

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Anti-Racism Action Plan *WORKING DRAFT DOCUMENT*

Last revised 15 December 2020

This plan is not exhaustive, and will be added to and updated regularly. There will also be departmental/programme anti-racism action plans, which will be led by Directors and HoDs/HoPs. Those plans should align with this institutional plan, but specify discipline-specific information as appropriate.

With special thanks to our alumni who have been a part of the consultation process, and brought their professional perspectives and their experiences of RCS to the discussions, as well as current students, colleagues and both our outgoing SUP and our newly appointed SUP for 2020-21.

Action Plan

Accountability

- Our action plan and a timeline will be published on our website, including regular updates **quarterly**. *Responsible: External Relations Directorate*

Cycle: December, March, June, September (anniversary of first publication = last day of August/early September).

- We will include more people of colour in our Board with an interest in Diversity and Inclusion issues and publish the profiles of Board members on our website.¹ *Responsible: Nominations Committee, Board of Governors; RCS Senior Leadership & Director of External Relations*. Work to begin **immediately**.

UPDATE: The Conservatoire is receiving advice and contacts from a specialist organisation to seek a broader range of candidates for Board vacancies. The organisation's wide-reaching online platform and reputation for engaging diverse candidates considerably enhances the Conservatoire's

¹ The Scottish Funding Council and Advance HE has produced a paper, *SFC/Advance HE Race Project: Tackling Racism in Our Universities and Colleges* written by Nighet Riaz (AHE), Khadija Mohammed (UWS) and Sharan Virdee (Heriot Watt). In particular, the paper seeks to support Institutions to implement recommendation nine of the Equality and Human Rights Commission report [Tackling Racial Harassment: Universities Challenged](#) and provides University Governing bodies with an outline of how Governing bodies can engage with the sector-wide activities and build oversight into HE Governance structures. The Race Project will be focusing on "creating tangible improvements to how universities and colleges respond to racial harassment. The focus of the work is to create buy-in across institutions. There is an expectation that early outcomes of the project will be issued in October 2020, to coincide with Black History Month." The paper refers to the MoU between the Scottish Funding Council and the Equality and Human Rights Commission: the [Memorandum of Understanding](#) was published on 4 March 2020 as 'an equal partnership for the mutual benefit of EHRC, SFC and Scotland's Colleges and Universities'.

opportunity to make significant progress in this important area of governance. We expect to make progress with the appointments process from January 2021.

- The CSMT and Board will engage directly and **immediately** with existing resources on inclusive leadership and board level diversity such as the 'Positive Action Checklist' by Advance HE, and the resource suite on board diversification, which can be found at: <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/guidance/governance/board-diversification>.²

UPDATE: a number of staff, including Senior Managers, attended (virtually) a series of webinars as part of AdvanceHE's 'Tackling Racism on Campus' initiative. Details of the seminars, recordings and other materials can be found here: <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/tackling-racism-campus-raising-awareness-and-creating-conditions-confident-conversations>

- We will use our membership of AdvanceHE to discuss other aspects of [Governance](#) support that Advance HE could offer RCS, both in terms of member benefits and possible bespoke solutions, aligning [Governance with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#). *Responsible: Chairperson of the Board of Governors, Principal, HR Directorate. Immediately.*
- The Principal and/or Assistant Principal and other members of CSMT and the Board will meet regularly with groups of students [part of Student Experience Forum series], including ethnic minority students, to discuss their experiences at RCS. Meetings will be scheduled **twice per term** (informal meetings can take place in between by arrangement).

UPDATE: There have been two Student Experience Forums in Term 1 of 2020-21. The first covered many aspects of students' experiences during the pandemic, and the second focused entirely on the Anti-Racism action plan, and students' experiences during the pandemic of negative, and racist attitudes (in the city, or online) particularly towards students of Far East Asian heritage. This is wholly unacceptable and, whilst we have not received information to suggest that this is an issue within the Conservatoire itself, we understand that some students may encounter racist attitudes (not helped by stigmatisation of China

² Other resources include the AdvanceHE webinar series:

[Webinars](#) – these include webinars run in July 2020, and include the following topics. Further details and booking links can be found through this [link](#)

- Enhancing Good Practice – progressing and normalising the conversations on Race in HE
- Safe(r) for staff? Equality implications for re-opening university and college campuses in the age of COVID-19
- Global perspectives – Higher Education: Who belongs here?
- Higher Education Leadership in the Pandemic Age – from crisis to connected campus

[Previous webinars](#) - recordings from recent AdvanceHE member benefit webinars are also available and can be accessed through this [link](#) (please note, you do need to be already logged in to the [Advance HE Connect](#) platform in order to access these):

- Governing solutions for a dynamic world
- Culture – the key to good governance
- [Critical Conversations on Racism](#)

in particular in some press and non-UK political administrations) and require additional support at this time. We are particularly grateful to those students who contributed to the Student Experience Forum and shared their experiences, perspectives and challenged us to acknowledge their situation. We abhor any racism towards any group in our community.

- No racism will be tolerated at RCS. Incidents will be reported to Head of Programme (or another appropriate individual in a position of responsibility, including one of the EDI officers), investigated according to the complaints procedure (NB. The investigatory team will not be all White – see below ‘*Transparency*’). Both the Dignity at Work and Study Statement and the Whistleblowing Policy can be invoked as appropriate. *Responsible: HR Directorate*

UPDATE: The DAWAS statement has been updated and redesignated, in order to reflect its importance as a statement in which we all have responsibility to behave with dignity towards others, and which signposts the appropriate grievance, disciplinary and complaint processes for anyone who requires to use them. Funding will be sourced for appropriate external counsel (if required) in relation specifically to complaints of racism at the Conservatoire.

- Upheld complaints will result in disciplinary sanction, including dismissal (staff) and termination of studies (student) as appropriate. Students and staff will be supported through these processes and the SU will continue to provide support to students, including raising issues informally on students’ behalfs when appropriate to do so. *Responsible: HR Directorate (Staff) & Academic Registrar (Students)*

UPDATE: Further training on supporting staff and students through an investigation and/or a disciplinary process is under development.

- Whilst students are curious to know the ethnicity of programme teams and the students in programmes, our small teams/departments often amount to very few FTE staff and the release of this data would contravene GDPR. However, all programmes will be aware of the need to diversify the staff associated with the programme, including visiting staff and professionals who host placements, etc. Programmes that currently have no Black or minority ethnic students enrolled should continue this work nonetheless, using consultants (including Alumni) as appropriate to assist with curriculum, recruitment and other relevant work. *Responsible: Programme Leaders and Directors of Schools*

UPDATE: since we have published this action plan, we have made a number of staff appointments into academic teams (and others), and prioritised student-facing roles. We have at all times sought to diversify our staff body and have been pleased to appoint exceptional candidates of colour into some roles. We have made appointments both to permanent (FTE) roles at the Conservatoire and to our sizeable body of part-time and visiting staff.

- All minority groups are affected by discrimination. Many of the principles in this document on anti-racism plans applies in the case of other minority communities at RCS. We are also committed to better representation for disabled staff and students, for example. Fundamentally, all students from minority groups recognise the importance of representation across the whole RCS community, from senior staff and Board members, to students themselves. Ultimately, our art should transcend all these issues, and genuine inclusivity would enable us to concentrate fully on making art that feels empowering for everyone.

Curriculum

UPDATE: work has begun in all these action points listed below. There are complexities to be managed, owing to the overarching discussions (strategic level) and detailed discipline-specific requirements, and bringing these all together with some consistency of approach and understanding. Priorities so far have included involving students in discussions about their learning, and future direction, and these discussions are in turn feeding into the strategic discussions regarding the Learning and Teaching Strategy, and how we identify and share good practice in 'Decolonisation' across disciplines and levels of study.

- The Draft Learning and Teaching Strategy (a supporting strategy of the Conservatoire Strategic Plan 2020-2025) contains a project on Decolonisation of the curriculum across the Conservatoire at all levels of study. Students and staff will work collaboratively to progress Decolonisation of curriculum. *Responsible: Assistant Principal, Academic Board, Board of Governors final sign-off **June 2021***
- All programmes at all levels will have been evaluated (production choices, performance repertoire, resource lists, assessment tasks, competitions, exercises, pedagogical methodologies and professional involvement) **by Easter 2021** with a report submitted to the Academic Board in the **Summer meeting 2021**. School Management Teams will be responsible for collating reports for QSC, Academic Board and BoG. *Responsible: Heads of Programme/Department and Academic Directors*

UPDATE: As a support to this work, we have undertaken a Diversity in the Library Project, accessible here - [Diversifying the Library Collections](#)

- All programmes will produce their own Anti-Racism plans, to be approved by School Management Teams. Alumni of various programmes have expressed a willingness to be involved in this process. The process should be a collaborative one with all students in the programme. *Responsible: Heads of Programme and*

Academic Directors. Plans will be complete in alignment with the timescale of the action immediately above in this list.

UPDATE: all programme leaders in the school of DDPF have consulted with their students and programme teams extensively. Most have now created a full first draft of their plans. Colleagues are diversifying reading lists, materials and evaluating the impact upon planned changes. Teams will collate any minor module modifications through a cover paper which will then go to Quality and Standards Committee to ensure visibility of these changes. Director, DDPF has read and commented on all first drafts and is collating them alongside other materials in a Microsoft Teams channel for ease of collaboration and sharing of ideas.

SoM is working towards a School-wide action plan, covering all departments, as well as programme plans. Priority has been given to evaluating repertoire choices and programming decisions as well as artists invited to interact with students via Masterclasses, performance classes or particular projects. The School has made a Visiting Professor appointment to a prominent composer who will work closely with students on projects, performances and workshops.

- This work will not (cannot) supplant the external and internal regulatory framework (QAA Quality Enhancement Framework) which we must adhere to. However we will include action and reflection on anti-racist curriculum in both periodic programme review processes and annual monitoring. *Responsible:* QSC. Work to begin **immediately**.
- We will publish the schedule for periodic programme review (an externally-validated process) across the period 2021-25 (to align with the Strategic Plan) for all programmes in **September 2020**, and include specific requirements for Decolonisation of curriculum in the documentation.
- The Annual Monitoring process (the reports for 2019-20 and the action plan for 2020-21) will require programmes to articulate plans to Decolonise the curriculum in consultation with students and alumni. These are first presented to the Programme Committee in **October 2020** and actions are monitored in subsequent meetings, involving student reps.
- At the commencement of AY 2020-21 (**September 2020**), each programme will be challenged to consider at least two ways in which immediate changes to diversify content/approach etc. can be made. *Responsible: Assistant Principal and Academic Directors*
- Heads of Programme and other relevant staff will use core budget and additional funds such as the Diversity Fund to [continue to] engage professionals and staff identifying as ethnic minorities. *Responsible: Heads of Programme and Academic Directors. Immediately.*

- Where appropriate, learning opportunities provided by staff contracted in one area of a School will be shared with other programmes, collaboratively.
- Production teams will **immediately** review and consult appropriately on practices relating to expectations of students in productions. This review will include requirements relating to appearance for roles, dress codes, expectations relating to hair and makeup, lighting etc.
- Visiting artists, directors and designers who work with us on productions and concerts will be the responsibility of the relevant Programme Team and be expected to ensure an actively anti-racist learning environment for students.
*Responsible: Heads of Programme and Academic Directors. **Immediately.***
- We will share the staff-student charter (mentioned immediately below) with all visiting staff, and access to our training as appropriate. *Responsible: CPU, Heads of Programme/Department & HR.* Charter to be completed **Term 1 2020-21.**
- A staff-student charter will be developed that relates to the Conservatoire's Dignity at Work and Study Policy. This will outline a set of agreed behavioural standards relating specifically to issues affecting minority groups in our student and staff cohorts. To be developed **Term 1-2 2020-21.** *Responsible: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officers, HR Directorate and Assistant Principal*

UPDATE: SUP and AP will bring a draft charter to an EDI Forum in early 2021 for discussion, having drawn on materials in the redesignated Dignity at Work and Study Statement, other exemplars from peer institutions and student and staff consultation.

- We will look at our contracted External Examiners and Specialist External Examiners, and work with our sector partners to find more Black and ethnic minority individuals to act as EEs across our portfolio. *Responsible: Heads of Programme and QSC – **immediately** (as vacancies arise).*
- Our PreHE portfolio will be evaluated to ensure that we maximise opportunities for recruiting minority ethnic students into the Conservatoire (eg. Juniors, Transitions, Short Courses) and we will develop a mentoring or buddy scheme as appropriate to support incoming students of colour with more experienced individuals familiar with the RCS environment. *Responsible: Directors of Schools and Fair Access – work to begin **immediately.***
- Additionally, we will seek to strengthen relationships in our local community with many cultural groups, and to sustain these connections in order to grow a regular and longstanding relationship with communities in Glasgow both inside and outside the Conservatoire itself. *Responsible: Fair Access Directorate, Artistic Planning and External Relations Directorate.* The next Fair Access plan will include exploration of strategies for this work.

UPDATE:

We have appointed a new outreach co-ordinator to assist us to progress partnership working with key organisations to reach our priority under-represented groups. We are seeing this continuing to impact positively in the growth in the number of applications to our Transitions programme from black and minority ethnic communities. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to undertake outreach work using online means we have undertaken activities designed to engage with black and minority ethnic communities and professional artists/educators of colour.

Initiatives include a film festival collaboration between the Fair Access team, RCS's Film Department, Africa In Motion Film Festival, Gmac Film, and FANS Youth Film Festival. The collaboration aimed to encourage young black creatives to engage in the arts - and also to signpost the RCS as an opportunity to develop their craft and career. The event brought together young black film makers and creatives for an on-line discussion that formed part of the RCS' Film Department's Open Day, Africa In Motion's Industry Programme and Gmac Film's *Little Pictures* training programme (a new short film scheme specifically aimed at black and minority ethnic communities). The event was streamed on-line for a wide audience and made available during Africa In Motion's Festival delivery window throughout November.

We are working with Scottish Youth Theatre, 'Seeds of thought' and the Youth Community Support Agency to deliver a project called 'Now you see me' that allowed young black and minority ethnic people to work in a closed, safe place with artists of colour: <https://scottishyouththeatre.org/national-artistic-programme/winter2020/now-you-see-me-younger-seeds>.

We are continuing to expand our network of commissioned artists and educators of colour to work with our Transitions and WACI students. A music educator of colour has just finished delivering a six-week vocal leadership course to encourage young black and minority ethnic people to see future potential in entering a career in music education.

We are working with the 'universities of sanctuary' and the Scottish Refugee Council to develop best practice in reaching out to and supporting asylum seekers and refugees.

Representation

- We will develop and extend our practices in recruitment, of both students and staff, to ensure that we do not make assumptions about where, how and when students and staff of colour will engage with our institution. *Responsible: HR Directorate and Academic Directors* [work to continue **immediately** – a plan for

increasing diversity in appointments of staff should be presented to the Equality and Diversity Forum **in early 2021**].

UPDATE: We already have a well-developed recruitment policy and EDI training. However, in seeking to attract a more diverse range of applicants for roles at the Conservatoire, we are utilising methods as appropriate to particular roles, to engage potential colleagues (see above for reference to the Board recruitment process). Likewise, we have received valuable feedback from students that our use of Alumni and images in marketing/recruitment campaigns can be an important factor in their choosing to apply to/accept a place at RCS. To this end, we are undertaking to ensure that engagement with Alumni is broader ranging (see below) and that we ensure that that engagement is meaningful – and recurrent – in students learning (the programme teams are seeking to involve alumni and other professionals who can bring their own experiences to offer students perspectives on employment opportunities, and the learning environment).

- We have **immediately** appointed new counsellors to ensure that students have a greater opportunity to feel supported by individuals who can identify with their cultural lived experiences. This will enhance the crucial support available to students when they need it most. We will continue to appoint a diverse range of counsellors to support our community at RCS. *Responsible: Academic Registrar*

UPDATE: Using funding from the Scottish Funding Council given to institutions to increase the provision of counselling and mental health support for students, we will shortly be advertising and appointing a permanent member of staff to the counselling team and hope to attract a pool of candidates with diverse backgrounds and prior experience to the role.

- We will grow our alumni network throughout the period of the forthcoming Strategic Plan, and this will include developing a network of Black and minority ethnic alumni, who may be in a position to advise and mentor current students, by arrangement with the Conservatoire. *Responsible: External Relations Directorate* [work to begin **immediately**; clear reporting to be ensured through the Strategic Plan period, via reporting on supporting strategy projects to Academic Board and BoG as appropriate, annually].

UPDATE: We have re-established alumni comms via a monthly newsletter and are engaging more with the community through this and social media channels.

We also engaged with alumni through all four open days in November and worked with each HoD to reach out to a diverse alumni group to gather video content/graduate endorsement across all programmes.

- Supported by funding from the William Grant foundation we're looking to develop an initiative to support and celebrate self-generated student/new graduate artistic work

on the theme of diversity. We are working with RKE and hope to launch in the new year.

- We will seek to appoint an additional Equality and Diversity Officer role as soon as is practicably possible. Recruitment process: **immediately**. *Responsible: HR Directorate.*

UPDATE: Our new Equality and Diversity Officer began their role in November 2020, and has immediately begun discussions with students, the HR team and Senior management on the future effective implementation of this Anti-Racism Action Plan.

Staff and Student Training

- We will consult with appropriate sector partners (including other Conservatoires) in order to source effective anti-racist training that will be mandatory for *all* staff upon induction, and for all staff currently in roles at the Conservatoire. We will expect this mandatory training to be completed **by March 2021**, and the ongoing engagement of all new appointees with the training will be monitored by *Human Resources Directorate*.

UPDATE: We are pleased to be able to develop in-house training for the Conservatoire community, both staff and students, which will enable us to deliver targeted training suited to our particular environment. We have also begun to 'roll out' training sourced externally (as indicated in the action, above) to staff in student-facing roles as a priority (see also below).

- We anticipate the delivery of Anti-Racism training **w/c 14th September 2020** (in place of Learning and Teaching Week) and additionally, later that week, Active Bystander Training for staff, followed by rollout of the training to all staff as agreed with the training provider.

UPDATE: Racism, Race Equality and Race Allyship training has taken place, in addition to separate Active Bystander training . 135 staff members so far attended the Racism, Race Equality & Race Allyship Workshops and 128 staff members so far attended the Active Bystander Workshops. In addition, over 800 students attended Race Equality Workshops. Further opportunities will be in place to meet the deadlines established in this document.

- We will develop, in partnership with our students and alumni, anti-racist and anti-discrimination training for students during induction and the very first weeks of term each year. This will be delivered online and will be part of registration/matriculation each academic year. *Responsible: CSMT and SU. Immediately.*

UPDATE: Again, this will form part of our in-house development of training for students. We have received feedback that students would value training in-person as well as online to facilitate discussion, and we are looking into the logistics of this, as well as how programme teams can actively engage their students in appropriate discussion, particularly within the academic context.

- Our Board members will also undertake the staff training on joining the Board, and those already members will be required to complete it. This will be completed by the **April Board 2021**.
- We will appoint staff ambassadors to support the institution in disseminating messages about the importance of the training, and the implementation of the learning in our day-to-day work.

Transparency

- We will publish materials on our website to update on progress on each of the areas of work listed above. This publication will be **quarterly**. *Responsible: External Relations Directorate.*
- Our complaints process has recently undergone review and independent scrutiny, and we will further implement assurances that students and staff, or other users of the Conservatoire reporting racist incidents will be treated fairly and sensitively throughout the process, remain informed and receive a clear outcome and rationale from the process. *Responsible: Principal. Immediately.*

UPDATE: we are part of the “Fearless Glasgow” partnership of Glasgow HEIs who are working towards establishing a collective license for Culture Shift’s “Report & Support” system. This system has proved very successful in a number of universities across the UK: <https://www.culture-shift.co.uk/>

- We will support student and staff complainants in the first-stage frontline resolution process to try to resolve as many issues as possible timeously using this route, including the use of mediation where appropriate. *Responsible: HR Directorate and Academic Registrar. Immediately.*

UPDATE: The Dignity at Work and Study Policy is now the Dignity at Work and Study Statement of Standards. A breach of those standards will be dealt with through the relevant policy- complaints/.grievance/disciplinary. This will give greater clarity on the most appropriate policy to use. Discussion and mediation are at the forefront of seeking solutions to issues prior to formal procedures being implemented. However the RCS will always use formal procedures as necessary.

- We will ensure that where incidents of racism and other forms of discrimination are reported, appropriate individuals will be consulted – independent of the Conservatoire as necessary – in order to resolve the complaint. Where there are complaints requiring investigation, relating to accusations of racism, we will

ensure that the complaint is not heard by an all-White panel in future.
Responsible: Principal, HR and AAS. Immediately.

Useful resources (to be added to):

Action Plans:

Keele University

https://www.keele.ac.uk/equalitydiversity/equalityawards/raceequalitycharter/recsubmission/Redacted_Keele_REC_Application.pdf

University of Cambridge

https://www.race-equality.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/uoc_rec_action_plan.pdf

Journalism:

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/black-lives-matter-ballet-boss-heeds-dancers-plea-for-greater-diversity-of-roles-cpc2vhr2x>

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jun/14/white-privilege-is-a-lazy-distraction-leaving-racism-and-power-untouched?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

Radio broadcast *A Point of View*, with Bernadine Evaristo on BBC Radio 4 (first broadcast 03/07/2020) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000khls>

Television/Film Resources:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m000kbk6/arena-i-am-not-your-negro>

<https://bigthink.com/videos/how-to-solve-racism>

Black and British: A Forgotten History: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b082x0h6>

A House Through Time, Series 3: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000jjn9>

Relevant Studies/Publications:

<http://www.sfc.ac.uk/news/2019/news-78041.aspx>

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/tackling-racial-harassment-universities-challenged.pdf>

BIPOC Demands for White American Theatre (We See You WAT): <https://www.weseeyouwat.com/>

Relevant Organisations with appropriate materials for reference:

AdvanceHE (of which RCS is a member, and has access to numerous seminars, courses and training events): <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/tackling-racism-campus-raising-awareness-and-creating-conditions-confident-conversations>

<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/charters/race-equality-charter>

United Nations: <https://www.un.org/en/letsfightracism/>

Universities UK recommendations to all HEIS in order to tackle racial harassment in HE*: <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/news/Pages/uuk-calls-urgent-action-racial-harassment-higher-education-november-2020.aspx>

*the associated documentation, including case studies and the full report, are uploaded as PDFs alongside our own Anti-Racism Action Plan and Appendix Documentation.