Bird College
Conservatoire for dance and musical theatre

EQUALITY, EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN (2024 - 2027)

September 2024

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As the principal of Bird College, I would like to acknowledge the collective dedicated effort put into the creation of our Equality, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EEDI) Strategic Action Plan 2024-2027. This document is more than a policy; it is our commitment to ensuring that Bird College becomes a centre of inclusivity, where every individual, regardless of background, is empowered to thrive. The principles outlined in this plan reflect our unwavering dedication to nurturing an environment where equity does not just stay as a goal but a reality woven into the core of our institution.

This strategic plan will serve as our roadmap for change, guiding us toward creating an inclusive and supportive community for all students, staff and faculty members. It is my sincere belief that by addressing the systemic barriers that exist in education and the performing arts, we will enrich the lives of our college community and contribute to the diversity and vibrancy of the broader performing arts industry.

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone involved in the development of this plan—from the faculty members who have championed inclusivity in the classroom to the students whose voices have been instrumental in shaping this vision. Together, we are setting new standards for what it means to truly belong in an educational setting, and I am incredibly proud to lead Bird College into this new chapter of growth, understanding and inclusion.

This is also a call to action for all of us that in everything we do, we aim to embody the diversity and creativity of the world around us. I look forward to working with each of you as we bring this vision to life.

Luis De Abreu
Principal and Artistic Director

Agenda

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-Action Plan

iNTRODUCTION

At Bird College, we believe that the principles of Equality, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EEDI) are not just essential values but fundamental to the thriving of our community and the performing arts as a whole. EDI means creating a space where every individual —regardless of their background—feels respected, valued and empowered to achieve their fullest potential. In the context of the UK's performing arts scene, it is crucial that we reflect the rich diversity of our society and champion an inclusive culture where creativity and expression can flourish.

Our EEDI Action Plan for 2024-2027 sets forth a comprehensive strategy to embed these principles into every facet of our institution. Our purpose is to cultivate an environment where students, staff and faculty can learn, work, and perform without the barriers of discrimination and inequality. This plan outlines our commitment to transforming our college into a beacon of inclusivity, where diverse voices and perspectives are not only welcomed but celebrated.

Through targeted actions in student experience, curriculum development, staff recruitment and support, culture and change management, as well as leadership and governance, we aim to make lasting changes that resonate across our college and the broader performing arts community. By setting clear benchmarks and continually assessing our progress, we ensure that our initiatives are impactful and sustainable.

Bird College's EEDI Action Plan is a testament to our unwavering dedication to fostering a diverse and inclusive community, driving positive change and enriching the lives of everyone who walks through our doors. Together, we can build a future where the arts truly reflect and celebrate the diversity of our world.

What We Want To Achieve

Increasing representation of Global Majority groups in faculty and staff	Achieving the 25% target and regularly reviewing and adapting hiring processes to sustain diverse representation.
Annual cultural competence and unconscious bias training to all staff and faculty	Tracking attendance and completion rates of training, as well as conducting pre- and post-training surveys to assess improvements
Reviewing and updating the curriculum by the end of the academic year to ensure it reflects a wide range of cultural perspectives and addresses topics related to social justice, equity and inclusion.	Increasing student satisfaction rates regarding diversity in course content

EEDI at Bird College

ELEMENT	GOALS	ACTIONS	SUCESS METRICS
EQUALITY	Ensuring all individuals have equal access to opportunities	-Regular policy reviews to identify and eliminate biases -Transparent recruitment and admissions processes	Increased diverse student and staff representation.
EQUITY	Providing resources and support tailored to individual needs	-Scholarships opportunities to underrepresented groups -Mentorship programs for minority students and staff	High satisfaction rates from underrepresented groups
DIVERSITY	Promoting a diverse college community that reflects a range of backgrounds	- Recruiting students and staff from diverse backgrounds - Incorporating diverse perspectives into the curriculum	Positive feedback on curriculum inclusivity
INCLUSION	Creating a college environment where all members feel valued and included	- Inclusive campus events and cultural celebrations - Continuous EEDI training for all members of the college	- Increased participation in EDI events and initiatives - High engagement scores in climate surveys

OUR EEDI COMMITMENTS

Student Experience

We aim to enhance the student experience by promoting equality, equity, diversity and inclusion by ensuring that all students feel valued and supported throughout their educational journey at Bird College.

- Awareness Campaigns: We launched targeted awareness campaigns to educate students on EDI principles. This includes workshops, seminars, and events featuring guest speakers from diverse backgrounds in the performing arts industry.

- Student Support Services: We established dedicated support services, such as wellbeing and learning support, counselling, Equity and Inclusion support and peer support groups, specifically for underrepresented and marginalised student groups. These channels create a comprehensive support network that includes mental health resources, academic advising and mentorship programs.

- Feedback Mechanisms: We aim to implement anonymous feedback systems, such as online surveys and suggestion boxes, to gather student experiences related to EDI. Regularly reviewing feedback will help us to identify areas for improvement and address any concerns promptly.

- Scholarships and Grants: We have established scholarships and grants programmes specifically for underrepresented groups to provide financial support and encourage a diverse range of students to pursue their education at Bird College.

OUR EEDI COMMITMENTS

Curriculum

We acknowledge the significance of upholding Western, Eurocentric, and White academic standards, and their influence on defining what it means to be 'well-read' in the performing arts. We take the initiative of the Liberating the Curriculum effort, uniting students, academic staff, and librarians to assess and revise reading lists, reimagining them to employs a variety of perspectives and better reflect the UK's diverse and international student body. We continuously develop and implement our curriculum that reflects diverse perspectives in the performing arts, promotes inclusivity and prepares students for a diverse and globalised world.

- Curriculum Audit: We will conduct a comprehensive audit of the existing curriculum to identify gaps in representation and inclusivity. This audit will involve faculty members, students and administrative help.

- Inclusive Teaching Training: We aim to provide mandatory training for faculty on inclusive teaching practices. This includes workshops on integrating diverse materials and perspectives into coursework and understanding cultural sensitivities.
- New Introductory Sessions/Courses: We are planning to introduce new sessions and courses that focus on social justice, equity and cultural competence .These courses will explore themes such as the history of marginalised groups in the performing arts and contemporary issues in Student Participation: We encourage student participation in curriculum development to ensure that the content remains relevant and inclusive. We will establish student advisory boards to provide feedback and suggestions on course content and materials.

- Sustainable Practices: We are thriving to ensure that inclusive practices are embedded sustainably within all programs and courses. This includes our continuous review and adaptation of course materials to reflect current social and cultural dynamics.

OUR EEDI COMMITMENTS

Staff

We continuously foster a diverse and inclusive workforce that reflects the diversity of the wider community, promoting equality and equity in all aspects of employment.

- Diversity Recruitment: We review and enhance our recruitment processes to attract a more diverse pool of applicants. This includes outreach to minority-serving institutions, diverse job boards and professional organisations. We implement blind recruitment processes to reduce unconscious bias during the hiring process and tools available to HEIs.

- EDI Training: We have started initiating EDI training for all staff members to promote a more inclusive workplace culture. This training will cover topics such as unconscious bias, anti-racism, cultural competency and inclusive leadership.

- Employee Resource Groups (ERGs): We support creation of Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) for underrepresented staff, such as Pride Society, Global Majority, International Society and Neurodiversity society. These groups provide networking opportunities, peer support, and a platform for advocacy within the college.

- Inclusive Culture: We are keen to cultivate an inclusive culture where diversity is celebrated and all staff feel valued and supported. This initiative is supported by regular EDI events, recognition programs, anonymous feedback channels and open forums for discussion.

OUR EEDI COMMITMENTS

Culture and Change Management

At Bird College we eagerly promote a culture of inclusivity and continuous improvement, ensuring that EDI principles are integrated into all aspects of the College's operations and culture.

- EDI Committee: Along with Societies and ERG groups we will establish an EDI Committee to work with Equity and Inclusion Officer to oversee the implementation and progress of the action plan. This committee will include representatives from all areas of the college, including students, faculty and staff.

- Communication Strategy: We created and continuously develop our comprehensive communication strategy to promote EDI initiatives and achievements. This includes regular updates through monthly EDI newsletters, social media contents, live documents and internal communications platforms.

- Climate Surveys: We conduct an annual anonymous survey to assess the campus environment and identify areas for improvement. This survey gathers feedback from students, faculty and staff on their experiences related to EDI.

- Continuous Improvement: We conduct regularly review and update to the EDI action plan to reflect new challenges and opportunities. This includes staying informed about best practices and emerging trends in diversity and inclusion.

OUR EEDI COMMITMENTS

Leadership and Governance

We integrate EEDI principles into the College's strategic planning and decision-making processes, ensuring that leadership and governance structures are reflective of the diverse community they serve.

- Policy Review: We regularly review existing policies and procedures to identify and address potential biases. This includes updating policies to reflect best practices in diversity and inclusion.

- Diverse Leadership: We set targets for increasing the diversity of the College's leadership and governing bodies. This includes recruitment efforts aimed at diverse candidates and succession planning to promote internal diversity.

- Transparency and Reporting: We internally publish live EDI progress report to maintain transparency and accountability. This report details the progress toward goals, challenges faced and plans for future initiatives.

- Recognition Programs: We established recognition programs to celebrate achievements in advancing EDI at the college. This includes recognising champions and ambassadors for their support and advocacy who have made significant contributions to promoting diversity and inclusion.

Action Plan

CORE PILLARS	SHORT TERM until 2025	MID TERM until 2026	LONG TERM until 2027
Student Experience	Awareness Campaigns: Launching awareness campaigns focusing on EDI principles through workshops, seminars and events. Student Support Services: Establishing dedicated support services for underrepresented and marginalised student groups. Feedback Mechanisms: Implementing anonymous feedback systems to gather student experiences related to EDI.	Mentorship Programs: Developing mentorship programs pairing students from diverse backgrounds with faculty and alumni. Scholarships and Grants: Introducing scholarships and grants specifically for underrepresented groups.	Comprehensive Support Systems: Continuously improving support systems based on feedback and evolving needs of students. Longitudinal Studies: Conducting longitudinal studies to track the progress and impact of EDI initiatives on student success.
Curriculum	Curriculum Audit: Conducting a comprehensive audit of the curriculum to ensure diverse perspectives and inclusive content. Inclusive Teaching Training: Providing training for faculty on inclusive teaching practices and integrating diverse materials into coursework.	New Courses/Sessions: Introducing new courses that focus on social justice, equity and cultural competence. Student Participation: Encouraging student participation in curriculum development to ensure relevance and inclusivity.	Sustainable Practices: Ensuring that inclusive practices are embedded sustainably within all programs and courses. Collaborative Projects: Fostering collaborative projects that involve students in community engagement and social justice work.
Staff	Diversity Recruitment: Reviewing and enhancing recruitment processes to attract a more diverse pool of applicants. EDI Training: Initiating EDI training for all staff members to foster a more inclusive workplace culture.	Career Development: Implementing career development programs aimed at promoting diverse staff into leadership positions. Employee Resource Groups: Supporting the creation of Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) for underrepresented staff.	Inclusive Culture: Cultivating an inclusive culture where diversity is celebrated, and all staff feel valued and supported. Leadership Pipelines: Strengthening pipelines to leadership for staff from diverse backgrounds.
Culture and Change Management	EDI Committee: Establishing an EDI Committee to oversee the implementation and progress of the action plan. Communication Strategy: Developing a communication strategypromote EDI initiatives and achievements	Climate Surveys: Conducting annual climate surveys to assess the campus environment and identify areas for improvement. Inclusive Events: Organising events celebrating diverse cultures and identities to build a more inclusive community.	Continuous Improvement: Regularly reviewing and updating the EDI action plan to reflect new challenges and opportunities. Community Engagement: Strengthening partnerships with local and national organizations to promote diversity and inclusion beyond the college.
Leadership and Governance	Policy Review: Reviewing existing policies and procedures to identify and address potential biases. Leadership Training: Providing EDI training for senior leaders and board members to ensure top-down commitment.	Diverse Leadership: Setting targets for increasing the diversity of the College's leadership and governing bodies. Transparency and Reporting: Publishing annual EDI progress reports to maintain transparency and accountability.	Institutional Integration: Ensuring EDI principles are fully integrated into the institution's strategic planning and decision-making processes. Recognition Programs: Establishing recognition programs to celebrate achievements in advancing EDI at the college.