Name of Provider: University for the Creative Arts
UKPRN: 10006427

UNIVERSITY FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS TEF YEAR FOUR PROVIDER SUBMISSION

Provider Context

The University for the Creative Arts (UCA) is a specialist creative community. We are committed to widening access to arts education and to progression to creative careers. This commitment has brought extraordinary personal success, a global talent pipeline and leadership to the UK's important and thriving Creative Industries. We are recognised as the number one specialist creative arts provider in the UK for graduate employability, with a **96.9%** graduate employment rate[1]. Oscar-winning film makers and animators, world-renowned fashion designers, television presenters and Turner Prize nominees are just some of UCA's high-profile graduates who shape the Creative Industries with their talent.

We are internationally recognised for our contribution to art, technology and business for the creative industries. UCA comprises seven disciplinary Schools: Film, Media & Performing Arts, Fine Art & Photography, Craft & Design, Architecture, Fashion, Communication Design and the recently developed Business School for the Creative Industries. Our Schools are distributed across four campuses in the South East of England: Canterbury, Epsom, Farnham and Rochester.

The support we provide to our community drives career-wide professional development for our staff and thriving research communities in our Schools. We are one of the **top ten** research communities amongst specialist art and design institutions (REF 2014, Unit 34, Times Higher League Table) and we believe that this brings extraordinary benefits to teaching and learning.

In addition to undergraduate, postgraduate and research degrees, we provide opportunities for learners from age 14, through our commitment to National Saturday Art and Design Clubs, a portfolio of part-time and distance-learning courses delivered through UCA's subsidiary the Open College of the Arts, Further Education courses at each campus and a portfolio of transnational education partnerships. These different and highly-supported progression routes underpin an educational ethos that values diversity as a fundamental principle and resource of our creative community.

In recognition of the achievements of our staff and students, we are extremely proud to have been named Modern University of the Year and ranked in the **top ten** of all UK Universities for teaching quality in the recent Times/Sunday Times League Table.

We have a unique environment in terms of our community of staff and students. Both participate in a challenging, dynamic and supportive studio culture which requires students to be agile in the development of an individual creative practice that is conceptually and theoretically rigorous, encourages experimentation and risk and achieves the high-quality production skills required by industry. The following sections develop the case for teaching excellence and graduate outcomes inclusive of all learners against the criteria and descriptor for TEF Gold awards.

[1] DLHE statistics and benchmarking

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Teaching Quality

UCA's core metrics reflect outstanding teaching quality. The metrics on teaching quality, assessment and feedback, academic support and continuation are consistently above benchmark and attract a positive flag for teaching quality and academic support and a double positive flag for assessment and feedback. A summary of the evidence of outstanding teaching quality is provided in this section.

TQ1: UCA's courses consistently provide stimulation, challenge and a pedagogic approach that produces a highly effective learning community igniting students' passion and commitment to their studies

Our educational ethos is enshrined in the University's *Creative Education Strategy* (March 2015), which describes the 'shared characteristics and commitments of all UCA courses'. It ensures a consistent approach to education and guides all course development, explicitly tested at validation and periodic review. This ensures our 'curriculum is designed to be holistic and inclusive, challenging and developmental. It is appropriately staged and defined by specific learning outcomes that demonstrate student achievement' (Principle 2).

Our education is a distinctive embedded experience for students. They work in studios and workshops to develop their creative practice and conceptual thinking within a progressively demanding theoretical and professional context. They are supported by a teaching team that comprises experts in their discipline pursuing excellence through research, pedagogical inquiry and industry engagement. This approach enables students to position their practice in terms of their discipline, the academy and the creative industries and to put into practice the skills of leadership, teamwork and peer support. At UCA you will find our students working collaboratively and supportively alongside lecturers, tutors, technicians, industry professionals and other students in realising their creative vision. Our approach to the development of a learning community was referenced by students during a consultation on Strategic Development[2], with **70%** of all student responses referring to specialist professional and educational teaching teams and opportunities to collaborate within the community as the most 'distinctive and valuable' aspect of a UCA education.

University policy (Academic Board 2014) requires that at least 30% of all learning hours are 'scheduled' in terms of timetabled activity to ensure a 'consistent minimum.' However, the proportions of scheduled timetabled activity consistently exceed this defined minimum, as evidenced by our Unistats data. Furthermore, development of projects in workshops, studios and even in our libraries (which are built around large open plan spaces designed for individual and group creative work) means that education is immersive, and that the time spent with lecturers, tutors, technicians and other students is much greater than published contact hours.

This experience is intrinsically engaging, and students demonstrate commitment to their studies and to the UCA community. This is indicated in the way UCA performs in the National Student Survey (NSS) for 'Student Voice' and 'Learning Community' questions:

2017/18	UCA %	Sector %
Learning community	**81.13**	**76.55**
I feel part of a community of staff and students	78.09	69.20
I have had the right opportunities to work with other students as part of my course	84.44	84.10
Student Voice	**78.73**	**73.33**
I have had the right opportunities to provide feedback on my course	84.19	84.02
Staff value students' views and opinions about the course	80.37	75.43
It is clear how students' feedback on the course has been acted on	71.85	60.58

[2] An anonymous survey was circulated to students and recent graduates in August 2018 asking them to define their experiences at UCA to inform strategic planning for the future direction of UCA.

We are particularly proud of the excellent levels of satisfaction with our community and how we value and respond to feedback (**9%**, **5%** and **11%** points above sector average respectively). Our Students' Union says: 'UCA creates an incredibly caring community where students and staff take a proactive approach to a supportive environment to enhance wellbeing and professional development. This friendly environment offers the opportunity for everybody to fulfil their potential. Our mutual goals include support and success.'

TQ2: UCA institutional culture consistently facilitates, recognises and rewards excellent teaching

The academic community benefits from continuous development across three core career fields: pedagogy, professional practice and research. This development ensures high quality teaching across conceptual, theoretical and professional settings to provide an inclusive and stimulating teaching environment. UCA's Academic Career Fields scheme was formalised in recognition of these three key fields of expertise in Autumn 2018 and supports the existing practice of rewarding excellence though promotion to reader and professor in all three areas of specialism.

A distinctive feature of UCA education is that all course teams include practising professionals who bring current professional knowledge to teaching. In addition, **all** permanent academic staff (regardless of lead specialism) are contracted to undertake both research and scholarly activity to ensure they can excel in these fields. The resulting outputs in professional practice, research and specialist pedagogies are intrinsically linked to the disciplines and inform teaching excellence at UCA. Staff within different career fields work together to support the diverse challenges unique to UCA students in devising, creating and contextualising their work.

UCA's technical staff are a key feature of our pedagogic model and learning community, delivering workshops, skills training and support for students in developing their production skills. UCA is in the vanguard of promoting and delivering the highest quality practice-based teaching from technical staff. We have been highly successful in elevating the status and quality of technician pedagogies. We were the first specialist arts institution to join The Technician Commitment. We are collaborating with the National Centre for Technician Development and the Institute of Science and Technology to establish a professional registration scheme for arts technicians. We are committed to raising the status of these individuals so crucial to the education and support of our students. Praise for our technicians is a consistent theme in qualitative student feedback, which frequently refers to the value of access to a supportive and mutually respectful academic community. The 2016/17 HESA return identified 51 technicians as holding a recognised teaching qualification: meaning that **48.57%** of our technicians are qualified teachers.

At the last HESA census date UCA returned a figure of **66%** of all academic staff holding a teaching qualification. This is **24%** points above sector average (42%)[3]. All new academic staff are required to either hold a teaching qualification, Higher Education Academy (HEA) Fellowship or undertake the University's Postgraduate Certificate in Creative Education (PGCert CE). Academic and technical staff are supported to study on the course through fee waivers and through paid time to attend classes. Successful achievement of a teaching qualification is rewarded by promotion from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer.

Our PGCert CE is accredited by the HEA and is a recognised route for achieving Fellowship. We also encourage teaching staff to advance their status through our Creative Education CPD scheme, providing an experiential route for HEA Fellowship. We have:

Principal Fellows	2
Senior Fellows	32
Fellows	197
Associate Fellows	23

Our developmental approach to teaching qualification and CPD aims to stimulate inquiry in the signature pedagogies of our disciplines and share practice within our community. Examples include:

[3] According to the Advance HE data submitted as part of the annual CPD review in October 2018

- Course Leader Awaydays that take place every term. The last of these focused on inclusive teaching practice in relation to BME; it included specialist input and workshop style discussions. The group created our *BME Manifesto* that has been adopted by all of our courses.
- JUICE, UCA's Journal of Useful Investigations in Creative Education. JUICE is a peer-reviewed, open-access journal that provides a supportive platform for our students, tutors, technicians and researchers to share effective strategies for supporting and enhancing creative education.
- our Creative Education Network: a social platform for all UCA teaching and technical staff providing webinars, podcasts, publications and discussion boards all focused on current pedagogic issues.
- we have University-wide CPD, PDR and Peer Supported Review schemes.
- we provide funding for academic and technical staff to undertake PhDs, with 31 staff members receiving funding to undertake a PhD at 12 different universities over the past three years. 12 of these PhDs are in Educational research, including one in Technology Enhanced Learning.
- we hold the 2018 Good Practice, Developing Excellent Practice Award from Advance HE.

<u>TQ3 – UCA course design and assessment are effective in stretching students to develop their full creative potential</u>

Our courses are designed into units which are interdependent and iterative, providing a holistic curriculum encompassing the development of critically reflective creative practice, conceptual thinking and theoretical underpinning. Students develop comprehensive production and transferable skills through project work across their degree study. This is challenging and rewarding; as is navigating the diverse perspectives and reflections upon their work that emerge from the critique of their practice by academic and technical staff, professionals and peers. In the recent consultation underpinning development of our 2018 Strategic Plan, the four most common words our students associated with UCA's approach to education were: 'creative', 'innovative', 'community' and 'challenging'.

Our pedagogic approach requires our students to be dextrous. In their final year they must self-manage their time and priorities to write a major reflective study; produce a final artefact (or body of work) for exhibition as the end result of a long project-based experience; curate final degree shows; contribute to group work and peer assessment; and develop and begin implementing their career plan. These multiple skills are those that our staff themselves possess from their own creative practice. We strongly believe that students are encouraged to strive for excellence by staff who are able to demonstrate rigour and stretch themselves: students achieve well due to staff ambition for them.

'Courses are designed to provide graduates with the attributes and skills to innovate and create opportunity; to work within and beyond the areas of their specialism; and to bring the values of their creative practice to bear on the world in diverse and unexpected ways' (Principle 9: *Creative Education Strategy*). This sense of the diverse and unexpected is intrinsic to creative practice and requires students to learn and manage the process of experimentation and risk-taking. We teach our students resilience and the ability to operate in an uncertain world. Such risk-taking is supported in the curriculum through a wide range of mechanisms, for example:

- Maker and Materials Labs, allowing free experimentation with materials
- Year 3 learning agreements drafted by each student to provide an individualised project proposal with aims, objectives, realisation plan and timescales
- 'Test Installs' for experimenting with work in specific locations and adapting prototypes to environment
- Year 1 students are required at points to write their own briefs to test their knowledge of the creative process in relation to Unit Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria

Our particular emphasis on a curriculum delivered through projects provides the opportunity to integrate the core elements of learning (professional, practical, conceptual, theoretical) enabling each student to develop an individualised response. Projects allow space and time for changes in direction as work develops. Formative assessment is used routinely to develop the self-critical capacities of learners in the development of their understanding and engagement with the creative

process.

Our Students' Union describes our approach to curriculum as offering 'sufficient self-reflection time to allow ideas to develop, but also to push the learner to achieve the best possible outcome. Each course has specific requirements for different units that introduces the cohort to activities that expand their portfolio, preparing them for work in industry. Students are encouraged to undertake research that broadens their views outside the typical approaches to art and design, especially around controversial or unusual topics.'

2017/18	UCA %	Sector %
The teaching on my course	**84.80**	**83.70**
My course has challenged me to achieve my best work	83.04	81.00
Learning opportunities	**88.11**	**83.14**
My course has provided me with opportunities to explore ideas or concepts in depth	87.15	83.90
My course has provided me with opportunities to bring information and ideas together from different topics	88.90	84.48
My course has provided me with opportunities to apply what I have learnt	88.30	81.10

The data above recognises the level of challenge (**2%** points above sector), depth (**3%** points above sector), consolidation (**4%** points above sector) and application of learning (**7%** points above sector). In our Strategic Plan consultation words such as 'inventive', 'innovative', 'ambitious', 'challenging' 'testing', 'imaginative', 'exciting', 'inspiring', 'dynamic', 'evolutionary', 'exploratory' and 'experimental' appeared in 87% of students' individual comments about UCA.

Our proportion of good degrees has increased over the period of reporting in the supplementary metrics. This reflects improving standards and we are proud of the outcomes achieved by our students:

- we have searching admissions processes that enable us to identify talent and diversify our student body. We require creative portfolios for entry and interview our applicants.
- our Academic Board approved an uplift in entry tariff in November 2015 (from 88 to 112 new tariff points) to formally recognise increasing entry standards.
- the upward trajectory across nearly all TEF metrics demonstrates a year on year enhancement in the learning and teaching environment.
- there is a rise in recognition of the value of UCA graduates for the Creative Industries Sector, evidenced in the employment and highly skilled employment metrics for the most recent year of reporting (both attracting green flags).

We take the threat of grade inflation very seriously and have place measures to protect against it:

- achievement is measured and monitored annually at University and Course Level, with specific investigation of those courses with high or low performance against School and University averages. Consideration of this data in 2015/16 resulted in a discussion about cross-course parity exercises. We identified significant good practice in some Schools to bring together all Course Leaders in a discipline to discuss marking standards and pedagogic approaches to assessment. Accordingly, this was embedded in all Schools and audited to ensure consistency in marking practices.
- common grade descriptors are used across the University and are published in our Common Credit Framework (CCF).
- the algorithm for degree classifications (also within the CCF) has remained static since 2012, with some minor amendments in 2014 to remove all scope for discretion from borderline decisions to further ensure parity. This algorithm includes all Year 2 units at 25% weighting with the majority weighting (75%) placed on Year 3 to demonstrate exit velocity.
- individual assessment criteria for each unit are received and considered at validation and periodic review by a panel which includes external HE members. Each unit is subject to internal verification under our Internal Verification Policy, which states that all assessment must be moderated by blind, sample, group or second marking.
- all units are scrutinised by External Examiners appointed according to UUK guidance. We

currently have 121 External Examiners who confirm that UCA standards are equivalent to those elsewhere in the sector, responding to a detailed set of 13 KPI questions that enable monitoring, benchmarking and action. The key questions that relate to standards are:

% responding 'yes'	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
Standards for the course(s) are set and maintained at an appropriate level, comparable with other courses in the sector	98	99	99
Did the structure and nature of the assessments permit students to demonstrate their level of achievement?	100	100	100
Are the processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards sound and fairly conducted?	99	100	97
Did you find the general standard of marking satisfactory?	99	99	97

TQ4 Assessment and Feedback are used effectively by UCA to support students' development progression and achievement

The assessment of project and portfolio work takes place within the context of studio teaching with continuous feedback and formative assessment being routine at UCA. It is stated in our *Creative Education Strategy* (Principle 3): 'Assessment is designed to support student learning and achievement. It is an ongoing 'culture' that is supported by 'formative' and 'summative' feedback and is made meaningful by projects that have purpose and relevance in the world.'

The high level of student satisfaction with assessment and feedback is primarily due to this dialogic use of assessment that ensures iterative self, peer and tutor reflection and criticality to stretch students to their full potential through assessment. However, it is also challenging. Students must navigate feedback from a wide variety of sources (tutor teams, technicians, peers, industry professionals) and find their own response to that feedback to push their practice forward. This approach to education helps students to develop their confidence and resilience.

We have worked hard to systematise feedback to ensure a consistent experience for students. In 2014 we targeted assessment feedback as a priority. Academic Board approved a new Assessment Feedback Policy that positioned 'constructive feedback' as 'essential for successful learning, motivating and supporting reflection', and reinforced principles of 'valid criticism' and 'appropriate positive commentary' on 'learning not the artefact'. The policy required feedback to be given on all work (formative and summative) and a compulsory template mapping feedback against criteria for summative work to be returned within four weeks of the hand-in date. This Policy to ensure consistency was part of a University wide focus on feedback, including an audit of practice. The impact of this targeted project is evident in the NSS assessment scores, student degree classifications and employability data.

UCA's approach to assessment has consistently attracted a **double positive flag** across the three TEF years for assessment and feedback. Students are **7%** points more satisfied with assessment than sector average, with quality and timeliness of feedback scoring particularly highly (both **10%** points above sector average) and fairness in assessment scoring **5%** points above sector average.

2017/18	UCA %	Sector %
Assessment and feedback	**80.68**	**73.28**
The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance	77.40	72.88
Marking and assessment has been fair	78.63	73.13
Feedback on my work has been timely	83.11	73.32
I have received helpful comments on my work	83.60	73.89

Learning Environment

UCA provides a learning environment that is outstanding in quality and globally recognised. This is evidenced in the quality of the academic community, technical facilities, library, archives and specialist collections and learning support facilities. A summary of the evidence of excellence in learning environment is provided in this section.

LE1 UCA has state of the art specialist digital and physical facilities that are integral to student learning

Our *Creative Education Strategy* states that our 'Courses use a wide variety of technologies and facilities to develop, enhance and organise learning, teaching and assessment. This is enshrined in the technical, technological and library environment and via an ethos of collaboration between disciplines' (Principle 4).

UCA has state of the art making facilities. As studio culture is essential to our ethos, each discipline has its own bespoke studios equipped to industry standard to enable students to operate at a professional level in a professional context. These spaces range from high specification computer studios for games and animation that include stop frame facilities, green screen, Oculus HDVR and Avid suites to professional kilns, furnaces and forges for working with glass, ceramics and metals. **92%** of our undergraduate provision is rated as 'high-cost' for delivery (HESES18). The standard of technical and professional facilities is a defining aspect of education at UCA, tested against discipline specific needs through course proposal, course design, validation and review. The annual resource planning process ensures a rigorous approach to major and on-going capital investment in facilities. For instance, last year we invested £400k in refurbishing our animation studio to ensure currency of hardware and software and in the current year we have built a new Film and Media Centre containing over £817k of equipment. We support all students in equipping their practice through professional analogue and digital equipment provided for loan by our Stores. The Stores currently contain over £2 million worth of equipment and facilitate over 30,000 student loans in a calendar year. Wherever this equipment is being used, students are able call upon the technical expertise of the staff that run the Stores to support their individual or group projects.

We have a number of professional accrediting bodies who have scrutinised our resources within accreditation processes to ensure they meet professional standards (the British Kinematograph, Sound and Television Society (BKSTS), Skillset, RIBA, ARB, CILECT, Broadcast Journalism Training Council (BJTC)). We have been a member of the Avid Learning Partnership Scheme (ALP) since 2014. We implement ALP within lens-based courses to provide undergraduate students with a recognised vocational qualification in video and sound editing. A condition of ALP membership is that learning resources must be representative of current professional standards.

UCA also takes pride in the links and partnerships with leading creative industries that support students' learning through placement, live projects, competitions and professional input. UCA has several formal partnerships that provide additional delivery locations, for instance the Farnham Maltings and Turner Contemporary (both Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisations), the Royal School of Needlework and Maidstone Television Studios.

In addition to the specialised facilities of courses, we believe in cross-disciplinary access to technical and professional facilities to support individualised and inventive practice. Our technical teams are discipline aligned but operate as a single team to support the concept of 'no walls' between disciplines. Some examples include:

- illustration students exploring three-dimensional mark making in ceramics,
- interior design students working in metals,
- product design students working in jewellery.

Our Students' Union explains: 'when the student wishes to broaden their palette of skills, they are able to do so by collaborating with students from different courses, or are inducted to a different field'. Having specialist users working alongside users from other creative practices results in dialogue between disciplines and encourages innovation.

UCA has library facilities and collections of global significance. We develop and maintain specialist arts collections and library learning spaces to stimulate excellence in learning and teaching, inspire creativity and independent learning, and promote a vibrant research culture. We have extensive library resources. Each year over 1 million searches are undertaken, 300,000 electronic resources viewed and almost 100,000 items loaned. We seek regular stakeholder feedback on library services and resources and undertake periodic studies on student needs. We also review library usage

annually to ensure collections are responsive to course teams and students. Benchmarking against data from SCONUL, the engagement of our students with our library is impressive:

Total physical library visits 2016-17	839,000
Visits per FTE student	169.6

Our six comparator specialist institutions (according to SCONUL) range between 30 and 101 visits per FTE in the same period; and of our seven regional comparators, six range between 49 and 115 visits per student, with only one regional comparator performing higher.

Our Centre for Digital Scholarship has developed an international reputation for research in the management, delivery, engagement and preservation of digital assets in the creative arts. We host the national Visual Arts Data Service (VADS) which provides over 140,000 images, collected from publicly funded arts research projects, including the Zandra Rhodes Digital Study Collection and the National Inventory of Continental European Paintings. The VADS collections are made freely available for educational and research use worldwide. Our open access research repository, hosts over 2,000 items and attracts 120,000 visitors and 50,000 downloads a year. The Library's Digitisation Service offers access to specialist arts digitisation equipment and expertise to students and staff as well as an external consultancy service.

Our Archives & Special Collections provide a rich range of original primary sources. The half kilometre of materials includes original letters, artists' papers, sketchbooks, film reels and artwork, with particular strengths in arts activism, animation and photography. Materials include the works of Oscar-winning animator Bob Godfrey, photographer Tessa Boffin and graphic designer Vaughan Oliver. The Crafts Study Centre provides a unique international focus for craft research and teaching as a fully accredited University Museum and Gallery located at UCA since 2000. In order to help external visitors, staff and students to navigate our extensive research materials, we provide workshops on the use of primary sources.

Our library facilities support and enhance the learning, teaching and research aspirations of staff, students and external visitors worldwide, consistently achieving above sector satisfaction in the NSS (**5%** points above sector average in 2017/18):

2017/18	UCA %	Sector %
Learning resources	**87.59**	**85.40**
IT resources and facilities provided have supported my learning well	84.00	83.30
The library resources (e.g. books, online services and learning spaces) have supported my learning well	91.98	86.52
I have been able to access course-specific resources (e.g. equipment, facilities, software, collections) when I needed to	87.04	86.59

<u>LE2: UCA's learning environment is enriched by student exposure to and involvement in provision at the forefront of scholarship, research and/or professional practice</u>

All academic staff teach and are actively engaged in pedagogical inquiry, research or professional practice (TQ2) according to UCA's Academic Career Fields scheme. This allows us to identify clear leaders in each field and attain excellence across the core knowledge fields that underpin UCA's approach to education.

UCA's approach to pedagogical excellence, teaching qualifications, membership of the academy and sharing practice is explained under TQ2. Recent examples of UCA funded pedagogical research projects include:

- Undergraduate Retention and Engagement: the first-year experience of students at UCA (Mary-Lou Barratt, Fine Art)
- Towards a Digital Village: the use of online social learning by students at UCA (George Charman, Learning Development)
- Co-researching beyond the category: a thematic analysis of a student-led focus group study into BME student experiences at the University for the Creative Arts (Steve Dixon Smith, Learning

Development)
- Induction Tutoring (Katie Allder and Lynda Fitzwater, Fashion)
- Walking and Learning (Rosie Holmes, Learning Development)
- Wellbeing Strategies that Work (Ruth Torr, Acting and Performance)

Many staff undertake professional practice as part of their commitment to scholarship or as part of a portfolio-based career that includes teaching. A commitment to supporting staff with on-going professional practice ensures our curriculum, links with industry and work opportunities for students are continuously refreshed. Examples given below illustrate the breadth of ongoing activity by our permanent staff across our disciplines and are representative of activity across the University in every course team:
- screening at International Film Festivals
- directing music videos (including for Bloc Party and Sigrid)
- making advertisements (including for Stella McCartney and JOOP!)
- running International Games Conferences
- scholarly articles in *Stitch Stories* and *Spaces and Traces in Textile Art*
- Turner prizes and commissioned art for the Turner Contemporary
- exhibitions at The Royal Academy
- editor of *Archivist*
- fashion stories for *FHM* and *FHM Collections*
- founder of *SuperGonk*
- Director of Design at *Super Massive Games*

In addition, UCA has 879 high-profile sessionals members of staff from organisations such as *Ralph Lauren*, *Lionhead Studios*, *The Guardian*, *Mulberry*, *Tatty Devine* and the *BBC*. Sessional members of staff are vital to UCA's educational ethos. Their high profile active status in industry provides further access to current industry trends and opportunities. We are careful to nurture the right balance between permanent and sessional staff, guided by our published *Sessional Staffing Principles* that advises that **20%** of teaching hours are provided by sessional staff to ensure the primary balance of highly experienced, permanent staff, augmented by access to a diversity of additional professional voices.

In the recent Strategic Plan consultation, students referred to the value of 'workshops with industry leading visitors' and the 'strong sense of community' which 'makes [UCA] stand above other universities'.

Our vibrant research environment is also of crucial importance to teaching quality and student outcomes. In the REF 2014 submission, **14.4%** of UCA's research outputs were rated as 'world leading', **40.4%** as 'internationally excellent' and **33.7%** as 'internationally recognised': a total of **88%** of outputs being of international standard. Over the period of TEF reporting, we have a significant number of new research outputs of global significance that will be included in the next REF submission, including the work of established researchers such as Gabor Stark, Professor Simon Olding, Professor Anna Fox, Dr Camille Baker and Professor Lesley Millar. Some examples of new outputs include:
- Sam McElhinney (Course Leader, Architecture) who developed *Isovist_2.0*, a software tool launched in 2017, performing visibility analysis scans for architecture. This has already received international recognition for being at the 'forefront'[4] of its field.
- Zadoc Nava (Senior Lecturer, Photography) who produced *Gholam* the first British-Iranian film shot in the UK, internationally lauded.
- Martin Charter (Professor of Innovation and Sustainability and Director of the Centre for Sustainable Design), who published *Designing for the Circular Economy* (2018) and convened the International Standards Organisation's ISO14006:2019 *Environmental Management Systems – guidelines for incorporating eco-design.*

Research active staff are embedded within teaching teams using their research to impact on

[4] Professor John Peponis, Georgia Institute of Technology

curriculum development and to enrich the student experience through exposure to new work. Researchers often involve students as participants in their research, for example:

- Computer Arts Animation students worked alongside Course Leader Phil Gomm, storyboarding and animating his film *Red and the Kingdom of Sound*
- Jean Wainwright curated 'Powerful Tides: 500 years of Chatham and the Sea' at the Historic Dockyard Chatham in 2018. The exhibition included the work of J.M.W. Turner, as well as Turner prize-nominated artist Yinka Shonibare and Tracey Emin (herself a UCA alumna). The exhibition showed the works of current and recent UCA students in fine art and photography, giving them the chance to exhibit alongside many of Britain's leading artists, past and present.
- Andrew Kotting involves students in his unique and internationally renowned film research practices, producing works which are screened by the BFI and FilmFour among other international media giants.
- Vaughan Oliver commissioned UCA Graphic Design students to co-design with him the sleeve and artwork for the Pixies recent release *Come On Pilgrim... It's Surfer Rosa*.

The student as co-researcher is a key concept; it aligns to our community ethos, raises aspirations and underpins our commitment to exposing our students to knowledge at the forefront of our disciplines.

<u>LE3: UCA students' academic experiences are extremely individualised, maximising rates of retention, attainment and progression</u>

Our pedagogic approach centres on the development of professional, conceptual and theoretical skills through highly individualised project work. The ability to experiment, take risks and the freedom to explore new ideas through critical reflection with peers and staff ensures that students are immersed in a deeply personal but supportive experience.

The Students' Union says: 'the courses are designed to allow students to develop knowledge and skills in a way that suits their individual needs. Units are written in a way that students receive guidance around self-taught practise and are able to work by themselves to consider constructive feedback from tutors and work on it to improve. Students are taught to work without direct guidance and develop skills of individual assessment.'

All courses employ particular strategies to support personalised learning, for example 'Personal Commitment Pledges', 'Student Learning Agreements' and 'Personalised Learning Agreements.' These ensure that within an extremely individualised experience students understand how they plan, develop and review project goals linked to unit learning outcomes.

UCA believes that our community is strengthened and emboldened by its diversity. Our student community of talented individuals comprises **30%** from low participation backgrounds (18% points above HESA Benchmark), **23%** with declared disabilities (10% points above HESA Benchmark) and **26%** BME (-2% points from HESA Benchmark). Our goal is to make the educational experience inclusive: building on students' artistic interests and experiences and allowing expression of these through their practice. We introduce students to a wide variety of examples of creative practice from different cultures and socio-political contexts. We encourage diversity through portfolio entry, which enables us to admit students on the basis of talent, and the provision of different progression routes to study at degree level (Further Education Diplomas and four-year degrees).

We currently have 1,234 students with a disclosed disability, 535 (43%) of whom are in receipt of Disability Student Support (DSA). We have responded positively to changes in DSA, launching a two-year project to enhance inclusive practice, allowing course teams to reflect upon and further embed support within the curriculum. Examples of how we have supported consistent approaches to inclusivity include:

- Learning Development Tutors work closely with the Dyslexia Advisers and Course Leaders to ensure that course materials are made accessible to all students;
- academic staff reflect on their practice in relation to inclusivity as part of the PGCertCE and within the experiential CPD HEA fellowship scheme;
- significant inclusivity resource for course teams has been developed and published on the

Creative Education Network;
- annual Inclusivity Conferences bring together and promote best practice. Themes over the past three years have been *Inclusive Learning & Teaching*; *Being Mindful of Mental Health*; and *Enabling an Inclusive Learning Environment*.
- the staff Peer Review Scheme references 'inclusivity teaching guides' within the criteria.
- Specialist Disability and Health and Safety Advisors work with Estates and Couse Teams to ensure inclusive access to facilities.

Retention[5] is on-benchmark across the community (**92%**), and above-benchmark in relation to retention of students from low participation neighbourhoods and disabled students (**92%** and **93%** respectively). Internal data for BME retention is high at **90%** and is on benchmark in relation to the sector, but demonstrates a retention gap of **2%** compared to all students. The *BME Manifesto*, created by the academic community, commits to eliminating BME inequality through 16 actions to enhance the experience of students from ethnic minorities, to be overseen by the newly convened BME Attainment Group. We have committed to eradicating any attainment gaps for the BME population within our 2018 Strategic Plan, and are confident that we can achieve this through targeted work (for example all staff have been required to complete online training in Unconscious Bias, and work is being undertaken to map the journey of the BME population to see if there is a pattern to withdrawal).

On-course support has been described extensively in this document in the context of the studio-based approach to learning. The Fashion Journalism Course Leader explains: 'students use studio space as the 'hub' to explore new ideas through different cultural experiences. This studio culture has developed a 'community of practice' (Lave and Wenger 1991). Students are comfortable in the knowledge of a safe space that allows them to develop their individuality and be authentic. This is a space where students and staff 'bounce ideas' off each other and support one another (share, build and challenge): where it's all about connection.' However, studio-based learning is one aspect of a multifaceted support system, for example:
- staff Year Leaders act as key contacts and co-ordinators for each cohort;
- there are group and individual academic tutorials within all courses;
- each course has an articulated approach to personal tutoring;
- all staff are required to have published office hours and an 'open door' approach;
- there are 'drop-in surgeries';
- peer mentoring and buddying schemes are in place across the University;
- embedded theory teachers work in the studio helping to contextualise practice and illustrate principles from theory lectures and seminars; and
- Library & Student Services deliver quality tailored and personalised services and support for students.

Library & Student Services is founded on the principles of 'Students First' and 'Library as Gateway'. 'Gateway' operates immediate support where possible, and an effective referral system to specialist professional services for more complex cases (including careers and employability, counselling, financial advice, learning and teaching librarians, learning development tutors and disability and learning difference support). In 2017/18, Gateway dealt with 50,000 enquires. These were dealt with at source or referred to specialist advisers. UCA has dedicated Learning Development Tutor (LDT) provision on each of its sites. This provision has three strands that specialise in complex support needs: individual tutorials, embedded teaching, and curriculum review and validation to ensure inclusivity. Course Leaders will identify and refer students needing learning support to LDTs. Students may also self-refer through the Gateway. Satisfaction data evidences our extremely high standard of student support, **6%** points above sector average for advice and guidance and **9% points** above sector average for quality of advice for study choices.

2017/18 NSS	UCA %	Sector %
Academic support	**84.50**	**79.58**
I have been able to contact staff when I needed to	85.44	85.69

[5] Counted across Levels 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 for home and overseas students

I have received sufficient advice and guidance in relation to my course	83.95	78.43
Good advice was available when I needed to make study choices on my course	84.29	74.60

We are passionate about our community approach to education and the importance of the student voice in making this real. Our Student Charter, which was jointly developed with the Students' Union, has at its centre 'the student experience in the context of a creative community'. It states our expectation that 'all staff and students [are] responsible and caring members of an inclusive community celebrating diversity and creativity'.

The student voice is embedded at all levels of our work. Students are included:
- in strategic planning through consultation events and surveys;
- in appointment panels for senior staff – the Students' Union explains that in these settings students 'are encouraged to speak freely as part of the process. The student opinion is considered as equally as other members of the panel, showing a clear commitment to student confidence throughout the recruitment activity';
- on senior academic committees, including the Board of Governors and throughout the academic committee structure;
- in periodic course reviews, both as independent panel members and (for on-course students and alumni) meeting with the panel to provide feedback on the student experience;
- in 'the course representative system [that] allows for the learner voice to be a fundamental and influential element of course design, ensuring student feedback is incorporated into the delivery.' (Students' Union);
- in curriculum development through co-creation workshops and focus groups with current and past students and leaders from industry;
- in internal and external student satisfaction surveys which are used within the Annual Academic Monitoring process to monitor standards and drive enhancement. Our students engage very positively in these opportunities. For instance, the NSS has held to a consistently high response rate (**88%** in 2018).

Student Voice is demonstrated through our achievement of **9%**, **5%** and **11%** points above sector average for student satisfaction with community, valuing student feedback and responding to student feedback respectively in the 2017/18 NSS (see TQ1).

The Students' Union states that 'the relationship between the UCA Students' Union and UCA is very strong and we work in partnership to achieve their goals and ours by involving students and listening to them. UCA Students' Union has been recognised nationally for its activities to enhance the student experience, having (over the TEF period of reporting) won the NUS Small & Specialist Students' Union of the Year and NUS Disabled Students HE Union of the Year awards. In the NSS, student satisfaction places UCA Students' Union 22nd against all other HEI organisations'. The NSS score for 'the students' union (association or guild) effectively represents students' academic interests' in 2017/18 was 65%, **9%** points above the sector average for this question.

There is a great deal of collaborative working between the Students' Union and UCA, which allows projects to take advantage of combined resources, experience and talent. An example has been co-working to enhance the welcome and induction process through 'Freshers Crew', which gave students hundreds of employed hours and enabled a vibrant and exciting introduction to UCA through events and activities. Another example of this collaborative activity is the delivery of LGBTQ+ training ('Queer to Learn'), developed and delivered by the Students' Union to over 70 UCA staff members. This partnership working is crucial to our community approach to determining and addressing additional support needs for sections of the community.

Student Outcomes and Learning Gain

UCA's metrics reflect outstanding student outcomes. There is a double positive flag for the supplementary metric 'above median earnings threshold or further study' and a positive flag for the core metric 'employment or further study.' In the most recent year of data there are double positive flags across all TEF employment metrics. A summary of the evidence of

excellence in student outcomes and learning gain is provided in this section.

SO1: Students achieve their educational and professional goals, in particular progression to further study or highly skilled employment

It is our purpose to prepare talented individuals for work in the creative industries. Our curriculum is professionally focused and involves professional practitioners in its creation, continuing development and delivery. To this end we launched the first Business School for the Creative Industries in 2018. The Business School portfolio addresses the need for traditional business disciplines with a contextual and professional focus on, and application to, the creative industries.

Our commitment to preparing successful graduates is reflected in our approach to curriculum and delivery (TQ1 and LE3), the composition of and support given to academic staff (TQ2, TQ3 and LE1)) and the standard of facilities (LE2). The *Creative Education Strategy* ensures consistency through requiring that 'Employability, Enterprise and Professional Practice skills are taught in all courses, and this makes them, and their students current and relevant to their specific industry sectors. Through live projects, competitions, industrial placements, field trips and visits, participation in exhibitions and events, and engagement with professionals and alumni, professional development planning is made fundamental to student learning' (Principle 7). This ethos is echoed in the UCA Student Charter that commits us to provide 'a programme of study that is professionally relevant, inclusive and provides embedded employability'.

The supportive and individualised curriculum develops students to their full potential and ensures their resilience and inventiveness in entering their chosen careers. This, alongside our embedded employability (using professional practitioners, live projects, placements and studio environments) and graduate support facilities, has seen continuous improvements to our employability data. In the period of TEF reporting UCA has improved year on year, scoring a double positive flag in the most recent year of reporting for graduate employment, highly skilled employment and sustained above median earnings.

SO2: students acquire knowledge, skills and attributes that are valued by employers and that enhance their personal and/or professional lives

We take what is deeply personal to the student (their creativity), allow them to acquire skills, knowledge and understanding applicable to the creative industries, with a sophisticated and critically reflective ability to assimilate and respond to feedback. The value of our education is evident from the University's employability data and from the high levels of satisfaction that students have with their courses.

Our Strategic Review of Careers, Employability and Enterprise in 2017 brought together staff, students and externals from industry. It reflected on current practices and considered employability in terms of graduate outcomes and pedagogies for employability. This included a commissioned HEA review of employability and enterprise at UCA. The review highlighted the exceptional practice with embedded employability across the University and made recommendations on ways practice could be shared further across UCA and how the university can continue to enhance the support it provides to graduates.

UCA has strong networks with a range of employers, with staff highly connected in the creative industries supplying visiting lecturers, live briefs, placement and graduate employment opportunities. Our network is continually strengthened as companies employ our graduates. It is for this reason that you will see names replicated within the staff professional expertise, destinations of students and providers of placements and live briefs. For example, Ralph Lauren hosted a masterclass for Fashion students in 2017/18 and then interviewed students for a paid internship in New York. EA Games provided a lecture for Communication Design and Computer Games Arts students, followed by a series of one-to-one tutorials and then invited students to their testing studios. Industry input to curriculum design for validation is also vital, for example in 2017/18 Yaswara Robotics contributed to the development of a BSc (Hons) Industrial Design and Jason Bruges contributed to a BSc (Hons) Creative Coding and Technology.

The high value our students bring to the creative industries is not only evident in employability data, but also from the high profile graduate destinations within the Highly Skilled Employment metric. Examples include Black PR, Agent Provocateur, Harrods, the White Company, Louis Vuitton, Burberry, Marc Jacobs, Tommy Hilfiger, Karen Millen (herself an alumna),*Vogue*, Liberty, *Black Hair and Beauty*, Paragon, *GQ*, Turner Contemporary, Moving Picture Company, Hanger 13 and Guerrilla Games in a wide range of professions including character artists, periodical editors, games designers, PR account executives, magazine stylists, textile designers, creative managers, concept artists and production co-ordinators all within the creative industries. In addition, a significant portion (37%)[6] of UCA graduates go on to be self-employed, both as practising artists and CEO's of their own companies.

Final year projects are so relevant to industry that they often lead to start-up companies, professional awards and employment. Recognition by industry of the quality of student outcomes in 2017/18 includes:

- multiple Graduate Fashion Week awards, including the 'Trailblazer Award';
- work that was presented to industry and secured immediate employment (for example, as assistant editor of Liberty of London's magazine);
- a feature within the Startups 15 Young Entrepreneurs to Watch in 2018;
- exhibiting within London Fashion Week (and featured within *Ragged Cult* and *Bricks*);
- external awards from the British Fashion Council, Arts Development, Foundation Art, South Square Trust, the Prince's Trust, DAD and CRATE;
- paid internships at Ralph Lauren (New York);
- six students shortlisted for the Merchant Taylors Company 'Golden Shears' awards;
- prizes and commendations at the Solutions Awards (including Gold for 'Sustainability Matters');
- nomination for best student documentary at the Grierson Awards (winning entry to the Grierson DocLab Scheme);
- multiple winners of the HUCK X VANS Vision Walk Competition;
- *WAVE* (final year project) featured within the BBC Young Guns Network;
- the 'Woon Art Prize', the 'Fashion Marketing Award', the 'Bonmarché Fashion for All Award', and the 'ASOS Future Talent Communications Award'; and
- exhibiting as part of the Turner Contemporary (Margate) Graduate Platform Award.

We actively encourage and promote entry in external competitions and events to all of our students to enhance their professional engagement and widen their employment opportunities.

SO3: Positive outcomes are achieved by UCA students from all backgrounds

We are extremely successful in the highly skilled employment of our disabled, BME and low participation background students (**62%, 60%** and **60%**), which are all above sector average with no significant gaps in performance compared to the wider student population. The supplementary LEO metrics demonstrate sustained high wages for BME and low participation graduates, attracting a double positive and positive flag respectively.

By its nature our education is inclusive; what an individual brings to their creative practice from their own experience is supplemented by exposure to diverse cultures and perspectives. An inclusive and comprehensive approach to employability is embedded in all courses through the curriculum and exposure to industry professionals. Courses ensure that all students have access to employers and work opportunities through a number of approaches, such as:

- placements, for example River Island, French Connection, Jenny Packham, Rocksanda, *Harpers Bazaar*, *OK*, *The Times*, *Cosmopolitan*, Wonderland, Emilia Wickstead, Karen Millen, Gigwize.com, Finsbury Studios, EA Games, Ralph Lauren etc.
- live industry briefs, which include self-starter projects and work commissioned by leading names in the creative industries.
- self-starter projects, which include booking, organising and promoting live music tours, organising festivals, film productions, live broadcasts, creating journals/magazines, designing

[6] UK domiciled First Degree 16/17 FT leavers: Employment data from DLHE

fashion collections, creating computer games and animated films.
- external projects, which include work commissioned by Farfetch, Warehouse, Harvey Nichols, Acne, ASOS Marketplace, Youth Club Culture, Nike, Swarovski, Body Shop, Canterbury Cathedral, Reiss, Tommy Hilfiger, Whistles, Hermés and Carnaval de Venise, with briefs for interior, fashion, marketing, film, games and product design. This work demands complex and professionally relevant skills, requiring students to work together on productions in roles and environments that mirror the industry and to present their work to industry professionals.

Supporting the embedded approach to employability in course design, our Careers & Employability Team deliver a range of inclusive services aimed to prepare students and recent graduates for success. SPECTRA, an extra-curricular programme of workshops, talks, speakers and events, developed in collaboration with academics, alumni and employers, aims to provide inspiration and skills for graduate success and is delivered across all campuses. In addition, well-attended sector specific careers events are hosted for students on each campus annually:
- Fashion First: attracts leading brand names including ASOS, Kurt Geiger and River Island, plus alumni panels representing companies such as L'Oreal and Whistles.
- #emergingartist: invited guest speakers deliver a range of talks around establishing professional practice and networks.
- Futurewards: industry speakers and a creative activity.
- Projections: exhibitors and industry talks, including Itasca Films and Renegade Pictures, an alumni panel along with CV and networking sessions.
- Animate your Future: a diverse range of inspirational speakers including alumni guests working for prestigious companies such as MPC, Jelly Fish Pictures, the Flying Colour Company and Sliced Bread Animation along with insights into the career journeys of alumni.

Employability events are supplemented by weekly career workshops delivered within courses focusing on personal promotion, digital identity, freelancing, networking, teaching as a career and the wider opportunities for creative graduates. Students have access to one-to-one support (face-to-face or virtual) and a dedicated careers web-resource and online learning environment. This support is continued for three years after graduating.

Provision of inclusive opportunities is also evident in our commitment to offer all students the chance to platform their work. This is referenced in the *Creative Education Strategy* (SO1) and in the Student Charter which commits to 'opportunities to all students to exhibit, perform and/or publish their work'. Our Degree Shows provide one such opportunity. They take place on each campus and include exhibitions of all final year students' work, including film screenings and games testing. We take pride in showcasing all of our students' major project outputs. Industry and community leads are invited to the Private Views and students are able to present and contextualise their work to potential employers, as well as involving their families in the celebration of their studies. External discipline specific opportunities for exhibition are also provided, such as New Designers, Graduate Fashion Week, Arts Thread, Canterbury Festival, the Brewery Tap Project, Free Range, the Medway Festival, the Candid Arts Trust and London Design Week.

Conclusion

We firmly propose that we meet the criteria for a TEF Gold award in teaching excellence. Our argument is based on our pursuit of a unique approach to a highly successful creative learning community that provides a caring, stimulating and challenging environment that is professionally focused. Our Students' Union has provided our closing statement:

'The University for the Creative Arts provides an environment that supports students to embrace and explore their creative potential, while preparing them for a professional life beyond the institution. Students are taught to form their identity and evolve a unique approach to their discipline, which offers a culture designed to develop the creatives of tomorrow.'