

# Inspection of University of the Arts London

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 March, and 13 March 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Education programmes for young people	<b>Good</b>
Adult learning programmes	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

## Information about this provider

University of the Arts London (UAL) is a specialist creative arts university with seven sites across London. UAL's further education foundation diploma is located at Central Saint Martins campus in Archway and the Camberwell, Chelsea and Wimbledon foundation centre in Camberwell.

At the time of the inspection, there were around 1,029 learners, including 501 young learners and 528 adult learners on different courses in the fashion, creative arts and design areas. Around 530 of these learners were on the level 3 foundation diploma in arts and design.

UAL works with two subcontractors, Goldsmiths Centre and Morley College. UAL subcontracts most of its adult learning provision to Morley College. At the time of the inspection, 489 learners studied across a range of unaccredited and accredited short courses in creative arts and design at the college. The teaching for these courses takes place face to face at the Waterloo Centre for Adult Education based in southeast London. At the time of this inspection, 10 young learners studied a range of specialist courses at levels 2 and 3 in jewellery making at the Goldsmiths Centre in east London.

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

Leaders have developed a creative environment where learners feel safe to be themselves and express their ideas freely. Staff promote an inclusive culture where learners frequently explore issues of identity, race and tolerance through their work. For example, level 3 foundation diploma learners explore human rights through work showing the experiences of Asian learners, and discuss the representation of black hair and colour in pictures and art. As a result, learners develop good social and cultural awareness of diverse communities and different viewpoints.

Most learners have positive attitudes toward their learning. They are supportive and respectful towards each other and their teachers. In their lessons, studios and workshops, learners follow industry etiquette and demonstrate professional behaviours such as collaboration, reflection, planning and creative thinking. They greatly value the opportunity to learn from teachers who work in the creative industries and bring their knowledge of contemporary practice to lessons. Consequently, learners enjoy their lessons and are motivated to learn more.

Leaders do not ensure that all learners, including adult learners on unaccredited short courses, have access to impartial careers advice and guidance. Staff provide well-structured advice and guidance to learners on the level 3 foundation diploma on progression to higher education, particularly on UAL degree courses. However, learners do not receive as helpful information on other progression options, such as apprenticeships and employment. Consequently, too many learners do not feel sufficiently well informed about different career options and other progression routes available at the end of their qualifications.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have improved how they monitor attendance and follow up on absences. However, learners' overall attendance varies and is not consistently high enough. For example, adult learners at Morley College attend well and make good progress. Whereas too many young learners who attend the Camberwell campus do not attend their sessions and miss out on important learning. Consequently, teachers must repeat sessions to help learners develop the essential creative language and critical thinking skills they need for their future careers.

Staff do not routinely discuss with learners topics such as the risks of radicalisation and extremism, personal safety and healthy relationships. Although staff cover these topics during induction, they do not repeat these in sufficient detail later. Consequently, learners do not have a consistently sound understanding of how these issues can impact their lives and work. Young learners receive little information about topics such as consent, sexual harassment and misogyny. As a result, they have limited knowledge of healthy relationships.

## **What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?**

Governors and senior leaders are committed to providing their learners with an

ambitious creative arts and design curriculum. The curriculum offer is based on current trends and developments within creative industries. For example, leaders have developed a level 3 foundation diploma that offers multiple pathways in art and design, including fashion, textiles, painting and digital media. This programme offers learners the opportunity to develop both traditional and emerging skills that are highly relevant to the creative industries. A high proportion of learners successfully achieve their qualifications and go on to degree courses.

Leaders have developed well-structured curriculums which gradually build in complexity. For example, adult learners in printed textiles short courses learn about print materials, dye and colour before they develop the skills needed to make a silkscreen print. Learners on the level 3 foundation diploma start with projects that allow them to experiment with different materials. They then progress to more complex tasks that require critical thinking and detailed analysis of their work. As a result, learners develop their knowledge and skills incrementally over time.

Teachers support learners effectively to develop a broad range of skills beyond the technical that benefit them personally and professionally. For example, teachers on level 2 jewellery courses for adults provide helpful guidance to help learners develop their business skills. They teach learners different business strategies, including costing items, branding, packaging, writing artist statements and using social media to promote and sell their artefacts. This helps learners to build their confidence and self-esteem. They learn to collaborate with others and how to constructively critique creative pieces.

Teachers are highly skilled industry experts. They use their expertise to give learners clear insights into current practices in production, selling, collaboration and curation. Teachers show learners how to manipulate different materials and train them to use specialist equipment such as laser cutters and print presses correctly. This supports learners to develop contemporary skills essential for success in their studies and the creative sector, including areas of niche expertise such as haute couture.

Teachers, including those at their sub-contracted provision, make good use of a range of teaching techniques such as explanation and demonstration to teach their learners. As a result, most learners, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, develop sound knowledge and understanding.

Teachers on the foundation diploma provide learners with clear and detailed project briefs that challenge them to produce industry-standard work. They provide helpful prompts and questions to help learners plan and create their work. For example, learners on the built environment and space pathway have prompts to consider the impact of design on people and the world. Learners produce work of a consistently high standard.

Teachers' use of assessment to check learners' understanding in lessons varies. In some lessons, they do not ensure that learners have the support they need to clarify their understanding or provide specific support based on individual learners' needs. As a result, some learners struggle to make expected progress. In a few cases,

teachers cover too much content too quickly, and this means that learners struggle to remember what they have been taught.

Learners benefit from a variety of enrichment activities that link well with their curriculum. For example, learners visit galleries, attend independent film screenings and participate in workshops with leading furniture makers. In addition, staff encourage learners to explore topical themes such as climate change and sustainability through their work. Learners participate in activities like second-hand clothes exchanges and fundraising for crisis campaigns. Consequently, they enhance their creative skills and knowledge and develop a strong sense of social responsibility.

Since their previous inspection, leaders have faced several changes, including changes in management and a significant increase in adult learners. Leaders have identified and put in place suitable action plans to tackle their areas for improvement. However, some of the actions are not yet fully implemented and do not have a consistently positive impact on the experience of all learners.

Governors and senior leaders regularly self-assess and evaluate their performance. They have rigorous governance and quality assurance processes to monitor the quality of education their learners receive. However, while leaders broadly have an accurate understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement, they do not have a sufficiently detailed oversight of some aspects of their provision, including the progression of adult learners in their subcontracted provision and the progress of a small minority of learners who undertake GCSE English and mathematics.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have taken effective measures to support the safety and well-being of their learners. Designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) are suitably trained to conduct their roles effectively.

Leaders have established extensive student support services to support learners with concerns around issues such as mental health, well-being and financial challenges. Learners also have access to a wide range of specialist services, including access to counselling, the student health team and mental health professionals who can provide individual support. Learners feel safe and know who to report their concerns to. Leaders have created safe working environments for their learners.

Leaders take appropriate steps to keep learners safe while they study. For example, teachers insist that adult learners on jewellery courses at Morley College wear protective goggles when soldering aluminium in lessons. At the Archway campus, learners walk in threes to the station and are alerted to local crimes such as mobile phone thefts.

DSLs and those responsible for safeguarding do not routinely update some of their

essential records, such as staff recruitment and suitability checks. They do not ensure that staff update essential training frequently.

### **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- Leaders should ensure that learners have consistently high attendance, so they benefit from all learning opportunities.
- Leaders should ensure that teachers use suitable assessment methods to check learners' understanding in lessons and provide specific support based on their needs to enable them to remember what they have been taught.
- Leaders should ensure learners have suitable opportunities to explore and discuss safeguarding topics such as the risks of radicalisation and extremism, and sexual harassment so that they develop an age-appropriate understanding of these topics.
- Leaders should ensure that learners receive information, advice and guidance on a broader range of progression opportunities, so they are aware of the different options available to them at the end of their qualifications.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	133900
<b>Address</b>	272 High Holborn London WC1V 7EY
<b>Contact number</b>	02075146000
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.arts.ac.uk">www.arts.ac.uk</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Alfred Cardona
<b>Provider type</b>	Higher Education Institution
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 and 2 and 27 and 28 February 2017
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	Morley College Goldsmiths Centre

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the associate director of progression projects and pre-degree, 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

Saher Nijabat, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Christina Christou	Ofsted Inspector
Saskia Niderost	Ofsted Inspector
Andrea McMahon	His Majesty's Inspector
Rebecca Jennings	His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

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