

1. Overview & context

The Academy's recruitment and admissions policy operates on a first come, first served basis, subject to a successful interview (see entry requirements below). No formal entry qualifications are needed for programmes, in line with the Academy's commitment to open access. Prospective students are provided with information, advice and guidance about which programmes (and constituent elective skills workshop courses) might best meet their needs. However, the decision to study a particular programme of elective skills workshops rests with each student.

The Art Academy operates a fair and transparent admissions process, to ensure that the widest range of people (with the motivation and ability to study at the correct level) have an opportunity to benefit from the Fine Art education we provide. We will operate admissions processes which are:

Individually tailored, but consistent

All applicants are invited to submit a portfolio of work for assessment, which necessitates a highly individualised approach to admissions decisions; however, all the staff involved in Admissions must provide the same *level* and *quality* of information to applicants.

Transparent

We will provide clear, accurate, up-to-date and accessible information about our programmes and entry requirements, including any variations in admissions procedures necessitated by the differing nature of specific programmes, timetables for decision-making, etc;

Inclusive

All our admissions processes are included in the scope of our Equality & Diversity Policy, with the aim of enabling the recruitment to our programmes of students from the full range of social, cultural and educational backgrounds;

Accountable

We will have clear areas of responsibility and accountability for the operation of our processes, and staff will be well-trained and knowledgeable. We will ensure that all decisions on admissions strategy are informed by our overall strategic priorities which reflect our core values and kept up-to-date inline with developments in national policy and QAA requirements.

1.2 Roles and responsibilities

Institutional strategic decisions: include the overall numbers of students, target numbers for individual programmes, the level of student fees (including application, enrolment/registration, and tuition fees), numbers and types of bursaries to award year on year are taken by the Principal in consultation with the Executive Management Team, and are subject to the approval of the Board of Trustees.

Admissions strategy decisions: The Academy's student recruitment, marketing, publicity and information strategies are the responsibility of the Principal, Director of Programmes, Academic

Course Manager and the Marketing Officer.

Operation of the admissions function: The Academy's admissions processes are the responsibility of the Academic Course Manager, who is supported in their day-to-day operation by the Academic Team. The admissions function includes, but is not limited to, dealing with programme-related admissions queries, processing applications, communication of arrangements for interview and their outcomes, and dealing with any further queries, complaints or appeals that may arise.

The Academic Course Manager supported by the Academic team has responsibility for:

- Implementing the Academy's admissions procedure
- Processing applications and the decisions.
- Disseminating relevant information to programmes.
- Communicating with applicants during admission process.
- Participating in Academy wide open days
- Providing accurate and relevant information for applicants and prospective applicants
- Assessing applicants and making offers
- Making reasonable local adjustments aimed at ensuring that individual disabled applicants have full access to the admissions process in conjunction with the operations manager.
- Ensuring compliance with the admissions procedures; ensuring fairness and consistency.

Training of Staff: All members of staff involved in admissions are given appropriate guidance in order to fulfil their roles competently and in line with the policy. Structured guidance is given to programme areas from the Academy in light of any national or institutional changes to admissions policy or procedures. Ongoing information is given to all staff from the Academic Course Manager

1.3 Entry Requirements

Applications will be considered on an individual basis and are welcomed from individuals with non-standard qualifications, patterns of prior study and experience or from a variety of backgrounds. All applicants are required to undertake an interview and portfolio review for assessment of key skills and level of ability and enthusiasm for the programme they are applying for. In the case of Degree and Foundation Degree programmes, though no formal qualifications are required, applicants will need to demonstrate work at least of Level 3 equivalent. In some cases the selection process may include the submission of supplementary work in addition to the information provided on the application form and requested as part of the portfolio review.

Applicants will be evaluated against the following criteria:

- The ability to demonstrate a range of fine art experience including an awareness of the cultural, historical and professional contexts of fine art and key artistic skills through an interview and portfolio review.
- Satisfactory academic reference.
- Personal statement
- Academic attainment at a pre degree foundation course, within general education at GCSE & Level 3 (where the applicant has a traditional educational background) **or** alternative experience within art and design or appropriate subject areas.

English Language Requirements: All applicants are required to demonstrate an appropriate level of English Language to gain entry to the Art Academy. This is assessed through evidencing an approved English Language qualification at level 2 or through the review of a requested sample of written (analytical) work at application. Appropriate level of spoken English is assessed at interview.

Specific entry requirements are laid out in the relevant programme documents and on the Academy website. All applicants are required to prove UK right of residency; The Art Academy does not sponsor international students through the Tier 4 visa system and therefore cannot accept international students unless they are able to prove right of residency in the UK.

1.4 Re-admission of Students

Applications from the following will require the approval of the Director of Programmes and Academic Course Manager, where appropriate, before the applicant can be offered a place:

- Students whose previous programme was terminated by the Academy.
- Students who have withdrawn from the Academy and are seeking re-admissions to the same programme.
- Students who have a tuition fee debt to the Academy.

1.5 Applicants with disabilities or special needs

The Academy provides a welcoming environment for people with disabilities, specific learning difficulties and special educational needs.

Disclosure: Applicants are invited and encouraged to disclose any disabilities or special needs at the point of application so that the Academy can begin to plan any support it may need to provide at the earliest opportunity, including during the admissions process itself. Admissions decisions are always made on the basis of the candidate's ability and/or potential to complete the course for which they are being considered.

Reasonable adjustments: Provided that the candidate is suitable for the programme applied for, the Academy will make reasonable adjustments for disabled candidates in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. This may include special arrangements for the interview. The Academic Course Coordinator will provide all applicants who are offered a place with details of the support available for students with disabilities or special needs, so that they can make an informed decision as to whether the Academy is able to provide an appropriate environment for their studies.

Accessibility of The Art Academy's estate: The Art Academy's premises are old buildings which inevitably means that access to some areas can be problematic for people with a physical disability. This will continue to be an issue for the foreseeable future. Therefore, whilst this is the case, we undertake to mitigate problems for disabled applicants and students as far as possible by ensuring that where possible, appropriate arrangements are made to hold interviews, classes, workshops, tutorials, exhibitions and other events in accessible spaces. However, applicants and potential applicants who have mobility difficulties should arrange to visit the Academy before completing the application process, to ensure that their needs can be met.

1.6 Students who will be under the age of 18 on entry to the Academy

There is no upper age limit for applicants to the Academy, and all applications are considered on their merits. For those under 18 years when they commence their studies (regarded as 'minors' in the eyes of the law) the Academy has an enhanced duty of care; this continues until their 18th birthday.

Students under the age of 18 are generally not admitted to undergraduate programmes due to lack of experience and levels of ability, however the Academy does take on students under 18 (though not below the age of 16*) for the foundation course, which is designed to enable progression onto undergraduate degrees. The Academic Course Coordinator will inform the appropriate member(s) of staff, including the person with responsibility for the oversight of child protection issues (Academic Course Manager), whenever an application is received from a potential student 'minor'. Students

under the age of 18 accepted onto course(s) will be closely monitored by the Academic Course Manager & Academic Course Coordinator. All tutors who are likely to teach such students are required to be DBS checked.

* other than for specialist young artist short courses, students at the Academy are over the age of 16.

1.7 Consideration of applications from people with an 'unspent' criminal conviction

Applicants with an 'unspent' criminal conviction should declare this on their application form. Such applications will be considered, balancing the Academy's duty of care to its students and staff with the need to treat all applicants fairly. The consideration of whether such an applicant's admission would pose an unacceptable risk to the Academy's community will be kept separate from consideration of the applicant's suitability on academic grounds (as far as possible in a small institution).

The Criminal Convictions Policy and Procedure contains detailed information and procedure for applications with a criminal conviction for applications.

1.8 Entry to a year other than the first year of a programme

Entry is normally at Level 4, but is possible at subsequent levels subject to appropriate qualifications and experience. Intake is normally in Term One (September).

Where students have prior higher education or equivalent work experience, it may be possible for this to be taken into account, to enable advanced entry to their chosen programme.

For direct entry to Level 5 students may be considered for exemption from Level 4, if they have previously completed a Level 4 120 -credit programme in an appropriate subject or previous courses studied (APCL). Students may also be awarded credit for relevant prior learning such as industrial, professional or other experience (APEL). The Academy welcomes from individuals with non-standard patterns of prior study and experience

Direct entry to Level 6 is only allowed for those students who have completed a level 5, 240-credit programme in an appropriate subject (i.e Foundation Degree).

For direct entry to any level other than Level 4, along with the considerations and requirements above, applicants will be required undertake an interview and portfolio review for assessment against the following criteria:

- The ability to demonstrate a range of fine art experience including an awareness of the cultural, historical and professional contexts of fine art and key artistic skills appropriate to the level applied for through an interview and portfolio review.
- Satisfactory academic reference.
- Personal statement or letter of application.

1.9 Expectations of applicants

The Academy considers all applications and makes its admissions decisions on the assumption that all information provided by applicants is complete and accurate. Throughout the application process the Academy expects applicants to:

- Provide full and accurate information about themselves and to correct any factual errors as soon as they are discovered;
- Inform the Academy of any updates to the application, e.g. changes of address or other contact details, in a timely way in order to ensure that communications reach her/him throughout the application process; the Academy is not responsible for correspondence being lost due to the applicant having provided incomplete or incorrect contact details;
- Inform the Academy of any changes in their circumstances after an application is submitted;
- Respond to any requests for further information within the timescales stipulated, and if this is not possible for a good reason, to inform us in good time so that other arrangements *can be agreed*.

Applicants should not omit any requested or relevant information, make a misrepresentation (for example, through plagiarism) or give false or misleading information at any point of the application process including after an offer is made. Should this occur the Academy reserves the right to dismiss an application, withdraw an offer of a place and/or revoke registration.

Withdrawn Application

An application may be withdrawn either by the applicant or by the Academy. If the Academy withdraws an undergraduate application the reason will be communicated to the applicant via email. An applicant will be withdrawn if they fail to attend an interview without making contact with the Academy or if an applicant has failed to respond to Academy emails or letters within given deadlines.

1.9.1 Data protection

By signing an application form, applicants give the Art Academy permission to process their personal data, including any 'sensitive' personal data (as defined in the Data Protection Act 1988), for the purposes of managing the recruitment, selection and admissions process. Data made anonymously will also be used to compile Equality & Diversity statistics for internal reporting and monitoring purposes.

2. Admissions and Induction procedure

2.1 Communication with applicants

During the application process, the Academy will communicate only with the applicant, as required by the Data Protection Act 1988, unless s/he has given specific consent for the Academy to discuss the application with another person. The Data Protection Act applies equally to the personal details of people who are under 18 years of age as to those who are adults.

Applicants will receive notification of the outcome of their application by letter, normally sent as an attachment to an email.

2.2 Deadlines

All deadlines are published on the website and places are offered in order of application date.

2.3 Decisions to admit or reject candidates

Decisions on the suitability or otherwise of candidates, and the determination of offers, are made on behalf of the Principal, normally by a member of the Academic team (either the Academic Course Manager or the Academic Course Coordinator) by assessing the applicant at interview and portfolio review.

Interviews are normally conducted with two members of staff, but where only one member of staff is present, no application will be rejected without their application being reviewed by another member of staff. Unsuccessful applicants, or those who do not take up their place, may reapply to the Academy in a subsequent year. Admissions decisions based on academic judgement may not be challenged unless there is evidence of prejudice or bias against a candidate. An interview form is completed, taking into account the applicant's potential to succeed i.e. performance at interview and the portfolio of work.

The role of the interviewer is to make a judgment whether the applicant has the potential to succeed on the programme applied for and to make a decision which they consider to be in the best interests of the applicant.

The Academy reserves the right, if the number of qualified applicants exceeds the number of places available, not to admit every suitably qualified applicant to a programme of study. In such cases, the Academy may offer the opportunity to transfer the application to another (suitable) programme for the same academic year or place the candidate on a waiting list (where by candidates will be offered a place should one become available in order of application date).

2.4 Outcomes

Conditional Offer

A conditional offer means that the Art Academy will offer an applicant a place providing certain conditions are met before registration on the programme. Usually conditions are based on the completion of outstanding qualifications. Each offer is specific to the applicant's individual circumstances.

Unconditional Offer

An unconditional offer means that an applicant has met the (academic and non-academic) entry requirements and has been accepted onto their chosen programme at the Academy.

Unsuccessful Application

Applicants will receive an unsuccessful response if the Academy has decided not to offer them a place on the programme. Applicants can be unsuccessful for many reasons and should be aware that many of the programmes at the Academy receive far more applications than number of places available.

2.5 Feedback

Feedback will be given to any applicant who requests it.

For applicants to programmes validated by the Open University, In the first instance general feedback is given on UCAS Track. Should an applicant require further feedback this will only be provided upon receipt of a written, signed request to the Academic Course Manager. The feedback will be based on information stated on the interview form completed.

For internally awarded programmes feedback this will only be provided upon receipt of a written,

signed request to the Academic Course Manager. The feedback will be based on information stated on the interview form completed.

2.6 Changes to an applied programme

Should there be any significant changes to a programme applied for, applicants are notified of this as soon as possible between the time the offer is made and enrolment is complete.

2.7 Welcoming incoming students

We will offer opportunities to incoming students to get to know the Academy between the time they accept their offer and when they enrol. These may include: A welcome letter from the Principal; Invitations to graduate and other shows.

2.8 Acceptance of Offers

By accepting offers students agree to abide by the Academy's Regulations. The student contract (terms and conditions for validated programmes), Student Handbook and student charter set out the commitment on the part of the student and of the Academy, as well as the provision for refunds and withdrawal from a programme. The Student Regulations define the basis of the registration agreement and apply to all registered students of the Academy.

2.8.1 Acceptance of Offers (UCAS applicants)

Students accept offers through the UCAS system.

2.8.2 Acceptance of Offers (direct applicants)

Students accept offers via completion and return of student contract.

2.8.3 Deferment of place

Students who have accepted an offer may defer the start of their programme by one academic year. Application to do so should be made in writing directly to the Academic Course manager.

2.9 Arrangements for enrolment and induction

Arrangements for enrollment and induction will be emailed directly to incoming students. The Academy will ensure that all reasonable adjustments have been considered in the arrangements for enrollment and induction to enable disabled students to participate fully.

3. Complaints and appeals

Complaints or appeals will only be considered from the applicant and not from any third party.

Informal procedure

In the first instance applicants who wish to query the decision of the Academy or make a complaint should contact a member of the Academic Course Manager within four weeks of the date of the original decision. If this proves to be unsatisfactory then the procedures set out below should be followed.

Formal procedure

An applicant wishing to lodge an appeal or make a formal complaint should do so, in writing, to the Operations Manager. An applicant wishing to lodge an appeal should do so within four weeks of the date of the original decision, informing the Operations Manager of the decision on his or her application. An applicant wishing to make a complaint should do so within four weeks of the matter with which the complaint is concerned.

The appeal or complaint must comprise of a statement setting out, in writing and in full, the grounds for the appeal or the nature of the complaint. If an appeal or complaint is lodged, the Operations Manager will contact the applicant to acknowledge receipt of the appeal or complaint. The Academy will endeavour to deal with any appeal or complaint in a timely manner.

Appeals and complaints shall be considered in the first instance by the Operations Manager. They shall decide whether there is a case for consideration. The Operations Manager shall be permitted to request further information from the appellant and/or anyone within the Academy in order to assist in the determination of the case. The appellant and/or staff shall normally be required to produce such further information within 7 working days of the issue of the request.

If the Operations Manager decides that there is not a case for consideration, the appeal or complaint is dismissed and the applicant informed of the decision.

In the event that a case is established the appeal or complaint will be considered by the Operations Manager and Director of Programmes who will obtain written statements from members of Academy staff and all other persons as appropriate.

Appeal Outcomes

If the Operations Manager and Director of Programmes determine that an admissions decision was made where there was evidence of irregularity in the decision making process, the Academic Course Manager will be instructed to reconsider the application. Should the reconsideration result in a decision to admit the applicant (subject to any conditions being met), but at such a time in the cycle that the original entry point is not possible, a suitable alternative entry point will be offered.

Should the Operations Manager and Director of Programmes determine that there was no evidence of irregularity in the decision making process, the applicant will be informed accordingly with a statement explaining the appeal has been rejected.

Complaints Outcomes

The investigation of a complaint will result in either the complaint being rejected or upheld wholly or in part. Should a complaint be rejected, the applicant will be informed accordingly with a statement as to why the complaint has been rejected.

If the investigation determines that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the Academy will take such action or provide such remedy as may be appropriate. Should the findings suggest that changes to procedures or policies are appropriate this will be stated in any correspondence to the applicant.

Reports and Documentation

A summary of admissions appeals and complaints and their outcomes is reported to Academic Board and included in the annual Self evaluation document for monitoring purposes.

Policies and documents that supplement and reference this document:

Student Handbook
Criminal Convictions Policy and Procedure
Quality Handbook
Regulations for Validated Awards of the Open University

Version 1 Feb 2018 Awaiting approval by the Academic Board.