

International School of Creative Arts

Teaching and Learning Policy

Need a large print copy?

Please ask in the School Office.

Control Page

Document Title	Teaching and Learning Policy	
Document Reference	ISCA 46	
Version	6.0	31/07/2024
Author	Executive Director	
Location	J:\9. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES\Approved	
Controller	Head of School	
Approved by	Senior Management Team	
Date of Adoption	September 2024	
Date of Next Review	September 2025	

Contents

A. Policy Statement	1
B. Aims	1
C. Guiding Principles	1
1. <i>Our Mission</i>	
2. <i>The Teachers' Standards</i>	
3. <i>A Definition of Learning</i>	
4. <i>Nurturing Creativity</i>	
D. Responsibilities	3
1. <i>Teachers</i>	
2. <i>Support staff</i>	
3. <i>Subject Leaders</i>	
4. <i>Senior leaders</i>	
5. <i>Students</i>	
6. <i>Parents and carers</i>	
7. <i>Governors</i>	
E. Planning	4
1. <i>Learning Objectives</i>	
2. <i>Long-term Planning</i>	
3. <i>Short-term Planning.</i>	
4. <i>Planning to meet the needs of all students</i>	
5. <i>Differentiation</i>	
F. Teaching	6
1. <i>Challenge</i>	
2. <i>Explanation</i>	
3. <i>Modelling</i>	
4. <i>Guided practice with scaffolding</i>	
5. <i>Independent, deliberate practice</i>	
6. <i>Responsive Teaching</i>	
G. Marking and Assessment	8
H. The Learning Environment	9
I. Self-directed study	9
J. Monitoring and Evaluation of Teaching and Learning	10

Appendix 1: The Teachers' Standards

A. Policy Statement

It is the policy of the school to provide a rich and varied learning environment that allows students to develop their knowledge, skills and abilities to their full potential.

The majority of impact will come as a result of classroom-based learning and associated self-directed study/homework. However, the wider co-curriculum and learning beyond the classroom is equally important in providing students with a variety of learning experiences which increase their awareness of learning as a life skill beyond school.

By ensuring our curriculum is broad, deep and balanced and well-matched to pupils' abilities and interests, and by delivering teaching that is challenging and inspiring, we will provide the platform for our students to excel and develop into resourceful, creative and aspirational young people.

B. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Outline the guiding principles which underpin teaching and learning at ISCA
- Define the roles and responsibilities of all staff
- Describe what best practice in teaching and learning looks like at ISCA
- Outline ISCA's approach to the monitoring and evaluation process

C. Guiding Principles

1. Our Mission

ISCA's mission is to be at the forefront of pre-university studies in art and design and provide students, aged 15 to 19, from diverse cultural backgrounds, with a safe, dynamic and stimulating environment in which to learn and develop the technical and intellectual skills required to progress to leading creative arts universities in both the UK and overseas.

Our aim is to nurture the creative potential of each individual student, to promote their welfare and wellbeing, and to offer the most artistically energising education that hones talents, sharpens intellect and builds self-confidence.

By encouraging and developing artistic talents and skills in this way, ISCA provides a specialist arts education that ensures each student has the opportunity and support to realise their full creative and academic success.

2. The Teachers' Standards

The practices and approaches outlined in this policy are underpinned by the expectation that all teachers shape their practice to meet [*The Teachers' Standards*](#) (Appendix 1) which are founded on the principle that "Teachers make the education of their pupils their first concern, and are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct. Teachers act with honesty and integrity; have strong subject knowledge, keep their knowledge and skills as teachers up-to-date and are self-critical; forge positive professional relationships; and work with parents in the best interests of their pupils."

3. A Definition of Learning

We see learning as “a process that leads to change, which occurs as a result of experience and increases the potential for improved performance and future learning” (Ambrose et al, 2010, p.3). The change in the learner may happen at the level of knowledge, attitude or ability/behaviour. As a result of learning, learners come to see concepts, ideas and the world differently.

4. Nurturing Creativity

As a specialist art and design school, ISCA has also developed an approach specifically aimed at nurturing the creativity of students.

We believe that creativity is a catalyst for innovation, adaptability and survival in a fast-changing world. Humanity is by nature curious, constantly seeking to innovate by finding hidden patterns, making connections and generating solutions. Creativity is the act of transforming these ideas into reality.

This creative process has two parts to it: thinking and then doing. It begins with a core foundation of knowledge, skill and perception. It then continues to develop through experimentation, exploration, questioning, imagination and the synthesising of information.

In terms of teaching, therefore, the goal must be to ensure opportunities for students to explore and discover through visual experience, perception and communication. Students are given a thematic starting point around which activities are built that drive engagement with subject and concept. These activities not only provide students with strategies to explore materials, techniques and process; they also foster the development of imagery which is at the heart of any form of creative, visual communication.

Students are encouraged to make connections between subjects and not see art and design practice as static, but as fluid, dynamic and interdisciplinary. The cross-fertilization of the art and design subjects (Fine Art, Fashion and Textiles, 3D Design, Graphic Communication) empowers students to combine and exchange the frameworks, concepts and skills of different disciplines to examine a theme or solve a problem from new perspectives. More generally, art education also aims to integrate connections with other subjects, such as science, mathematics, literature, and history, fostering a holistic understanding of the world.

Whilst theoretical knowledge is important, the sensory awareness developed through experiential learning is vital. Students gain a deeper understanding of the ‘potentiality’ of ideas and materials when their engagement is physical, mental and emotional.

Students, therefore, are taught to look hard at the world, responding to what they see, recording through direct observation, developing and refining a visual language with which to communicate. They learn to experiment with image-making and drawing as a means of solving problems and generating new ideas. They are encouraged to take risks and explore the potential of materials. In this way, students discover belief in their own personal potential to be independently creative.

In short, ISCA actively nurtures the growth of perceptual awareness and equips students with the skills, knowledge and understanding required to give expression to their insights, observations and ideas. Inquiry, reasoning, feeling and imagination are given the opportunity to flourish and inform creative judgement and decision making. Students are allowed to meaningfully test the limits of their understanding and to learn from mistakes in a safe and nurturing environment.

D. Responsibilities

Teaching and learning at ISCA is a shared responsibility, and everyone in our school community has an important role to play.

1. Teachers at ISCA will:

- Follow the expectations for teaching and professional conduct as set out in the [Teachers' Standards](#);
- Follow the expectations as set out in this policy;
- Update parents/carers on students' progress through termly reports on progress and parent/carers consultation meetings.

2. Support staff at ISCA will:

- Work collaboratively with the class teacher in planning for learning and teaching;
- Know students well and differentiate support to meet their individual learning needs;
- Support teaching and learning with flexibility and resourcefulness;
- Meet the expectations set out in this policy.

3. Subject Leaders at ISCA will:

- Help to create well-sequenced, broad and balanced curricula that build knowledge and skills;
- Sequence lessons in a way that allows students to make good progress;
- Use their budget effectively to resource their subject, providing teachers with necessary resources for learning;
- Drive improvement in their subject, working with teachers to identify any weaknesses;
- Timetable their subject to allocate time for students to achieve breadth and depth, fully understand the topic and demonstrate excellence;
- Moderate progress across their subject by, for example, systematically reviewing progress against a range of evidence and reviewing performance data;
- Improve on weaknesses identified in their monitoring activities;
- Create and share clear intentions for their subject;
- Encourage teachers to share ideas, resources and good practice.

4. Senior leaders at ISCA will:

- Have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality, inclusive education to all;
- Celebrate achievement and have high expectations for everyone;
- Hold staff and students to account for their teaching and learning;
- Plan and evaluate strategies to secure high-quality teaching and learning across school;
- Manage resources to support high-quality teaching and learning;
- Provide support and guidance to other staff through coaching and mentoring;
- Input and monitor the impact of continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities to improve staff's practice and subject knowledge;
- Promote team-working at all levels;
- Address underachievement and intervene promptly.

5. Students at ISCA will:

- Take responsibility for their own learning, and support the learning of others;
- Meet expectations for good behaviour for learning at all times;
- Attend all lessons on time and be ready to learn, with all necessary equipment;
- Be curious, ambitious, engaged and confident learners;
- Know their targets and how to improve;
- Put maximum effort and focus into their work;
- Complete homework and self-study activities as required.

6. Parents and carers of students at ISCA will:

- Value learning and encourage their child as a learner;
- Support good attendance;
- Participate in discussions about their child's progress and attainment;
- Communicate with the school to share information promptly;
- Encourage their child to take responsibility for their own learning;
- Support and give importance to homework and self-study.

7. Governors at ISCA will:

- Monitor that resources and funding are allocated effectively to support the school's approach to teaching and learning;
- Monitor the impact of teaching and learning strategies on students' progress;
- Monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the Head of School to account for its implementation.

E. Planning

Teachers see planning as a process not a product. It is about 'hard thinking'; it is not about form filling. Its purpose is to ensure high quality delivery which enables all students to learn.

Teachers are clear and precise about the knowledge, skills and understanding they want students to acquire in each lesson.

Teachers spend time thinking about what they want students to learn before they consider what they want them to do.

The questions teachers ask when planning a lesson are:

1. Where are the students starting from?
2. Where do I want them to get to?
3. How will I know when they are there?
4. How can I best help them get there?

1. Learning Objectives

Teachers and students are both clear about the key learning that will take place in a lesson.

Teachers make learning objectives explicit to students. While it is considered best practice to write down the objectives for students, it is not mandatory. However, all students will be able to explain what the key learning of the lesson is.

2. Long-term Planning

Schemes of Learning (SOL) are in place to support teacher's individual lesson planning, and are saved in the Course Folder on the shared drive so that it is accessible to all staff.

Schemes of Learning are related to the Curriculum Documents of the respective subjects, also published in the Course Folder on the shared drive. The Curriculum documents describe the overall INTENT of the curriculum, its IMPLEMENTATION and its IMPACT.

When planning a lesson, teachers are clear where it fits into the overall curriculum for their subject. Teachers know what prior knowledge is needed before a lesson is taught, and when the key learning of a lesson will be retrieved later on in the Scheme of Learning.

3. Short-term Planning.

Teachers are not expected to produce lesson plans for each lesson, but teachers are always ready to show evidence of short-term planning if asked. The form such evidence takes will vary from teacher to teacher, depending on experience and personal style.

Teachers produce written lesson plans for formal observations, which are seen as an opportunity to reflect more deeply than usual about their teaching and to record the cognitive process (the 'hard thinking') of lesson planning.

4. Planning to meet the needs of all students

Teachers use their knowledge of the students (prior attainment, specific needs, progression aspirations, level of English language etc.) to inform their planning.

This knowledge is brought together in a Class Profile, with individual information about each student in the class.

When completing the Class Profile, teachers look at student data recorded:

1. on Engage, the school's SIMS, where information can be found on:
 - a. progress reports
 - b. attendance records
 - c. welfare records
 - d. behaviour records
2. In the Course Folders on the shared drive where information can be found about:
 - a. English language levels
 - b. SEND
 - c. marks and other assessment information

The Director of Studies is available to help if further information is required.

5. Differentiation

Teachers embrace the idea that inclusive, high quality teaching is the first wave of intervention for meeting the needs of SEND students.

Differentiation is planned over time to ensure a quality first approach which meets the needs of all students.

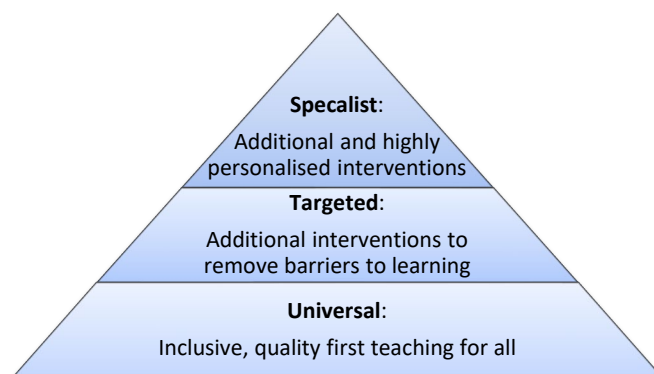


Figure 1: Waves of Intervention (Quality First teaching)

When planning, teachers consider a range of different pedagogical approaches to deliver lessons appropriate to every individual within the teaching group, ensuring support, stretch and challenge opportunities, as required.

F. Teaching

What ‘typical lessons’ will look like will vary from subject to subject and individual teachers may utilise a variety of strategies based upon their professional judgement and knowledge. Some things, however, they will have in common:

1. Challenge

Teachers know the students in front of them. Individual needs are known and planned for. They explain to students why they are learning what they are expected to achieve

Teachers have consistently high expectations of their students and recognise that it is good for students to struggle just outside of their comfort zone.

Teachers make connections between subjects and between underlying concepts; students are made to think hard and engage with the learning process.

Teachers ensure all students are actively engaged with learning, from the very beginning to the end of each lesson.

Teachers pitch high and teach to the top, with expert instruction and modelling.

2. Explanation

Teacher explanations and demonstrations are highly effective because they:

- ✓ have excellent curriculum knowledge and
- ✓ a comprehensive understanding of their subject area, which they are actively engaged in developing further.

Teachers clearly define outcomes, provide fully guided explanations and model excellence and how to achieve it.

Teachers know the students in front of them. Instruction is planned with knowledge of individual needs and awareness of the demands on students' cognitive load.

- ✓ New material is broken down and presented in small steps
- ✓ Instructions and explanations are clear and simple
- ✓ Concepts and ideas are supported with a lot of examples
- ✓ Material is re-taught as necessary

3. Modelling

Modelling supports explanation and can help students to make abstract ideas concrete.

Teachers are experts who guide students step-by-step through a process, before allowing them to try themselves.

Teachers:

- ✓ Demonstrate the activity in front of students
- ✓ Think aloud to show the thought process
- ✓ Show it is OK to make a mistake and show empathy, e.g. 'I found this bit challenging too'.
- ✓ Integrate quick-fire questioning e.g. why am I doing this now?
- ✓ Provide model answers/exemplars

4. Guided practice with scaffolding

Teachers provide a guided practice phase in each lesson.

During guided practice, worked examples and scaffolding are used to allow students to demonstrate their learning; for example, procedural steps or question prompts provided to work through a task/problem, sentence starters, key word definitions, etc.

Teachers create activities which allow students to work collaboratively at this stage, in order to encourage effective class/small-group discussion and questioning.

5. Independent, deliberate practice

Deliberate practice is employed to develop and consolidate skills and to embed knowledge.

Students are provided with the time they need to practise new material in a number of ways in order to master it. Scaffolding is reduced or removed for most students.

All practice will be careful, deliberate and with enough challenge to push students just outside their comfort zone.

6. Responsive Teaching

Teachers always check for understanding so as to ensure that learning has stuck. They confidently and accurately use teaching techniques to gather a secure overview about whether the key learning has actually been learnt. They then adapt the lesson or reteach it differently if learning is not yet secure for students.

For responsive teaching teachers might use:

Questioning:

- ✓ is used to develop both conceptual and visual thinking. Questions are planned and suitable time is given for thinking time and response;
- ✓ is a fundamental tool for probing, checking and extending student understanding;
- ✓ is used extensively and skilfully by teachers;
- ✓ allows teachers to measure how well students are learning and use what they discover to adapt and reshape teaching within and between lessons,

Retrieval Practice:

- ✓ is a learning strategy used regularly in lessons to help students retrieve previously learnt material from their long-term memory;
- ✓ is low stakes and completed without access to notes;
- ✓ when used at the start of a lesson, can help to recap prior knowledge needed for today's lesson and/or understand the prior learning of the class.

Effective feedback:

- ✓ arises through formative assessment and is embedded throughout lessons;
- ✓ can take several forms including:
 - informal verbal comments in lessons;
 - responses to questions and answers;
 - written comments on marked work e.g. post-it notes in sketch books, teacher marking of written work etc.;
 - tutorial notes and comments on assessments;
 - verbal feedback at parents' evenings;
 - report grades and comments;
- ✓ focuses on the most prominent areas for improvement;
- ✓ reduces the gap between current and desired outcome;
- ✓ provides challenging and specific goals for the student to act on;
- ✓ builds time into lessons to allow students to reflect and act upon the feedback;
- ✓ allows students to redraft their own learning;
- ✓ is clear and given a short while after the learning has taken place;
- ✓ is motivating and supportive to students, rewarding effort and strategy, not innate ability;
- ✓ forms a positive two-way process between student and teacher;
- ✓ results in more effort, thought and time for learners than teachers.

G. Marking and Assessment

Marking and assessment have two purposes:

1. It allows students to get feedback which they act on to make progress over time;
2. It informs a teacher's future planning and teaching.

Effective marking should be meaningful, manageable and motivating for the recipient whilst simultaneously being manageable and sustainable for the teacher.

Marking must be primarily formative, may be selective, and be clear about what students must act upon to improve their work.

Further details can be found in ISCA's Assessment Policy & Marking Guidelines.

H. The Learning Environment

In order for there to be excellent learning behaviour there needs to be the right classroom conditions, where all students feel safe, supported and valued. To ensure all students are confident in knowing what is expected of them in terms of work and behaviour, all teachers have:

1. High expectations

Teachers always have high expectations for learning and behaviour for all their students. They:

- Teach to the top, with necessary scaffolds to support those who need it;
- Promote active engagement, not just compliance;
- Establish a growth mindset culture in which mistakes are celebrated;
- Focus praise on effort, value the commitment to learning.

2. Positive relationships

Teachers build positive relationships with all students through positive behaviour management.

- Students are made to feel welcome in the class.
- Positive framing is used to remind students of expectations and learning routines.
- Meaningful praise and rewards are used as much as possible.
- Students are given the opportunity to change their behaviour, so that continuing with poor behaviour and accepting the resulting sanction becomes a “choice they have made”.
- Restorative conversations are had when necessary, for example, after a reprimand, detention etc.
- Consequences are shown to be temporary, e.g. new lesson, fresh start.

3. Consistent routines and procedures

Teachers have clear and consistent routines and procedures, so there is a safe, orderly learning environment and learning time is maximised.

- Students are greeted as they arrive.
- Lesson title, learning objectives and starter activity are shared on board from very start of lesson – learning begins immediately, every minute matters.
- Classroom rules and expectations are fair, reasonable and consistently applied, so that all students know exactly what is expected of them when they enter the classroom.
- Students are always challenged when they break rules or fail to meet expectations – fair warning is always given before sanctions are applied.

I. Self-directed study

Self-directed study (homework) is an important factor in supporting the development of pupils’ learning. Tasks set should support in-class learning, allow students to research ideas, revise and review key concepts, develop their sketchbooks and acquire effective approaches for independent study.

Tasks should be easily identifiable as either *preparation* for future learning or *practice* to help develop learning/work already undertaken in class.

Teachers recognise and adopt the five fundamental characteristics of good homework identified by Cathy Vatterott (2012):

1. *Purpose* Assignments are meaningful. Students understand their purpose and why a particular assignment is important in the context of their academic journey.
2. *Efficiency* Assignments do not take an inordinate amount of time and demand some level of challenge.
3. *Ownership* Students who feel connected to the content of an assignment learn more and are more motivated. Providing students with choice in their assignments is one way to create ownership.
4. *Competence* Assignments are achievable within the timeframe available and are appropriate for the level at which the students' is working. Assignments are tailored to the individual as much as possible.
5. *Aesthetic Appeal* A well-considered, clearly designed resource and task impacts positively upon student motivation.

J. Monitoring and Evaluation of Teaching and Learning

We monitor teaching and learning across the school to make sure that all our students make the best possible progress from their starting points.

Aims of monitoring and evaluation:

- To make secure judgements of teaching and learning;
- To monitor and evaluate the progress of students;
- To evaluate the performance of individual teachers against the [Teacher Standards](#) and check that high standards of professional performance are established and maintained;
- To identify training needs and drive the CPD programme.

The Senior Management Team and Lead Tutors will monitor and evaluate the impact of teaching on student's learning through:

- Lesson observations, to inform judgements on the quality of teaching and learning at the school and provide constructive coaching to all teachers;
- Conducting learning walks, to either inform judgements on an agreed area of focus or identify more general areas for review;
- Student work scrutiny, to assess the quality of work produced by students;
- Assessment and marking scrutiny, to make judgements on the quality of assessment and the effectiveness of the school's Assessment Policy;
- Course reviews, to make judgements on the quality of provision;
- Student Forum, to gather input from students via questionnaires and regular meetings with the student representatives;
- Statistical analyses of a range of data sources including, but not limited to, admissions, progress and exam results, SEND, EAL, attendance, behaviour, safeguarding, health & safety, complaints.

Links to the Teachers' Standards

Guidance for School Leaders, School Staff and Governing Bodies:

- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1040274/Teachers_Standards_Dec_2021.pdf

The Teachers' Standards Overview:

- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/665522/Teachers_standard_information.pdf