

## Equality & Diversity Policy and Strategy

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### 1. Introduction

The Art Academy is an independent art school and registered charity based in central London. Founded in 2000 by Tanya Russell ARBS, a professional sculptor. The Art Academy began life as The Sculpture Academy in response to a perceived gap in skills-based teaching in art education, providing sculpture training in an atelier style.

The Academy has grown considerably since it opened. Today, the Art Academy operates as a close-knit, vibrant artistic community, providing high quality, intensive artistic training through academic programmes whilst also offering adult education classes in the evenings and at weekends to people in the wider community interested in the part-time study of art. In the academic year ending August 2016, 150 long course students (on courses one year or longer) and 2,788 short course students passed through its doors. Central to the ethos of the Academy is the championing of widening participation, accessible learning and inclusivity in arts education, which is reflected in the choice of the Open University as validating partner as the Academy launches validated Degree programmes for the first time.

The Art Academy is distinct from other institutions in that it combines the energy and creativity of a contemporary Fine Art college with its original atelier approach, offering students tuition in traditional artistic skills whilst also challenging them to develop their creative practices and academic skills. Furthermore, all the Academy's tutors are practising artists and specialists in their fields, contracted to work on a part time basis. This provides students with the opportunity to access a wealth of resources and advice from regular contact with established practising artists.

We have no minimum entry requirements for our academic programmes and welcome applications from individuals with non-standard qualifications, patterns of prior study and/or experience from a variety of backgrounds. The student body at the Academy is diverse; we have a strong track record of working with SEN students and proudly enable a large number of mature students to return to study and realise often long held ambitions to explore careers in Fine Art and wider creative industries.

### 2. Context

The Public Sector Equality Duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires that a public authority\* must, in the exercise of its functions have due regard to the need to:

- ***Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act;***
- ***Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;***
- ***Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.***

*The relevant protected characteristics are:*

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership (but only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination)
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex

## **- Sexual orientation**

People with caring responsibilities are also protected from discrimination by virtue of their association with people with protected characteristics.

*\*The provisions of the public sector Equality Duty (introduced in 2011) apply to any organisation that serves a 'public function', even if it is not technically a public sector organisation.*

## **2.2 Prevent**

This policy has been a key consideration in the development of the Academy's Prevent Policy. Monitoring of the Prevent Policy should take place over time to ensure the Academy is aware of any trends or patterns emerging involving particular groups of people and its impact on those groups.

## **3. Intended Audience**

This Equality & Diversity policy is intended to be read, understood and complied with by all members of our community who work, study at or govern The Art Academy. It also applies to those who supply goods and services to or visit the Academy.

The Art Academy is committed to providing an inclusive and positive environment for all based on the principles of equality, dignity and respect, and to the integration of this ethos into all areas of policy and practice.

## **4. Consultation and engagement**

We recognise the importance of consultation in all aspects of the implementation of our statutory equality duties and we will consult on our equality scheme, equality objectives, action plans, and other matters relevant to the Public Sector Equality Duty. This consultation will primarily be with students (through the Student Council) and staff, but may be expanded to encompass other groups and organisations, where relevant.

### **4.1 Student Engagement.**

This policy and strategy is available to students, sign posted in the Student/ Programme handbooks and they are informed about it and the Academy's Equality and Diversity Principles at induction.

### **4.2 Staff Engagement.**

Equality and Diversity forms a key part of the annual CPD programme, with core tutors, the Executive Team and office staff undertaking an online module on the Equality Act and its implications with the HE sector in 2017/18 academic year. As part of the preparations for delivering validated programmes, staff are involved in a number of training events to familiarise them with new policies and regulations, this being one of them.

It is intended that more in-depth themes concerned with the Equality and Diversity Strategy will form future sessions with the CPD programme.

## **5. Equality analysis**

Equality analysis, formerly known as equality impact assessment, is the method used to give due regard to equality when developing and revising policy. Policy is broadly defined and means any proposed, amended or existing strategy, policy statement, project plan, procedure or practice, which is often, but not necessarily, a written document.

The aims of equality analysis are: to identify potential discrimination and remove or reduce this as far as possible, to consider how policy might support the promotion and advancement of equality of opportunity, and to consider how policy might help to promote and foster good relations.

All new policies and subsequent revisions will undergo equality analysis, conducted by individuals other than the author. In developing policies for the Open University validated awards, concerns have been identified and policies

rewritten to limit potential discrimination as part of this process; an example of this being the Academy Attendance Policy being amended to account for individual circumstances which may prevent the rules on attendance being met (such as those students with dependants or acting as primary carers).

A similar analysis of project briefs and learning resources is being developed as part of the Academy's quality assurance processes. When writing programme and module specifications, equality analysis has been a consideration and resulted in changes such as the replacement of 'craftsmanship' with 'craftpersonship'.

## 6. Our Equality and Diversity principles

- The Art Academy values the rich diversity of our students, staff and alumni, which is fundamental to our character. This diversity informs our teaching and learning and our employment practices, producing both inspired practitioners and leading professionals.
- We value diversity and we recognise that different people bring different perspectives, ideas, knowledge and culture, and that this difference brings great strength in an institution such as ours.
- We recognise that patterns of under-representation and differences in outcomes at The Art Academy can be challenged through positive action programmes.
- We respect the rights of individuals, including the right to hold different views and beliefs. We will not allow these differences to be manifested in a way that is hostile or degrading to others.
- We expect commitment and involvement from all our staff, students, partners and providers of goods and services in working towards the achievement of our vision.

## 7. Policy and Strategy Aims

In order to uphold these values and to sustain an accessible and inclusive environment for all students, staff, alumni, trustees, members of the public and partners in the community and commercial sector with whom we engage, we will:

- Celebrate the diversity of our community, recognising that it is integral to our success.
- Comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and demonstrate our compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty, which requires us to have due regard to the three principles outlined in the introduction of this document.
- Challenge and address inequality, by prohibiting unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation as defined in the Equality Act 2010; in relation to the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief (including lack of belief), sex (gender) and sexual orientation, whether such a characteristic is actual, perceived, or by association. This applies to all stages of the student and staff 'lifecycles' and to our engagement with service users, suppliers and external parties.
- Take seriously any allegation of breach of this policy and investigate it taking action via our disciplinary procedures, where necessary.
- Embed our Equality and Diversity principles in all our policies, strategies and processes, through active consultation with students and staff, and evaluation of the potential and actual impact.

### 7.1 Student experience

Ensure that the student experience is positive, fair and inclusive, in each of the following areas:

- Application and admission.
- Induction.
- Curriculum and course design.
- Access to estate, services, website information etc.
- Throughout the programmes.
- Assessment.
- Academic progression.
- Withdrawal, interruption of study and transfer.
- Complaints.
- Student support.
- Employment outcomes monitoring.
- Any other activities - under the control of the Art Academy which students participate or which affects their ability to learn, work or socialise.

## 7.2 Staff experience

Ensure that the staff benefit similarly by the application of this policy, specifically in the areas of:

- Recruitment and selection.
- Contractual status and work-life balance.
- Job description, grading, pay and benefits .
- Induction.
- Probation.
- Appraisal.
- Employee relations.
- Staff development.
- Career progression.
- Length of service and retention.

## 8. Implementation and responsibilities

This Equality and Diversity policy and strategy is owned and endorsed by the Board of Trustees, which has corporate responsibility for the Art Academy's Equality duties and for ensuring that an inclusive culture is promoted throughout the Academy.

The Director of Operations and Finance is responsible for leading equality and diversity and for ensuring implementation of this policy, and that appropriate action is taken against breaches of this policy. Practical implementation of the equality duties is managed by the Academic Quality and Programme Manager for student and Academic staff related matters and the Operations Manager for general staff-related matters.

All students, staff and visiting tutors have an individual responsibility to support and foster the aims of this policy.

*Under UK legislation and this policy, every member of staff and student has a responsibility to:*

- Listen to what others have to say and respect their point of view.
- Understand that it is unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability and that disciplinary action will be taken against those involved in discrimination, harassment or bullying on any grounds.
- Speak out if the situation demands it (e.g. if there is an immediate risk of escalation) or, more often, report it if they witness or are aware of bullying, vindictiveness, verbal or physical aggression and not assume that it is someone else's responsibility.
- Question their prejudices and assumptions.
- Avoid using language and behaviour that might offend others.
- Familiarise themselves with the responsibilities that equalities legislation places on them.
- Be sensitive to issues of cultural diversity in their work.

## 9. Complaints relating to alleged breaches of this Policy

All reported complaints relating to an alleged breach of this policy will be taken seriously, investigated and managed according to the Academy complaints procedure or, in the case of staff, via the grievance procedure. Serious breaches may lead to further action being taken under the relevant Disciplinary procedures.

Students who feel that they have experienced discrimination have recourse to the Academy’s student complaints procedure, but should first contact either their Programme/ Pathway Leader or the Academic Quality and Programme Manager for information, advice and guidance. Informal resolutions should be attempted in the first instance where possible.

Employees who feel they have experienced discrimination can pursue the matter through the formal grievance procedure, but should first contact their line manager, or, if the complaint concerns their line manager, the Operations Manager for information, advice and guidance. Informal resolutions should be attempted in the first instance where possible.

Members of the Public who wish to make a complaint should contact the Operations Manager in the first instance.

## 10. Objectives of the Strategy and how they will be Measured

The Academy has set its initial equality objectives following consultation and engagement with staff, students and stakeholders and also by reviewing the equality information which we gather, or have available to us across all of the protected characteristics. (Annual monitoring reports are published as staff and student information become available). The aim of the objectives is to focus on the major issues and develop objectives with measurable outcomes. In setting objectives we have also considered sector benchmarking.

This policy and strategy will be implemented September 2018 reviewed every four years in line with the requirements of the Equality Act (relevant equality Data will be published and analysed annually as part of the Academy Self Evaluation process). Amendments will be made in the interim, however, where legislation, case law or operational experience necessitate.

## 11. Objectives of the Strategy

### **Objective 1: Increase the participation and attainment of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students at the Academy**

**KPI 1:** A 1% increase each year in the percentage of new student entrants from BAME groups. Our current % is 12.9% of long course students are from BAME background, which is close to the National Statistics Demographic split for England and Wales which is 14%

#### **Programme Activity:**

Create a widened outreach programme to attract more students from BAME background, with progress to be reviewed annually. This annual report will track application rates of BAME, and monitor student experience, staff experience and community activity. The start of this process is to roll out and clarify for staff and students the founding culture of the Academy, which celebrates and supporting a diverse community of artists and with our founding aim to “give creative opportunities to the wider community”. This is going to be entrenched in all HR documents, onboarding procedures and staff will have this clarified for them. Marketing material will be reconsidered to reflect and attract a higher number of students from a BAME background. Initiatives designed to engage with our central london inner city community, working in partnership with Better Bankside and the London Borough of Southwark to attract local communities through their outreach channels and festival initiatives throughout the year and targeted school talks in local inner city London schools for our Foundation programme. (Lead: Marketing)

#### **Outcome:**

A 1% increase each year in our percentage of BAME groups. Like for like feedback experience from BAME students and staff, in our feedback gathering metrics. Yearly increases in the amount of community outreach

activities we are running.

**E&D Lead:** Marketing Manager

**Progress:**

**Objective 2: Improve the provision of reasonable adjustments for disabled students and staff across the Academy**

**KPI 1:** To ensure that by September 2018, each Academy site has made suitable provision for disabled students and staff requiring additional access requirements.

**Outcome:** Ongoing

**E&D Lead:** Operations Manager

**Progress:** We have engaged Assemble to work with us to improve the current school buildings and facilities. As part of this we have had Burdus Access Management complete an access audit. The results of this audit will inform future decision on the renovation of our spaces which will allow for better access for those with disabilities.

**Objective 3: Ensure staff are aware of their responsibilities to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation in relation to the Equality Act 2010.**

**KPI 1:** Train all managers and support staff through a Managing Diversity Skills Programme

**KPI 2:** Train all teaching staff on E&D best practice in the learning environment

**Outcome:** Ongoing

**E&D Lead:** Academic Quality and Programme Manager

**Progress:**

**Objective 4: To meet the needs of students, staff and visitors who require Quiet Spaces.**

**KPI 1:** To ensure that by September 2018, each Academy site has made suitable provision for students, staff and visitors who require access to a Quiet Space or private room for:

- Prayer or personal reflection
- Rest, due to pregnancy or disability
- Other disability or health related requirements.

**Outcome:** Ongoing

**E&D Lead:** Operations Manager

**Progress:** We have identified area where we intend to create quiet spaces and a prayer room. These will be developed as part of our building refurbishment.

Our access audit will be making recommendations to improve access for those with mobility problems.

In order to ensure the maintenance of suitable facilities we have engaged a professional cleaning company to improve the hygiene standards of the school and reduce the amount of dust and other irritants. We also supply safety equipment to all those using material that could cause any health problems. We have reviewed the use of certain chemicals which can affect ongoing health issues, as well as chance how we handle this chemicals we have also sourced substitute less harmful ones.

## Appendix A: A guide to the Equality Act (Great Britain)

### What is the Equality Act?

The Equality Act is applicable in England, Scotland and Wales. The main provisions of the Act were implemented in two phases: The first phase became law on 1 October 2010 and in broad terms it harmonises, updates and amends previous anti-discrimination legislation, providing greater protection for all individuals across a wide range of 'protected characteristics'. The second phase became law on 5 April 2011 and enacts a new 'public sector equality duty', which amends and expands the existing duty to cover a wider range of characteristics.

### What is 'prohibited conduct' under the Act?

*Direct discrimination and indirect discrimination*, continue to be prohibited, but are now extended across all of the characteristics, with the exception of pregnancy and maternity. Pregnancy and maternity now has specific protection for the duration of pregnancy and up to 26 weeks after birth. Students are explicitly protected from less favourable treatment if breastfeeding.

Protection from *harassment* is extended to all characteristics with the exceptions of pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnership. Individuals are protected from victimisation, where a person makes an allegation or brings proceedings under the Act, and suffers a detriment as a result.

Discrimination by *association* is extended to cover all the characteristics, with the exception of pregnancy and maternity. For example, carers are protected because of their association with someone with a protected characteristic, such as a disabled person or an older person.

Similarly discrimination because of *perception* is extended to the same characteristics. This means that individuals who are treated less favourably because they are perceived to have a characteristic are protected, even though they don't have that characteristic.

It continues to be unlawful not to make a *reasonable adjustment* for a disabled person and a disabled person no longer has to show that their impairment affects a capacity, such as mobility or manual dexterity. It continues to be lawful to treat a disabled person *more favourably* than other people.

It is now unlawful to ask disability or health - related questions during a selection process, with some exceptions.

A new protection, *discrimination arising from disability*, has been introduced. It means that unfavourable treatment because of something connected with a person's disability is unlawful, for example, refusing to allow a student to use a recording device in a tutorial. In practice, providing that reasonable adjustments are made, discrimination should not arise from disability.

### What are the positive action provisions?

The positive action provisions in the Equality Act replicate those in previous equality legislation. Where we reasonably think that people who share a protected characteristic suffer a disadvantage, have different needs, or have disproportionately low rates of participation in an activity, we may take action to overcome or minimise this,

providing any action taken is proportionate. This provision applies to all functions, including employment and education, and we have and will continue to use these provisions where appropriate.

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**Policies and documents that supplement and reference this document:**

- Quality Handbook
- Student Handbook
- Staff Handbook
- Tutor Handbook
- Student Support and Guidance (including Tutoring Policy)
- Admissions Policy
- PREVENT Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Freedom of Speech Policy
- A guide to Student Engagement
- Teaching and Learning Strategy
- Fitness to Study Procedure
- Academic Misconduct Policy
- Extenuating circumstances Policy
- Data Protection Policy