

# **Guildhall School of Music & Drama**

## **Access and participation plan 2025/26 to 2028/29**

### **Introduction and strategic aim**

Guildhall School of Music & Drama ('the School') is a small (circa 1,100 higher education students) specialist provider of vocational degree programmes in music, drama and production arts, unique in England as the only conservatoire delivering training in all three disciplines. Achieving TEF Gold in 2023, and ranked as number one in Arts, Drama & Music by the Complete University Guide 2024<sup>1</sup>, one of the top five performing arts institutions in the world in the QS Rankings 2024<sup>2</sup>, and the number one music provider in the Guardian University Guide 2023 league table<sup>3</sup>, the School delivers world-class professional training in partnership with distinguished artists, companies and ensembles. Guildhall School graduates are widely acknowledged as amongst the best in their field, with many alumni becoming household names. The School is also one of the UK's leading providers of lifelong learning in the performing arts, offering inspiring training for children, young people, adult learners and creative and business professionals, through its undergraduate, postgraduate and research degree programmes, and via the Guildhall Young Artists<sup>4</sup> network, a broad programme of short courses and summer schools<sup>5</sup>, and Guildhall Ignite<sup>6</sup>, offering accredited coaching training.

The School's Strategic Plan 2023-2030<sup>7</sup> sets out a mission to "inspire the extraordinary" and outlines eight strategic aims that include "a commitment to lifelong learning", "deeply-worked equity, diversity and inclusion" and the recruitment and retention of "excellent people who do exceptional work". The Strategic Plan emphasises a "'One School' approach, for all" and an ambition to be "the contemporary conservatoire", committing to being an "advocate for the continuing importance of the performing arts, in a context where equity and sustainability matter", being "inclusive of all people regardless of their background" and ensuring that its work is shared "as widely as possible".

The Access and Participation Plan (APP), alongside the developing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) strategy, is integral to the School's ambition to recruit and train the most talented students irrespective of their background, and annual monitoring shows that its approach to Access and Participation in recent years has supported pleasing progress towards targets. Nevertheless, the School recognises there is still much to do, particularly in light of declining music and performing arts education in the state-funded education system (see Risks to Equality of Opportunity).

This APP reaffirms the School's commitment to facilitating young peoples' access to inspiring performing arts training, to its support of underrepresented applicants seeking admission to the School's prestigious training, and to the removal of financial barriers that impede the realisation of talent and ambition; ensuring gifted musicians, actors and production artists across the UK can reach their potential and embark upon a creative future.

### **Risks to equality of opportunity**

<sup>1</sup> [www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/league-tables/rankings/arts-music-institutions](http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/league-tables/rankings/arts-music-institutions)

<sup>2</sup> [www.topuniversities.com/university-subject-rankings/performing-arts](http://www.topuniversities.com/university-subject-rankings/performing-arts)

<sup>3</sup> [www.theguardian.com/education/ng-interactive/2022/sep/24/the-guardian-university-guide-2023-the-rankings](http://www.theguardian.com/education/ng-interactive/2022/sep/24/the-guardian-university-guide-2023-the-rankings)

<sup>4</sup> [www.gsmd.ac.uk/study-with-guildhall/children-and-young-people/guildhall-young-artists](http://www.gsmd.ac.uk/study-with-guildhall/children-and-young-people/guildhall-young-artists)

<sup>5</sup> [www.gsmd.ac.uk/study-with-guildhall/short-courses-summer-schools](http://www.gsmd.ac.uk/study-with-guildhall/short-courses-summer-schools)

<sup>6</sup> [www.gsmd.ac.uk/research-engagement-services/commercial-services-consultancy/guildhall-ignite](http://www.gsmd.ac.uk/research-engagement-services/commercial-services-consultancy/guildhall-ignite)

<sup>7</sup> [www.gsmd.ac.uk/about-guildhall/corporate-documents/policies](http://www.gsmd.ac.uk/about-guildhall/corporate-documents/policies)

Following a thorough assessment of performance<sup>8</sup> (see Annex A), the School has identified two key Risks to Equality of Opportunity, aligned to national risks identified in the Office for Students' (OfS) Equality of Opportunity Risk Register<sup>9</sup> (EORR). *Please note that all percentages included in this section are rounded to ensure compliance with HESA Standard Rounding Methodology, and not all analysis is included, due to the small number of students in the School's population.*

### **Risk 1: There is inequitable access to the performing arts provision that supports the attainment and skill development required for access to the School**

*[Related to EORR risks 1-4: knowledge and skills; information and guidance; perception of HE; application success rate]*

The School has a necessarily high standard of entry to its undergraduate programmes, with all applicants undertaking assessment via audition or interview – for some courses supported by a portfolio – prior to offer. Admission is based on talent, merit and potential rather than prior academic attainment or the content of a personal statement. Those who have had limited or no access to performing arts provision through their primary and secondary education are less likely to meet the standard of entry, or have the inclination to apply to the School's programmes.

Across 2018/19-2022/23, 70% of the School's UK undergraduate new entrants, 65% of offer-holders and 73% of applicants recorded a **state-funded<sup>10</sup> school or college** as their last place of education. There are two indications of risk here; a pronounced drop at the offer and enrolment stages, and a low proportion of state-educated applicants, when compared to the UK population's average of 93% (Social Mobility Commission, 2019). This is likely a result of reducing arts, and specifically music and performing arts, provision in state-funded schools. When undertaking analysis of KS4 and KS5 examination entries, The Cultural Learning Alliance (2023) found that "the fall in entry to arts subjects at GCSE between 2015 and 2023 is 35% [whilst the] fall in entry to arts subjects at A Level is 16%". Tambling and Bacon (2022, p.15) found that "the prioritisation of EBacc (non-arts) subjects in secondary accountability measures has meant a reduction in the level of arts subjects, teachers and resources available, and therefore declining GCSE and A Level take-up" in state-funded schools. In contrast, independent schools invest substantially in arts provision, with Ashton and Ashton (2023, pp. 9-10) finding that "the 20 [top independent] schools had 33 theatres and/or drama studios", "support staff such as Theatre Managers [and] Theatre Technicians", "dedicated provision for concerts" and "full-time music teachers [...] supported by professional musicians providing classes in specific instruments". It is also notable that Elliot Major and Machin (2018, p.137) found that 67% of British Oscars winners, and 75% of British Classic BRIT Award winners attended private schools; as a key contributor to the talent pipeline, low state-educated student recruitment at the School has the potential to stall diversity progress in the performing arts industry.

In this educational context, the primary means of children accessing performing arts provision is for their families to pay for classes, private tuition and cultural experiences, leaving those from **low-income households** without; validated through research by the Music Commission (2019), ABRSM (2021), Society of London Theatre (2023), Brook, Miles, O'Brien and Taylor (2022) and Dugher (2018). The School does not currently collect applicant or student household income data, and holds no data on Free School Meals – though will collect self-reported Free School Meals data

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<sup>8</sup> Undertaken using internal data as the primary source, to allow for consideration at every stage of the applicant and student lifecycle, and to mitigate the unreliability of the small, suppressed datasets that are publicly available through sources such as the OfS' data dashboard

<sup>9</sup> [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/equality-of-opportunity-risk-register/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/equality-of-opportunity-risk-register/)

<sup>10</sup> Including state comprehensives; schools that are part of a multi-academy trust; and further education colleges

from the 2025/26 application cycle. In the absence of household income data, analysis of **Indices of Multiple Deprivation** (IMD) data was undertaken, given the dataset's close links to socio-economic status<sup>11</sup>. Analysis across 2018/19-2023/24 shows that a low proportion of the School's applicants, offer-holders and new entrants have a home postcode classified as Quintile 1 (Q1) in the IMD dataset, at circa. 7% at all stages in this aggregate time period. Applications, offers and enrolments are substantially higher for those with a home postcode classified as Quintile 5 (Q5) in the IMD dataset – 33%, 35% and 33% respectively. Onward UK research (2022, p.3) states that “just over 50% of young people in the wealthiest decile play a musical instrument, compared to under a third of those in the most deprived decile”, and Cox and Kilshaw (2021, p.16) found that “A-Level music entries come disproportionately highly from areas in which young people are likely to go on to higher education”. The School has identified a six-year aggregate gap of 26pp<sup>12</sup> between both Q1 and Q5 applicants, and Q1 and Q5 new entrants. Though on par with music education engagement outlined by Onward UK, and not surprising given Music is the School's largest undergraduate department (circa. 60% of new entrants each year), this is still a notable indication of risk, particularly when coupled with a lower offer rate<sup>13</sup> for IMD Q1 applicants and in comparison to the wider sector where there is no discernible gap in HE participation between Q1 and Q5<sup>14</sup>. To mitigate the volatility of the small number of IMD Q1 new entrants each year (which would make annual reporting impossible), the School will commit to a numerical target combining the two lower quintiles, Q1 and Quintile 2 (Q2). Across the same six-year aggregate analysis (2019/19-2023/24), the School has identified a gap of 36pp between IMD Q1&Q2 new entrants, and the comparator group of IMD Quintile 4 (Q4)&Q5 new entrants, again demonstrating that those from the lowest income backgrounds are less likely to access Guildhall School training.

In its APP 2020/21-2024/25, the School outlined a target to increase the proportion of **Black, Asian and ethnically diverse** new entrants, and analysis shows that in recent years the School has made progress; 21% in 2021/22-2023/24 aggregate new entrant data, compared to 15% 2018/19-2020/21. Since 2020/21 the School's Black, Asian and ethnically diverse new entrant population is consistently larger than the 17% HE sector average for Black, Asian and ethnically diverse students studying Design, Creative and Performing Arts degree programmes<sup>15</sup>. Black, Asian and ethnically diverse applicants to the School also have good outcomes overall, making up a higher proportion of offer-holders than applicants in every year of analysis, and of new entrants than applicants since 2020/21. However, recruitment varies by department, and analysis shows there is still progress to be made in the recruitment of Black, Asian and ethnically diverse students in the Music and Production Arts departments, with 2018/19-2023/24 aggregate analysis at 14% and 10% respectively.

Further, Black, Asian and ethnically diverse performers, artists and audiences remain underrepresented in the wider arts sphere, with Cox and Kilshaw (2021, p.12) finding that “amongst the orchestral workforce in England [...] 3-6% were Black, Asian or from other ethnically diverse groups” and the Arts Council England's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion 2021-2022 report outlining that 21% of its paid artists (p.15), and just 9% of its theatre audiences (p.34), were Black, Asian and ethnically diverse. As a key contributor to the pipeline of artists and professionals into

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<sup>11</sup> 45% of the score's weighting is dedicated to income and employment deprivation, with a further 13.5% dedicated to education deprivation (Infographic, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>).

<sup>12</sup> Percentage points

<sup>13</sup> The number of offer-holders for that characteristic divided by the number of applicants for that characteristic.

<sup>14</sup> Office for Students' data dashboard: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/data-dashboard/>

<sup>15</sup> Aggregate HESA data 2019/20-2021/22

the creative industry, the School should not become complacent in the recruitment of Black, Asian and ethnically diverse students, despite its progress in recent years.

Government analysis (2020) finds that Black, Asian and ethnically diverse people are more likely to live in the most overall deprived, and specifically the most income-deprived, 10% of neighbourhoods in England. This is reflected in intersectional analysis across 2018/19-2023/24, which shows that the School's Black, Asian and ethnically diverse new entrants are disproportionately more likely to have a home postcode that is Q1 on the IMD dataset (23%) than white new entrants (4%) and less likely to have a Q5 home postcode (20% compared to 32%). They are also more likely to record a state-funded school or college as their last place of education, at 78% across 2018/19-2022/23, compared to 69% of white new entrants. This shows clear correlation between the groups affected by Risk One, and a need to continue targeted support for Black, Asian and ethnically diverse creatives.

Disaggregated ethnicity analysis shows a very low volume of applicants and new entrants with Asian heritage, a finding also evident in the wider HE sector when considering the proportion of Asian students studying Design, Creative and Performing Arts undergraduate degrees in the UK (HESA data indicates a 2019/20-2021/22 aggregate of 3%). The dataset is too small to set and report on specific targets in this APP, however, the School will continue to monitor applications and outcomes, and will explore potential interventions with students and alumni of Asian heritage, who have expressed keen interest in working with young people in their communities to dispel myths around conservatoire and drama school training and creative careers.

The School is mindful that other groups experience inequality, and likely experience inequitable access to performing arts provision, though analysis has either not shown a specific indication of risk at this time, or the population of the group is too small for meaningful analysis. Young people with disabilities, those who are a Care Leaver or care experienced, those who have experienced estrangement and young carers will continue to be eligible for, and supported by, all Access and Participation interventions. Mature applicants will also be eligible for targeted application support.

## **Risk 2: Cost pressures and associated impact on student mental health, wellbeing and engagement**

*[Related to EORR risks 7, 8 & 10: Insufficient personal support; Mental health; Cost pressures]*

The School's undergraduate programmes are intensive, with a high number of contact hours and an expectation that students rehearse, undertake independent study and attend shows outside of these. The physicality of training also necessitates rest and recuperation time. This limits opportunity for paid part-time employment, and students rely on maintenance loans, family support and scholarships and bursaries as their primary sources of income during their studies. Those who do work part-time report difficulty in maintaining a positive balance between study, work and life. The cost of living crisis has had a notable impact on all students, and specifically those from low-income backgrounds, manifesting in declining physical, mental and emotional wellbeing, and differing levels of engagement with study. A mixed-method analysis has been undertaken to understand this further, as the School does not collect student household-income data.

The 2023 Access and Participation 'Have Your Say' student consultation survey found that 92% of respondents had experienced an increase to their cost of living in the last 12 months, with 68% outlining in a follow-up free-text response that this had a negative impact on their mental health. Respondents also referenced the intensity of study as a barrier to student success (37%) and many referred to the high cost of living in London and ability to balance study with part-time paid

employment as challenges. In the School's spring 2024 Student Wellbeing Survey, when asked to rate<sup>16</sup> their agreement with a series of wellbeing-related statements, UK undergraduate respondents scored an average of 2.69 for 'good work/life balance', 2.51 for 'opportunity to engage in extra-curricular activities and hobbies' and 3 for 'schedule is manageable'. When asked about their financial security, 45% of all UK undergraduate respondents indicated that they worry about money often, with a further 35% worrying sometimes. 61% indicated that these worries affected their future plans, their wellbeing and their ability to socialise. 53% indicated that money worries affected their diet and 48% outlined a negative impact on their mental health. The survey also highlighted differences in engagement with part-time employment; 49% of UK undergraduate respondents on Music programmes responded 'yes' when asked whether they had a part-time job, compared to 67% of Acting and Production Arts respondents, who typically have more time intensive programmes of study.

Since the beginning of the cost of living crisis the School has experienced a substantial rise in applications to its hardship fund, with UK undergraduate student applications up 71% by mid-March in academic year 2023/24<sup>17</sup>, when compared to the entire academic year 2021/22, with many applicants now seeking support with rent costs. Across the three year analysis, almost half of the students applying to the fund were engaged in Access and Participation activity and so known to be from a low-income household, demonstrating the financial pressure that these students face.

The Access and Participation Student and Alumni Consultants shared their experience of studying at the School in February 2024, with funding and finance a key feature of conversation. All referenced difficulty in purchasing items necessary for their studies, with instruments, technical equipment and software, headshots, tickets for shows, books, and appropriate clothing for classes and concerts highlighted. They also referenced the intensity of their degrees and the required additional hours, such as working on shows or booking practice rooms and rehearsal spaces outside of teaching hours, and the associated impact this has on their ability to work part-time. The Acting representative highlighted the high contact hours of the final year, that leave students with less time to undertake part-time work and preparatory activity to support a more frugal budget (e.g. batch-cooking). This is reinforced by the volume of hardship applications submitted by final year Acting students; 44% of all Acting applications in 2021-23. The Students' Union (SU) President and wider team provided further insights aligned to all of the above, and flagged a challenge specific to Music students, who struggle to find affordable accommodation suited to their practice requirements.

There is much research about the link between financial security and ability to engage with learning, most recently published by HEPI and AdvanceHE (Neves and Stephenson, 2023, p.71), who found that "76% of students feel that the cost-of-living crisis has affected their studies" and BlackBullion (2024, p.10) who found that "57% of students have received a lower grade than expected [...] because they felt too cold to study or concentrate" and that "1 in 2 students have received a lower grade [...] due to cutting down on going to campus". Million Plus research (2022, p.2) suggests that "Black and mature students are the two groups most at-risk of immediate financial hardship". The School's assessment of performance identified emerging awarding gaps for these two groups of students; potentially a manifestation of cost pressures.

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<sup>16</sup> 5 = strongly agree, 1 = strongly disagree

<sup>17</sup> with one term remaining

In aggregate awards data 2018/19-2022/23, there is a 14pp gap in 'good degree'<sup>18</sup> outcomes between white and Black, Asian and ethnically diverse students, though aggregate data from 2020/21-2022/23 indicates that this has reduced to 13pp. It is notable that the actual number of students not obtaining a 'good degree' is very low for both groups, particularly so for Black, Asian and ethnically diverse students (n = < 30), creating statistical uncertainty, and the School will not pursue a numerical target to reduce the gap further within this APP. The ethnicity awarding gap is a key feature of the developing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) strategy (see Whole Provider Approach), and the School commits to closely monitoring undergraduate degree outcomes for all ethnic groups (see Objectives) and ensuring students engage with learning and pastoral support (see Objectives and Intervention Strategy 2). Should the gap not improve, or worsen, during the lifetime of this APP, the School will seek to make a variation to include a numerical target and/or a focused intervention to address this, as appropriate.

Analysis also shows a 9pp gap between young (20 or under) and mature (21+) students obtaining a 'good degree'. Again, it is notable that the actual number of mature students not obtaining a 'good degree' is very low (n = < 25) and so the School will not set a numerical target to reduce the gap given the statistical uncertainty this brings. Through this APP the School commits to monitoring undergraduate degree outcomes for mature students (see Objectives) and ensuring students engage with learning and pastoral support (see Objectives and Intervention Strategy 2).

It is also of note that Guildhall School graduates are widely acknowledged in the industry as bringing high standards of professionalism and expertise, irrespective of degree classification, and students apply to, and enrol at, the School to access its prestigious, practical, industry-focused training, and graduate opportunities. It is therefore possible that Guildhall School students do not place the same value on degree classification as students in traditional universities – an assumption validated by the SU President. Through the lifetime of this APP the School will work with the Access Student Community to ensure they understand the transferability of their degree in the future, and the importance of degree classification in addition to their practical training.

## Objectives

**Objective 1:** The School will increase the proportion of new entrants whose last place of education was a state-funded school or college by 2028/29.

**Objective 2:** The School will increase the proportion of new entrants with home postcodes that are IMD Quintile 1 and Quintile 2 by 2028/29.

**Objective 3:** The School will increase the proportion of Black, Asian and ethnically diverse new entrants by 2028/29, and will monitor closely the proportion of Asian new entrants.

**Objective 4:** The School will ensure that appropriate support and guidance (including financial, pastoral, academic and professional) is available and accessible to all Access Bursary recipients (circa. 45 UK undergraduate students by 2028/29), and the wider Access Student Community.

**Objective 5:** The School will monitor the awards outcomes of Black, Asian and ethnically diverse, and mature, students and seek to better understand the learning experience of these two groups by 2028/29. Should ongoing monitoring and/or qualitative findings denote no improvement in degree outcomes for either group, the School will review its APP-specific activity and targets.

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<sup>18</sup> First or Upper Second Class honours

## Intervention strategies and expected outcomes

### Intervention Strategy 1: Access

This Intervention Strategy (IS1) includes a combination of pre-entry financial, subject-specific and application support and activity, designed to improve access to the performing arts for young people and adults currently underrepresented at the School, and in the creative industries.

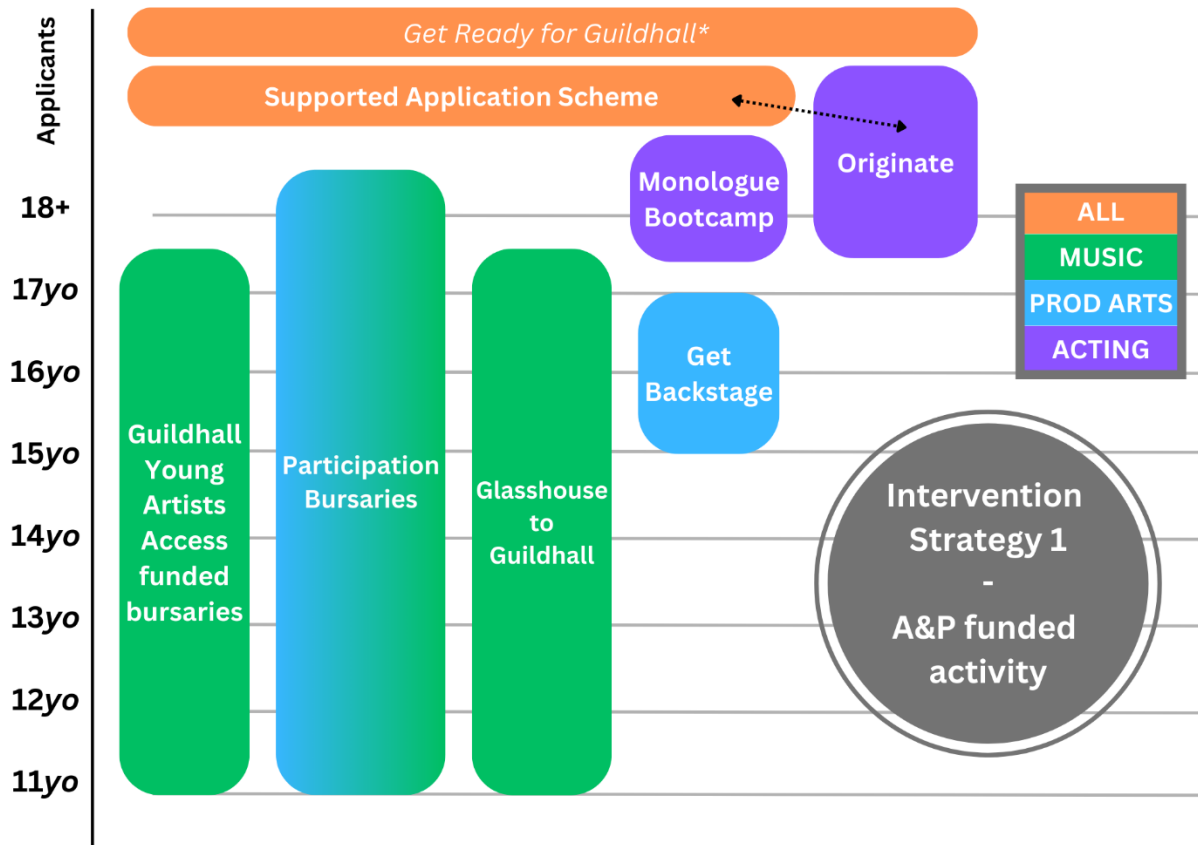


Figure 1: Infographic showing the pre-entry Access and Participation activity available for each age group.

\*Get Ready for Guildhall is part of Intervention Strategy 2, but depicted in this infographic as the final point of pre-entry support.

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## Targets

- **Access PTA\_1:** Increase the proportion of state-educated new entrants in each year of the APP, and to 73.2% of new entrants by 2028/29
- **Access: PTA\_2:** Increase the proportion of new entrants from IMD Quintile 1 and Quintile 2 areas in each year of the APP, and to 24.5% of new entrants by 2028/29
- **Access: PTA\_3:** Increase the proportion of Black, Asian and ethnically diverse new entrants in each year of the APP, and to 22.7% of new entrants by 2028/29

This Intervention Strategy (IS1) responds to **Risk to Equality of Opportunity One:** *There is inequitable access to the performing arts provision that supports the attainment and skill development required for access to the School.*

Activity and description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross IS?
<p><b>Supported Application Scheme</b></p> <p>The Scheme provides financial, skill development and pastoral support to <b>low-income</b> applicants to the School, with a particular focus on those who are also state-educated, Black, Asian and ethnically diverse, mature, care experienced,</p>	<p><b>Circa £17,000 annually, excl. salaried staff time.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access and Participation team<sup>19</sup> to lead and coordinate the Scheme and activity, and administer logistics, e.g. free application links, travel bursaries, workshops</li> <li>• UG programme application fees</li> <li>• Audition travel bursaries, and accommodation bursaries if necessary</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Short-term</u></b></p> <p>Applicants are not deterred from applying to the School due to financial barriers</p> <p>Applicants have improved knowledge, confidence and sense of belonging</p> <p>Participants engage with all aspects of support</p> <p>The Scheme has national reach, supporting 40%+ of participants based outside of Greater London</p>	<p><b>IS2</b></p>

<sup>19</sup> The Access and Participation team consists of Head of Access and Participation, Access and Participation Officer and Access and Participation Coordinator, all 1.0FTE.



Activity and description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross IS?
<p>estranged or who have a disability.</p> <p>This is the final stage of pre-entry support for participants who have previously benefitted from other activity, though the Scheme welcomes applicants who have not previously engaged with activity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop leaders to deliver practical workshops, both online and on-site</li> <li>• Space and catering for on-site activity</li> <li>• Free tickets for Guildhall School shows</li> <li>• Theatre ticket bursaries for Production Arts applicants</li> <li>• Consultation lesson bursaries for Music offer-holders</li> <li>• Academic and support staff time</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Medium-term</u></b></p> <p>A consistent proportion of participants receive offers each year</p> <p>Participants accept their offers</p> <p><b><u>Long-term</u></b></p> <p>Participants enrol at the School</p> <p>Unsuccessful applicants reapply via the Scheme, and engage with additional A&amp;P skill development activity</p> <p>Participants progress to other drama schools or conservatoires</p> <p>Participants who enrol at the School continue and obtain 'good degrees'</p>	
<p><b>Guildhall Young Artists (GYA) bursaries</b></p> <p>GYA Bursaries provide financial support to <b>low-income, state-educated</b> young musicians, enabling them to partake in weekly music training in the GYA network over a number of years, raising their musical attainment. The bursary will be complemented by a celebratory launch event for recipients and pastoral support offered by the Access and Participation team from 2025/26, particularly</p>	<p><b>£100,000 annually, excl. salaried staff time.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access and Participation team to coordinate bursary payments, support GYA teams, support recipients and their families and plan activity</li> <li>• GYA Centre administrative teams to means-test and administer bursaries</li> <li>• GYA teaching staff to deliver music training and monitor progress</li> <li>• Space for launch event</li> <li>• Travel bursaries for regional recipients to attend launch event</li> <li>• Student ambassadors to support launch event</li> <li>• Guildhall School music teaching staff to support launch event</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Short-term</u></b></p> <p>Recipients benefit from sustained music training, and attend their weekly lessons</p> <p>Recipients visit the School at least once per year</p> <p><b><u>Medium-term</u></b></p> <p>Recipients improve their musical knowledge and confidence</p> <p>Recipients pass grade examinations that they take</p> <p>Recipients and their families feel they belong in the Guildhall community</p> <p>Recipients continue to the next year of GYA study</p> <p><b><u>Long-term</u></b></p> <p>Recipients apply to the School, and receive offers</p>	IS2

Activity and description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross IS?
<p>around HE options and preparedness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Travel and accommodation for Access and Participation to visit regional centres</li> </ul>	<p>Recipients enrol on Guildhall School BMus programmes, continue and obtain 'good degrees'</p> <p>Recipients progress to other conservatoire music degrees</p> <p>Recipients enrol on creative degrees</p>	
<p><b>Originate</b></p> <p>This eight-month training programme for 18 young London-based actors is run in partnership with RADA, Theatre Peckham and the Young And Talented. The training is designed for <b>actors currently underrepresented in the industry</b>, with a particular focus on Black, Asian and ethnically diverse actors, working-class actors and actors with disabilities. Care Leavers and those with caring responsibilities are also prioritised for places. Participants attend three-hour classes weekly for the duration of the programme, receive free applications to both drama schools, benefit from exclusive industry opportunities and</p>	<p><b>Circa £5,000 annually<sup>20</sup>, excl. salaried staff time.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access and Participation team to collaborate with partners, support auditions and showcase, organisation of Guildhall workshops, pastoral support of participants</li> <li>Guildhall School teaching staff for 6x workshops</li> <li>RADA, Theatre Peckham and Young and Talented teams contribution, as above</li> <li>Space for workshops at the School</li> <li>Auditions for 60-120 young actors</li> <li>Space and workshop leader for workshop for those unsuccessful at Originate audition</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Short-term</u></b></p> <p>All applicants access a skill development opportunity</p> <p>Participants attend classes weekly</p> <p><b><u>Medium-term</u></b></p> <p>Participants grow in confidence during the programme</p> <p>Participants develop acting skills and technique</p> <p>Participants are prepared for auditions and Drama School</p> <p>Participants are part of a supportive and creative community, and feel that they belong in theatre and drama school spaces</p> <p>Participants apply to Guildhall School and RADA and progress through audition rounds</p> <p>Participants receive offers from Guildhall School and/or RADA</p> <p>Participants develop and deliver a professional showcase</p> <p>Participants receive industry queries following the showcase</p> <p><b><u>Long-term</u></b></p> <p>Participants enrol at Guildhall School or RADA</p>	<p>IS2</p>

<sup>20</sup> This is the School's contribution to the project; each partner contributes both financially and in-kind.

Activity and description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross IS?
<p>develop a professional showcase at the end of their training.</p>		<p>Participants progress to other Drama Schools</p> <p>Participants take industry roles and opportunities</p>	
<p><b>Get Backstage</b></p> <p>Get Backstage introduces 14 <b>state-educated</b> year 11 &amp; 12 pupils to backstage-related degrees and careers, with a particular focus on supporting those who are Black, Asian and ethnically diverse, low-income, care experienced or who have a disability. Participants join a workshop for each Production Arts undergraduate pathway, attend a west-end production and another industry visit that includes a tour, to develop new skills, increase awareness and explore the opportunities available backstage.</p>	<p><b>Circa £5,000 annually, excl. salaried staff time.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access and Participation team to organise the logistics of the activity, operate application process, support promotion, and coordinate the four-day project</li> <li>• Production Arts Outreach Manager to organise the teaching staff, space and resources required</li> <li>• London theatre to collaborate and provide discounted theatre tickets and exclusive Q&amp;A with the production team, and backstage tour if available</li> <li>• Alternative theatre or music venue to collaborate and provide a backstage tour</li> <li>• Theatre partners to provide additional resources such as production programmes and merchandise</li> <li>• Production Arts teaching staff to lead workshops</li> <li>• Student Ambassador to support each workshop</li> <li>• Catering</li> <li>• Travel bursaries for cross-London travel</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Short-term</u></b></p> <p>Participants' knowledge of, and preparedness for, Production Arts degrees grows</p> <p>Participants' knowledge of Production Arts careers grows</p> <p>Participants develop skills, confidence and sense of belonging</p> <p>Participants create materials and take photographs that can be used for an application portfolio</p> <p><b><u>Medium-term</u></b></p> <p>Participants apply for and receive a Participation Bursary for a specialist Production Arts short course</p> <p><b><u>Long-term</u></b></p> <p>Participants apply to a Production Arts degree at the School</p> <p>Participants enrol on a Production Arts degree at the School</p> <p>Participants enrol on a Production Arts degree at another drama school</p> <p>Participants enrol on creative degrees</p>	<p>IS2</p>

Activity and description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross IS?
<p><b>Monologue Bootcamp</b></p> <p>This three-day acting audition preparation project is run in collaboration with Leeds Conservatoire and equips <b>state-educated</b> actors with skills and techniques that they can use when preparing for, and performing in, auditions. The project is offered to two groups of prospective students aged 17+, once at Leeds Conservatoire and once at Guildhall School, allowing both drama schools to engage with a broader group of prospective students.</p>	<p><b>Circa £4,000 annually, excl. salaried staff time.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access and Participation team at both institutions to organise the logistics of the activity, book staff, operate application process, support promotion and run the three-day project. <i>Each team leads on and funds the project hosted at their institution</i></li> <li>• Acting workshop leader(s) to deliver skills workshops</li> <li>• Acting student ambassador(s) to support workshops and smooth-running of activity</li> <li>• Travel and accommodation for staff</li> <li>• Catering</li> <li>• Branded resources</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Short-term</u></b></p> <p>Participants gain new acting skills and techniques</p> <p>Participants gain confidence, and build a sense of belonging in the drama school space</p> <p>Participants' preparedness for drama school, and application and audition processes increases</p> <p><b><u>Medium-term</u></b></p> <p>Participants apply to Guildhall School and Leeds Conservatoire and progress through the auditions</p> <p>Participants receive offers from Guildhall School and/or Leeds Conservatoire</p> <p><b><u>Long-term</u></b></p> <p>Participants enrol at Guildhall School or Leeds Conservatoire</p> <p>Participants enrol at other drama schools</p>	<p>IS2</p>
<p><b>Glasshouse to Guildhall</b></p> <p>The School collaborates with the Glasshouse International Centre for Music<sup>21</sup> to offer conservatoire insights to <b>state-educated</b> students on the young musician programme, with a particular focus on low-income students. Participants join a 'Creative</p>	<p><b>Circa £5,000 annually, excl. salaried staff time.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access and Participation team to organise the logistics of the activity, book staff, operate application process, book travel and accommodation, deliver presentation and support project coordination</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Short-term</u></b></p> <p>Participants collaborate on the composition of new music</p> <p>Participants gain new skills, techniques and confidence</p> <p>Participants have increased awareness about Guildhall School and conservatoires</p> <p><b><u>Medium-term</u></b></p>	<p>IS2</p>

<sup>21</sup> <https://theglasshouseicm.org/>

Activity and description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross IS?
<p>Orchestra', working with their peers and Guildhall teaching staff to compose new music using creative methods. An annual presentation provides information about studying at the School, applications and auditions, and pre-entry support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Glasshouse YMP admin team to organise space, promote activity and support running of the project</li> <li>• Glasshouse YMP music teachers team to support students on the project</li> <li>• Music department teaching staff to lead activity</li> <li>• 1x Music student to support activity</li> <li>• Accommodation, travel and subsistence for Guildhall School staff and students</li> </ul>	<p>Glasshouse music teachers gain new skills and techniques to apply to their teaching practice</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Long-term</u></b></p> <p>Participants attend a Guildhall School short course or summer school online or in person</p> <p>Participants apply to a Guildhall School BMus programme</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Participants enrol at Guildhall School</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Participants enrol on creative degrees</p>	
<p><b>Participation Bursaries</b></p> <p>The School runs a range of short courses and summer schools for fee-paying participants, offering skill development and an insight into its teaching. Bursaries are available for <b>low-income</b> 11-19 year olds, for courses relevant to the School's Music and Production Arts undergraduate degree programmes. This is a vital 'next step' for participants on other activity within the Intervention Strategy</p>	<p><b>Circa £16,000 annually, excl. salaried staff time.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access and Participation team to operate application process, means-test applications and award bursaries</li> <li>• Short courses team to liaise with Access and Participation team about bursary recipients, and deliver programme</li> <li>• Free tickets to Guildhall shows for bursary recipients during application process</li> <li>• Launch event for summer bursary recipients, with refreshments, Q&amp;A and tour of facilities</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Short-term</u></b></p> <p>Recipients access a fee-paying course free of charge</p> <p>Previous activity participants access a short course</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Medium-term</u></b></p> <p>Recipients have improved knowledge, confidence and sense of belonging</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Long-term</u></b></p> <p>Bursary recipients engage with other Guildhall School provision, such as Guildhall Young Artists, and/or return to complete another short course in future years</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Bursary recipients enrol at Guildhall School</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Recipients enrol on creative degrees</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">IS2</p>

**Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy: £1,131,000 across four years of APP** (incl. estimated portion of Access and Participation team salaries, and investment in evaluation)

**Summary of evidence base and rationale**

(Further detail on the evidence used to inform Intervention Strategy 1 can be found in Annex B)

There is much internal evaluation to support the continuation of the School's pre-entry activity, designed to respond to declining music and performing arts provision in the state-funded education system. The School's Supported Application Scheme<sup>22</sup> supported 600+ applications to the School in 2019-2023, building impressive national reach with 42% of participants based outside of Greater London. In this time, 9% of participants enrolled at the School, compared to a 6% average enrolment of applicants, and outcomes show a tangible effect on offer acceptances, particularly for Black, Asian and ethnically diverse applicants<sup>23</sup>. The Scheme was replicated by two small and specialist providers, including RADA<sup>24</sup>, in autumn 2023, with the School's Access and Participation team advising on implementation for both. The Originate<sup>25</sup> programme demonstrates the power of drama school and industry collaboration, with at least 35% of participants in 2017-2023 joining some of the most competitive drama schools in the world (including the drama school project partners). A further 21% of Originate participants progressed straight into industry, with alumni working for National Theatre, ITV, BBC, Netflix and the Royal Shakespeare Company, showing the strength of the training. At the time of writing this APP, Originate has been shortlisted for the NEON 2024 Widening Access Partnership Award, in recognition of the project's achievements and the success of the partnership. The Get Backstage<sup>26</sup> 2023 project evaluation outlined a 72% rise in participants' knowledge of Production Arts degrees and careers, with some participants already applying to and accepting offers from the School. The project won the HELOA Award for Best Practice in Access, Outreach and Student Recruitment Award in January 2024<sup>27</sup>; a prestigious award providing peer recognition of the project's innovation and impact.

Externally, the success of the charity Open Door<sup>28</sup>, of which the School is a partner (see Whole Provider Approach), demonstrates the impact of providing skill development and financial support to drama school applicants, and this model of support was influential in the development of the School's activity in 2018-2020. HEPI research in 2017, which included consultation with state schools in Norfolk, identifies "broadening horizons", "contact with professionals as role models", "meeting current students", "access to concentrated opportunities", "opportunities to develop creative resilience" and "displaying and exhibiting work" (p.4) as the key needs of creative children. Activity in Intervention Strategy 1 meets these needs.

The School's decision to continue substantial financial support for young musicians within its Guildhall Young Artists' network addresses declining music provision in state schools and responds to research recommendations that arts and cultural organisations must ensure that "every child and young person can access a broad and balanced curriculum that enables them to fulfil their potential" and to prevent the arts becoming "the preserve of only those who can afford them" (Cultural Learning Alliance, 2019, p.3). The network's Centre for Young Musicians<sup>29</sup> is referenced in two good practice case studies (p.40 & p.43) in supplementary material to 'A National

<sup>22</sup> [www.gsmd.ac.uk/supportedapp](http://www.gsmd.ac.uk/supportedapp)

<sup>23</sup> [www.face.ac.uk/reflections-on-practice-and-context/](http://www.face.ac.uk/reflections-on-practice-and-context/)

<sup>24</sup> [www.rada.ac.uk/access-participation/connect/](http://www.rada.ac.uk/access-participation/connect/)

<sup>25</sup> [www.gsmd.ac.uk/originate](http://www.gsmd.ac.uk/originate)

<sup>26</sup> [www.gsmd.ac.uk/get-backstage](http://www.gsmd.ac.uk/get-backstage)

<sup>27</sup> [www.heloa.ac.uk/awards](http://www.heloa.ac.uk/awards)

<sup>28</sup> [www.opendoor.org.uk/](http://www.opendoor.org.uk/)

<sup>29</sup> [www.gsmd.ac.uk/study-with-guildhall/children-and-young-people/guildhall-young-artists/centre-for-young-musicians](http://www.gsmd.ac.uk/study-with-guildhall/children-and-young-people/guildhall-young-artists/centre-for-young-musicians)

Plan for Music Education’ (2022, p.5), which sets out a vision “to enable all children and young people to sing, play an instrument [...] and have the opportunity to progress their musical interests and talents”. Unpublished CUK<sup>30</sup> research in 2022, to which the School was a contributor, found that two of the biggest barriers for underrepresented young people accessing the UK’s Junior Conservatoires were finance and mind-set – believing that conservatoires were ‘for them’ – emphasising the importance of belonging and the need to retain under-18 music training within the conservatoire sphere to eventually diversify the undergraduate student population.

## Evaluation

Process evaluation will be undertaken for every activity, to identify improvements and ensure value for money. Additionally, the School seeks to understand the collective impact of the pre-entry activity outlined in Intervention Strategy 1. Findings of process evaluation, both what does and does not work, will be shared via Higher Education networks such as the Forum for Access and Continuing Education (FACE) and its APPSIG, and HELOA, ensuring the School’s contribution to best practice sharing across the sector.

Activity	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
<b>Intervention Strategy 1</b>	<p><b>OfS Standard of evidence 2: Empirical – impact evaluation</b></p> <p>Using a combination of monitoring of engagement with each activity, and the extent to which participants ‘cross’ activity; surveys; staff observations; case studies; monitoring of participant characteristics; monitoring of Guildhall School application outcomes and enrolments; qualitative participant feedback; tracking HE outcomes via the HEAT database.</p>	<p>The School will publish an annual Access and Participation Impact report on the Access and Participation pages of its website from <b>2025</b>.</p> <p>The School will publish findings of the collective impact of Intervention Strategy 1 in <b>2029/30</b>, ensuring sufficient data for meaningful analysis, via a report hosted on its website.</p>
<b>Supported Application Scheme</b>	<p><b>OfS Standard of evidence 2: Empirical – impact evaluation</b></p> <p>Using a combination of monitoring of participant characteristics; monitoring of Guildhall School application outcomes and enrolments; monitoring of engagement with the Scheme; surveys; staff observations; tracking HE outcomes via the HEAT database; qualitative participant feedback; case studies.</p>	<p>The School will publish findings from the first five years of the Scheme in <b>2025</b>, and commits to a further five year analysis and publication in <b>2030</b> – both via a report hosted on the School’s website.</p> <p>The School will share findings at more regular intervals via sector blogs and conferences, as appropriate.</p>
<b>Guildhall Young Artists Bursaries</b>	<p><b>OfS Standard of evidence 2: Empirical – impact evaluation</b></p> <p>Using a combination of monitoring of participant characteristics; monitoring of engagement with teaching; participant surveys at the beginning and end of each year; parent/guardian surveys; staff observations; monitoring of Guildhall School application outcomes and enrolments;</p>	<p>The School will publish findings of the bursary scheme so far in <b>2028/29</b>, via a report hosted on its website.</p>

<sup>30</sup> <https://conservatoiresuk.ac.uk/>

Activity	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
	tracking HE outcomes via the HEAT database; qualitative participant feedback; case studies.	
<b>Originate</b>	<p><b>OfS Standard of evidence 2: Empirical – impact evaluation</b></p> <p>Using a combination of monitoring participant characteristics; pre and post surveys; start, mid and end point project evaluation exercises; staff observations and lesson evaluations; monitoring of engagement with the programme; monitoring of Guildhall School and RADA application outcomes and enrolments; tracking HE outcomes via the HEAT database; tracking participants into the acting industry; qualitative participant feedback; case studies.</p>	<p>The School and RADA will share some findings of the first ten years of the project via HE sector networks in <b>2027</b>.</p> <p>The School and RADA will develop a consistent approach to evaluating Originate from 2024/25 onwards, and publish aggregate findings and participant outcomes for 2024/25-2028/29 in <b>2029/30</b>, allowing for five years of data collection. The final report will be hosted on the website of all partners.</p>
<b>Get Backstage</b>	<p><b>OfS Standard of evidence 2: Empirical – impact evaluation</b></p> <p>Using a combination of pre and post participant surveys; start, mid and end point project evaluation exercises; staff observations; monitoring of progression to Guildhall School short courses; monitoring of Guildhall School application outcomes and enrolments; tracking HE outcomes via the HEAT database; qualitative participant feedback; case studies.</p>	<p>The School will share findings of the project via HE sector conferences and events, and theatre networks from <b>2024</b>.</p> <p>The School will explore the possibility of a collaborative evaluation with fellow drama schools (see Evaluation) which, if agreed, will publish findings in 2028/29. Should this not come to fruition, the School will publish findings of Get Backstage via a report on its website in <b>2027/28</b>.</p>
<b>Monologue Bootcamp</b>	<p><b>OfS Standard of evidence 2: Empirical – impact evaluation</b></p> <p>Leeds Conservatoire will lead on the process and impact evaluation of Monologue Bootcamp using the evaluation plan they have developed with SEER, with the School supporting as required. The School will lead on tracking HE outcomes via the HEAT database, and advise on application outcomes and enrolments to the School specifically.</p>	<p>Leeds Conservatoire will publish an <b>annual</b> report of project highlights, which the School will share via its website.</p> <p>The School and Leeds Conservatoire will explore avenues for sharing best practice in collaboration, including via blogs and sector events and conferences.</p>



## Intervention strategy 2: The Access Student Community

### Objectives

**Objective 4:** The School will ensure that appropriate support and guidance (including financial, pastoral, academic and professional) is available and accessible to all Access Bursary recipients (circa. 45 UK undergraduate students by 2028/29), and the wider Access Student Community.

**Objective 5:** The School will monitor the awards outcomes of Black, Asian and ethnically diverse, and mature, students and seek to better understand the learning experience of these two groups by 2028/29. Should ongoing monitoring and/or qualitative findings denote no improvement in degree outcomes for either group, the School will review its APP-specific activity and targets.

*Given the School's small student population, and consequential statistical uncertainty, there are no numerical targets for Intervention Strategy 2.*

This Intervention Strategy (IS2) responds to **Risk to Equality of Opportunity Two: Cost pressures and associated impact on student mental health, wellbeing and engagement.**

Activity and description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross IS?
<p><b>Access Bursary</b></p> <p>The Access Bursary is awarded to low-income (under £33k) UK UG students, with priority given to <b>care-experienced, estranged and independent</b> students, those with <b>caring responsibilities</b> and those with a <b>disability</b>. The annual award value is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>£3075 OR</li> <li>£4100 in final year OR</li> <li>£5000 if care experienced</li> </ul>	<p><b>£155,000<sup>31</sup> annually in 2025/26 and 2026/27; £162,000 in 2027/28; £167,000 in 2028/29, excl. salaried staff time.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access and Participation team to promote and administer bursaries</li> <li>Budgeting workshop for recipients</li> <li>1:1 meetings for recipients</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Short-term</u></b></p> <p>Recipients feel financially secure, experience positive emotional and mental wellbeing, and access student support</p> <p><b><u>Medium-term</u></b></p> <p>Recipients continue to the next year of study</p> <p>Recipients are able to reduce part-time work and engage more fully with student life</p> <p>Recipients do not need to apply to the hardship fund</p>	<p><b>IS1</b></p>

<sup>31</sup> Note: due to the financial support commitments in the APP 2020/21-2024/25, it will take time to transition to a point where the entire £155k is awarded under the conditions and eligibility of the new bursary model. £90k will be ring-fenced for the existing bursary model (Access Bursary 1), as per previous commitments to students who commenced their degree in 2024/25 or before. By the final year of this APP, £167k will be awarded via the new bursary model (Access Bursary 2). Should it be required (based on the number of new entrants who have participated in the Supported Application Scheme), funds from the Access Bursary may be diverted to the Access Start-Up Fund, with both awards considered as 'Financial Support' investment.

Activity and description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross IS?
		<p align="center"><b><u>Long-term</u></b></p> <p align="center">Recipients continue, and obtain a 'good degree'</p>	
<p align="center"><b>Access Start-up Fund</b></p> <p>The £400 Access Start-up fund is available to new entrants who participated in the Supported Application Scheme, to support with the costs associated with beginning a degree, such as course equipment, items for accommodation and participation in social activity.</p>	<p><b>Circa. £8,000 annually, excl. salaried staff time.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access and Participation team to administer awards</li> </ul>	<p>The Supported Application Scheme has a strong offer to enrolment conversion</p> <p>Recipients have financial stability in the first term of their first year</p> <p>Recipients feel that they belong at the School</p>	<p align="center"><b>IS1</b></p>
<p align="center"><b>Get Ready for Guildhall</b></p> <p>This one-day transition event introduces offer-holders to the student support services, other offer-holders from similar backgrounds and current students. Attendees can also book 1:1 meetings with the Student Services team, beginning vital support pre-entry. Any offer-holder who feels that they are underrepresented, and require the additional support, may join the event, but the School specifically invites those who have outlined on their application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a disability</li> <li>• care-experience</li> </ul>	<p><b>Circa. £5,000 annually, excl. salaried staff time.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access and Participation and Student Services teams to plan and deliver the day</li> <li>• Student Services team to meet 1:1 with attendees</li> <li>• Support from student support teams across the School incl. Library, Registry and the Students' Union</li> <li>• 5x student ambassadors</li> <li>• Guildhall branded resources</li> <li>• Catering</li> </ul>	<p align="center"><b><u>Short-term</u></b></p> <p>Offer-holders are introduced to student support</p> <p>Offer-holders receive early access to 1:1 support ensuring timely DSA applications, disability assessments and student finance support</p> <p>Offer-holders meet other offer-holders and current students from similar backgrounds and establish a network prior to starting studies.</p> <p>Offer-holders experience reduced nerves and anxiety linked to commencing their degree.</p> <p>Access and Participation connect with offer-holders who may have missed pre-entry support.</p> <p align="center"><b><u>Medium-term</u></b></p>	<p align="center"><b>IS1</b></p>

Activity and description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross IS?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an IMD Q1-2 postcode</li> <li>• a state-school as their last place of education</li> <li>• that they are Black, Asian or ethnically diverse</li> <li>• that they are over the age of 21.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel bursaries for attendees travelling to the School from outside of London</li> <li>• Student accommodation for attendees with unreasonable journeys for one-day</li> </ul>	<p>Attendees enrol in September, or where they do not this is because the event supported them to make a positive and informed decision</p> <p>Attendees feel that they belong at the School</p> <p><b><u>Long-term</u></b></p> <p>Attendees have strong continuation rates</p> <p>Attendees engage with student services as required</p>	
<p><b>Access and Participation drop-in</b></p> <p>The Access and Participation team host a weekly drop-in for the Access Student Community, guaranteeing office hours for students to discuss their needs or have a chat.</p>	<p><b>Circa. £200 annually, excl. salaried staff time.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access and Participation team time</li> <li>• Refreshments for end of term Access Community events</li> </ul>	<p>Students have access to additional support, outside of their studies or formalised student support</p> <p>Students who have participated in pre-entry activity maintain their relationship with the team</p> <p>The Access Student Community have strong continuation rates and obtain 'good degrees'</p>	<p><b>IS1</b></p>

**Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy: £837,000 across four years of APP** (including proportion of Access and Participation team salaries, and investment for evaluation)

**Summary of evidence base and rationale**

*(Further details on the evidence used to inform Intervention Strategy 2 can be found in Annex B)*

In its APP 2020/21-2024/25, the School acknowledged that success in improving access for underrepresented groups may require a diversion of funds from access measures to student success measures, and in this APP it realises this prediction, increasing financial support to strengthen the financial security of the growing population of low-income undergraduate students.

Previous recipients of the School's Access Bursary have outlined a positive impact of the award on their ability to engage in their studies, and specifically on their ability to continue year on year. There is substantial research on the impact of the cost of living crisis for students – see Save the Student, Blackbullion, NUS, HEPI, The Sutton Trust and Unite Students – with many reports recommending an increase to financial support. The Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation's Centre Stage report (2021, p.5) refers to their previous recommendation that "improved financial support for individuals from the lowest-income backgrounds [is] the most effective way to attract more diverse students" to drama schools. The decision to make a larger, and guaranteed, financial award to care-experienced students was made in 2022 in consultation with the Care Leavers Covenant<sup>32</sup>, of which the School is a signatory, and the continuation of the uplift follows positive feedback from care-experienced recipients since its implementation, particularly in relation to their financial security. The decision to offer an increased Access Bursary award to final year students has been influenced by student feedback that consistently emphasises the intensity of final year studies. The Access Start-up fund was implemented following consultation with students in 2019, which highlighted the high costs of equipment for Guildhall degrees; the continuation of it is supported by feedback from the Access and Participation Student and Alumni Consultants (see Risks to Equality of Opportunity).

WonkHE's 'Building Belonging in Higher Education' (Blake, Capper and Jackson, 2022) emphasises the important role of transition inductions in articulating student support systems, and sets out four Foundations of Belonging (p.5); connection, inclusion, support and autonomy. TASO research (2024, p.18) outlines emerging evidence on the importance of transitions support, specifically for disabled students, with findings highlighting that activity "helped many students to feel at ease before starting university" and that "signposting to relevant [IAG] on how to access support was regarded as a crucial component". The importance of cross-School transition support was highlighted by the Student and Alumni Consultants who discussed feelings of isolation on the School's small degree programmes, particularly if they were the only 'working class' student in a class of, for example, six or seven. The opportunity to meet students from other degree programmes is therefore vital to sense of belonging, and incorporating this into pre-entry provision eases offer-holder anxiety.

The Access and Participation team includes Mental Health First Aiders and one of the School's designated Care Leaver contacts, showing the value in their support of students continuing post-enrolment. The importance of the team's engagement at each stage of the student lifecycle has been highlighted by many students in the Access Student Community. Notably, by a care experienced student who benefitted from multiple interventions, who outlined an appreciation of an

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<sup>32</sup> <https://mycovenant.org.uk/>

additional layer of support independent of their studies and formalised student support mechanisms; and a recent graduate who benefitted from similar interventions and explained:

*“The department has been extremely helpful, always on hand for anything that I need [...] They are a place to go to and hold a safe space for students coming from a working-class background [...] They have been at 100% of the way throughout my journey at Guildhall and have been a massive part of how much I have thrived at the School.”*

## Evaluation

Activity	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
<p><b>Access Bursary</b></p>	<p>The School will utilise the OfS’ Financial Support Evaluation Toolkit<sup>33</sup> to evaluate the impact of the Access Bursary on recipients annually; specifically the Survey and Interview tools.</p> <p>The School will monitor engagement with support services, bespoke sessions for bursary recipients and the Access and Participation drop-in.</p> <p>The School will monitor continuation and awards outcomes for bursary recipients.</p> <p>The School will monitor applications to the Hardship Fund from bursary recipients, to assess the suitability of the bursary values.</p>	<p>The School will share findings of its revised Access Bursary structure as appropriate via HE sector networks such as FACE and HELOA, but will not publish any evaluation findings in the lifetime of this APP, to allow for the transition to the new bursary model, and so that it can understand the correlation between the bursary, continuation and award outcomes over a longer period.</p>
<p><b>Get Ready for Guildhall</b></p>	<p><b>OfS Standard of evidence: Empirical – impact evaluation</b></p> <p>Using a combination of participant surveys; staff observations; engagement rates with student services; monitoring of enrolments; continuation rates; case studies.</p>	<p>The School will publish a Get Ready for Guildhall impact report on its website in <b>2026/27</b>, meaning attendees of the first event will have graduated and student outcomes will be more meaningful.</p> <p>Get Ready for Guildhall will be included in the annual Access and Participation Impact report, published from 2025.</p>

## Whole provider approach

### Access and Outreach

Though the School’s Access and Participation activity is increasingly prominent, particularly within the Higher Education sector, it is by no means the most established of the School’s activity to improve equity within arts education. Activity supporting access for creative people, and specifically young people, is embedded across the School, through departmental support of Access and Participation, as part of its broader commitment to improving access to the arts for all – as per commitments in the Strategic Plan 2023-2030 – and through its commercial activity.

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/evaluation/financial-support-evaluation-toolkit/>

Significant work is undertaken to encourage children to access music education, and to support the raising of their musical attainment and aspiration. Guildhall Young Artists centres<sup>34</sup>, teaching circa. 1600 pupils every year, train their young musicians over a number of years, providing high quality teaching every Saturday in term-time, with four centres based in secondary schools or colleges<sup>35</sup> and working successfully in partnership. Approximately one-quarter of students in the network are in receipt of a bursary, either funded by Access and Participation (see Intervention Strategy 1) or by external donors and charities. Music Education Islington<sup>36</sup> is the Music Education Hub for the London Borough of Islington, led by the School and Islington Council, in partnership with Music in Secondary Schools Trust and leading arts organisations and funders, bringing free music education to over 11,000 young people in the Borough since 2018. At the time of developing this APP, the School is establishing a partnership with The City Academy, Hackney – a secondary school with a thriving music department, and a substantial proportion of FSM recipients – to bring Guildhall teaching expertise and support to their core and extra-curricular offer. The School is also the lead partner for the London centre of the National Open Youth Orchestra<sup>37</sup>, a pioneering inclusive orchestra for disabled musicians aged 11-25, and the Music department offers instrument and genre specific outreach activity to support increased diversity on principal study pathways. These include the annual Girls in Jazz Day and an emerging partnership between the Strings department and a local secondary school.

The Music department runs several community based projects via their Social Arts Practice modules, electives in years 3 and 4 of the BMus programme. 'Creative Orchestra', brings a 3-4 day project for young musicians to local schools, and is supported by Guildhall School students looking to develop their teaching practice. The 'Satellite Collective' is delivered in partnership with Shoreditch Trust, for activity taking place in secondary schools in the London Borough of Hackney, and secondary schools in the London Borough of Southwark, engaging young musicians who experience inequality in accessing the arts, and offering paid placements to Guildhall School students. 'Satellite Collective' participants then have the opportunity to join 'Impossibilities', a band that allows young musicians, poets and international jazz musicians to collaborate and create new music, with an annual performance opportunity at Guildhall School and at the London Jazz Festival. 'The Messengers' is a band for Guildhall School students and people with lived experience of homelessness, allowing them to work together on two 3-4 day projects, with an annual performance at the School.

The School also undertakes considerable work to create equitable access to acting and production arts training and opportunities. Five of six Guildhall Young Artists centres offer teaching in drama and/or production arts every Saturday, and summer schools in these subjects are available in GYA Taunton and Norwich, allowing music students an opportunity to access drama outside of their weekly music training. The School is a partner of Open Door<sup>38</sup>, a charity supporting talented young people across the UK who do not have the financial support or resources to gain a place at leading drama schools, via their Acting and Behind the Scenes programmes. The Production Arts Outreach Manager collaborates with the Access and Participation team on the development of Get Backstage, hosts Guildhall School visits for theatre based youth groups, initiated and supports Untold Creative Training<sup>39</sup>, a charity providing technical training workshops for young prisoners,

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<sup>34</sup> Comprising Junior Guildhall, Centre for Young Musicians London, GYA Norwich, GYA Taunton, GYA King's Cross and GYA Online - <https://www.gsmd.ac.uk/study-with-guildhall/children-and-young-people/guildhall-young-artists>

<sup>35</sup> Morley College and Elizabeth Garrett Anderson School in London; City of Norwich School in Norwich; Richard Huish College in Taunton.

<sup>36</sup> [www.gsmd.ac.uk/study-with-guildhall/children-and-young-people/music-education-islington/about-music-education](http://www.gsmd.ac.uk/study-with-guildhall/children-and-young-people/music-education-islington/about-music-education)

<sup>37</sup> [noyo.org.uk/](http://noyo.org.uk/)

<sup>38</sup> [www.opendoor.org.uk/](http://www.opendoor.org.uk/)

<sup>39</sup> [www.gsmd.ac.uk/outreach-the-untold-project](http://www.gsmd.ac.uk/outreach-the-untold-project)

and is developing a 'Backstage Roadshow' that will initially bring interactive production arts workshops to state-funded schools and colleges across London, before launching nationwide.

The School's Innovation department coordinates and delivers important activity engaging a variety of audiences. Its programme of short courses and summer schools<sup>40</sup>, many of which have Participation Bursaries available (see Intervention Strategy 1), offer skill development opportunities and a taste of Guildhall School music, acting and production arts training to young people, with many courses complementary to training they may undertake year-round, such as an Essential Music Theory course for children preparing to take music grade exams. The programme also includes a range of online and in-person evening courses for adults, including Guildhall School staff and alumni, which develop professional skills for the creative industries, offering an alternative and less intensive means of studying with the School. The Creative Partnerships team manage and produce artistic projects with cultural partners and communities, including leading on the School's creative place-making activity and the production of the DISRUPT Festival and evaluation toolkit<sup>41</sup>. The Guildhall Production Studio<sup>42</sup> produces immersive and interactive digital experiences for all audiences, with many projects incorporating an outreach or community-focused element, such as a school workshop or site visit.

This activity is all complementary to the targeted work defined in Intervention Strategy 1, and is often a young person's first point of contact with the School. The Head of Access and Participation convenes the termly Guildhall Outreach Working Group for colleagues across the School who work with young people and communities, to encourage best practice sharing, to develop common approaches to activity and promotion, to build confidence in signposting young people to their next steps, and to tackle problems collaboratively and creatively. Going forward, the convening of this group will ensure wider alignment of the School's response to Risk to Equality of Opportunity One, embedding consistency and strengthening a Whole Provider Approach. Membership of the Group also includes the Head of Safeguarding to support compliance with the Safeguarding strategy, the Public Engagement Evaluation Manager to provide advice on effective evaluation and representatives from the Marketing team to advise on promotion, ensuring activity is as far-reaching as possible.

The School does not currently have the resource to offer the flexible degree pathways that are emerging in traditional university settings, but its wide-ranging and far-reaching outreach activity evidences a commitment to Lifelong Learning, a key feature of the Strategic Plan 2023-2030, and ensures there are many ways for creative people in the UK to engage in Guildhall School training.

## **Student Success**

Around half of the School's students receive financial support, either through tuition fee waivers, a Financial Award or a named scholarship, and these are awarded in addition to Access and Participation funded bursaries (see Intervention Strategy 2). The School employs a Senior Student Funding Officer to support students with Student Finance queries and applications, external finance applications and budgeting. They attend pre-entry Access and Participation activity and Open Days, ensuring applicants and offer-holders have access to financial information and support, and encouraging early applications to Student Finance to minimise the likelihood of incorrect or late maintenance loans. The post-holder is also a designated contact for Care Leavers, verifying Care Leaver status (if not already verified through application to Access and Participation

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<sup>40</sup> [www.gsmd.ac.uk/study-with-guildhall/short-courses-summer-schools](http://www.gsmd.ac.uk/study-with-guildhall/short-courses-summer-schools)

<sup>41</sup> [www.disruptfestival.org/](http://www.disruptfestival.org/)

<sup>42</sup> <https://liveevents.gsmd.ac.uk/>

activity), and offering tailored guidance on Student Finance applications. The Emergency Support Fund is available to students who face unexpected financial hardship, ensuring no student is unable to continue with their studies due to financial pressure. From September 2024 the School will subscribe to the Blackbullion platform, providing all students with access to financial education.

Student Services offer advice and support to all Guildhall School students, from pre-application to graduation. The team includes disability and learning support experts, a health and welfare specialist, a physiotherapist, and several counsellors with a range of specialisms and modalities (e.g. CBT and addictions), and students are supported both individually and, where appropriate, through group activity. Since 2022, the Student Services experience for many students has begun with Get Ready for Guildhall, a one-day transition event run in collaboration with Access and Participation (see Intervention Strategy 2), and Welcome to Guildhall, a series of induction sessions for all students scheduled during Fresher's Week and embedded in the first week timetable for new students. This increases awareness of the service, enables the establishment of learning support agreements from the outset of studies, and provides students with early support for disability diagnosis and Disabled Students' Allowance applications. Student Services run a range of drop-in activities to encourage a proactive approach to students' learning, wellbeing, and physical and mental health, including study skills sessions, writing groups, a sexual health clinic, accommodation advice, yoga classes and the Neurodiverse student network. Neurodiversity support is essential given the large proportion of students at the School that have shared a disability correlating to neurodiversity – 17% of all UK undergraduate students 2018/19-2022/23, around half of all disabilities shared. In 2022/23, a range of targeted study skills resources were launched on the School's virtual learning platform and bespoke 'Teaching for Neurodiversity' training was offered to academic staff, leading to the development of a 'Neuro-inclusive Teaching Guide'. Learning support is tailored to the individual needs of the student, recognising that neurodiversity takes many forms, and that a one size fits all approach is not necessarily conducive to success. Student Services also coordinate applications to the School's student accommodation, Sundial Court, giving priority to students with a disability, and care-experienced and estranged students.

Every student at the School can access free, in-house counselling, with flexibility in the frequency of sessions, how they are offered and the possibility for additional sessions beyond the initial allocation of ten should a student require it. Whilst awaiting formal counselling, or as needed, students can access mental health support during office hours from the Head of Student Services and the Senior Health and Welfare Advisor, and via the Student Assistance Programme operated by Health Assured, available 24/7, 365 days of the year.

The School's professional, practical training prepares students for careers in the performing arts industry and opportunities relevant to graduate progression are necessarily embedded within programmes. Agents, casting directors and industry professionals are invited to final year productions, showcases and graduate exhibitions. Drama productions involve external directors, designers and creative teams, and Music concerts are led by professional conductors and directors, grounding assessment in professional-equivalent experience. Students are taught by expert teachers and freelancers, bringing a range of industry experience and relevant networks. Four to six week work placements with a professional theatre, company or individual are integral to the Production Arts programme, allowing students to apply their training in a professional context and providing important contacts for future employment. Music students can elect to take the Social Arts Practice modules, providing valuable teaching experience, and must take the Professional Studies module in their final year, introducing them to the professional aspects of



music making such as taxation and freelancing, alongside a panel discussion with professionals. The Acting training seeks to mirror professional practice at every stage, with the industry standard productions in the final year the culmination of training.

### **Alignment with wider School Strategies**

In September 2024 the School will relaunch the Institute for Social Impact Research in the Performing Arts as a hub for exploring, documenting, and sharing diverse approaches to arts creation, performance, and research in a diverse range of societal settings. It will engage Guildhall staff and students as well as individual and organisational partners collaborating with the School. This builds on five decades of socially engaged practice and research at Guildhall, from the launch of the first conservatoire-based Music Therapy course in the 1970s to the current work happening across the School, such as the aforementioned Disrupt, Undisciplined<sup>43</sup> and the Research Institute.

At the time of developing this APP, the Head of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is consulting on a new DEI Strategy, with the APP integral to the development of a diverse student community and their success. The implementation of this DEI Strategy will take up to three years and builds on significant work that has been undertaken departmentally since 2020, including a partnership with Black Lives in Music<sup>44</sup>, audition panellist reviews and a range of staff and student inclusivity training. The Strategy contains five key objectives, which together will foster a cohesive and inclusive culture for staff and students:

1. Development of an equitable and inclusive culture where diversity is embraced and celebrated
2. Transparent and accountable governance
3. Retention and development of a staff community that is valued, respected and that reflects the diversity of the School's community
4. Development of a diverse student community that is empowered to achieve their potential no matter their background
5. A skilled and diverse leadership that champions DEI

The DEI Strategy will also include the development of a Decolonising and Diversifying the Curriculum Toolkit, a commitment to using the Kent Academic Repository's Culturally Sensitive Curricula Scale<sup>45</sup>, an internal KPI to reverse the emerging ethnicity awarding gap and a review of student policies to support and enhance inclusivity of all student at all stages.

### **Student consultation**

The School's student population are consulted regularly on APP activity and development, whether through formal consultation, by contributing to planning days or via informal conversation, and Access and Participation updates to students are embedded in the School's governance structure.

The Students' Executive Committee meets twice termly and Access and Participation is a standing agenda item, with activity and strategic updates provided at every meeting and an annual report monitoring APP progress shared once approved by the Board of Governors. Members of the Committee – including students from all academic departments and stages of study, and the Students' Union team – have the opportunity to speak with the Access and Participation team

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<sup>43</sup> [www.gsmd.ac.uk/life-at-the-school/undisciplined](http://www.gsmd.ac.uk/life-at-the-school/undisciplined)

<sup>44</sup> <https://blim.org.uk/>

<sup>45</sup> <https://kar.kent.ac.uk/87875/>

during, or outside of, this meeting. The Committee have received updates on the direction of travel for this APP, particularly in relation to Risks to Equality of Opportunity, and feedback was invited.

The SU President met with the Head of Access and Participation to discuss the Assessment of Performance (Annex A) in February 2024 and following this meeting gathered feedback from the elected Students' Union Officers to contribute to Intervention Strategies and Student Consultation, with a particular focus on financial barriers to study. The SU President also contributed thoughts to a first draft of this APP; is a member of the Board of Governors, which has ultimate approval of it; and will write a Student Submission on behalf of the student population, with supporting statements from two of their predecessors (representing SU Presidents from 2020/21-2023/24).

Consultation with the wider student population is challenging at the School as our programmes are intensive and students do not necessarily have time to engage with surveys or consultation activity. In spring 2023, the School's Access and Participation 'Have Your Say' survey collected students' thoughts on the barriers that exist at each stage of the student lifecycle and their experience of managing their finances during the cost of living crisis. Responses were low (4% of the UG student population), but reflective of the Access and Participation student experience, with 63% of responses from students previously engaged with activity, and there were some useful findings that have informed the direction of travel for this APP (see Risks to Equality of Opportunity). In spring 2024, the Student Wellbeing Survey collected feedback on the student experience, general wellbeing and the financial needs of students. The response rate for this survey was much higher – at early April 2024 responses had been received from 16% of the whole student population and 21% of the UK undergraduate population at the School. The findings of this survey have also informed the development of this APP (see Risks to Equality of Opportunity), with students advised in the survey's introduction that this would be the case.

To mitigate the possibility of low survey response rates, and to ensure the relevancy of student engagement, five Access and Participation Student and Alumni Consultants were appointed to paid roles in January 2024, specifically to support APP development. The Consultants are reasonably representative of the student population, studying or graduated from each undergraduate academic department, from various regions of the UK, and each identifying as an underrepresented student in a different way. Two of the students are pursuing dissertation topics linked to access to the arts, so this role is also beneficial to their learning. The Consultants attended an online session to learn about APP regulation and the School's current provision, and an in-person meeting to discuss proposals and their student experience. The Consultants have had opportunity to read and provide feedback on a draft of this APP, choosing to engage with different sections based on their interest and availability.

Finally, the School's small student population lends itself to ongoing and informal student engagement. Students who participated in pre-entry activity maintain contact with the Access and Participation team throughout their studies, whether supporting activity as an ambassador, attending the weekly drop-in or bumping into them between classes. Ideas for activity and student support have been sparked by this engagement and Access and Participation work is grounded in collaboration with students, alumni and participants, with the team an active part of the undergraduate student experience and prominent supporters of students and their work.

## **Evaluation of the plan**

Meaningful evaluation of the School's Access and Participation pre-entry activity is challenging given the very small number of participants on the majority of it (often, under 20 participants). The

extensive training and support that participants likely receive externally, in addition to the School's offer, creates difficulty in establishing causal impact of its provision, and the need for inherent talent and potential, assessed through audition, interview or portfolio, means that enrolment at the School is not the only positive outcome for its activity.

The School has made considerable progress in its evaluation of Access and Participation activity since the development of its previous APP (2020/21-2024/25). The OfS Evaluation Self-Assessment Tool<sup>46</sup> was completed as part of the preparatory process for both APPs and though the School's category of evaluation practice remains 'emerging', it is notable that the tool identified a 27-point increase in the overall score in the preparation of this APP. The School has further learning to undertake and more consistent evaluation practice is required to truly understand the combined impact of its activity. However, it has established a good basis.

The School learned much from the successful development and evaluation of its 'Get Backstage' project. In 2021, a Theory of Change for a new Production Arts project was developed and a pilot 2-day project ran in spring 2022, undergoing robust process evaluation, and impact evaluation via pre and post surveys, staff observations and participant tracking. The project was redeveloped into a 4-day project for 2023, offering many more practical elements and closer links to industry, based on findings of the process evaluation. As in 2022, impact was evaluated via pre and post surveys, staff observations and participant tracking. Whilst publication of a detailed report will only be possible once multiple years of activity have run, due to the small cohorts, initial findings were shared via the HELOA Best Practice Access, Outreach and Student Recruitment Award finalists presentation, and the School is exploring the delivery of sessions at other sector events to share further findings. The School will replicate this approach to activity development in the future, and will continue to make use of sector-wide opportunities to share findings; in addition to suitable HE award nominations, findings will be shared via online blogs, through workshops at relevant conferences and via peer networks such as the FACE APPSIG, of which the School is a convenor.

Given the aforementioned small population of participants engaged in Access and Participation activity, the School is limited in the evaluation findings it can publish. However, the School endeavours to publish evaluation findings for the Supported Application Scheme in 2025, to share the impact of the first five years, with some findings already shared via a FACE blog in 2023<sup>47</sup>. This will support institutions across the sector who wish to implement, or that have recently implemented, similar activity, whilst supporting our own understanding of how the Scheme might evolve. The School will seek to evaluate and share findings of its refreshed Guildhall Young Artists financial support in the final year of this APP, though this will likely outline only progress towards short and medium term objectives and process evaluation, with the long term objectives of this activity achieved over the next decade.

The School recently subscribed to HEAT<sup>48</sup>, which will enable the tracking of activity participants into Higher Education. The competitive nature of audition processes, high standard of entry and limited places available mean that not all participants can progress to the School's degree programmes, and so progression into creative, and specifically performing arts, degrees at any institution following participation in Access and Participation activity is of particular interest. The School understands there will be some 'time-lag' in accessing this data, and so tracking may not be widely used to understand the impact of activity delivered under this APP, but will instead

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<sup>46</sup> <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/evaluation/standards-of-evidence-and-evaluation-self-assessment-tool/>

<sup>47</sup> [face.ac.uk/reflections-on-practice-and-context/](https://face.ac.uk/reflections-on-practice-and-context/)

<sup>48</sup> Higher Education Access Tracker - <https://heat.ac.uk/>

contribute to ongoing impact evaluation over several years and in future APPs. HEAT will be used by all teams who engage young people in outreach activity across the School (see Whole Provider Approach) to understand the collective impact of the School's outreach and its overall contribution to diversifying the creative industry pipeline.

In developing this APP, the School has focused on the TASO<sup>49</sup> Core Theory of Change Model (see Annex B) to build an evaluation plan for Intervention Strategy 1, providing a rigorous framework to help the Access and Participation team test assumptions surrounding the inputs, delivery and outcomes of the work. The School will seek to advance this to an Enhanced Theory of Change in 2024/25, again using the TASO template, as it prepares for the implementation of the APP in September 2025. In addition, an Access and Participation survey question bank, including appropriate validated scales, will be collated in 2024/25 to ensure consistency in evaluation across activity, and alignment with the outcomes in the Theory of Change. This will enable the publication of a report to understand the combined impact of Access activity (see Intervention Strategy 1). The School has also utilised the OfS' financial support evaluation toolkit<sup>50</sup> to develop evaluation methodology for its Access Bursary (see Intervention Strategy 2).

The Access and Participation team has worked with the School's Public Engagement Evaluation Manager in the design of evaluation methodology, specifically using the Guildhall Creative Method toolkit for activity evaluation, and will continue to work with them in 2024/25 in preparation for the APP implementation. Utilising this toolkit allows the exploration of creative evaluation approaches that are better suited to performing arts activity than some recommended HE evaluation approaches. Should this creative methodology be successful, the School will share resources and findings with other institutions via peer networks such as the FACE APPSIG and at relevant sector conferences. The Public Engagement Evaluation Manager is developing a school-wide Evaluation Framework, to support consistency in evaluation taking place across the School, the embedding of an evaluation culture, and appropriate training and support for colleagues working in public engagement, with Access and Participation one of five evaluation categories in this framework. The Head of Access and Participation is a member of the cross-School Evaluation Working Group, which convenes termly and is chaired by the Public Engagement Evaluation Manager.

Another area of particular evaluative interest is the impact of Production Arts outreach activity on access to relevant degrees and the wider industry pipeline. The School is exploring the possibility of collaborative evaluation and knowledge exchange with RADA, LAMDA and CSSD<sup>51</sup> to understand the combined impact of drama school access activity in this area. In collaborating, each evaluation partner would benefit from shared expertise, thorough process evaluation to understand the most successful activity structure, and an insight into how young people engage with activities across multiple institutions. Vitally, a combined evaluation will create a larger dataset of participants for analysis supporting the possibility of eventual publication of findings for relatively small activities. Should the exploration of this collaboration result in a formal evaluation partnership, findings will be shared in 2028/29, allowing for three years of data and tracking, with all partners utilising the HEAT system to support this and making use of the formalised data sharing that the system allows. The strong relationship and frequent communication between the institutions' Access and Participation teams also supports best practice sharing across other activity, and this will continue irrespective of a formal evaluation partnership being agreed.

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<sup>49</sup> Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education - <https://taso.org.uk/>

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/evaluation/financial-support-evaluation-toolkit/>

<sup>51</sup> Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, London Academy of Music & Dramatic Art and The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

## Monitoring and Reporting

The School has robust internal governance for APP annual monitoring. An annual report is submitted to the School's Board of Governors for approval each spring, following approval by the School Executive, led by the Principal. This report outlines the steps that have been taken to comply with the provisions of the APP and actual progress towards annual milestones, and is accompanied by a short presentation from the Head of Access and Participation. The same approvals process has been followed during development of this APP. Access and Participation is also monitored by the new Education Strategy Committee, of which the Head of Access and Participation is a member, and the Students' Executive Committee.

## Provision of information to students

### Tuition fees

Annual fee information is published on the Policies page of the Guildhall School website, alongside the relevant policies and terms and conditions for financial support:

[www.gsmd.ac.uk/policies](http://www.gsmd.ac.uk/policies) (drop-down: HE Fees and Funding)

### Financial Support

Fees and funding information for prospective and current students can be found on the Fees and Funding page ([www.gsmd.ac.uk/study-with-guildhall/fees-and-funding](http://www.gsmd.ac.uk/study-with-guildhall/fees-and-funding)) of the Guildhall School website. This page outlines, and signposts to further information about, tuition fees, Guildhall Financial Awards, Access Bursary, student loans, costs that students incur and the Supported Application Scheme.

Detailed information on Guildhall Financial Awards, the Access Bursary and the Hardship Fund can be found at [www.gsmd.ac.uk/study-with-guildhall/fees-and-funding/scholarships-bursaries-and-financial-awards](http://www.gsmd.ac.uk/study-with-guildhall/fees-and-funding/scholarships-bursaries-and-financial-awards)

#### *Guildhall Financial Awards*

Guildhall Financial Awards collates the School-funded and various named scholarships that are available to students, to create a streamlined application process, with awards allocated by each academic department based on eligibility, merit and financial need, depending on the parameters of the award. All students who accept a place at the School can apply for scholarship support, and for the majority of awards they will need to reapply each year.

In addition to being available on the School's website, information regarding Guildhall Financial Awards applications is available on the School's intranet and emailed to applicants who accept an offer, with a step by step guide on how to apply. Students are reminded to re-apply for financial support annually when applications open. Some departments operate a second allocation of funds in January, meaning students who have need for an uplift to their award have the opportunity to reapply for further funds; again, details of process are shared via email and the School's intranet.

#### *Access Bursary*

Students who began their undergraduate programme in 2024/25 or earlier may apply for the Access Bursary under the original criteria, outlined in the APP 2020/21-2024/25 (Access Bursary model 1). Students who commence their undergraduate programme from 2025/26 onwards may apply for the Access Bursary under the updated criteria, outlined below and in Intervention Strategy 2 (Access Bursary model 2).

The Access Bursary (model 2) is awarded to low-income (under £33k) UK undergraduate students. The annual award value is:

- £3,075 *or*
- £4,100 for final year students *or*
- £5,000 for care experienced students.

Priority is given to care-experienced, estranged and independent students, those with caring responsibilities and those with a disability. Following the prioritisation of these students, bursaries will be awarded to applicants based on financial need, e.g. lowest household incomes, or those awarded lower value Guildhall Financial Awards. The award is not guaranteed each year and students are expected to re-apply annually; with the exception of care experienced students who are guaranteed £5,000 for every year of study to support their financial security. The majority of Access Bursary awards will be made prior to the start of the academic year, although should there be funds remaining an in-year application process will be implemented. The Access Bursary will be paid in termly instalments.

#### *Access Start-up Fund*

Additionally, Access Start-up Fund awards of £400 are available to new entrants who participated in the Supported Application Scheme in the year that they successfully applied to the School. This award will be paid at the beginning of the first term, of the first year of study only. Supported Application Scheme offer-holders will be contacted directly about this award and there is no formal application required, though they must confirm that they wish to receive it and provide evidence of their maintenance loan from a UK Student Loans Company to verify that they are a qualifying student.

#### *Hardship Fund*

The School's financial hardship fund, the Emergency Support Fund, supports students who, due to unforeseen circumstances, find themselves in temporary financial hardship. Additionally, the Fund may make a contribution towards assessments and/or specialist equipment for students with a disability where this is not covered by DSA. Applications to the Fund are assessed by a cross-department panel, comprising representatives from each academic department and Student Services, the Senior Student Funding Officer and the Head of Access and Participation. In addition to being available on the School's website, information is available on the School's intranet, and students who seek support on their financial circumstances are reminded, and supported, to apply.

#### *Financial education*

From September 2024 the School will subscribe to Blackbullion's financial education platform, available to all students.

### **Access and Participation**

The School's APP, and previous APPs relevant to students who enrolled in 2024/25 or earlier, are available on the Policies page of the Guildhall School website.

[www.gsmd.ac.uk/policies](http://www.gsmd.ac.uk/policies) (drop-down: Access and Inclusion).

Information on all Access and Participation activity is available at [www.gsmd.ac.uk/access](http://www.gsmd.ac.uk/access).

# Annex A: Further information and analysis relating to the identification and prioritisation of key risks to equality of opportunity

## Introduction

To understand institutional Risks to Equality of Opportunity, and identify the groups most likely to be affected by these, a thorough analysis of student lifecycle data was undertaken. Internally available data was used for the majority of analysis as the School's student population, and specifically its UK undergraduate new entrant population, is small, resulting in rounded and suppressed numbers in the Office for Students' (OfS) data dashboard, making meaningful inquiry challenging. At the Access stage, using internal data allowed for analysis of application and offer rates for each group, and accurate comparison to enrolment rates, as applications are made directly to the School, and not via UCAS. It has also allowed for analysis of more recent application data, mitigating the volatility of data during the pandemic, providing insights into the impact of Access and Participation activity established since 2019, and enabling a fuller understanding of which groups face inequality. Using internally available data at the student success stage allows for greater contextualisation of very small numbers, supporting the identification of actual Risks to Equality of Opportunity.

The following internal data was considered:

- internal Guildhall School application, offer and enrolment data, 2018/19 to 2023/24;
- internal Guildhall School awards data 2018/19 to 2022/23;
- internal Guildhall School student withdrawal data 2018/19 to 2022/23;
- internal Guildhall School student disability data 2018/19 to 2023/24;

Due to the small datasets not all findings can be shared to ensure compliance with data protection regulation, and it is not always possible to consider groups in a disaggregated way (e.g. specific ethnicities or disability categories). Aggregate data, across six, five or three years, is presented for disaggregated groups where possible, and where it is pertinent to the identification of Risks to Equality of Opportunity. Findings have been deduced from actual percentages, calculated from unsuppressed numerical data. However, only percentages rounded to zero decimal places are presented here to ensure compliance with HESA Standard Rounding Methodology.

To contextualise the data and to support benchmarking, and to ensure some progression analysis, the following external data has also been considered:

- Office for Students sector-wide data dashboard data<sup>52</sup>;
- Office for Students Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR)<sup>53</sup>
- Office for Students Guildhall School suppressed student progression data;
- HESA student characteristic data<sup>54</sup>;
- IMD datasets<sup>55</sup>.

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<sup>52</sup> <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/data-dashboard/>

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/equality-of-opportunity-risk-register/>

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students>

<sup>55</sup> Comparison to these datasets was undertaken via the Higher Education Access Tracker's postcode profiler, which links to IMD data for the four UK nations.

# 1. Access

## 1.1 School type *(internal applicant, offer and new entrant data, 2018/19-2022/23)*

The School's Access and Participation Plan (APP) 2020/21-2024/25 outlines an ambition to see annual growth in the number of state-educated or state-funded (supported by Music and Dance Scheme) new entrants. Analysis shows relative consistency in the recruitment of state-educated and state-funded students, ranging from 71% to 76% - aggregate 74% across 5yrs - but the School did not meet the milestone in any year of the APP monitoring, and largely hovered around the 2017 baseline of 75%. In its analysis, the School has considered state-educated and state-funded combined as previously, and also state-educated only, to determine the suitability of the combined analysis going forward.

### State-educated and state-funded application, offer and entry rates

Since 2020/21, the proportion of state-educated and state-funded new entrants has largely been in line (within 1pp<sup>56</sup>) with the number of applications received, and offer outcomes for state-educated and state-funded applicants have improved, in comparison to the earlier years of analysis.

Entry year	Proportion of apps	Proportion of offers	Proportion of enrolments
2018/19	75%	70%	72%
2019/20	75%	71%	71%
2020/21	76%	77%	76%
2021/22	77%	76%	76%
2022/23	75%	74%	76%

Figure 1: proportion of state-educated and state-funded applicants, offer-holders and new entrants, using Guildhall School internal data

The entry rate<sup>57</sup> of state-educated and state-funded applicants is largely in line with the rate of their alternatively educated peers in every year, and since 2020/21 there has been no discernible gap in entry rate between the two groups.

The School's Music department is its largest, recruiting circa. 60% of all UK undergraduate new entrants in the five year period, and low state-educated and state-funded student recruitment in this department has a tangible impact on the School's proportion of new entrants from this group. *Note in Figure 2 the correlation between Music and overall performance each year.* The Acting and Production Arts departments recruit a much smaller cohort of students each year, and their data cannot be published in Figure 2.

<sup>56</sup> Percentage point

<sup>57</sup> The number of new entrants for that characteristic divided by the number of applicants for that characteristic.



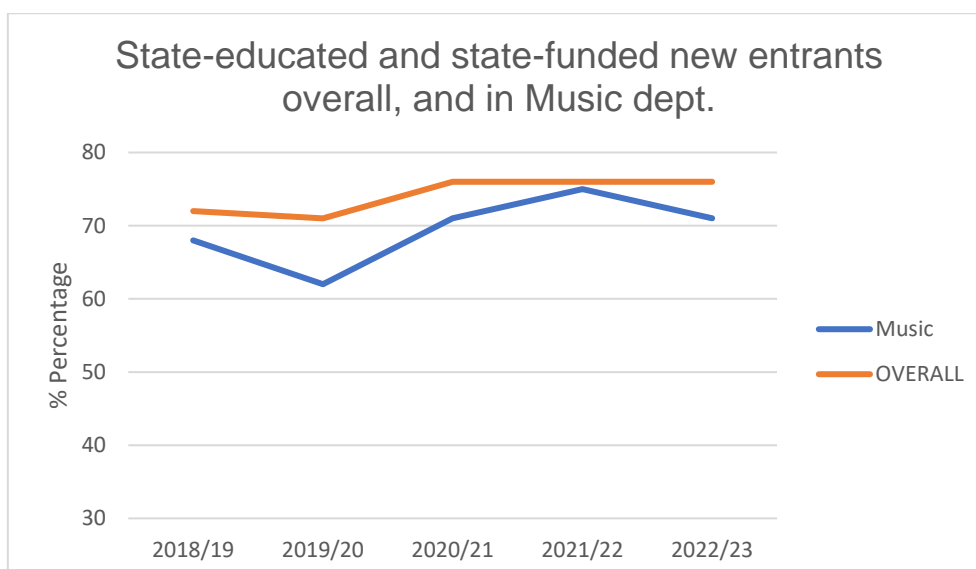


Figure 2: proportion of state-educated and state-funded new entrants overall, and in Music, using Guildhall School internal data

There is relative consistency in application outcomes for state-educated and state-funded applicants to Music programmes since 2020/21 (see Figure 3, below), and again there is alignment to the School’s overall applicant outcomes presented in Figure 1.

Entry year	Proportion of apps	Proportion of offers	Proportion of enrolments
2018/19	69%	67%	68%
2019/20	71%	66%	62%
2020/21	73%	72%	71%
2021/22	75%	76%	75%
2022/23	71%	71%	71%

Figure 3: proportion of state-educated/state-funded BMus applicants, offer-holders and new entrants, using Guildhall School internal data

Evidently, many of the state-educated and state-funded applicants meet the School’s high standard of entry, which indicates that any Risk to Equality of Opportunity for this group exists at the point of application (Office for Students EORR Risks ‘Knowledge and Skills’; ‘Information and Guidance’; ‘Perception of Higher Education’).

### State-educated only application, offer and entry rates

Following the identification of a possible Risk to Equality of Opportunity at the point of application, further analysis of outcomes for just state-educated applicants was undertaken, to account for the differences in performing arts provision in state-funded and independent schools (Ashton and Ashton, 2023).

Entry year	Proportion of apps	Proportion of offers	Proportion of enrolments
2018/19	72%	59%	65%
2019/20	73%	65%	70%
2020/21	74%	70%	73%

Entry year	Proportion of apps	Proportion of offers	Proportion of enrolments
2021/22	74%	66%	73%
2022/23	73%	67%	71%

Figure 4: proportion of state-educated applicants, offer-holders and new entrants, using Guildhall School internal data

This focused analysis of only state-educated applicant outcomes shows that the inclusion of state-funded applicants in previous APP analysis has likely masked a Risk to Equality of Opportunity. Applicants who are state-educated are less likely to have accessed performing arts provision as part of their core education, particularly focused music education, and this is demonstrable in their outcomes at application where they are consistently a lower proportion of offer-holders and new entrants than they are applicants. Across 2018/19-2022/23 this is more pronounced in the Music department (see Figure 5), strengthening the assumption that this is linked to reducing music provision in state schools and colleges.

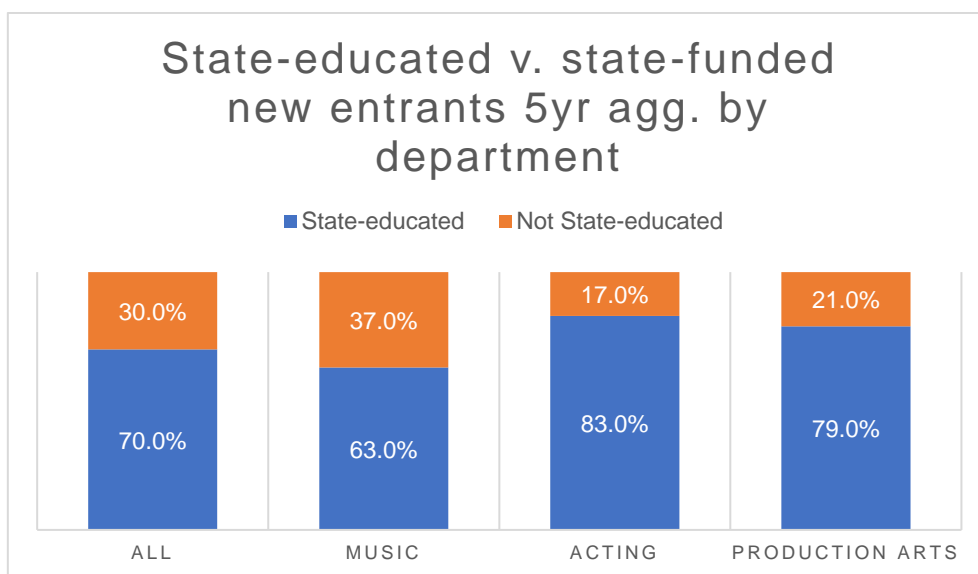


Figure 5: state-educated v. not state educated new entrants by department 2018/19-2022/23 aggregate, using Guildhall School internal data

Direct comparison to the HE sector is challenging, as the School's context is very different to traditional universities that offer a broader range of courses, requiring less pre-entry specialist training. However, aggregate 2018/19-2021/22 HESA data shows that 92% of new entrants attended a state-funded school or college, and approximately 93% of the UK population are state-educated, so the School is substantially below the sector and national averages. In addition to the EORR risks outlined previously, it is apparent that state-educated applicants face a further Risk to Equality of Opportunity, 'Application Success Rates', as a result of the competitive audition process and high standard of entry at the School.

## 1.2 Indices of Multiple Deprivation *(internal applicant, offer and new entrant data, 2018/19-2023/24)*

The School does not currently collect applicant or student data that is indicative of socio-economic background, such as eligibility for Free School Meals. In the absence of this data, Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) analysis has been undertaken given its close links to socio-economic status, with almost half of the score's weighting dedicated to income and employment deprivation.

Six year analysis shows that the School's new entrants are consistently more likely to be from Q4-5 areas (least deprived) than Q1-2 (most deprived) areas.

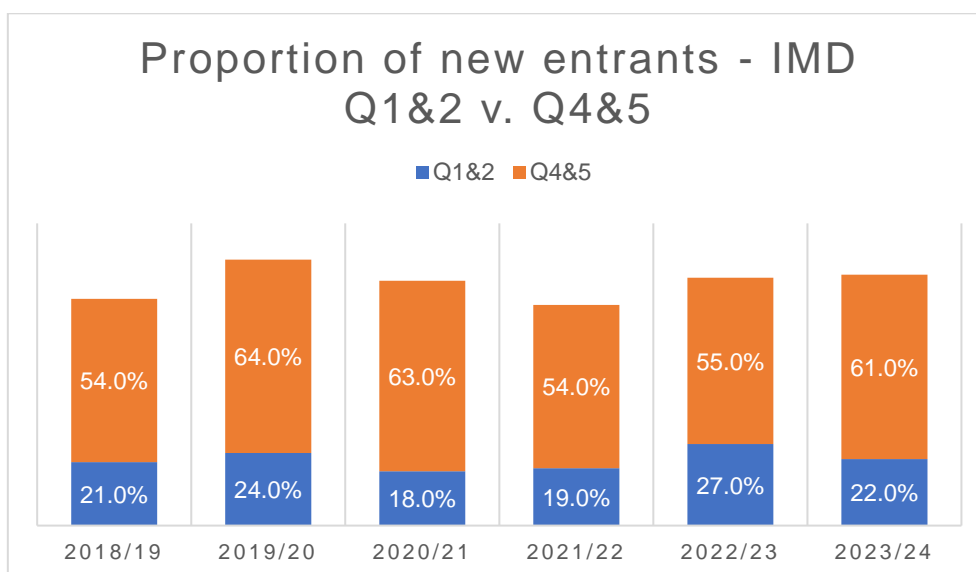


Figure 6: proportion of new entrants from IMD Q1-2 areas, compared to Q4-5 areas, using internal Guildhall School data

Closer analysis across the period shows that a very low proportion of the School's applicants, offer-holders and new entrants have a home postcode that is classified as Quintile 1 (Q1) in the IMD dataset, at just 7% six-year aggregate at all stages. Applications, offers and enrolments are substantially higher for those with a home postcode classified as Quintile 5 (Q5) in the IMD dataset – 33%, 35% and 33% respectively. As aforementioned, direct comparison to the Higher Education sector is challenging given the School's specialist context. However, there is a substantially wider gap between IMD Q1 and Q5 new entrants at Guildhall School than exists in the sector. From 2018/19-2021/22 there is an aggregate sector gap of 1pp between the two groups; at Guildhall School in the same time period the aggregate gap was 27pp.

This analysis has highlighted a possible Risk to Equality of Opportunity at the application and offer stage for applicants who come from areas with higher levels of deprivation, who are consequently more likely to be from a low-income household. This is likely a consequence of the reducing arts provision in state schools and colleges as, often, the only way for children to access the skill development and training opportunities needed to reach Guildhall School's high standard of entry is for their families to pay for this as extra-curricular activity, meaning children from low-income households are least likely to access it. Indeed, in 2021, ABRSM found that "children and adults from the wealthiest households are 1.4 times more likely to play a musical instrument than those from the poorest households" (p.15).

### 1.3 Ethnicity *(internal applicant, offer and new entrant data, 2018/19-2023/24)*

The School's APP 2020/21-2024/25 outlines an ambition to increase the proportion of new entrants who are Black, Asian and ethnically diverse, and Figure 7 shows that progress in the recruitment of students who are Black, Asian or ethnically diverse has been made in recent years. A higher proportion of offers are consistently made, with enrolments higher than applications since 2020/21 – data for 2018/19 and 2019/20 cannot be included due to small numbers.

Entry year	Proportion of applicants	Proportion of offers	Proportion of enrolments
2020/21	15%	22%	18%
2021/22	16%	19%	20%
2022/23	17%	21%	22%
2023/24	19%	21%	20%

Figure 7: proportion of Black, Asian or ethnically diverse at each stage of the application cycle, using Guildhall School internal data

Black, Asian and ethnically diverse applicants also have a marginally higher entry rate, with the 6yr aggregate at 7% compared to 6% for white students.

In the HE sector, around 29% of UK full-time undergraduates are Black Asian and ethnically diverse (2019/20-2021/22 HESA data). In the same time period the sector aggregate for Design, Creative and Performing Arts degree programmes was 17%, aligned to the School’s new entrant aggregate in this same time. From 2021/22-2023/24, the School’s aggregate data shows that 21% of new entrants were Black, Asian and ethnically diverse, notably higher than the known sector average.

OfS categorisation was used to analyse disaggregated ethnicity data – Black; Asian; mixed ethnicity; and ‘other’ (the latter being too small for any analysis). Using a six-year aggregate to account for small numbers, analysis shows that Black and mixed ethnicity applicants have good outcomes (Figure 8), though are a relatively small proportion of applicants overall.

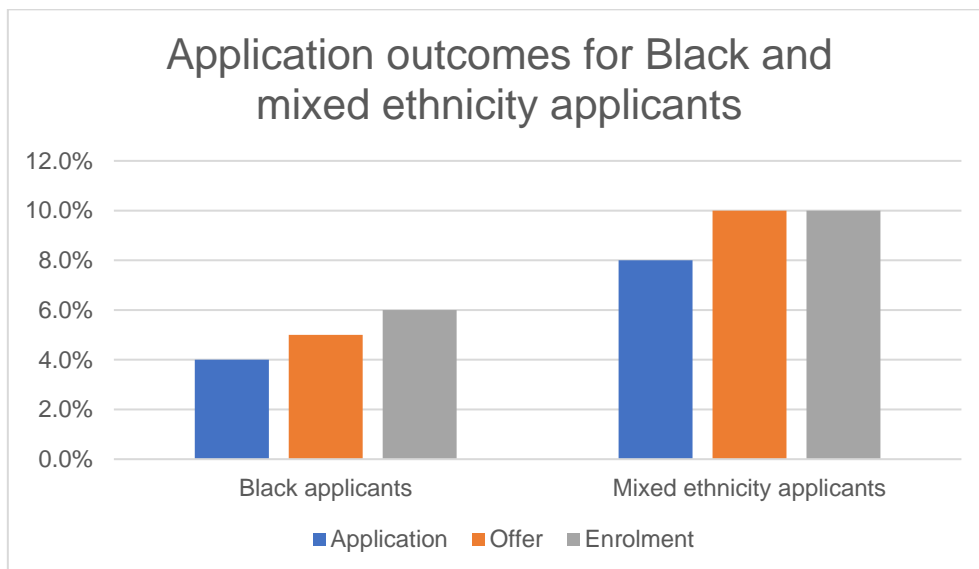


Figure 8: application, offer and new entrant rates for Black applicants and mixed ethnicity applicants, six-year aggregate 2018/19-2023/24, using Guildhall School internal data

The School receives a very low volume of applications from Asian applicants and in most years there is too little data to draw conclusions. The proportion of Asian students studying Design, Creative and Performing Arts undergraduate degrees in the UK overall is also very low – across the same time period an aggregate of 3% of the Asian student population were enrolled in these subjects. The School’s aggregate new entrant data from 2021/22-2023/24 does show a slight increase, but progress is slow. Students and alumni of Asian heritage have expressed interest in working with young people in their community to dispel myths around conservatoire training and creative careers, suggesting that the biggest Risk to Equality of Opportunity for this specific ethnic

group is linked to EORR Risks 'Information and Guidance', and 'Perception of Higher Education', specifically conservatoires.

There is no obvious risk to equality of opportunity for Black, Asian and ethnically diverse applicants overall when looking solely at ethnicity application and new entrant data; there has been a year on year increase in applications, and reasonable growth in the proportion of new entrants since 2020/21. Disaggregated analysis shows fairly positive outcomes for each ethnic group where sufficient data exists. However, it is notable that the recruitment of Black, Asian and ethnically diverse students varies by department, with the Acting department having greater diversity than the Music and Production Arts department – six-year aggregate data for new entrants departmentally is 44%, 14% and 10% respectively. Retaining a focus on the recruitment of Black, Asian and ethnically diverse students will support progress in all departments at the School.

### Ethnicity and IMD and state-educated intersectionality

To further understand whether the School should retain a target for Black, Asian and ethnically diverse new entrants, intersectional analysis was undertaken to identify whether there is a correlation between ethnicity and socio-economic status.

There is a demonstrable link between ethnicity and IMD across aggregate analysis of 2018/19-2023/24 data. Given the aforementioned small proportion of Q1 new entrants, it is helpful to first consider Q1 and Q2 together, compared to Q5. White students are more likely to be from a Q5 area than a Q1-2 area, and Black, Asian and ethnically diverse students are more likely to be from a Q1-2 area than a Q5 area.

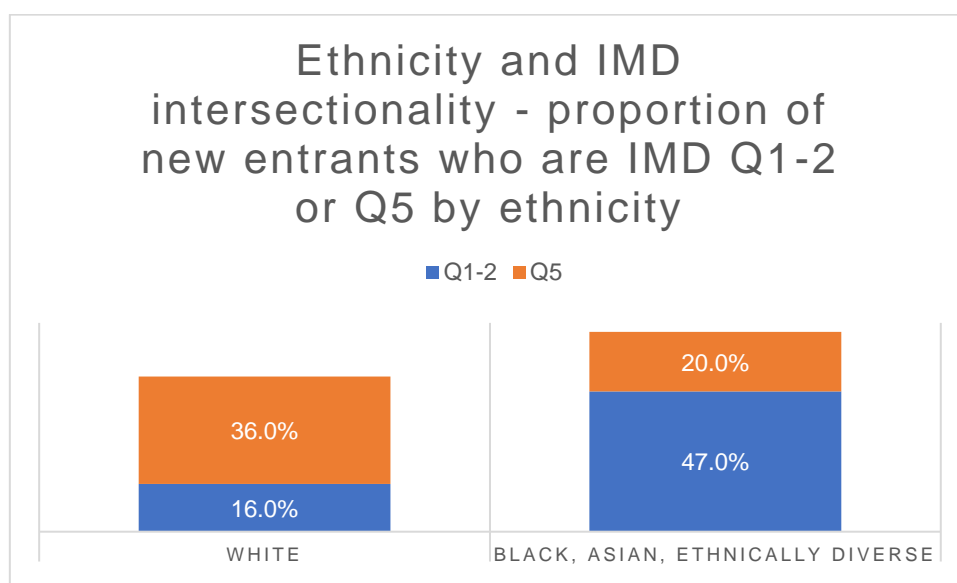


Figure 9: proportion of new entrants who are white and Black Asian and ethnically diverse, and who are IMD Q1-2 or Q5, 2018/19-2023/24, using Guildhall school internal data

When considering just Q1 and Q5, there is a far smaller gap between the two for Black, Asian and ethnically diverse new entrants – 23% Q1 and 20% Q5. However, just 4% of white new entrants were from a Q1 area, compared to 32% from Q5 areas, so the correlation remains. It is notable that Government research in 2020 found that Black, Asian and ethnically diverse people were more likely to live “in the most deprived 10% of neighbourhoods” than white people, with the exception of those from Chinese and Indian ethnic groups (who are underrepresented at the School).

Analysis also shows that 78% of Black, Asian and ethnically diverse new entrants listed a state-funded school or college as their last place of education, compared to 69% of white new entrants.

Further, disparity in access to performing arts careers and experiences in the creative industry remains, with Cox and Kilshaw (2021, p.12) finding that “amongst the orchestral workforce in England [...] 3-6% were Black, Asian or from other ethnically diverse groups” and the Arts Council England Equality, Diversity and Inclusion 2021-2022 report outlining that 21% of its paid artists (p.15), and just 9% of its theatre audiences (p.34), were Black, Asian and ethnically diverse.

This additional analysis indicates that Black, Asian and ethnically diverse applicants and new entrants are more likely to experience a Risk to Equality of Opportunity associated with their socio-economic background, and in accessing the performing arts and related careers, and should remain a focus within this APP.

**1.4 Disability** (internal applicant, offer and new entrant data, 2018/19-2023/24; internal student record data 2018/19-2022/23)

The School’s APP 2020/21-2024/25 set out two targets linked to disability; to increase the proportion of new entrants who declare a disability, and to increase the proportion of new entrants who declare a sensory, medical or physical disability.

Analysis of applicant disability data has highlighted a considerable gap between disability shared at the point of application and disability shared at some point in the applicant or student journey. In the years 2018/19-2022/23 **19%** of new entrants had shared a disability at the point of application, but **36%** of the same population had shared a disability when looking at up to date student data (with 14% categorised as having ‘multiple’ disabilities). This is substantially higher than the broader HE sector, with HESA data suggesting 18% of the UK undergraduate student population declared a disability 2018/19-2021/22. The following analysis looks at data at **application only**, to understand correlation with offer and enrolment rates – however this does result in new entrant data that is too small to be published in three of six years.

Entry year	Proportion of apps	Proportion of offers	Proportion of enrolments
2018/19	14%	17%	19%
2019/20	15%	15%	- -
2020/21	14%	17%	21%
2021/22	17%	17%	- -
2022/23	18%	22%	23%
2023/24	12%	14%	- -

Figure 10: proportion of applicants with a disability at application, offers and new entrant stage, using Guildhall School internal data at application

Across 2018/19-2023/24, applicants who share a disability have largely positive outcomes, with the proportion of offer-holders always on par or greater than the number of applicants, and the proportion of new entrants on par or greater in every year but 2021/22 (when data is too small to publish). In each year that the proportion of enrolments was higher than proportion of applications, applicants with a disability actually had a higher entry rate than applicants without a disability; anywhere from 2-3pp.

Analysing disaggregated disability is challenging given the School's small numbers. The majority of new entrants with a disability at application have a learning difference (51%). The School continues to receive a low volume of applications from applicants with physical, sensory, mobility and chronic health disabilities, and as a result continues to recruit very low numbers – across the six years of analysis, an aggregate 2% of applicants, and a slightly lower proportion of new entrants. There is also a low volume of new entrants disclosing a mental health condition, both at application and once they are students at the School.

The analysis does not identify a specific risk to equality of opportunity for applicants or new entrants who share a disability at this time, and whilst the School will continue to support applicants and students with disabilities through pre-entry and on-course Access and Participation provision, there will not be a specific target set for this group.

### **1.5 Age on entry** (*internal applicant, offer and new entrant data, 2018/19-2023/24*)

The School does not have a target for mature (aged 21+) new entrants in its APP 2020/21-2024/25, as data analysis indicated a slight upward trend in recruitment during development. Since 2020/21 the proportion of mature new entrants has declined whilst the proportion of young new entrants has risen. Annual data is too small for publication, but analysis of 2018/19-2020/21 and 2021/22-2023/24 aggregates shows a 2% decline in the proportion of mature new entrants. Across other characteristic analysis at the Access stage there is relative parity in outcomes for each group – the proportion of new entrants is relative to the number of applicants from that group and entry rates are largely aligned to entry rates of their comparator group. However, it is notable that in every year of analysis, mature applicants had worse outcomes than their young counterparts, with the gap in entry rate growing from 2pp in 2020/21 to 4pp in 2023/24.

Though initial analysis indicated there may be a Risk to Equality of Opportunity for mature applicants, more focused analysis points towards these findings being a result of the volatility of small student numbers and the competitive nature of the School's degree programmes. Mature applicants are significantly more likely to apply to the BA Acting, with 93% of all mature applicants to the School applying to this programme from 2018/19-2023/24. The School receives a very high volume of BA Acting applications, with around 1% of applicants successful in their application each year. It is therefore unsurprising that a high proportion of mature applicants are unsuccessful in their application. Mature applicants to the BA Acting programme actually have a slightly higher offer rate (2% compared to 1%) and equivalent entry rate in this time period, so although the majority may be unsuccessful, there is no notable indication of a Risk to Equality of Opportunity. On this basis, the School will not set a target for mature applicants.

## **2. Continuation** (*internal student withdrawal data 2018/19-2022/23*)

Of students starting their course in 2018/19-2022/23 just 4% of UK undergraduates withdrew in the first year of their course, giving the School an overall continuation rate of 96% - higher than the sector average in 2019/20 of 91%<sup>58</sup>. It is difficult to identify potential Risks to Equality of Opportunity from this very small dataset, but five year aggregate analysis was undertaken for some protected characteristics, where data was sufficient.

The School's APP 2020/21-2024/25 outlines a target to improve continuation rates for mature students, and there was a 100% continuation rate 2021/22-2022/23. Across 2018/19-2022/23,

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<sup>58</sup> Figure 2, <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/annual-review-2022/a-statistical-overview-of-higher-education-in-england/>

there was a gap in continuation rate of 4pp between mature and young students at the School, however the actual number of students withdrawing was very small for both groups, and the continuation rate of mature students was notably higher than the 2019/20 sector averages of 86.4% for those aged 21-30 and 85.4% for those aged 31+<sup>59</sup>.

There is a very small continuation rate gap of 1pp between students with a disability and students without a disability, but the School's continuation rate for students with a disability remains notably higher than the 2019/20 sector average, which was 90.2%.

There will always be a handful of students who experience circumstances beyond their, or the School's, control that result in a withdrawal, or who change their mind about their studies. Analysis does not indicate that there is a specific Risk to Equality of Opportunity at this stage of the student lifecycle and no continuation target will be set, though continuation rates will continue to be monitored for groups with protected characteristics as part of broader reporting in the School.

### **3. Awards** (*internal awards data 2018/19-2022/23*)

This analysis included **all** student award outcomes, including Ordinary degrees, diplomas etc., to understand if any group faces inequality in obtaining an Honours degree, e.g. they are less likely to complete their degree or to submit work of the necessary academic standard. The actual numbers of students not awarded an Honours degree overall is low across the five-year aggregate (n = < 50), and no group is disproportionately less likely to be awarded an Honours degree.

#### **3.1 Disability**

The School's APP 2020/21-2024/25 sets out a target to increase the proportion of students with a disability obtaining a 'good degree'<sup>60</sup>.

Analysis shows that although the School surpassed the milestone in 2020/21, when 91% of students with a disability obtained a 'good degree' compared to 89% of those without, it did not in the ensuing two years (75% and 80%). However, the student population changed in this time, with 29% of all awards in 2021/22 and 40% in 2022/23 going to students with a disability, compared to 23% in 2020/21, providing some context for the increase in volatility. It is notable that in 2022/23 there was a gap of just 3pp in 'good degrees' between students with and without a disability. A more pronounced gap of 16pp in the awarding of 'good degrees' for students with and without disabilities in 2021/22 was likely a result of the pandemic, as students completing their studies in this academic year were most impacted by the disruption. The five-year aggregate is a more reliable means of understanding if there is an underlying Risk to Equality of Opportunity, and shows there is a very small gap in 'good degree' outcomes, just 3pp between those with a disability and those without, with 84% of all students with a disability obtaining a 'good degree'. At this time, there is no indication of a Risk to Equality of Opportunity. Students will continue to be encouraged to access support services for their learning and disability needs, and the School will continue to monitor degree award outcomes for students with disabilities as part of broader reporting.

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<sup>59</sup> Continuation rates for underrepresented groups - <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/annual-review-2022/a-statistical-overview-of-higher-education-in-england/>

<sup>60</sup> First or Upper Second Class Honours.



### 3.2 Ethnicity

Across the HE sector there is an awarding gap between white students and Black, Asian and ethnically diverse students, with Universities UK identifying an 8.8pp gap in 2020/21<sup>61</sup>. The sector gap for 'good degrees' is particularly pronounced between white and Black students, at 20pp in 2021/22<sup>62</sup>.

Awards data from 2018/19-2022/23 shows the emergence of an awarding gap at the School. Aggregate analysis shows that 88% of white students achieved a 'good degree' in this time, compared to 74% of Black, Asian or ethnically diverse students (14pp gap). In every year, a lower proportion of Black, Asian or ethnically diverse students are awarded First Class Honours than white students, and in every year a higher proportion are awarded Lower Second Class Honours (*although actual numbers for this degree classification are too small for publication*). There is parity in Upper Second Class Honours awards (Figure 11).

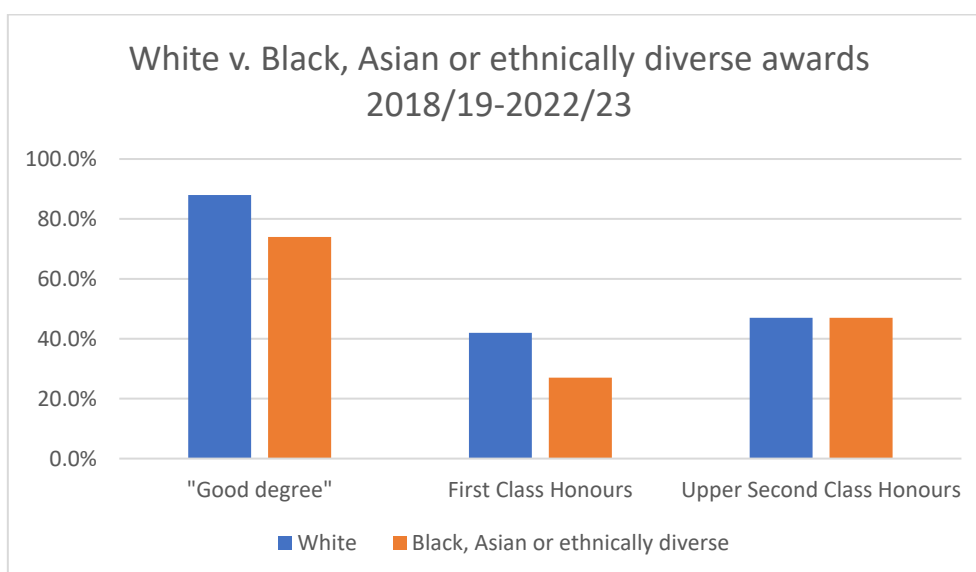


Figure 11: Proportion of white and Black, Asian and ethnically diverse students obtaining a 'good degree' and obtaining First and Upper Second Class Honours 2018/19-2022/23, using Guildhall school internal data

Given the sector-wide focus on the awarding gap between white and Black students, disaggregated ethnicity data has been considered, however this has not highlighted notably worse outcomes for Black students, with their outcomes in line with aggregated ethnicity analysis in this time. Further analysis by actual degree award classification is not publishable due to small numbers.

As is the case across the sector, the School's ethnicity awarding gap is 'unexplained'<sup>63</sup>. Consideration has been given to intersectionality of students who are Black, Asian and ethnically diverse and those who have a disability to understand potential correlation linked to learning support needs, but this analysis did not show a correlation between the two; in fact, Black, Asian and ethnically diverse students who shared a disability were slightly more likely to be awarded a 'good degree' than those who had not.

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/Reports/closing-the-gap-three-years-on.pdf>

<sup>62</sup> OfS data dashboard

<sup>63</sup> Executive Summary p4 - <https://s33320.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/Full-report-the-impact-of-curriculum-reform-on-the-ethnicity-degree-awarding-gap.pdf>

Three-year aggregate analysis does show a reduction in the ‘good degree’ gap between white and Black, Asian and ethnically diverse students, to 13pp. Whilst there is the emergence of an indication of Risk to Equality of Opportunity for students who are Black, Asian or ethnically diverse at this stage of the student lifecycle, given the very small number of students not awarded a ‘good degree’ (n = < 30), and the three year aggregate reduction in the gap, the School will not commit to a numerical target in this APP. However, the School will continue to monitor this awarding gap closely and ensure that students access both targeted and widely available learning support.

### 3.3 Age on entry

The mature (aged 21+) student population at the School is small, and so five-year aggregate analysis has been undertaken to mitigate some of the data volatility that this brings. Analysis shows a 9pp gap between young and mature students obtaining ‘good degrees’. Assumptions can be drawn for the reasons behind this; the School’s degrees are intensive, and students with other responsibilities (e.g. children) may have less time to engage as fully as their peers; they may also experience financial challenges as they independently fund their studies, that increase the need to undertake paid employment; and they may need to familiarise with academic writing and study, after a longer time outside of education. The analysis does show the emergence of a Risk to Equality of Opportunity for mature students. However, given the small number of mature students across the five year analysis, particularly for those not obtaining a ‘good degree’ (n = < 25) and the wide-ranging individual circumstances that they bring, at this time the School will not set a specific target, and instead commit to monitoring mature student degree award outcomes, and ensuring that mature students access both targeted and widely available learning support.

## 4. Progression *(Office for Students progression data for Guildhall School)*

The School currently has one target for progression; ‘to improve the progression outcomes of students declaring a disability’.

The School does not hold internal data on graduate progression. Of the limited Office for Students data available for Guildhall School graduate progression, analysis was possible for four-year and two-year aggregates of students with and without a disability, which does show the elimination of a progression gap (Figure 12).

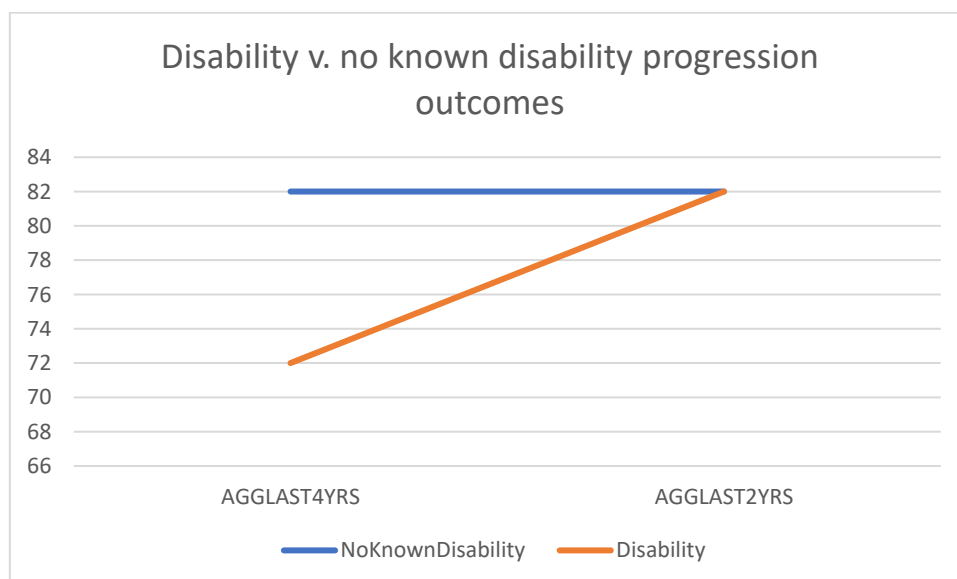


Figure 12: progression gap between graduates with and without disabilities, using Office for Students’ data

The School has also been able to consider some progression to postgraduate study, within the Music department specifically, as a large proportion of students continue their training beyond the four-year undergraduate degree, either with the School or at another conservatoire in order to broaden their training. 42% of Music graduating students 2019/20-2022/23 applied for postgraduate study at the School, with 83% of applicants made an offer, and 75% of offer-holders accepting. Of all Music graduates in this time, 26% continued into postgraduate study at the School, and it is likely that many more undertook postgraduate study elsewhere.

On this basis, and given the limited data to understand progression outcomes for other groups that may experience Risks to Equality of Opportunity, the School will not include a specific commitment for progression in the APP 2025/26-2028/29.

## **Annex B: Further information that sets out the rationale, assumptions and evidence base for each intervention strategy that is included in the access and participation plan.**

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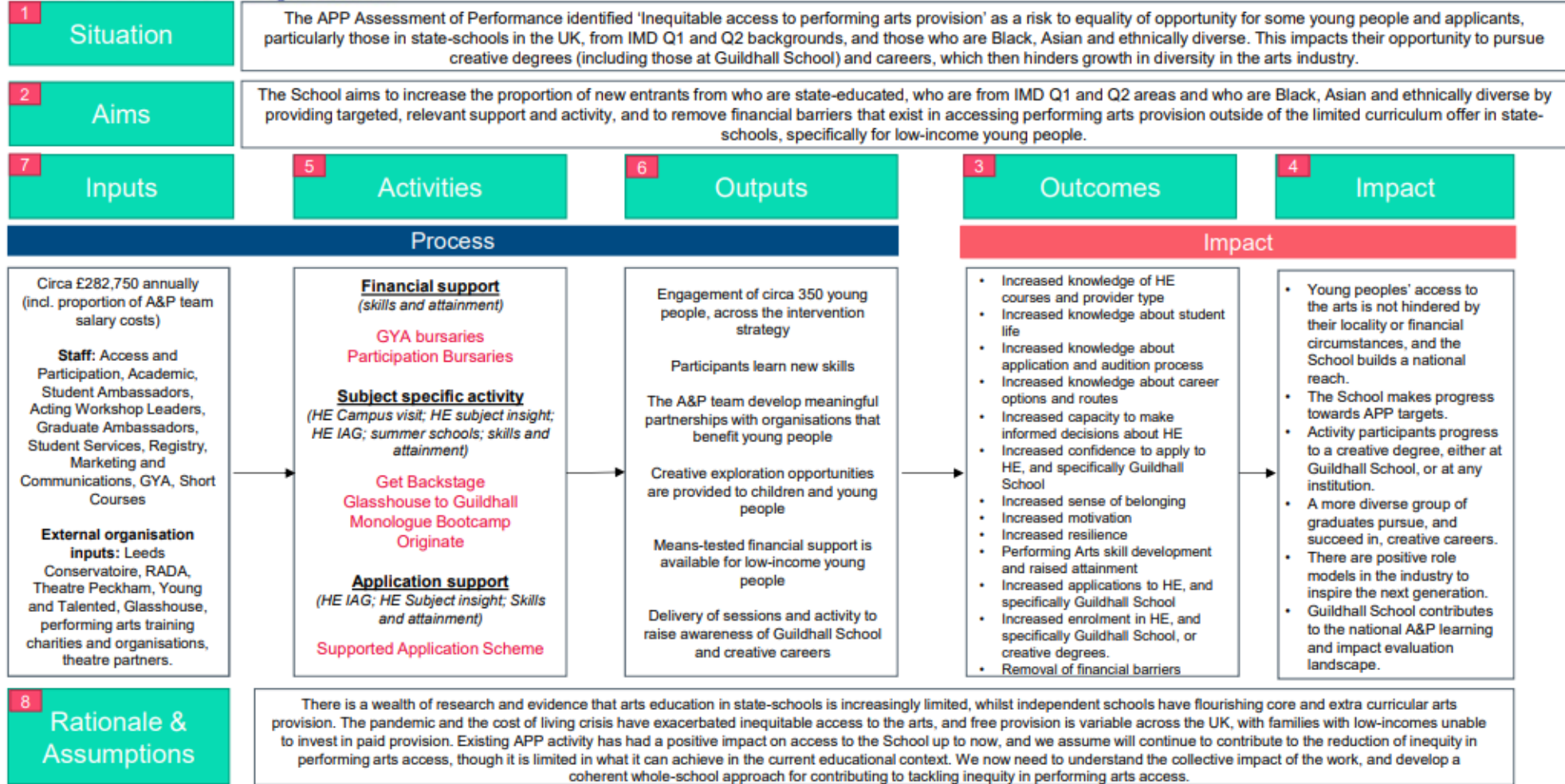
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# Intervention Strategy 1 – Theory of Change



Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education

## Intervention Strategy 1: Access





# Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: Guildhall School of Music & Drama

Provider UKPRN: 10007825

## Summary of 2025-26 entrant course fees

\*course type not listed

### Inflation statement:

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

Table 3b - Full-time course fee levels for 2025-26 entrants

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree		N/A	9250
Foundation degree	*	N/A	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND	*	N/A	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	*
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year	*	N/A	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Other	*	N/A	*

Table 3b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2025-26

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

Table 4b - Part-time course fee levels for 2025-26 entrants

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

Table 4b - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2025-26

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

# Fees, investments and targets

## 2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: Guildhall School of Music & Drama

Provider UKPRN: 10007825

### Investment summary

A provider is expected to submit information about its forecasted investment to achieve the objectives of its access and participation plan in respect of the following areas: access, financial support and research and evaluation. Note that this does not necessarily represent the total amount spent by a provider in these areas. Table 6b provides a summary of the forecasted investment, across the four academic years covered by the plan, and Table 6d gives a more detailed breakdown.

#### Notes about the data:

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.

Yellow shading indicates data that was calculated rather than input directly by the provider.

In Table 6d (under 'Breakdown):

"Total access investment funded from HFI" refers to income from charging fees above the basic fee limit.

"Total access investment from other funding (as specified)" refers to other funding, including OIS funding (but excluding Uni Connect), other public funding and funding from other sources such as philanthropic giving and private sector sources and/or partners.

**Table 6b - Investment summary**

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Breakdown	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Access activity investment (£)	NA	£268,000	£268,000	£268,000	£268,000
Financial support (£)	NA	£163,000	£163,000	£170,000	£175,000
Research and evaluation (£)	NA	£65,000	£65,000	£65,000	£65,000

**Table 6d - Investment estimates**

Investment estimate (to the nearest £1,000)	Breakdown	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Access activity investment	Pre-16 access activities (£)	£116,000	£116,000	£116,000	£116,000
Access activity investment	Post-16 access activities (£)	£144,000	£144,000	£144,000	£144,000
Access activity investment	Other access activities (£)	£8,000	£8,000	£8,000	£8,000
<b>Access activity investment</b>	<b>Total access investment (£)</b>	<b>£268,000</b>	<b>£268,000</b>	<b>£268,000</b>	<b>£268,000</b>
<b>Access activity investment</b>	<b>Total access investment (as % of HFI)</b>	<b>15.1%</b>	<b>15.3%</b>	<b>15.0%</b>	<b>14.8%</b>
<b>Access activity investment</b>	<b>Total access investment funded from HFI (£)</b>	<b>£268,000</b>	<b>£268,000</b>	<b>£268,000</b>	<b>£268,000</b>
<b>Access activity investment</b>	<b>Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>
Financial support investment	Bursaries and scholarships (£)	£163,000	£163,000	£170,000	£175,000
Financial support investment	Fee waivers (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Hardship funds (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
<b>Financial support investment</b>	<b>Total financial support investment (£)</b>	<b>£163,000</b>	<b>£163,000</b>	<b>£170,000</b>	<b>£175,000</b>
<b>Financial support investment</b>	<b>Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)</b>	<b>9.2%</b>	<b>9.3%</b>	<b>9.5%</b>	<b>9.7%</b>
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (£)	£65,000	£65,000	£65,000	£65,000
<b>Research and evaluation investment</b>	<b>Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)</b>	<b>3.7%</b>	<b>3.7%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>



