

The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

Access and participation plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama's (Central) mission is to develop practitioners and researchers who shape the future of theatre and performance across the UK and beyond. We are recognised as a world-leading institution of the theatrical and performing arts and continue to evolve and develop to meet the needs of the industry and profession.

Central received a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Gold award in June 2018, the statement of findings from the TEF Panel drawing attention to the very high proportions of students at the School *from all backgrounds* (emphasis added) who continue with their studies and progress to employment, highly skilled employment or further study, notably exceeding benchmarks. This demonstrates that the work we have been doing with regards to access, student success and progression for underrepresented groups is currently working although we have further work to do and will therefore continue to build upon that work during the next five years. Central's TEF Year 4 metrics, published in autumn 2018, provide a similar picture, with positive flags for continuation (where the School is still marked within the top 10% of absolute performance) and for highly skilled employment or further study.

In the following assessment of performance Central identifies its widest gaps, all of which will become targets in our plan. The four targets are comprised of three in access; reducing the gaps in participation for students from IMD quintile 1, reducing the gaps in participation for students from POLAR4 quintile 1 and reducing the gaps participation for students from BAME (ABMO) backgrounds. The fourth area of focus is reducing the gap in progression for students from BAME (ABMO) backgrounds. The plan sets out our ambition to succeed through our School-wide aims of increasing participation of those from underrepresented backgrounds in higher education, building upon student success and progression and embedding inclusive practice throughout the School. Taking a timely approach and using a theory of change, illustrated in tables herein, we will continue to develop those activities which have the potential to make the most impact for the most disadvantaged groups.

1. Assessment of performance

Central's student body is small, comprised of approximately 1100 students, one third of which are studying on postgraduate courses. Alumni are to be found in all departments of theatre, film and television, in the music industry, and in community arts organisations. Central is a world-leading trainer of actors.

Despite a growing creative economy (creative industries GVA contribution at £101.5 billion (5.5%) of the whole economy (a 7.1% increase since 2016) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/759707/DCMS_Sectors_Economic_Estimates_2017_provisional_GVA.pdf, and the Geography of Creativity in the UK, July 2016, www.nesta.org.uk), England has a declining national arts curriculum in schools, which will inevitably lead to a smaller pipeline into higher education and consequently a gap in qualified arts graduates, in particular, from low socio-economic backgrounds. Central's position in the HE sector is unique and some of the challenges for improving social mobility are specific to the theatre and performance as a vocational career choice within some communities and socio-economic groups. These cultural barriers cannot be overcome within the HE sector alone, <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/lee-elliott-major-university-access-heading-perfect-storm>.

Central is pre-eminent in the UK with regard to the industry-specific facilities which support research through practice and greatly enrich the curriculum experience. These specialist facilities are at the forefront of what is available in the university sector for performing arts.

1.1 Higher education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status

Access

In 2018, the offer rate of young, full-time first degree entrants was 7.5% from q1, 8.2% from q2, 9.3% from q3, 8.6% from q4 and 8.4% from q5. Proportionally more POLAR4 q1 (least represented) are now accessing Central. The proportion of q1 students has increased by 5.3% over the five years 2013/14 to 2017/18 to 8% (see Table 1.)

Since 2016, Central has been actively engaging with year groups 10-13 from targeted schools and colleges in the East Midlands, a designated cold spot and, in 2017/18, with similar groups in Essex (funded through NCOP, project ends in July 2019), in order to raise our regional profile and to engage with harder-to-reach groups from quintiles 1 and 2. Further targeted regional projects such as audition and interview programmes in Leicester and Oldham continue our drive to increase application rates from the lowest quintiles. The latest data, from 2017/18 shows that 470 applications (a 31% increase on 2016/17) were received from outreach participants in 62 target schools and colleges; of those 470 applications, there were 43 offers and 28 enrolments at Central including 58 applications and 3 enrolments directly from the East Midlands project.

KPM 1: Gap in participation between most and least represented groups (POLAR 4 quintiles 5 and 1 respectively)

Table 1 Access - POLAR4 q1 and q5

		Year 1 %	Year 2 %	Year 3 %	Year 4 %	Year 5 % 2017-18	Change year 1-5 %
Central	POLAR4 q1	2.7	10.7	9.3	8.3	8.0	5.3
	POLAR4 q5	34.7	34.6	31.9	41.1	32.1	-2.6
Gap		32.0	23.9	22.5	32.7	24.1	-7.9
Sector	POLAR4 q1	11.0	11.4	11.6	11.6	11.8	0.8
	POLAR4 q5	31.0	30.5	30.4	30.4	30.3	-0.7
Gap		20.0	19.1	18.8	18.8	18.5	-1.5

Table 1. In the same time period, the proportion of q5 students has decreased by 2.6% and the gap between q1 and q5 has decreased by 7.9%. Proportionally, there are more of the most underrepresented students at Central and the gap is closing, however, we acknowledge the institutional gap (although the gap does compare favourably with the HE sector which has decreased by less -1.5 percentage points over 5 years. **This institutional gap is identified as one of the widest and increasing recruitment of students from POLAR4 quintile 1 will therefore be a TARGET.** Please see Table 4 for further information using the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

Table 2 Peers - q1 and q5

		Year 1 %	Year 2 %	Year 3 %	Year 4 %	Year 5 % 2017-18	Change year 1-5 %
Rose Bruford	POLAR4 q1	9	9	12	10	9	0
	POLAR4 q5	32	30	31	32	29	-3
Lamda	POLAR4 q1	DP*	DP	15	DP	DP	N/A
	POLAR4 q5	45	55	50	40	60	10
Guildhall	POLAR4 q1	8	5	7	3	5	-3
	POLAR4 q5	55	41	42	50	46	-9

Table 2. Where it is possible to say (like competitor institutions have none or suppressed data), Central has made the most gain in access for the least represented students over 5 years when compared to its peer group. *DP - data is suppressed for data protection reasons and to avoid risk of identifying individual students.

Alternative perspective on KPM 1 using q1&2 and q3-5:

Table 3 Access - POLAR4 q1&2 and q3-5

		Year 1 %	Year 2 %	Year 3 %	Year 4 %	Year 5 % 2017-18	Change year 1-5 %
Central	POLAR4 q1&2	15.6	20.1	18.7	18.5	19.0	3.3
	POLAR4 q3-5	84.4	79.9	81.3	81.5	81.0	-3.3
Gap		68.8	59.8	62.6	63.0	62.0	-6.8
Sector	POLAR4 q1&2	26.3	27.0	27.1	27.2	27.3	1.0
	POLAR4 q3-5	73.7	73.0	72.9	72.8	72.7	-1.0
Gap		47.4	46.0	45.8	45.6	45.4	-2.0

Table 3. It should be noted that Central has invested in significant amounts of outreach in the East Midlands as well as smaller projects in the north of England, areas with high proportions of POLAR4 q1&2. More of the least represented students are now accessing Central. The proportion of students accessing Central from POLAR4 q1&2 has increased by 3.3% over the 5 years from 2013/14 to 2017/18. The gap between q1 and q5 has decreased by 6.8 percentage points over 5 years. This compares favourably with the HE sector where the gap has decreased by 2 percentage points in five years.

However, using only POLAR4 data may not be accurate enough in its measure of the least represented groups accessing HE, in particular for London based students, ‘Although other measures also suggest that disadvantage in London has decreased over a similar timeframe, the overall picture is less rosy. Two-thirds of London is [classified](#) as more deprived than average according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (the Government’s core measure of deprivation) - quite a different impression than that given by POLAR, which only measures one dimension of disadvantage.’ <https://wonkhe.com/blogs/dont-leave-disadvantaged-students-out-in-the-cold/>.

The following table illustrates, in more detail, the recruitment gap using the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) against the sector.

[Access and IMD \(Index of Multiple Deprivation\)](#)

Table 4 Access and IMD q1 and IMD q5

		Year 1 %	Year 2 %	Year 3 %	Year 4 %	Year 5 % 2017-18	Change year 1-5 %
Central	IMD q1	8.4	15.4	14.3	12.8	10.7	2.3
	IMD q5	36.5	23.4	24.6	33.7	29	-7.5
Gap		28.1	8.0	10.3	20.9	18.3	-9.8
Sector	IMD q1	18.8	19.7	20.4	20.8	21.1	2.3
	IMD q5	23.5	22.5	22.2	22.0	21.5	-2.0
Gap		4.6	2.8	1.8	1.2	0.4	-4.2

Table 4. In the above Table 5 the institutional gap between IMD q1 and q5 has closed by nearly 10 percentage points (9.8) over 5 years. However, we are recruiting from q1 at a significantly lower rate than the sector (10.7 against sector of 21.5) as well as more from 5 than the sector. **This gap is identified as one of the widest and therefore increasing recruitment of students from IMD quintile 1 will be a TARGET.**

[Success](#)

KPM 3: Gap in non-continuation between most and least represented groups (POLAR 4 quintiles 5 and 1 respectively)

Continuation

Table 5 Continuation rates - POLAR4 q1 and q5

		Year 1 %	Year 2 %	Year 3 %	Year 4 %	Year 5 % 2016-17	Change year 1-5 %
Central	POLAR4 q1	N	N	100	88.2	92.9	N/A
	POLAR4 q5	96.2	98.0	100	98.3	95.7	-0.6
Gap		N	N	0	10.0	2.8	N/A
Sector	POLAR4 q1	91.6	90.9	90.2	90.1	90.0	-1.6
	POLAR4 q5	94.9	94.8	94.4	94.3	94.3	-0.5
Gap		3.3	3.8	4.2	4.3	4.3	1.0

Table 5: Prior to Year 3, Central's data is marked as statistically insignificant on the dashboard and it is hard to demonstrate whether Central's achievement against its target is increasing over time, however, on the few POLAR statistics available, we can demonstrate in 2017/18 that we had a continuation rate of 92.9% thus doing better than the sector's 90%. If we consider the IMD data, Central's continuation rate for q1 has improved from 86.7% in 2013/14 to 88% (q5 95.5%) in 2017/18 and outperforms the 2017/18 sector rate of 85.9%. Whilst this gap is not considered to be one of the widest at Central (and therefore not a target) we nevertheless have a strong commitment to reducing the continuation gap between q1 and q5, year on year, and to close the gap beyond the life of this plan.

Table 6 Continuation rates - POLAR4 q1&2 and q3-5

		Year 1 %	Year 2 %	Year 3 %	Year 4 %	Year 5 % 2016-17	Change year 1-5 %
Central	POLAR4 q1&2	93.1	100	87.5	94.1	96.8	3.7
	POLAR4 q3-5	96.7	97.6	96.9	96.6	91.2	-5.5
Gap		3.6	-2.4	9.4	2.5	-5.6	-9.2
Sector	POLAR4 q1&2	92.2	91.6	91.1	90.8	91	-1.3
	POLAR4 q3-5	94	93.9	93.4	93.2	93.2	-0.8
Gap		1.8	2.2	2.4	2.3	2.2	0.4

Table 6. Central's statistics are marked as statistically insignificant. However, Central's continuation rate for POLAR4 quintiles 1&2 combined has improved by 3.7% over 5 years. Continuation rates for q1&2 have improved year on year since Year 3. In Year 5 (2017/18) more q1&2 student continued than quintiles 3 to 5 (96.8 v. 91.2). It is not yet possible to determine whether this will be a continuing trend.

Attainment

Table 7 Qualifiers - Qualifiers x POLAR4 1&2 and 3-5

		Year 1 %	Year 2 %	Year 3 %	Year 4 %	Year 5 % 2017-18	Change year 1-5 %
Central	POLAR4 q1&2	81.8	95.5	81.8	78.6	81.5	-0.3
	POLAR4 q3-5	91.1	85.7	90.6	90.4	87.9	-3.2
Gap		9.3	-9.9	8.8	11.9	6.4	-2.9
Sector	POLAR4 q1&2	70.8	71.5	72.9	74.3	75.5	0.5
	POLAR4 q3-5	75.8	77.3	78.2	79.9	80.7	0.5
Gap		5.1	5.8	5.4	5.6	5.1	0.0

Table 7. Central's 'Gap' is marked as statistically insignificant on the dashboard data. However, the percentage of qualifiers at Central in the most deprived POLAR4 quintiles 1&2 far exceeds the percentage of qualifiers in the same quintiles across the sector and will therefore not be a target. However, it is noted that our attainment gap between qs1-2 and qs3-5 is greater than across the sector as a whole (6.4% as opposed to 5.1%). If we consider IMD data, the attainment gap between q1 and q5 has closed from 14.9% in 2013/14 to 7.4% in 2017/18 at Central and we plan to continue to narrow the gap year on year. In 2017/18 we outperformed the sector with an 86.2% attainment rate for q1 against the sector rate of

67.1%. However, whilst this gap is not considered to be one of the widest at Central (and therefore not a target) we nevertheless have a strong commitment to reducing the attainment gap between q1 and q5, year on year, and to close the gap beyond the life of this plan.

Progression to employment or further study

Table 8 Qualifiers - POLAR4 q1 and q5

		Year 1 %	Year 2 %	Year 3 %	Year 4 %	Year 5 % 2016-17	Change year 1-5 %
Central	POLAR4 q1	N	N	100	88.2	92.9	NA
	POLAR4 q5	96.2	98	100	98.3	95.7	-0.6
Gap		N	N	0.0	10.0	2.8	NA
Sector	POLAR4 q1	91.6	90.9	90.2	90.1	90.0	-1.6
	POLAR4 q5	94.9	94.8	94.4	94.3	94.3	-0.5
Gap		3.3	3.8	4.2	4.3	4.3	1.0

Table 8. Central's statistics are marked as statistically insignificant on the dashboard. For progression to employment or further study, there is no table for Central. There are either very small numbers or unavailable data, we therefore cannot draw any conclusions from the dashboard data. However, institutional data illustrates an aggregate percentage of 95 from 2013/14 to 2016/17 which is better than the sector. If we consider IMD data, Central's progression rate for q1 has increased from 66.7% in 2013/14 to 68.8% in 2017/18, however, we acknowledge there is still an institutional gap of 7.3% between IMD q1 and q5 which we shall seek to reduce during the life of this plan whilst not falling below the sector rate of 68.9%.

KPM 2: Gap in participation at higher-tariff providers between the most and least represented groups. This measure is not relevant to Central since we are not a higher-tariff provider. Entrance to many of our courses is assessed by audition and portfolio potential rather than existing academic qualifications.

1.2 Black, Asian and minority ethnic students (BAME)

(to note and to avoid confusion: the term BAME has been used thus far and is the acronym presented in OfS templates and guidance, however, the term ABMO (Asian, black, mixed, other) has been presented throughout the OfS access and participation data dashboard).

Access

In 2018, the offer rate of young, full-time first degree students from BAME backgrounds was comprised as follows; 15.6% from Asian backgrounds, 0.0% from Black* backgrounds (although when including black undergraduate applicants of all ages this increases to 12.3% of applicants), 11.8% from mixed backgrounds and 8.4% from white backgrounds. Since student numbers are low it is not possible to provide further analysis without risk of identifying individual students. Through its outreach programme in 2017/18, 54% of the young people with whom Central engaged from the London area who declared their ethnicity, were from a non-white background. Activities took the form of campus tours, preparation workshops, master classes and 1021 free tickets to student performances at Central and other venues.

Although Central has numerically fewer BAME applicants than white applicants, BAME applicants have a better chance of gaining a place (source: UCAS application and acceptance data 2017/18).

- 7.9% white applicants received an offer compared to 11.3% BAME applicants
- 3.8% white students registered on courses compared to 6.2% BAME students
- The percentage of our total UK BAME student population has risen from 14.8% in 2014/15 to 15.8% in 2018/19
- Central's total student population comprises 16.4% UK BAME students compared to 15.2% BAME students in the sector studying arts subjects (HESA).

*in their technical guidance, UCAS state that offer rates are listed as 0.0% if there are fewer than five offers.

Table 9 Access - White and Asian, Black, Mixed, Other (ABMO)

		Year 1 %	Year 2 %	Year 3 %	Year 4 %	Year 5 % 2017-18	Change year 1-5 %
Central	White	86.4	80.6	82.4	83.9	85.0	-1.4
	ABMO	13.6	19.4	17.6	16.1	15.0	1.4
Gap		72.8	61.2	64.8	67.8	70.0	-2.8
Sector	White		72.1	70.7	69.6	69.0	-4.4
	ABMO	26.5	27.9	29.3	30.4	31.0	4.4
Gap		47.0	44.2	41.5	39.2	38.1	-8.9

Table 9. Despite growth in the percentage of ABMO recruitment, Central does not recruit students from ABMO backgrounds at the same proportion as the sector; in 2017/18, Central recruited students at a rate of 15% against the sector of 31% (it is worth noting the underrepresentation in industry too, where we have close links, and where there is work to be done together to close the gap). However, whilst the sector has outperformed us (although we have increased the institutional proportion over 5 years by 1.4%), we acknowledge the decrease in Year 5 and are therefore working to stem any further decline. **This gap has been identified as one of the widest and therefore increasing recruitment of students from ABMO backgrounds will be a TARGET.**

Success

Continuation

Table 10 Continuation rates - all ages White and ABMO

		Year 1 %	Year 2 %	Year 3 %	Year 4 %	Year 5 % 2016-17	Change Year 1-5 %
Central	White	95.5	97.5	95.6	96.6	92.2	-3.3
	ABMO	93.3	100	92.1	94.7	90.6	-2.7
Gap		2.2	-2.5	3.5	1.9	1.6	-0.6
Sector	white	92.7	92.5	92.1	91.9	91.9	-0.8
	ABMO	90.5	90.6	90.1	89.2	89	-1.5
Gap		2.1	1.8	2.0	2.8	3.0	0.8

Table 10. Central is performing better than the sector. Whilst we are not recruiting enough students from ABMO backgrounds, data illustrates those recruited performing well throughout their programme of study.

Attainment (degree outcomes)

KPM 4: Gap in degree outcomes (1sts or 2:1s) between white students and black students

(to note and to avoid confusion, the above KPM is for data relating to 1^{sts} 2:1s, however, the data on the dashboard is for all qualifiers. Data for Central is statistically insignificant between white and black students).

Table 11- Degree outcomes (proportion gaining a degree) White and Asian, Black, Mixed, Other (ABMO)

		Year 1 %	Year 2 %	Year 3 %	Year 4 %	Year 5 % 2017-18	Change year 1-5 %
Central	White	92.4	87.7	88.9	88.3	89.8	-2.5
	ABMO	68.4	88.9	90	93.5	78.1	9.7
Gap		23.9	-1.2	-1.1	-5.2	11.7	-12.2
Sector	White	76.7	78.1	79.2	80.3	81.3	4.6
	ABMO	61.5	62.9	63.6	65.9	67.6	6.1
Gap		15.2	15.2	15.5	14.4	13.7	-1.6

Table 11. As the table shows, of White students in 2017-18, 89.9% were awarded First or 2:1. Compared to 78.1% ABMO. Central's gap is 11.7% (the sector gap 13.7%). In previous years there was a 'negative'

attainment gap (i.e, ABMO students fared better than White students). We acknowledge the decrease in Year 5 and will therefore continue to monitor performance and seek to narrow the gap, year on year.

Taking just Black and White students: 81.3% of Black students were awarded First or 2:1 degrees in 2017-18, compared to 89.8% of White students. This means an attainment gap of 8.6% (sector wide 58.1% Black students received a First or 2:1 degree, compared with 81.3% of White students, so a much greater attainment gap of 23.8%. However, we acknowledge there is still an institutional gap of 8.5% which we shall seek to reduce, year on year, during the life of this plan. Moreover, should the gap worsen during the life of this plan a sharper focus and further commitment for developing new strategic measures would be implemented for approval.

Progression to employment or further study (highly skilled employment or higher study)

Table 12 - Progression to employment or further study White and Asian, Black, Mixed, Other (ABMO)

		Year 1 %	Year 2 %	Year 3 %	Year 4 %	Year 5 % 2016-17	Change year 1-5 %
Central	White	66.4	61.3	71.7	68.7	79.5	13.1
	ABMO	65.2	50	R*	70.6	66.7	1.5
Gap		1.2	11.3	R	-1.9	12.9	10.8
Sector	White	62.4	65	68.2	70.5	73.2	10.8
	ABMO	53	57.7	63	64.9	67.9	12.9
Gap		9.4	7.3	5.2	5.6	5.3	-4.1

Table 12. For 2016-17, 79.5% White students entered highly skilled employment/higher study compared to 66.7% ABMO. Central's 'gap' therefore is 12.9% against the sector gap of 5.3%. **Therefore this area will become a TARGET for Central.** To note, the dashboard data is statistically insignificant and we are therefore unable to make any forecasts about trends without risking identifying individual students. *R - did not meet threshold for responses.

1.3 Mature students

Access

As Central offers specialist courses across theatre and performance for both undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications, mature students more typically apply for and study at postgraduate levels.

Table 13 Access and age

		Year 1 %	Year 2 %	Year 3 %	Year 4 %	Year 5 % 2017-18	Change year 1-5 %
Central	Under 21	79.0	80.3	83.5	83.2	75.4	-3.6
	21 and over	21.0	19.7	16.5	16.8	24.6	3.6
Gap		58.1	60.6	67.0	66.3	50.8	-7.2
Sector	Under 21	77.5	77.4	77.2	76.8	76.5	-1.0
	21 and over	22.5	22.6	22.8	23.2	23.5	1.0
Gap		55.0	54.8	54.4	53.6	53.0	-2.0

Table 13. As the table shows, the number of mature students increased significantly in year 5. Based on aggregate, Central is therefore outperforming the sector. However, whilst this will not become a target, we will keep a close eye on intake going forward.

Success

Based on the TEF metrics for 2018, 22% of Central's undergraduate student body is comprised of students aged 21 and over.

Continuation

Table 14 Continuation vs age

		Year 1 %	Year 2 %	Year 3 %	Year 4 %	Year 5 % 2016-17	Change year 1-5 %
Central	Under 21	96.0	98.0	95.0	96.2	92.3	-3.8
	21 and over	91.9	97.4	94.4	97.2	91.2	-0.7
Gap		4.1	0.5	0.1	-1.1	1.1	-3.0
Sector	Under 21	93.5	93.1	92.8	92.5	92.6	-0.9
	21 and over	86.8	86.3	86.7	86.0	85.5	-1.2
Gap		6.7	6.8	6.1	6.5	7.0	0.3

Table 14. As the table shows, Central is significantly outperforming the sector with a gap of only 1.1% against a sector gap of 7%.

Attainment (degree outcomes)

Table 15 Proportion gaining a degree vs age

		Year 1 %	Year 2 %	Year 3 %	Year 4 %	Year 5 % 2017-18	Change year 1-5 %
Central	Under 21	89.4	87.3	89.2	88.1	86.8	-2.6
	21 and over	90.0	88.2	88.9	96.3	90.5	0.5
Gap		-0.6	-0.9	0.3	-8.2	-3.7	-3.1
Sector	Under 21	74.6	75.8	76.9	78.5	79.3	4.8
	21 and over	66.2	66.3	67.5	68.5	69.8	3.7
Gap		8.4	9.5	9.4	10.0	9.5	1.1

Table 15. Central is outperforming the sector. Since we have a much higher baseline, we would not expect to have a significant change since students are already performing well.

Progression to employment or further study

Table 16 Progression after HE x age

		Year 1 %	Year 2 %	Year 3 %	Year 4 %	Year 5 % 2016-17	Change year 1-5 %
Central	Under 21	65.4	61.5	70.1	70.9	76.3	11.0
	21 and over	69.4	55.2	68.0	62.5	78.3	8.8
Gap		-4.1	6.4	2.1	8.4	-1.9	2.2
Sector	Under 21	59.5	62.3	65.9	68.2	71.0	11.5
	21 and over	64.7	68.2	71.6	73.2	75.8	11.1
Gap		-5.2	-5.9	-5.7	-5.0	-4.9	0.3

Table 16. Central's statistics are marked as statistically insignificant on the dashboard data. However, latest institution employment for mature students in highly skilled employment or higher study (i.e., 2016-17) are, for Under 21: 76.3%, Mature (21 and over) 78.3%, a negative gap of 1.9% at Central compared to a sector gap of 4.9%, therefore mature students at Central are performing better than the sector.

1.4 Disabled students

In 2018-19 an accessibility audit focussing on the School's digital resources and services took place. The audit was conducted by Jisc as well as AbilityNet, a company that specialises in technology applications that support people with disabilities in collaboration with IT services, the Disability team and a sample of Central students. The audit found much to celebrate in the area of accessibility to the School's digital resources particularly in the two courses sampled (Learning Skills and MA Applied Theatre) and practices that can now be transferred across the institution.

Central has a high percentage (around 20%) of students with learning differences and mental health conditions; often these are co-occurring. The strengths of students with dyslexia include being highly

creative, having good spatial thinking, and in thinking ‘outside the box’. These strengths can be particularly useful for creative, acting or technical theatre courses.

Neurodiverse students at school are often drawn to courses which they consider showcase their strengths, rather than being weighted on assessment through traditional written examinations. These young people are more likely to be steered to creative practical courses in higher education where they excel. In effect, what you need to be artistic aligns with the strengths of being neurodiverse.

Access

Table 17 Access - Disabled students

		Year 1 %	Year 2 %	Year 3 %	Year 4 %	Year 5 % 2017-18	Change year 1-5 %
Central	Non-disabled	74.2	76.3	80.7	73.3	77.6	3.4
	Disabled	25.8	23.7	19.3	26.7	22.4	-3.4
Gap		48.4	52.5	61.5	46.5	55.2	6.8
Sector	Non- disabled	88.3	87.5	86.8	86.1	85.2	-3.1
	Disabled	11.7	12.5	13.2	13.9	14.8	3.1
Gap		76.6	75.0	73.6	72.1	70.4	-6.2

Table 17. Central has a high proportion of students with a disability and significantly more than the sector.

Success

Students with complex needs will be supported and will continue to have access to funded provision as agreed through their needs assessment. However, in response to continuing changes to DSA funding, we remain concerned about some aspects. In particular:

- the potential for these measures to be seen as an additional disincentive to disabled students, given the existing impact on students’ perceptions of support available to them as a result of the widely published reduction in DSA funding;
- the likely cost of continuing weekly 1:1 support for students with specific learning difference in an institution that, like many specialist arts institutions, sees a high (22.4%) rate of self-declared dyslexia. Given that no alternative funding stream is proposed, we will need to identify new revenue to deliver support with no guarantee that this will be sufficient to maintain our current high standards.

Continuation

Table 18 Disability - Continuation

		Year 1 %	Year 2 %	Year 3 %	Year 4 %	Year 5 % 2016-17	Change year 1-5 %
Central	Non-disabled	94.2	99.3	94.7	96.6	93.2	-0.9
	Disabled	98.0	93.8	95.7	95.2	88.9	-9.2
Gap		-3.9	5.5	-1.0	1.4	4.4	8.2
Sector	Non-disabled	92.1	91.7	91.6	91.2	91.1	-1.1
	Disabled	90.9	90.8	90.7	90.2	90.3	-0.7
Gap		1.2	0.9	0.9	1.0	0.8	-0.4

Table 18. The gaps in continuation between those with no disability and those with a disability at Central are statistically insignificant. Nevertheless, continuation rates for both the disabled and non-disabled are general higher than across the sector. Central is aware that continuation rates for those with a disability has declined over 5 years but the numbers on which these percentages is calculated has been small in each of the 5 years

Attainment

KPM 5: Gap in degree outcomes (1sts or 2:1s) between disabled students and non-disabled students.

Table 19 Disability - qualifiers

		Year 1 %	Year 2 %	Year 3 %	Year 4 %	Year 5 % 2017-18	Change year 1-5 %
Central	Non-disabled	91.0	90.7	91.1	87.6	90.2	-0.8
	Disabled	86.5	82.0	84.6	93.9	79.2	-7.4
Gap		4.5	8.7	6.4	-6.3	11.0	6.6
Sector	Non-disabled	73.4	74.4	75.4	76.8	77.8	4.4
	Disabled	70.1	71.5	72.7	74.0	75.2	5.1
Gap		3.3	2.9	2.7	2.8	2.6	-0.7

Table 19. The table demonstrates that the gap has increased in Year 5 although Central's statistics are marked as not statistically significant in the dashboard. It is not yet possible to determine whether this will be a continuing trend. However, this may be a future target to address.

The attainment gap between disabled and non-disabled students has increased. Whilst a significant level of additional learning support (including one-to-one mental health mentoring, dyslexia tutoring, additional time and specialist equipment) is offered to students with neurological differences, research has proven that written academic essays are not the most effective or fair way of assessing these students' knowledge. Whilst a great deal of work in the area of inclusive assessment has taken place in recent years there is still work to be undertaken in the coming years by the disability and dyslexia (DDS) team to reduce the stigma attached to choosing an alternative format of assessment.

In addition to this we know that Central students are heavily timetabled making it difficult for those in need to access regular one-to-one support sessions. The DDS team will continue to work with course teams to encourage timetable flexibility when the student need is high enough to impact on their success or progression especially in their final year of study.

Progression to employment or further study

Table 20 Disability - progression

		Year 1 %	Year 2 %	Year 3 %	Year 4 %	Year 5 % 2016-17	Change year 1-5 %
Central	Non-disabled	66.7	53.9	69.7	66.7	75.6	8.9
	Disabled	65.5	72.7	69.6	76.3	79.4	14
Gap		1.2	-18.8	0.2	-9.6	-3.8	-5.0
Sector	Non-disabled	60.5	63.5	67.1	69.4	72.1	11.6
	Disabled	59.9	62.5	65.9	67.9	70.9	11.0
Gap		0.6	1.0	1.3	1.5	1.3	0.7

Table 20. Some of the gaps are statistically significant and some are not, it is therefore difficult to forecast, year on year. However, the general trend is that Central's progression rate is better for those with a disability than those without and better than the sector across all 5 years.

Care Leavers

It is not possible to analyse data for Central's care leaver community since the small numbers are at risk of identifying individual students. However, with permission from one of our alums, case study here <https://www.cssd.ac.uk/content/interview-henrietta-imoreh>

Central's policy for care leavers and carer students is recognition that a considerable level of additional support is required to enable those students an equal platform in which to thrive and flourish in their studies and to enter further study and/or employment alongside their peer group. The programme includes a mentoring scheme to provide practical support and academic guidance from the point of application until the end of undergraduate study. Central provides a bespoke programme that recognises the need for an intersectional approach to support students on a case-by-case basis including financial, academic and pastoral support through to the point of employment. The School works closely with Drive Forward, a charitable organisation which supports the career pathways for care leavers.

Access

Central collaborates annually with the University of Hertfordshire to deliver a three day residential summer school. This gives up to 25 young people in care (aged 15-17) the opportunity to experience different universities and different subject areas. The experience at Central not only offers an insight into drama training, but also through drama based sessions, the chance to raise confidence and aspirations.

Support for Care Leavers is clearly signposted on Central's website including contact details for the designated point of contact, the support available and an interview with a care leaver graduate offering a positive role model. Signposting is also available through Propel; a website providing care leavers with information on the support available to them from colleges and universities offering higher education courses across the UK.

Success

Continuation

Due to the small numbers of care leavers enrolled at Central, statistics cannot be provided without the risk of identifying students. However, through its bespoke programme of support, staff work closely with care leavers to ensure early intervention and support for students at risk of non-continuation. When a risk of withdrawal is flagged, the designated member of staff for care leavers will identify the appropriate support programme. This includes bursaries, academic tutoring and peer to peer mentoring. The bursary of £1000 per academic year is to contribute to living costs and costs associated with studying. This is split into two payments of £500 a year and care leavers are in control of when they receive it.

Attainment (degree outcomes)

Due to the small numbers of care leavers enrolled at Central, stats cannot be provided without risk of identifying students. However, care leaver students have access to academic support through the Learning Centre, personal tutor support and peer to peer mentoring. Regular meetings are held with the designated member of staff to ensure that care leavers are on track with attendance and academic progression.

Progression to employment or further study

Central recognises that transitioning out of university and therefore out of care can be a stressful and worrying time for care leavers. As such, it offers an exit bursary of £500 to ease financial stresses and support graduation. We work closely with Drive Forward, a charitable organisation which supports the career pathways for care leavers. Due to the ongoing personal relationships with care leavers, we are able to report that 100% of care leaver graduates were working, studying or both 6 months after completion. However, due to the small numbers, this is not captured by DLHE.

1.5 Intersections of disadvantage

Table 21 IMD x male (white working class)

		Year 1 %	Year 2 %	Year 3 %	Year 4 %	Year 5 %	Change year 1-5 %
Central	IMD q1&2 Male	8.4	10.1	8.4	9.7	11.9	3.5
	IMD q1&2 female	22.2	26.1	19.2	16.8	21.4	-0.7
Sector	IMD q1&2 Male	15.9	16.5	16.6	16.7	17.0	1.1
	IMD q1&2 female	21.8	22.5	23.1	23.6	23.8	2.0

Table 21. Central has 3.5% more males from IMD q1&2 over a 5 year period and a decrease in proportion of females from IMD q1&2 over the same period. We are doing more than the sector as a whole, however, two of our targets relate to increasing recruitment - from POLAR4 q1 and IMD q1 and our activity will specifically include working with young white males.

1.6 Other groups who experience barriers in higher education

Trans, non-binary and gender diverse students

Building on from the in-house training programme staff are now encouraged to access the School's staff development funds to attend CPD sessions, delivered by Gendered Intelligence, to support them to better understand trans people's experiences of HE and how they could develop their own working practices to be more mindful and inclusive of trans students.

The disability team continues to work close with Gendered Intelligence to provide a mentoring scheme for trans, non-binary or gender diverse students (as well as to those who are questioning their gender identity or who have a trans history). The scheme provides up to 6 one-to-one sessions with a trans mentor as well as 2 meetings with course staff where relevant and appropriate. The mentoring package can support a student with the practical aspects of student life as a trans person including name change, communicating with peers and staff etc.

Several academic staff engage in practice and research that specifically focuses on trans and gender diverse identities in theatre and performance. The TransActing project explores the issue of performer training for people who identify as trans and/or non-binary.

The project's aims are:

- To develop and disseminate good practice in performer training with trans and/ or non-binary people
- To nurture the creativity and talent of participants, all of whom identify as trans and/ or non-binary
- To give producers, directors and others involved in making TV, film, radio, theatre and other media, access to that talent.

2. Strategic aims and objectives

2.1 Target groups

Using the OfS Access and Participation data dashboard, institutional data and encompassing the national key performance measures, Central has identified the following four target groups as those representing the widest institutional gaps, two of which are at the 'access' stage and at the progression stage of the lifecycle:

- To reduce the gap in participation in higher education for students from IMD q1 backgrounds at the 16-18 years stage of the lifecycle in the first instance and building upon engagement with those aged 14-16 years (with a specific focus on young white males).
- To reduce the gap in participation in higher education for students from POLAR4 quintile backgrounds at the 16-18 years stage of the lifecycle in the first instance and building upon engagement with those aged 14-16 years (with a specific focus on young white males).

- To reduce the gap in participation in higher education for students from BAME (ABMO) backgrounds at the 16-18 years stage of the lifecycle in the first instance and building upon engagement with those aged 14-16 years.
- To reduce the gap in progression to employment or further study (highly skilled employment or higher study) for students from BAME (ABMO) backgrounds.

These areas will be the main focus of our work in the immediate term and subject to close monitoring during the course of the next five years in order to evaluate impact, year on year, and to determine any shifts in focus.

2.2 Aims and objectives

Central's aims are stretching and closely aligned to those areas where we have identified significant gaps, three targets in access and one in progression. The baseline year of 2016-17 throughout enables us to consistently measure progress across the School up until 2024-25 and to review annual milestones for each: the **first target** sets a baseline of 8% with an outcome of 15% to reduce the recruitment gap in participation in higher education for students from POLAR4 quintile 1. Beyond the life of this plan (and by 2030), it is our intention to significantly narrow the gap against the sector. The **second target** sets a baseline of 10.7% with an outcome of 17% to reduce the recruitment gap in participation in higher education for students from IMD quintile 1. Beyond the life of this plan (and by 2030), it is our intention to significantly narrow the gap against the sector (21.1% in 2017/18). The **third target** sets a baseline of 15% with an outcome of 20% to reduce the gap in participation in higher education for students from BAME (ABMO) backgrounds. Beyond the life of this plan (and by 2030), it is our intention to significantly narrow the gap against the sector of 31% in 2017/18 (it is worth noting the underrepresentation in industry too, where we have close links, and where there is work to be done together to close the gap). The **fourth target** sets a baseline of 12.9% with an outcome of 5% to close the gap in progression to employment of further study (highly skilled employment) for students from BAME (ABMO) backgrounds and students from a white background as well as seeking to outperform the current sector gap of 5.3% by 2025.

3. Strategic measures

3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

Overview

In all aspects of its governance, management, academic and operational work, Central values, embraces and strives to promote, celebrate and recognise equality, diversity and inclusion. Central's mission to shape the future of theatre and performance in the UK and beyond is contingent on a diverse and inclusive student and staff body. We believe that the biggest risk to the theatre and performance arts, industry and specialist conservatoire training is the notion that they constitute an exclusive, rather than inclusive, study and career choice. We identify, inspire and equip cultural leaders to develop the future of our theatre industries.

The School's widening access and participation strategy has the following five aims which reflect the priorities identified in our assessment of performance, as well as considering the national priorities identified by the Office for Students:

- To increase and maintain participation from diverse backgrounds, locally and nationally: in particular, to prioritise those disadvantaged groups identified as under-represented both institutionally and in the wider arts sector;
- To remove the range of barriers impacting on access to Central and to the field of theatre and performing arts;
- To continue to build upon student success and retention for students of all backgrounds;
- To continue to build upon student progression into employment, entrepreneurship and postgraduate study;

- To develop new initiatives that encourage and sustain diversity in the student population.

Alignment with other strategies

Central's Equality and Diversity plan sets out the following values and commitments:

- We will take every opportunity to promote, celebrate and recognise diversity and inclusion.
- By celebrating and respecting our different cultures, abilities and identities, we shape a better future for the arts and society.
- We will strive to identify unconscious bias in our behaviours, systems and structures and to eradicate them.
- We will treat all members of the Central community with dignity and respect.

In 2018, Central's Board of Governors commissioned Halpin partnership to conduct an external and independent race equality review of our principles, practices and processes for the development and realisation of the School's race equality inclusion ambitions. The Board has accepted all recommendations including the introduction of a Governing Equality and Diversity Committee (which will be jointly responsible for monitoring the APP), a new full-time Equality and Diversity Advisor, support for additional diversity training across the School, projects to support a more inclusive curriculum and further diversity recruitment plans. Implementing them has already begun.

Objectives in our academic plan include 'improve participation and success rates for underrepresented groups as well as students in need of learning support'.

In HR, we encourage and sustain diversity in the staff population. Central regularly reviews its advertisement, recruitment, selection and induction procedures to ensure all areas of potential bias and/or prejudice opinion/judgment is eliminated. Following the outcome of an independent and external review (March 2019) which identified barriers BAME individuals experienced with regards to the School's recruitment and selection process; a number of adjustments and modifications were introduced in order to ensure Central's approach was inclusive for all, examples include anonymising sensitive data on application forms and implementing positive action recruitment techniques. In addition the School introduced compulsory unconscious bias training for all interview and selection panel members and are in the process of rolling out further equality and inclusion training School-wide.

More recently and again to ensure Central attracts the best talent from the labour market, Central has worked in partnership with BAME Consultancy, a recruitment agency dedicated to targeting BAME professionals to join the higher education sector.

The School's induction procedure and on-boarding arrangements are also being reviewed and in preparation for 2019/20, mentoring and reverse mentoring arrangements for underrepresented groups will be introduced.

Central's Student Recruitment Strategy Group is responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of its strategy. Its scope encompasses recruitment for outreach and widening participation and agrees and plans student recruitment activities in relation to key institutional Access and Participation Plan forecast targets.

Strategic Measures

In order to illustrate a theory of change for each of Central's four targets, please see below tables:

Theory of Change Table 2020-21to 2024-25			
TARGETS (ACCESS): To reduce the gap in participation in higher education for students from both POLAR4 q1 and IMD q1 backgrounds at the 16-18 years stage of the lifecycle in the first instance and building upon engagement with those aged 14-16 years (with a specific focus on young white males).			
Aims	Activities	Measurements (how will we evaluate performance)	Outcomes
To prepare and raise attainment and development for those students in targeted schools and colleges (using a variety of datasets)	A workshop programme including preparations for auditions, interviews and portfolios and transition to HE, specialist and curriculum linked masterclasses. Invitations to campus tours at Central. Summer School provision including Camden Summer University programme and Looked After Children collaboration.	Evaluation will include feedback forms (pre and post events from 2019-20), focus groups, vox pops, annual review of activities, annual reporting, tracking conversion rates to HE. Through regular institutional monitoring (APP working group) we will take a proactive approach towards addressing areas of no change and/or worsening gaps which would likely involve varying this plan and developing new strategic measures and/or targets.	Increased number of applications and enrolments to HE (it is difficult to measure this outside of our institution since we are not members of HEAT due to its prohibitive cost). However, we are currently investigating a joint membership through GuildHE.
To break down cultural barriers	Free tickets to Central shows and external performances. Post-show question and answer sessions with cast and crew. Free audition vouchers for students with a household income lower than £25k.		
To provide positive role models and peer mentoring	Trained student ambassadors delivering talks, supporting Open Days and delivering mentoring sessions.		
To target regions identified as 'cold spots' to encourage white working class males and females into the creative and performing arts	A sustained and developing programme with pre and post workshops, Q&A sessions and backstage tours for targeted schools and colleges in the East Midlands.		
To regularly communicate with teachers in order to provide accurate advice and guidance.	Regular meetings and updates, annual teacher event held at Central including curriculum led workshops.		

Theory of Change Table 2020-21to 2024-25			
Aims	Activities	Measurements (how will we evaluate performance)	Outcomes
TARGET (ACCESS): To reduce the gap in participation in higher education for students from BAME (ABMO) backgrounds at the 16-18 years stage of the lifecycle in the first instance and building upon engagement with those aged 14-16 years.			
To prepare and raise attainment and development for those students in targeted schools and colleges (using a variety of datasets). Specifically targeting schools and colleges with a more than 50% representation of students from BAME (ABO) backgrounds.	A workshop programme including preparations for auditions, interviews and portfolios and transition to HE, specialist and curriculum linked masterclasses. Invitations to campus tours at Central. Summer School provision including Camden Summer University programme and Looked After Children collaboration.	Evaluation will include feedback forms (pre and post events from 2019-20), focus groups, vox pops, annual review of activities, annual reporting, tracking conversion rates to HE. From 2019-20 we will further analyse data to determine the percentage of students from BAME backgrounds who receive audition vouchers and free tickets to shows. Through regular institutional monitoring (APP working group) we will take a proactive approach towards addressing areas of no change and/or worsening gaps which would likely involve varying this plan and developing new strategic measures and/or targets.	Increased number of applications and enrolments to HE (it is difficult to measure this outside of our institution since we are not members of HEAT due to its prohibitive cost). However, we are currently investigating a joint membership through GuildHE.
To break down cultural barriers	Free tickets to Central shows and external performances. Post-show question and answer sessions with cast and crew. Free audition vouchers for students with a household income lower than £25k.		
To provide positive role models	Trained student ambassadors delivering talks, supporting Open Days and delivering mentoring sessions with a particular emphasis on alumni students from BAME (ABMO) backgrounds. .		
To regularly communicate with teachers in order to provide accurate advice and guidance.	Regular meetings and updates, annual teacher event held at Central including curriculum led workshops.		

Theory of Change Table 2020-21 to 2024-25

Aims	Activities	Measurements (how will we evaluate performance)	Outcomes
<p>TARGET (PROGRESSION): To reduce the gap in progression to employment or further study (highly skilled employment or higher study) for students from BAME (ABMO) backgrounds.</p>			
<p>To identify issues and obstacles limiting progression for students from BAME backgrounds to postgraduate study at Central.</p>	<p>Commissioned and funded internal pilot project exploring 'the pathways and obstacles to PhD study for students of colour within the performing arts and specifically at Central'.</p>	<p>Project will involve interviews and qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. Through regular institutional monitoring (APP working group) we will take a proactive approach towards addressing areas of no change and/or worsening gaps which would likely involve varying this plan and developing new strategic measures and/or targets.</p>	<p>Increased applications for postgraduate study at Central. Exploring possible synergy with LAHP, GuildHE Research and Research England for up-scaling this project, presentation for academic conferences such as SCUDD, ELIA (European), BSA, and PSA and possible publication.</p>
<p>To provide opportunities and encouragement for students from BAME backgrounds to continue to postgraduate study at Central.</p>	<p>Recruit for Mphil/PhD study with projects focusing on BAME experience and performance histories.</p>	<p>Quantitative analysis and qualitative interview.</p>	<p>More students continuing on towards further study, Increased visibility of BAME students at higher level should produce positive impact on visibility of progression possibilities.</p>
<p>To continue work towards a broader reparative curriculum.</p>	<p>Ongoing work with Director of Learning and Teaching, Course Leaders, and Academic Staff following from 2017 curriculum audit and ongoing Annual Monitoring Review to ensure continued diversification of curricular content.</p>	<p>Qualitative survey and interview feedback.</p>	<p>Increased recognition of 'self' in curriculum leading to reduced attainment gap.</p>
<p>To provide positive role models and encourage representation</p>	<p>Active language regarding recruitment of underrepresented groups in all recruitment campaigns.</p>	<p>EDI monitoring forms provide both information about pool of job applicants and ability to monitor employment characteristics.</p>	<p>Better representation amongst staff providing clear role models and encouragement to students.</p>
<p>To provide positive role models and encourage representation.</p>	<p>Active solicitation of CVs to encourage diversification of Visiting Lecturers from disadvantaged backgrounds.</p>	<p>EDI monitoring forms provide both information about pool of job applicants and ability to monitor employment characteristics</p>	<p>Better representation amongst staff providing clear role models and encouragement to students</p>
<p>To provide students with keys to success by diminishing initial gap in understanding of/engagement with school systems.</p>	<p>For 2018-19 we piloted a new and ongoing collaboration between the Learning Skills Programme, the Student Advice Service, and the Student Union to facilitate an induction in to the 'culture' that we strive for at Central. These new inductions named as 'How to Central' included interactive presentations on equality, respect, dignity, unconscious bias, and personal boundaries to enable a broader conceptualisation of Central as a community that values all individuals. The induction also introduced students to School-wide support frameworks, services, and student codes of conduct, and the report and support pages on MyCentral. Future plans for this programme include follow up sessions for all students and staff on topics including 1) privilege and otherness, 2) building allyship, 3) intention vs impact, 4) empowering students to call out racism and 5) what it means to be called out.</p>	<p>Student feedback.</p>	<p>Better awareness of and engagement with School systems.</p>
<p>To continue, through revalidation and annual monitoring processes to maximise possibilities for inclusive assessment across all programmes.</p>	<p>Through revalidation and annual monitoring processes, continue to examine assessment points and maximise possibilities for inclusive assessment across all programmes.</p>	<p>Student feedback.</p>	<p>Inclusive feedback ensures that students are not disadvantaged by need to pursue alternative arrangements.</p>
<p>To diversify pool of placement opportunities for students, encouraging engagement and increased representation.</p>	<p>We will continue to respond to student needs as well as working with organisations such as Talawa Theatre Company, Theatre Peckham and Yellow Earth.</p>	<p>Student assessment and feedback.</p>	<p>Student successfully completing placement module or unit.</p>

Access

Entry qualifications are not the only 'offer' measure on any of our courses. Auditions and interviews are equally, and in some cases a more significant mechanism for successful entry on to a course with little, if any, attention paid to tariff points. Raising attainment, therefore takes on a wholly different approach to the more traditional measure of prior educational attainment and subject/qualification choice and, as such, requires interventions of specialist preparation through audition and interview workshops for pupils to progress to drama schools and/or conservatoires in higher education. We do have ambitious plans to raise attainment in schools and colleges through our preparation programme and to simultaneously prioritise the specific challenges of breaking down cultural barriers and improving diversity in the higher education arts sector.

Curriculum, pedagogic and student support

We are currently approximately halfway through the current five-year Academic Strategy, which includes both a Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Plan and a Research Plan. Continued development of inclusive practice is embedded both explicitly and implicitly across the strategy, as well as defining Aim 2, Objective 3 'improve participation and success rates for underrepresented groups, as well as students in need of learning support'. With specific regard to the former, we conducted a cross-School audit of curriculum and content by courses in 2016-17, which has provided the basis for ongoing development at the course level. This focused on broadening the representation of groups historically underrepresented in the UK higher education sector in line with a breadth of scholarship linking representation to success.

Health and Wellbeing support for vulnerable students

It's important to note that Central is committed to supporting students from all backgrounds and recognises the importance of a student's health and wellbeing in relation to their academic progression and wider college experience. The School's well established wellbeing and fitness to study procedures are the foundation for reviewing and implementing student support. They are intended to be student centred, supportive and used by staff when a student's health, wellbeing, disability and/or behaviour is having a detrimental impact on their ability to progress academically.

Reporting incidences of bullying, harassment, discrimination and hate crime

Central is committed to promoting a safe and inclusive environment for all students. In 2018-19 the Student Advice Service (working closely with the student union president and the student union ethnic minorities officer) launched Central's report and support page, an online support platform on the virtual learning environment (VLE) designed to offer accessible, up to date, quality guidance to students when they or a friend experience difficulties during their studies. This includes a detailed and well-resourced section on how to report incidences of bullying, harassment, discrimination and hate crime and seek support advice throughout this process from the team of experienced, trained, non-judgemental student advisors.

Employability

Building on student progression into employment and postgraduate study, we continue to develop collaborative activity through a wide-ranging level of education and industry links which support showcase and student placement activity. The School offers MA, MFA and PG certificate courses to which our undergraduate students are encouraged to apply. Our small and specialised nature enables bespoke promotion of further study at a course/local level. Doctorate applications are considered on a case-by-case basis.

In 2017 Central launched the Central Start-up & Enterprise scheme. The scheme is designed to fund graduate start-ups (with awards totalling c£5,000 and track their impact whilst developing a culture, awareness and understanding of enterprise amongst Central's students, particularly those about to graduate.

The scheme will continue to develop in line with what our students tell us they need by way of help in the development of their entrepreneurial skills, their business ideas and start-up companies. All of this helps to support all students, in particular, those from disadvantaged backgrounds who may not have home support or any cultural capital.

Collaboration

On the Contemporary Performance Practices programmes, collaborations exist between arts organisations such as NAZ who have provided BAME specific placement opportunities for BAME students. BAME students on the BA Musical theatre course have been invited to a free summer course with National Opera Studio for diverse voices encouraging BAME performers into opera. Central is also a member of Stage Sight, an organisation that works to promote a diverse off-stage workforce. Looking ahead, our aim is to continue to work with a wide range of organisations and to investigate mechanisms to best support students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

As a specialist federal college of the University of London we will work with each other and the wider group of universities, in particular, those within the performing and production arts sector, in order to share best practice and, where relevant, to make best use of economies of scale. We will continue to review our current memberships and/or join other specialist arts networks with industry and education networks such as AdvanceHE, London Higher, GuildHE, CUK, UUK, Cultural Camden, CIF, What Next?/Young Vic, Linking London (hosted by Birkbeck, University of London) NEON and UKADIA to ensure value for money and to better understand the cultural arts and its models of best practice in these landscapes. You can find out more about the work of Linking London and Central's engagement via the website: www.linkinglondon.ac.uk.

Alignment with other work and funding sources

Central is currently part of the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) through Linking London. The project includes partnering FE colleges with HE providers to raise the aspirations of students from targeted wards within the M25 location. Central are working with performing arts, creative arts and media students to highlight the opportunities that Conservatoire training can offer. It is not yet confirmed whether this funded programme will continue beyond 31st July 2019.

Financial support

For financial support, Central will automatically allocate cash bursaries comprising equally divided awards to first year undergraduate students who are from a widening participation background and with a household income lower than £25,000 and, in particular, those from care leaver and carer backgrounds. It should be noted that these allocations may vary, year on year, depending upon the number of enrolled eligible students in order to ensure an equal distribution of funds to all students from a widening participation background. However, the eligibility and criteria for funds will be made explicit on our website.

It should be noted that the level of contact hours for all of Central's degree courses is high, in particular, the acting courses are in session from 8am to 6pm with rehearsals often at weekends. Therefore, the cash bursaries are put in place to significantly reduce the need for students to secure part-time work. The Scholarship and bursary development plan includes a focus on supporting those students identified in Central's three target areas.

Central has an annual hardship fund of c£20,000 comprised of funding for undergraduate and postgraduate students and including care leavers and carers. Information on the application process is accessible on Central's virtual learning environment (VLE) which students can access upon enrolment. Care leavers and carers receive an annual hardship bursary which is outlined under the Care Leaver section.

3.2 Student consultation

Student consultation is embedded within the core administrative function at Central and one of Central's objectives included in our academic plan is to engage students in all aspects of development and enhancement. In May 2019, the Access & Participation manager conducted a focus group with the Student Union (SU) President and seven student representatives from the three undergraduate courses of Applied Theatre, Acting and Theatre Practice in order to determine how the students might meaningfully engage in this process going forward. The SU President sits on the following committees: Governing Body, all course committees, Health and Safety Management, Academic Board, Learning Teaching and Student Experience, Inclusion Committee, Virtual Learning Environment and Data governance and is therefore in a position to disseminate information to the student body and seek feedback to report to committees.

The challenge of how to engage students for the 20/21 Access and Participation Plan in such a short space of time proved difficult and it was agreed that the focus group would identify ways in which to do this over the course of the next five years. However, the Student Union President was involved in all meetings related to the development of the plan, the students were happy with the current plan and there was a clear desire and eagerness to engage further, although to a certain extent there was a lack of understanding. In order to address this, suggestions included having 'tea and talk' sessions over a whole week - looking at a different target each day, followed up with further discussion.

It was agreed to continue with the 'tea and talk' sessions held termly for students which enabled face to face engagement with key members of staff and to which all students could join in. Due to the detailed nature of the Access and Participation Plans, a week long programme of talks would be useful - capturing one headline each day. All events would allow students the opportunity to give feedback and suggestions (post it notes, etc.).

3.3 Evaluation strategy

We will continue to work closely with the national Higher Education Access Tracking (HEAT) service to produce an outreach monitoring and evaluation report each year as well as to draw upon the latest research data. Evaluation methods will include feedback forms, focus groups, vox pops, anecdotal evidence and annual reporting.

Through collation of all of the above evaluation methods, we will identify successes of the activity programmes for continuation and determine those activities which were not successful and how they should be changed. Through regular communication with colleges, schools and community groups, we are well positioned to ensure the design of our programmes is fit for purpose and to respond to sector changes. For example, our current programmes link to the college and school curriculums and we have (based on last year's evaluation report), introduced pre and post feedback forms.

Through GuildHE we are exploring the idea of a group membership to HEAT (the cost is prohibitive for a small and specialist HEI) to enable us to target students over a five year period and to track student progress into higher education.

Historically, evaluating financial support has been through 1:1 student interviews and capturing anecdotal evidence (verbal not written) since focus groups were unsuccessful due to timetabling clashes and a lack of resource to bring groups of students together at different and numerous points throughout the year (it should be noted that Central has the equivalent of 1.5 FTE members of WP staff). However, in 2019/20, we will conduct a survey through liaison with course representatives to measure the impact on those students who receive cash bursaries and to identify whether it alleviates the burden of part-time working and/or any other financial commitments including maintenance (for example, the high cost of living in a central London location), as well as taking into account the high number of contact hours for students each week and rehearsals/showcases at weekends.

3.4 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan

Central's Governing Body (including a new sub-committee for Diversity and Inclusion), Executive Management Group, Inclusion Committee and the Head of Outreach & Business (who chairs the APP working group) are responsible for delivery of the APP, in collaboration with the Deanery, the Admissions and Recruitment Group, the Student Union and the student body. These groups meet regularly throughout the year and reports on progress are received by the Governing Body and the Executive Management Group.

From 2019-20, Central will employ an Analysis & Insight Officer to support on-going evaluation and thus inform evidence based decision making.

Through the APP working group, the collection of data relating to our specific targets will be discussed to determine what actions will be taken to achieve/exceed progress and/or actions to be taken if progress is worsening. For example, should we not be making sufficient progress against Target 1 (increasing recruitment of students from IMD quintile 1), action plans would include expanding our geographical reach of colleges, ensuring our focus is accurate in order to reach cohorts from quintile 1. We would also encourage engagement from our student body to find innovative ways of reaching out to those target cohorts.

The development of our access, student success and progression measures will be informed by evaluating what does and doesn't work. Our approach to the evaluation of access and student success will include:

- Monitor increases/decreases in applications and recruitment of those students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds using POLAR 4 and/or IMD data;
- Monitor increases/decreases in applications and recruitment of those students from BAME (ABMO) backgrounds;
- Monitor the progression to employment or further study of those students from BAME (ABMO) backgrounds;
- Regularly review targeting of colleges, schools and community groups;
- Review annually all pre and post activity feedback processes to maximise their potential and to capture information about preparation and delivery to inform progression to higher education;
- Continue to explore the idea of a group membership to HEAT for small and specialist institutions;
- To track students over the five year period to determine their progress into higher education, specifically to Central and, where possible to other higher education institutions and employment;

4. Provision of information to students

Central will continue to ensure that clear and timely information on our tuition fee levels and financial support for students is provided for UCAS and the Student Loans Company so they can populate their course databases in good time to inform applications.

Central's website provides prospective students with information on the tuition fees that they will pay, together with details of the financial support available to them. Tuition fee details are published 18 months before the commencement of the academic year to which they refer; a statement is included on the relevant webpage that makes it clear that students studying subsequent years of their programme may see their tuition fee rise by a small percentage each year in line with inflation.

We are committed to the clearest possible communication of information to all our students. The School will continue to provide information through its printed prospectuses and more specific details on the website link www.cssd.ac.uk as well as through workshops and Q&A sessions and responding to enquiries. We are currently reviewing the language we use on the website, in our prospectus and at open day presentations to make information more accessible and to ensure the conservatoire environment is not perceived as elitist.

Fee information will continue to be made clear in offer letters. Our commitment to widening participation is built into our admissions processes and we continue to audition/interview every eligible applicant and accept a broad range of entry qualifications. All information on all scholarships is accessible on the website link www.cssd.ac.uk/fees-and-funding.

Central will offer cash bursaries totalling £37,000 comprising equally divided awards to first year undergraduate students who are from a widening participation background and with a household income lower than £25,000 including those from care leaver and carer backgrounds. In 2017-18, there were a total of 44 students who received a bursary.

Central has an annual hardship fund of £24,000 comprised of funding for undergraduate and postgraduate students and including care leavers and carers. Further, the 2016/17 Disability and Dyslexia SU representative introduced a video to promote the significant student support on offer at Central. Here is a link to the video: <https://youtu.be/njAQm7xZ2ms>

5. Appendix documents

Targets and investment plan 2020-21 to 2024-25
Fee information 2020-21

Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflationary statement:

We do not intend to raise fees annually

Table 4a - Full-time course fee levels for 2020-21 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 2020-21 entrants

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 2020-21 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 2020-21 entrants

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 2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

Provider UKPRN: 10007816

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 investment forecasts below in access, financial support and research and evaluation does not represent not the total amount spent by providers in these areas. It is the additional amount that providers have committed following the introduction of variable fees in 2006-07. 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				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Total access activity investment (£)	£277,450.00	£282,777.00	£290,290.00	£295,997.00	£301,903.00
Access (pre-16)	£16,250.00	£16,250.00	£17,250.00	£17,250.00	£17,250.00
Access (post-16)	£89,000.00	£89,000.00	£90,000.00	£90,000.00	£90,000.00
Access (adults and the community)	£20,000.00	£20,000.00	£20,000.00	£20,000.00	£20,000.00
Access (other)	£152,200.00	£157,527.00	£163,040.00	£168,747.00	£174,653.00
Financial support (£)	£61,000.00	£62,000.00	£63,000.00	£63,000.00	£63,000.00
Research and evaluation (£)	£11,700.00	£12,022.00	£12,355.00	£12,700.00	£13,057.00

Table 4b - Investment summary (HFI%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HFI)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Higher fee income (£HFI)	£1,823,235.00	£1,891,105.00	£1,912,700.00	£1,912,700.00	£1,912,700.00
Access investment	14.9%	14.8%	14.9%	14.9%	14.9%
Financial support	3.3%	3.3%	3.3%	3.3%	3.3%
Research and evaluation	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.7%	0.7%
Total investment (as %HFI)	18.9%	18.7%	18.8%	18.9%	18.9%

