

Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance Access and Participation Plan - 2022-23 to 2026-27

Introduction

Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance (**Rambert School** or **the School**) is a specialist provider dedicated to providing world-leading training and education in ballet and contemporary dance. Its history dates back to 1920, when Polish emigree and former Ballets Russes dancer Marie Rambert arrived in London fleeing the outbreak of the First World War and set up a dance school.

Rambert School is a professionally oriented and culturally diverse environment. Our 140 students come from 18 different countries and are supported by 43 members of staff. Diversity and inclusion are crucial to our vision of sustaining a School in which the history of the art form is understood and respected whilst its boundaries are examined and questioned.

In 2005 the School entered the Higher Education (**HE**) sector, joining the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama (**CDD**) and validating its Foundation Degree and BA (Hons) course in Ballet and Contemporary Dance with the University of Kent. Under CDD's access and participation plan, we have made good progress in achieving a more representative student population, but we want to go further. This Access and Participation Plan (**APP**) outlines our assessment of the School's historic performance in this area. We have identified areas where we will take further action and set out the strategic approaches we will take to improve the participation of under-represented groups in our dance training.

We have consulted our students as part of the development of this APP and their comments and feedback have been included in this document. In particular, we have taken into account our students' concern to avoid a tick-boxing approach to diversity and inclusion.

Words matter to us and our students and our language is something we review regularly in the School. For that reason, we refer to People of Global Majority to describe Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students; and students with "specific learning differences" to describe students with a "specific learning difficulty" throughout this APP. The reference of these terms throughout the plan only applies to qualifying students that come under an access and participation plan. Not only have we analysed our performance data, but we have taken a detailed look at the people behind the data and their personal journeys and stories.

1. Assessment of performance

Although we are a newly registered Higher Education Provider (**HEP**), we have the advantage of having been a constituent part of another HEP, namely CDD. One of the key aims of this plan is to build a consistent set of measures, appropriate for the subject we teach, so that we can establish useful benchmarks for evaluating our performance.

Our principal data sources for analysing our performance are:

- the Office for Students (**OfS**) access and participation data (via the OfS APP dashboard, March 2021 release);
- sector wide data available through the Higher Education Statistics Agency (**HESA**);
- internal Annual Programme Monitoring and Review (**APMR**) data for academic years 14/15, 15/16, 16/17, 17/18 and 18/19;
- internal equality monitoring on student success (continuation and attainment) for academic

- years 17/18, 18/19 and 19/20;
- internal data collected about graduate destinations for the cohort graduating in 2018, 2019 and 2020. As with other specialist arts institutions, the (former) Destination of Leavers in Higher Education survey has limitations for students working in a freelance capacity. We ourselves collect information about student destinations specifically in relation to professional employment in their areas of training;
- long-term trend analysis based on internal data for Rambert School and OfS APP dashboard data for the sector which helps to visualise our journey. In order to comply with HESA's rounding methodology we have reduced the data included on the X and Y-axis to a description.

Student numbers at Rambert School are kept deliberately low, which reflects the world-class nature of the School and enables the School to nurture each individual throughout their training ensuring the School's young adults prosper into healthy, balanced and ultimately successful professionals. Around 150 undergraduate and postgraduate students train with Rambert School in any one year. Of those around 140 take our Ballet and Contemporary Dance course (a Foundation Degree with a top-up BA (Hons) year) on a full-time basis. The full-time undergraduate entry cohort each year is made up of 45 students, of whom 27 will typically be UK-domiciled. Although we are based in London, we recruit from all over the UK and each year we welcome around 18 EU and overseas students.

Our performance data should be understood in that context: a difference of one student often leads to a 2 to 3 percentage point change. To smooth out the volatility caused by changes in one or two students, we have included a linear trend line in our analysis, which shows the underlying trend and direction of travel whilst recognising that individual data points will inevitably vary from this trend.

The small size of each cohort also means that in reporting performance we must be careful not to enable the inadvertent identification of individual students. In the presentation below we follow the approach adopted by HESA, which means that often we are unable to report actual numbers or percentages. We use five-year (or where available three-year) aggregates to enable us to present data on our specific gaps, bearing in mind the small number of students who sometimes make up these categories.

Rambert School has two separate undergraduate programmes. The one-year top-up BA (Hons) in Ballet & Contemporary Dance follows on from the two-year Foundation Degree in Ballet & Contemporary Dance. With the exception of a few students who join us in year three, all BA(Hons) students start their training on the Foundation Degree and the expectation is that they will continue onto the BA programme. Very few students choose to leave after the Foundation Degree. For the purpose of this APP, we have taken entry to our Foundation Degree as the entry point for assessing our performance and have applied "Other undergraduate" filter to the data in the APP dashboard for Rambert School. "Other Undergraduates" includes entrants to the Foundation degree and excludes students who will be continuing to the BA Top-up year. We have applied "All Undergraduates" filter to the analysis of our attainment and progression performance.

In the next sections we focus on access, continuation, success and progression for each of the under-represented groups:

- students from deprived socio-economic backgrounds,
- student members of People of Global Majority (the category of People of Global Majority will in the future be further disaggregated as part of the work planned in this APP),
- mature students,
- students with a disability or learning difference,
- care-leavers.

1.1 Access

The analysis which follows shows that Rambert School has made steady progress in recruiting a more diverse group of students. Participation by students from areas with the lowest higher education participation and from areas of the highest deprivation has increased, as has participation by People of Global Majority and by students with a declared disability or learning difference. Whilst the School is proud of the improvement made over the last 5 years, the analysis shows that we can go further.

Higher education participation, household income or socioeconomic status

The graphs, tables and commentary below set out the School's performance in recruiting students from deprived socio-economic backgrounds. In line with HE sector practice, we have used the POLAR4 classification of Low higher education Participation Neighbourhoods (**LPNs**), and we track and target reduction of the gaps in participation and success between students from different POLAR4 quintiles. To enhance our analysis, we have chosen additionally to assess performance by reference to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (**IMD**) and to students' household income to gain fuller evidence of our progress in achieving equality of opportunity across socio-economic groups.

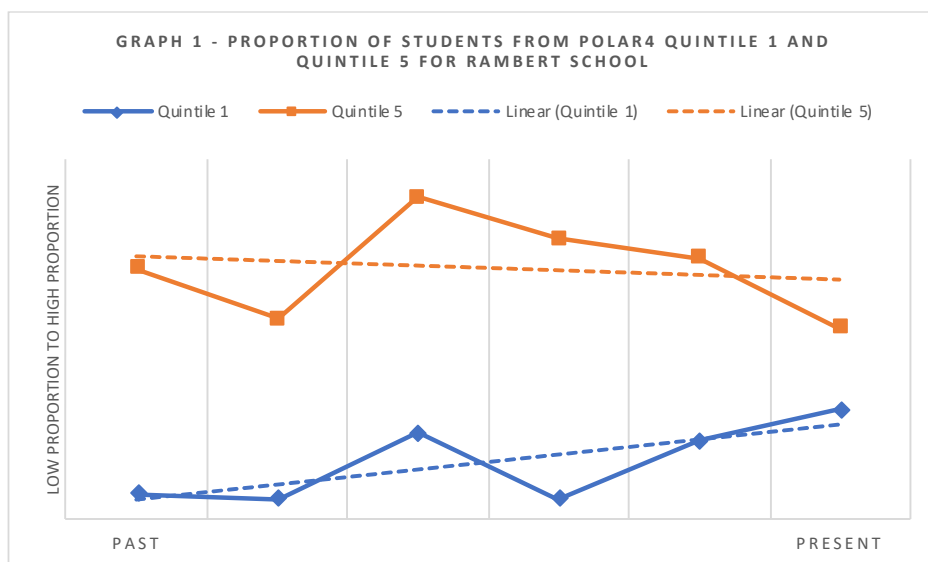
POLAR4 data

POLAR4 divides the UK in postcode areas and each is classified according to whether young people attend University. Postcodes are divided in 5 groups or quintiles. Quintile 1 includes postcodes with lowest level of participation. Quintile 5 the highest. When applied to London, from which we recruit a high proportion of our students, POLAR4 has limitations: a higher percentage of young people from London progress to university when compared to other regions. It is also not unusual for single postcodes to encompass some neighbourhoods with very high levels of participation, and some with very low levels of participation. These facts mean that there are proportionally fewer POLAR4 quintile 1 postcodes, exacerbating the scale of the gap.

The aggregate gap between POLAR Q5 and Q1 for all full-time undergraduate entrants to the HE sector in England is 18.3 percentage points (**pp**) for the five years 2015/16 to 2019/20. The five-year aggregate gap between POLAR Q5 and Q1 for full-time, Other undergraduate entrants to Rambert School for those same years is 32pp (OfS APP dashboard).

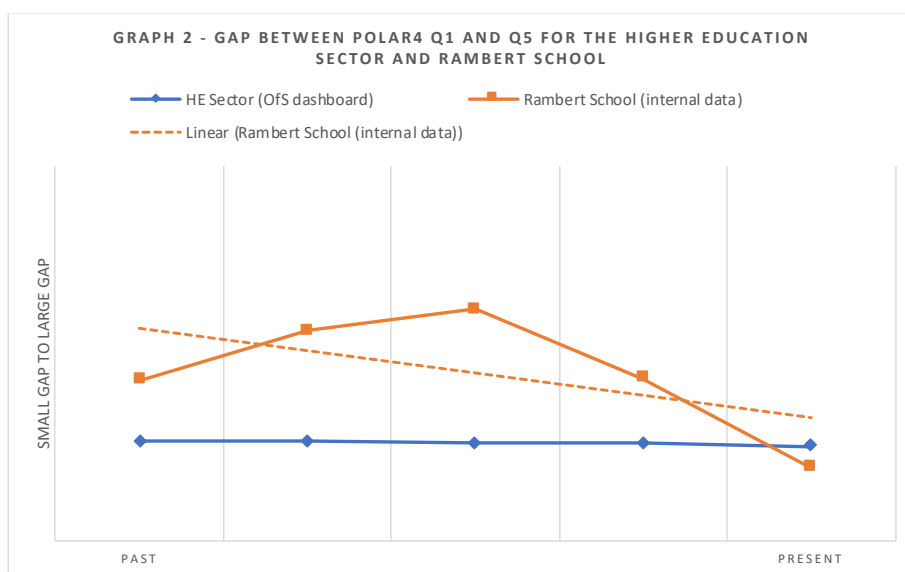
The aggregate gap between POLAR Q5 and Q1 for all full-time undergraduate entrants to the HE sector in England is 18.1pp for the three years 2017/18 to 2019/20. The three year gap between POLAR Q5 and Q1 for full-time, Other undergraduate entrants to Rambert School for those same years is 31pp (OfS APP dashboard)

Our additional internal analysis shows that the trend over that time is for the gap to narrow, but there is still clearly a substantial amount of work to do to enable a greater proportion of people from low-participation neighbourhoods to study at Rambert School.



Source: internal data for Rambert School

Graph 1 (based on internal data) shows that whilst there are significant variations between years, the trend (shown by the dashed linear trend line) is a decreasing gap between POLAR4 Quintile 1 (students from postcodes with lowest higher education participation) and Quintile 5 (students from postcodes with highest higher education participation) over time.



Source: OfS APP dashboard for the HE sector gap and internal data for Rambert School gap

Graph 2 shows that whilst the gap between POLAR4 quintiles 1 and quintile 5 remains wider than the gap for the Higher Education sector in England (which covers 247 registered HE providers), the actions the School has taken are closing the gap.

Index of Multiple Deprivation data (IMD)

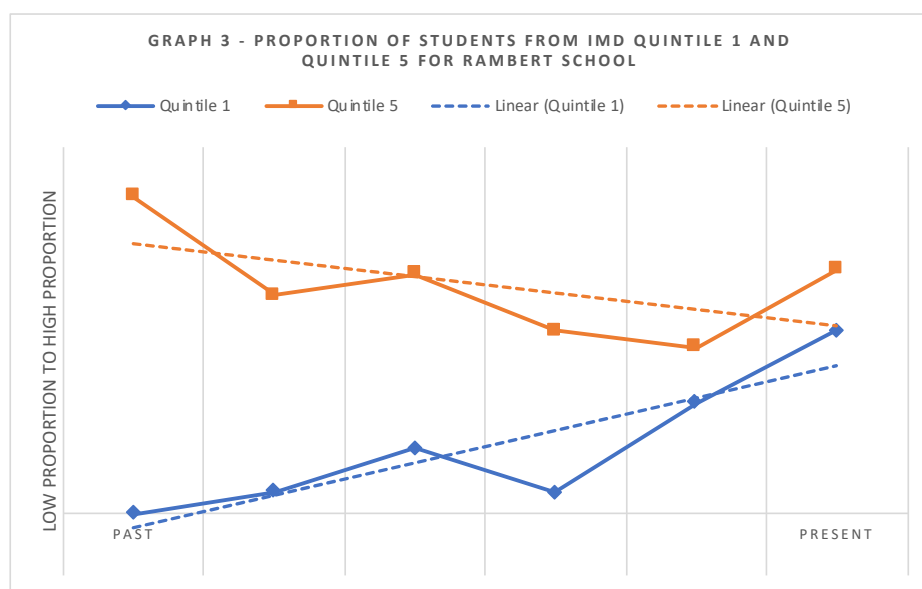
The Index of Multiple deprivation is calculated from a set of measures which classifies areas in England (only) by their level of deprivation relative to the rest of England. It includes seven domains of deprivation: income, employment, education, health, crime, barriers to housing and services and living environment.

Quintile 1 represents the most disadvantaged population; Quintile 5 represents the least disadvantaged population. As a measure, it captures deprivation robustly including in London.

The aggregate gap between IMD2019 Q5 and Q1 for all full-time undergraduate entrants to the HE sector in England is 0.3pp for the five years 2015/16 to 2019/20. The five-year aggregate gap between IMD2019 Q5 and Q1 for full-time, Other undergraduate entrants to Rambert School for those same five years is 23pp (OfS dashboard data)

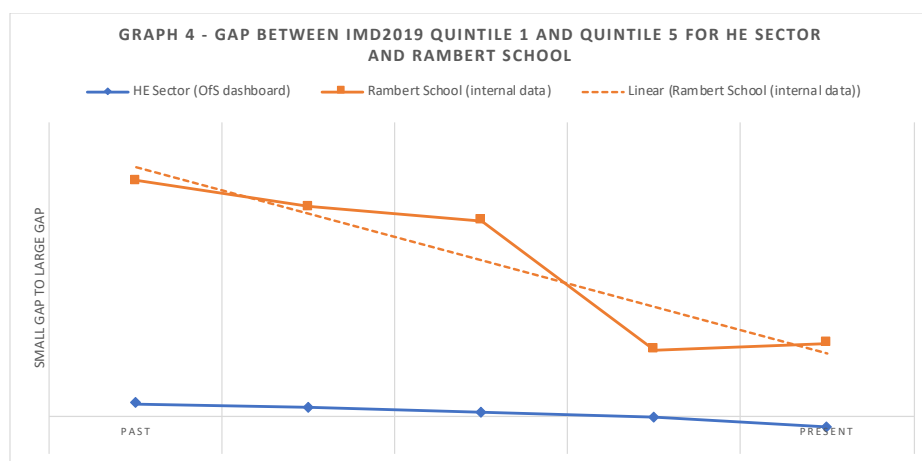
The aggregate gap between IMD2019 Q5 and Q1 for all full-time undergraduate entrants to the HE sector in England is -0.4pp for the three years 2017/18 to 2019/20. The three-year aggregate gap between IMD2019 Q5 and Q1 for full-time, Other undergraduate entrants to Rambert School is 17pp for those same three years (OfS APP dashboard).

Our additional internal analysis shows that the trend over that time is for the gap to narrow, but there is still clearly a substantial amount of work to do to enable a greater proportion of people from more deprived neighbourhoods to study at Rambert School.



Source: internal data for Rambert School

Graph 3 shows that the trend is for the gap in the proportion of students from IMD Quintile 1 (students from areas with high deprivation) and the proportion of students from IMD Quintile 5 (students from areas with low deprivation) to decrease over time for Rambert School.



Source: OfS APP dashboard for the HE sector gap and internal data for
Rambert School gap

Graph 4 shows that in the past the gap between students with backgrounds from the most deprived and least deprived areas at Rambert School was significantly wider than for the HE sector in England. Over time the gap has been decreasing for Rambert School and the School is nearing closing the gap in line with the HE sector.

Household Income data

Of those students who declare their household income as part of their application to the Student Loans Company (SLC), around four in ten come from low-income households (less than £25k) each year.

Table 1: Proportion with household income less than 25k (of all students who declared household income)

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
% home UG students from low income background	44%	37%	40%	40%	40%	43%

Source: SLC data

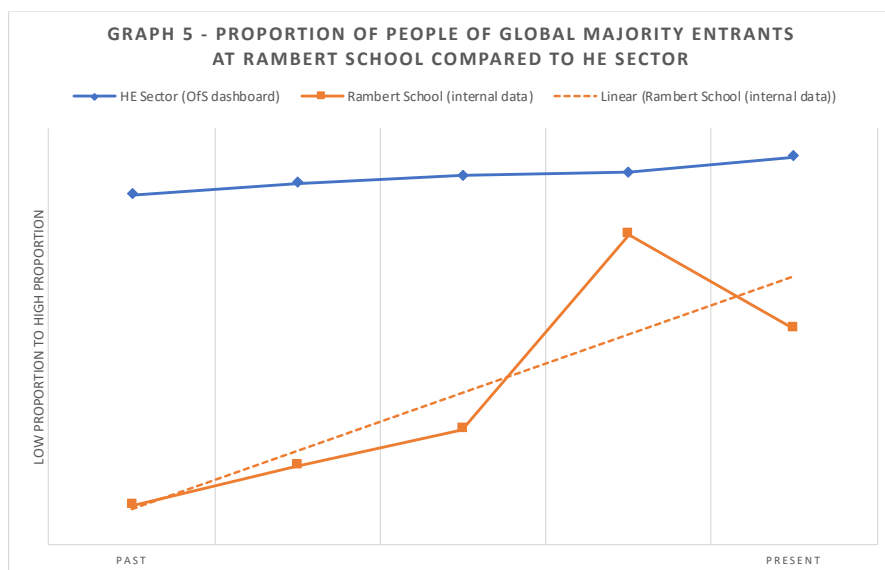
People of Global Majority students

Over the five-year period 2015/16 to 2019/20 on aggregate 30.9% of all full-time undergraduate entrants into HE were People of Global Majority. This compares with an aggregate 11% (for 2015/16 to 2019/20) for Rambert School.

For the period 2017/18 to 2019/20 on aggregate 31.6% of all full-time undergraduate entrants into HE were People of Global Majority. This compares with an aggregate of 16% (for 2017/18 to 2019/20) for Rambert School. (OfS APP dashboard)

Our additional internal analysis shows that the trend over that time is for the proportion of students from People of Global Majority to increase, but there is still clearly work to be done to enable an even greater proportion to study at Rambert School.

Graph 5 shows that the proportion of People of Global Majority students at Rambert School has varied over time. Overall there has been an improving trend.



Source: OfS APP dashboard for HE sector and internal data for Rambert School

Proportionally there are fewer People of Global Majority who study at the School compared to the overall HE sector and it is the School’s ambition to continue to progress, to make the School more reflective of the wider society, and in line with its commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

Mature students

Mature students are defined as students aged 21 and older. During the five-year period 2015/16 to 2019/20 in aggregate 28.5% of all full-time undergraduate entrants were mature. For Rambert School on aggregate 2% of full time, Other undergraduate entrants were mature during the period 2015/16 to 2019/20.

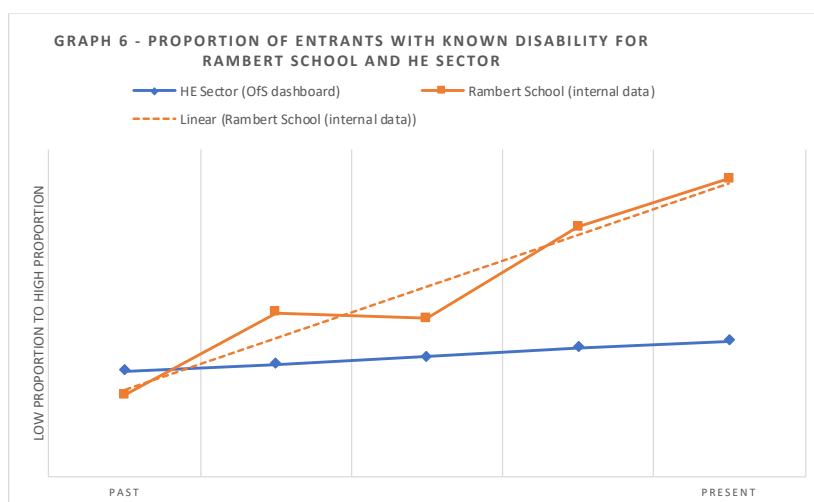
During the three-year period 2017/18 to 2019/20 in aggregate 29.2% of all full-time undergraduate entrants were mature . The numbers for the period 2017/18 to 2019/20 for Rambert School were too small to report. (OfS APP dashboard)

There is a significant gap between Rambert School’s performance in admitting mature students and English HEs. Careers in dance – especially at conservatoire levels of performance – require an early start to attain the levels of performance necessary. We are happy to consider applications from mature students, and have accepted mature students onto our programmes, but there are structural reasons why mature students do not apply to programmes such as ours.

Disabled students

During the five-year period 2015/16 to 2019/20 on aggregate 14.8% of all full-time undergraduate entrants to English HEs had declared a disability (OfS APP dashboard). Over the same five-year period on aggregate 22% of Rambert School’s full time other undergraduate entrants had declared a disability

On aggregate 15.7% of all full-time undergraduate entrants to English HEs had declared a disability when measured over the three-year period 2017/18 to 2019/20. Over the same three year period (2017/18 to 2019/20) this was on aggregate 28% for Rambert School (OfS APP dashboard).



Source: OfS APP dashboard for HE sector and internal data for Rambert School

Graph 6 shows that the proportion of students at the School with a known disability has increased steadily over time and is above the English HE sector.

The highest proportion of disabled students are those with specific learning differences. One of the groups we want to engage in this APP is people across the whole spectrum of physical and sensory impairments. This group is underrepresented across the dance sector as a whole. We want to make the School's access and outreach activities accessible to dancers with physical and sensory impairments to prepare them for potential degree-level training.

Care leavers

Rambert School has not had any students who fall within the specific definition of care leaver within its undergraduate student population in the past five years.

Intersections of disadvantage

Our focus up to now has been on delivering activity and monitoring gaps in achievement for the core groups. As part of this plan we will improve our data monitoring so that we can look in more detail at intersections of disadvantage. Because the School only has a small number of students, the effect of any intersections will be magnified by the performance of one or two students.

1.2 Success - Continuation

Our internal APMR data for academic years 2016/17; 2017/18 and 2018/19 shows that a negligible proportion (too small to report either as an absolute number or as a percentage) do not continue to the next year of study in line with expectations.

We have taken a detailed look at the characteristics of those students who withdrew, did not progress or repeated a year over the last 3 academic years – the number was very small. We found that only a small proportion of this very small number had some form of disadvantage (disability, IMD quintile 1 or ethnicity).

As part of our performance assessment we reviewed each case individually and established that there were other factors (such as COVID or family circumstances) which had contributed significantly to the student not progressing.

We also established that for each of the students who did not continue, the School had put in place significant support. We also worked to enable as many students as possible to leave with a formal qualification (CertHE) recognising their achievement.

Low participation neighbourhoods

During the three-year period 2016/17 to 2018/19 on aggregate the gap in continuation between POLAR4 Q1 and POLAR4 Q5 for entrants in English HEs was 4.8pp (OfS APP dashboard).

The small number of students at the School means that we cannot report the gap analysis at Rambert School.

Our detailed analysis showed that there was no obvious continuation gap for entrants from low participation neighbourhoods.

Low socio-economic status

During the three-year period 2016/17 to 2018/19 on aggregate the gap in continuation between IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 for entrants in English HEs was 7.8pp (OfS APP dashboard).

The small number of students at the School means that we cannot report the gap analysis at Rambert School.

Our detailed analysis showed that there was no obvious continuation gap for entrants from low socio-economic status backgrounds.

People of Global Majority

During the three-year period 2016/17 to 2018/19 on aggregate the gap in continuation between People of Global Majority Students and white entrants was 3.2pp (OfS APP dashboard).

The small number of students at the School means that we cannot report the gap analysis at Rambert School.

Our detailed analysis showed that there was no obvious continuation gap for entrants from People of Global Majority.

Mature Students

During the three-year period 2016/17 to 2018/19 on aggregate the gap in continuation between young and mature entrant in English HEs was 7.8pp (OfS APP dashboard).

The small number of students at the School means that we cannot report the gap analysis at Rambert School.

Our detailed analysis showed that there was no obvious continuation gap for mature entrants.

Students with Disabilities

During the three-year period 2016/17 to 2018/19 on aggregate the gap in continuation between entrants in English HEs who had declared a disability and those who had not was 0.8pp (OfS APP dashboard).

The small number of students at the School means that we cannot report the gap analysis at Rambert School.

Our detailed analysis showed that there was no obvious continuation gap for entrants with a declared disability or learning difference.

Care leavers

Rambert School has not had any students who fall within the specific definition of care leaver within its undergraduate student population in the past five years.

1.3 Success - Attainment

We have taken a detailed look at the student characteristics of those students who achieved an outstanding outcome at the end of their studies (Distinction and Merit at Foundation level and First and Upper Second at Degree level) in academic years 17/18, 18/19 and 19/20.

Whilst students from underrepresented groups did not achieve Distinctions, Merits, First and Upper Second-Class degree outcomes in the same proportions as their peers in the same cohort, the numbers are too small to make robust generalisations. We will continue to gather and monitor the data and develop our understanding of what makes our students achieve in outstanding ways and challenge ourselves to support each of our students in their own individual journey at Rambert School.

Low participation neighbourhoods

During the three-year period 2017/18 to 2019/20 on aggregate the gap in attainment between POLAR4 Q1 and POLAR4 Q5 for students qualifying with an honours level qualification in English HEs was 9.3pp (OfS APP dashboard).

The small number of students at the School means that we cannot report the gap analysis at Rambert School.

Our detailed analysis showed that there was no obvious attainment gap for qualifying students from low participation neighbourhoods.

Deprivation

During the three-year period 2017/18 to 2019/20 on aggregate the gap in attainment between IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 for students qualifying with an honours level qualification in English HEs was 16.8pp (OfS APP dashboard).

The small number of students at the School means that we cannot report the gap analysis at Rambert School.

Students who came from high multiple deprivation backgrounds (IMD Q1 and Q2) achieved lower levels of attainment (fewer Distinctions and Merits, more Passes) at the end of the Foundation year in all three academic years. The analysis showed a similar pattern for students from high multiple deprivation backgrounds (IMD Q1 and Q2) and levels of attainment in year 3 (fewer Firsts). However, this data related to too small a number from which to draw robust conclusions.

People of Global Majority

During the three-year period 2017/18 to 2019/20 on aggregate the gap in attainment between People of Global Majority Students and white students qualifying with an honours level qualification was 12.1pp (OfS APP dashboard).

The small number of students at the School means that we cannot report the gap analysis at Rambert School.

Whilst People of Global Majority students progressed and graduated in the same way as their cohort, from the data we looked at this group had proportionally fewer Distinctions and Merits at the end of year 2 and fewer Firsts and Upper Seconds at the end of year 3 than their peers. However, this data related to too small a number from which to draw robust conclusions.

Mature Students

During the three-year period 2017/18 to 2019/20 on aggregate the gap in attainment between young and mature students qualifying with an honours level qualification in English HEs was 10pp (OfS APP dashboard).

The small number of students at Rambert School means that we cannot report the gap analysis at Rambert School.

Students with Disabilities

During the three-year period 2017/18 to 2019/20 on aggregate the gap in attainment between students qualifying with an honours level qualification who had declared a disability and those who had not was 2pp (OfS APP dashboard). This was 2.2pp for the period from 2015/16 to 2019/20.

The small number of students at Rambert School means that we cannot report the gap analysis at Rambert School for the 3 years 2017/18 to 2019/20. The aggregate gap over the last 5 years (2015/16 to 2019/20) is -5pp which shows a better performance than the sector.

Care leavers

Rambert School has not had any students who fall within the specific definition of care leaver within its undergraduate student population in the past five years.

1.4 Progression to employment and further study

Table 2 shows the progression rates across the English HE sector by characteristic. It shows that a number of significant gaps remain in progression for qualifying students with certain characteristics (POLAR4 quintile 1; IMD quintile 1, People of Global Majority and students with reported disability).

The table also shows that the small number of students at Rambert School means that we cannot report the gap analysis at Rambert School.

Table 2: Shows the gap in progression of qualifying students by characteristic for the HE sector and for Rambert School

	5 year aggregated gap (2012/13 to 2016/17)	
	HE Sector	Rambert School
Between POLAR 4 quintile 5 and quintile 1	6.8	DP
Between IMD quintile 5 and quintile 1	8.3	DP
Between People of Global majority and White	4.4	DP
Between Young and Mature	-5.4	N
Between No disability reported and Disability reported	1.4	N

DP: The data is not reportable due to suppression for data protection reasons

N: The data is not reportable due to there being fewer than 25 students in the population

Source: OfS APP dashboard

Because of the limitations of sector wide graduate outcomes surveys, we informally collect graduate outcomes data. Table 3 includes student employment and further study outcomes for all Rambert School graduating students (UK domiciled, EU and international). Of those students who completed our survey, over half of our students were employed as professional dancers when they graduated from Rambert School and another quarter continued to study. The Other category includes students who have taken a gap year, left the information blank or progressed to non-dance related employment.

Table 3: Rambert School Progression

Progression to	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Dance profession	51.60%	53.50%	51.00%
Further HE Study	22.60%	27.90%	30.60%
Other	25.80%	18.60%	18.40%
Combined dance and further study	74.20%	81.40%	81.60%

Source: Rambert School Internal Data

We have been working over the past three years to improve the collection of graduate outcomes data. The data we have informally collected on student employment and further study to date shown in table 3 is insufficiently robust to enable analysis by student characteristics; the individual categories will also have too few students in them to enable robust analysis or publication. This means that we cannot identify quantitatively the specific gaps between students in the underrepresented groups. This is something we will start doing from 21/22 onwards as part of our strategic measure to improve our data analysis capability.

Anecdotally we know that People of Global Majority dancers are often highly sought after in the profession and are very likely to find immediate employment.

It is clear that we will need to improve our data in this area; however, the evidence we have suggests that we do not have a significant progression gap in comparison to the rest of the UK HE Sector.

Care leavers

Rambert School has not had any students who fall within the specific definition of care leaver within its undergraduate student population in the past five years.

2. Strategic aims and objectives

Rambert School's overall strategic aims are to:

- include talented people irrespective of their personal characteristics or circumstances
- develop and enhance Rambert School's unique training model

- grow Rambert School’s educational provision

In terms of widening access and success, the School plans to:

- expand our programme of Participation and Outreach activities launched in 2016 and target our interventions at an earlier age, at grass roots level, across a wider geographical area
- review and further improve our admissions practices for the admissions round for 2023
- continue to invest into our student bursary fund to ensure that students on low income are supported before and during their time at Rambert School
- continue to cohesively integrate physical, academic and pastoral support for each individual student so that they thrive
- continue to develop the content of our curriculum, our pedagogical approaches and our assessment practices
- employ a more diverse group of staff
- improve our data collection and analytical capability, with significant increases in capacity during 2022/23

2.1 Aims and objectives

Rambert School is committed to a whole of life-cycle approach to access, success and progression.

Based on our performance assessment, we consider that the most significant identified gaps relate to access, and in particular to access from students from low participation neighbourhoods; from deprived neighbourhoods; and by People of Global Majority.

We recognise also that mature students and care leavers are under-represented in our student body. Whilst we are not suggesting specific targets for these groups, we will include activities in our strategic measures which relate to these groups.

At continuation and success stages, we do not consider that there are gaps which we should prioritise at this stage.

At the progression stage, we do not consider that there are gaps which we should prioritise at this stage.

We will continue to maintain our work for under-represented groups at continuation and success and progression stages to ensure gaps do not appear in the future.

Based on this performance assessment, the target groups for this plan are:

Group	Life-cycle stage	Gap to address
Low participation neighbourhoods	Access	Reduce the participation gap for full time undergraduate entrants between POLAR4 quintiles 1 and 5
Deprived neighbourhoods	Access	Reduce the participation gap for full time undergraduate entrants between IMD quintiles 1 and 5
People of Global Majority	Access	Grow the People of Global Majority entrant population

2.2 Target Groups

A critical note on target setting

The national performance measures set by the OfS focus on the closing of gaps between the most and least disadvantaged and over and under-represented groups of students. We recognise this approach as the most effective way of supporting sector-wide change.

Because of the small number of students concerned and to prevent erratic data fluctuations as a result of the small size of the School, we will reviewing progress using both in year performance as well as 3-year and 5-year aggregates (which we have interpreted to mean average).

Targets for the plan period

Target	Gap to address	Target for the plan period
1	The 5-year aggregate (2015/16 to 2019/20) participation gap between POLAR4 quintiles 1 and 5 is 32pp	Reduce the participation gap for full-time, Other undergraduate entrants from POLAR4 quintiles 1 and 5 to 21pp by 2026/27.
2	The 5-year aggregate (2015/16 to 2019/20) participation gap between IMD quintiles 1 and 5 is 23pp	Reduce the participation gap for full-time, Other undergraduate entrants from IMD quintiles 1 and 5 to 7pp by 2026/27.
3	The 5-year aggregate (2015/16 to 2019/20) proportion of People of Global Majority students in Rambert School is 11%.	Increase the overall People of Global Majority full -time Other undergraduate entrant population from 11% to 19% by 2026/27.

3. Strategic measures

3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

Overview

Since 2016/17 we have developed a strong outreach programme to widen access from a diverse student body to our undergraduate programme. Whilst our student community has become more diverse and inclusive, we still have a lot of work to do. As a member of CDD, we have contributed to its access and participation achievements and we are now looking to build and develop further our access and participation strategy. We are not looking to reinvent the wheel where our approach has been effective but will continue to refine and develop our approach as we evaluate our activities and find better ways to support our applicants and students and widen our reach.

Our access work is located in the Operations and Development team. This ensures our activity is closely aligned with our Development team who raise funds to enable us to deliver participation work, and our Marketing team whose aim it is to target under-representation. Our Head of Participation, Outreach and WP works closely with the Student Support team to ensure that once people become our students they continue to be supported. Our current students, teaching staff and graduates support and engage in our access and participation work.

Our commitment to widening participation is led by our Principal and Artistic Director, supported by the Senior Leadership Team. We are seeking to embed practices that will support changes across the organisation. During the development of this plan, we extensively engaged with our Board of Trustees who are fully committed to this important activity.

The high-level institutional theory of change which underpins this plan is a continuation of the framework which the School has used as a member School of CDD and is:

Theory of Change				
		Inputs	Change Factor	Impact
Key Institutional Enablers	Strategy and Leadership	Excellent strategy and leadership at School, sub-sector and sector level; and effective stakeholder engagement	Institutional practices and outputs are coherent and aligned to mission; staff supported and developed; active performance monitoring is in place	Increased performance outcomes across Access, Success and Progression; Increased practice standards and capable institution
	Enhancing data capability	Enhanced understanding and application of a range of data to track, monitor and evaluate performance across the student lifecycle	Increasingly evidence-led and data-driven practices, continuous improvement	Increased performance outcomes across Access, Success and Progression; Increased practice standards and capable institution
	Student Engagement	Collaborating with students	Student-led and informed practices at the School; students are more engaged	Better student outcomes (success, engagement, NSS & TEF), Collaborative community of practice
Access strategies	Early Engagement in Dance	Provision of a range of (early) experiences in dance; (early and ongoing) Skills development in dance	Stimulates confidence, awareness, interest and passion in dance. Students more likely to consider and apply to HE	Students are equipped with ability (skills and experience) to progress to HE and excel in dance. Students successfully apply and enrol
	Partnerships, Collaboration	Partnerships and collaboration with schools and other organisations	Improves activity reach and effectiveness; increase teacher and key influencer engagement	Target groups more aware and likely to apply to HE; influence on school curriculum
	Supporting Access and Admission	Provision of a range of access pathways into dance, including support with admissions, audition and interview process	Enables target students to successfully participate in access programmes and auditions/interviews for HE	Target students are offered places and enrol in specialist HE
Outcomes strategies	Diversity and Relevance in Curriculum	Increasing diversity of the School's Offer and curriculum in dance; Delivery of highly experiential, inclusive and industry linked curriculum	A Broader, inclusive range of opportunities appeals to more diverse student groups, inclusive curriculum supports ongoing success and participation of all students and into employment	High proportion of student Continuation, Attainment and Graduate-level progression with comparable rates across cohort and target groups
	Excellences in Student Support	Provision of excellent and timely student support, that responds to student needs in their study and career context	Students are more likely to be retained, engage and achieve higher degree and satisfaction outcomes; students more likely to enter employment	High proportion of student Continuation, Attainment and Graduate-level progression with comparable rates across cohort and target groups

Alignment with other strategies

Our commitment to diversity and inclusion is also reflected in our Learning and Teaching action plan. Our main focus is to:

- Develop physical support systems so that all our students can thrive in our physically demanding training
- Evaluate and develop our mental well-being programme
- Develop the skills of our staff so that they can better support students with specific learning differences in practical and academic classes (for example ADHD)
- Develop inclusive practices (for example in the context of gender identity) and innovative training practices (for example in the context of students with physical impairments)

- Engage with all students (for example via regular informal groups) and widen student representation at the School
- Expand our programmes to reach diverse groups (for example mature students through our MA in Professional Dance and Performance and our MA Dance Research for Professional Practitioners)
- Refine the student appraisal process to improve the support for employment

Rambert School has due regard for the Equality Act 2010 and is compliant with the Public Sector Equality Duty. As part of this duty, staff and students have had a number of discussions around gender identity. As a result, the School has made changes to language used in class and on timetables and made toilets gender neutral. Research into gender neutral approaches to classical ballet repertoire is also being undertaken.

The murder of George Floyd and subsequent Black Lives Matter events in June 2020 were a catalyst for racial justice and anti-racism conversations and discussions in the School. A legacy of those discussions is the School's investment in resources to improve racial literacy and confidence in tackling issues of race and racism amongst its staff and students. The school is continuing with this work in partnership with Black Artists in Dance, as well as consulting students, staff, alumni and industry members.

Strategic Measures

1. Offer preparatory training through our access and outreach programmes and financial support

This strategic measure is designed to address targets 1 to 3; and also to support access by mature students and care leavers.

To be accepted onto our undergraduate programme in ballet and contemporary dance requires a high level of technical skill, developed through consistent training. To support applicants in gaining these technical skills, the School offers a number of pre-entry schemes targeted at young people between 14 and 19 years old. The current development of our "pre-pre vocational" series of engagements takes this work to a younger audience, engaging with participants from age 11. From our evidence gathered so far, we know that to give young people enough time to develop the technical skills they need, we need to target our interventions at an earlier age, at grass roots level and across a wider geographical area.

Over the next 5 years (ie 2022/23, 2023/24, 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27) each of the schemes focused on widening access will be designed to enthuse, inform, develop and/or support and will be systematically evaluated. We will develop targeted schemes with partners who work with specific under-represented groups (for example schools in low participation neighbourhoods, dance companies showcasing aspiring performers of African and Caribbean descent or dance companies working with dancers with physical or sensory impairments). Where we have evidence that it makes a difference, these early engagement activities will be offered on a concessionary or means-tested basis and will be supported with bursaries.

In this APP we will take steps to further increase the impact of our activities by targeting even younger age groups. To support changes in the grass-roots dance sector, we are developing Rambert Grades. Rambert Grades is a commercial venture between the School and Rambert (Company – the separate dance company that shares our name) which aims to broaden, enthuse, develop and support grass-roots dance activities by providing a graded syllabus for the study of contemporary dance. As Rambert Grades develops and is adopted across grass-roots dance, we will consider how we might use it as a means to identify and support a broader range of learners – including care leavers - to gain access to Rambert School's training.

Whilst work with pre-14 students requires long-term investment that will not see outcomes until the medium-to-longer term, we consider this early intervention work critical to building success and technical skills down the pipeline and changing culture and awareness.

2. Evaluate the effectiveness of our admissions procedures

This strategic measure is focused on targets 1 to 3 and also to support access by care leavers.

We have started to gather internal equality monitoring of applications for the last two admissions rounds (Rambert School applications are not conducted through UCAS) and will be undertaking a detailed analysis at the end of the recruitment round for 22/23 entry and then annually. In 23/24 this will include an in-depth analysis of the application outcomes for care-leavers.

In addition to this analysis, we want to evaluate the effectiveness of our admissions procedures from two perspectives.

First, entry to Rambert School is determined by an audition and interview process: the initial audition at the School includes a tour of the School and gives our applicants the chance to evaluate the School's premises, its environment and its training regime. For applicants who are successful this is followed by a second audition and interview at the School. We see this in-person application process as an essential component of our selection procedure (prior academic achievement is not a good measure of likely success). We would like to evaluate the outcomes of this process for applicants from different groups and consider whether the process prepares students well for success at Rambert School.

Second, our application process is expensive and labour-intensive. We cannot cover the audition and interview costs for 450 applicants without making a charge. We waive audition fees for students from certain backgrounds, including anyone with a low income. We are interested in testing the impact of these on access. It is generally assumed, and reported by media, that fee charges represent a deterrent. Over a quarter of applicants do not disclose income and we know from meeting them that some of these could be eligible for a free audition. We are interested in the impact of fees on applications as well as what financial models might facilitate our in-depth application process and secure access for people from disadvantaged groups. We know other providers- like RADA – are looking into this and we will look to collaborate with them.

The School is also developing a training programme for staff to address the potential for unconscious bias in our admissions process. Finally, we will strengthen our monitoring of applications and audition rates for WP students. We will be gathering more and better data from the 21/22 entry cycle to inform our work.

3. Continue to improve support for underrepresented students and review our pedagogical practices

This strategic measure supports the continuation and success stages of the student journey and will be important when our data is better able to inform future plans in these areas.

The School maintains high levels of individualised support whether this is pastoral, academic or physical and annually invests over £140k in student services and support. We provide students with mental health problems access to counselling at times which fit into their timetable and provide our staff with specific training for teaching students with specific learning differences and for students who enter at the age of 16 (which includes students in care).

In addition to the support we provide students, we continue to develop and renew the content of our curriculum, our pedagogical approaches and our assessment practices. We are introducing gender neutral solos and are identifying what changes we will need to make to enable students with physical and sensory impairments to access our training. By integrating racial literacy into our curriculum, our staff and students

are better able to recognize, respond to and counter forms of everyday racism. As we assess our students, we want to recognise both the individual progress our students have made, as well as our students' ability to achieve our very high technical standards

We will also be conducting further analysis of the levels of success students from underrepresented groups achieve so that we can take actions based on robust evidence. As part of this APP, we will continue to test annually which interventions have the most positive impact on student achievement (we have for example received external funding to evaluate the work on improving racial literacy). This evidence-led approach will enable us to target our resources effectively.

4. Ensure financial hardship does not impact on retention by continuing to provide bursaries

This strategic measure supports the continuation and success stages of the student journey and will be important when our data is better able to inform future plans in these areas; and also to support access by care leavers.

Given the intensive and immersive nature of our training, entailing long hours throughout the academic year, our students are unable to take advantage of the full range of opportunities to support themselves financially through part-time paid employment that are open to students in other institutions. We wish to ensure that students do not drop out because of financial hardship.

Our internal evaluation has shown that our bursary scheme is effective in supporting retention and success for students from low family incomes.

The School intends therefore to maintain and increase through fundraising the financial bursaries available for our students by 2026/27. Overall spending at the School on bursaries for undergraduate students has more than doubled since 2017/18 and in 2019/20 68% of our undergraduate students received financial assistance during the year. We will continue to refine and evaluate the scheme annually, make sure it is visible and take steps where there is evidence for change which may increase its positive impact on retention and success.

The School also recognises that students who have spent a period of time being looked after by the State can face many additional obstacles to accessing and succeeding in higher education. Furthermore, young people who are estranged from their parents, but who have not entered the UK care system and thus are not deemed 'care leavers', face many of the same financial and pastoral barriers. As such, the School offers additional financial assistance to these students on top of other financial support they may be receiving through the bursary scheme, in the form of an additional payment of £1,000 per year of study.

5. Increase ethnic diversity in our staff body, visiting professionals, and Board of Trustees

This strategic measure is designed to address Target 3.

We are actively seeking to address areas of under-representation in our staff body. There is multiple evidence to suggest that People of Global Majority students (and children) perform better when their teachers include people of colour. Rambert School seeks to develop its pool of diverse teachers through mentoring programmes and targeted recruitment. We also seek to ensure that there is diversity in the visiting professionals working with Rambert School students and in the material chosen for our student productions. We plan to evaluate the impact of structured approaches to this on student outcomes. Finally, we will be looking to increase the diversity of our Board of Trustees by 2022/23. This will be informed by a comprehensive governance review which took place in January 2021.

6. Enhance our data analysis and evaluation capability and capacity

This strategic measure will help us to achieve all of our targets.

We recognise that, as a small and specialist arts institution, we do not have the capacity of large universities to evaluate our activity. We plan to invest in our data analysis capacity during 2022/23 and subsequent years to ensure that we are able to collect and analyse consistent data across all stages of the student lifecycle.

From 2022/23, this will be done at a level of disaggregation that permits us to assess outcomes over a period of time for students from different groups, even where these are in very small numbers. For example, we want to look in more detail at the breakdown between the various groups that make up our People of Global Majority population and we want to develop a greater understanding of the different forms of disability. This will help us to improve our understanding of any intersections of disadvantage (or, indeed particular advantage). We will also systematically collect continuation, attainment and graduate outcomes data from 2022/23.

Should our data collection and annual analysis identify any gaps during the period of this APP or should any gaps emerge over this time we will act on that evidence. We commit to start acting on our internal data analysis in 2023/24.

3.2 Student consultation

Although we do not have a formally-constituted students' union, we have a system of student representation: year group representatives – six in total - and inclusivity representatives – five in total. All of these are current students, and none has a paid sabbatical position. Our approach to ensure that students were properly consulted as part of this APP has been as follows:

- We informed all students that we were working on the APP and shared with them our commitment to access and participation, the purpose, scope and content of the plan, a summary of the activities we had been undertaking and the outcomes we had delivered. We thought it important that our whole student community was informed about this work.
- We asked our student inclusivity representatives to contribute to our work.
- As part of our regular informal meetings with each student year group, we talked about our access and participation activities and plans.
- We provided our Student-Staff Liaison Committee with a summary of the data analysis, the gaps we have identified and the proposed steps to address these gaps. We then asked for their views about the approaches, suggestions and other measures.
- Consultation outcomes from students involved in access and participation discussions and in developing and reviewing the APP, all of which have subsequently been endorsed and reflected in this APP, were:
 - Ensuring visibility of information regarding support for students whilst applying to the School and whilst studying
 - Ensuring staff have access to racial justice, anti-racism and unconscious bias training with the aim to decrease racial bias
 - Ensuring staff have access to training which will help them to understand behavioural aspects of certain learning differences
 - Ensuring we take a more inclusive approach to gender identity
 - Ensuring we address inclusivity and diversity at the grass-roots level of dance training
- We submitted a near-final draft plan to the student inclusivity and year group representatives prior to submission to OfS.

- The final plan submitted incorporates our students' views.

Access and participation will continue to be a regular item for our student-staff liaison meetings and the meetings of our Academic Board.

3.3 Evaluation strategy

We are aware that our access and participation activity needs to be directed by gaps in participation and thus we need to undertake more robust evaluation to demonstrate whether we are meeting our own objectives and targets. Rambert School has redirected the focus of its outreach work over the past three years. This is a shift from offering short courses (with a low fee) and some free project work engaging with young people generally, to targeted activity addressing under-represented groups, including a stronger focus on opportunities in technical dance skills. The next stage in our journey is to improve both data gathering and evaluation activity.

It is unlikely that we will be producing evaluation which can establish a causal link between an intervention and outcome because we are generally dealing with intensive interventions and small numbers. The School will continue to use a framework¹ which evaluates our projects on four levels - reaction (has the project enthused?); learning (has the project informed?); behaviour (has the project developed skills?); and impact (has the project supported entry to HE?) and over the short, medium- and long-term.

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

- Ensure that we have the capacity to gather and analyse baseline data in relation to our student population and participants in our widening participation activity (access-focused).
- Ensure that we are gathering datasets from our participants and that we are able to access other information sources to assess and interpret data about participants.
- Work with other partners, for example AccessHE (as our local National Collaborative Outreach Programme) and our validating university, the University of Kent, to draw on their greater expertise. We will also seek to use the informal network of WP managers within dance schools to increase our shared capacity for evaluation of this work and also to share findings.
- Ensure that our annual monitoring cycle includes reference to ongoing evaluation and the effectiveness of our programme of activity and the need to adjust this if we are not achieving the desired objectives.
- Set up some specific evaluation projects which will provide us with additional insight (for example, into our admissions processes).
- Seek to target our evaluation rather than a single approach for all projects. We would expect to evaluate our longer-term activities, such as conservatoire preparatory training (strategic measure 1) in greater depth, gathering more data from participants, and tracking their progress beyond completion of the pre-entry programme (and, where possible, tracking applicants who do not participate in the pre-entry programme) to understand outcomes.
- Continue to conduct an evaluation of our Scholarship, Bursary and Audition Fee Waiver Scheme on an annual basis (using the survey developed by OFFA and building on the work started when it was a member of CDD).

¹ This is based on the Kirkpatrick model for analysing and evaluating the results of training and educational programs.

3.4 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan

Our principal mechanism for monitoring progress against the delivery of the APP will be Rambert School's cycle of Annual Programme Monitoring and Reporting (APMR). We are obliged to do this to fulfil both quality assurance obligations and the requirements of our validating university, the University of Kent. Our APMR framework is inclusive of both individual programme and also whole-provider developments, including student support, academic governance and quality assurance activity and widening participation. In this way we can monitor targets at both a programme and institutional level.

We generate an action plan in relation to the APMR which is reviewed at Academic Board and by the Senior Leadership Team. The annual reporting is reviewed by Rambert School's Board of Trustees (the governing body). There are both individuals and committees accountable for ensuring actions are completed on time and that we can evidence our actions. It seems sensible, for an institution of our size, to incorporate our APP monitoring into that framework, consolidating those objectives with others, including equality, diversity and inclusion actions.

As noted above we will regularly review our access and participation work at our Student Staff Liaison Committee and Academic Board. Our academic governance structures include student representation at all levels who are involved in the monitoring and reporting process.

The Head of Admissions, Registry and Student Support is responsible for ensuring that progress against the APP is monitored, with day to day responsibility being held by the Head of Participation, Outreach and WP.

We expect to review progress in line with ongoing evaluation of our strategic measures, so if we are failing to make the anticipated progress, we expect to be in a position to adjust our actions to address any areas of deficit. The APP will also be reviewed by Rambert School's Board of Trustees as part of its monitoring of that plan. We consider that this embeds the APP into our organisational structures.

4. Provision of information to students

4.1 Fees

Rambert School will not have a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) rating from 2022-23, but we may seek to have a TEF rating (or be obliged to do so) during the period of this APP. We will continue to notify students via our website of fee information. We currently publish fees on the Fees and Finance section of our website and on the programme page. We also publish the following information, in accordance with consumer rights obligations:

- total fees for the programme
- our Fees Policy
- our Terms and Conditions
- our Student Protection Plan (once approved)
- information about scholarships and bursaries

4.2 Financial support offered through the Access and Participation Plan

Rambert School will continue to offer scholarships and bursaries to its students, building on the Conservatoire Scholarship Scheme which is part of our current offer.

To be eligible, students must give us information through the Student Finance portal about their household income. Students whose household income is below £25,000 will receive a minimum award

of £2,000 for the first two years of their study. We will make this provision clear on our website.

We will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the financial support through the lifetime of this APP.