

I came to the ICCE certificate at the age of 16, starting at the beginning of the General Level. I'd been home-educated all my life and had really enjoyed it, so I was pleased to have the opportunity to continue studying at home at the same time as gaining a qualification recognised by most UK universities. At the time, I really wasn't sure what I wanted to do with my life – whether I even wanted to go to uni or what I might like to study further – but I knew I wanted good A-Level equivalents that would give me the chance to apply to universities should I choose to a few years down the line. The broad range of subjects compulsory in the ICCE General and Intermediate Certificates really helped me to find my areas of interest and by the time I came to choosing my Advanced Level bias course I had decided that I wanted to take my music seriously. I was one of the first students to take the Music Bias, which I very much enjoyed studying for, and whilst completing it I applied to study the 'cello at the Royal Northern College of Music. My application was accepted and the RNCM had no problems with recognising the ICCE Advanced Level as an equal standard to the usual A-Level requirements for UK students. I am now well into my second, busy year at RNCM and I am really enjoying living, studying and working in Manchester.

*Anna Ryland-Jones, November 2014*