

Ethics Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and scope

- 1.1.1 The purpose of this document is to articulate the Art School's commitment to pursue the highest standards of ethical conduct in everything we do, and to provide guidance to all members of the Art School on the ethical framework of policies and governance through which we intend to ensure that those standards are upheld.
- 1.1.2 This Policy applies to all members of the Art School, including all current students, staff, trustees, contractors, and alumni in respect of any activities undertaken in connection with the Art School.

1.2 References

- 1.2.1 As a Company Limited by Guarantee, the Art School is bound by its Articles of Association and by the statutory requirements of the Finance Act 2010 and the expectations of the Charity Code.
- 1.2.2 The Art School is also a 'higher education provider'¹ regulated by the Office for Students (OfS) under Section 75 of the Higher Education & Research Act (HERA) 2017, in receipt of public funds in respect of our designated courses of study. This Ethics Policy, therefore, together with other policies and procedures referred to herein that are concerned with the governance of the Art School, aims to ensure our compliance not only with the requirements of the entities mentioned in 1.2.1 but also the conditions of registration of the OfS by meeting the expectations on Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) of the Code of Higher Education Governance.²
- 1.2.3 The 'seven primary elements of HE governance' on which the precepts of the Code of Higher Education Governance are predicated are the 'Seven Principles of Public Life' (the Nolan principles)³: *selflessness, integrity,*

¹ Registered with the Office for Students (OfS) from 2019/20; previously an 'Alternative Provider' of Higher Education regulated by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)

² 'The Higher Education Code of Governance', CUC 2014, revised September 2020

³ Established by the second report issued in 1996 by the Committee on Standards in Public Life, chaired by Lord Nolan.

objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership. An extract from the Report which articulates and expands on these Principles is appended to this Policy (Appendix A).

1.3 Responsibilities

- 1.3.1 The Art School's Board of Trustees is ultimately responsible for the oversight of our Ethics Policy and for the policy framework within which it sits. Day-to-day responsibility for ensuring that the operation of Art School policies and procedures is conducted in accordance with our ethical principles is delegated to the Principal, the Senior Management Team, and Departments via the Art School's governance structures.
- 1.3.2 Notwithstanding the formal responsibilities described above, each and every member of the Art School has a responsibility to conduct themselves in accordance with the principles which underpin this Policy.

2. Art School Ethics Statement

2.1 Our intent

- 2.1.1 City & Guilds of London Art School is committed to upholding the highest possible ethical standards at all times. We aim to ensure that both institutionally and individually, our educational activities and the infrastructure which supports them continue to reflect and renew the ethical values on which the Art School was originally founded.
- 2.1.2 The Art School seeks to foster a culture built on respect, trust, integrity, equality, celebration of differences, openness and fairness. Both institutionally and individually, the Art School undertakes to act ethically in:
- The ways in which members of the Art School interact and treat each other
 - Our governance and decision-making processes
 - Our strategies, regulations, policies and procedures
 - Our teaching and learning
 - Our research
 - Staffing and remuneration
 - Financial administration
 - Our fundraising activities, gifts to the Art School, and disbursement of student grants and financial awards
- 2.1.3 The Art School has policies and procedures in place to ensure that we adhere to legislative and regulatory requirements. These documents are formulated, agreed and monitored via a governance structure which is itself grounded in accepted ethical principles, and which operates a system of constant self-assessment, review and improvement.

3. Ensuring ethical behaviours

3.1 Individual and collective responsibility

- 3.1.1 At the heart of the Art School's ethos is our core belief that everyone should be respected and treated as an individual within a supportive community of equals. This approach is embedded throughout both the education we provide and all the policies and procedures which support its delivery. The Art School's ethical framework is reflected in a suite of policies which we require both our staff and students to abide by. A list of relevant policies is given at Appendix B.
- 3.1.2 Individual staff, students, trustees and contractors are each responsible for their own actions and behaviour. We expect each member of the Art School to think for themselves and act in accordance with accepted standards of behaviour, as well as in the best interests of the institution.

4. Ensuring ethical governance

4.1 The Board of Trustees, committees, panels and working groups

- 4.1.1 The Board of Trustees and its constituent committees are established and conduct their business in accordance with the Articles of Association of the City & Guilds of London Art School Limited, the Charity Code and with the seven 'Primary Elements' of Higher Education Governance articulated in *The Higher Education Code of Governance*.
- 4.1.2 The Nominations Committee of the Board of Trustees is responsible for identifying potential members of the Board and making recommendations for all categories of member, taking account of the need for effective governance and following due diligence scrutiny of all nominees.
- 4.1.3 Individual Trustees and any lay persons invited to participate in its committees must meet the 'management condition' as stipulated in the Finance Act 2010. This means that they must be 'fit and proper persons' and will be required to sign a self-declaration form to that effect on appointment to their role.
- 4.1.4 In addition, Trustees are required to declare annually on a Register of Interests any associations and/or activities which might give rise to a conflict of interest.
- 4.1.5 Trustees and lay persons must always discharge their responsibilities, and conduct themselves, according to the precepts of the Seven 'Nolan Principles' of Public Life (see Appendix A).
- 4.1.6 Trustees and lay persons involved in the governance of the Art School are expected to understand:

- the standards of conduct and accountability which are expected of them;
- their legal and ethical duties and responsibilities; e.g. the responsibility to ensure that due diligence takes place; and
- the supportive nature of their relationship with the Art School's executive

4.1.7 The remits and memberships of the Art School's internal committees, sub-committees, working groups and panels are described in its Governance & Management Handbook.

4.1.8 All members of the Art School who take part in its governance at any level should, like the Trustees, conduct themselves according to the Seven 'Nolan Principles' (see Appendix A). They must take care to ensure that all matters are properly considered, that due diligence is exercised and that decisions are made without personal bias or conflict of interest, with due regard to any other ethical considerations which may arise.

4.1.9 Members of permanent or *ad hoc* panels which hear and make judgements on cases involving specific individuals, whether students or staff, must recuse themselves from participation if they have any previous or current connection with any person involved in the case, which could reasonably be construed as having the potential to compromise their judgement.

4.2 Art School strategies, regulations, policies and procedures

4.2.1 All strategies, regulations, policies and procedures must reflect the Art School's values in their content and language. All new and revised documentation is subject to scrutiny and must be approved via the Art School's governance structure before taking effect. Committees and individuals charged to review or approve documentation should include ethical considerations in their scrutiny.

4.2.2 All strategies, regulations, policies and procedures must be reviewed periodically according to an agreed schedule, to ensure they remain fit for purpose and continue to uphold the values of the Art School.

4.3 Learning and Teaching

4.3.1 The Academic Board, chaired by the Principal, is the primary body with responsibility for academic matters, including the ethical aspects of academic policies and procedures, including:

- Widening access to education, via the Art School's *Widening Participation Action Plan*
- Admissions, via the Art School's *Admissions Policy Recognition/Accreditation of Prior Learning Policy and Complaints Procedure*

- Academic standards, via the *Quality Handbook*
- The *Learning & Teaching Strategy* and pedagogic practice
- The conduct of assessment and feedback to students on their work, including careers and employability, via the *Assessment & Feedback Policy*, *Tutorial Policy* and *Academic Integrity Policy*
- Student academic and pastoral support, via the *Tutorial Policy* and the *Inclusive Learning & Participation Policy*
- Student engagement with Art School life, via the *Student Participation, Attendance & Engagement Policy*
- Student representation, via the *Governance & Management Handbook* and the *Quality Handbook*

4.3.2 Implementation of the above policies and procedures is undertaken by staff in Departments, Professional Services staff and overseen by the Senior Management Team and the Boards of Studies.

4.4 Research

4.4.1 High-quality research is integral to all courses offered at the Art School, and an ethical research culture is essential to the successful academic endeavour of every student and member of staff.

4.4.2 It is the responsibility of each individual to ensure that their research conforms to ethical principles including academic integrity and compliance with professional standards.

4.4.3 In some instances, it may be necessary to obtain formal approval from the Art School before certain types of research may be undertaken, e.g. research which requires the consent of participating subjects or where special arrangements may be required by law (e.g. involving children, vulnerable people, animals, food, etc.); where confidentiality and data protection requirements apply, as well as where there may be contractual implications (intellectual property rights etc.).

4.4.4 It is the responsibility of all individuals to assess the risks involved with their proposed research, and to comply with any instructions laid down by the Art School to obtain formal permission, if required, to proceed. This applies whether the research is funded (either externally or internally) or unfunded; and whether it is proposed to take place on, or away from, Art School premises.

4.4.5 When either a member of staff or a student themselves deems that student research falls into an area where ethical considerations need to be made, the student is required to complete a Working Ethically Pro Forma. This form, which is signed off initially by the Head of Department (HoD), describes the research in detail as well as any mitigations to reduce any risks. Ultimately, the Senior Management Team (SMT) is responsible for the consideration of research proposals which require ethical approval, particularly for research projects that will be shown to the public, thereby requiring further scrutiny and

potential mitigation (trigger warnings, etc). The HoD must therefore report the approval to SMT or consult SMT in advance if unsure of the action to be taken.

4.5 Financial matters, audit and risk

- 4.5.1 The Board of Trustees is responsible for managing the finances of the Art School, including ensuring that due diligence is exercised in the procurement of goods and services.
- 4.5.2 The Audit and Risk Committee of the Board of Trustees is responsible for ensuring that institutional functions and activities are assessed regularly in terms of any financial and/or reputational risk to the Art School.
- 4.5.3 The Remuneration Committee of the Board of Trustees is responsible for determining policy on staff remuneration and staff pay increases at the Art School, having due regard to 'public interest' considerations.
- 4.5.4 The Investment Committee of the Board of Trustees is responsible for setting up and monitoring the Art School's managed endowments in an ethical manner. It sets the investment strategy and reviews the performance of the investment portfolio.

4.6 Fundraising and gifts

- 4.6.1 As a not-for-profit institution, the Art School depends upon the philanthropic support of a wide range of private individuals, charitable foundations and corporate sponsors. Ethical fundraising and the proper administration of the gifts and donations we receive are vital to maintain the trust and support of our donors.
- 4.6.2 While the Joint Development Advisory Group advises the Art School in matters related to fundraising and gifts, it is the Trustees through the Audit and Risk Committee that exercise due diligence and, where necessary, the consideration of the ethical propriety of proposed donations in accordance with the *Gift Acceptance Policy*.
- 4.6.3 All aspects of the governance of fundraising and gifts to the Art School and the City & Guilds Art School Property Trust (landlord of the Art School) are overseen by the Director of Resources & Operations with day-to-day oversight given by the Head of Development & External Relations.

4.7 Applications for student bursaries and financial awards from the Art School

- 4.7.1 Applications for financial support are considered by a Grants & Financial Awards Panel; decisions on awards are made solely on the basis of published procedures and criteria.

4.7.2 All persons who participate in the awarding process must declare any prior or current connection with an applicant for financial support which might reasonably be considered a conflict of interest, and recuse themselves from taking part in the consideration of that application.

5. Review and Audit

5.1 Policy review

5.1.1 This Policy will be reviewed every 5 years in accordance with the Art School's published review schedule. This policy was adopted by the Board of Trustees in March 2023 on the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee; it is next due for full review in the academic year 2027/28.

5.1.2 Amendments which require only minor changes, e.g. to bring job titles or names of committees up to date, may be made by the Director of Resources & Operations and reported to SMT, Academic Board, and the Board of Trustees.

5.1.3 Should legislative change occur, or if institutional change outside the normal review schedule require it, the Director of Resources & Operations will bring proposals for amendments to this Policy initially to SMT for discussion, and thence to Academic Board for approval and thereafter to the Board of Trustees for approval.

5.1.4 Formal approval by the Board of Trustees is required for any changes that require:

- the removal of previously-required actions or procedures,
- different or new actions to be taken; or
- new procedures to be followed

5.2 Audit

5.1.5 The Audit and Risk Committee of the Board of Trustees may from time to time review any aspect of the Art School's ethical framework, or any area of activity to which it applies.

6. Review and monitoring

This Statement and Policy will be formally reviewed by the Board of Trustees every five years. In addition, it will be subject to interim review by the Director of Resources & Operations to ensure that any changes to legislation or institutional need are incorporated in a timely way, with any changes reported to the Board of Trustees.

This Policy was last approved by the Board of Trustees on the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee in March 2023 and will next be reviewed in the 2027/28 academic session.

Appendix A

The Seven 'Nolan' Principles of Public Life

Selflessness:

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

Integrity:

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity:

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability:

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness:

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty:

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership:

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

From: the Second Report of the Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life, May 1996

Appendix B

Art School Policy Framework relevant to ethical considerations:

Equality and Diversity Statement and Policy

Freedom of Speech and Creative Expression Policy

Gift Acceptance Policy

Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy

Professional Practice Policy

Protecting Dignity and Respect Policy

Safeguarding and Prevent Policy

Staff Professional Code of Conduct

Student Charter

Student Disciplinary and General Misconduct Regulations

Upholding Academic Integrity Policy