



# ACCESS & PARTICIPATION STATEMENT 2019-20-21

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# ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION STATEMENT 2019-20-21

## INTRODUCTION

This statement aims to demonstrate how London Film Academy (LFA) takes active steps to encourage access and participation for under-represented and disadvantaged students. Widening access to students from these groups and supporting them through the entire educational life-cycle has a significant impact on social mobility, student well-being and success, and is a driving force behind the Academy's development strategy.

LFA is a respected film & TV education and training establishment that delivers professional-standard quality, innovation and continued student and graduate career development in a collaborative and personable way.

LFA aims to provide a diverse and inclusive learning environment that guides and prepares multi-skilled, adaptable and creative filmmakers ready for employment in the film & TV industry by encouraging an appreciation of all roles in the filmmaking process and an understanding of teamwork.

LFA is a diverse, inclusive and professional academic community that respects individuals and enables them to strive for success in order to contribute positively and sustainably to the local, national and international world of filmmaking and to wider society in general.

Consequently, students at LFA can be confident that they have joined an institution that is serious about education and one that strives to deliver courses of the highest quality within an environment that ensures an outstanding student experience to those of all backgrounds.

We publish this Access and Participation Statement not only to meet regulatory requirements but also to inform prospective students who will want to know whether their particular characteristics are represented within the student body. This document sets out the following:

1. Analysis of the Academy's current student body, by socio-economic background, ethnicity, age, and disability; identification of underrepresentation of any particular group.
2. The Academy's ambitions and strategy in widening access and participation to underrepresented groups.
3. The activities currently undertaken to widen access; and the activities which support completion and success.
4. Our targets, investment and supporting policies.
5. Self-evaluation of Access and Participation

## PART ONE: ANALYSIS CURRENT STUDENT BODY AT LFA



## SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

LFA is located in Fulham Broadway, in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, West London. Students can access local student accommodation and there are good transport links to the rest of London and further afield and both underground and overground stations within walking distance of the LFA.

During term-time 91.7% of our full-time student population reside across a wide area of the London with 35.4% living in the borough itself. Only 8.3% live outside of London with a daily commute to the Academy.

Although POLAR does not offer a precise measure of socio-economic disadvantage it does measure the likelihood of entry to higher education. To analyse the POLAR 4 data of our UK domiciled students (17) we can see that the majority of students come from areas where there is high participation in higher education. None of our students reside in areas falling in Quintile 1 of the POLAR 4 data set, i.e. the areas with the lowest rates of participation in H.E.

	UK LFA Domiciled Students	%
5th Quintile	10	59%
4th Quintile	4	24%
3rd Quintile	2	12%
2nd Quintile	1	6%
1st Quintile	0	0%
Total Students	17	

It is difficult to collect data from students regarding their financial background as they are not means tested. We have observed that students applying to us cannot rely on government supported loans SLC because our all-inclusive course fees are greater than the amount of money that a student can borrow. The student is therefore dependent on raising additional money through private means. We therefore understand our biggest obstacle in attracting students from a low socio-economic background is access to finance.

Since our inception back in 2001 as LFA we have always chosen to financially assist up to a third of course cohort through self-funded scholarships and bursaries. Last year we launched a "Pioneer's Award" (worth £23,000), a fully funded place on our post-graduate course, for a student who would not otherwise be able to afford the course. This award was financially supported by a founding member Baroness Kidron and this year by the Concordia Foundation. In addition, we introduced several Team Assistant positions for UK/EU nationals where students can earn up to £5,000 per year working for the Academy, in order to help fund their courses, which in addition provides them with work experience in the sector.



## ETHNICITY

Analysis of the current student body compared to the overall population of London shows that minority ethnicities are well represented at LFA.

Due to the relatively small size of the institution a highly granular analysis of each ethnicity is not very insightful, so for this purpose we have used broad categories. The ethnicity of our current student population falls into the following proportions:

Category	Ethnicities included	Percentage of current UK student body at LFA	Percentage of current whole student body at LFA	Percentage in the population of London	Percentage in the UK	HESA statistics for UK domiciled students for in an AP institution for higher education 2017/18
<b>Asian</b>	Bangladeshi Chinese Indian Pakistani Asian other	0%	9%	18.5%	6.6%	14%
<b>Black</b>	Black African Black Caribbean Black other	6%	5%	13.3%	2.7%	24%
<b>Mixed</b>	Mixed White/Asian, Mixed White/Black African, Mixed White/Black Caribbean, Mixed other	19%	14%	5%	1.9%	4%
<b>White</b>	White British White Irish White other	75%	68%	59.8%	87.9%	54%
<b>Other</b>	Arab, Any Other	0%	5%	3.4%	0.9%	4%

To compare this with the population of London as a whole we have looked at the government source here:

<https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/british-population/national-and-regional-populations/regional-ethnic-diversity/latest>.

To compare this with the population of UK domiciled students in an Alternative provider (AP) higher education institution at the government associated source HESA:

<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/sb254/figure-4#notes>



As you can see from the table LFA is underrepresented in its UK Asian and Arab population but over represented in our Mixed ethnicities compared to London/UK population figures and HESA.

We are pleased to note that we have an excellent representation of “Mixed” ethnicities where we see figures significantly higher (15%) than average for either London (5%), UK (1.9%) or HESA (4%).

It is interesting that LFA has managed to attract a good cross-section of ethnicity for the student body as a whole but for UK nationals we have identified that we would like to improve our Asian and Arab representation.

## GENDER

We believe that male/female equality is important and we recently identified that there were more male applicants and enrolments on our full-time courses. As a result we instigated and raised funds for a Pioneer’s Award where we would co-finance a fully-funded place for a female studying on our postgraduate level Filmmaking Diploma course. Since then we have seen an increase in female applicants for that particular course and for this May intake we now have a 70/30 F/M split so in time we may need to readdress the balance! Please note we have very few student population numbers so one or two students can heavily sway the statistics. Nerveless we have identified this as an area for improvement.

	LFA statistics for total student population for 2018/19	HESA statistics for UK domiciled students for in an AP institution for higher education 2017/18
Female	40%	54%
Male	60%	46%

Source data: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/sb254/figure-4#notes>

## MATURE STUDENTS

LFA has always had a good representation of students between the ages of 21-35 mainly because since its inception it traditionally delivered postgraduate level courses. Last year saw the introduction of a Bachelor of Arts degree and our 18-21 student numbers increased to become a significant part of our student body (40%).

Currently 94% of the student body are under the age of 35 and if we compare ourselves to Alternative Providers (AP) then our mature (35+) student numbers are significantly lower. Consequently we identified as an area for improvement to increase our mature student population (35+).

Age range	LFA statistics for total student population	HESA statistics students for in an AP for higher education 2017/18
18 – 21	40%	19%
22 – 25	27%	28%
26 – 35	27%	15%
35+: 2	6%	38%



Source data: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/sb254/figure-4#notes>

## DISABLED STUDENTS

The number of students who have identified as either disabled or with learning difficulties forms 18% of our student population well above that of other APs according to HESA statistics (<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/14-02-2019/sb254-higher-education-student-statistics-APs/numbers>).

We believe this is due to the positive Academy-wide approach to disability. We have introduced several initiatives to support the wellbeing whilst the students are on the courses and our staff at all levels are engaged with supporting and speaking openly about disability.

Disability data collected for HESA	Total Student population	%	UK nationals student population	%	HESA students at an AP 2017/18	%
Number students in total	48	100%	17	100%	71,050	100%
No Known disability	39	81%	14	82%	65,550	88%
Known disability	9	18%	3	18%	8,500	12%

Source data:

<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/14-02-2019/sb254-higher-education-student-statistics-APs/numbers>

## PART TWO: THE ACADEMY'S AMBITION AND STRATEGY

The Academy seeks to contribute to the national strategy of widening access and participation to underrepresented groups. At present we have a clear view of our current performance and can identify three areas where we would like to improve.

1. Equality in female male enrolments
2. Increase in students over age of 35
3. Increase in UK domiciled students identifying as Asian or Arab

Firstly, the ratio of female to male students will continue to be monitored to see if the work we have been doing over the recent years is starting to readdress the balance and bring it more in line with a 50/50 dynamic. Meanwhile we will continue to seek funding to support the Pioneer's award and as our student numbers increase due to launch of our BA(Hons) in Filmmaking we will use marketing and communication to encourage applications from women.

Secondly, we aim to double the proportion of students over the age of 35 from 6% to 12% initially and do further research into trends regarding students of this age studying Filmmaking and the employment market. For example, the typical positions in the industry may require long hours and therefore disadvantage mature students who may have other time or financial constraints. These changes will be addressed when we have a greater awareness of the barriers to enrolment of this age group.



Thirdly to increase the number of UK domiciled students of Asian and Arab/other ethnicity from 0% to at least 5-10% of the student body. The overall aim is to have representation from all ethnicities and line with the UK population. These changes will be achieved by means of engaging proactively with educational agents within the Asian/Arab communities and targeted 'outreach programmes' partnering with the appropriate film festivals, schools, colleges, youth organisations, faith organisations and other relevant community bodies.

All three targets will benefit from us reviewing our marketing materials to encourage and inspire the type of student we are looking to attract as well as improve how we talk about what we currently offer students.

LFA has consulted with the current students in developing this Access and Participation Statement. They are supportive of the work that is being undertaken and their feedback has been taken into account.

## PART THREE: OUR CURRENT ACTIVITIES AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

### HOW WE WIDEN PARTICIPATION AND IMPROVE ACCESS

1. **Representation** from gender to ethnicity that ranges from tutors/actors employed to deliver classes to script development. Activities include compulsory classes on representation at script development stage, course deliverers booking tutors and actors that demonstrate a range of ethnicities as well as gender equality, students are introduced to films that show a good range of representations on and off screen, and assignment briefs actively encourage representation
2. **Flexibility** for students with disabilities, and mature students with families or part-time work. Due to the small cohort sizes we get to know our students well and encourage them to talk to us if they need additional time to complete their work.
3. **Wellbeing** is actively encouraged at the LFA. LFA Staff are given award-winning health insurance and wellbeing solutions through Westfield Health and are being given Mental Health First Aid Training, so they best support the students. Students are given a variety of classes on wellbeing from breathwork to careers advice on how to manage life as a freelancer. Mental health and wellbeing are openly and positively talked about within the LFA. Students have several one-to-one meetings with members of staff/personal tutors and are contacted if absent more than one day.
4. **Students with English as a second language** have their needs identified at interview stage and where the level of English is causing a barrier to entry onto a course, applicants are given an option to take up an English language courses at preferential rates.
5. **Courses with rolling intakes:** The Academy recognises that not everyone's life falls into the normal academic cycle and therefore some full-time course offer intakes throughout the year including September, October and May.
6. **Students without the relevant academic qualifications** may use previous relevant work experience in addition to other certified learning to gain entry to a course. For students who have obtained relevant credits elsewhere, the LFA applies a process of





Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). In addition, applicants have an option to take up an LFA short course to test their abilities (this short course fee is then deducted from the full-time course fee).

7. **Disabled learners** are given flexibility in how they access the course. Course deliverers work with students to ensure relevant health information is shared appropriately to support their learning.
8. **Employability** is the focus of our courses. The LFA holds several individual careers meetings to develop a personal career strategy for each student, as well as general sessions on how to create CVs etc. The LFA funds students' participation and attendance of industry relevant festivals to support networking opportunities and knowledge of new developments and practices within the industry. The BA(Hons) in Filmmaking has embedded work placement modules, organised by LFA, that enable students to gain meaningful work experience opportunities. Throughout all the full-time courses sessions are scheduled with guest speakers explore different career paths for students to achieve their ambitions.
9. **Helping 'Returners to education'**. The LFA encourages mature 'returners to education' through the structure of the course that assumes no prior subject specific knowledge. Where there are gaps in academic education, these are identified, and relevant support is offered. Our retention, progression and achievement within this group is excellent. All BA(Hons) in Filmmaking students are given study skills sessions to support successful achievement in their academic study.

#### HOW WE SUPPORT OUR STUDENTS TO SUCCEED IN THEIR STUDIES

The list below provides a summary of activities in place at LFA that support the students' learning, well-being and success:

1. Comprehensive pre-enrolment Information
2. Detailed Induction programme
3. Transitional learning support through short pre-sessional filmmaking courses, where appropriate
4. Study Skills and academic writing support classes
5. Introductory classes that assume no prior knowledge to establish a common knowledge base
6. Low tutor-to-student ratios and high contact hours per week
7. Strict attendance policy with monitoring and poor performance support
8. Access to discounted courses at a partner institution of English as a foreign language classes
9. Course deliverers' "open door" policy
10. Scheduled Personal Tutor or Course Deliverers meetings with students to any discuss issues they might have
11. Major assignments have timely verbal and written feedback sessions
12. Flexible delivery of feedback or classes that takes into account individual needs
13. Assignment focussed workshops and seminars
14. Online Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) or information portal available 24/7



15. Welfare staff members are trained in supporting issues around mental health and have a thorough knowledge of the specialist support services available locally to which learners can be signposted.
16. Guest speakers and industry visits
17. Careers guidance (termly careers meetings, personalised guidance on employment and further study, LFA Filmmakers' Club, job listings, access to events and festivals)

The LFA's learning and teaching strategy recognises the benefit of adopting a pedagogic approach for its learners that does not assume prior subject knowledge. Students are taught in small groups by industry practitioners, ensuring that students receive relevant subject knowledge and progress steadily in the different connected film disciplines. Course deliverers have substantial contact with each student and are well placed to identify and support their needs.

## PART FOUR:

### SUMMARY TARGETS

Specific targets to be met during the 2019/20/21 academic year may be summarised as follows:

1. Equality in female male enrolments
2. Increase the proportion mature student (35+) enrolled to 12% of the student body
3. Increase the proportion of UK domiciled students with Asian and/or Arab ethnicity to at least 5% of the student body

### INVESTMENT

It is not possible at present to be precise about the investment that will be made in improving access. Part of our development work leading up to the new academic year will be to cost the improvement events identified in this statement and allocate resources as required.

### POLICIES THAT SUPPORT OUR ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLANS

LFA believes in the principle of freedom from discrimination for everyone, regardless of their age, gender, disability, ethnic or national origins, marital status, sexual orientation, social background or religious beliefs, or of being part of any other group which may have experienced discrimination. The LFA aims to provide a real equality of opportunity for all existing learners and staff and supports the same for the wider community.



The LFA's Access and Participation Statement is supported through the application of a number of other policies including (but not limited to):

- Disability Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Admissions Policy

#### PART FIVE: HOW WE EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR ACTIVITIES

The LFA has a management structure and ethos that ensures the targets set are realistic and achievable, recorded in the Academy wide LFA Operational Plan and regularly evaluated and recorded at our Executive Committee Meetings. The collection and analysis of appropriate data on an on-going basis will be essential if the targets stated above are to be achieved.

Data will be collected in line with HESA guidelines at multiple points during the academic cycle including: application, admission, induction, transition, study phase, progression points, completion and leaver information. It will be collected through feedback from participants in specific events and student consultations. Data will be collated throughout the year and reported through the LFA's Committee structure to ensure that evaluation is embedded in the LFA's strategy.

