



Level 3 Diploma in Foundation Studies (Art & Design)

Frame of Reference and Guidance for Centres

ABC LEVEL 3 DIPLOMA IN FOUNDATION STUDIES (ART AND DESIGN)

ABC (Level 3) Diploma in Foundation Studies [Art and Design] Frame of Reference and Guidance for Centres.

1. Definition and characteristics

- a. The ABC scheme defines Foundation as a pivotal programme, the principal aim of which is to educate students to make informed decisions facilitating progression primarily but not exclusively to appropriate higher education in art and design. In supporting this transition, the programme builds on students' prior experience, linking skills already acquired with ideas and challenges which will extend students' critical independence and enable them to demonstrate a full understanding of application of art and design, relevant to progression opportunities, the increasing diversity and complexity of courses available and career choice.
- b. An accredited programme will be characterised by an academic rigour and student centred learning culture, encompassing analytical principles, exploratory and investigative practices, contextual research and material experiences. These should be delivered through a coherent and integrated sequence of learning activities which will enable students to identify and capitalise on their strengths and affinities.
- c. Programme teams will be expected to be innovatory in delivery, identifying specific discipline expertise, whilst ensuring that the core interpretative function of translating student abilities into realisable goals is achieved. This programme is characterised by experiential, experimental and integrated learning, relying upon the application and transfer of manual skills, whilst valuing the accidental and disruptive results that can occur and recognising common principles and distinctive characteristics of subject disciplines within the field of art and design.

2. Aims

The Diploma in Foundation Studies is designed to meet the following aims:

- enhance students' capacity to learn and develop those facilities and skills which lead to self reliant learning;
- develop students' critical awareness of the contemporary visual world and related contexts;
- develop students' ability in the methods of creative production;
- develop students' understanding and awareness of the opportunities and demands of further education and study in art and design in order to translate potential and ability into realisable goals within higher education (or a chosen employment opportunity);
- provide a context in which students can identify and interpret their strengths and direction through a progressive exploration of skills and concepts central to art and design practice.
- offer students a qualification whose currency will last for 5 years.

1. Level, duration and modes of attendance

The Diploma in Foundation Studies [Art and Design] is distinguished from other art and design qualifications at Level 3 in the national qualifications framework by:

- a. recognition of the student's level of prior general education, experience and readiness
- b. the rapid (intensive) fostering of the student's ability to understand how art and design disciplines can interrelate and the contemporary contexts in which they operate. The programme is also distinguished by its recognition of the importance of independent thinking, organisation and motivation leading to an informed choice of progression.
- c. Programmes leading to the achievement of the Diploma are normally designed to last a minimum of one-year full-time study, or its equivalent. The ABC scheme will encourage and support institutional initiatives which confront the challenge of appropriately structured part-time, flexible modes of learning and delivery which are supported by a quality management framework. Such proposals must clarify the comparability of the quality and quantity of contact time, student support and learning resources.
- d. Occasionally, individual student's programmes may vary from the norm depending on prior experience and learning with the approval of ABC.

2. Access, Admissions and Induction

- a. It is the responsibility of the centre to recruit with integrity. Centres must therefore:
 - provide applicants with appropriate information;
 - identify applicants' needs and abilities and translate these into realisable goals;
 - select in the light of applicants' previous qualifications and expertise.
- b. The programme is intended primarily for those students wishing to progress to higher education in art and design or associated studies. However, students who wish to use the qualification as preparation for employment should not be discouraged.
- c. The following entry requirements will be applied to accredited programmes. Students who enter with at least one of the listed qualifications and are normally 18 years of age, are likely to benefit more readily from the programme.
 - One A2 level supported by 3 GCSE grades 'A' to 'C' or equivalent.
 - A combination of GNVQ single Award and A/S level supported by appropriate previous accredited achievement.
 - A portfolio of work which demonstrates evidence of having achieved a standard which will enable the student to benefit from the course.

In some circumstances students may have achieved:

- A BTEC National Diploma in Fine Art or a named Design Pathway
- Advanced GNVQ in Art and Design.

Individuals seeking progression onto this qualification could be:

- Mature applicants who wish to build a portfolio and develop the skills necessary to entry into higher education in art and design and show evidence of aptitude for this qualification. In the case of applicants over the age of 21 the requirement of formal academic qualifications may be waived.
- d. Within the ABC scheme for validation it is recognised that academic qualifications provide only partial evidence of an applicant's capacity to benefit from and ability to succeed on a Foundation programme. Therefore course proposals will be required to document and implement the following procedures for student admissions:
 - Applicants must submit evidence in the form of a portfolio of recent work for inspection. Course proposals will identify a range of evaluative criteria to be applied to this portfolio of student work.
 - Candidates must be invited to attend a personal interview which will enable the interviewer(s) to assess the applicant's aptitude and potential to benefit from the course. Course proposals will identify the range of evaluative criteria applied to the interviewing process.
 - Mature candidates (21 plus) must identify how they meet the evaluative criteria of the programme in terms of both portfolio and personal interview.
 - e. Within the ABC scheme accredited programmes will document induction arrangements in line with the student charter. Proposals will determine the means whereby;

- Individual primary learning goals are identified and action planned.
 - Pastoral counselling and careers advice are made available.
 - Academic tutorials are implemented.
 - Timetabling arrangements are clarified.
 - Course structures and assessment points are communicated for both internal and external assessment.
 - Health and safety regulations and procedures are disseminated and monitored.
 - A course handbook is distributed and explained.
- f. Equal Opportunities.
Course submissions must include an institutional policy statement on equal opportunities and information on its implementation in the context of the programme.

3. Planning the programme

- a. Centres wishing to run a Foundation [Art and Design] should consider:
- The needs of the market in terms of individual students and the diversity of their experience prior to Foundation. Higher education selection and entry requirements, including the expanding complexities of specialist and modular pathways in art and design provision.
 - Employment opportunities and employer needs.
 - Effective and efficient procedures for liaison with providing institutions, ie schools, receiving institutions and potential employers.
- b. Not every centre delivering Foundation will be expected to provide identical programmes, but will be required to cover the same range of outcomes and assessment criteria and ensure coherent sequencing, (patterns of teaching, learning and assessment which are continuous, interactive and integrative) rather than a fragmented approach across diverse disciplines.

4. Resourcing the Programme.

- a. The physical resources necessary for the preparation, launch and implementation of the programme;
- Appropriately equipped and updated art and design studios and workshops, including sufficient dedicated access in key resource areas and adequate flexible or open access provision in other more specialist areas, with particular reference to external assessment requirements.
 - Adequate access to modern information technology facilities.
 - Access to appropriate information and research sources, including the Internet.
- b. The academic, vocational and professional experience, including support staff, appropriate to delivery of the programme:
- Submissions must identify a designated course leader specific to the proposal and the course team working under the leader. Any key responsibilities should be defined against appropriate team members.
 - An accredited Foundation programme will command the dedicated or regular services of appropriately qualified staff. Submissions must include a curriculum vitae for each member of the teaching and support staff indicating: years in industry/professional practice; years in teaching; availability to the programme; key responsibilities appropriate to the proposed programme.
- c. The efficient management, monitoring and review of the programme. Submissions for approval must include:
- Procedures and practices which facilitate consultation, collaboration and communications within the team, and its interface with management.
 - Systems in operation which will monitor student progress on the programme. Students should be assigned personal tutors for the second and third stages of the programme.

- Documentation of programme specific quality monitoring, review and evaluation procedures, action plans resulting from the implementation of the system and evidence of implementation.
- Documentation of institutional quality monitoring, review and evaluation procedures.

5. Programme design, structure and delivery.

The ABC scheme for validation supports an innovative approach to programme design and delivery within the broad context of course aims and the assessment unit specification requirements of Foundation within the national framework.

The programme can be delivered in a variety of ways, but where possible should build on established good practice. **Programme delivery should be coherent and integrated**, progressively focused upon the relationship between the development of students' work and the choices they make. As the programme progresses, students must be able to demonstrate achievement in learning and observing and practical experience in art and design, paralleled by an increasing ability to synthesise the next stage of their professional development.

Centres should adopt a holistic approach and should avoid an insular or fragmented approach to programme delivery. At all times students should be developing a skill base which acknowledges the interrelationship of the critical, theoretical and practical and the relationship between the development of their ideas and work and the choices they make regarding future progression.

Centres are therefore advised to consider an integrated unit model through each stage. The first two stages may be informally graded by the centre, to benchmark student progress.

Submissions must indicate;

- Course structure - pattern of parallel and sequential units;
- The allocation of staff to each unit - ie who assesses each unit;
- The allocation and nature of teaching and technical support on each unit;
- The allocation and nature of tutorial time;
- The allocation of studio/working space for delivery of the programme;
- Assessment arrangements for the **third** stage;
- Centres are also required to produce a handbook for the guidance and use of students with both general and programme specific information.

6. Assessment

The ABC scheme for validation supports innovative assessment methodology within the context of programme aims and the assessment criteria and evidence required in the specifications approved by QCA for inclusion on the national framework.

Submissions must include:

- Assessment strategies and tracking schemes, using appropriate formats/schedules.
- Procedures for assessing each project/stage.
- Allocation of staff to the assessment;
- Assessment arrangements for feedback to students.
- Mechanisms for implementing externally assessment elements: reports, etc.
- Arrangements for referral and remedial retrieval for students
- The system for academic appeals within the institution.

Assessment should allow an opportunity for referrals at the end of stages 1 and 2. A period of 2/3 weeks after the assessment of stages 1 and 2 should be allowed for additional activity and work, in the student's own time, to make up any referrals. Only those candidates who have achieved **all units will be eligible for external moderation**.

In the case of extenuating circumstances which can be evidenced (e.g. by certificate) such as illness or bereavement, the ABC would support the provision of a range of flexible and responsive assessment strategies which sought to remove barriers to assessment. Course teams and their managers may employ the necessary flexibility with regard to the timing and requirements for an individual student's assessment.

7. End of programme criteria.

Centres will need to submit **proposed grades** for the **Confirmatory stage** to the External moderator whose purpose is to confirm the accuracy of programme team assessment decisions.

Where a candidate has been given special consideration, the ABC reserves the right to endorse diplomas accordingly, but only where the deviation from standard conditions is such that the candidate has not demonstrated the competencies in accordance with the published assessment objectives/criteria. In these cases an unendorsed certificate might mislead potential employers and other users of the diploma

The procedure for appeals by candidates against non-certification or grades awarded should follow the ABC policy set out in the Directory (Part Three). Appeals by Centres against assessment decisions made by the External moderator will follow the procedure outlined in the Directory (Part Three).

Complaints by Centres should be made in writing to the Reading office of the ABC. Alternatively, complainants may complete a copy of the leaflet "Users' Views" which can be obtained from the nearest regional office. The procedure for addressing complaints can be found in the ABC Directory (Part Three).

Centres will also be required to collate, analyse and present to ABC student assessment results and destinations at the end of each run of the programme.

8. **Quality Standardisation and Archiving**

It is the Awarding Body's responsibility to ensure that standards are consistent across the country. In pursuit of this aim, ABC will require all Visiting /Foundation Moderators to identify at the time of the visit, the range of work they would wish to be retained or recorded by appropriate means e.g. digital imagery, slides or photocopying of written material.

ABC will pay for and hold recorded samples of work at the administering office on a roll-on, roll-off basis for a period of 5 years. The Lead Moderator for Art and Design will be responsible for organising a national cross moderation exercise with a national cross sample of moderators to ensure that the samples of work meet the assessment criteria at Referral, Pass, Merit and Distinction levels year on year.

The exercise will form part of the Lead Moderator's report to the National Advisory Group for Art and Design.