



Organ Scholar Application Pack



Welcome

Canterbury Cathedral is delighted to provide an opportunity for an outstanding early-career organist to contribute to the musical life of the Cathedral, and to develop their musical talents and career ambitions.

The Organ Scholar will play at a range of Cathedral services, frequently accompanying the Choir; there will also be further opportunities for musical performance, community engagement work, and music administration. The scholarship is a career development role and is therefore limited to 11 months from September 2025 until July 2026

The Organ Scholar is offered accommodation in the historic Cathedral precincts in a house shared with the Choral Scholars, fully-funded organ lessons, and the opportunity to develop their talents and CV through a range of creative projects appropriate to their skills and interests. The value of this Scholarship is £9277.84, paid over 11 months.

Canterbury Cathedral is the seat of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Mother Church of the Church of England and the worldwide Anglican Communion. Founded by St Augustine, following his mission to England in 597 AD, and the scene of the martyrdom of St Thomas Becket in 1170, the Cathedral draws a large regular local congregation, together with thousands of pilgrims and many high-profile visitors every year.

Canterbury has excellent transport links, including a fast train service to London (55mins into London St Pancras), making it an ideal place to develop a professional musical career. It is also a lively university city with many shops, bars, restaurants, and a busy social and cultural life.

Music at Canterbury Cathedral

The Cathedral is blessed with a large and flourishing Music Department under the leadership of Dr David Newsholme, Director of Music. Choral Evensong is sung regularly and a Choral Eucharist is celebrated on Sundays. The Cathedral has a popular online presence: professional-standard webcasting technology is in place, allowing our music to reach a very large audience around the world.

A broad range of musical activities takes place both at the Cathedral and further afield. In recent years, the Choir has recorded for Accent Records, Decca Records, Resonus Classics, Signum Classics and BBC Music Magazine.

The Choir has performed with world-class ensembles including His Majestys Sagbutts and Cornetts, Fretwork, and The English Concert, and enjoys an ongoing relationship with period instrument orchestra The Harmonious Society of Tickle-Fiddle Gentlemen.

The Cathedral has also partnered with Glyndebourne Opera and The Marlowe Theatre, working to deliver a high-quality engagement project in local schools.

The Choir is made up of up of boys (7-13 years old) and girls (12-18 years old) who attend a range of local schools. Both of these groups sing alongside 12 professional adult singers, a mixture of Lay Clerks and Choral Scholars, who provide the lower voices in the Cathedral Choir.

Canterbury Cathedral's Choral Scholar scheme launched in February 2021 as a professional development opportunity for early-career singers. Now in its fourth year, the scheme has succeeded in bringing talented individuals to Canterbury and affording them the opportunity to flourish here; it has also helped the Cathedral foster stronger links with conservatoires and other significant musical institutions nationally. We are delighted to offer this opportunity for a third successive year for an early-career organist to enjoy comparable opportunity and experience.

Harrison & Harrison have recently completed an extensive rebuild of the Cathedral's Great Organ, giving Canterbury one of the leading accompaniment and solo instruments in the country. Additionally, the Cathedral is home to a one-manual instrument by JW Walker (currently in the Nave), a two manual extension organ by FH Browne & Sons (currently in the Western Crypt), The Galpin Organ, a chamber instrument thought to be the work of Father Smith, last restored by JW Walker in 1990 (currently in the Trinity Chapel), portable chamber organs by Kenneth Tickell & co. and Peter Collins, and two grand pianos (currently in the Choir Practice Room and in the Eastern Crypt).





Duties of the Organ Scholar

The Organ Scholar will be expected to attend all rehearsals (between Saturday and Tuesday, only those rehearsals when the adult singers are in attendance) and services when on duty. They will take a share of the organ playing at these, generally playing for Evensong on Mondays and Fridays.

The current weekly routine of choral services is as follows:

Sunday 11.00am Eucharist (boys and adults)

 5.30pm Evensong (girls and adults)

Monday 5.30pm Evensong (girls and adults)

Tuesday 5.30pm Evensong (boys and adults)

Wednesday 5.30pm Evensong (girls)

Friday 5.30pm Evensong (adults)

Saturday 5.30pm Evensong (boys and adults)

Absences

We are keen for you to make the most of professional opportunities that come up to develop your career as a soloist and accompanist beyond the Cathedral, and we also understand the need on occasion to be absent for personal reasons. Requests for absence should be made to the Director of Music at the earliest possible opportunity (at the very least one week's notice), and are allowed only at his discretion. A deduction based on your hourly rate may be made in the case of an absence in order to assist the Cathedral in funding a deputy (arranged by the Cathedral) to take your place.

Other Duties

In addition to the commitments detailed above, and to your own private preparation time for this (which is not included in your hours), you will offer around 7 hours per week of work to the Cathedral. This will include occasional further solo or ensemble performance (as appropriate), musical community engagement work, and administrative support to the Cathedral music team. You may also be required, on occasion, to assist with chorister musicianship tuition.

We will work with you to allocate these hours at times that are most effective for you and for us, but service commitments and working these hours should take priority over other engagements, except by permission of the Director of Music. You may take on additional voluntary or paid work during the period of your Scholarship which does not conflict with your duties here. You will also attend organ lessons and meetings with Cathedral staff as directed by the Director of Music.

What does the Cathedral Offer you?

Scholarship value

The value of this scholarship is £9277.84 (Paid over 11 months September 2025 - July 2026)

Accommodation

Accommodation (a room in a house shared with the Choral Scholars) is provided within the Cathedral Precincts. This accommodation is rent and rate free as the nature of the post requires that the incumbent resides within the Precincts for the better performance of their duties. The cost of utility bills and cleaning charges are also included. This benefit is currently exempt from PAYE tax and NI.

Organ Lessons

The Cathedral will fund regular organ lessons for you during your Scholarship. These are to be taken with an organ teacher agreed by the Director of Music and the Organ Scholar.

Professional Development

While resident at the Cathedral, we encourage you to take up the many opportunities to be creative that this environment offers. This could include (at the discretion of the Director of Music) creating solo performance opportunities both sacred and secular, gaining directing experience with the Choral Scholars' ensemble, developing a teaching practice, or undertaking a placement in an institution relevant to your career plans. We will seek to support you as much as we are able to make the most of these opportunities.

Key Responsibilities of the Post

- To play the organ at Cathedral services (generally up to two or three each week), events and rehearsals, always maintaining consistently excellent musical standards, as appropriate to current level of training, in both accompanying and solo playing.
- To attend all Cathedral rehearsals and services whilst on duty.
- To cover the roles of the Assistant Director of Music and Director of Music in case of absence. This may, on occasion, include some choral direction.
- To behave at all times in a way that facilitates the worship of the congregation, and respects the sanctity and prayerfulness of the Cathedral environment.
- To participate fully in professional development opportunities provided by the Cathedral, including organ tuition.
- To participate in further playing opportunities and the administration and outreach work of the Music and Liturgy Department, as directed by the Director of Music.
- As an employee of the Chapter of Canterbury Cathedral fully to endorse, understand and exercise the roles and responsibilities contained within the Chapter's Health and Safety and Safeguarding policies, which are set out in the Staff Handbook and Code of Conduct.
- The post holder may be required to undertake any other reasonable task as requested by the Director of Music.

Additionally, it is expected that the Organ Scholar will

- Provide piano accompaniment for the adult singers' monthly singing lessons. These generally take place on a Saturday.
- Provide piano accompaniment for the Choral Scholars' song recitals at the Cathedral. During the 2025/26 academic year, there will be three such recitals, which will take place on weekday lunchtimes in the summer term.
- Perform occasional organ recitals as part of the Cathedral's series.

Further to the above, the Organ Scholar may be invited to play the organ for a share of extra offices, including weddings, funerals, carol services, and other special services. These frequently command an additional fee.





Person Specification

The following specification indicates the qualifications, experience, knowledge, and skills required to undertake the role effectively.

Essential

- High level of personal musicianship.
- Gifted organ soloist and accompanist of choral repertoire, psalms, and hymns, with proficient improvisation skills.
- Excellent sight-reading skills.
- An understanding of, and sympathy with, the aims and purposes of the Cathedral, its worship, mission and ministry.

Desirable

- Some experience as a choral director, working with both children and adults.
- Experience as a piano accompanist.
- Ability to realise figured bass, transpose, and play music from open score.
- Experience of working in church music.
- Experience in, or aptitude for, musical outreach work.

Personal attributes

- Organised and self-disciplined.
- Professional approach to work and relationships with colleagues.
- Reliable and punctual.
- A flexible approach to hours worked.
- Able to work co-operatively with others.
- Commitment to personal professional development.
- Able to take musical direction and constructive feedback.
- Commitment to thorough private preparation and playing to the best of one's ability in every rehearsal and performance.
- Confident in performance.

Terms and Conditions

- Job Title:** Organ Scholar
- Duration:** 11 Months (1st September 2025 - 31st July 2026)
- Reporting to:** Director of Music
- Location:** Canterbury Cathedral Precincts (CT1)
- Right to work:** Applicants must have the right to work in the UK.
- Scholarship Value:** £ 9277.84 - paid over 11 months (September 25 - July 26)

Probation period:

During the probationary period of 3 months, either party may terminate this agreement by giving one weeks' notice in writing.

Working hours:

You will be contracted to work for 811 hours (September 2025 - July 2026) inclusive of your holiday allowance and therefore the Organ Scholar must be available to work for 709 hours per annum.

The basic working week will be approximately 10 hours of playing the organ and attending Cathedral services, and 7 hours of other musical, outreach, and administrative duties. Also included within your annual working hours is the requirement to:

- Work on public holidays which fall within your usual working hours.
- Work on major Christian festivals such as Christmas, Easter and Pentecost, and the Feast of the Martyrdom of Thomas of Canterbury.
- Attend professional organ training and meetings as specified by the Director of Music.
- Play at other Cathedral services, events (e.g. concerts and recording sessions) or rehearsals which fall within your contracted hours as notified to you by the Director of Music.

In addition to the core hours, the Organ Scholar is required to be available for services and rehearsals, the Organ Scholar must work such reasonable additional hours as may be necessary to enable the effective discharge of the Organ Scholar's professional duties, including in particular private rehearsal and familiarisation of assigned music.

You should attend all rehearsals as required by the Director of Music, arriving in your place (with the set music fully prepared) for the published start time of the rehearsal.





Annual leave:

Your paid holiday entitlement for 11 months is 102 hours. Your entitlement is calculated on the basis of 5 weeks paid annual leave plus 8 public holidays. The post holder should take this leave during the following planned periods when they are not required to play:

- 11 consecutive days after Christmas, with the exception of 29th December.
- 12 consecutive days after Easter (including one weekend), except on the rare occasions when Easter falls very late, when the holiday will be split before Palm Sunday and after Easter Day.
- The choir holiday period beginning in mid-July.
- Half-term breaks in each term.

Specific dates for 2025-2026 are available on request.

Safeguarding:

A satisfactory DBS disclosure is required for this post.

Pension:

The Dean and Chapter of Canterbury offer a Stakeholder pension to all employees via Aviva. Your age and salary will determine if you are to be automatically enrolled into the pension scheme. An employer's contribution will be made by the Dean and Chapter after 3 months continuous service. Staff have the right to opt out of the scheme if they do not wish to be a member.

Equality Statement

The Dean and Chapter recognises that discrimination and victimisation is unacceptable and that it is in the interests of the organisation and its employees to utilise the skills of the total workforce. It is the aim of the organisation to ensure that no employee or job applicant receives less favourable facilities or treatment (either directly or indirectly) in recruitment or employment on grounds of age, disability, gender / gender reassignment, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Other Terms & Conditions

The details above are only a summary of the terms and conditions offered and do not replace the wording of the Terms and Conditions which will form the contract between the post holder and the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury.

Application Process

A full CV and covering letter should be submitted online via the Cathedral's website:

<https://www.canterbury-cathedral.org/get-involved/work-with-us>

You should also upload a digital file of you playing a piece of your choice (maximum 5 minutes) as a YouTube video. This can be published as 'unlisted' if you wish.

You must provide a link to your video on the application.

Your application should reach us by:

Sunday 29 September 2024

Interviews and auditions are expected to take place in Canterbury:

Monday 7 October 2024

If you would like to discuss this role informally, please contact the Director of Music by email:

music@canterbury-cathedral.org

We look forward to receiving your application and thank you for your interest in Canterbury Cathedral.

