

Strategic Equality Plan: Our progress

2023-2024

Introduction

At the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, our commitment to equality is strengthened by the power of partnership working. Collaboration is at the heart of our progress, allowing us to share knowledge, resources, and best practices to drive meaningful change.

By working closely with our partners, including community groups, advocacy networks, and fellow arts organisations, we can better identify and address inequalities, ensuring that our policies and practices create a fair and inclusive environment for all.

This report highlights the strides we have made over the past year, showcasing the impact of our efforts in promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion. It also reflects on the challenges we continue to face and the collective actions needed to drive further progress. Through strong partnerships, we can build a more equitable future where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Our progress

Students

- + We have worked to develop student recruitment targets specifically around disability and ethnicity, taking dropout rates into consideration. Our Education strategy ensures that diversification of the student body is a key focus going forward.
- + The Student Recruitment team secured partnerships to help raise awareness of our courses with under-represented groups, such as the Reaching Wider Partnership Fund.
- + Our Community Engagement Partner collaborates with organisations such as Race Council Cymru, UCAN, Taking Flight Theatre, and Hijinx to understand and address barriers that diverse students face.
- + We ran free workshops in the Old Library for people with protected characteristics, ensured that Open Days were as accessible as possible, and supported student attendance at live performances.
- + A team of students and staff participated in the Advance HE Race Charter Mark training, preparing for our inclusion in the USW application in 2024/25.

Case study - Treasure Island

Making our stories inclusive: 'Treasure Island' – integration of BSL

In December 2024, RWCMD staged a reimagined 'Treasure Island' that fully integrated British Sign Language (BSL), enhancing accessibility for Deaf audiences and embedding inclusive practice into every stage of production.

Actor-interpreter Anna worked alongside student performers, directors, and Deaf advisors to make BSL a creative, central element. This involved rethinking character dynamics, staging,

and rehearsals to ensure Deaf audiences shared the full richness of the story.

The process also helped students understand the power and creativity of accessible theatre:

'It added so much charm and a real sense of community.'

Hannah McQuair,
Assistant Stage Manager

'I learnt how important accessibility is, and how creative it can and should be.'

Kellie-Gwen Morgan,
Lead Actor



Case study - The Winter's Tale

Inclusive curriculum development: the contextualisation of 'The Winter's Tale'

Classical plays often pose challenges to inclusivity, with their dated social norms and limited representation. RWCMD's production of 'The Winter's Tale' tackled this by centering inclusion in both casting and interpretation.

The production featured a diverse cast, including four actors of African descent. Instead of overlooking their racial identities, the production embraced them, weaving Afrocentric themes into the storytelling. Leontes' jealousy and suspicion of his wife and best friend – the major inciting incident in the play – was reframed through published race theory. Drawing from this research on inherited racism and biases and so that the issue of inherited unconscious racism could be explored, Leontes' was

presented as a wealthy white British man with an African British wife and an African American life-long friend.

This approach allowed for a contemporary and accessible context with which students could deeply engage – especially the actors of colour who frequently struggle to find representation in classical works. By honouring the diversity of the cast and embedding EDI principles, the production demonstrated that classical texts are not static relics but living, adaptable works that can speak to and tackle contemporary issues. By embedding EDI into the core of our curriculum, we prepare our students not just to be skilled performers, but to be reflective, engaged, and socially conscious artists who can shape the future of theatre.

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Our progress

Community

- + Our partnership with Craidd brings together mainstream Welsh theatre companies to drive sustainable change and improve the representation of disabled people in theatre.
- + We have embedded British Sign Language (BSL) into family Christmas shows and introduced creative captioning in our summer puppetry performances.
- + Our Community Engagement Partner continues to build new relationships to facilitate College-curated events both on-site and within the wider community.
- + The College actively supports national campaigns, including Pride Month, Lunar New Year, and Disability Students' Day, through communications and social media.
- + We launched our new residency partnership with the National Open Youth Orchestra, investing in staff resources and facilities.

Case study - Windrush Cymru

RWCMD and the Windrush Cymru Elders – A partnership in inclusion and cultural exchange

RWCMD's collaboration with Race Council Cymru's Windrush Cymru Elders shows the power of community-led inclusion. Weekly gatherings on campus support intergenerational cultural exchange, with Elders contributing to programming and co-creating public events.

A highlight was a collaborative concert with jazz musician Dennis Rollins, blending student performance with the Elders' musical heritage in a celebration of Calypso Jazz.

The College also supports Elders' participation through the Tempo Time Credit Network, exchanging their time for access to arts events - removing financial barriers and fostering genuine partnership.

This collaboration exemplifies how institutions can weave EDI into everyday life, creating shared ownership and mutual growth.

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Our progress

Staff

- + Unconscious bias and anti-racism training were delivered during staff training sessions by Tonic Theatre.
- + Anonymous recruitment was introduced for job vacancies at the College, ensuring details that could influence bias are removed from applications and CVs.
- + We are working to diversify committee membership to better reflect the communities we serve.
- + An audit of the staff and student intranet, the Hwb, was conducted to assess accessibility issues in internal systems, with an action plan now in place.
- + We introduced brand guidelines that clearly outline accessibility standards.
- + All social media output is captioned and includes appropriate alt tags.
- + The College continues to participate in Equal Pay Reviews as part of the USW Group, implementing actions from the resulting Equal Pay Action Plans.
- + We are enhancing the collection, analysis, and monitoring of equalities data to inform our strategies for diversifying the student body and supporting career development among staff.

Case study - Tonic Theatre

Tonic Theatre training

The College identified the need for specialised training that addresses the unique dynamics of the performing arts sector. In collaboration with Tonic Theatre, RWCMD organised a series of tailored training sessions for its staff and students. These sessions encompassed various aspects of EDI, including:

- + **Unconscious bias:** Understanding and mitigating implicit biases that can affect decision-making and interactions.
- + **Creating inclusive environments:** Strategies to cultivate a welcoming and supportive atmosphere within the College community.
tonictheatre.co.uk
- + **Fundamentals of allyship:** Empowering staff to actively support under-represented groups.

These workshops provided practical tools and fostered open discussions, enabling staff to reflect on their roles in promoting inclusivity. The College's collaboration with Tonic Theatre exemplifies the College's proactive approach to integrating EDI into its organisational culture.



