

# TRINITY LABAN

## 2025-2030 Research Plan

Version 2.0

# RESEARCH PLAN 2025-2030

## Introduction

Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance (TL) occupies a distinctive position within the country's higher education and cultural landscape. Our commitment to artistic innovation, excellence in education, and leading practice-based research is underpinned by a belief in the power of the arts to effect meaningful change in society.

This Research Plan articulates how Trinity Laban will continue to build on the period since the last Research Plan (2020-2025), which has seen some rapid changes: a doubling of Research Degree Programme (RDP) student numbers, a doubling of income from Research England; enhancements to the number of, and support given to research-active staff; increased public awareness of research at Trinity Laban.

## 1. Update on Research Plan 2020-2025

The previous iteration of the Research Plan covered the years 2020 to 2025, during a period of consolidation of research activity at Trinity Laban. Below are the key objectives from this previous strategic document, together with a brief commentary on outcomes and where appropriate, the inclusion of updated data.

### 1.1 Creation of a new Trinity Laban New Research Centre: 'Thinking Through Practice'

The modified requirements for staff eligibility for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 necessitated that all submitted TL staff be attached to a designated Research Centre. The creation, in 2020, of the 'Thinking Through Practice' centre was therefore partially motivated by this regulatory requirement, but additionally by wider institutional imperatives. The first of these was to provide a succinct statement of TL's specific definition of practice-as-research; a series of questions and values that would connect together the

various smaller research groupings that exist within the institution, such as the Sounding Moves, Moving Sounds (SM|MS) group, the Jazz Research Group, and the Dance Studies Reading Group. Secondly, it was intended that the same series of questions and values be a template for defining how research-led teaching is thought of at TL, which could be variously utilised across both undergraduate and Masters-level curricula, whilst embedding research-led thinking in each.

<https://www.trinitylaban.ac.uk/research-and-knowledge-exchange/our-research-centre/>

'Thinking Through Practice' was also intended to align with new institutional imperatives regarding diversity, and one way of approaching the importance of this issue was to use performance as a lens through which wider social issues can be addressed, such as diversity, inclusion, wellbeing and community. Some questions that the Research Centre addresses are therefore:

- How does making and thinking about performances provide a mechanism for wider societal commentary?
- What are the limits of this procedure?
- How can working through the lens of art-making provide value and benefit?
- How can performance-making contribute to disputes and questions in wider disciplinary areas in the sciences and humanities?

## 1.2 Application for Research-Degree Awarding Powers (rDAPs), and Visibility of the RDP Programme

The institution reached the milestone of the final submission of complete materials for an rDAP application in November 2024 to the Office for Students (OfS). At the time of writing, the institutional scrutiny that normally follows such a submission has been paused by the OfS until AY 26-27. It is therefore one of the objectives of the next iteration of the Research Plan to successfully complete the institutional acquisition of rDAPs during the period 2025-2030 (see Section **4.3**), and further, to implement an institutional strategy for maximising the

opportunities that such powers would afford, in terms of the extension and augmentation of TL’s offer at Level 8.

In terms of visibility of the RDP programme, there have been many improvements in the last five-year period, including: the compilation a series of short films showcasing TL RDP alumni; full website-based biographies and dedicated pages for RDP students, and a full listing, together with research interests, of all TL Category A and B supervisory staff.

<https://www.trinitylaban.ac.uk/courses/research-degree-programme/>

However further work in this area remains to be done, and as such, another key objective of this Research Plan 2025-2030 is the creation of a new TL research portal, which will house multimedia content relating to all areas of research activity at TL, and hosted on Research Catalogue (see Section 4.1).

### 1.3 Sustaining Quality-Related Research Income Through REF 2021 and Beyond

This objective was met, and then significantly exceeded, in two different ways during the period 2020-2025. The first was an improved result in REF 2021, which led to sustained levels of “core” quality-related (QR) research income to TL from Research England. In REF2021 Trinity Laban’s submission achieved the following quality profiles:

	4*	3*	2*	1*	Unclassified
Overall	<b>28%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>0%</b>
Research outputs	<b>21.9%</b>	<b>34.4%</b>	<b>37.5%</b>	<b>6.2%</b>	<b>0%</b>
Research impacts	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>
Research environment	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>37.5%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>

The results showed strong improvement on the last exercise in 2014. The percentage of research deemed world-leading doubled from 14% to 28%. Grade point average increased from 2.78 to 2.92. Research impact showed 100% world-leading or internationally excellent quality, with a grade point average up from 3.2 to 3.5.

Comparison within a similar group of institutions with music provision was positive. Trinity Laban placed third behind the Guildhall School of Music & Drama and Royal College of Music on overall grade point average and on world-leading outputs, out-performing the Royal Academy of Music, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and Royal Northern College of Music.

The second reason for the objective being significantly exceeded was changes to policy at Research England, whereby small specialist institutions (SSIs) who were already in receipt of core QR income saw this income increased through the introduction of several new funding streams: a dedicated SSI component; an 'enhancing research culture' component; a 'co-participant research' component. The breakdown of 2023-24 Research England funding allocations is as follows (these are time-limited, but were renewed at the beginning of AY 25-26):

- Recurrent 'mainstream' QR income of c. £242k p.a.
- A time-limited allocation of QR income as a 'small specialist institution' which is c.£323K for 23-24.
- A time-limited allocation of QR funding for 'co-participant' research, currently at £20k for 23-24.
- A time-limited allocation of QR funding for 'enhancing research culture', currently at £50k for 23-24.
- HEIF funding allocation, which supports some research-related activities in knowledge exchange and public engagement (particularly work in Arts and Health), currently at £407K for 23-24.
- Total external funding for both research and knowledge exchange activity stands at £1.043M in 23-24.

#### 1.4 Arrangements for a 'Spectrum' of Research Active Status Across the Institution

This objective was met during 2020-2025, and there are now several mechanisms that allow research activity at TL to be recognised and supported; this has created a 'spectrum' of research active status at Trinity Laban. Whilst many staff are currently on official research-active contracts necessary for REF, a mechanism was developed during 2020-2025 whereby the workload allocation for any member of staff for 'Staff Development' – and where line manager approval has been secured – can be routed towards research activity, with adequate annual monitoring. In addition, an additional sub-objective of 1.4 was also met during 2020-2025. The TL Research Mentoring Scheme was created whereby members of the research active pool are assigned mentors within the larger group of researchers.

To summarise, TL staff can gain support for their research activity through the following spectrum of research-active status (which includes enhanced workload support to undertake research):

- Being awarded research-active status on appointment to TL, usually reflecting the prior acquisition of such status at another HEI;
- Being awarded research-active status by agreement between the Artistic Director and Head of Research and Knowledge Exchange;
- By peer-review application to periodic open calls for research-active status. In 2023, and in accordance with both the Trinity Laban Strategic Plan and Research Plan, the Conservatoire greatly augmented the number of research-active staff by this route, from a headcount of 20 submitted to REF 2021 to the current total of 36.

## **2. Links to Trinity Laban Strategic Plan 2018-2028**

This plan is designed to be read in conjunction with the ten-year Trinity Laban Strategic Plan 2018-2028 and shares its core values, enumerated as: Artistically

Ambitious and Experimental; Progressive; Ethical and Inclusive; Socially engaged; Collaborative. This Research Plan 2025-2030, is consistent with the relevant Core Aims within the Strategic Plan, particularly Core Aim 2: which states:

*To undertake and disseminate research that advances artistic practice in music and dance, creates new and original work in our art forms, and uses our world-leading performance science expertise to improve health and well-being among professional artists and wider society*

### 3. The Trinity Laban Research Degree Programme (RDP)

At the heart of any research community is a thriving doctoral programme, and in fact the two are importantly correlated: recurrent QR funding awarded through REF for the research community at large depends on there being a currently running doctoral or RDP Programme. This means that maintenance of the most significant area of TL research funding (see **1.3** above) depends on the maintenance of a high-quality RDP Programme, and the following therefore highlights some data from the period 2020-2025.

#### 3.1 New admissions

The current RDP population at Trinity Laban is **36** students, having doubled from a previous total of **18** students at the commencement of the last Research Plan in 2020. A complete list of current students, biographies, supervisors and research topics is included at URL here:

<https://www.trinitylaban.ac.uk/courses/research-degree-programme/>

#### 3.2 Completion Rates

There have been **45** completions to date on the RDP since 2008 (up from **22** at the last revalidation before the Research Plan 2015-2020, in 2013); **three** more are scheduled for AY 25-26). There have also been **five** completions at MPhil level (3 as 'standalone' MPhils and 2 as a PhD to MPhil conversion). Drop out rates remain low in comparison with the rest of the sector. Historic completions

from three separate validation periods by City University now easily total more than the **thirty** completions<sup>1</sup> required as a pre-requisite for an rDAP application. Current completion rates are estimated at ca. **80%** which compares favorably with UK HE sector averages.<sup>2</sup>

### 3.3 Key Recent Developments on the RDP Programme

The RDP Programme continues grow and innovate and has become one of the leading destinations for practice-based doctoral researchers in the Conservatoire sector. Listed below are some key recent developments that have expanded and augmented the provision.

#### 3.3.1 *New Pathways.*

In June 2025, City St George's accepted a programme amendment to allow text-only submissions, in line with other pathways, which already specify a fully written thesis, with varying wordcounts. This new pathway in Dance / Musicology / Collaborative Arts would be analogous to the existing Dance and/or Music Pedagogy pathway, in that the submission would consist of a fully written thesis of ca. 100k words, without the accompaniment of a creative portfolio. The revised pathways have therefore been augmented to:

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| <b>EITHER</b> | <b>MPhil/PhD in Creative Practice: Dance/Music/Collaborative Arts (CPM/CPD/CPCA)</b> |
| <b>OR</b>     | <b>MPhil/PhD in Dance Studies/Musicology/Collaborative Arts Studies (DS/Mus/CAS)</b> |
| <b>OR</b>     | <b>MPhil/PhD in [Dance and/or Music] Science (DSc/MusSc)</b>                         |
| <b>OR</b>     | <b>MPhil/PhD in [Dance and/or Music] Pedagogy (DPed/MPed)</b>                        |

The new pathways afford new opportunities for TL RDP students to be supervised in the following topics:

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<sup>1</sup> A 'completion' at TL refers to a student who has initially registered for the TL RDP programme and exits the institution with a terminal degree (MPhil/PhD).

<sup>2</sup> On average, completion rates across UK HE are in the range of 72-76%:  
<https://files.core.ac.uk/download/80698655.pdf>

### Musicology

Topics within: music theory; music analysis; historical musicology; historical performance practice; music history and historiography; philosophy of music; sociology of music; music and gender; music and politics; music performance studies;

### Dance Studies

Topics within: dance theory and studies; dance history and historiography; philosophy of dance; sociology of dance; dance and gender; dance and politics; dance performance studies;

### Collaborative Arts

Topics within: intersectional studies between music and/or dance and other artforms; choreomusicology; projects studying historical collaborative practice; case studies of transdisciplinary arts projects; collaborative arts and mediatization.

#### *3.3.2 Saytam Kalon PhD Programme.*

The Programme is a groundbreaking collaboration between academics, artists and students from leading arts institutions in India, the United Kingdom and the United States. It involves a multidisciplinary team of art historians, dancers, musicians and philosophers drawn from Attakkalari Centre for Movement Arts in Bangalore, Columbia University in New York, KM Music Conservatory in Chennai, Shiv Nadar University in Delhi and Trinity Laban in London. This international team will work together to explore the interactions between dance, music and visual art in a transnational context, focussing on philosophy as well as theory and practice. Two PhD scholarships, commencing in September 2026, have now recruited students, with supervision that couples senior TL research supervisors with counterparts at the University of Bonn and elsewhere. A bilateral series of six-monthly seminars will alternate between TL and Shiv Nadar University, commencing in June and December 2026.

#### *3.3.3 Significant Enhancements to the RDP Research Training Programme*

Commencing in AY 25-26, there have been significant additions to: the TL Research Seminar Series; Professional Development Series; Researcher Development Series. In addition, also commencing in AY 25-26 is a pioneering series, curated by TL, of shared research training for doctoral students across the whole of Conservatoires UK. At the time of writing, **forty-eight** training sessions are scheduled for the current academic year. Full details can be found at:

<https://www.trinitylaban.ac.uk/research-and-knowledge-exchange/research-events-and-seminars/>

## 4. Research Objectives 2025-2030

### Summary

The Research Plan 2025-2030 has **five** objectives:

- 4.1 Creation of a new Trinity Laban Research Portal; Replacement of Trinity Laban Research Online (TLRO);
- 4.2 Roadmap Towards TL's Submission to REF 2029;
- 4.3 Final Acquisition of Research Degree Awarding Powers (rDAPs); Opportunities for Expansion for TL Level 8 Offer;
- 4.4 Strategy for Research and the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF);
- 4.5 Enhancements to the Trinity Laban Research Culture.

This is the fifth long-term Research Plan for Trinity Laban. The research objectives follow from strategic objectives derived from discussions at the Trinity Laban Research Board, the institution as a whole, and reflect changes in the sector more widely. There are five main objectives that each relate to 'world-leading' REF 2014/21 areas of research activity at Trinity Laban, which in the last exercises were: composition; choreography; musical performance; aesthetics; music psychology, and couple these with strong existing areas of research in the institution, which include; performance science (more broadly); pedagogical and educational research in music and dance; musicology; dance studies; somatics;

research into arts and public engagement. Taken together, these research groupings constitute the entirety of TL's research activity. The five objectives are outlined below.

#### 4.1 Creation of a new Trinity Laban Research Portal; Replacement of Trinity Laban Research Online

A key objective for the next five years is the establishment of a new online platform or portal to showcase the work of TL researchers and RDP students. Whilst the TL website does important work in this regard already, it is primarily a student recruitment vehicle and lacks the agility to upload content in short-term timeframes. Establishing a complementary online presence to the website would enable several new initiatives and provide a solution to some existing issues. Such a portal could host: images; footage of TL research events; a journal in practice-based research; databases attached to TL research projects; interactive content; text thought-pieces, and so on. In addition, an online open-access section of the portal would provide a solution to the text requirements for REF 2029 through the replacement for Trinity Laban Research Online (TLRO); which was a low-cost interim solution to REF access-requirements and is no longer adequately supported to be viable as a long-term solution.

##### *4.1.1. Proposed Portal: Research Catalogue*

The Research Catalogue (RC) is an international, online, open-access platform designed to document, share, and publish artistic research. It is developed and maintained by the Society for Artistic Research (SAR), a non-profit organization that promotes artistic research across disciplines and institutions worldwide.

<https://societyforartisticresearch.org/research-catalogue>

<https://societyforartisticresearch.org>

The Research Catalogue functions as both a repository and a publication environment for artistic research; that is, research in which art practice is a

central method of inquiry. It allows artists, researchers, and institutions to present their work in varied, multimedia and non-linear forms that go beyond traditional academic papers. The RC has the following features,

- Media Presentation – Users can combine text, images, audio, video, and interactive elements to present research in a format that reflects the complexity of artistic practice.
- Open Access – Most entries are freely available to the public, fostering transparency and accessibility in artistic research.
- Version Control & Collaboration – Researchers can edit and collaborate on projects online, similar to a digital lab notebook.
- Peer-Reviewed Publication – The RC hosts peer-reviewed journals and portals (e.g., *Journal for Artistic Research*, *VIS – Nordic Journal for Artistic Research*, a new TL journal in practice-based research).
- Institutional Portals – Art academies and research institutions can maintain their own “portals” to curate and publish affiliated research (this is the proposed route for a TL subscription that costs ca. £10k p.a.).
- Expositions: The core unit of publication—an interactive document that can contain media, links, and text arranged in a spatial, web-like layout.
- Portals: Institutional or journal-specific areas that curate and publish expositions according to their standards.
- Profiles: Individual TL researcher pages where users can present their projects and academic background.

The acquisition of a TL institutional subscription would utilise several of the above design features that would enable TL research activity to be publicly shared in a responsive dynamic online environment.

#### *4.1.2. Institutional Support: New Research Assistant Position*

Populating the TL RC would require additional administrative capacity beyond what exists already at TL. Therefore, a sub-objective of 4.1 is to create a 0.2FTE

Research Assistant position to perform this role (for an initial three-year fixed term post, at cost of ca. **£15k** p.a.). This role could be filled by an administrator at TL via an open call, or a postdoctoral position with a three year fixed term.

#### *4.1.3. Replacement for Trinity Laban Research Online (TLRO)*

Context: Trinity Laban introduced TLRO before REF 2021, which is the current 'in-house' solution to the storage of the research outputs of Trinity Laban staff and Masters-level dissertations in the (old) Faculty of Dance. This was motivated by the open-access demands introduced during the last REF 2021 window, namely the requirement that REF-submitted text outputs (journal articles and conference proceedings) are made fully open-access (subject to publication embargoes) within 12 weeks of acceptance for publication. This solution, designed in-house by the TL AV team, worked well and ensured compliance with the institutional requirements of REF 2021, especially as the number of outputs (5-6 per year) requiring this provision was quite low.

Rationale for Change: Whilst indicative open-access requirements for the next iteration of the REF in 2029 show little change to open-access requirements for text-based research outputs, it is likely in the future that these requirements will be extended to e.g. long-form publications. In addition, non-REF related desired requirements for a repository, such as providing a location for RDP theses /MFA dissertations, and the non-REF submitted research outputs of the wider TL research community, means it has become apparent that TL requires a larger system, especially given current difficulties regarding the navigability and ease-of-use of the current solution, TLRO. The current system can no longer be managed by the same mechanism and methodology, due to internal staff changes, and the internal infrastructure needed to support the system is in need of repair/replacement; something that would be completely solved by moving the repository outside of internal TL servers, where maintenance for the repository can be outsourced to a third-party.

Proposed Solution: The open-access features of the TL institutional Research Catalogue portal could readily enable such a third-party repository solution, that would be fully compliant with the open-access requirements for REF 2029, and the maintenance and uploading of this section of the portal would be the responsibility of the new Research Assistant. All existing TL text-based outputs would need to be ported into the RC without loss of compliance, by using an overlapping time window. An important additional aspect of this solution is the ability to host shared open-access research databases, an area which was included in the People Culture and Environment Pilot for REF 2029 (see **4.2**).

## 4.2 Roadmap Towards TL's Submission to REF 2029

### 4.2.1. *Context*

The next REF exercise follows a broadly similar structure to the last two iterations in 2021 and 2014. The assessment is still split between: research outputs; impact case studies; People, Culture and Environment (PCE) statement (which receives a higher weighting than in 2021). A roadmap and arrangements for each of these follow.

### 4.2.2. *Outputs*

TL research-active staff are required to complete an annual Research Activity Report in March of each year. In 2026, the data from this exercise will be collated into a provisional REF 2029 output spreadsheet-based database. This will happen in conjunction with 1-1 meetings with each member of research-active staff and the Head of Research and Knowledge Exchange (HofR), who can provide guidance on eligibility, suitability and options for the selection of output-type (individual; portfolio). Once provisionally selected, researchers will continue improving, submitting, and disseminating these outputs until the Autumn of 2027, when a Mock REF exercise, peer-reviewed by senior academics, will determine, via a 1-4\* grading system, the likely output selection for TL's REF 2029 submission. After this date, the submission will be honed and if necessary

augmented, with outputs disseminated at the end of the REF window (August 2028). Once outputs are selected, careful focus on their professional presentation, including wherever possible, professionally made recordings, films and other fixed media with labelling, especially for the large majority of creative practice outputs likely to be submitted.

#### *4.2.2. Impact Case Studies*

The number of impact case studies are still under consideration and will include examples of the TL work in Arts and Health, coupled with potential case studies derived from the work of TL practitioners. Starting in Spring 2026, these will be submitted as standing items to the TL Research Board, with a final selection made in the period leading to the Mock REF Exercise in Autumn 2027. Once selected, effort needs to be made to ensure that these case studies: have an appropriate and extensive range of both quantitative and qualitative evidencing; are corroborated through a diverse range of sources; are professionally presented and have been through several stages of critical readership.

#### *4.2.3. People, Culture and Environment*

At the time of writing, the parameters for the content of this document are still unknown, pending review during a three-month pause to the REF 2029 timetable announced in Sept 2025. When the requirements for this submission are disseminated, a draft statement will be authored and submitted as a standing item to TL Research Board from early 2026 onwards. The document will also be made available for external scrutiny.

A summary TL REF 2029 Roadmap is collated below:

Date / Period	Key Activity or Milestone
2024 – Late 2025	REF: Ongoing People Culture and Environment (PCE pilot); consultation on PCE indicators; continued panel

	<p>recruitment; draft guidance development.*</p> <p>*Research England pauses REF 2029 schedule for three months in September 2025</p> <p>TL: Submission of REF 2029 Roadmap to TL Research Board</p>
Spring Term 2026	<p>TL: Submission of Research Activity Reports from Research-Active Staff. Creation of initial database of provisional TL REF 2029 Research Outputs (HofR, Research Administrator); HofR commences 1-1 meetings with research-active staff for information gathering on likely submission; selection of provisional TL Impact Case Studies (HofR, Postdoctoral Fellow in Arts and Health)</p>
Summer Term 2026	<p>REF: Publication of draft guidance and panel criteria for consultation.</p> <p>TL: HofR continues 1-1 meetings with research-active staff. HofR to complete REF 2029 Code of Practice documentation.</p>
Autumn – Winter 2026	<p>REF: Panel meetings to finalize criteria; publication of final REF 2029 guidance.</p>

2027	REF: All guidance and policy modules finalized; institutions prepare submissions.  REF: HofR to compile draft People, Culture and Environment documentation for submission to TL Research Board.
Autumn 2027	TL: HofR conducts peer-reviewed Mock REF exercise to determine likely Outputs and Impact Case Study submission to REF 2029. External assessors appointed. Online submission commenced with further data gathering from TL staff (HofR, Research Administrator)
Autumn 2028	REF: REF 2029 submission deadline to funding bodies.  TL: Online Submission finalized and submitted for assessment.
December 2029	Publication of REF 2029 results.

#### 4.3 Final Acquisition of Research Degree Awarding Powers (rDAPs);

##### Opportunities for Expansion for TL Level 8 Offer.

##### *4.3.1 Final Acquisition of rDAPs*

The next five years will hopefully see the completion of the final stage of Trinity Laban’s strategic goal of acquiring completely autonomous degree-awarding powers. The Trinity Laban submission for rDAPs was completed in November 2024, and immediately thereafter, a communication from the Office for Students (OfS) indicated that the requisite scrutiny period would be paused for TL’s- and

all other pending-applications in the UK HE sector. However, in September 2025, an initial meeting was held between TL and the OfS which resulted in the completion of the first stage of the pre-scrutiny process. Scrutiny of TL's application will commence in the AY 26-27, and a feasible timeline towards acquisition of rDAPs is therefore the following year: AY 27-28. The required scrutiny was confirmed as being 'light-touch' regarding the tDAPs criteria (A-E) in the application, and more involved for the remainder of the research criteria (F-H). Scrutiny will likely involve site visits, meetings with relevant senior staff, the observation of institutional committees, and 'triangulated' interviews with those involved with research degree management, delivery, and administration. A Working Group has been set up to lead on the final stages of the rDAPs project. This Working Group consists of:

- Senior Assistant Registrar (Quality and Governance)
- Artistic Director
- Deputy Director (Learning and Teaching and Student Experience)
- Registrar
- Head of Research and Knowledge Exchange
- Senior Registry Administrator (Academic Administration- Research)

During AY25-26, the primary goals of the Working Group is to a) negotiate further stages of the six required by the OfS for acquisition of rDAPs b) arrangements for a full update of the Critical Self-Assessment document and the Supporting Documentation, following the delay in processing the application. Thereafter, the Working Group will host pre-briefings with relevant TL groupings and individual staff, in order to prepare for the scrutiny period in AY 26-27.

#### *4.3.2 Expansion of TL Level 8 Offer*

During the last few years, TL has instigated a plan to grow student numbers across a variety of levels in order to mitigate financial pressures on the institution. The

acquisition of rDAP would further augment this strategy. Current RDP numbers have fluctuated between 15 and 36 students, but given the recent augmentation of the numbers of research-active staff and the introduction of a Professorial recognition scheme in 2016, these numbers could substantially rise to ca. 50 students, given the ability of the institution to introduce a more flexible provision for degrees at Level 8 than is currently possible with City St George's University. Such an extended offer, which would appeal to a changing demographic of students who need to study in combination with part-time working, will include: 'low-residency' MPhil/PhD programmes that are available to external students, supported by online learning; DMus programmes for specialist performers; one-year Level 8 ISP programmes; PhDs by Publication/Prior Output and Professional Doctorates, available to students outside the UK. In addition, the flexibility of offer afforded by rDAP will enhance progression and retention routes through the institution, for example by offering research degrees that incorporate a year of MFA study (currently an area of investment by the institution at Level 7), as well as extending exit awards at an early stage of PhD study. Another objective of the post-rDAP RDP strategy will be the extension of available PhDs to students in Music Theatre, Music Education and progressing from the BAMPI programme.

#### 4.4 Strategy for Research and the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF).

##### *4.4.1 Context*

TL is the recipient of recurring annual HEIF funding from Research England. This funding enables both the majority of TL's Public Engagement activity as well as important crossover projects with the Research Department and focused on the work of the Postdoctoral Fellow in Arts and Health, vital to TL's REF 2029 Research Impact Strategy. Historic conditions at TL have tended to prioritise the allocation of this funding to support recurring salary costs across departments. This has historically left little surplus funding for designing new and bespoke engagement projects. This has become important in the context of recent communications from Research England, which suggest that the award of future HEIF funding to

HEIs may be correlated with success in demonstrating achievement against metrics derived from the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF). TL requires more agility and flexibility in aligning to these new potential priorities, as performance against these metrics is far from uniform. Therefore, a further objective of the Research Plan 2025-2030 is to address this via the formation of a new Working Group, comprising stakeholders from Research, Public Engagement, Finance and Senior Management to address this new terrain. Strategic areas to be covered by the Group would include:

- re-allocation and re-distribution of existing HEIF funding;
- plans to enhance the allocation through improved performance on weaker metrics, such as: external consultancy income; graduate start-ups; spin-off companies, intellectual property, and so forth;
- Overall management of HEIF income as a totality.

#### 4.5 Enhancements to the Trinity Laban Research Culture

In addition to the four directed objectives above, the following sets out policies and procedures for a number of extensions and enhancements to the overall research culture at TL. There are **four** subobjectives in this regard:

##### *4.5.1 Strengthening International Research Partnerships.*

A strategic objective of the RDP Programme and of TL generally in the next five years relates to enhanced internationalisation agreements. At the time of writing, TL is pursuing links that will afford collaborative opportunities for TL RDP students with a number of international partners, including: Shiv Nadar University, Delhi, India (as part of the Satyam Kalon programme); Conservatorio C. Monteverdi, Bolzano, Italy (particularly in light of the renewed commitment to EU Erasmus schemes by the UK Government in 2025); University of Macau, China;

##### *4.5.2 Conferences*

Another objective for the Research Department is to increase the visibility of the TL research culture by hosting more national and international conferences. This process commenced in August 2025 with TL hosting the Women's Work in Music 2025 conference. Enhancements to the technological requirements for such events, including video-conferencing is also underway;

#### *4.5.2 Review of Existing Research Groups*

An additional objective for the current AY 25-26 is for the HoR to undertake a review of existing research groups, in consultation with the Research Board, Research Degree Programme Committee and the RDP community to establish which groups are currently operating well, and to give support to possible new groups. Areas here might include composition, performance and a staff group designed to scope funding opportunities for TL research-active staff;

#### *4.5.3 Increasing Visibility of the TL Research Centre and its impact on UG and PGT cohorts.*

The *Thinking Through Practice* research centre (see 1.1) was an institutional requirement for REF 2021, but its visibility within the institution at large is limited. A project, led by the HofR will commence in AY 26-27 to rectify this, and further embed the core principles of the Research Centre into taught programmes at Level 6 and 7, with the aim of producing policy documents for research-led teaching on all taught programmes at TL. In addition, other objectives under this heading include the introduction of a TL practice-based research journal housed in the Research Centre and hosted by Research Catalogue; an inaugural Research Centre Award for best research practice.

## **5. Timeline**

The drafting of the TL Research Plan 2025-2030 has been developed through the following timeline:

- Initial presentation of draft research objectives and associated activities to the TL Research Board in Autumn 2025 and Spring 2026;
- Submission to Academic Board (Spring 2026);
- Submission of document to PMG (thereafter).

Professor Jonathan Clark

Head of Research and Knowledge Exchange

February 2026