

# Short inspection of Arts University Bournemouth

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 May 2023

## **Outcome**

Arts University Bournemouth continues to be an outstanding provider.

## **Information about this provider**

Arts University Bournemouth is a further and higher education institution. It specialises in art, performance, design and media courses. Approximately 6,000 students enrol each year on higher education, leisure and pre-degree courses. The inspection focus was on students studying the level 3 foundation diploma in art and design. The foundation diploma offers several pathways, including photography, 3D-art, craft and design, film and animation, graphic communication, and fine art and illustration. There are currently 285 learners aged 18 and over enrolled on these one-year courses.

## **What is it like to be a learner with this provider?**

Students develop creative knowledge and practical skills to a very high standard. This is because of the excellent teaching they receive from highly experienced industry experts. As a result, students are well prepared and equipped to progress to further study or employment. The vast majority of students successfully progress to their chosen degree courses.

Students develop the confidence to be self-critical and analytical. As a result, students improve the decisions they make about their own work. Lecturers are highly ambitious for their students and use challenging questions that require students to reflect on and seek out for themselves solutions to problems. As a result, students frequently adapt and improve the direction and quality of their creative projects.

Students are very well supported, because leaders are proactive in putting in place appropriate support and interventions for all students, including those with additional educational needs. Key staff have received mental health first aid and awareness training and they use this knowledge confidently and skilfully to ensure that students feel safe and secure at college and amongst their peers.

Students enjoy their studies. They work purposefully and diligently. They take ownership of their learning by planning their time well and scheduling themselves into the university's well-equipped technical and innovation workshops to progress their creative ideas.

## **What does the provider do well?**

Leaders, managers and lecturers use their detailed knowledge of the creative arts curriculum and industry well. For example, lecturers skilfully sequence the content of the curriculum so that students gain underpinning technical knowledge and skills early in the course, such as photography processes, 3D modelling and digital animation. Consequently, students build on this learned knowledge, which has a positive impact on the quality and standards of their work in the later stages of their course.

Lecturers design the curriculum so that students gain a wide range of transferable creative and technical skills. For example, architectural and product design students use the drawing skills they have gained through life drawing classes to improve the fluency and speed of their architectural sketches. Students recognise how these skills prepare them well for higher level study and professional practice.

Leaders, managers and lecturers have established a comprehensive stakeholder network. For example, students receive talks from a range of expert guest speakers and former students. Students assist in art and community projects in local schools and undertake live project briefs, which they present to managers of large retail companies. As a result, students are well prepared for what it is like to work as a practitioner in one of the creative industries.

Lecturers are highly skilled and knowledgeable in their subjects and are qualified teachers. They are confident in their abilities and use them well. For example, lecturers combine the use of both traditional techniques such as drawing and handmade fabrication, alongside new digital, virtual reality and artificial intelligence tools effortlessly. Consequently, students use a range of traditional skills that they integrate with new technologies to realise their ideas and concepts, which they render impressively.

Lecturers ensure that students consider the end user or audience for their creative work sensitively. For example, students studying creature effects prosthetics carefully consider age and genre. They think about how their work fits within a narrative such as in film or literature. As a result, students have a deep knowledge of the realistic parameters and constraints they will encounter in the creative industries.

Leaders and managers ensure that students receive high-quality teaching and use the excellent university resources well. For example, photography students learn about a range of appropriate skills including traditional silver-based photographic skills. As a result, the students develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to be successful.

Leaders and managers have developed a full range of information that students access to help them with what to do next. For example, students have access to one-to-one career coaches. They attend online sessions such as 'planning for the future' and 'how to ace an interview'. Students also have access to online resources with employment opportunities and freelance work. As a result, students can make informed choices on what they can do when they complete their foundation programme.

Leaders and managers have rightly recognised the increase in students who are struggling with their mental health and other post-pandemic challenges. Consequently, they have increased staffing and facilities that students can access outside of the classes. For example, students have access to a range of support, from trained counsellors to well-being practitioners. There has been a recent addition to this, with the opening of a drop-in mental health retreat hub, where students can get same-day support. As a result, students rightly feel well supported while at the university.

Governors have a strong understanding of the areas the university does well and the areas that need to improve further. For example, they are fully aware of the self-assessment report and how that links to improvements. They also discuss the foundation programme during both academic board meetings and the full board of governors. As a result, governors can hold senior leaders to account for the performance of the foundation programme.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers have created a culture of safeguarding. For example, staff with roles that have contact with foundation students have a full enhanced DBS check. All staff including governors receive safeguarding training. As a result, all staff are clear about the role they play in the safeguarding of their students.

Leaders and managers meet their statutory requirements. The designated safeguarding lead is knowledgeable and ensures that safeguarding concerns are appropriately managed and recorded clearly with action taken.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	133793
<b>Address</b>	Wallisdown Road Poole Dorset BH12 5HH
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<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Paul Gough MA (RCA), PhD (RCA), FRSA, RWA
<b>Provider type</b>	Higher education institution
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	23 to 26 January 2018
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	None

## Information about this inspection

The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since Arts University Bournemouth was judged to be outstanding in January 2018.

The inspection team was assisted by the head of foundation studies as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

### Inspection team

Steve Battersby, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Cliff Shaw	His Majesty's Inspector
John O'Connell	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Morris	Ofsted Inspector

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