

## Admissions Policy

---

*This document has been informed by the expectations, core and common practices of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access. This can be found at the following location and contains further guidelines, references and resources:*

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance>

### List of appendices:

**Appendix A** - Third Party Consent Form

## 1. Overview & context

Art Academy London'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 widening participation in Fine Arts education. 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.

Art Academy London 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***

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

### ***Accountable***

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

## 1.2 Roles and responsibilities

**Operation of the admissions function:** Art Academy London's admissions processes are the responsibility of the Admissions Administrator, 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 Admissions Coordinator 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 the 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. Guidance is given to Programme Leaders in light of any national or institutional changes to admissions policy or procedures. Ongoing information is given to all staff from the Admissions Administrator.

### 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 undergraduate 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:

- Through an interview and portfolio review:
  1. The ability to demonstrate a range of Fine Art experience, ability and understanding, including evidence of:
    - a. Technical ability in one or more Fine Art medium,
    - b. Conceptual ideas and understanding,
    - c. Awareness of the cultural, historical and professional contexts of fine art.
  2. Independence of thought;
  3. Evidence of curiosity, inquisitiveness and being open to new ideas and thinking;
  4. The potential and ambition to develop their Fine Art work and ideas further, and ideas about how they might do that;
  5. A willingness to explore alternative ways of thinking and working;
- 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 competence to gain entry to the Art Academy. This can be through previous study in English (evidencing an approved English language qualification at Level 2). Where an applicant is unable to provide evidence of a relevant, formal English qualification, the Academy will require specific performance in written English tests at interview. 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 Student 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 Director of Academic Quality, Standards and Student Experience, 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

Art Academy London provides a welcoming environment for people with disabilities, specific learning difficulties and special needs (educational or otherwise).

**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 Admissions Administrator 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 Art Academy London's estate:** Art Academy London's premises are old buildings which inevitably means that access to some areas can be problematic for people with a physical disability. However, as part of the validation process the Academy has taken steps to ensure the possible accommodation of applicants, students and staff with mobility issues in the Mermaid Court main building; appropriate arrangements are made to hold interviews, classes, workshops, tutorials, exhibitions and other events in accessible spaces. 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 Art Academy London

There is no upper age limit for applicants to the Academy, and all applications are considered on their merits. For those under 18 years old 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 not admitted to undergraduate programmes due to lack of experience and levels of ability.

However, the Academy does take on students under 18\* (provided that their 18th birthday falls within the academic year) for the Foundation programme, which is designed to enable progression onto undergraduate degrees. The Academic Programme Manager will inform the appropriate member(s) of staff, including the Designated Safeguarding Officer, whenever an application is received from a potential student 'minor'. Students under the age of 18 accepted onto programme(s) will be closely monitored by the Academic Team. All tutors at the Academy 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 (RPCL). Students may also be awarded credit for relevant prior learning such as industrial, professional or other experience (RPEL). The Academy welcomes applications 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.

Please refer to the [Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#) for further details.

## 1.9 Expectations of applicants

Art Academy London 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.

### 1.9.1 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.

## **1.9.2 Data Protection**

By signing an application form, applicants give the Academy permission to process their personal data, including any 'sensitive' personal data (as defined by the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations), for the purposes of managing the recruitment, selection and admissions process. Data made anonymous 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, Art Academy London will communicate only with the applicant, as required by the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR, unless s/he has given specific consent for the Academy to discuss the application with another person. The DPA 2018 and GDPR apply 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**

Deadlines vary, depending on the programme applied for. 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 the Programme Leader (or a suitable member of the Academic Team) 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 judgement 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 (whereby 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 Art Academy London 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 the number of places available.

## **2.5 Feedback**

Feedback will be given to any applicant who requests it.

The feedback will be based on information stated on the interview form completed. This will only be provided upon receipt of a written, signed request to the Admissions Coordinator. 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 Terms and Conditions and Student Handbook set out the commitment on the part of the student and of the Academy (and for undergraduate programmes additionally the Regulations for Validated Awards of the Open University), as well as the provision for refunds and withdrawal from a programme. These documents define the basis of the registration agreement and apply to all registered students of the Academy.

### **2.8.1 Acceptance of Offers (direct applicants)**

Students accept offers via completion and return of student contract.

### **2.8.2 Deferral 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 Admissions Coordinator.

## **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. Admissions Complaints**

## **3.1 Definition of Admissions Complaint**

A **Complaint** is normally a specific concern related to a procedural error, irregularity or administrative error in the application process. Complaints can cover a wide range of issues including the way in which an application has been handled, the outcome of the selection or fees classification, or the way in which an applicant has been

interviewed.

**Challenges against academic judgement will not be considered. Academic judgement is defined as a judgement about a matter where only the opinion of an academic expert will suffice.**

**Disagreement with a policy/regulation rather than its application does not constitute grounds for a complaint.**

A complaint will only be considered if there has been an irregularity in the conduct of the application process, which was material enough to affect the outcome of the application. The subject of the complaint should relate specifically to one or more of the following, or comparable issues:

- Failure of the Academy to meet obligations.
- Misleading or incorrect information in prospectuses or promotional material and other information provided by Art Academy London.
- Concerns about the application or interview process.
- Complaints relating to allegations of bullying, harassment or victimisation by members of staff.

Anonymous complaints will not be considered unless there are exceptional and evidence-based reasons to do so. In many circumstances, raising a concern anonymously could impede investigation and communication of the outcome.

Complaints made by third parties on behalf of an applicant will only be accepted if the applicant has given their written permission that the third party may act on their behalf. Please note that where this option is taken up the applicant's representative will attend all meetings and respond to all correspondence *in the place* of the applicant. A Third Party Consent Form can be found in **Appendix A** of this document.

### **3.2 Principles**

Complaints should be treated seriously and applicants must not suffer any disadvantage or recrimination as a result of making a complaint in good faith. It is expected that applicants and their representatives will conduct themselves responsibly and treat the complaints process and those members of the Academy involved in the process with respect at all times.

A complaint needs to be dealt with flexibly, quickly and as close as possible to the point in time at which it arises. In all cases, it is desirable that complaints are resolved informally and quickly between the relevant parties, and that the formal process is only started if that fails. Evidence of an attempt at informal resolution will be required.

Complaints must be substantiated with evidence, expressed in clear and succinct English and submitted within prescribed timescales.

Complaints submitted outside of the timescales stipulated in the procedure will only be considered in the most exceptional circumstances and where there is good reason, supported by evidence, for the late submission.

Art Academy London will not accept or investigate complaints which it considers frivolous or vexatious and observes OIA guidance to identify such complaints.

*Note: for both the informal and formal procedures set out below, in the absence of the Director of Academic Quality, Standards and Student Experience, or where a conflict arises, the Director of Operations shall deputise.*

### **3.3 Informal procedure**

In the first instance applicants who wish to make a complaint should contact the Director of Academic Quality, Standards and Student Experience (DAQSSE) **within twenty eight calendar days** of the date of the original decision. If this proves to be unsatisfactory then the procedures set out below should be followed.

### 3.4 Formal procedure

If after following the informal procedure an applicant wishes to pursue the formal procedure, a formal complaint can be lodged, in writing, to the DAQSSE. An applicant wishing to lodge a complaint should do so **within forty two calendar days** of the date of the original decision, informing the DAQSSE of the decision on his or her application.

The 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 a complaint is lodged, the DAQSSE will contact the applicant to **acknowledge receipt of the complaint and inform the student how the matter will be taken forward within two working days of receipt.**

A complaint shall be considered in the first instance by the DAQSSE. They shall decide whether there is a case for consideration. The DAQSSE 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 seven working days of the issue of the request.

If the DAQSSE decides that there is not a case for consideration, the complaint is dismissed and the applicant informed of the decision within the timescales indicated in 3.5 below.

In the event that a case is established the complaint will be considered by the DAQSSE and the Director of Programmes who will obtain written statements from members of the Academy staff and all other persons as appropriate. The applicant will be informed of the decision within the timescales indicated in 3.5 below.

*\* Further evidence requested from applicants will be specific to the case/ complaint, but may involve further clarification of events, copies of correspondence or published information which is claimed to have misled.*

### 3.5 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 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.

**Outcomes of complaints shall be communicated in writing to applicants within ten working days of receipt of the formal complaint. However, a student will be advised if a time extension is required and the reasons why. Where further evidence has been requested the date of receipt of said evidence shall be treated as the original receipt date.**

Should the findings suggest that changes to procedures or policies are appropriate this will be stated in any correspondence to the applicant.

### 3.6 Case for Complaint rejected (Open University validated programmes)

Where the appeal has been rejected, the 'Completion of Internal Procedures Letter' concludes the Academy's appeals procedures and provides the student with formal confirmation that the student has exhausted all available stages of the internal admissions complaint procedures and advises them of their right to take their appeal to the OU.

Students who are not satisfied with the outcome of the admissions complaint procedure may take their complaint to the Academy's validating partner, The Open University. An appeal will not be considered unless it is initiated and progressed by the student personally. No substantive correspondence or discussions will be entered into by the Open University with a third party unless the student specifically requests this in writing. The Open University procedures state that they must receive appeals as soon as possible and within three months of the outcome of the Academy's internal procedures. A copy of the Open University formal appeals and complaints procedure for students is available on request from the Quality & Standards Office. Alternatively, you may send your complaint



to The Open University directly: to The Director, OU Validation Partnerships, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA, United Kingdom.

### 3.7 Case for Complaint rejected (internally awarded programmes)

Where the appeal has been rejected, the 'Completion of Procedures Letter' concludes the Academy's admissions complaint procedures.

### 3.8 Reports and Documentation

A summary of admissions 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
- Tutor Handbook
- Criminal Convictions Policy and Procedure
- Recognition of Prior Learning Policy
- Quality Handbook
- Regulations for Validated Awards of the Open University

Document name	Admissions policy	Document owner	Darren Nairn
Date originally created	February 2018		
Version	3	Review date	November 2022
Author of amendments	Darren Nairn	Next review date	November 2023
Changes (list sections)	1.2,1.3, 1.6, 2.2, 2.5, 2.8, 3.6		
Approved by	Academic Board	Date of approval	February 2023 (AQSSEC)

## Appendix A - Third Party Consent Form



### Third Party Consent Form

Consent for a third party to act on a student’s behalf in connection with the following (delete/ circle as appropriate):

Academic Appeal / Student Complaint / Disciplinary

Other matter (Please specify):

Section A: Details of the student authorising a third party to act on their behalf			
Name			
Date of Birth			
Student ID no.			
Programme		Year of study	
Tel no.		Email	
Address			

Section B: Details of the person authorised to act on behalf of student (representative)			
Name			
Role/relationship to me			
Tel no.		Email	
Address			
Declaration of representative			
<p>I confirm that I am the person detailed above in Section B.                      I confirm that I am happy to act as the representative for the student detailed above in Section A.                      I confirm that I am happy for Art Academy London to use my personal details in the administration of the procedure(s) and am aware that in accordance with the Academy’s Data Retention and Disposal Schedule, my personal details will be held on record as part of the students file relating to the procedure(s) for a period as specified; <i>The Academy will not use your personal data for any other reason than those required to effectively administer the procedure(s).</i>                      I confirm that I am happy for my personal details to be shared with relevant parties within the Academy, as necessary for the administration of the procedure(s).</p>			

<b>Signature of acting person</b>		<b>Date</b>	
-----------------------------------	--	-------------	--

<b>Section C: Declaration by the Student</b>
--

I confirm that I am the person detailed above in Section A.  
 I confirm that I will pass any relevant information relating to the procedure(s) to my representative.  
 I confirm that my representative has not been suspended/ excluded from the Academy.

<b>Signed</b>		<b>Date</b>	
---------------	--	-------------	--