



Notice on compensation and refunds Issued March 2021

As everyone will be aware, since March 2020 the UK government has imposed safety restrictions and requirements including intermittent Lockdowns, as part of the national effort to manage the very serious health risks arising from the Covid19 pandemic. During this period, the Conservatoire and its Member Schools along with all other higher education institutions have been forced to make changes to the delivery of our courses in response to these risks and to comply with these restrictions in accordance with our legal and statutory obligations.

Institutional adjustments to the pandemic

Since the pandemic struck, the Conservatoire and its Member Schools have made every effort to ensure that students were able to continue successfully with their studies. These efforts have included putting Covid safety measures and protocols in place in each School, such as:

- the implementation of blended on-site/online learning
- 'bubbling/nesting/grouping' of students
- the use of masks
- social distancing signage and markers, including adjusting learning spaces
- temperature checking and recording on arrival at School sites
- health questionnaires
- restricted access/one-way systems/zoning of School buildings
- installation of hand sanitiser stations
- putting extra cleaning in place
- the inclusion of additional cleaning supplies in every workspace for users to disinfect when leaving

All of these measures have sat alongside necessary academic adjustments, such as:

- revising course delivery and timetables
- staggered timetabling
- adapting and reducing assessment where possible and appropriate
- reconsideration of submission deadlines and assessment timings
- extensions to the teaching calendar
- ensuring staff communicate regularly with students regarding any updates and changes in accordance with government policy
- additional academic and pastoral support for students where needed
- affording as much flexibility as possible, understanding that a shift to online delivery in particular is a highly significant and new endeavour for both students and staff.

Staff from across the whole Conservatoire have made exceptional efforts to ensure students are supported during some incredibly difficult circumstances, and we thank students collectively for your patience, understanding and partnership in working with us through the most challenging of times.



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Opportunities for enrichment

Member Schools are already considering where there may be possibilities for them to provide enrichment opportunities to supplement your experience for the 2020-21 academic year. Further to this, here is some key information to note:

- Our Member Schools are currently examining what opportunities these might be, and (if they have not already done so) will consult with students in due course about these opportunities.
- One of the key facets of the Conservatoire is our diversity of Member Schools even where the artistic disciplines overlap; each Member School is of a different size and structure.
- Consequently, enrichment opportunities will be offered at the discretion of each Member School as deemed feasible and appropriate by them in accordance with their individual circumstances.
- Any enrichment opportunities on offer by a Member School will be optional, not compulsory.
- Enrichment opportunities may be offered at different times and to different student cohorts/disciplines, according to the individual circumstances of each Member School.
- Some opportunities have already been identified, put in place and delivered (or are in the process of being delivered) by Schools.

Staff are continually reflecting on the student experience and are working very hard to see what opportunities may be able to be offered. Such opportunities may include, for example:

- additional optional activities outside the normal timetabled classes focused on health and wellbeing
- community building
- opportunities for professional networking
- master classes
- revisiting module content that was not able to be delivered online, even where the rest of the module was delivered and the learning outcomes met.

Please note that where module content is revisited and offered as an enrichment opportunity, this does not mean the Member School will be 'reopening the module' if, in the academic judgement of the examiners, the student is deemed to have met the learning outcomes of that module without all module content having been delivered. Such enrichment would not, therefore, be a 'revisit' of the related module or an opportunity for further assessment attempts, even if the enrichment exercise involves content previously outlined within a module or course specification.

This does not mean however that such an enrichment opportunity would not be offered – such opportunities will be offered where the School judges that it is safe and appropriate to do so, and that the activities can be properly managed.



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Requests for refunds/compensation – 2019-20 academic year

The delivery last year ensured that all students who were studying on a Conservatoire course of higher education during 2019-20 were able to meet the learning outcomes and either complete their courses or progress to the next year of study. We are very proud that this was achieved in spite of the unforeseen and unprecedented disruption caused by the pandemic, and would like to commend staff across all of the Member Schools for ensuring that this could happen. The external examiners for all our courses were satisfied with the necessary adjustments made to the delivery of the courses in light of the pandemic arising. Continuing students were offered the opportunity to cancel their contract or enter into a new contract accompanying the revised information for course delivery in 2020-21. Therefore, taking account of all of these factors, we will not be considering any compensation or refunds for the 2019-20 academic year.

Requests for refunds/compensation – 2020-21 academic year

It would be premature to assume at this point in the academic year that no further required changes to course delivery will be necessary, as we cannot know this yet, nor what any impact might be if such changes arise. Please be advised therefore that:

- Requests for refunds and/or compensation for the 2020-21 academic year will not be considered by the Conservatoire until after the results for the 2020-21 academic year have been confirmed by the relevant Board of Examiners for your course.
- The Conservatoire will consider putting in place an expedited procedure for consideration of requests for compensation and/or refunds pertaining to the 2020-21 academic year, in due course.
- The Conservatoire will also take a proactive approach to working with its Member Schools in identifying any areas in which it may be appropriate to consider refunds or compensation requests.
- Students do not have to take separate action to request a refund or compensation under the [Conservatoire's Refunds and Compensation Policy](#) where this has already been a part of other discussions under other Conservatoire policies such as the Student Protection Plan being triggered.
- Students may raise a request for associated costs where these have not already been compensated by the Conservatoire and/or the Member School either under the Student Protection Plan or in resolution of other matters.
- However, we cannot estimate the costs to each student against each scenario in terms of accommodation, repercussions for Student Loans, living expenses, etc.
- Living expenses will not normally be compensated because whether a student was studying or not, they would have to pay for general living expenses such as food and accommodation.
- Compensation is a means of redress for recognisable loss that may or may not be financial (see section 'Compensation', in the Conservatoire Refunds and Compensation Policy for further guidance). The Conservatoire will always consider what types of compensation may be appropriate to the circumstances of the case.