

# Royal Scottish Academy *of Music and Drama*

## **Disability Equality Scheme**

**December 2009**

**All comments on this Disability Equality Scheme are welcome.**

Comments should be made by post or e-mail to:

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RSAMD's Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan are publically available on the RSAMD website: <http://www.rsamd.ac.uk>

## 1. Introduction

The mission of the RSAMD: *To create in Scotland the international centre of excellence and innovation for learning, teaching and research in performance, in which quality of student experience is paramount* is evolving so as to enhance the Academy's position in the world as a leading progressive conservatoire of music and drama. The Academy continues to provide an environment in which a spirit of creativity, innovation, enterprise and excellence is imbued in students and staff, thereby preparing our students for the rapidly changing artistic and economic landscape of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

As detailed in the Academy's first review of the DES the Academy underwent a complete reorganisation of its staff and committee structures in 2007-08. The Academy is now building on the new structures to enhance existing and future practice. This review takes us forward towards our development of a Single Equality Scheme, which will build on the DES and the Academy's Race and Gender Equality Action Plans that are already in place.

## **2. Background Information and Context**

This is the RSAMD's revised Disability Equality Scheme (DES). It sets out what we have done in the area of disability equality since the original DES was published in 2006 and identifies the next steps to be taken in order to ensure that the Academy continues to fulfil its duties and responsibilities towards disabled people in general and RSAMD students and staff in particular.

The development of this DES has included consultation with disabled staff and students, who have played a crucial part in the identification of priority areas. Stakeholders were invited to contribute to the development of the DES through the completion of questionnaires and participation in focus groups.

The priorities that were identified in the previous DES based on the engagement with disabled people remain key areas:

- Curriculum Development and Delivery
- Impact assessments
- Policies and Procedures
- Staff and Student Monitoring
- Staff and Student Participation and Consultation
- Staff Training

The priorities identified during the engagement with disabled people are aligned with the Academy's Mission Statement (September 2008), in order to ensure that actions relating to the disability equality agenda form part of our daily practice.

The Academy is committed to making further developments in Disability Equality in the coming year and is confident that the items in the Action Plan can be achieved in the timescales indicated.

### **3. Achievements in Disability Equality to date**

Progress on the DES and Action Plan was previously monitored by the Academy's Reachability Committee. Following the re-organisation which the Academy underwent in 2007/08, progress on the DES Action Plan will now be monitored and reviewed by the Academy's Equality & Diversity Forum.

Since the review of the DES in June 2008, the Academy has implemented the following changes in relation to disability equality:

- Appointed an Academy Equality & Diversity Officer for staff and students
- Created the post of Academy Counsellor & Disability Adviser to support disabled students and staff
- Reviewed the former Reachability Committee and proposed a new Equality & Diversity Forum (EDF) to ensure that all strands of equality, including disability, are represented
- Inclusion of a presentation on Equality & Diversity (including disability) to all new students in induction week
- Developed an on-line questionnaire for disabled students to monitor satisfaction

#### **Curriculum Development & Delivery**

- A comprehensive curriculum reform programme is currently underway. One of the Key Questions being addressed in the Curriculum Reform project is 'How should we promote equality and diversity through our curriculum and what practical steps can we take to further promote access?' This demonstrates the Academy's commitment to placing equality and diversity, including disability, at the heart of all its activities.

#### **Information Services**

- The new RSAMD website has been designed to be accessible for people with any degree of visual and motor impairment and users of screen readers.

- Induction loops are available at all public interaction points in the RSAMD library: the Enquiry Desk and the Issue Desk
- AccessApps (for portable accessibility applications), is now available on Flash Drives for students

### **Policies & Procedures**

- The Academy's Recruitment & Selection Policy has been completed and is in operation. It is reviewed annually.

### **Partnership Working & Procurement**

- The Academy is preparing to launch PECOS, the e-procurement system, which includes an equality and diversity statement of commitment within its remit. All relevant staff have been trained in PECOS. All temporary external teaching staff are required to sign up to the letter and spirit of the Academy's Disability Policy (as well as the Policies on Gender and Race) as part of their contracts.

### **Staff & Student Monitoring**

- Equality data, including Disability data, has been and is being collected for all students, staff applicants and current Full-time Equivalent (FTE) and Part-time Hourly Paid (PTHP) staff.
- Application statistics for the School of Music and the School of Drama in relation to disabled students are collected and monitored; statistics relating to student progression, graduation and withdrawal are also collected and monitored annually.

### **Staff and student participation and consultation**

- Staff and students with disabilities have been involved in the content of this Revised DES through questionnaires, feedback to the Counsellor & Disability Adviser and participation in focus groups
- Following the recent organisational restructure it has been decided to introduce a new Equality & Diversity Forum (EDF) which will have Academy-wide representation, including disabled staff and students

- The Academy Counsellor & Disability Adviser holds regular meetings with disabled students and outcomes will now be reported to the EDF
- An annual on-line questionnaire has been developed and piloted to monitor the satisfaction of disabled students

### **Staff Development**

- Disability Equality Training is now part of the induction process for all new staff.
- All relevant new staff receive copies of the Academy's Student Disability Policy in their induction packs and, where relevant, other guidance documents e.g. *Guidance on auditioning/interviewing applicants with disabilities*.
- All current teaching staff have received Disability Awareness Training.
- All Academic Administration & Support staff have received Disability Awareness Training.
- Equality and Diversity Training is mandatory for all staff as part of the annual Staff Development week

The RSAMD remains committed to the spirit of the DES, and is proud of its progress as identified in the Action Plan. We acknowledge that there is still action that needs to be taken and we are confident that we can build on what has already been achieved towards consistently placing disability equality at the heart of our services and activities.

## 4. Summary of Current DES Commitments

The Equality & Diversity Forum (EDF) will be chaired jointly by the Dean of Music and the Dean of Drama. The EDF will regularly review the Academy's DES and ensure that the goals are incorporated into the new Single Equality Scheme, which the Academy is planning to implement in advance of the Single Equality Duty coming into force in 2011.

Over the coming year the Academy is committed to progressing on-going work in the following areas, as outlined in the attached Action Plan (Appendix A):

**Commitment DES 1:** Impact assessments: Equality Impact Assessments, which will address all equality strands including Disability, will be completed for all Academy policies to ensure that equality is an integral part of all policy development

**Commitment DES 2:** Consideration will be given to how Equality and Diversity issues can be introduced into the Career Review process. Staff will be required to reflect on and consider the ways in which they contribute to Equality and Diversity principles, including those relating to Disability, in their practice

**Commitment DES 3:** Enhancing monitoring systems. An Academy-wide review of monitoring relevant statistical data is being carried out to enable a standard template to be implemented. Evidence gathering is an integral part of the process of achieving greater equality for disabled people. However, the process of information gathering is not an end in itself, but is a vital mechanism to enable the RSAMD to make better decisions about what changes in educational and employment practice would best improve disability equality within the Academy. The information we gather will allow us to:

- assess our performance, including the identification of barriers
- carry out effective impact assessments
- review progress and adjust Academy practice as appropriate

- set targets for improving outcomes
- benchmark against other comparable institutions

**Commitment DES 4:** Curriculum Review Process. The Academy is currently engaged in a fundamental review of its entire curriculum and one of the key questions the project will address is ‘How should we promote equality and diversity through our curriculum and what practical steps can we take to further promote access?’ This process is helping to ensure that equality, including disability, is embedded at the heart of the Academy’s curriculum.

**Commitment DES 5:** Promotion of Equality in all workplace activities. The Dignity at Work and Study policy (which includes Disability) is currently being refined to ensure it maximises effectiveness for staff and students. To support the introduction of this policy, Staff Support Contacts have been trained to provide support for colleagues who may be experiencing problems (including for reasons relating to a disability) in the workplace.

**Commitment DES 6:** To work towards and achieve the Two Ticks - Positive About Disabled People Award to demonstrate our commitment to recruiting and retaining disabled people across all departments and at all levels of the Academy.

## 5. Appendices

### Appendix A: Action Plan

<b>REF:</b>	<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>UPDATE</b>	<b>STATUS</b>	<b>DEADLINE</b>
DES 1	Implement meaningful impact assessment processes in relation to equality in general and disability in particular	Academy Equality & Diversity Officer; Academy Counsellor & Disability Adviser	The Equality Impact Assessment Template and process have been developed based on sector best practice. Academy policies are in the process of being assessed.	On-going	December 2010
DES 2	Introduce Equality & Diversity issues into the Career Review Process	HR Adviser	Staff will be encouraged to reflect on how they promote and reflect good practice in equality and diversity issues as part of the annual career review process	On-going	May/June 2010
DES 3	Implement meaningful monitoring data collection and monitoring processes in the area of equality in general and Disability in particular	HR Adviser/Academy E & D Officer; Academy Counsellor & Disability Adviser	An Academy wide analysis is being undertaken to review all statistical data that is produced and to finalise a template for meaningful and standardised corporate data collection to enable future priorities to be identified and benchmarking to take place with other conservatoires.	On-going	December 2010

DES 4	Promote and encourage active engagement in the area disability, and encourage the development of inclusive learning, teaching and working practices	Director of Academic Development/Learning & Teaching Committee	The Academy's Curriculum Reform programme will be the vehicle by which equality and diversity initiatives, including disability will be embedded into all learning and teaching practices.	On-going	December 2011
DES 5	Develop policies and procedures to ensure that equality in general and disability in particular is promoted within all workplace practices	HR Adviser/Academy E & D Officer; Academy Counsellor & Disability Adviser	The Dignity at Work and Study policy is currently being refined to maximise its benefits and effectiveness for staff and students.	On-going	December 2009
DES 6	To work towards and achieve the Two Ticks - Positive About Disabled People Award	HR Adviser/Academy E & D Officer; Academy Counsellor & Disability Adviser	The Academy already has many of the required structures in place and these will be tied into the specified commitments for the Award.	On-going	December 2010

## Appendix B: Statistics - Staff

- **Staff data**

The Academy currently collects a range of quantitative data (staff, students, applicants) and qualitative data (students) relating to diversity in general and disability in particular. The collected data is monitored and reviewed and used to inform strategies and operational plans. The data will be presented to the Equality & Diversity Forum and recommendations will be taken forward.

The Academy's staff data as of 1 September 2008 is as follows:

### Teaching staff

	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Disabled</b>	7	4	11
<b>Not disabled</b>	40	7	47
<b>Unknown</b>	0	2	2

### Support staff

	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Disabled</b>	2	4	6
<b>Not disabled</b>	87	10	97
<b>Unknown</b>	3	0	3

### Part-time hourly paid staff

	<b>Teaching</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Disabled</b>	14	0	14
<b>Not disabled</b>	473	1	474
<b>Unknown</b>	39	0	39

*(source: HESA)*

The Academy's staff data as of 1 September 2009 is as follows:

### Teaching staff

	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Disabled</b>	1	2	3
<b>Not disabled</b>	36	11	47
<b>Unknown</b>	0	0	0

### Support staff

	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Disabled</b>	3	0	3
<b>Not disabled</b>	102	15	117
<b>Unknown</b>	0	0	0

### Part-time Hourly Paid staff

	<b>Teaching</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Disabled</b>	7	0	7
<b>Not disabled</b>	446	0	446
<b>Unknown</b>	0	0	0

*(source: HESA)*

## Appendix C: Statistics - Students

- **Student data**

The 2008/09 application data for the School of Music is shown below. (The source for all student statistics is the Student Records System, RSAMD.)

APPLICATION STATUS	# of Disabled Applicants		# of Applicants	
Reject	28	(53.85%)	433	(44.27%)
Unconditional Offer	10	(19.23%)	211	(21.57%)
In Process	3	(5.77%)	27	(2.76%)
Reserve offer (unconditional)	5	(9.62%)	53	(5.42%)
Applicant withdrawn	4	(7.69%)	44	(4.5%)
Conditional Offer	2	(3.85%)	95	(9.71%)
Audition Pending	0	(0%)	6	(0.61%)
Declined Reserve place	0	(0%)	85	(8.69%)
Reserve offer (conditional)	0	(0%)	24	(2.45%)

The 2008/09 application data for the School of Drama is shown below:

APPLICATION STATUS	# of Disabled Applicants		# of Applicants	
Pending	0	(0%)	33	(1.82%)
Conditional Offer	1	(0.78%)	35	(1.93%)
Reject	83	(64.84%)	1077	(59.37%)
Reserve Offer	3	(2.34%)	55	(3.03%)
Unconditional Offer	16	(12.5%)	213	(11.74%)
Try Again	0	(0%)	3	(0.17%)
Applicant Withdrawn	25	(19.53%)	398	(21.94%)

The 2008/09 data for students with disabilities is shown below.

Students	Total Number		Percentage	
	Undergraduate (U)	Postgraduate (P)	Undergraduate (U)	Postgraduate (P)
Declared a disability	102	9	16.7%	6%
No disability	508	139	83.3%	94%

Students	Totals for each Discipline		Percentage	
	Music	Drama	Music	Drama
Declared a disability	31 (U) 6 (P)	71 (U) 3 (P)	8.3% (U) 5.7% (P)	29.7% (U) 2% (P)
No disability	340 (U) 99 (P)	168 (U) 40 (P)	91.7% (U) 94.3% (P)	70.3% (U) 98% (P)

Type of Disability	Number of students	% of disabled student body (111)	% of total student body (750)
Blind/visual impairment	0	0	0
Deaf/ hearing impairment	3	2.7%	0.4%
Dyslexia/SpLD*	83	74.7%	11%
Mental health	4	3.6%	0.5%
Mobility impairment	0	0	0
Autistic spectrum	3	2.7%	0.4%
Multiple disabilities	4	3.6%	0.5%
Unseen disabilities**	14	12.6%	1.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>14.7%</b>

\* includes dyspraxia and dyscalculia

\*\* includes ME, asthma, epilepsy, arthritis, CF and diabetes

### Undergraduate Students: Music & Drama

- 32 disabled students and 124 non-disabled students graduated in 2009
- 60 disabled students progressed to the next year of the course
- 4 disabled students out of 71 had re-sits (all Music students)
- 3 disabled students deferred (2 Music, 1 Drama)
- 10 disabled students withdrew from course (6 Music, 4 Drama) and 25 non-disabled students (24 Music and 1 Drama)
- 1 disabled student failed the year (Music)

**Breakdown of classification of total undergraduate degrees awarded 2008/09.**

Degrees awarded	Ordinary degree		1 <sup>st</sup> class		2 <sup>nd</sup> class (upper)		2 <sup>nd</sup> class (lower)	
	Music *	Drama **	Music ***	Drama †	Music ***	Drama †	Music ***	Drama †
Disabled students	1	12	2	4	1	9	3	0
Non disabled students	6	40	11	8	40	7	12	0

\* These figures are 3<sup>rd</sup> year students on Honours programmes exiting with an Ordinary degree

\*\* BA Acting and BA Technical & Production Arts are Ordinary degree programmes

\*\*\* BMus Honours, BEd Honours and BA Honours Scottish Music/Scottish Music (Piping)

† BA Honours Contemporary Theatre Practice, BA Honours Digital Film & Television

**Breakdown of classification by percentage of total of graduating students with a disability (32)**

Degrees awarded	Ordinary degree		1 <sup>st</sup> class		2 <sup>nd</sup> class (upper)		2 <sup>nd</sup> class (lower)	
	Music * %	Drama ** %	Music %	Drama %	Music %	Drama %	Music %	Drama %
Disabled students	3.125 %	37.5%	6.25%	12.5%	3.125 %	28.125 %	9.375 %	0

**Breakdown of classification by percentage of total number of graduating students (156)**

Degrees awarded	Ordinary degree		1 <sup>st</sup> class		2 <sup>nd</sup> class (upper)		2 <sup>nd</sup> class (lower)	
	Music *	Drama **	Music	Drama	Music	Drama	Music	Drama
Disabled students	0.64 %	7.6%	1.28%	2.56%	0.64 %	5.7%	1.9%	0
Non disabled students	3.84 %	25.6%	7.54%	5.1%	25.6 %	4.4%	7.6%	0

## **Appendix D: Student Qualitative Data**

As well as quantitative data the Counsellor & Disability Adviser also collects qualitative data from disabled students on the support provided by the Academy. All disabled students are contacted by e-mail at the end of each academic year and asked the following question: 'What is one thing the Academy does well in supporting students with disabilities? What is one thing the Academy needs to improve in supporting students with disabilities?' The responses are passed to the appropriate Heads of Department and will also be passed to the Equality & Diversity Committee. From next year (2009/10) an on-line survey will be sent to all students asking about their experience of students support in the Academy, including disability support.

Below are some of the student responses received at the end of 2008/09.

### **What is one thing the Academy does well in supporting students with disabilities?**

"We get extra time in exams; we can take laptops, dictaphones etc... into lectures -we have someone to talk to if we are having difficulties."  
(Year 2 Music student)

"Since my diagnosis [of dyslexia] I have found that my confidence in my written work has soared which in turn has made me happier within my arts practise. The feeling that I was lazy and just didn't try hard enough has left me and for this i am very grateful. Everyone involved has been supportive and generous and this has made a huge difference to me."  
(Year 3 Drama student)

"Gives good advice for students on how to deal with it!"  
(Year 4 Music student)

"Very welcoming and open to the students issues/needs. There is an obvious will to get the very best of educational equality for those who suffer from dyslexia"  
(Year 1 Drama student)

"The thing the academy does well is it gives you an opportunity to be tested for educational problems...and they support you with the results of those tests."

(Year 4 Drama student)

**“They are quick and helpful to identify students that may have a learning disability. Easy and straightforward guidance for funding is put in place and communication to all tutors to understand the disability or individual tailoring of the course is put in place. But up most is the UNDERSTANDING.”**

(Year 3 Drama student)

### **What is one thing the Academy needs to improve in supporting students with disabilities?**

“Regular Lecture Notes from every lecture!”

(Year 3 Music student)

“Free access to printing”

(Year 2 Music student)

“One minor thing is that I find it very complicated to work out where the learning support office is and how its hours operate.”

(Year 3 Drama student)

“Make students more aware of the Effective Learning facility. This is something I heard about in first year but didn't go and seek help from them until fourth year. I soon realised that their support was great and had I used them earlier life might have been a bit easier!”

(Year 4 Music student)

“The academy could improve there resorces for proof reading.”

(Year 4 Drama student)