

NCO Student Placements 2027 Application Pack

Insight 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 Insight

NCO's Insight Placement takes place on our non-residential Orchestral Weekends. 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.

We are looking for music students with varying instrumental specialties and experiences to gain valuable understanding of delivering outstanding youth music activity and to inspire our young musicians. To be considered for this placement, students will need to be available for **both** the

spring and summer weekends at one Orchestral Weekend location and must also attend the online briefing and training session.

What will you do?

- Play in orchestral sections and assist music tutors to provide support and role-modelling to young musicians during full orchestral and sectional rehearsals
- Lead part of sectional rehearsals
- Gain insights into pedagogical practice, aiding the development of a valuable 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

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?

- Musicians who are studying music at undergraduate or postgraduate level
- Musicians who play traditional orchestral instruments
- Musicians who are passionate about developing their knowledge and experience of music education
- Musicians with an interest in large ensemble or orchestral playing
- Musicians who are creative and critical thinkers
- Musicians who like to roll up their sleeves and get involved
- Musicians 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 will be allocated to one of the following and you must be available for both weekends in your given location (one spring and one summer):

Location	Spring	Summer
London North (Camden)	27 th & 28 th February 2027	19 th & 20 th June 2027
London South (Lewisham)	27 th & 28 th February 2027	19 th & 20 th June 2027
North (Bolton)	6 th & 7 th March 2027	12 th & 13 th June 2027
Midlands (Birmingham)	13 th & 14 th March 2027	12 th & 13 th June 2027
South West (Tiverton)	13 th & 14 th March 2027	22 nd & 23 rd May 2027

We aim to offer successful applicants a placement in the weekend location closest to where they are based, but on some occasions we may ask applicants to travel further afield.

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 first 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 placements are 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. We receive a large number of applications each year and will contact applicants as soon as possible to confirm whether they have been successful.

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