

Royal Scottish Academy
of Music and Drama

**International Student
Handbook**

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Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of information in this publication at the time of going to press, the RSAMD wishes to stress that information given may be subject to alteration. All prices are given as a guide only. Students should contact the appropriate organisation for up to date information/prices.

International dialling codes have been given throughout this publication. When calling from within the UK, omit the +44 and include the 0 before all numbers.

1 PRE-ARRIVAL INFORMATION

1.1 PRINCIPAL'S WELCOME TO THE ACADEMY

Welcome to the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama

We are Scotland's international conservatoire, which attracts students from across the world. The contribution that you, as an international student, make to the cultural life of the Academy and to Scotland is invaluable and I am delighted that you have chosen to pursue your dreams here at the Academy. You can be assured of a very warm welcome and a truly excellent, world class, education and artistic experience.



Scotland has a deservedly great reputation for world-class education. We boast one of the world's youngest and most innovative National Theatre, resurgent opera and ballet companies, three outstanding orchestras and one of the liveliest performing arts scenes in Europe. It's a country that has put culture at its centre.

We at The Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama believe that ultimately, it is performance that lies at the heart of creative and artistic success. Whatever your specialism across Drama and Music, Technical and Production Arts, or Digital Film and Television, your own personal performance - the ability to raise your game when it really counts - will be crucial in your future artistic journey through life.

Make Performance your purpose at Scotland's International Academy.

John Wallace, Principal

1.2 THE ACADEMY

As Scotland's international conservatoire, we welcome students from all over the world to join the multicultural, friendly and supportive environment here at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. Each year, we welcome students from over 45 countries that choose to study at the Academy.

We understand that coming to the United Kingdom to study can be a challenging as well as an exciting experience and the Welfare and International Student Advisor and Academic Administration and Support Department are on hand to provide you with support and advice.

This handbook is designed to help you plan your journey to the UK and to find your way in your first few weeks in Glasgow, as well as providing you with information for your life as a student of the Academy.

The RSAMD is located in the heart of Glasgow, one of the UK's most energetic and friendly cities. Situated on the banks of the River Clyde, Glasgow is Scotland's largest city, with a vibrant mixture of history, culture, entertainment and education.

If you would like more detailed information and advice about anything in this booklet, please contact:

John Greenwood

Welfare and International Student Advisor

Telephone: +44(0)141 270 8281

Email: j.greenwood@rsamd.ac.uk

1.3 PREPARING TO COME TO THE UNITED KINGDOM

As you are about to embark on an exciting new journey, it is important that you start your preparations to come to the Academy well in advance of your departure. The following information is a guide to help you to prepare for your arrival in the UK and the Academy.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Task	When to do
<input type="checkbox"/>	Estimate your study and living expenses and think about how you will pay for them.	At least 12 months before departure.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Start applying for scholarships.	At least 12 months before departure.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Start arranging accommodation.	As soon as you have an unconditional offer.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contact the RSAMD Finance Department about arrangements to pay your fees.	As soon as you have an unconditional offer.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Check your passport/national ID card expiry date and make arrangements if you need to replace it.	As soon as possible as processing times vary.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Check with your nearest British Embassy to see if you require an entry clearance for your studies and when it is appropriate to apply. If so, start preparing your application.	As soon as possible as recommended application and processing times vary between counties.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Check that you have received your letter confirming your unconditional offer and that you have received your CAS from the RSAMD.	As soon as possible as this will be needed for your entry clearance application
<input type="checkbox"/>	Book your travel arrangements to Glasgow.	As soon as possible after you have received your unconditional offer.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Buy travel insurance.	When you book your travel arrangements.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Check with your airline about baggage limits and restrictions.	When you book your travel arrangements.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Find out what health services you are entitled to in the UK and, if needed, arrange health insurance.	1 month before departure.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Find out the customs restrictions on bringing goods into the UK.	1 month before departure.
<input type="checkbox"/>	If you are taking prescribed drugs or medicines, ask your doctor to write you a letter detailing this.	1 month before departure.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Purchase enough pounds sterling to cover your expenses for your first few weeks in the UK.	Check with your local bank, as some banks require you to order this in advance.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure you have all your important travel documents in your hand luggage. Make copies to leave with relatives or friends at home as well as keeping copies for yourself in a separate place to the originals.	Organise these at least 1 week before departure and check again when packing.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Label all your luggage with your UK address and contact details.	When packing.

1.4 IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE UK

Students who are NOT European Economic Area nationals or Swiss nationals

If you are not a national of a European Economic Area (EEA) country or are not a Swiss national, entry clearance is mandatory if you intend to stay in the UK for longer than 6 months. You must obtain entry clearance from the British Embassy, Mission, High Commission or Consulate-General in your own country before you decide to travel to the UK.

Please refer to the Visa Services website for a list of Embassies and Application Forms to download: www.ukvisas.gov.uk – on this website you will find all of the

information you need to apply for a visa including how, which forms and where to apply.

If you are in any doubt about your status or need any advice you should contact the British Embassy in your own country or John Greenwood (j.greenwood@rsamd.ac.uk).

Please also refer to the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) website, where there are a range of useful information sheets, including the sheet below on *Making a student immigration application in your home country*:
http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/info_sheets/applying_home_country.php

CAS (Confirmation of Acceptance to Study) numbers are required for certain visa types, including Tier 4. The CAS number is only valid for a period of 6 months and can only be used within the 3 months prior to your course starting. Therefore, we cannot issue your CAS number earlier than 6 months prior to your course start date.

If you would like to check how long it is currently taking for visa applications to be processed in your home country you can use the UKBA website to find out the latest timescales; <http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/processingtimes>

Students from within the European Economic Area and Swiss nationals

If you are a national of a country within the European Economic Area (EEA) or a Swiss National you do not need to obtain entry clearance to enter the UK to study. When entering the UK you will be asked to provide official proof of nationality (passport or ID card).

Please also refer to the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) website, where there are a range of useful information sheets, including the sheet below for *EEA and Swiss students*:
www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/eea.php

You are an EEA national if you are a citizen of one of the following countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway are in the EEA but are not members of the European Union (EU). Switzerland is not in the EEA, but an international treaty means that Swiss Nationals have a similar right to live in the UK as EEA nationals.

1.5 ADDED CUSTOMS CHARGES

There have been instances where students have been charged customs duty on expensive items (such as instruments, computers etc) whilst in transit at certain airports. If you are beginning your journey to Glasgow from outside the EU, you can

check in items that may attract duty into the hold of the aircraft. Alternatively, you may wish to avoid transiting within the EU. For further information on customs restrictions for the UK please visit www.hmrc.gov.uk

1.6 FEES AND FUNDING

Thinking ahead about your finances is critical to the success of your studies. You will need to know that you have sufficient funds to finance yourself to the end of your programme. It is essential that you budget and plan your finances well in advance to cover your study period. In order to satisfy visa requirements you must be able to show that you have access to £5400 (minimum) for maintenance plus the amount of your tuition fees. Please see the UKCISA information sheet about what financial requirements you need to have when applying for a visa; http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/info_sheets/applying_home_country.php#financial_requirements

Scholarships

There are a number of scholarships available for overseas students which are awarded on merit of application at the audition or interview stage. However, as funds are limited, we would advise that you ensure that you have considered all funding options available to you.

We would advise you to research any scholarship or funding opportunities in your own country in advance of starting your studies. For further advice and guidance please visit the British Council website: www.britishcouncil.org

Tuition fees

Tuition fees should be paid in full at the time of matriculation but permission may be granted to pay the fees in three termly instalments. If a sponsor pays your tuition fees, you must bring a statement from them confirming that your fees will be paid. Please note that tuition fees are reviewed annually, which means that they will be subject to a year-on-year increase.

If you need any further information regarding payment of tuition fees, transferring of funds etc, please contact: studentfinance@rsamd.ac.uk or by telephone +44 (0)141 270 8233.

The Students Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS)

The Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) will pay tuition fees on behalf of undergraduate students from EU member states, provided that they meet the residential and other criteria laid out by SAAS. 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 from SAAS online: www.student-support-saas.gov.uk

If you have any queries regarding your fee status, please contact John Greenwood, Welfare and International Student Advisor (j.greenwood@rsamd.ac.uk).

1.7 COST OF LIVING

It is difficult to say exactly how much your study period at the Academy will cost, as students budget differently. However, below is a breakdown of the approximate cost per month for a single student living in either private rented accommodation or halls of residence self-catering accommodation:

Rent/Accommodation	£400
Bills (Electricity/Gas/Telephone/Broadband).	£80
Food.	£100
Clothing/Toiletries.	£50
Daily Travel.	£50
Social/Entertainment.	£60
Insurance.	£10

In general, we would recommend allowing approximately £7,000-£7,500 for an undergraduate single student per year and roughly £8,000-£8,500 for a postgraduate student. You should also be prepared to budget for unforeseen or one-off costs – for example, airfares home and for any travel you are planning to do while you are in the UK.

UK Currency

The currency in the UK is the Pound Sterling (£). 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 £5, £10, £20, £50 and £100. Scottish banks issue their own notes and these, together with Bank of England notes and notes issued by the banks in Northern Ireland are legal tender in Scotland. For current exchange rates please check www.xe.com

If you are travelling to the UK from outside the EU and are carrying more than €10,000 with you in cash, cheques or a bankers draft, you must declare this at customs. Please ensure that you have enough currency for your arrival in the UK to pay for travel to Glasgow - and around the city - until you can cash traveller's cheques or gain access to other funds.

1.8 ACCOMMODATION

It is advised that you sort out your accommodation as soon as you have been made an unconditional offer and accepted your place on a programme at the Academy. In Glasgow, there are several different types of accommodation to choose from. The Academy has halls of residence accommodation arrangements with Liberty Living but there is also the option to rent a room in private accommodation or other student accommodation. For information sheets and help in finding accommodation, please contact John Greenwood, Welfare and International Student Advisor (j.greenwood@rsamd.ac.uk).

Liberty Living

Liberty House is situated in the centre of Glasgow, within 15 minutes walk of the Academy. All rooms have en-suite facilities with shared kitchen/dining areas for single rooms and self contained kitchen facilities for double bedded studio rooms.

A room at Liberty House can be booked through the Finance Office at RSAMD. You will receive booking information with instructions on how to book a room. Further information can be found on the Liberty House website: www.libertystudents.com – For your first year of study we strongly recommend that you take this option of living in halls.

Students bringing their families to Glasgow with them should note that halls of residence do not have family accommodation.

Finding your own accommodation

You may decide that living in halls of residence is not suitable for you and you may wish to find your own accommodation. 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 rent, who pays utility bills, how the deposit return works, etc. Remember that the landlord may ask for two or three months' rent as deposit. You should always ask for a written contract and it should have the names of all the residents on it. You should also ask for receipts for your rent payments if paying by cash.

There are a number of websites which advertise accommodation in Glasgow. For an information sheet listing websites that may be of use in finding your own accommodation, please contact John Greenwood, Welfare and International Student Advisor (j.greenwood@rsamd.ac.uk).

Private Accommodation Database (PAD)

The **Private Accommodation Database (PAD)**, where students can look for accommodation in the Glasgow area, 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 access the website and search at www.glasgowpad.org

Please contact John Greenwood, Welfare and International Student Advisor (j.greenwood@rsamd.ac.uk) for more details.

Temporary and Short-Term Accommodation

Although you are strongly advised to have long-term accommodation arranged before arriving in the UK, there are a number of Youth Hostels around the UK which offer reasonably priced overnight accommodation.

If you are coming on an Erasmus or Exchange 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 choices will be available to 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.

For an information sheet that may be of use in finding temporary and or short term accommodation please contact John Greenwood, Welfare and International Student Advisor (j.greenwood@rsamd.ac.uk).

2 ARRIVAL IN GLASGOW AND THE UK

2.1 WHEN TO ARRIVE

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 holiday and the Academy can be quiet. It is best to try to arrive 5–7 days before your programme begins.

The Welfare and International Student Advisor sends out a welcome e-mail towards the start of the session which provides arrival information and information on the support provided throughout the year. Please feel welcome to contact John Greenwood, Welfare and International Student Advisor (j.greenwood@rsamd.ac.uk) with any questions about your arrival.

2.2 IMMIGRATION PROCEDURES ON ARRIVAL

On arrival in the UK you will need to pass through Immigration Control if you are not a British/EU passport holder. You will need to show the Immigration Officer your entry clearance and may be asked for the evidence you provided with your application. The Immigration Officer will stamp your passport or travel document to activate your entry clearance.

On arrival in the UK, remember to carry the following in your hand luggage:

- A valid passport or travel document.
- Entry clearance, if required.
- Documentary evidence submitted with your visa application.
- Documentary evidence of sufficient financial support for the duration of the academic year.
- A note of your UK address, if obtained.
- A health certificate, if required.

It is very important to make a note of the expiry date of your entry clearance to ensure it does not expire while you are still in the UK. If your entry clearance is due to expire before you complete your programme, you will need to start preparing your extension application if you wish to continue your studies. You should try to do this at least 6 weeks before your entry clearance expires. For information and application forms, please refer to the UK Border Agency website: www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk

For more information on making an in-country extension application, please contact John Greenwood, Welfare and International Student Advisor (j.greenwood@rsamd.ac.uk) or refer to the UKCISA information sheet *Making a*

student immigration application in the UK.

www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/info_sheets/immigration_uk.php

2.3 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.

Buchanan Street bus station is 5 minutes walk from the Academy. The bus station has departures and arrivals for local and national routes.

Queen Street train station is 10 minutes walk from the Academy. Trains run to and from Edinburgh, Dundee, Aberdeen and Inverness as well as operating local routes.

Central Station, which is about 15 minutes walk from the Academy, has departures and arrivals for the east and west coast routes to London, local trains and trains to and from Glasgow Prestwick airport.

If you are arriving at Glasgow International airport (approximately 10 miles from the city) a taxi to the Academy will cost about £25.00. Alternatively, an airport bus runs to and from Buchanan Street Bus Station every 20 minutes. Please refer to the Glasgow International Airport website for further information:
www.glasgowairport.com

If you arrive at Glasgow Prestwick airport, you can catch a train direct to Glasgow Central train station. The journey takes approximately 40 minutes. Please refer to the Glasgow Prestwick Airport website for further information:
www.gpia.co.uk

2.4 REGISTRATION WITH THE POLICE

Nationals over the age of 16 and is a citizen or national of the following countries must register with the police within 7 days of arrival;

Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Belarus, Bolivia, Brazil, China, Colombia, Cuba, Egypt, Georgia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, North Korea, Oman, Palestine, Peru, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Yemen.

Check on your visa to see if you have to register. If you do, you must book an appointment and take the following items to the police headquarters or to your local police station:

- Your passport
- 1 passport-sized photograph
- £34.00 *please take exact money where possible*
- a letter from RSAMD, proving that you have registered on the programme
- your accommodation contract, showing your UK address

The address and opening hours of the Nationality Branch at the police headquarters are given below.

Nationality Branch	Mon, Tues & Thurs: 09.00-12.30
Police Headquarters	13.30-16.00
173 Pitt Street	Wed: Closed
GLASGOW	Fri: 09.00-12.30 and 13.30-15.30

Your police registration certificate will be sent to the Welfare and International Student Advisor, who will contact you when it is ready to collect. You must inform the police every time you change your address, programme or receive an extension of 'leave to remain'.

2.5 OPENING A BANK ACCOUNT

There are a number of banks in Glasgow that can provide bank accounts to international students. You should research several banks to find the one that offers the best service for you. Please note that many banks do not offer 'Student Accounts' to international students.

You may find it useful to speak to your bank in your home country before you leave and ask their advice about opening a bank account in the UK. 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 home country account.

The opening hours of most banks in the UK are Monday-Friday, 9:30am to 5:00pm. However, some banks stay open later on Thursdays ('late night shopping' day in the city centre) and a small number are open on Saturday mornings.

When you have decided which bank you wish to join, you must request a Student Status letter from Academic Administration and Support. This will have your address in Glasgow and the bank address on it, so please remember to keep your contact details updated. Most banks will ask you to make an appointment to set up your account. You will be given an ATM card but most banks will not give credit cards. Please check with the bank if you would like a debit card.

When you go for your appointment, take the following documents:

- your passport
- your Student Status letter from Academic Administration and Support

It may take 2-3 weeks to open a bank account in the UK, so you should prepare for this by making financial arrangements similar to those you might make if you were a tourist. Bring travellers' cheques 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 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.

2.6 MEDICAL SERVICES

If you are a full-time student in Scotland, you will not have to pay any NHS (National Health Service) medical charges – which include treatment at an NHS doctor's surgery or hospital. This also applies to your spouse or children, if they accompanied you as your dependents. However, you do have to pay a standard charge of £3.00 per item for prescriptions for medicine.

You should register with a doctor (GP) as soon as possible. Please contact John Greenwood, Welfare and International Student Advisor (j.greenwood@rsamd.ac.uk) for details of a local GP that many Academy students register with. The name of the practice is Dr Love and Partners www.drloveandpartners.com. When you have enrolled you will be given an application form to register with them. We strongly advise that you register with them on your arrival as you will need to be registered with a GP to access the health services.

When you register with a dental surgery, you should check first to see if they will register you as an NHS patient. There are many private dental surgeries where treatment costs are higher than the reduced costs at NHS surgeries.

2.7 TV LICENSING

If you buy your own TV for your room or flat, you must arrange a TV licence. It currently costs £145.50 for a year for a colour TV. You do not need to pay if you only watch TV in the communal area in student accommodation. There is a fine if you have a TV without having a licence. For more information on TV licences for students please visit

<http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/check-if-you-need-one/for-your-home/students-aud1/>

2.8 COUNCIL TAX

Council tax is charged to residents by the local council to cover costs for local services. Students who are registered on a programme of 21 hours or more per week for more than 24 weeks per year, generally do not need to pay Council Tax. If you are living with your spouse and he/she is not a British citizen and is prevented from taking paid employment or from claiming benefits by the terms of his/her leave to remain in the UK, you will not be charged Council Tax.

Students who are in the UK for less than 24 weeks per year or will not graduate in the UK (exchange students) are not eligible for a council tax exemption.

Usually, Glasgow City Council will not contact you if you live in student accommodation. If you live in private accommodation, you should fill out a Council Tax Enquiry Form and a Student Exemption form. You can get copies of this form from the Academic Administration and Support office.

2.9 INSURANCE

If you have not already done so before leaving your home country, it is strongly advised that you take out some form of insurance policy to cover the cost of your personal property, in case it is lost or stolen. There are a number of insurance services/outlets in the city centre near to the Academy. You should contact several companies to find the type of insurance and service that suits your needs best. Some companies offer reduced rates for students.

We also recommend that you consider health insurance to cover you while you are studying in the UK. If you needed help returning home due to medical reasons or you preferred to access private medical care, the costs of this are usually very high. Check with health insurance providers in your home country for more details. Most holiday insurance policies have a limit to the amount of days they cover per trip so make sure that you check with the insurance company that the policy you are paying for covers you for your whole stay.

3 LIVING IN GLASGOW

Glasgow is one of Europe's most vibrant cities with easy access to the rest of Scotland and the UK.

Scotland has a population of just over five million and Glasgow, is home to one of the liveliest cultural scenes in Europe. The city features the Scottish Ballet, National Theatre of Scotland, Scottish Opera, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra as well as a plethora of theatres, plus concert and performance, many of which have an international reputation for developing and supporting new works. Glasgow is one of the few cities granted UNESCO City of Music status and hosts a regular calendar of festivals which bring visitors from all over the world. These include Celtic Connections, one of the largest folk and Celtic festivals; the Jazz Festival; the Comedy Festival; and New Moves International Festival of Live Music.

There is a multicultural vibe to the city with many different traditions and activities which you may never have come across before. Attitudes towards dress, alcohol and relationships may be very different to home but part of being in a diverse culture is that you and everyone's culture is respected and valued.

Edinburgh with its world renowned international arts festival is just 40 minutes by train and London is only 4 and a half hours by train and an hour by plane. If you want to explore further afield then many of Europe's top destinations are just an hour and a half flight time away.

3.1 EMPLOYMENT DURING YOUR STUDIES

Students who are non-European Economic Area nationals or Swiss nationals

Whether you are allowed to work or not depends on the stamp in your passport or the conditions on your visa. Many international students are permitted to work part-time in term time and full-time throughout holidays, however you must check all of

the conditions that apply to you before engaging in any employment. It is also important to note that employment as a professional entertainer is not allowed. If you are in any doubt about your permission to work, please contact the Welfare and International Student Advisor.

Students from within the European Economic Area and Swiss nationals

EEA and Swiss nationals may take employment as they would in their own country. However, if you a national of the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia or Slovenia, you might need to register your work under the Worker Registration Scheme. If you are a national of Bulgaria or Romania, you might be subject to the Worker Authorisation Scheme. For more information about either of these Schemes, please refer to the UKCISA website:
www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/eea_work.php

National Insurance Number

If you are planning to take up employment or have been offered employment, you will need to obtain a National Insurance Number. You will need to telephone the National Insurance Number Allocation Services to arrange an appointment for this. Please contact the Welfare and International Student Advisor for more details.

3.2 DRIVING IN THE UK

Before driving in the UK, it is important that you fulfil the legal requirements and are aware of the correct procedures. All motor vehicles in the UK must be registered, taxed and insured. If you plan to drive whilst in the UK, you should obtain a copy of the Highway Code in order to familiarise yourself with the legalities of driving in the UK.

For further information on driving in the UK contact the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) www.dvla.gov.uk

You can also refer to the UKCISA guidance note:

http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/info_sheets/driving.php

3.3 PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Travelling on public transport in Glasgow is convenient, as the city is well served by a number of local bus services, local trains and an underground train system. The nearest underground station to the Academy is either Cowcaddens (on West Graham Street) or Buchanan Street. Bus and train fares will vary according to the distance you travel. You will need plenty of loose change when travelling on buses within Glasgow, as you must put the exact fare into the box beside the driver and no change is given. The nearest bus stops to RSAMD can be found on Renfrew Street and Hope Street.

3.4 SHOPPING AND INTERNATIONAL FOOD STORES

Many shops are open seven days a week, from 09:00-17:30, although some shops are closed on Sundays. Larger stores in the city centre operate late night opening on Thursdays and supermarkets are open late into the evening on most days. Large department stores are located on Sauchiehall Street, Buchanan Street and Argyle Street in the city centre. Most supermarkets stock a range of international,

vegetarian and organic foods but you can also find a number of specialist food shops around the city:

- Chung Ying Ltd, Chinese cash and carry, 254 Dobbies Loan, G4 0HS
- Lim's Chinese supermarket, 63 Cambridge St, G3 6QX
- KRK Continental food store, 140 Woodlands Rd, G3 6NE
- See Woo, Oriental food specialists, The Point, 29 Saracen St, G22 5HT

3.5 POSTING LETTERS AND PARCELS

There are many Post Offices across Glasgow, ranging in sizes and services – you can buy envelopes, stamps and parcel packets, buy travel insurance and collect foreign currency, depending on the size of the branch. Normal opening hours are Monday-Friday, 09:00-17:30 and Saturday 09:00-12:30.

For further information on postal services visit www.royalmail.com

3.6 ELECTRICITY

Electric current in the UK is 240 volts at 50 cycles. If you come from a country which operates on a different voltage, you should make sure that you are equipped with the appropriate adaptor for any equipment/appliances which you bring with you.

Alternatively, there are a number of shops in the city where you can buy small electrical appliances at reasonable prices.

3.7 LAUNDRY AND DRY-CLEANING

If there is no washing machine in your accommodation, you could take your clothes to a *launderette* where you will find coin-operated washing machines and dryers.

You can either operate the machine yourself or, at a small extra charge, the attendant will do your washing for you. For heavier items of clothing that cannot be machine-washed, there are many dry cleaners in the city centre area.

3.8 ENTERTAINMENT

Glasgow is a lively and friendly city, with an exciting range of pubs, clubs, restaurants, theatres, cinemas and concert venues. Restaurants in the city range from cheaply priced to expensive and cater for a full range of tastes. You will find Indian, Chinese, Mexican and Italian restaurants all over the city and there are also those which specialise in Russian, French, Persian, Greek, Thai, Mongolian, Argentinean, Moroccan and vegetarian foods, among others.

3.9 SAFETY IN GLASGOW

As with any other major city in the world, help to keep yourself safe in Glasgow by remembering the following advice:

- plan ahead – how are you going to get there and back?
- always go out with people you know and trust
- do not accept invitations from anyone without letting a friend know who you are going with and where
- always use well-lit, busy roads and avoid shortcuts through dark, quiet areas
- walk with friends and never walk alone at night

- stay alert – be aware of your surroundings. Don't listen to music when out alone
- don't speak to people you don't know, or go up to their cars, even if they speak to you first
- don't accept money, gifts or drinks from people you don't know
- don't hitch hike anywhere in Britain
- never carry all of your money or passport with you
- try to carry your valuables, such as camera, out of view
- never leave your bag unattended in public places. It may be stolen or treated as suspicious

The British Council website, Safety First, features a downloadable safety guide for international students: www.britishcouncil.org/educ-safety-first.pdf

3.10 WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

In a serious situation, for example a fire, a robbery, a road accident or an assault, you should call the British emergency number 999. Calls to this number are free. Tell the operator which service you require – police, fire or ambulance. Then you should try to give as many important details as possible. You should only use this number in emergency situations.

If you would like to report a crime that is not an emergency, you should contact your local police station. You can find the number in the phonebook.

At fire drills, make sure that you know what to do if the fire alarm sounds. In every room you are in, please check for the nearest exit, fire extinguishers and meeting point. If the fire alarm sounds, leave the building without collecting your possessions and go to the meeting point. Do not return to the building until the fire officer says that it is safe. Please be aware of the disabled access, especially for helping someone out of a building without using lifts in case of fire.

3.11 SCOTTISH CLIMATE

The weather in Glasgow, and indeed throughout Scotland, is unpredictable and can be quite changeable over a period of just a few hours. In winter it tends to be rather cold and wet. You may wish to buy suitable clothing when you arrive in the UK and begin to become accustomed to the weather. However, try to bring some cold-weather clothes and rainwear with you, as well as lighter clothes for the summer season.

For further information on the weather and climate in Glasgow, please visit www.worldclimate.com

3.12 PLACES OF WORSHIP

An information sheet on places of worship in Glasgow within easy reach of the Academy is available from John Greenwood, Welfare and International Student Advisor (j.greenwood@rsamd.ac.uk).

3.13 STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES AND CONTACTS AT RSAMD

Welfare and International Student Advisor

John Greenwood

E-mail: j.greenwood@rsamd.ac.uk

John Greenwood is available to provide advice and support for all international applicants. John gives practical advice on aspects of life in Glasgow and UK and is the primary source of immigration advice at the Academy. Applicants should not hesitate to contact John to discuss any aspect of the immigration or admission process.

John is available for appointments Monday-Friday, 09:00-17:00 in the Academic Administration and Support office. You can e-mail John to arrange an appointment or book an appointment at reception. There is a Welfare Drop-in hour for quick queries which do not require a detailed discussion in a confidential environment. The Welfare Drop-in hour is 12:00-13:00, Monday-Friday.

Counsellor and Disability Advisor

Jane Balmforth

E-mail: j.balmforth@rsamd.ac.uk

Jane Balmforth is the Academy Counsellor and Disability Advisor and is the person with whom you can discuss any confidential issues. Jane also offers support and advice to any student with a disability or medical condition. When you arrive at the Academy you can drop into Jane's office, which is on the ground floor, near the lift. Jane is in the Academy 09:00-17:00pm, Monday-Friday and you do not always need an appointment.

English Language Requirements and Support

International applicants whose first language is not English will be required to give evidence of proficiency in English. The level of proficiency required varies between programmes, please see the table below for more specific details;

Programmes	English Language Requirement
All Music programmes	IELTS 6.0.
BA TPA/ Digital Film and Television/ Modern Ballet	IELTS 6.5.
MA CCT/ BA CCP/ BA or MA Musical Theatre/ BA Acting	IELTS 7.5.

We do accept some alternative English language tests that are equivalent to the above scores so please enquire with admissions if you have an alternative test and we can advise you further.

All students are given access to in-session English language support classes. Information on classes will be provided at the beginning of the academic year. For more information on the English language support please contact John Greenwood (j.greenwood@rsamd.ac.uk).

Effective Learning Service

E-mail: els@rsamd.ac.uk

All RSAMD students at all ability levels are welcome to use the Effective Learning Service for a free and confidential service tailored to individual needs. The tutors can provide assistance on strengthening study skills in a range of areas – for example working on time management, referencing, revision and exam techniques and improving the quality of your written assignments. One-to-one appointments are available and can be made by contacting the reception in the Academic Administration and Support office or by e-mail.

Other useful RSAMD contacts

RSAMD	Address: Telephone: Fax: Website:	100 Renfrew Street Glasgow G2 3DB Scotland +44(0)141 332 4101 +44(0)141 332 8901 www.rsamd.ac.uk
Susan Lee Assistant Registrar (Admissions)	Telephone: Email:	+44(0)141 270 8315 s.lee@rsamd.ac.uk
Students' Union Office	Telephone: Fax: Email	+44(0)141 270 8296 +44(0)141 270 8371 info@rsamd-su.co.uk
Box Office	Telephone:	+44(0)141 332 5057

3.14 SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND ADVICE OUTWITH RSAMD

Visa Services Provides advice about applying for visas when you are outside the UK.	Address: Telephone: Fax: Website:	UK Border Agency Visa Services Directorate King Charles Street London SW1A 2AH +44(0)20 7008 8457 +44(0)20 7008 8359 www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en
Home Office- UK Border Agency Provides advice and guidance on extending your stay, once in the UK	Address: Telephone: Website:	Lunar House 40 Wellesley Road Croydon Surrey CR9 2BY +44(0)870 606 7766 www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk
UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) Provides advice and information	Address:	9-17 St Albans Place London N1 ONX

to international students studying or planning to study in the UK	Telephone: Fax: Website:	+44 (0)20 7107 9922 +44(0)20 7288 4360 www.ukcisa.org.uk
National Union of Students Scotland NUS Scotland provides information and advice on all aspects of student life in Scotland	Address: Telephone: Fax: E-mail: Website:	29 Forth Street Edinburgh EH1 3LE +44(0)131 556 6598 +44(0)131 557 5679 mail@nus-scotland.org.uk www.nusonline.co.uk
British Council The British Council provides information to help international students prepare for study in the UK	Address: Telephone: E-mail: Website:	The Tun 4 Jackson's Entry Holyrood Road Edinburgh EH8 8PJ +44 (0) 131 524 5700 scotland.enquiries@britishcouncil.org www.britishcouncil.org www.educationuk.org
Immigration Advisory Service The IAS is an independent organisation that gives confidential advice, assistance and representation on all immigration matters.	Address: Telephone: E-mail: Website:	115 Bath Street Glasgow G2 2SZ +44(0)141 248 2956 glasgow@isauk.org www.iasuk.org
Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS)	Address: Telephone: Website:	Gyleview House 3 Redheughs Rigg Edinburgh EH12 9YS +44(0)845 111 0244 www.saas.gov.uk
Strathclyde Police Nationality Department	Address: Telephone: Fax:	Police Headquarters 173 Pitt Street Glasgow G2 4JS +44(0)141 532 2421 +44(0)141 532 2681