

## Student Transitions: Example of transitions practice

**Title:** Enabling and supporting students through transitions to professional practice: Arts Leadership and Fundraising

### Transition(s) the practice supports:

- Self-diagnosis of readiness to study with professional practice outwith their core skills base
- Module framework: 10 credits
- Fundraising and Leadership skills, advocacy and persuasive arguments
- Horizon scanning and strategic fit for the profession

### Abstract:

**Arts Leadership and Fundraising** is one of the *Choice* modules on offer at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Unique modular offerings, available to all students regardless of programme expertise, *Choice* enables students to strategically diversify or specialise in defined areas of professional practice. This example of transitions practice allows students to engage with a range of skills and practices directly relevant to business start-ups and working in the subsidised and/or commercial arts economy.

### Description:

Arts Leadership and Fundraising was first delivered in 2012/13. A 10 credit module at SCQF level 9, the learning experience is designed to engage students with contemporary arts debates, consider and critique leadership theory in an arts context, curate and communicate persuasive arguments all in a multi-disciplinary class setting.

Particularly relevant to transitions practice is the age/stage debate: this module (within our Academic Framework) enables students to self-diagnose the best placement of this type of training in relation to the development of their core skills and projected career destination. This allows students to ensure their engagement with areas such as project planning, budget formulation and effective fundraising strategies is optimal in relation to their own personal development planning.

The module has been popular and recruits a wide range of students from diverse backgrounds. The students formulate a case-study and a funding application for the formally assessed outcome of the module. Feedback from the module has been exceptionally strong:

*“The course enabled me to really think about the business side of my artistic practice, which is producing. I was able to take my learning into my future work, and it also worked well alongside my final modules for university. It really set me up for leaving the Conservatoire with the knowledge needed about leadership, management models, modes of fundraising and how it all works together.”*

Daisy Douglas, BA Contemporary Performance Practice (now living and working in Australia as a Producer)

*“I took this module in my 3<sup>rd</sup> year at the Royal Conservatoire. At the time I was applying for funding to accept my place onto the Master of Performance (Vocal – Mezzo-Soprano) course at the Royal Academy of Music, London. With the help of this class and Helen’s expertise I went on to secure in excess of £15,000 through my applications. This allowed me to accept my place, move to London and begin the*

*next stage of my career. I feel very strongly that this class is one of the most significant subjects I ever took part in during my undergraduate – I certainly don't think I would be living, studying and working in London without it."*

Fiona Joice, BMus Performance (now undertaking an MMus in vocal performance at the Royal Academy of Music, London)

Of real significance, is the impact this module has had upon not only students engaging with the module but the reach of their associated career trajectories as they transition into further study/the profession:

*"I took Arts Leadership and Fundraising in my final year at the Conservatoire. It was the perfect class for me to have taken both now and then. It focused my mind on two specific areas, fundraising for the arts, and assessing the situation within arts organisations. Going to a Conservatoire is empowering, but it is also important for students in training to receive teaching on how to make things happen. This is especially the case at a Conservatoire with such a hotbed of entrepreneurial activity, and also in a hyper competitive music world where musicians have to rely on themselves more and more to make things happen.*

*At the time of the class I was putting together and opera tour with my company Raucous Rossini, and we had no money. The fundraising section in the class was so important for me, it crucially allowed me the flexibility to use a live funding application in class. This was a great step forward for me, and we actually received £1000 worth of funding from the application. I think it will be virtually impossible for any musicians today not to have to fill out these sort of applications on a yearly basis. A year on from this class, the skills gained have helped me raise over £10,000 for my opera company.*

*The section on assessing performance and structure at arts organisations was revelatory. It made me understand just how seriously I needed to take my 'admin' and my 'analytical' skills if I wanted to take my career forward as a Leader in the Arts. This part of the module inspired me to undertake a Masters in Business and Management at Strathclyde University, and helped me put forward a proposal that won me the top scholarship on the course. I am now pursuing creative leadership positions in the music world, working 6 jobs, organising another opera tour with 30 musicians and starting work on my dissertation, which I am sure will build upon the work we started in Arts Leadership and Fundraising.*

*The fact that many of my peers at the Conservatoire now (rather cheekily) tell me they are relying on me for future work is in part testament to this course and Helen's work at the Conservatoire."*

Max Fane, BMus Performance (now undertaking an MSc in Business and Management, Strathclyde University and Founder of Raucous Rossini: [www.raucousrossini.com](http://www.raucousrossini.com))

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**All examples provided will be posted to the Enhancement Themes website with the intention of including them in the National Transitions map**