



Guide for International Students

Session 2007/08

This guide is available in large print and on audiotape on request.

Contents

Welcome	3
Section One: Why Study at the RSAMD	4
Section Two: Frequently Asked Questions	6
Section Three: Coming to Scotland and the RSAMD	11
Visa Information	11
Financial Matters	13
Accommodation & Cost of Living	16
Arriving in Glasgow	20
Useful Contact Numbers	26
Appendix A: Advice on raising funds for your studies	30

WELCOME!

We're glad you've decided to consider studying at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. The Academy welcomes students from all backgrounds and students with disabilities.

Wherever you are in your journey – just considering applying or just accepted an offer – we hope this International Handbook can help you with all your questions.

There's a lot to consider in studying abroad and we want to help you make the most informed decision you can about one of the most important moves you'll make in your life.

We've tried to design this handbook in a way that will help guide you through a number of areas and while there's a lot of information to take in, we hope the layout will help make it clear what you should read – whatever point you're at.

- Some information is most helpful when you are just browsing and thinking about courses. You'll find this in **Section One**.
- Some information is most helpful when you are trying to decide whether to apply or to accept an offer. You'll find this in **Section Two**.
- Really detailed information is most helpful once you've decided to come and join us – you'll find this in **Section Three**.

Our international office at the RSAMD is new and we are very keen to help get your experience just right. We try to make the experience both personal and as supportive as possible.

Please get in touch if you further advice with either the International Development Administrator (p.rao@rsamd.ac.uk), +44 141 270 8214 or the Registry Team registry@rsamd.ac.uk + 44 141 270 8206.

Equal Opportunities Statement

The Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama welcomes a diverse population of staff and students. The Academy is committed to promoting equality in its activities and it aims to provide a performing, learning, teaching, working and research environment free from unlawful discrimination against applicants, staff and students on the grounds of gender, actual or perceived, sexual orientation, disability, race, colour, nationality, national or ethnic origin, marital status, age and actual or perceived religious or similar belief.

Section One: Why Study at the RSAMD?

The Academy

The RSAMD is one of the most vibrant conservatoires in the UK, with the widest range of courses in the sector. From Contemporary Theatre Practice to Opera; from Scottish Traditional Music to Digital Film and Television, the extraordinary interdisciplinary atmosphere of the Academy is inspiring and the sheer range of performances, masterclasses, screenings and showcases make the Academy the busiest performing venue in Scotland.

We have many international students, from over 30 countries and the mix of nationalities and disciplines combine to make the country's only conservatoire a truly unique place to be. The yearly intake is large enough to make all this performance possible, but small enough to allow the academy to maintain highly individualised and personal attention to every student here. Class sizes are small and our staff is fully dedicated to the artistic and academic growth of each student in their department.

You can download our prospectus from our website and have a look at all our courses. There are also pages on this site that give even more information about courses and life at the Academy. You'll find information about applying – either here in Scotland or by sending in videotapes/CDs/DVDs or portfolios. We also audition in various locations around the world including China, Korea, Norway, and North America.

Life in Glasgow

As well as being a great place to live and study, Glasgow is the UK's third most popular tourist destination. It has earned the titles 'European City of Culture' and 'UK City of Architecture and Design', and is home to Scottish Ballet, Scottish Opera, The Royal Scottish National Orchestra, the new National Theatre of Scotland and BBC Scotland. It has three large universities so the city is very student-oriented.

There are great restaurants, bars, clubs, and along with being the UK's largest shopping centre outside of London, it's no wonder that Glasgow has earned a reputation for being one of the best student-friendly cities in Britain. Yet for all its cosmopolitan atmosphere, the beauty of Loch Lomond is only 40 minutes away by train from Glasgow Central. One of the world's greatest summer art festivals is only 50 minutes away by train in Edinburgh. The natural beauty and cultural uniqueness that make Scotland one of the most popular small countries in the world is one of many benefits to living and learning in Scotland.

Scotland

This is an interesting time to be thinking about earning a degree in Scotland. As part of the newly devolved Scottish government's campaign to encourage talented young professionals to live and work in Scotland, the Scottish Executive has launched 'Fresh Talent' – a scheme through which international students who gain a degree from a Scottish university can apply to stay on in Scotland after they graduate.

For more information on Fresh Talent, please visit the website www.scotlandistheplace.co.uk where you can learn more about this programme and how it might benefit you.

If you would like any advice or guidance in making an application to the Academy, please contact registry@rsamd.ac.uk, +44 141 270 8206.

For more advice relating to being an international student please contact Praveen Rao in the International Office, p.rao@rsamd.ac.uk, +44 141 270 8214.

Section Two: Frequently Asked Questions

This section is designed to answer the questions we most often receive from people who are either thinking about coming here or have been made an offer to come and study. If you've decided to apply or if you've now been offered a place, you'll want to know as much as you can about the specific course you've been accepted on so that you know what to expect from us – and what we will expect from you.

We've tried to include information to help you make an informed choice about your degree, and hopefully to help answer your most immediate questions.

I've been offered a place -- How can I find out more about the course?

Your best first stop is to check the specific course details on this website. All courses have a page or more dedicated to describing the course in detail.

Most of the courses have information about how a typical day is structured. These can vary widely from course to course. Some courses have very full timetables and others allow more time for your individual work but all courses at the Academy are intensive, practical courses which means you will spend much time in the building working in various classes and on a wide variety of performance projects. You can also contact the School Directors, who will be happy to help you with your enquiry:

James Gourlay, Director of the School of Music, j.gourlay@rsamd.ac.uk, +44 141 270 8241

Maggie Kinloch, Director of the School of Drama, m.kinloch@rsamd.ac.uk, +44 141 270 8212

I'm interested in an Erasmus Exchange study – how can I organise this?

The Academy is part of the Erasmus exchange programme. We accept applications for incoming Erasmus students up until 31 March prior to the Academic year you are applying for.

If you are interested in applying, your first step is probably to talk with someone in the international office of your current institution. In most cases they will then get in touch with us directly – but you are also very welcome to contact us. We usually ask for audition materials (CDs, videos, etc.) and acceptance is conditional upon successful audition with the Head of Department. If you are accepted, please read the sections below on visas and accommodation carefully. *Short-term accommodation can be more difficult to arrange and the sooner you know your plans the more help we should be able to give you.*

How can I find out more about living in Glasgow?

These websites give useful insights to life in the city and also about Glasgow culture:

<http://www.glasgowguide.com/>
<http://www.seeglasgow.com/>
<http://www.usefulinfo.co.uk/glasgow/>
<http://www.glasgowlife.com/>

How many students does the Academy have?

The academy has 728 full time students, and 12% of these are overseas students coming from 37 different countries.

What about accommodation?

We assist in any way we can to help students find accommodation in Glasgow. The Academy leases rooms from Liberty Living halls of residence (www.libertystudents.com) and we do our best to ensure that everyone who wants a place gets one. However as places are limited we would advise you to apply early.

Rooms for students with special needs are available on request so please visit the website or contact Liberty Living directly at libertyhouse-glasgow@libertyliving.co.uk.

In terms of applying for this accommodation, application forms will be sent out by the Registry department.

There are also many other options for finding a place to live – because of the high student population, there is a lot of student accommodation available in the city. The general cost of student accommodation in Glasgow is between £70 – 90 per week.

You'll find more detailed information on housing options in the next section.

How do your tuition fees compare with other institutions around the world?

In relation to other conservatoires in Great Britain, the RSAMD overseas fees are very competitive.

A quick comparison per year for an undergraduate course in 2006/2007 looks like this:

Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama: £10,632
Royal Academy of Music (London): £13,650
Royal College of Music (London): £13,950
Juilliard (New York): £13,606

Carnegie Mellon (Boston): £17,699

Royal Northern College of Music (Manchester): £12,000 - £13,100

What about Scholarships?

The RSAMD has a number of scholarships available to students and there is no requirement to apply for scholarship. All scholarships are awarded on the basis of merit at audition. Sometimes you will be notified of a scholarship award along with your offer letter from the Academy.

Sometimes the scholarship award panels have set dates at which they meet to determine how to disburse funds after the audition rounds are completed. Because there are many different scholarships and because many of them are conditional upon specified requirements, it is difficult to give one answer to this question. But if you know you will need scholarship assistance in order to attend you are advised to ask about scholarships when you audition.

What if I don't get a scholarship from the RSAMD?

There are a number of sources, both public and private, that can help you finance your studies. Many governments operate student loans or career development loan schemes that can help. Many students find partial funding through private trusts, sponsors and donors.

If you are applying for a student loan the most important thing to remember is to **APPLY EARLY**. Loan applications can take quite a while to process, so the earlier you start the better. Make sure you read and follow all instructions carefully – particularly about which forms need to come to the Academy for processing, and this will differ depending upon which country you are applying from.

For more information about how to research and plan a fund raising campaign on your own behalf, see Appendix A at the end of this handbook.

Are non-UK students allowed to work in the UK?

Full time students on one of our degree courses can work up to 20 hours per week during term time and full-time hours during vacations.

International students are usually given this allowance when you first pass through customs coming into the country. However, the customs Entry Clearance Officer will still require you to prove that you can pay your course fees and living expenses without working in the UK (see information in Section Three on what you will need to gain an entry visa).

This means you should consider that any part-time work you get can 'top-up' your finances, but should not be looked on as a primary source of funding your studies. If you are coming for a short period of study (under 6 months) you will not be allowed to take part-time work.

As an International student, will my husband or wife be allowed to work?

If you receive permission to stay in the UK for 12 months or more to complete your degree, your husband or wife will probably receive permission to work in the UK while you are studying.

Can I get in touch with other international students who are studying at the Academy now?

Yes – there are a few ways that we can help you with this. You can contact the Student's Union here or visit their website at <http://www.rsamdstudents.co.uk/>. The website has a forum where you can introduce yourself and ask questions. You can also contact us in the international office and we'll do our best to put you in direct touch with someone on the course you're interested in.

Who do I contact for information about fees and financial support?

You can contact Registry on registry@rsamd.ac.uk, +44 141 270 8206. The Registrar and Student Support Manager, Meg Lavery will assist with your enquiry.

Is there any English Language Support at the Academy?

In addition to providing an IELTS or TOEFL score with your application, you may benefit from further English language support either before or during your studies here at the Academy. Courses available for you to attend here in Glasgow – please contact the Registry for further information.

I have a disability. Who do I contact for support?

The Academy Counsellor & Welfare Advisor, Jane Balmforth is able to provide further information and advice. Please contact her on j.balmforth@rsamd.ac.uk, +44 141 270 8282. As a guide there is also a downloadable handbook of "Information for Disabled Students and Applicants" on this website.

How accessible is the RSAMD?

The Academy actively encourages applications by disabled people and seeks to promote genuine equality of opportunity across a wide range of applicants.

The Academy supports wholly the letter and the spirit of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 and acknowledges its general duty under the Act to promote disability equality.

A Counsellor & Welfare Advisor, Access Co-ordinator and Equal Opportunities Officer and an Effective Learning Officer are available to provide advice and support. Individual Learning Agreements for disabled students are drawn up at the beginning of your time as an Academy student.

Efforts have been made to make the Academy building fully accessible. The following is readily available:

- Dedicated off-street parking in close proximity to the building
- Level access at main entrance in Renfrew Street
- Accessible lifts with voice announcements to all floors
- Accessible unisex toilets with emergency call buttons available on all floors
- Wheelchair spaces provided in all performance venues.
- Sign language or audio-described interpretation services available as advertised.
- All RSAMD venues are fitted with an induction loop.
- Guide dogs and hearing dogs are welcome.

Section Three: Coming to the Scotland and the RSAMD

This is the section that is designed to make your preparations for coming to the Academy as thorough as possible so that you are ready to make the most of your experience with us right from the first day. We'll start with all the information you need to obtain a visa, get your finances and accommodation in order and then we'll follow on with all the information you'll need once you're actually living here.

Preparing to Come to Scotland

There are many things to arrange before you leave, so we'll try to give you all the information you'll need as clearly as possible. If you need more advice there are also a couple of other websites that you'll find extremely helpful.

The first is UKCOSA, the Council for International Education, which produces very helpful guidance notes. These can be downloaded from their site on:

<http://www.ukcosa.org.uk/>

Also, the British Government provides comprehensive information on their website for international students:

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/international-students>

We strongly recommend that you spend some concentrated time looking at both of these websites, as they are full of information that is relevant to you and your preparations for coming to the UK.

VISA Information

Students from within the European Economic Area

If you are a national of a country within the European Economic Area (EEA) you can enter the UK freely by showing your passport and you do not need to obtain entry clearance (visa) or produce any other form of documentation.

Students from outside of the EEA

If you are a national of a country outside of the EEA you will have to meet the following conditions to enter the UK as a student:

- ✓ You must have been accepted on to a course of study at the RSAMD
- ✓ You must have a valid visa

- ✓ You must show that you can meet the costs of your course and your living expenses (including those of your family, if they are with you) without working in the UK or claiming state benefits
- ✓ You must intend to leave the UK on completion of your studies.

Students are permitted to bring their spouse and children under the age of 18 to the UK for their period of study as dependants. Please note that government policy does not allow this if you are unmarried.

Do I need a visa?

The answer to this depends on which country you are coming from and the length of course you are attending. Generally, if you are coming from a country outside of the EU you will probably be a 'visa national' – which means that you need a visa. The quickest way to check your status is to go to: www.ukvisas.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1006977149962

Answer the three questions and you will get an immediate answer.

Alternatively, a list of 'visa national' countries is available at www.ukvisas.gov.uk - this website also has other useful information about applying for visas. If you are in any doubt about your status or need any advice you should contact the British Embassy or High Commission in your own country. The easiest way to find them is to go to the website:

www.fco.gov.uk

On the home page that comes up, select Directory (which is near the bottom of the menu on the left side of the page). That will take you to a page with a link, "UK Overseas Missions". Click and you will easily be able to find the all the contact details of the British Embassy office nearest you.

If you are a visa national you will have to complete an application form through the British Embassy or High Commission in the country where you live, and satisfy the Entry Clearance Officer that you meet the conditions in order to obtain a visa. Visa nationals must not attempt to travel to the UK without a valid visa under any circumstances.

If you are coming to study for a course that is longer than 6 months, you will need a VISA no matter which country you are coming from. There is a charge for all types of entry clearance.

You are advised to apply early for entry clearance, even if you are not a visa national, and especially if you wish to come to the UK with your family.

Whether you apply for entry clearance before leaving your country or intend to obtain permission to enter when you arrive in the UK (only possible if you are not a visa national) you will be expected to produce documents to show that you fulfill the requirements described above. You will need to show:

- ✓ Your valid passport
- ✓ Written confirmation of your acceptance on a full-time course at RSAMD (i.e. your offer letter from us)
- ✓ Evidence of adequate funding (e.g. a sponsor's letter, your bank statements or those of someone in your family who is supporting you.)

You may also be asked for a health certificate issued by your country's Department of Health before you are admitted to the UK. Check with the British Embassy or High Commission in your country.

Entry regulations vary between countries. It is therefore advisable to check what is required with the British Embassy or High Commission in your country before leaving. It is also advisable to have your family name (as stated on your passport) shown on all of your documents and to have these documents handy on arrival at immigration.

Avoiding Added Customs Charges

There have been instances when students have been charged customs duty on expensive items (such as instruments, computers etc) whilst in transit at certain airports. To avoid this we advise (if beginning your journey to Glasgow from outside the EU) that you check in items that may attract duty into the hold of the aircraft. Alternatively, you may wish to avoid transiting within the EU.

Financial Matters

There's no getting around it – overseas fees are pretty high wherever you go. We recognise this, and we do all we can to raise money for scholarships that can help students to study with us, and to help you arrange student loans or give you suggestions about where you might look for grants or scholarships elsewhere (see advice on this below). The RSAMD has a number of scholarships and if you are awarded one, the conditions and full amount will be carefully explained to you in a scholarship offer letter.

Thinking ahead about your finances is critical to the success of your studies. You want to know that you have sufficient funds to finance yourself to the end of your course. Tuition fees should be paid in full at the time of matriculation but permission may be granted to pay the fees in three termly installments (there is a charge of 4% of the total fee for this service). If a sponsor pays your tuition fees you must bring a statement from them confirming that your fees will be paid.

If you need any further information regarding payment of tuition fees, transferring of funds etc., please contact the Finance Office +44 141 270 8233.

If you're an undergraduate student from the EU, the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) will pay tuition fees for you, provided that you meet the residential and other criteria set out by them.

If you think you may be eligible and have not already done so, you should apply to SAAS using the appropriate application form. This form is available either from the Registry, or from SAAS (see 'Useful Contacts' below for contact details).

It is very important that you are realistic regarding the level of finance required, and that you have access to sufficient resources to support yourself throughout your course. Even if you are in receipt of a scholarship it is very unlikely that the scholarship will fully cover your living costs.

You may wish to note that the British Council administers a searchable database 'Sources of Funding' which you can access via the British Council's website on:

www.britishcouncil.org/education/gdu/index.htm

If you have any queries regarding your fee status, please contact Registrar and Student Support Manager, Meg Lavery at registry@rsamd.ac.uk

Please note that tuition fees are reviewed annually, which means that they will be subject to a year-on-year increase, usually in line with inflation. If you want to try raising funds for your studies, please see the Appendix to this handbook on page

UK Currency

The UK has not joined the Euro and therefore the currency in the UK is the pound (£). One pound (£1) is divided into one hundred pence (100p). Coins issued are 1p, 2p, 5p, 10p, 20p, 50p, £1 and £2. You can also get notes to the value of £1, £5, £10, £20, £50 and £100.

Scottish banks issue their own notes and these, together with Bank of England notes, are legal tender in Scotland. For a check on current exchange rates please take a look at <http://www.xe.com>, where you can perform quick conversions to make sure you know what your home currency is worth in British pounds (listed on xe.com as GBP).

There is no limit to the amount of money you may bring into the UK but your own country might operate exchange controls. You should make sure that you have enough currency for your arrival in the UK to pay for traveling to Glasgow - and within the city - until you can cash traveler's cheques. We recommend that you have between £100-200 cash with you when you arrive.

Opening a Bank Account

You will find it useful to have your own bank account in the UK while you are studying. It is a good idea to speak to your bank in your home country before you leave and ask their advice about opening a bank account in the UK. Some banks are really helpful in setting up an account for you in Glasgow before you leave – this is a great advantage, so try to arrange if possible. Find out what methods of transferring money are available, including the security of each method and the costs involved. Find out whether or not your home country bank has a 'preferred' bank in the UK and whether this connection would be beneficial to you. Also, find out if you can use a cash card from your home country bank in UK bank machines, to take money out of your account in your home country. A letter from your home bank about your reliability, etc., is also very useful for opening a bank account in the UK.

Because it may take 2-3 weeks to open a bank account in the UK, you should prepare for this by making financial arrangements similar to those you might make if you were a tourist. Bring travelers' cheques or a debit card that will work in cash point/automatic teller machines with you, and possibly a credit card. It is not advisable to carry large amounts of cash or to keep a large sum of money in your accommodation.

There are a number of banks in Glasgow that can provide bank accounts to international students. If you haven't made arrangements before leaving, you should 'shop around' to find the bank that offers the best service for you. It is also very easy these days to set up a bank account online.

Some of the main Scottish banks are: The Bank of Scotland, The Royal Bank of Scotland, and the Clydesdale Bank, all of which have branches close to the Academy.

There are several 'Bureau de Change' in Glasgow, including one at Central Station. These are open outside normal banking hours, and are useful if you need to change money in a hurry or at weekends.

To open an account you will need:

- ✓ Your passport
- ✓ Proof of address in Glasgow (if you are living in student halls of residence have a letter confirming your place there. If you are living in private accommodation, ask your landlord for a letter confirming your address)
- ✓ A letter from RSAMD confirming your student status. After you matriculate, Registry will be able provide you with one on request.

You will have to complete an application form detailing your name, address, occupation etc. A letter from your own bank confirming that you have been a good customer can help as well – as will old bank statements.

There are two main types of account, current account and deposit account. A current account gives you a cash card for use with 24-hour automatic cash dispensers. A deposit account would be of more use to those with large amounts of money to deposit, because they pay interest.

You can transfer money from home by giving the name and address of your Scottish bank, along with your account number and code. In terms of security this would be a much safer way of transferring money, rather than having a bank draft sent to your residence.

Your fees can also be paid by bank transfer direct to the RSAMD's account. The account details are as follows:

Royal Bank of Scotland, Glasgow City Branch
10-15 Gordon Street
Glasgow G1 3PL.

The Sort Code is 83-07-06 and the Account Number is 00684832.

The opening hours of most banks in the UK are Mon-Fri 09.30~17.00. However, some banks stay open until 17.30 on Thursdays ('late night shopping' day in the city centre) and a small number are open on Saturday mornings.

Accommodation and Cost Of Living

The cost of living per year depends on how you would like to live. If you choose to take accommodation through Liberty Living, you can select from different types of accommodation to suit your budget (subject to room availability).

Costs for session 07/08 will be confirmed shortly but as a guide, the costs for session 06/07 were:

A 42-week contract total cost = £3,780

A 50-week contract total cost = £4,147

This was based on the least expensive accommodation option of standard en-suite and included all bills.

The benefits of staying at the Liberty Living are:

- Modern, attractive and affordable accommodation
- Key city centre location close to the Academy
- Quality furniture provision
- On-site management and maintenance teams
- 24-hour security

- Comprehensive CCTV coverage
- Electronic entry systems
- Manned reception areas
- Member of the ANUK National Code of Standards

Alternatively the approximate cost for a single student living in rented self-catering accommodation would be around £320 per month (for 10 months) with monthly bills (electricity, gas) of around £35 per month (for 10 months), so approximate total: £3,550.

You should expect things like entertainment, laundry, toiletries, postage and telephone to cost £50 per week (42 weeks = £2,100 / 50 weeks = £2,500). Food will cost approximately £150 per month.

These costs are approximate and are detailed only for your planning purposes. Of course, you may be able to live more cheaply than this, or you may prefer to enjoy a more expensive lifestyle.

However, in general, we recommend allowing approximately £7,000 - £7,500 for a single student per year and roughly £10,000 for a married couple per year. Add approximately £1,000 a year on for each child. Obviously, you will have to budget for airfares home, and for any travel you are planning to do while you are in the UK.

One of the conditions of permission for overseas students to study in the UK is that you can accommodate and provide for yourself (and your family, if appropriate) without applying to the state welfare system for financial assistance. It is essential that you budget and plan your finances well in advance to cover your study period.

Please contact the Academy Counselor and Welfare advisor, Jane Balmforth (j.balmforth@rsamd.ac.uk, +44 141 270 8282) if you would like to discuss living in Glasgow.

Students bringing their families with them to Glasgow should note that halls of residence do not have family accommodation, and that accommodation in the private sector can cost between £500-700 rental per month for a family-sized property.

Finding your own accommodation

There are a number of sites for finding your own accommodation, amongst these are:

www.accommodationforstudents.co.uk

http://www.homesforstudents.co.uk/student_accommodation_glasgow.aspx

<http://www.studentaccommodation.org>

<http://www.letting-in-scotland.co.uk/glasgow.htm>

http://www.flatshare.com/flatsharing_guide.html?&rand=316201158757531&urlsession_id=

These websites have many possibilities - both large student-hall type residences as well as other kinds of accommodation and include some helpful student reviews.

Private Accommodation Database (PAD)

PAD stands for Private Accommodation Database where students can look for accommodation in the Glasgow area. The five Higher Education Institutions in Glasgow have collaborated to produce the database, and it can be accessed by logging on to:

www.accom.gla.ac.uk/pad

While you can log on to read about the site, you will need extra information -- a username or password – in order to actually search for accommodation. You can contact either the RSAMD student union or a member of the Registry Team at registry@rsamd.ac.uk.

PAD is useful if you do not wish to stay in halls, but would rather share a flat in the private sector with friends. You can type in the number of bedrooms you are looking for, or the maximum rent you want to pay and the database will search for all the properties matching your requirements.

Short-term accommodation

If you are coming on an Erasmus or semester abroad programme, it is important that you get your plans (dates of arrival, departure) set as soon as you can. The earlier you know exactly when you will need accommodation, the more assistance we can give you. Short-term accommodation is more difficult to find as many student-housing schemes depend on taking a room for a full academic year of residence.

However, there is one student housing scheme which does allow students to take short-term accommodation, but the earlier you can contact them, the better your chances of securing one of these rooms. You can find out more about them and the rooms they offer on:

<http://www.accommodationforstudents.com/largerprivatestudenthousing/lphs.asp?id=136>

It is always advisable to see a property before handing over any deposit or payment of rent. Make sure you get all the information about the rental, and ask about who pays utility bills, how the deposit return works, etc. Remember that the landlord may ask for two or three months rent as deposit.

Paying Bills

In terms of paying rent for the accommodation in which you live, it is worth remembering that it is your responsibility to pay the rent to your landlord on time and not the landlord's duty to collect it from you.

If you are living in rented accommodation in the private sector, your house may use a combination of gas and electricity, or just electricity, depending on the type of heating in operation (you should check this with your landlord). There are various ways of paying these bills, usually by either paying a quarterly bill for each at a Post Office or appropriate retail outlet, by direct debit or by purchasing 'Powercards' (electricity) and paying for gas using a 'gas card'. Again, you should ask your landlord about payment of bills.

Telephone bills are also usually paid quarterly either at Post Offices, by sending a cheque through the post or by direct debit (this would have to be arranged with your bank and telephone company).

Insurance and Health

If you have not already done so before leaving your country, it is strongly advisable that you take out some form of insurance policy to cover the cost of your personal property, in case it is lost or stolen. You should do this even if you are living in the Halls of Residence, as their insurance package does not usually cover things like instruments or bicycles. There are a number of insurance services/outlets in the city centre near to the Academy. You should 'shop around' for the type of insurance and service that suits your needs best. Some companies offer reduced rates for students.

All students from overseas who come to study in the UK for six months or more are entitled to free medical care and hospital treatment under the NHS, although if you were to become ill and wanted to be treated at home, you may wish to consider insurance to cover such a situation. There will be someone available to talk to you about registering for health care during induction week.

Arriving in Glasgow, UK

Unless you plan to do some travelling or have friends/family in the UK you are advised NOT to arrive too early. September is a time when many people are still away for their summer break and things at the Academy can be quiet. If you arrive before there are people to help you feel at home you may find yourself feeling isolated and homesick. As a rule it's best to try and arrive 5 – 7 days before your course begins.

Meeting and Greeting

There are two ways to make sure that there is a friendly face when you arrive. The first is to contact our Student Union - they will arrange to have someone meet you on your arrival in Glasgow (either at the airport, train station or bus station) and take you to your accommodation. Just complete the form included below and return it to the Students' Union well in advance and they will arrange to have someone waiting for you.

We also belong to the Glasgow International Student Welcome Programme – which you may find very useful. They will also arrange to meet you when you arrive at Glasgow airport, where they have a welcome booth set up. Once you locate the booth (usually right next to the baggage claim, they will tell you exactly how to get to your accommodation and give you any advice on arrival that you may need. They also have a booth throughout most of the month of September in George Square in the city center, where you are very welcome to drop in at any time for advice, help or just a cup of coffee with a friendly volunteer.

You will be receiving information about when you should matriculate and about your induction programme.

Travelling to RSAMD

The Academy is located in the centre of Glasgow on Renfrew Street and is within walking distance of the underground, bus and train stations.

The Buchanan Street Bus Station is a 5-minute walk away while Queen Street Station (trains to and from Edinburgh, Dundee, Aberdeen and Inverness) is 10 minutes walk.

Central Station, which is about 15 minutes walk from RSAMD, has departures and arrivals for the east and west coast routes to London and local trains to/from Paisley (with a bus link to Glasgow airport), Ayr and Glasgow Prestwick airport.

If you are arriving at Glasgow airport (approximately 10 miles from the city) a taxi to the Academy will cost about £20. Alternatively an airport bus runs to and from Buchanan Street Bus Station every 20 minutes until 23.00 and costs around £2.50.

If you arrive at Glasgow Prestwick airport, you can catch a train direct to Glasgow Central for approximately £7.50. The journey takes about 40 minutes, however when making your plans you should know that there are no trains from Prestwick after 11 pm.

Clearing Customs and Registering with the Police

If you are from outside the EU your passport will probably be stamped with the period of time you are permitted to stay (“leave to remain”) - usually one year - and whether you will need to register with the police.

It is unusual to receive a stamp for longer than a year, unless you are sponsored by The British Council, for example. If your spouse accompanies you, he/she will normally be admitted for the same period of time you receive. Your spouse should also register with the police if required to do so.

If your entry stamp does not advise you to register with the police then it is not necessary for you to do so. However if it DOES require that you register with the police then you must go to the Police Nationality Branch at 173 Pitt Street and take with you:

- ✓ Your passport
- ✓ 1 passport-sized photograph
- ✓ Proof that you are a full-time student (your offer letter will do)
- ✓ Proof of your address in Glasgow
- ✓ £34 (bring this exact amount in cash)

If you are from outside the EU your passport will probably be stamped with the period of time you are permitted to stay (“leave to remain”) - usually one year - and whether you will need to register with the police. It is unusual to receive a stamp for longer than a year, unless you are sponsored by The British Council, for example. If your spouse accompanies you, he/she will normally be admitted for the same period of time you receive. Your spouse should also register with the police if required to do so.

If you are staying for more than a year, you must remember the date when your “leave to remain” expires, as any application for an extension must be made well in advance or your permission running out (at least one month before expiry). Put a date in your diary so that you will remember to start the renewal process in good time. If you apply by post it can take from 2 – 14 weeks and you will not be able to travel out of the UK once you have submitted your passport for renewal.

To renew your visa, please go to: www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk and click on the 'for all forms click here' button. You will need to complete form FLRS.

If you renew by post, send all the necessary documents and the fee of £250 to:

Leave to Remain – (FLRS)
P O Box 498
Durham
DH99 1WN

For security, you should send your passport and documents by recorded or special delivery and keep the receipt.

You can also apply in person at the below address, however this is twice the cost of a postal application:

Glasgow Public Enquiry Office
Festival Court 1
200 Brand Street
Govan
Glasgow
G51 1DH
0141 555 1258

You should phone first to make an appointment and will need to take all your documents plus £500.00 fee.

Your First Few Days in Glasgow

Of course you'll want to get a feel for the city and come into the Academy to have a look around. Again, depending on when you arrive you can probably arrange to have someone from the Students Union meet you for a quick chat. There will be orientation sessions once term starts, but these first days are really for you to get settled in. A good map of the city (available at Tourist Info offices at airports, train stations and in the city), a visit to your bank to open an account, and finding your nearest grocery store will probably be high on your list.

Remember that the Glasgow International Student Welcome Programme runs a programme of events prior to the start of the academic year. Further details of this will be sent to you once an offer of a place has been accepted.

Finally, Jane Balmforth, the Academy Counsellor and Welfare advisor is also available to talk if you need advice or a friendly chat.

Personal Safety

Generally, Glasgow is a safe and friendly city, although like any other large city it is not crime-free. Take the same sensible precautions you would take in any city – for example do not carry around large sums of cash or valuables and be mindful of your personal safety when you are out and about in the evenings – don't be distracted from what's happening around you while talking on a mobile or listening to a personal stereo.

Should you ever need to contact the emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) call 999, and an operator will direct your call to the right place immediately.

The British Council have an excellent site, Safety First, which features a downloadable safety guide for international students. It's well worth reading. You can find it on:

www.educationuk.org/downloads/safety_1st.pdf

You can also request a copy of this to be sent to you directly, please contact Registry.

Fresher's Week

The very first week of term is a time when there will be many people on hand to help you get oriented. There will be people on site to give you information about signing up with a doctor and dentist, about welfare services here at the Academy, and about social life at the Academy in general.

Religion

The following is a list of places for worship in Glasgow within easy reach of the Academy.

- **Roman Catholic**
St Aloysius RC Church, 25 Rose Street, Glasgow, G3 GRE. Tel: 0141 332 3039.
- **Baptist**
Adelaide Place Baptist Church, Bath Street, Glasgow, G2 4HZ. Tel: 0141 248 4970. Times: 11.00 and 19.00
- **Sikh Gurdwara**
Sikh Central Singh Sabha, 138 Berkeley Street, Glasgow, G3. Tel: 0141 221 6698.
- **Muslim**
Al-furqan Mosque, 19 Carrington Street, Glasgow, G3. Tel: 0141 332 2811.

- **Jewish**
Jewish Orthodox Synagogue, Garnethill, 127 Hill Street, Glasgow G3 6UB.
- **Greek Orthodox**
St Luke's Greek Orthodox Chapel, 27 Dundonald Road, Glasgow, G12 9LL. Tel: 0141 339 7368.
- **Quaker (Religious Society of Friends)**
Quaker Meeting House, 38 Elmbank Crescent. Time: Sunday 11.00. Tel: 0141 248 8493.
- **Hindu Temple**
Hindu Mandir, 1 La Belle Place, Glasgow, G3. Tel: 0141 332 0482.
- **Buddhist - Order of Western Buddhists**
329 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow. Tel 0141 333 0524.
- **Glasgow Chinese Christian Church**
2 Melrose Street, Glasgow, G4 9BJ. Tel: 0141 332 8385.
- **Church of Scotland - Presbyterian**
St George's Tron Church, 163 Buchanan Street, Glasgow, G1 2JX. Tel: 0141) 332 2795. Time: 11.00am & 6.30pm every Sunday, 1.10pm - half hour service every Wednesday
- **Methodist**
Woodlands Methodist Church, Woodlands Road, Glasgow, G3 6LW.
Time: Sunday 11.00
- **Episcopal - Anglican**
St Mary's Cathedral, Great Western Road, Glasgow, G4 9JB. Tel: 0141 339 6691. Times: Sunday 10.00 and 18.30

The RSAMD follows the European week (which may include Saturdays) in relation both to teaching and examining.

Arrival in Glasgow Form

If you wish to be met by a student on your arrival to Glasgow, please indicate your details below. We can then make arrangements for someone to take you to your accommodation.

Name
[Block capitals]

Date of arrival in Glasgow

Place of arrival

Please circle or select the appropriate place:

Buchanan Street Bus Station

Glasgow Central Station

Glasgow Queen Street Station

Glasgow Airport

Prestwick Airport

Time of arrival
[Please use 24-hour clock]

Flight Number (if appropriate)

Starting point of final train/plane/bus to Glasgow

Please return to

Students Union

RSAMD

100 Renfrew Street

Glasgow G2 3DB

Scotland

or

Fax: 44-141 270 8371

or

E-mail: supresident@rsamd.ac.uk

Useful Contact Numbers Within RSAMD

(Telephone numbers and e-mail addresses):

RSAMD +44 141 332 4101

Or +44 141 270 8 (+ Ext)

Fax: +44 141 332 8901

Website: www.rsamd.ac.uk

Meg Lavery

Registrar & Student Support Manager +44 141 270 8206

m.lavery@rsamd.ac.uk

Jane Balmforth

Counselor/Welfare Adviser +44 141 270 8282

j.balmforth@rsamd.ac.uk

Katja Riek

Access Coordinator +44 141 270 8319

d.neville@rsamd.ac.uk, k.riek@rsamd.ac.uk

Praveen Rao

International Development Administrator +44 141 270 8214

p.rao@rsamd.ac.uk

Students' Union Office +44 141 270 8296

Fax +44 141 270 8371

Website: <http://www.rsamd-su.co.uk/>

Useful Contact Numbers Outside the RSAMD

Citizens Advice Bureau

The CAB will provide free advice on a wide range of issues. You must make an appointment in advance.

48 Albion Street, Glasgow, G1
+44 141 552 5556

British Council

The British Council provides information to help international students prepare for study in the UK. There are British Council offices in 110 countries worldwide – check on the website above to find your nearest office.

The British Council, Bridgewater House, 58 Whitworth Street, Manchester M1 6BB

<http://www.britcoun.org.uk/education>

Home Office

The Home Office handles immigration and visa queries and applications

Lunar House, Wellesley Road,
Croydon, CR9 2BY
0208 686 0688

UK Council on Overseas Student Affairs (UKCOSA)

The Council for International Education provides advice and information to international students studying or planning to study in the UK.

9 –17 St Albans Place, Islington,
London N1 0NX
0207 226 3762
Fax 0207 226 3373
<http://www.ukcosa.org.uk>

Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS)

If you are a student from the EU you may be eligible to apply to SAAS for your fees to be paid.

Gyleview House, 3 Redheughs Rigg,
Edinburgh EH12 9YS
0845 111 0244
<http://www.saas.gov.uk>

UK Immigrants Advisory Service

The IAS is an independent organization that gives confidential advice, assistance and representation to anyone applying for entry clearance to the UK.

2nd Floor, County House
190 Great Dover Street, London
SE1 4YB
0207 967 1200 / 0208 814 1559
<http://www.iasuk.org>

or

115 Bath Street, Glasgow, G2 2SZ
+44 141 248 2956
E-mail: Glasgow@iasuk.org

UKVISAS

You can get further advice and guidance about visas from:

UKvisas, London, SW1A 2AH
0207 008 8438
<http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/enquires>

Immigration and Nationality Directorate

Providing further advice and guidance about extending your stay once in the UK.

Croydon Public Caller Unit
Lunar House, 40 Wellesley Road
Croydon, London, CR9 2BY
0870 606 7766
<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/hpg/htm>

Tourist Information Office

The Glasgow Tourist Information Office can provide assistance finding temporary accommodation in Glasgow e.g. hotels, bed & breakfasts.

11 George Square, Glasgow,
G2 1DY
+44 141 204 4400
<http://www.visitscotland.com>

National Union of Students

NUS Scotland provides information and advice on all aspects of student life in Scotland.

11 Broughton Market,
Edinburgh EH3 6NU
0131 556 6598
<http://www.nusonline.co.uk>

Consulates and High Commissions within Scotland

GLASGOW

Brazilian Consulate	25 Broomvale Drive, Newton Mearns, G77	+44 141-616 0300
German Consulate	James Sellars House, 144 West George Street, Glasgow G2	+44 141-281
Greek Consulate	98 Baronald Drive, Glasgow G12	+44 141-0360
Icelandic Consulate	389 Argyle Street, Glasgow G2	+44 141-6943
Italian Vice-Consulate	170 Hope Street, Glasgow G2	+44 141-4297
Netherlands Consulate	3 Annandale Terrace Old Kilpatrick	01389-875744
Norwegian Consulate Royal	Inter City House, 80 Oswald Street, Glasgow, G1	+44 141-1353
Pakistan Vice-Consulate	137 Norfolk Street, Glasgow, G5	+44 141-5335
Spanish Vice-Consulate	389 Argyle Street, Glasgow, G2	+44 141-6943
Swedish Consulate	228 Clyde Street, Glasgow, G1	+44 141-7845
Thai Consulate	70 Wellington Street, Glasgow, G2	+44 141-6677

EDINBURGH

American Consulate	3 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh	0131-556 8315
Austrian Consulate	18 South Groathill Avenue, Edinburgh	0131-332 2585
Belgian Consulate	19 Ainslie Place, Edinburgh	0131-226 6881
Danish Consulate	4 Royal Terrace, Edinburgh	0131-556 4263
French Consulate General	11 Randolph Terrace, Edinburgh	0131-225 7954
Japanese Consulate	2 Melville Crescent, Edinburgh	0131-255 4777
Monaco Consulate	39 Castle Street, Edinburgh	0131-552 0301
Spanish Consulate	63 North Castle Street, Edinburgh	0131-220 1843

Appendix A

How do I go about trying to raise funds for my studies?

It's important that you really take the time to plan and be persistent! Make lists, and be thorough. It's very possible that if you are really positive and dedicated you will see your efforts pay off.

The first step is research:

1. Look locally first. Try any local trust or grant-making institutions in your area. You may be able to find these on an Internet search, but your best bet is through your local library. Try local businesses or trade unions – especially if you have any family connections through them. Talk to people at your school – teachers or career counselors who may be very helpful in identifying local funding possibilities. Community theatres, churches, newspapers, Rotary clubs, and City Councils or Chambers of Commerce can sometimes help out too.
2. Now think about looking at the bigger picture. Your local library should have reference books like Directories of Grant Making Trusts that will list national organizations in your country that may be able to help. Some of these list scholarships that can cover study abroad. Do as much research in this way as you can and list every source you think will be worth approaching. Don't bother approaching places unless you KNOW that you meet their criteria.
3. Finally – think about the really 'off-the-wall' possibilities: your favorite actors, directors or musicians, or people who are listed in things like 'the 500 wealthiest people' in your country. These kinds of letters are long shots, but they have often been known to pay off!

Once you have your lists – both local and national – it's time to think about composing your application package. Because you will probably send out many, many applications, it's wise to put together either a leaflet about yourself or a really well composed package that you can photocopy, and that includes:

- A CV that covers your experience to date
- A cover letter that is clear about why you deserve support. Stress that you have been accepted to a great Royal national conservatoire, and that you were selected out of a very competitive field. Explain that your course will be intensive and will require that you can devote yourself whole-heartedly to your studies. Sketch out your ideal future: what you think you can contribute to the arts, or education, or community.

Make sure you sound passionate and dedicated to achieving your dreams. If you have some great references or reviews that you can quote from (other than any

required referee letters), use them! Don't be shy about asking people here at the Academy for reference letters that might help.

Once you have your funding campaign materials together – watch dates! Don't miss a chance because you missed a deadline. Don't be discouraged by rejection – you will get those, but with persistence you will probably find that you get help as well – so stay positive.