

Statement of Access, Participation and Public Good

Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts, one of the UK's leading drama schools, is a small specialist conservatoire which was founded in 1945 and relocated to Peckham, South London in 2018 from its previous home in Wood Green, North London. We currently train approximately 450 full time students each year for theatre and its related industries and we have a long standing and international reputation for providing the highest quality training at an undergraduate and postgraduate level in acting, musical theatre, actor musicianship, directing, producing and technical theatre.

Strategic Aims & Priorities

VISION			
ENABLING, TRAINING and PROMOTING CREATIVE PERFORMANCE AND PRODUCTION ARTISTS			
MISSION			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ World Class Training<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Foundation preparation, undergraduate and postgraduate degrees○ Young people's programme of skills development with professional practitioners<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Professional Practitioner Development❖ Exceptional Performance<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Professional rehearsal space for world-class performance artists○ Year-Round Programme of Professional Performances and Rehearsal Residencies<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Contemporary music, comedy, dance, theatre❖ Creative and Cultural Practice<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Adult Programmes○ Artists Work Spaces○ Resident Companies○ Community Engagement			
OUR PRINCIPLES AND VALUES			
Excellence	Access	Innovation	Transformation

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS				
World Class	Relevance	Connected	Resilient	Civic
Training and Skills-Development	Fit for Purpose	London	Organisational Effectiveness	Fostering a Cultural Neighbourhood
Facilities for Creative Artists	Commissioning & Developing new work	National	Diverse, Inclusive and Collaborative	Developing the Civic role of the institution
Industry Leadership	Fostering Contemporary Practice and Thought Leadership	International/ Global	Environmentally Responsive and Responsible	Developing Home-Grown Talent

INITIATES																				
PERFORMANCE			PRODUCTION			CREATIVE PRACTICE				COMMUNITY			STRATEGIC							
ACTING	MUSICAL THEATRE	ACTOR MUSICIAN	TECHNICAL THEATRE, TV, RADIO & BROADCAST	DESIGN REALISATION - SCENIC ARTS &	STAGE MANAGEMENT	DIRECTING	CREATIVE PRODUCING	MUSICAL DIRECTION	SITE SPECIFIC PRACTICE	COMMUNITY & EDUCATION	WHATS NE*T (YOUNG PEOPLE)	IN-RESIDENCE (ADULT)	CULTURAL NEIGHBOURHOOD	INTERNATIONAL	NEW WRITING	PRESS REALIATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS	FUNDRAISING	DIVERSITY, ACCESS AND INCLUSION	WELLBEING	ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Mountview's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2017 states that Mountview is wholly committed to:

- Widening participation across all programmes to currently underrepresented groups in the Theatre and related arts (primarily through the 'Mountview Outreach Scouting Audition Scheme' – see page 3)
- Effectively monitoring data and reflecting upon all aspects of equality and diversity (internally and externally)
- Representing Mountview's equality and diversity in all internal and external communications and promotions
- Ensuring that all managers and staff understand their responsibility to equality, diversity and inclusion and, where necessary undergo appropriate training for their role
- Building upon our current International profile and recruitment of international students

This is not an exhaustive list, nor can one policy or person be responsible for 'Equality, Diversity & Inclusion'. It is a collective responsibility and is embedded across all Mountview policies, procedures and working practices. In pursuing legitimate aims as a vocational drama school, Mountview is committed to open and fair casting, staffing and opportunity. Applicants to Mountview are auditioned/interviewed and are offered a place to study purely on their natural talent, individual merits and potential to acquire the skills necessary to succeed in their chosen profession.

We know that our environment will be enriched by embracing local, national and international students from a cross-section of backgrounds, experience, ethnicities, cultures and learning needs. Working together with our students we are pro-active in fostering changes that will make our training accessible and achievable to groups and individuals who might otherwise have been excluded due to their life circumstances.

This statement is designed to reflect our serious commitment to access, participation and contribution to the public good. We are committed to careful monitoring, identification of further progress that is needed and careful planning of action to achieve success, measured against our goals.

This statement reflects on the three key areas highlighted by the Office for Students (OfS): Access, Success and Progression and this statement also serves as our Public Good Statement, as required by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW).

Access

We audition or interview every applicant to our courses which demonstrates our commitment to open inclusion. Our current students act as ambassadors for auditions, welcoming applicants and answering questions. Mountview is creating an environment where diversity is celebrated, and equality of opportunity is embedded for all students and staff. In joining the Diversity School Initiative and partnering with other organisations, we are helping to get the message of accessible high quality drama training across to talent all over the UK and around the world.

We have opened a Community Academy at our new facilities in Peckham which operates outside of core teaching hours. Mountview has become a thriving resource for the community, offering weekend and evening classes, volunteering and adult community programmes as well as planning apprenticeships programme in set construction, scenic arts, wardrobe and marketing. The new facility in Peckham has also enhanced engagement on the 'Engage' Young People's Programme.

Mountview began actively working in the Borough of Southwark in September 2018 and as we began work to introduce and establish Mountview in Peckham, we initiated various projects including GENERATION N*XT, The Bridge Project and Taster Days.

As young people's work and progression routes into higher education/vocational training are central to our work, the Young People's GENERATION N*XT programme receives primary focus. Predominantly the age group we engaged with through this work is 6 – 11 years.

We have continued the Bridge Project initiative started by Mountview in Haringey which was very successful and introduced local Southwark schools including STAC, Sacred Heart, Harris Academy Peckham, Walworth Ark, Harris Dulwich Girls and UAE Southwark. This project delivers drama opportunities in local schools, and allows Mountview to signpost young people to further training opportunities, as well as identify local young people of natural talent. The Bridge Project is a key part of our young people's/community engagement work.

To ensure that Mountview truly establishes itself as a building for everyone, we have begun to work with a variety of local companies and artists. Some as one-off projects and some as partnerships in delivering our work. So far, these have included: The Movement Factory (a local community dance programme that works with young people), Sara Shama (a local artist), Erroll Willaims Tae Kwon Doe and Play On/Compass School. Furthermore, students from local schools and a local care home attended final year productions in our Theatres free of charge last year and we hope to continue this in the future.

Our new building in Peckham is more accessible to disabled students, including wheelchair users, as it is 100% Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant. This includes the theatres, studios, all front and back of house areas, as well as all other training and public facilities. As a result of this, we will engage more confidently in the inclusion of disabled students and staff who are wheelchair users. Tailored support is offered to all students who require it through the Specific Educational Needs or Disability (SEND) system. For example, large print scripts, extended deadlines on written work, BSL interpreters for hard of hearing students and many other adjustments and support.

In order to increase applications from a wider background demographic, Mountview has created a Scouting Outreach Programme in collaboration with 42 partnership organisations. These partners work with Mountview in order to identify young talent from diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, and young people who will consider a three year vocational drama training to be culturally or financially unattainable. The scheme offers free auditions and helps with travel to audition centres as required for nominated candidates. The current provision for Foundation level training courses at Mountview has expanded to include a one year full-time Acting course and a part-time Musical Theatre course. These new offers will support and widen opportunities for prospective students without prior attainment and enable them to train in the Mountview environment whilst deciding if the school is right for them.

In 2018, Mountview was one of five drama schools which entered into a landmark partnership with the Diversity School Initiative. The Initiative, founded in 2017, is a non-profit, student-founded campaign which aims to address the issue of underrepresentation and diversity in UK drama schools. The partnership involves a three-year contract where partners commit to improving diversity in their institution.

Mountview's Principal, Stephen Jameson, said: *"Improving access to training has always been at the heart of our ethos. This partnership confirms our commitment to building on this foundation: we are open to the experience and challenge that Diversity School are bringing to the table. Together we are at the forefront of positive change for the UK arts industry. We can't wait to get started."*

Both Mountview and the Diversity School Initiative believe that everyone should be given a fair and equal opportunity to train, learn, experiment and fulfil their potential, regardless of gender, ability, ethnicity, social status, nationality, faith, sexuality or sexual orientation. This will be achieved through developing a more inclusive curriculum, faculty and student body, and the Initiative will support students through a mentoring scheme. Mountview plans to share information on best practice, and allow the Diversity School Initiative to audit progress on diversity and to speak to students. There will also be a programme of workshops for students and staff as well as outreach into schools and colleges. The Diversity School Initiative will also go to 'cold spots' in the UK and speak to young people who consider drama school to be culturally or financially beyond their reach, and promote Mountview.

Mountview have also recently partnered with Stage Sight, who's vision is to create an off stage workforce that is more reflective of our society today, inclusive of ethnicity, class and disability and our Director of Academic Affairs is on the steering group for the 'Get into Theatre' initiative run by The Stage, which is aimed at school children choosing their GCSEs. All of these partnerships and any future partnerships, ultimately, should encourage an increase in applications from more diverse backgrounds.

In 2018-19, 26% of the BA Performance students across all years and pathways and 22% of the entire full time student population identified as BAME and at level 4 in 2019-2020, 24% of all our BA Performance students identified as BAME. This is broken down in the following pathways as:

Performance pathway	BAME Recruited for Level 4 2019-20	BAME Recruited for Level 4 2018-19
Acting	31%	53%
Actor Musician	6%	13%
Musical Theatre	28%	26%

We provide opportunities for students to apply for scholarships and bursaries in addition to the Mountview Hardship fund. Scholarships and bursaries that require an audition, such as the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation Scholarship, are open to an equal number of male and female candidates in order to ensure fairness. Information about all scholarships and bursaries, as well as other awards, is publicly available on Mountview's website. Now that we have moved into our new facilities in Peckham, we are placing a renewed focus on developing access to more bursaries and work on substantially increasing funds for our Student Hardship Fund. In 2018-19, 139 BA Performance students were studying on Trinity Diplomas and in receipt of Dance and Drama Awards funding (DaDA) from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

Moreover, we have now started offering an 'early bird fee' for auditions in December for Foundation, BA and MA Performance courses. This 'early bird fee' is £35 compared to the standard fee of £45 and although it is open to all applicants, it is aimed at encouraging applicants from a lower socio-economic background to apply. For Southwark residents, we also offer one free audition for any of our Foundation, BA or MA Performance courses.

The budget for widening participation is integrated into a range of areas including admissions, student support, touring, outreach workshops and short courses. This helps to support Mountview's visits to schools, colleges and arts centres across the UK, leading workshops, holding auditions, touring productions and networking with communities. Across these areas of activity, our estimated total spend on widening participation in 2018-19 is at least £80,000, which represents around 1.5% of total student fee income for the year.

The BA Performance programme, which has three pathways: Acting, Actor Musicianship and Musical Theatre, was revalidated for the 2019-20 academic year. We revalidate our UEA validated courses every five years and this provides an opportunity for Mountview to continue its innovative stance on ensuring a 21st century curriculum that reflects society and the current industry that our students are training to join.

Each revalidation opportunity will play a key role in aligning our access aims more closely with our validated content and increasing our reach to BAME applicants in the process. An example of a shift that has already been embraced is the teaching of Multicultural London English (MLE), a sociolect of English spoken authentically by working class young people in London which is now covered in speech classes. Many BAME students identify this to be their natural accent and it will be a casting expectation for many students when they graduate. As part of the BA Performance revalidation, we revised and diversified our reading lists, removed RP (Received Pronunciation) as the basis for learning phonetics and we encouraged staff to embrace and explore world theatre traditions and practices in order to prepare students fully for the global theatre industry.

All of this presents further opportunities to strengthen our focus on widening participation amongst underrepresented groups and creating access for them. Our alumni will continue to act as community ambassadors for us and this will be a key initiative to help us connect with prospective students living in areas of low higher education participation, and who may otherwise not consider higher education or conservatoire training.

Success

Retention remains one of Mountview's strengths. For instance, 100% of BA Performance Actor Musician students from the 2016-17 intake graduated in 2018-19, as well as 82% of BA Performance Acting and 97% of BA Performance Musical Theatre. There is no trend of withdrawal decisions being made amongst underrepresented groups. Each year there are an average of two students that may choose to interrupt their studies, these are almost exclusively for medical reasons and 100% of these students return and complete their studies. The intensive nature of the training that Mountview provides places a significant focus on collective learning as an ensemble, this very supportive method of delivery contributes to our extremely high student retention rates.

Mountview employs gender and colour conscious casting and selects materials for performers that will offer a balance of opportunities from writers of all ethnicities and backgrounds. This ensures fairness and equality for assessment and opportunities for all enabling students to achieve success.

All students are encouraged to make use of additional academic support where needed (used in particular by students with no prior attainment or poor educational experience). Additionally, the Personal Tutor Scheme supports learning progress for students throughout their course through individual and group tutorials. In addition, Mountview has both a full-time Student Welfare Manager and a School Counsellor and all staff are currently completing Mental Health First Aid training. The links between mental health wellness and its impact on educational outcomes for students is becoming much clearer across the sector.

Reasonable adjustments to learning and assessment are implemented for students with a Specific Learning Disability and additional 1-1 support is provided where necessary. Students working in English as a second language are also given support and this will be formalised over the next year to include 1-1 support. Mountview staff are skilled at working with students to create adaptations for learning and assessment and in using a wide range of learning styles in their teaching. Staff also attend training sessions on Specific Learning and Educational Needs (SEND) and share best practice at teaching and learning sessions.

88% of BA Performance graduates with a Specific Learning Disability in 2019 achieved a 2:1 and the remaining 12% (one student) achieved a 2:2. All students with a Specific Learning Disability on all BA courses graduated with an Honours degree, but we have identified that there is still room for improvement and we hope for more BA Performance students with Specific Learning Disabilities to achieve first class degrees going forward.

These statistics show that whilst students with Specific Learning Disabilities are not disadvantaged at Mountview, there is room to develop students at the higher levels of achievement.

BAME students represented 15% of the BA Performance graduates in 2018-19 and the average mark for these students was 62.03. 92% of BAME BA Performance students achieved a 2:1 in 2018-19 and the remaining 8% (one student) achieved a 2:2. No first class degrees were awarded to BAME BA Performance students in 2018-19. In comparison, white students represented 85% of the BA Performance graduates in 2018-19 and their average mark was 64.85, a difference of +2.82 compared to their BAME counterparts. 68% of white BA Performance students achieved a 2:1 in 2018-19, 26% achieved a 1st and 6% achieved a 2:2. Moreover, 25% of BAME BA Performance graduates in 2018-19 reported having a Specific Learning Disability compared to only 7% of white BA Performance graduates.

These statistics suggest that whilst our BAME students are achieving success across all pathways, they currently require more support than their white counterparts. This is highlighted by the fact that no first class undergraduate degrees were awarded to BAME graduates. In part, this is due to the intersection of BAME students that come from low income households, those living in areas of low higher education participation and those with Specific Learning Disabilities. This is something we aim to work on going forwards.

Progression

Given the vocational nature of the training, Mountview students are intensively prepared for employment throughout their training and in their final year they actively seek agent representation and employment. All of this activity is supported by Mountview's Industry Liaison Manager. It is unusual in this environment for students to choose to go on to further study immediately and this tends to be an option explored by alumni after an average of five years out and working in the industry.

Our alumni continue to be supported by us throughout their careers, using Mountview library resources, booking studios, meeting with staff and receiving ongoing careers advice. This is reflected by the high percentage of students signed by agents by the end of their training and the calibre of the roles they are undertaking in the industry.

As of October 2019, 99% of BA Performance graduates from 2018 were signed with agents (100% of students on the Musical Theatre and Actor Musician pathway and 97% of students on the Acting pathway). Furthermore, 93% of the BA Performance graduates gained professional work within the industry during their first year of graduating (91% of graduates from the Acting pathway, 95% of graduates from the Musical Theatre pathway and 94% of graduates from the Actor Musician pathway). BAME students made up 18% of the graduating BA Performance cohort in 2018 with 94% of BAME BA Performance graduates signed with agents and gaining work within their first year post graduation. 48% of BA Performance graduates in 2018 received DaDA funding, 98% of whom signed with agents and 93% of whom gained work in their first year following graduation.

For those BA Performance students graduating in November 2019, 94% of graduates across all three BA Performance pathways are currently signed with agents (89% of graduates on the Acting pathway, 95% of graduates on the Musical Theatre pathway and 100% of graduates on the Actor Musician pathway). BAME students made up 13% of the BA Performance graduating cohort in 2019 over the three BA Performance pathways, 100% of whom are currently signed with agents (an increase of 6% compared to 2018). 59% of BA Performance graduates in 2019 received DaDA funding, 96% of whom are currently signed with agents.

It is important to recognise that given the very specific nature of the industry, there is often little correlation between agent representation and employment gain and indeed there is rarely any correlation between degree classification and employment or agent representation. We simply encourage our students to achieve excellent results across all three of these measures: grades, agent representation and employment and ensure that they have the skills to do so. Whilst some students are not always in paid employment in their industry of choice, all students have transferrable skills due to the high level of communication skills taught on all courses. The nature of the employment that Mountview students seek is short term freelance contracts, typically ranging between a two-day filming contract to a one-year contract in a West End Musical.

What next?

The statistics on Mountview's results and graduate destinations speak for themselves regarding the quality of training offered at the school, but it is also clear that a majority of BAME students tend to have lower grades than their peers and that those students with Specific Learning Disabilities do not always access the support provided.

There are several new initiatives to target these areas:

	Initiative	Action/Measure	Review
1.	Closer analysis of the educational background of each student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate how this impacts degree classifications 	Annual cycle
2.	Increasing availability of 1-1 support as necessary for students with no prior attainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student take up Learning gain 	Annual cycle COMPLETE – Through Revalidation
3.	Increasing mentor support for students from different cultural backgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collating current mentoring initiatives through LTAS group Implementing a nominating process 	September 2020 Ongoing – LTAS 2020.
4.	Introducing language support (EFL) for students whose first language is not English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student take up Learning gain 	Ongoing for 2020
5.	Developing more short courses for students who are not ready for full-time training to enhance their opportunities for admission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application rates Entry to articulated course 	June 2020 COMPLETE
6.	Further encouragement of students with Specific Learning Disabilities to access the support and reasonable adjustments available to them through targeted dialogue with Personal Tutors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student take up Personal Tutor feedback Learning gain 	Ongoing
7.	Extending practical hardship initiatives through the Mountview Hardship Fund i.e. oyster top-up for students in financial crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review application process Reduction of cases we are unable to assist 	Annual cycle Our new Judi Dench fund has recently launched.
8.	Development of funds for the Hardship Fund and more bursaries to help students financially in the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New focus for the Development team Number of new 	Annual & ongoing Our new Judi Dench fund has recently launched.

	short, medium and long term of their education cycle with us	opportunities realised	
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In addition, we will continue to develop our existing commitment to access and participation through:

- Working with the Diversity School Initiative to identify new goals
- Running regional auditions and taster workshops
- Staff mental health first aid training
- Growing the Community Academy in the heart of Peckham
- Working closely with all students and the Students Union to reflexively provide enhanced support for students
- Offering BSL masterclasses
- Employing diverse practitioners as role models for underrepresented groups.

We will monitor our progress against these initiatives and continue to innovate strategically towards our aim of access of opportunity for all.

This statement is available on our website:

<https://www.mountview.org.uk/courses/life-at-mountview/access-diversity/>