

## **Collective Acting Studio**

### **Access and participation plan**

**2023-24 to 2027-28**

#### **1. Assessment of performance**

2. Collective Acting Studio is a new actor-training provider, seeking to actively increase representation within the arts, by seeking to provide alternative routes into education, responding to the needs of the changing face of industry. Collective seeks to make our society a fairer place by providing access to the highest-quality training for actors from underrepresented groups, particularly in terms of ethnicity, disability and class (socio-economic disadvantage).
3. Founded in February 2022, it is the aim of the organisation to show leadership in making the performing arts a more representative industry that better reflects the rich diversity of our society. To achieve this, we aim to become the leading provider of specialist vocational training in the U.K. for actors from underrepresented groups. Imbedded in this desire is the need for Collective to be truly accessible to all, recognising the huge amount of work that is required to be done across the performing arts sector.
4. This Access and Participation Plan (APP) outlines our current intentions, and will serve to hold us accountable in future assessment of our performance.
5. As a brand-new Higher Education (HE) provider, Collective is not able to assess its current performance in HE in relation to access, success, and progression, for students from underrepresented groups. Where possible, we have therefore used alternative data available from our unvalidated Part-Time Drama School to assess our current performance – against that of competitor institutions and national benchmarks.
6. The Part-Time Drama School accepted its first cohort in September 2022 and currently has 52 students. As this course is yet to complete an academic year, it cannot yet provide us with data to identify gaps in success, or progression – or enable us to measure whether we are closing those gaps, though it does allow us to assess our current performance around access, which is strong.
7. Our primary data sources to analyse our current performance in this APP will be as follows:
  - The OfS Access and Participation Data Dashboard.
  - Internally collected application data for the Part-Time Drama School.
  - Other external research data as referenced.
8. Collective does not currently have an active relationship with the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT). Whilst our independent subscription does not exist to the HEAT, our accrediting partner, Queen Margaret University, does submit data to the organisation. This data will be reviewed on an annual basis from November 2023.

#### **1.1 Higher education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status**

##### **Access**

9. As a new provider, Collective is unable to provide data on access to HE for students living in areas of low higher education participation, or from lower household income or socioeconomic status

backgrounds. However, we make a timebound commitment to tracking access to HE for students from this group. We will identify this data-set for our first cohort by October 2023.

10. For the duration of this plan, October shall then be the annual data-collation point for statistics on access in regards to the new HE intake. This will enable us to reflect in a timely manner on our performance in the latest recruitment cycle. We will reassess the efficacy of our current strategic measures on an annual basis, and make timely interventions – for example, by making amendments to Outreach Programme for the coming academic year – if we identify we are failing to increase access for a particular target group.
11. Whilst at the time of writing we have no HE students, we have analysed access statistics across the first academic year of our Part-Time Drama School. The breakdown of the household income in relation to this group of students is shown below. This data is self-reported by students at application.

<b>Household Income for Part-Time Drama School Students at Collective – 2022-23</b>	
Below £15,000	15.4%
£15,000 to £19,999	12.8%
£20,000 to £24,999	15.4%
£25,000 to £34,999	20.5%
Above £35,000	35.9%

12. Although this data-set does not allow an absolute comparison, it suggests Collective can expect a high number of students from a lower socio-economic background when we begin our HE provision, particularly in comparison with the sector. In an analysis of three sector competitors (Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance, the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama), the average figure for access from Quintiles 1 and 2 of the IMD was 34.6%, which is lower than the figure for English HE providers (44.1%). This expectation of higher numbers of HE students from Quintiles 1 and 2 at Collective has informed our Strategic Measures outlined in Section 3.1. Data is from the OfS Access and Participation Data Dashboard for 2021-22.
13. To support our analysis around socio-economic background, as part of applications and admissions processes we will:
  - Gather information on household income to help us determine students from Quintiles 1 and 2 of the IMD.
  - Use address data to identify students from POLAR Quintiles 1 and 2.

We make a timebound commitment to collate this data for our first HE cohort by October 2023.

#### Success

#### Non-continuation

14. As Collective currently does not have any HE students – we are not able to provide any data around non-continuation in our Higher Education provision. However, we make a timebound commitment to gathering data on the non-continuation of HE students living in areas of low higher education participation, or from lower household income or socioeconomic status backgrounds at the following points:
  - November 2023 (we have identified this as an important data-gathering point, as we recognise significant numbers of students discontinue their studies during the first semester – and wish to test the effectiveness of our induction activities in mitigating this.)
  - February 2024 (ascertain students who are non-continuing their studies after Semester 1, Year 1).

- August 2024 (ascertain students who are non-continuing their studies before entering Year 2.)
  - February 2025 (ascertain students who are non-continuing their studies after Semester 1, Year 2).
  - August 2025 (ascertain students who are non-continuing their studies before entering Year 3.)
  - February 2026 (ascertain students who are non-continuing their studies after Semester 1, Year 3).
  - August 2026 (ascertain the number of students who did not graduate.)
15. This cycle will be repeated for all HE cohorts during the lifecycle of this plan to allow the development of a robust dataset for the analysis of non-continuation trends and subsequent strategies and interventions where necessary.
16. To help assess our current performance, we have analysed non-continuation statistics across the first academic year of our non-validated Part-Time Drama School. This data was informative, as students must decide each trimester whether they wish to sign up for the next. The non-continuation of students living in areas of low higher education participation, or from lower household income or socioeconomic status backgrounds was statistically insignificant (the exact data is suppressed for GDPR reasons due to low numbers).
17. However, we have identified that providing financial support for those students has been a significant factor in achieving this outcome, with 27.5% of students receiving a fee waiver during the 2022-23 academic year. We have also identified, through feedback from the Student Senate, that the ability of students to engage in paid employment alongside their studies was significant for the majority of students in enabling them to access training. This analysis has informed our initial Strategic Measures for HE students outlined in Section 3.1.

#### Attainment

18. As with non-continuation, we are unable currently to provide data around the attainment for HE students living in areas of low higher education participation, or from lower household income or socioeconomic status backgrounds for the reasons outlined. We make a timebound commitment to tracking attainment of students from this group in the first HE cohort at the following points:
- February 2024 (Analysis of Semester 1, Year 1 marks)
  - July 2024 (Analysis of Semester 2, Year 1 marks)
  - February 2025 (Analysis of Semester 1, Year 2 marks)
  - July 2025 (Analysis of Semester 2, Year 2 marks)
  - February 2026 (Analysis of Semester 1, Year 3 marks)
  - July 2026 (Analysis of Semester 2, Year 3 marks and overall degree outcomes)
19. This cycle will be repeated for all HE cohorts during the lifecycle of this plan to allow the development of a robust dataset for the analysis of non-continuation trends. This data will be compiled using modular assessment data and final degree outcomes.

#### Progression to employment or further study

20. We commit to gathering data on the progression of students living in areas of low higher education participation, or from lower household income or socioeconomic status backgrounds, to employment (including highly-skilled employment) and further study. This information will be gathered through the following methods:
- Alumni employment questionnaires
  - Tracking verifiable alumni professional profiles, for example on LinkedIn, and on [Spotlight](#).
21. We will have our first data set available for this area in June 2027. We commit to revisiting our assessment of performance at this point and setting success and progression targets where appropriate by September 2027.

22. Collective strongly advocates that all students who study in the creative arts (and particularly acting) should be equipped, through their education, with the knowledge and skills needed to go on and gain employment in the particular industry for which studied – should they choose to do so. We believe this is important to students, who invest a great deal personally and financially in pursuing this particular career-choice.
23. In our analysis of progression to employment, and highly-skilled employment, we therefore commit to disaggregating the data between employment gained *within* the creative industries, as opposed to all other employment sectors. By including this analysis, we wish to contribute to a wider understanding in the sector about the effectiveness of, and the necessity for, the significant number of actor-training courses available to students in the U.K. (According to an analysis by WhatUni there are currently 130 undergraduate courses in Acting, offered by 68 HEI providers.)
24. For the purposes of this analysis, we will define ‘highly-skilled employment’ in the creative industries as employment in a variety of widely-recognised sector-leading organisations, such as: the National Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Company, the BBC, Channel 4, in Hollywood films, and for leading studios such as Netflix and Amazon.
- 25. To identify any gaps in attainment for this particular group – in our analysis of all the data – we will disaggregate students from Quintiles 1 and 2, and identify the gap between the attainment of Quintiles 4 to 5 as the point of comparison.**

## 1.2 Black, Asian and minority ethnic students

### Access

26. Collective is not yet able to provide data on access to HE for students from Black, Asian and minority backgrounds. We commit to gathering data on access for this group using the same methods and timeline as outlined in Section 1.1.
27. Whilst at the time of writing we have no HE students, we have analysed and disaggregated access statistics across the first academic year of our Part-Time Drama School in terms of ethnicity. You can see this data below, in comparison to national statistics - and in relation to three competitor institutions This data was taken from the OfS Access and Participation Data Dashboard for 2021-22.

Access Figures – Disaggregated by Ethnicity						
Ethnic Group	Students in the Collective Part-Time Drama School	All English HE Providers	Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (HE Students)	Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance (HE Students)	Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (HE Students)	Average figure for the three competitor institutions
Asian	13.4%	15.7%	3.8%	2.7%	DPL	2.2%
Mixed	11.5%	5.6%	7.0%	10%	11.8%	9.6%
Black	30.7%	10.5%	7.0%	9.5%	9.8%	8.8%
White	36.5%	65.2%	81.1%	76.2%	74.5%	77.2%
Other	7.6%	3.0%	DPL	1.6%	DPL	0.5%

## Notes:

- Where the data above is indicated as DPL, this means the data has been suppressed because the numerator or headcount is less than, or equal to 2, meaning that the indicator will take a value close to 0 per cent.
- Where data is suppressed for comparator providers, indicated as DPL, the value has been calculated as if it were zero – and the average figure in the final column may, therefore, not be exact.

28. This data-set suggests Collective's performance on access for students from this underrepresented group is currently strong in relation to the sector, whilst we acknowledge that there is a different challenge in access for HE courses. The high number of Black students currently at Collective suggested we can expect a significant of students from this group when we begin our HE provision. Whilst we are pleased to note our recruitment of Asian students is high for the sector, it is still below the national average for all subject areas. These findings have informed our Strategic Measures for HE students outlined in Section 3.1.

29. We are already gathering data on ethnicity during the applications and admissions processes for the BA Acting. We make a timebound commitment to collate this data for our first HE cohort by October 2023.

### Success

#### Non-continuation

30. As discussed, we are not yet able to provide data on non-continuation in HE for students from Black, Asian and minority backgrounds. We commit to gathering data using the same methods and timeline as outlined in Section 1.1. To help assess our current performance, we have analysed non-continuation statistics across the first academic year of our non-validated Part-Time Drama School. The non-continuation of students from Black, Asian and minority backgrounds was statistically insignificant (the exact data is suppressed for GDPR reasons due to low numbers).

31. Whilst the continuation of students for this group was clearly high, Collective recognises HEFCE's findings in their review 'Higher Education in 2017' that 'a sense of 'belonging' is a key factor that influences student outcomes.' We believe the sense of community and multiculturalism – embedded in the student body, the staff team, and curriculum - within the Part-Time Drama School has been a significant factor in the high continuation rate of these students. This analysis has informed our initial Strategic Measures for HE students outlined in Section 3.1.

#### Attainment

32. As with non-continuation, we are unable currently to provide any data around the attainment for HE students in this group. We commit to gathering data using the same methods and timeline as outlined in Section 1.1.

### Progression to employment or further study

33. As indicated previously in Section 1.1, as a new provider of Higher Education, Collective does not currently have any graduating students on any of its courses. We commit to gathering data on the progression of Black, Asian and minority ethnic students to employment (including highly-skilled employment) and further study. This information will be gathered using the same methods and timelines as outlined in Section 1.1.

34. Collective identifies an observed, under-researched, recent trend within the creative industries to re-assess and address historic underrepresentation of Black, Asian and minority in terms of the kinds of performance being programmed and commissioned. We believe this is leading to an increased demand for Black, Asian and minority ethnic actors. One of the few pieces of research in

this area, undertaken by the Andrew Webber Foundation in 2019 showed that casts of West End musicals had a similar proportion of Black, Asian and minority ethnic actors (38%) to the population of London (41%), but that this was figure was slanted towards Black performers, with Asian actors very underrepresented. To aid this research, we wish to identify other sector institutions who have significant numbers of Black, Asian and minority ethnic actors, for example LAMDA and Guildhall, with whom we can aggregate graduate employment data to contribute to a better, sector-wide understanding of whether there is indeed a realignment occurring.

35. We commit to disaggregating our data on employment in regards to ethnicity, to help identify any notable trends that could benefit other institutions working in this field – as this could impact future decision-making for providers around student and staff recruitment, outreach, and curriculum.
- 36. To identify any gaps in attainment for this group – in our analysis of all the data – going forwards we will disaggregate students by ethnicity, and identify any gaps between all different ethnic groups as points of comparison.**

### 1.3 Mature students

#### Access

37. Collective is not yet able to provide data on access to HE for mature students. We commit to gathering data using the same methods and timeline on access for this group as outlined in Section 1.1.
38. We have analysed access statistics across the first academic year of our Part-Time Drama School in relation to this group of students this academic year. 73% of students were mature students, this compares very favourably with the 29% of students in all HE English Providers. (This figure is from the OfS Access and Participation Data Dashboard for 2021-22.) We do not expect this picture to be repeated at HE level, due to the different career-progression we see in our mature part-time students.

#### Success

##### Non-continuation

39. We are not yet able to provide data on non-continuation in HE for mature students. We commit to gathering data using the same methods and timeline as outlined in Section 1.1. We have however analysed non-continuation statistics across the first academic year of our non-validated Part-Time Drama School. The non-continuation of mature students was statistically insignificant (the exact data is suppressed for GDPR reasons due to low numbers).

##### Attainment

40. As with non-continuation, we are unable currently to provide any data around the attainment for HE students in this group. We commit to gathering data using the same methods and timeline as outlined in Section 1.1.

#### Progression to employment or further study

41. As indicated in Section 1.1, Collective does not currently have any graduating students on any of its courses. We commit to gathering data on the progression of mature students to employment (including highly-skilled employment) and further study. This information will be gathered using the same methods and timelines as outlined in Section 1.1.
- 42. To identify any gaps in attainment for in this group – we will disaggregate students who are over 21 years of age at the commencement of their undergraduate studies, and identify the**



**gap between the attainment of students who under are 21 years of age as the point of comparison.**

## 1.4 Disabled students

### Access

43. Collective is not yet able to provide data on access to HE for disabled students. We commit to gathering data using the same methods and timeline on access for this group as outlined in Section 1.1.
44. Whilst at the time of writing we have no HE students, we have analysed access statistics across the first academic year of our Part-Time Drama School in relation to this group of students. 17.9% of students reported as having a disability. This is in line with national average for all registered English HE providers (17.4%) according to data from the OfS Access and Participation Data Dashboard for 2021-22.
45. From September 2022, within the Part-Time Drama School, we have welcomed our first students with physical or sensory disabilities – an important target group in this plan. We have successfully implemented many of our policies and procedures around support for students with disabilities, for example the use of Access Riders, differentiated practice, and reasonable adjustments. This experience has informed our Strategic Measures for HE students outlined in Section 3.1.

### Success

#### Non-continuation

46. We are not yet able to provide data on non-continuation in HE for disabled students. We commit to gathering data using the same methods and timeline as outlined in Section 1.1. We have however analysed non-continuation statistics across the first academic year of our non-validated Part-Time Drama School. The non-continuation of disabled students was statistically insignificant (the exact data is suppressed for GDPR reasons due to low numbers). We also gathered important testimony from our Access Rider meetings with disabled students – around their experience of our differentiated approach to actor-training which has informed the policies and procedures referenced in this plan.

#### Attainment

47. As with non-continuation, we are unable to provide any data around the attainment for HE students in this group. We commit to gathering data using the same methods and timeline as outlined in Section 1.1.

### Progression to employment or further study

48. Collective does not currently have any graduating students on any of its courses. We commit to gathering data on the progression of disabled students to employment (including highly-skilled employment) and further study. This information will be gathered using the same methods and timelines as outlined in Section 1.1.
49. **From October 2023 we will disaggregate disabled students into those who receive a Disabled Students Allowance (DSA), and those who have declared a disability but are not in receipt of a DSA. To identify any gaps in attainment for both these groups, we will use non-disabled students as the point of comparison. Our data will also include disaggregation by disability type.**

## 1.5 Care leavers

### Access

50. As a new provider of Higher Education, Collective is not yet able to provide data on access to HE for care leavers. We have not formally requested this information for students from our Part-Time Drama School. We commit to gathering data using the same methods and timeline on access for this group as outlined in Section 1.1.

### Success

#### Non-continuation

51. We are not yet able to provide data on non-continuation in HE for care leavers. We commit to gathering data using the same methods and timeline as outlined in Section 1.1.

#### Attainment

52. As with non-continuation, we are unable currently to provide any data around the attainment for HE students in this group. We commit to gathering data using the same methods and timeline as outlined in Section 1.1.

### Progression to employment or further study

53. Collective does not currently have any graduating students on any of its courses. We commit to gathering data on the progression of care leavers to employment (including highly-skilled employment) and further study. This information will be gathered using the same methods and timelines as outlined in Section 1.1.

- 54. To identify any gaps in attainment for in this group – we will disaggregate students who are care leavers, and identify the gap between the attainment of students who have not been in care as the point of comparison.**

## 1.6 Intersections of disadvantage

55. It has been observed by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) at Collective that there are intersections and overlaps between students from Quintiles 1 and 2 of Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and students who identify as Black. This intersection is also supported by the data provided by the OfS' Participation and Access Data Dashboard. Whilst the implications on their outcomes with Collective are impossible to determine at this point; being fully cognisant of this correlation will allow the organisation to monitor the situation – and, moreover, pre-emptively adjust strategy accordingly to manage any attainment gaps before they materialise.

56. Collective must realise – and does so – that it is a small educational organisation. And, as such, must focus on demographics – and intersections of those demographics – where common gaps pertaining to retention, continuation, attainment and progression exist or materialise. We should stress, however, that we recognise other disadvantaged groups occur, and when further data becomes available for us to evidence their educational journey, we will seek ways to serve them best and improve their outcomes should gaps in attainment also exist there.

57. We make a timebound commitment to review our data to identify any intersections of disadvantage by August 2025, and amend this APP to implement additional strategies where necessary.

## 1.7 Other groups who experience barriers in higher education



58. We recognise that there are other groups who may be impacted in their journey through education and training. These groups might include refugees, those with responsibilities as care givers, those with children and dependents, and the LGBTQ+ Community (with specific reference to Trans, Non-Binary and Gender Diverse Students). Insufficient internal – or externally sourced – data exists to accurately and appropriately determine gaps in attainment on a sector-wide level. We remain committed to monitoring these demographics, and will review strategic aims and objectives once further data is gathered.
59. We make a timebound commitment to review our data to identify any other groups who are experiencing additional barriers at Collective by August 2025, and amend this APP to implement additional strategies where necessary.

## 2. Strategic aims and objectives

60. Due to Collective being a new provider, necessarily this plan focuses to a great extent on **access**. Within the duration this plan we aim to:
- Recruit students from areas with high levels of deprivation and/or low HE participation through effective, targeted outreach.
  - Replicate the achievement of the Part-Time Drama School at an HE level - in terms of creating a diverse student body in terms of ethnicity, particularly targeting the underrepresentation of Asian students within the sector.
  - Actively recruit students with physical or sensory disabilities on to the BA Acting.
61. In terms of **success**, our current strategic aims and objectives are based on analysis of current best practice in the sector, and/or from the limited data we have from the Part-Time Drama School. We aim to:
- Replicate the success of the Part-Time Drama School in creating a nurturing and inclusive environment that promotes higher levels of continuation for Black students.
  - Utilise learning from the Part-Time Drama School to successfully and fully integrate students with physical or sensory disabilities into the Studio's approach to vocational actor-training.

We have set targets PTS\_1 and PTS\_2 in relation to the above aims. These targets have been decided upon largely to do with Collective's overarching mission, and the current demographic of the student body. PTS\_1 has been set as a target due to the high number of Black students in the Part-Time Drama School. Due to the mission statement and marketing of the school, we anticipate this demographic will be replicated at HE level – so it was felt a focus on continuation for this particular group was important due to the unexplained gap between the continuation of Black students, as opposed to White students, nationally - as evidenced by the OfS Access and Participation Data Dashboard. PTS\_2 has been set as a target due to Collective pursuing a new, sector-leading pedagogical model involving the full integration of students with sensory and/or physical disabilities into conservatoire-level actor-training through a differentiated approach. It was felt by the Senior Management Team it was vital this target was set, as this new model, though innovative in seeking to address the chronic historic underrepresentation of students with these particular disabilities in professional actor-training, is novel, and based on the limited evidence of success observed in our own Part-Time Drama School.

62. With regards to **progression**, during the lifetime of this plan we aim to develop the industry network of the Studio for the benefit of all students. This will lay the groundwork to enable our first graduates to progress to employment and further study from June 2026 onwards. Specifically, we aim to put in place measures that enable students to work consistently within the sector they trained: the creative industries.

63. Recognising the limited data we have to set certain baselines, throughout this plan we also lay out timebound commitments to gather data on success, and progression, in order to set evidence-based future targets.

## 2.1 Target groups

64. The below table identifies the specific groups targeted in this plan, and at which stages of the student lifecycle.

Target Group	Stage In Lifecycle	Further Detail
Higher education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status	Access	Actively recruit students from Quintiles 1 and 2 of the IMD and Quintiles 1 and 2 of POLAR.
Black, Asian and minority ethnic students	Access	Specific focus will be placed on recruiting Asian and Black students to address the underrepresentation of these groups in the HE actor-training sector.
Disabled Students	Access	Actively recruit students with physical or sensory disabilities to address the underrepresentation of these groups in the sector.
Black, Asian and minority ethnic students	Success	Specific focus on addressing the high non-continuation figures of Black students.
Disabled Students	Success	Ensure an effective pedagogy of differentiation, in line with the <a href="#">Social Model of Disability</a> , to allow students with physical and/or sensory disabilities to fully engage with all aspects of actor-training.

## 2.2 Aims and objectives

65. Below are our aims and measurable objectives, which directly reflect those in our targets and investments plan. All data is from the OfS Access and Participation Data Dashboard figures for 2021-22 (for targets (PTA\_1, PTA\_2 and PTA\_3) and 2020-21 (for targets PTS\_1 and PTS\_2).

Target	Target Group and Aim	Timescale
PTA_1	<b>Socioeconomic</b> Through targeted outreach, work to increase access for more socioeconomically disadvantaged students, allowing for a higher proportion of the student body to be made up of Quintiles 1 and 2 from the IMD (2019).	We wish to raise the number of students from Quintiles 1 and 2 from the IMD from the baseline data of 34.6% to 45% by 2027-28. The baseline figure is taken from the average figure of the same three competitor institutions indicated in paragraph 27 for the IMD (2019).
PTA_2	<b>Low participation neighbourhood (LPN)</b> Through targeted outreach, aim to increase access into training for students from low participation neighbourhoods, allowing for a higher proportion of the student body to be made up of Quintiles 1 and 2 from POLAR. This will ultimately contribute to the national key performance measure (KPM) of eliminating the unexplained gap in participation between Quintiles 5 and 1 from POLAR.	We wish to raise the number of students from Quintiles 1 and 2 from POLAR from the baseline data of 28.2% to 40% by 2027-28. The baseline figure is taken from the figure for all registered English Higher Education providers.

PTA_3	<b>Ethnicity</b> Aim to increase the number of Black students recruited on the degree programme over the lifecycle of the plan. Due to our Mission Statement, and initial data from our Part-Time Drama School, we wish to recruit Black students at a much higher rate than the sector-wide statistics in comparison with the number of White students.	We wish to raise the number of Black students from the baseline data of 8.8% to 25% by 2027-28. The baseline figure is taken from the average figure of the same three competitor institutions indicated in paragraph 27.
PTA_4	<b>Ethnicity</b> Aim to increase the number of Asian students recruited to the degree programme over the lifecycle of the plan. Due to our Mission Statement, and initial data from our Part-Time Drama School, we wish to recruit Asian students at a higher rate than the sector-wide statistics in comparison with the number of White students.	We wish to raise the number of Asian students from the baseline data of 2.2% to 15% by 2027-28. The baseline figure is taken from the average figure of the same three competitor institutions indicated in paragraph 27.
PTA_5	<b>Disabled</b> Actively recruit from this demographic to ensure that at least 10% of our intake are students with physical or sensory disabilities by the end of the cycle of this plan, reducing the gap in comparison with non-disabled students.	We wish to raise the number of students with physical or sensory disabilities from the baseline data of 1.4% to 10% by 2026-27. The baseline figure is taken from the average figure of the same three competitor institutions indicated in paragraph 27.
PTS_1	<b>Ethnicity</b> Through the creation of a nurturing and inclusive environment, aim to increase the number of Black students who continue with their studies. This will ultimately contribute to the KPM of eliminating the unexplained gap in degree outcomes between Black and White students.	We wish to raise the continuation rate of Black students from the baseline data of 84.3% to 91% by 2027-28. The baseline figure is taken from the figure for all registered English Higher Education providers.
PTS_2	<b>Disabled</b> Through an effective pedagogy of differentiation, in line with the Social Model of Disability, aim to increase the number of disabled students who continue with their studies. This will ultimately contribute to the KPM of eliminating the gap in degree outcomes between disabled and non-disabled students.	We wish to raise the continuation rate of disabled students from the baseline data of 88.8% to 92% by 2027-28. The baseline figure is taken from the figure for all registered English Higher Education providers.
N/A	<b>Progression</b> As previously indicated it is not possible to currently set progression targets.	We commit to revisiting this plan in September 2027 to set appropriate, ambitious progression targets for 2027-28 onwards – particularly related to employment within the Creative Industries.

Notes:

- The three competitor institutions referenced in the table above are the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance, and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art.
- Where suppressed data for comparator providers has been used, the value has been calculated as if it were zero – and the average figure in the final column may, therefore, not be exact.

### 3. Strategic measures

#### 3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

Overview

66. This APP is central to Collective's core mission, which is to increase access to high-quality actor-training for students from groups who have traditionally been underrepresented within the

performing arts industry - particularly in terms of ethnicity, disability and class. You can read our Mission Statement [here](#). We have developed a Theory of Change, which articulates how our whole-provider approach underpins the aims, objectives and strategic measures in this plan in line with that mission. You can view this document below:

**1** Situation

There is a persistent shortfall in those from underrepresented groups working within the creative industries in the U.K. This needs to be addressed, because our society is fundamentally unfair, some groups are routinely advantaged over others, and those working within the creative industries have the power to effect positive societal change through the stories they tell.

**2** Aims

We aim to create the most diverse and inclusive specialist HE vocational actor-training course in the U.K. - with a focus on educating actors from underrepresented groups, particularly in terms of ethnicity, disability and socio-economic disadvantage.

**7** Inputs

**5** Activities

**6** Outputs

**3** Outcomes

**4** Impact

**Process** **Impact**

A clear sense of vision and culture set by the Board of Directors.

A central role for the Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Committee in holding the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) accountable to this plan.

Staff training, particularly around: an inclusive curriculum, tackling unconscious bias, and working in line with the Social Model of Disability.

Undertake an outreach programme focused on reaching potential students from the targeted underrepresented groups.

The SLT to undertake an audit to ensure that the diverse learning materials that were validated are used and enhanced by all teaching staff, and in particular Module Leaders.

Teaching staff to ensure the area of actor-training that they deliver is fully inclusive for disabled students through differentiated lesson-planning.

A diverse student body is achieved and maintained.

Inclusive learning materials are used that reflect the diversity of the student body.

Disabled and non-disabled students train successfully as actors alongside each other through a differentiated curriculum.

More students from underrepresented groups – notably in terms of ethnicity, disability, and lower socio-economic backgrounds – are recruited to study acting.

Those students are engaged and inspired – because they are able to see themselves reflected in the staff that teach them, and the curriculum they study.

Those students experience a sense of belonging and community in their education - leading to higher attainment.

A greater number of students from underrepresented groups graduate into a successful career within the creative industries – creating a force for positive societal change through the stories they will go on to tell.

**8** Rationale & Assumptions

The creative industries in the U.K., in a widespread manner, are currently seeking to address historic inequalities, racism, discrimination and underrepresentation - in terms of the work they programme and commission - and the actors and other creative artists they employ. This means that those engaged in actor-training must radically change the demographic of the students they teach, and the manner in which they are educated. This is not only the right thing to do, it is necessary to meet the changed employment demands of it the sector which is demanding authentic and diverse representation in terms of the professional storytellers it engages.

## Alignment with other strategies

67. To ensure that this plan is realised across entire Studio, we have aligned the APP with other strategies and policies. The table below references how this alignment occurs:

Policy/Strategy/Committee	Alignment with the APP
<a href="#">Reasonable Adjustments Policy</a>	This policy supports the aim of fully integrating students with physical or sensory disabilities through a policy of differentiation based on reasonable adjustments in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
<a href="#">Considerate Marking and Feedback Policy</a>	This policy supports the aim of fully integrating students with physical or sensory disabilities by ensuring that the principles of reasonable adjustments apply to assessment.
<a href="#">Disability Statement</a>	This core statement, which outlines our core mission around disability, ensures the application of the <a href="#">Social Model of Disability</a> is a key part of the culture of the Studio.
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee	The EDI Committee will play a key role in identifying potential failures to the delivery of this APP, holding the SLT to account, and reporting relevant findings to the Board of Directors who have ultimate responsibility for the plan. Issues they will scrutinise include: identifying instances of potential unconscious bias, issues with recruitment leading to a lack of diversity emerging amongst the staff team and/or student body, and areas where Collective values around diversity and inclusion not being reflected in aspects of the curriculum/learning resources/teaching delivery. There is student representation on the EDI Committee.
Teaching and Learning (TaL) Committee	The TaL Committee will ensure that inclusive learning resources and practices are utilised within the curriculum, notably ensuring that staff are using appropriate models of differentiation and reasonable adjustments in their teaching to support disabled students.
Equality Act 2010	Collective Acting Studio is fully compliant with Public Sector Equality Duty, and prioritises the Equality Act 2010 within its operational practices. We commit to developing and implementing equality impact assessments by July 2023.

## Strategic measures

68. Below are outlined the strategic measures and interventions we will undertake as part of this APP, across the student lifecycle to achieve the aims, objectives and targets in this plan, which are informed by our theory of change:

### Curriculum, Pedagogic and Student Support

69. As we launch our HE provision during the implementation of this plan, we will employ elements of sector-recognised best practice in terms of curriculum development, pedagogic delivery and student support as part of our strategic measures. This will include:

- **Enhanced Personal Tutor Support** – based on their strategy for student support, we will utilise a Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) system modelled on the approach of our validating partner, Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh (QMU). This will be in place for HE students by September 2023.
- **Access Riders** - during induction week, students with disabilities will work together with the Disability Consultant to create an Access Rider containing information about their needs and highlight areas of the curriculum which may prove challenging. The team will then work together to adapt their teaching based on this information to ensure alternative options are offered, and the student is able to fully participate in all classes. This Access Rider will be continually



reviewed, as will the adaptations surrounding it. This model is already working successfully in the Part-Time Drama School and will be rolled out to HE students from September 2023.

- **Support for Health and Wellbeing** – We will offer both pre-emptive and remedial support for students in need through our Student Welfare Officer, and External Support agencies. We also believe in a proactive, preventative approach to foster good mental health across our whole community. Mindfulness, meditation and regular exercise are embedded in our courses to make Collective a safe and healthy environment for both our students and staff. In terms of crisis support, our Student Welfare Officer will act as a ‘first responder’ for our students, and will signpost our students to appropriate services where necessary – including counselling. Our document outlining the external support services we recommend for students can be found [here](#). This support is already partially in place, and will be fully resourced by August 2023.
- **Inclusive Curriculum and Learning Resources** - to reflect the diversity of our student body, the inclusive values of the Studio, and the multicultural demographic of the city in which we reside, it is of the highest priority to Collective that the curriculum we offer is truly inclusive and decolonised. We will address this in the following ways: ensure that the range of learning resources studied reflects the diversity of the student cohort, provide opportunities for students to explore subject matter that celebrates their own cultural identity, continually update the module Learning Resources to ensure they are inclusive, making particular note to include texts and other resources that address the specific needs and experiences of the disabled artist. This measure was significant and successful part of the recent validation (completed April 2023) of our BA Acting course, and will be reviewed each semester by the EDI Committee from September 2023.
- **Equality Training** – We will look to train staff and students alike in ways to build on their existing understanding(s) of inclusion, diversity and equality. This may manifest in (but will not be limited to) a pursuit of anti-racist pedagogies, unconscious bias training, along with specialist training provided by organisations such as Access All Areas and Dark Horse Theatre. Our Support Staff will work with developing educational research to ensure that we are always operating within what is deemed as best practice. All staff will be provided with this training during their induction. This will occur for all current staff by August 2023.
- **Disability Consultant** – we have appointed this key role as a member of our four-person SLT to champion strategic measures around disability and to ensure we take a whole provider approach to this aspect of our work.
- **Peer Mentoring** - we operate a ‘Buddy’ system, where a first-year student is paired with a second-year during Induction Week. This provides the new student with an avenue for peer-level support, helps them to feel welcome and to integrate them within our community. In the first year of the degree, the Buddies will be students from the Part-Time Drama School. This will occur from September 2023.
- **Explore Flexible Modes of Study** – focus groups with our disabled students have revealed that the flexibility of Part-Time Drama School is a significant factor in them selecting that educational pathway. We have noted the strategic measure from the APP of Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance, where in partnership with leading disability company Graeae they are examining more flexible modes of delivery to ‘open up courses to communities currently excluded from provision organized along the traditional three-year degree pattern’. As part of our validation by QMU, we have committed to exploring the application of this strategic measure at Collective by September 2025.

The above strategies are all designed to support us in achieving Targets PTS\_1 and PTS\_2 which address **success**, specifically in regards to non-continuation of Black and disabled students.

### Employability

70. It is central tenet of Collective’s approach to support students in gaining consistent employment upon graduation, and particularly within the creative industries. We will use the following strategic measures to support employability:



- **Industry Liaison** - we have appointed this key role as a member of our four-person SLT to champion strategic measures around employability in the creative industries and to ensure we take a whole provider approach to this aspect of our work.
- **Royal Court Theatre** – we have established a partnership with the Royal Court, where students will be able to take classes on their stage, and undertake workshops with their artistic team to develop key skills around employability. This partnership is already active for the Part-Time Drama, and will be extended to HE students in the 2023-24 academic year.
- **Short Courses** - a key component of the work we do at Collective is our Short Courses for Professional Actors programme which offers opportunities for alumni who wish to engage in ongoing professional development after graduation. These courses will help our alumni avoid the 'cliff edge' that many drama-school graduates experience – by providing a community where they can maintain and enhance their skills between jobs. We offer two free scholarship places in every class, which will be accessible to Collective HE graduates from June 2026.
- **Casting and Industry Workshops** – we are developing a wide network of relationships with casting directors, agents and leading industry employers and artists who support our mission to train actors from underrepresented groups. This work is in progress, continuous and ongoing.
- **Industry Mentors** - To help nurture a real sense of readiness for entry to the industry, each student will be assigned an external industry mentor from the second year of the course onwards. This will occur from September 2024.
- **Careers Advice** - We recognise that some students will decide during the course of their degree that they wish to pursue alternative career opportunities outside of the Creative Industries. Our Student Welfare Officer will lead on providing careers advice through a series of workshops and events for those wishing to seek employment outside of the Creative Industries or undertake a postgraduate degree. This will be in place for HE students by September 2025.
- **Programme Design** – we will use evaluation from module surveys, assessment results and other findings to inform programme design updates that target underrepresented groups for whom the largest gaps in access, success and progression have been identified. We will begin this evaluation from May 2024, and implement programme design changes from September 2024. This cycle will be repeated annually – and shall be overseen by the Teaching and Learning Committee.

The above measures will all play a part in establishing an effective strategy to support future aims and targets around **progression**.

### Collaboration

71. We will have undertaken a minimum of 20 free outreach workshops across London and the U.K. by August 2023 in secondary schools and FE colleges. This outreach programme has been targeted at areas of deprivation and/or low engagement with HE. During the lifecycle of this plan, we aim to develop sustained and enduring relationships with many of these schools and FE colleges.
72. We will also continue to engage in outreach with the following partner arts organisations, who work with underrepresented groups in terms of ethnicity, to ensure a truly diverse cohort is recruited each year. These organisations include: Brixton Youth Theatre, Company Three, Theatre Peckham, Ambitious Academy, The Boury Academy, Hoxton Hall Youth Arts Programme, GainCtrl, Bubble for Young People from London Bubble, Tara Arts and Theatre Royal, Stratford East. This will support us in achieving Targets PTA\_3 and PTA\_4 around increasing access for Black and Asian students. This work commenced in January 2023.
73. We will also continue to engage in specialist outreach with partner organisations such as National Youth Theatre Playing Up, Angel Shed and Graeae. This will support us in achieving Target PTA\_5 and around increasing access for students with physical or sensory disabilities. This work commenced in January 2023.

74. Through ongoing training, and exchange visits, provided through our collaborative partnerships with leading organisations who champion disabled artists, such as [Dark Horse](#) and [Access All Areas](#), we will ensure that our staff are engaged with leading industry practice to support the needs of our disabled students. This will support us in achieving Target PTS\_2. This work will be ongoing, and shall commence from August 2023.

75. We shall collaborate with other sector institutions who have significant numbers of Black, Asian and minority ethnic actors, for example LAMDA and Guildhall, to aggregate graduate employment data to contribute to a better sector-wide understanding of employment trends for this group. We will undertake this work by July 2027.

The above measures will all play a part in establishing an effective strategy to support future aims and targets around **access**.

#### Alignment With Other Work and Funding Sources

76. It is our currently unproven observational assumption, that due to historic realignments within the industry, and a sector-wide desire for more authentic representation, there is an increased number of highly-skilled employment opportunities for disabled actors. We wish to commit to undertaking research in this area to help identify whether this is reflected statistically, as this could benefit other institutions working in this field and impact future decision-making for providers around student and staff recruitment, outreach, and curriculum.

#### Financial Support

77. To support access for all students, and particularly those who from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, auditions of entry for our HE provision are free for all applicants, which is a point of differentiation from many competitor institutions.

78. As previously outlined, we have identified through data from the Part-Time School that financial support has been a factor in enabling both access, and continuation, for students in our target groups. This is supported by the report to OFFA by Nursaw Associates (2015) which highlighted the following key findings:

- ‘Financial support is not the most significant determinant in the decision to apply to HE or the choice between institutions – but there is a sizeable minority of students who feel that financial support does impact on their decision to enter HE and in choice of destination.
- Students receiving financial support have comparable non-continuation rates with students who do not receive financial support – but institutional findings show that students in receipt of financial support report that it has enabled them to stay on course and that they consider withdrawing less.’

79. In line with the data outlined in our Targets and Investments Plan. We make the following financial commitments:

	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>	<b>2025-26</b>	<b>2026-27</b>	<b>2027-28</b>
<b>Bursaries and Scholarships</b>	£9,000.00	£18,000.00	£27,000.00	£27,000.00	£31,500.00
<b>Hardship Funds</b>	£3,000.00	£4,000.00	£5,000.00	£7,500.00	£10,000.00

80. Financial support is targeted only at those students whose family income is below £15,000 per annum. All of the above financial support summarised above is for HE students from underrepresented groups only.

The bursaries/scholarships will be divided as follows:

2023-24 to 2026-27: £1500 per student, paid in two instalments

2027-28: £1750 per student, paid in two instalments

For clarity, all student bursaries awarded from 2027-28 will be £1750, including for eligible students who received £1500 in previous academic years.

The figures outlined are based on an estimated 6 students per cohort being eligible for the bursaries/scholarships – which is supported by our current admissions data – however the Studio guarantees these bursaries/scholarships will be made available to any student who meets the eligibility criteria.

The procedure for the allocation of hardship funds will be finalised by June 30<sup>th</sup> 2023 and published to students as outlined in Section 4.

Bursaries and Scholarships awarded will be paid to each eligible student in each year of their studies.

### 3.2 Student consultation

81. We recognise the necessity and value of student consultation with regards to this plan. The plan was discussed with our Student Senate on July 17<sup>th</sup> 2024. The Senate is composed of elected student representatives from the Short Courses for Professional Actors, the Youth Academy and the Part-Time Drama School. For this particular meeting, students who have accepted a place on the BA Acting were additionally invited to attend and give feedback. The feedback from the Senate on the plan was uniformly positive. One student noted how ‘how included the degree students felt in the process and expressed pride that the school took such care in ensuring its values were delivered.’ Another ‘praised the strong report and commended the idea of the senior management mentee, as well as the changes made to leadership within the industry.’ There were no recommendations for change that arose out of this student consultation.
82. Going forwards, we make the below timebound commitments to engage in further student consultation around the content and delivery of this plan:

Consultation Strategy	Timescale
Implement training for all members of the Student Senate	October 2023 (then annually)
Receive feedback on the APP from elected HE students of the Student Senate	December 2023 (then annually)
Anonymous Module Feedback Forms (to include questions around inclusion, diversity, access, and participation)	December 2023 (then bi-annually)
Receive individual feedback from disabled students through Access Rider meetings	Continuous
Structured engagement with Care Leavers in the Part-Time Drama School to identify feedback on this plan in relation to that target group	October 2023
Create formal feedback mechanism for outreach partners	October 2023

83. You can see the Terms of Reference for the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion committee [here](#), and for the Student Senate [here](#). Both committees have responsibilities for providing feedback on aspects of this plan. Collective does not currently have its own Students Union.

### 3.3 Evaluation strategy

84. In designing our evaluation strategy for this APP, we have made use of the self-assessment tool. This has helped us configure a strategy that is robust, realistic about our current status as a new provider, credible, and suitable for a provider of our size. In all five areas, our performance is categorized as emerging. The self-assessment tool indicates that the area requiring the most significant focus relates to the design and implementation of evaluative processes. The Studio will employ the tool to develop its approach to evaluation and aims to have achieved best practice by 2027-28. The strategy will be implemented between 2023-24 and 2027-28. The results of the self-assessment reflect our own view of our current status and we are committed to undertaking the necessary work to address this situation.

85. Some overall strengths we have identified in relation to this process are as follows:

- 1) As a very small institution, it is easier to share information and best practice amongst the team. The leaders of the evaluation strategy are all from the SLT, who meet weekly - allowing regular opportunity for coordination and evaluation.
- 2) We are able to respond quickly and nimbly to new initiatives with a whole-provider approach, as we do not have 'long levers' that need to be pulled within the structure of the organisation.

86. The SLT have divided responsibility for the management and evaluation of programmes as follows:

<b>Programmes Related to:</b>	<b>SLT Member Responsible:</b>
Access (Disability related)	Disability Consultant
Access (All other)	Youth Academy Manager/Outreach Coordinator
Success	CEO/Programme Leader
Progression	Industry Consultant

The SLT will be delegate aspects of data collection to staff from the administrative team as appropriate.

87. Our initial actions, to generate effective evaluation that is proportionate to our size and capacity is as follows:

- Formalise and implement at SLT level a robust and credible evaluation strategy for all strategic measures which demonstrates continuous improvement of practice for the duration of the Plan. This will be undertaken during July and August 2023.
- Utilise a theory of change model for all new initiatives, that relate to the overarching theory of change.
- Coordinate and enhance, through the SLT, our developing systems to gather and analyse baseline data in relation to our applicants, student body, and participants in our widening participation activity. This work is already underway.
- Work with our validating university, QMU, to draw on their greater expertise. This engagement will occur during July 2023. We will develop further evaluation actions as necessary following that process.
- Forge partnerships with other smaller institutions in the sector to share research and expertise. This will be undertaken by April 2024.
- Formalise our already rich and successful engagement with industry into an employment strategy – that develops a clear arc from access initiatives - through to progression outcomes. This will be undertaken by July 2025.
- Review and develop the Teaching and Learning Strategy by December 2023 to ensure it appropriately supports and enhances the strategic measures around success.
- Systematic consideration needs to be undertaken of staff development needs relating to access and participation and its evaluation. We have agreed support in place from QMU in this regard for July 2023.

- Employ the financial toolkit resource to evaluate the impact of the financial support given to students. This will be undertaken by July 2025, and shall occur annually from that point.
- Engage in a process of research and review to ensure all strategic measures are underpinned by suitable evidence.

### **Evaluating Financial Support**

88. We will evaluate the impact of those areas in which we are investing heavily, i.e. the Youth Academy and outreach workshops. We will undertake research through alumni tracking into the progression of members of the Youth Academy into HE, both at Collective and with other providers. This will be undertaken by July 2024 and will occur annually from that point. We will identify a number of outreach partners, with whom we are developing sustained relationships, and create a system of appropriate data-sharing to identify the impact of our outreach work with their students. This work will be undertaken by July 2026. This will take place in the clear context of GDPR legislation.

### **3.4 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan**

89. The monitoring of performance is the primary responsibility of the SLT. The division of responsibility for monitoring across the various strategic activities aligns with division of responsibilities outlined in paragraph 85.

90. Monitoring is also undertaken by the Equality Inclusion and Diversity Committee, the Teaching and Learning Committee, and the Student Senate. The first, and the latter, include both student representatives who are engaged with the monitoring of the plan, and members of the Board of Directors. This is help ensure close engagement between the students and the governing body.

91. The Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Committee, the Teaching and Learning Committee, the Student Senate and the SLT all report any issues within their remit about the delivery of this plan to the Board of Directors, who will provide instruction to the SLT should they require any changes to delivery. The Board of Directors add an issues of particular concern to the Institutional Risk Register for review at each meeting until they are considered resolved.

### **4. Provision of information to students**

92. The fees for the duration of the course are outlined on our website. They have also been outlined in our offer letter that has been sent to all successful applicants.

93. Upon successful registration with the OfS, and by not later than July 31st 2023, we commit to write to all students outlining:

- Information on student loans, how they can be accessed, and how they are paid to the Studio.
- Details on scholarships/bursaries and hardship funds available to underrepresented students throughout their course.
- The eligibility criteria for scholarships and bursaries.
- Clarification that eligibility for financial support will be assessed using information provided on the student loan application form, but that students must agree to share their financial information.

94. From August 2023, this information will also be published on our website for incoming students and those applying for the following academic year.

### **5. Appendix**

95. The OfS will append the following items from the fees and targets and investment documents when an access and participation plan is published:

- Targets (tables 2a, 2b and 2c in the targets and investment plan)
- Investment summary (tables 4a and 4b in the targets and investment plan)
- Fee summary (table 4a and 4b in the fee information document)