3 - String Performance Class [approximately 40 hours per Academic Year]

String Performance Class is broken into a range of topics focusing on developing the skills and knowledge required to work as a professional string player.

General Performance Class

Students have free choice to perform any repertoire they are working on, either with piano (an accompanist is available for this class), solo or with chamber music partners. The class simulates real performance while also building performance techniques such as mental strength, stage presence, reducing anxiety, developing focus and communication. The class also includes a discussion element led by the tutor, focusing on developing critical listening skills, where students give constructive feedback drawing on their own personal experiences and ideas in relation to the performance heard.

Orchestral Excerpts Classes

These classes explore in detail orchestral excerpts for your instrument. Students will build an understanding the specific skills and techniques required for a range of excerpts commonly set for orchestral auditions.

Audition Training

This class simulates an audition with a mock panel. It explores both open and screened auditions and allows students to experience the perspective of both the candidate and the panel.

Ensemble Techniques

Students build the skills required to successfully work as a professional ensemble or orchestral musician, including developing practical skills on how to prepare your part, how to work in a section, understanding gesture and orchestral etiquette.

Historically Informed Performance

- Introduction to Historical Performance [compulsory for Access, Dip Mus, BMus Perf 1 & 2]
- Historical Performance Style [compulsory BMus Perf 3, 4, MMus Perf, Recital Artists taking Performance Class]

These classes build knowledge and understanding of Baroque performance styles, rhetoric, articulation and expression. Students develop an ability to interpret and perform Baroque music from a harmonic perspective.

Specialist Performance Classes

A rotating range of classes programmed as topics of interest tailored to the specific student cohort. Examples include contemporary music performance and the use of extended string techniques, chamber music and flexible listening, performance health and preventing unnecessary tension.

Learning Outcomes for Performance Class (Strings)

- Communicate through performance with presence and confidence.
- Engage in productive self-evaluation and respond positively to the feedback from others.
- Build a knowledge and understanding of performance choice, including awareness of a range of styles and approaches.
- Critically assess performance and communicate opinions constructively.
- Identify the skills required to effectively work as part of a musical ensemble.
- Develop the technical, musical and practical skills required for success in orchestral auditions and professional ensemble work.

Appendix 4: Academic Regulations

1. Overview of the Course

The Access Course is a structured whole-time course of one year's duration. It is specifically for those students who wish to study music at third level and who may not yet have the fully rounded music education necessary and/or who wish to take a year out after leaving school to test their suitability for a career in music.

2. Structure of Course

2.1 The following instruments/disciplines may be offered as Principal Study

Keyboard	String	Woodwind, Brass & Percussion	Voice	Conducting
Piano	Violin	Recorder	Soprano	Choral
Organ	Viola	Flute	Mezzo-soprano	Instrumental
Harpsichord	Cello	Oboe	Countertenor	
Accordion	Double Bass	Clarinet	Tenor	
Accompaniment/Direction	Concert Harp	Bassoon	Bass	
	Irish Harp	French Horn	Baritone	
	Classical Guitar	E flat Tenor Horn		
		Trumpet		
		Trombone		
		Euphonium		
		Tuba		
		Percussion		

2.2 Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the Access Course are:

- To improve the musicianship, technique and repertoire of its students to the standard required for entry to a degree/diploma course
- To significantly expand performing skills and steer the candidate towards higher artistic goals
- To strengthen theoretical knowledge and musicianship skills we consider vital for all professional musicians today
- To expose burgeoning musicians to the professional standards of the modern musical world and to instill in them working methods to help achieve those standards
- To expand and enrich the candidate's appreciation of music whilst enlarging their knowledge and understanding of the repertoire

3. Governance structure

3.1 RIAM Board of Governors

The RIAM Board of Governors is responsible for the governance and management of the Academy and for the administration of the endowments. The Board consists of Vice Presidents, the Director and Governors representing the members of the Academy, the endowments, Dublin City Council, the Academic Board and staff.

3.2 RIAM Board of Studies

The RIAM Board of Studies is the Academic Board of the Academy. Subject to the supreme control of the Governors, this Board has charge of all matters directly appertaining to education in the Academy. The Board meets on a weekly basis during the Academic year and minutes of these meetings are submitted to the Board of Governors for approval. to the Board of Governors for approval.

3.3 RIAM Heads of Faculty

Five Heads of Faculty are appointed from the teaching staff. The faculties are broken into: Keyboard, Vocal Studies, Wind, Brass and Percussion, Strings and Musicianship. Heads of Faculty represent their faculties' interests at RIAM Board of Studies meetings and also assist the Director in setting and implementing strategic plans for the RIAM.

4. Academic quality assurance

4.1 RIAM Board of Studies

The Board of Studies has overall responsibility for assuring the quality of all programmes delivered by the RIAM and are informed of all recommendations of the Access Committee. Part of the review to ensure the course is meeting the needs of students and lecturers, is a self-review including student feedback and external review process. The Undergraduate Committee will report to the Board of Studies and to the Board of Governors on a regular basis.

4.2 Evaluation/Student feedback

Student feedback on module content, assessment, and teaching is sought directly from students. The questionnaire is disseminated to students in a hard copy format at the end of each Academic Year and is collected via an anonymous hand-in point in the Third/Fourth Level office in RIAM.

Feedback from questionnaires is collated and presented to the Undergraduate Committee for consideration. Recommendations arising from this feedback are made to the course teaching staff. Implementation of such changes will be the responsibility of teaching staff, overseen by the Undergraduate Committee. The secretary of the Undergraduate Committee will report to the Board of Studies and, from this committee, reports will be issued to the Governing Body of the RIAM about the implementation of these changes.

This questionnaire is supplemented by group feedback sessions with RIAM staff and both sets of data are added to the on-going quality assurance processes for this course.

4.3 Student services and facilities

The new world-class RIAM campus opened in January 2023, doubling the number of teaching and practice rooms, providing new and enhanced facilities; creating a space for collaboration and creativity to flourish. Ireland's new home for music education.

300 Seat Whyte Recital Hall

The Whyte Recital Hall is the first concert hall in Ireland primarily devoted to chamber music and small ensembles. Its state-of-the-art acoustics and design match the highest international standards. From a student perspective, the opportunity to perform in a venue of this quality is unsurpassed.

Versatile Vernon Studio

The Vernon Studio is a large ensemble studio space with floor measurements to match a typical stage and a ceiling height to optimise acoustics to provide a stunning home for opera and orchestral rehearsals and performances on site. The flexible space also caters for yoga, movement workshops, masterclasses, launches and social events.

Modern Sonic Arts Hub & Composition Lab

The bespoke Sonic Arts Hub & Composition Labs include state-of-the-art recording equipment and all the latest technology to develop student skills and facilitate next generation electro-acoustic composition.

Plentiful Practice & Rehearsal Rooms

The newly redeveloped campus features double the amount of rehearsal and practice rooms as before, which can be booked by students online using Asmit, RIAM's room management software.

Library

The new RIAM Penthouse Library overlooks Dublin City Centre and provides a vital resource for researchers, practitioners and students. It is a cutting-edge learning hub for our full-time graduate-level students and, for junior students, a bespoke 'zoned area' for homework and private study.

Third/Fourth Level office

The Royal Irish Academy of Music has an efficient, well-staffed administrative Office to support students in relation to admissions, registration, examinations and records. The Office is also responsible for organising an Orientation Week for new students. On Orientation Week [which is held at the RIAM] students will be introduced to RIAM staff - the Director, and other key personnel. Information regarding commencement of lessons and academic studies will be available at this time. New students will be given a tour of the RIAM Library and its facilities.

Use of computers

Valid usernames and passwords will give each student access to Moodle, the Internet, MS Word, music technology software and personal folders on the Student Server (RIAMTLS) to store course-related work, created on PCs [20] which are connected to the Student Network and installed in the Library and in the Computer Room.

5. Undergraduate Committee

5.1 Structure of the Undergraduate Committee

The Undergraduate Committee is the forum where all questions of policy, academic integrity and future curriculum development of the course are discussed and recommendations will be formulated. The Undergraduate Committee reports to the Board of Studies and to the Board of Governors on a regular basis and consists of the following members:

Membership of the committee includes the RIAM Director, a Secretary to the Committee (a member of the 3rd and 4th level office), 5 Heads of Faculty (one of whom is elected as the Chair), Head of Programmes and Research, one student representative of each year of the programme (to be a balance of disciplines and specifically 4 students for Bachelor degrees; 1 student for the Diploma; and up to five academic staff (one from each Faculty that has students on the relevant courses) elected annually. That staff representative should be teaching on an undergraduate course.

Co-optees from the wider music profession or other persons who may be deemed useful to the work of the Committee (e.g. members of the RIAM management team, external advisors etc.) may be invited to attend Committee meetings from time to time. Such persons are engaged in terms of the role or function they perform and are not deemed to act in a representative capacity. As such, they do not have voting rights and may not be considered in the calculation of the quorum for a meeting.

Only members of the Committee and those invited to the meeting have the right to attend meetings. Appointments to the Committee are made automatically in September each year.

The Undergraduate Committee will convene at least six times annually. The committee will be chaired by a member of the Undergraduate Committee who is nominated and elected each Academic Year.

Duties of the Undergraduate Committee

- Systematic oversight of curricula for the relevant course
- Reviewing External Examiner reports relevant to the course and making recommendations to the Board of Studies
- Establishing as required a standing committee to develop a new or modified programme concept
- Recommending curricula modifications and new curricula to the Board of Studies
- Preparing reports and course reviews for the Board of Studies and for periodic programme reviews as required
- Monitoring and recording student progress and noting student feedback
- Reviewing issues brought to the committees by students and making decisions on their resolution where appropriate
- Conducting a review of their own performance and terms of reference to ensure they are operating at maximum effectiveness
- Reporting formally to the Board of Studies at least once a year on activities undertaken by the committee

6. Academic Year and Terms

Principal Study

The RIAM Academic Year consisting of 30 weeks of tuition commences on the second Monday of September each year. Students may be required to take lessons outside the working hours of 9am - 6pm and at weekends to accommodate those who work in orchestras and have other commitments.

Performance Ensembles

The 30 week RIAM Academic Year includes 6 intensive Performance Spotlight weeks for intensive ensemble study [Performance projects may include weekends and evening hours]

Supporting Studies

The RIAM Academic Year consisting of 24 weeks of lectures and 2 reading weeks

Examinations

End-of-year examinations are held in May/June

Supplemental periods for repeat exams is normally last week in August and first week in September.

6.1 Module Co-ordinators/Lecturers

The Undergraduate Committee design, implement and monitor the delivery of the degree.

Note:

- Each lecturer reserves the right to alter the course module at any stage during the Academic year.

7. Assessment Procedures

Assessment/Examinations will be by:

- End-of-year Recital exam [Principal Study]
- Continuous assessment/assignments and End-of-year written exams for supporting studies
- Portfolio [Composition students only]

7.1 Marking criteria

The proportion of marks allocated to each of the components for the purposes of arriving at the overall percentage for the year's diet of assessments/examinations will be as follows:

Module	Marks	Overall %
Principal Study - Instrumental/Vocal:		
End-of-year exam	100	50%
Teachers mark - Continuous Assessment/Attendance		Pass/Fail
Performance Class		
Principal Study - Composers		50%
Portfolio	100	
Second Study - End-of-year Exam	100	
Teacher's mark -Continuous Assessment/Attendance		Pass/Fail
Supporting Studies:		50%
• Rudiments/Harmony and Counterpoint	100 [$\frac{1}{3}$ of overall 50%]	
Continuous assessment = 40%		
End-of-year exam = 60%		
• Aural Training and Sight Singing	100 [$\frac{1}{3}$ of overall 50%]	
Continuous assessment = 40%		
End-of-year exam = 60%		
• Music History/Score study and Style	100 [$\frac{1}{3}$ of overall 50%]	
Continuous assessment = 100%		
Essays: Produce two essays (1500 words each) = 25% each		
Presentation: Give two presentations on two works from the periods covered in the course = 25% each		
Performance Electives		
• Chorale/Orchestra/Ensemble		Pass/Fail
Continuous assessment/attendance		
Vocal students only		Pass/Fail
• Junior Song Class		
Continuous assessment/attendance		Pass/Fail
• Baroque/Oratorio Class		
Continuous assessment/attendance		Pass/Fail
• Italian Diction		

Note:-

- Each weighted element shall be marked out of 100 initially and weighted subsequently to conform to the overall percentages listed above

➤ **Non-attendance penalties:**

100% attendance is expected in all modules or components within modules. Students who fail to attend without a certified and sanctioned excuse will have marks deducted as follows:-

Instrumental/Keyboard Performance Classes; Group classes; Languages classes etc.

The following penalties will apply to the relevant module/component within a module:

2½% for any 2 unexplained absences; 5% for any 4 unexplained absences; 7½% for any 6 unexplained absences etc. Penalties incurred for Performance Classes [Keyboard/Instrumental] will be deducted from the overall Performance mark [weighted at 60% of their year's total marks].

Such deductions shall be made for all absences [without a certified and sanctioned excuse] without limit, and persistent non-attendance could result in failing the year.

Supporting Studies

100% attendance is expected in **all** Academic lectures. Failure to do so will result in the following penalties: 5% will be deducted from the relevant module/component where students only attend a minimum of 75%; an additional 1 mark for each lecture missed thereafter will be deducted from the relevant module/component.

RIAM Holistic

Students should attend all Holistic lectures. Failure to do so will result in the following penalties: If on aggregate, a student's attendance drops to 75% a 5% deduction will be applied to the weighted

Performance Electives

Chorale and Non-orchestral Protocol: -

- Full (100%) attendance is compulsory for all RIAM ensembles. Performance projects may include weekends and evening hours.
- Except where there is duly certified or other approved reason, students who miss a rehearsal or performance will be removed from the ensemble for that specific performance project and will bear a 10% deduction off their overall performance mark (weighted at 60% of their year's total marks)
- A further unexplained absence in a further performance project will bear an additional 10% deduction and the student will again be removed from that project.
- Such deductions shall be made for all absences without limit, and persistent non-attendance could result in failing the year.

Orchestral Protocol

- 100% attendance is expected. All musicians must attend all rehearsals. Performance projects may include weekends and evening hours.
 - If too ill to attend, students must contact the Orchestra Manager and must provide a doctor's note certifying illness.
 - Rehearsals begin at the stated times and students are expected to be in their seat, warmed up and ready to tune 5 minutes before the start of each rehearsal.
 - If a student is late for a rehearsal or performance they will bear a 10% deduction off their overall performance mark (weighted at 60% of their year's total marks)
 - A second lateness for rehearsal or performance will bear an additional 10% deduction
 - Such deductions shall be made for each lateness without limit, and persistent lateness could result in failing the year.
 - Except where there is duly certified or other approved reason, student absence may result in failure of the Performance Elective following referral to the Undergraduate Committee and ratification at the Exam Board.
- All programmes must adhere to syllabus requirements and must be created in agreement with the principal study teacher. Deadlines for submission can be found in the [academic calendar](#).
 - Where a student does not submit their exam programme by the given deadline [please refer to the [academic calendar](#)] and as required by the Undergraduate Committee a deduction of 5 marks for that exam will be imposed as a penalty.
 - Repertoire may be substituted [on the relevant form] subject to approval by the relevant Head of Faculty.
 - Throughout the entire course, any work or study performed at examination may not be repeated again in any subsequent examination unless the work or study has only been performed in part and not as a whole in a previous examination. Urtext editions are recommended where possible and available.
 - All performances will be open to the public.
 - Where a student does not satisfactorily present Programme Notes for a performance exam, a penalty reduction of 5 marks will be imposed.
 - Use of sheet music:-
 - **Pianoforte** students have no memory requirements, except for the Quick Memorisation tests in the Mid-Year Examinations of years 1 and 2.
 - **Harpsichord** students have no memory requirements.
 - **Accordion** students have no memory requirements for End-of-Year Performance.
 - **Organ** students have no memory requirements in the mid-year or End-of-Year Examination.
 - **String students** have no specific memory requirements, however are advised to perform works from memory where this is standard practice, for example concerti, virtuoso pieces and solo Bach. Playing works from sheet music when it is standard practice to perform from memory may indicate to the panel a lower level of preparation, and this will be taken into account when awarding the overall mark.
 - **Wind, Brass, Percussion students** are not required to perform their examination programmes from memory but are encouraged to do so.

- **Vocal students** will be required to perform all examinations from memory. Those who choose to use the sheet music without prior permission will incur the following penalties:
 - Up to 5 minutes of platform time students will incur a deduction of 1 mark
 - Up to 10 minutes of platform time students will incur a deduction of 2 marks
 - Up to 20 minutes of platform time students will incur a deduction of 3 marks
 - Up to 30 minutes of platform time students will incur a deduction of 4 marks
 - Over 30 minutes of platform time students will incur a deduction of 5 marks
 Students may apply to the Undergraduate Committee for an exemption from this sanction, and this request will be reviewed in light of the demands of the works in question.
- Students who play **over** the maximum duration of the recital will incur a penalty:-
 - A 3 minute latitude and then an initial 3 marks will be deducted followed by an increase of 1 mark per minute up to a max of 10 marks.
- Students who play **under** the maximum duration of the recital will incur a penalty:-
 - A 3 minute latitude and then an initial 3 marks will be deducted followed by an increase of 1 mark per minute up to a max of 10 marks.
- Students **must** submit **all** work assigned for academic modules in the RIAM. Should a student require an extension for any academic piece of work they must contact Prof. Marie Moran. Extensions are not automatically granted. The particular circumstances pertaining to the extension request will be discussed with the student and carefully considered before a determination is reached.
- Any academic work that is received up to one week after the official due date for submission will receive a deduction of 10% of the mark from that assignment.
- Any academic work that is received between one week and up to two weeks following the official due date will receive a deduction of 20% of the mark from that assignment.
- Any academic work that is received later than two weeks from the official due date will receive a mark of zero for that assignment.
- Students will be required to carry out such assignments in all areas of the course, as determined by the lecturer, and to submit complete portfolios of all assignments for assessment.
- Students must provide **two** copies of music for each examination panel. Photocopies of music texts must not be used in examinations unless prior written permission has been obtained from the publisher, in which case the permission must be shown to the examination panel before the examination takes place. Any other exceptions (e.g. copying a single page for difficult page turns etc.) should be in line with the Code of Fair Practice (1992) published by the Music Publishers' Association. [3rd Floor, Strandgate, 18-20 York Building, London WC2N 6JU].
- In all examinations, the examiners' decision is final.

The following are the modes of assessment for each module

Principal Study - Performance Requirements

Instrumentalists

- An end-of-year recital of 15 minutes maximum duration is required. This recital will be performed to, and assessed by, an examination panel. This recital will take place during the end-of-year examination session and will be open to the public. The performance will be assessed as a marked examination.

Vocalists

- An end-of-year recital of 15 minutes maximum duration is required. This recital will be performed to, and assessed by, an examination panel. This recital will take place during the end-of-year examination session and will be open to the public. The performance will be assessed as a marked examination.

The recital should consist of at least the following:

One Aria in Italian [from 16th - 18th century]

One Art Song in English

One own choice song [in any language]

Composers

- To submit a Portfolio of Compositions

Supporting Studies**Assessment****Aural Training**

Continuous Assessment	40%
End-of-year Examination	60%

Rudiments/Harmony & Counterpoint

Continuous Assessment	40%
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The 24-week cycle will be broken into 4 segments each of 6 weeks duration. These will occur at six-weekly intervals and will include the four elements outlined above (rudiments, Melodic writing, basic harmony and basic counterpoint).

End-of-year Examination	60%
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History 60%

Project assignments:

Produce 2 sets of programme notes (1000 words each), each worth 5%

2 Essay (1000 words) 45%

End-of-year Examination 40%

1 Essay style question on a general topic

Definitions & Explanations of Form (e.g. Opera Fugue etc.)

Continuous Assessment: 100%

Essays: Produce two essays (1500 words each), 25% each

Presentation: Give two presentations on two works from the periods covered in the course, 25% each

Note

Essays should contain musical examples where appropriate. Essays which do not contain musical examples, will not receive a mark of more than 65%.

Performance Electives

The relevant conductor and or Orchestral/Ensemble manager will monitor the student's attendance and participation in this component on a continuous assessment basis.

7.2 Examination Panels

Principal Study:

The end-of-year examination will normally be conducted by an exam panel consisting of:-

- Two members of the Board of Studies or their nominees

Performance Classes

The relevant lecturer of which the student is a member will assess this module on a Pass/Fail basis, and a report will be submitted to the Board of Studies.

Supporting Studies:

The panel of examiners for these modules will be the relevant lecturer(s) on this course, who will submit a mark in respect of each student for their assessments and end-of-year examination.

Performance Ensembles:

The relevant conductor(s) of the orchestra/chorale/ensemble and or the Orchestra/Ensemble Manager of which the student is a member will assess this component module, and a report will be submitted to the Board of Studies.

7.3 Re-sit Assessments

Practical Study

A student who fails their **end-of-year recital** will be required to repeat the examination at the re-sit session in the September immediately following his/her first attempt.

Performance Classes

Students will incur penalties for non-attendance – please see non-attendance penalties [page 6]

Supporting Study

A student who fails their **continuous assessments** will be required to repeat the relevant academic module with attendance [a fee for this is applicable].

A student who fails their **end-of-year written examination** will be required to repeat the relevant examination[s] at the re-sit session in the September immediately following his/her first attempt.

Note

- The result of a re-sit examination/re-submission will be judged simply on a pass/fail basis [pass = 40%] and the **overall grade** recorded for the relevant academic year will be recorded as a **pass/fail** [this result will also be clearly indicated on transcripts]
- In an exam/assignment for which there was an approved excused absence i.e. medical certificate, the grade achieved on the second sitting (first attempt) will be graded accordingly.

7.4 Result procedures

Board of Examiners

The Board of Examiners will consist of the Board of Studies, which will consider all relevant matters pertaining to a student's level of performance and attainment at the diet of assessment/examinations, and declare a recommended result in respect of each student. Such results, certified by the Director or Administrative Officer [Registry] of the RIAM, will be displayed on the noticeboard as soon as possible following the deliberations of the Board of Examiners.

Students will receive copies of their results and detailed remarks in the case of Principal study by e-mail sent from the Third/Fourth Level Office and copied to the relevant lecturer. This process ensures students receive feedback on their strengths and areas for improvement.

7.5 Awards

The final overall percentages will be graded as follows:

- Distinction 70% +
- Honours 60% - 69%
- Merit 50% - 59%
- Pass 40% - 49%
- Fail 0% - 39%

7.6 Appeals procedure

Please refer to the [RIAM Regulations and Policy Documents](#) for full-time students.

7.7 Graduation

Students who successfully complete all aspects of the course will receive a certificate stating the overall grade achieved.

