

The College Charter

Hereford College of Arts is dedicated to providing accessible education and training of the highest quality in further and higher education. The learning environment is exclusively focused upon the study of art and design and the performing arts, responding to the needs of students and practitioners within the local, regional and national communities that it serves.

The College aims to maintain a distinctive profile as a centre of excellence and to collaborate where appropriate with other specialist partners.

Teaching and learning is informed by a creative, enquiring and analytical spirit, where process and product are seen as equally significant and within which the individual is supported in a culture of equal and open interchange of ideas and practices.

We continue to employ staff of the highest calibre and to invest in their professional development in order to enhance our contribution to lifelong learning through the visual and performing arts.

Equality and Diversity

The College is committed to the promotion of equality and diversity and to providing access to education and training in the visual and performing arts to all who can benefit from it, regardless of gender, marital status, family responsibilities, sexual orientation, colour, race, nationality, religious belief, ethnicity, disability or age. Each person associated with the College has the right to be valued equally and to have equality of opportunity.

A copy of the College's Equality and Diversity Policy is available on the College Website, on Moodle and on request from Reception.

Race Equality Statement

The College is committed to providing equality for all students and staff and for all potential students and staff regardless of racial group or ethnic origin. We are committed to the elimination of any form of racism and to the active promotion of equal opportunities and good race relations.

Students with Disabilities and Additional Learning Needs

The College welcomes applications from people of all abilities. We are committed to ensuring that disabled people, including those with learning difficulties, are treated fairly. All reasonable adjustments to provision will be made to ensure that disabled students and other disabled people are not disadvantaged.

Most of our College facilities are accessible to students with disabilities. Areas not currently accessible will be managed to ensure any student with a disability is not disadvantaged. Details of our commitment and the support we offer to people with disabilities and/or additional learning needs are provided in the College's Disability Policy Statement and the Disability Equality Scheme which is reviewed annually and is available on the College Website, Moodle and from Reception.

Getting a Place at the College - Our Commitment to Students

In order to help you make an informed choice about your future course of study the College aims to provide clear and accurate information about entry requirements, progression opportunities, programmes of study, qualifications, facilities and support services via a range of marketing and publicity materials, events and activities, including:

- annually updated prospectus, website, course leaflets and student diary/handbook
- information about fees, bursaries, travel arrangements, accommodation and student welfare
- access to statistical data about student progression and achievement
- details about additional learning support services
- provision of specialist staff and career events
- College Open Days and Information Evenings
- summer schools/workshops
- advisory interviews providing accurate information and impartial advice/guidance
- the opportunity to visit the College and view our facilities, exhibitions and performances.

Applicants for the College's Further Education Programmes can normally expect:

- to receive a response to a verbal or written enquiry within five working days
- the opportunity to have an advisory interview on request with an appropriate member of the academic staff prior to the submission of a formal application
- acknowledgement of a formal application within ten days of receipt giving either a date for interview, or an indication of when interview procedures for a particular course are due to commence
- to be informed of the outcome of an interview in writing, within ten working days
- to be provided with further information on request where an application has been refused
- to have access to an appeals procedure if dissatisfied with the outcome of the applications procedure.

Applications for the College's full-time Higher Education programmes are processed in strict compliance with the procedures laid down and published annually by the University and College's Admissions Service (UCAS).

Teaching, Learning and On-Course Support

Our aim is to provide all of our students with appropriate individual learning programmes delivered by suitably qualified/experienced staff in a safe, supportive and adequately resourced learning environment.

As a student at the College you can normally expect to receive the following:

- clear and impartial advice/guidance to enable you to choose a programme of study best suited to your particular needs
- an introduction to the College and introduction to your programme of study and guidance
- screening for additional support needs for literacy and numeracy
- sound, effective teaching and management of your learning programme
- individual tutorial support to help you plan your learning
- regular oral/written feedback on your progress and achievement
- a student handbook and diary containing information about the College's rules, regulations and support services
- a course handbook providing information/guidelines about your programme of assignments with clear aims, assessment criteria and deadlines
- assessment results to be communicated within ten working days of the assignment completion date
- access to a range of support services including information and advice about careers, additional learning support, - financial hardship, accommodation, child-care and confidential counselling/guidance
- opportunities to comment on the quality of your learning experience and the services provided by the College
- access to library/Information Technology provision and specialist facilities appropriate to your programme of study
- support in identifying and organising suitable work experience if appropriate
- the opportunity to join the College's Student Union
- an induction into health and safety.

Our Commitment to Employers

The College will seek to develop collaborative partnerships and be responsive to the identified needs of employers and the business community through a variety of channels.

As a specialist College of Arts, we aim to provide regional businesses/employers with flexible, accessible learning opportunities for their staff, the opportunity to contribute to curriculum developments and broad representation of their interests through the College's Governing Body.

Our Commitment to the Community

The College aims to work in close partnership with the community to provide lifelong learning opportunities in the Arts appropriate to the needs of all sections of the community and in particular to:

- adult returners
- people with specific learning difficulties or disabilities
- unemployed people
- members of racial minority communities
- single parents
- children
- students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

We recognise the importance of involving the community in the planning of our provision and will seek to develop a dialogue with community representatives/groups about their needs and respond positively to any invitation to speak to community groups/organisations.

As an integral part of its Mission, the College has always sought to play a central role as a leading agency for the promotion and development of the visual and performing arts within the community. It will continue to expand its profile at every opportunity but at present it specifically offers:

- specialist lectures and seminars on the Arts
- exhibition and performance space for College and public shows
- a venue for local and regional arts events and meetings
- summer schools for secondary school pupils (prior to entry to year 11)
- open days for local employers and community

As a member of the community you can normally expect:

- to receive an initial response to a verbal or written enquiry within five working days
- to have access to clear and accurate information about the College's curriculum provision, student support services and achievements
- to meet with a member of academic staff or senior management, if appropriate.

Quality Assurance

The College seeks to promote collective ownership of the process of quality assurance and to place the student and their learning experience at its centre.

Strategies for achieving this aim include regular monitoring through formal reporting mechanisms, informal meetings, data collection and the evaluation and development of programmes/services.

All courses and year groups should have a designated student representative to carry forward their views at course team level.

Students are encouraged to express their views and contribute to the quality assurance process in the following ways:

- representation on Board of Governors (2 student Governors are appointed, one representing FE, and one HE)
- course team meetings
- BA Hons and Foundation Degree Course Boards of Study
- course representatives attending termly audit and annual review meetings
- student Disciplinary Committee
- completion of questionnaires related to course quality
- student Focus Groups
- student union.

Employers make an input through:

- student Focus Groups
- acting as course advisors
- representation on some course boards of study
- involvement in quinquennial reviews and FE/HE
- inspections/reviews.

What to do if things go wrong

The College aims to deal with any complaint fairly and efficiently and to ensure that no-one is treated adversely as a result of making a complaint.

If you feel that certain aspects of the College's services fall below the levels outlined in the Charter you should, in the first instance, bring your concerns to the attention of an appropriate member of staff. This could, for example, be your tutor, your Programme Manager/Course Leader or a College Counsellor.

If you are unable to resolve your concern with any of these people refer your complaint to the PA to the Principal - in person, by telephone or ideally by letter detailing the nature of your complaint.

You can expect to receive an initial response within ten working days of receipt of the complaint.

A full copy of the College's 'Complaints Procedure' can be downloaded from the College Website or Moodle or from the PA to the Principal.

The College's Governing Body

The College has a Board of Governors whose duties are established in law and whose members are drawn from a wide range of backgrounds and skills to best match the needs and interests of the College and the community which it serves.

Information about the College's Governing Body and its committees, including a list of members with a register of their skills and interests, may be obtained from the Clerk to the Governors via Reception or the PA to the Principal.

Members of the Governing Body may be contacted in writing via the Clerk to the Governors.

Further information, including copies of the minutes of the Board and its

committees, and details of the whistleblowing procedure, is available for reference in the Library.

College Appeals Procedure for FE Students

A student can appeal against an assessment of a unit or course grade on the following grounds:

- their performance in formal assessment was adversely affected by illness or other factors which the student was unwilling or unable to divulge at the time
- there were material irregularities in the way the assessment was carried out
- the student considered the grades attained did not accurately reflect the level of work produced in the identified element of the course
- the student feels that the written warning issued to them has not been accurately set against College or course regulations.

Procedure

The student Appeals Procedure is open and available to all full-time and part-time FE students. As an FE student you will have a lecturer in charge of your area of work. It is their responsibility to ensure that your course's tutorial and counselling system is properly carried out and in most circumstances this system will act as the first line of enquiry and support if you have a concern about an assessment or grading.

Following tutorial/counselling a clear statement confirming the assessment decision and any supporting explanation will be given to you in a written tutorial report.

If you are concerned or dissatisfied you may, within seven days, make a formal written appeal to the Assistant Principal clearly stating the grounds for the appeal.

You will receive a written response within five days. This will indicate:

- the time and date at which the appeal will be heard
- the documentation they will be required to produce, including up-to-date record of achievement
- the composition of the Appeals Panel.

The Programme Manager/Course Leader for their part will submit documentary evidence of the assessments in question and the rationale for their or the course team's decisions.

Where considered relevant by the Appeals Panel, the student and/or the Programme Manager/Course Leader may be invited to attend the meeting.

Following the meeting of the panel a clear decision will be given in writing to the student which may give reasons for upholding the grading or indicate a defined opportunity for re-assessment.

Appeals Panel Membership

At least three to include:

- senior member of the academic staff, Assistant Principal or a Programme Manager appointed in their absence
- an appropriate Programme Manager/Course Leader acceptable to the student
- an appropriate member of the student body acceptable to the student.

Further advice could be provided by a course advisor, examiner, verifier or counsellor although they would not be expected to have a role in the appeal itself.

Appeals Procedure for BA (Hons)/FDA students

Students will be subject to the current appeals procedures of the University of Wales or the University of Gloucestershire as appropriate.

Your Comments

We would welcome your views on the Charter and how we can improve the services we provide. If you have any comments, suggestions or observations you wish to make, please forward them in writing to Alan Hughes, Assistant Principal.