



Why choose Plymouth College of Art?

Plymouth College of Art is not unique in the speed at which we have adapted our teaching delivery to an online setting since we were forced to temporarily close our physical campus, or in the dialogue that we maintain with students to adapt our solutions and respond to the student voice. Our students and our expert academic and specialist technical staff are all missing being on campus and having the freedom to work across the whole array of facilities that the college offers, but what holds our creative community together is more than technology or physical spaces.

What unites us and is unique is our curriculum and the combined depth of experience of our expert academic and highly specialised technical staff. Where other institutions are using digital tools out of necessity, our core values as an **agile, independent art school** will give you a headstart when it comes to thriving creatively in our contemporary digital society. When you join us this year, we're committed to ensuring that our hybrid of physical and digital teaching will safeguard your creative practice against future interruptions and make sure you're well placed and networked with industry to adapt to any global changes that may come.

Accommodation

If your main concern is about signing a tenancy agreement to join us in October, we understand the additional stress that this could cause at a time of so much uncertainty. I'd like to reassure you as directly as I can about the timeline needed to book accommodation – **there is no shortage of student accommodation in our city, either through our preferred accommodation providers or privately.** There have been high levels of investment into the range of student accommodation in our city in recent years. There was no shortage of student accommodation in Plymouth before the pandemic and some international students will be less likely to study in the UK this year due to delays, freeing up even more spaces.

When you choose Plymouth College of Art you have the opportunity to choose from a variety of dedicated halls and houses or other private options. Our preferred accommodation providers, HOST and Clever Student Lets, offer a range of rooms designed to suit your taste and budget with no deposit, no additional fees and bills included. Their properties are ideally located around the campus and surrounding area, so you'll only ever have a short walk to get to college. It is worth noting however that most accommodation providers in the city have tenancy agreements that include liability for rent if you cancel early unless a replacement tenant can be found, so this is definitely worth factoring in when you make a decision about whether to book now or wait until closer to the time that you join us.



We can't make any guarantees, but it is **very likely** that you will be able to book student accommodation significantly closer to your start date.

Richness in resilience – our curriculum

I'd like to reassure you that our current BA (Hons) students are completing this academic year with incredible creativity and resilience. With travel no longer being a barrier, we have hosted a line-up of digital visiting artist lectures from **leading contemporary artists from across the world**, including photographer Arko Datto, curator Ben Borthwick, painter Sue Kennington, artist Fiona Robinson, cinematographer Barry Kirk, prop builder/designer Elliott Montello, writer/director Matthew McDuffie and artist/writer Henry Ward. Change is inevitable, but creative students are better placed than most others to respond resourcefully and resiliently.

Feedback so far

We have had an amazing amount of positive feedback from our students who have begun learning after Easter, both for the way that they are being taught and the level of support they are feeling from their staff and fellow students. Even sessions like Workshop Wednesdays, which allow our students to try a variety of practices and subjects across the college, are being run by academics and technicians as live streams and group teaching adapted to working from home with limited access to equipment and resources.

Although it's hard to reassure you with detail in this time of uncertainty regarding exactly what the shape of the first term would be like for you, the college is well prepared to reopen quickly and adapt to the next stage of possible social distancing as society, public venues and universities begin to reopen. We offer a range of incredibly specialised courses at Plymouth College of Art that are very important to us and **we believe strongly that we can offer a rewarding experience across the three years**, regardless of whether you initially enter the college in person or online in October before gaining more access to our specialist studios and workshops.

Continuing to deliver live briefs and international partnerships

To keep students connected with our wide range of national and international partners, we already provide virtual opportunities to connect with other universities and collaborative design and manufacturing projects. This can take the form of joint projects through our Fab Lab, or with businesses, artists and designers in the form of virtual lectures and live briefs set by agencies, film or animation festivals and publishing houses. Many of our graduates already work in their own micro-businesses as makers and designers from their flats and



home studios, be it from Barcelona or the wilds of Cornwall responding to commissions and briefs from international clients, including big-name organisations like Habitat, Playstation, Lego and the BBC, working in a globalised market.

When the campus reopens we will continue to stage physical lecture programmes, film and animation events in the Plymouth Arts Cinema that we house alongside our public gallery, as well as hosting international symposiums focused on making and sustainability such as Making Futures and hosting graduate development initiatives such as Hothouse, the Crafts Council's national programme for emerging makers.

Learning online

Our students and staff are already supported in the training needed to use (and free access to) an array of very easy-to-use Google and other digital resources to stream sessions, host live meetings and presentations from visiting lecturers and receive digital submissions of creative work. We have modified the format of sessions to make learning work for an online environment.

On a day-to-day basis, this means a range of things to students, who are taking part in online group technical demonstrations, taught lectures and crits which our staff are delivering from home, and finding that staying connected is more important than ever.

Many students have told us that they feel like they're receiving a more personalised learning experience than ever before through 1-2-1 video and phone tutorial sessions, where academics advise them on techniques to use, things to research and give feedback on written submissions. On a bigger scale as a college community, they're also taking part in SU run societies and socials like virtual quiz nights, which have become a popular way to get together whilst allowing students to choose to participate actively or passively from their homes. Our students can also still arrange free student support services, such as professional counselling, mindfulness and meditation sessions.

We will reopen our campus as soon as the UK Government restrictions are lifted, and will look to introduce a phased return to normal operations in accordance with Government advice. Our planning for the next academic year will allow students to begin or resume their studies with access to our resources at the earliest opportunity, once it is safe for our community to do so. Our plans acknowledge that our students want us to prioritise their access to our industry-standard facilities and equipment, in small groups if necessary. We are looking at timetables which allow for remote learning interspersed with sections of studio access.