



**Imperial Society of  
Teachers of Dancing**

# **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**



## Related policies

**HR policy:** Equality and Diversity

**Exams policies:** Reasonable Adjustments, Special Considerations (please also read Appendix 2 of this 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 Inclusion<sup>1</sup>. 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

<sup>1</sup>“**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’.

Association of Charitable Foundations, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: The Pillars of Stronger Foundation Practice, 2019.

[https://www.acf.org.uk/downloads/ACF\\_DEI\\_Thepillarsofstrongerfoundationpractice\\_final.pdf](https://www.acf.org.uk/downloads/ACF_DEI_Thepillarsofstrongerfoundationpractice_final.pdf)

## **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. This process is supported by an EDI advisory group that replaces the previous EDI Think Tanks. The EDI advisory group is established to:

- Act as an ambassador for the Society by raising awareness of our EDI work through their professional networks.
- Support ISTD's strategic development by gathering and sharing views and feedback from under-represented stakeholders.
- Suggest opportunities to raise awareness and share lived experience of EDI with members and the broader dance community.
- Contribute to Faculty Committee discussions so that a range of viewpoints and perspectives are heard and considered.
- Recommend EDI role models (e.g.: Lecturers/future Examiners).
- Contribute to ISTD's print and social media as appropriate.

Three areas of particular focus for the Advisory Group are:

- Racial diversity
- LGBTQI+ and gender
- Disability inclusion.

The Advisory Group 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 advisory group 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](mailto: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 Appendix 1.

## **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 identity, 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.

## **Qualifications and Related Services**

A policy statement in relation to qualifications and related services is at Appendix 2.

## Appendix 1

### Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2025

Below we lay out the Society's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Plan for 2025 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 2025 we will continue to engage with our EDI Advisory Group to better understand the barriers to access to dance and to recommend strategies for overcoming these and improving access to the Society.
- EDI is considered in all Leadership and Trustee decision making, so that we assess the broader impact of our actions and decisions.
- We strive to listen, to be open to feedback and responsive 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](mailto:governance@istd.org)

#### Plan

- Our EDI Advisory Group is a permanent element of our member governance structure.
- To affect meaningful change, we will continue to upskill Staff, Examiners, Members and Trustees.
- Our new Qualification Development Strategy commits to ensuring that all new developments will be co-produced, informed and endorsed by diverse perspectives.
- Our new inclusive dance uniform includes gender neutral and modest options, and this will be extended in 2025 to include uniform for Ballroom, Latin, Sequence and Classical Indian Dance.
- We will ensure that diverse perspectives and people with lived experience inform the re-development of our Level 4 Diploma in Dance Education teaching qualification, so that EDI skills and knowledge are embedded into the curriculum.
- To improve access to dance teacher training, we continue to work with vocational dance colleges and HE providers to create bespoke models for embedding our Level 4 and 6 teaching qualifications into their current curriculum offer.
- We are also piloting a new Level 4 Diploma in Teaching Community Dance to extend access to teacher training for learners who have not previously accessed ISTD qualifications.

#### Act

- In 2024 we launched *Dance for All: Extending our Ambition for Dance in the UK* which calls for greater access to dance and sets out a series of sector-wide commitments that we intend to support and advocate for.
- We will continue to promote our *Find Your Dance Space* campaign, which strives to break down barriers and engage schools, community groups and families in a new zest for dance, promoting it as a space to improve wellbeing, have fun, make friends, and find a new passion, as well as an inclusive space.
- We are also actively supporting the *Let's Dance* campaign by providing Members with guidance materials and marketing collateral that will help them promote their services and encourage more people into their studios.
- We will continue to offer CPD to build confidence and increase awareness in EDI topics and approaches to broadening access as a regular part of our programmes.
- Inclusive assessment processes have been improved by a new Application for Reasonable Adjustment policy and associated training. Between September 2023 – August 2024, 861 candidates applied for a Reasonable Adjustment.
- Our Faculty Committees have reviewed our syllabus specifications to ensure that any unintentional barriers are removed and have implemented gender neutral syllabus options for all genres.
- We will continue to 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.

- We have embedded our EDI commitment in new codes of conduct for Members, Staff and Trustees. Our public commitment is also supported by Patrons who reflect our EDI goals.
- Each year we provide bursaries to remove economic barriers to dance teacher training, so that access to the Society is as broad as possible. In 2023/24 we supported 24 learners with a total of £34,000 of bursary funds.
- To support our on-going learning, we will seek opportunities to work in partnership with arts organisation led by people with lived experience.

### **Report**

- To ensure we achieve best practice, we 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/>
- We will gather and record protected characteristics data 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.
- Members are required to sign up to our published EDI policy when they join or renew their membership.
- 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.
- Our Annual Report and Accounts will include a summary of the actions we have taken and their impact. We also report plans that we have yet to implement.

## Appendix 2

### Policy statement for the ISTD qualifications and related services

All learners should have equitable opportunities to access our qualifications and assessments. Furthermore, the content of our qualifications and assessments should reflect the wide diversity of our learners. We strive to support learners of all abilities and to ensure we award our qualifications in a way that is fair to every learner.

#### Design and development of our qualifications

The Society will ensure that there are no features that could disadvantage any groups of learners that share a particular characteristic or barriers to entry other than those directly related to the purpose of the units or qualifications. The nature of any such features or barriers will be stated and the inclusion of the requirements that create the barrier justified in terms why they are required for the particular unit or qualification.

#### Members/Approved Dance Centres

The Society expects its Members/Approved Dance Centres to enable learners to have equal access to training and assessment for qualifications irrespective of their sex, marital status, age, religion, colour, race, nationality or ethnic origin or disability. Members/Approved Dance Centres are required to have in place a policy to ensure that such discrimination does not occur either directly, indirectly or as a result of pressure from other bodies, and there should be arrangements in place to monitor its application and effectiveness.

#### Delivery and assessment of our qualifications

We pledge to provide equity of opportunity within our assessments through inclusive design and reasonable adjustment. We are committed to designing assessment that is free from gender, sexual orientation, disability, ethnic, political, cultural, or other discrimination and stereotyping.

In accordance with the Equality Act (2010) and other relevant equalities legislation in the UK, to remove or reduce a disadvantage that a disabled learner faces because of their disability compared with a student who is not disabled, we will consider and make (when appropriate) 'reasonable adjustments' to an assessment. Along with our policy for Application of Reasonable Adjustments, we also have a policy in place for Special Considerations.

#### Monitoring the success and relevance of our arrangements

The Society is committed to complying with all current and relevant legislation and, which at the time of writing includes, but is not limited to the Equality Act 2010 and Northern Ireland Equality Law.



As part of the learner registration and certification processes for qualifications and units, the Society may collect information on diversity, requests for special considerations, access arrangements and feedback from learners, Members/Approved Dance Centres and other stakeholders.



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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