

CONTENTS FINE ART TUNING DOCUMENT

Tuning Fine Art Education

- 3.1 Introduction to the subject area
- 3.2 Degree profiles
- 3.3 Learning outcomes and competencies – level descriptors
- 3.4 Consultation process with stakeholders
- 3.5 Workloads and ECTS
- 3.6 Trends and differences within the European Higher Education Area in Fine Art
- 3.7 Learning, teaching and assessment
- 3.8 Quality Assurance and Enhancement

TUNING DOCUMENT FINE ART EDUCATION

This tuning document has been produced by PARADOX, the Fine Art European Forum, within the framework of the *inter}artes* thematic network, strand 2.

3.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE SUBJECT AREA

To describe the characteristics of the subject area Fine Art¹ it is necessary first to consider Contemporary Art practice and its context in Europe. Art is a creative and intellectual endeavour that involves artists and other arts practitioners in a reflexive process where the nature and function of art is questioned and challenged through the production of new art.

Contemporary Art is a broad and dynamic field encompassing a wide range of approaches, technologies, contexts, theories, traditions and social functions². Knowledge and reflection are embodied in artistic practices and processes. Specific to art is an aesthetic approach to questioning and exploration, opening up new ways of understanding and producing meaning and knowledge.

Fine Art higher education involves an integrated approach to production, theory, critical reflection professional practice³ technical development and public manifestation. Diversity is a characteristic of Fine Art higher education in Europe. It is important that Fine Art programmes continue to define their own specific qualities, weighting and approaches to their curricula.

Fine Art education enables students to become creative arts practitioners. Students learn to develop the necessary imaginative, intellectual, theoretical and practical skills to equip them for continuing personal development and professional practice within the arts. Students are required to actively participate in their own education and to define their own area of practice, theory and research and the relevant professional skills that their practice requires. Fine Art education involves modes of study that lay stress on creativity, improvisation and the questioning of orthodoxies.

¹ For the purposes of this document *Fine Art* refers to all Higher Education programmes that specialise in a combination of Art practice with related theory.

² Artists work in a range of contexts, media and materials and are continuously questioning and expanding the range of approaches that they employ. They may operate from within a gallery or museum. Or, work to commission to produce public art, working independently or collaboratively to make interventions in the virtual or public sphere. These activities come in to being via a wide variety of specific, multi and interdisciplinary media and forms of presentation, including: painting; sculpture; installation; drawing; film and video; photography; web based projects; performance and text based works. Developments in contemporary art practice are reflected in the Fine Art curriculum with courses offering projects or modules in, for example: socially engaged art practice and site based or site specific art practice.

³ Professional Practice for arts practitioners includes both practical and conceptual considerations. Through the development of projects and exhibitions and through lectures and seminars run by artists and arts professionals, students acquire knowledge and skills to enable them to develop their future careers including project management; negotiation and teamwork; documentation and presentation and an approach to writing applications and proposals.

Art is vital for the functioning of the whole of society and Fine Art programmes play an active role in providing the necessary creative human capital. Career paths following the study of Fine Art include: working as an artist; as a teacher of art; as a curator or arts administrator; as a critic or in some other role in the field of culture. The transferable skills that students acquire during their studies are also relevant and valued in a range of other working contexts, in particular creative and entrepreneurial contexts and management.

In the course of their studies students are given the opportunity to develop an individual practice and perspective and are provided with the intellectual and physical space and technical resources where the transformation from a passive mode to an active form of learning can take place. This approach to learning enables students to become self managing reflexive practitioners.

The Fine Art studio is a crucial space in which ideas can take form. The studio is both a dedicated workspace for individual students and a discursive space shared by a group of students and tutors who negotiate its use. The studio is a 'laboratory' environment where students can experiment and test out ideas and approaches, making discoveries and 'mistakes'. For second and third cycle students may have organised and established studio space independently based on the specific requirements of their practice.

For those involved in studying and teaching Fine Art there is a shared commitment to improving and contributing to the quality and vitality of cultural experiences. The role of the 'artist-teacher' is essential to all Fine Art programmes⁴. Curators, researchers, theorists and other arts professionals should also be involved in the delivery of the programme. Art practice is an activity shared by both students and their tutors, in this way discussions about the dilemmas and issues raised are both practical and theoretical and are based on case studies and direct experience. There are opportunities for students and staff to work alongside each other on exhibitions and projects and to share the process of installation and the evaluation of the event.

A feature of Fine Art programmes is the exhibition or project presentation as a defining assessment point in the first and second cycles. Exhibitions play a role in offering students targets and deadlines throughout their studies. Public exhibitions or presentations offer students an opportunity to bring a body of work to a conclusion, to develop a conceptual and aesthetic awareness and an understanding of the relationship between audience and artwork.

The Fine Art programme plays a role within wider communities through active engagements, residencies, exhibitions, open seminars and

⁴ In Europe there are different traditions of teaching Fine Art and there may be an academy/atelier system or a tutorial based system in place. In all cases the necessity for tutors to be practising artists engaged in and aware of the current discourses in contemporary art is valued.

workshops⁵. Graduates, professional artists and cultural practitioners use second and third cycle Fine Art programmes to develop and upgrade their competencies. This experience deepens their understanding and knowledge of the context and critical discourses related to their work, developing their practice and career paths.

The wider Fine Art community of education is also a context for study and exchange. Projects that involve a number of institutions in different countries play a key role within curricula offering students a broader perspective on their own practice⁶.

⁵ The programme team may collaborate with public and private arts institutions and professional groups to enhance the curriculum and enable students to situate their work in a public context. Fine Art programmes may also contribute to the local community through schools' workshops and other forms of support and involvement. Such activities clearly benefit students by enabling them to develop professional practice and interpersonal skills. There is also an aspiration that these activities may encourage those who are currently under-represented, whether for reasons of gender, ethnic origin, nationality, age, disability, family background, vocational training, geographic location, or earlier educational disadvantage to participate in Higher Education

⁶ It is noted in the section on *Trends and Differences within the European Higher Education Area in this Subject*, that exchanges are particularly appropriate for the subject due to the self negotiated nature of Fine Art study and the universality of art as a language.

3.2 DEGREE PROFILES

While some countries have already adopted a three cycle system, others are at different stages of development with regard to the Bologna process.

Typical degrees offered in Fine Art

First cycle	<p>The typical first cycle Degree in the subject area is entitled <i>Fine Art</i>. A number of institutions offer programmes, courses or pathways that emphasise aspects of the subject area for example: <i>Painting, Sculpture, Printmaking, Fine Art Critical Practice, Art and Visual Culture, Art in a Social Context and Curatorial Practice</i>.</p> <p>Typical elements of the Degree at this level include: Studio practice, self directed art projects, theory and art history, research and professional practice.</p>
Second Cycle	<p>The typical Degree at second cycle is also called <i>Fine Art</i>. There are a number of subject specific courses as described for the First cycle including: <i>Gallery Management and Curation</i>.</p> <p>Typical elements of the Degree at this level include: Studio practice, self initiated and self directed art projects and exhibitions, theory and art history, professional practice through the development of projects and public exhibitions.</p>
Third Cycle	<p>Typical Degrees at third cycle in <i>Fine Art</i> are PhD level</p> <p>Typical elements of a Fine Art Degree at this level include: A self initiated and self directed programme of mapped and evaluated research and practice with a rigorous assessment. PhD level degrees in Fine Art vary considerably in the weighting of written to practical work.</p>

Typical occupations of the graduate in Fine Art

The study of Fine Art enables students to develop a range of competencies including: creative thinking; critical reflection; research skills; project management; presentation skills; communication and negotiation skills and technical competence related to their art practice. Such competencies acquired and enhanced during the course of study results in highly employable graduates.

First Cycle	By the end of this cycle graduates are equipped for professional practice or further professional development as artists or arts administrators and will have acquired numerous transferable skills that prepare them for other employment. Completion of study may also lead to further study on a postgraduate Fine Art programme, teaching qualifications or other subject areas.
Second Cycle	By the end of the second cycle graduates will be fully equipped to function as artists or professionals in fields of culture. They may also go on to teach Art at various levels or to practice in creative industries.
Third Cycle	By the end of the third cycle graduates are further equipped for an academic career and have developed their profiles as professional artists. They will be at the forefront of their particular field of research, able to contribute and disseminate results to the wider community.

Role of subject area in other degree programmes

Fine Art may be taken as a component of a combined Honours Degree programme along with subjects such as Education, Restoration, Art History and Performance Studies. There are also courses that have a greater weighting towards theory in which Fine Art practice is in a smaller or equal proportion to related theoretical study.

3.3 LEARNING OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCIES- LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

1st CYCLE LEARNING OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCIES

Key Subject Specific Competencies	Key Generic Competencies
<p>An ability to:</p> <p>explore and acquire familiarity with the language, materials and tools of Fine Art;</p> <p>develop a knowledge, awareness and understanding of contemporary and historical Fine Art practices, theories and the wider cultural and social context;</p> <p>develop a professional working basis in processes, theories, technical skills and organisation/communication skills relevant to art practice;</p> <p>critically reflect on and evaluate their own work and the work of others;</p> <p>communicate and articulate ideas visually, verbally and in writing as appropriate;</p> <p>develop an art practice that includes the production and presentation of a body of work;</p> <p>generate creative ideas, experimental methods, concepts, proposals and solutions;</p> <p>negotiate or develop an argument independently and/or collaboratively in response to self initiated activity;</p> <p>demonstrate a conceptual and aesthetic awareness and an understanding of the relationship between audience and artwork;</p> <p>develop an awareness of the contexts in which their work may develop;</p> <p>develop a knowledge of how to operate within the professional field.</p>	<p>An ability to:</p> <p>develop basic research skills in order to gather and select, analyse, synthesise, summarise and critically judge information;</p> <p>develop knowledge and understanding of theories, concepts and methods pertaining to a field (or fields) of learning;</p> <p>exercise appropriate judgement in a number of complex situations or contexts;</p> <p>act effectively within a team led by experts in the field of study;</p> <p>act in variable and unfamiliar contexts;</p> <p>manage learning tasks and workloads independently, professionally and ethically;</p> <p>develop presentation skills and an ability to interact effectively with audiences;</p> <p>work and practice effectively with a knowledge of ethical, economic and health and safety implications.</p>

2nd CYCLE LEARNING OUTCOME AND COMPETENCIES

Key subject Specific Competencies	Key Generic Competencies
<p>An ability to: further develop and evaluate working processes appropriate to individual creative practices;</p> <p>acquire independent research skills and utilise them effectively;</p> <p>display evidence of professional competencies required for individual creative practice;</p> <p>evolve further strategies and utilise expertise, imagination and creativity in appropriate media;</p> <p>develop own criteria for evaluating and directing work: question and contextualise individual practice and that of others;</p> <p>articulate an informed position in the fields of art and culture;</p> <p>create, sustain, manage, administer and present an art practice professionally;</p> <p>articulate intentions, values and meanings of works produced to relevant audiences as well as non specialised audiences;</p> <p>consider and evaluate available relevant pathways to progress.</p>	<p>An ability to: develop a systematic understanding of knowledge informed by the fields of learning;</p> <p>cultivate an enhanced critical awareness of current developments and/or insights, informed by the forefront of the fields of learning;</p> <p>demonstrate a range of standard and specialised research or equivalent skills and techniques to a high level;</p> <p>negotiate and interact effectively with others to initiate activity;</p> <p>foresee and adapt to changing contexts;</p> <p>self evaluate and take responsibility for continuing academic/professional development.</p>

3rd CYCLE LEARNING OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCIES

Key subject Specific Competencies	Key Generic Competencies
<p>An ability to: possess a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of recent advances in contemporary Fine Art practices, theoretical discourses and art contexts;</p> <p>demonstrate skills acquired through research training and the development of experimentation/innovative research and working processes relevant to artistic projects;</p> <p>self direct a research project, based on a focused and well-founded research proposal;</p> <p>position the individual research project in relation to peer review and published, exhibited and other public outcomes;</p> <p>make a public presentation of the research outcomes, that displays a significant level of understanding of audience interaction and reception;</p> <p>make a contribution at the forefront of developments in contemporary art and the wider cultural context.</p>	<p>An ability to: a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of the field of learning;</p> <p>prioritise research activities and set achievable intermediate goals appropriate to a project of advanced research;</p> <p>employ insight into the development of working processes and critical analysis during the research process;</p> <p>demonstrate a significant range of the principal skills, techniques, tools, practices and/or materials which are associated with the field of learning;</p> <p>develop new skills, techniques, tools, practices and/or materials;</p> <p>document, report on and critically reflect on research findings to specialist and non-specialist audiences;</p> <p>create and interpret new knowledge, through original research and advanced scholarship;</p> <p>exercise responsibility and a significant level of perception and accountability in contexts that are unforeseen and ethically complex.</p>

3.4 CONSULTATION PROCESS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

The tuning process initially involved a steering group from PARADOX, the Fine Art European Forum comprised of: Bob Baker, Head of Fine Art, School of Art & Design, Limerick Institute of Technology, Ireland; Paula Crabtree, Dean, Department of Fine Art, Bergen National Academy of Arts, Norway; Tamiko O'Brien, Course Leader Fine Art: Sculpture, Wimbledon College of Art, University of the Arts London; Simeon Saiz Ruiz, Dean of Fine Art, Universidad de Castilla La Mancha, Cuenca, Spain, in March 2006.

A first draft was revised following consultation with colleagues at the PARADOX working conference in Utrecht on 31 March 31 and 1 April, 2006. The second draft has been disseminated at ELIA and *inter}artes* events including the ELIA Biennial conference in Gent, October 2006 and *inter}artes* working conferences in Budapest September 2006; Athens January 2007; Tallinn April 2007; Stuttgart June 2007; Porto September 2007. Comments have also been invited through the PARADOX and *inter}artes* websites.

The steering group consulted a range of documents and papers including: On the way to a shared set of core values in Fine Art education ELIA (Cluj Romania 2004 ;Four Years, ELIA, On the way to a European Higher Education Area in the Arts, the Dublin Descriptors ; Libro Blanco para diseno de la Titulacion de grado en Bellas Artes en Espana; HETAC (Ireland) Standards for Art and Design; Subject Benchmark Statements UK; National Actions to implement Life Long Learning in Europe, Eurydice European Unit 2001; *Making a European Area of Life Long Learning a Reality*, Commission of European Communities, 2001

3.5 WORKLOAD AND ECTS

First Cycle	3 to 4 years 180 to 240 ECTS
Second Cycle	1 to 2 years 60 to 120 ECTS
Third Cycle	3 to 4 years 180 to 240 ECTS

3.6 TRENDS AND DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA IN FINE ART

As already outlined in the introduction diversity is both a characteristic and core value of Fine Art education and programmes may have distinctive characteristics related to local traditions and the nature of contemporary Art practice in their locality. Institutions also vary in scale and economy.

A number of trends have been identified.

- Public interest and demand for art in general has increased, visitor numbers to major art museums and galleries have risen. It is recognised that cultural industries contribute significantly to national and international economies⁷.
- Fine Art practice is dynamic and constantly evolving. Greater opportunities for artists now exist and there is an increased awareness of professional practice in Fine Art programmes. Whereas the acquisition of professional practice skills was usually implicit and embedded within the Fine Art curricula, there is a move towards a more explicit recognition of the roles and relevance of professional practice for Fine Art. Some programmes feature professional practice as an identified and specific element of the course. Increasingly this involves collaborations with partners in cultural institutions.
- There is a trend towards the study of critical theory as integrated and directly related to students' own developing art practice. The relationship between and proportion of theory and practice may be negotiated with individual students when considering their programme of work.
- Practice based research degrees are a recent development. There are a range of approaches to the practice based Fine Art PhD and the proportion of written work to practice differs across Europe. The number of artists who have completed the 3rd cycle has increased.
- Developments in learning, teaching and assessment have included the use of Learning Outcomes and assessment used as a positive learning tool that involves students in peer review. There is a general move towards a more accountable and transparent approach to teaching that is student-centred and focused on learning.
- Developments in technology have impacted on the way students learn. The internet has greatly expanded the opportunities for research in current international practices. In some institutions a *Virtual Learning Environment* provides the opportunity for students and staff to access programme documentation and information. The VLE also provides a context for students to access each other's work and can be used as a tool for students involved in organising and negotiating group work.
- Exchanges have become a feature of the curriculum. They are appropriate for Fine Art students because of the emphasis on negotiated self directed study. The nature of international contemporary art facilitates participation in programmes in other countries.
- Artists are constantly renewing and refreshing their knowledge of the field of Fine Art. As a result Fine Art students can be from a

⁷ (UK department for culture, media and sport reports 1998, 2001, Arts Council of Ireland 'Arts Plan' 2002-2006). Fine Art education has increased in popularity accordingly leading to a wide range of career opportunities (Dutch research project on careers 2004).

wide age range. Fine Art is a key subject area in which life long learning and widening participation are viable.

A number of differences have been identified:

- Some institutions consider that traditional subject disciplines provide students with useful contexts from which they can focus their studies. Others have established broad based courses where students can engage in multi disciplinary forms of practice.
- Models of teaching are diverse in Europe. There is a tradition of the academy/atelier system where students work with one tutor or professor for a number of years and develop a dialogue with that artist and their practice. In other countries students may work with a number of different tutors and visiting artists during their period of study.
- Admissions procedures vary across the sector. In some countries students are required to have completed a diagnostic 'Foundation' or 'Access' course of varying lengths. Others recruit students directly from second level education⁸.
- Currently there is a diversity of programme lengths. Many countries are moving towards a 3 cycle structure.
- Part time study is offered in a number of countries in a range of formats and over a different numbers of years. Part time students may swap between part time and full time modes or vice versa as their circumstances change⁹.
- Fine Art education in Europe is provided by a range of institutions including: universities, specialist academies and colleges of higher or further education. While the standard of the programmes and students' achievements are comparable there may be differences between the resources available and the level to which academic staff are supported to undertake their own research.
- Different structures are employed by institutions in delivering the curriculum. Some programmes are modularised or unitised where students can choose components that involve study in subjects other than Fine Art. Many programmes are specifically holistic in approach, where the different components of the curriculum are imbedded rather than explicit.

3.7 LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

Fine Art curricula and teaching and learning practices have developed in response to changes in the nature of contemporary art practice and the wider cultural and social context. Innovations and curriculum development have been required in order for students to be prepared for and engage in contemporary art practice.

⁸ Admissions may be based on: exam results; drawing/aptitude tests; a week long project based competence test; portfolio interviews or group critique and group interview. Students may be selected by an individual professor that works with them for the duration of the programme. In other institutions teams of staff select students for the programme.

⁹ This has increased participation by learners previously under represented in Higher Education.

Students are involved in a wide range of learning activities¹⁰. Assessment is employed as a learning tool and students are expected to play an active role in the assessment of work. This may be through assessment by group critique, by writing critical evaluation reports on their own progress and /or peer evaluation.

Example 1:

Work or project placements/ residencies

These projects may initially involve students in seeking out and negotiating their placement and considering the practical, social, ethical and health and safety implications. The placement is discussed with tutors and approaches to the relevant individuals and institutions are made. Students gain first hand experience of the issues and good practices associated with their placement. Students document their experiences and are assessed on a presentation of their evaluation of the project made to their peers and tutors. In this way the student group gains valuable information and insight from their peers' experiences as well as developing their own presentation skills.

Example 2:

Peer Evaluation and student participation in assessment

This form of assessment involves students in analysis, evaluation and debate with their peers. It is devised to make assessment criteria and processes more transparent and in this way enables students to take more responsibility for their own learning. Students work in teams to discuss the criteria and their own and others performance in relation to learning outcomes. They may write a progress report and compare results with that of other teams and tutors' evaluation.

Peer Evaluation provides students with a substantial and rigorous learning experience that enables them to consider future directions and effectively evaluate areas for development. This process encourages students to gain insight into their own and other's work and ideas.

Example 3:

A student presentation

Making presentations enables students to acquire confidence in communicating to a group and provides them with the opportunity to test out and develop presentation skills. The peer learning involved in observing and discussing each others' presentations is valuable and enables students to develop their critical awareness and capacity for reflection.

Students are required to give a visual and verbal presentation on their own work considering it in relation to other historical or contemporary examples and placing it in a critical and theoretical context. Other forms of presentation involve students evaluating and discussing an exhibition or

¹⁰ Examples of learning activities include: art practice; lectures and seminars; independent research; documentation; tutorials and group critiques; gallery and museum visits; organising and curating exhibitions; working to a brief or context; giving visual and verbal presentations; work experience; residencies; exchanges; and critical and reflective writing about these and related topics.

art project or debating a particular art related issue. In both cases students will be expected to employ diverse methods of visual presentation. Presentations require students to employ individual and collaborative research skills and to understand theory as an integral part of their studies.

3.8 QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

- Processes of quality enhancement vary considerably across Europe. A number of countries are at various stages of development. Stakeholders ¹¹ are increasingly involved in quality assurance and improvement processes. Students gain educational benefit as it can play an important part in their development as reflective professionals.
- The evidence based nature of Fine Art assessment is a transparent process that forms an integral part of the learning and quality enhancement processes. Assessment displays and exhibitions provide a continuous focus for student, faculty/departmental/ and personal reflection and improvement.
- In most Fine Art Faculties and Departments teaching staff combine practice as artists and researchers with teaching duties. In some institutions exemplary practice as an artist or researcher is a prerequisite of appointment and continued career development. This ongoing professional and personal development enhances the vitality and topicality of staff involvement and is directly reflected in the quality, relevance and vitality of the learning and teaching available to students.
- As with other disciplines Fine Art programmes in Europe are subject to validation processes and approval before they commence. The processes employed are essentially the same as all other disciplines. The programme development team write a proposal that contains such material as: rationale for the programme; learning, teaching and assessment context; learning outcomes; curriculum; programme specifications, content and design; syllabi; stakeholder endorsement; learner profiles; physical resources required/available; stakeholder feedback and Q&E processes; curriculum vitae of academic staff. The proposal is subject to scrutiny by a panel of institutional and/or external experts. This panel of experts is selected from related professional agencies and Higher Education and appointed by the faculty/department or institution. The panel may decide to approve the programme, not approve or approve it subject to amendments both mandatory and recommended.
- In some countries periodic (i.e. 5 yearly) regular monitoring reviews by a panel of institutional and/or external experts are conducted either at the request of individual institutions or by national or international agencies. The panel of experts is selected from Higher Education or related professional agencies appointed

¹¹ Stakeholders are considered to be groups that impact on the activity and performance of the institution. Internally: students, academic staff, administrative ancillary and technical staff. Externally: external professional agencies, employers, arts & culture agencies and organisations.

by the faculty/department, institution or agency to scrutinize and assess performance, quality and enhancement processes. This can be at programme, faculty/department and/or institutional level. This process is usually based on an analysis contained in a self evaluation report¹².

- Institutions employ a wide range of monitoring procedures to gauge the strengths and weaknesses of programmes and services on offer, such as student satisfaction questionnaires; reports of student and stakeholder representatives discussion and focus groups; staff views and reviews of student assessment. These and other feedback mechanisms are used to accumulate the information that forms the basis for improvement and development of programmes and services.
- Annual programme reviews and reports that include students teaching team records, progression and other related statistics may form part of the quality assurance processes. In some countries (e.g. UK, Ireland, Scandinavia, France) external examiners at all degree levels are involved in this feedback process.

¹² An analytical and objective report that summarises strengths and weaknesses as well as statistics and factual data. This report also contains accumulated results, annual reports and documentation covering the period in retrospect with plans for future development. This self evaluative reporting process provides a focus for faculty/departmental/institutional as well as personal reflection and improvement.