

OUR MISSION

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**IS TO EMPOWER  
CREATIVITY AND  
ENRICH OUR  
WORLD THROUGH  
TRANSFORMATIVE  
ARTS EDUCATION**

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STRATEGY OVERVIEW 2018-2023



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# **HCA is an independent arts school, rooted in place but connected to the world.**

## **Snapshot of HCA:**

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**Our college was founded mid-19th Century, at the peak of the great Victorian drive for art and design education, when government and industry leaders were championing the arts as a way to increase the material and cultural wealth of the nation.**

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**HCA began as the Herefordshire College of Art & Design but in 2007 our name was changed to Hereford College of Arts to reflect our broader provision of music and performing arts.**

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**We remain proudly independent and the only specialist arts college in the West Midlands.**

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**Our curriculum encompasses art & design, digital media, music and performing arts.**

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**We have more than 150 members of staff, including many who continue their own professional creative practice alongside their work in education.**

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**We are supported by circa 30 influential and inspiring fellows from the broad arts sector including most recently: graphic designer Phil Cleaver, painter Lucy Jones, illustrator Jackie Morris, materials designer Seetal Solanki, and blacksmith Richard Quinell.**

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**We offer a wide range of short courses, and in 2018/19, 11 college-level programmes, 12 BA(Hons) degrees, as well as 2 MA programmes.**

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**HCA has 2 campuses in the city of Hereford. Our Folly Lane campus is a modern building, fronted by the architecturally innovative Hub. In contrast, our degree campus on College Road is an impressive, gothic, listed building.**

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**We champion learning through active creativity with critical thinking, breaking down distinctions between academic and technical education.**

## OUR VALUES

We support student and staff to be:

- Collaborative
- Inquisitive
- Brave
- Inventive
- Individual

**HCA is at a hugely important and exciting juncture. This is a defining moment for change within the College, in our city and region, and for the arts in society at large. This document sets out a transformative programme, over the next 5 years, to benefit our students, the local community, and the regional economy.**

- HCA has a crucial role in making our city and our region an exciting place to live, work, study and visit.
- Nationally, the creative industries have never been more important as part of the UK's economic trajectory; they are one of the fastest growing sectors of the UK economy, on-track to create 1 million new creative industry jobs between 2013 and 2030.
- Future forecasters, such as those who contributed to Nesta's 'Future of Skills Report: Employment in 2030', highlight the importance of skills developed by creative education. Creative, interpersonal and higher-order cognitive skills will be crucial for workers to add value in a world of work that will be transformed by automation and other societal changes.
- Both digital technologies and new materials continue to evolve rapidly, and HCA's commitment to craft and design across both physical materials and digital media means we are exceptionally well placed to prepare students for these new opportunities.
- With environmental issues becoming ever-more imperative, creative artists will have a critical role in helping us to see the world in different ways and motivating change.
- The Herefordshire Cultural Partnership has generated momentum locally, through building on existing arts and culture programming to generate new opportunities, including developing young people's pride in place, skills and confidence through inspirational arts and culture. HCA will play an important role in delivering the new ten-year cultural strategy for Herefordshire.
- HCA represents a unique creative asset for our city and our wider region. Our dynamic creative community embraces: students of all ages and life-stages, staff who are often active practitioners in their own right, schools and colleges that participate in our out-reach programmes, plus business and third-sector partners. This creates a hub for collaboration, creativity and innovation that enriches the local economy.
- With our focus on community engagement and entrepreneurial spirit, HCA is a catalyst for arts-based activity at all levels from grass-roots engagement, smaller arts pop-ups, to international events that enrich the cultural landscape of our region.





# Strategic Pillars

## Curriculum

Our students achieve more than qualifications, they gain the skills, self-knowledge and self-confidence to take control of their lives and shape their own futures. Our curriculum is designed to enable students to develop their practice as creative professionals and to make a positive impact in the world. HCA is rooted in place but connected to the world. Student projects are inspired by our historic city and exceptional landscape, and we also support students to engage with wider societal issues as part of national and international discourse. We offer qualifications from post-GCSE (at Level 2 or Level 3) all the way up to postgraduate degrees. This breadth provides an energy and dynamism to HCA and an accessible ladder of opportunity within our local community. We believe individuals with the skills and confidence to take risks, invent and collaborate are at the heart of every successful creative enterprise. Creativity should not be constrained by conventional subject boundaries and our students are actively encouraged to adventure across disciplines.

## Community

At HCA, our dedicated arts focus combined with our personal approach provides a unique environment for a stimulating and supportive community to flourish. Our scale means that individuals are not lost in the crowd and our staff are dedicated to helping every student develop their own unique creative voice. Our community extends well beyond staff and students, to incorporate an inspiring network of alumni and other creative professionals, an exceptional roster of governors and fellows, as well as the many businesses and other organisations with whom we collaborate. We believe a healthy community embraces diversity, divergence of thought and expression, and reaches out with curiosity and empathy. We are committed to developing the wellbeing of our students and staff and to promote wellbeing in society through creative practice.

### OUR STRATEGIC PLAN WILL

- Create more inter-disciplinary pathways at Further and Higher Education and through our short courses.
- Expand our digital curriculum to enable students to work creatively in a world full of new digital possibilities.
- Launch new BA and MA programmes to attract talent and establish Hereford's national reputation as a destination for specialist higher education.



### OUR STRATEGIC PLAN WILL:

- Deliver a college wellbeing strategy focused on building confidence, empathy and connection.
- Instigate ambitious research projects on the role of creative practice in contributing to wider community wellbeing.
- Curate a holistic student experience promoting social, play and volunteering experiences as well as formal learning.
- Ensure all students are challenged to engage creatively with diverse cultures, viewpoints and opinions: locally, nationally and internationally.

## Creative Spaces and Places

Across both campuses we offer specialist workshops, well-equipped music studios, and spaces for performance. Our Folly Arts Theatre is a professionally specified black box performing arts theatre. From music, dance and drama; through design, image-making and physical-making; using traditional media, innovative new materials or digital technologies; our excellent facilities enable our students to develop technical expertise and to express, challenge and realise their ideas.

We believe our campuses should be regularly open to the public, and more porous so that individuals, organisations and businesses from across our region can benefit from the independent arts school in their midst. Beyond our campus, HCA extends its reach across our city and county in creative place-making activity. This includes public art, collaborations with businesses, and pop-up creative events and performances, both large and small. Our setting gives students access to exceptional landscapes of cultural significance including the birthplace of the picturesque movement. Creative engagement with this landscape takes many forms including exploring critical environmental issues.

## Student Careers and Enterprise

All our full-time programmes at college and degree-level have a focus on preparing students to progress into further study or professional work. Students gain valuable experience of professional working life responding to what we call 'live briefs': commissions, competitions and other external projects set by regional and national businesses, charities and third sector partners. The benefits are mutual as these projects deliver value to our external partners as well as the students. On leaving HCA many alumni go on to work in the 'creative industries' (a huge arena from advertising and marketing, through craft and product design, to music, performing arts and visual arts), whilst others take up creative roles in other sectors, and many start their own businesses. At degree-level, our HCA Enterprise Programme represents our commitment to ensure all degree students have the chance to develop essential enterprise and employability skills. And our new HCA Graduate Launchpad co-ordinates an on-going supportive relationship for new alumni during the formative first 18 months after graduation.

### OUR STRATEGIC PLAN WILL:

- Support all our students to explore our city and county, for the benefit of their creative practice and their personal wellbeing.
- Deepen HCA engagement in our city and county: amplify current projects and develop ambitious new partnerships with cultural organisations and businesses, to attract more people to live, work, study, and visit Hereford and our region.
- Extend access to our campus through more weekend and holiday opening for academic and short-course students, as well as hosting more public events.



### OUR STRATEGIC PLAN WILL:

- Launch a digital showcase to promote recent HCA alumni and make it easy for businesses and other clients to connect with new talent
- Work with partners to develop more start-up support for new creative businesses in Hereford and the region (e.g. graduate studios, co-working and incubation spaces)
- Develop a co-ordinated network of business mentors for students and recent alumni.

# The Scale of our Ambition

**Over the next five years we will:**

**Grow our college-level student community to at least 470 students.**

Launching the first in a new portfolio of college-level Digital Futures and Interactive Media programmes in September 2019.

**Grow our degree level student community to at least 680 full time equivalent students:**

Increasing student numbers on existing courses.

Introducing at least one new BA (Hons) or MA degree programme each academic year from 2019.

**Deliver at least 4000 short course places, enabling local people to empower their creativity.**

**Extend our network of regional and national partnerships with at least 5 major partnerships.**

**Ensure HCA exceeds an NSS score of 90% student satisfaction.**





# Exciting Projects

**Here we give a flavour of just some of the exciting projects born from our strategic vision:**

## **Inspiring student accommodation:**

We are collaborating with Herefordshire Council and new engineering and technology university initiative NMiTE to develop the purpose-built accommodation essential to attract more students to study in Hereford.

## **New city-centre exhibition space:**

HCA is opening a new pop-up exhibition and graduate studio space in the heart of the city thanks to the support and partnership of Maylord Shopping Centre.

## **Ambitious public events:**

Ferrous 2019 will build on the success of our 2017 pilot festival to bring this celebration of forged metal design and making, back into the heart of Hereford. This festival will attract thousands of visitors to engage in the spectacle of fire and hot metal: see live forging from master Artist Blacksmiths, have a go themselves with student guides and find out more about Herefordshire's internationally renowned Artist Blacksmithing creative practice.

## **Connecting with heritage:**

Working with the regional National Trust, students across multiple courses are engaged in research and contemporary creative interpretation for some of our region's nationally important heritage sites.

## **Connecting to our environment**

In 2019, the 50th anniversary of the first moon landing and a year with three supermoons, the College will stage a series of moon themed creative events under Herefordshire's exceptionally dark skies. Inspired by our rural location and the transformation we witness through the changing seasons, we are also developing a new programme exploring creative connections with the seasons.



# How to Support HCA

**There are many ways in which you can support HCA, and help us achieve the exciting transformation outlined in this strategy overview. We welcome all support both large and small.**

**To demonstrate your support for HCA, could you:**

- ☐ **Sign-up for our email newsletter 'Creativity Unlimited'**  
- sign-up at [hca.ac.uk](http://hca.ac.uk)
- ☐ **Attend our Synthesis exhibitions, performances and other events, that showcase our student's work in the summer, and encouraging others to do so** - see [www.hca.ac.uk/synthesis](http://www.hca.ac.uk/synthesis) for updates in the summer term
- ☐ **Engage with our students via setting interesting client briefs** - see [www.hca.ac.uk/client-briefs](http://www.hca.ac.uk/client-briefs)
- ☐ **Go on record to explain how creativity makes a difference in your business or organisation** – contact [marketing@hca.ac.uk](mailto:marketing@hca.ac.uk) to let us know or for joint promotional opportunities
- ☐ **Offer mentoring or work experience to our students** – email [businessservices@hca.ac.uk](mailto:businessservices@hca.ac.uk)
- ☐ **Consider offering an Artist-in-Residence opportunity in your organisation**
- ☐ **Provide support through sponsoring prizes or contributing to the HCA fund**
- ☐ **Demonstrate support in our grant applications, or provide match-funding if you are able**
- ☐ **Come and speak to our students** – about your practice, your career, or the ways in which creativity has proved transformative for your organisation
- ☐ **Help spread the word for our outreach activity with young people and schools and colleges groups**
- ☐ **Engage with us on social media #insideHCA and #outsideHCA**