

alra Academy of Live & Recorded Arts

Widening Participation Strategy

ALRA is dedicated to helping students of all backgrounds and ages to enter the world of live and recorded arts. We offer three types of access provision for students: **School/College outreach auditions, regional auditions, preliminary online assessments, collaborative partners and network building.**

Outreach & Regional Auditions

To ensure that students who can't afford to travel to Wigan or London for our in house auditions we travel to their college or offer a regional audition. Our strategy for determining which colleges/regions to visit includes highlighting areas of deprivation where there is a low level of engagement in the performing arts. We provide Senior Staff members for **ALRA** who visit the School/Venue and offer information about accessing higher education, the potential employment opportunities post **ALRA** as well as a workshop based audition.

We hold outreach auditions at the following venues most years:

- Barton Peveril
- York College
- Cirencester
- Generation Arts
- Bubble Theatre
- SGS College
- Cathedral Academy Wakefield
- Guernsey College
- Warrington College
- Blackpool Sixth Form
- Loughborough College
- Blackpool Sixth Form
- Leicester College
- Read College
- Nescot College
- Guernsey College
- York College
- Manchester College
- SGS College
- Runshaw College

- Exeter College
- Cirencester College
- Cardiff + Vale College
- Manchester Regional
- Glasgow Regional
- Middlesbrough Regional

Through this engagement we have made access to auditions possible for 100's of young people that would not normally access this work.

Preliminary Online Assessment

ALRA understands the high costs involved for international students wishing to study in the UK who are required to attend an audition. We have a preliminary stage for international applicants, which we hope will result in reduced costs for some of our overseas applicants. Pieces must be recorded and posted to **YouTube** and a link supplied to the Registrar.

Work will be assessed and if successful students are invited to audition at **ALRA** in London or Wigan to complete the full audition.

Network Building

We build our networks to access diverse student populations who would not normally be aware of ALRA or the opportunities that our unique training provide.

Through our network building we attend higher education events, run workshops for potential students.

Over the course of the year we will run Higher Education and Careers events at Richmond Upon Thames Tertiary College, Paston 6th Form College (North Norfolk) and NESCOL College, Surrey.

We have been represented at the following conferences and events:

- Compose Your Future Oct 2016 (London and Manchester)
- The Higher Education Show Oct 2016
- Theatre Craft Show Nov 2016
- Theatre 2016
- Brit School Careers and HE Event - Jan 2017
- Music & Drama Education Expo - Feb 2017

Retention

ALRA demonstrates an exceptionally high record of retaining students between all levels of study with 90% of students continuing to throughout the their courses at high success rates.

Collaborative Partners

Leicester College

ALRA have developed a partnership with the college that allows our staff to enhance the quality of their Level 4 – 6 delivery with input and mentoring from our specialist staff in areas such as acting for camera, movement and voice. The college has the option of selecting students in collaboration

with **ALRA** to access our unique level 6 **University Certificate** (subject to validation in 2018) allowing them accelerated entry to our [MA in Professional Acting](#). Therefore learners will be able to engage in an integrated level 7 programme of study spanning two sites and two institutions in just over three years. Leicester are within a deprived postal code allowing us to integrate our model for excellence within actor training in an area that would not normally receive this level of professional engagement.

National Opera Studio

ALRA is currently developing a partnership look at cross curricular engagement with this professional opera company. We aim to be a strategic part of their new Diversity project for 2018 developing new opportunities for young diverse people to access opera.

Evaluation and monitoring

We engage in extensive evaluation and monitoring of WP experiences both successful and perceived as unsuccessful through per engagement. This involves looking at the following documentation and activities within the organisation. Feedback on this is overseen by the Vice Principal (Operations and Student Experience).

Areas we review:

- Outreach
- Partner and KMPF Schools
- FE colleges
- Academy sponsorship
- Community outreach and the Access and Certificate Programmes
- Student success and retention
- Student transition from the University
- Employability and internships
- Postgraduate study
- Admissions policy and procedures
- Scholarships and Stipends
- Governance and organisation
- Resources and supporting documentation

Network Building

We invest in building on our networks with diverse organisations such as Diversity Arts and Papa Tango theatre company. Our aim is to connect up organisations that would not normal be exposed to our training and enhance our diverse practice by drawing on their insights through collaborative conversation and strategic recruitment for our courses.

We host the Monologue Slam which champions diversity within performance, allowing the curation of various happening within both North and South campuses to enable to multiple benefits of access to professionals.

Equality and Diversity within the curriculum

As an organisation we promote the use of queer theatre texts and gender blind casting within level 4,5 and 7 of our courses. Our approach to ethnicity, religion, gender and sexuality within the content of our modular reading list and choice of text is aligned to Critical Theory ideologies exacerbating our programme aims and defining the currency of our work as an academy.

Equality and Diversity within the organization

Where possible we look to promote diversity within the leadership team of the academy and in 2018 we are beginning a targeting tutor development scheme working with young directors who identify as BAME to assist Lead Tutors across the academy in paid positions, therefore actively looking to increase the work force.

At admission stage students with protected characteristics are offered foundation year training as a pre-requisite to training on the MA or BA at no extra cost to align their experiences more closely with the expectation of our programme rules. This financial commitment from the academy represents our commitment to developing a diverse acting workforce for the future of the industry.