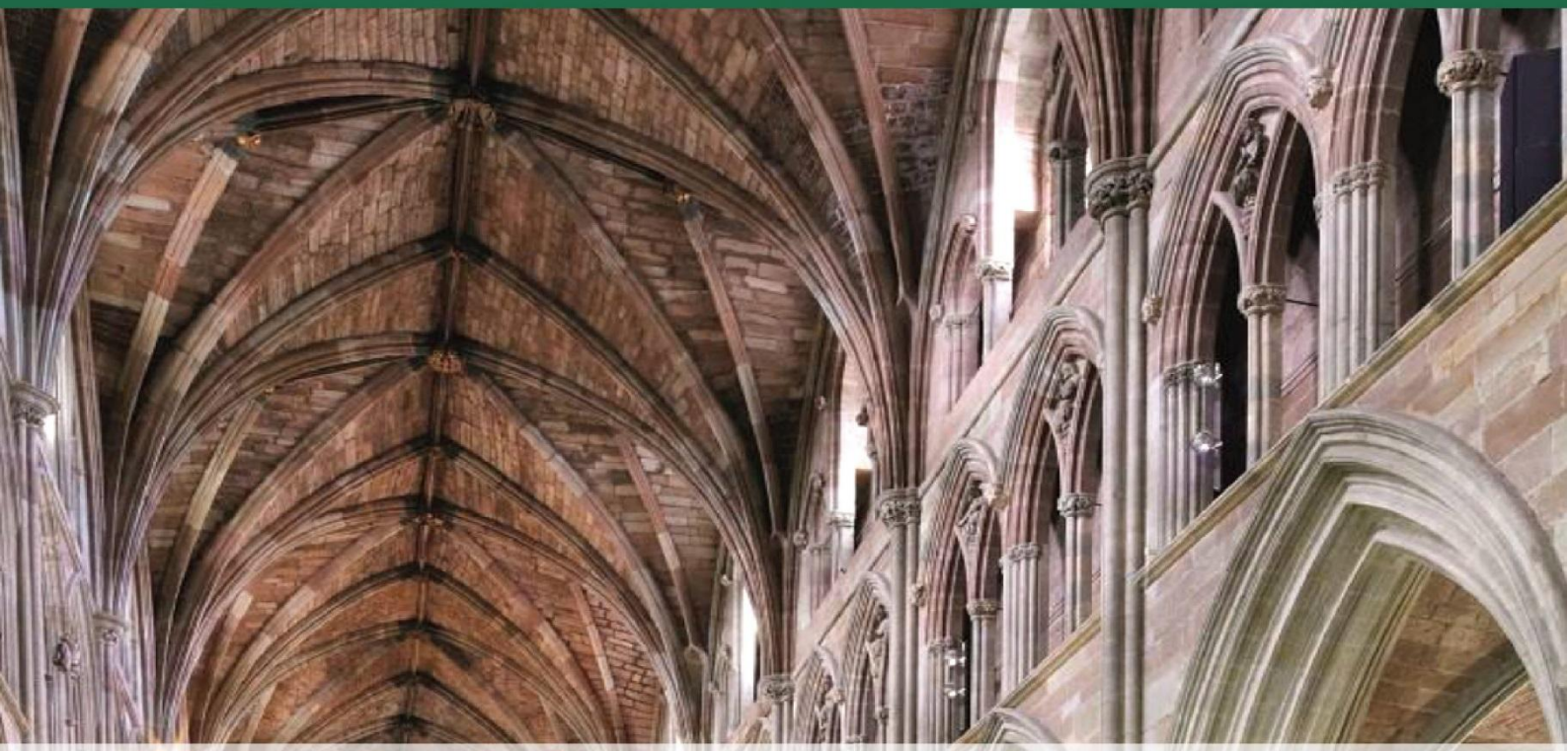
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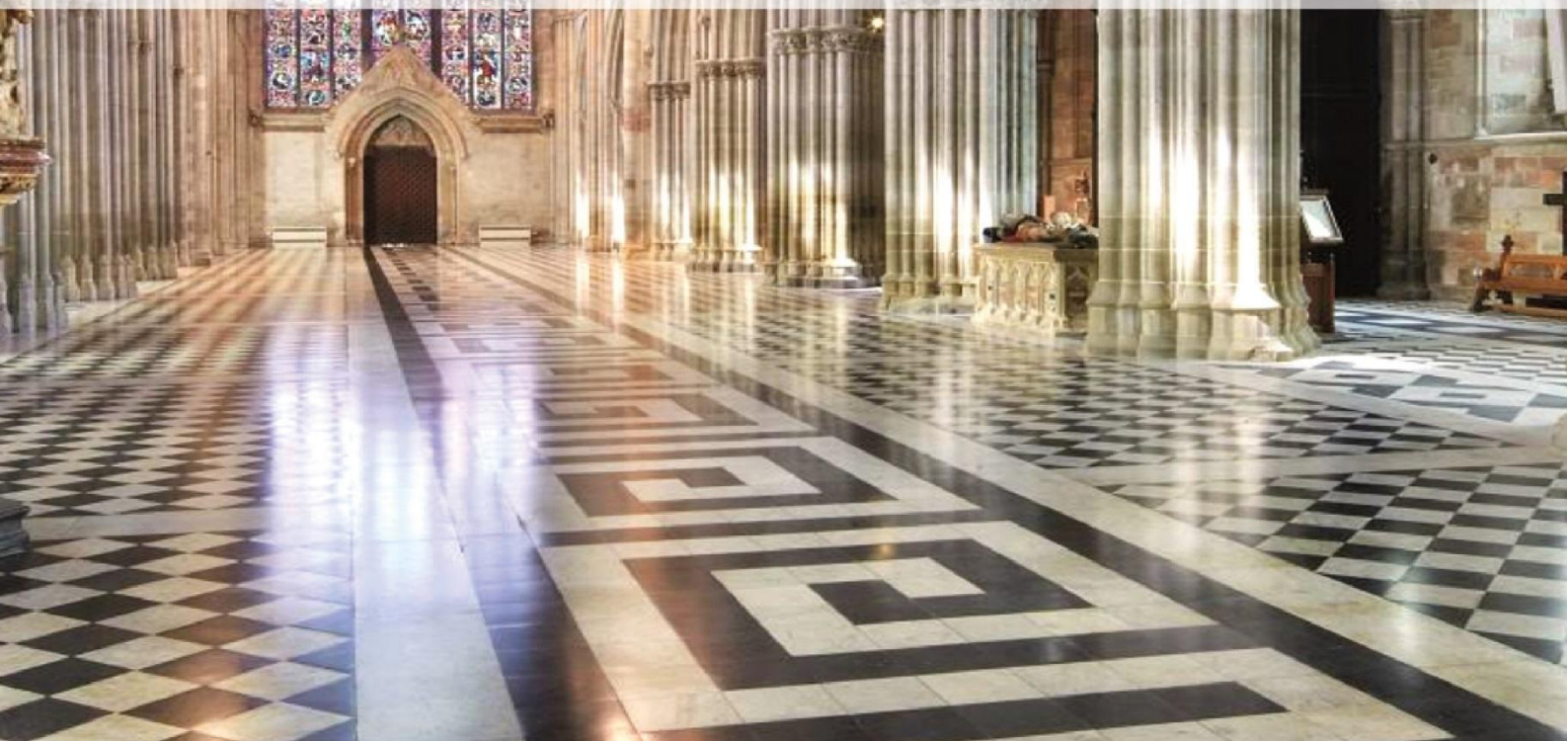
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Application Pack

Organ Scholar

September 2027 – August 2028



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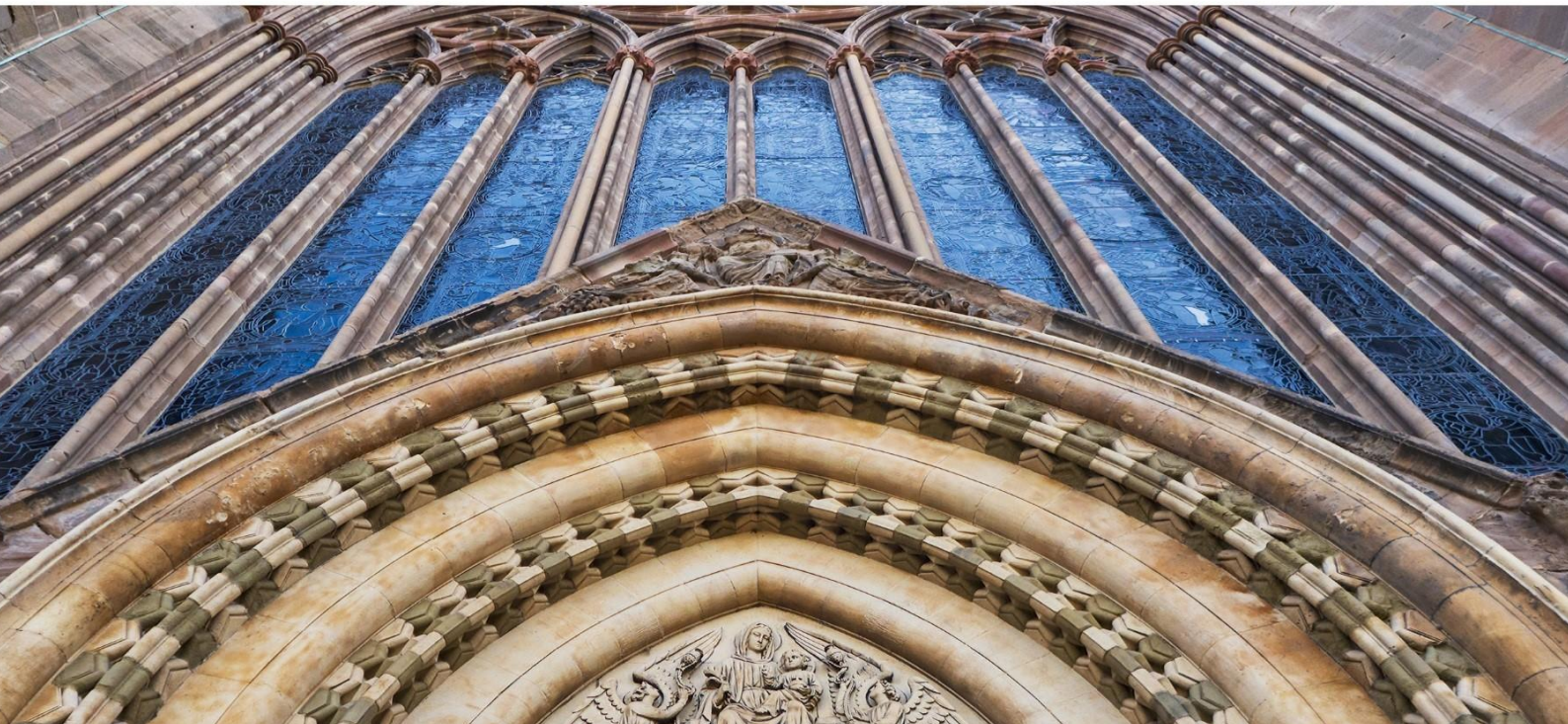
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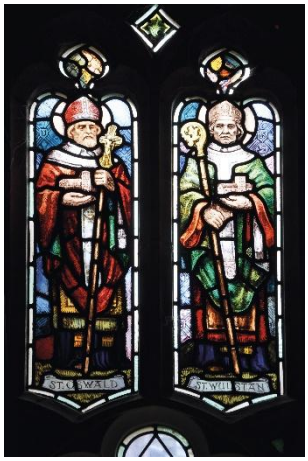
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About Worcester Cathedral

WORCESTER CATHEDRAL



Worcester Cathedral is a magnificent sight as it rises majestically above the River Severn. Worcester has been the seat of a bishopric since the seventh century, and the Cathedral was served by monks until the Reformation. St Oswald and St Wulfstan were among the bishops.

Since the eighteenth century, the Cathedral has been famous for its part in the annual Three Choirs Festival (the 2028 festival will take place in Hereford Cathedral), the oldest choral festival in existence. Today, the Cathedral is the centre of a vibrant community of clergy and laypeople; offering the praises of God each day, serving the city and diocese of Worcester, and attracting visitors from all over the world.

The Cathedral community is diverse with over 100 staff and 300 volunteers. We are rightly proud of the tremendous heritage and number of partners we work with across the Cathedral to provide a warm welcome to our visitors to learn more about the history of the building, attend our many events and activities, and to experience the spiritual opportunities of the Cathedral.

The governance of the Cathedral is the responsibility of the Chapter, which comprises residentiary canons and lay canons with professional expertise. The Chapter is responsible for the strategy, oversight and delivery of the operational plan.

There are a team of Departmental Managers led by the Chief Operating Officer, who meet regularly and work collaboratively to achieve the annual objectives and plan. The Cathedral has a diverse range of income, all of which is either achieved through donations, fundraising, earned income, investment income or other support.



Worcester Cathedral Music Department

Members of the Music Department currently include:

Organist and Director of Music	Mr Samuel Hudson
Assistant Director of Music	Mr Alexander Robson
Organ Scholar	Mr Zane Soonawalla (2026 – 2027)
Music Administrator	Mr Alan Sheldon

Regular service timetable (sung by the cathedral choir unless otherwise stated):

Monday:	17:30	Evensong
Wednesday:	17.30	Evensong (choral scholars)
Thursday:	17:30	Evensong
Friday:	17:30	Evensong (lower voices every other week)
Saturday:	17:30	Evensong (with soprano lay clerks)
Sunday:	10:30	Eucharist
	16:00	Evensong
	18:30	Evening Worship (voluntary choir)



Worcester Cathedral's Choirs

WORCESTER CATHEDRAL

Worcester Cathedral Choir consists of up to 20 boy and girl choristers, 9 lay clerks and 3 choral scholars. In September 2025 the cathedral recruited 4 associate soprano lay clerks, who sing with the lower voices usually on a Saturday each week. This new venture, supported by a grant from the Cathedral Music Trust, represents one of the first opportunities for sopranos to contribute regularly to cathedral music.

The alto, tenor and bass lay clerks sing for six choral services each week. Six principal lay clerks sing for all of these services, with three assistant lay clerks joining them for services on Saturday and Sunday, and for major festivals. The back row is completed by three Choral Scholars.

The cathedral choir takes a central role in the **Three Choirs Festival**, held in the final week of July every year and hosted in turn by the cathedrals of Worcester, Hereford, and Gloucester.

Worcester Cathedral Voluntary Choir is directed by the Assistant Director of Music and entered a new chapter of life in September 2021. The Voluntary Choir is now an upper voice ensemble for boys and girls, recruited from a variety of local schools. The choir sings at the weekly 6.30pm Sunday service.

Worcester Cathedral Youth Choir was formed in September 2021. Directed by the Assistant Director of Music, the choir aims to provide an opportunity for former choristers and other singers from the local area from year 9 and above to contribute to the cathedral's music. The choir rehearse once per week and sing at a number of services and concerts throughout the year.

Worcester Cathedral Chamber Choir is an adult choir of some 30 singers, directed by its founder and former Senior Lay Clerk, Stephen Shellard. The choir sings regularly at cathedral services, as well as at services and concerts in the local area.

Worcester Festival Choral Society is an autonomous group of approximately 120 singers linked to the cathedral, conducted by the Director of Music. They rehearse on Mondays every week in the cathedral, and present three concerts in the first two terms of each academic year.



The Role

WORCESTER CATHEDRAL

Worcester Cathedral are looking to appoint an organ scholar for the academic year 2027 – 2028.

The Organ Scholarship is suitable for a graduate or gap-year student and offers the opportunity to work with and learn from the thriving music department at Worcester Cathedral. Previous holders of the organ scholarship have gone on to organ scholarships at colleges in both Oxford and Cambridge, and have obtained positions as Assistant Director of Music at Winchester, Birmingham, St Edmundsbury and St Albans Cathedrals.

The organ scholar is the principal accompanist for both the Voluntary Choir and Youth Choir, and also shares in the accompaniment of services sung by the Cathedral Choir. The organ scholar can therefore expect to play up to three services per week, in addition to providing pre-service music for weekend services and major festivals as agreed with the Director of Music and Assistant Director of Music. There is also an opportunity to perform in the cathedral's lunchtime recital series, and to assist visiting recitalists as necessary. Occasional opportunities for directing the cathedral's choirs are also explored in the interests of offering as broad an experience as possible.

The organ scholar is also expected to attend morning chorister rehearsals (and lead them in the occasional absence of the Director of Music or Assistant Director of Music), and to assist with escorting choristers between the Cathedral and the King's School. The organ scholar will also take responsibility for management of the music library, ensuring music is distributed to and collected from all choir members as required by the choir directors.

The organ scholar is strongly encouraged to gain experience through singing in WFCS and to take as full a part in the Three Choirs Festival as possible, singing with the festival choirs, and assisting the cathedral organists at the organ console.

A full timetable will be provided upon appointment.



Job Description

WORCESTER CATHEDRAL

Job title: Organ Scholar

Department: Music Department

Reporting to: The Director of Music

Overall purpose of the post:

To provide an opportunity for the gathering of a broad range of experience, including in choral accompaniment, solo performance, choir training, and directing, working as part of a supportive team and in the professional environment of the cathedral music department.

Duties and responsibilities:

- To perform at weekly services, accompanying all those sung by the Voluntary Choir and Youth Choir, and contributing to other services as agreed with the Director of Music and Assistant Director of Music;
- To assist in the training of the cathedral choristers, attending morning chorister practice, and leading rehearsals in the occasional absence of the Director of Music or Assistant Director of Music;
- To share in the responsibility for supervising choristers and escorting them between the cathedral and school;
- To take full responsibility for management of the music library, and take on administrative duties (including preparation of printed musical resources) as required;
- To sing as a member of Worcester Festival Choral Society (WFCS);
- To take a full part in the Three Choirs Festival, singing in the Festival Chorus and Festival Youth Choir, as well as assisting at the console during festival weeks;
- To attend a weekly music department meeting;
- To take part in training as required;
- To ensure that all safeguarding and health and safety instructions are followed, and that care is taken to ensure safety for self and colleagues, reporting concerns immediately;
- To treat everyone in a way which reflects the Cathedral's values;
- To undertake as requested other duties as may reasonably be expected.

The Organ Scholar receives support from the Director of Music, the Assistant Director of Music, and the other members of the Music Department to help them achieve any targets set during their tenure.

Health & Safety

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, you must take reasonable care for your own Health and Safety and that of any other person who may be affected by your acts or omissions. In addition, you must co-operate with the Organisation on Health and Safety and not interfere with, or misuse, anything provided for your health, safety or welfare.

Safeguarding

This role requires an Enhanced DBS check.

The Cathedral is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk who visit our premises and precinct. All staff and volunteers are expected to actively demonstrate a commitment to a culture of safeguarding by:

- Understanding and adhering to cathedral safeguarding policy and procedures.
- Maintaining professional boundaries and demonstrating behaviour that prioritises safety and wellbeing.
- Taking responsibility for identifying and promptly reporting and safeguarding concerns in line with the policy and procedures.
- Undertaking safeguarding training and fulfilling any specific safeguarding duties required in their role.
- Actively contributing to an environment where everyone feels safe, valued and empowered to raise concerns without fear of reprisal.
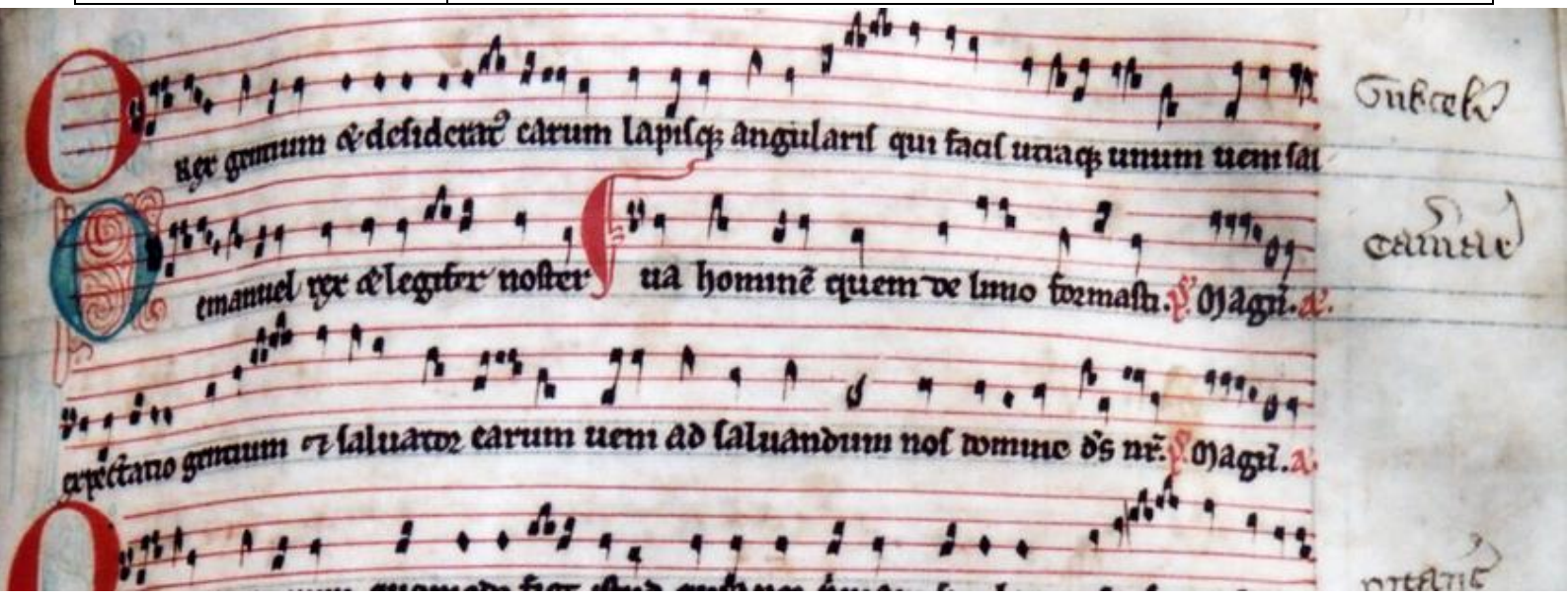
Cathedral ID badges must be worn at all times while on duty. Badges are for use by the named individual only.

Person Specification

WORCESTER CATHEDRAL

This section outlines the knowledge, skills and abilities the job holder needs in order to fulfil the requirements of the post.

PERSON SPECIFICATION	
Key Criteria	
Education, skills and experience	Experience in solo organ performance, and choral accompaniment in a church or cathedral context An organist of grade 8 (or equivalent) standard Confidence in sight-reading, and some proficiency in score reading, and transposition A strong musical ear and sense of general musicianship Ability to work in a team Formal training on one or more further instruments, or singing (desirable)
Personal qualities	Punctual and well-presented Efficient in time management Willing to engage with a range of tasks to assist with the smooth running of the music department Self-motivated to improve individual performance and gain experience Interested in engaging with the varied life of the cathedral and city An ability to be flexible and adapt to a dynamic environment A commitment to living harmoniously with others in shared accommodation



Working for us

WORCESTER CATHEDRAL

Remuneration

The Organ Scholar receives an honorarium of £6,000, plus rent-free accommodation in an eighteenth-century flat above the Song School with spectacular views of the Cathedral, Malvern Hills and River Severn. The flat is shared with three choral scholars.

There may be opportunities for extra work in the surrounding area, and we are committed to supporting organ scholars in taking on extra work which will complement cathedral duties.

Organ Lessons

An allowance is available for organ lessons, with a teacher agreed in consultation with the Director of Music.

Staff Discount

All employees will receive a 10% discount on purchases in the Gift Shop and Café within the Cathedral.

Employee Assistance Programme

All employees and their immediate family have access to a range of confidential support through our commissioned employee assistance programme.



How to apply

WORCESTER CATHEDRAL

To apply for the Organ Scholarship for the academic year 2027 - 2028, please send your application by post or email to:

Jodie Brookes
People Administrator
The Old Palace, Deansway
Worcester, WR1 2JE

jobs@worcestercathedral.org.uk

Your application should include:

- a current CV including contact details, and availability if called for an interview on Wednesday 11 November 2026;
- a brief covering letter explaining why you are applying for the post and how your skills and experience match the requirements of the role;
- and the details of two referees who can speak about your relevant experience and personal qualities. Please note that, if applicable, one of your referees should be your current employer, and that references will usually only be contacted if you are shortlisted for the role.
- a completed EDM form

Should you have any queries about the role, please don't hesitate to contact the Director of Music, Samuel Hudson (01905 732916).

Closing date: 9am on Wednesday 4 November 2026.
We will aim to contact all applicants by the end of Thursday 5 November 2026.
Interviews and auditions for shortlisted candidates: Wednesday 11 November 2026.





WORCESTER CATHEDRAL

The Chapter Office
Worcester WR1 2LA
Enquries: 01905 732900
www.worcestercathedral.co.uk

Worcester Cathedral is fully committed to Equal Opportunity policies.