



Exeter  
Cathedral



# Organ Scholar *Application Pack*

2026/27



**Job Title:** Organ Scholar

**Department:** Liturgy & Music

**Reporting to:** Director of Music

**Salary:** £9,560 per annum plus single accommodation (provided free of rent and council tax)

**Contract Type:** Twelve months



**The Dean and Chapter of Exeter Cathedral wishes to appoint an Organ Scholar for the academic year 2026/27. The appointment is for one year, but may in certain circumstances be extended for a further year. The position will be ideally suited to a recent graduate seeking to gain experience of the daily duties of a busy cathedral musician, though applications from suitably qualified 'gap' year students (i.e. pre-University) would be welcome also.**

## Exeter

The city of Exeter lies in the south west of England, and is the administrative capital of the county of Devon. With a population of around 118,000, Exeter is consistently rated as one of the best places to live in the UK. It is a safe, student-friendly city with a vibrant and fun culture and relaxed atmosphere. The Cathedral is geographically and spiritually at Exeter's heart, a fact reflected in the high profile it enjoys in the local media and community. The city has rail services to London (Paddington and Waterloo), Birmingham, Manchester and Bristol, and a busy commuter airport, giving good connections nationwide.



# Exeter Cathedral

Exeter Cathedral is one of the nine Old Foundation' cathedrals of England and its architecture dates from the Norman and Gothic periods. the building has been extensively restored, including the extensive reconstruction of the chapel of St James, which was completely destroyed by the Luftwaffe in a bombing raid in 1942. Notable features of the interior include the misericords, the minstrels' gallery, the astronomical clock and the organ. The Diocese of Exeter was formed in 1050 and covers the county of Devon.

## The Exeter Cathedral Choir

Music has been an important part of the Cathedral's life for hundreds of years. There has been a choir since the thirteenth century and today it maintains a regular schedule of seven choral services a week (during term time).

The Choir sings a very broad repertoire embracing everything from Gregorian Chant to recently composed sacred music, mainly from the Anglican (or pre-reformation) tradition, but including the best music of other churches. Recently the Cathedral commissioned a new setting of the canticles from contemporary American composer, Nico Muhly.



Described by Classic FM as “one of the country's finest choirs”, the Choir also has a busy programme of other engagements, which often includes tours (most recently to Austria and Slovakia), concerts, recordings and radio broadcasts. Recent performances include Bach's St John Passion (with Charivari Agréable), and Tabakova's *Centuries of Meditations* (with the City of London Sinfonia). The choir's sell-out performances of Handel's *Messiah* and Bach *B Minor Mass* were ecstatically received.

The Choir's full complement numbers 20 boy choristers, 20 girl choristers, six Lay Vicars, and six Choral Scholars. The Cathedral's Music department consists of the Precentor, The Revd Canon James Mustard, the Director of Music, Timothy Noon, the Assistant Director of Music, Michael Stephens-Jones, and the Organ Scholar.

## Key accountabilities

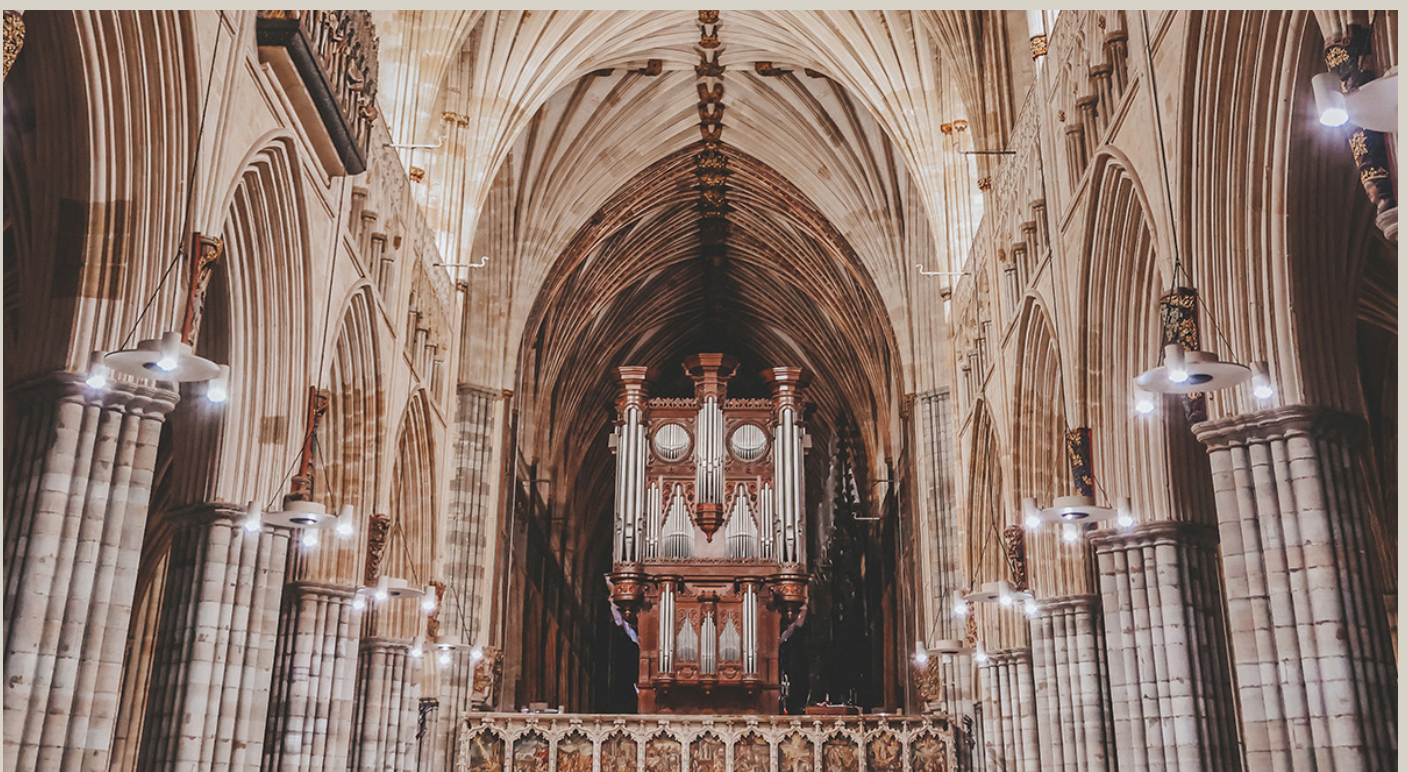
Excepting their day off, the Organ Scholar will attend all Cathedral Choir rehearsals and services (see timetable below), and will normally be expected to play, conduct, sing



(if appropriate), or assist in the organ loft, for all or part of each service, and take a role in teaching the probationer Choristers during morning practices. This means being in Exeter from the beginning of September up to, and including, 25 December, (Christmas Day) when there are three services, including Choral Evensong, following which there is a holiday of two to three weeks. There is a holiday of a similar length after Easter (beginning after Evensong on Easter Monday) and there is a long half-term of twelve days from the last week of October. There is a half-term of about a week in the Lent Term and a similar one in the Summer Term, with the academic year usually ending before the middle of July. Although the annual pattern of Choir Terms is fairly consistent (taking into account where Easter may fall), actual dates are advised well in advance. The Organ Scholar acts as Librarian to the Music Department, under the guidance of the Director of Music and the Assistant Director of Music. He/she will be expected to take part in Choir broadcasts, concerts, recordings, tours, and other events falling outside the regular timetable, including playing for some services when the Choir is not present (such as funerals and weddings, for which extra fees will be paid). He/she will also take a role in accompanying rehearsals and services sung by the Cathedral's voluntary Choir, the St Peter's Singers.

## Dress code and general behaviour

The Organ Scholar should be smartly presented at all times, especially when working with the Choristers or the general public; this will normally mean wearing black shoes, with a jacket and tie (white shirt on Sundays). He/she must be aware at all times of the importance of discretion in conduct and behaviour, especially with all under-18s, and will be required to have enhanced DBS clearance. The Organ Scholar should be in sympathy with the Christian ethos.



# Candidate Profile

## **Essential:**

- An Organist of ARCO qualification or equivalent standard and experience
- A talented musician in sympathy with the worship, ministry and ethos of Exeter Cathedral
- A promising organist; solo player, accompanist and liturgical organist
- Some ability to engage, train and inspire a choir
- An ability to manage children in a firm but kindly manner
- Knowledge of the standard Anglican repertoire
- Experience of accompanying choirs to a high standard
- Flexibility towards the development of a wide range of musical and liturgical styles
- A team player with an enthusiastic and positive approach
- A willingness to work beyond the Cathedral precincts
- A maturity of character and a good sense of humour
- A well-organised person
- An understanding of current issues and best practice relating to Safeguarding, and a willingness to undertake training as necessary

## **Desirable**

- A music degree or other appropriate qualification/experience
- An interest in, or up-to-date knowledge of, church liturgy
- A communicator who can inspire choristers, and who can also relate well to non-musicians
- Some understanding of vocal technique
- Some experience of choral conducting
- A communicant member of the Church of England
- Some experience of working in a Cathedral/Greater Parish Church/University College or similar

The appointment will be subject to enhanced clearance from the DBS.

## **Terms & Conditions**

The scholarship, payable by the Dean and Chapter, will be £9,560 per annum and will be paid in monthly instalments in arrears, directly into a bank account. The Organ Scholar has sole occupancy of a spacious flat in the Cloister Garth, immediately adjacent to the cathedral, provided without charge for rent or council tax. Though not technically an employee, the Organ Scholar will be given a copy of the Employee Handbook, which contains details of the Chapter's disciplinary and grievance procedures, as well as general information about the Cathedral.





## Working for us

### Working Pattern

Sunday	Treble practice	0845–0915
	Full practice	0915–0950
	Eucharist	1000–1120
	Treble practice	1445–1515
	Full practice	1515–1550
	Evensong	1600–1700
	Sundays @ 6.30	1830–1930
Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri	Treble practice	0810–0910
	Treble practice	1620–1655
	Full practice	1655–1720
	Evensong	1730–1820
Sat	Treble practice	1620–1655
	Full practice	1655–1720
	Evensong	1730–1820

The Organ Scholar may be responsible for directing treble practices with either the boy Choristers, the girl Choristers, or the probationers, as required. Evensong on Thursdays may be followed by a short rehearsal of up to 30 minutes. Full Choir practices are usually held in the Cathedral at weekends. Variations to this timetable and additional events are shown on the printed termly schedule, which is circulated by the Director of Music.

## **Time off/absences**

The Organ Scholar will be entitled to a regular, complete day off per week (normally Wednesday), in consultation with his/her colleagues. In weeks where this is not possible, a different day will be arranged. The Organ Scholar, like the other musicians, should normally also have a free Sunday plus six weekdays (except in the event of a choir tour) at half-terms, after Christmas and after Easter, as well as at least six complete weeks off in the summer. This may involve occasional days off in lieu. Absences must be agreed in advance with the Director of Music.

## **Discounts**

All employees receive a 10% discount on purchases made in our Shop and Café and complimentary tickets to our in-house concerts.

## **About Exeter Cathedral**

A vibrant community hub and a world-class heritage destination, Exeter Cathedral has been at the heart of Devon for nearly a thousand years. Now, as then, it offers a refuge for reflection and a place for prayer – as well as stage for artists, performers and musicians. It has witnessed a fascinating history and remains home to a living Christian faith, a place for learning and a retreat for relaxation. Exeter Cathedral is, at once, a centre of innovation and of ancient treasures; telling stories of the past while carefully conserving them for the future. Innovatively sharing its secrets to welcome a new generation.

## **Our Values**

At Exeter Cathedral, we are committed to and will courageously pursue being:

- Welcoming to all
- The best we can
- Open and listening
- Fair and respectful

## **Safeguarding**

Exeter Cathedral is committed to following best safeguarding procedures and practices to protect children and vulnerable adults. It is therefore an essential contractual requirement that all employees complete safeguarding at the appropriate level identified for their role and attend refresher training when invited by the Cathedral.

# Applications

If you have any queries or wish to discuss the role further, please call Timothy Noon on 07973 220769 or email [timothy.noon@exeter-cathedral.org.uk](mailto:timothy.noon@exeter-cathedral.org.uk)

Applications should take the form of:

- A completed application form and covering letter (together with a CV, if desired).  
The application form can be downloaded via the Exeter Cathedral website at: <https://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk/about-us/vacancies/>
- Any other documents that you feel will support your application are welcomed.
- Please include details of three referees, of which at least one should be a priest, and another should be able to comment on musical suitability.

**The closing date for applications is 12 noon on Monday 22 September 2025.**

Receipt of all applications will be acknowledged.

Applications should be sent by email or post to the Chief Operating Officer:

Email: [vacancies@exeter-cathedral.org.uk](mailto:vacancies@exeter-cathedral.org.uk)

Post: Catherine Escott, Chief Operating Office, Exeter Cathedral, 1 The Cloisters, Exeter, EX1 1HS

Suitably qualified candidates will be invited to interview on Monday 29 September 2025. Candidates would be required from 9am until around 3.30pm (overnight accommodation on will be provided if required).

The interview process will incorporate an audition which will include:

- a) Prepared playing - two solo contrasting pieces of the candidate's choice.  
At least one should be by J. S. Bach. The pieces should last no longer than 10 minutes combined.
- b) Prepared accompaniment - candidates will be sent a piece to prepare, with registration suggestions.
- c) Tests at the organ - a hymn, to be transposed, then continued in an extemporisation.
- d) A short rehearsal with the choristers (repertoire to be advised).

These details and other information about Exeter Cathedral music can be found on the Cathedral website [www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk](http://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk)