

# ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN 2022/23 TO 2026/27

The Royal Academy of Music moves music forward by inspiring successive generations of musicians to connect, collaborate and create.

Charity number 310007

Company registration number RC000438

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**UNIVERSITY  
OF LONDON**

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# INTRODUCTION

The Royal Academy of Music is one of the world's leading conservatoires and a member institution of the University of London. We have an unswerving focus on musical excellence and innovation, which we deliver through inspiring learning and teaching, collaboration with a wide range of partners including schools and music hubs, our outstanding teaching staff, and a rich landscape of performance opportunities. Entrance is via a combination of competitive audition (performers and conductors) or interview/portfolio submission (composers) and the fulfilment of relevant academic entry requirements (two A level passes). The Academy's student population is small but diverse from a global perspective.

The Academy promotes an inclusive learning and working environment in which all students, staff and visitors are welcomed, with individual needs recognised and supported.

We are strongly committed to access and participation. Although our admissions procedures are highly competitive, at undergraduate level we audition every candidate who applies. In common with other leading international conservatoires, the Academy mainly recruits students who have already achieved a very high standard in their instrumental discipline or show clear promise of doing so. This means that most applicants who have not had the advantage of high-quality individual tuition over a period of many years prior to application are at a disadvantage.

The Academy targets this advantage gap through our Open Academy and Junior Academy departments and our Your Academy initiatives including schools based projects Community First String Experience, and discipline-specific Clubs for teenagers. . As a joint member of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM), the Academy is both strategically and financially committed to providing bursaries at both junior and senior levels, as well as co-contributing to regional schemes to identify and support young musicians from underrepresented areas.

## 1. ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE

The Academy is implementing a three-stage access strategy:

- a) interventions whose effect will be seen in the long term. These programmes include Community First String Experience taking place over 3 years in two partner primary schools in areas of low household income and low tertiary academic participation in London (St John's, Rotherhithe and Corpus Christi, Brixton) and Leeds (St Urban's, Meanwood)
- b) those with a medium-term effect on recruitment, targeted at 14–17-year-olds - our Jazz, Composer and Percussion Clubs, Mentor and Audition Clubs, and Grade 6-8 Springboard Sessions. These are produced in collaboration with Waltham Forest, Newham, Brent, Havering and Haringey Music Hubs, and have taken place at various schools across those London Boroughs. In addition, we hope that our new initiative Musical Theatre Junior Academy will include a series of outreach workshops and follow-up visits to the Academy with secondary schools in Dagenham, Clapham and Walthamstow, in order to encourage aspiration towards music performance in Higher Education.
- c) those targeted at pre-HE ages 17-18: we now have a Year 14 programme at Junior Academy. Small numbers make appreciable differences in an institution of our size, and we are encouraged by early results since the drafting of our previous 2020/21 to 2024/25 Plan. Several young people have been recruited from the Clubs (Audition and Composers) into our Senior and Junior programmes, and applications to Junior Academy from low-income households, areas of low participation and from Black African-Caribbean, Asian and other minority ethnic backgrounds have increased.

This strategy is driven by Dean of Students and the Access and Participation Manager, both of whom took up their posts in January 2020. In 2022 we will add two new part time members of staff to focus on evaluation and developing relationships with schools, colleges and other local organisations.

We now offer audition fee waivers to our junior programmes for all those taking part in Club activities. We have not identified any students from under-represented groups whose success, continuation, attainment or progress is demonstrably different from that of students from well-represented groups. Once admitted to our BMus programmes all students are as likely to succeed, regardless of background. This is due to the intensive nature of the training, coaching and mentoring that students receive and the academic and pastoral support that underpins this delivery. The tables of data below provide an illustration of our performance at each stage of the student lifecycle in relation to the UK undergraduate population at the Academy.

<b>Table 1a: UK undergraduate contextual data</b>						
		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
		%	%	%	%	%
<b>Level of study</b>	First degree	99	99	98	99	99
	Other UG	1	1	2	1	1
		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
		%	%	%	%	%
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Black African-Caribbean, Asian, Minority Ethnic	9	11	15	15	16
	White	91	89	85	85	84
		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
		%	%	%	%	%
<b>Disability</b>	Yes	16	14	14	17	21
	No	84	86	86	83	79

<b>Table 1b: UK undergraduate disability (detailed)</b>						
		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
		%	%	%	%	%
<b>A mental health condition</b>		2	1	2	3	5
<b>Physical impairments or health condition</b>		5	5	4	5	6
<b>Specific learning disability</b>		9	8	8	9	10
<b>No known disability</b>		84	86	86	83	79

<b>Table 1c: UK undergraduate ethnicity</b>						
		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
		%	%	%	%	%
<b>Asian</b>		4	6	7	6	6
<b>Black African-Caribbean</b>		2	1	1	2	2
<b>Mixed</b>		3	3	6	6	8
<b>Other ethnic background</b>		0	1	1	1	0
<b>White</b>		91	89	85	85	84

Sources: HESA student record

<b>Table 2: Widening participation</b>						
		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
		%	%	%	%	%
<b>Entrants from state schools</b>		47.7	44.1	40.6	42.4	38.9
<b>Entrants from state school benchmark</b>		88.8	89.7	89.9	89.8	90.0
<b>4-year average 2015/16 to 2018/19</b>		43.7				
<b>4-year average 2016/17 to 2019/20</b>			41.5			
		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
		%	%	%	%	%
<b>Entrants from Low Participation Neighbourhoods (LPNs)</b>		3	3.4	3.1	2.9	3.7
<b>Entrants from LPNs benchmark</b>		8.8	9.3	9.8	9.8	10.5
<b>4-year average 2015/16 to 2018/19</b>		3.1				
<b>4-year average 2016/17 to 2019/20</b>			3.3			

Source: HESA performance indicators

<b>Table 3: Non-continuation following year of entry</b>						
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	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
	%	%	%	%
<b>First degree UK domiciled entrants who continue at RAM</b>	97.1	98.4	95.5	98.6
<b>First degree UK domiciled no longer in HE</b>	1.4	1.6	3	1.4
<b>First degree UK domiciled no longer in HE benchmark</b>	5.4	5.8	6.1	6.3
<b>First degree UK domiciled entrants who transfer to another provider</b>	1.5	0	1.5	0

Source: HESA performance indicators

<b>Table 4: Progression to employment or further study, UK undergraduate leavers</b>				
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	
	%	%	%	
<b>Employment or further study</b>	100	98	97	
<b>If in employment, percentage in employment classed as high-skilled</b>	91	100	89	

Source: HESA student record based on age at 31 August prior to academic year start

<b>Table 5: Age of first-year entrants – home fee-paying undergraduates</b>						
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	
	%	%	%	%	%	
<b>18 years and under</b>	83	78	81	68	82	
<b>19 years</b>	15	17	13	21	16	
<b>20 years</b>	1	2	4	8	2	
<b>21 years and over</b>	1	3	2	3		

Source: HESA student record based on age at 31 August prior to academic year start

## 1.1 HIGHER EDUCATION PARTICIPATION, HOUSEHOLD INCOME, OR SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

### ACCESS

Access is the lifecycle stage which presents us with the greatest challenges in recruiting students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods. Our performance in respect of students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods, according to the HESA Performance Indicators (see Table 2), has significant scope to improve. There was a slight decrease in entrants from state schools in 2019/20, though this in itself is not an indication of low socioeconomic status; but the same year saw an increase in students from low participation neighbourhoods.

We know from our financial support data collection that a number of Academy students receiving fee waivers (because their household income is under £25,000 per year) joined us from specialist music schools, and for that reason are not included in the HESA PIs. In 2019/20, fee waivers were allocated to 21.1% of the Academy's UK undergraduate student population. 37% of fee waivers were awarded to state school entrants, 13 percentage points up from 2018/19, with a 9 percentage point reduction in fee waivers awarded to entrants from specialist music schools (see Table 6 below).

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
	%	%	%
<b>Specialist</b>	44	48	37
<b>Independent</b>	15	21	22
<b>State</b>	31	24	37
<b>Grammar</b>	10	7	4

Source: RAM internal data, young entrants only

### SUCCESS, NON-CONTINUATION, ATTAINMENT, PROGRESSION TO EMPLOYMENT OR FURTHER STUDY

We aim to ensure that UK students recruited from POLAR4 quintile 1 and quintile 2 neighbourhoods, with Black African-Caribbean, Asian or other minority ethnic backgrounds, or who have declared disabilities achieve results that match or exceed whole year-group average results each year. Each year we will report the number of first class degrees, 2:1 degrees (etc.) awarded to UK students overall, the numbers that would have been awarded to students in each under-represented group had results been strictly proportional to their numbers ["expected"], and the numbers actually awarded to students in each under-represented group ["actual"]. We aim either for no difference between expected and actual numbers, or for positive differences suggesting that students in under-represented groups are reaching higher than average levels of achievement. We do not think it is fair or reasonable to expect students in under-represented groups to improve their performance relative to the UK year-group average by a widening margin from year to year; so our target for expected-actual differences has been set at zero. This is the situation at present. We aim to maintain it.

We track students individually through our study support and pastoral teams. No systemic attainment gaps have so far been identified in relation to protected characteristics.



The Academy has an outstanding record in terms of progression to employment or further study (see Table 4). Tables 3 and 4 reference our general cohort rather than our underrepresented target groups owing to small student numbers in our UK undergraduate cohort (between 55 and 65 students over the past 4 years).

Many of our graduates do progress to full-time highly skilled employment in orchestras and various other forms of cultural institution. Others establish a portfolio pattern of highly skilled work in performance, teaching or arts management alongside other ways of generating income. Skill level therefore does not always correlate with income, and this is reflected in the low threshold of earnings from purely musical activity that is required to join the Musicians' Union. A clear boundary between skilled and unskilled work is less meaningful for us as a sign of progression after graduation, as our graduates will often take on unskilled but flexible part-time work in order to leave space for exploiting performance opportunities while they build their networks and enable career progression in this way. This is especially true of graduates from lower income households or students who are caring for family members at the same time as establishing their careers. (For a stark summary of the challenges they face see "Precariousness, Pay, and Cultural Work", pp. 144-6 in O. Brook, D. O'Brien and M. Taylor, *Culture is Bad for You*; Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020.)

## 1.2 BLACK AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC STUDENTS

### ACCESS

Our performance in this area has improved greatly over the past five years, overtaking the 2011 National Census figure (13%) in 2018/19, and in 2019/20 increasing to 16% (see Table 1a). This is in line with the percentage of children of Black African-Caribbean, Asian, other minority and multiple heritage in the national population receiving music tuition via Music Education Hubs. We endeavour to maintain this position as reflected in our targets. As Table 1c shows, and taking a small UK undergraduate population into account, the number of students from British Asian and bi/multiple heritage has increased the most since 2015/16. We would like to continue to build on our success in this area and have reflected this in our targets, with a view to increasing our percentage of Black African-Caribbean, Asian and Minority Ethnic students and maintaining a percentage above the national average, rising to 19% by 2024/25.

We continue to target funded places at Junior Academy level, and First String Experience and we have strong links with leading organisations and schools based in areas with a diverse populations to encourage applications from particular ethnic groups. We offer industry-supported scholarships (full fees and maintenance) on our Musical Theatre MA programme for students from Black African-Caribbean, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.

### SUCCESS, NON-CONTINUATION, ATTAINMENT, PROGRESSION TO EMPLOYMENT OR FURTHER STUDY

We carry out annual monitoring to check whether there are attainment gaps affecting students from Black African-Caribbean, Asian and other minority ethnic backgrounds. . We can now track attainment from Admissions to graduation. The following table is an indicative start by ethnicity, (Table 7) and socio-economic challenge (Table 8) according to POLAR4 quintile data. POLAR quintile data classifies local areas into five groups – or quintiles – based on the proportion of young people who enter higher education. The vast proportion of our students graduate with first and 2:1 class degrees, which is higher than the national average: this has been checked for grade inflation by several external examiners, who have concluded that it is the result of our competitive intake rather than our assessment procedures. For this reason, we have analysed high achievement in terms of first-class degree classification, as this is where any achievement gap would lie.

<b>Table 7 – Percentage of first class degrees awarded by ethnicity (UK domiciled only)</b>						
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	All years
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>BAME</b>	50	33	50	71	90	68
<b>White</b>	69	73	55	53	71	63

Source: HESA student data

<b>Table 8 – Percentage of first class degrees awarded by POLAR4 quintile (UK domiciled only)</b>					
	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	All years
	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Q1</b>	67	100	100	100	88
<b>Q2</b>	67	38	50	75	55
<b>Q3</b>	25	57	25	86	50
<b>Q4</b>	60	63	67	62	64
<b>Q5</b>	86	63	54	78	70

Source: RAM internal data

The table shows that, over a five-year period 2015-2020 our ethnically diverse and POLAR4 quintile 1 students achieve better results than our White and more economically privileged students. This reinforces that our priority for improvement should be in Access: once students are with us they are all supported to realise their potential. We continue to strive for a more inclusive culture, however, so that this achievement does not come at a cost to wellbeing.

The Academy has an outstanding record in terms of progression to employment or further study (see Table 4). Tables 3 and 4 reference our general cohort rather than our underrepresented target groups owing to small student numbers in our UK undergraduate cohort (between 55 and 65 students over the past four years).

## 1.3 MATURE STUDENTS

### ACCESS

While we have a reasonable proportion of mature students across the overall student population, the Academy does not recruit large numbers of mature students to undergraduate programmes. Students of all ages are accepted for audition, though the majority of relevant musical training and progress takes place during early developmental years. It is very rare for late starters to reach the level required for entry to our programmes. We do however recruit a number of students without a first degree in music or any other subject directly into Academy postgraduate programmes (mostly singers and musical theatre performers). This intake is supported by a robust APEL process to ensure that these students are ready to enter and succeed in the Higher Education environment.

### SUCCESS, NON-CONTINUATION, ATTAINMENT, PROGRESSION TO EMPLOYMENT OR FURTHER STUDY

We monitor continuation, progression and attainment annually, and have not identified attainment gaps between students of differing age at the stages of success, retention, attainment or progression to employment or further study. The Academy has an outstanding record in terms of progression to employment or further study.

## 1.4 DISABLED STUDENTS

### ACCESS

Roughly 21% of the Academy's UK undergraduate population have a declared disability (see Tables 1a and 1b), a proportion which is in line with other comparable institutions and which we will seek to maintain and increase through measures such as on-course access to diagnostic help, over the next five years. The Academy is committed to ensuring that candidates with disabilities and specific learning difficulties are not disadvantaged by the admissions or audition process, and we emphasise this in our auditions guidance. Disabilities include specific learning conditions such as dyslexia, those relating to mental health and long-standing and permanent medical conditions such as visual impairment or those relating to mobility.

The Academy applies the social model to its understanding of disability. This focuses on how people are disabled by the restrictions that exist within society rather than by their impairment or condition. We regularly review our prospectus and website materials to ensure that the Academy is presented as an inclusive, supportive learning environment.

We offer dedicated support to students with disabilities in terms of their audition requirements. Candidates who are made offers and subsequently accept their place invited to identify any areas of additional need before enrolment, to make sure that we can support them fully as soon as they enrol. Some do this via UCAS, but our enrolment process also encourages students who may not have had a diagnosis to work with our Disability Advisor to obtain to obtain an Educational Psychology Assessment. Success, non-continuation, attainment, progression to employment or further study

Our annual assessment of attainment gaps across under-represented groups (carried out via the annual monitoring of continuation, progression and attainment) shows that there are no attainment gaps between students with disabilities and those without disabilities at the stages of success, retention, attainment or progression to employment or further study.

With each student's consent, the Academy's Disability Advisor works alongside the Senior Tutor in Undergraduate Pastoral Support, Programme Tutors and Additional Support Tutors to ensure that individual needs are met.

Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) are created by the Disability Advisor in partnership with the student as well as their Tutor in order that additional challenges or learning differences can be addressed.

The Academy has an excellent record in terms of progression to employment or further study (see Table 4). Table 9 shows an improvement since 2019, in attainment between students known to have a disability and those with no known disability, which we attribute to our robust academic and pastoral support structure.

<b>Table 9 – Percentage of first class degrees awarded by disability (UK domiciled only)</b>						
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	All years
	%	%	%	%	%	%

<b>Known to have a disability</b>	50	46	17	50	75	49
<b>No known disability</b>	69	78	59	55	74	66

Source: HESA student data

## 1.5 CARE LEAVERS

### ACCESS

We do not have any students who identified as being care leavers in the current student population. The chances that care leavers would have had sustained access to high-level musical training from an early point in their lives are very low. Academy access initiatives targeting potential students in low participation neighbourhoods and from low-income backgrounds could potentially benefit care leavers.

### SUCCESS, NON-CONTINUATION, ATTAINMENT, PROGRESSION TO EMPLOYMENT OR FURTHER STUDY

Any students who disclosed the fact that they were care leavers would have access to our extensive student support framework if required, and we would not envisage any gaps in success, non-continuation, attainment or progression students from this group compared to the wider student population.

## 1.6 INTERSECTIONS OF DISADVANTAGE

The Student Data Manager is working to improve cross-Academy understanding of intersections of disadvantage and inform work intended to alleviate these disadvantages. The numbers are very small, so beginning in 2021 we will report these over five years as an average in order to avoid identifying individual students.

## 1.7 OTHER GROUPS WHO EXPERIENCE BARRIERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

We are currently treating groups identified by the Office for Students as Academy priorities for all our work around Access and Participation.

# 2. STRATEGIC AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Academy's main strategic aims are to deliver an exceptional educational experience underpinned by ambitious artistic projects; to recruit and retain the best student talent from around the world; and to demonstrate outstanding engagement with the wider community.

The Academy is committed to providing a range of long-term outreach activities targeted at groups that are under-represented in higher education. By taking music out into the community and providing high level musical tuition to children and young people, our Open Academy, Junior Academy programmes and Your Academy projects help to raise aspirations, make connections and challenge preconceptions.

A number of Academy Clubs have been set up recently as part of Your Academy. These, along with the Community First Strings Experience, our planned Musical Theatre Junior Academy (MTJA) outreach and Grade 6-8 Springboard Sessions, tackle the specific challenges that underrepresented groups face in applying for and

attaining a place within a conservatoire at either senior or junior level. Skills such as developing improvisation skills for jazz (the focus of Jazz Club), exposure to a wider range of composition options (Composer Club), strings development at an early age (CFSE) being inspired via a workshop with the rising stars of the West End (MTJA). Additionally, passing Grade 5 Theory, required for progression to Grade 6 and higher, is crucial for opening up access routes to conservatoire education. Individual students have obtained places at Junior and Senior Academy as a direct result of this activity.

The Access strategy for the Royal Academy of Music Museum is aligned with this Access and Participation Plan; they form an important part of the Museum's application for reaccreditation in 2022. Remodelling of museum space will allow the delivery of a range of access activities including a week-long summer programme combining music theory tuition with composition in the museum environment, making use of the collections to address possible gaps in cultural capital among the targeted student groups; the first one takes place in August 2021 and is free to participants from our target groups, recommended to us by our partner Music Hubs in Tower Hamlets, Newham, Brent, Waltham Forest and Jo Richardson school in Dagenham. The Museum collaborates with Open Academy in hosting schools' workshops for participants from Camden and Westminster as well other community groups. Once at the Academy, students have access to high-quality and sometimes historically significant instruments from the Museum Collection, bridging the gap between students from affluent backgrounds and those who play on more low-cost instruments. The working instrument collection regularly reaches six-figure audiences as part of concert activity given by students and staff, and is an important part of our recruitment strategy.

## 2.1 TARGET GROUPS

We have chosen to target the following priority groups:

- Low Participation Neighbourhoods
- Low-income backgrounds
- Black African-Caribbean, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds
- Disabled students

## 2.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- Low participation Neighbourhoods

We aim to increase UK undergraduate recruitment from Low Participation Neighbourhoods, so that the gap in admission percentages between entrants from POLAR4 quintiles 1 and 2 (taken together) and quintiles 4 and 5 (taken together) reduces by 4 percentage points each year over the duration of the plan. Separately, we will record and monitor numbers of students recruited annually from each of the five POLAR4 quintiles, and check to see whether quintile 2 representation increases at a faster rate than quintile 1 representation.

**Table 10 – Aim to reduce gap in participation in HE from LPN (UK domiciled only)**

Baseline	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
70%	66 %	62 %	58 %	52 %	48%

Source RAM Internal data:

- Low-income backgrounds

To enable more UK undergraduate students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods to join the Academy, we aim to award bursaries and fee waivers to more students in our target groups. We would expect most or all students recruited from POLAR quintiles 1 and 2 both to need and to qualify for bursary and fee waiver

support. As numbers of students in these categories increase so will total Academy bursary and fee waiver expenditure benefiting students from LPNs. We are planning for this and will report on the numbers of award made year-on-year to OfS, (Since bursaries and fee waivers are means tested we may occasionally admit students who do not need and are not offered Academy financial support even though their home addresses are in Low Participation Neighbourhoods.) Through Your Academy we are also partnering with schools and music organisations based in a variety of London boroughs within LPNs, providing skills training and greater knowledge about the application process for conservatoires.

- Black African-Caribbean, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds

We aim to increase numbers of Black African-Caribbean, Asian and minority ethnic students. Specific targets for the remainder of the plan period will be set following first year review. To ensure that targets are relevant and achievable a major data disaggregation project is under way: this will have reported to Senior Management by the end of Year One. Through Your Academy we are also partnering with schools and music organisations based in a variety of London boroughs within LPNs, providing skills training and greater knowledge about the application process for conservatoires An effective pathway can be via being accepted on to programmes such as Junior Academy.

- Disabled students

We aim to increase our performance in terms of the number of disabled students represented in the undergraduate population (currently 21%). Following first year review, and in continuing dialogue with OfS, we are setting a more ambitious target of 25% over the five years of the plan.

## EXISTING TARGETS

The Academy views the submission of the Access and Participation Plan for 2022-2027 as the continuation of our strategic approach. The very small number of UK undergraduates in any one year (fewer than 70) will inevitably lead to considerable statistical variability from year to year. Success will need to be measured over the life of the Plan, aiming for clearly demonstrable and sustainable progress by Year 5. Completely consistent upward year-on-year trends are aspirational.

## 3. STRATEGIC MEASURES

The Academy has published its policy statement on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (<https://www.ram.ac.uk/about-us/equality>), with which this Access and Participation Plan is fully aligned. The policy exists to ensure that the contribution of staff and students from all backgrounds is valued by the Academy; to promote positive working relationships through which all members of the Academy are valued and respected; to ensure that inequality and discrimination are challenged and eliminated; to make sure that all staff, students or visitors in the Academy have an obligation to carry out the policy effectively. To challenge and eliminate inequality and discrimination the Academy needs a robust Access and Participation Plan: only with such a plan in place can larger numbers of students from backgrounds currently under-represented be recruited, supported and successfully trained for professional careers in an industry facing serious Equality, Diversity and Inclusion challenges of its own. The Academy continuously monitors performance against its EDI objectives and produces a formal annual EDI report that can be downloaded from the Academy website. Our EDI policy and Access and Participation Plan are related documents and should be read in conjunction.

### 3.1 WHOLE PROVIDER STRATEGIC APPROACH

The Academy aims:

1. To increase the pool of talented applicants from under-represented groups so that we can continue to foster greater diversity in our population of undergraduate students from the UK and contribute to the Office for Students' aim of eradicating gaps in access to higher education;
2. To enhance our admissions, teaching and learning, assessment, student support and employability strategies to ensure that as the Academy's population of undergraduate students from the UK becomes more diverse, we will maintain our excellent track record in student continuation and progression.

To bring about the changes required to achieve these aims, a whole provider strategic approach has been developed with oversight from the Governing Body and Senior Management Team. It has four core components:

- a. We continue to finesse the alignment of our access, educational and support strategies to ensure that they have optimum impact on our access and participation measures across Junior Academy, Open Academy and Your Academy; do not discriminate against students from under-represented groups; and do not discriminate against students who have one or more protected characteristics.
- b. Access and participation measures are discussed and approved by appropriate committees within our academic governance structure, namely the Academic Board, the Access and Participation Committee, and the Undergraduate Programmes Board.
- c. We have begun to enhance the annual cycle of staff training events to include more detailed discussion of strategic measures and the role of staff in their delivery.
- d. Students are involved in all aspects of the planning, delivery, evaluation and monitoring of our strategy through student representation on academic governance committees (from the Governing Body down), Access and Participation Committee, Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Committee and Ethnic Diversity Student Committee and the Student-Staff Liaison Committee.

## STRATEGIC MEASURES TO ACHIEVE AIM 1: BROADENING THE TALENT POOL

We wish to increase the pool of talented applicants from under-represented groups who are experiencing barriers to progression (see: context for evaluation p.25). We have three main areas of activity pre-18 to support this.

1. Junior Academy, which provides sustained high-level training for talented musicians of all backgrounds between the ages of 5 and 18.
2. Open Academy, which gives children and adults from under-represented groups the opportunity to participate in artistic and educational musical projects side-by-side with current Academy students.
3. Your Academy. In our last Plan we defined this as our summer programme for teenagers. The Covid-19 pandemic has meant postponing this in-person initiative, and instead we are grouping all of our Clubs and widening participation projects under the name Your Academy. Individual departments are supported by the Access and Participation Manager to carry out projects to identify talented musicians aged 4-17 from under-represented groups with the aim of familiarising them with the Academy and its undergraduate programmes, and – where appropriate – working with them and their families (Mentor Club).

## JUNIOR ACADEMY MEASURES

As Table 10 shows, those who participate in Junior Academy are overwhelmingly likely to progress into higher education with a significant proportion progressing into an undergraduate programme at a conservatoire.

<b>Table 11: Junior Academy Leavers Destinations</b>						
<b>Year</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Music at conservatoire</b>	<b>Music at university</b>	<b>Other subject at university</b>	<b>Total progressed into HE</b>	<b>Gap Year</b>
<b>2016</b>	43	49%	21%	21%	39	9%
<b>2017</b>	48	58%	17%	17%	44	8%
<b>2018</b>	49	39%	29%	16%	41	16%
<b>2019</b>	20	45%	30%	20%	19	5%
<b>2020</b>	37	51%	21%	11%	31	17%

Source: Internal RAM Data

We have therefore prioritised interventions to develop a student demographic within Junior Academy which better reflects the social, financial and ethnic mix of British society as a whole. 2020 saw the largest % of Junior Academy leavers progressing into conservatoire education at HE so we are confident that, over time, this will have an impact on our 18+ cohort. Arts consultants Andrea Spain and Helen Hendry, in a report commissioned by the Academy (“Engagement and Progression in Instrumental and Vocal Learning by Under-Represented Young People”, January 2020) identified barriers to progression towards the Junior Academy stage. Our Club interventions are designed to lower these barriers for the young people on our Access schemes, though of course our reach is limited by geography and resource. We cannot hope to address all of the entrenched inequalities in the wider UK social and educational context. We have been able to offer a series of audition fee waivers to those who have attended our Clubs (see Your Academy below) to facilitate this.

### ***Pre-Junior Academy: Beginners***

First String Experience is a three-year preliminary music course for students aged four to seven, designed to introduce very young children to the concept and skills of playing a stringed instrument from a very early age. No previous musical training is required, but our existing cohort draws largely from more affluent social groups. In order to encourage greater participation of children from under-represented groups, we have established an access initiative: Chance to Play. Fully funded places are available for children from low-income backgrounds who would otherwise be unable to participate in the scheme. Over the next three years we plan to increase the number of Chance to Play places.

We have also decided to develop a Community-based First String Experience (CFSE) in two state primary schools (St John’s Rotherhithe and Corpus Christi Brixton) – starting at four years old, to address the issue of the programme’s lack of diversity. Following completion of the CFSE programme, participants will be connected to our partners who can develop their training further.

Children completing the First Strings Experience need additional tuition and support to reach the level required for entry to a junior conservatoire at the age of nine. Over the next five years we will develop a two-year transitional programme to enable talented individuals from under-represented groups to continue receiving expert tuition after First Strings Experience so that they can continue to study at Junior Academy or on comparable programmes at other conservatoires beyond the age of nine.



### **Transitions**

The transition to secondary education has been identified as a high-drop-out stage for musical activity, by the London-based music education charity Music Masters for instance: their Champions Programme is designed to encourage students to continue (<https://musicmasters.org.uk/who-are-our-champions/>). Over the next five years the Academy Clubs programme will develop our partnerships with Music Hubs in Brent, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest, Southwark, Haringey and Croydon and state schools across London to generate new partnerships and identify and support children from low-participation neighbourhoods, low-income backgrounds, and Black, African-Caribbean, Asian and ethnic-minority backgrounds. From 2022 with the small Your Academy team growing from 0.5 Access and Participation Manager to include a 0.5 Evidence, Evaluation and Projects Co-ordinator, and a 0.6 intern, we shall investigate working across the UK – starting with a series of projects in north Leeds suburb Meanwood. Our initial target will be to identify five talented children in this category and to increase that number gradually year-on-year so that by 2024 the number of applicants from these under-represented groups to Junior Academy for woodwind, brass and percussion should increase at least threefold. This in turn will widen the pool of applicants from these under-represented groups to the Academy's undergraduate programme.

Since 2020 Your Academy has developed and delivered initiatives with partner Music Hubs and state schools in London to identify and support talented young musicians and composers from low-participation neighbourhoods, low-income families and Black African-Caribbean, Asian and ethnic-minority backgrounds so that they can make a viable application to Junior Academy or comparable programmes at other conservatoires at Year 12. Our initial target will be to identify four talented young people in this category and to increase that number gradually year-on-year so that by 2024 the number of applicants from these under-represented groups to Junior Academy for composition and performance should double from its baseline. This in turn will widen the pool of applicants from these under-represented groups to the Academy's undergraduate programme.

### **Addressing economic barriers to musical opportunity**

Junior Academy is supported by the Music and Dance Scheme 'Access to Excellence' programme. Junior Academy students also receive support from the Leverhulme and Wolfson Trusts. The Music and Dance Scheme criteria and funding model are used for all other bursary awards in Junior Academy. Junior Academy undertook a review of bursary processes during the Covid-19 pandemic in order to support children whose family income dropped suddenly during the crisis.

From 2021 we will develop a Junior Musical Theatre programme, starting with a cohort of 30 participants. One third of places will be fully-funded, prioritising those from our target groups. The programme team will develop links to the West End and musical theatre degree programme providers across London and the wider UK. To help with recruitment to this programme, Academy Disney Scholars will offer workshops to state secondary schools in east London in order to build potential students' confidence. (The Disney Scholars are Musical Theatre MA students from Black African-Caribbean, Asian or other Minority Ethnic backgrounds or from households with a low income.)

## **OPEN ACADEMY MEASURES**

Open Academy is our community and participation department, which serves a dual purpose: Academy students gain experience of this field of work while project participants have the opportunity to explore their own musicianship and creativity. Open Academy projects support wellbeing, raise aspirations, make connections, challenge preconceptions and create new possibilities through a range of activities often delivered through strategic partnerships with other organisations. Projects typically support participants from

schools and community groups that experience higher than average levels of deprivation to create new music, working alongside our students. For many participants these projects are their first experience of collaborative musical creativity and performance.

In order to help achieve the Academy's access and participation strategic aims, Open Academy's strategy is to target schools and community groups whose individuals predominantly have backgrounds that are under-represented in participation in the performing arts and where levels of multiple deprivation are well above the national average. These include long-term partnerships with the Camden and Triborough Music Education Hubs, IntoUniversity, The City Lit, Spitalfields Music, London Music Masters, Regent High School, and Wigmore Hall. Intensive project work with children also allows us to identify early talent and, where possible, make a smart intervention (for example to one of the Clubs that form part of Your Academy) to enable individuals who demonstrate exceptional potential to have access to sustained musical opportunity.

In 2019/20, Open Academy undertook 18 projects with primary schools, and six projects with secondary schools, engaging a total of 5,139 participants at a pre-HE stage of their education, thus exceeding our target.

Over the five years of this plan, we will endeavour to maintain these numbers, although the pandemic has inevitably curtailed our in-person engagement with schools. We anticipate that digital projects will continue to have a significant role, even as we return to in person work.

## YOUR ACADEMY

Your Academy is now the umbrella under which individual departments work with the Academy's Access and Participation Manager to undertake widening participation projects complementing the access and participation work of Junior Academy and Open Academy.

Each of the Academy's Principal Study departments holds an annual Open Day. We are developing ways of informing state schools whose pupils predominantly have backgrounds that are under-represented in participation about ways to be included in these days. We recognise that individuals from low-income backgrounds may require support to attend Open Days in London and we will fund those who would otherwise be unable to afford the costs of attendance.

We are prioritising musical disciplines that are most likely to have the greatest impact on the diversity of our undergraduate population from the UK: Composition, Percussion, Jazz and Musical Theatre; Mentor and Audition Clubs also 'top and tail' these interventions, respectively giving participants a grounding in what studying music at a 'music school' involves and then giving them further encouragement, training and support after. We are also looking at access for early years via our Community First Strings Experience, taking our well-established early string programme to two primary schools in Rotherhithe and Brixton.

## CLUBS

We started with a Composers Club for pupils studying final-year GCSE Music and AS level Music at state schools in Greater London. This small scale, intensive intervention approach has since been extended to a range of different instruments and activities including Jazz Club, offered free to state school-educated 13-18 year olds, some of whom subsequently applied to our Junior Jazz Programme.

Audition Club and Mentor Club develop skills and support applications to Junior and Senior conservatoires. These schemes will be developed further via a series of partnerships: with pre-18 music providers (including Music Masters, Pro Corda, Orchestras for All, Brass Bands England, the Nicola Benedetti Foundation); with regional music hubs including Brent, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Croydon and others in South England; and

with a number of primary schools in Low Participation Neighbourhoods and with sizeable Black African-Caribbean, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities (Brixton, Tower Hamlets, Tottenham and the Diocese of Leeds).

## YOUR ACADEMY SUMMER SCHOOL

From 2022 we are planning a summer school for young people who have been involved with our clubs and mentoring programme. This will give them further 1:1 specialist teaching and experience of group work, careers advice and help with auditions and applications.

## GRADE 6-8 SPRINGBOARD SESSIONS

Grade 5 Theory is a barrier that young people have to clear before they can take ABRSM Grades 6-8 practical exams. Our free Springboard Sessions will demystify Grade 5 Theory, giving KS3 students (age 11-14) the knowledge, confidence and question-handling technique that they need to pass.

## STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

All the measures outlined above are designed to equip potential applicants from under-represented groups with skills that students reaching the Academy via 'standard' routes (such as specialist music school) have had ample opportunity to develop.

## STRATEGIC MEASURES TO ACHIEVE AIM 2: PROGRESSION AND ATTAINMENT

We are working to optimise support services for students from under-represented groups, so that the whole of their Academy journey is as productive, enjoyable and future-enabling as it possibly can be. We keep all the following under continuous review:

1. Admissions
2. Curriculum Design
3. Academic and Pastoral Support
4. Employability
5. Financial support

## ADMISSIONS MEASURES

The Academy runs a rigorous admissions process so that we can assess fully the suitability of each applicant to meet the challenges of our intensive undergraduate programmes. For UK applicants this involves travel to central London and commitment to a full day of auditions, diagnostic assessments of musicianship, and interviews. Over the period of this Plan we will take the following measures to encourage access and participation by under-represented groups:

1. We currently audition all applicants to our undergraduate programmes. We will continue this policy.
2. The care we take with auditions carries costs which are shared with applicants in the form of an audition fee. Any applicant unable to afford the audition fee can apply for an audition fee waiver. We will continue this policy.
3. We are actively reviewing other (non-audition) costs of application, and trying to find ways to waive or otherwise mitigate these for students from low-income backgrounds.

4. Feedback from applicants on their audition experiences at the Academy has been overwhelmingly positive in the last five years, but we keep the fitness-for-purpose of our auditions under review.
5. As part of our quality assurance cycle we undertook a periodic review of our undergraduate programmes in 2019/20, including an analysis of how effectively our auditions procedures ensured equality of opportunity for applicants in under-represented groups.
6. Over the period of this plan we will develop the mandatory training programme for academic staff involved in auditions and interviews, to increase their sensitivity to the potential of applicants from under-represented groups who may not have had access to rigorous prior training opportunities. We will align this with mandatory staff training in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion which begins in September 2021.

In the light of the successful online audition process introduced during the Covid-19 pandemic, we will keep digital auditions to mitigate against travel and other access costs, for both the Junior and Senior programmes, as well as continuing to offer audition fee waivers.

## CURRICULUM DESIGN MEASURES

Our strategic measures to increase the pool of talented applicants from underrepresented groups have a subsidiary aim of closing the skills gap between individuals from under- and well-represented groups. Nevertheless, we recognise that the design of the first two years of our four-year undergraduate curriculum must address any residual skills gaps between UK students from those different groups, as well as between UK and international students who may bring a wide variety of prior learning experiences. Following a periodic review of our undergraduate programmes in 2019/20 we are working with Blueprint For All (formerly the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust) to audit our curriculum through the lens of greater diversity of composers and musical voices for study. To help us develop a curriculum that will be fit for purpose for at least the next decade we will consult thoroughly with a range of stakeholders, including sixth-form teachers of music in state schools, directors of Music Hubs, and current students from under-represented groups including the Academy's Ethnic Diversity Student Committee. All proposals will be subject to equality impact assessments before implementation.

## ACADEMIC AND PASTORAL SUPPORT MEASURES

We are proud of our excellent record regarding the continuation of students from all backgrounds within our undergraduate programmes. Over the period of this Plan we will:

- a) continue to enhance the support package that we offer our students. On arrival at the Academy, each student is allocated to a Head of Year and is encouraged to meet with them at key points during the academic cycle. Heads of Year oversee each student's academic progress and wellbeing; they are the first point of contact for referral to additional support services such as study skills support or disability support. Our Disability Advisor works with Heads of Year and Heads of Programmes to raise awareness of the support issues faced by students from under-represented groups and encourage sharing of best support practice. We have also made provision for an Additional Support Tutor, a Student Finance Advisor and three part time counsellors, bringing our counselling team up to 5 members of staff.
- b) continue to enhance the range and quality of the academic support we offer to students in addition to the core delivery of the programmes, including:
  1. Practice, preparation and rehearsal skills for students who have not had sustained access to high-level tuition before entering the Academy
  2. General study skills, research skills and essay-writing skills
  3. English Language skills for those whose first language is not English

4. Academic support classes for students whose prior experience requires some remedial work in music theory, analysis, and aural skills
  5. Recording and technology skills for students who have not had access to music technology before entering the Academy.
- c) provide further support for mature students on our undergraduate programmes, drawing on our long experience of successfully supporting mature students in our postgraduate programmes. We operate a robust APEL policy to provide equality of opportunity for mature students with non-traditional qualifications; review the learning support we offer mature learners who need to generate income through work while studying with us; and, through mechanisms like Leave of Absence and Special Circumstances, make sure that study arrangements for mature students with family or caring responsibilities are as flexible as they can be.
  - d) continue to support students with disabilities through Personal Learning Plans and access to dedicated support.
  - e) continue to prioritise the wellbeing of all our students by enhancing the WellBeing strand of our undergraduate programmes: workshops that focus on wellbeing and professional development issues, an initiative implemented in 2018-19. We will ensure that the topics covered in the workshops address issues faced particularly by students from under-represented groups, providing students from those groups with focused information, advice and guidance.

## EMPLOYABILITY MEASURES

Since the 1820s the core mission of the Academy has been to train talented young people for a career in music. Employability has therefore been at the core of our educational delivery over the last 200 years. It continues to drive our programmes of study. We are proud of our excellent record in student destinations and aim to maintain it as the demographic of our population of undergraduates from the UK evolves.

If we achieve the aims of our pre-admissions measures, admissions measures and curriculum design measures we will succeed in closing the skills gaps between students from under- and well-represented backgrounds and the employability measures embedded in our undergraduate programmes will have an equally effective impact on all our students. Nevertheless, we recognise that additional measures may be necessary to support students from under-represented groups in developing their employability over the duration of the four-year programme. We will:

1. continue to ensure that the range of collaborative projects with leading professional musicians and placements in partner ensembles offers opportunities at the Academy as well as in different sites throughout London and the southeast of England, so that those with limited travel and subsistence budgets will have access to them.
2. ensure that the professional development and artist development strands embedded in our undergraduate programmes address challenges faced by students from under-represented groups.
3. promote a programme of staff training to improve the understanding that principal-study teachers have of the challenges faced by students from under-represented groups and their support needs, with the aim of enhancing the professional mentorship provided by the staff.

Post-Covid, we will continue to address digital poverty by supplying equipment and enhanced broadband to students who need it, both to enable them to access learning resources online, and to enhance their employability through digital music literacy.

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Success on our intensive undergraduate programmes demands a high level of sustained engagement from students. There is no shortcut to the many hours of practice, private study, preparation and rehearsal needed to develop the professional skills that make our graduates employable musicians. Students whose financial circumstances require them to devote significantly less time to their studies so that they can undertake course-unrelated paid work face particularly acute problems with continuation and employability. We therefore target financial support at students in that situation to mitigate or eradicate those negative effects.

In 2019/20 we implemented Academy-commissioned Bridge Group report recommendations to increase the transparency of our bursary programmes. In order to gather and analyse data to inform the strategic deployment of financial support we have restructured our small Registry team and appointed new members of staff with roles targeted at delivering our identified goals. A new full-time Assistant Registrar (Admissions and Financial Awards) has played a key role in developing robust mechanisms to support our Access and Participation Plan, managing the journey from application to enrolment and oversight of our bursary application process. Our Student Data Manager has begun to coordinate the data necessary for a strategic framework for financial support, and a Student Funding Manager began work in May 2021 to help students navigate the systems internally and externally.

The Bridge Group Report identified that students in conservatoires from low-income backgrounds found fee-waivers less useful than cash bursaries which help more immediately with up-front costs such as musical equipment and access to training opportunities. Accordingly, from September 2021 we are now paying cash bursaries to students from low income households:

1. For students whose household income is £25,000 or below, the Academy will automatically pay a cash waiver bursary of £3,000
2. For students whose household income is between £25,001 and £33,500, the Academy will automatically pay a cash waiver bursary of £2,000.

We are introducing a light-touch form of means declaration at the offer stage of the admissions cycle to enable students on lower incomes to make informed decisions about the cost of their studies before committing to them. This will then be followed up externally with the UK Student Finance process.

## 3.2 STUDENT CONSULTATION

Student involvement in Academy consultation processes and student membership of committees such as our Access and Participation and EDI Committees is entirely voluntary. There is nevertheless an expectation (of which students are made aware via the Students' Union) that committees will be broadly representative. Students from a range of backgrounds are encouraged to come forward, and supported by their teachers and tutors to do so. Students who wish to report EDI-related concerns about discrimination or harassment anonymously, either because they have witnessed an incident or suffered themselves as a result of it, can do so via the Academy's "Report and Support" online portal. All Report and Support notifications are investigated by the Academy's Head of Human Resources and by the Dean of Students jointly: they work with colleagues to take remedial (and where necessary to initiate disciplinary) action, in line with Academy procedures formally adopted by Governing Body and accessible to all staff and students via the Academy intranet.

Over the last three years we have consulted annually with student groups and elected student representatives on a range of EDI-related issues, including the definition of EDI objectives and progress toward targets. Examples include:

- Feedback from unsuccessful applicants for undergraduate places indicated that parts of our selection process were perceived as intimidating: especially the academic interview and some musicianship tests. We asked current students to suggest changes, As a result of this consultation we have replaced the academic interview with a more open discussion of applicants' musical interests, aptitudes and ambitions, encouraging them to articulate and demonstrate what they have been able to achieve in the context of their prior musical training. Musicianship tests have been redesigned to give them a more ludic or game-like feel.
- Current students told us that they wanted to understand better the system by which we award needs-based bursaries. They felt that the timing of award announcements was not ideal in giving applicants from Low Participation Neighbourhoods the confidence required to take up Academy places once offered. As a result, we revised our published guidance about applying for a bursary to make the process more comprehensible and transparent. We also changed the timing of bursary awards so that initial awards are made shortly after places have been accepted. The Bursary Committee now meets regularly and frequently so that later applications for bursary support can be considered and awards made in a timely fashion.
- As part of the periodic review of our BMus programme in 2019/2020 we undertook detailed consultation on curriculum and delivery with a wide range of student groups. One of the enhancement priorities that emerged from this process was a far-reaching reconfiguration of Year 1 of the programme with a view to bridging the gap between pre-tertiary experience and the subsequent demands of the programme, particularly for those students whose secondary education has been non-specialist. We have extended the initial induction period to four weeks and reconfigured the Year 1 curriculum so that it builds on prior musical experiences that vary very greatly from student to student.
- The Academy's student body elected not to make a formal contribution to this Access and Participation Plan, but the President of the Student Union, the Ethnic Diversity Society representative and students on our Access and Participation, WellBeing, Staff-Student Liaison, and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committees have all been involved in its development. Students told us that working with more state-educated peers was a priority, and they have backed this up with action: Jazz, Audition and Composer Clubs have been implemented with committed student involvement in teaching, performing and mentoring younger applicants. Students asked the Dean of Students to produce regular reports on EDI progress: these are sent to all staff and students, and they document work with external partners and groups alongside curriculum developments such as seminars, repertoire sessions and programming from a more diverse range of composers. Students and staff are invited to contribute ideas and suggestions to each report.

### 3.3 EVALUATION STRATEGY

#### SELF-EVALUATION OF OUR HISTORIC AND CURRENT POSITION

- a. The strategic context in which evaluation is undertaken. We acknowledge (see Section 1 above, Assessment of Performance) that, in relation to HESA benchmark figures, the Academy recruits too few students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods and from state schools. Financial barriers encountered at pre-HE stage are the main explanation for this: students from low income family backgrounds are unlikely to have the benefit of sustained, high quality 1:1 vocal or instrumental tuition, or the opportunity to join elite youth music ensembles. Recently published (August 2021) Department

for Education research findings confirm that, despite many successes, the 2011 National Plan for Music Education has not enabled students from all backgrounds to progress to the next level of musical excellence. Family income and opportunities to progress are strongly correlated. When evaluating the success of Access and Participation initiatives, the Academy like other leading conservatoires has to take account of this brute financial reality. A new National Plan for Music Education will be published in 2022, informed by advice from a panel of experts whose membership government has just announced (6 August 2021: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/panel-of-experts-to-shape-future-of-music-education>). Regrettably, at the time of writing the Academy has to undertake evaluation in a context of widely admitted national strategic overstretch. We are determined to play our part in turning the situation round.

- b. How evaluation and evidence shape current programme design. The Academy conducted a comprehensive curriculum review in 2020. The new curriculum resulting was informed by evaluation and evidence on two levels: numerical (data analysis suggesting a causal relationship between under-representation of certain types of student in the Academy population, and common Academy assumptions about levels of prior attainment that applicants should be required to demonstrate regardless of their circumstances); and narrative (seeking and considering feedback from students and alumni with suggestions for improvement to make, about gender and racial representation issues above all).
- c. How evaluations are designed. At present (August 2021) our headline evaluations are numerical. We are working to improve student recruitment from Low Participation Neighbourhoods and from state schools, and looking for evidence of success or failure against recruitment targets agreed with OfS. We have since 2020-21 been investing substantially in new posts that will greatly enhance the Academy's ability to plan and deliver Access and Participation projects and to monitor their effectiveness. Here we were starting from a low staff base. Monitoring from 2022-3 onwards will make systematic use of OfS's self-assessment tool, aiming to produce evidence of "Commended" quality across the board; but we are still (August 2021) a year away from being able to do this meaningfully. Covid-19 delayed the full, in-person rollout of a number of outreach projects for which the Academy has fundraised and continues to fundraise. In 2020-21 the Blueprint For All consultancy conducted in-depth interviews with members of the Academy's governing body, staff and students in order to inform a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action plan, now being implemented. The SHM Foundation began design work on a new, interview-based evaluation framework intended to capture the benefits of involvement with the Academy from Junior Academy onwards, which often but not always include progression to Senior Academy. These two narrative investigations, both ongoing, will produce evidence allowing the Academy to test and if necessary refine its current theory of change: that class and closely related economic determinants make some types of student much more likely than others to choose to career in music and apply for entry to the Academy. Promising students in under-represented groups need identifying, and need targeted financial support to help them overcome barriers to progression. (This theory draws on quantitative and qualitative research funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council, into inequality in the cultural and creative industries generally. See O. Brook, D. O'Brien and M. Taylor, *Culture is bad for you* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020) for a full presentation of research findings.)
- d. How evaluations are implemented. Actions arising for evaluation are implemented across the Academy by a variety of means: instructions from Governing Body and Senior Management Team, cascaded down through lines of report; in strategic planning, workload planning and staff probation and appraisal discussions; through publication of key plans and policy documents via the Academy's website and intranet, with the clear expectation that staff and students will read them and act on



them; in continuing dialogue with staff and student committee representatives; in continuing constructive dialogue with OfS.

- e. How learning from evidence and insight from evaluation shape improvements. Evaluations undertaken so far are guiding the Academy in its allocation of bursary resources (targeting students in underrepresented, financially disenfranchised categories from Junior Academy upward); in continuing work to extend our practical and academic curricula in the direction of greater inclusivity; and in continuing, widely consultative EDI policy development and implementation.

In the past our evaluation of our interventions has been geared towards their impact on all participants, not just those from under-represented groups. We have:

1. analysed annual statistics in progression from the Junior Academy to Higher Education;
2. conducted sample surveys of participants from under-represented groups in Open Academy projects, reviewing the impact of projects and the likelihood of their future participation in Higher Education;
3. sought informal qualitative feedback from applicants who have not taken up their places on our BMus programme for financial reasons.

This information has been useful in gauging appropriate levels of financial support to enable undergraduate applicants to take up their places and has enabled us to refine our Junior Academy and Open Academy offerings to encourage and enable participation in Higher Education.

During the various projects we deliver, evaluation is conducted with teachers, parents and children – via focus groups, vox pops and surveys and sometimes including drawings from the young participants in order to adapt the programmes to the needs of schools. We continue to refine our contact with Music Co-ordinators and Music Hub representatives.

## CONTINUING TO BUILD A ROBUST SYSTEM OF EVALUATION

Since 2020-21 we have:

1. Appointed a new Assistant Registrar (Admissions and Financial Awards) with responsibility for admissions and financial awards processes
2. Appointed a new Student Data Manager in Registry with responsibility for data collection and analysis
3. Commissioned independent arts consultants Andrea Spain and Helen Hendry to survey pre-18 music provision within the UK, to help us understand the landscape better and identify more potential access and participation partners
4. Created a new Senior Management Team post, Dean of Students, with responsibility for driving and overseeing strategy and activities in access and participation and student support
5. Created a new Access and Participation Manager post
6. Created a new Student Funding Manager post
7. Appointed a new Director of Junior Academy with links to Hubs and to Senior Academy to advise on and smooth access routes from ages 4-18
8. Quadrupled our counselling support
9. Appointed a new Disability Advisor and Learning Support Tutor on increased fractional contracts
10. Held quarterly Access and Participation Committee meetings, attended by multiple stakeholders: Dean of Students, Academic Registrar, Head of Finance, Head of Junior Academy, Head of Open Academy, Access and Participation Manager, Student Data Manager, Disability Advisor, President of the Student Union, student representatives from the Ethnic Diversity Society. Access and

Participation Committee reports to the Academic Board, and through Academic Board to the Academy's Governing Body

11. Implemented recommendations from our commissioned Bridge Group (Research, Action, Equality) report "Means Testing and Financial Support: A Review", September 2019.
12. Commissioned SHM Foundation to develop evaluation methods that can track the effectiveness of access and participation initiatives over time. In 2020/21, SHM consultants started work with Academy student volunteers on a joint qualitative and quantitative data assembly project, including a new framework for presenting and analysing data as it becomes available. By the end of 2022 we will have the mechanism in place to track (with permission and according to GDPR legislation) participants in our Access programmes throughout their engagement, from age 4 to 18 and beyond.
13. Established a new Wellbeing Committee to monitor the experience especially of students from underrepresented groups
14. Commissioned Blueprint For All to produce a report on safeguarding practices, addressing issues of discrimination for reasons of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, social class, disability or economic disadvantage.
15. Initiated an anonymous reporting portal to capture issues around discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, gender or gender identity, social inequality and other cultural elements of the student experience.
16. Developed relationships and delivered projects with 30 schools and 15 music hubs via the Your Academy projects, working with 490 children and young people (Feb 2020-Jul 2022)
17. Developed a pathway from Clubs to Junior Academy via offering waivers to application fees to Junior Academy and Junior Jazz

## OBJECTIVES BEYOND 2022

1. To refine our targets and recruitment strategy regarding Low Participation Neighbourhoods.
2. To refine our targets and recruitment strategy regarding under-represented subgroups within the Black African-Caribbean, Asian and Minority Ethnic category.
3. To ensure that the financial support we offer our students is as efficient and effective as possible in helping us to close gaps in participation.
4. To revisit targets regarding other under-represented groups.
5. To refine our mechanisms for tracking the continuation, attainment and progression of students from under-represented groups in order to monitor our performance, evaluate the impact of our student support strategy, and enhance it accordingly
6. To increase the diversity of our teaching staff.
7. To nurture and develop our existing relationships and forge new ones with nominated Music Hubs and schools within LPN, local household income and diverse areas of London to deepen and strengthen the consistency of young people attending
8. To connect with two nominated areas outside of London, supporting access to music provision for young people from LPN, local household incomes and diverse populations

## HOW EVALUATION FINDINGS WILL INFORM PROGRAMME DESIGN

By reporting directly to the Academy's Academic Board, and thence to its Governing Body, the Access and Participation Committee will play a key role in disseminating the findings of the evaluations and ensuring that they inform the development of the institution's strategies. The chair of the Access and Participation Committee is the Dean of Students, a member of the Senior Management Team, who will therefore be able to draw on the results of the evaluations to affect relevant management decisions from the highest level of the Academy down.

### 3.4 MONITORING PROGRESS AGAINST DELIVERY OF THE PLAN

As a member of the Academic Board, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, and, alongside all other members of SMT, an attendee at Governing Body meetings, the Dean of Students is well placed to present the findings of the evaluations to leading Academy decision makers. Working with the Deputy Principal, Registrar, Head of Undergraduate Programmes and Heads of Principal Study Departments, the Dean will ensure that delivery issues arising from the evaluations will be addressed through the publication of information, advice and guidance, and through staff training initiatives. The Dean will also ensure that changes to strategy and delivery are subject to Equality Impact Assessments to provide assurance that the Academy is performing its statutory duties under the 2010 Act.

#### DATA

We are working to improve our data collection and analysis and will continue to do so. Starting in 21-22 we will:

1. Track attainment by POLAR4 quintile information as well as more focused disaggregated ethnicity and declared disability statistics.
2. Factor POLAR4 quintile analyses into the annual data set produced by our Data Manager, making them more easily accessible to stakeholders across the Academy.

We will supply a relevant dataset concerning UK undergraduate admissions and attainment, to each termly meeting of the Access and Participation Committee for each admissions cycle. This committee reports to our Academic Board and thence to our Governing Body as part of our embedded monitoring processes and reporting cycle. The Committee is chaired by the Dean of Students and includes departmental and academic representatives, as well as students. The Student Union Equality, Diversity and Inclusion leads are represented on this committee, further strengthening links between these two areas.

We have identified a series of targets through which we aim either to maintain or improve our performance in respect of under-represented groups. The most challenging target to meet will be increasing the proportion of Academy UK students recruited from Low Participation Neighbourhoods.

Our Wellbeing Committee, set up in May 2021, reviews suitably anonymised student testimony obtained via the Academy's Report and Support portal, to see whether protected characteristics correlate with adverse student experience in any way. A member of Governing Body sits on this Committee, which also reports annually to our Audit Committee.

### 3.5 ENHANCED MONITORING AND REPORTING

As required by OfS, the Academy has made a number of specific monitoring and reporting commitments to which it will adhere throughout the 2022-27 planning period. These commitments inform our 2022-27 Access and Participation Plan as approved and published, as well as targets supporting it, but for maximum clarity they are re-stated here.

1. The Academy will capture and analyse data relating to intersections of disadvantage that could explain the under-representation of certain groups of student within the Academy community. Our Theory of Change suggests that economic disadvantage is decisive, but other types of disadvantage surely do have economic implications. We will compare the number of students

recruited from POLAR4 quintiles 1 and 2 with the number of students recruited from quintiles 4 and 5, and aim to reduce the gap in numbers admitted from these two whole-population subsets by (on average) four percentage points each year. We will tell OfS each year whether or not this target has been met. We will in addition capture and report data allowing the Academy and OfS to see whether students placed in the under-represented category for other reasons (students from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds for instance, or students with declared disabilities) were or were not recruited from POLAR4 quintile 1 and 2 Low Participation Neighbourhoods. We will keep detailed records that allow the Academy and OfS to assess the effectiveness of bursary support measures intended to encourage students in under-represented groups to apply to the Academy and to help them progress successfully through the Academy's undergraduate degree programme.

2. We will continue to review the Academy's undergraduate curriculum on a rolling basis, in consultation both with teaching staff and with student representatives, to ensure that Academy graduates leave with all the skills they need for future professional success, and that musical inputs from which they benefit while studying at the Academy reflect both the diversity of the modern profession and of London as a multicultural capital. Each year we will update OfS on curriculum developments, supplying copies of relevant staff-student committee minutes.
3. The Academy's Governing Body will keep progress against targets set out in the Academy's OfS-approved 2020-21 Access and Participation Plan under regular review (or progress against 2022-27 targets when, with OfS approval, these have superseded 2020-21 targets). Each year we will update OfS on progress against targets, say whether or not we believe that targets have been met, present evidence allowing OfS to decide for itself whether or not targets have been met, and list specific steps that the Academy proposes to take to recover any lost ground.
4. We will, in consultation with OfS and other partners, ensure that systems put in place to gather and analyse data and monitor the Academy's performance against approved Access and Participation Plan targets continue to evolve reiteratively, so that success or otherwise can be evidenced to standards expected by OfS.

## 4. PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO STUDENTS

Information on tuition fees is published on our website. Students are informed ahead of application and enrolment of the fee cost and the process for any permitted increase that may be applied during the course of their studies within the appropriate maximum fee cap. Applicants who have been made an offer and self-declare low income are eligible for our targeted low-income bursaries at this point in the cycle.

Fee information is available on our website and we provide UCAS Conservatoires and the Student Loan Company with timely updates of all necessary information to ensure that applicants can make informed decisions.

We also provide accessible and accurate information to potential students about our programmes of study, tuition fees and financial support arrangements in accordance with Competitions and Markets Authority regulations.

The Access and Participation Plan is published on the Academy's website once approved.

## APPENDIX

The OfS will append the following items from the fees and targets and investment documents when an access and participation plan is published:

Targets (tables 2a, 2b and 2c in the targets and investment plan)

Investment summary (tables 4a and 4b in the targets and investment plan)

Fee summary (table 4a and 4b in the fee information document).

### Summary of 2022-23 entrant course fees

\*course type not listed

#### Inflationary statement:

Subject to the maximum fee limits set out in Regulations we will increase fees each year using CPIH

**Table 4a - Full-time course fee levels for 2022-23 entrants**

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£9,250
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

**Table 4b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2022-23**

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

**Table 4c - Part-time course fee levels for 2022-23 entrants**

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

**Table 4d - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2022-23**

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

# Targets and investment plan

## 2022-23 to 2026-27

Provider name: The Royal Academy of Music

Provider UKPRN: 10007835

### Investment summary

The OFS requires providers to report on their planned investment in access, financial support and research and evaluation in their access and participation plan. The OFS does not require providers to report on investment in student success and progression in the access and participation plans and therefore investment in these areas is not recorded here.

#### Note about the data:

The figures in Table 4a relate to all expenditure on activities and measures that support the ambitions set out in an access and participation plan, where they relate to access to higher education. The figures in Table 4b only relate to the expenditure on activities and measures that support the ambitions set out in an access and participation plan, where they relate to access to higher education which is funded by higher fee income. The OFS does not require providers to report on investment in success and progression and therefore investment in these areas is not represented.

The figures below are not comparable to previous access and participation plans or access agreements as data published in previous years does not reflect latest provider projections on student numbers.

Table 4a - Investment summary (£)

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Academic year				
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
<b>Total access activity investment (£)</b>	£175,198.00	£210,849.00	£212,343.00	£213,859.00	£215,398.00
Access (pre-16)	£131,721.00	£154,330.00	£155,273.00	£156,229.00	£157,199.00
Access (post-16)	£43,477.00	£56,519.00	£57,070.00	£57,630.00	£58,199.00
Access (adults and the community)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Access (other)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
<b>Financial support (£)</b>	£311,100.00	£312,100.00	£313,100.00	£315,100.00	£316,100.00
<b>Research and evaluation (£)</b>	£18,261.00	£18,535.00	£18,813.00	£19,095.00	£19,381.00

Table 4b - Investment summary (HFI%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HFI)	Academic year				
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
<b>Higher fee income (£HFI)</b>	£737,315.00	£641,680.00	£626,255.00	£617,000.00	£617,000.00
<b>Access investment</b>	16.5%	19.1%	19.7%	20.2%	20.3%
<b>Financial support</b>	16.5%	15.1%	13.0%	11.2%	11.3%
<b>Research and evaluation</b>	0.7%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.9%
<b>Total investment (as %HFI)</b>	33.6%	34.9%	33.5%	32.3%	32.5%





