



Royal Conservatoire
of Scotland

Pre-entry / Induction at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Transition(s) the practice supports: The transition from successful applicant to matriculated student

Abstract: This case study focusses on recent enhancements put in place to tackle two areas that are mainly relevant for a Conservatoire; a long lead time from audition to matriculation and the relative uniqueness of Conservatoire education. The first, a Freshers' Facebook page, was set up to keep-in-touch with our successful applicants prior to entry. Alongside this was the further refinement of our Freshers' Friend scheme. The second, a Family Welcome Event, was introduced in recognition that many students would be the first in their generation to be entering a Conservatoire environment. Both of these situations may present boundaries to an applicant's transition into our institution and their subsequent retention.

Description: Because of the performance-based nature of the Conservatoire's programmes all applicants are invited for audition/interview. This approach serves the dual purpose of allowing the audition/interview panel to assess at first hand an applicant's suitability for their chosen programme and it also affords the applicant the opportunity to gain a deeper insight into the nature of that programme and the opportunities that the Conservatoire offers.

The majority of Music auditions are held in November, ten months prior to matriculation. Drama, Dance, Production, and Screen auditions/interviews take place from December until June. It is clear then that many of our applicants have a significant delay between offer and matriculation. It is therefore imperative that we keep-in-touch with this group to ensure a smooth transition into the Conservatoire.

In a conservatoire education, individual development is paramount involving one-to-one and small-group teaching as the focal point of the experience. The teachers have significant profiles as leading professionals with a specialised knowledge of what is required to succeed. This provides a full timetable of activity each day, while allowing time for private and self-directed study. This intensive preparation will lead to public performance, often in diverse settings, be they schools, theatres, dance studios, instrument museums, hospitals or various forms of studios.

Like most HEIs, we provide our students with a variety of information ranging from fees and funding to the weather in Glasgow. Annually, we conduct a First Year survey in order to review and enhance the provision of pre-entry information and the matriculation/induction process generally. In addition, an Induction review group

meets annually to review and enhance the pre student experience. This group has representatives ranging from Directors of Schools, IT Support, Welfare, Conservatoire Counsellor & Disability Adviser, Health and Safety, and School representatives. Based on feedback, and with limited budget, we looked to make some small but significant enhancements in the last few years to demystify Conservatoire education and ease the transition into our institution.

The first enhancement was the creation, in 2012, of a **Facebook Freshers'** page open only to successful applicants with contributions from the SU, current students, admissions, and welfare staff. Evidence from our 2013/14 First Year survey indicates that this has been a useful resource that applicants can use as and when appropriate.

"The website and the Facebook page was really informative and friendly, and I particularly enjoyed looking through the photo galleries at what students were up to and day to day student life."

"The RCS Facebook page could have much more about the Music Department as almost all posts are related to Drama/reposts from the brass page. It would be beneficial if, when we have visiting artists (e.g. keyboard/Friday at 1 series) we advertised this on the RCS Facebook page."

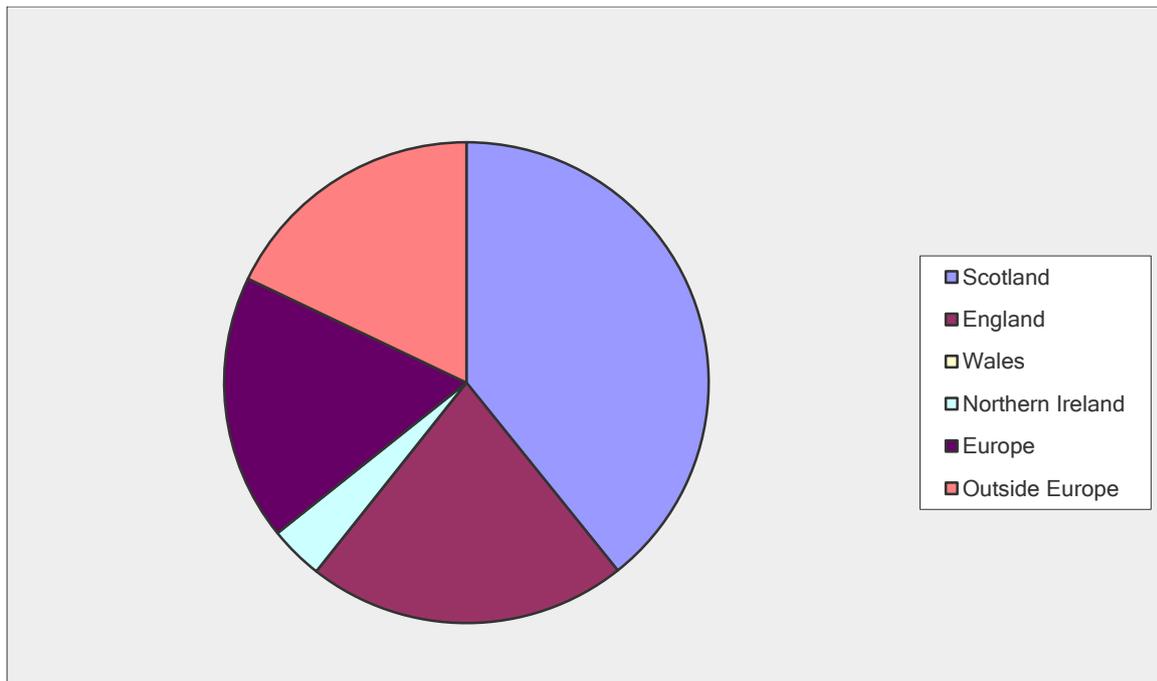
We hope that the 2014/15 First Year survey, which closes in February 2015, highlights more areas for improvement and provides further evidence of the group's usefulness.

Prior to our Facebook Freshers' page we created a **Freshers' Friend** scheme in 2011. The scheme allows a new student to contact an allocated current student directly regarding any questions they have about being a new student at the Conservatoire or general queries about living in Glasgow.

Recruitment for Friends begins in April with training of successful applicants taking place in May and June. The training consists of the duties and responsibilities needed to become a Friend and some guidance on common scenarios that may occur. Friends participation is recognised within the HEAR.

The second development was the introduction of a **Family Welcome Event** for students and their Families/Carers in September 2012, held the weekend prior to matriculation. The event includes a tour of the Renfrew Street campus and a welcome speech from the Directors of School. As of 2014 we offered transportation from our Halls of Residence and a tour of Spiers Locks Studios.

Feedback from the event showed that whilst the majority of attendees were from Scotland a good proportion were from the EU and beyond.



“As a parent of an international student, I greatly appreciated the parent welcome event. My only suggestion would be to prove a Q&A session for the directors of each specialism.”

“The tour group we were in was very large, with one tour guide. It was difficult to hear what the tour guide was saying and we sometimes missed what had been said by the time we caught up with the group. We did however greatly appreciate the opportunity to tour and thought the Director’s presentation was excellent.”

“Very impressed with RCS and am excited for my daughter to have this incredible opportunity!”

“RCS students who helped with moving in at Liberty House were a credit to you - friendly, helpful, supportive and happy to share their experiences.”

“Thank you very much for taking the time, to extend a warm welcome to the student’s family and friends”

With the support of the Transitions Enhancement Theme we plan to continue to review and enhance our induction processes.

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