

NCO Student Placements 2027 Application Pack

Conductor Placement

At NCO, our purpose is to champion the life-changing power of music.

Nearly 2,000 children aged 8-14 connect with National Children's Orchestras each year through:

- auditioned Orchestral Weeks and Weekends
- non-auditioned workshops and Orchestral Days
- activities with schools, music education hubs and other partner organisations
- free tickets to concerts

We empower children to uncover the joy of orchestral music, unleash their creativity, realise their ambitions and embrace a future filled with endless possibilities. We use the power of music to create supportive communities that enrich lives. The confidence, resilience and teamwork learned through music become skills for life, wherever each young musician's journey takes them.

Play together. Be unstoppable.

NCO Student Placements

NCO's Student Placement scheme supports around 40 students from across the country on our Orchestral Weekends and Orchestral Weeks programmes. NCO is committed to supporting and engaging with the UK's emerging musical leaders to provide them with insight, opportunity and experiences that inform and develop their understanding of working with children and within music education, particularly orchestral training. NCO's Student Placement programme:

- Enhances students' understanding of how to work with and to lead large youth ensembles
- Supports the development of best practice in music education in emerging music leaders
- Provides peer learning opportunities with students from across the country
- Provides an insight into NCO's learning framework and creative thinking

We have four different types of placement available at NCO - Insight, Tutor, Advance and Conductor.

[For more information on each of the placements available please visit our website.](#)

NCO Conductor

NCO's Conductor Placement takes place on **one** of our non-residential Orchestral Weekends, for one successful candidate. These are held twice a year, and we welcome up to 100 children aged 8-14 from Grades 3-8+ in each location. They come together with a team of experienced music tutors, guest artists and conductors to work on orchestral and creative music-making. This placement will be with the NCO Conductor working on that weekend of activity. To be considered for this placement, students will need to be available for **one weekend of our Summer Orchestral Weekend activity** and attend an online briefing and training session.

What will you do?

- Observe and assist (if appropriate) the NCO Conductor during full orchestral and sectional rehearsals. You will have 1 online session with the conductor in advance of the weekend to plan and discuss participation
- Lead a workshop rehearsal with partnering visiting groups in learning a body percussion piece that will be performed alongside NCO Weekends Members*
- Gain valuable pedagogical training to support the development of a professional toolkit for working with young musicians
- Have access to online training sessions on warm-ups and ice breakers, building relationships with young musicians and strategies to support neurodivergent young people

**NCO works in close partnership with Music Hubs across the country and Young Sounds UK Connect Hubs. A small cohort of children from the local area, from a specific instrument group, join NCO Weekends Members for a day to work with our Guest Artist. They also learn a body percussion piece to perform side by side with NCO musicians at the Sharing Performance at the end of the weekend activity.*

You will also attend an online briefing prior to the placement which will include an overview of NCO's learning approach and information on safeguarding and working with young people and neurodiverse young musicians.

Who should apply?

- Conductors who are studying at Master's level on a Conducting course
- Conductors who are passionate about developing their knowledge and experience of music education
- Conductors who already have some experience of music education work through teaching, ensemble work or as an instrumentalist
- Conductors who are creative and critical thinkers
- Conductors with an interest in and passion for improving access, inclusion and diversity within the industry. We are particularly interested in hearing from students from diverse backgrounds and those who feel underrepresented in the current music industry

When is it?

You must be available for **one weekend in one of the below locations**, and for an advance planning meeting with the conductor (date to be decided between you), in addition to online activity during 2027:

Location	Dates
South West (Tiverton)	22 nd & 23 rd May 2027
North (Bolton)	12 th & 13 th June 2027

Additional online activity:

- Online NCO Weekends 2027 Activity Launch (optional): Sunday 17th January 2027, 4pm
- Online briefing & training (mandatory): Monday 25th January 2027, 5pm

What do I need?

You will receive a briefing and safeguarding training prior to the weekend. You will need an enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) clearance to support any NCO events. If you do not have a current certificate, we will apply and pay for one for you. Please also enquire with your university or college as they can often provide this as part of your course.

Travel and Expenses

This is an unpaid opportunity, but NCO will cover all costs relating to the placement including travel, training and a DBS application where needed. Accommodation can be considered when the placement weekend is outside of your study city.

NCO would welcome any contribution partnering institutions can make towards travel costs for their students. Please speak to your university or college to find out more.

How do I apply?

[Applications will be open from Tuesday 6th October 2026 through our website here.](#)

We will ask for details of your current study and your placement preferences, why you are interested in taking part in our Student Placement scheme and what skills and qualities you can bring to the opportunity.

Applications will close at midday on Thursday 12th November 2026.

Interview: We will shortlist candidates once applications have closed and will hold online interviews in the week commencing Monday 23rd November. We will let you know as soon as possible via email if we would like to invite you to interview.

Please get in touch with Emily Pieczko (e.pieczko@nco.org.uk) if you have any questions!