



Chetham's
School of Music

Admissions Policy

The first stage in applying to Chetham's School of Music is to complete an application form – available from the School, or to download from Chetham's website at www.chethams.com. Chetham's welcomes applications throughout the academic year, but we strongly encourage you to apply as early as possible as places do become limited, especially by the end of the Spring Term. If you are applying for Sixth Form entry, then we recommend that you return your application forms before March. Any later than this and the auditions can often coincide with GCSE examinations. For all applications, we strongly advise you to apply early, ideally before Christmas.

Entry Requirements

Chetham's welcomes applications from young musicians for both boarding and day places for girls and boys aged 8 – 18. Principal study vocalists are invited to apply for Sixth Form only (we do not normally offer a first study vocal programme earlier than this).

Areas of Study: Chetham's welcomes applications for principal study of all western classical and jazz instruments, and voice. Please note that percussionists are expected to demonstrate a range of tuned and untuned percussion at audition. We also welcome applications for composition as either principal or second study (please note, composers should also be able to offer a good level of proficiency on a second study instrument).

Other requirements: There is an expectation that all students applying for Sixth Form (Year 12) entry will have passed GCSE Music (or equivalent) and ABRSM Grade 5 Theory. Given the already vibrant programme that Sixth Form entails, we strongly advise that this expectation is met, in order to avoid the need to attend 'catch-up' theory classes. All students are required to study A-level Music.

We advise all applicants to be involved in a wide range of musical activities, such as singing in a school or local choir, composing, or playing in an orchestra or other ensemble.

Advice Auditions: These informal and informative sessions are available all year around and are normally for musicians aged 7–16 who would like professional feedback on their current musical level and potential or general advice (please see the section on Accessibility regarding disabled access). Please note that we do not usually provide accompanists for pre-application advice auditions.

Open Days: These are held every October and January. They offer an excellent opportunity to see the school in action and to meet our Heads of Instrumental Departments, Director of Music and the Head. Check our website for further details.

What happens next?

Once the form is received, the Director of Music and Head of the relevant Instrumental Department will consider your application and gauge when best to arrange an audition. Should we feel that it might be better to delay an audition we will offer advice on areas to consider and develop to support auditioning at a later date.

How do I apply?

By downloading an application form or contacting us and we will send you a prospectus and application form. Please complete all sections of the application form, giving as much information as you can, especially about your musical experience and all activities, and including references from current music tutors. Please tell us about any known disability, learning differences or special educational need which may affect an applicant's ability to participate in the admissions procedure and take full advantage of the education provided at the School (see the section below entitled Accessibility).

The audition process

There are two stages in the audition process:

Stage One - Assessment Audition

Stage Two - Main Audition

One of our staff accompanists will be available for your assessment and main audition (except where the principal study is piano, harp, guitar or percussion). Please ensure that you bring your own piano parts to the audition. We do not permit audition candidates to bring their own accompanists.

Stage One

The **Assessment Audition** lasts around 30 minutes with the Head of the relevant Instrumental, Vocal or Composition Department. You are asked to prepare two contrasting pieces of music which you feel best demonstrate your current musical ability on your principal instrument, and one piece on your second instrument, if you have one. In the audition, we look for the following qualities:

- Musicianship - your ability to deal fluently with practical music issues. This may include questions on key, rhythm, dynamics and other aspects of interpretation.
- Aural awareness - your ability to understand, identify and respond to musical sounds and patterns. This will include ear (aural) tests, mainly through singing, and pitching intervals, short melodies, answering phrases, rhythms and simple chord recognition.
- Creativity / Musicality - what we look for primarily is natural musical spontaneity and potential.
- Technique - your instrumental skills, including awareness of quality of sound, intonation and rhythmic precision. You will also be asked to play scales at the appropriate level.
- Musical literacy - your ability to sight-read (a short piece will be given) and your ability to understand and discuss music - we'll ask you about your audition programme.
- Musical personality / potential - we highly value these qualities. We are looking for your strength of personality, dedication, enthusiasm, individuality and musical potential.

- Response – with all of the above we are looking for potential and musical 'instinct'.

After the Assessment Audition, we will write to inform you whether you are invited to Stage Two of the audition process. If not, we can provide constructive feedback designed to help your future musical development, or possibly ask you to re-audition at a later date. If you are invited back, we may ask you to work on specific areas so that we can gauge your response and progress (e.g. try to improve scales, sight reading or rhythmic security).

Stage Two

The Main Audition is held by the Director of Music and the relevant Head of Instrumental Department, who may sometimes invite other members of staff onto the audition panel. During the audition, in addition to your prepared pieces, you may be asked to try out certain unprepared musical exercises, to help the panel to assess your musical responses. You may also be asked to talk about your musical activities, interests and influences. In addition to your audition, you will sit a brief theory assessment and aural test and you may also be given a Quick Study to prepare during your warm-up time before the audition.

After the Main Audition, you may be offered a place at Chetham's for the following September, or you may be held on the reserve list, or indeed invited to re-audition at a later date. If you are not offered a place, we will be happy to provide constructive feedback designed to help your future musical development.

Overseas Applicants Applying from Abroad

The normal school year in the UK runs from early September to early July.

If you live abroad and distance makes it difficult for you to visit Chetham's for an audition, DVD and video performances are accepted at the assessment stage, which should be accompanied by a completed application form and further information about you, including a reference from your principal study music teacher. **A personal introduction helps us to get to know you. Apart from very exceptional circumstances, all candidates are required to travel to Manchester for the Main Audition.**

Although admission is purely on musical potential and there are no academic entry requirements, it is important that Chetham's can provide a suitable course for your needs, academically as well as musically. Please let us know your current educational achievements and the subjects you would like to study at Chetham's. Evidence of fluency in both spoken and written English is also required. Support is available for students for whom English is an additional language. The school reserves the right to make a charge for extra support if language presents a significant barrier to learning and integrating with school life.

Applying to be a Chorister

Auditions for Manchester Cathedral Choristers are held throughout the year and applications are welcomed from girls and boys between the ages of 8-10. Choristers are educated at Chetham's and also study one instrument at the School. They normally remain in the Cathedral Choir until the end of Year 8 when they can audition for an instrumental place at Chetham's or complete their secondary education elsewhere.

Life as a Chorister

Potential Choristers do not need any prior experience to audition for the Choir; we are looking for children who enjoy singing, being part of a close-knit team and who, with their parents, will commit to a demanding but immensely rewarding schedule. Choristers

attend rehearsals in the Cathedral each day and sing for the weekly round of services and other special events such as live radio broadcasts, CD recordings and touring within the UK, Europe and beyond. They are busy during many holiday periods and weekends; Christmas and Easter are especially busy periods and it is important that parents are aware of these considerations when applying for a choristership.

Choristers attend most lessons and practice sessions at school with the other students, and their daily rehearsals and services at the Cathedral are integrated into the school timetable. They have timetabled music lessons, as do the other students, and if they do not already play an instrument when they come to Chetham's they will be expected to learn the piano.

To enquire about Choristerships, please contact the Cathedral in the first instance:
T: +44(0)161 833 2220 E: christopher.stokes@manchestercathedral.org

Accessibility

The School currently has limited facilities for the disabled but will do all that is reasonable to comply with its legal and moral responsibilities under the *Equality Act 2010* and *The Children and Families Act 2014*, in order to accommodate the needs of young people who have disabilities for which, with reasonable adjustments, the School can cater adequately.

The School needs to be aware of any known disability, learning differences or special educational need which may affect an applicant's ability to participate in the admissions procedure and take full advantage of the education provided at the School. Parents of an applicant who has any disability, learning differences or special educational needs or existing Access Arrangements for examinations should provide the School with full details. The School needs this information so that, in the case of any applicant with particular needs, the School can assess those needs and consult with parents about the adjustments which can reasonably be made to ensure that the application/audition procedure is accessible for the applicant and that the School can cater adequately for the applicant should an offer of a place be made.

Stephen Threlfall

Last reviewed: May 2016

Date of next review: 30 May 2017