



INFORMATION PACK FOR APPLICANTS

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History of the College

Leeds College of Art has its roots in the original Leeds School of Art and so shares the same history. This, often very successful and sometimes difficult history, goes back to 1842 when the Leeds Mechanics' Institute merged with the Literary Institute and moved from Park Row (where Lloyds Bank now stands) to South Parade.

The Mechanics' Institute had been sponsoring classes in geometrical perspective, figure and landscape drawing since its formation in 1824. Now, in South Parade, a more organised art education began and grew into the form of a Government School of Design. It was established with help from the Council of the School of Design in London, who contributed £80 towards the salary of the first master, Mr C L Nursey.

That was in 1846 and less than 15 years later Leeds School of Art had affiliated branches in Wakefield, Halifax, Ackworth and Keighley. Bradford and Huddersfield joined this large scheme and by 1864 the Schools were collectively responsible for 7,430 students.

This regional scheme for the co-ordination of art education was one of the first in the country, but Leeds at the centre was still in its original, now inadequate, building.

The School moved to Cookridge Street in 1868 when the new Leeds Institute was completed, and the committee of the joint Mechanics' and Literary Institute, which is now The City Museum, was completed at a cost of £30,000. It was designed by Sir Cuthbert Brodrick - the architect of Leeds Town Hall - and was one of the finest, most up to date educational centres in the country.

Nowadays, the College is run by a board of governors and the head of the College is called the Principal. Then the head of the School was known as the Headmaster; during the early years of expansion, this was Mr Walter Smith.

He laid the foundations on which many of the later successes of the College were built, such as its international reputation as an art teachers' training centre.

In 1871 Walter Smith travelled to America where he was appointed the first Director of all public schools of Massachusetts. As a result of his work a School of Art was established at Boston, which influenced the development of art education in the United States.

During the second half of the nineteenth century the Leeds School's success in national competitions increased. It won many awards, including Queen's Prizes and gold, silver and bronze medals.

Eventually the School's premises in the Institute Building were proving to be too small, so new ones were planned and in 1903 the Leeds School of Art moved to its present site in Vernon Street.

Out of several designs, that of Messrs. Bedford & Kitson of Leeds was chosen. It was built using - what were then - very new materials and was unusual because the reinforced steel joists, normally concealed, were exposed and made a design feature on the north-light side of the School. It differed in style from the Institute Building, reflecting the clean and uncluttered lines of the Arts & Crafts Movement.

A contemporary architectural magazine stated that the bricks were Accrington Red Brick (Bloods) decorated with Ancaster Stone. The cartoon for the mosaic panel above the entrance was designed by Professor Gerald Moira, and the panel itself was made by Rusts' Vitreous Mosaic Company.

It was still very close to its former home and the series of buildings which now form the Art College and the City Museum joined by a maze of passageways and staircases. It was conveniently situated very near to the City Art Gallery and Library and close to the town centre.

The building included a gymnasium, wood and stone casting, bookbinding, lithography, enamel and pottery areas and a conservatory on the top floor.

During the next fifty years the College expanded from 575 to 1,415 students. A school of architecture was established in another nearby building and more specialised design and craft courses developed. These included tapestry design, silversmithing, jewellery, furniture, graphics, printing and a dress and textile department

In 1946, no less than fifteen past students of the College were Principals of colleges and schools of art, including the then Principal of the Royal College of Art, P H Jowett. The College is perhaps most well known for the development of the foundation course under Harry Thubron (appointed Head of Fine Art in 1955). The philosophy underlying the teaching has influenced Foundation courses throughout the country and is still of paramount importance today. University of Leeds fellows also taught at the College during the 1950s. These included Terry Frost and Alan Davie.

The College buildings were in such a dilapidated state in the 1980s that a new college was planned, the first stage being completed in 1985 with the opening of the Blenheim Walk Building.

Since 1993 the Vernon Street site has been completely refurbished and extensive alterations have taken place in Rossington Street. Rationalisation of courses has taken place to re-establish the core of art, design and craft studies as the focus of the College's activities. There has been considerable investment in the library, computer suites and multi-media technology.

In the early 1980s the college also widened its access to include 1st BTEC Diploma and a part-time Fine Art and Craft course (now Access). The College had developed a very flourishing Adult Education programme.

A great many past students of the College have achieved national and international recognition for their work in design, teaching, painting and sculpture. Some have reached fame, and others have achieved success quietly and anonymously - Henry Moore, Kenneth Armitage, Barbara Hepworth, Vivian Pitchforth, Ralph Brown, Marcus Harvey and Damien Hirst are all past students.

There has always been a tradition that art, design and craft complement each other and that equal respect should be given to their practitioners. This began in 1852 when the School of Art admitted 'artisans' into its classes and continues with the influence of the philosophy of the Bauhaus on the teaching of art and design today.

Mission statement

We shall continue to provide a distinctive education in Art, Design and the Crafts, enabling our students to fulfil their creative ambitions and to progress to, and through successful careers.

Value statement

To develop a fully integrated learning community based around the arts, crafts and design in which students are treated according to their need, with parity of esteem irrespective of their background, race, gender, age, ambition, previous education and subject or level of study.

CORPORATE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES 2008 – 2013

Theme One - Exceeding students' expectations

This theme is concerned with creating a culture where excellence is expected in the College's student-facing services.

1. To have a culture of continuous improvement in teaching, learning and assessment and to further improve retention and achievement.
2. To achieve excellent results in externally measured reports including the QAA's Integrated Quality Enhancement review, the LSC's Framework for Excellence and any Ofsted inspection or assessment and to aim to be in the top quartile for externally measured student satisfaction surveys, including the National Student Survey for HE students and the Framework for Excellence Learner Satisfaction Survey for FE students.
3. To continually develop the curriculum, particularly addressing the need for more cross course opportunities, ensuring additional subject areas are directly relevant to the curriculum and providing support for students with different skill levels at commencement.
4. To ensure our students receive focused career and educational advice leading to appropriate progression opportunities to either vocationally based careers or further study and to establish accurate destination measures.
5. To continue to provide high quality, suitably specified equipment to support the increasing demands of art, design, media, craft and their curriculum activities, in order to develop a progressive teaching and learning culture that adopts and adapts new learning technologies to best meet the evolving needs of students and staff.
6. To develop communities of practice, where schools work both individually and together, to improve the student experience.
7. To provide additional support to applicants and existing students, which is appropriate to their needs, enabling them to fulfil their potential.
8. To provide an environment which promotes an exciting art and design ethos and to further develop the social activities available to students.

Theme Two - Collaborating with others

This theme is concerned with strategically collaborating with others for the benefit of students, the City and the College.

1. To continue to develop activities with appropriate partners including; the Open University, Group for International Design Education, Council for Higher Education in Art and Design, National Arts Learning Network, University of the Arts London, West Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network, Aim Higher, Leeds City Council, Leeds Schools, The Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Art, Design and Media, the University of Leeds, Leeds College of Music and The Sorrell Foundation.
2. To increase the College's involvement with employers by further developing work placement activities, increasing the number of live briefs used and establishing a formal process for keeping in touch with alumni.

3. To support the establishment of a Creative Network with clear links to the College.
4. To ensure the College's established art and design provision is not adversely affected through re-organisations or mergers of other institutions by continuing to raise our profile as a high quality provider of specialist education.

Theme Three – Valuing staff

This theme addresses how the College seeks to attract, retain and further develop high quality academic and support staff with the necessary qualifications and experience to succeed in their roles.

1. To ensure that the skills and knowledge of staff are developed to meet the present and future needs of students.
2. To apply consistent recruitment procedures for new appointments and promotions and to introduce staff to the College and their role through a comprehensive induction programme.
3. To create a research culture amongst staff appropriate to a small, specialist institution.
4. To further develop an environment where staff feel supported with the necessary equipment, facilities and assistance and where they feel confident to experiment in their teaching practice and develop innovative ways of working.

Theme Four - Consolidating the College's reputation as an influential art school

This theme covers all aspects of promotion, marketing and market research with the aim of raising the College's profile within the arts environment locally, nationally and internationally.

1. To produce high quality promotional materials and distribute them through effective channels, monitoring the effectiveness of them on an annual basis.
2. To create a new website which integrates potential applicants and users of the College with staff, students, alumni and employers into a coherent whole and effectively promotes the College's programmes, student achievements, staff and ancillary facilities available.
3. To continually research the needs of students and employers to ensure their present and future needs are met.
4. To participate in exhibitions and events which raise the profile of the students' work and/or the College, disseminating research activities through publications.
5. To promote the College through press releases in the local, national and international media.
6. To transfer to the Higher Education sector

Theme Five – Achieving optimal College performance in support areas

This theme is concerned with providing excellent facilities and support services for students and staff.

1. To develop a new capital building strategy which provides for the future needs of students.
2. To ensure the College is welcoming, safe, clean, well maintained and professional in its appearance and manner.
3. To ensure the IT infrastructure is robust, secure and consistent, with software and hardware that works effectively for students and staff with minimum possible down times.
4. To provide working conditions that are healthy and safe by continuing to make available resources, including finance and expertise, to ensure this happens.
5. To ensure the issue of sustainability is at the heart of all new build projects and within the operation of existing buildings and processes.

Theme Six - Making the best use of funding available for the benefit of students

This theme concentrates on maximising efficiency without compromising quality so that investment can take place, which benefits the student experience

1. To meet student enrolment, retention and achievement targets overall and course by course to ensure cost effective delivery and to maximise funding.
2. To record student information accurately to ensure the College receives the appropriate funding from the LSC and HEFCE and to lobby on the basis of the College's specialist provision where any funding is discretionary.
3. To evaluate the College's support systems and procedures to reduce bureaucracy as much as possible and to continue to improve efficiency and effectiveness for the benefit of students and staff.
4. To employ the College's cash reserves, obtain borrowings at competitive rates and obtain capital grants to invest in buildings, facilities and equipment that will further improve the students and staff working and social environments.
5. To continue to support students through a package of financial support from the Learner Support Funds and OFFA agreement to ensure vulnerable students may continue with their education.

Theme Seven - Equality & Diversity

The College is committed to equality and diversity and this theme is concerned with ensuring all those who can benefit from studying, working or visiting the College are not disadvantaged due to their race, gender, disability etc.

1. To encourage participation from disadvantaged or under represented groups who would benefit from studying or working at the College.
2. To remove physical and non physical barriers that may prevent prospective students, students, staff and visitors from fully engaging with the College.
3. To further develop the College's widening participation strategy.