Central Film School

Access and Participation Plan 2025-26 to 2028-29

Introduction and Strategic Aim

Central Film School (CFS) is a small and specialist Higher Education Institution (HEI), founded in 2008 and providing students from all over the world with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the screen industries. We are committed to providing an exceptional education in visual storytelling to a diverse and talented student body. Our vision is to be a leading screen school, renowned for our inclusive and innovative approach to teaching and learning. We aim to inspire the next generation of screen professionals, empowering them to tell their stories and challenge the status quo.

Our mission is to **amplify underrepresented voices** and **create a more equitable and diverse film industry**. We believe that everyone, regardless of their background, should have the opportunity to pursue their passion for filmmaking. By fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment, we aim to empower our students to reach their full potential.

Our core values underpin our commitment to access and participation. Of particular importance is our commitment to:

- **Inclusivity:** We strive to create a welcoming and inclusive community where all students feel valued and supported.
- **Diversity:** We celebrate diversity in all its forms and strive to create a learning environment that reflects the richness and complexity of the world around us.
- **Equity:** We are committed to ensuring that all students have equal opportunities to succeed, regardless of their background or circumstances.
- **Excellence:** We are dedicated to providing high-quality education and training that prepares our students for successful careers in the film industry.

Through this Access and Participation Plan (APP), we aim to:

- **Increase access** to higher education for underrepresented groups.
- **Narrow gaps in student retention and attainment** rates.
- **Enhance the student experience** for all learners.
- **Contribute to social mobility** and economic growth through **progression** strategies.

By implementing the strategies outlined in this plan, we will work towards creating a more equitable and inclusive HEI that reflects the diversity of the world around us.

To achieve these goals, we will focus on the following key areas:

- **Recruitment and Outreach:** We will develop targeted recruitment and outreach strategies to identify and engage with potential students from underrepresented groups.
- **Financial Support:** We will provide a range of financial support options, including targeted bursaries, to help students overcome financial barriers.
- **Academic Support:** We will offer a variety of academic support services, such as tutoring, mentoring, and academic counselling, to help students succeed.
- **Accessibility:** We will ensure that our facilities and services are accessible to all students, including those with disabilities.
- **Student Experience:** We will create a positive and supportive learning environment that fosters creativity and innovation
- **Collaboration**: We will endeavour to both supportive a collaborative environment within the school and foster partnerships with educators, industry and the third-sector

Risks to equality of opportunity

Analysing Performance and Identifying Risks

CFS is committed to continuous improvement in access, retention, and progression, guided by data-driven insights and sector-wide benchmarks. To effectively identify and address risks to equality of opportunity, we began by analysing our performance against previous targets outlined in our APP. This reflective approach enables us to evaluate progress, recognise areas of success, and address persistent challenges.

Our analysis revealed notable achievements in widening participation for underrepresented groups, including surpassing our target for students from POLAR Quintile 1, and achieving significant representation of mature and disabled learners. However, challenges remain in bridging the BAME attainment gap, sustaining support for disadvantaged students, and addressing barriers to graduate employability. These areas require targeted interventions informed by nuanced and reliable data.

As a small institution, we face unique challenges related to data limitations, including small sample sizes and the complexity of intersectional disadvantages. As these constraints make it difficult to draw statistically significant conclusions or identify trends over time, we recognise the importance of qualitative insights, including student feedback and case studies, to complement quantitative data. To address these limitations, we have adopted a triangulated approach, combining internal performance metrics with sector-wide benchmarks from organisations like HESA, OfS, and AdvanceHE. As much of the school's data on the APP dashboard is limited or suppressed, we have used internal data as our evidential starting point. The group analysed only includes 'qualifying students', which is broadly equivalent to UK-domiciled undergraduate students.

Analysis of Performance Against Aims in Current APP

We began our reflective research with an assessment of where the school currently stands in terms of its performance against the aims stated in its current APP, first published in August 2020. Analysis includes our performance against target, the sector and a selection of similar institutions.

Aim 1: Proportion of POLAR Quintile 1 Students

- **2024-25 Targe**t: 6% of enrolled students from POLAR Quintile 1 areas.
- **Actual Performance**: 6.16% of enrolled students from POLAR Quintile 1 areas.
- **Sector Benchmark**: Across UK higher education, POLAR Quintile 1 representation averages 11.5%, while creative disciplines typically report rates closer to 8% (UCAS, 2022).
- **Competitor Benchmark:** UAL reports 8% POLAR Quintile 1 students, while MetFilm School stands at 7%.

CFS has marginally exceeded its target for POLAR Quintile 1 representation, enrolling 6.16% of students from these areas. While this aligns with internal objectives, it falls short of sector-wide benchmarks and trails key competitors in the creative education space. This reflects the challenges inherent in attracting students from areas with historically low higher education participation rates. Students from POLAR Quintile 1 often face a combination of economic, geographic, and cultural barriers that limit their access to creative disciplines (Gorard et al., 2012). For institutions like CFS, located in a metropolitan hub, the accessibility gap may be exacerbated by the high cost of living and perceived exclusivity of the film industry. Despite outreach efforts, the modest margin above the target highlights the need for more aggressive and sustained interventions.

Aim 2: Proportion of Students from Disadvantaged Backgrounds (IMD Quintiles 1 and 2)

- **2024-25 Target**: 30% of enrolled students from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2.
- **Actual Performance**: 40.41% of enrolled students from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2.
- **Sector Benchmark**: Representation of IMD Quintiles 1 and 2 students in UK higher education averages 45%,
- **Competitor Benchmark**: UAL reports 35%, while BIMM averages 35%.

CFS has significantly outperformed its target, with 40.41% of students coming from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2, surpassing both its internal benchmark and aligning closely with the sector average. We assume this success is driven by inclusive admissions practices and community engagement initiatives, in addition to the financial accessibility provided by CFS being added to the OfS Register in the Approved (fee cap) category, allowing students to have their full fees paid through SLC funding.

This success does, however, potentially create challenges in providing adequate academic, financial, and wellbeing support to ensure retention and progression. Research by Thomas

(2012) highlights the importance of a holistic approach, integrating academic, pastoral, and career support to address the compounding disadvantages faced by these students.

Aim 3: Proportion of Mature Students

- **2024-25 Target**: 10% of enrolled students to be mature learners.
- **Actual Performance**: 17.81% of enrolled students are mature learners.
- **Sector Benchmark**: The sector-wide average is 28.7% across all higher education
- **Competitor Benchmar**k: MetFilm School reports 16.3%, while UAL averages 13.6%.

While CFS does not match the proportion at sector-level of mature students, we significantly exceeded our target for mature students, with 17.81% of its student body aged 21 or older at course commencement. This result demonstrates the institution's appeal to individuals seeking career changes or personal development opportunities. Mature learners face distinct challenges, including balancing external responsibilities and adapting to academic life after extended absences from formal education. Tinto's (1993) model of student integration emphasizes the critical role of institutional support in retaining non-traditional learners.

Aim 4: BAME Attainment Gap

- **2023-24 Target**: 20% attainment gap (reducing to 10% in 2024-25).
- **Actual Performance**: 40.74% attainment gap, broadly driven by students graduating with lower-than-planned qualifications
- **Sector Benchmark**: There are significant variances across differing ethnicities, with the gap between white and mixed ethnicity being reported as 4%, but over 22% for black students
- **Competitor Benchmark**: UAL reports a gap 17% for black students and 7% for students of mixed ethnicity

The BAME attainment gap at CFS is significantly higher than its target of 20%, and the sector average. While the low number of BAME students at CFS amplifies the statistical impact of individual performance, this figure highlights potential issues in the institution's approach to equity.

This evaluation of performance against our previous targets highlighted where CFS had succeeded, but also a potential area of focus - attainment for non-white students. The next step of the evaluation process was to assess the current student body across the key metrics of access, continuation/completion, attainment and progression.

Access

Understanding the demographics of our student body is crucial for identifying opportunities to enhance access, participation, and equity. This section provides an in-depth analysis of the socio-economic, ethnic, disability, gender, and mental health characteristics of CFS's students, referencing sector benchmarks, competitor performance, and academic literature to inform best practices. As with all sections in this plan, the sector and competitor benchmarks have all been taken from the most recent data available on the APP Dashboard, while CFS data was primarily mined from internal sources, due to the lack of data available on the APP dashboard.

1. Socio-Economic & Geographic Representation Analysis

CFS Data Overview

- **TUNDRA Quintiles 1 and 2**: **16.43%** of students at CFS come from low-participation neighborhoods, based on TUNDRA data. This includes **8.9%** from Quintile 1 and **7.53%** from Quintile 2.
- **Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Quintiles 1 and 2**: **40.41%** of students are from the most economically deprived areas, a distinct indication of economic disadvantage.
- **FSM Eligibility**: **9.59%** of students were eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), reflecting long-term economic deprivation.

Sector Benchmarks

- Across UK higher education, students from **TUNDRA** Quintiles 1 and 2 represent respectively 12.5% and 15.7% - at 28.2%, this is significantly higher than CFS. UAL reports 21.9% in quintiles 1 and 2 and met reports 12.9%
- CFS' **IMD representation of 40.41%** is aligned with the sector average (45%), outperforming competitors such as UAL (**34.9%**) and MetFilm School (**25%**) in socio-economic diversity.
- At CFS, **9.59% of students** were eligible for **Free School Meals** (FSM), a strong indicator of long-term socio-economic disadvantage.The most recent data from OfS indicates that **17.7%** of full-time undergraduate entrants in England were eligible for free FSM during their secondary education, meaning that CFS is below the benchmark. UAL reports 16.3% while the last available data for MetFilm reports 12.5%

Analysis

CFS demonstrates strong success in recruiting students from **IMD Quintiles 1 and 2**, showcasing effective outreach and widening participation initiatives. However, the lower **TUNDRA Quintiles 1 and 2** representation suggests a need to enhance access strategies for students from low-participation areas. Financial pressures associated with creative disciplines present an ongoing challenge, necessitating targeted support to ensure equitable retention and progression for disadvantaged students. This also impacts on the support necessary for those who have noted they are eligible for **FSM** at CFS, where CFS is under the sector and competitor levels.

2. Ethnicity

Use of "BAME" as a Measure

Central Film School acknowledges the limitations and critiques surrounding the use of "BAME" (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic) as a collective term. Critics argue that the term oversimplifies complex ethnic identities and obscures significant disparities within subgroups (Pilkington, 2021). However, CFS has chosen to utilise this aggregated measure within its APP when analysing current student data, due to the small size of its student cohorts. Disaggregating ethnicity data completely in such a context risks compromising privacy and anonymity. For instance, identifying academic performance by cohort or progression trends for specific ethnic groups in a small cohort could lead to breaches of ethical data handling practices, as highlighted by AdvanceHE (2022). Although "BAME" data lacks nuance, CFS' APP ensures tailored interventions are designed to address distinct challenges faced by specific groups within this category. Research indicates that Black students often face cultural disconnection and bias in academic environments, while Asian students may encounter differing barriers, such as underrepresentation in leadership roles or unique academic challenges (Richardson et al., 2020). Our APP will recognise these nuances through our objectives and interventions, outlined later in this plan.

CFS Data Overview

Ethnic diversity at CFS fluctuates across cohorts, but due to the small sample size, we have restricted our published analysis to whole-year cohorts:

BAME Representation by Cohort:

- O21: 46.51%
- O22: 24.24%
- O23: 30.91%
- O24: 29.76%

Sector Benchmarks

- Nationally, **32.9%** of higher education students are from BAME backgrounds. However, in creative disciplines, BAME representation tends to be lower, reflecting systemic barriers to access and participation.
- Competitor performance:
  - UAL reports **35.2%** BAME representation, achieving sector benchmark-matching inclusivity.
  - MetFilm School reports **18%** non-white representation, although similar to CFS and other specialist institutions, the data is very limited on the APP Dashboard due to small cohort size.

Analysis

While CFS performs well compared to the sector in certain cohorts, variability in BAME representation could indicate potential room for improvement. The institution's small cohort sizes amplify statistical disparities, making consistent recruitment strategies crucial. To support

BAME students holistically, CFS must address systemic barriers through tailored outreach, inclusive pedagogy, and culturally relevant curriculum reforms.

3. Disability

CFS Data Overview:

- **Disability Representation**: 19.86% of students across all cohorts at CFS identify as having a disability, including specific learning difficulties (e.g., dyslexia), mental health conditions, and physical impairments.

Sector Benchmarks

- 18.3% of students disclose a disability across the sector, while UAL reports 22.7%, and MetFilm School states 23.8% in the most recent data available

Analysis

CFS's disability representation (19.86%) aligns closely with sector leaders such as UAL and is slightly above the sector average. This potentially reflects strong inclusivity and recruitment practices. However, the physical and collaborative demands of filmmaking, coupled with potential resource constraints, may present unique challenges for disabled students at CFS. Addressing these needs through targeted support and accessible resources is vital to maintaining retention and ensuring equitable academic outcomes.

4. Gender

CFS Data Overview

- **Gender Balance:**
  - Female: 46.23%
  - Male: 51.92%
  - Prefer not to say: 1.85%

Significantly, there are significant variances by cohort.

Cohort	Female Count (%)	Male Count (%)	Prefer Not to Say Count (%)
BAAS	30 (62.50%)	17 (35.42%)	1 (2.08%)

BAPF	27 (38.03%)	44 (61.97%)	0 (0%)
BASW	5 (35.71%)	7 (50.00%)	2 (14.29%)
IFY	7 (53.85%)	4 (30.77%)	2 (15.38%)

- Gender distribution varies significantly between cohorts.
- BAAS (Acting for Screen) has the highest proportion of female students (62.50%), while BAPF (Practical Filmmaking) has a male-dominated cohort (61.97% male).
- BASW (Screenwriting) and IFY (International Foundation Year) display greater gender diversity, with higher percentages of students preferring not to disclose their gender (14.29% and 15.38%, respectively).

Sector Benchmarks

- Nationally, **57%** of higher education students are female, though creative disciplines average closer to **51%** (UCAS, 2022).
- Competitors like UAL maintain parity, while MetFilm School reports a male-dominant split with 45% women.

Analysis: CFS achieves near gender parity, however there are variances across cohorts which could be addressed. The underrepresentation of women in technical disciplines mirrors industry trends. Research by the British Film Institute (BFI, 2021) highlights that women are significantly underrepresented in technical filmmaking roles, such as cinematography (16%) and sound engineering (6%). Gender imbalances in these areas reflect broader societal stereotypes and structural barriers. Addressing this imbalance requires targeted recruitment and retention and progression strategies.

5. Mental Health

CFS Data Overview

- **Mental Health Challenges:** Due to the sensitive nature of the data, the published research cannot deaggregate the data. However it should be noted that 40% of students in some cohorts report mental health challenges, including anxiety and depression.

Sector Benchmarks

- Nationally, **21%** of students disclose mental health conditions, with creative disciplines reporting slightly higher rates (HESA, 2021).

- Competitors like UAL and MetFilm School invest heavily in mental health frameworks **Academic Context:**

Analysis: The high prevalence of mental health challenges at CFS reflects both broader sector trends and the unique pressures of filmmaking courses. Small institutions often struggle to scale mental health support to meet growing demand, but it's essential that these challenges are addressed. Stevenson et al. (2019) highlight the rising prevalence of mental health issues among students, particularly in resource-intensive disciplines like filmmaking. Unaddressed mental health challenges can lead to disengagement and withdrawal. However, it should be noted that CFS performed well in the most recent NSS with regards to how well we communicated information about our mental wellbeing support services - 88% reported positively. We will not, however, be complacent with this, being conscious of the forecast increase in student numbers we anticipate over the lifecycle of the new APP.

Success - Continuation & Completion

Continuation Rates

The continuation rates at CFS demonstrate an improving trend, although disparities remain among different student demographics, particularly for BAME students.

For the **2023 cohort**, the overall continuation rate was **81.01%**, with significant differences between BAME students (**75%**) and White students (**84%**). This performance is below the national continuation rate of **91%** (HESA, 2022) and highlights challenges faced by BAME students in persisting through their programs. Specific courses, such as BASW, revealed particularly stark gaps, with continuation rates for BAME students at **57.14%**, compared to **90%** for White students. This disparity suggests systemic barriers, such as unequal access to academic support or cultural disconnects within course content and teaching practices, that disproportionately affect BAME students' ability to progress, although it should be noted that small sample sizes amplify these variances.

When benchmarked against institutions like the UAL, which achieves continuation rates close to the sector average, CFS's performance indicates a need for targeted support strategies. Other comparator institutions with similar profiles, such as MetFilm, have extremely limited publicly available data, making comparison difficult.

Completion Rates

Completion rates at CFS reveal pronounced disparities, with BAME students consistently underrepresented among those successfully achieving their intended qualifications. This gap significantly contributes to the overall attainment disparity between White and BAME students.

For the **2020 cohort**, BAME students achieved a completion rate of **77.78%**, compared to **85.71%** for White students. The gap widened for the **2022 cohort**, with BAME completion rates declining to **60.00%**, while White students achieved a completion rate of **88.89%**. These figures indicate persistent challenges for BAME students, particularly in transitioning between academic levels or meeting final program requirements.

Courses like BAAS and BAPF offered more promising outcomes for BAME students, with completion rates of **75%** and **90.48%**, respectively. However, these successes are offset by significant underperformance in other programs, highlighting inconsistencies in support and engagement across different courses.

Nationally, the average completion rate for higher education is approximately **89.2%** (HESA, 2022), with UAL reporting **88%** for its students. These figures place CFS below both sector averages and competitor performance, particularly for BAME students - the figure for UAL is between 85% and 88% for non-white students. The gaps at CFS align with broader sector trends but are exacerbated by the challenges of operating as a small and specialist institution with limited data and resources.

Interpreting the Data

The data highlights a critical relationship between continuation and completion rates. For BAME students, to some extent lower attainment can be connected with lower continuation and completion. The data, though limited, could indicate that CFS must focus on bridging the gaps in continuation and completion for BAME students to align more closely with sector benchmarks and ensure equitable outcomes for all students. Particular attention is paid to the attainment gap with BAME students in the below section.

Attainment

Overview

The attainment gap between BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic) students and their White peers at Central Film School (CFS) is evident in the proportion of students achieving "good degrees" (1st and 2:1 classifications). The data reveals disparities among ethnic groups in terms of academic outcomes, which align with sector-wide challenges in higher education.

CFS Data

- **Asian Students**: Achieving "good degrees" at a rate of 40.74%.
- **Black Students**: Achieving "good degrees" at a rate of 31.22%.
- **White Students**: Significantly higher "good degree" rate at 74.07%.

Sector and Competitor Benchmarks

- Nationally, the average attainment gap for BAME students compared to White students is around **13%** (OfS, 2022).
- Creative disciplines often display wider attainment gaps due to structural barriers like limited representation in faculty and curriculum design (Stevenson et al., 2019).

- Competitor institutions like UAL and MetFilm School report varied performance, with attainment gaps closer to sector averages but dependent on the specific ethnic group.

Academic Context

Research by Richardson et al. (2020) highlights systemic factors contributing to attainment gaps:

- Limited access to culturally inclusive curricula.
- Lower representation of BAME staff in academic and support roles.
- Experiences of unconscious bias in teaching and assessment.

These factors may compound at smaller institutions like CFS, where cohort sizes magnify disparities and limit robust data analysis.

Analysis

While CFS has made strides in diversifying its student body, significant work remains to address academic disparities. The attainment gap for Black and Asian students exceeds sector averages, underscoring the need for targeted intervention.

Progression Outcomes

The Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS) data provides insights into the employment and further study trajectories of graduates from CFS graduates. However, due to the limited sample size for CFS (15 known outcomes in the latest available data), drawing meaningful conclusions or implementing significant changes based on this data is challenging.

Limitations of the Data

The small sample size of 15 known outcomes severely limits the generalisability of these findings. According to the Office for Students (OfS, 2022), small institutions often face challenges in generating representative data for graduate outcomes due to low response rates and cohort sizes. At CFS, this limitation is compounded by the project-based nature of creative work, which may not align with traditional employment metrics used in the GOS.

Implications:

1. **Alternative Data Sources**:
   - Collect qualitative data through alumni surveys or focus groups to capture nuanced insights into graduate experiences.
   - Track long-term outcomes (e.g., three years post-graduation) to better understand career trajectories in the creative industries.
2. **Benchmarking Challenges**:
   - Compare outcomes with other niche creative institutions rather than larger, more diversified schools like UAL.

- Use industry-specific metrics, such as film credits or project completion rates, to evaluate graduate success

Notwithstanding the limitations of the GOS data, the results highlight areas for growth, particularly in improving employment rates and addressing unemployment. Research by the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC, 2022) highlights that creative graduates often rely on institutional networks and internships to transition into employment, areas where CFS may require further investment. Unemployment rates for creative graduates are typically higher than those in other disciplines due to the project-based nature of engagement in the sector. By expanding career services, strengthening industry ties, and redefining success metrics, CFS can better support its graduates and enhance its reputation within the creative education sector. Recognising the unique challenges of smaller institutions and creative disciplines, future strategies should prioritise long-term tracking and tailored interventions to meet the needs of CFS alumni.

In the absence of reliable data, we decide to create a set of objectives and interventions based on industry benchmarks we could mine from the APP Dashboard.

Intersectional Disadvantage at CFS

Intersectional disadvantage—the overlapping and compounding barriers experienced by individuals belonging to multiple marginalised groups—presents significant challenges for equity and inclusion. At CFS, potential intersections of disadvantage include Black women filmmakers, who may face barriers related to both gender underrepresentation in technical filmmaking roles and ethnicity-based attainment gaps, as well as disabled students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, who may encounter financial, physical, and academic challenges. Research by Crenshaw (1989) highlights how intersecting identities can amplify inequities, creating unique barriers not addressed by single-axis analyses.

However, the small cohort sizes at CFS pose challenges for granular data disaggregation without risking breaches of privacy or ethical guidelines. This limitation underscores the need for cautious interpretation and reliance on qualitative feedback to capture nuanced student experiences. Despite these constraints, CFS remains committed to monitoring potential intersectional disadvantages across the student lifecycle—encompassing access, retention, attainment, and progression.

Indicators, Objectives and Interventions

Having analysed our current position and performance, we identified six key indicators of risk, with associated objectives and intervention plans. Each of these indicators of risk is aligned with the Office for Students Equality of Opportunity Register (EORR). In certain cases, we have identified risks not explicitly outlined nor enumerated in the register.

Indicator of Risk 1: Access for those from under-represented and disadvantaged socio-economic groups

Indicator: Low representation of students from TUNDRA Quintiles 1 and 2, and students eligible for FSM at secondary school, compared to sector benchmarks

Relevant EORR Risks

- **Risk 1**: Students may not have equal opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills required to access higher education.
- **Risk 2**: Students may not have access to appropriate information to make decisions about entering higher education.
- **Risk 3**: Students may feel that a higher education in visual storytelling is 'not for them' even though they are suitably qualified, due to lack of representation.

Objective 1: Increase Access for Students from Areas of Lower Participation

Associated EORR Risks: 1, 2 & 3

Targets

- **Year 1**: Increase representation of students from TUNDRA quintiles 1 and 2 to 18%.
- **Year 2**: Increase representation to 20%.
- **Year 3**: Increase representation to 23%.
- **Year 4**: Achieve sector benchmark of 25%.

Rationale

CFS currently underperforms against the sector benchmark for students from TUNDRA Quintile 1 and 2 and achieving the benchmark would enhance CFS's standing as an inclusive institution. This objective addresses gaps in access by expanding outreach, providing financial aid, and ensuring equitable access to resources required for success in creative disciplines.

Objective 2: Increase Access for Students eligible for FSM

Associated EORR Risks: 1, 2 & 3

Targets

- **Year 1**: Increase representation of students eligible for FSM to 11%.
- **Year 2**: Increase representation to 13%.
- **Year 3**: Increase representation to 15%.
- **Year 4**: Achieve sector benchmark of 18%.

Rationale

CFS currently underperforms against the sector benchmark for students eligible for FSM, the characteristic considered the most reliable indicator of disadvantage by many, and achieving the benchmark would enhance CFS's standing as an inclusive institution. This objective addresses gaps in access by expanding outreach, providing financial aid, and ensuring equitable access to resources required for success in the creative disciplines.

Intervention Strategy 1: Increase Access for Students from Low-participation Areas and Disadvantaged Socio-Economic Backgrounds

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross Intervention Strategy?
Targeted Outreach	Deliver workshops and career talks in 10 schools located in high-FSM and low-TUNDRA areas, targeting 100 students annually.	Staff time, outreach budget	Increased awareness and applications from underrepresented groups.	Yes (Indicator 5: Retention)
Pre-Enrolment Support	Offer summer schools for 5 disadvantaged students annually, focusing on academic and technical skills.*	Staff time, operational costs	Improved preparedness and confidence among disadvantaged students.	No.
Financial Aid Expansion	Provide bursaries covering equipment and travel costs for 10 students annually from TUNDRA Quintiles 1 and 2.**	Financial resources	Reduced financial barriers for underrepresented students.	Yes (Indicator 5: Retention)

Indicator of Risk 2: BAME Attainment Gap

Indicator: Fluctuating BAME representation across cohorts and significant attainment gaps for Black and Asian students.

Relevant EORR Risks

- **Risk 6**: Students may not receive sufficient personalised academic support to achieve a positive outcome.
- **Risk 7**: Students may not receive sufficient personal support to achieve positive outcomes.
- **Risk 9**: Students from marginalised groups tended to be more greatly impacted by the effects of coronavirus.

Objective 3: Close the Attainment Gap for Black Students

Associated EORR Risks: 6, 7 & 9

Targets

- **Year 1**: Reduce the attainment gap from 31.22% to 25%.
- **Year 2**: Reduce the attainment gap to 20%.
- **Year 3**: Reduce the attainment gap to 15%.
- **Year 4**: Reduce the attainment gap to 10%.

Rationale

Black students at CFS face attainment gaps significantly above sector averages. This objective addresses barriers such as unconscious bias, cultural disconnection, and inadequate academic support, aligning with institutional priorities for equity and inclusion.

Objective 4: Close the Attainment Gap for Asian Students

Associated EORR Risks: Risk 6, **Risk 7, Risk 9**

Targets

- **Year 1**: Reduce the attainment gap from 40.74% to 35%.
- **Year 2**: Reduce the attainment gap to 30%.
- **Year 3**: Reduce the attainment gap to 20%.
- **Year 4**: Reduce the attainment gap to 10%.

Rationale

Asian students at CFS face the most significant attainment gaps among BAME groups, requiring tailored academic interventions to address systemic inequities and promote equity.

Intervention Strategy 2: Close the Attainment Gap for Black & Asian Students

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross Intervention Strategy?
Mentorship Program	Pair Black and Asian students with alumni mentors to provide academic and career guidance.	Staff time, mentor stipends	Improved attainment and confidence among Black students.	Yes (Indicator 3: Graduate Progression)
Inclusive Curriculum Review	Conduct a curriculum review to integrate diverse perspectives and culturally relevant materials.	Staff time, external consultants	Enhanced engagement and cultural relevance in teaching materials.	No.
Unconscious Bias Training	Provide unconscious bias training for all staff, focusing on assessment and feedback practices.	Staff time, training resources	Reduced bias in assessment processes, contributing to narrower attainment gaps.	Yes (Indicator 3: Asian Attainment)

Indicator of Risk 3: Graduate Progression

Indicator: Low full-time employment rates and high unemployment among CFS graduates compared to sector benchmarks (although the data available for CFS is too limited to be classed as fully reliable).

Relevant EORR Risks

- **Risk 12**: Students may not have equal opportunity to progress to an outcome they consider to be a positive reflection of their higher education experience.

Where This Indicator Extends Beyond the EORR

The reliance of creative industries on unpaid internships and networking creates structural barriers disproportionately impacting disadvantaged students. While not explicitly addressed in the EORR, addressing this indicator ensures equitable outcomes.

Objective 5: Improve Graduate Employability and Outcomes

Associated EORR and other Risks

- **Risk 12**, also a risk associated with a lack of Social Capital for groups under-represented in the screen industries

Targets

As the CFS data on progression from the GOS is so limited, the below targets use the outcomes achieved by UAL,useing 2017-18 as a baseline. The focus group will be IMD quintiles 1 & 2, as this constitutes the largest proportion of the potentially disadvantaged groups identified in CFS' academic community. However it is recognised that this activity should benefit all graduates to some extent, primarily through the Creative Futures Digital Platform project, which has applied for OfS funding and will be delivered with an education partner - Point Blank Music School - and a range of industry partners, including Target3D.

- **Year 1**:Increase graduate progression metric to 57%
- **Year 2**:Increase graduate progression metric to 60%
- **Year 3**:Increase graduate progression metric to 65%
- **Year 4**:Increase graduate progression metric to 70%

Rationale

Graduate employability is a critical measure of institutional success. This objective focuses on addressing structural barriers and enhancing industry connections to improve outcomes, aligning with OfS priorities and sector benchmarks.

Intervention Strategy 3: Enhancing Graduate Employability and Outcomes

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross Intervention Strategy?
Careers and Networking Workshops	Host workshops on pitching, networking, and industry-specific skills, targeting all final-year students, with a focus on IMD Q 1&2 students.	Staff time, guest speakers, and materials.	Improved graduate confidence and readiness to enter competitive industries.	Yes (Objective 1: Access)

Paid Internships	Partner with industry organisations to offer 10 paid internships annually, prioritising IMD Q 1&2 students.	Staff time and internship stipends.	Enhanced real-world experience and reduced unemployment for participating students.	Yes (Objective 4: Retention)
Alumni Mentorship Program	Develop an alumni network to provide career guidance, mentorship, and industry connections to current students.	Staff time and alumni engagement efforts.	Strengthened networks and improved transition from education to employment.	Yes (Objective 6: Mental Health)
Creative Futures Digital Platform	Develop and launch an accessible online platform connecting creative students, alumni, and industry professionals. Features include tailored resources, mentorship opportunities, and skill-building tools with embedded gamification and certification to incentivise engagement.	Staff time, development costs, and platform maintenance and updates.	Increased networking opportunities, career readiness, and access to creative industry roles.	Yes (Objective 7: Gender Parity)
Industry Partnerships	Collaborate with organizations like ScreenSkills, Target3D, and AMP Network to create bespoke technical placements and contribute to platform resources.	Partnership agreements.	Improved employability and progression into technical roles for underrepresented graduates.	Yes (Objective 2: BAME Attainment)

Indicator of Risk 4: Completion for BAME students

Indicator: Lower continuation and completion rates among students from underrepresented groups, particularly those of non-white ethnicity.

Relevant EORR Risks

- **Risk 6**: Students may not receive sufficient academic support to achieve positive outcomes.

- **Risk 9:** BAME students may be more likely to be impacted by the effects of the pandemic, inhibiting their ability to complete their studies
- **Risk 10**: Increases in cost pressures may affect a student's ability to complete their course or obtain a good grade.
- **Risk 11**: Insufficient institutional infrastructure to support students with specific needs.

Objective 6: Improve Completion for BAME students

Associated EORR Risks

- **Risk 6**, 9, **10**, **11**

Targets

- **Year 1**: Improve completion rates to 77% for BAME students
- **Year 2**: Improve completion rates to 80%.
- **Year 3**: Improve completion rates to 85%.
- **Year 4**: Improve completion rates to 90%.

Rationale

Continuation and completion rates are critical indicators of institutional success and equity. This objective addresses systemic barriers to progression, aligning with institutional and OfS priorities.

Intervention Strategy 4: Enhance Retention and Completion for BAME Students

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross Intervention Strategy?
Early Intervention	Use predictive analytics to identify at-risk students early and provide tailored support.	Monitoring tools, staff time	Increased continuation rates for disadvantaged and underrepresented groups.	Yes (Indicator 1: Access)

Integrated Support Hubs	Establish hubs combining academic advising, mental health counselling, and financial aid. ***	Staff time, operational costs, financial support	Enhanced retention through centralised and holistic support.	Yes (Indicator 6: Mental Health)
Flexible Learning Options	Offer evening and part-time course options to support students balancing external responsibilities.	Staff time, curriculum redesign	Improved completion rates and accessibility for students with complex needs.	No.

Indicator of Risk 5: Gender Representation and Progression

Indicator: Lower representation of women filmmakers enrolled on the BA Practical Filmmaking (BAPF) programme and underrepresentation in technical roles such as cinematography and sound design.

Relevant EORR Risks

- **Risk 8**: Students may not experience an environment conducive to good mental health and wellbeing.
- **Risk 12**: Students may not have equal opportunity to progress to an outcome they consider to be a positive reflection of their higher education experience.

Where This Indicator Extends Beyond the EORR

The EORR does not explicitly list gender parity or gender-specific barriers as standalone risks. However, these challenges intersect with broader systemic risks in access, progression, and attainment, necessitating institutional attention.

Objective 7: Increase Gender Parity in Practical Filmmaking and Technical Industry Roles

Associated EORR and other Risks

- Risk 8, Risk 12, an additional risk of lack of equality of opportunity for women in screen

Targets

- **Year 1**: Increase the proportion of women on the BAPF programme from 35% to 40%.
- **Year 2**: Achieve 50% gender parity on the BAPF programme.

- **Year 3**: Maintain 50% gender parity and increase the proportion of women specialising in technical roles to 20%.
- **Year 4**: Increase the proportion of women specializing in technical roles to 25% and ensure at least 75% of women graduates successfully progress into technical industry roles.

Rationale

This objective addresses gender disparities in enrollment and progression identified through student feedback and sector benchmarks. It aligns with institutional goals for inclusivity and industry diversification while addressing systemic gender-based barriers.

Intervention Strategy 5: Supporting Women in Practical Filmmaking and Technical Roles

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross Intervention Strategy?
Targeted Outreach	Partner with schools and community organizations to encourage applications from women. Host "Women in Filmmaking" open days featuring female industry professionals and alumni.	Staff time, outreach budget	Increased awareness and applications from women.	Yes (Indicator 1: Access)
Scholarships for Women	Offer scholarships specifically for women pursuing technical specialisms on the BAPF programme. ****	Financial resources	Increased enrolment of women in technical specialisms.	Yes (Indicator 4: Retention)
Mentorship and Peer Networks	Establish a mentorship programme pairing women students with female industry professionals. Create peer support groups for women in technical disciplines.	Staff time, mentor stipends	Improved confidence and retention among women students.	Yes (Indicator 6: Mental Health)

Recruitment of Female Lecturers	Increase the proportion of female tutors in technical filmmaking disciplines to address the gender disparity and enhance representation.	Recruitment costs	Enhanced representation of women role models in teaching staff, encouraging more women to enroll.	No.
Industry Partnerships	Collaborate with organisations like Women in Film & TV and ScreenSkills to create technical internships exclusively for women.	Partnership agreements	Improved employability and progression into technical roles for women graduates.	Yes (Indicator 3: Graduate Progression)

Indicator of Risk 6: Mental Health and Wellbeing

Indicator: Challenges in accessing and engaging with mental health and wellbeing services, particularly for underrepresented groups.

Relevant EORR Risks

- **Risk 8**: Students may not experience an environment conducive to good mental health and wellbeing.

Where This Indicator Extends Beyond the EORR

The specific challenges faced by creative students, such as intense workloads and competition, require bespoke wellbeing interventions not fully addressed in the EORR framework.

Objective 8: Promote Mental Health and Wellbeing through collaborative projects

Associated EORR Risks

- **Risk 8**

Targets

- **Year 1**: Increase response to ‘How well communicated was information about your university/college's mental wellbeing support services’ to 90%

- **Year 2**: Increase response to 'How well communicated was information about your university/college's mental wellbeing support services' to 92%
- **Year 3**:Increase response to 'How well communicated was information about your university/college's mental wellbeing support services' to 95%.
- **Year 4**: Maintain response to 'How well communicated was information about your university/college's mental wellbeing support services' at 95%.

Rationale: Addressing mental health and wellbeing is critical to ensuring students thrive academically and personally. This objective aligns with sector best practices and recognises the unique challenges faced by creative students.

Intervention Strategy 6: Fostering Mental Health and Wellbeing

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross Intervention Strategy?
Mental Health Awareness Campaigns	Develop and implement campaigns to reduce stigma and promote mental health services.	Marketing budget	Increased awareness and utilisation of mental health resources.	Yes (Indicator 1: Socio-Economic Access)
Peer-Led Support Networks	Establish peer groups for underrepresented students to discuss shared challenges and mental health topics.	Training and facilitation costs	Strengthened student community, reduced isolation.	Yes (Indicator 5: Gender Parity)
Mental Health Co-Creation Project	Collaborate with IHE and the Charlie Waller Trust to implement the CREATE Toolkit and develop a robust mental health strategy.	Staff time for training, resource integration .	Improved early identification of mental health issues, increased staff awareness, tailored support for students in need.	Yes (Indicator 4: Retention & Completion)
Integrated Wellbeing Hubs	Combine academic, financial, and mental health support into centralied hubs.	Staff time, operational costs	Improved retention and progression rates for supported students.	Yes (Indicator 3: Graduate Outcomes)

Financial Inputs

Below are two proposed financial inputs. Table 1 outlines the inputs by type of resource. Generally speaking staff costs are an allocation of time from the permanent team. Marketing & Outreach have specific expense lines within CFS' accounts. Table 2 outlines the investment by intervention. Yearly investment is projected to increase over the life of the plan as the school's fundable student numbers increase - final investment will be subject to actual student numbers.

Table 1: Financial Inputs by Year

Category	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Staff Costs	£45,000	£47,000	£50,000	£52,000	£194,000
External Services	£30,000	£32,000	£35,000	£37,000	£134,000
Marketing & Outreach	£20,000	£22,000	£24,000	£26,000	£92,000
Evaluation & Monitoring	£20,000	£22,000	£24,000	£26,000	£92,000
Scholarships & Bursaries	£12,000	£20,000	£22,000	£22,000	£76,000
Hardship Fund	£10,000	£12,000	£13,000	£15,000	£50,000
Total	**£137,000**	**£149,000**	**£162,000**	**£174,000**	**£622,000**

Table 2: Financial Inputs by Intervention

Intervention	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
Intervention 1: Access for Socio-Economic Groups	£20,000	£22,000	£23,000	£25,000	£90,000
Intervention 2: BAME Attainment	£30,000	£32,000	£35,000	£37,000	£134,000
Intervention 3: Graduate Progression	£25,000	£27,000	£30,000	£32,000	£114,000

Intervention 4: Retention & Completion for BAME Students	£22,000	£24,000	£26,000	£28,000	£100,000
Intervention 5: Gender Representation and Progression	£18,000	£20,000	£22,000	£25,000	£85,000
Intervention 6: Mental Health and Wellbeing	£22,000	£24,000	£26,000	£27,000	£99,000
Totals	£137,000	£149,000	£162,000	£174,000	£622,000

Below is additional information pertaining to financial support:

- *Students will be eligible to apply for free places on the Summer Future Filmmakers programme if they satisfy the course criteria (i.e. be aged between 14 and 17 and have an upper-intermediate level of English) and satisfy one of the **contextual admissions criteria**. Currently this includes:
        - Applicants residing in POLAR4 Quintile 1 and 2 postcodes (from 2025, this will be applied to students who are TUNDRA quintile 1 and 2)
        - Applicants in receipt of Free school meals at present or during secondary education
        - Applicants who have been in the care of the local authority for at least 13 weeks since the age of 16, as set out by The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
        - Those granted refugee status
        - Those who have undertaken caring responsibilities during the period when either they were studying their highest qualification or directly before their application to study at CFS.
    - Students will be asked to complete a online form on the website course page and submit a short self-tape (2-3 minutes) outlining their aspirations and why they should be awarded the free place.
    - The cost of transportation to and from the school will be covered by CFS, lunch form part of the standard course provision
- **Equipment and Travel bursaries will be available to applicants who satisfy one of the contextual admissions criteria, as outlined above
    - This fund will be offered to students once a year and will be worth between £500 and £1000 total per student. This fund will be on a first come first served basis for new entrants. Information will be shared in the Onboarding VLE space for new entrants.
    - Continuing students can apply to receive a travel bursary in their subsequent years of study (equipment bursaries will be solely for new entrants)
- ***Hardship fund provisions are available to students from £500 to £800 per year. The hardship fund will be available for home undergraduate students. Application will be through an online form and eligibility will be based on an assessment of acute need. The fund is deployed on a first come first served basis and will be available until the total budget is expended

- ****For the Women in Film Scholarship scheme, applicants will apply for during the standard application process, using an online form on the website. There will be an increasing number of scholarships per year - 3, 4, 5 and 6 in the fourth years, each worth £3,000. Applicants will be asked to submit a short self-tape (2-3 minutes in length), outlining their aspirations in the screen industry, and why they should be awarded the scholarship. Continuing students will have the scholarship applied to subsequent years' fees provided that a 2.1 grade average is maintained.

Evaluation - Theory of Change

CFS's application of the Theory of Change framework represents a strategic, evidence-based approach to addressing the objectives outlined in our APP. This methodology is informed by TASO's (Transforming Access and Student Outcomes) model of evaluation, which emphasises aligning inputs, activities, and measurable outcomes to drive institutional improvement. It also draws from Tinto's (1993) model of student integration, which highlights the critical role of academic and social engagement in fostering student success. By employing this framework, CFS ensures its interventions are empirically grounded, data-driven, and responsive to evolving student needs.

The Theory of Change is particularly valuable in CFS's context as a small and specialist institution, where cohort sizes and data limitations necessitate precision in intervention design and impact assessment. The iterative nature of the framework allows for continuous monitoring, enabling dynamic adjustments to initiatives such as targeted outreach, mental health programs, and efforts to reduce attainment gaps among underrepresented groups. This aligns with the OfS's emphasis on evidence-led practices to address systemic inequities in higher education (OfS, 2022).

Benchmarking against competitors, including Met Film School and UAL, underscores the importance of tailored, context-specific approaches. For instance, UAL's Creative Access Scheme and AdvanceHE's recommendations on inclusive pedagogy demonstrate the impact of focused industry collaborations and curriculum development. Incorporating these sector best practices strengthens CFS's commitment to equity and inclusion while addressing its unique challenges as a creative institution.

Through rigorous evaluation, regular dissemination of findings, and sector-wide collaboration, CFS ensures transparency, accountability, and continuous learning. This evidence-based methodology positions CFS to effectively enhance access, progression, and success for its diverse student body, fostering lasting social mobility and institutional excellence.

Evaluation of Intervention Strategies

This section outlines the evaluation framework for each intervention strategy, ensuring alignment with institutional priorities and OfS requirements. Each table details the activities, outcomes, methods of evaluation, and plans for sharing findings to promote transparency and continuous improvement.

Intervention Strategy 1: Increase Access for Students from Low-participation and Disadvantaged Socio-Economic Backgrounds

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of Evaluation	Summary of Publication Plan
Targeted Outreach	Increased applications from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2.	Empirical (Type 2): Track application data and demographic profiles of participants.	Internal reporting to the Access and Participation Committee (APC) with annual summaries.
Pre-Enrolment Support	Improved preparedness and confidence among students from disadvantaged backgrounds.	Empirical (Type 2): Survey attendees and analyse transition rates into CFS courses.	Internal reporting to the Access and Participation Committee (APC) with annual summaries.
Financial Aid Expansion	Reduced financial barriers for underrepresented students, contributing to higher enrollment rates.	Empirical (Type 2): Analyse uptake rates of financial aid and correlation with enrollment data.	Findings will be incorporated into APP evaluations and shared in institutional progress reviews.

Intervention Strategy 2: Close the Black Student Attainment Gap

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of Evaluation	Summary of Publication Plan

Mentorship Program	Improved attainment and confidence among Black students.	Empirical (Type 2): Monitor academic performance and gather qualitative feedback from mentees and mentors.	Findings will be included in Annual Internal Review updates and shared in internal staff termly committee meetings
Inclusive Curriculum Review	Increased student engagement and cultural relevance in course materials.	Empirical (Type 2): Conduct student satisfaction surveys and focus groups to assess curriculum changes.	Mid-term review of APP objectives shared with academic teams and summarised for OfS reports as required
Unconscious Bias Training	Reduced bias in assessment processes, contributing to narrower attainment gaps.	Empirical (Type 2): Compare pre- and post-training assessment outcomes and staff feedback surveys.	Internal summary shared with staff; annual APP updates include quantitative findings.

Intervention Strategy 3: Enhancing Graduate Employability and Outcomes

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of Evaluation	Summary of Publication Plan
Careers and Networking Workshops	Improved readiness for freelancing, entrepreneurship, and networking.	Empirical (Type 2): Pre- and post-workshop surveys measuring skills, confidence and understanding of career pathways.	Summary shared with staff and in institutional career service reports.
Paid Internships	Enhanced real-world experience and reduced unemployment for participating students.	Empirical (Type 2): Track graduate employment outcomes and gather employer feedback on internship performance.	Shared in annual APC updates and alumni newsletters.

Alumni Mentorship Program	Strengthened networks and improved transition from education to employment.	Empirical (Type 2): Track alumni engagement metrics and gather feedback from students on alumni contributions.	Updates included in annual APC reports and alumni engagement newsletters.

Intervention Strategy 4: Enhance BAME Retention and Completion

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of Evaluation	Summary of Publication Plan
Early Intervention	Increased continuation rates for disadvantaged and underrepresented groups.	Empirical (Type 2): Monitor continuation rates of flagged at-risk students before and after interventions.	Findings shared in APC updates and presented at staff development workshops.
Integrated Support Hubs	Improved retention through centralised, holistic support services.	Empirical (Type 2): Survey students who access hubs; evaluate correlation between hub use and retention rates.	Shared annually in institutional performance reviews and APC updates.
Flexible Learning Options	Improved completion rates and accessibility for students with complex needs.	Empirical (Type 2): Evaluate impact of flexible options through student surveys and retention/completion analysis.	Findings summarised in annual reports and APC updates.

Intervention Strategy 5: Supporting Women in Practical Filmmaking & Technical Roles

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of Evaluation	Summary of Publication Plan

Targeted Outreach	Increased awareness and applications from women.	Empirical (Type 2): Track applications and participation data from outreach events.	Findings shared in annual APP updates and progress reviews.
Scholarships for Women	Increased enrollment of women in technical specialisms.	Empirical (Type 2): Analyse scholarship uptake and enrollment in technical specialisms.	Findings incorporated into APC evaluations and institutional progress reports.
Mentorship and Peer Networks	Improved confidence and retention among women students.	Empirical (Type 2): Gather qualitative and quantitative feedback from participants.	Findings summarised in APC progress updates and shared with sector partners.

Intervention Strategy 6: Fostering Mental Health and Wellbeing

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of Evaluation	Summary of Publication Plan
Awareness Campaigns	Increased awareness and utilisation of mental health support services.	Empirical (Type 2): Track attendance and engagement rates for campaigns; gather student feedback via surveys.	Findings shared as part of student experience reports and APC updates.

Expanded Counseling Services	Improved mental health and wellbeing among students, contributing to retention and satisfaction.	Empirical (Type 2): Monitor counseling usage data and survey service satisfaction among students.	Findings shared in institutional performance reviews and APC updates.
Peer-Led Support Networks	Enhanced student community and reduced isolation.	Empirical (Type 2): Conduct pre- and post-workshop surveys on stress management and resilience.	Summary included in APP updates and shared with wellbeing teams for future planning.

Whole Provider Approach

Central Film School is committed to fostering a culture of inclusion and equality of opportunity. To achieve this, we adopt a whole-institution approach that integrates equality and diversity into all aspects of our operations.

The Access and Participation Committee (APC) plays a crucial role in driving our equality and diversity agenda. Chaired by the CEO, the APC brings together key stakeholders from across the institution, including academic staff, professional services staff, and student representatives. The committee oversees the development and implementation of our Access and Participation Plan, ensuring that it aligns with our strategic goals and institutional values.

Key Strategies for a Whole-Institution Approach:

1. **Leadership Commitment:**
    - **Strong Leadership:** The CEO, as Chair of the APC, provides strong leadership and commitment to equality and diversity.
    - **Staff Training and Development:** All staff receive regular training on equality, diversity, and inclusion.
2. **Inclusive Curriculum and Teaching Practices:**
    - **Diverse Curriculum:** The curriculum is designed to be inclusive and representative of diverse perspectives.
    - **Inclusive Teaching:** Staff are encouraged to adopt inclusive teaching practices that cater to the needs of all students.

3. **Student Support Services:**
    - **Academic Support:** A range of academic support services, such as tutoring and mentoring, is available to all students.
    - **Personal Support:** Counseling and wellbeing services are provided to support students' mental health and emotional wellbeing.
    - **Financial Support:** Bursaries and scholarships are available to students from disadvantaged backgrounds.
4. **Staff Development and Well-being:**
    - **Staff Training:** Staff receive regular training on equality, diversity, and inclusion.
    - **Staff Wellbeing:** The institution provides support for staff wellbeing, including mental health support and work-life balance initiatives.
5. **Monitoring and Evaluation:**
    - **Regular Reviews:** The institution regularly reviews its policies and practices to ensure they are effective and up-to-date.
    - **Data Analysis:** Data is collected and analyzed to identify areas of strength and weakness.
    - **Feedback Mechanisms:** Students and staff are encouraged to provide feedback on their experiences.

By adopting a whole-institution approach, CFS aims to create a welcoming and inclusive environment where all students have the opportunity to succeed. We recognise the importance of addressing intersectional inequalities and ensuring that our policies and practices are fair and equitable.

Alignment with Equality Act 2010:

CFS is committed to complying with the Equality Act 2010. The APP aligns with the Act by:

- **Preventing Discrimination:** Ensuring fair treatment for all students, regardless of protected characteristics.
- **Promoting Equality:** Taking proactive steps to address inequalities and promote diversity.
- **Advancing Equality of Opportunity:** Providing opportunities for all students to succeed.

By embedding equality and diversity into all aspects of our operations, CFS is working towards creating a truly inclusive institution.

Student Consultation

Central Film School is committed to providing an inclusive and equitable learning environment for all students. Our strategy, aims, and core values place student voice at the heart of our operations. By actively listening to student feedback, we can identify and address barriers to equality of opportunity and ensure that our interventions are effective and relevant.

The Role of Student Feedback in Shaping the APP

To ensure that our APP effectively addresses the needs of our students, we have engaged in a comprehensive consultation process. This process involved seeking feedback from students at three key stages:

1. **Initial Consultation:** We presented our initial draft of the plan to student representatives and sought their input on our proposed objectives and strategies.
2. **Written Feedback:** We invited students to provide written feedback on the plan, allowing them to express their thoughts and ideas in more detail.
3. **Student Survey:** We conducted a student survey to gather quantitative data on student experiences and perceptions of equality and opportunity.

By engaging with students in these ways, we have gained valuable insights into their experiences and aspirations. This feedback has been instrumental in shaping the following intervention strategies:

Student Consultation and the Development of a New Indicator of Risk

As part of its commitment to equity and inclusion, CFS undertook a comprehensive student consultation to inform its APP. This consultation sought candid feedback from students across cohorts through student representatives, highlighting areas of strength and opportunities for improvement in the student experience. While several positive themes emerged, such as the effectiveness of the Admissions team in providing tailored support, students also identified key challenges that have shaped the APP's priorities. The consultation process underscored the importance of incorporating student voices into institutional strategy, ensuring that interventions address real and pressing needs.

Key Themes from the Consultation

1. **Gender Representation in Teaching Staff and Classroom Dynamics**:

    - Students expressed significant concern about the lack of female tutors across all courses. Second-year students highlighted that they had very few female tutors during their time at CFS.
    - Female students reported challenges in classroom dynamics, particularly in the BA Practical Filmmaking programme. Male students were noted to dominate

equipment usage and discussions, creating an environment where female students at times felt sidelined or unsupported.

2. **Admissions Process**:

    ○ Positive feedback was given for the Admissions team's accessibility and support, particularly during the interview and clearing processes. Neurodiverse students appreciated the tailored approach, which alleviated stress and barriers they had faced at other institutions.

Identifying a New Indicator of Risk: Gender Parity

The consultation revealed a critical area of focus: gender representation and progression, particularly on the BA Practical Filmmaking programme and in technical screen industry roles. This feedback informed the creation of a new **Indicator of Risk: Gender Parity in Practical Filmmaking Degrees and Technical Industry Roles**. Recognising the importance of addressing these disparities, CFS developed a specific objective and intervention strategy to promote gender equity.

Subsequent to the initial feedback session, further feedback was sought from the student representatives on the proposed objectives for the new APP. Feedback collected from all CFS cohorts demonstrated widespread agreement and support for the proposed objectives, affirming their relevance and alignment with student priorities. Some of the key insights are outlined below.

General Consensus on Objectives

Students across cohorts found the objectives highly appropriate, with many emphasising their potential to create an inclusive and supportive environment. For example, a student representative from the foundation year noted that the objectives were "vital to making sure students feel welcomed and that a future career is promised." Similarly, a filmmaker representative praised the objectives for addressing critical areas like access, attainment, continuation, and progression, capturing the "full student experience."

Suggestions for Enhancing Visibility

A recurring theme was the need to better communicate the objectives to the broader student body. Students suggested more verbal reinforcement of these goals, as emails—while appreciated—were noted to be overlooked by some. Several students recommended additional verbal announcements during classes or events to ensure that key messages reach all students.

Activity Recommendations

Students proposed a range of activities to support the objectives:

- **Workshops and Networking Events**: Many advocated for additional industry-focused events, such as showcases, networking nights, and career workshops, to strengthen employability and progression outcomes.
- **Enhanced Academic Support**: Ideas such as one-on-one meetings with tutors, scheduled office hours, and informal mentorship opportunities were highlighted as critical for improving attainment and continuation.
- **Timetable Consistency**: Some feedback suggested keeping classes on the same days each week to better accommodate students balancing work and study responsibilities.
- **Collaboration Across the Student Lifecycle**: Screenwriting students emphasised the importance of partnerships with other higher education institutions, schools, colleges, and employers to raise attainment and progression outcomes.

The feedback highlighted the strength of the proposed objectives and provided actionable recommendations for enhancing their implementation. By incorporating these insights—particularly around visibility and student engagement—CFS can ensure that its objectives resonate with students and effectively address their needs across the student lifecycle.

Embedding Student Consultation in the Evaluation Process

To ensure that our APP remains responsive to the evolving needs of our students, we will embed student consultation throughout the evaluation process. This will allow us to gather ongoing feedback and make necessary adjustments to our strategies.

Specific Strategies for Student Consultation in Evaluation:

- **Regular Student Surveys:** Conduct annual surveys to gather feedback on student experiences, satisfaction, and perceptions of equality and opportunity.
- **Focus Groups and Interviews:** Organise focus groups and interviews with students to delve deeper into their experiences and opinions.
- **Student Representatives on Evaluation Committees:** Involve student representatives on evaluation committees to provide a student perspective on the effectiveness of interventions.
- **Peer Evaluation:** Encourage students to provide feedback on their own learning experiences and the experiences of their peers.
- **Social Media and Online Platforms:** Utilise social media and online platforms to gather informal feedback from students.

By prioritising student voice and feedback, we can create a more responsive and effective APP. Regular consultation will help us to identify emerging challenges and opportunities, and to adapt our strategies accordingly.

Evaluation of the Plan

Overall Evaluation Framework

To ensure the effectiveness of our APP, CFS will employ a robust evaluation framework that aligns with the Theory of Change model. This framework will involve a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to assess the impact of our interventions and identify areas for improvement.

Year 1: Baseline Assessment and Planning

- **Baseline Data Collection:** Gather baseline data on student demographics, attainment rates, progression rates, and other relevant metrics.
- **Refine Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):** Identify specific KPIs to measure the impact of our interventions, such as Black and Asian attainment gap, student retention rates, and graduate employment rates.
- **Establish Evaluation Methods:** Select appropriate evaluation methods, such as surveys, interviews, focus groups, and document analysis.
- **Develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:** Outline a detailed plan for collecting, analysing, and reporting on evaluation data.

Year 2: Implementation and Monitoring

- **Monitor Progress:** Track the implementation of intervention strategies and identify any barriers or challenges.
- **Collect Data:** Collect data on student outcomes, including academic performance, progression, and employability.
- **Conduct Interim Evaluations:** Conduct interim evaluations to assess the effectiveness of specific interventions and make necessary adjustments.

Year 3: Mid-Term Review and Adjustment

- **Review Progress:** Conduct a comprehensive review of the APP to assess progress towards objectives.
- **Identify Areas for Improvement:** Identify areas where improvements can be made and develop action plans to address these issues.
- **Update KPIs:** Update KPIs as needed to reflect changes in the institutional context and student needs.

Year 4: Final Evaluation and Reporting

- **Conduct a Final Evaluation:** Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Access and Participation Plan, including an assessment of the impact on student outcomes.
- **Analyse Data:** Analyse quantitative and qualitative data to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of the interventions.
- **Produce a Final Report:** Prepare a final report summarising the findings of the evaluation and outlining recommendations for future action.

Benchmarking and External Evaluation

To ensure that our APP is aligned with best practice, we will engage in benchmarking with other HEIs. This will involve:

- **Comparing Performance:** Comparing our performance on key metrics, such as attainment rates and progression rates, with similar institutions.
- **Identifying Best Practices:** Identifying best practices from other institutions and adapting them to our context.
- **External Review:** Commissioning an external review of our APP to provide an independent assessment of our progress.

By incorporating benchmarking and external evaluation into our approach, we can ensure that our interventions are evidence-based and effective.

Student Voice and Feedback

Student feedback is essential to the success of our APP. We will continue to engage with students through a variety of methods, including:

- **Regular Surveys:** Conducting annual surveys to gather feedback on student experiences and satisfaction.
- **Focus Groups and Interviews:** Organising focus groups and interviews to delve deeper into student perspectives.
- **Student Representatives on Committees:** Involving students in decision-making processes.
- **Reporting on progress to students**: We will ensure that we communicate progress to the whole academic community

Provision of Information to Students

Pre-Enrolment Information

To ensure that prospective students have clear and accurate information about fees and financial support options before they enroll, we will implement the following strategies:

- **Dedicated Website Page:** Maintain a dedicated webpage on our website that provides comprehensive information on tuition fees, maintenance loans, bursaries, and scholarships.
- **Prospectus and Course Information:** Include detailed information on fees and funding in our prospectus and course information materials.
- **Open Days and Events:** Utilise open days, applicant days, and other events to provide prospective students with information about fees, funding, and financial support.
- **Individual Consultations:** Offer individual consultations with admissions and finance staff to answer specific questions about fees and funding.

Post-Enrolment Information

Once students have enrolled, we will continue to provide clear and accessible information on fees and financial support throughout their studies:

- **Regular Communication and Ratification:** Send regular updates to students about any changes to fees or financial support policies. Any changes to fees and other policies which directly impact students are and will continue to be ratified at the appropriate board - usually the Academic Board.
- **Financial Advice and Guidance:** Provide access to financial advice and guidance services to help students manage their finances effectively.
- **Student Finance Support:** Work closely with the Student Finance England to ensure that students understand the application process and receive timely payments.
- **Bursaries and Scholarships:** Promote bursaries and scholarships available to students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Accessibility and Clarity of Information

To ensure that information on fees and financial support is accessible to all students, we will:

- **Use Clear and Concise Language:** Avoid jargon and technical terms.
- **Where possible, Provide Information in Multiple Formats:** Offer information in various formats, such as written, audio, and video.
- **Consider the Needs of International Students:** Provide information on international student fees and funding options.

By providing clear and accessible information on fees and financial support, we can help students make informed decisions about their education and reduce financial stress.

Appendix A

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Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: Central Film School London Ltd

Provider UKPRN: 10024024

Summary of 2025-26 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflation statement:

Subject to the maximum fee limits set out in Regulations we will increase fees each year using RPI-X

Table 3b - Full-time course fee levels for 2025-26 entrants

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	*	N/A	*
Foundation degree	*	N/A	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND	*	N/A	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	*
Accelerated degree	Direct entry	N/A	10800
Accelerated degree	With integrated foundation year	N/A	9000
Sandwich year	*	N/A	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Other	*	N/A	*

Table 3b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2025-26

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Sub-contractual provider name and additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

Table 4b - Part-time course fee levels for 2025-26 entrants

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	*	N/A	*
Foundation degree	*	N/A	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND	*	N/A	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	*
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year	*	N/A	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Other	*	N/A	*

Table 4b - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2025-26

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Sub-contractual provider name and additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

Office for Students

Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: Central Film School London Ltd

Provider UKPRN: 10024024

Investment summary

A provider is expected to submit information about its forecasted investment to achieve the objectives of its access and participation plan in respect of the following areas: access, financial support and research and evaluation. Note that this does not necessarily represent the total amount spent by a provider in these areas. Table 6b provides a summary of the forecasted investment, across the four academic years covered by the plan, and Table 6d gives a more detailed breakdown.

Notes about the data:
The figures below are not comparable to previous access and participation plans or access agreements as data published in previous years does not reflect latest provider projections on student numbers.

Yellow shading indicates data that was calculated rather than input directly by the provider.

In Table 6d (under 'Breakdown'):
"Total access investment funded from HFI" refers to income from charging fees above the basic fee limit.
"Total access investment from other funding (as specified)" refers to other funding, including OfS funding (but excluding Uni Connect), other public funding and funding from other sources such as philanthropic giving and private sector sources and/or partners.

Table 6b - Investment summary

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Breakdown	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Access activity investment (£)	NA	£40,000	£45,000	£51,000	£58,000
Financial support (£)	NA	£20,000	£29,000	£32,000	£34,000
Research and evaluation (£)	NA	£16,000	£18,000	£20,000	£22,000

Table 6d - Investment estimates

Investment estimate (to the nearest £1,000)	Breakdown	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Access activity investment	Pre-16 access activities (£)	£10,000	£11,000	£12,000	£14,000
Access activity investment	Post-16 access activities (£)	£20,000	£22,000	£25,000	£28,000
Access activity investment	Other access activities (£)	£10,000	£12,000	£14,000	£16,000
Access activity investment	**Total access investment (£)**	**£40,000**	**£45,000**	**£51,000**	**£58,000**
Access activity investment	***Total access investment (as % of HFI)***	**7.5%**	**7.4%**	**7.5%**	**7.8%**
Access activity investment	***Total access investment funded from HFI (£)***	**£40,000**	**£45,000**	**£51,000**	**£58,000**
Access activity investment	***Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)***	**£0**	**£0**	**£0**	**£0**
Financial support investment	Bursaries and scholarships (£)	£12,000	£20,000	£22,000	£22,000
Financial support investment	Fee waivers (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Hardship funds (£)	£8,000	£9,000	£10,000	£12,000
Financial support investment	**Total financial support investment (£)**	**£20,000**	**£29,000**	**£32,000**	**£34,000**
Financial support investment	***Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)***	**3.7%**	**4.8%**	**4.7%**	**4.5%**
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (£)	£16,000	£18,000	£20,000	£22,000
Research and evaluation investment	*Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)*	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	2.9%

Office for Students

Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: Central Film School London Ltd

Provider UKPRN: 10024024

Targets

Table 5b: Access and/or raising attainment targets

Aim [500 characters maximum]	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone	2028-29 milestone
Increase Access for Students from Disadvantaged Socio-Economic Backgrounds	PTA_1	Access	Tracking Underrepresentation by Area (TUNDRA)	TUNDRA quintile 1 and 2	TUNDRA quintile 3, 4 and 5	CFS currently underperforms against the sector benchmark for students from TUNDRA Quintile 1 and 2 and achieving the benchmark would enhance CFS's standing as an inclusive institution. This objective addresses gaps in access by expanding outreach, providing financial aid, and ensuring equitable access to resources required for success in creative disciplines. Data is internal and based on most recent year (in this case 2024-25).	No	Other data source (please include details in commentary)	Other (please include details in commentary)	Percentage points	16.43	18	20	23	25
Increase Gender Parity in Practical Filmmaking and Technical Industry Roles	PTA_2	Access	Sex	Female	Male	This objective addresses gender disparities in enrollment and progression identified through student feedback and sector benchmarks. It aligns with institutional goals for inclusivity and industry diversification while addressing systemic gender-based barriers. This objective focuses on specific activity to support more female students into studying on technical programmes, and to support them into industry. Data is internal and based on most recent year (in this case 2024-25).	No	Other data source (please include details in commentary)	Other (please include details in commentary)	Percentage	35	40	50	50	50
Increase Access for Students eligible for FSM	PTA_3	Access	Eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM)	Eligible		CFS currently underperforms against the sector benchmark for students eligible for FSM, the characteristic considered the most reliable indicator of disadvantage by many. This objective addresses gaps in access by expanding outreach, providing financial aid, and ensuring equitable access to resources required for success in creative disciplines. Data is internal and based on most recent year (in this case 2024-25).	No	Other data source (please include details in commentary)	Other (please include details in commentary)	Percentage	9	11	13	15	18
	PTA_4														
	PTA_5														
	PTA_6														
	PTA_7														
	PTA_8														
	PTA_9														
	PTA_10														
	PTA_11														
	PTA_12														

Table 5d: Success targets

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone	2028-29 milestone

Close the Attainment Gap for Black Students	PTS_1	Attainment	Ethnicity	Black	White	Black students at CFS face attainment gaps significantly above sector averages. This objective addresses barriers such as unconscious bias, cultural disconnection, and inadequate academic support, aligning with institutional priorities for equity and inclusion.	No	Other data source (please include details in commentary)	Other (please include details in commentary)	Percentage points	31.22	25	20	15	10
Close the Attainment Gap for Asian Students	PTS_2	Attainment	Ethnicity	Asian	White	Asian students at CFS face the most significant attainment gaps among BAME groups, requiring tailored academic interventions to address systemic inequities and promote equity.	No	Other data source (please include details in commentary)	Other (please include details in commentary)	Percentage points	40.74	35	30	20	10
Improve Completion for BAME students	PTS_3	Completion	Ethnicity	Other ethnicity	White	Continuation and completion rates are critical indicators of institutional success and equity. This objective addresses systemic barriers to progression, aligning with institutional and OfS priorities.	No	Other data source (please include details in commentary)	Other (please include details in commentary)	Percentage	60	77	80	85	90
Promote Mental Health and Wellbeing through collaborative projects	PTS_4	Continuation	Reported disability	Mental health condition	N/A	Addressing mental health and wellbeing is critical to ensuring students thrive academically and personally. This objective aligns with sector best practices and recognises the unique challenges faced by creative students. Data is internal	Yes	Other data source (please include details in commentary)	Other (please include details in commentary)	Percentage	88	90	92	95	95
	PTS_5														
	PTS_6														
	PTS_7														
	PTS_8														
	PTS_9														
	PTS_10														
	PTS_11														
	PTS_12														

Table 5e: Progression targets

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone	2028-29 milestone
Improve Graduate Employability and Outcomes	PTP_1	Progression	Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations [IMD])	IMD quintile 1 and 2	N/A	Graduate employability is a critical measure of institutional success. This objective focuses on addressing structural barriers and enhancing industry connections to improve outcomes, aligning with OfS priorities and sector benchmarks. There are a number of objectives at play here, but primary focus is to increase graduate employment. As the data for CFS is so limited, we are using UAL data, with 2017-18 as a baseline	Yes	The access and participation dashboard	2017-18	Percentage	57	57	60	65	70
	PTP_2														
	PTP_3														
	PTP_4														
	PTP_5														
	PTP_6														
	PTP_7														
	PTP_8														
	PTP_9														
	PTP_10														
	PTP_11														
	PTP_12														