

ROYAL WELSH COLLEGE
OF MUSIC & DRAMA
COLEG BRENHINOL
CERDD A DRAMA CYMRU

Strategic Framework
2026-35

Rydym yma dros
y celfyddydau,
Cymru
a'r dyfodol

We are here for
the arts,
Wales
and the future

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Foreword

We are at a pivotal moment. The arts sector is evolving rapidly, and higher education is facing profound challenges.

Yet I remain deeply optimistic. With challenge comes immense opportunity and the need for clarity. Here at RWCMD, we have a once-in-a-lifetime chance to do things differently. It is a unique opportunity to build on our strengths and artistic excellence, to deepen our community, expand our reach and impact, and redefine our role as both the national conservatoire and convenor of the arts in Wales.

That is why this bold new strategic framework – a guiding light as we navigate the coming ten years – looks far ahead, shaped around our three enduring commitments.

We are here for the arts, Wales and the future.

With diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging woven throughout, and underpinned by detailed planning, these three themes set out how we will deliver world-class training, create value for Wales, and build a sustainable future for the College and the communities we serve. At its heart lies a simple yet powerful belief – that the arts change lives. They bring people together. They transform society. They are not an optional extra – they are essential to who we are and the world we shape. This is what we stand for at RWCMD.

I have never felt more passionate and confident in our role, our ambition, or our trajectory. That passion and confidence are rooted in the extraordinary dedication of our people, the achievements of our students and graduates, and the strength of our partnerships. We have already accomplished so much together – and yet our greatest opportunities still lie ahead.

I look forward to working with you all, our community, to bring this vision to life in the years to come.

Professor Helena Gaunt
Principal

Our purpose

We are here because we believe that the arts change lives, bring people together and transform society.

Our values

Expert and inclusive
Contemporary and collaborative
Resourceful and responsible

This strategic framework is underpinned by commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB)

Our commitments

- 1** Expert practitioners empowering and training students from across the world to the highest industry standards to shape the industry of the future.
- 2** Making work with, by and for our community — we deliver the largest public arts programme in Wales, in diverse communities as well as at our centre.

- 3** Developing and testing new and creative ways for the arts to thrive.

Through this, and the impact of our skilled graduates and staff on the creative industries, we are proud to be an anchor institution for Wales, a beacon of excellence and inclusion across the globe and a unifying resource for the nation, supporting the arts and creative industries as a source of economic growth, place-making and community-building, social mobility and well-being.

This framework is supported by RWCMD's [DEIB strategy](#), together with DEIB and anti-racism action plans. Delivery of these plans is managed by the College DEIB Committee, chaired by the Principal, and overseen by the Board. The plans contain specific commitments, including in relation to anti-racism, disability inclusion and gender equality. In addition, specific safeguarding commitments are set out in RWCMD's [Safeguarding Policy](#), managed by our Safeguarding Committee.

Our strategic themes 2026-35

Arts

Providing world-class
training, distinctively
attractive for students
and industry



Wales

Creating value
for Wales



Future

Ensuring financial
and organisational
resilience



Arts



Providing world-class training, distinctively attractive for students and industry.

RWCMD develops outstanding artists who are creative, collaborative, resilient, resourceful, and socially responsible.

Through a distinctive approach that engages students in diverse ways with people, communities and society through their artistic practice, degree courses prepare them for the future, integrating craft and creative excellence with well-being, personal and intellectual development, society, sustainability and ethical digital literacy.

- A diverse course portfolio with a focus on collaborative practice, supported by outstanding partnerships, placements and pathways into employment
- A world-class and diverse community of staff and visiting artists in an empowering and inclusive creative community
- Real-world experience (industry, public and community engagement, digital and employability literacies) for students
- Excellent graduate outcomes, underpinned by robust and tailored quality processes

Wales



Creating value for Wales

Advancing the nation's creative, social, cultural and economic well-being, through world-class artistic training, creative leadership, and deep partnership across Wales.

The College will invest in young talent, champion Welsh culture and language as a living, contemporary force, and position Wales confidently on the global stage.

- World-class opportunities and outcomes for students from Wales from all backgrounds
- Feeding the arts and creative industries in Cardiff and across Wales
- Engaging young people and diverse communities across Wales in our work, widening access
- Championing Welsh culture and language across courses, programming, operations
- Building brand Wales through our growing excellence and international engagement

Future



Ensuring financial and organisational resilience

Resilience is built through sustainable income, a diverse and well supported staff community, an expert and inclusive culture, and fit for purpose spaces and systems.

Resilience depends on building respect and partnership across the institution, and in turn enables creativity, excellence, and care for our community.

- Student numbers, commercial and fundraising growth
- A resilient conservatoire staffing framework, with professional services as partners in delivery; and priorities for well-being
- Space and infrastructure planning linked to growth and accessibility, with a plan for Carbon reduction to net zero
- A global brand recognised for distinctive excellence
- Data-informed decision making; streamlined and transparent governance



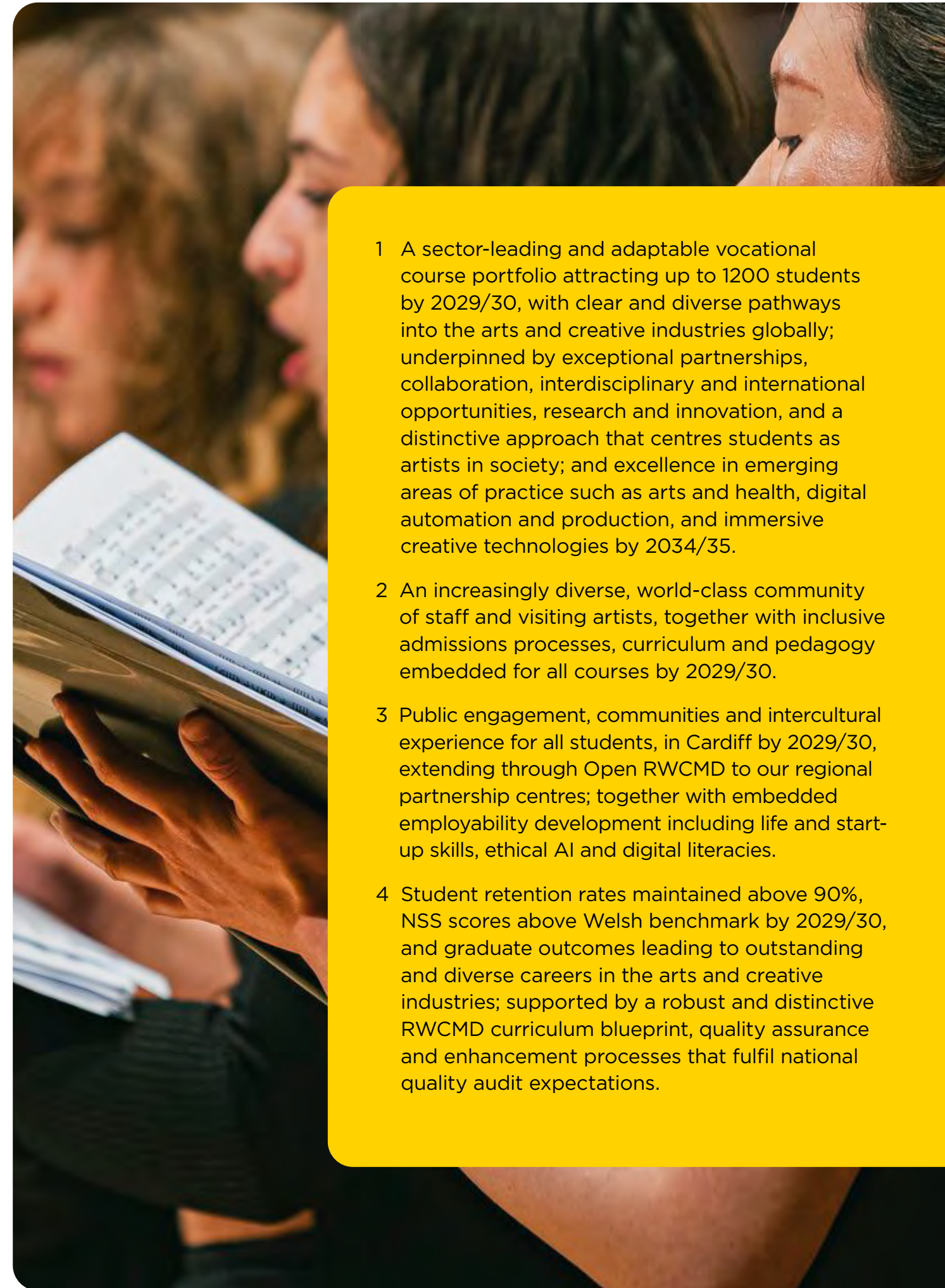
We are
ambitious
in imagining
success in
5-10 years

What success looks like in 5-10 years

Arts



A dynamic and resilient learning community; diverse, highly sought-after graduates shaping their disciplines for the future in Wales and across the world, exceptional ambassadors for RWCMD and the nation.



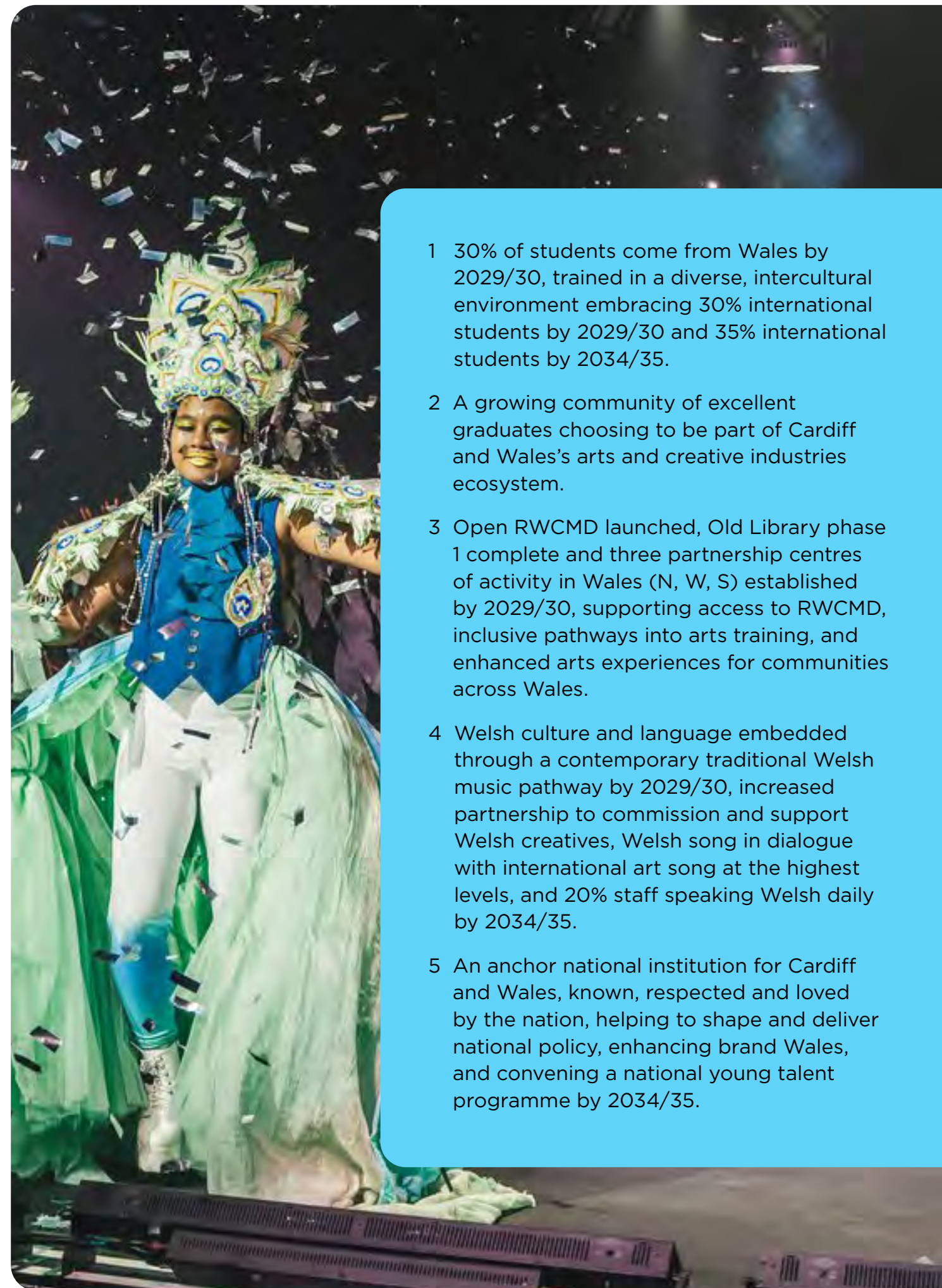
- 1 A sector-leading and adaptable vocational course portfolio attracting up to 1200 students by 2029/30, with clear and diverse pathways into the arts and creative industries globally; underpinned by exceptional partnerships, collaboration, interdisciplinary and international opportunities, research and innovation, and a distinctive approach that centres students as artists in society; and excellence in emerging areas of practice such as arts and health, digital automation and production, and immersive creative technologies by 2034/35.
- 2 An increasingly diverse, world-class community of staff and visiting artists, together with inclusive admissions processes, curriculum and pedagogy embedded for all courses by 2029/30.
- 3 Public engagement, communities and intercultural experience for all students, in Cardiff by 2029/30, extending through Open RWCMD to our regional partnership centres; together with embedded employability development including life and start-up skills, ethical AI and digital literacies.
- 4 Student retention rates maintained above 90%, NSS scores above Welsh benchmark by 2029/30, and graduate outcomes leading to outstanding and diverse careers in the arts and creative industries; supported by a robust and distinctive RWCMD curriculum blueprint, quality assurance and enhancement processes that fulfil national quality audit expectations.

What success looks like in 5-10 years

Wales



An anchor national institution for Wales and its capital city, Cardiff, known, respected and loved by the nation; championing young people and widening access to the arts, and central to the ecosystem of Wales's arts and creative industries; helping to develop and deliver national policy.



- 1 30% of students come from Wales by 2029/30, trained in a diverse, intercultural environment embracing 30% international students by 2029/30 and 35% international students by 2034/35.
- 2 A growing community of excellent graduates choosing to be part of Cardiff and Wales's arts and creative industries ecosystem.
- 3 Open RWCMD launched, Old Library phase 1 complete and three partnership centres of activity in Wales (N, W, S) established by 2029/30, supporting access to RWCMD, inclusive pathways into arts training, and enhanced arts experiences for communities across Wales.
- 4 Welsh culture and language embedded through a contemporary traditional Welsh music pathway by 2029/30, increased partnership to commission and support Welsh creatives, Welsh song in dialogue with international art song at the highest levels, and 20% staff speaking Welsh daily by 2034/35.
- 5 An anchor national institution for Cardiff and Wales, known, respected and loved by the nation, helping to shape and deliver national policy, enhancing brand Wales, and convening a national young talent programme by 2034/35.

What success looks like in 5-10 years

Future



Confidence in RWCMD's sustainability, financially, environmentally, and in terms of our people and physical resources.



- 1 Confidence in RWCMD's financial sustainability supported by growth and diversified income, cash reserves and a larger endowment by 2034/35.
- 2 A resilient staffing framework enabling increased engagement and well-being across all contract types by 2029/30.
- 3 An efficient operational framework, with updated physical and digital infrastructure by 2029/30, and agile systems, processes and use of AI embedded by 2034/35; a plan for net zero with milestones articulated by 2027/28, and implemented in progressive stages.
- 4 Enhanced reputation and strong brand recognition in the UK, USA, China, Singapore, Malaysia, Australia, India, together with a mature approach to student recruitment nationally and internationally, meeting annual recruitment targets; a community of highly recognised and diverse graduates across the arts and creative industries in Wales and the world, working proactively with RWCMD and as exceptional ambassadors by 2034/35.
- 5 Robust, agile and transparent governance embedded throughout the organisation by 2029/30, with priorities clearly linked to the strategic framework and delivery plans.

