
Strategic Equality Plan: Our Progress 2021-22



Anyone walking through any part of our campus will see that our commitment to strategic equality is spelt out loud and clear. More than 180 wall spaces feature our community's Respect statement – carefully worded and designed and placed for maximum visibility.

The College is, indeed, a space that we intend to be for everyone – an open and welcoming place where individual characteristics are celebrated and protected.

For the creative work on which we all thrive, every characteristic in our world is an opportunity to explore something new. The differences between us encourage us to push new artistic boundaries while working towards deeper understanding and appreciation of each other. For us, it is about so much more than respect. It is fundamental to the way we pursue artistic excellence.

As we continue this journey, we are moving forward all the time, always aware of how much more there is to do. To do this we are working together – students, colleagues, artists, audiences, and with brilliant critical friends to challenge and support us with their expert eyes. We would like to thank them all, because without that collective energy this progress could not happen.

This update captures a range of headlines and highlights from 2021-22, explaining some of the ways we have taken this work forward through the last year. We hope that by sharing these actions, you will gain a stronger appreciation of our commitment to strategic equality.

With a focus always on improving ourselves – which is a conservatoire way of working, after all – we celebrate our progress here and look forward to the future.

Professor Helena Gaunt, Principal
Natalie Roe, Student Union President

Respectful Space

Everyone working and collaborating in RWCMD is entitled to do so in a safe space. A respectful space is a supportive environment free of bullying, discrimination and harassment of any kind.

+ As part of the RWCMD community, we will value our differences when collaborating, promoting creative challenge while retaining the utmost respect for each other.

+ We will be polite and treat one another with respect at all times.

+ If we are subjected to, or witness bullying, discrimination or harassment we will speak out knowing that our voices will be heard and we will be taken seriously.

+ We will actively promote a positive, optimistic and mutually supportive approach to work and study, celebrating the arts and creativity.

Our Values

Expert and
Inclusive

Contemporary and
Collaborative

Resourceful and
Responsible

Together we will create a respectful space.

Our Strategic Equality Objectives

These are the eight ways we are working towards equality, diversity and inclusion across all protected characteristics. The full details are in our published plan.

1 Culture and Governance To promote dignity, respect, inclusion and fairness within the College community and embed equality into the decision making of the College.

2 Collaboration, Communication and Public Engagement To ensure that engagement takes place with staff, student, audiences, community and voluntary sector groups from protected characteristics through collaboration, communication and consultation.

3 Diversity of Student Body and Experience To attract, select and retain a diverse range of students to study at the College and create an environment that encourages and supports all students to actively engage and to realise their full potential.

4 Attracting, Retaining and Developing Staff To attract, retain and develop a diverse range of people to work for the College and to enable them to have access to open and transparent career development and progression.

5 Accessibility To ensure College buildings and infrastructure reflect the diverse needs of our communities and provide accessible and inclusive working and learning environments.

6 Inclusivity in Professional Practice To develop an inclusive approach to research, whereby the involvement of people from protected characteristic groups is promoted and barriers to the participation of people from diverse groups are removed.

7 Equal Pay To undertake Equal Pay Reviews as a part of the USW Group every three years and implement the actions arising from the resulting Equal Pay Action Plans.

8 Data Collection and Monitoring To enhance the collection, analysis and monitoring of equalities data and relevant equalities information.

Objective 1: Culture and Governance



To promote dignity, respect, inclusion and fairness within the College community and embed equality into the decision making of the College.

- + We have introduced an **inclusive approach to curriculum resources**, to support teaching and learning. Resources are also now tagged in our library catalogue to make protected characteristics materials easier to find.
- + **Clear new guidance** was introduced to support higher expectations around creating inclusive spaces across College. Working with staff, students and external partners, we launched language guidance for race and mental health awareness, using staff development and student induction.
- + Our **Respect statements** are now across every College space, redesigned and placed for better impact. The ethos of RWCMD as *A Space For Everyone* was also highlighted to our new student joiners through a two-week induction period in 2021, which focused on equality and respect.

Objective 2: Collaboration, Communication and Public Engagement



To ensure engagement takes place with staff, student, audiences and local voluntary sector groups from protected characteristics through collaboration, communication and consultation.

- + RWCMD **pushed new boundaries** by working with leading artists, with the Autumn term being the most diverse in RWCMD history.
- + Bringing audiences a **wider range of artistic voices**, the College delivered more diverse and ambitious productions than ever before and used these collaborative opportunities to enrich learning for students.
- + We worked with some of industry's most sought-after creatives including 2021/22 **Writer in Residence Roy Williams OBE FRSL and Artist in Residence, composer Errollyn Wallen CBE.**
- + New **RWCMD Community Panels** launched, led by the Students' Union in partnership with College. These collaborative open discussions focussed on issues around LGBTQ+, socio-economic, disability and ethnicity.
- + We recruited our first-ever **Community Engagement Partner** – a role designed to connect the College more closely with schools and communities, identify potential barriers and encourage a wider range of interaction.

Objective 3: Diversity of Student Body and Experience



To attract, select and retain a diverse range of students to study at the College and create an environment that encourages and supports students to actively engage and realise their full potential.

- + As a partner alongside others in higher education and the NHS, we joined forces for the launch of the **Mental Health University Liaison Service** in April 2022. This intervention service initiative bridges the gap between College and NHS provision, with medical professionals on site every week.
- + We launched our reimagined **Bursary Scheme**, which awards automatic bursaries to every student who joins RWCMD from a household with a below-average income. 100% of recipients tell us it helped ease financial pressure.
- + Our new partnership to create Wales' first disability-led **National Open Youth Orchestra** got off the ground. The initiative, with BBC National Orchestra of Wales, aims to bring disabled young talent into the mainstream through a conservatoire experience.

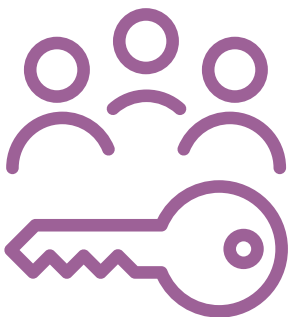
Objective 4: Attracting, Retaining and Developing Staff



To attract, retain and develop a diverse range of people to work for the College and to enable them to have access to open and transparent career development and progression.

- + We further developed Restorative Practice training for staff, to grow more expertise. With a working group of 14 level 2 trained staff established in Summer 22, we now have **39 qualified practitioners** to help resolve conflict at College early.
- + In Research and Scholarly activity, we took a **deep dive into our ethics processes**, to review and reframe our way of working. As a result, we have created a Subcommittee to oversee student and staff research and has begun to offer ethics training to all students.
- + Our Staff **Development Day** this year focussed on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

Objective 5: Accessibility



To ensure College buildings and infrastructure reflect the diverse needs of our communities and provide accessible and inclusive working and learning environments.

- + With an eye on future diversity, we commissioned a **comprehensive audit** of our facilities, to help us identify real barriers where they exist.
- + A full, College-wide **Accessibility Action Plan** is now a dynamic way to track progress on accessibility.
- + To make sure the work around accessibility progresses as quickly as possible, with clear accountability, we introduced a **new cross-College Working Group**.

Objective 6: Inclusivity in Professional Practice



To develop an inclusive approach to research, whereby the involvement of people from protected characteristic groups is promoted and barriers to the participation removed.

- + Our performance **exam panels** in music have been re-energised with a focus on equity and transparency, including stronger representation of protected characteristics and a student advocacy role for each panel Chair.
- + We continued our commitment to formal membership of the Conservatoires UK Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, sharing best practice with the wider conservatoire sector and **leading on use of data** for strategic decisions.
- + Through our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee and sub groups, we worked with **expert partners** including Race Council Cymru, Stonewall Cymru and UCAN Productions.

Objective 7: Equal Pay



To undertake Equal Pay Reviews as a part of the USW Group every three years and implement the actions arising from the resulting Equal Pay Action Plans.

- + As part of the USW Group, **RWCMD is included** in the university cycle for regular review, with both the University and College committed to ensuring there is no pay discrimination within pay structures.
- + The next Equal Pay Review is due to **take place 2024**, informed by an audit to compare the pay of the protected characteristic groups (age, disability, race, sex) and ensure equal pay is given for equal work.
- + Meanwhile we continue to **gather data and monitor pay** across the workforce.

Objective 8: Data Collecting and Monitoring



To enhance the collection, analysis and monitoring of equalities data and relevant equalities information.

- + Recognising the crucial role of benchmarking to monitor progress, we appointed our **first Data Lead** in Summer 22. Following last year's commissioned specialist data project, this role will sharpen our use of data and develop insight for future planning.
- + A bespoke **staff survey** identified protected characteristics across our community, to help inform future development and committee membership across College.

The Year Ahead

The journey continues year-on-year, and across 2022-23 we will keep moving forward across each of our objectives. Our action plan is purposely dynamic, acknowledging that some aspects will happen sooner than planned and some will be later. The most important thing for us is that we are open to change and to challenge along the way, learning as much as we can together.

In the year ahead, we aim to achieve more progress in a number of focused priority areas. We will:

Make step-change in our accessibility, to truly become a space for everyone. This needs an honest assessment of the whole journey for anyone engaging with the College – student, colleague, audience member or anyone else we could be relevant to. From our website to our physical teaching and learning spaces, we will be making improvements so that we are increasingly inclusive and learning as we go.

Put extra effort into how we find and foster our future talent, across students and colleagues at RWCMD. We need the very best talent to help us achieve the excellence we will always pursue, and we know that we need to work harder to reach and connect with a wider range of people and places. We are aiming to be an organisation which thrives on the richest imaginable mix of diversity.

We want to thank everyone in the RWCMD community who is helping us on this important journey.

Next year, we will report again on our progress as we strive towards our strategic objectives across all areas of RWCMD life.

If you would like to learn more about our work in this area, please contact info@rwcmd.ac.uk