

CONSERVATOIRES UK

Principles of Best Practice in Conservatoire Teaching

Introduction

Each CUK member institution is committed to providing its students with an excellent learning experience, underpinned by the highest possible professional standards in all aspects of its activities. The following principles of best practice, which apply to teaching settings involving students who are 18 years of age or over, are reflected in each member institution's own policies, procedures and practices.

All CUK member institutions conduct regular and systematic reviews of their own policies, procedures and practices and the CUK will also keep these principles of best practice under review.

Principles

1. The student/teacher relationship is based on mutual respect. Teachers have a particular responsibility to create an empowering learning environment for their students, in which professional boundaries are explicit, understood and maintained at all times.
2. A student's well-being is always a teacher's first concern.
3. The role of teachers is to:
 - listen and respond to their students' concerns and individual learning needs;
 - provide inspiration and guidance through example and practice;
 - provide honest and constructive feedback in a supportive way;
 - provide their students with the information and guidance that they need in a way that they can understand;
 - encourage and support their students' development as independent and autonomous practitioners.
4. Decisions made in respect of a student's learning are discussed and agreed between student and teacher.
5. In the case of any disagreement between student and teacher, the relevant Head of Department will, in the first instance, attempt to provide an appropriate resolution which, in cases of significant and irreconcilable disagreement, may involve a change of teacher.

6. Designated one-to-one teachers will not normally be involved in the summative assessment of their students.
7. Physical contact between teacher and student is sometimes necessary for the student's learning (e.g. to correct poor posture or to adjust bow hold). Its purpose and form should be explained to the student by the teacher and the student's consent obtained in advance of physical contact taking place. In this context, as in all others, teachers will be sensitive to feedback from their students and will respond accordingly.
8. Teaching will take place in a safe and comfortable environment and the physical construction of teaching spaces will incorporate a proportionate degree of external visibility.
9. Teaching will normally take place in teaching spaces either provided, or previously approved, by the institution. Any off-site teaching will be subject to prior approval by the institution.
10. Teachers are strongly discouraged from establishing or seeking a sexual relationship with students. Each institution will have its own policies and procedures to deal with any such occurrence.
11. If a teacher is uncomfortable with a student's behaviour towards her/himself, the teacher should report those concerns to the relevant Head of Department or other designated person so that appropriate steps can be taken in accordance with the institution's own policies and procedures.
12. Teaching practice should promote equality and respect diversity. A teacher's personal political, religious or moral views must not impinge on her or his professional relationship with students.
13. Students and staff will be informed of procedures to be followed and of how to seek advice and support should they believe that institutional policies, procedures and practices in respect of the student/staff relationship are not being followed.