

EQUITY REPORT

2024/25





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INTRODUCTION FROM THE PRINCIPAL/CEO



Equity is the driving force behind our ambition to be a world-leading centre of excellence in creative learning and vocational training.

Our **2023–2026 Strategic Plan** placed equity at the heart of our institutional mission, recognising that true excellence can only be achieved in an environment where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. That is why equity is one of our six strategic themes, shaping our aspirations and actions.

This inaugural **Annual Equity Report** is a testament to the progress we have made so far. It celebrates the transformative work taking place across LIPA, from policy reform and curriculum innovation to community partnerships and the evolution of our brand identity. Each initiative reflects our deep and ongoing commitment to embedding inclusivity at every level of the institution.

The report offers a snapshot of the impact our students, staff, and wider community are making. It is by no means exhaustive, but it does illustrate the passion, creativity, and determination with which equity is being championed across LIPA. I am deeply grateful to everyone contributing to this vital work.

We know that achieving equity is not a destination. We understand that it is a journey. We are proud of our progress, and we are equally clear-eyed about where more needs to be done. Transparency and accountability are central to our approach, ensuring that we learn, adapt, and improve continuously.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to building on our successes, learning from our challenges, and continuing to create meaningful, lasting change for the benefit of all.

Sean

Professor Sean McNamara
Principal & CEO



Our equality, diversity and inclusion vision is that equity is in our DNA as a 'golden thread' running through, and central to, how we operate. We are committed to advancing, cultivating and preserving a culture of diversity, inclusion and belonging.

We believe in developing strong relationships within the creative arts sector and the communities in which we work because it makes us stronger. This directly aligns with our mission to inspire, enable and empower the creatives of the future to secure sustained employment. We do this by listening to our staff, our students and the wider community and learning from what we hear.

GOAL & ACTIONS

LIPA is committed to creating and developing a culture and environment for equality and inclusion at all levels throughout the institution

To achieve that goal, we identified the following actions:

- Strengthen our approaches to equitable and inclusive recruitment, retention and development of students, especially those from groups under represented in higher education and vocational training
- Develop a recruitment strategy and processes to encourage representation within the staff body that reflects our communities
- Develop training opportunities for students and staff
- Embed equity and inclusion into the learning environment, curriculum, and teaching practices
- Review staff roles and structures at all levels to provide progression and developmental opportunities
- Improve appraisal processes
- Develop strategies to increase applications for the 'making performance possible' programmes.

We also identified five equity themes to structure our work around: **Commitment & Capacity; Creative Curriculum; Culture & Capability; Compositional Diversity; and Community Engagement.**



STRATEGIC AIM & PROGRESS

To establish, enact and communicate organisational systems, structures, policies and processes that mobilise and sustain ED&I commitments and resources through leadership, governance and accountability

Key milestones

- **Established foundational structures** including an EDI Sub-Committee that reports to Council ensuring institutional accountability and a dedicated budget for equity-driven initiatives
- **Demonstrated a commitment to data-driven decision making** by introducing new annual reporting of EDI-related student data to Institute Quality Committee (IQC), covering global majority, disability, and LGBTQ+ representation. EDI progress will also be monitored by our new student record system, TechnologyOne
- **Strengthened the student voice** through social media campaigns, showcasing the lived experiences of LIPA's diverse community
- **Integrated EDI considerations into key areas of policy and process development and delivery** across LIPA. EDI considerations inform course validation and new course proposals; training modules provided to new and returning students at inductions; and policy design and communication reflecting the needs of minority students.

CHALLENGES & PRIORITIES

- Ensuring that our initiatives are **sustained, deeply embedded and continuously monitored** to drive long-term change
- Strengthening **qualitative data collection** (e.g. Equality Impact Assessments) to complement quantitative measures and provide richer insights
- Addressing **accessibility challenges**, particularly within two listed buildings where physical spaces require adaptation
- Further **amplifying underrepresented voices** in decision-making through Student Voice and governance structures.

"I feel really proud to go back to LIPA now and reclaim some of that confusion and isolation I felt at times studying here. To see proper change and development in diversity makes me emotional. Thank you especially to Cherise Weaver [Head of EDI] for all your efforts in creating and celebrating more representation at LIPA."

- Gaia Ahuja, LIPA Alum and DJ, Producer, Actor, Mentor and Teacher



STRATEGIC AIM & PROGRESS

To enhance, innovate and develop continuously: embed equity and inclusion into the curriculum and our teaching and learning practices, in a manner that exemplifies inclusive excellence.

Key milestones

Across our three Schools we have implemented curriculum and pedagogical interventions aligned with our Equity Strategy. These have included:

- **Enhanced the range of voices present across the curriculum**, through the appointment of visiting professionals, selection of performance works, and the embedding of intersectional perspectives in reading lists
- **Engaged with grassroots (rather than top-down) practices and methods** to empower new voices and perspectives
- **Maintained and developed assessment practices** that cater to a broad range of learning styles
- **Introduced a new programme**, BA in Acting (Contemporary Performance) that engages with global voices, cultures and communities
- **Supported students to make conscious, empowered decisions** about how they bring their complex identities into their own performance practices and projects.



CHALLENGES & PRIORITIES

- Increasing **diversity in academic reading lists** remains a challenge due to the dominance of white male scholarship in certain disciplines
- Balancing the need to **diversify performance works** while still engaging with material and traditions from the performance canon
- Strengthening **differentiated curriculum content and assessment methods** for neurodivergent learners
- Ensuring that **institutional support networks** exist to support students as they experiment within the curriculum.

“I had the invaluable opportunity to work closely with Cherise Weaver and the Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Committee at LIPA. This experience played a significant role in shaping both my academic journey and professional development, providing a platform to engage deeply with creative work rooted in cultural awareness, representation, and social equity.”

- **Frederico Mendes, LIPA Management Student**



STRATEGIC AIM & PROGRESS

To treat everyone with dignity; we make decisions drawing on different perspectives; we involve, listen to, and seek to learn from everyone; we strive to nurture a sense of belonging so everyone can participate.

Key milestones

- **Expanded Learning & Development Days** to include targeted EDI training, covering topics such as unconscious bias, racial equity, menopause in the music industry, and motherhood & music
 - **Introduced the Equity Award** at our Teaching Excellence and Employee Recognition Awards. The award has gone to Ben Leventhall, Head of Widening Participation and Schools/Colleges Liaison, for 'always acting in the interests of equity of experience for all' and
- Cherise Weaver, Head of EDI, for her 'massive impact' in bringing 'positive change within the curriculum and the building'
- **Enhanced internal communication** to build a shared culture of inclusion using Welcome Back meetings, newsletters and regular staff updates
 - **Celebrated key cultural moments and milestones** in the LIPA foyer and elsewhere, fostering community-wider engagement.



CHALLENGES & PRIORITIES

- Increasing **staff engagement in training** and ensuring agile, needs-driven learning and wellbeing provision that meets the diverse needs of LIPA staff
- Shifting from top-down communications to **community-driven initiatives**, promoting greater grassroots engagement in EDI work
- Building a more **proactive and supportive HR presence** to strengthen the employee journey from application, through on-boarding, to on-going training and development.

“We’re proud to have made meaningful progress in diversifying our Acting Department at LIPA, with a noticeably more inclusive student body among our first-year undergraduate programmes and more diverse visiting staff. Whilst this marks an important step forward, we recognise that true equity requires ongoing, sustained change. Our commitment now is to ensure that this diversity is reflected not just in our cohorts, but across our curriculum, culture, and creative practices.”

- David Salter, Head of Acting (Stage & Screen)





STRATEGIC AIM & PROGRESS

To attract and engage a community of learners, creatives, practitioners, professional services and leaders who reflect local, national and international democratic diversity

Key milestones

- **Removed barriers to access** for students, such as audition fees, and delivered a wide range of targeted interventions for under-represented groups in higher education, ranging from our intensive Get Set summer school to pre-interview and pre-audition advice phone calls for flagged applicants
- **Launched a new institutional brand** reflecting EDI principles through inclusive language, imagery and tone of voice
- **Enhanced storytelling activities** across our website and social media to ensure we reflect the diversity of voices and experiences at LIPA
- **Strengthened staff recruitment policies**, ensuring fair hiring practices and equitable selection processes. We have introduced an EDI question into interviews to enable candidates to engage with this core institutional mission
- **Developed Council Director recruitment processes**, which increased the range, diversity and experience of interview candidates and subsequently newly appointed Council Directors in recent recruitment rounds.

CHALLENGES & PRIORITIES

- Continuing to **diversify our student body**, implementing strategies outlined in our Access & Participation Plan
- Increasing **diversity among our student ambassadors**, who play a crucial role in inspiring future applicants
- Ensuring our **new brand identity** is used consistently across the institution and we deploy a tone of voice that uses inclusive and clear language
- Identifying more **teaching staff resource** to support outreach activities with feeder colleges
- Improving **staff recruitment targeting** to attract a more diverse talent pool beyond word-of-mouth hiring networks. This is crucial because, as a small, specialist institute, we have limited turnover of substantive staff.

“Our Access and Participation Plan outlines LIPA’s commitment to improve equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups to access, succeed in and progress from our training. It’s an ambitious document with challenging but achievable targets that will help ensure anyone, regardless of their background, is supported and empowered to realise their creative potential.”

- Ben Leventhall, Head of Widening Participation and Schools/Colleges Liaison





STRATEGIC AIM & SUCCESSES

To develop a model of public participation that promotes relationship building to create a positive impact in the social and cultural fabric of our local, national and international communities

Key milestones:

- **Delivered 100+ visits and workshops** across 50 local schools and colleges providing careers advice, raising awareness of higher education and supporting attainment for underrepresented students
- **Engaged with key local, national and international cultural events** including sponsoring Africa Oyé, performing at Vogue Ball, attending Liverpool Pride March, collaborating with the Black Actors Collective, and hosting Collective Encounters activities for young people from care backgrounds
- **Provided strategic leadership and support** to collective efforts to improve EDI in Liverpool, working alongside 20 Stories High, Race Equality Hub, and the Creative Music Cluster
- **Encouraged students to take active roles in shaping their communities** through EDI initiatives, curriculum-based projects, Widening Participation activities, and Student Voice-led campaigns.



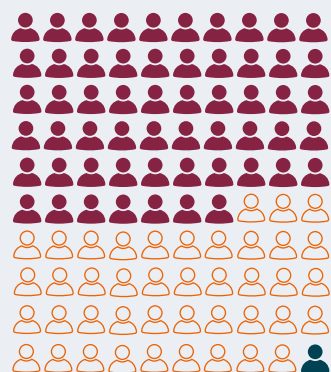
CHALLENGES & PRIORITIES

- **Sustaining long-term impact** when resource constraints, particularly staff time, prevents us delivering deeper, more embedded community initiatives
- **Maximising the impact of Student Voice** which is still evolving and could further integrate into community engagement efforts
- **Evaluating activities by compiling richer and more timely data** so we can develop comprehensive, institution-wide understanding of activities.

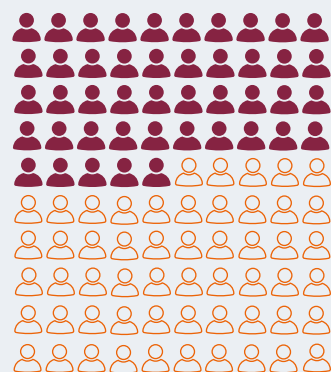
“Our second International Women’s Day event was an extraordinary coming together of performers, researchers, thought leaders and campaigners. Together, we powerfully learnt why #AccelerateAction is more important than ever”

- Cherise Weaver, Head of EDI

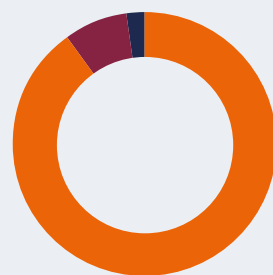
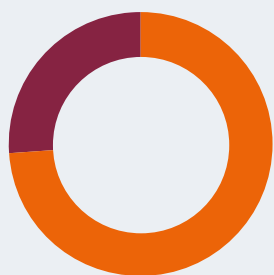
1,089
Students



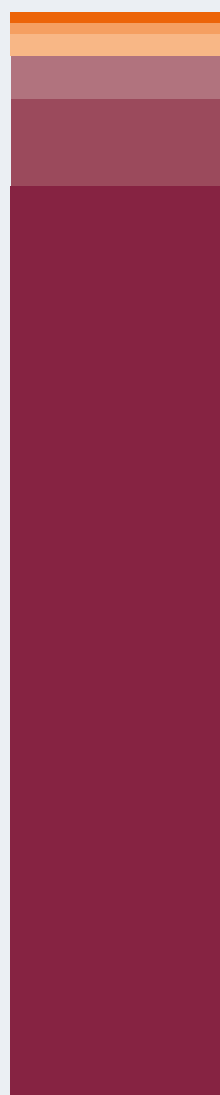
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Staff



Gender: 57% of students and 45% of staff are **female**. 1% of students identify as **other**



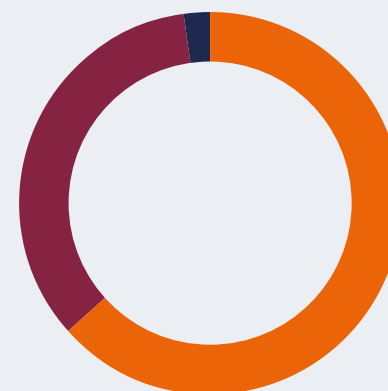
Nationality: 90% of staff and 74% of students are **British Nationals**. 2% of staff's nationality is **not known**



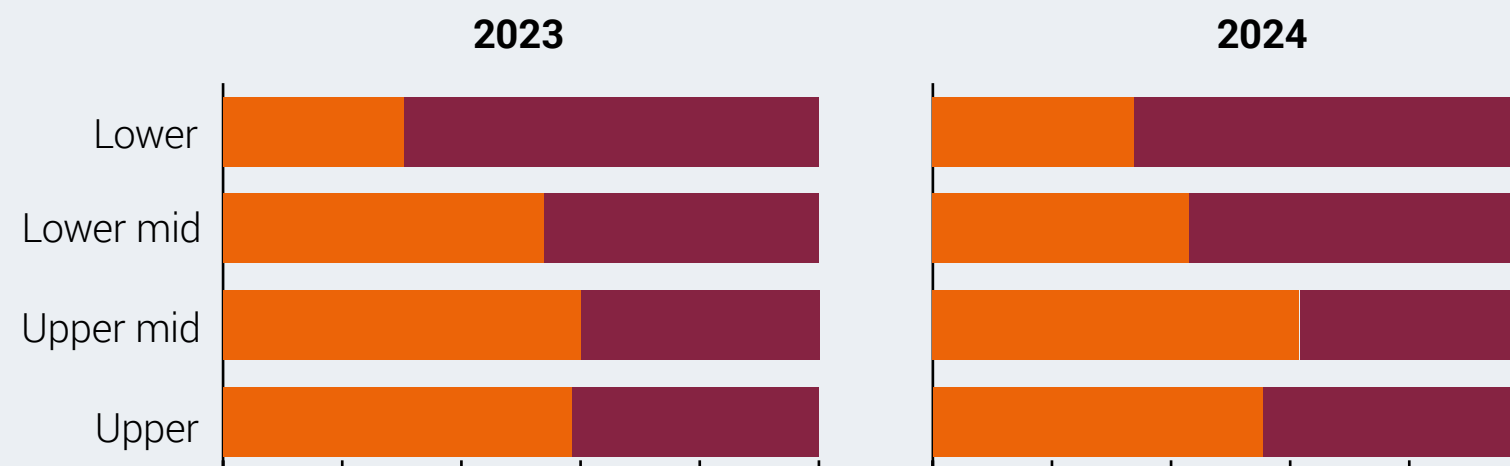
Ethnicity 84% of students and 83% of staff are **white**; 8% and 6% are **mixed**; 4% and 1% are **Asian**; 2% and 3% are **Black**; 1% and 2% are **Other**; and 1% and 5% are **not known**



Sexuality: 54% of students are **heterosexual**, 17% of students' sexuality is **not known**, 16% are **bisexual**, 10% are **gay or lesbian**; and 2% are an **other sexuality**



Disability: 64% of students have **no known disability**. 35% have a **disability**, of which 12% have a Learning disability and 12% have a Mental health condition. The disability of 2% is **not known**



Gender pay gap: In 2024, there were more **women** than **men** in the lower (66.2% vs 33.8%) and lower mid salary quartiles (56.9% vs 43.1%). The pattern is reversed at the upper mid (38.5% vs 61.5%) and upper (44.6% vs 55.4%)

REFLECTIONS & NEXT STEPS

This Annual Equity Report enables us to reflect on our progress and look ahead. We have built strong foundations — creating systems, structures and a culture that enable Equity to become more deeply embedded across LIPA.

We know, however, that equity work is never complete. Progress brings with it the responsibility to go further, to listen more deeply, and to act with purpose.

I am proud of what our community has achieved — and mindful of the challenges we continue to face.

Guided by this report, and shaped by the voices of our students, staff and wider stakeholders, we have identified five priorities:

- **Strengthening data and insight** to ensure decisions are shaped by evidence and lived experience.
- **Amplifying student and staff voice** to foster a participatory approach to equity.
- **Building capacity and confidence** so that equity is a shared responsibility across our community.
- **Deepening community engagement** through long-term partnerships.
- **Sustaining transparency and visibility** — celebrating progress and acknowledging challenge.

Equity is not a project — it is a mindset and a shared practice. Together, we will continue to build a culture where everyone at LIPA can belong, thrive and succeed.

Simon

Simon Fowler
Council Director and Chair of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee



