



CSVPA ACCESS & PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

Cambridge Arts & Sciences Ltd_10010308

JUNE 2021

Cambridge School of Visual and Performing Arts (CSVPA) is committed to facilitating access and widening participation.

Admissions criteria and support

The school has a flexible admissions policy that while maintaining standards with respect to entrance requirements also recognises the importance of prior relevant experience, commitment and enthusiasm and non-traditional qualifications. With this in mind prospective students are offered an interview and given an opportunity to present previous work and explain their motives for applying to the school. These interviews play an important part in our selection process alongside formal examination grades. The school provides many opportunities for a wide range of prospective students to view the work of current students and tour the facilities. We run regular open days and exhibition events open to the public which are broadly publicised.

The school recognises that some students may not be equipped to enter into a full undergraduate degree programme due to lack of formal education in the relevant areas or some other obstacle. For this reason, the school offers phased entry into its HE programmes by way of Foundation programmes. These courses are designed to equip students for the challenges of a full BA degree or to be taken as standalone programmes of study.

We support the Care Leavers Covenant: <https://mycovenant.org.uk/about/>

Student Partnership

CSVPA engages with students as key stakeholders. Students representatives are members of a key committees and contribute actively to the development, enhancement and deliver strategic objectives. Our VLE is employed as a communication channel to feed back to students on how the school is responding to the *student voice* and to ensure students have access to copies of the minutes of relevant committees.

Financial support

CSVPA is able to provide financial support in the form of bursaries, for example, to students who are experiencing economic hardship. These awards can range from discounted fees to a one off payment and are assessed on an individual basis and in confidence by the Academic Planning and Resources Committee (APRC). We provide financial support towards tuition fees in the form of bursaries and scholarships with a total value equivalent to approximately 10-12% of higher education fees. More than half of all Home and EU students on undergraduate and postgraduate courses received some measure of tuition fee support from the School. This support is provided to ensure individuals with low income backgrounds are retained and enabled to complete their studies.

We aim to build upon our strategy to develop deeper and wider relationships with creative industry players, drawing upon our partners to assist both in financing bursaries and scholarships, and promoting them to a wide and diverse home audience. In the inaugural year of our partnership with Hearst Magazines UK, 2016/17, for example, a number of co-funded full 'Hearst' scholarships to our MA Art & Design course were awarded. In 2018/19, with the same media company's support, two magazine-branded full scholarships will be offered at undergraduate and FE level to home students,

with the express aim of encouraging diversity and supporting outstanding talent in the sector. In May 2021, CSVPA and Hearst Magazine additionally launched a fully-funded “Access All Areas” Scholarship with Cosmopolitan. The initiative offers the successful applicant a scholarship for any of the CSVPA arts, design and performing arts courses including Extended Diplomas, Foundation, BA (HONS) or Masters.

Nationally, editorial endorsement and promotion of these scholarships through the print and digital partner brands of Hearst Magazines UK is planned, which will greatly extend our reach into audiences across the full socio-demographic range. Locally, we will promote these scholarships to, and through, our partner schools, highlighting the opportunity available for world class creative education on their doorstep.

Support services

- 1 to 1 tuition – making it flexible for students with caring responsibilities, mature learners and those from lower income backgrounds who may struggle.
- Peer learning give additional support to students who struggle to complete and succeed in their courses, in particular those at risk of dropping out.
- Mindfulness programmes ensure that all students are considering their personal and professional development
- All students have access to additional study skills support.

Students have access to a wide range of services that are committed to supporting every student’s wellbeing as well as their academic achievement and success. We have a dedicated welfare team and healthcare professionals whose job it is to see that all students are properly cared for during their time with us.

We run a number of activities and support services to help students to settle in to study. These include: induction weeks; a student mentoring scheme; and, additional learning support consultation to assist in the identification any specific learning needs. All students are given 1 to 1 tutorial support with all of their course work and there is a dedicated study skills department that provides support with the nuts and bolts of academic study (how to write essays, research, reference and think critically and analytically).

The school is also excellently equipped to provide language support for students for whom English is not their first language.

At CSVPA we take the view that all support services ought to be readily available to all students at any time. However, for those students with specific needs these services are especially valuable and are intended to provide each student with the support needed to overcome most obstacles and succeed in their chosen field of study.

Student Representation and School Student Forum allow students to work with and support one another. We aim to build in this over the coming year to provide further mentoring opportunities within the student community (student to student, staff to student, and external speakers to students). As part of our induction programme, we encourage our students to engage with local

organisations to make the most of their time in Cambridge; we have also reached out to our partner University to discuss working together with their Student Union.

Student learning experience

Our portfolio of undergraduate and postgraduate degrees and courses has been developed upon these historic principles, and we remain committed to delivering a high quality student experience through frequent and regular contact time, small class sizes, one-to-one support in class, dedicated work space, studio access throughout the week, and on successful completion of your course guaranteed participation in an end of degree event.

Our courses are delivered by a team of lecturers, all of whom are experienced HE professionals active in their own disciplines as practising artists, designers and researchers, and professionals bringing industry links and real insight into the world of work in the creative industries. Together, our courses are taught within a dynamic and global community bringing opportunities, international contacts and friendships for our diverse student body.

At CSVPA we value diversity and recognise that differences bring richness and strength to the school. Celebrating diversity improves the quality of our teaching and student learning, enhancing the life and professional skills developed in every student.

Community engagement and outreach

Summer School

CSVPA offers an extensive Summer School programme for students aged 14 to 18. A range of weekly Art and Design programmes offer a broad introduction across subject areas including Photography and Film, Painting and Drawing, Graphics and Illustration, Fashion Promotion, Games Design and Animation, with more intensive two-week programmes available in a range of areas including Performing Arts. A Portfolio Preparation course is also offered to assist students aged 16+ looking to apply for further or higher education in Art and Design.

Partnerships with targeted local schools and colleges

Working closely with other local schools and colleges is a core element of our existing outreach programme and its further development is key to our future strategy. Outreach activity in local schools includes

- Providing creative careers advisory sessions at careers fairs and events at local sixth forms
- Running on-site workshops and advisory events for students at local schools, particularly in the field of performing arts. For example, expert sessions in audition techniques have run at local village schools, while Musical Theatre and Acting workshops will be held at Colchester Sixth Form College in June.
- Offering free workshops in the College
- End of year performance (for example “A Midsummer Night’s Dream”) at a local primary school
- Providing support to the Cambridge Young Artists’ Competition in its aim to promote artistic endeavour amongst Cambridgeshire’s youth, from pre-school up to sixth form - an

egalitarian and inclusive platform, inviting state, private and special schools as well as home-schooling organisations to take part. Alongside administrative and marketing support, we provided prizes in the form of free places on summer school creative arts courses.

We continue to build on this with the launch of an outreach art & design programme in targeted local primary schools, focusing on those in areas of particular deprivation and with the greatest need of expert art & design support. Students from POLAR Quintiles 1 and 2 have been identified as under-represented groups (*TEFY4_10010308_Cambridge Arts & Sciences Limited: contextual data*) in our higher education student population (our current ethnic diversity is healthy; gender balance favours females).

CSVPA commissioned the brand profiling agency *Youthsight* to review student perceptions of our brand identity and the impact this has on student recruitment. The report, published in November 2018, identified the following for consideration:

- In line with their ideal values, CSVPA came across strongly as creative (the most frequently cited value).
- The support provided to students comes through strongly, with many assuming that the small nature of the college and class sizes would create a nurturing feel.
- Prestige is also conveyed, which links with the ideal value of excellence.
- However, some of the values chosen for CSVPA could be interpreted as negative – e.g. selective, exclusive, high-brow (being located in Cambridge only adding to these perceptions).

In building a strategy to improve equality of opportunity at CSVPA the following issues have been identified as key factors to consider in designing marketing materials and arranging outreach activities:

- The appearance of being exclusive, selective.
- Prestige carries connotations of pressure and stress. It is interesting that this is still emerging, despite supportive aspects of the school also being perceived.
- Perceptions of diversity are not coming through: we know that students value the opportunity to mix with a range of peers to enhance both social and professional networks.
- Look at the language used to convey values and ensure that communications align with ambition and strategy.

Key consideration is given to the use of language, image and information provided during outreach activities to counter perceptions of being *high-brow* and to bolster understanding of diversity.

Further information is displayed in the OfS Transparency Returns which is published on the school website here: <https://www.csvpa.com/about/ofs.htm>

Each year we offer a series of art & design workshops across a range of local village colleges, building on the fashion-related workshops undertaken with the outreach team at the Fitzwilliam. To date these workshops have proved to be very successful in attracting young people and providing

effective outreach to many local schools and individuals who would otherwise have limited opportunity to learn about careers and education in art and design.

A budget has been allocated for widening participation activities.

Target numbers for the recruitment of under-represented groups are low but will be significant as a percentage of small cohorts, or year groups, on each undergraduate course.

Table of intended growth for under-represented groups

Academic Year	Total intake target for each undergraduate course	Target number POLAR 1 & 2 on each course	Percentage POLAR 1 & 2 on each course
2019/20	20	2	10%
2020/21	20	3	15%
2021/22	20	4	20%
2022/23	20	4	20%
2023/24	20	4	20%

Partnerships with other HEIs

In 2017/18 we launched our first Visual Arts Lab series in conjunction with Cambridge University, running workshops at both King's College and St John's College. Bringing together participants from across both our own college and Cambridge University, the workshops develop collaborative projects and jointly break new ground: it was the first time in King's College history that its chapel had been home to a drawing workshop. Artwork was exhibited in June in King's College Art Rooms.

Building on this foundation, we plan jointly to establish an intercollegiate network of visual arts from 2018/19; early discussions have been had with a number of Cambridge University Colleges. In the longer term, we plan to extend this concept to develop a range of cross-university and industry collaborations and think-tanks.

We will continue to develop cross-university links in order to extend and facilitate wider access, building on initiatives this year such as CSVPA students being invited to attend Cambridge University lectures and shared access to visiting experts. In 2020/21, CSVPA Arts Lab have been working in collaboration with composer Richard Causton of Kings College Cambridge on the 'Phoenix' project. The visualisation of a music score for flute, clarinet, violin cello and piano. This work will culminate in a series of events during 2021/22.

Key cultural partnerships

We have worked with Cambridge University Museums, collaborating with the Fitzwilliam Museum to provide an after-hours fashion-related event. Linking to the Fitzwilliam's own collection of artworks, we developed a series of lectures and workshops, led by our expert lecturers, to support the Museum's aim of drawing a new, younger, culturally and demographically diverse audience through its doors. Deemed highly successful by our partners, the event drew around 300 participants, aged 16+. Our performing arts team has also worked closely with local theatre and concert venues.

We continue to build on this partnership, with collaboration on events at other of the University's museum and gallery spaces under discussion. We will extend our relationships to a range of other targeted cultural partners: discussions have begun, for example, with House of Cambridge, a proposed multi-arts festival to take place in the city next year, with the Cambridge Literary Festival, and with the Academy of Magic and Science, an educational programme born in the accelerator of Cambridge University's Judd Business School.

Resourcing the community

Our performing arts centre offers high quality facilities and performance spaces which are in short supply locally. In our first year in the premises, more than twenty local groups and projects have used our facilities outside college hours, many of which have become established, ongoing users.

We have particularly welcomed – and regularly supported through free access to our facilities – not-for-profit community groups and charities working to improve, through creativity, the lives of the underprivileged, disadvantaged and troubled in society. For example, regular users include Cambridge Community Arts, which aims to inspire and support with creativity those with mental health issues; Sin Cru, a Hip-Hop collective which runs community projects especially aimed at disadvantaged members of the community, at young people and their families, as healthy alternatives to negative behaviour and crime; and Dance East Centre for Advanced Training, which opens careers in dance to talented young people across the region. Recruiting widely (more than 200 young people were reached through its schools and taster workshops in 2017/18, including 80 pupils in the East Cambridge & Fenlands Social Mobility Opportunity Areas), Dance East is able to offer support through DfE grants and financial aid for the disadvantaged: half of those in training in 2018/19 were in receipt of such a grant.

Leading and celebrating creative initiatives for the community

We will celebrate and champion creative arts in our local community, both through our outreach programmes and by developing specific, community-focused events, such as our planned celebration of our performing arts centre's heritage as one of the homes of Northern Soul.

Cultural and creative exchange: supporting local community initiatives

Where possible, our college community has offered support for local initiatives. This year, our performing arts students worked with the city's central shopping area, the Grand Arcade, at Christmas, and have been invited back to perform again. Students held a food and clothing drive for a local homeless shelter, donating a large number of food, clothing and hygiene items, as well as making a financial donation in support of a local women's shelter; and a performance of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" raised money for a local charity.