

From: David Alker [mailto:DAIker@uclan.ac.uk]
Sent: Tue 28/10/2008 17:27
To: Alice Hynes
Subject: Re: Foundation Courses

Dear Alice Hynes

I have written some notes, below, in response to the Delivery Partnership meeting last Wednesday at Woburn House.

Thanks

David Alker

The debate over admission to HE courses in art and Design raises some complex issues and the meeting with Foundation course tutors on October 22 underlined the significance of these in terms of the relationship between curriculum design and the admissions process. Speaking personally, I don't know of a course leader or admissions tutor who agrees with the proposal to abandon the Route B application process. Ultimately the discussion shouldn't be about statistics or streamlining a complex admissions process it should be about students.

As someone who works in a major HE art and design institution I can outline some of the basic priorities from my perspective which affect student progression from Foundation, Diploma or sixth form to BA level. Summarising this very briefly I would say that we need to make sure students have made the right choices reflecting their interests, skills and ambitions. The diagnostic element of a pre-degree course needs time to work and be effective. We need to make sure students are enrolled on the right course and retention is a key issue.

In order for students to be able to make these choices they need to have some awareness of the 'fields' available to them in art and design, have experience of working in these areas and demonstrate this through a folder of coursework. The pre-degree courses have a crucial diagnostic function which is specific to the subject area. On top of this is a whole process of recruitment talks, visits to prospective colleges etc all geared towards a later application date.

That is why the current route B timetable exists - to give the student's the greatest opportunity to make an informed choice. That is why I would argue for a deadline which is as late as it needs to be for these things to take place in the learning process. Rather than agree to a sliding timetable that starts mid

January and continues until March 24th as was discussed, I would prefer to see one which begins no earlier than late February and runs until late March. I think the difference this would make in terms of preparation time would be considerable.

I am concerned that an early deadline creates a situation where a student makes a series of uniformed choices. This could create problems with students selecting the wrong course or changing their minds after making their initial application. Looking at the earlier deadline of mid January raises the question of how many potential courses a student could visit in the autumn term, how far they would have developed their making skills before the deadline etc. Ultimately this is undermining the role of the Foundation or pre-degree course. The issue with a long sliding deadline is it makes the process confusing for the student and the HE providers. There would be a lot of pressure on universities to take the applicants at the earlier stage (for evidence of this, look at the current statistics on how many courses now recruit through route B only.)

David Alker
Fine Art programme Leader
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>>> Alice Hynes <Alice.Hynes@guildhe.ac.uk> 07/10/2008 15:42 >>>
Dear Colleagues

Further to my email of 1 October, I am writing to let you know that there will be a meeting for foundation course colleagues with the Delivery Partnership Chair of the Art & Design Working Group. This has been arranged for the afternoon of 22 October 2008 at 2.00 p.m. in Woburn House, 20 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HB. Please let Hazel Flynn ([HYPERLINK "mailto:hazel.flynn@guildhe.ac.uk" hazel.flynn@guildhe.ac.uk](mailto:hazel.flynn@guildhe.ac.uk)) know if you are able to attend on this occasion.

We hope this will give an opportunity to ask questions more directly, to receive the latest update on the various admissions changes and to express your views to those of us working on this set of admissions recommendations.

With best wishes

Alice

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