

CORPORATE PLAN FOR THE PERIOD TO *2020-21

**The Governing Body approved this Corporate Plan for the period 2013-2018 which has now been extended to 2020 pending full implementation of the new Office for Students regulatory body, the outcome of the Government's HE funding review and the Comprehensive Spending review.*

The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (hereafter referred to as 'Central' or the 'School') is an exempt charity under the terms of the Charities Act 2011 and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) is the principal regulator of Central, both as a Higher Education Institution and as a Charity.

Our Vision

To be a world-leading institution of the theatrical and performing arts.

Our Mission

Placing students at the centre of its work, Central develops practitioners and researchers who shape the future of theatre and performance across the UK and beyond.

Institutional Identity

We are committed to:

- maintaining and enhancing our distinctive ethos and identity as an HE conservatoire. This comprises a fluid combination of scholarship and research, industry-related vocational training and research-informed teaching;
- identifying and extending the benefits to society and industry of our work as an educational institution and also as a place where professional and community stakeholders meet and participate in the educational process;
- maintaining a diverse and sustainable institution;
- leadership of our fields.

Specific core public benefit aims include:

- a) developing the leading practitioners of the performance industries;
- b) developing leading edge knowledge in performance practice and application;
- c) promoting the societal value of performance;
- d) creation of new audiences;
- e) offering specialist speech and drama training that is innovative, socially responsive and tailored to the needs of diverse groups by working with schools, voluntary and community organisations, businesses and communities and the public sector;
- f) reaching out to under-represented groups to inspire interest in pursuing a career in theatre arts;
- g) developing a culture that productively uses and enjoys difference;
- h) continuing to build upon community engagement activity within Central London, nationally and internationally; and
- i) promoting widening participation and fair access through Central's Access Agreement which provides bursary support and increased investment in outreach work.

The Opportunities

Opportunities during the strategy period are expected to include:

- i) conditions which favour Central's taking up of acknowledged premier position among UK specialist theatre institutions;
- ii) optimisation of the student experience through further developed partnerships with companies and professional practitioners;
- iii) income generation through fundraising, sponsorship, consultancy and research;
- iv) efficiencies and effectiveness through shared services
- v) development of Central Connects in relation to outreach, business training and establishing a new role of the specialist college with partnership schools;
- vi) maximise the value of the University of London brand;
- vii) maximise the value of the Royal title for recruitment and general profile in relevant markets and media;
- viii) to provide leadership and advocacy for the creative industries in Central's areas of specialism;
- ix) development of external examinations in speech and drama;

- x) the development of an advocacy role for Central through an increased ability to inform government policy and representation of the HE perspective in relevant networks

The Challenges

Challenges which the School expects to face during the strategy period include:

- a) urgent need for estate development with limited capital funding and identification of appropriate alternative accommodation during construction work;
- b) continued public-sector austerity throughout the planning period, including:
 - likely adjustments to Government funding in 2015 which may strip money out of the HE sector in general
 - increased actual and perceived poverty of those who might think of entering higher education
 - potential changes to the allocation of HEFCE control numbers to support demand
 - competition from new providers entering into the public-funded sector
 - impact of increased student debt burden
 - ability to maintain high student employability (including self-employed/freelance)
 - assessed need to deliver an annual EBITDA surplus in the range of 9%-13% to remain sustainable;
- c) changed circumstances, and further review, of public funding for specialist institutions and conservatoires in 2015;
- d) changing school syllabus and possible resultant challenge to widening participation and student diversity;
- e) a move to training teachers within school settings
- f) attracting and retaining high calibre staff, including suitably qualified academic staff to sustain disciplinary specialist expertise, in a climate of pay restraint;
- g) the need to optimise environmental performance to enhance economic sustainability;
- h) maintain and develop research quality in an increasingly selective funding environment;
- i) maintaining the quality of student experience during a downturn and through a period of construction including matching student satisfaction with student expectation;
- j) sustainability of Postgraduate taught provision in a competitive and changing environment;
- k) effective profile and data management in a world soaked with information;

l) sustaining appropriate leadership and governance succession arrangements throughout the period

A. Teaching and learning and the student experience

Objectives:

- (a) Develop: an engagement plan for the supply chain.
 - (b) Distinctiveness: Commitment to maintenance of high quality student experience and distinctiveness of the provision:
 - ensure standards meet expectations.
 - (c) Standards: Define standards: benchmarked according to subject in line with international peers within the discipline.
 - (d) Quality: Ensure highest quality teaching curriculum and student intake:
 - research and industry informed curriculum;
 - recruitment quality.
 - (e) Explore opportunities for, and feasibility of, the extension of Central's geographical range of delivery both regionally and internationally.
 - (f) Enhance student experience in relation to current and future modes and places (regional/ international) of delivery.
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B. Research outputs and sustainability

Objectives:

- (a) Develop new research leaders.
- (b) Increase quality of outputs for submission.
- (c) Diversify research funding.
- (d) Develop expertise in impact.
- (e) Review of research infrastructure post REF.

C. Financial performance for sustainability and Financial Health

Objectives:

- (a) Deliver an EBITDA annual result within the target range of Total Income.
 - (b) Deliver MSI within target range.
 - (c) Maintain positive net current assets annually.
 - (d) Maintain cash balances (excluding investments) to meet future liquidity requirements of the School.
 - (e) Reduce reliance on HEFCE funding by developing alternative income streams (diversity of income).
 - (f) Ensure affordability of funding of estate development.
 - (g) Maintain staffing costs within plan.
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D. Industry Impact

Objectives:

- (a) Develop strategy to increase External engagement:
 - 3rd stream activity;
 - development of discipline specific engagement models;
 - collection of employment data.
- (b) Sustaining and enhancing employment and start-up levels and improving intelligence and data gathering systems.
- (c) Generation and management of business information (employment statistics in relation to employment impact).

E. Estate Development

Objectives:

- (a) Model estate masterplan to 2025:
 - phasing;
 - delivering phase 5 by 2016/17;
 - (b) Arrangements to secure appropriate alternative accommodation.
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F. Human Resource Development

Objectives:

(a) Learning and Development:

To develop and maintain a comprehensive learning and development strategy that prepares and equips staff to fulfil the changing requirements of roles in accordance with institutional needs.

(b) Retention

To maintain and enhance career progression routes to retain an appropriate balance of staff.

(c) Recruitment and Diversity

To maintain and enhance quality and diversity of staff.

(d) Industry and Professional Contribution

To maintain the integrated contribution of visiting and professional staff.