

Access Creative College

Gender Pay Gap Report 2024

This document sets out the College's Gender Pay Gap information for the reporting year 2024 and complies with its statutory duty to publish information annually.

01.04.2025

Contents

1. GENDER PAY GAP STATEMENT	2
2. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS	2
3. ACCESS CREATIVE COLLEGE GENDER PAY GAP	3
4. The mean and median explained	3
5. Gender pay gap vs equal pay	4
6. Gender pay gap	4
7. Recruitment	5
8. Actions	5
9. Review	6

Gender Pay Gap Statement

Access Creative College (ACC) is part of the Access Further Education Limited Group. The College encompasses the following brands, Access Creative College, Access Industry and Access Sport.

ACC is committed to building a fair and inclusive workplace where all employees who are essential to the success of the business and our learners can achieve their full potential.

To achieve this we must take appropriate actions, based on data and data analysis to allow us to benchmark ourselves against the UK population and sector-specific metrics and to set realistic and achievable milestones for our journey.

We do not pay people differently based on their ethnicity, gender or any other protected characteristics. Pay gaps exist because different groups are represented unequally in the workforce. From a gender perspective, ACC still has too few women at all levels of the Company, especially at senior levels.

We all want a workplace that more accurately reflects the communities in which we operate and the learner seeking qualifications to enable them to succeed in their future creative careers.

The College should be a place where the very best people can nurture, support and develop the Creatives of the future, we will always seek to appoint, retain and develop appropriately skilled and qualified staff regardless of their background or status. We recognise that doing so in a way that moves us towards a fully inclusive workplace will take time. However, we remain committed to making progress on inclusion now and in the future.

Legislative Requirements

Gender pay gap legislation requires employers in the United Kingdom with 250 employees or more to calculate and publish on an annual basis, gender pay gap data. This must be based on data on the 5th of April each year. The specific information we are required to publish needs to include:

- Mean and median gender pay gap (based on an hourly rate of pay on 5th April 2024)
- Mean and median bonus gender pay gap (considers bonus pay received in the 12 months leading up to the 5th of April 2024)
- The proportion of men and women receiving a bonus payment
- The proportion of men and women in each quartile pay band (looking at the proportion of 4 pay bands when we divide our workforce into 4 equal parts)

The gender pay gap is expressed as a percentage of male earnings (e.g. women earn x% less than men).

As this is our fourth report, it also includes comparison figures from our previous reports and an analysis of any changes as appropriate.

Access Creative College Gender Pay Gap

Gender Pay Gap	ACC 2021	UK Economy 2021	ACC 2022	UK Economy 2022	ACC 2023	UK Economy 2023	ACC 2024	UK Economy 2024
Mean	11.69%		12.05%		11.68%		13.60%	
Median	8.95%	7.9%	8.54%	8.3%	6.39%	7.7%	5.10%	7%
Bonus Pay Gap								
Mean	7.01%		12.75%		65.64%		-25.33%	
Median	-2.73%		-3.33%		14.82%		-11.11%	
% Employees receiving a bonus								
Male	7.8%		5.12%		8.43%		5.19%	
Female	5.6%		4.92%		7.69%		6.92%	

The 2024 Gender Pay Gap report shows improvements across median pay gaps but an increase in the mean. With the mean pay gap being influenced significantly by the relative proportions of men and women across the organisation, the Median is considered a more reliable measure of our progress toward eradicating the pay gap. The 2024 report shows that the College's median gender pay gap continues to be below the UK average for full-time staff and is falling steadily, continuing our progress towards eliminating the gap. This is a significant improvement over time and shows that raising awareness and implementing our recommendations are driving the required outcomes to become a fair and inclusive workplace.

The Bonus Pay Gap has returned to its more typical levels following the anomaly in 2023 linked to contractual commitments and performance in prior financial years, which was considered exceptional based on the circumstances at the time. Again more women than men received bonuses in 2023/24 with women receiving a higher level of bonus than men. However, the overall number of staff receiving a bonus remains small and variances can be more pronounced as a result.

The mean and the median explained

Mean pay gap: the mean pay gap is the difference in the arithmetic average hourly pay for women compared to men within the College.

Median pay gap: The median represents the middle point of a population. If you lined up all our women and all our men in order of the hourly rate at which they are paid, the median pay gap is the difference between the hourly rate for the middle woman compared to that of the middle man.

The mean and median are important metrics and need to be looked at together. However, the mean can be skewed by fewer individuals earning more in the upper ranges.

In terms of the organisation's performance in these metrics, the mean continues to fluctuate around +- 2% but the e median pay gap has improved again now tending 1.9% below that of the UK economy.

Gender pay gap vs equal pay

A gender pay gap measures the difference between the average earnings of men and women (irrespective of roles or seniority). Equal pay is our legal obligation as an employer to give men and women equal pay for equal work.

	April 2021				April 2022				April 2023				April 2024			
Quartile	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Upper (75-100%)	53	26	67%	33%	66	22	75%	25%	70	21	77%	23%	72	25	74%	26%
Upper Middle (50-75%)	55	25	69%	31%	66	23	74%	26%	63	29	68%	32%	70	28	71%	29%
Lower Middle 25-50%	50	30	63%	37%	57	32	64%	36%	63	29	68%	32%	67	31	68%	32%
Lower (0-25%)	43	37	54%	46%	49	39	56%	44%	57	34	63%	37%	58	40	59%	41%
Totals	201	118			254	122			253	113			267	124		

Our gender pay gap is not a result of equal pay issues, as we have a gender-neutral approach to pay across all levels of the organisation. The number of men relative to women across the organisation have risen, and we have also seen a reduction in the number of women employed. We are slowly improving the recruitment of women in more senior positions although this has not reached the levels of 2020/21 mainly due to the greater recruitment of men overall. We expect to see more positive distribution particularly at higher levels in 2024/25 as a result of steps we have taken.

Gender pay gap

Our figures show that we do have a gender pay gap and a gender bonus gap.

We understand why we have a gender pay gap at ACC. It is mainly due to the levels of female representation overall and in particular at senior/leadership positions. A more balanced distribution of men and women at all levels will be needed to narrow and ultimately eliminate the gap with particular emphasis on recruiting more higher-paid female senior staff.

Our Gender bonus gap in 2022/23 was skewed due to some exceptional payments which were made in the year linked to performance goals and are not typical of our normal performance bonus arrangements. This is shown in the return to a more typical pattern during the 2023/24 reporting year.

Initial analysis of our recruitment and candidate attraction suggests that the pattern of representation in our workforce is replicated in the proportions of applicants of each gender, although there are encouraging signs that more women are being attracted to work with us and there is a better balance of candidates being interviewed. But, this is still not generating significant improvements in respect of hires with only a marginal increase in the percentage of female hires in the 2023/24 reporting period. In part this may be linked to the nature and type of curriculum offered, sports, computing, and games alongside our music and media offers, or the nature of the roles being location-specific may also be contributory factors in this imbalance.

Recruitment

We have reviewed our Gender recruitment profile for the 2020/2021, 2021/2022, 2022/2023 and 2023/24 years, which nationally was as follows:

Gender	Applicants				Interview				Hire			
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2021	2022	2023	2024	2021	2022	2023	2024
Male	69.1%	67.6%	58.9%	61%	55.4%	61.4%	49.3%	57%	51.9%	61.9%	59.8%	57%
Female	29.7%	30.3%	39.2%	38%	42.3%	38.6%	48.4%	42%	48.1%	36.9%	39.2%	42%
Not Disclosed	1.2%	2.1%	1.9%	1%	2.3%		2.3%	1%	1.2%	1%		1%

Whilst there are some regional variations, at each stage of the process, these are not significant and are broadly in line with the profile above.

Whilst the number of female applicants and the proportions progressing through to interview has dipped in 2024 this is not reflected in the numbers at appointment. In the context of actions to address the gender pay imbalance, more needs to be done to attract female applicants to roles and to improve the ratios progressing through the stages to final hire. The inclusion of a minimum 50% gender representation target for senior roles, introduced during the later part of the 2023/24 reporting year, should become more visible in the 2024/25 reporting year

An increase in the number of female applicants progressing through the hiring process, regardless of level, will contribute to closing the gender pay gap overall. In particular, the appointment of increased numbers of females to higher-paid roles needs to be significantly improved to tackle the imbalance of representation in more senior and higher-paid roles. Recent senior appointments of female leaders in 2024/25, which will feature in the April 2026 report, should lead to both greater representation and a narrowing of the Gender Pay Gap at higher levels.

Actions

Recruitment & Hiring Practices.

Our focus is to look at embedding recruitment and hiring strategies that allow us to attract, retain, and promote diverse talent, ultimately reducing the gender pay gap and fostering a more equitable workplace. It is our intention to do this by focusing in on the following areas:

Gender-Neutral Job Descriptions

- Use inclusive language in job postings to attract a diverse range of applicants.
- Utilize AI tools to remove gender bias in job adverts.

Diverse Hiring Panels

- Ensure interview panels include a balanced representation of genders to minimize unconscious bias in hiring decisions.
- This will allow for a more balanced decision-making process with a broader representation of views, knowledge and experience when reaching decisions.

Targeted Recruitment Initiatives

- Actively encourage applications from underrepresented groups.
- Implement positive actions to enhance accountability to recruitment agencies when they are engaged to support our recruitment activities, applying targets that they put forward a minimum 50:50 gender balance split.
- We will also seek to implement a higher target on gender diversity where appropriate, this may relate to more senior positions within the organisation or where our data shows an imbalance in the demographics.

Flexible Working & Returner Programmes

- Advertise jobs with flexible working options, including part-time, compressed hours, and remote work where appropriate to the role.
- Develop programmes to support career returners, particularly women who have taken career breaks for caregiving responsibilities.

Gender-Balanced Shortlisting

- Set targets for gender-balanced candidate pools, ensuring at least a 50:50 gender split where possible.
- Work with recruitment agencies to mandate gender-diverse candidate shortlists.

Retention and Progression

We will seek to focus our retention and progression practices in the following core areas to provide a framework that demonstrates our commitment to taking meaningful steps to address our gender pay gap:

Career Progression & Leadership Development

- Introduce career progression pathways and fast-track opportunities to support female staff in advancing to leadership roles.
- Explore targeted training and development programs to equip female employees with the skills and experience needed for progression.
- Offer mentoring and coaching opportunities with female role models, both internally and externally.
- Consider ring-fencing a proportion of internal progression roles to align with female employees' skills development and career aspirations.

Inclusive Policies & Workplace Support

- Continue to review and introduce gender-sensitive policies that support all employees, ensuring an inclusive work environment.
- Build on recent policy developments such as the Menopause Policy and Parental Bereavement & Baby Loss Policy.
- Explore improvements to shared parental leave policies to encourage greater participation.
- Promote awareness and open discussions on workplace challenges faced by female employees.

Flexible Working & Work-Life Balance

- Expand opportunities for compressed hours, flexible working, and term-time-only roles to support employees with caregiving responsibilities.
- Explore where job-sharing arrangements may be feasible to create more opportunities for women in leadership roles.

Embedding Diversity & Inclusion in Organisational Culture

- Review our organisational values to ensure they actively support diversity, inclusion, and gender equity.
 - Establish regular reviews of recruitment, pay, and promotion data to identify and address any gender disparities.
 - Position ourselves as an employer of choice by fostering an inclusive and supportive work environment.
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Review

Progress against agreed actions and any targets set to be monitored and the results published in future reports, including any analysis and trend data for comparative purposes, annually as part of this report.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Beaumont', written in a cursive style.

Jason Beaumont

CEO