

Strategic Plan for Diversity, Equality, Inclusion and Belonging (2025-2030)

Foreword from Principal

Our Strategic Plan for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) serves as a roadmap for advancing and guiding our efforts to create community for our students, staff, and partners. Through proactive measures, we seek to promote diversity in all its forms and to cultivate a culture of belonging where everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

The College is a space intended for everyone – an open and welcoming place where diversity is celebrated and protected. We are committed to providing respectful spaces that encourage on-going discussion between our staff, students and wider community members and to identifying and removing barriers proactively to ensure more equitable outcomes are at the heart of what we do.

Our strategic DEIB plan details our commitment to creating an inclusive learning and working environment in which everyone in our diverse community feels a sense of belonging, is enabled to achieve their full potential and can contribute to our vision of making music and drama more accessible for all.

Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB)

The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama's (RWCMD) strategic framework embeds inclusion as a core value, expressed as a vision to inspire and change lives and connect and transform communities through the arts. RWCMD aims to address the systemic barriers that exclude people from music and drama opportunities, making music and drama more accessible for all, regardless of background or protected characteristic.

RWCMD works in partnership with key arts organisations including BBC National Orchestra of Wales (BBC NOW), the National Open Youth Orchestra (NOYO) and a range of community organisations, such as the Windrush Elders, Race Council Cymru, Cardiff City of Sanctuary and Oasis Cardiff (a centre for asylum seekers and refugees). Our previous DEIB related activities have created new possibilities for aspiring local musicians - from integration of local authority Music Services and ensembles within RWCMD's community engagement programme to creating opportunities for community residencies and furnishing talent and career pathways that enable young people to reach their full potential. Other DEIB activities have enabled our drama students to

develop their artistic citizenship by working in and serving community groups, such as Cardiff's Forget-me-not Cafe, Oasis and the Wallich.

However, we are also aware that barriers and inequities persist, and we recognise we have more to do. For example, Conservatoire admission requirements create socio-economic barriers due to the high cost of instruments and limited music instruction in schools. We also recognise that we need to engage meaningfully with our staff and students to understand better and respond to the lived experience of our diverse community.

The following principles underpin our approach to progressing DEIB:

- Using a whole College approach by embedding DEIB in everything we do, as everyone's responsibility.
- Embedding our DEIB work within RWCMD's decision-making processes, strategic and operational planning, while being transparent on accountability for progress with clear success measures.
- Working in partnership with our students, colleagues and communities (through student voice mechanisms, staff networks and community groups) to facilitate DEIB governance mechanisms that enable a range of perspectives to be heard on an ongoing basis.
- Improving data capture, analysis, and reporting to enable evidence-based and strategic equality planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Our Commitments

Our Strategic DEIB Plan sets out our commitments in three key areas of impact and influence in relation to:

- our students,
- our staff and
- our communities.

Our Student Commitments

1. We will ensure meaningful, ongoing and active dialogue with students to better understand and respond to the lived experience of our diverse student body.
2. We will better understand and address student admissions, degree awarding inequities and graduate outcomes.
3. We will diversify student recruitment through community engagement activities.
4. In partnership with students and drawing on specialist and industry expertise, we will co-create and embed inclusive curriculum and decolonising principles within our quality assurance processes and our learning and teaching, enabling all to develop their inclusive practice.

Our Staff Commitments

1. We will ensure meaningful, ongoing and active dialogue with our staff to better understand and respond to the lived experience of our diverse staff body.
2. We will continue to develop proactive strategies to attract diverse applications alongside addressing identified academic and professional recruitment and selection outcome inequities.
3. We will ensure that career development and mentoring opportunities are transparent and equally available for all staff.
4. We will review and evaluate career and work support for underrepresented staff groups (e.g. providing transparent reasonable adjustment processes).
5. We will ensure that staff regrading and progression processes and support mechanisms are transparent and equitable for all staff.

Communities Equality Commitments

1. We will continue to promote dignity and respect, to tackle unwanted behaviours and to work towards creating a safe, respectful, inclusive and restorative culture in which everyone feels a sense of belonging.
2. We will work in equal partnership with staff, students and community organisations to increase use of and sense of belonging at RWCMD.
3. We will improve staff and student awareness and engagement in our DEIB aspirations and activities, enabling them to embed anti-racism and inclusion within their practice.
4. We will improve accessibility to our campus and performances and raise awareness of support mechanisms.
5. We will provide opportunities for our staff, students and community to engage with activities celebrating language – inclusive of [Welsh](#) and BSL.
6. We will continue to assess our policies and processes for equality impact and embed these assessments within our policy governance.

Key Success Measures

DEIB Governance

- Published evidence of annual progression against our strategic and operational equality plans.
- Diverse representation on RWCMD decision-making committees increased.

Students

- Baseline for student admissions outcome disparities established and reduced.
- Diversifying student recruitment activities evident within community collaboration
- Ethnicity awarding gaps decreased for undergraduate and postgraduate students (from the baseline in 2024 of approx. 20% for 1st (UG) and distinctions (PG)).

Staff

- Proportion of Global Majority (GM) academic and professional support staff increased from 6% and 5% respectively to 15%.
- Data baseline for staff recruitment and selection outcome disparities will have been established and subsequently reduced.
- Data baseline for any disparities in experience of work and career support of staff will have been established and subsequently reduced.

Community

- Increased accessibility of RWCMD campus (drawing on our campus audit and experience of students and staff)
- Increased community use of RWCMD spaces evidenced
- Increased confidence in students and colleagues being able to have an open conversation about race, evidenced through engagement and feedback
- Increased confidence in bullying and harassment reporting processes, evidenced through student and staff engagement and feedback

Legal Obligations

Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 places an equality duty of public sector bodies such as the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. In carrying out our functions we must have due regard to

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The General Duty covers the following protected characteristics:

- age
- gender reassignment
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or on maternity leave
- disability
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

We do not limit our understanding of diversity to protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act (2010) and consider everything that makes us unique, including, for example, socio-economic status, caring responsibilities or being a care leaver.

Welsh Language

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 established a legal framework and sets out the statutory duty which public bodies in Wales are required to comply with. The Welsh Language Standards, which came into force in 2018, are a set of legally binding requirements that aim to improve the bilingual services that individuals can expect to receive from public bodies and organisations including the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama. The Standards establish what the College's responsibilities are in providing bilingual services, ensuring that the Welsh language is not treated any less favourably than the English language.

Our commitment to Welsh Language is detailed within [RWCMD's Welsh Language Culture Strategy](#), which sets out RWCMD's ongoing approach to the Welsh language for all its stakeholders, including students, staff and audiences. Beyond language considerations alone, and within the context of a dynamic arts organisation, our Welsh Language Culture strategy aims to extend to Welsh culture, and to develop a holistic approach, recognising that culture and language are interwoven in the cultural fabric of Wales.

Developing our Strategic DEIB Plan

Development of our strategic DEIB plan and commitments has been underpinned by analysis of our internal diversity data and through consultation with staff, students and the wider community. We have also drawn on good practice from the further and higher education sector, including specialist music and drama expertise such as via Conservatoires UK. A Strategic DEIB Plan task and finish group, which included staff and student representation, led on developing the Plan prior to approval from our DEIB Committee, Senior Leadership Team and Board.

Implementing and monitoring our Strategic DEIB Plan

Our Strategic DEIB Plan is a set of 15 overarching commitments with associated success measures for 2025-30. It is backed up by an annual operational action plan, which embeds our Race Equality Charter action plan and includes more detailed success measures against which to evaluate our progress.

Overall responsibility for development and implementation of our Strategic DEIB Plan lies with both RWCMD's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and through oversight from RWCMD's DEIB Committee. Strategic and operational leads are detailed in our operational action plans. Our Board provides external scrutiny of progress against our Strategic DEIB Plan.

The DEIB Committee meets termly and is representative of services and staff and student groups across the College. The DEIB Committee Terms of Reference, which is reviewed annually, set out responsibility, remit and constitution of the group and reflect representation across our community.

DEIB oversight is also embedded across decision-making committees with each equality objective having a staff lead and actions embedded into local plans. Leaders holding accountability for progress cross-report to the DEIB Committee and key academic committees such as College Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Committee, Research and Innovation Committee and College Quality Assurance Committee. Annual review of the RWCMD Board and Senior Leadership Team DM committees includes evaluation of representation.

Scrutiny on the progress towards meeting our Strategic DEIB Plan objectives will be published on our website. Monitoring the implementation and impact of our equality objectives and action plan will be an on-going process that will take place through the equality governance structures – outlined above – and as follows:

- A RAG rated action plan will be reviewed termly via the DEIB Committee and annually to SLT and the Board.
- In line with the Equality Act Specific Duties, we will publish annual reports by the 31st of March each year which details staff employment and student equality data reports, and which assesses progress towards achieving our equality objectives.