

Strategic Plan



150 | 2030

GUILD
HALL
SCHOOL



Introducing our Strategic Plan 2023–2030

Guildhall School of Music & Drama is a vibrant, international community of musicians, actors and production artists in the heart of the City of London.

Ranked as one of the top ten performing arts institutions in the world*, as well as the number one institution in both the Guardian University Guide music league table and the Complete University Guide arts drama and music league table**, we deliver world-class professional training in partnership with distinguished artists, companies and ensembles.

A global leader in creative and professional practice, we promote innovation, experiment and research, and are also one of the UK's leading providers of lifelong learning in the performing arts, offering inspiring training for children, young people, adult learners, and creative and business professionals.

Our Strategic Plan is structured within a seven-year timeframe, leading up to the significant milestone of our 150th anniversary in 2030.

It is intended to be dynamic and adaptable. As an institution supported by the City of London Corporation, we will align our objectives with the next iteration of the City of London's Corporate Plan and with Destination City, the new vision for the Square Mile; and we will update our plan accordingly considering the outcomes of these exercises.

The Plan is additionally informed by a series of reviews that are underway within the School, including reviews of our business model, estate arrangements, and internal academic governance structures.

1st

in the 2023 Guardian University Guide music league table

1st

in the Arts, Drama & Music Complete University Guide League Table 2023 & 2024

1st

among music conservatoires for research in the Research Excellence Framework 2021

*QS World University Rankings 2023

**Guardian University Guide music subject league table 2023; Complete University Guide Arts Drama and Music league table 2024

Principal's foreword



/// Guildhall School is a uniquely positioned institution, and this Strategic Plan has been developed at a unique time in our history. We have sought to recognise the challenges and opportunities that arise for us as an internationally acclaimed, London-based conservatoire in a fast-changing context for higher education, the performing arts, and civic cultures nationally and internationally.

The global socio-political landscape, at the time of writing, is one of super-complexity and uncertainty: political systems under threat and the rise of extreme ideologies; challenges arising in relation to mass migration; a rapidly increasing climate crisis; the uneven acceleration of technological development, which has benefitted some areas of the globe and not others; a lack of trust in authorities and corporations; and 'post-truth' discourse playing out on social media and in the political sphere. Closer to home, the impact of Brexit, the pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and policy decisions in specific areas including immigration, arts funding, music education and

the cost-of-living crisis, mean that our sector is experiencing increasing financial challenges and marked volatility.

Much of our context is informed by the performing arts industries with which Guildhall School engages – predominantly drama and theatre, music, opera, live events and digital production – and the higher education sector of which we are a part. Both areas are engaging with similar challenges and opportunities across the country, and indeed internationally. These include recent economic instability, and a concomitant requirement to reframe our business models. They partly relate to the acceleration of socio-cultural developments in the area of social justice and a recognition of the need to improve equity for individuals and groups. They include an exponential rate of recent technological development (for example in the areas of Artificial Intelligence, Extended Reality, and media dissemination) – all of which will change the way that the performing arts are produced, presented and consumed. And they necessarily require adaptation to the changing profile of our students and citizens, and their shifting assumptions, needs, and expectations. This has a bearing on the employment trajectories of our students and alumni, now and in the future. At Guildhall School we aim to prepare graduates who are both employable and enterprising, adaptable, artistically nimble, technologically flexible, and ready to engage in a lifetime of learning.

Our Strategic Plan seeks to be sensitive to this environment, and to articulate a new vision of our place and possibilities within it. We draw upon and celebrate the best of our history, with its deep structure of excellent training, teaching and industry engagement. And we aim to secure a future in which we are always alive to our moment and able continually to influence and reshape it. **///**

Professor Jonathan Vaughan
Principal

Our purpose, mission & values

Looking towards our 150th anniversary, Guildhall School has a distinguished story.

We train elite artists and practitioners, who are among the best in their field. Many of our alumni are household names around the world, a mark of our influence and impact. We are demonstrably world-class at what we do: rated in the top ten performing arts institutions in the world*, as well as the top institution of our kind in the country**. We are distinctive as a multi-disciplinary conservatoire.

We have a rich heritage of doing things differently: we were the first conservatoire in the UK to launch a degree in jazz, the first to provide degrees in music therapy, and have a long history of training students in socially engaged work and in interdisciplinary practice. We are one of the largest providers in the country of specialist music education for children. We are the only major training institution for electronic and produced music. Being bold and taking risks is in our DNA, and this is carried through in the aims of this Strategic Plan.

We don't always choose to speak about ourselves in this way, but we are unashamed of training exceptional people. We are also glad to identify as a conservatoire; and we believe conserving means evolution, not preservation. So we celebrate the achievements of the past and the present, whilst proactively embracing what we can be in the future. This means that who we are now, and who we would like to be, are not always the same.

The way we express that for the purposes of this strategy, and to our students, staff and wider community, is set out on the right.

We hold our values guided by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, and the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles).

*QS World University Rankings 2023

** Arts Drama & Music league table, Complete University Guide 2024

Our purpose is to

Be the home of exceptional training, research and partnership in the performing arts; helping people to live well, in a world worth living in.

We describe our mission as

Inspiring the extraordinary.

Underpinning our purpose & mission, we value being

ATTENTIVE

to show decency and kindness in everything we do.

BOLD

to try new things and step up and act when we can make things better.

CURIOUS

to ask questions, listen and learn, and remain inquisitive in order to improve.

DEDICATED

to approach our work and each other with commitment, enthusiasm and care.



Our themes

Our Strategic Plan has three cross-cutting themes that run across our aims and objectives.

1. A 'One School' approach, for all

Guildhall School's various areas and activities gain benefit from their mutual connection, working under common frameworks and systems that recognise the distinctness of departments. We recognise and celebrate intersections (of people, disciplines, departments, partner organisations), and difference. We want to be inclusive of all people regardless of their background, we want our buildings and activities to be welcoming and accessible, and we want to share our work as widely as possible. We also want to ensure the boundaries between the different levels of our training are porous, and that people at every stage of life can learn with us.

2. The contemporary conservatoire

From our founding as Britain's first municipal music college, housed in a warehouse, to our location in London's architecturally bold Barbican estate, we have always been a conservatoire that stands out. We are a progressive organisation and are not complacent; we embrace change and development. This is reflected in our work environment, our engagement with social change and sustainability, the pedagogic approaches of our teachers, the currency of our facilities and technologies, and our organisational culture. We ensure that our repertoire of public-facing work is broad, fresh and relevant. We advocate for the continuing importance of the performing arts, in a context where equity and sustainability matter. We are an all-round conservatoire for the twenty-first century, combining excellent training, education and performance, leading-edge research and knowledge exchange, civic and community engagement, and lifelong learning.

3. Delighting in the exceptional

We want to be the best, and to nurture and bring out the best in everyone we reach. We work hard continually to earn and maintain our standing as a world-leading conservatoire. We embrace the exceptional and value innovation, advanced skill, and virtuosity. We recruit highly talented staff; work with extraordinary partners; and enrol students who have the aptitude to become the foremost artists, practitioners, and cultural leaders of tomorrow. We aim to empower individuals to become the fullest version of themselves and bring skill and imagination to their workplace. We operate from high-specification facilities and, through our tailored infrastructures, support systems and operational processes, strive to provide the best environment possible.

Strategic aims

Our Strategic Plan is expressed through eight aims.

1. An enhanced business model

We will implement a business and financial model that provides for fiscal stability and opportunities for development as a world-leading organisation over the period of the Strategic Plan.

2. A refreshed and extended disciplinary scope and range

We will refresh our currency in our specific subject areas; increase our research activity and research grant capture; broaden our embrace of digital and technological innovation; extend our profile for genuinely interdisciplinary study and practice; and enhance our capacity as an all-round teaching, training and research organisation.

3. A focus on sustainability, civic responsibility and creative leadership

We will extend the scope of our work in sustainability and civic engagement for wide social benefit; and develop a sector-leading profile for training in areas of artistic, cultural and creative leadership and innovation.

4. A commitment to lifelong learning

We will remodel our portfolio, building on our current strengths in Under-18 and Short Course provision, to become a sector leader in Lifelong Learning, providing continuous educational opportunity for all.

5. Deeply-worked equity, diversity and inclusion

We will further our work in equity, diversity and inclusion, to be a reflective and developmental organisation where education and social justice work in tandem; and a community where everyone feels safe, differences are celebrated, and we support each other to learn, change and thrive.

6. Excellent people who do exceptional work

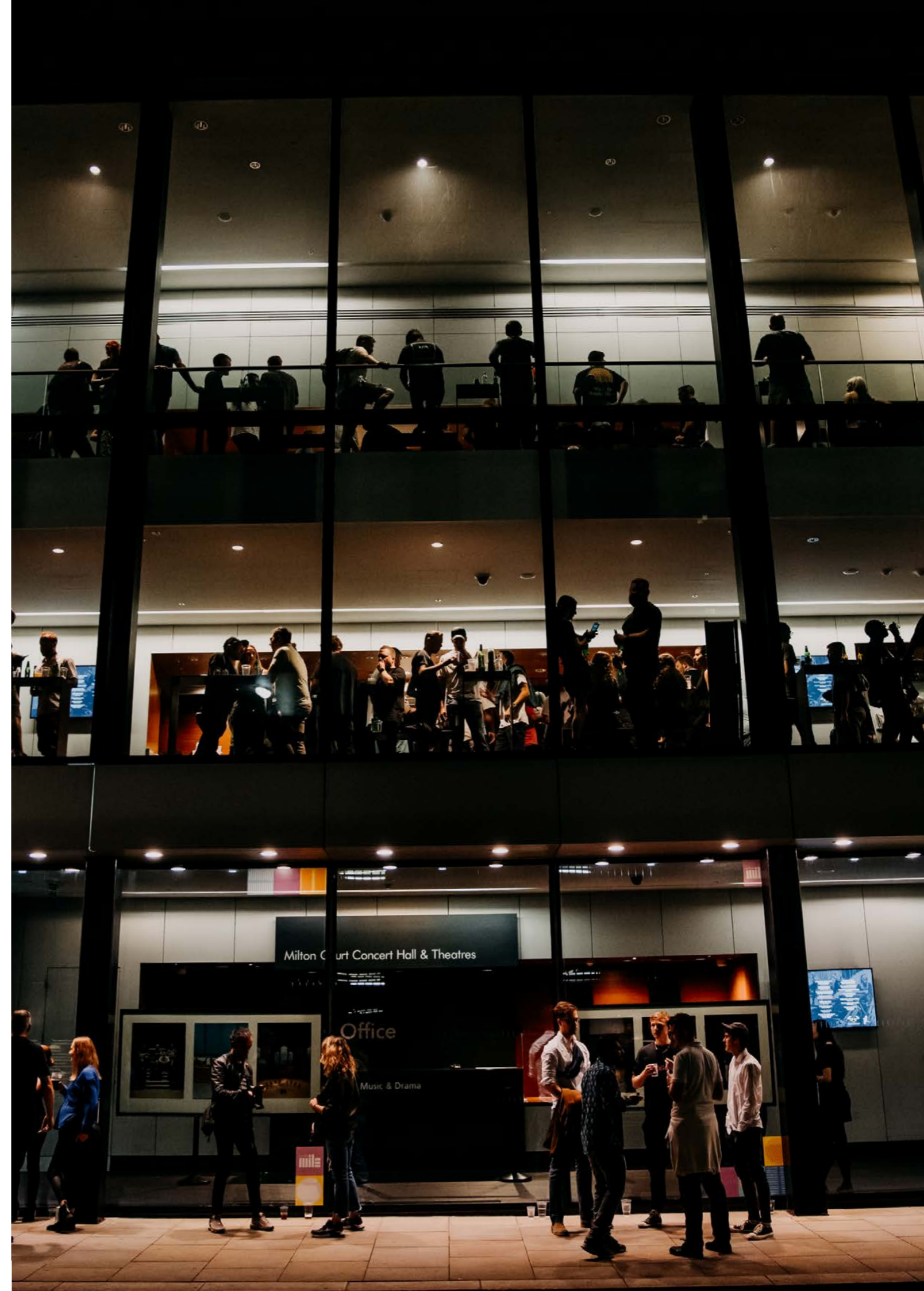
We will recruit and retain excellent staff and students; and provide a working environment in which all can achieve their full potential, with support for personal and professional development and wellbeing, and a community that treats everyone with dignity and respect.

7. State-of-the art technology and infrastructures

Through our cutting-edge technologies, we will pioneer new forms of performing arts presentation for a digital age. We will update and remodel our institutional management structures to support our work in contemporary contexts; and renew and extend our infrastructures (facilities, resources, systems, technologies) as a conservatoire aligned with industry-leading practices.

8. Strategic and impactful national and international partnerships

We will develop a national and international leadership role through formal partnerships with selected organisations, nationally and internationally, to increase our capacity in specific areas, enhance our profile and impact, and extend opportunity for staff and students.





Implementation

To provide a structure for implementation, the Strategic Plan is accompanied by an Operating Plan, separate from but integral to this document. The Operating Plan is divided into three phases of activity:

Years 1-2: while longer-term aspects of the plan will begin to unfold during this period, our initial priorities will focus on the outcome of a number of reviews which are currently in progress and are anticipated to inform the remaining phases of activity. At the end of this first period we will revisit the plan, and will make changes to outcomes or aims as necessary.

- Our priorities for Years 1-2:**
- A decision on the size and shape of our institution, including the scope and coverage of our subject areas, our higher education student numbers and the portfolio of our programmes.
 - A decision on the refurbishment of current building facilities and/or the provision of new facilities, informed by and in support of the revised institutional size and shape.
 - A plan for financial consolidation (including a refresh of core and discretionary areas for expenditure and allocations of resource) and income generation, modelling growth and development over the longer term.
 - Implementation of the recommendations of our governance review, to support decision-making and change management, particularly in the above areas.

Years 3-5: core development and implementation.

Years 6-7: completion and consolidation; monitoring and planning for next strategic plan cycle.

The Operating Plan provides for detailed planning, project delivery, and annual monitoring.

The Strategic Plan and the Operational Plan are realised through the following departmental plans and strategies:

- Music
- Drama
- Production Arts
- Research
- Teaching & Learning
- Lifelong Learning
- Under 18s
- Open Programmes
- Guildhall Young Artists
- Innovation
- Knowledge Exchange
- Guildhall Live Events
- Business & Financial
- Human Resources
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Staff Development & Training
- Student Experience
- Access & Participation
- Safeguarding
- Environmental Sustainability
- Estates & Facilities
- Marketing & Communications
- Development & Alumni Relations
- International
- Digital
- Digital Learning
- Information Technology

Our vision for 2030

We cannot entirely predict what challenges and opportunities are in store over the next seven years. However, we can confidently set out a vision for Guildhall School as we approach our 150th anniversary and outline what kind of institution we will be in 2030, should all elements of the Strategic Plan be delivered.

- We will be distinctive from our competitors as an exceptional and world-leading interdisciplinary performing arts conservatoire, operating at the intersections of Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, Research & Knowledge Exchange, and advanced industry practice.
- Our graduates will be immediately employable and will in their turn develop and change the industries in which they work.
- We will be financially stable, with a business model that allows for the implementation of long-term strategic planning and delivery of key initiatives.
- We will operate from a high-specification estate, able to accommodate all our activities, suitable to the range of specialist practices that we address, and fully accessible to all.
- We will work through infrastructures, processes and systems that are fit for purpose, suitable to a modern work environment, and aligned with our values.
- We will be known internationally as an exemplar of best practice in our pedagogy, our relations with our industries and peers, our organisational culture and behaviour, our modelling of sustainable and equitable processes, and our benefit to society.

- **New income streams**
- **New programmes**
- **New technologies**
- **New facilities**

