

# RIAM

Royal Irish  
Academy of Music

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## **Royal Irish Academy of Music**

### **Erasmus Policy Statement**

**May 2020**

The Royal Irish Academy of Music is Ireland's national conservatoire for music. It endorses the European Commission's belief that education and culture are essential to develop a more inclusive, cohesive and competitive Europe and does this by providing high quality pre-professional music education.

The objective of a European Education Area in which the free movement of learners is guaranteed, in which people have a strong sense of their identity as Europeans of Europe's cultural heritage and its diversity, is one which RIAM fully supports through its partnerships and Erasmus activities.

We acknowledge that RIAM must play its part in harnessing the full potential of education and culture as drivers for job creation, economic growth and improved social cohesion, as well as a means to experience European identity in all its diversity.

With that in mind, RIAM's Erasmus strategy, related to our internationalisation and modernisation strategy, has the following objectives:

**To ensure that spending time abroad to study and learn should become the norm for RIAM stakeholders** – RIAM's students and staff undertaking Erasmus exchanges has increased steadily and we commit to fostering further growth

**Higher education qualifications from Erasmus exchanges will be recognised at RIAM** – RIAM's student exchanges contain approved learning agreements in which modules are formally credited by partner institutions and will be included in transcripts and the Diploma Supplement

**We will encourage students to aspire to two languages in addition to one's mother tongue as standard** - RIAM encourages our students to take language classes and offers English language classes to incoming students

**To achieve greater access to high-quality music performance education, irrespective of socio-economic background or disability** – RIAM has a bursary fund, an inclusion strategy and is committed to developing more inclusive curricula and civic engagement in its student and staff body through Erasmus strategic partnerships

**RIAM graduates will have a strong sense of their identity as a European, of Europe's cultural heritage and its diversity** – RIAM, as a music conservatoire, is both the keeper of Irish musical culture, and a means of reaching out internationally through the performance and dissemination of music from other countries. We will actively promote this identity within a broader European context through our programme content, performances from current students, research projects and their dissemination, and the careers that our graduates have.

RIAM's 6 internationalisation and modernisation goals are:

**1. To increase the number of RIAM's international graduates and those who study with us on Erasmus exchanges-** RIAM plans to attract more international and Erasmus students, building on the positive learning and cultural experiences that incoming students experience at RIAM. In order to achieve this, RIAM has increased the number of Erasmus bi-lateral agreements made with other institutions to over 30. In addition, to facilitate effective incoming applications, RIAM has joined the EASY online Erasmus application programme, which has over 100 conservatoire members.

**2. To improve the quality and relevance of teaching and researcher training in order to equip graduates with the knowledge and core transferable competences they need to succeed** - Staff exchanges serve to develop and refresh professional skills as our staff can observe best practice work in the international arena. This has inspired them to bring fresh curriculum and administrative ideas back, to improve the student experience. RIAM students are at the moment benefitting from a new course in entrepreneurial skills, developed by the NEWS in MAP Erasmus+ project, of which RIAM is a member. This was made possible thanks to an early staff exchange visit to project leaders Santa Cecilia Conservatorio in Rome, in which the original concept for a class on transferrable skills was discussed. More such collaborations, particularly linked to RIAM's digital strategy, will be part of our Erasmus strategy from 2021-2027.

**3. To provide more opportunities for students to gain additional skills through study or training abroad** – we encourage our students to apply for Erasmus exchanges, and the numbers of outgoing applicants have grown thanks to the increase in institutional bi-lateral agreements and the positive stories from those who return. Outgoing RIAM students have the unique experience of studying certain musical styles, often in the country of origin, giving them additional specialist skills not available in Ireland.

**4. To strengthen the "knowledge triangle", linking education, research and business** - RIAM staff are on professional working groups such as the Erasmus partnership NEWS in MAP and also the AEC (Association of European Conservatoires) working group on Entrepreneurship under the Erasmus+ Strengthening Music in Society Programme, supported by the European Commission through the scheme "European Networks" of the Creative Europe programme. These major cross-European networks enhance our staff knowledge of how practice and research can improve the employability of our future graduates. They share their knowledge of next practice with colleagues and in taught modules to students, contributing to the quality and relevance of RIAM's programmes. It is our intention to seek further partnerships in this area.

**5. To create effective governance and funding mechanisms to support exchanges and acknowledge learning and training activities** - The accountability and monitoring taken on internally by the RIAM International team, reporting to the Higher Education Authority of Ireland, will ensure that all funds used will be accounted for and will go towards high value education experiences that are recognised formally in the Diploma Supplement and related transcripts for students, in staff performance reviews and curriculum development.

**6. To contribute to the European Education area in a leadership role by linking networking and professional development experiences for RIAM staff and students to important developments in higher music education policy** - In April 2020, RIAM submitted its first application as lead partner for an Erasmus strategic partnership bid, with 9 other institutions as a KA 203 proposal under 'Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices'. 'PRIhME' aspires to create a stakeholder assembly (in the style of the Citizen's Assembly) to look at the important subject of power relations in music conservatoires, and how power imbalances can undermine the student and staff experience. This project promotes civic engagement and inclusion, some key objectives of the EU, and will encourage active citizenship on the part of the student and staff body

of the RIAM. This is an example of projects that the RIAM plans to lead in the lifetime of this Erasmus Programme.

RIAM Director Deborah Kelleher, who is a Vice-President of the AEC (the umbrella organisation for over 300 music conservatoires across Europe) was closely involved in the above mentioned AEC SMS bid, a project whose aim is to support and encourage Music HEIs to adapt to change, embrace innovation and open up new fields of activities together.

The RIAM has moved to this new leadership phase through senior roles in international networks and making bids for Erasmus funds thanks to the experience and the valuable networks we have developed under the Erasmus programme to date.