



GUIDE

for prospective and current
Academy students with disabilities
and specific learning difficulties

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ram.ac.uk

Registered Charity No 310007

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Welcome

The Academy recognises that a diverse community of staff and students affords artistic, educational, social and organisational benefits. We are committed to promoting an environment which values diversity, and which identifies and removes barriers that prevent people from fulfilling their potential at the Academy.

We offer a wide range of support for students who have disabilities and specific learning difficulties, so that all students can participate fully in the life of the Academy. This includes exam arrangements and provision for specialist tuition. We will meet you individually to discuss your particular needs.

This booklet explains the services the Academy offers and how you can access them. We hope you find it helpful.

This booklet can be made available in Braille and large print on request. Please email disability@ram.ac.uk.

You can download a copy as a PDF document from the Academy's website at ram.ac.uk.

Introduction

What is meant by the term 'disability'?

The term 'disability' includes a wide range of impairments, medical conditions and mental health problems including:

- specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit disorder (ADD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- social/communication impairments such as Asperger syndrome and autistic spectrum disorders
- sensory impairments, such as visual and hearing impairments
- mobility impairments
- long-term health conditions, such as diabetes
- ongoing medical conditions, such as multiple sclerosis
- a diagnosis of HIV, cancer or multiple sclerosis
- long-term mental health conditions

According to the Equality Act 2010 (S6[1]), a person (P) has a disability if:

- P has a physical or mental impairment, and
- the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on P's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities

The social model of disability

The Academy is informed by the 'social model' in its understanding of disability. The social model focuses on how people are disabled by the restrictions that exist within society, rather than by their impairment or condition. The social model provides a framework that focuses on removing barriers and creating a more inclusive environment.

By using the social model, the Academy strives to provide an inclusive environment for students, staff and visitors who use Academy facilities.

Disclosure and confidentiality

If you are already a student or are planning to study at the Academy and would like to discuss any issues relating to disability, you are welcome to contact the Disability Advisor, Heather Symonds, at disability@ram.ac.uk and, when enrolled, your Head of Year (for undergraduates) or Tutor (for postgraduates).

Please contact us as early as possible so that appropriate support can be agreed and put in place. Information disclosed to the Academy by students is treated in confidence.

When you first contact Student Support and Wellbeing (Disability), we will have a confidential discussion with you. We will ask you to sign a Confidentiality/Disclosure Consent Form, giving us permission to tell staff of any disability support or access arrangements required. We will discuss with you the information to be disclosed, provide you with a copy of the documentation – usually a Personal Learning Plan (PLP) – and ask you to confirm your consent to this by email.

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Applying to the Academy

The Academy welcomes enquiries and applications from disabled students. Candidates are recruited on the basis of their musical ability and potential. For details of our courses and facilities, please see our prospectus, which is available at ram.ac.uk or via the Admissions Team on **020 7873 7393** or admissions@ram.ac.uk.

The Academy is committed to ensuring that candidates with disabilities and specific learning difficulties are not disadvantaged by the admissions or audition process.

Open Days

If you need information about access when attending an Open Day, please contact the departmental administrator (find their details via ram.ac.uk/departments) or the Disability Advisor (disability@ram.ac.uk).

Application

When applying, you can use the UCAS Conservatoires online form to notify the Admissions Officer of any requirements you might have due to disability.

You can also contact the Admissions Officer at admissions@ram.ac.uk or the Disability Advisor at disability@ram.ac.uk directly.

Auditions

Any disability-related requirements will be agreed prior to audition. For example, a candidate with dyslexia will be allowed 25% extra time to complete their paperwork test. Contacts are as above.

Specific audition requirements can be found on the individual departmental pages of the website via ram.ac.uk/departments.

Offers

All offers are posted from the Academy before Christmas.

Taking up a place at the Academy

If you tell us about a disability when you apply, the Disability Advisor will contact you by email before you start at the Academy and offer you an appointment to discuss any access or support requirements. We will arrange the meeting as early as possible, so that any necessary arrangements can be put in place early in the term.

If you did not disclose a disability when you applied but would like to discuss any issues relating to a disability, you are welcome to contact the Disability Advisor or your Head of Year (undergraduate students) before you start your studies and, when you arrive at the Academy and at any point during your course, the Senior Tutor in Undergraduate Pastoral Support (undergraduates), or your Tutor (postgraduates).

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Support and advice during your course

Support staff

Heads of Year and Tutors

Undergraduate Heads of Year and postgraduate Tutors have overall responsibility for monitoring students' progress and for their general pastoral care. They also assist and guide students in all areas of their curriculum, including performance and academic options, timetabling and any other aspect of a student's programme of study. Postgraduate students are allocated a Tutor when they enrol.

The Senior Tutor in Undergraduate Pastoral Support, Ruth Byrchmore, works with the Dean of Students, Heads of Year/Tutors, Disability Advisor and other Academy support mechanisms. You can contact Ruth at r.byrchmore@ram.ac.uk.

Disability

The Disability Advisor and the Additional Support Tutor offer advice and practical support in relation to disability or specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia or dyspraxia. They work alongside the Senior Tutor in Undergraduate Pastoral Support, Heads of Year and Tutors to support students.

Heather Symonds, Disability Advisor

disability@ram.ac.uk or hsymonds@ram.ac.uk

Linda Kiakides, Additional Support Tutor

lkiakides@ram.ac.uk

Initial screening, assessment or diagnosis

If you have or think you might have a disability, you can speak to the Disability Advisor, or to your Head of Year or the Senior Tutor in Undergraduate Pastoral Support (undergraduates) or Tutor (postgraduates).

If you think you might have dyslexia or dyspraxia, the Disability Advisor will carry out an initial screening. Depending on the outcome, you may be referred for a formal diagnostic assessment with an educational psychologist.

The Disability Advisor can discuss the appropriate process of diagnosis for students with other disabilities or ongoing health conditions.

If you are a new student, we encourage you to contact the Disability Advisor at disability@ram.ac.uk before you start your course, or as soon as possible after you arrive at the Academy, so that arrangements such as extra time in examinations can be put in place in good time.

Formalising access/additional support arrangements

Personal Learning Plan (PLP) scheme

Any access/additional requirements you need related to a disability or specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia or ADHD will be set out in a Personal Learning Plan (PLP). This is an agreement between you and the Academy, which allows the Academy to make appropriate arrangements, referred to as 'reasonable adjustments', and you to agree to make the most of the support offered.

You will normally need evidence of disability before a PLP can be issued. For a specific learning difficulty, this is usually a diagnostic assessment carried out after the age of 16 by a suitably qualified psychologist or teacher. For other disabilities and health issues, evidence from a medical practitioner is usually required.

You will be invited to meet the Disability Advisor and any other relevant staff to discuss what arrangements are needed. Issues of confidentiality,

disclosure and who will receive the PLP will be discussed with you. No information about your disability or specific learning difficulty will be sent out without your written consent.

Examples of common reasonable adjustments include:

- extra time in written exams (usually 25%)
- extra time in aural and sight-reading tests
- use of a laptop in exams
- use of a separate room for exams
- enlarged print scripts
- coloured paper exam scripts

This is not an exhaustive list.

Psychological Support Service

The Student Support Team has professionally trained and experienced counsellors, skilled at helping people from different backgrounds and cultures with a wide range of issues. The team works in line with the **Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions** produced by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy.

Gabriella Flatt, Counsellor

Available: Monday and Wednesday, 9am to 5pm

[**gflatt@ram.ac.uk**](mailto:gflatt@ram.ac.uk)

Anita Gould, Senior Psychological Therapist

Available: Monday to Thursday, 9am to 5pm

[**agould@ram.ac.uk**](mailto:agould@ram.ac.uk)

Sujaree Kuenghakit, Counsellor and Senior Psychological Therapist

Available: Monday and Friday, 9am to 5pm

[**skuenghakit@ram.ac.uk**](mailto:skuenghakit@ram.ac.uk)

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Dyslexia and dyspraxia

Diagnostic assessment

Students who have not been previously diagnosed with a specific learning disability, or who need an updated assessment (post-16 years), may be referred to a qualified educational psychologist. The assessment process takes about two-and-a-half hours. It may be possible for a student to apply to the Academy to contribute to the cost.

Please contact the **Disability Advisor** for further information.

Additional learning support tutorials

Arrangements can be made for one-to-one tuition for students with specific learning difficulties.

This support is available to students who have been allocated funding for specialist tuition through their Disabled Student Allowance (DSA). Further information about DSA is on page 14 of this document.

The Academy can also help with the provision of this tuition for students who are not eligible to apply for DSA, including international students. Please discuss this with the **Disability Advisor**.

Useful IT software

mindmup.com

naturalreaders.com/online

These are free, web-based programs but are fairly basic.

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Visual impairment

Please contact the Disability Advisor at disability@ram.ac.uk to discuss access requirements before you start your studies at the Academy.

The Academy has links with the organisation Musicians in Focus (Visually Impaired) Ltd, run by Jackie Clifton. Jackie offers specialist training and support to enhance access for blind and visually impaired musicians. The Academy can help organise training to take place before a student starts their course, so they can begin their studies with confidence.

For contact details, please email the [Disability Advisor](#).

Support for UK students can normally be funded through the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA). Further information about DSA is on page 14 of this document.

For students not eligible for DSA, funding options can be discussed with the [Disability Advisor](#).

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Monitoring and developing provision for students with disabilities

The Academy is committed to continuing to develop our services for disabled people and promoting disability equality. Our Equality Scheme, Primary Equality Objectives and Action Plan can be found on the Academy website [here](#) and in hard copy from the Disability Advisor.

Student-Staff Liaison Committee

Disability issues are overseen by the Student-Staff Liaison Committee, which is chaired by Catherine Jury, Registrar and Director of Student Operations. All areas of student support and welfare are represented on this committee, which reports to the Standing Committee of the Academic Board.

Students' Union

The Royal Academy of Music Students' Union is an independent student body, which exists to represent the interests of students at every level in the Academy. The Union can also provide support for students relating to individual issues.

Students can contact the President on **020 7873 7337** or ramsu@ram.ac.uk, or find them in the Students' Union Office (**LG18**) across from the Student Common Room.

Student Central

The Academy Students' Union is affiliated to Student Central, previously known as University of London Union, so its members have access to all Student Central services. Find out more at studentcentral.london.

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Other useful information

Financial help for disability support

Disabled Students' Allowance

Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) are government grants that help to cover some of the extra costs that arise because of a mental health problem, long-term illness or any other disability when studying at higher education or postgraduate level. It is available to home students.

Students can receive the allowances in addition to other student finance. You will not need to repay DSAs.

DSAs are not means-tested. Students can receive DSAs even if they do not qualify for help with fees or the means-tested element of the student loan.

Students can apply for DSAs if they have studied a course at the same level before. They are advised to check their fee situation with Registry.

There are three parts to DSAs for undergraduate students:

- The Specialist Equipment Allowance pays towards the cost of equipment such as computers, assistive technology and digital recorders (one amount to cover the whole of a course). Students are required to make a £200 contribution towards the cost of a computer.
- The Non-Medical Helpers' Allowance pays for specialist tuition (for dyslexia, for example), helpers such as sign language interpreters or readers, mobility enablers and mental health mentors. This allowance may be granted to meet such costs for each year of study.
- The General Allowance can pay for other disability-related costs of studying, such as extra books, photocopying, CDs or extra heating costs, and it can also be used towards additional disability-related costs for accommodation, such as needing an en-suite room. Students can get the general allowance to meet such costs for each year of study.

Students can also apply for help with travel expenses if they have additional costs due to disability.

Postgraduate students can receive one sum for each year of study towards study-related disability expenses.

Applying for DSAs

To apply, students will require evidence of disability. This can be:

- a medical report/letter; or
- a dyslexia report carried out by a Chartered Educational Psychologist or other qualified person after you reached the age of 16

This evidence will need to be sent to the appropriate finance agency, dependent on where you live, together with a DSA application form, which can be downloaded from the links below. Applications can also be made online.

- In England: [Student Finance England](#)
- In Scotland: [Student Awards Agency Scotland \(SAAS\)](#)
- In Wales: [Student Finance Wales](#)
- In Northern Ireland: [Student Finance NI](#)

Further information and help

See the relevant link above for Student Finance. You will also be able to download the relevant application form or apply online.

Please contact the [Disability Advisor](#) at the Academy for further help with applying for DSAs.

Once your eligibility for DSAs is confirmed, Student Finance might ask you to contact an assessment centre to work out what help you need. This is known as a needs assessment. Do not book this unless and until you are asked to do so by Student Finance.

International students

International students are not eligible to apply for DSAs but are advised to contact the Disability Advisor on **020 7873 7431** or **disability@ram.ac.uk** regarding assistance in finding alternative funding opportunities for disability-related expenditure.

Hardship Fund

The Royal Academy of Music is able to offer financial assistance to students who are experiencing hardship during their time at the Academy. The awards are made at the discretion of the Dean of Students.

Students wishing to be considered for an award should fill in the application form **[here](#)** and return it to the International Officer and Executive Assistant, Sarah Low, at **slow@ram.ac.uk**. If your request is particularly urgent, please discuss this with the International Officer and Executive Assistant.

Access to our buildings

The entrance to the main Royal Academy building on Marylebone Road is step free. There is a drop-off point via the slip road for taxis and other vehicles immediately outside this entrance.

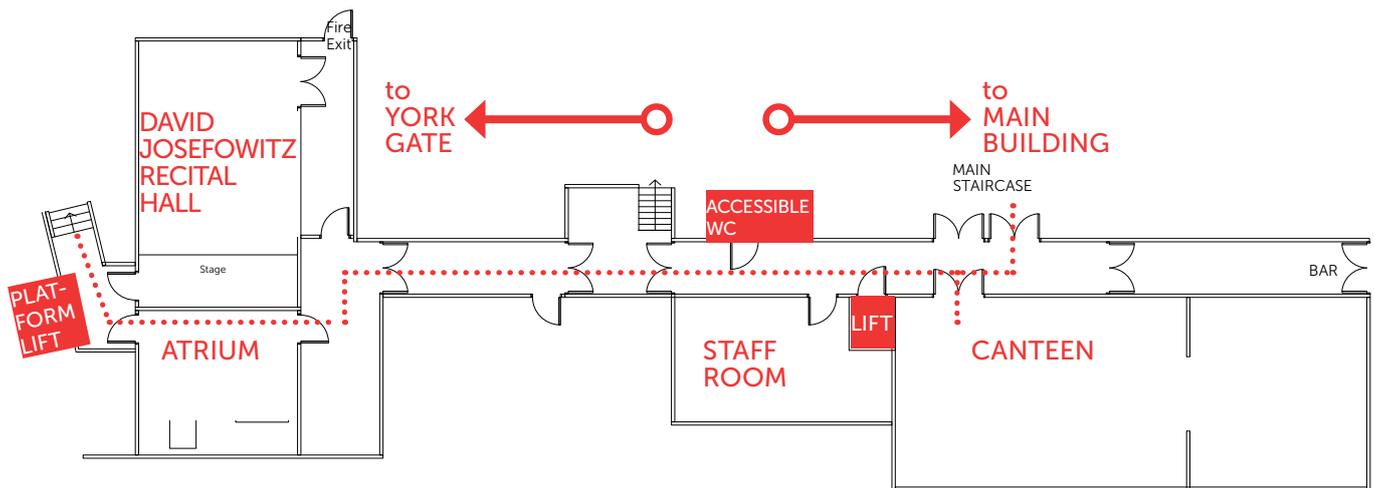
The reception area is on the ground floor as you enter the building. There is access by lift to some floors of the main building and to the Sound Bites canteen on the lower floor. There is an accessible toilet on this floor.

Wheelchair (step-free) access to the York Gate building is via a ramp at the side entrance of the York Gate building. This is located approximately 100m to the left of the Academy's main entrance and is adjacent to the David Josefowitz Recital Hall. It is signposted from the York Gate building front entrance. The ramped entrance has a remote entry system via voice intercom.

Once inside the building, via this entrance, there is access to all floors of York Gate, and accessible toilets via the lift.

The lift also provides access to the basement, from which there is access to the main building, as follows:

An enclosed platform lift takes you down to the lower level of York Gate and the basement area of the main building. This gives access to the David Josefowitz Recital Hall, and a long corridor connects with the main building, including the canteen (Sound Bites) and bar. From here, there is a lift to all floors at the front section of the main building.



York Gate can also be accessed via the main entrance using the above route in reverse.

Prospective students who would like to visit the Academy for a tour of the premises and to discuss access arrangements are welcome to do so. Please contact disability@ram.ac.uk.

Our Step-free Access Guide can be found at ram.ac.uk/access.

Emergency evacuation

Disabled refuge areas are provided in the York Gate Building and in the event of an evacuation of the building there are dedicated marshals to check the refuges and take whatever action is necessary to ensure that people are helped safely out of the building. If appropriate, a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) will be set up for individual students. For further information, email safetyadvisor@ram.ac.uk.

Health and safety

If you have any concerns about health and safety or emergency evacuation, please contact either the [Safety Advisor](#) or the [Disability Advisor](#).

Accommodation

There are many options available to Academy students when choosing somewhere to live. We have produced some guides to help you make your choice, which can be found at ram.ac.uk/accommodation.

If you have any questions regarding accommodation, please contact the Facilities and Accommodation Assistant on **020 7873 7432** or accommodation@ram.ac.uk.

As a member institution of the University of London, all current and future students at the Academy are also able to make use of the free services offered by the University of London Housing Services (ULHS) department. These include advice and guidance on private accommodation and house hunting, as well as a large database of available accommodation – both whole properties and individual rooms.

You can contact ULHS on **020 7862 8880** or housing@london.ac.uk.

If you would like to discuss any access issues or disability-related arrangements, please contact the [Disability Advisor](#).

International Students House

International Students House offers affordable accommodation a short distance from the Academy.

International Students House

229 Great Portland Street, London W1W 5PN

+44 (0)20 7631 8300

ish.org.uk

To apply for a place online, go to ish.org.uk/longstay.

Transport

Driving and parking in central London

Within the City of Westminster, Blue Badge holders can park free of charge in designated disabled parking bays. At meters or pay-and-display parking, payment is necessary but Blue Badge holders are entitled to an additional hour of parking for free. Blue Badges must be displayed at all times while parked.

Find out more about the Blue Badge scheme [here](#).

The City of Westminster also offers a White Badge scheme, which has similar application criteria as the Blue Badge. The White Badge enables holders to park without time restriction in residential bays and pay-and-display street bays in Westminster, free of charge.

More information about disabled parking in Westminster is available [here](#).

Congestion charge

Holders of a Blue Badge are eligible for a 100% discount from London's daily congestion charge, once they have registered for a one-off fee. Badge holders can register up to two vehicles they normally use. Please note that the Badge holder does not have to own the vehicle. The discount applies to the Badge holder, not the vehicle. For more information, visit cclondon.com or phone London Transport on **0343 222 1234**.

Public transport

There is a slip road in front of the main building where taxis can safely drop off disabled people. Buses that pass by the front of the Academy include the 18, 27, 30 and 205. All of these bus routes are wheelchair accessible. They all have a low floor access and ramp.

More information about transport accessibility can be found on the Transport for London website, [here](#).

TfL's guide to accessible travel can be found [here](#).

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Useful contacts and websites

General disability information

Disability Unit

Government website containing news and information on a wide range of disability issues.

Web: [gov.uk/government/organisations/disability-unit](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disability-unit)

Disability and the arts

Help Musicians

Advice and information for disabled musicians.

Web: helpmusicians.org.uk

Arts Council England

Advice and information about funding for the arts.

Web: [artscouncil.org.uk](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

Disability-specific organisations

Dyslexia Teaching Centre

Tel: **020 7361 4790**

Email: info@dyslexiateachingcentre.co.uk

Web: dyslexiateachingcentre.co.uk

British Dyslexia Association (BDA)

Tel: **0333 405 4555**

Email: helpline@bdadyslexia.org.uk

Web: bdadyslexia.org.uk

The Dyspraxia Foundation

Helpline: **01462 454 986** (Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm)

Web: dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk

The National Autistic Society

Helpline: **0808 800 4104**

Online helpline enquiry form

Web: **autism.org.uk**

Mind

National Charity offering advice about mental health issues

Tel: **0300 123 3393**

Text: **86463**

Web: **mind.org.uk**

Students Against Depression

Web: **studentsagainstdepression.org**

Action on Hearing (previously RNID)

Tel: **0808 808 0123**

Text (SMS only): **0780 000 0360**

Relay: dial **18001** followed by **0808 808 0123**

Email: **information@actiononhearingloss.org.uk**

Web: **actiononhearingloss.org.uk**

Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)

Tape and Braille services, student support services, benefits rights, awareness training.

Tel: **020 7388 1266** or **0845 766 9999** (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm)

Web: **rnib.org.uk**

RNIB Music Advisory Service (MAS)

Tel: **020 7391 2273**

Email: **mas@rnib.org.uk**

Musicians in Focus (Visually Impaired) Ltd

Contact the Academy's **Disability Advisor** for information

Medical assistance

Paddington Green Health Centre

Tel: **020 7887 1600**

Web: paddingtongreenhc.nhs.uk

British Association for Performing Arts Medicine (BAPAM)

Specialist health support for performing artists

Tel: **020 7404 8444**

Email: info@bapam.org.uk

Web: bapam.org.uk

Government funding agencies

Student Finance England

Tel: **0845 300 5090**

Web: gov.uk/apply-online-for-student-finance

Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS)

Tel: **0300 300 3135** (then option 6)

Web: saas.gov.uk

Student Finance Wales

Tel: **0845 602 8845**

Web: studentfinancewales.co.uk

Student Finance Northern Ireland

Tel: **0845 600 0662**

Web: studentfinancenir.co.uk

PATRON

HM The Queen

PRESIDENT

HRH The Duchess of Gloucester GCVO

PRINCIPAL

Professor Jonathan Freeman-Attwood CBE

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