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## **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

The purpose of the Transart Institute Handbook is to present essential policies and practices as they apply to the institute and also to Plymouth University regulations. The Handbook is meant to inform and serve all members of the Ti community. The Institute reserves the right to change or rescind any and all of the policies contained herein with or without notice. The Handbook will be revised and updated annually. The current edition of the Handbook is available in Moodle in the calendar section.

### **History**

Transart Institute MFA in New Media was founded in 2004. It was accredited by the Austrian Ministry of Education and Culture through Donau University Krems, Krems, Austria in 2005 and the first summer residency was held in 2005 with an international body of 25 students and eight faculty staff. The programme is currently validated through the Plymouth University.

### **Profile (Distinctive Features)**

Transart Institute offers an international, low-residency MFA programme for working artists in a highly individualized format. The innovative program consists of three intensive summer residencies with lectures, workshops, critiques, seminars, performances and exhibitions in Europe and two shorter, winter residencies in New York. In the four semesters between residencies, students create their own course of study realizing individual art and research projects with the support of faculty and self-chosen artist studio advisors wherever they work and live.

The programme is geared towards the development of a sustainable artistic praxis rather than training in certain media or genres, challenging students to think conceptually and work creatively in new ways.

Transdisciplinary work occurs in various media, genres and approaches including curating, digital media and net art, film and animation, gaming, graphic design, installation, painting, performance and dance, photography, robotics, sculpture, sound, text art, video, and virtual reality.

### **Goals**

Transart Institute is a student-centered postgraduate art programme which fosters independent thinking, risk-taking and the creation of an informed and sustainable art praxis. The institute is also a platform for faculty to expand their teaching praxis by making space for creativity and experimentation.

Beyond its educational goals, Transart Institute is engaged in building an international community in support of students, alumni, faculty and their artistic and academic goals. The institute offers its former students a

virtual and material basis for artistic practice, the exchange of ideas, opportunities and critiques, thus inducing individual and collective growth beyond the duration of the program. Despite its compact size, Transart Institute has become a place where the diverse and often incongruous experiences, philosophies and epistemologies of the post-colonial world can be in contact with each other. Kindness, generosity and honesty enable this intercultural exchange; openness and independence keep it alive.

Transart Institute is a model in which administration is streamlined for a healthy balance of influence and a maximum of time and budget for academic matters. The Institute's mission remains in progress and is subject to alteration, refinement, addition and change based on input from all the Institute's members. Transart Institute's pedagogical structure is also open to change through input from faculty, alumni and students on an annual basis. The Institute is committed to sharing its program and evolving model through institutional visits, teaching and student exchanges.

## **ACADEMIC PROGRAMME**

### **Programme Overview**

It is managed and delivered by Transart Institute (TI) in partnership with the School of Art & Media in the Faculty of Arts, Plymouth University (UoP), UK. The program operates within the Plymouth University's standard regulations for postgraduate taught programmes: <http://staff.plymouth.ac.uk/acregsc/acadregs/intranet.htm>.

### **Programme Aims**

The aims of the programme are:

- enable participants through critical studies and a clear understanding of current theoretical positions to define their own concerns and to put them in broader artistic, political and social contexts
- enable students to define a position for themselves in the spectrum of contemporary creative practice
- support participants in building a sustainable creative practice
- immerse participants into an environment of international and trans-cultural exchange
- maintain and continue to develop a learning environment appropriate to postgraduate study
- provide high quality teaching, underpinned by innovative staff research, scholarship and professional practice
- enable participants to achieve a high level of performance appropriate to the award of a Masters degree

- enable participants to determine the focus, theme or subject of their work, within a framework of negotiated and independent learning
- enhance the quality of participants' practice through the development of critical enquiry and innovative thinking and making, and realized through appropriate processes, approaches, methods, ideas, artworks and texts
- enable participants to develop and test an effective conceptual, contextual and critical framework for their practice informed by interdisciplinart perspectives
- widen participation to include all those who can benefit from the program

### **Programme Learning Outcomes**

Knowledge/Understanding *On completion graduates should have developed:*

- a systematic understanding of knowledge of contemporary art practice, and a critical awareness of new insights much of which is informed by the fields of cultural theory, and at the forefront of contemporary art practice
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own creative practice and research
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding and to develop new skills to a high level through creative practice
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge within contemporary art as well as in interdisciplinary contexts

Cognitive/Intellectual Skills *On completion graduates should have developed:*

- the ability to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgments and communicate their conclusions clearly through creative practice to arts and non-arts audiences
- the ability to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline of contemporary art practice
- the ability to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose and test new artistic methods and forms of practice

- an appropriate conceptual and critical framework for their art practice

**Key/Transferable Skills (generic) *On completion graduates should have developed:***

- self-directed learning and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level
- the ability to critically evaluate their art practice against self-determined criteria
- a high level of communication skills in appropriate visual/spatial/material/sonic and verbal/written modes

**Practical Skills (subject specific) *On completion graduates should have developed:***

- the ability to make creative use of the relationship between art practice and theory and generated innovative responses to problems and issues
- flexibility and effectiveness in the application of technical knowledge and expertise in the field of contemporary art practice
- exploratory and experimental approaches to ideas, methods, processes and material investigation

**Employment related Skill *On completion graduates should have developed***

- the exercise of initiative and personal reliability
- decision-making skills in complex and unpredictable situations
- the independent learning skills required for continuing professional and careers development

## Programme Structure (For Descriptions of the modules see Moodle)

### First year

July/August

*Summer Residency 1:*  
Workshops, presentations, seminars and planning for MCP 502 and MCP 504

Sept/Dec

*Semester One (fall or autumn) :*  
MCP 501  
MCP 503  
Advisor meetings, critiques and online learning

Jan/Feb

*Winter Residency 1:*  
**Assessment of MCP 501 (30 credits) and MCP 503 (30 credits)**  
Workshops, presentations, seminars and planning for MCP 502 and MCP 504

Feb/July

*Semester Two (spring):*  
MCP 502  
MCP 504  
Advisor meetings, critiques and online learning

### Second year

July/August

*Summer Residency 2:*  
**Assessment of MCP 502 (30 credits) and MCP 504 (30 credits)**  
Workshops, presentations, critiques, seminars in preparation for MCP 505

Sept/Dec

*Semester Three (fall or autumn):*  
MCP 505  
Advisor meetings, critiques and online learning

Jan/Feb

*Winter Residency 2:*  
**Assessment of MCP 505 (60 credits)**  
Workshops, critiques, seminars in preparation for MCP 506

Feb/July

*Semester Four (spring):*  
MCP 506  
Advisor meetings, critiques and online learning.

July/August

*Summer Residency 3:*  
professional development, presentations  
**MFA Project assessment MCP 506 (60 credits)**

## **Admissions**

The application for admissions period is rolling from December 1st to June 1st by online application form. Applicants are normally interviewed by two members of staff from the MFA Creative Practice team who will be looking for evidence of: a well developed independent and critical art practice; ability to write within a critical context; and a well considered and developed proposal for study at Masters level. They should also normally have a BA/Bsc or equivalent in a related subject.

Overseas applicants, if unavailable for interview, can be selected through the production of an electronic portfolio and telephone interview, and are required to have a TOEFL score (iBT) of 52 or better, or 6.5 IELTS (or equivalent).

Applicants with Accredited Prior Learning or Accredited Prior Experiential Learning are considered on an individual basis according to the University regulations framework. There is general guidance regarding accreditation of prior learning. This can be found at:

<http://intranet.plymouth.ac.uk/studhand/rulesregs/intranet.htm>

Applications consist of a digital portfolio that should contain documentation of recent artistic practice, a personal statement of 300-600 words, a curriculum vitae, transcripts or diplomas and a first year project plan. Letters of recommendation are not required.

## **Programme Calendar and Forms**

Residency dates may vary based on residency location requirements. The official and complete online calendar for residencies can be found here <http://www.transartinstitute.org/Calendar.html>. This brings you to all deadlines and corresponding online assignment forms. Assignments, forms and guides are linked to due dates. Keep a copy of all forms you fill out on your own computer by pasting all form fields and your answers into a text document.

The best way to keep track of everything is to follow along on the student calendar throughout the year by bookmarking it in your browser. Click on each item in the calendar in advance so you are prepared for what will come due next. There are links to helpful guides for many assignments but if you need additional information, just let us know. Administration will always send you a reminder email 1-2 weeks prior to a due date.

## **Communication**

The newsletter is an official form of communication with us. Always fish it out of the junk mail box because important information about the program and some of our requests will only be sent out this way. During

residencies the official spot is the Residency Forum in the Summer Residency Course. Documentation of all exchanges via Skype, chat, video conferencing and email are highly encouraged.

### **Change**

Change is a valid and valued process in the Institute in order for the program to serve the needs and goals of its members and to remain vital. The flow of change: Discussion between members and their reps > agenda to collegium meeting > collegium meeting > review by faculty board > changes to Ti Handbook and all relevant TI documents including online forms, online guides, all calendars. Suggestions for changes to modules and/or UoP documents will be fed into the UoP Permitted changes and if required, the approval processes.

## **TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT**

### **Modes of Delivery and Learning**

As students progress through the program they participate in a sequence of modules that involve a number of different modes of learning. The practice modules (MCP 501 and MCP 502) and the MFA Project (MCP 505 and MCP 506) are delivered in the form of residency workshops, presentations and seminars, as well as self-directed practice, online critiques and advisor meetings during semesters. Related study visits, individual and group tasks add to the variety of each student's learning experiences. The Conceptual and Aesthetic Frameworks for Creative Practice module (MCP 503) and Synthesis (MCP 504) module are delivered through seminars, presentations, advisor meetings, assignments and self-directed study. A core pedagogical strategy of the programme is to deliver most of the taught elements at each residency so participants can progress to self-directed study and individual research swiftly.

Modes of learning include:

- Self-directed practice
- Study plans
- Critical writing
- Research presentations
- Practice presentations
- Small group seminars
- Small group themed workshops
- Open discussions (circle groups)
- Critiques
- Short courses
- Reading diaries
- Individual meetings with studio advisors
- Individual and skype meetings with research advisors

- Email discussions with advisors
- Placements, residencies, commissions if appropriate
- Research journals and sketchbooks
- Exhibitions/dissemination
- Circle meetings
- Online blogs via Moodle
- Online critique groups via Moodle, email and skype
- Access to relevant information on Moodle
- ILS Student eLearning Facilities are utilised as appropriate

### **Project Study Plans**

Students make study plans for each first year project (modules MCP 501 and MCP 502). Go as far as you can with your plans but be open to making changes based on your experiences at the residency. This can be a study plan that runs through the whole year, or can be for two separate projects. Here is a link to advice and outline for writing your plan: <http://www.transartinstitute.org/Guidelines.html>. While work can be based on previous projects the inclusion of artistic work done prior to the programme is not acceptable.

### **Research**

Students complete one research project per year. For MCP 503 first year students are required to write a 10-page academic research paper (2,500-3,000 words) that is directly connected to and informs their studio project, this is in addition to the proposal for MCP 504. Second year students have the option of writing a traditional academic paper in MCP 505 and MCP 506, or perform an alternative research project. Guidelines are published in Moodle for first year papers [here](#) and for second year projects [here](#). Students projects are accompanied by Research Advisors who will form research groups by subject clusters based on student project plans.

Research (in the widest sense of the term) is a central feature of art practice, particularly at MFA level. Ideas, processes and products are developed through experimental, exploratory and connective modes of enquiry. Arising from particular needs and purposes, knowledge is questioned, gained and externalised through a continuous process of finding out, trying out and making, within a framework of critical reflection and contextualisation.

### **Seminars**

A pre-residency suggested and required seminar reading list along with the course syllabi, goals and description can be found [here](#). Reading diaries are sent to your faculty via email according to the academic calendar. The reading diary is required for admittance to the course and is in lieu of an exam.

## **Workshops**

Workshops are not intended to further technical virtuosity but to enhance creativity by exposing students to new approaches in working with various genres. Working with familiar media is recommended so that students can focus on ideas, concepts and methods rather than technical issues.

Students should bring their own tools, whatever they like to work with i.e. cameras, powerbooks, sketch pads. Students aren't required to bring anything in particular unless it is listed in the course description. A Mac service station with essential software, scanner and printer will be available. The institute strongly recommends that you bring your own laptop or powerbook. Internet access is available through WLAN and on terminals on site.

## **Critiques**

Critiques take place at appropriate points for the presentation of work in progress, or completed work, for critical reflection and discussion by a group of students and studio advisor. Students are expected to introduce the work under discussion, to describe aims and objectives, and to raise particular ideas or issues to initiate the debate. In these critiques students develop the ability to articulate ideas, to assimilate and respond to criticism and advice, and to argue in support of their ideas and artefacts where necessary. Participants are encouraged to be honest and frank, and to balance robust criticism with useful advice and support. The exchange of ideas and carefully argued judgments is essential to sound professional practice and to the developmental processes of learning. Some critiques take place on line and some in the residencies.

## **Self Directed Study and Attendance**

Throughout the programme students will be expected to take responsibility for their own learning in negotiation with studio and research advisors and the programme leaders. Within the framework of the programme structure and defined learning outcomes, they determine the particular focus of study by establishing themes, approaches, aims, intentions and directions for both practice and related research and text-based work. This process of defining themes and objectives within the time frame of the program is an important aspect of postgraduate study, and requires high levels of self-organisation, participation and responsibility.

## **Residences**

### Summer Residencies

Workshops, seminars and presentations are structured to give the maximum flexibility and freedom to faculty to accommodate teaching styles and strategies. A minimum of one hour is allotted each morning for faculty presentations and a minimum of an hour is assigned every afternoon for student presentations. The hours in between are to be used

at faculty discretion for assignments, film viewing, field trips etc. Assessments for MCP 502, MCP 504 and the MFA project MCP 506 take place during the summer residency. The first thirty minutes of each residency day will be an open discussion - a circle meeting – that all are expected to attend.

### Winter Residency

Annual weekend winter residencies in New York consist of group critiques of student work in progress by local faculty and studio advisors and assessments of MCP 501, MCP 503 and MCP 505. The program, links to students' art documentation and a list of participating students can be found in Moodle > Winter.

### Weekend Events

Faculty and students can propose additional optional weekend events [here](#).

### Student Presentations

Project presentations are given by students in every residency to their group and 3-4 faculty who ask questions, make suggestions and give feedback. Presentation periods are thirty minutes with students speaking for five minutes in this period, ten minutes in the second residency and fifteen in the final residency. Here are student guidelines

<http://www.transartinstitute.org/Guidelines.html>

for presentations you might find helpful. Time in the program is set aside for faculty to familiarize themselves with student art projects via web links in Moodle > Summer. Graduate students will lead or facilitate critiques during the second session.

### Time Commitment

Students are required to give an average of 20 hours a week to their art project and 5 hours for their research project. Note: Time learning new skills for the projects are considered additional to the required hours.

### Travel and Accommodations

Students make their own arrangements for travel, accommodations and meals during the residencies. Transart Institute takes no responsibility for these arrangements.

## **Tutorial Support**

### Student Advisors

New students work with Transart faculty for the first year. Faculty will form critique groups of advisees based on student project plans and keep “office hours” for students to drop in via Skype or by appointment. Beyond the required critique groups faculty determine their individual approach to student advising. It is possible to work with a student advisor at a distance, i.e. over the phone and internet, go for a visit to the student advisor's city, whatever works best for the student. Second year students are free to work with a student advisor of their own choice. All student advisors new to the program have to be nominated by the interested student before the beginning of the summer residency and need to be approved by a module leader. Points to consider in choosing a student advisor are available in the Moodle Guide to Teachers.

Student Advisors are sponsored by the Institute to work with students on a one-on-one basis on their art and/or curatorial projects off-site during semesters between residencies. Responsibilities include a minimum of two meetings per semester for critiques and advisement on the student's media independent study projects plus a mid-project and final written evaluation each year. Student and Student Advisor make schedule arrangements between themselves. It is the student's responsibility to make contact with the student advisor on a regular basis as agreed to.

An initial list of over 200 student advisors is available online. Student Advisors are artists in all genres and fields with higher academic degrees (or equivalent) and generally a minimum of three years college level teaching experience.

#### Guidance Committee (Tutorial Support and Guidance)

Every student has an individual guidance committee that includes the student, their studio advisor and their research advisor. A three way meeting (via Skype or phone) is expected to take place the first week of the fall and spring semester and after comments from the academic board are received and all members have had time to review the student's blog. However, any member of the committee can call a meeting to discuss the student's project at any time throughout the year.

#### **Professional Training/Placements/Work-based Learning**

Students who undertake professional training, placements/commissions or an aspect of their MFA project that requires them to undertake work-based learning in another organisation or agency as part of their MFA should negotiate the placement with the Programme Leaders and Studio Advisor.

#### **Assessment Strategies**

Assessment/grading is presented as an integral part of teaching and learning, in which students are expected to play a central part through a

process of self-evaluation and dialogue. Students are invited to do this by responding to a number of agreed and published criteria as well as reflecting more broadly on their learning experience and their own aims and objectives. Assessment on the MFA will follow the procedures and approaches fostered over many years that place an emphasis on qualitative assessment at formative (evaluative) and summative stages of the programme, and student reflection and critical evaluation against module criteria and negotiated aims and objectives. Students are graded on a Pass/Fail basis by faculty and studio advisors for semester and residency work. The criteria for semester grading are based on the successful completion of the student's Study Proposal (Art and Research Projects) and completion of all semester evaluation forms. The criteria for grading residency work are based on student presentations, participation in all residency events, participation, thesis and thesis exhibition, and reading diary. Grades will not appear on transcripts however graduates may request an official letter be sent to employers and academic institutions if needed for employment or academic advancement.

#### Evaluations and Self-Evaluations

Every student receives formative evaluations by their studio advisors and faculty at the mid-point and end of each year's projects. Students will give a self-evaluation for each project at the mid-point and end of year as well. In addition, reading diaries (a pre-requisite for all seminars) are evaluated by research faculty. Presentations of studio and research projects will be evaluated by a summer academic board.

#### Summative Assessment

The Faculty provide summative written evaluation for each module. Within the PGDip stage students are formally assessed at the end of each module (summative) against specified criteria related to the Assessed Learning Outcomes (see modules in Moodle). The criteria are available at the start of each module in the study pack. Students are also assessed in MCP 501, MCCP 502, MCP 505 and MCP 506 against their own aims and objectives for the module. Self-evaluation contributes an essential aspect to the assessment process and takes place at the end of each practice module in the form of a critical evaluation and is seen as an important part of the learning experience and professional development. It is designed to encourage students to adopt responsibility for their own learning.

#### Marking Policies

MCP 501 and MCP 502 (Creative Practice I and II) are jointly assessed by two or more members of the Faculty at the residencies. MCP 503 and MCP 504 are assessed independently by two members of the Faculty. MCP 505 and MCP 506 are assessed by all the programme team present at the residencies.

## **MFA Project**

The 'MFA Project' refers to the creative arts practice and research papers undertaken within MCP 505 and MCP 506. The relationship of writing to practice is negotiated through the proposal in MCP 504, and throughout the MFA project.

### **----MFA Project Exhibition, Documentation and Archive**

The MFA Project exhibition takes place in a "project space" at or nearby the summer residency. Students have the option to make an exhibition, give a performance or provide documentation of a project if one or more aspects of the project do not fit into the exhibition framework. The same standards will be applied to MFA projects, whether the work is exhibited or documented. Students who provide documentation of a project for their final MFA Project need to propose this in their approved project plan no later than February 1st so that particular issues of the final form of the documentation may be carefully considered. See "Guide to Project Documentation".

### **----Catalog, MFA Project and Artist Books**

Written MFA Project requirements can be found in the Guide to Second Year Research Papers in Moodle. Digital documentation of the MFA thesis on disc are required on the first day of the residency. The institute will engage a preface writer and a graphic designer to produce a digital and publish on-demand catalog with two page spreads for each student's projects. Material will be gleaned and edited from student submissions via online form.

## **Websites**

Students are required to maintain a blog in Moodle throughout the program and need to provide links to documentation of work on a quarterly basis according to the academic calendar.

## **Tuition**

Upon tuition payment (due June 1 - July 1), students are enrolled in all Moodle courses and can sign-up for their summer courses and reading material. Tuition increases for new cohorts will be based on the Consumer Price Index for tuition as published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics with the index for 2010 as the basis. Any increase or decrease of more than 5% will be considered. Further adjustments beyond the CPI for tuition need to be approved by the TI faculty board. Tuition is fixed for students once they are enrolled in the program for the duration of their studies.

# **LEARNING RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT**

## **Locations**

Transart Institute is an international program. Faculty and students choose their own off-site locations for semester work. Summer and winter residencies generally take place in Europe and New York respectively. Transart Institute identifies itself as an organization of artists and scholar members and not with a specific building or location. The Institute locates itself for events where: synergies with other arts organizations and communities can interact; where space is conducive to free thinking and expression and an open flow or intimacy can be achieved; and where as many members as possible can congregate. Residency locations are subject to change.

### **Facilities, Studios and Equipment**

Students bring their own powerbooks/laptops. Scanners, printers and WLAN are available on-site. Students have access to a wealth of digital library resources for their research throughout the year, on- and off-site. MFA Creative Practice students are expected to have their own studio spaces, and/or appropriate work locations and technical facilities or access to technical facilities outside of the residencies. Students and studio advisors negotiate where to meet for mentoring meetings. Students can negotiate the use of available facilities during residencies.

### **Resources and Guides**

A wealth of guides, academic and bibliographic resources and references is online in Transart Institute's virtual space "Moodle" [here](#). Relevant guides and resources are also linked to due dates in your Moodle calendar. E-journals are also available on the Plymouth University Portal: <http://intranet.plymouth.ac.uk/>

### **Languages**

The primary language on-site is English. Student off-site semester work, however, can take place in any language that the student and their studio advisor have in common. All written work will normally be in English. Exceptions may be negotiated on an individual basis with UoP ensuring due process can be followed. All administrative paper work (including student/faculty evaluations) must be in English. Note: For students with English as a second language, research faculty have the option to require that the student engage a professional proofreader if they deem it necessary. TOEFL exams for incoming students may be required by the Institute.

### **Research and Scholarly Activity**

The faculty are actively engaged in practice and research across the field of Creative Practice. The broad range of disciplines encompassed by the

program is underpinned by this research, especially through individual and collaborative creative practices. Research dissemination by staff includes exhibitions, publications, bookworks, conference papers, video/film, music, performance, on-line curatorial and interactive projects, residencies and commissions

## **REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES**

### **Academic Notices**

An academic board will review project progress through the students' blog presentations mid-semesters. Comments will be sent to students by email. No academic notices will be given to students in the fall (autumn) review. Academic warnings will go out by email for missing, incomplete, unsatisfactory, insufficient work or work done prior to the study period, for plagiarism, work not according to the study proposal based on the spring blog presentations mid-spring semester.

### **Academic Standing**

Students with positive evaluations from faculty and studio advisors and all assignments completed are in good academic standing. Student status can be reviewed in Moodle under "Calendar".

### **Short Course Electives and Faculty Choices**

Course sign-up takes place in Moodle after tuition payment has been received. Processing of International wire transfers can take up to two weeks. Students are not enrolled in the Moodle Summer Residency Course until payment is confirmed. If payment has been sent less than two weeks prior to course sign-up, students may send documentation of payment to [admin@transartinstitute.org](mailto:admin@transartinstitute.org) to expedite the process. Students may sign up for courses and switch courses as long as enrollment is open in Moodle, space permitting. Students who do not complete the Studio Advisor choice form before the deadline will be assigned studio advisors on the deadline.

**Extenuating Circumstances** – a student can expect a response around 14 days from the date of submitting the form, although it could take slightly longer if submitting during Bank Holidays and/or the winter/summer or spring Holiday period.

- A student emails/telephones Programmes Administration requesting an extenuating circumstances form (*please see section 1 overleaf for further details*).
- The extenuating circumstances form with guidance is then emailed to the student with Jessica Lutz copied in.

- The student would be advised to complete the form in full, detailing to what extent their performance has been affected, writing down the 'to' and 'from' dates they have been affected as well as providing independent corroborating evidence to support their claim (*please see section 2 overleaf for further details*). The student then emails (if scanning facilities are available) or posts the form and corroborating evidence to Jessica Lutz for signing.
- The student has the option, if necessary, to have their claim treated with the utmost confidentiality (*please see section 3 overleaf for further details*).
- Once the extenuating circumstances form has been signed by Jessica Lutz, the form and corroborating evidence are either emailed (to the staff support mail box [am.staffsupport@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:am.staffsupport@plymouth.ac.uk)) or posted to the Programmes Administration office:
  - Room 109, Roland Levinsky Building Faculty of Arts Plymouth University Plymouth Devon PL4 8AA
- When we are in receipt of the paperwork, the details will be logged into the Extenuating Circumstances Database and passed on to the Faculty of Arts Registrar, Donna Sanders.
- Donna then considers the paperwork and if deemed valid and the student has claimed for late submission, they would be able to submit their work after the official deadline (in liaison with their tutor), in or around a 20 working day timeframe. If uncharacteristic performance (atypical) applies, the student *may* retake the work again as a referral after the Post Graduate Taught (PGT) Faculty Board have met, depending on other failed modules and ultimately the board's decision (*please see section 5 overleaf for further details*). The outcome of the Extenuating Circumstance application would be emailed to the student, Jessica Lutz and Sarah Bennett (to keep Sarah in the loop).
- If the form is not clearly valid, the student's claim would go to a Panel to deliberate over the claim. If a claim is invalid after deliberation, the student would be emailed an explanation via the programmes office with Jessica Lutz and Sarah Bennett copied in (*please see section overleaf 4 for further details*)

## **Extenuating Circumstances Reference Guide**

**1** This Regulation applies to students who have registered for one or more modules, started their studies, and then found themselves in circumstances outside their control which impacted on their performance in one or more elements of assessment.

Extenuating circumstances are circumstances which:

- are exceptional;
- are outside the student's control;
- can be corroborated by independent evidence; • occurred during or shortly before the assessment in question; and
- may have led to an unrepresentative performance in relation to the student's previously demonstrated ability

Students who wish extenuating circumstances to be considered should:

- obtain an Extenuating Circumstances form from Faculty Office;
- complete the form;
- attach corroborating evidence; • obtain the appropriate signature;
- submit as soon as feasible.

## **2 Corroborating Evidence**

All claims must be accompanied by independent corroborating evidence; specific about the nature, timing and severity of the problem and if possible provide an independent assessment of the effect the problem may have had on the student's performance.

Corroborating evidence may include:

- A medical note.
- A letter from a counsellor.
- A note from the Accommodation Office confirming a particularly severe problem.
- An official document - police report with a police reference number, court summons.
- A letter from a solicitor, social worker or other official agency.
- An insurance claim document supported by a letter from the insurance company.
- Corroboration from support staff in e.g. the Chaplaincy, Student Funding.
- Academic staff who have been closely involved in the pastoral care (must be countersigned by the member of staff designated as responsible

for the coordination of pastoral care within the School). It is the responsibility of the staff member concerned to obtain a valid countersignature.

Full-time students cannot claim pressures of work, since such students have by implication made a commitment to make available the time necessary for study; part-time students in full-time employment or self-employed can.

Students should not seek to obtain corroborating evidence retrospectively.

### **3 Confidentiality**

Claims are confidential to the Screening Panel and Board other than if they need to be considered as part of a student appeal. They can enter the word 'Confidential' on the form in the boxes headed 'Brief Description' and 'Comments' and attach written evidence in a sealed envelope.

Personal Tutors (and possibly other staff) may need to be notified about the outcome of their tutee's extenuating circumstances claim, although not the details of the case.

### **4 Consideration of Extenuating Circumstances: Screening Panel**

Each Faculty has a Screening Panel. The Panel includes Faculty Registrar, Associate Dean T&L as Chair plus appropriate academic staff. The Panel determines whether the claim is valid within the Regulations (exceptional, outside the student's control, and corroborated).

Screening Panels will meet in January, March, June and September prior to Panels and prior to Referred and PG Boards. In this Faculty the Faculty Registrar (FR) is authorized to approve circumstances claims outside formal meetings, where the claim is clearly valid. If the FR, and Chair are not convinced that a claim is valid, it must be considered by the Screening Panel.

Claims are logged and tracked on the Extenuating Circumstances database. The Faculty Office notifies students of the outcomes and where invalid, must explain why this decision has been reached.

### **5 Consideration of Extenuating Circumstances: Award Assessment Board**

Valid claims are forwarded to the Board for consideration in mitigation of:

- Atypical or uncharacteristic performance
- Failure to attend (an) examination(s), end-of-module test(s) or in-class test(s)
- Failure to submit work by the appointed time
- Failure in the relevant assessment
- Failure to meet other programme requirements

Students are normally required to undertake an assessment at the same attempt.

### **Plagiarism**

"The practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own" (as defined by the New Oxford Dictionary of English, 2001), will not be tolerated. Students should exercise extreme caution in the process of footnoting, identifying their own ideas from those of others.

1. All studio and research projects must be the student's, with the exception of collaborations, in which the student's contribution and those of the collaborators are clearly described and there is no room for misunderstanding about the student's role in the project.
2. Students shall trace all sources and when including someone else's ideas, texts, statements, etc., full bibliographical information must be given, including footnotes and parenthetical documentation. Students may refer to the Chicago Style Manual. If in doubt about whether documentation is adequate, students should seek the guidance of their faculty and studio advisors prior to submitting the assignments.

### **Penalties for Plagiarism**

1. Failure in the module in which the plagiarism was committed .
2. Expulsion from the Institute for a second offence.
3. Students accused of plagiarism may request a hearing before the Collegium which may recommend that the matter be dismissed or be reviewed by the Academic Board. The accused student has 48 hours from receiving written notification of the accusation of plagiarism to request a hearing. The findings of the Academic Board are final. Students may then only appeal to the Plymouth University Appeals Committee.
4. Students may not submit the same project in which the plagiarism was committed without the express consent of the faculty, studio advisor and academic board. Standard Plymouth University Regulations will be followed.

### **Appeals**

Appeals against assessments results, i.e. the Appeals Procedure, will be conducted through the Plymouth University Appeals Procedure. For all Plymouth University Academic Regulations and Policies see Moodle

### **Student Complaints**

Unfortunately things occasionally go wrong and we need to be made aware when this happens so we can respond and ultimately improve our services. Whatever your complaint you can expect it to be dealt with promptly and fairly and in line with the policies and procedures. You will not be disadvantaged or treated less favourably by making a complaint.

In the first instance, talk to the member of staff most directly involved.

For further information please go to:

<http://staff.plymouth.ac.uk/studhand/rulesregs/intranet.htm>

### **Equal Opportunities**

In order to provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals, engagement decisions at Transart Institute are based on proposals, qualifications, and teaching abilities. Transart Institute does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or sexual orientation. Transart Institute will endeavor to make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities. This policy governs all aspects of employment, including selection, job assignment, compensation, termination, access to benefits and employee development.

Any member with questions or concerns about any type of discrimination within the institute are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of a member of the faculty board. All issues will be addressed in the institute's judicial forum, the Transart Institute Collegium. All members can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal. Anyone found to be engaging in any type of unlawful discrimination will be subject to termination of employment.

### **Outside Academic Engagements**

Faculty are encouraged to work with other institutions. Faculty in good standing will be supported by all Transart Institute members in any way possible and reasonable to facilitate other academic and professional engagements. The Institute's intention is to promote Institutional exchange and knowledge sharing.

### **Conflicts**

In many cases, issues are a misunderstanding or the result of poor communication that can be resolved by both parties through additional discussion and agreement. As a member of the Transart community, you are encouraged to bring academic issues to a module leader or other collegium member. If faculty are unable to resolve the issue, a collegium meeting (programme committee) is called and an outcome will be

determined by the group once everyone has been heard. Any member having an issue has the right to be heard and may expect a fair resolution without the fear of reprisal (please see section on Student Complaints for further information).

### **Disability**

Transart Institute will undertake every reasonable effort to accommodate students with special needs or disabilities, be they physical or sensory impairments, mental health and learning difficulties, or health conditions. All special needs will be negotiated after individual consultations. Prospective applicants should indicate any special needs and/or disabilities on the initial application form (which will be amended to reflect this policy).

### **Harassment and Violence**

Transart Institute is committed to providing a work environment that is free from all forms of discrimination and conduct that can be considered harassing, coercive, or disruptive, including sexual harassment. Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's sex, race, color, national origin, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated. Faculty who become aware of possible sexual or other unlawful harassment must immediately advise a chair or other collegium member so it can be investigated in a timely and confidential manner. Anyone engaging in sexual or other unlawful harassment will be subject to termination of engagement with the institute. Workplace violence are acts or threats of physical violence, including intimidation, harassment, and/or coercion, that involve or affect the institute or that occur at any Transart Institute event. This prohibition against threats and acts of violence applies to all persons involved with the institute. Violations of this policy, by any individual, will lead to termination of engagement with the institute.

### **Ethics**

See Moodle for Plymouth University ethics procedures

### **Interruption from the Programme (leave)**

An interruption from studies may be taken for personal, financial, or artistic reasons. A student seeking an interruption from studies must make a request in writing to a module leader at least one month before the beginning of the module. There are standard deadlines by which a student should inform of interruption, as noted above. After three years of interruption of study, a student must formally apply to the programme for readmission. The maximum registration period that a student can take to complete the program is the period of the program (2 years) plus 3 years.

### **Recommendations**

Students request letters of recommendation from their faculty and studio advisors. Chairs write recommendations for Faculty only.

### **Module Assessment Arrangements**

See Moodle calendar

### **Progression**

On successfully completing 120 level 7 credits of the PGDip and with the agreement of the Award Assessment Board, students will be allowed to progress to MFA. If a student decides to withdraw from the program after successfully completing the PGDip then they will be eligible for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma.

### **Degree Requirements**

Candidates for a Master of Fine Arts degree from Transart Institute must meet the following requirements:

The successful completion of 240 credits (120 ECTS ) in the modules required by the program included in the mandatory four semesters , three summer residencies and winter residencies (MCP 501, MCP 502, MCP 503, MCP 504, MCP 505 and MCP 506) including completion of the graduate thesis, exhibition or documentation and presentation of studio project and all study proposals, reading diaries, self-evaluations and teacher evaluations.

The complete and definitive set of Plymouth University academic regulations is published electronically on Moodle or can be found at: <http://intranet.plymouth.ac.uk/studhand/rulesregs/intranet.htm>

### **Subject Assessment Panel and Award Assessment Board Arrangements**

The Faculty of Arts Postgraduate Award Board determines the academic status of students, advised by The MFA Subject Assessment Panel. A student who has failed to make satisfactory progress toward the degree may receive a warning from TI, or may be advised to interrupt from the program. In order to return to the program, work must be submitted that complies with conditions stated by the Postgraduate Award Board. See: <http://staff.plymouth.ac.uk/acregsc/acadregs/intranet.htm>.

### **Student Progress (2010-11)**

After the close of each summer session, the student's work and participatory effort are evaluated by the faculty and a Subject Assessment Panel held to confirm the results and standards of assessment. These results are then confirmed by the Postgraduate Award Board at the Plymouth University and the student is notified of credits achieved.

### **Transcripts, Award Certificate, and Diploma Supplement**

These will be issued by the Plymouth University in partnership with Transart.

### **Ceremony and Diplomas**

An informal pre-graduation celebration takes place in the residency space followed by a reception hosted by the Institute on the last day of the residency. The Plymouth University in partnership with Transart will send transcripts, award certificate, and diploma supplements after the Plymouth University Postgraduate Award Board in the fall, at which awards will be confirmed as appropriate. TI faculty and students will be invited to the Plymouth University Postgraduate Award ceremony in December.

### **Graduation**

Students who successfully complete all modules, demonstrate an ability to engage in a critical dialog with faculty and students and present a Master Thesis project are eligible to graduate the program. All graduating student work is reviewed mid-semester by an academic board. The board determines whether the graduate projects are on schedule and have the potential for an adequate level of accomplishment. Module results are collated at the MFA Subject Assessment Panel at the end of each residency and forwarded for confirmation to the Postgraduate Award Boards at UoP. Graduate thesis exhibition or documentation, presentations and TI ceremony take place at the end of the third summer residency. Students are eligible to attend a Graduation Ceremony at the Plymouth University.

### **Effects on Residencies**

Attendance at all summer residency classes and events is required. Notify staff immediately in case of illness. Students who miss more than three days of the residency need to take an approved equivalent course during the year or repeat the residency.

### **Scholarships**

Only students in good academic standing are eligible for scholarships. Scholarships will be revoked from students not in good academic standing.

## **MFA PROGRAM MANAGEMENT**

### **Key Contacts/Support**

Joint Programme Leaders	Cella, Klaus Knoll, Jessica Lutz
Programme Team	Cella, Geoff Cox (Chair: Cultural Studies) Jean Marie Casbarian (Chair: Studio Art), Klaus Knoll, Jessica Lutz
Summer Faculty 2010	Myron Beasley, Lynn Book, Jean Marie Casbarian, Ofri Cnaani, Cella, Geoff Cox, David Dunn, Nicolás Dumit Estévez, Laura González, Klaus Knoll, Mary Ting
Directors, MFA & Transart Institute	Cella, Klaus Knoll, Jessica Lutz

### Module Leaders

MCP 501 Jean Marie Casbarian	<a href="mailto:jmcasbarian@transartinstitute.org">jmcasbarian@transartinstitute.org</a>
MCP 502 Klaus Knoll	<a href="mailto:knoll@transartinstitute.org">knoll@transartinstitute.org</a>
MCP 503 Geoff Cox	<a href="mailto:geoff@anti-thesis.net">geoff@anti-thesis.net</a>
MCP 504 Geoff Cox	<a href="mailto:geoff@anti-thesis.net">geoff@anti-thesis.net</a>
MCP 505 Cella	<a href="mailto:cella@transartinstitute.org">cella@transartinstitute.org</a>
MCP 506 Klaus Knoll	<a href="mailto:knoll@transartinstitute.org">knoll@transartinstitute.org</a>

### Plymouth University Liaison

Sarah Bennett [sarah.bennett@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.bennett@plymouth.ac.uk)

### Plymouth University Programme Administrator

TBC

### TI Administrative Manager

Selina Heaton                      admin@transartintitute.org

Systems Administrator

Jorge Prado                      admin@transartintitute.org

Residency Support

Michael Poetschko              admin@transartintitute.org

Financial Accounting

Al Bolton                         admin@transartintitute.org

Legal Counselor

Yvonne Ahearn                 admin@transartintitute.org

**Collegium (MFA Programme Committee)**

Collegium Meetings will take place twice per year, with a further meeting optional. The first meeting will take place during the winter residency and will include the Annual Programme Monitoring process (APM) and respond to the External Examiner's report. The minutes of this meeting and subject action plan will be forwarded to Faculty of Arts Quality Unit. The second meeting for monitoring and planning will take place during the summer residency.

The membership of the Collegium comprises:

- The Program Leader/s
- All Module Leaders and optionally for the studio and research advisors
- Student representatives (1 elected member for each year)
- Secretary
- Plymouth University Liaison Tutor

The Collegium normally meets at least two times per year and is responsible for:

- Reviewing the performance and progress of the Program
- Annual Program Monitoring (winter residency meeting)
- Consideration of the Programme Action Plan
- Responding to the External Examiner's report
- Addressing student concerns
- Proposed permitted changes to the programme
- Considering proposals from the MFA Academic Board concerning the operation and development of the programme

This is also the board for students and Faculty to appeal to for any disagreement which cannot be resolved one on one. If the collegium is unable to resolve an issue, the responsibility will be with the TI Faculty

Board, after which the Plymouth University Complaints Procedure will be used.

### **Student Representatives and Feedback**

Each year in the programme has one student representatives, elected at the beginning of the year, who are expected to participate in a range of activities such as attending the Collegium (Programme Committee) and representing student views.

Students are encouraged to provide feedback to faculty about all aspects of the programme, by the following means: module evaluation forms; student questionnaires; faculty-student rep meetings; student representation on the TI Collegium. This important feedback enables the faculty to improve the learning experiences of students and to enhance the quality of provision.

## **TRANSART INSTITUTE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE**

### **Faculty Board**

Four Faculty consisting of two chairs and two Ti co-directors with various teaching and organizational responsibilities for different aspects of the academic program comprise a board responsible for leadership, guidance, and mediatory aspects of the program for faculty and students as well as decision making and oversight of long term programme goals. The faculty board is ultimately responsible for faculty engagement and overall budget under advisement from faculty, alumni and student representatives. Decisions are made per simple majority, ties result in no action being taken.

### **Advisory Board**

The Institute's advisory board consists of members who can contribute areas of expertise important to the goals of the institute.

### **Academic Board**

All module leaders and the program leader/s form the academic board which is charged with overseeing, review, advising and supporting studio advisors and students through the planning, execution and completion of student studio projects. The board evaluates student summer presentations, residency performance (participation), thesis exhibitions and the semi-annual check-ins. It may seek the additional advice of faculty, studio advisors and alumni for the purpose of reviewing student work.

### **Collegium**

Please see above under Management Structure