

The purpose of the scheme is to provide help with payment for organ tuition for people who would like to develop their skills as a church organist within the area covered by the Anglican Diocese of Manchester. Candidates for the scheme do not have to be members of the RSCM or attached to an affiliated church - the scheme is only administered by the RSCM Manchester Area Committee on behalf of the Diocese of Manchester.

The scheme provides up to 50% of the cost of tuition on the organ for successful applicants who fulfil the criteria set out below. In order for a grant to be made, approval from the RSCM Committee must be received before tuition commences. Tuition will be provided by an approved tutor (the list of current approved tutors is available from the Area Secretary), allocated following approval. Some candidates may be asked to attend an advisory audition to assess their suitability to benefit from the scheme. Most tutors ask prospective students to have a basic grasp of keyboard technique and to be able to sight-read a simple hymn tune (e.g. 'St Peter' or a similar tune), although this is not intended to exclude those with a limited keyboard facility.

Prospective applicants should complete the application form (attached) and return it to the RSCM Area Secretary. They will receive confirmation that we have received the application and given an estimate of when they will be informed of the outcome. All applications must be accompanied by a written recommendation from the applicant's parish priest/minister. Applications cannot be accepted without one. Space is provided for this on the application form itself. Also, we ask applicants to include some information about the instrument they will use for practice/services i.e. the organ builder, who maintains the organ at present, the number of manuals/stops, has it a full pedal-board (30-32 notes) etc.

If the application is successful the committee will allocate the student an approved tutor. They will then need to arrange lessons with this tutor to fit their own diaries. In the first instance, funding provided will be for a maximum of 50% of the cost of up to ten lessons - it is not possible to fully fund lessons, and sheet music and book purchases will be the students own responsibility. Funding for further lessons will be considered following a review of the student's progress (by means of progress reports from the tutor). Funding is provided in arrears and will be subject to full attendance at arranged lessons.

The syllabus followed for tuition is informal in nature in order to best suit the needs of the individual student. However, since the scheme is intended to improve the skills of a church musician, the main focus will be on those aspects of organ playing used for this purpose; Hymn playing, Anthem and Psalm accompaniment, and voluntaries. Of course other aspects will be covered; basic music theory, organ technique (effective use of stops, pedals and swell box where available), appropriate choosing of music for festivals/seasons of the churches year, etc.

Further information and/or advice is available from the Area Secretary at the address below:

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