



Royal Conservatoire  
*of Scotland*

# Transitions 20/40: Advice and Guidance through Mentoring

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## Transitions the Practice Supports

Transitions 20/40 is a strategic pre-HE initiative designed and delivered by the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland to enable young people from SIMD 20/40 communities to develop their creative talent and potential and achieve a positive training destination.

### Abstract

Transitions 20/40 recognises that equitable access to quality learning and teaching is only one component of a holistic package of experiences a student requires exposure to as they prepare for a potential career in the creative industries.

In addition to 150 hours of fully-funded direct teaching, Transition 20/40 offers highly bespoke and specialised 1:1 mentoring to over 100 pre-HE students currently. They receive developmental and career guidance from RCS academic and support staff to develop skills and knowledge in:

- Leadership and self-confidence
- Analytical and problem-solving skills
- Communication and presentation skills
- The ability to receive and offer constructive criticism
- Powers of reflection
- Networking within and understanding Scotland's cultural landscape

Providing young people with an RCS mentor augments both their school and RCS learning experiences. It also aligns our practice with the Four Capacities within the Curriculum for Excellence, i.e. successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

### Description

The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland designed Transitions 20/40 in response to the knowledge that funding pre-Higher Education training and development activities can be a significant barrier for many people planning to pursue a career in the performing or production arts.

Early access to high quality, specialised training is essential to develop the requisite skills in drama, modern ballet, music, production and screen. However, they are inconsistently available across Scotland and, where opportunities do exist, the cost of participation is often prohibitively expensive.

Transitions 20/40 helps pre-HE students overcome financial barriers and provides practical guidance to future artists, creators, educators, performers and producers from Scotland's most deprived postcode areas as they enter the 'transition into training' phase of their life.

More than a third of the current Transitions 20/40 cohort identify as the first person in their family to work towards study at an HEI. A further 39% indicate that they attend a secondary school with a low progression rate to Higher Education. Our students are clear about the challenges they face when trying to access impartial and relevant information about further study when no-one in their support network is able to furnish them with key advice about student life, ongoing training or career expectations.

This is a completely new and enhanced approach to supporting pre-HE students at RCS and employs experienced professionals to fill the gaps in knowledge and support to young people from some of this country's most marginalised communities.

In academic year 2014/15, Transitions 20/40 will recruit and train twenty mentors. Academic staff, the RCS Principal and colleagues from support departments have committed to being involved in this development. These colleagues will act as positive role models and as sources of valuable information and guidance that many young people find hard to access locally.

Transitions 20/40 is working closely with organisations such as MCR Pathways and the Glasgow Caledonian University to ensure that RCS staff receive generic and subject specific training. Production of a mentor's handbook is also underway; as the numbers of Transitions 20/40 students increases so too will the need for well-briefed and trained RCS mentors.

Since the inception of the project in autumn 2013, RCS has also funded a PhD research student to analyse the impact of the initiative. Early feedback from our learners indicates that the objective support, advice and guidance a mentor can offer assists them to develop core skills, clarify and articulate educational and career aspirations and gain the requisite confidence to attain a positive training or employment destination.

## Contact Details

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