

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland Draft Outcome and Impact Framework 2021/22

April 2021

Principal's Introduction

At the time of writing, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland is continuing to deliver some carefully managed learning activity on site, but as part of an overall 'restricted blended' diet of learning set out in the latest available Scottish Government guidance to the HE sector. The flourishing of our students, staff and programmes, notwithstanding these extraordinary circumstances, is something to be celebrated – the impacts of the pandemic will be felt for a long time to come, and it is worth acknowledging the considerable and sustained efforts that have gone into supporting the continuity of the student experience since the first lockdown in March 2020.

I believe that our very recent third-in-the-world ranking (QS Rankings, 2021) is testament to the RCS' international reputation for groundbreaking curriculum, research and professional activity, but that to achieve it – and to sustain our top ten position – in the current circumstances is all the more a recognition of our creative response to the global challenges of the moment. The pandemic is only one of these.

Like many organisations, we have undertaken much needed anti-racism work, recognising that our action previously has been inadequate to the needs of our community, and committing to sustained, meaningful action from now on. We have also engaged in thoughtful plans (complicated by the pandemic) around our participation in events relating to COP26, due to be in Glasgow this Winter. The place of the performing arts in meeting our climate change commitments may not be immediately obvious, but the proven social benefits of artistic inclusion, as well as the audiences we reach with our activity – and therefore our message – places us in a position of responsibility to lead the way in developing sustainable arts practices. We have also embarked on several curriculum initiatives that address climate change issues, both in terms of the subject matter dealt with, and the materials and methodologies deployed in the work.

We have made great strides – as a necessity – as an institution capable of delivering substantial digital/blended learning opportunities. Some of these are described in the document that follows, but we recognise the importance of achieving a suitable balance between continuing to develop – in partnership with our professions – the pioneering approaches to digital creativity and dissemination of work, and sustaining the importance of the live, in-person experience that is so essential to what we do. There are undoubtedly new discoveries that our pandemic-enforced ways of working have enabled, including the development of new audience demographics and the extent of our reach, globally, to those who enjoy our artistic output. A new flexibility in thinking has emerged across our portfolio, as students and staff have explored the possibilities of incorporating the digital into their productions and even the concept of their work, often reflecting society back at itself through the lens of the moment – the virtual, 'physically distanced' space we inhabit. In this we have continued to uphold the humanity and social importance of the arts, which have never been more important than when we have been apart, but with the discoveries comes challenge, in terms of ensuring equal access to all to our provision, ensuring the skills

developments are supported, and financial scoping is realistic. Developments in technologies, both for identifying enhanced learning opportunities and infrastructural interventions, are of course costly. For example, we have gained significant experience in streaming productions from our venues, where there have been no public audiences for over a year – for the benefit of both our remote audience(s) and our students’ learning – but this comes at a significant cost that needs to be balanced against other important means available to support the student experience. With our enterprising RCS@Home artistic broadcasts, the innovative thinking of our lecturing/tutoring, RKE and professional services staff, as well as our adaptive short course portfolio (delivering online provision), we have remained connected to our communities, and the renewed sense of purpose that we have found collectively at RCS to support our students and colleagues through the pandemic has enabled a cohesive RCS community to withstand the physical distancing that continues to be in place.

Despite the significant responsiveness of our staff as expert practitioners and educators, and our student community (and here there should be mention of an extraordinary effort on the part of our Students’ Union to support students both socially and in their learning), there remain some existential challenges for the Conservatoire to overcome. RCS will not be the only organisation to be facing similar obstacles, but as the National Conservatoire, we recognise the cultural importance of ensuring that we take effective action to ensure the sustainability of the institution, as we seek to plan an ambitious strategic framework on the back of responding to the more immediate ‘emergency’ needs of last year, the present year and likely the next two years as we begin to recover as a society from the impacts of the pandemic.

There are several ‘threats’ that we must find the means to overcome:

- Brexit has impacted our student applications from the EU significantly. This not only reduces the presence of European styles, practices and cultures amongst our student (and staff) population, to the potential detriment of all – since all our art forms thrive on the blend of cultural perspectives that meet in them – but it raises an additional imperative to seek more Scottish students, whose prior education in the performing arts has been impacted by cuts to arts services and provision even before the pandemic physically restricted activity. We must therefore continue to develop a healthy ‘pipeline’ of students across the spectrum of our artforms. We are gratified that our proposals for Music Tuition for Scotland’s young people have been commitments in all five political manifestos for the forthcoming (May 2021) elections. However this challenge – to develop sustainable growth in Scottish numbers in the performing arts – is one that will take time, resource and resilience to further impacts of Brexit, the pandemic, and the widening social gap that results from the latter. In this context, our status as The National Conservatoire is both a significant privilege (in that we are enabled to work closely with National Companies and others to find solutions to challenges together), but also leaves RCS exposed to the extent that different decisions that might be taken in the rest of the UK (whether in terms of short-term pandemic response measures in HE, or longer-term in specialist funding arrangements in the devolved nations) might impose further challenges that impact negatively on

RCS and consequently Scotland, in a competitive recruitment landscape across the UK, Europe and Internationally.

- The further impact of Brexit on the ability of EU students to remain and settle, or to conduct a typical freelance career of professional performance throughout the continent without ‘red tape’ impediments to travel also makes RCS and the UK more generally a less palatable proposition for students, for whom a ‘nomadic’ career is a highly likely possibility. Travel and the cultural richness that offered, whether for those seeking to establish their professional artistic practice, or those more established in their career and ‘in demand’ is an essential part of freelance work.
- Pandemic recovery – the professional venues and companies that, in ‘normal’ times contribute towards Scotland’s fast growing creative economy are at serious risk of long term deficit, decline or closure. This represents many problems, but significantly for RCS, an impact on our partnership working and the profile of Scotland’s National, thriving, arts scene as well as a concerning employment landscape for our graduates. The latter is especially worrying, given the most recent figures (pre-pandemic) recognising that up to c. 80% of RCS graduates remain in Scotland and Glasgow upon graduation, to work. Part of the challenge of strategic planning over the next number of years is to plan for curriculum advancement in the face of an under-resourced, struggling profession, that may in turn impact our ability to recruit the highest quality students, who will consider their future employability as a high priority when considering what, and where, to study.
- For all that we have adapted as flexibly as we can to the demands of the moment, motivated in all cases by preserving safety and wellbeing for all, many students have missed out on experiences they expected to have, and many have experienced complex challenges during lockdowns, whether in terms of their ability to connect remotely to provision, or because their living conditions or particular needs cannot meet the learning conditions they need to thrive as individuals, and creatives.
- As students have been understandably frustrated with missed opportunities, staff have relentlessly supported and accommodated student needs, many without being able or feeling able to take quality breaks from work. The collective and individual energies needed to sustain the effort that looks to be required for at least the foreseeable future is a significant ‘ask’ of a workforce that has already expended considerable efforts to enable students to graduate successfully. Additional resource has been supplied where appropriate, but this is limited for reasons of needing to prevent an even greater deficit to overcome, and yet a legacy of this period will undoubtedly be an urgent need to support staff to regain equilibrium and assist transition back towards regular onsite working. Likewise, our students, many of whom have been unable to fulfil many of their expected public performance opportunities are experiencing difficulties in re-establishing the confidence that regular exposure to an audience can lend live performance. Consequently, additional resources have also been allocated to supporting students, whether to remain digitally connected, or to support mental health through this time.

Throughout the recent times, and looking ahead to the future, RCS is poised to make further significant impact, implementing a period of strategic growth (in fundraising and business development in particular) but balanced with careful efficiencies and realism about the financial challenges.

Above all RCS has endeavoured to uphold its commitment to disadvantaged students, recognising the importance of standing up for the arts and the rights of everyone to experience it. One of the most significant achievements, made by a small team (Transitions) is to have remained supportive of, and in contact with, the most disadvantaged learners that join RCS on the Transitions programme. Their work in Fair Access has required adaptive thinking of the highest quality in order to maintain the RCS experience for these learners. Similarly, our Knowledge Exchange work has relied on the ingenuity of key post holders to generate exciting opportunities and micro funds for learners to stimulate career and artistic development. That – in addition to the fact that despite our disciplines being almost exclusively dependent on the delivery of practical skills, in practical and professional settings, public-facing, physical and interactive in essence, we have supported students to achieve their learning outcomes, secure agents, employment and creative experience – instils confidence that RCS will emerge from the pandemic a more resilient learning community with much to offer Glasgow, Scotland and the world.

Section one

Statement of Intent

This document will share the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland's activities that contribute towards the achievement of sector priorities and outcomes for students, as they are in the academic year 2020-21 and as they will be for 2021-22.

This current academic year has been unprecedented in HE and in recent history, with the impact of a global health pandemic first brought to public attention in January of 2020. The subsequent national lockdown that began on March 23rd 2020 and other measures that followed at various points between that date and January 2021 have inevitably impacted the whole sector. As an institution dealing in practical, creative subjects, RCS has experienced the challenge of managing the lockdown and restrictions within the context of continuing to deliver our core performing arts portfolio, our access work, our commitment to equalities and sustaining our graduate outcomes, partnerships and world-leading profile.

The following text will detail contributions, impact and outcomes for students and other users, to provide assurance on the use of allocated funding in 2020-21 as well as project forward planned outcomes for the 2021-22 cycle.

Outcomes for Students: Fair Access (& Transitions)

Our Fair Access work is scrutinised and supported at the most senior level of the Conservatoire, where a Fair Access Committee, convened by one of our Governors in partnership with the Director of Fair Access and our Fair Access Manager, reports jointly to the Academic Board and the Board of Governors. The Committee comprises both staff and student representatives. A plenary session is held as part of each Fair Access Committee, where external experts are invited to provide insight to a pertinent

topic or theme. These sessions are used to benchmark our work with the Sector, learn from others and inform the development of future fair access work.

A Fair Access Plan: 2017-21 (Fair Access Plan) was approved in 2017/18. The Fair Access Committee and team are responsible for the implementation of the Fair Access Plan. The current plan runs until July 2021 and will be replaced by a Fair Access Strategy to run alongside the lifespan of the next Conservatoire Strategic Plan from August 2021.

Achievements in 2019-20

Each year, our Fair Access Committee receives an annual report detailing our achievements and impact of our Fair Access work on meeting the CoWA recommendations. The latest report for 2019-20 was published in October 2020 and is appended to this document. Despite the disruption to our normal operations caused by the COVID pandemic, we still accomplished most of the activities in the plan. Amongst our achievements, the proportion of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants (SDUE) from the 20% most deprived postcodes in 2019/20 was 18.8% (24 out of 128 Scottish-domiciled entrants). We exceeded our outcome agreement target by 1 and this represented a 1.2% increase on 2018-19 (18.8%). We continue to exceed the national target: *'by 2021, students from the 20% most deprived backgrounds should represent at least 10% of full-time first degree entrants to every individual Scottish university'* by 8.8%.

Our Transitions programme, (including our 7-11 pre-juniors programme) had a total of 135 students, representing 97% of our target of 140. We had 121 students in the Transitions 11+ programme, 1 more than our target of 120, and 14 students in our Transitions 7-11 programme, 6 fewer than our target. Recruitment to the 7-11 programme was impacted negatively by the COVID 19 pandemic which prevented us from delivering planned 'engagement' workshops in targeted SIMD 20 Schools. We saw year-on-year improvement in our priority areas of SIMD 20. 77% of the cohort (93 students) were from a SIMD20 background, 14% of the cohort (17 students) were care experienced or estranged. 17% of the cohort (21 students) were black, Asian, minority ethnics (BAME).

COVID-19 Pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought about considerable challenges for widening access. Between March and July 2020, we moved all delivery of our Transitions and Widening Access to the Creative Industries programmes online and have continued to offer substantial online support to all of our students. Given the practical nature of our programmes, this has required us to think creatively about how we continue to engage and support students with significant barriers to their learning. Having equipped the widening access team with equipment to work remotely, we've risen to the challenge, however and have launched our new fair access online micro sites for both programmes (<https://portal.rcs.ac.uk/waci/>) and (<https://portal.rcs.ac.uk/transitions>), as well as a learning zone (<https://portal.rcs.ac.uk/fairaccess/>) and microsite <https://www.rcs.ac.uk/fair-access-expo/>). Through these, our students can access a range of online resources and support.

To end of July 2020, we provided 1053 instances of online learning including workshops, masterclasses, virtual bands, lockdown learning tasks, 1:1 lessons and CPD/materials for teachers and provided 164 online coaching sessions for students with trained coaches. We have hosted 3 digital performance trips including post-

performance reflections and discussion and have worked in partnership with the National Theatre of Scotland on an autistic 'Artist in Residence' programme <https://portal.rcs.ac.uk/waci/2020/07/14/the-storyteller/> and the Ayr Gaiety Theatre on a playwriting project for care experienced young writers. Other examples of our online resources include:

Let's Make a Scene, (<https://portal.rcs.ac.uk/waci/2020/06/09/lets-make-a-scene/>), an online drama project devised a play that's being published as part of Wonder Fools' Positive Stories project <https://positivestories.scot/plays/ozymandias/>

Digital poverty has been an area of concern for students from widening access backgrounds in both our undergraduate programmes and our pre-HE provision. We benefitted from funding support from SFC to loan devices to UG students requiring them and we utilised funds in our Transitions budget to purchased 12 laptops as well as dongles and data packages which are loaned to students that need support with access to technology. Learning online from home in the arts necessitates specialist equipment. We have also purchased kit such as microphones, speakers, headphones, dance mats, stools for instrument practice (e.g. double bass) and grips for holding tablets and mobile device steady place whilst receiving 1:1 instrument lessons. Likewise, we have sent out materials packages for engaging with online activity, provided pre-downloaded resources for students struggling with Wi-Fi connection.

2020-1 Progress Update and 2021-2 Objectives and Targets

Further amendments to the plan for 2020-1 have been made, taking into account guidance from Scottish Government/SFC and the objectives and targets set in the OA 2020-1 has now been approved by our Board of Governors.

The following sets out our achievements to date against the objectives set in our 2020-1 OA and provides revised objectives and targets for 2021-2:

Achieve SIMD 20 recruitment target of at least 24 Scottish domiciled undergraduate entrants. (16.6% of SDUEs from 20% most deprived postcodes). Achieve SIMD 21-40 target of at least 45 Scottish domiciled undergraduate entrants. (31% of SDUEs from 40% most deprived postcodes).

We continue to be effective in improving access to the Conservatoire's undergraduate programmes for people from SIMD 20/40 data zones as the data below demonstrates:

Year	Number of SIMD 20/40 students starting UG Programmes	%age of Scottish domiciled students starting UG Programmes
2014/15	35	25
2015/16	45*	33
2016/17	41	28
2017/18	39	28
2018/19	39	30
2019/20	39	30
2020/1	41	33

**includes 5 students who were enrolled on the BA Performance in British Sign Language with English, which recruits on a 3-yearly basis.*

SFC Guidance	Objectives and Targets for 2021-22
<p>By 2021, students from the 20% most deprived backgrounds should represent at least 10% of full-time first degree entrants to every individual Scottish university and work with our Outcome Agreement Team to agree further targets for subsequent years.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Achieve SIMD 20 recruitment target of at least 27 Scottish domiciled undergraduate entrants. (17.4% of SDUEs from 20% most deprived postcodes). 2. Achieve SIMD 21-40 target of at least 50 Scottish domiciled undergraduate entrants. (32.3% of SDUEs from 40% most deprived postcodes).
<p>Barriers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strategic funding for core Fair Access work finishes in July 2021. 2. Impact of the COVID Pandemic on future Fair Access Recruitment for beyond 2021. 	<p>How:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue dialogue with SFC/OA Team to conclude future funding for Transitions. 2. Continue to undertake targeted outreach and recruitment activity in SIMD 20 areas to maximise recruitment to 'Transitions'

Transitions

Transitions continues to be important to us strategically as it provides a vehicle to progress our development as the national Conservatoire. We were delighted to receive continued funding for one year (2020-1) for our Transitions programme and have already started dialogue about future funding from 2021 onwards. We have also recently seen the conclusion of a funded PhD which was exploring the Transitions programme, effectiveness and which provides useful context and opportunity to enhance our work. We will be able to digest the conclusions of this research at our next Fair Access Committee meeting at which the PhD researcher will present their findings.

In 2020-1 we have appointed a new outreach co-ordinator to assist us to progress partnership working with key organisations to reach our priority under-represented groups including care experienced, estranged, minority ethnic, asylum seekers/refugees, D/deaf and people from rural locations.

Our targeted outreach activities and the development of resources has allowed us to extend reach nationally in targeted areas/communities of deprivation and rurality using both face-to-face and technology enhanced methods to raise awareness, and build routes to further study for those with talent and potential in the performing arts. To date we have embarked on the following:

- Provided bursaries to technical theatre and design teachers working in schools in areas of multiple deprivation to attend online CPD sessions offered online by the Scottish Drama Training Network (SDTN). Process of developing a series of further workshops targeted at teachers and their pupils which will be rolled out from January 2021.
- Developed a suite of new online materials designed to equip primary teachers with skills and resources to deliver specialist performing arts education as a result of

cutbacks in peripatetic music and drama teachers. Rollout will start with music resources being issued to schools in January 2021.

- Working closely with key organisations such as the Scottish Refugee Council, SCAPP and Universities of Sanctuary to explore ways to reach and provide pathways to arts education for Asylum Seekers and refugees.
- Worked with the Ayr Gaiety and Ayrshire Champions Board to offer a bespoke performing arts project to care experienced young people in Ayrshire.
- Worked with the Youth Community Support Agency alongside Scottish Youth Theatre to support young black and minority ethnic people to engage across the arts (film, music, drama and writing).
- Ran an online Fair Access Expo, connecting students to working professionals. <https://www.rcs.ac.uk/fair-access-expo/>
- Collaborated with the RCS' film programme and Africa In Motion Film Festival, Gmac Film, and FANS Youth Film Festival to bring together young black film makers and creatives for an on-line discussion that forms part of the RCS Film Department's Open Day, Africa In Motion's Industry Programme and Gmac Film's *Little Pictures* training programme (a new short film scheme specifically aimed at BAME and under-represented communities).
- Offered a Studio Three Sixty online Technical theatre residency for young people nationwide interested in education pathways for production arts (technical and design). We have worked closely with schools, support agencies and college students to ensure a broad reach with participants joining from Orkney, Highland, North and South Ayrshire, and Glasgow.
- Participated in the RCS 'Home from Home' service over the winter break to ensure that Care Experienced and Estranged Students were looked after and have a one-stop-shop to a variety of other support services offered by partners at this time.

Other activities that are planned for 2020-1 include:

- Technical arts training for drama teachers – The aim of offering this training is to engage with Drama Teachers and pupils who are keen on production - and also to upskill Drama Teachers who are under resourced in the Technical arts in schools serving SiMD20 areas.
- 'On the Edge' – a creative film engagement – through a video instillation project celebrating key workers in SiMD20 areas (including NHS, shopkeepers, artists and teachers). The aim is to make contact with community groups, arts groups and organisations working with YP in 4 SiMD20 neighbourhoods. Following the projection delivery the aim is to offer up a series of workshops / engagement activities for YP in the 4 areas. Aim to connect with Drama / Music & Film Teachers in the local schools
- 'Home' - a digital resource with a number of short films exploring Rhythm and movement. The aim is to show the beauty and potential of exploring rhythm through music, poetry, art and dance. The films will be short - approximately 5 minutes. They will be accompanied by a resource pack that gives instructions to help young people and communities try out their own version of the activity. The Resource will be added to the Learning Zone. When the resource is completed we will mail out to our contact database and encourage teachers and arts workers to use and share the resource with their young people.
- 'Positive Stories for Negative Times' - We are planning to collaborate with the creative arts community at Saint Roch's Secondary school (including their D/deaf

unit) and Wonderfools. The aim is to make a piece of work that will form part of a final digitised and streamed presentation at the Traverse.

- Recruitment Videos – the aim is to provide accessible information to people about Transitions then to support them with adequate information if they are interested in applying to Transitions.
- Ethnic Minority targeted project - The aim is to engage with communities of young people of colour and signpost the Creative disciplines as a possibility for study and ultimately careers.
- Outreach database – the aim is to provide our team with information about growing network of artists, educators and organisations for whom widening participation is core.
- Community Choir – open access for anyone interested in participating in a singing community. The aim is for social activity and is a response to a request from our participants.
- Early Years Music and Ballet - the aim is to work with Big Noise, Glasgow Instrumental Service and Scottish Ballet/Associates to provide early years feeders into our pre-HE Juniors programmes for SIMD20 participants.

Despite our Transitions programme being delivered online in 2020-1 we have successfully recruited to the programme for 2020-1 and have maintained high levels of engagement with the programme. Recruitment data for 2019-20 and 2020-1 is provided below:

Target 2019/20 Includes 20 pre-JC	Actual	Var	Target SIMD 20/ Care Exp	Actual	Var	Target SIMD 40	Actual	Var	Target BME	Actual	Var
140	135	-5	70% (98)	70% (98)	0	30% (42)	26% (37)	-5	10% (14)	17% (21)	+7
Target 2020-21	Actual	Var	Target SIMD 20/ Care Exp	Actual	Var	Target SIMD 40	Actual	Var	Target BME	Actual	Var
140	129*	-11	70% (98)	68% (95)	-3	30% (42)	14% (19)	-23	10% (14)	20% (28)	+14

**This is still work in progress as we are still recruiting*

Targets for applications from Transitions to the Conservatoire and to other HEIs:

Year of entry	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020-1
Applications to RCS	27	36	67	58; 22 successful = 38%	38; 10 successful = 26%	37; 12 successful = 32%
Applications to other institutions	27	36	93	62	40	91 (inc. 20 for non-arts subjects)

Total	54	72	160	124	78	128
-------	----	----	-----	-----	----	-----

Learning from the COVID Pandemic

Since the start of the COVID Pandemic lockdown, and restrictions in our ability to deliver our programmes face-to-face, we have developed a range of online services, resources and activities. Although we have faced issues relating to digital poverty and have started to see our students experience some 'online fatigue', the majority have continued to engage. We have worked closely with agencies, institutions and partners to support students. This has prevented several students from falling away, and enabled us to work closely to fully support those few who have needed to step back. We have shared engagement strategies for this demographic with the wider widening participation community including other HEIs, third sector and artistic organisations. For example, we have been co-developing outreach activity for our youngest participants with organisations such as Sistema who face the same issues with engagement. We recognise that post-pandemic, while much of our delivery will return to an 'in-person' format, there are some core activities that will benefit from continuing to be online. This is something we will evaluate during 2020-1 with a view to identifying core services and resources that will be developed as part of our new Fair Access Strategic Plan from 2021-2.

Future Funding Support

Funding for our two widening access programmes finishes in July 2021. The Commissioner for Fair Access, in his 2020 Annual Report, recognised that targeted initiatives, such as the Transitions programme have been successful and had led to increases in access for the bottom two SIMD quintiles. The Commissioner recommended that the SFC should guarantee continuing support for the access work of the RCS as one of the key institutions in creative art and design education. We have already started a dialogue with our outcome agreement team and would wish to negotiate a successful outcome to enable us to continue our work from August 2021.

Care Experienced Students, Estranged Students and Carers

We have continued to work collaboratively with other agencies such as MCR pathways, Who Cares? Scotland and the Corporate Parenting Forum in Glasgow to recruit students with a care experienced background to our Transitions programme. To date for 2020-1 we have recruited 20 care-experienced students (14% of the target cohort).

Fifteen Care Experienced students applied for entry to UG programmes at RCS in 2020-2, two of whom came from Transitions. Only one student was successful in gaining a place and they were a Transitions student. None of the other care experienced applicants scored highly enough in audition, despite rigorously applying contextualised circumstances. In 2019-20, 11 care experienced students applied with one being successful. Whilst we have improved Transitions care experienced numbers, we know that we need to find ways to increase our care experienced entries to undergraduate study at RCS through pre-HE provision and contextualised admissions processes and this is something we will focus on in 2021-2.

We have refreshed our Care Experience Website and will review progress against our Corporate Parenting Action Plan. A revised action plan is currently being created and will be submitted with a 3-year review of our corporate parenting responsibilities in March/April 2021. We have also reviewed and updated our contextualised admissions

policy and audition practices guidelines to include estranged students and carers. This will be considered by our Academic Board in March 2021.

In line with some other HEIs, we have created a signposting page for estranged students alongside our Corporate parenting pages: https://www.rcs.ac.uk/fair_access/fair-access/corporate-parenting/ . We are in the process of signposting further information and guidance for estranged students. To date we have created further information on our portal: <https://portal.rcs.ac.uk/estranged-students/>. We have begun work in collaboration with our student union and our estranged/ care experienced undergraduates through focus groups. We are currently working with this group of students to make impactful and positive changes to the way we support them.

To ensure our students continue to be well supported, we are continuing to offer coaching and one-to-one support services online to all Transitions students for the foreseeable future. To date we have:

- Recruited 18 coaches for 2020-1 and provided induction and ongoing training for all to develop coaching skills.
- Provided individual coaching sessions online. 100% (125 students) of our Transitions cohort attended their coaching sessions for semester 1.
- Employed 20 student mentors and provided induction training.
- Employed 6 student workshop assistants to assist with the delivery of in the region of 20 online workshops and events.
- Fair Access team have provided 70 individual advice and guidance sessions for students so far this academic year sessions to students to date
- Provided 125 online one-to-one check-ins at the beginning of term for students to ensure that students are coping at a time when we are still not offering face-to-face sessions. We will do the same again in January
- Held an online parent/carer event which focussed specifically on the specific challenges relating to digital poverty and challenges relating to the physical environment when students are trying to engage in remote /blended learning in small shared living.

We continue to have strong mechanisms in place to support students with caring responsibilities. Following the Carer's Trust initial analysis of our offer to satisfy the requirements of their '*Going Higher Award*', we have started to work towards this award with the aim of achieving it in 2022/3.

Veterans

We have now signed up to the armed forces Covenant. We have a pilot project planned for Veterans in 2020-1

SFC Guidance	Objectives and Targets for 2021-22
<p>Implement the entitlement of an offer for care-experienced learners who meet the requirements of access audition thresholds.</p> <p>Provide a brief update on current activities to support carers, veterans, and estranged students, including take up of the 'standalone pledge',</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Launch our new Fair Access Strategic Plan covering the next 5 years. 2. Sustain numbers and improve support for Transitions students who are care experienced and estranged across Scotland

<p>and engagement with the Armed Forces Covenant.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Review Fair Access undergraduate recruitment targets at programme level to include Care Experienced and Estranged students from AY 2022-3 onwards. 4. Increase the number of Scottish-domiciled care-experienced students entering UG study at RCS. 5. Review and monitor support mechanisms for care experienced and estranged undergraduate students 6. Extend our fair access coaching service to WA students entering and progressing through UG study with a view to improving retention and achievement.
<p>Barriers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reaching care-experienced across Scotland 2. Audition panel understanding of care experienced, estranged and young carer students. 3. Recruitment of care-experienced students to UG programmes 	<p>How:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop our new Fair Access Strategy taking into account Scottish Government widening access priorities, SFC guidance, RCS strategy, and reflections on Widening Access by the Fair Access Commissioner. 2. Develop an outreach plan in collaboration with our Outreach Co-ordinator to reach our priority groups. 3. Continue to hold regular care-experienced/estranged and young carer students focus groups to inform our evolving practice. 4. Continue to use Coaching to provide enhanced support and direction to care-experienced, estranged and young carer students to prepare them for UG study and then support them as they transition through UG study. 5. Work regionally and nationally (via SCAPP) to benchmark our practice and learn from others

Access Thresholds, Contextualised Admissions and Retention

Our access threshold continues to be expressed as minimum academic qualifications and an acceptable grade at audition. Our access thresholds are not therefore expressed in terms of conventional ‘academic standards’ as commonly understood and applied across the rest of the higher education sector. Details of our access

thresholds can be found for each of our undergraduate programmes online at <https://www.rcs.ac.uk/undergraduate-courses>.

We do however articulate and apply threshold performance or production standards as set out in our Contextualised Admissions policy and guidelines for our audition/interview panels. In 2019-20, we have started to explore ways to capture and share data relating to registration for free school meals and estranged students. In 2020/21 we are committed to embedding our individual level indicators to flag up applicants eligible for consideration for contextualised offers to our audition/interview panels.

We are continuing to work to improve the data we collect and report on to monitor the impact of our access thresholds and contextualised admissions. This has enabled us to identify further changes to our contextualised admissions policy will be approved in 2020-1 for implementation for our 2022-3 recruitment cycle

In 2020/21 we started to gather data that enables us to evidence that the retention of SIMD 20 and care experienced is comparable to the institutional norm. With this in mind, we are committed to report on:

- The number of Scottish Domiciled Full-time First Degree applicants who accepted an adjusted offer based on Widening Access criteria who **completes each year of a programme and progresses to the next year** compared to the full cohort.
- The number of Scottish Domiciled Full-time First Degree applicants **who completes the programme and gains a qualification** compared to the full cohort.

Whilst the retention data gathered in 2019-20 provided a statistical baseline for the retention of Fair Access students, it has not enabled us to determine the ‘lived experiences’ of our students to help us identify areas where we could continue to improve our practice. This is something we are undertaking in 2020-1.

SFC Guidance	Objectives and Targets for 2021-22
<p>Evaluate contextualised and wider admissions processes and entry requirements to ensure they meet CoWA recommendations.</p> <p>Promote Access thresholds to relevant schools, parents/carers, local authorities and teachers.</p> <p>Report on the rate of conversion of applications to acceptances for SIMD20 and care experienced students and the use of adjusted offers.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to assess how much difference our contextualised admissions make to participation rates among socially deprived communities. The visibility of MERs on university websites, and so their impact on application rates, varies. But particularly welcome is the promise that all care-experienced applicants who meet MERs will be guaranteed an offer of an undergraduate place at university. 2. Extend our data collection and reporting to our Quality and Standards Committee to evidence the retention and achievement of students with contextualised offers against institutional norms. 3. Continue to promote our contextualised admissions policy and thresholds to key stakeholders via our website, our fair

	access programme portals and via information events targeted at pupils, teachers, parents and local authorities.
<p>Barriers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Core data such as registration for free school meals and estranged students is still not available from CUCAS 2. New data capture and reporting tools are required to provide conversion of applications to offers to acceptances. 	<p>How:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with our admissions and student records teams to extend our data collection and reporting tools for integration into our 2021-2 reporting cycles. 2. Undertake an action research project to collect the lived experiences of our Fair Access students who have transitioned to UG study. 3. Monitor progress through our Quality and Standards Committee and Fair Access Committee.

School Engagement and SHEP

We aspire to work with schools throughout Scotland, to promote progression, and focus on Schools that will most benefit from that work. In the west of Scotland, we have been funded through the SHEP programme via 'Focus West' in the past to deliver a SHEP initiative aimed at widening access to the creative industries.

The funding for our WACI programme finishes in July 2021, as the SHEP programme is currently under review.

SFC Guidance	Objectives and Targets for 2021-22
<p>SFC is currently developing a school engagement framework to deliver a coherent and national approach to school engagement across the sector.</p> <p>The number and proportion of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants from the SHEP schools (i.e. schools with consistently low rates of progression to higher education)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to offer a high quality school engagement programme for West of Scotland widening access pupils who are interested in studying performing and production arts 2. Develop and improve CPD training and knowledge exchange for teachers and artists working with widening access pupils who are interested in the performing arts as study/ a career 3. Develop and improve our digital engagement activity for schools and communities interested in the creative industries so that some of our activity can be accessed nationally. 4. Continue to develop our Ambassador programme to ensure meaningful and sustained connection with school pupils and creative arts/guidance teachers

<p>Barriers: We have flat funding confirmed verbally for WACI for a further year in 2020-21, but nothing in writing as yet. As we understand it, funding will be the same as the previous year, which is problematic as staffing costs continue to rise. This work will not be possible without funding support.</p> <p>SFC are currently reviewing this programme and as yet we do not know how this will impact on our work for 2021 and beyond.</p>	<p>How:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Our dedicated WACI team will continue to work collaboratively with the 37 SHEP schools and other key partners including community-based arts initiatives and theatres to deliver creative industry awareness workshops, audition preparation workshops, access to live performance and access to bespoke training. 2. We will continue to develop our network of School Ambassadors to help promote this work to pupils in S1 to S6.
--	---

Junior Conservatoire Music

Early Years Music

Primary Instrumental Programme

Pre- Junior Conservatoire

Junior Conservatoire

Music Centres

Prince's Foundation Performing Arts Programme (Music)

The Junior Conservatoire is the largest and most extensive Junior Conservatoire in the UK. The programme extends from open-access, early-years provision, through a primary instrumental programme leading to an auditioned, pre-junior programme to a more comprehensive, secondary-aged Junior programme. The curriculum is designed to reflect the core undergraduate provision at RCS and offers a cohesive and progressive pathway from early years to higher education as well as providing access to excellence in a variety of different disciplines.

Current Student numbers 2020/21

Programme/Centre	Student Numbers
• Early Years Music	• 136
• Primary Instrumental Programme	• 14
• Pre-Junior Conservatoire Music	• 65
• Junior Conservatoire Music	• 319
• Prince's Foundation Performing Arts Programme - Music (Dumfries House)	• 46
• North Ayrshire (Saturday) Music Centre	• 15
• North Ayrshire (Tuesday) Music Centre	• 12
• Stirling Strings Music Centre	• 54
• Stirling Traditional Music Centre	• 51
• West Lothian Armadale Music Centre	• 77
• West Lothian Livingston Music Centre	• 46

Our sought-after Junior Conservatoire Music programme attracts students from the North of England to the Outer Hebrides and Orkney Isles with classes and lessons delivered primarily at weekends through a comprehensive variety of delivery modes. Students from remote communities are supported by a combination of blended and on-line learning.

Since March 2020, the Junior Conservatoire activity has been delivered successfully online with the vast majority of core components continuing to take place on a weekly basis. Weekly ensemble rehearsals have not taken place due to restrictions, instead students have been working on virtual ensemble projects such as the Junior Conservatoire *Festive Showcase*, premiered in December 2020.

During 2020/21 we continue to enhance the quality of learning and participation by:

- continuing to raise standards by aligning our curriculum, programme and processes with undergraduate courses at RCS
- continuing to raise the standards of teaching and learning through curriculum development, staff training and monitoring and quality assurance
- continuing to raise the standards of teaching and learning through enhanced/aligned assessment procedures
- enhancing and maintaining the recruitment 'pipeline' from Junior Conservatoire to Conservatoire undergraduate programmes (*see BMus and BEd tables below)
- continuing to facilitate and encourage recruitment to Junior Conservatoire from our Music Centre, Satellite hubs and Local Authorities
- achieving/maintaining targets for Junior Conservatoire recruitment (**see table below)
- further developing and expanding the new Primary Instrumental Programme
- working with colleagues in Transitions to ensure increased integration and widening access through developing new, targeted music outreach programmes
- further developing the scope and reach of online learning opportunities through the Junior Conservatoire Digital Learning Strategy
- further enhancing access to the programme from remote and rural communities through ongoing development of online and blended provision
- development of an additional intermediate strand for the Dumfries House programme
- Develop new expressive arts and mandarin resources for schools across Scotland as a specialist Confucius Classroom partner
- Launching a new Prince's Foundation programme in Edinburgh/Holyrood Palace
- continuing to facilitate access and sharing of learning through existing partnerships with key stake holders; MEPG, HITS, SAME, National Centres of Excellence, Junior Conservatoires UK, the Benedetti Foundation, National Organisations (National Youth Orchestras of Scotland and National Youth Choirs of Scotland)

*Scottish-domiciled students progressing to Bachelor of Music (Performance) Degree Programmes over the past 5 years:

BMus (Performance)		
Year	Number	% of Scots domiciled intake
2015/16	16	44
2016/17	9	28
2017/18	25	48
2018/19	21	49
2019/20	19	44

We aim to for the level of recruitment to be maintained (i.e. 40%+), viewing the 2016/17 outcome as an aberration.

Junior Conservatoire students progressing to the Bachelor of Education Music Degree programme over the past 5 years:

BEdMus		
Year	Number	% of Scots domiciled intake
2015/16	2	7
2016/17	3	10
2017/18	2	6
2018/19	5	17
2019/20	6	25

We are pleased to see the increase in recruitment from the Junior Conservatoire to the Bachelor of Education Degree programmes in 2018/19 and 2019/20.

** Target recruitment for Junior Conservatoire Music (including Pre-Junior Music students):

Discipline	Total Target number of students in 2019/20	Actual number of students in 2019/20	Total Target number of students in 2020/21	Actual number of students in 2020/21	Total Target number of students in 2021/22	Actual number of students in 2020/21
Music	360	411	375	384	375	TBC following auditions outcomes in April 2021

Quality Learning and Participation

Our Quality processes have continued, despite the pandemic and the inevitable challenge to uphold quality of our offer and of the student experience that has arisen. We have continued our usual annual monitoring process and were delighted with our significant increase in the outcome of the 2019-20 NSS, which we believe reflects a renewed effort to communicate with students, to respond to their concerns and to engage proactively with them in developments in learning and teaching, and learning support.

Alongside our strategic academic risk registers, we have implemented an Academic Continuity Group convened by the Assistant Principal, that has met weekly (and continues to) throughout the pandemic. This group comprises academic leadership at RCS, as well as Human Resources, Estates, Marketing and Communications and Health and Safety colleagues. This grouping enables us to make decisions against the backdrop of a rapidly evolving pandemic situation, uncertainty in guidance (which can only respond to the latest available information the Governments and public health have) and make adaptive changes to plans with the best available information at the time. The agility of the group, and the ability to effect plans to graduate our students successfully in 19-20 were a major contributor to our being able to undertake carefully paced, planned in-person activities in T1 of 2020-21, in the context of SG Level 4 restrictions. T1 passed off remarkably well, considering the challenging operating environment. The emergence of new variants and ever-stricter national measures have created greater challenges in Term 2 since January 2021, and necessitated the evolution of the 19-20 'No Detriment' policy to a more individually-focused, adaptive 'No Disadvantage' principle for 2020-21. For students for whom this is the second affected year of study, we are conscious of the responsibility to balance the necessity for maintaining the quality of our awards at the same time as observing outcomes for students that reflect as fairly as possible their achievements in their programme. In this we have been guided and counselled by the Academic Board.

We have had some challenges, as to be expected, with full participation because of some students lacking optimal equipment to engage. There have also been individuals for whom engagement has been challenging due to their living conditions, personal health circumstances or other impactful situations that have prevented their productive progress in their programmes of study. There have been significant challenges, particularly in the first lockdown, which are too many to enumerate here (although the Level 4 provision document appended provides numerous exemplars), but which include the difficult balance to be struck between managing safely the Covid-19 restrictions in asking students to work remotely, and the real risk to safety of enabling students to practice in unsafe domestic settings without the appropriate equipment/space. We are currently proceeding with the utmost minimal onsite provision that is time-critical, and critical assessment activity without which, we will find it extremely difficult to graduate students with the requisite skills, and in a timely manner.

Our External Examiner reports have been a source of encouragement for the approach we are taking, in that the EEs were impressed that we graduated our 19-20 cohorts successfully (by-and-large) and that we did so whilst upholding the quality of the awards. These reports have fed into the annual monitoring process, currently passing through the Quality and Standards Committee. We additionally recognise the

encouragement in those reports to continue to make progress with digital/online learning and developments in this area in future. Our delayed Strategic Plan (currently due to be approved by the Board of Governors in summer 2021) focuses on this area as one requiring investment and strategic evaluation within the institution.

The realities of our students' varied experiences of the pandemic are conveyed through a number of avenues, whether formal programme committees or other meetings, a more informal student experience forum (convened by the Assistant Principal) or in some cases via the work they produce. There has not been one RCS 'experience' of the pandemic: rather, individuals and groups have been impacted on the basis of particular personal circumstances or because the particular art form (for example opera singing) has been subject to the most rigorous restrictions, necessitating for a considerable time a 3m+ rule for example, for physical distancing.

Students have excelled in the new learning environment, but some have struggled to adapt, to engage or to produce their best work. A significant proportion of students have disclosed newly developed or exacerbated mental health conditions. Even those who have not, have conveyed to us the considerable frustrations and isolation of lockdowns, and the inability to see a trusted tutor in person, or to socialise, play chamber music without constraints or welcome their families to see their final play or show. For students progressing into AY 2021-22, this will be the third successive year in which restriction measures have been in place, impacting the planned learning. The longevity and uncertainties of this protracted period have impacted students and staff, leading to a number of RCS@Home initiatives instigated by a partnership of the SU, and Events teams to support social engagement and wellbeing. Students are reporting that they are concerned and less confident for their professional futures, both because of the precariousness of the professions, and because the interruptions to practical learning have disrupted the continuity of learning experience. The adage 'practice makes perfect' is one that rings true for students, but increasingly consistent practice or 'perfect practice makes perfect' is cited as a reason that students feel detrimentally affected by lack of access to venues, practice rooms and other specialist facilities/technologies.

Positive reflections include students evaluating online performance classes extremely well, enabling those who may not feel empowered to contribute in person in these classes, to do so via the virtual medium (School of Music); recorded/remotely produced dance and drama content – some of which students felt very equivocal about – nonetheless furnished a set of previously unacquired skills that stand students in good stead for innovative theatre practices being developed in the professions, whilst dancers have learned about ballet for screen as a complement to their theatrical performance experience; all our BA Actors acquired professional agents after their shows were streamed (this is the first time a graduating Acting cohort have all had an agent prior to graduation); our D/deaf actors, whose challenges of interacting across remote platforms with sub-optimal subtitling and intermittent internet quality have been amongst the hardest to overcome, have produced exceptional work and entered into collaborations with other programmes, and maintained progress towards their graduation this summer, against all the obstacles facing them. These achievements should not be underestimated.

Students have been hugely supportive of collaborative efforts with staff and the Senior Management Team to ensure that provision is maintained, and careful measures are in place in our buildings to ensure limited in-person activity, essential to assessments and progression, is enabled to continue. The pressure on the small SU (one sabbatical officer) to respond to student needs and advocate effectively for the student body, many diverse subgroups and to convey important information in sometimes tense circumstances in such a way as to involve everyone and make them feel heard has been highly impressive and particularly valued by students, staff and Governors alike. Of course, there are some students who have felt aggrieved at missed opportunities, decisions made (and their timing, usually due to the unpredictability of new pandemic restrictions) and who have not felt that the plans made are proportionate. In the latter case, RCS has received representations at various times from students who've felt that the provision on offer in-person is not enough/too cautious whilst others have expressed genuine anxiety that the Conservatoire has continued to offer limited in-person activity even in January 2021 when the pandemic reached its worst moment to date. We have been transparent, in partnership with the SU, around our data, including the numbers allowable onsite at any one time, the numbers of positive tests, and so on. We have also managed our estate well enough that to date there have been no reported cases of onsite transmission of Covid, and only a single case in our residence. The degree of confidence in measures in place has grown over time and students embarking on their third term at this time, and for many their most significant and critical assessments in the academic year (and for some in their degree as a whole), are positive about the opportunity to be assessed in person. For many this makes all the difference to their experience, their confidence and their sense of achievement as they complete the last step before embarking on a career that might look very different from how they had imagined only a year ago.

Impact

Case Study from the School of Dance, Drama, Production and Film

A piece conducted within the MA Classical and Contemporary Text programme entitled *Triptych* ([TRIPTYCH - Royal Conservatoire of Scotland \(rcs.ac.uk\)](http://TRIPTYCH - Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (rcs.ac.uk))) is representative of everything we want our students to be doing/making on the Classical and Contemporary Text Programme. The piece represents a deep engagement with the world from the artist's lived experience as a self-identified mixed-race, working-class person. She has taken her lived experience, probably most directly captured in her written component of *Triptych* (part three), translated it into an advanced and elaborate performed metaphor (part two), and also channelled it into a canonical text (Hermione from Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale* in part one). It is the very honest voice of an artist of colour and her relationship with herself, her original work and more canonical classical work lends extraordinary depth and complexity to all three. As noted in the introduction, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

The Head of Programme writes 'It seems to me that the artist is exploring questions of what it means to live in a world that is fundamentally unjust and what happens when it seems that's the only world there is.' The artist thought that was an apt summary of what the work is doing. I'd suggest that in all the thinking we're doing about social justice, equity, anti-racism, etc., the piece has only become more timely and more valuable as a message to RCS and the wider world.

Case Study from the School of Music: one outcome of moving learning and teaching online in response to Coronavirus

In March 2020 (and again in January 2021), the School of Music had to make an immediate switch to online learning and teaching. This was very hard for all of our disciplines, which are performance based. In addition, with remote learners spread across the globe, some have felt disconnected from their peers, and we have found it challenging to maintain a community of virtual learners.

However, there has been one advantage, although this has not been universal across all disciplines. Pre-lockdown, Performance Classes afforded weekly opportunities for students to perform live to their peers, and for peers give feedback to the performers as part of the class. Through lockdown, these moved online, and students submitted recordings rather than performing live, enabling them to select their best recording of the work, if they wished to do so, and in some cases this has also helped to overcome performance anxiety associated with performing live. The peers then reviewed the recordings and gave written feedback (in some cases verbal feedback, depending on the department).

It has been our experience that this approach to providing peer-to-peer feedback affords greater opportunity for reflection, which results in feedback that is richer and of a higher quality, in that it is generally longer and more considered than the in-the-moment feedback that might be given in a live class situation, where some students can sometimes feel embarrassed at having to articulate their thoughts coherently in real-time. Thus, the performers have benefitted from gaining deeper insights into their work, and the student peers have benefitted from the discipline of constructing more meaningful feedback, extending their vocabulary, and learning from other peers who have provided written (or verbal) feedback.

RCS at Home and RCS Presents Case Study

RCS at Home and *RCS Presents* were created and launched as digital public platforms in March 2020.

RCS At Home felt an essential way of reaching our community (our audiences and students' families) and sustaining a presence in reminding people that the creative arts are one element of life that enables social cohesion and a shared sense of purpose. It was also a vehicle to enable work recorded prior to the pandemic or developed in new ways during the pandemic, to be shared. Equally, seeing footage from around the world of people turning to music and other participatory art-making, from their balconies in lockdown, it became immediately clear that RCS too had a role to play in promoting good morale both within our own learning community, and further afield.

What followed has been an outpouring of art from all corners of the globe, as the RCS community engaged in creating digital performances, writing blog posts, sharing tips and techniques to get one another through lockdown, and publishing research papers, all through RCS at Home.

Some of the earliest RCS at Home content included a [performance from Traditional Musician of the Year and RCS Lecturer Jenn Butterworth](#) streamed from her living room, BBC Philharmonic clarinettist and graduate [Fraser Langton playing every part in a Quarantine Clarinet Quartet](#), a [Wellbeing blog series](#) aimed at keeping us physically and mentally healthy and an [Exchange Talk](#) with Dr Emily Doolittle discussing her research on

bird song. Principal Jeffrey Sharkey also took part, performing Scott Joplin on the piano from his living room on the first day of RCS at Home.

The platforms have continued to evolve, in particular the RCS Presents performance strand, which has premiered around 40 concerts and a number of full drama productions. To date RCS at Home has received around 55,000 views from more than 100 countries. The impact has been creating a wider, more international audience for student work, in most cases far greater, more diverse (and with greater longevity) than could have been achieved from the 'normal' in-person performance activity in our venues.

This has had impact. One example is the filmed performance of the David Grieg play *The Bacchae* delivered by the final year BA Acting students and which was shown on the RCS Presents channels at the end of Term One 2020. Tickets (free) were distributed via the RCS Box Office and industry professionals were invited. The performance was watched by more than 1300 people in 31 countries and received four-star reviews in mainstream media. Subsequent to the digital performance, all actors involved in the production secured professional representation.

All RCS at Home and RCS Presents content can be accessed from the main website and from other platforms such as Facebook and Instagram the digital performance files themselves are uploaded to YouTube (with some content on Vimeo). All content is currently free to view with no registration required. RCS at Home continues to develop and evolve with a further update planned to improve functionality and usability.

For more information and further examples please see <https://www.rcs.ac.uk/review/rcs-at-home-creatively-connecting/>.

Equalities and Inclusion

Like many institutions across the world (not only in Education), RCS was challenged on its record in relation to creating and sustaining an actively anti-racist learning environment for students and staff. The institution should have made better progress than it had, before the events of May 2020 in Minneapolis and subsequent activism prompted much-needed action to make the institution safer for the Black and global majority community. As a result of many meetings and collaboration with students, and in particular the members of the RCS Black Union, an institutional Anti-Racism Action Plan was published on September 1st 2020 ([RCS Anti-Racism Action Plan](#)) It commits to significant progress in crucial areas of operation, including recruitment, curriculum, leadership, governance, representation and transparency/accountability. Quarterly updates are published, the first in December 2020 and the second due in March 2021.

It is clear from emerging reports and research that the global Covid-19 pandemic has impacted BAME and other minority communities more severely, and that disadvantaged groups have further endured challenge throughout restriction measures and in terms of access to services, including education. We know from our Estranged Students, and other groups, that they have struggled with mental health and financial challenges, and we are working to understand these impacts and to support all students in need.

Equality Outcomes

2021 is a significant year for RCS as it is the time when we review the Equality Outcomes we set for 2017 - 2021 and we establish new ones to achieve over the next four years.

Below is a review of our Equality Outcomes from the past four years:

Equality Outcomes 2017 - 2021		
	Equality Outcome Overview	Examples of our Achievements
EO1	Our learning, teaching and administration environment is supportive in relation to all students and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Piloted and evaluated a range of race equality training provision to identify which had a measurable impact on behaviour - Implemented a programme of disability equality training which had a measurable impact on staff confidence and behaviour - Developed our in-house provision of trained Mental Health First Aiders - Achieved the Bronze Healthy Working Lives Award - Published our Trans & Gender Diversity Policy & Guidance for staff and students and rolled out workshops for staff
EO2	An increased diversity of students and staff involved in learning and teaching at the Conservatoire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implemented a number of positive action initiatives to redress gender imbalances in identified programme areas (i.e. we hosted a Royal Philharmonic Society's weekend workshop for aspiring women conductors in February 2019 and made funding available to cover the costs for the 4 internal applicants who attended) - Widened our outreach approach and started earlier in order to better engage with Glasgow's minority ethnic communities in regards to the performing arts - Consulted with Close the Gap and Family Friendly Scotland to develop a more equal workplace for staff by working to eliminate gender based occupational segregation (for professional support staff).
EO3	All of our policies, systems and processes for students and staff are inclusive, accessible and transparent, demonstrating the benefit of reflecting on previous performance and feedback to the enhancement of our practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reviewed and updated our Equality Impact Assessment process and piloted it on our 2018 Outcome Agreement for the Scottish Funding Council. - undertook staff surveys to provide important data on EDI issues, awareness of staff on how to access training and development, knowledge around flexible working etc., which we subsequently acted upon. - Developed the creative integration of d/Deaf performers in productions, providing employment opportunities for graduates. We have committed an extra financial resource to supporting this, and other work specifically identified within our BSL Plan. - Developed the Inclusive Education module of our M.Ed. for Arts Pathway 5 for dance professionals, to

		<p>ensure that learners at all levels have the appropriate support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SU made a concerted effort to ensure the Student Council was diverse, and the constitution was edited to that effect. Role descriptors for the Liberation Officers were developed and published. The SU committed to encouraging more BSL users onto the Student Council and in 2019 over 10% of members of the Council were BSL users.
EO4	<p>A comprehensive set of student and staff equality and diversity data that gives us a more detailed picture of our Conservatoire community and enables us to undertake more informed analysis of under-representation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchased the learning and development module for I-Trent to identify the most effective method of capturing the necessary data to ensure we can use this information meaningfully for reporting purposes. Developed action plans arising from data gathered from Equal Pay Review and other EDI surveys Fair Access Team achievements (see separate section)

In the last year we have also achieved the following:

New EDI Officer Role – we recruited an additional Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Officer to work alongside our long-serving post holder. Staff and students now benefit from a gender and race balance in the EDI Team.

Racism, Race Equality & Race Allyship Workshops – all academic staff were required to attend this workshop, which was run by Diverse Minds, prior to the start of the 20/21 academic year. Additionally, all academic staff were required to attend **Active Bystander Workshops** prior to the start of term, to ensure that they were fully aware of inappropriate behaviour, especially that relating to race, and how to address it effectively.

We are in the process of undertaking detailed analysis of the feedback from both training courses to enable us to design effective in-house training for all other staff. At the start of the academic year, all new and returning students attended a Race Equality workshop run by the Scottish Association of Minority Ethnic Educators.

In October we launched a **Dignity at the Conservatoire** survey, in which we invited all students and staff members to anonymously provide details of their experiences, positive and negative, whilst at the Conservatoire. The survey provided the opportunity to provide free text responses, and we are currently analysing the results, which have been very varied. Some information has been the source of concern in a number of areas, including race and disability, and we will be addressing this in our future work (including our new Equality Outcomes and planned training).

Our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Fund was launched again in November this year, although due to the pandemic, only submissions for digital initiatives to promote and explore EDI were invited. Five submissions were successful, including events relating to Holocaust Memorial Day 2021 and USA Black History Month, a BSL signed composition relating to the changing voice of a trans person and a virtual project exploring the similar experiences between those with Covid19 and those who have HIV/ AIDS.

Our Trans & Gender Diversity Policy and Guidelines have continued to evolve with the contributions of students and staff. Our Name Change process, which is coordinated by one of our EDI Officers, provides a simple one-step service for any individual wishing to change their name on any/all RCS systems. It removes the need for them to have to repeatedly make a request to different people, by signing one form, which is GDPR compliant, with all of the necessary details, permitting the EDI Officer to make all of the arrangements on their behalf. The feedback for this has been excellent. Additionally, consultation has led to the agreement to have portable “modesty” screens in all changing rooms, so that anyone can use them if they wish, without necessarily outing themselves. This will benefit not only trans and gender diverse students, but anyone who would prefer some privacy for religious, cultural or any other reason. Our **Colleague Coaching Scheme** replaced our Workplace Mentoring Scheme and aims to provide direct support and encouragement to any member of staff who requires it. It is coordinated by the EDI Officer and, whilst open to all staff, is particularly valuable to members of minority groups to enhance personal and professional development.

The key areas that we will be focusing on within our Equality Outcomes for 2021 - 2025 are:

1. Race – we will build on key themes from our Anti-Racism Action Plan, including enhancing the diversity of our student and staff bodies and enhancing accountability
2. Neurodiversity – for example, developing a more inclusive and supportive learning and teaching environment for students and staff
3. Gender Based Violence – in addition to standard good practice in this area, we will explore our curricula to review how perspectives and attitudes can be changed by the texts that are used and how they are adapted
4. Board Diversity - we will identify creative approaches to enhance the diversity of our Board of Governors and developing opportunities for minority groups to gain experience in board positions elsewhere

Please note that the above Equality Outcomes will be fully developed for publication in April 2021.

In the above mentioned institutional Anti-Racism Action Plan is a commitment that “We will include more people of colour in our Board with an interest in Diversity and Inclusion issues and publish the profiles of Board members on our website” (Responsible: Nominations Committee, Board of Governors; RCS Senior Leadership & Director of External Relations). The Nominations Committee have approved the use of an external recruitment company (Nurole) to reach as wide as possible in the search for diversity on the Board of Governors. The recruitment drive began at the start of January 2021 with a view to achieving this in time for the April/June Board of Governor meetings in 2021.

We have taken on board comments that our policies and procedures could be clarified and that the support for staff and students who do raise a complaint could be highlighted.

Working with the Students Union, our Staff Consultative Forum and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Forum we have revised our Dignity at Work and Study Policy into a Dignity at Work and Study Statement which now:

- highlights mediation and discussions a first step

- clarifies how to raise an issue
- outlines how it would be dealt with (via the complaints, grievance or disciplinary procedure)
- links to our Anti-Racism Action Plan
- provides for a diversity of people who would undertake investigations
- highlights the support to staff and students through any process
- outlines our new Intimacy Choreography guidelines

We have launched the Statement as part of a package of measures to support the theme of “respect for each other”, including training for mentors and those supporting staff and students during any complaints process. The Students Union and the Principal jointly headed up the launch.

Employers

It has been important throughout the pandemic to engage with our partners (e.g. National Companies) in order to continue to provide students with learning opportunities (often in amended format) and also to be part of the conversation about the future of the performing arts – a sector hit so badly by the pandemic – and likely developments. This is both a short-term conversation which responds to the immediate, perhaps even existential, challenge of the pandemic and a longer-term initiative that will see RCS work closely with the employers of our students to develop skills that both push the creative industries forward and ensure that we produce graduates cap able of thriving in a fast-changing creative environment. Our considerations range from developing degree and short-course offers that are delivered in partnership, or in close association with a particular organisation, to engaging expertise embedded within companies to help inform the future directions of RCS learning and teaching.

Our students have long benefitted from placement opportunities and working ‘hands on’ with professional organisations whilst studying, but the imperative for this is all the more urgent as the professions continue to evolve, respond and regenerate, acknowledging the importance of a multi-platform future for producing and performing work. Whilst there will always incontrovertibly be a need for in-person, intensive learning in the arts (and a significant role in supporting social cohesion and personal development within that), it is also the case that the pandemic has necessitated other ways of thinking about how we create and experience art, some of which will enjoy development and prominence in a performer’s portfolio long after the pandemic’s worst restrictions have been lifted.

We have also learned how to manage a blended pedagogy, and will retain elements of this as we evolve our degree courses to remain competitive, relevant and attractive, notwithstanding the downturn in recruitment we are seeing in light of the pandemic and Brexit. We very much hope to remain fully aligned with our partners in Europe, including the Association of European Conservatoires (AEC), which has pledged its commitment to including Scotland’s national Conservatoire in its plans and core developments in future. RCS would especially wish to continue some form of engagement with the ERASMUS+ scheme, since the value of inbound EU students into our diverse and rich arts scene in Scotland is inestimable.

Like many organisations in HE, we are preparing proposals to fulfil ‘microcredential’ courses to enable the upskilling of professionals who are looking for additional learning opportunities they can build around work and other commitments, in order to enhance their own employment prospects, or to re-enter the profession with renewed, updated skills and confidence. So far, our developments are focused on upskilling educators, recognising the importance of upholding the quality and quantity of arts-led teaching in Scotland, and likewise the significance of developments in online and digital production prompted by the pandemic, but here to stay in our sector.

For this year, we were able to successfully transition our blended-learning MEd programme to a fully online provision, however, as participants on this programme are arts educators, final year projects have been impacted by lack of access to learners. This has required some innovative rethinking with some students engaging on online projects focused on directly meeting the needs of learners, such as a series of online visual art sessions designed to explore Gaelic identity, and a socio-cultural Edutainment resource for language- development in early years. Other projects focused on contributing to the knowledge-base of practitioners within specific contexts, such as paper on the impact of Educational Drama on literacy progression within Scottish primary schools, a systematic review of the acting profession in Scotland, and an evaluation of the self-efficacy of secondary PE teachers delivering dance in the curriculum. Over this year, most students revised their projects to provide professional learning opportunities for peers within their sectors. These included an innovative online toolkit to support the development of music notation skills, a teaching resource to support secondary teachers of drama, a resource pack to support music facilitators to teach conducting in areas of low socio-economic development, a feminist pedagogy for community and recreational dance delivery, and an education pack to support educators to teach Gaelic song. These projects have allowed the MEd programme to impact on the Upskilling of not only the participants on the programme, but also on their peers within the formal and informal arts education sectors.

We will also be looking to build on the success of our MEd blended-learning programme to offer further programmes that enable engagement by professionals looking to obtain a full degree. Our microcredential offer will also seek to make the (probably ten-15 credit) units portable and ‘stackable’, to maximise the potential for flexible uptake by users.

Staff Development

Since 2004, we have held an annual Learning and Teaching Conference. Designed as a vehicle to support staff development, the conference typically offers a mix of talks by external guests and RCS staff, creative conversations and workshops to inspire sharing of innovative practices in arts education. We made the decision not to hold a Conference in September 2020, recognising that staff would need the additional time to prepare for our new blended delivery model. In 2019, our Learning and Teaching Conference focused on some of the technologies being used to enhance teaching and learning, and we believe this development activity played a small part in preparing our staff for the move to the blended model. For September 2021, we are planning an online version of our Learning and Teaching Conference, with focusing on our work for the QAA Enhancement Theme: Resilient Learning Communities. This will provide

an opportunity to engage our staff in development activities that will address a number of institutional priorities, such as student and staff wellbeing, mental health, inclusion, anti-racism and community building.

In 2020, we graduated three more staff members with the PG Cert in Learning and Teaching, each of whom also attained HEA Fellowship. Since we started delivering the PG Cert programme as a vehicle for staff professionalism in teaching in 2007, 63 members of staff have gained the award and the accompanying HEA Fellowship. One member of staff has successfully completed the MEd in Learning and Teaching in the Performing Arts. One member of staff successfully achieved HEA Senior Fellowship bringing the institutional total to four. Currently there are 7 members of staff studying on the PG Cert and a further 6 studying the full MEd programme. The practice-based research projects undertaken by these staff members are impacting across the Conservatoire, contributing to ongoing enhancement of the student experience.

Digital developments, obstacles and opportunities of online learning for ITE students

Our BEd and PGDE Music students have a unique identity in the Conservatoire; not only are they students of Music but are student teachers, developing their knowledge, understanding and skills of learning in teaching in the Primary and Secondary school. As such, our student teachers have not only been coping with the demands of an online and blended approach to their Music studies but have also experienced a very different year in terms of school placement.

Changes to placement experienced by ITE students nationwide across academic session 2020-21 have been unprecedented with placement dates/patterns in a continual state of fluidity with national health guidelines. To mitigate this guidance was produced by the Scottish Council of Deans (SCDE) as a framework to support institutions and schools across Scotland in terms of the shape, expectations (both face to face in-person teaching and online delivery) and assessment of placements including digital observations. See <http://www.scde.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/COVID-19-Guidance-on-Student-Teacher-Professional-Placements-in-Scotland-August-to-December-2020.pdf>.

For RCS students, while they had experience of using digital resources for module coursework and assessment in Music studies, the use of digital recordings was new for School Experience. During placement 1 (October-December) students were encouraged to capture digital recordings of their lessons in place of a face to face visit. These recordings would then be uploaded to RCS OneDrive and assessed by an RCS tutor in advance of a Professional Learning Conversation between the student, school mentor and RCS tutor. Students submitted a variety of different recordings ranging from 'edited highlights' to a continuous shot of a lesson. While there have been some difficulties for students in obtaining recordings (i.e., local authority permissions, hardware and buffering issues) those who have submitted have found the process to be worthwhile. Indeed, one school mentor deemed a digital recording to be an invaluable tool for supporting the development of student teachers, allowing them to deepen their skills of reflection and to begin to articulate their professional choices.

We continue to follow the guidance provided by SCDE for Placement 2 assessments (see <https://www.scde.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/ADES-GTCS-SCDE-SPMG-Covid-19-Student-Placement-Guidance-Feb-2021.pdf>) and from this guidance digital observations continue to be the preferred means of assessment in these difficult times. However, as we look for experiences to continue post pandemic it is clear that there is merit in exploring the use of digital recordings in terms of supporting the development of our student teachers while on placement.

Research and Innovation Impact

Introduction to Research

Our research culture is exciting and innovative. It is built around practice and applied research *in* the performing arts as well as a range of work *on* the performing arts, and it remains our strategic ambition to continue to grow both the quantity and quality of our research.

Just as AY 2020-21 was dominated by preparation for the delayed Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021, so the AY 2021-22 will be dominated by the strategic decisions and planning that will be necessary when the result of REF, and the funding implications that flow from it, are known. Although the institutional strategic plan has been delayed by the global pandemic, our draft Research and Innovation Strategy is all but complete, and it is now appropriate to await the results of REF 2021 before finalizing this, given the radical uncertainties of the current time.

Lessons learned from REF preparations

Preparations for REF 2021 have provided an opportunity to review progress in the development of the Conservatoire's research culture since 2014. Our submission to the present exercise is substantially larger than in 2014, and the increase in size is due to the growth of research at the Conservatoire, not the changed requirements for staff inclusion. The following figures are provisional at the time of writing:

	2014	2021
REF 1 (Staff)	14.78 FTE (25 H/C)	25.41 FTE (36 H/C)
REF 2 (Outputs)	62	64
REF 3 (Impact)	2 case studies	3 case studies
REF 4a (Doctoral completions)	9	15
REF 4b (External Research Income)	c.£232k	c.£581k (tbc)

In narrating our research environment for the REF submission, the key ideas that we have developed are:

- The 'coming of age' of our research environment (the submission coming on the 21st anniversary of the original Strategic Research Development Grant that kick-started research at the Conservatoire in 1999);
- Growth in quality and quantity of research since 2014;
- The significance of both interdisciplinarity and impact in our research ethos;

- The two research themes that underpin most work at the Conservatoire: Artistic Research, and research that interrogates and extends the role of the performing arts in society;
- Our individually tailored approach to supporting staff research, and the extent to which that support is informed by interdisciplinarity and considerations of impact.

Reviewing all aspects of our submission for REF 2021 in the context of our previous submissions, the strengths that we have identified to inform the next iteration of our strategy include:

- Demonstrable progress since 2014 and clear fulfilment of the strategic goals we set ourselves then;
- Evidence of an interdisciplinary and impact-driven ethos; our particular approach to support for staff research; excellent specialist facilities; and 'punching above our weight' in contribution to the wider research infrastructure.

The weaknesses that we will seek to address in our future strategy include:

- A range of limitations that arise from our lack of an academic promotion structure at the Conservatoire;
- The need for a systematic approach to growing post-doctoral research;
- Our growing, but still limited, external research income.

Approach to Strategy

Although our strategic approach will be confirmed following the REF2021 result, it is in an advanced draft form at the time of writing. The overall objectives for Research and Innovation are framed as 'outcomes' that align explicitly with the SFC Core Objectives and the National Performance Framework. These broad ambitions will be operationalized in a series of strategic projects, each designed to support progress towards the wider outcomes. Given the delay to finalising the overall strategy, some of these projects are under way at the time of writing.

Future Support for Staff Research

We continue to invest in research staff and the environment for research at the Conservatoire. The strategic appointment of two 'Athenaeum Research Fellows' within the Research and Knowledge Exchange unit, and the work the two Fellows has proven to be transformative, particularly their support for the research of colleagues and interdisciplinary working. All of the research support activities that we undertook in the pre-Covid context have been sustained through the pandemic, with uptake from staff increasing as we have moved to new formats. In AY 21-22, with the hoped-for emergence into post-Covid working, we will review the lessons learned from the extraordinary circumstances of the pandemic to ensure that our support for staff research draws on the best of face-to-face and online approaches.

We have successfully continued to use REG funding to lever additional funding from external sources (for example, from the Royal Society of Edinburgh and the Carnegie Trust). REG also enables us to participate in the Doctoral Training Partnership within the Scottish Graduate School for the Arts and Humanities (SGSAH); it also allows us to pursue partnerships (and income) from other sources (such as for applied research with partners such as Creative Scotland and Scottish Ballet).

Preparations for REF focused attention on our customised CRIS, which is now a much more comprehensive and effective portal presenting staff research and professional practice; as noted in the past, this portal will also, in time, help us to contribute to the outcomes of the Concordat on Open Research Data.

Notwithstanding the particular issues around Open Access for the disciplines in which the Conservatoire specialises, we are nonetheless seeking to cultivate an approach that values the free and wide sharing of the outcomes of our research and the insights it generates – an Open Research attitude. There is evidence of this across the span of our work, from our publication of two open access journals (the Scottish Journal of Performance (scottishjournalofperformance.org) and Music Performance Research (musicperformanceresearch.org)) to the way we encourage and promote the free dissemination of outputs through the CRIS, to our wider work in public engagement.

Future support for Doctoral Research

Doctoral degrees at the Conservatoire are validated by the University of St Andrews, following a historic agreement in 1999, and research students benefit from a wide range of research training opportunities both at the Conservatoire, through St Andrews (and, specifically, the Centre for Education Enhancement and Development or CEED), and through SGSAH, of which the Conservatoire is a founder member.

During the global pandemic, we significantly reinforced our support for students – both pastoral and academic – with our existing events moving online and being supplemented with new strands of activity designed to support our postgraduate researchers both individually and collectively, to successful completion in the current circumstances. As with our support for staff, we will, in AY 21-22, review the lessons learned from the extraordinary circumstances of the pandemic to ensure that our future support for postgraduates draws on the best of the new approaches we have developed.

Partnerships

As well as working with our colleagues across the Scottish sector, and our wider peer group of conservatoires across the UK and internationally, we undertake many innovative projects in applied research, including collaborations with partners in the creative and cultural sectors, such as Creative Scotland and Scottish Ballet. These projects are not just reflective of our interest in high-impact research: they are a reflection in research terms of how we understand our wider role as the national conservatoire. This sense of a wider role also underpins initiatives such as 'SHARE', our forum for interdisciplinary working, the development of which has continued despite the pandemic.

We will continue to pursue relevant research partnerships, pursuing projects that maximise the impact of our contribution as Scotland's national conservatoire, and prioritising work that supports our economic and cultural recovery from the global pandemic.

Research Integrity

Research ethics are overseen by the Conservatoire's Ethics Committee, which is itself overseen by the Academic Board. We believe we have robust processes in place for research ethics and, more widely, for research integrity, and keep these

under constant review. Through Conservatoires UK, we have contributed to sectoral discussions at the UK level around research integrity, its scope and implication, in the specific context of the performing arts.

For 20/21 our objectives in research are to:

- Finalise our future strategy for Research and Innovation, in the context of the outcome of REF 2021 and the funding that flows from that outcome.
- Review our approaches to staff and student research support, drawing on the lessons learned during the global pandemic.
- Sustain and extend our partnership working in the emergence from the pandemic.

Introduction: Innovation

The Conservatoire's submission for the Universities Innovation Fund (UIF) 2021/22 sets out in detail our key objectives around innovation, and our contribution to wider sectoral initiatives to support the nationally agreed outcomes. That draft submission is included in this Outcome Agreement as Appendix One.

The UIF will continue to drive and underpin Knowledge Exchange and Innovation at the Conservatoire, and in 21/22 we will extend this work on the basis of the development and implementation plan for our proposed Innovation Hub, RCS iHub, and through our participation in the KE Concordat Development Year.

Our iHub will include new strands of work in creative enterprise, strategic partnerships in the arts and public sector, nationally focused policy influencing research and new collaborative modes of working with other higher education institutions. We will also take forward agreed priorities from our participation in the KE Concordat Development Year project 20/21.

In addition, we will review 5 years of transformative UIF-focused work, to gather evidence and set the direction for KE and innovation at the Conservatoire for the next 3 to 5 years.

University Innovation Funding (UIF)

Our draft UIF report can be found as Appendix One to this Outcome Agreement and includes some reframing of our original plans in order to prioritise our innovation and Knowledge Exchange response to Covid 19 for the second of the emergency years. The UIF Appendix One also provides more detail on the projects that we will undertake alone and with partners. The elements below are the key strands of our planned work in the coming year.

RCS iHub

While we are somewhat further on with the Innovation Hub project in terms of our thinking and how it will shape the way that we work and the projects and programmes we develop, COVID 19 has of course raised further questions about the optimal shape and form this should now take, as well as considerations around access and engagement.

How best can we leverage the innovation potential of our community and drive it towards ambitious recovery and transformation? What new areas of opportunity and engagement will connect the Conservatoire's innovation expertise into local and global transformation efforts? And how can it help us to contribute fully to a wider

systems approach to driving positive benefits in cultural, social and economic outcomes?

KE Concordat

The KE Concordat provides a welcome opportunity to make a step change in the strategic positioning and development of KE and innovation at the Conservatoire in the next academic year and beyond. Building on some preparatory work undertaken across 19/20 and 20/21, through our Internal KE Audit, we have already highlighted areas of strength and potential and a strong basis to embark on this project. We welcome the chance to consider KE in the broadest of terms and the widest application, and will use this project as a mechanism to embed KE awareness and practices more completely at the Conservatoire, and set ambitious growth and development targets for the coming 3 to 5 years.

Goals for KE and innovation in AY 2021-22

In all respects, we have directed our UIF resource to areas that will create the strongest impact, with both immediate and longer-term benefits. This growth in the scale of our core KE work will be part of a new 10-year strategy (2020-30) with research and innovation at the heart of our ambitions to advance the critical role we play in fostering the next generation of artists and leaders. Looking ahead to AY 21-22, our goals will span a dynamic combination of consolidation and acceleration, prioritising projects and initiatives that can contribute to building the resilience of our community of artists and setting transformational targets for the coming years.

Creative Enterprise and Entrepreneurship

We will continue to deliver the following programmes and services in 21/22, all focusing on the practical side of living and working as an artist as well as highlighting the range of contributions and collaborations that can underpin a viable portfolio career. We will position this work in 21/22 in a new workstream called Start Up Foundry and deliver it as part of a Pilot year of our Innovation Hub.

As we continue to deal with considerable challenges and the potentially devastating impact of Covid 19 on the arts and Creative Industries, we will continue to direct our innovation and enterprise support efforts towards recovery and resilience. Our programmes will be focussed on assisting our community of performing and production artists to emerge into this new operating context with new tools, new approaches, an adaptive mindset and the means to thrive as artists. The targets outlined stretch recent activity targets, and a more defined set of outcomes will be developed throughout the year.

- 1. Career Mentoring 121s** - facilitated advice and guidance for RCS Students/Alumni with industry experts delivered via one to one meetings online. **50 instances of support and assistance**
- 2. SHIFT** 5-day collaborative online programme with GSA, QMU and the wider Scottish HEI network –for students and new graduates from Scotland’s HEI creative industries courses (40 + RCS). - **up to 150 participant places**

3. **Make It Happen Monthly Events** – creative enterprise and bite size skills sessions, talks & workshops for students and graduates – **250 attendances across the year** (online)
4. **Make It Happen Fund** Following 3 years of delivering a micro funding initiative to our recent graduates, we will review and evaluate this initiative, gather case studies and assess the impact of this fund in recent years. We aim to launch an enhanced MIHF (15 awards) supported by donors in early 22. – **15 awardees**
5. **The Road Ahead** – late spring online week co-curated with the RCS Students Union. 5 consecutive lunch time industry workshops and panels specially curated for students about to graduate as well as recent graduates – **100 instances of engagement.**
6. **Crowdfunding Development Programme** – staff/students/graduates programme to develop and refine viable crowdfunding propositions and campaigns. Delivered with industry partners – **20 participant places**
7. **Resilience Coaching** – one to one coaching series for graduates to support artists development and well-being. 20 participant places x 5 coaching sessions – 100 instances of coaching delivered online.

Case Study: Creative Enterprise Partnership working with HEIs

SHIFT www.shiftintoyourfuture.com

The Conservatoire, GSA and QMU jointly developed SHIFT to great success in a live setting in September 2019 and successfully re-developed it into an online offer for 100 participants in September 2020. SHIFT is now positioned as a critical part of the professional skills mix for artists emerging into a changing economy. It is also a strong example of partnership and collaboration, and has been selected as a case study by OECD as an effective contribution to the entrepreneurial ecosystem and a model to share internationally.

SHIFT is a late summer/early autumn programme for students and new graduates that deals with the very specific and practical issues for emerging artists shifting into their professional context. Designed as an intensive one week programme, SHIFT delivers a mix of inspiration sessions, practical workshops and resources, and access to artists and makers further on in their careers. It is structured in an engaging progressive format to help the participants to prepare a plan with very clear goals and defined next steps. The students benefit from being connected with peers from other disciplines and other ways of working and many of the first cohort are still connected to each other.

SHIFT will continue its delivery relationship with the Creative Entrepreneurs Club as co facilitators and wide engagement with the freelance community of Artists,

demonstrating the connection and interdependence between Arts Education Institutions and the freelance community.

We have carefully evaluated the 2020 programme in this new delivery format and we will run it in this online online format once again in September 21 (see report in [Appendix Two](#)). The benefits of delivering SHIFT online include; accessing the programme from anywhere in the world, selecting your own path through the programme from the range of options available, the ability to interact easily with other participants and speakers through the various online fora, as well as the easy access to digital workbooks, resources and materials that go hand in hand with the delivery of the sessions.

In September 2020 we opened up 10 additional places on SHIFT to participants from other Scottish HEIs which was a great success. Participants came from UWS, RGU and University of Aberdeen. In order to extend the number of places available on the programme we are currently in discussions with Creative Scotland to explore the possibility of funding a scale-up in 2021. This which would allow us to open up 50 additional places for creative arts students and graduates across the Scottish HEI community. Creative Scotland have suggested that we explore a time limited support from them to allow us to test a number of scale-up routes for the programme.

We are also about to undertake some impact evaluation from the 2019 and 2020 cohorts and also to understand how they have been affected by the pandemic and what they have taken forward from SHIFT into their professional practice.

Recruitment for SHIFT 21 has opened up this week at RCS, GSA and QMU – see the 1 minute taster video; [SHIFT 2021 Recruitment Video](#)

An additional 50 places will then open up across the HEIs in the coming weeks should we successfully secure additional funding from Creative Scotland.

Partnerships with Industry – Creating Impact.

The Conservatoire is deeply embedded within the cultural sector and the creative industries, meaning that partnership with industry underpins all that we do. Nonetheless, there are examples of KE partnerships that illustrate how that relationship can be curated to produce substantive insights for the industry, and impactful research outcomes for our colleagues. The partnership with Scottish Ballet is an example of this mode of working.

Since 2015, Dr Bethany Whiteside has partnered with Scottish Ballet to evaluate and research a diverse series of engagement projects and programmes. These include:

- Dancers' Education Group (working directly with company dancers who aspire to be dance educators)
- The Close (working with vulnerable at-risk young people)
- Dance for Parkinson's Scotland (run in conjunction with Dance Base, Edinburgh);

- Time to Dance (Dance for Dementia)
- Elevate (Dance for Multiple Sclerosis)

The partnership began as a single short-term project but grew and developed as both partners realised the value of building on the researcher’s familiarity and understanding of the company and shared values of collaboration, creativity, and dignity within research and engagement. A relationship that was initially transactional has developed into something more thoroughgoing with additional benefits and outputs for both partners, with both partners having the opportunity to devise methodologies, make original contributions to knowledge, form new partnerships, and participate in the dissemination of findings through joint publications and presentations.

Climate Change

Leadership in obligations under Climate Change Act 2009 (environment and social sustainability)

Unfortunately the work of the Sustainability Committee has had to pause during the lockdown and subsequent disruption to the Conservatoire’s operation. Upon resumption the committee with its agenda to move beyond a piecemeal and largely estates-driven approach to institution-wide strategic thinking and culture change. In the interim the institution will look to engage as much as possible with the delayed UN Climate Change Conference (COP26), currently scheduled to take place in Glasgow in November 2021.

The policy of divestment from direct holdings in fossil fuels has progressed to the extent that as at December 2020 only 1.7% of the value of the investment portfolios remained invested in this sector. The balance will be disposed of by the end of 2021. At present an upper limit of 15% of the portfolio value has been set for holdings in renewables. At December 2020 this stood at 10%.

It was previously noted that the Conservatoire was considering the launch an MFA in Performance and Ecology but this has been shelved as it was not assessed to be economically viable in the proposed format.

	Annual % movement 2018-19 to 2019-20
Fossil fuels non-residential	-13.88
Grid electricity	-26.47
Water and sewerage	-18.77
Waste to landfill	0*
Recycled waste	-48.37

* The waste contract RCS now has, which covers all waste, guarantees zero waste to landfill. This has been the case throughout the period noted above.

We target a 5% overall reduction in carbon emissions year on year. The 2019-20 consumption and waste to landfill figures are very low due to the campus being closed from the end of March until the end of the financial year.

The Conservatoire received and considered the findings of a feasibility study into alternative forms of heat, light and power generation. It concluded that, in addition to not having a particularly compelling payback period CHP was not a technology the RCS wished to invest in as it does little to push the carbon agenda along as it uses gas to generate electricity. Air source heat pump technology might still be considered but at the moment this is an expensive and disruptive option. A solar panel project for the Renfrew St campus will be progressed when it is safe and practical to do and a rainwater harvesting system at Renfrew St also remains under consideration.

In addition the transformers in the electricity sub-station located at Renfrew St will be replaced in December 2021. An ancillary part of this project will improve the efficiency of electrical consumption.

The carbon emissions picture overall tells a positive story over recent years. With sustained and meaningful reductions.

Climate Change Carbon Emissions Summary

Year	tCO2e			
	Scope 1	Scope 2	Scope 3	Total
2014-15	362	832	126	1,320
2015-16	379	698	83	1,160
2016-17	343	574	63	980
2017-18	427	451	47	925
2018-19	417	408	40	865
2019-20	355	274	28	657

As noted above the emissions figures are unusually low for 2019-20 due to the closure of the campus from the end of March until the end of July.

For 2021-22, our objectives will be to:

- Continue to reduce carbon consumption an average by 5%;
- Engage with COP26;
- Complete a project to replace transformers and upgrade resilience and efficiency within the electrical sub-station;
- Reflect upon the extended experience of conducting a large proportion of the Conservatoire’s administrative functions remotely and r-assess the need to travel to participate in face to face meetings around the UK and beyond;
- Implement solar energy project to provide a proportion of electricity requirements at Renfrew St;
- Keep rain water harvesting project to reduce mains water consumption at Renfrew St under review;
- Continue to look for opportunities to introduce sustainable practices into the curriculum.

Section Two

Some detail on how RCS has responded to the challenges of the current crisis are embedded in sections, above. However, a general summary of the response would focus on the immediate practical challenges that were faced by all institutions (for example ensuring that online contact was established as quickly as possible, always mindful of the mental health impact of this situation), and the RCS-specific response to challenges arising on account of the practical nature of our courses. For some students, their entire lives since they were very young, have revolved around access to instruments, or facilities, that have enabled dedicated daily practice in order to achieve the standard necessary for conservatoire study and professional life. This was taken away from them – few, if any students, have grand pianos at home, or in halls, or access to a sprung floor suitable for ballet; tools for technical production, or appropriate space and equipment for costume-making/design. RCS' first concern was to support the mental health of both students and staff, as much as possible, and focused quite quickly on establishing a platform for performances to reach homes online (RCS@Home and RCS Presents) as well as to reassure students that plans were being made to enable them to compete studies, or progress, as appropriate.

We have continued to produce our short courses, enabling those who had found themselves in different circumstances the opportunity to engage in upskilling work. We have also worked hard with the National Performing Companies to evaluate the creative landscape in Scotland and devise ways forward to ensure its healthy future as a source of both national pride and as an attractive economy for those who wish to settle here, work in our arts companies and be part of Scotland's international cultural presence.

Stakeholders that RCS has worked with to ensure that course provision matches industry needs

We have engaged with a number of companies, both in the performing arts and also further afield, mindful that we have a role in ensuring quality of the education of young people is not diminished by the pandemic and also to explore future fruitful creative directions, for example in areas of digital production, tech and video gaming industries. Our alumni are also making significant work at this time, helping to disseminate the message that creativity can respond positively to constrictions (see for example 'Staged', BBC 1 iPlayer and 'Staged 2').

Specific short and long-term needs that industry and employers have identified as a result of the crisis, and the ways in which RCS has changed our offer and delivery in response

Our partners have identified two things, principally: one, that there needs to be significant and sustained support for high quality education in the performing arts, led by the Conservatoire and a coalition of partners, in order to develop a talent pipeline of scots-domiciled learners; secondly, artists who can engage creatively across boundaries will be vital to the development of arts companies. For example, directors who can also direct for screen; technologists who can also prepare and curate online/streamed artistic content; theatre directors who have experience in directing for screen or projects conceived as 'digital'; musicians who can work with recording and streaming technologies; dancers who can perform for screen and stage – these are all important. Our short course offer and developing microcredential portfolio will

prioritise both these outcomes in order to make an impact on the future of Scotland's arts industry.

Key target groups of students including workers leaving furlough, retraining employees, young people entering the workplace for the first time, MD10/20

Retraining performers, for example, with pedagogical skills to enable them to teach, or to upskill primary school teachers with confidence and techniques to teach performance to young children are priorities for us. We also seek to develop young people to be adaptive so that they might be able to contribute to technical developments in the workplace, for example, as a precursor to pursuing their personal artistic aspirations (i.e. creating the means for online/remotely conceived work, and then being able to appear in the work, or to direct it, as well as understand and operate the mechanisms for its realisation in the first place).

Ways in which RCS is ensuring students are equipped for the workplace in light of the impact of the pandemic

We are engaging in lots of conversations with professionals, and exposing students to those professionals, including alumni, who are able to relate their own personal experiences and whose diaries are generally more accessible now that some of their planned work has unfortunately been cancelled or postponed.

Ways in which RCS is safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing and resilience of our students during the current crisis

We have been fortunate to be (as we understand it) one of the very few institutions in Scotland that has not experienced a waiting list for counselling services, having recently diversified our range of counsellors and therapies, all of which are continuing to be provided online. We have put together a significant package of support for students' wellbeing, through the 'Home from Home' function, with significant involvement from the SU. This is an evolution of our usual 'Welcome Home' start-of-term induction week, which has enabled us to ensure students are provided with practical advice, entertainment and basic amenities. We have maintained a constant dialogue with our Students' Union and are lucky to have so proactive and engaged a sabbatical officer in the role of SUP. We have made regular communications to students and ensured that staff are in regular contact with students (our cohort sizes facilitate this), and that students are often reminded of avenues of support both health-wise and financial available to them. The SU has run a series of social events (online) and broadcast films and talks to students to preserve a routine/timetable of activity, especially to counteract loneliness).

Ways in which RCS is ensuring our students' learning experience is maintained at a high standard, including how they engage with our institution

We have developed a 'No Disadvantage' principle for the AY 2020-21, following the 'No Detriment' approach favoured in 19-20. This is in line with the latest thinking expressed by leaders in learning and teaching at US LTC, and is endorsed by our Academic Board with contributions and critique from external academic leaders from other institutions, as well as External Examiners. We have comprehensively reviewed all learning outcomes and where necessary, devised appropriate alternative means to achieve those, whilst enabling essential work – thus far – to continue in-person with strict safety protocols (constantly under review) in place.

University Outcome Agreement Impact Framework: Supporting Data

Measure	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2020-21	Ambition		
							2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
A Number of Scottish-domiciled Undergraduate Entrants	148	145	150	136	133	123	155	155	155
B Total number of Scottish-domiciled HN entrants from Scottish colleges to undergraduate programmes	21	22	22	17	0	24	20	22	24
Number of Scottish-domiciled HN entrants from Scottish colleges to undergraduate programmes with Advanced Standing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Proportion of Scottish-domiciled HN entrants from Scottish colleges to undergraduate programmes with Advanced Standing	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
C COWA measure: Total number of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree entrants	148	145	150	136	133	123	155	155	155
COWA measure: Number of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree entrants from the 20% most deprived areas	11	19	20	18	20	21	23	24	25
COWA measure: Proportion of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree entrants from the 20% most deprived areas	7.4%	13.1%	13.3%	13.2%	15.0%	17.1%	14.8%	15.5%	16.1%
D Number of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants with care experience	2	1	0	1	1	1	2	2	2
Proportion of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants with care experience	1.4%	0.7%	0.0%	0.7%	0.8%	0.8%	1.3%	1.3%	1.3%
E Number of Scottish-domiciled full-time first year entrants	123	148	144	150	136	128	123	155	155
Number of Scottish-domiciled full-time first year entrants returning to study in year 2	122	138	140	144	127	123	115	141	141
Proportion of Scottish-domiciled full-time first year entrants returning to study in year 2	99.2%	93.2%	97.2%	96.0%	93.4%	96.1%	93.5%	91.0%	91.0%
F The difference (+/-) from the individual institution benchmark figure for students satisfied with the overall quality of their course of study in the National Student Survey	-2	1	0	-4	-7	6	0	0	0
G1 The number of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey				76					
The number of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey in a positive destination				75					
The proportion of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey in a positive destination				98.7%			95%	95%	95%
G2 The number of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey in employment				71					
The number of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey in employment in professional employment				34					
The proportion of Scottish-domiciled full-time first degree qualifiers responding to the Graduate Outcomes survey in employment in professional employment				47.9%			50%	55%	60%
H Number of Scottish-domiciled Undergraduate Qualifiers	123	131	107	137	137	125	125	125	125

Appendix One

Universities Innovation Fund

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

INTRODUCTION

As we consider the second of the Covid emergency years there is a considerable amount of 20/21 UIF work yet to deliver, evaluate and review.

We set ourselves many ambitious growth targets in 20/21 which we will continue to work towards in 21/22. The extension of particular goals across two years will provide the time we need to ensure we can deliver major projects and manage change with positive results.

Some of the planned development work will take a slightly different shape, based on recent experience we have had in responding to current needs, capacity, and the most effective way to direct the efforts of our small KE team to contribute to recovery and renewal.

We have also used this time to continue to develop and pursue our strategic objectives for KE at the Conservatoire and its wider impact across our communities.

This strategic focus will be honed further in 21/22 from the impact and next steps of the delivery of two major KE & Innovation projects in 20/21.

- Implementation of the Pilot year of the RCS iHub
- RCS' participation in the KE Concordat Pilot Delivery Year.

RCS iHUB

While we are somewhat further on with the Innovation Hub project in terms of our thinking and how it will shape the way that we work and the projects and programmes we develop, COVID 19 has of course raised further questions about the optimum shape and form this could now take as well as considerations around access and engagement.

How best can we leverage the innovation potential of our community and drive it towards ambitious recovery and transformation? What new areas of opportunity and engagement will connect RCS innovation expertise into local and global transformation efforts? And how can it help us to fully contribute to a wider systems approach to driving positive benefits in cultural, social and economic outcomes.

KE CONCORDAT

The KE Concordat provides a welcome opportunity to make a step change in the strategic positioning and development of KE and Innovation at RCS in the next academic year and beyond. Building on some preparatory work undertaken across 19/20 and 20/21 through our Internal KE Audit, we have already highlighted areas of strength and potential and a strong basis to embark on this project.

We welcome the chance to consider KE in the broadest of terms and the widest application and will utilise this project as a mechanism to deeply embed KE awareness and practices at RCS and set ambitious growth and development targets for the next 3 to 5 years.

In all respects, we have directed our UIF resource to areas that will create the strongest impact, with both immediate and longer-term benefits. This growth in the scale and reach of our core KE work is part of a new 10-year strategy at RCS (2020-30) with research and innovation at the heart of our ambitions to advance the critical role we play in fostering the next generation of artists and leaders.

Looking ahead to Academic Year 21/22, our goals will span a dynamic combination of consolidation and acceleration, prioritising projects and initiatives that can contribute to building the resilience of our community of artists, facilitating pipelines of innovation that extend artists contributions into new contexts, and setting transformational targets for the coming years.

PROPOSED USE OF THE UIF IN SUMMARY

In 2021-22, the Conservatoire will use the UIF in support of the two broad strands we have prioritised to date;

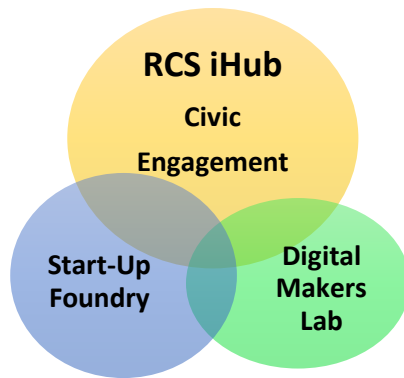
1. to provide enhanced innovation support
2. to make an effective contribution to the nationally agreed Strategic Outcomes.
3. In addition, we will undertake a third strand and complete a review of our UIF focused work since 2016/17. This will help us to rationalise our approach and the future direction for our UIF resources.

This review, along with the priorities and actions from our KE Concordat and our IHub pilot will set out a renewed and revitalised approach to leveraging the potential of UIF going forward, building on the significant scope for impact it has unlocked at RCS in the past 5 years.

Enhanced Innovation Support

21/22 will see the implementation of a pilot year of our RCS iHub. Catalysed by the UIF and the very specific talents, ambitions and capabilities of our staff, students and graduates, the pilot will provide a test bed to facilitate new interventions, provide support, seed early-stage innovations and establish significant partnerships which will underpin our innovation efforts for the next three to five years.

Below is a sketch of the shape of our hub pilot, our thematic areas of focus, priority work streams and planned delivery in the next academic year.



The RCS iHub will comprise three areas of intervention; Civic Engagement, Start-Up Foundry & Digital Makers Lab. These are areas with significant potential and build on extensive ground-work in recent years. The pilot hub will be delivered as a wholly virtual initiative in 21/22.

Strand 1: Civic Engagement

Key thematic areas: UN Sustainable Development Goals & Place-Making.

Key Projects for Pilot:

- a) **Innovation Awards for Staff** - for innovative projects and partnerships aligned with UN SDGS and place-making.
- b) **Place Partnerships** – with local partners in Glasgow city centre, we will explore the development of a place partnership that can help to revitalise Renfrew St and surrounding area post-pandemic. Early stage conversations are underway.
- c) **Supporting Creative Companies** – provide expert research and practitioner support into Arts SMEs to support recovery efforts. Working on a similar scale to the Innovation Vouchers, RCS will support a small number of organisations in the next year. We have recently commenced work with Dance North and Chamber Music Scotland by providing RCS expert staff time on projects looking at musicians’ resilience and innovative operating models.
- d) **Innovation Showcase** – digital window into the innovative projects emerging from across the Conservatoire staff/students/alumni. We will share stories of transformation through the application of innovative arts practices and research in wider society.

Strand 2: Start-Up Foundry

Key thematic areas: Enterprise development & Extending performing and production skills into new contexts.

Key Projects for Pilot:

- a) **Career Mentoring 121s** - facilitated advice and guidance for RCS Students/Alumni with industry experts delivered via one to one meetings online. **50 instances of support and assistance.**
- b) **SHIFT** 5-day collaborative online programme with GSA, QMU and the wider Scottish HEI network –for students and new graduates from Scotland’s HEI creative industries courses (40 + RCS). - **up to 150 participant places.**
- c) **Make It Happen Monthly Events** – creative enterprise and bite size skills sessions, talks & workshops for students and graduates – **250 attendances across the year** (online).
- d) **Make It Happen Fund** Following 3 years of delivering a micro funding initiative to our recent graduates, we will review and evaluate this initiative, gather case studies and assess the impact of this fund in recent years. We aim to launch an enhanced MIHF (15 awards) supported by donors in early 22. – **15 awardees.**
- e) **The Road Ahead** – late spring online week co-curated with the RCS Students Union. 5 consecutive lunch time industry workshops and panels specially curated for students about to graduate as well as recent graduates – **100 instances of engagement.**
- f) **Crowdfunding Development Programme** – staff/students/graduates programme to develop and refine viable crowdfunding propositions and campaigns. Delivered with industry partners – **20 participant places**
- g) **Resilience Coaching** – one to one coaching series for graduates to support artists development and well-being. 20 participant places x 5 coaching sessions – **100 instances of coaching delivered online.**

Strand 3: Digital Makers Lab

Key thematic areas: Digital tools and learning for creative experimentation & Prototyping approaches to production and performance.

Key Projects for Pilot:

- a) Digi Makers Programme led by the Stageport as a legacy of the Innovate UK/Tramway Revisited project which will complete in Summer 21.
- b) ISO Digital Artists Residency.

In addition, we will carry a number of the stated objectives of 2020/21 into 2021/22. These are key to our longer term KE success, the success of our innovation hub and are central to the KE Concordat.

We will:

- **surface** the scale, breadth and depth of the institutions’ links with industry and the professions building on our 2020 KE audit.

- **narrate** the RCS KE story in a new compelling way, to open up wider understanding and debate about the expertise RCS nurtures and its transformational influence across society. (continuing through iHub and KEC)
- **accelerate** the development of the RCS IHub and amplify and expand the current suite of innovation and business support offers at RCS. (continuing through iHub)
- **sustain** the KE team at current level and seek opportunities to augment the team expertise and capacity. (see below)
- **review** all existing projects to ensure that they are designed and delivered for maximum engagement with robust evaluation and measurement processes embedded within them. (UIF 5-year Review)
- **streamline** legal and financial processes within RCS to facilitate a more embedded approach to KE. (ongoing)
- **galvanise** the KE processes and impact across all of our research expertise. (ongoing)
- **publish** our policies on IP, Start Ups and Consultancy. (ongoing)
- **simplify** processes for creating MOUs for RCS driven KE projects and partnerships, deepening connections and aligning specialisms and expertise over a longer-term trajectory. (ongoing)

Working in partnership with other Scottish HEIs to make an effective **contribution to the agreed Strategic Outcomes** commensurate with our scale and expertise, we will:

- **expand** and deliver *SHIFT* across the current partnership community (RCS, QMU, GSA) and extend an offer of participation to other HEIs.
- **co-lead** the Creative Enterprise Forum within the UIF Enterprise Strand.
- **advocate** for the arts and creative industries sector within the HEI stakeholder group, drive new areas of development, identify existing barriers for creative industries and work in partnership to mitigate these.
- **connect** with HEI colleagues on new projects aligned with Industrial Strategy Challenge Funds (ISCF)
- **pursue** innovative interdisciplinary projects across the HEI sector through the connections forged through the UIF work.

Sustaining the KE Team

As noted in previous years, the Conservatoire's central KE team is small and has diverse responsibilities. The Research and Knowledge Exchange department became a directorate of the Conservatoire in January 2019, recognising the strategic significance of its work in the ambitions of the institution.

In 20/21 we enhanced the team and made some further commitments by increasing the KE Development Officer role to a full-time post and investing resource in our KE Manager post through an additional time commitment to drive forward all aspects of the Innovation Hub and related work.

In 21/22 we will seek to continue to work with our Senior KE Fellow who brings much needed additional capacity and expertise to major projects. In addition, we will seek

to secure much needed administrative capacity, in order to support the implementation of the iHub pilot.

We will also invest in the development of our core team and their leadership potential through specialist KE training programmes delivered by Praxis Auril.

The KE team now comprises:

- Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange
- Knowledge Exchange Manager & Innovation Hub Lead
- Research and Knowledge Exchange Development Officer
- Senior KE Fellow (PTHP).

Our challenge is to ensure that this small team has the flexibility, capacity and expertise necessary to deliver a world class KE support service for the Conservatoire, highly visible and easy to engage with for our community and our partnership potential locally and internationally.

Appendix Two

SHIFT Debrief

1.0 Recruitment

186 applications were received from across the institutions. It was advertised that 90 places were available (30 from each HEI). The decision to invite additional HEI partners was made at a later date and much fewer applications were received from UHI, RGU, UWS and Aberdeen.

Table 1.1

Which higher education institution do you study/have you studied?		
The Glasgow School of Art	93	50%
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland	28	15%
Queen Margaret University	44	24%
University of the Highlands and Islands	2	1%
Robert Gordon University	3	2%
University of the West of Scotland	13	7%
University of Aberdeen	2	1%
Other*	1	1%
Total Applications	186	

**One applicant from University of Minnesota who was an applicant to a Masters programme at Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. This applicant was not eligible.*

The majority of applicants (62%) were current students. However due to the timing of the applications, it is likely that many of those who identified as a current student were graduating in 2020, as becomes evident in Table 1.4. 116 applicants (62% of the overall number of applicants) did not respond to identify themselves as either studying at the Undergraduate or Postgraduate level.

Table 1.2

Are you a current student or are you a graduate?		
Current student	116	62%
Graduate	70	38%

Table 1.3

Are you in an undergraduate programme or a postgraduate programme?		
I am a graduate	42	60%

Undergraduate	17	24%
Postgraduate	11	16%
Did not answer	116	

Table 1.4

When did you graduate? Or what year do you expect to graduate?		
2022	19	10%
2020	90	48%
2021	45	24%
2019	18	10%
2023	14	8%

Applicants were asked to identify the creative area they work in, and they could choose multiple answers. 67 applicants identified their work as ‘Design’ making this the largest cohort of applicants. The second largest group was Visual Arts and then Film and Media. This reflects the overall majority of applicants coming from The Glasgow School of Art.

Table 1.5

Discipline <i>(respondents could choose multiple answers)</i>		
Visual arts (i.e. painting & printmaking, fine art, sculpture & environment)	43	14%
Design (i.e. communication design, architecture, product design, interior design, graphic design, textile design)	67	22%
Music and Sound (i.e. sound design, composition, music performance)	27	9%
Film and Media	41	14%
Theatre and Performance	35	12%
Arts Production (i.e. costume design, production)	15	5%
Arts & Creative Management (i.e. international management, arts management)	24	8%
Interdisciplinary	24	8%
Other*	26	9%

**Other includes: Events Management and International Marketing; virtual reality and serious game design; social innovation; Creative Writing (prose, novels, scripts); Medical Visualisation; Design Innovation and Interaction Design; Research; Design Innovation and Service Design; Puppetry, experimental performance, creative writing; Games Development; Design Innovation & Service Design; Opera; Learning technology; MLitt Curatorial Practice; Exhibition/interpretive design for museums, heritage sites and visitor centres; Marketing, PR and Events; English and Philosophy; Photography; Mental health & wellbeing; Public Relations and marketing; Interaction Design; Silversmithing and Jewellery Design; Animation, visual arts, research; animation, visual arts and research; Serious Games and Virtual Reality; International Management & Design Innovation; Arts education.*

Applicants were asked to identify their level of business experience to gauge the existing skills and knowledge of the participants and shape the programme accordingly. The majority noted that they had no business experience (36%) and a close second majority noted that they have run ‘projects’ before (32%). This answer was specifically added to broaden the understanding of ‘business’. After the 2019 programme, SHIFT organisers identified that many participants did not identify or use the term ‘business’ but that many had experience or goals to run ‘projects’ as they identified them. The skills and knowledge of running a ‘project’ are transferable to running a ‘business’. A large number of applicants, therefore likely have some experience of organising projects in a less formal way.

Table 1.6

Business Experience		
I don't have business experience as such	76	36%
I've studied some business basics but I've never put it into practice	57	27%
I've run some projects of my own	68	32%
I've run a business	13	6%

Table 1.7

How did you hear about SHIFT Summer School		
University communication	136	73%
Referred by a member of staff	22	12%
Social media	24	13%
Referred by other student or former SHIFT participant	4	2%

From 186 applicants, 117 were invited. 15 dropped out of the programme ahead of the start date and 10 did not attend the programme (did not respond to contact during the programme). There were 92 ‘active’ participants on the programme.

Breakdown of participants:

Table 1.8

The Glasgow School of Art	38
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland	18
Queen Margaret University	27
University of the Highlands and Islands	0
Robert Gordon University	0
University of the West of Scotland	7
University of Aberdeen	2
Other	0
Total	92

Table 1.9

When did you graduate? Or what year do you expect to graduate?	
2019	10%
2020	46%
2021	25%
2022	11%
2023	7%
Unknown	1%

Table 1.9.2

Discipline	
Visual arts (i.e. painting & printmaking, fine art, sculpture & environment)	11%
Design (i.e. communication design, architecture, product design, interior design, graphic design, textile design)	18%
Music and Sound (i.e. sound design, composition, music performance)	11%
Film and Media	11%
Theatre and Performance	12%
Arts Production (i.e. costume design, production)	13%
Arts & Creative Management (i.e. international management, arts management)	5%
Interdisciplinary	9%
Other	10%

It should be noted that discipline was not taken into account when accepting a participant into the programme.

Participants were mainly based in Scotland or the UK. There were 3 participants in Italy, 1 in Hong Kong, 1 in Cyprus, 1 in Greece, 1 in Finland, 1 in Poland and 1 in Germany.

2.0 Skills Check-In

Participants were asked to identify skills they have on a Scale of 1-5 (1 being 'I don't currently have this skill' and 5 being 'I am confident with this skill'). They completed the skills check-in on the first day of the programme and the final day of the programme.

Table 2.1

Skill	Start of week responses	Start of week average	End of week responses	End of week average	Absolute rise	% increase
Managing and costing your time	78	2.82	80	4.03	1.21	43%
Networking	78	2.81	80	4.12	1.31	47%
Soft skills (e.g. confidence, public)	78	3.24	80	4.12	0.87	27%

speaking, managing fear and anxiety)						
Marketing and sales	78	2.17	80	3.62	1.45	67%
Money management	78	2.71	80	3.62	0.91	34%
Action planning	78	3.00	80	4.26	1.26	42%
Collaborating	78	3.59	80	4.33	0.74	21%
Fundraising	78	2.18	80	2.99	0.81	37%
Self-awareness (e.g. values, strengths, goals)	78	3.63	80	4.49	0.86	24%
Setting-up your company	78	1.92	80	3.73	1.81	94%
Business modelling	78	1.82	80	3.58	1.76	96%
					1.18	48%

The average absolute rise from the start to the end of the programme was 1.18 points, or an average increase of 48%. The largest rise came from ‘Setting Up Your Company’ with a 94% rise and Business Modelling with a 96% rise. There were smaller rises in areas like Collaborating (21%) and Self-Awareness (24%). Participants coming from a creative arts education are likely to have already learned collaboration skills throughout their degree and may already have a strong sense of their self (goals, values, strengths), however as became evident in programme feedback these two areas are still highlights of the programme.

3.0 Programme Feedback

Participants were asked to complete a feedback form on the final day of the programme. 80 participants responded. As noted earlier, there were on average 92 ‘active’ participants in the programme across the week.

Table 3.1

Survey Respondents by Institution		
RCS	17	21%
QMU	22	28%
GSA	33	41%
Aberdeen	2	3%
UWS	6	8%

The feedback form was a combination of free form text boxes, Likert scales, and multiple choice answers. Findings from the feedback have been summarised here with key quantitative data and illustrative quotes from the free form text answers.

Overall findings suggest that participants found SHIFT a helpful, informative, and supportive space. In particular, key themes that arose from the feedback were:

- Participants were happy to have a space to be ‘pushed’ to talk about themselves/their work
- Participants thought the mix of practical skills and abstract values/goals was in balance
- Participants noted that the supportive atmosphere made a big difference to their experience

- Many participants noted that SHIFT was an exercise in confidence building
 - Participants felt a sense of community with their peers and with organisers/speakers
 - Many felt a sense of empowerment and encouragement
- Participants noted that it was important for them to connect with people from other fields

Informal feedback gathered during the week highlights some of these key themes:

“I just wanted to thank all of my fellow students on here and all involved with SHIFT as I feel ridiculously inspired and energised by you all. And I'm feeling a lot of love today after my presentation, so I just wanted to reciprocate”

“I'm just recapping my notes and doing my workbook in one sitting ... And I'm reading all these amazing revelations I had during session and while other participants were talking and I just want to share my gratitude”

“Feel so excited and actually prepared to move to the next stage after this week”

“The content this week never felt ‘less than’ or like it was treated with less importance because it was run online & I think that’s a really special thing”

Table 3.2

The structure and flow of the programme enabled me to build upon each day's learning.		
Strongly agree.	54	68%
Agree.	24	30%
Disagree.	1	1%
Strongly Disagree.	1	1%

One participant noted, *“I really liked the flow of all the talks and activities. It was like little steps leading to the final outcome which really helped me focus on what I want to do next.”*

Another said, *“[SHIFT] covered literally every step that a creative business needs to take from Day 1 to Day 5”.*

One identified the aspect they liked most at SHIFT was, *“how each day built on the next so without really realising it I overcame ground I was too scared to even look at on Monday”.*

Table 3.3

The programme has inspired me to take action on planning my next steps.		
Strongly agree.	62	78%
Agree.	17	21%
Disagree.	1	1%
Strongly Disagree.	0	0%

One participant noted, *“I have done bits of a lot of the things before but they have never been communicated together in a way that makes me feel like I am able to take action on them and work towards a goal”.*

Another noted, *“It's sometimes suggested that if you're talented in your chosen path, it will all work out, but listening to professionals go through the steps was so reassuring. It gave me a sense of control over my career, which is definitely something I was lacking. It has also given me a solid plan to not only manage my career but also my mental wellbeing.”*

Speaking about sessions focused on budgeting, costing and pricing, one participant said the programme *“helped me to make steps to keep using my creativity to generate income”.*

Table 3.4

The programme has enabled me to shift my thinking about my future.		
Strongly agree.	54	68%
Agree.	25	31%
Disagree.	1	1%
Strongly Disagree.	0	0%

A participant said, *“I personally came in with very low self-esteem and little belief in my work and no idea about where to go next. SHIFT has really helped me conceptualise my future and given me confidence in my ability to achieve my goals.”*

Speaking about a session on marketing, a participant noted *“I was one of those people that saw selling as a negative thing and those session re-aligned my thinking here”.*

Similarly, another said, *“I also began SHIFT feeling guilty when I ask people to pay for what I make; now I know that it is normal to ask people to pay for my work even if I enjoy it.”*

One said from the perspective of a performer: *“I sometimes can get caught up too much in the creative side of things compared to the practicalities. Then when looking at the practicalities, I can find them daunting, but SHIFT enabled me to have a clear, concise way of approaching them.”*

Table 3.5

Have you done anything like SHIFT in your curriculum at your University/Conservatoire?		
Yes	23	29%
No	57	71%

Those who answered yes were prompted to tell us what was covered in their curriculum that was similar to SHIFT and if/how SHIFT was different. Respondents who had some similar courses felt they were better prepared for SHIFT and were able to process the information faster and move forward at a good pace because of the framework of knowledge they already held.

Many noted that SHIFT is different because it is led by leaders in the field, and that it is more in depth than what was covered in their courses.

One highlighted the transdisciplinary nature of the programme: *“it wasn't limited to my specific art form and music genre meant that it covered things that I hadn't even considered doing and so it broadened my horizons within the arts sector.”*

Another participant noted, *“I have done bits of a lot of the things before but they have never been communicated together in a way that makes me feel like I am able to take action on them and work towards a goal”.*

Table 3.6

Would you recommend the SHIFT programme to a friend/colleague?		
Yes	78	97.5%
No	2	2.5%

Table 3.7

On a scale of 1 - 5, (1 being low; 5 being high) how would you rate your overall experience of working online?		
1	0	0%
2	0	0%
3	12	15%
4	42	53%
5	26	33%

Informal feedback collected over the week had begun to indicate that participants enjoyed working online. The feedback at the end of the week confirmed that with 100% of participants indicating that they would rate their experience working online at 3 or higher (on a scale of 5).

Asked to identify aspects of working online they liked most, the most common answers were around the comfort of working at home, the freedom of working in your own space, and the ability to be flexible or tailor the programme to your needs.

One participant said, *“I liked the freedom from being at my home, let me feel more comfortable and confident so that I could focus on learning.”* Another noted that, *“Being able to navigate a heavy going conference with small adjustments to suit my energy levels made a huge difference.”*

An unexpected result of working online for many was that they had more confidence to join into conversation, talk about themselves and their work, and to share their ideas, than they would have in ‘real life’.

One participant summarised it as such: *“I loved the opportunity to decide when and if we wanted to be seen and heard, so we could take time away from being on camera to be comfortable and alone, allowing full focus to be on the speakers presentations. This also meant that when I did contribute, I could give more energy because I wanted to speak, I wasn't expected to do that all the time.”*

Table 3.8

If you would you like to receive further communications about professional development and enterprise skills, please give your name and contact email here.

Provided contact	75	94%
Did not provide contact	5	6%