

ROYAL CENTRAL

SCHOOL OF SPEECH & DRAMA • UNIVERSITY OF LONDON




STRATEGIC PLAN *PIVOT*

ACADEMIC YEAR 2023-2024



CONTENTS

WELCOME	3
INSTITUTIONAL IDENTITY, VISION AND MISSION	5
OUR VALUES	6
<i>HOW DO WE GET TO BECOME THE INSTITUTION WE WANT TO BE IN 2023-2024</i>	7
EQUITY AND INCLUSION	8
DISTINCTIVE AND TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION AND TRAINING	9
RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE	10
SUSTAINABILITY AND THE PERFORMING ARTS	11
INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT	12



Welcome to a unique strategic plan
– we see this as a pathway to an
arts training and culture centre that
enriches and changes our world.
Where history and legacy meet.

This is Central.



CENTRAL IS A SPECIALIST INSTITUTION OF THE THEATRICAL AND PERFORMING ARTS WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.

Its unique meeting of contemporary arts training, award-winning Arts Research, Knowledge Exchange and societal arts training, come together to inspire and create the global society and arts sector of the future. Through its award-winning teaching and research staff, we seek long-term engagement with industry and community, associate companies and international partners. Here we nurture 360-degree thinkers and practitioners.

Central is at a renaissance of tough and exciting change. The re-establishment of equity and inclusion as fundamental to our society and communities, the rising need to support and listen to students and staff through challenging times, prioritising safety, health and wellbeing. At Central, we must face our past inequities and celebrate the changes we have made, and use this motivation to create an institution for all.

In the context of a continuing uncertain and challenging environment resulting from the pandemic, Brexit and concerns over government funding for the higher education ecology, Central is forging a strategy to be able to respond quickly and in an agile manner to embrace global and higher education change.

This Strategic Plan is for the years 2023-2024. With clear transparency, evaluation, data and external benchmarking – Central places itself at the crucible – an institutional pivot that will set us on our course for our ambition to invest in teaching excellence from academic years 2024-2030.

Transformational change offers hope and inspiration to our arts landscape, in solidarity, for years to come.

INSTITUTIONAL IDENTITY, VISION AND MISSION

OUR VISION

An arts training and culture
centre that enriches and
changes our world.

OUR MISSION

To inspire, educate and
train the change-makers
of tomorrow to shape our
artistic and social world.

RESPECT AND EQUITY

Equity and inclusion are fundamental to what we stand for. Respecting is about understanding each other as equals, empowering students and staff, and being socially responsible and ethical.

COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

We are an outward-facing arts community that seeks to enrich the society that we live in, embracing collaboration, dialogue and partnerships as the cornerstones to a thriving community.

OUR VALUES

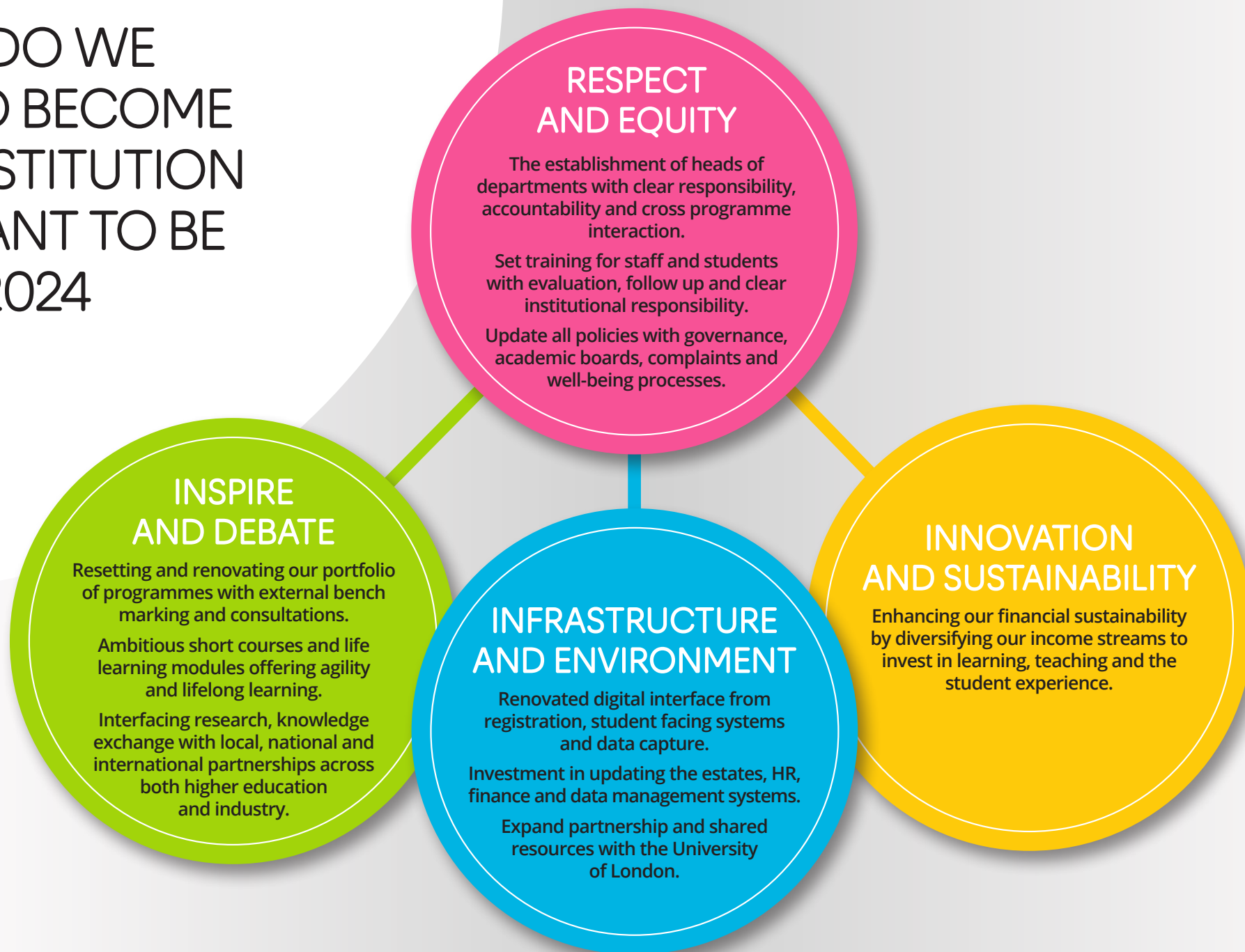
INSPIRE AND DEBATE

We work with rigour and openness in our practice, research, scholarship and teaching. We seek to involve and inspire our communities in debate and action, asking difficult questions of ourselves and each other and cherishing intellectual academic freedom.

INNOVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

Whilst respecting the past, we look to research and knowledge exchange, to shape industry and become courageous and environment-leading towards a more sustainable world.

HOW DO WE GET TO BECOME THE INSTITUTION WE WANT TO BE 2023-2024





RESPECT AND EQUITY

Creating a culture that practises equity and inclusion at all levels throughout Central; that fosters awareness of power, responsibility, and accountability; that promotes ownership for equity and inclusion at an individual and community level; attends to the lived experiences, identities and positionalities of all our students and staff; does not tolerate discrimination, harassment, exclusion and marginalisation; and that actively seeks to challenge historic and present underrepresentation in the field of theatre and performance training and study.

Achieved through

- Reinforcing and deepening a professional culture that embeds principles of equity and inclusion, anti-racism and anti-oppression in all levels and departments. This will include data informed action, and evaluation of mandatory training and development for all staff and students
- Strengthening our approaches to equitable and inclusive recruitment, retention and career

development of students, especially those from groups underrepresented in higher education and theatre training

- Consolidating course level work on equity and inclusion in learning and teaching and establishing an Equity and Inclusion Framework for course development and review, validation, and annual monitoring
- Decentring, decolonising and repairing the curriculum and practising equity and inclusion in our learning and teaching through an ongoing reflective process
- Acknowledging and addressing Central's history in a transparent and accountable manner
- Creating a representative staff body that reflects our students and communities
- Ensuring Central's commitment to all the protected characteristics in a culture of equality by continually reviewing our Dignity at Work and Study Policies and reducing barriers to reporting.

INSPIRE AND DEBATE

An arts training and culture centre that enriches and changes our world.

Achieved through

- Putting students, staff and well-being at the heart of all our work
- An ongoing curricula and portfolio review of courses
- Placing diversity, difference and collaboration at the centre of our learning and teaching
- Creating a culture that nurtures collaboration and respect across disciplines fostering student growth and learning
- Investment in and development of our performance and production infrastructure
- Delivering a strategy for innovation in digital technologies and applications in a new age for the arts in higher education especially in digital-related courses
- Developing our collaborations with theatre, film, and performance companies and artists, as well as partners in science, technology and the arts industries
- Increasing support for our students as they study and graduate into a changing environment, including enhanced career development programmes before and after graduation
- Supporting the needs of UK and international students in learning, health and well-being
- Supporting staff well-being and development to inspire and enhance teaching and learning, as well as professional work, scholarship, research and training.





COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

Thinking, making, doing: critical dialogues through research and knowledge exchange ensuring the sustainability of our expanding research culture.

Achieved through

- Deepening our engagement with challenged research, responsive to the needs of both local and wider communities, and consolidating our increasingly visible position in the sector by providing a civic model for ethical research leadership underpinned by meaningful actions, including a commitment to diversifying the field
- Addressing historical and present underrepresentation of people, practices and knowledge systems in our discipline(s) via funding strategies, alignment with wider institutional strategy on inclusion, and engagement with sector and subject groups
- Preserving and expanding on internal ethical funding initiatives developed to support and nurture our research culture and its impacts
- Building infrastructure and a data-informed system for expanding and evidencing knowledge exchange activities, public engagement and research impact at the widest level across the institution
- Building an infrastructure for scholarship across all areas of Central
- Growing an engaged, publicly aware postgraduate research cohort able to shape a fairer future for the discipline and the arts
- Supporting a viable and inclusive Early Career Researcher pathways
- Strengthening our ongoing work as sector advocates
- Actively pursuing external research income to build sustainability.

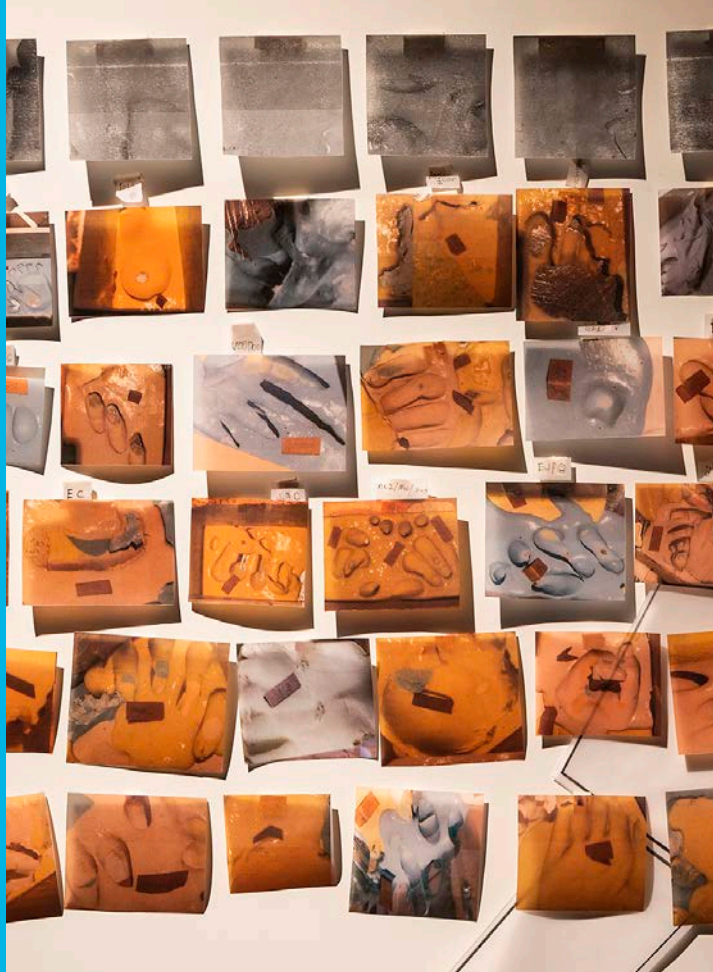


INNOVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

Creating a dynamic and balanced portfolio of education, research, and civic activities to deliver financial sustainability and enable investment in our people, environment, and the student experience.

Achieved through

- Diversifying our income streams through new partnerships and collaborations, innovative pedagogy, and commercialisation opportunities
- Delivery of a fully costed business case and sustainable investment plan to support a step change in income generation activities
- Evolving our onsite and online commercial short courses and events, for open access and CPD audiences, aligned to our emerging academic portfolio, market analysis, and drawing on and developing the expertise of Central's academic staff
- Investing in a youth theatre/drama offer that is aligned to our income generation targets while also being aligned to our outreach aims, supporting a pipeline of students into creative arts education
- A focused new fundraising strategy with a view to increasing budget relieving income, adding to Central's endowments, and raising more funds which will enable more scholarships, bursaries and other projects identified in the Strategic Plan.



INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Building an inspirational environment and efficient and effective infrastructure to support our student and staff community.

Achieved through

- Implementing a process improvement programme to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of our organisational structure, processes and systems, in order to enhance the student and staff experience and demonstrate value for money
- Reviewing our structures to implement an academic department structure that will increase connectivity across Central, support all courses of study and further progress research, scholarship and knowledge exchange activities
- Developing our planning processes, using evidence to support our decision making and improve transparency, accountability and financial sustainability
- Improving engagement, communication and consultation with our staff, students and partners
- Developing our technical infrastructure to provide digital technologies to support our teaching and research and to provide students with the technical knowledge required for their future careers
- Maximising our space usage ensuring we meet future teaching needs, enhance the student experience and enable income generation from space, facilities and equipment hire
- Developing a prioritised estates investment plan to improve the quality and accessibility of the existing campus
- Reducing our impact on the environment through an Environmental Sustainability Strategy.

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