RADA

Access and Participation Plan
2020-2025

31 May 2019

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Section 1: Introduction and assessment of performance

Introduction

1   RADA is a world-leading educational institution, training people from all backgrounds and nationalities in the dramatic arts. Inclusion is one of our core values: we want an Academy that sets the standard in actor and theatre production training and can be delivered to talented people irrespective of their personal characteristics or circumstances. We have made positive progress, especially in the last five years, in achieving a more representative student population and in diversifying our staff body. There is more work to do. This Access and Participation Plan, together with our plan for 2019-20, outlines our assessment of current successes. We identify areas where we intend to take further action and set out some of the strategic approaches we intend to take to improve the participation of under-represented groups in conservatoire training. This, we hope, will create change within the theatre, film and media industries of the future.

2   RADA is a very small institution, with approximately 200 undergraduate and postgraduate students on programmes validated by King's College London and up to a further 40 postgraduate students on a joint programme with Birkbeck, University of London (these students are registered with Birkbeck). Undergraduate provision is focused on two areas: actor training (a single bachelor's degree programme) and technical theatre and stage management (a foundation degree with a "top up" BA year). The fundable (home/EU and new to higher education) undergraduate student population is around 150 students. RADA receives approximately 3,600 applications for around 60 undergraduate places annually, with the majority (c.3,200 – 3,500) applying for the BA (Hons) Acting which takes 28 students each year. Our analysis for the purposes of this plan is focused, at access levels, on entry to the FdA Technical Theatre and Stage Management and BA Acting. We use the acronym 'TTSM' for the former throughout this plan. As performance may be different between the programmes, this plan uses both aggregate and disaggregated data, showing differences in achievement by programme where relevant.

3   Our principal data sources for analysing our performance are:

- the OfS access and participation data (via the data dashboard, 29 March 2019 release), in particular the Access proportions data analysis;
- internal equality monitoring of applications, which is currently limited by the information we collect, as RADA applications are not conducted through UCAS;
- internal equality monitoring on student success (continuation and attainment);
- internal (and relatively informal) data collected about graduate destinations;
- data collected through our scholarship and bursary scheme which we partly use as a proxy for social class (we recognise the limitations of this approach, but until the OfS participation data, we did not have access to published information).

4   As with other specialist arts institutions, the (former) Destination of Leavers in Higher Education survey has limitations for students working in a freelance capacity. We ourselves collect information about student destinations specifically in relation to professional employment in their areas of training and the volume of graduating actors leaving with an agent.

5   RADA does not, at present, subscribe independently to the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) service as it remains an affiliate of the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama during 2018-19, which has not subscribed. We intend to subscribe from 2019-20.

1.1: Higher education participation, household income, or socio-economic background

Access

6   We collect, at application stage, information about students' income. Our data over three years show a fairly consistent picture with 25% of applicants (disclosing information) coming from backgrounds of under £25,000. However, around 28% of applicants choose not to disclose their family income, so we do not necessarily have a full picture. There is a consistent difference (around 7%) between the number of applicants disclosing lower-income backgrounds between BA Acting and FdA TTSM. We have not, historically, analysed where students might be classed as 'mature' at the point of application and thus financial assessment is on the basis of their own income, rather than parental income, meaning that they appear to be from a lower-income family than other indications of socio-economic background might suggest.

7   Of our students, around 19% come from backgrounds of under £25,000. It is difficult to compare directly to applicant ratios, given the high proportion of applicants who do not disclose income background during the application process.

8   The data dashboard shows a mixed position for RADA in relation to the Index of Multiple Deprivation. Over a five-year period, RADA's intake of those in the two quintiles of highest deprivation has been between 62% of the student population and 25% of the student population. The trend over three years suggests that we are taking fewer students from more deprived quintiles (1 and 2). The numbers are small (averaging at 60 students), so a handful of students can make a significant impact on performance. Having access to this data for the first time means that we can monitor this more closely.

9   The data dashboard for POLAR4 indicates that RADA's student population is dominated by those from areas most likely to go to university, showing an increase in those from Q5 (most likely) but a significant decrease from Q4 (second most likely). Those from Q1 and 2 (least likely) feature as less than 10% and not in all years. Internal analysis of the 2018-19 cohort indicates that 4% of students are from POLAR4 Q1. Our POLAR4 data are subject to the same limitations as elsewhere, as postcode analysis does not necessarily indicate the individual circumstances or background of students, but general trends within an area. This is particularly pertinent when recruiting students with a London postcode.

Success

10   Our equality monitoring for the 2017-18 academic year shows no difference in outcomes for students, using household income as a determinant of socio-economic background. There are limitations to this measure, both in number of students and also using income as a proxy for social class. We are looking at a better collection of measures to determine socio-economic background and correlate to student progress.

Progression to employment or further study

11   There is no evidence that students from lower-income backgrounds failed to progress from the FdA to the BA TTSM. We do not have any reliable data concerning employment outcomes. Once we have established our measures for students, we can follow these through into employment and compare against the IMD/POLAR4 data that exists in relation to progression. If we start with the current student cohort progressing into their final year, we should have at least one year's data by the end of 2021 academic year.

1.2: Black, Asian and minority ethnic students

Access

12   There is a divergent picture in BAME recruitment across our two programmes, with most of the significant progress in increasing the population of BAME students focused on the BA Acting.

13   BA Acting: the proportion of BAME applicants remains constant over a six-year period at an average of 15%. The chart below shows the breakdown for 2017-18 applicants from different groups (BAME applications were at 17% for this year).

2017-18 BA ACTING APPLICATIONS

- Not disclosed 3%
- Other 1%
- Mixed 8%
- Asian 2%
- Black 3%
- White 83%
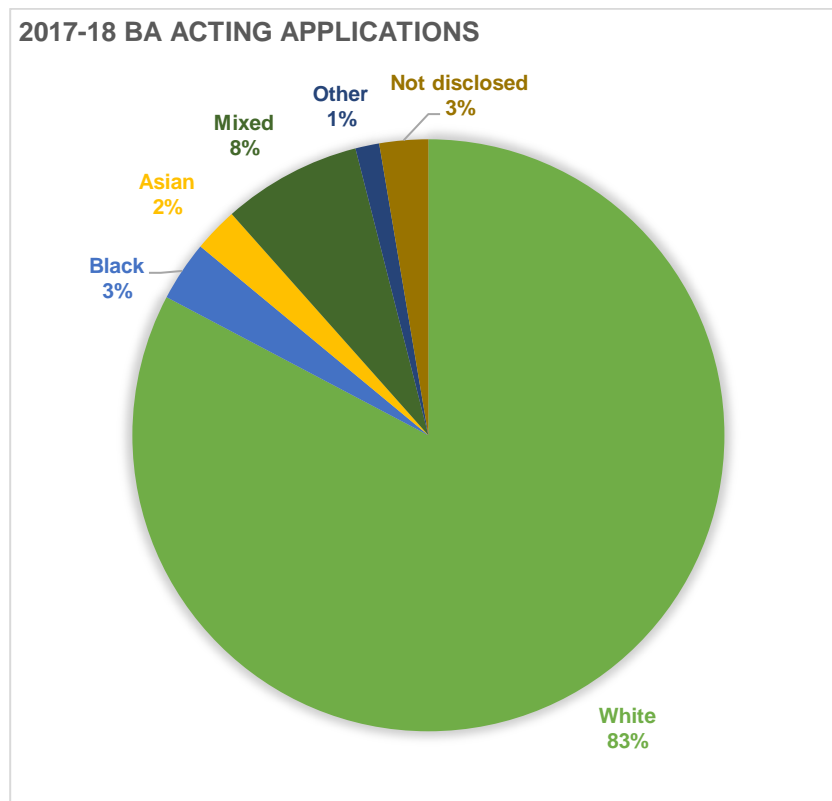
14   The 2017/18 cohort comprises 32% BAME students. The offer to acceptance rate for acting is 1:1 across all groups.

15   FdA TTSM: application numbers in TTSM are smaller than acting, so show greater divergence in BAME applicants year on year, but averaging at around 14%. For 2017-18 the white/BAME split is the same as in acting (83%:17%) and the composition from the different aggregated groups is similar, with slightly higher numbers of Asian applicants (5%). The enrolment rate for BAME students is lower at 8%. We need to do more work to establish whether this reflects fewer offers made, or fewer students of colour taking up places.

16   Overall, the data dashboard shows a picture consistent with RADA's own data of a steadily increasing number of students of colour (to 17% in 2017-18, slightly higher than the national average for the same groups). This is focused on black and mixed race students, with a significantly lower proportion of Asian students than other higher education providers. These students do not feature on the data dashboard, but the numbers entering across the two programmes are under five for all Asian backgrounds. HESA data show that the proportion of UK undergraduate students from black or mixed race backgrounds studying creative arts and

design in 2017-18 was 8.4% (black, 3.8% and mixed 4.6%) (source HESA student record table 34). RADA's Asian heritage student entrants were above the average of 3.8% for creative arts.

Success

17   Non-continuation
      There is no evidence of any difference in non-continuation. Numbers of students who do not continue (including those interrupting students) are under five.

18   Attainment
      BA Acting: our 2016-17 and 17-18 equality analysis showed no difference in outcome for BAME graduating actors over a two-year period. FdA TTSM: 2017-18 our equality analysis showed that BAME students had lower outcomes (one standard deviation), based on very small numbers.

Progression to employment or further study

19   Based on our own employment records, BAME students have shown equal or better progression outcomes than non-BAME graduates, especially into professional work. Based on 2016-17 and 2017-18 data, all BAME actors had an agent at the point of graduation and all BAME graduates had work within six months.

1.3 Mature students

Access

20   RADA has a consistently high proportion of mature students (aged over 21 on entry). The data dashboard shows this as averaging around 39% over the five years to 2017-18. The picture is different for "first degree" and "other undergraduate" which broadly equate to the BA Acting and the FdA TTSM, with the majority of older students studying on the BA Acting programme.

Success

21   We have not consistently monitored non-continuation nor attainment data for mature students. Mature students (on the basis of very small numbers) are less likely to interrupt their studies at RADA. There do not appear on the basis of data held to be any differences in attainment for these students. We need to add mature students to our equality monitoring in future. The HESA data do not yet disaggregate RADA from the Conservatoire from Dance and Drama in their monitoring tables.

Progression to employment or further study

22   There is no evidence that mature students are less likely to progress to the BA TTSM top up year. We have no conclusive evidence through our own monitoring of student employment that there is any gap for mature students in employment, including likelihood of signing with an agent for acting students.

1.4 Disabled students

Access

23   Based on RADA's application data, disabled students generally have an equal chance of being offered a place at RADA as their non-disabled peers. The application rates for both

programmes average at 15%. The average enrolled number of disabled students is 19% which is consistent with the data dashboard percentage of 21%. Disabled students' chances as a group remain consistent through all stages of the application process. This is consistently higher than the average disabled student population of 14.6%, and consistent with the creative arts student population at 20.3% in 2017-18 (HESA Table 33).

24   The highest proportion of both disabled applicants and subsequent students across both Acting and TTSM are those with specific learning difficulties, followed by mental health conditions and students disclosing multiple impairments. The multiple impairment disclosure includes students with physical and sensory disabilities, but in very small numbers. From our student wellbeing service data, around 5% of the HE student population (including postgraduate) have long-standing mental health conditions, which is consistent with our application data.

Success

25   Non-continuation
        There is no specific evidence to suggest that disabled students generally are less likely to complete their studies at RADA. There is a correlation between disabled students and students interrupting their studies, but these students rarely withdraw and are very likely to return and complete their programme. RADA assists any students 'intermitting' for the period of that interruption. We have analysed this information by group but are not sharing at any further level of disaggregation as the numbers are small and risk disclosing individual identities.

26   Attainment
        Our equality monitoring for 2016-17 and 2017-18 did not distinguish between specific impairments, but overall shows that disabled achievement is one standard deviation below that of their peers across all programmes.

Progression to employment or further study

27   Based on very small numbers (fewer than five) and three years' data, disabled students seem to be less likely to progress to the BA TTSM. There is a selection point between the foundation degree and bachelor's degree and a maximum of 55% of students have been able to progress because of limited places. Given small numbers we have not been able to establish any trends by impairment type. The transition between these programmes needs monitoring over a longer period, especially as we anticipate a higher proportion of FdA TTSM students seeking to progress to the BA TTSM in future and have adjusted entry numbers accordingly.

28   The data dashboard shows that over the five-year data period our progression rates for non-disabled students compared to disabled students range between -2.2% and 22.8%. This is based on Destination of Leavers in Higher Education data and the analysis shows the progression to further study or highly skilled work. We have noted a potential gap in progression between the FdA and BA TTSM (above, para 27). These data are based on small numbers (under 60 in total). The DLHE based on a census date in mid-January does not take easy account of self-employed students working in theatre or film. The Standard Occupational Classification system used also distinguishes between similar types of role for students from the same programme: a scenic artist will be judged to be a 'graduate' job whereas a props-maker will not, owing to its SOC. This applies to a handful (between one and five) of graduates annually).

29   We need to do more work to analyse our graduate destinations, taking account of our own data collection as well as the DHLE/Graduate Outcomes data to assess whether disabled graduates are disadvantaged in progression and set an appropriate target. We anticipate having sufficient

information to do this by the end of the 2021 academic year.

1.5 Care Leavers

30   RADA has not had any students who fall within the specific definitions of care leaver within its undergraduate student population in the past five years and fewer than five applicants. On the basis that we have not admitted any care leavers we cannot assess performance in relation to student success nor progression.

1.6 Intersections and any other groups

31   The data dashboard analysis of the intersection between index of multiple deprivation and BAME students correlates with our data (and perception) that students from BAME backgrounds are more likely to be from lower socio-economic backgrounds. This is true for both male and female students of colour (we have not correlated for those disclosing as non-binary/not disclosing as this is very small numbers). This does not appear to have any impact on their likely completion rates, overall levels of achievement or progression into employment, particularly for BA Acting students.

32   As a very small provider, our focus is on delivering activity and monitoring any gaps in achievement for the core groups and intersections between these. This does not mean that we are not seeking to provide opportunities for students from other groups where there might be equality gaps (for example refugees or students who are carers), but that it will be more difficult to evaluate and evidence impact given the size of our student population.

Section 2: Strategic aims and objectives

2.1 Target groups

33   We have identified five areas for activity over the five-year period of our Access and Participation Plan. These relate to our analyses of access, success and progression in relation to the target groups and the OfS's national key performance measures.

Group	Lifecycle stage	Gap to address
BAME students	Access	Increase the overall BAME undergraduate student population at RADA, particularly in theatre production (FdA and BA TTSM).
Social class	Access	Increase the number of undergraduate students from the Index of Multiple Deprivation quintiles 1 and 2 and POLAR4 quintiles 1 and 2 to eradicate the gap in participation between students from these groups.
Disabled students	Access	Maintain the participation of disabled students and increase participation of students with physical/sensory impairments.
Disabled students	Success	Close the achievement gap for disabled students at RADA.
Care leavers	Access	Recruit care leavers into our undergraduate programmes during the plan period.

2.2 Aims and objectives

34   RADA's strategic aim in relation to its students generally is "to be attractive to talented, diverse students who feel well supported in their training and have a strong voice in the RADA community". We consider that our Access and Participation Plan must be a core element in

achieving this objective. This includes closing gaps in representation as far as is possible in a small student population. Our specific objectives are drawn, as noted above, from our analysis of performance in relation to students from different groups. These inform the targets set below:

	Target group and gap to address	Target for the plan period
1	Increase the overall BAME undergraduate student population at RADA, particularly in theatre production (FdA and BA TTSM).	• Maintain 30% minimum BAME student population in Acting (maintenance commitment) • Increase TTSM BAME student population to at least 15% consistently, year on year, by 2025 (double current population). (Target PTA1)
2	Increase the number of undergraduate students from the Index of Multiple Deprivation quintiles 1 and 2 to eradicate the gap in participation between students from these groups.	• Close the participation gap so that 35% of the student body is from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2 by 2025 with a longer-term aim (within 10 years) to close the gaps completely. (Target PTA2)
3	Maintain the participation of disabled students and preferably increase participation of students with physical/sensory impairments.	• Maintain (as a minimum) our disabled student population at around 20%, ideally increasing the student population with sensory and physical impairments. We are not setting specific targets by impairment type because of (a) small numbers and (b) not seeking to suggest quotas. (Target PTA3)
4	Close the achievement gap for disabled students at RADA.	• Ensure that disabled students' performance at all stages is equal to that of their non-disabled peers by 2025. (Target PTS1)
5	Increase the number of undergraduate students from POLAR4 quintile 1 to address under-representation from students from low participation in HE neighbourhoods.	• Increase participation of students from POLAR4 Quintile 1 to 10% by 2025 (Target PTA4)
6	Recruit care leavers into our undergraduate programmes during the plan period.	• Recruit at least two care leavers into our undergraduate population by 2025 (commitment).

35   Target 1 is particular to RADA. We have set a general maintenance commitment for BAME students in acting. This is not a quota and year on year we might reasonably expect different recruitment figures, with 30% as a minimum. We also expect to be able to recruit students from different ethnic groups, including improving our performance in the recruitment of Asian heritage students. Our data show a clear under-representation of BAME students in theatre production, so we have set a target to improve performance in this area. We note that our data show an achievement gap for BAME students in theatre production. This is based on very small numbers, so we have not set a specific target but will monitor this and set targets if it appears that it is a consistent trend.

36   Target 2 relates to the Index of Multiple Deprivation as a measure of social class. We intend that this contributes to the OfS's key performance measure (a) (eliminating the gap between the most and least represented groups within higher education).

37   Target 3 recognises existing performance in recruiting disabled students, seeking to sustain and improve this. It also acknowledges that we aspire to recruiting more students with physical and sensory impairments, but we do not wish to set specific targets because we are working with very small numbers overall.

38   Target 4 relates to the achievement gap at RADA between disabled and non-disabled students and also reflects the OfS key performance measure (d) (reducing the gap in degree outcomes between disabled and non-disabled students). RADA's measure is seeking to address outcomes at every stage, not just final degree outcome, including progression from the FdA TTSM to the BA TTSM.

39   Target 5 relates to POLAR4. that this contributes to the OfS's key performance measure (a) (eliminating the gap between the most and least represented groups within higher education). Working with small numbers and as a London-based institution, we recognise that POLAR4 data do not always reflect our knowledge about a particular student's background and the likelihood of them participating in higher education, but we seek to contribute to the national objective of improving participation from low-recruiting neighbourhoods, especially to highly-selective higher education.

40   Target 6 seeks to ensure that RADA is recruiting care leavers into its undergraduate population. The target of two students within the period is consistent with our analysis of the Office of National Statistics summary of the number of care leavers in the UK going into higher education, compared against the number of undergraduate students in higher education (HESA data, both for 2017-18). We have identified that on this basis 0.3% of the student population are care leavers. This equates to a minimum of two students at RADA over the period of the plan. We will seek to recruit more than two students over the plan period and will ideally recruit at least one care leaver in the first year of the plan. Reaching our target will require specific work to increase the potential pool of applicants based on our application data, including identifying and working with theatre companies and youth groups who can help us reach out to care leavers. We have set this as a commitment within the plan but because of the very small numbers and associated difficulty of setting yearly milestones, it does not appear in the target sheet appended to this plan.

41   We have focused our measures principally on the Access stage of the student lifecycle. Our evidence suggests that if we recruit diverse students, we will be able to support them to successful outcomes. We are a small institution and devote significant time and resource to individual student support and teaching. We consider, therefore, that our focus should be placed on ensuring that students coming into RADA have the potential to benefit from our education and training. The exception to this is ensuring equal achievement for disabled students. Focusing our targets on access activity does not mean that we consider ourselves not to require further equality, diversity and inclusion work. We do consider this necessary, including diversifying our staff population. That is not the primary focus of our targets, although it is part of the strategic measures we will take to ensure that we meet our targets.

Section 3: Strategic measures

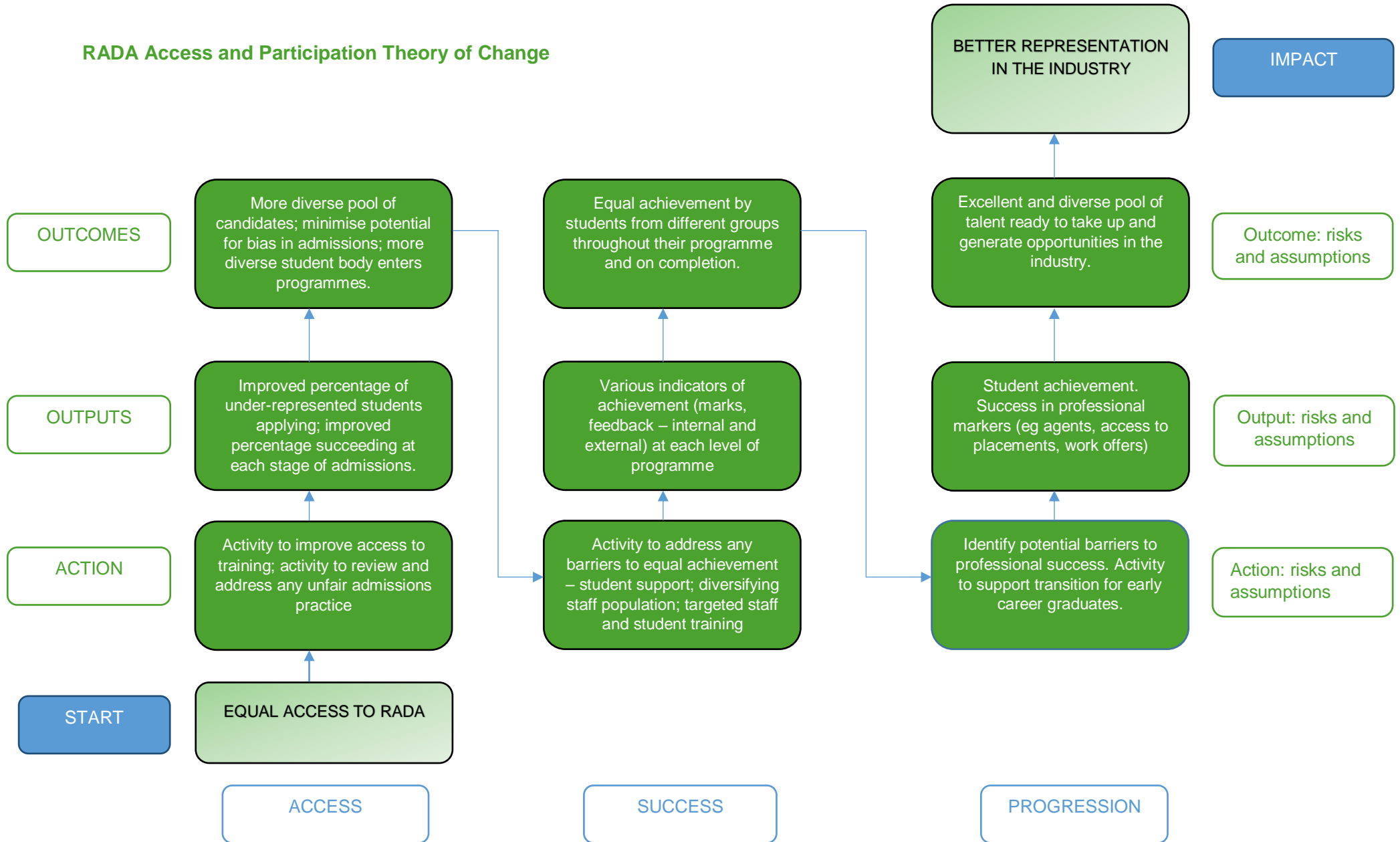### 3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

Overview

42   RADA's mission is to provide world-leading training in the dramatic arts. We have an excellent record of success in preparing people for professional work in theatre, film, television and allied industries. Our graduates are leaders in their fields, running national institutions and garnering

the industry's most prestigious awards (our analysis indicates that over its history RADA graduates make up a greater proportion of Oscar nominees than alumni from any other UK drama school). There are strong initiatives across the film, theatre and television sectors to improve representation in our performing arts sectors, both who is seen on stage or screen and those working behind the scenes (Act for Change and Stage Sight, for example). Our overarching theory of change is that if we want to see greater diversity in the dramatic arts, we must start by ensuring that there is greater diversity in the student body at RADA. If we help to shape the industry leaders, then we must demonstrate a commitment to who can become a leader.

43   The objectives in RADA's Access and Participation Plans form part of RADA's Strategic Plan for 2019-24, so these measures are at the heart of our strategy for the next five years. The need to deliver these changes also informs other aspects of that plan and of our Learning, Teaching and Student Experience action plan. Ensuring that we increase representation of under-represented groups within the RADA student community, and that those students succeed, is supported by all of RADA's activities. Our access work is located with Student and Academic Services to ensure that activity is closely aligned with support for our students and our teaching departments. Our current students, teaching staff and graduates support and engage in our access and participation work. Our development team raises funds to enable us to deliver participation work, and our marketing team works closely with widening participation and outreach to target under-represented groups. RADA is a small institution. A commitment to widening participation is led by the Director, supported by the Senior Leadership Team and we are seeking to embed practice that will support this change across the organisation.

44   We have a number of initiatives to support students into successful outcomes in a profession that is characterised by relatively low professional employment levels (for actors) and freelance work. These include the professional development offered to students throughout their training, starting with personal awareness (budgeting skills, resilience training) and moving into professional support as the programmes progress (meetings with agents, audition and interview practice, self-taping, meeting with unions and associations, a buddy scheme matching students with graduates, building professional networks through our productions, free or low-cost graduate classes). We have not set specific strategic measures in relation to employability or skills development, as we have focused our measures principally on access, specifically improving the attainment gap for disabled students and in improving our data analysis capacity. We will, however, add both targets and strategic measures in relation to employability if we find consistent gaps in progression for students from under-represented groups.

45   The chart overleaf outlines RADA's theory of change for its access and participation work.

RADA Access and Participation Theory of Change

IMPACT

BETTER REPRESENTATION IN THE INDUSTRY

OUTCOMES — Outcome: risks and assumptions

ACCESS	SUCCESS	PROGRESSION
More diverse pool of candidates; minimise potential for bias in admissions; more diverse student body enters programmes.	Equal achievement by students from different groups throughout their programme and on completion.	Excellent and diverse pool of talent ready to take up and generate opportunities in the industry.

OUTPUTS — Output: risks and assumptions

Improved percentage of under-represented students applying; improved percentage succeeding at each stage of admissions.	Various indicators of achievement (marks, feedback – internal and external) at each level of programme	Student achievement. Success in professional markers (eg agents, access to placements, work offers)

ACTION — Action: risks and assumptions

Activity to improve access to training; activity to review and address any unfair admissions practice	Activity to address any barriers to equal achievement – student support; diversifying staff population; targeted staff and student training	Identify potential barriers to professional success. Activity to support transition for early career graduates.

START

EQUAL ACCESS TO RADA

ACCESS   **SUCCESS**   **PROGRESSION**

12

Alignment with other strategies

46   We have produced this plan in tandem with the production of a new five-year Strategic Plan, so our priorities for access form a core element of our Strategy.

47   Relevant strategic priorities for the period are:

- to be an active, collaborative, safe and responsible space for students to be heard (student voice priorities);
- to create a graduate engagement strategy supporting the transition into the profession and maintaining relationships to our graduate community (graduate priorities);
- diversifying our teaching team to ensure that RADA's faculty includes people from under-represented groups, especially BAME faculty members (training priorities);
- to select and deepen relationships with industry partners who share our strategic aims, for example in widening participation (training priorities);
- increasing capacity (including through consultancy where necessary) to build on our equality, diversity and inclusion work across the whole Academy, including incorporating best practice from the theatre professions in supporting diversity, challenging harassment and tackling inequality (people priorities);
- increasing our data analysis capacity to provide management information, monitor progress and improve evaluation (operational priorities);
- to recruit a diverse student body and support widening participation work through evidence-led targeted initiatives, content and investment (communications and brand priorities).

48   RADA has due regard for the Equality Act 2010 and is compliant with the Public Sector Equality Duty. We have conducted an equality impact assessment of this plan and consider that it will enhance our equality, diversity and inclusion objectives. Delivery of this plan supports those objectives especially around access to training.

Strategic Measures

One: offer conservatoire-level preparatory training

49   This strategic measure is designed to address Target 1 (increase the overall BAME student population at RADA particularly in theatre production), Target 2 (increasing students from lower socio-economic backgrounds), Target 3 (maintaining participation of disabled students, increasing participation of those with physical and sensory disabilities) and Target 5 (recruiting care leavers). It might have an impact on Target 4 (close the achievement gap for disabled students at RADA) where students come from prior training or where we might be able to learn from bespoke training focused on students with specific impairments and apply that learning to our full-time programmes.

50   We expect to run a number of initiatives, shorter and longer term, which mirror the drama school experience, offer training that directly relates to our full-time programmes and includes some of the same teaching team, as well as graduates and current students mentoring participants. Programmes will include longer-term youth companies and targeted initiatives building relationships with theatres and organisations nationally. We will include work with schools, specifically Mulberry University Technology College in East London which specialises in technical theatre, to attract young people into theatre production training and working with those young people through their education to provide progression routes and, we intend, increase diversity in training and the wider industry at all levels. We will also work with initiatives across the drama-training sector, such as Open Door, which provides support and training for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds applying to drama schools. We will work with

them to introduce effective evaluation which will be of benefit all partner schools and provide a wider data source than we have independently.

51   Our evidence base needs work to demonstrate the effectiveness of this approach. Our starting position is the success that we have had with these types of initiative over a period of time, including the success of participants in gaining access to highly competitive training at drama schools including RADA. This is correlation not causation, but we hope that through evaluation, we can establish whether these programmes serve to address gaps in preparatory experience for people who might not have had access to drama in school or as an extra-curricular activity.

52   We expect to run programmes for children (age 8 upwards) but will likely focus most activity on the age range 14-21, ie in the build up to decision-making about higher education and for those discovering drama post-school (in keeping with our approach to recruiting mature learners).

Case Study: RADA Youth Company

RADA established an acting youth company in 2002, targeting young people aged 16-20. The youth company was not specifically designed as an access route into training, but young people who have participated in the year-long programme have consistently gained places on highly-competitive acting programmes at different drama schools and into actor-training at RADA.

In the past three years we have started to focus the youth company's work in two ways. First, it is more targeted to young people from under-represented groups (the 2018-19) acting cohort started with a 50:50 split between white and BAME participants. Second, we have developed a theatre production strand, which currently runs for 12 weeks culminating in a two-week intensive period matching that of the acting company in preparing for a performance in early August. Participants come from a variety of backgrounds and have historically paid a small fee (£170 for acting and £90 for theatre production). We have waived the fee for people from lower-income backgrounds.

Youth company participants experience a snapshot of life within a conservatoire. The Company Director teaches on undergraduate programmes and staff, students and graduates of the Academy are involved in leading sessions and supporting the company. Participants are held to the same levels of discipline and engagement as we expect from our undergraduate students, to prepare them for both the rigours of training and the industry.

There are currently five undergraduates at RADA who are alumni of the Youth Company in both acting and theatre production.

Our plans for the company in the coming years include setting the same (or higher) targets for participation by young people from under-represented groups (including a minimum of 30% BAME in acting and 15% in theatre production). We are teaming up with London theatres and theatre companies such as the Young Vic, the National Theatre, Kiln Theatre, Talawa, Theatre Royal Stratford East who are already doing a lot of work with these groups in order to have our Youth Company as a progression course. We will target local authorities and specific groups who are working with care leavers such as The Big House theatre company to support care leavers interested in drama. We will also introduce the role of 'Assistant Director' and recruit this role from people under-represented at RADA to diversify the programme leadership and also provide additional pastoral care for participants. We will be evaluating routes into the youth company and destinations of its alumni.

Two: evaluate the effectiveness of our admissions procedures

53   This strategic measure is focused on Target 1 (BAME access) and 2 (lower socio-economic background access).

54   We are interested in pursuing this from two perspectives. First, we consider that our in-person application process, involving as a minimum an interview (theatre production) or four rounds of audition (acting) is an essential component to our selection procedure which cannot be effectively conducted using prior academic achievement as a measure of likely success. We would like to evaluate the outcomes for students from different groups, including better measures in relation to socio-economic/disadvantage backgrounds, through the process and into RADA (and elsewhere) using HEAT data, in particular whether there is any relationship between our intensive process and improved student outcomes.

55   Second, our application process, specifically in acting, is expensive and labour-intensive. RADA's public funding and any additional grant does not cover the cost of our higher education programmes. We cannot cover application costs for 3,500 applicants without making a charge. We offer free auditions and travel bursaries for students from certain backgrounds, including anyone with an income under £25,000. We are interested in testing the impact of these on access. It is generally assumed, and reported by media, that fee charges represent a deterrent. Over a quarter of applicants do not disclose income, and we know from meeting them that some of these would likely be eligible for a free audition. We are interested in the impact of fees on applications as well as what financial models might facilitate our in-depth application process and secure access for people from disadvantaged groups. We would start from the position of testing this at RADA, but would be interested in working in collaboration with other, similar, schools for a broader picture.

Three: improve learning, teaching and academic support for disabled students

56   This strategic measure is to address Target 4 (closing the achievement gap for disabled students). We have invested significantly in support for students with mental health problems, including access to in-house counselling at convenient times for our heavily-timetabled students. We have piloted resilience training with some student and teaching groups. We are interested in exploring this further and evaluating more thoroughly its impact. We are creating adjusted curricula for disabled students with particular impairments and would like to develop and evaluate this work.

57   An area of focus, including more robust evaluation, is around the impact of interventions to support students with a range of specific learning difficulties and needs (SpLDs). Performing arts institutions generally have higher populations of students from this group (see paragraph 26 for our assessment of performance). We are interested in different models of supporting, including the impact of on students of working with different learning support practitioners allocated through Disabled Student Allowance systems, in-house provision, peer support and the impact of specific training for staff in teaching students with SpLDs.

58   We are seeking to test which interventions have the most positive impact on student achievement so that we can target our resources effectively and close the current achievement gap.

Four: increase diversity in our teaching faculty, visiting professionals and student support teams

59   This strategic measure is designed to address Targets 1 -4 and is one of RADA's Strategic Plan objectives under 'People'. We are actively seeking to address areas of under-representation in our staff body. There is multiple evidence to suggest that BAME students (and children) perform better when their teachers include people of colour. RADA seeks to develop

its pool of diverse teachers through mentoring programmes and targeted recruitment. We also seek to ensure that there is diversity (gender, ethnicity, disability) in the visiting professionals working with RADA students and in the material chosen for our student productions. This is a major area of teaching across our undergraduate programmes as student actors work on public productions from the end of second year, and TTSM students from their first few weeks. We plan to evaluate the impact of structured approaches to this on student outcomes, even at a basic level.

Five: enhance our data analysis and evaluation capability and capacity

60 This strategic measure will help us to achieve all of our targets. We recognise that, as a small and specialist arts institution, we do not have the significant capacity of large universities in evaluating our activity. We plan to invest in our data analysis capacity, first to ensure that we are able to collect and analyse consistent data across all stages of the student lifecycle and at a level of disaggregation that permits us to assess outcomes over a period of time for students from different groups, even where these are in very small numbers. It will help us to improve our understanding of any intersections of disadvantage (or, indeed particular advantage). We expect this to include investment in staff at RADA and also in relationships with other institutions, particularly the Social Mobility and Student Success department at our validating university, King's College London.

Collaboration

61 Much of our participation work is already in partnership with other organisations, including theatre companies (Deafinitely, Extant), theatres (Theatre Royal Stratford East, Kiln, Northern Stage, Birmingham Rep), youth hubs (Platform) and specific access initiatives (Open Door) as well as local schools and colleges. We will also develop our relationship with our local collaborative partnership AccessHE. We are developing potential (and assessable) proposals with our validating university, King's College London, to evaluate the impact of drama-related skills on young people's achievement.

Financial measures

62 RADA offers around £500,000 of financial support to students annually. We have decided not to include most of this funding within our Access and Participation Plan provision. The offer of financial support is an important element of our general support for students and is valued by our students. For the plan period, we wish to focus our strategic measures and evaluation on other interventions to address under-representation. The only financial support we wish to include within our plan provision is a care leaver's bursary of £3,000 per year in addition to any means-tested support we provide to those students. We are dealing in very small numbers here but consider it important to flag to potential care leavers that we are providing additional financial support. This amount is based on our current financial support for low-income students (which in turn related to the old maintenance grant award). We have not based the amount on any prior evidence at RADA, but will evaluate the impact of the award in encouraging care leavers to apply and for any in receipt of financial aid in future.

3.2 Student consultation

63 RADA has prepared this plan in a short timescale. We do not have a formally-constituted students' union although we do have a system of student representation. Working with the limitations of time and student availability, our approach to ensure that students were properly consulted as part of this plan has been as follows:

- We informed lead students that we were working on the plan and asked them to let the student representative group know and invite individuals to participate in reviewing and preparing our APP.

- We approached students individually who have expressed interest in or been engaged in access and participation work, those involved in RADA student groups (BAME students, RADA Pride group, for example) and others (including, but not limited to) student representatives to contribute to our work.

- We provided students with a summary of the data analysis, the gaps we have identified and the proposed steps to address these gaps and then asked for their views about the approaches, suggestions for other measures, running a session to explain the data to them.

- We had a consultative group of students involved in reading drafts of the plan and one of the Lead Students is involved in the Governance Group responsible for reviewing the plan on behalf of RADA's governing body.

- We submitted a near-final draft plan to the Student Experience Forum prior to submission to OfS.

- The final plan as submitted incorporates our students' views as well as those of staff and the governing body consulted in the planning process.

64   A statement of support for the plan by RADA's student body is attached as an appendix.

65   We will maintain a consultative group of interested students to work with us in our access and participation work and ensure that student views are included in that work. Ideally, and subject to their availability, we will include at least one member of our RADA Youth Company in that group. In general, RADA has two student representatives per year of each programme. These representatives serve on course committees (they can all attend the relevant committee) and up to four may attend Academic Board. All require at least one student in attendance to be quorate. All the student representatives participate in the Student Experience Forum which also includes senior staff and one member of the governing body. This group is co-chaired by a staff member and our Lead Students. From 2019-20 our two Lead Students will be full members of RADA Council (the governing body); they are currently in attendance. We consider that this will give further scope for meaningful engagement by students in policy, monitoring and practice in this area.

3.3 Evaluation strategy

66   We are aware that our access and participation activity needs to be directed by gaps in participation and thus we need to undertake more robust evaluation to demonstrate whether we are meeting our own objectives and targets. RADA has redirected the focus of its outreach work over the past three years. This is a shift from offering short courses (with a low fee) and some free project work engaging with young people generally, to targeted activity addressing under-represented groups, including a stronger focus on opportunities in theatre production as well as acting skills. The next stage in our journey is to improve both data gathering and evaluation activity. We have tended to use participant feedback coupled with informal data gathering about destinations of those participants as the primary means of assessing impact. Our self-assessment, using the OfS toolkit indicates that there is more work to do to create fit-for-purpose evaluation mechanisms.

Overview from self-assessment tool

67   In the five areas of the self-assessment tool (strategic context, programme design, evaluation design, evaluation implementation and learning to shape improvements), our performance is strongest in the strategic context. We are clear about the need for evaluation and evidence-

informed activity. It is unlikely that we will be producing evaluation which can establish a causal link between an intervention and outcome because we are generally dealing with intensive interventions and small numbers. We can, however, aim for a baseline of a narrative assessment in relation and ideally an empirical approach which can show correlations between our interventions and outcomes for students. Overall, our assessment shows that we are at an emerging/developing stage in using the effective evaluation of our activity. For example, we might be collecting data in relation to our activity (for example around students accessing our wellbeing service) but we are not yet necessarily using this as fully as we might to shape improvements in our service. We have not created evaluation strategies (beyond satisfaction feedback) as part of any access project activity in the past, but will do so with every initiative in future. We also propose using the theory of change model for any new initiatives, including how this relates to our overall theory of change model. Tying up the relationship between evidence and improvement will be a key area of activity over the five years of this plan.

Evaluation implementation

68   Our proposed plan to generate effective and efficient evaluation that is proportionate to our activities, our size and our capacity is as follows:

- Ensure that we have the capacity to gather and analyse baseline data in relation to our student population and participants in our widening participation activity (access-focused).
- Ensure that our academic governance includes appropriate provision for research ethics focused on our work in access and participation, managed through our new Research Committee which reports to Academic Board.
- Ensure that we are gathering datasets from our participants and that we are able to access other information sources, such as the HEAT tool to access and interpret data about participants.
- Work with other partners, for example AccessHE (as our local National Collaborative Outreach Programme) and our validating university, King's College London, to draw on their greater expertise. We will also seek to use the existing network of WP managers within drama schools to increase our shared capacity for evaluation of this work and also to share findings.
- Establish an evaluation framework which covers our target areas, what we are seeking to establish and the best methodology for achieving this (for example, how we assess whether a specific intervention, such as the Open Door initiative of audition preparation, levels the playing people for applicants from under-represented groups).
- Ensure that our annual monitoring cycle includes reference to ongoing evaluation and the effectiveness of our programme of activity and the need to adjust this if we are not achieving the desired objectives.
- Set up some specific evaluation projects which will provide us with additional insight (for example, evaluating the impact of workshops with young people in schools rather than performances without workshops or other longer-term activity attached).
- Seek to target our evaluation rather than a single approach for all projects. We would expect to evaluate our longer-term activities, such conservatoire preparatory training (strategic measure 1) in greater depth, gathering more data from participants, and tracking their progress beyond completion of the youth company (and, where possible, tracking applicants who do not participate in the youth company) to understand outcomes.

69   We are offering limited financial support as part of this plan and only to care leavers. We will evaluate the impact of this, but would likely do so in the wider context of initiatives to encourage access for care leavers, whether financial support improves access, how it should be targeted and whether financial support itself or other forms of support (for example, help with accommodation) would be more effective. As we are working with small numbers, we will look to the wider sector for expertise in this area to shape our offer appropriately. For the moment,

we have based our financial support on the 2019-20 plan so that there is continuity for potential applicants over at least a two-year period.

3.4 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan

70   Our principal mechanism for monitoring progress against the delivery of the plan will be RADA's cycle of annual programme monitoring and reporting (APMR). We are obliged to do this to fulfil both quality assurance obligations and the requirements of our validating university, King's College London. We are creating a new monitoring framework for 2019-20 onwards. Our framework is inclusive of both individual programme and also whole-provider developments, including student support, academic governance and quality assurance activity and widening participation. In this way we can monitor targets at both a programme and institutional level. We generate an action plan in relation to the AMPR which is reviewed at every course committee, at Academic Board and the Senior Leadership Team. The annual reporting is reviewed by RADA Council (the governing body). There are both individuals and committees accountable for ensuring actions are completed on time and that we can evidence our actions. It seems sensible, for an institution of our size, to incorporate our APP monitoring into that framework, consolidating those objectives with others, including equality, diversity and inclusion actions.

71   As noted in paragraph 61 above we will maintain a consultative student group for our access and participation work. Our academic governance structures include student representation at all levels who are involved included in the monitoring and reporting process.

72   The Director of Student and Academic Services is responsible for ensuring that progress against the plan is monitored, with day to day responsibility being held by the Widening Participation and Outreach Manager.

73   We expect to review progress in line with ongoing evaluation of our strategic measures, so if we are failing to make the anticipated progress, we expect to be in a position to adjust our actions to address any areas of deficit. The APP forms part of RADA's Strategic Plan objectives for 2019-24, so will also be reviewed by RADA Council as part of its monitoring of that plan. We consider that this embeds the plan into our organisational structures.

Section 4: Provision of information to students

4.1 Fees

74   RADA will not have a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) rating from 2019-20, but we may seek to have a TEF rating (or be obliged to do so) during the period of this plan. We will continue to notify students via our website of fee information. We currently publish fees at the start of each programme page information. We also publish the following information, in accordance with consumer rights obligations:

- total fees for the programme, including costs for materials.
- average monthly accommodation costs for our students
- our Fees Policy
- our Student Protection Plan
- information about scholarships and bursaries including specific bursaries for care leavers.

4.2 Financial support offered through the Access and Participation Plan

75   RADA will continue to offer scholarships and bursaries to its students, most of which will be means-tested bursaries. These measures are not included in our access and participation plan. We will publish information about our scholarship and bursary provision so that intending

students are clear about the minimum support they are likely to receive.

76 RADA will continue to offer a specific maintenance bursary of £3,000 per year to **care leavers**. This is <u>in addition</u> to any other RADA scholarship or bursary awarded up to a maximum of a full maintenance bursary (currently set at £14,000 per year). We will make this provision clear on our website (clearer than is currently the case) also indicating the minimum bursary and full bursary amounts so that prospective care-leaver students are clear about both the minimum and maximum financial support that they are likely to receive.

Conclusion

77 Our Access and Participation Plan 2020-25 sets out our aspirations and the challenging targets we have set ourselves to improve equality in the opportunities for people to train at RADA and move to successful careers in our creative industries. We hope that, working in partnership with the industry and education sector, we can deliver real change.

Appendix: Student statement of support

Equality and Diversity continues to be the cornerstone of development at RADA, and as students we have been consulted and involved in the process, from being consulted in drafts to meetings discussing the results and aims of the plan. At the moment, RADA's Admissions Procedures assure every applicant is given an interview, impartial advice and guidance is given to ensure all applicants are supported and students given equal opportunity to learn and join our community. This support and guidance is continued throughout the training in the form of financial, social and medical support.

However, RADA, like many other institutions faces two challenges: equality in higher education and equality in the theatre industry. Like most areas in higher education a lot of progress is still needed to achieve a learning environment and approach to give all equal opportunity. Theatre, although already inclusive and diverse to an extent, still has a long way to go.

We believe that this industry should reflect the society we live in and we feel that an Access and Participation Plan that has included its own student community in the process is the way forward to assure and actively implement the needed shift.

RADA Student Representatives 2018-19

Access and participation plan
Fee information 2020-21

Provider name: Royal Academy of Dramatic Art

Provider UKPRN: 10009292

Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflationary statement:

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

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

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	All BA degree programmes	£9,000
Foundation degree	Technical Theatre and Stage Management	£9,000
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Table 4b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

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

Table 4c - Part-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

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

Table 4d - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

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

Targets and investment plan
2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: Royal Academy of Dramatic Art

Provider UKPRN: 10009292

Investment summary

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

Note about the data:
The investment forecasts below in access, financial support and research and evaluation does not represent not the total amount spent by providers in these areas. It is the additional amount that providers have committed following the introduction of variable fees in 2006-07. The OfS does not require providers to report on investment in success and progression and therefore investment in these areas is not represented.

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

Table 4a - Investment summary (£)

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Total access activity investment (£)	£130,000.00	£130,000.00	£130,000.00	£130,000.00	£130,000.00
Access (pre-16)	£20,000.00	£20,000.00	£20,000.00	£20,000.00	£20,000.00
Access (post-16)	£50,000.00	£50,000.00	£50,000.00	£50,000.00	£50,000.00
Access (adults and the community)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Access (other)	£60,000.00	£60,000.00	£60,000.00	£60,000.00	£60,000.00
Financial support (£)	£0.00	£3,000.00	£3,000.00	£6,000.00	£6,000.00
Research and evaluation (£)	£30,000.00	£30,000.00	£30,000.00	£30,000.00	£30,000.00

Table 4b - Investment summary (HFI%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HFI)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Higher fee income (£HFI)	£441,000.00	£441,000.00	£441,000.00	£441,000.00	£441,000.00
Access investment	12.9%	12.9%	12.9%	12.9%	12.9%
Financial support	0.0%	0.7%	0.7%	1.4%	1.4%
Research and evaluation	6.8%	6.8%	6.8%	6.8%	6.8%
Total investment (as %HFI)	19.7%	20.4%	20.4%	21.1%	21.1%

Targets and investment plan
2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: Royal Academy of Dramatic Art

Provider UKPRN: 10009292

Targets

Table 2a - Access

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones 2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
To reduce the gap in participation in HE for students from underrepresented groups	PTA_1	Ethnicity	Increase FdA/BA Technical Theatre and Stage Management student BAME student population to 15% consistently.	No	Other data source	2017-18	8%	10%	11%	12%	14%	15%	The data source for this figure is based on our equality monitoring data within RADA (drawn from student data submitted to HESA) for the 2017/18 FdA TTSM student cohort. There are fewer than 100 students in total on this programme across all years and this is a challenging target to increase applications to translate into student numbers.
To reduce the gap in participation in HE for students from underrepresented groups	PTA_2	Socio-economic	Close the participation gap so that 35% of the student body is from lower IMD quintiles quintiles by 2025.	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	25%	27%	29%	31%	33%	35%	Given small numbers we are looking at a rolling three-year average in participation where some years we do not have as many students from lower quintiles and other years we have a higher proportion. We will use the data from the Access and Participation dataset to measure our success in this area. For the purposes of target setting and OfS requirements we show incremental improvement.
To reduce the gap in participation in HE for students from underrepresented groups	PTA_3	Disabled	Maintain our disabled student population at at least 20%, ideally increasing the student population with sensory and physical impairments.	No	Other data source	2017-18	19%	19.5%	20%	20.5%	21%	21.5%	The data source for this figure is based on our equality monitoring data within RADA (drawn from student data submitted to HESA) for the 2017/18 student cohort in both acting and TTSM.
To reduce the gap in participation in HE for students from underrepresented groups	PTA_4	Socio-economic	Increase participation of students from POLAR4 quintile 1 to 10% by 2025	No	Other data source	2018-19	4%	6%	7%	8%	9%	10%	We have shown incremental increase in line with OfS requirements and for the purposes of target setting. Actual performance is likely to vary as we are working with very small numbers of individuals.
	PTA_5												
	PTA_6												
	PTA_7												
	PTA_8												

Table 2b - Success

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones 2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
To reduce the attainment gap for students from underrepresented groups	PTS_1	Disabled	Ensure that disabled students' performance at all stages is equal to that of their non-disabled peers by 2025	No	Other data source	2017-18	-2%	-1.8%	-1.5%	-1.0%	-0.5%	0%	The data source for this figure is based on our equality monitoring of student performance in 2017-18 across all undergraduate students. Our overall aim is that disabled students are within +/-1% of achievement on average as their non-disabled peers. We consider that achieving and then maintaining this over time to be a challenging objective, especially on small student numbers where a single student affects overall averages.
	PTS_2												
	PTS_3												
	PTS_4												
	PTS_5												
	PTS_6												
	PTS_7												
	PTS_8												

Table 2c - Progression

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones 2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
	PTP_1												
	PTP_2												
	PTP_3												
	PTP_4												
	PTP_5												
	PTP_6												
	PTP_7												
	PTP_8												