



Imperial Society of
Teachers of Dancing

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Introduction

The Society is an educational charity whose mission is to educate the public in the art of dancing in all its forms. Like all dance teachers, we have seen first-hand the transformational power of dance – its ability to unlock a child’s creative, expressive potential; to provide opportunities for embodied learning and to transcend social and cultural divides. At the Society we all share a passion for teaching dance, yet we must acknowledge that our organisation is neither representatively diverse nor inclusive. Without providing sustained opportunity to access dance classes for all, we can’t achieve our charitable purpose, so we are fully committed to promoting and achieving Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) across all levels of the Society.

We aim to have an inclusive organisational culture, that values merit, openness, fairness and transparency. We want everyone we have contact with, both offline and online, to feel valued and respected and our activities and general ways of working to demonstrate our stated commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion¹. We value the different perspectives and experiences that everyone can bring to us.

Mainstreaming EDI is our goal - we will work energetically toward this vision through embedding diversity and inclusion into our behaviours and all that we do. We will highlight the importance of equity for all individuals and partner organisations and promote its positive contribution. We will draw on the rich variety of our dance genres and harness the diverse contributions and considerable talents of our staff, members and partners to achieve our vision in line with our organisational values and EDI principles.

Approach

We adopt the practice recommended by the Charity Governance Code <https://www.charitygovernancecode.org/en/6-diversity>:

- Assess
- Plan
- Act
- Report

Assess - Assessing and understanding of systems and culture

This assessment is led by our Trustees who set the tone and direction of our EDI Policy. The assessment starts from the rationale (summarised below) motivating EDI. The process is supported by EDI Think Tanks established to:

- Build knowledge and expertise amongst Staff, Faculty Committees and Members.
- Provide forums for consultation and opportunities to feed diverse perspectives in the strategic planning process.
- Identify future EDI training needs to inform programming and staff / Examiner training.
- Suggest opportunities to raise awareness and share lived experience / good practice of EDI with Members and the broader dance community.
- Recommend EDI role models (e.g.: potential lecturers / future Examiners).
- Identify systemic barriers to EDI (including use of language and images; role models; dance clothing, shoes and hair styles; cultural references in syllabi; economic disparity; micro/macro/meso aggression, conscious/unconscious bias and othering and access to opportunity) and recommend strategies for overcoming these.

¹ “**Diversity**” is defined broadly to include various elements of human difference, including gender, race and ethnicity, faith, sexual orientation, disability and class. Nuanced definitions of diversity also recognise the intersectional nature of identity and the complex and cumulative ways in which different forms of discrimination (based upon these attributes) combine, overlap, and intersect. “**Equity**” involves the promotion of justice and equality of opportunity and outcomes within the procedures, processes and distribution of resources by institutions or systems. Tackling inequity requires an understanding of the underlying or root causes of disparities, both at the point of access and in terms of outcomes, within our society. “**Inclusion**” refers to the degree to which diverse individuals are able to participate fully in all aspects of activity, including decision-making. While a truly ‘inclusive’ group is necessarily diverse, a ‘diverse’ group may or may not be ‘inclusive’.

Three areas of particular focus for these think tanks are:

- racial diversity
- LGBTQI+ and gender
- and disability inclusion.

Each think tank will include representatives from Staff, Faculty Committees, Members, Trustees and external stakeholders.

We will support our members to assess their own EDI situations, and to monitor improvements.

Plan - Setting context-specific and realistic plans and targets

The work of the think tanks will enable plans and targets covering:

- Training for staff, examiners and members
- Benchmarking against relevant organisations
- Removing systemic barriers to access the Society
- Decolonising our curriculum

Act - Taking action and monitoring performance

Action and monitoring will cover all groups:

- 1** Members of the Society
- 2** Members of the public who benefit from its services, to educate the public in the art of dancing in all its forms.
- 3** Staff
- 4** Examiners
- 5** Trustees
- 6** Volunteers

We require members to adhere to this policy and will provide training to enable awareness of EDI issues and equip them to take appropriate action. Members should commit to undertaking this, or equivalent, training and to also provide such training for their staff. We encourage members to monitor the diversity of participants in their activities and to share aggregate anonymous data with us so that we can monitor and report on progress.

Report - Publishing performance information and learning

We encourage anyone who has a suggestion or concern related to this policy to contact us by email governance@istd.org

We will include in our annual Report and Accounts a summary of the actions we have taken and their impact. We will also report plans that we have yet to implement.

Actions already taking place or being planned across all these areas are summarised in the Appendix.

Rationale

Our approach to EDI is motivated by a Moral Case, a Business Case and a Legal Case

Moral Case

It is important to value all people equally and to be impartial and respectful, and we are committed to do so. Our charitable mission is to educate the public in the art of dancing in all its forms. All people can benefit, in different ways, from dance and by ensuring EDI across the Society we will make a positive contribution to diversifying the talent pipeline to the dance industry.

Business Case

Many studies demonstrate that activities are enhanced by a broad diversity of participants, whether the activity is innovation, decision-making, performing or employment.

Legal Case

The Society takes all necessary steps to ensure that its workplace and wider activities are free from unlawful and unfair discrimination. We will not discriminate because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity/paternity/adoption/ surrogacy, race (which includes nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or health status. We will not discriminate because of any other irrelevant factors. We are actively working to remove direct and indirect discrimination.

Appendix

Below we lay out the Society's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Plan for 2021 and our four key focus areas.

Assess

- The Society was founded on user-led principles – created by dance teachers for dance teachers. Our charitable purpose is to educate the public in the art of dancing. This means ensuring that **everyone** can participate in our work.
- During 2021 we will undertake a strategic review of the Society's activities, which will invite feedback from a range of stakeholders.
- To assess and better understand barriers to the Society, three Think Tanks have been established with a focus on Racial Diversity, Disability Inclusion and LGBTQI+ and gender. Each Think Tank is formed of stakeholders drawn from across and beyond the Society and will recommend strategies for overcoming barriers and improving access.
- We strive to listen, to be open to feedback and response to challenges and questions. We want to work with diverse communities to improve our delivery, reach and engagement. If you would like to discuss this policy, please contact us at: governance@istd.org
- EDI is also a standing agenda item at all Leadership and Trustee meetings, so that we always assess the broader impact of our actions and decisions.

Plan

- To affect meaningful change, we will upskill staff, examiners, members and trustees. We have committed to an annual training programme, including a series of free member events designed to raise awareness of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.
- These events will be complemented by Continuing Professional Development programmes that will support our members to embed EDI within their teaching. In 2020 we delivered 8 courses towards this goal.
- Our dance faculty specialists are also reviewing our syllabus specifications to ensure that any unintentional barriers are removed and that contextual information acknowledges the diverse roots and modern day application of each genre.
- To ensure we achieve best practice, we will benchmark ourselves against leading EDI organisations and we have adopted the Eight Principles to Address the Diversity Deficit in Charity Leadership: <https://www.acevo.org.uk/eight-principles-to-address-the-diversity-deficit-in-charity-leadership/>
- Similarly, members will be required to sign up to our published EDI policy when they join or renew their membership.
- And our Trustees will set permanent and minimum targets for diversity that reflect the participants, donors, beneficiaries and the population of the area that the charity operates in.

Act

- We will educate our members and share good practice through CPD and guest speaker discussions.
- We will actively showcase a range of people and perspectives in our Dance magazine, newsletters, social media content and website – keeping in mind the range of ages, ethnicity, gender, geographic locations and social backgrounds of those we feature.
- Our public commitment also supported by Patrons who reflect our EDI goals.
- We will embed our EDI commitment in new codes of conduct for Examiners, Members, Staff and Trustees.
- Each year we provide bursaries to remove economic barriers to dance teacher training, so that access to the Society is as broad as possible and we have recently added bursaries to support teachers with improving access to their schools.
- This year, our new Challenge Fund will also support exam candidates from financially disadvantaged families with the cost of taking their exams.
- Our redesigned Affiliate Membership category welcomes teachers who do not hold our qualifications to join the Society and thereby benefit from our support and guidance.

- We also work in partnership with other organisations who share our EDI goals, including: The Royal Opera House *Chance to Dance Programme* and a long-term research project into *Pathways to Progression for Disabled Dancers* with Stoppag Dance and the University of Bedfordshire.

Report

- We will gather and record protected characteristics for staff, examiners, members and trustees so that we can monitor the demographic of those who work or interact with us and then use this data to set meaningful improvement targets.
- We will also ask our members to gather similar data for their pupils and to share this with us in an anonymised form.
- We will report on training undertaken by Staff, Examiners, Members and Trustees and the numbers that have completed it.
- Our Annual Report and Accounts will then include summary of the actions we have taken and their impact. We will also report plans that we have yet to implement.

The Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing exists to advance excellence in dance teaching and education. Membership of the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing is the passport to artistic and professional progression. Find out more **istd.org**



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