



CUKAS – Applying to Conservatoires 2020-21

<https://www.ucas.com/conservatoires>

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UCAS Conservatoires

UCAS is the application service for performance-based music, dance, drama, and musical theatre courses at conservatoires in the UK – at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. Conservatoire courses are very much based on practical training and performance, rather than the more academic courses available through UCAS Undergraduate and UCAS Postgraduate. If you're interested in a practical discipline, such as instrumental or vocal performance, then a conservatoire course may be a more beneficial route for you.

All the information, advice and guidance you'll need to make your application to study at a conservatoire is available here.

The different conservatoires

Each conservatoire has its own strengths and specialisms, so it's important to research all of them to find the right fit for you. For example, although all conservatoires offer music courses, only two offer drama courses. To help decide, research what graduates from each conservatoire have gone on to do, to see if this fits with your aspirations.

The conservatoires in the UCAS Conservatoires scheme are:

- [Royal Birmingham Conservatoire](#)
- [Bristol Old Vic Theatre School](#)
- [Leeds College of Music](#)
- [Royal Academy of Music](#)
- [Royal College of Music](#)
- [Royal Conservatoire of Scotland](#)
- [Royal Northern College of Music](#)
- [Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama](#)
- [Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance](#)

Studying at a conservatoire

All courses at conservatoires have a strong vocational, performance orientation, and course structures are reflective of the industry. This means graduates from conservatoires will be accustomed to the ways of working, hours, and expectations of the industry they are going to work in, as they will have practised this throughout their course.

Instead of a limited number of contact hours per week at a university, conservatoire students often work a 09:00 to 17:00, Monday to Friday routine. Performances and workshops are mostly held in the evenings and at weekends. On top of this, students are expected to practise extensively in their own time.

As conservatoire study is performance-centred, the year is broken down into a block of academic weeks, followed by a block of performance weeks.

The staff

All teaching staff at conservatoires are working professionals. There is a strong emphasis on one-to-one tuition, alongside group work and performances.

Professional musicians teach at conservatoires as part of their portfolios, and many teach at more than one conservatoire. At postgraduate level, students can choose to study under a particular tutor because of their reputation and distinction in their field. A particular tutor can be a main driving factor for choosing to study at a particular conservatoire.

Deadlines for applications

For courses starting in 2021, your application should be with us by one of these dates to ensure consideration by the conservatoires:

1 October 2020, 18:00 – for music courses

15 January 2021, 18:00 – for most undergraduate dance, drama or musical theatre courses

However, there are some exceptions, particularly for certain audition locations, international applicants or postgraduate courses, so check the conservatoire websites for full details.

If you miss the deadline for your course, you **must** ask the conservatoires whether they have vacancies before applying – we'll still process your application either way, but it will be deemed 'late' and some conservatoires might not consider you.

What needs to be done by these dates?

You'll need to leave enough time to complete your application, resolve any queries and make sure it reaches UCAS by the deadline. Later, after you [find courses](#) and you're ready to [apply](#), we'll explain everything in more detail, but here's an overview.

[Fill in your details, qualifications and course choices.](#)

[Write a personal statement](#) to demonstrate you'll be a good student.

Pay your [application and audition fees](#).

Your application will also require an [academic and practical reference](#) to be sent by email or post to each conservatoire.

You cannot apply for deferred entry. However, when considering applications, conservatoires can offer deferred places in response to an applicant's request, or after obtaining the applicant's agreement.

You'll still need to meet the conditions of the offer this year – for example, if you receive a conditional offer in 2019/20 to start a course in 2021, you have to meet the conditions of the offer by 31 August 2019 (unless the conservatoire tells you otherwise).

Make sure you're sure about the course though, because if you secure a place you'll be committed to it, and could only be released from the course if the course provider agrees to let you.

[Find out more about deferring your application](#)

You can't hold more than one confirmed place in higher education, so if you make an application through two or more of our application systems at the same, please accept one and withdraw from the others.

How to meet entry requirements

As well as an audition and/or interview, each course has different requirements you should have or be working towards in school or college – usually a mix of qualifications, subjects or exam grades. As such, many applicants apply during their final year at school or college.

When you try to [find courses](#) you'll need to check the entry requirements so you can apply for courses you have a good chance of getting a place on.

This is where the option to apply for up to six courses comes in handy, so you can choose courses with different entry requirements.

Getting started

1. Choose your subject

Conservatoire courses largely focus on practical tuition, performance experience and encouraging a great variety of creative influences and ideas – all backed up by academic study and professional development.

Your choice of subject will first of all be about where your talents and experience are based, but also something that leads towards a creative arts career you'd enjoy.

Thinking about more than one course or subject?

To increase your chances of getting a place on a course, UCAS give you the option of applying to up to six courses at once.

However, there's usually no need to apply for more than one course at any particular conservatoire.

- If you're applying for music courses you can choose two instruments if you want: to study equally, to study one more than the other, or to give two options – either of which you'd be happy to study as your one main instrument. You can study two instruments equally at most conservatoires.
- If you want to apply for several courses for the same instrument or discipline, just mention one on your UCAS Conservatoires application, then contact the conservatoire to mention your interest in other courses (stating your name and the Personal ID we'll email you after you've submitted your application to us).
- This is relevant to the step below too; the type of course.

2. Choose a type of course

Conservatoire courses are available at university levels, but within those levels there are different types of courses, different ways to study them and varying entry requirements.

- Undergraduate – diploma of higher education, non-award qualifications, or three or four-year degree (BA, BMus) courses
- Postgraduate – one or two-year master’s (MMus, MA) or postgraduate diploma (PgDip) courses. Alternatively, there are research degrees which you can learn about and apply for directly with the conservatoires.

Not sure what courses you’re qualified for?

As with picking multiple courses or subjects at any conservatoire, there’s usually no need to apply for more than one course at the same conservatoire. Here’s how to figure out which course to apply for.

Firstly, you’ll know whether you’re at undergraduate or postgraduate level – depending whether you’ve previously completed further education or graduated from an undergraduate degree.

Then choose a type of course at that level. They have different entry requirements, so it’s a good idea to contact the conservatoire to check which course they think you should apply for.

If there’s uncertainty over which will be the most suitable, just apply for the highest level course you’re interested in. Then the conservatoire will be able to make a final decision at the audition or interview stage.

For example, if you’ll be studying at undergraduate level and you’re not sure if you’ll be qualified for a diploma or a BMus degree, only apply for the BMus degree.

If you’ll be studying at postgraduate level and are not sure whether to apply for a postgraduate diploma or a master’s degree, only apply for the master’s degree.

3. Choose a conservatoire

Some students set their heart on a particular conservatoire, while others just want to choose the course they like the sound of best.

Either way is fine, but before you look for courses, check the different entry requirements and application deadlines.

When to apply

Some courses require applications almost a year in advance of the start date, and you’ll need to have or be working towards some qualifications from school or college. As such, many applicants apply during their final year of school or college courses.

There are some variations in the deadlines and requirements though – find out when to apply and what the entry requirements might be.

How to choose a course

After getting started with what to study, entry requirements and application deadlines, you might still find a large number of courses to choose from around the country.

Search for UCAS Conservatoires courses

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/what-and-where-study/ucas-undergraduate-what-study>

- If it is not already selected, select ‘Courses’ from the first drop-down menu.
- Select the scheme (UCAS Conservatoires).
- Enter the subject you’re interested in.
- Click the search icon.

Choosing these details means you'll only see relevant courses for the scheme, year, and subject you're interested in.

Compare course content

When you search for courses, read through the details to see if you like what's on offer and how it's taught.

- Who are the tutors and are they experts in areas you want to gain experience in?
- What's the balance between practical training, lectures, seminars and performances?
- What performance opportunities and masterclasses are available?
- What professional and industry links does the conservatoire have?

Applying for multiple courses?

There's often no need to apply for more than one course at any particular conservatoire.

If you're applying for music courses, you can choose either a joint course (50/50), a major/minor course (75/25) or you can provide two options, either of which you'd be happy to study.

If you want to apply for several subjects for the same instrument or discipline, just mention one on your UCAS Conservatoires application, then contact the conservatoire directly to mention your interest in other courses (stating your name and Personal ID).

Not sure what courses you're qualified for?

Check with the conservatoire. If there's uncertainty over which will be the most suitable, just apply for the highest level course you're interested in, then the conservatoire will be able to make a final decision at the audition or interview stage.

Compare conservatoires and locations

There are a few ways you can research conservatoires – read their websites and prospectuses, or speak to them at conservatoire open days.

- What creative arts do they specialise in?
- Can you get experience in or payment for public performances?
- Do they have facilities or societies you'd want to join?
- How near home, a city centre or the countryside are they?

Check conservatoire reviews

As well as talking through your ideas with family, friends, teachers or advisers, you can find other opinions online.

Get the student viewpoint at Unistats for subject and conservatoire reviews.

Read conservatoire reviews from The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

Check specialist league tables that rank course providers. Make sure you check the sources though, as some are biased. The Guardian, The Times and The Complete University Guide are some of the more impartial places to look.

What the entry requirements could be

Each course has different requirements – usually a mix of qualifications, subjects or exam grades they recommend you have or be working towards when you apply.

You'll be able to see exactly what they are when you search for courses, but here's the general idea.

Qualifications, subjects and exam grades – usually A levels or other qualifications at a similar level. Sometimes these are converted into UCAS Tariff points too, which we'll explain below.

An audition – a performance or interview at the conservatoire to assess your skills and suitability for the course – the conservatoire will let you know the details after you apply.

Your overall suitability – course descriptions often mention skills, interest or experience it's good to have, so look out for these details because applications can be quite competitive.

Further requirements – it's possible there may be health, financial or Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) checks.

<https://www.ucas.com/conservatoires/studying-conservatoire/visit-conservatoires>

Applying using UCAS Apply

You can only apply once in a cycle. Please don't apply more than once in a cycle, as you can't receive a refund for further applications. If you've applied in previous cycles and want to apply again, you'll have to submit a new application.

<https://www.ucas.com/conservatoires/how-apply-through-ucas-conservatoires/ucas-conservatoires-apply-and-track>

There's quite a bit to fill in, but you don't need do it all at once – you can save and sign back in anytime. You'll also find more help text within the Apply system.

1. Register to use Apply

Add some personal details, get a username, create a password and set your security question.

2. Sign in to the welcome screen

Here you'll find your Personal ID – quote this if you need to contact UCAS or your conservatoires. In 'my application' you add the other information that's needed.

3. Fill in the rest of your personal details

You can give a parent, guardian or adviser nominated access if you'd like them to speak on your behalf.

4. Fill in some further details

Nationality, residential category, student support arrangements (how you expect to pay for your tuition

5. State your previous education

Enter details of up to five schools, colleges and universities you have most recently attended or are still attending.

Please include any conservatoire junior departments or academies you've attended too.

6. State your previous qualifications

You must enter all your qualifications – whether you have the result (even any that were ungraded) or you're still awaiting exams and results.

For course results you're still waiting for, these are the exam results we're able to process and forward on to conservatoires. If any of your pending qualifications aren't on here, you still need to add them to your application, but also remember you'll need to send the results on to your chosen conservatoires when you get them.

7. Make your course choices

You can choose up to six courses – in no preference order.

- Conservatoires will be able to see where else you've applied, but your choices are listed in no preference order.
- There are 'study type' options for music courses, but for other subjects this will just state 'Main specialism'.
- Then you can choose from one of the audition locations.

There's usually no need to apply for more than one course at any particular conservatoire.

Are you studying music?

If you're applying for music courses, you might be able to select two instruments if you'd like to.

- Main specialism is just one instrument.
- Joint main specialism is two instruments studied equally.
- Secondary specialism is two instruments – one as your main and one as your secondary.
- Alternative main specialism is giving two options, either of which you'd be happy to study as one main instrument.

Thinking about several courses for the same instrument or discipline?

- If you want to apply for several courses for the same instrument or discipline at the same conservatoire, just mention one of them on your UCAS Conservatoires application.
- Then contact the conservatoire directly to mention your interest in other courses (stating your name and the Personal ID we'll email you after you've submitted your application to us).

8. Write a personal statement

This is your chance to show conservatoires why you want to study the course and why you'd make a great student. It might take a while until you're happy with it and you've checked it through with your personal tutor, so it's a good idea to start early.

9. Get two references

You'll need an academic reference and a practical reference More in the next section.

Your academic reference will be completed by your personal tutor.

This must be completed by the end of October for music courses, or as soon as possible for courses with other deadlines – check conservatoire websites for specific dates.

10. Read the declaration

Once you've marked all previous sections as complete you'll be able to read and agree to the declaration – which allows us to process your info and send it to your conservatoires.

11. Verify your email address

Can't see the verification email?

12. Pay application and assessment fees

There's an application fee of £25, paid when you send your application to us.

For most courses you'll need to attend an audition or interview, or send a recording or portfolio to each conservatoire.

There's usually a fee for these auditions and assessments – we collect most of these fees at this stage, but in some cases you'll need to pay the conservatoire directly.

When you're ready to send your application, the Apply system will tell you how much each fee is, and whether you need to pay now or send the fee direct to the conservatoire.

References

Who should write your academic reference?

BHASVIC write your academic reference.

Completing your part of both the reference forms

Enter your name and Personal ID on each reference form and save for each type of referee.

Enter the following details onto an academic and practical reference form:

- your main specialism/discipline
- the course applied for
- tick your choice of conservatoire

Send the academic reference form with your parts completed to he@bhasvic.ac.uk copying in your personal tutor, your tutors reference will be added and it will be sent off to your conservatoires.

Who should write your practical reference?

Your practical referee should be someone, such as your music, dance, drama or art teacher/tutor, or head of department, who can comment on your:

- ability, experience and potential in your specialist field
- general academic ability in music, dance, drama, or musical theatre
- practical skills
- attitude to work and reliability
- commitment to music, dance, drama, or musical theatre as a profession
- ability to communicate
- relevant experience

It is not permitted for either you, your family, friends, partners or ex-partners to write your reference. If subsequently we find this to be the case, the application may be cancelled.

You need an academic reference and a practical reference sent to each conservatoire for each of the courses you have applied for.

Key dates

If you're applying for music courses before the October deadline, aim to have your references with each conservatoire by the end of October. However, a small number of courses involve an additional shortlisting stage and require an earlier submission. Please check the conservatoires' websites for such requirements.

If applying for dance, drama, or musical theatre courses, aim to have your references with each conservatoire as soon as possible. It is recommended that this is no later than one month after the published deadline date for the course.

If you're applying after the October deadline, please send references to the conservatoires as soon as possible.

Useful links

<https://www.ucas.com/conservatoires>

<https://www.ucas.com/conservatoires/how-apply-through-ucas-conservatoires/ucas-conservatoires-apply-and-track>

For more information,  [please see the Conservatoires UK guide to studying at a conservatoire](#) (10.4 MB).

You can download the reference forms here:

 [UCAS Conservatoires academic reference form](#) (124 KB)

 [UCAS Conservatoires practical reference form](#) (125 KB)