



## **Human Resources Strategy**

**March 2009**

**The Conservatoire for Dance and Drama  
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## **Introduction**

- 1 This is the Conservatoire's second human resources strategy. The Conservatoire's first Human Resources Strategy was completed in July 2004 to meet HEFCE's requirements and was one of the institution's first joint strategies for its affiliate schools and, at the time, encompassed the two founding schools and two new schools which had just joined. Since then, a further four schools have joined the Conservatoire, each with their own particular histories and methods of managing human resources, found to be appropriate to their varying sizes, methods of operation and stages of development.
- 2 The strategy is focused on the effective management and development of the staff of the Conservatoire and its eight affiliates. It is underpinned by the shared values expressed within the Strategic Plan as they relate to the employment of staff and is supported by and supports the Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes and the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy.

## **Context**

- 3 The Conservatoire for Dance and Drama was established in 2001 with a view to securing the future of conservatoire-level dance and drama vocational training within higher education. It is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity.
- 4 The Conservatoire's objectives are to enable its affiliates to deliver at the very highest level, undergraduate and postgraduate vocational training in dance, drama and circus arts and to undertake performance-based research of vocational relevance.
- 5 The Conservatoire was constructed as a new-model HEI with a unique confederal structure. This comprises an institutional partnership between the Conservatoire and its eight affiliate schools. The affiliates enter into collegial agreements with the Conservatoire for funding to provide training leading to HE qualifications. The relationship extends to full collegial participation by affiliates in the Conservatoire's deliberative processes, decision-making and administration. At the same time, the affiliates remain legally autonomous institutions. As individual organisations, they bear responsibility for delivering the training and education programmes and they engage the staff and provide the resources to carry this out.
- 6 The structure of responsibilities within the Conservatoire sets the framework for prioritising this human resources strategy. The Conservatoire has prime responsibility for the stewardship of public funds provided by HEFCE. This involves both establishing its own direct governance and employment practice, and also ensuring that the same is observed within its affiliated schools.
- 7 As the Conservatoire has expanded, collaborative ways of working have evolved and continue to do so. A balance has been struck between preserving the individuality and independence of affiliates and promoting areas of joint working where such working is useful and appropriate for them.
- 8 Considerable progress has been made since 2004 towards achieving the objectives of the first HR strategy. Each affiliate continues to retain its own terms and conditions of employment, appropriate to their location and the market conditions for dance, drama and

circus which differ widely from one another. The Conservatoire has produced a number of policy documents for itself as an employer of a small staff team and for the institution as a whole which have an impact on HR management and development.

9 The mission of the Conservatoire is:

“to advance the art forms of dance, drama and circus by preparing students for sustainable careers as artists; the Conservatoire aims to attract the most talented students, who are selected for training irrespective of background, and to sustain its affiliate schools’ excellence and leadership in training and research”.

The aim of this human resource strategy is to further the achievement of the mission through the staff employed by the the Conservatoire and its eight affiliates.

## **Objectives of the Human Resources Strategy**

### Scope

- 10 The Conservatoire’s human resources strategy operates both for itself as an employer of a small administrative team and also for adopting procedures for assisting its affiliates in observing, maintaining and disseminating good practice in human resource management.
- 11 Affiliate schools are legally autonomous institutions. As individual organisations, they engage staff and carry responsibility for delivering the education and training programmes. Each affiliate needs to seek an individual balance to address its specific staff needs and skill requirements. Different market conditions exist in London than in Leeds and Bristol for staff, including teaching, support and administrative staff. There are also substantial differences between the dance, drama and circus worlds. It is therefore not the policy of the Conservatoire to seek harmonisation of terms and conditions, although all have similar legal responsibilities, particularly in relation to equality and diversity.

### Purpose

- 12 The purpose of the strategy is to ensure that all the employed teams in the various parts of the Conservatoire and its affiliates comprise staffs of the highest calibre, who are successful in their work, secure in their achievement, flexible in approach, well motivated and satisfied in their career aspirations. The Strategy will sit alongside and support the individual HR strategies within affiliate schools.

### Objectives

- 13 The Conservatoire’s objectives for its human-resources strategy are to:
- achieve sound human resource management arrangements for the Conservatoire’s directly employed staff;
  - enable the Conservatoire’s affiliates to maintain good human resource practice;

- encourage and support staff development to enable staff to perform at the highest level and for all staff to maintain professional contacts and memberships (where applicable);
- provide appropriate support and opportunities for staff to develop their careers;
- achieve network efficiencies and measures of harmonisation among affiliates where appropriate.

## **The HEFCE Self-Assessment Process**

- 14 In May 2008, the Conservatoire completed the self-assessment process, using the HEFCE 'People Management Self Assessment' tool to shape the process. The self-assessment tool provided a useful basis for reviewing progress across the Conservatoire and determining the priorities for the human resource strategy.
- 15 The self-assessment tool identifies seven 'dimensions' to people management and within each area, institutions are asked to assess their inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes. For each section and question, institutions are asked to rate both importance to the HR Strategy and the progress made.
- 16 The seven dimensions are:
- Remuneration and fair employment
  - Staff recruitment and retention
  - Size and composition of the workforce
  - Staff development and skills needs
  - Leadership, involvement and change management
  - Occupational health, staff welfare and health and safety
  - Performance management: linking people management to organisational performance

This strategy uses the seven dimensions of the HEFCE self-assessment process to determine the priorities for action in this strategy.

## **HR Strategy Priorities**

### Priority One: Remuneration and Fair Employment

- 17 The first HR strategy identified the provision of market-facing pay as an important issue to which Rewarding and Developing Staff funds was applied. The application of job evaluation schemes was identified as important, both to meet equality objectives and to assist in the review of pay across the institution. This did not imply that there would be a single pay scale across the Conservatoire, as the schools operate within their own markets, encompassing the worlds of higher education, subsidised arts and the commercial creative industries.
- 18 These areas were identified as of continuing importance, particularly in the light of enhanced equality legislation. Staff numbers have grown considerably and more of the affiliate staff are covered by contracts of employment rather than working on a self-employed basis.

### Areas for development:

- Identification of a suitable job evaluation scheme for schools that do not currently have a scheme and training for staff in carrying out evaluations, according to agreed procedures.
- Review of pay and grading structures for schools that do not currently have a job evaluation scheme, ensuring transparency.
- Development of recognised principles to guide the way in which staff are paid which might (subject to the policy and approach of the individual school) include mechanisms for rewarding the performance of teams or individuals.
- Equal pay audits for those schools that have not had a job evaluation scheme.
- Development of plans for addressing any discrepancies as a result of job evaluation.
- Work needs to be done on promotion and career progression for teaching staff, now that most teachers have contracts of employment with affiliates.
- Race equality action plan that meets the requirements of the Race Relations Act 2000.
- Meeting the HR equality objectives of the action plans of the current disability and gender equality schemes.

### Priority Two: Recruitment and Retention

19 The main priorities were to ensure appropriate and fair recruitment which complies with equal opportunities legislation and the sharing of good practice. The introduction of comprehensive induction programmes and effective appraisal systems have been largely achieved. The extension of equality and diversity work to include staff as well as students is having a positive impact on developing policy and practice across the Conservatoire. There were no areas with a high priority where there had been little progress. Staff turnover is in general low, although higher in administrative posts than in teaching. Recruitment of senior staff can also be difficult. There is little analytical information on turnover rates however.

### Areas for development

- The provision of information on turnover rates.
- Work needs to be done on creating opportunities for growth and progression for administrative staff, which are limited by the small size of the schools.
- Personal and skills development for teaching staff; creating opportunities for them to update their knowledge and skills.
- The induction of new staff into Higher Education where they have no previous experience of working in the field

- The introduction of exit interviews in those schools which currently do not carry them out in order to generate information on the reasons for leaving and to update job descriptions before recruiting replacement staff.
- Carrying out annual staff surveys. This will formalise methods of gathering information on staff views of employment in their schools (where appropriate this might include pay and reward packages).

### Priority Three: Size and Composition of the Workforce

- 20 Since the first HR strategy was developed, staff numbers have more than doubled across the Conservatoire, to around 500 individuals which equates to 120 full time equivalents. More staff are directly employed across affiliates, rather than working on a freelance basis, although a significant number of freelancers, such as directors and choreographers continue to be involved in the delivery of programmes.
- 21 A great deal of work has been done in the development of policies and practices to promote diversity across the Conservatoire for both its staff and student populations.

#### Areas for development

- The aim of the diversity policies and practices is to reflect the student population. The implementation and monitoring of the action plan priorities as set out in the Conservatoire's current Gender and Disability Equality Schemes and the setting of new priorities for these, would demonstrate progress.

### Priority Four: Staff Development and Skills Needs

- 22 The Conservatoire is committed to providing a range of flexible continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities to support both full and part-time staff as practitioners, teachers and in supporting students. The Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy identifies three key areas for staff development:
- The development of long term strategies to enable staff to renew industry experience, create new work and keep abreast of innovations in their field.
  - Supporting affiliates in embedding staff development strategies with measures for evaluating their effectiveness including provision, where yet to be implemented, for induction, staff appraisal and support for new teachers.
  - Developing teaching qualifications that suit the delivery of vocational training and encouraging staff to share innovative teaching practice.
- 23 Teaching Quality Enhancement Funding has been used to provide opportunities for staff to obtain teaching qualifications and invested in development work towards developing specific programmes to suit the demands of teachers of the performing arts. Staff have also been supported in making applications for National Teaching Fellowships.
- 24 The Equality and Diversity Manager organises and leads staff development on a number of equality areas, for example: training on such areas as the principles of disability equality;

supporting students with mental health difficulties and inclusive teaching and learning. This work is delivered at both individual and cross affiliate level.

26 Most of the affiliates have budgets, of varying size, for training and developing their staff.

#### Areas for development

- The establishment of agreed expectations for staff development across the Conservatoire.
- Formalisation of processes for the development of staff. Individual affiliates to create their own formal statements about staff development which will feed into a general Conservatoire statement.
- The use of appraisal systems to determine development needs for all staff working more than 20 hours a week on a regular basis , not solely those on permanent contracts.
- Using the Conservatoire's joint financial and human resources to provide cost effective training and development for staff across the affiliate schools.
- Evaluating the impact of staff development at the level of the individual, the team and the institution (as appropriate given the small size of schools and the fact that some departments might only include one full-time member and a number of freelancers).

#### Priority Five: Leadership, Involvement and Change Management

25 The last seven years have seen a quadrupling in size of the Conservatoire, both in terms of the number of affiliates and the number of students undergoing training. With that growth has come a great deal of change. The perception of the Conservatoire by its affiliates has altered from the view that the Conservatoire was primarily a route towards HEFCE funding, to one where the benefits of the support of the Conservatoire and the development of mechanisms for network efficiencies and the sharing of practice have evolved.

26 The senior teams of the affiliates have been closely involved in the development of the Conservatoire. Staff involvement has increased through conferences, training events, joint performances and projects.

#### Areas for development

- The self-assessment process identified a need for training in leadership and people management
- Find the appropriate means of finding out staff opinion on developments within their school, and how well-informed they are about developments. This might be through regular staff surveys, repeated at regular intervals so one can see any change over time. Affiliate schools might find performance indicators helpful in judging whether staff feel properly consulted and involved.

### Priority Six: Occupational Health, Staff Welfare and Health and Safety

27 All the schools have developed effective health and safety policies and procedures, critical in the physical disciplines taught in the Conservatoire. Progress has been less uniform in the areas of occupational health and staff welfare.

#### Areas for development

- Reviews and audits of occupational health and staff welfare provisions across the Conservatoire.
- Development and formalisation of more procedures and practices.

### Priority Seven: Performance Management: linking people to organisational performance

28 Organisational performance for the Conservatoire generally and schools specifically, is measured primarily by success in training artists. Accordingly, appraisal systems relate individual performance for most staff to this objective. In some of the affiliates, the lack of HR resource has meant that there is not a clear link between HR policies, practices and strategies and organisational strategies.

#### Areas for development

- Affiliates to develop HR strategies for themselves, linked to the Conservatoire strategy, and relating to the affiliate's corporate objectives.
- Policies and procedures need to be developed in some schools to deal with issues of poor performance and the implementation of these monitored.

### **Monitoring and review**

29 The strategy covers a three year period, from 2008-2011 and incorporates targets which can realistically be achieved during the first two years of the strategy. As noted above, the targets within the Strategy have been agreed with all eight Conservatoire schools. Some schools are further ahead in progress against the targets, but all agreed the actions listed and targets set are achievable for all Conservatoire schools and the Conservatoire itself over the three year period.

30 The strategy will be reviewed annually. Progress will be reported on a regular basis to the Principals' Management Group and the Conservatoire's Finance Committee. Progress on the Staff Development aspects of the strategy will also be reported to the Academic Board.

Julie Amber  
March 2009

## Action Plan 2008-11

<b>1 Remuneration and Fair Employment</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>By when</b>	<b>Accountability</b>	<b>Process</b>
<i>Job Evaluation and Equal Pay</i>			
1.1 Identify a suitable job evaluation scheme for those schools without one	September 2008	HR Manager	Compare JE schemes and decide on most appropriate
1.2 Undertake training for staff in carrying out evaluations	Begin March 2009 & ongoing	HR Manager	
1.3 Develop procedures for job evaluation including appeals processes	January 2009	Affiliates	HR Manager to send draft to affiliates for adaptation
1.4 Carry out equal pay audits	February 2010 February 2010	As appropriate	Once evaluations have been completed to audit for equality
1.5 Develop plans for addressing discrepancies		As appropriate	Make budgetary provision for any pay increases necessary to bring staff up to the pay level
<i>Pay Structures</i>			
1.6 Review pay and grading structures to ensure fairness and transparency	February 2010	PMG	Once evaluations have been completed undertake a review Internal discussion in each school and administrative centre on whether it is desirable to reward individual or team performance and if so, how this might be achieved
1.7 Develop recognised principles to guide the way in which staff are paid which may, if desired, include mechanisms for rewarding the performance of teams or individuals	May 2010	PMG	
<i>Promotion and Career Progression</i>			
1.8 Develop pathways for teaching staff who gain qualifications to progress in their careers.	June 2009	L&T Consultant, with Learning and Teaching Committee PMG	Discussion on suitable structures for consideration by schools. Academic Board to oversee. Financial, resource and contractual implications for consideration by PMG.

<i>Equality and Diversity</i>				
1.9	Develop an Equality Policy which meets the requirements of the Equality Bill (due to be passed Spring 2009)	December 2008	E&D Manager and affiliates	Affiliates to use as template for their own schools
1.10	Develop equality action plans to cover religion or belief, sexual orientation and age	May 2009	E&D Manager	
1.11	Develop a race equality action plan which meets the requirements of the Race Relations Act 2000	May 2009	E&D Manager	
1.12	Implement the gender and disability action plan priorities agreed for example Objective 7 of the Disability Equality Scheme, 'Conduct a thorough review of recruitment procedures in all schools in order to promote inclusion and provide support to disabled employees'	Ongoing	EDDWG	See 1.4 & 1.6
1.13	Ensure that pay structures do not discriminate either directly or indirectly	See 1.4 & 1.6 February 2010 and annual review	CDD and affiliates	
<b>2 Staff Recruitment and Retention</b>				
<i>Management Information Systems and Processes</i>				
2.1	Compile and review staff turnover rates in each institution for the institution as a whole and by department	January 09	CDD and affiliates' HR Manager	Use standard formula for calculation
2.2	Introduce exit interviews in those schools who currently do not carry them out to establish reasons for leaving and update job descriptions	March 09	CDD and affiliates' HR Manager	

2.3 Carry out annual staff surveys to provide information on staff satisfaction	January 09 and ongoing	CDD and affiliates' HR Manager	
<i>Learning and Development for Staff</i>			
2.4 Create opportunities for teaching staff to update their knowledge and skills	See 4 below	See 4 below	See 4 below
2.5 Develop opportunities for administrative staff to grow their jobs and gain new knowledge and skills	See 4 below	See 4 below	See 4 below
2.6 Induct new staff into Higher Education	March 09	CDD and affiliates	CDD to organise twice a year or when there is a sufficient number of staff. Affiliates to inform HR Manager when new staff are appointed. May use external induction programmes (eg MASHEIN).
<b>3 Size and Composition of the Workforce</b>			
<i>Diversity Targets</i>			
3.2 Set targets for diversity policies and practices with the aim of creating the ability to demonstrate progress towards achieving staffing which reflects the student population	December 2009	E&DWG to advise	
<b>4 Staff Development and Skills Needs</b>			
<i>Expectations for Staff Development</i>			
4.1 Establish agreed expectations for staff development across the Conservatoire	December 09	Academic Board/PMG	Academic Board to identify key requirements. For PMG to determine impact on resources and contracts.

<i>Processes for Staff Development</i>			
4.2 Formalise the processes for staff training and development by agreeing and implementing comprehensive staff training policies and procedures as above	To follow on from 4.1	CDD and affiliates	
4.3 Use of performance appraisal systems by managers to find out the learning needs of all staff regularly working in schools for over 20 hours a week, not solely those on permanent contracts and including management, administrative and teaching staff	December 2009	CDD and affiliates	Introduce or widen current staff appraisal systems ensuring that staff development needs form part of the discussion
4.4 Develop processes for the evaluation of the effects of training on the performance of the individual, the team and the organisation	December 2009	CDD and affiliates	Set clear objectives for all training undertaken against which to evaluate the effects on individuals and teams Use team and organisational performance indicators to evaluate wider effects of training and development activities
<b>5 Leadership, Involvement and Change Management</b>			
<i>Leadership and Management Development</i>			
5.1 Institute people management training across the Conservatoire	Academic Year 2009/2110	HR Manager	CDD HR Manager to research training deliverer/s in preparation. Training provided by the Conservatoire for affiliates
<i>Staff involvement</i>			
<b>6 Occupational Health, Staff Welfare and Health and Safety</b>			
<i>Occupational Health and Staff Welfare</i>			
6.1 Review and audit occupational health and staff welfare provisions across the Conservatoire	June 2009	CDD and affiliates	Affiliates to provide information to the Conservatoire HR Manager
6.2 Develop and formalise policies, procedures and practices	September 2009	CDD and affiliates	HR Manager to devise list on what should be included

<i>Affiliate HR Strategies</i>			
7.1 Development or updating by affiliates of HR strategies linked to that of the Conservatoire and their own Corporate Plans	December 2009	Affiliates/ Administrative Director	
<i>Performance Management</i>			
7.2 Policies and procedures to be developed to deal with issues of poor performance	December 2008	Affiliates	