



Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of City and Guilds of London Art School, January 2018

1 Outcome of the monitoring visit

1 From the evidence provided in the annual return and at the monitoring visit, the review team concludes that the City and Guilds of London Art School (the Art School) has made commendable progress with implementing the action plan from the January 2017 [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\)](#).

2 Changes since the last QAA review

2 The Art School continues to deliver programmes on Fine Art and Conservation validated by Birmingham City University and Historic Carving accredited by City and Guilds of London Institute, and as an Approved Centre for the University of the Arts London Awarding Body Foundation Diploma in Art and Design. At the time of the monitoring visit there were 229 registered students. At the School's HER (AP) visit in 2017 there were 232. There have been no material changes, but the recently validated MA in Conservation has now recruited and there is a new entrance to the building and covered atrium.

3 Findings from the monitoring visit

3 The Art School's systematic approach to action planning is thorough, with a focus on enhancement. The Art School has taken firm ownership of the Action Plan produced following its HER (AP) report 2017, which is fully integrated into its overall strategy. It includes actions which are in addition to the good practice and the recommendations of the 2017 HER (AP) Review. The monitoring team found that at each of its meetings the Senior Management Team scrutinises the Art School Action Plan to check progress and currency. In addition, it is revised every six months. All actions have been fully implemented and have contributed to ensuring the maintenance of academic standards and enhancement of the quality of student learning opportunities. The Art School now has firmly established a data set that enables the Academic Board to monitor student academic performance strategically (see paragraph 4). The Art School has successfully completed its 'Strengthening the Infrastructure' project phase one and has comprehensive policies and procedures. This enables it to meet the requirements of its three awarding bodies effectively (see paragraph 4). The Art School's staff and students confirmed that the application of the Assessment and Process Maps contributes to their thorough understanding of assessment procedures (see paragraph 4). Moreover, the examples of good practice noted in the HER (AP) 2017 report have been further developed and embedded. These make particularly positive contributions to the Art School's management of academic standards and the quality of its educational provision (see paragraph 5).

4 The Art School has collated and reviewed its data on admissions, retention and achievement to provide greater strategic and systematic application. This has resulted in positive actions which strengthen recruitment and widen participation. It has exceeded the recommendation of its QAA Action Plan by implementing a Data and Information Management Project that enables more precise programme monitoring, efficient compliance with legal reporting requirements and the development of international standards. The Art School has successfully implemented Phase 1 of the Strengthening the

Infrastructure Project. This project provides the Art School with a suite of its in-house policies, regulations and procedures that reflect best practice in higher education while meeting its three awarding bodies' and organisation's requirements. In addition, the comprehensive Staff Development Plan supports and complements this project with related documents published on both staff and student virtual learning environments (VLE). Staff demonstrate a thorough understanding of the policy infrastructure and students are aware of policies and regulations and know where to access them. The Art School has continued to make very good progress on the Assessment and Feedback Project. All programmes use the Assessment and Process Maps. They are available on the VLE and discussed in each student assessment briefing session. Tutors deliver workshops on Learning Outcomes in the autumn term and students work in groups to explore learning outcomes and how their work can evidence this learning. Students confirm the value of these sessions and are clear about assessment requirements. Fine Art students demonstrate this understanding through peer group assessment.

5 The Art School has further developed and embedded good practice which makes particularly positive contributions to the quality of student learning opportunities. In addition, the professional practice environment at the Art School continues to thrive. Professional Practice is systematically mapped to specific modules in order to demonstrate its relevance. The Material Matters programme, which explores materials used across departments, has successfully integrated curriculum areas. In addition, the staff clearly display enthusiasm for these projects and students are extremely complimentary about the range of opportunities to engage with practitioners and professional practice. The embedded, multi-tiered and responsive approach to student support continues to be a strength since the last review. The Art School has analysed its policies and procedures to ensure that they embed student support and has developed process maps which are published on the VLE. These maps also interface with the student records system to identify and support students with special needs. Information on student support is comprehensive and students reported that they value the extensive and individual support available. The Art School continues to enhance student opportunities for engagement with industry specialists to support their learning and preparation for future careers. Recent events include London Craft Week, involving a range of industry specialists and experts, and the Material Matters Programme. Students greatly appreciate these opportunities to develop their art industry links.

6 The Art School has robust Admissions Procedures which are underpinned by an Equality and Diversity Policy, Inclusive Learning and Participation Policy, Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and clear Admissions Handbook. All students are interviewed, and applicants provide personal statements and are required to submit a digital portfolio of work pre-interview. They are also required to demonstrate proficiency in English through documentary evidence including qualifications, written application and interview. These processes provide an effective basis for assessing an applicant's prior qualifications, their ability to study their subject, academic ability and their motivation for learning. The admissions tutors consider any non-traditional applicants in accordance with the Recognition of Prior Learning Policy (RPL). Applicants to MA Conservation undergo a rigorous two-day interview and complete a number of tasks to demonstrate their ability. Students confirm that the admissions process is transparent, supportive and provides equality of opportunity.

7 The Art School's monitoring and review processes are very thorough. It maintains strategic oversight of student and programme performance through its Annual Programme Monitoring (APM). Each Head of Department prepares an APM report which draws upon a range of qualitative and quantitative information including retention, achievement, external examiner reports and student feedback. The Senior Management Team (SMT) reviews the APM reports, which are then further scrutinised by the Board of Studies and confirmed by the Academic Board (which both have student representation). Each APM report includes

comprehensive action plans and these contribute to the annual Institutional Action Plan that is also confirmed by the Academic Board, SMT and the Board of Trustees. The consideration and ongoing updating of the Institutional Action Plan provides a means for the Art School to identify and implement enhancements to teaching and learning. Examples of recent enhancements of student learning opportunities noted at the visit included the learning outcomes workshops, peer assessment, Materials Matter project, the further development of the VLE and the application of the assessment maps.

8 The Art School monitors data systematically within its annual monitoring procedures, as identified in paragraph 4. The data demonstrates that retention, progression and achievement rates are high, nearly always 100 per cent. Small cohorts expose statistical anomalies and data can be significantly affected by individual cases. Where the rates are not 100 per cent, for example BA (Hons) Conservation Studies year 1 in 2016-17, each student represents 11 per cent and overall retention was 67 per cent. This is three students, of whom two students transferred internally and one transferred out. Final year completion and pass rates remain high and trends consistent.

4 Progress in working with the external reference points to meet UK expectations for higher education

9 The Art School demonstrates highly effective engagement with the relevant external reference points, including the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code), the Subject Benchmark Statements, the Tuning document for Fine Art Higher Education in Europe and *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ), as well as its awarding partners' regulations. The Art School's 'Strengthening the Infrastructure Project' enables its policies and procedures to readily map to the Quality Code and this was exemplified through the Quality Code being effectively deployed in the review and revalidation of BA and MA courses in 2016.

10 The Art School reviews its programmes annually and provides the necessary reference points that assure its awarding organisations for the setting and maintaining of academic standards. It also maps, reviews and monitors its policies and procedures against the Expectations of the Quality Code, along with regular monitoring by external examiners to ensure that provision meets UK expectations.

5 Background to the Monitoring Visit

11 The monitoring visit serves as a short check on the provider's continuing management of academic standards and quality of provision. It focuses on progress since the previous review. In addition, it provides an opportunity for QAA to advise the provider of any matters that have the potential to be of particular interest in the next monitoring visit or review.

12 The monitoring visit was carried out by Colette Coleman, Reviewer, and Catherine Fairhurst, Coordinator, on 31 January 2018.

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