

Art Academy

Certificate Programme Handbook

Academic Year 2025/26

This Student Handbook along with the Programme Handbook and the Student Terms & Conditions together make up your contract with the Art Academy and you are bound by all of the regulations and policies contained or signposted within them.

Large print versions of this document are available on request

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1. Introduction

Welcome to The Art Academy's Certificate Programme: the Certificate Programme aims to develop your technical skills and potentially prepare you for further study. The bespoke programme features a comprehensive range of different modules in a variety of disciplines, enabling you to tailor your course to suit your interests and aptitudes.

This document sets out for you the key things you need to know about your Certificate Programme, including the programme structure, the key requirements of the course, how it is assessed and how it is taught. It should be read alongside the **Student Handbook** which tells you all you need to know about the organisation, staff and facilities here at the Academy to support you in your studies. The Academy's Certificate Programme is internally awarded.

You will be able to access additional information about the programme, and information more generally about the Academy, via our Virtual Learning Environment, Moodle, once you have been inducted in its use. This is where you will find up to date information about your modules, your tutors, your timetable and other aspects of the programme. You will also be able to access all the Academy's regulations and policies. If there is any further information you need, the Academy staff are here to help you. Please feel free to ask questions of any staff member at any time.

Our aim is to ensure you get the most from the time you spend with us, tailoring your course to suit your interests and aptitudes. Our staff and tutors are here to support, guide and challenge you, in order to help you to develop your artistic and academic skills to the very best of your ability.

We wish you every success during your studies with us.

Sue Spaul
Director of Programmes

2. Academic calendar

The Art Academy runs three terms per academic year, the first two have a week-long reading week, but the third runs straight through.

2025/26 Academic year

Term 1 (2501)	Term 2 (2502)	Term 3 (2503)
Term starts 15/09/25	Term starts 12/01/26	Term starts 20/04/26
Reading week 27/10/25	Reading week 16/02/26	No reading week
Term ends 28/11/25	Term ends 27/03/26	Term ends 12/06/26

The Academy will be closed on bank holiday Mondays 06/04, 04/05, 25/05.

3. Attendance

The Art Academy London aims to enable all students to enhance their learning experience and develop their personal skills by requiring them to take a professional attitude to attendance and punctuality. The Academy believes that by doing so, retention, achievement and progression will be positively affected.

The Academy expects the following of all students:

- To attend all timetabled classes as required by the programme on which they are enrolled.
- To arrive on time for classes; late arrival causes disruption to other students and is unfair to the tutor.
- To notify the Academic Team of any known lateness in the morning so it may be brought to the tutor's attention.
- To notify the Academic Team in advance of any absences so it may be brought to the tutor's attention.
- To independently make arrangements to catch up on any work missed during absence.
- To not book holidays during term-time.
- To give a week's prior notice to the Academic Team of any absence or lateness where extra-curricular arrangements unavoidably conflict with classes (acceptance of the validity of the request is at the discretion of the tutor).

The Academy sets a minimum benchmark of 80% for attendance expectations. Electronic registers are taken for each session both in the morning and afternoon (as relevant). Where a student's attendance is below the benchmark standard, they will be invited to discuss the matter.

If a student is having, or anticipates having, difficulties adhering to this policy because of individual circumstances (for example, where caring responsibilities necessitate them leaving a class early on a regular basis, or a long term medical condition prevents attendance on occasion), personal, financial or academic problems, they should talk at an early stage to the relevant member of staff - Academic Team, their PAT or Programme Leader. Where appropriate, the Academy will make reasonable adjustments to attendance requirements on a case by case basis.

A poor attendance or punctuality record could result in the following:

- Initiation of the Fitness to Study Policy.
- A recommended period of interrupted study.
- Bursary payments being withheld.
- The Art Academy informing any relevant funding body/sponsor who may then withdraw the student's funding.
- Possible action under the Academy's Disciplinary Policy and Procedures
- The student's registration on the programme may be terminated.

Please contact the Academic Programme Manager or the Academic Administrator regarding any attendance issues on the number provided below under Staff, Academic Team.

Further details can be found in the Attendance policy student version), available from the [Policies](#) section of Moodle or via the Academy's [website](#).

COVID - 19

To keep all members of our community safe, we expect everyone to comply with Covid self-isolation guidance. If you test positive for Covid, please inform the Academic Programme Manager and do not attend the Academy until you have returned a negative test result.

Interrupting studies

We understand that life may get in the way of your studies. You can interrupt your studies as often as you like, pausing for a term (or longer). Interruptions can only be authorised for whole terms, not after a term has commenced and we ask that you give us at least three weeks notice, prior to the start of term, where possible. Please speak to the Academic Programme Manager if you wish to interrupt.

Please see the [Withdrawal and Interruption of Studies Policy](#)

4. Staff

Key Academic Staff

Zoe Toolan	Fine Art Certificate Programme Leader	zoe.toolan@artacademy.ac.uk
Julia Hawkins	Contemporary Portraiture Certificate Programme Leader	julia.hawkins@artacademy.ac.uk

All the teaching staff at the Academy are practising artists, and therefore don't work full time.

You will also be taught by a number of staff in Elective Skills Workshops who may only be in for their teaching days - one day a week for one or more terms during the year. Should you need to contact these tutors, the Academic Team can contact them on your behalf.

Academic team

Sue Spaul	Director of Programmes	sue@artacademy.ac.uk
Aimee Briginshaw	Admissions & Student Services Manager	aimee@artacademy.ac.uk
Thomas Groves	Quality Manager	thomas@artacademy.ac.uk
Paulo Tomas Sallis	Academic Systems & Support Coordinator	paulo@artacademy.ac.uk

The Academic Team is responsible for the day-to-day organisation and running of all academic

affairs.programmes. Most members of this team are full time, both during term time and during most holiday periods. The team works closely with the Programme and Department Leaders and Tutors to ensure the smooth running of your programme, that all students are happy, safe and making progress in their studies. Aimee, the Admissions & Student Services Manager, looks after the admissions process and oversees all student services, leading on pastoral and wellbeing for students. She is also available to students for general enquiries and pastoral support. Paulo the Academic Systems & Support Coordinator is available to students and tutors for general enquiries and IT and systems support. The Quality Manager ensures that our programmes meet national standards and works with Sue to complete programme timetables and the team to maintain student records.

Members of the Academic Team are available to speak to students at any time during office hours (9am-5pm), when they can also be contacted on **020 7407 6969**

5. Programme overview

The Certificate programme has pathways in Fine Art and Contemporary Portraiture. It is a predominantly practice-based programme for students with limited time who wish to pursue their artistic practice seriously, though the course on its own is not sufficient to prepare a student to become a professional artist.

The Certificate programme is made up of six modules referred to as Elective Skills Workshop courses (ESWC), each of one day a week for the duration of the term (terms one and two are ten weeks long, term three is eight). The ESWCs are common to all the academic programmes at The Art Academy. Most are available to all levels of student,

It provides not only a solid grounding in the technical aspects of each discipline but also ample scope for creative expression and development. You will choose your own individually tailored programme of elective skills workshop courses from a range available each term and can either specialise in one discipline or study multiple disciplines. Days of attendance will vary from term to term, depending on what students choose.

6. Tutorials

You will have a tutorial each term with your Certificate Programme Leader. Tutorials are 30 minutes one-to-one and provide you with the opportunity to discuss your individual practice, goals and educational development and progression, academic and administrative issues and general wellbeing. Tutorials are available in person or via Zoom.

Tutorials have a wide and open brief. They are generally the only time that you can have a tutor survey your whole artwork production across the board and this can also include any pre-certificate work and extracurricular artistic activity. A tutorial is the main opportunity for focused, one-on-one feedback and you should feel free to bring any art-related issue to the table. The tutor should also feel free to respond in any way they see fit, provided of course that it is in the best interests of your development and will provide clarity rather than confusion.

You should be properly prepared for tutorials and should show as much work as you can. It is advisable to let the tutor decide what is relevant as students often dismiss work which has the most potential. You should consider where you most want help and give the tutor as much detail as possible.

7. Programme Assessment

As the Certificate programme is primarily intended to enable students to develop skills, there is no formal, summative assessment. The Certificate is not graded or classified. However, eighty percent of the programme must be completed in order for the Certificate to be awarded. If a student fails a course based on attendance alone, the student may continue in the Certificate programme and may, at the tutor's discretion, be credited for work done outside the Art Academy in lieu of a failed skills course. If not, they would need to pay to repeat the Elective Skills Workshop course in a subsequent term (which will be subject to standard term fees).

Formative assessment is central to the teaching and learning strategy at The Academy and you will be provided with continuous formative assessment through active learning opportunities such as one-to-one and group critique sessions. This enables you to analyse your own progress and take control of your learning in order to maximise strengths and address weaknesses. Formative feedback is provided verbally and not recorded.

9. End of Programme Exhibition

All graduating Certificate students are invited to participate in the Art Academy's annual graduate exhibition. This event offers students the opportunity to showcase and sell their work, with a 20% commission on any sales. The Certificate graduation ceremony will be held during the private view evening of the exhibition.

On the day of the private view, the programme leader will conduct a group critique, bringing together graduating Certificate students to discuss the exhibited artworks. This session will also serve as a platform to reflect on each student's development and explore potential progression paths after the programme.

All participating students are required to invigilate during the public opening of the exhibition.

Further details about the Graduate Show, including important dates and deadlines, will be provided in the Graduate Show Guide which is published to students during the Summer term.

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	Student Experience		
Changes (list sections)	Removal of Director of Quality & Student Experience and Academic Programme Manager references. Updated job titles, responsibilities and names throughout.		
Approved by	AQSSEC	Date of approval	22 September 2025