

RAS (Retain-Achieve-Succeed) Project Outline

Research proposals from across UAL course areas and departments, including cultural and historical studies, academic support and QA areas, are invited to enable a number of small pedagogic research projects to take place from 2015 as the second phase of RAS. These projects are funded by bursaries of £3,000 (with a possible additional amount of up to £1,000, where larger projects are deemed worthy of such requirements) to support staff remission and /or on-going project costs. The projects will be reviewed in 2016 and 2017 by means of an interim report and a final report with recommendations. Further dissemination activity will take place inside and outside UAL. The benefits of this work are expected to feed back into the UAL curriculum and therefore proposals need to take this into account.

This is an exciting opportunity for on-going developments to be established to ensure increased participation and the inclusion of students where issues of disability, gender, race and ethnicity may impact on the institution's ability to provide a relevant curriculum and student experience. The research aims to bring changes to UAL via a more inclusive student experience. The programme will also promote the analysis of research findings which may be publishable in education journals and other publications. On completion, all projects must disseminate to UAL staff committees where appropriate. Support will be given throughout the programme together with advice on dissemination activity towards the end of the period of study.

The first phase of RAS focused on 'race' and the arts curriculum, and individual studies reviewed in the autumn of 2014 by means of the RAS Evaluative Report. Findings were also promoted via conferences, committee agendas and educational publications. There is now a community of researchers established to support inclusion in art and design education. The Inclusive Arts Education Forum (IAEF) meets once a term to support staff and students involved in this research and development. Four RAS researchers have now published in academic publications and strong links have been made to other research universities. (See: www.arts.ac.uk/about-ual/diversity/ras-research-programme).

The second phase of RAS will involve further staff research continuing its aims into wider areas of inclusion, acknowledging the intersectional nature of matters of identity and how these may affect learning. Each project will embody one or more of the following aims and objectives:

1. To encourage a selection of course clusters or teams to develop projects that start to widen the curriculum with a specific focus around one or more of the following concerns: disability, gender, race and ethnicity, intersectional inclusion issues
2. To support developments that seek to close achievement gaps and provide a more inclusive experience for all students
3. To promote academic ownership of an inclusive curriculum
4. To engage students and alumni in the co-creation of approaches
5. To encourage a method of engagement that respects and values the professional responsibility of UAL staff

6. To introduce themed events and build resources examining pedagogic issues around 'identity', 'inclusion', 'culture' and 'creativity' in order to both support the research and widen future conceptual and curriculum responses, thereby providing better long term and more diverse educational provision at UAL.
7. To consider the intersectional nature of identity for students and staff, especially across matters of 'race', gender, dis/ability, class and LGBT within UAL.

Project Methodology

After a successful first phase examining BAME attainment, RAS has now broadened to consider wider areas of inclusive arts education practice where disability, gender, race and ethnicity may feature as a part of the student experience. The RAS programme Phase 2 will promote values of equality and diversity, noting identity as a significant influencing aspect within the learning process. Therefore, researchers will be expected to learn about identity theory and associated cultural concepts such as Critical Disability Theory and Critical Race Theory in order to support their research.

It is expected that forthcoming research proposals from each School may embody a number of aims and objectives and deal with known or challenging questions around teaching, learning, the curriculum or the nature of art, design and its pedagogies. The remit is wide, covering issues such as staff/student experience, course data, curriculum matters, assessments and other learning and teaching contexts. The focus of the work will be on the institution and not the student, although some participation may be encouraged if appropriate to the research.

Each proposal will be reviewed in the light of, and be directed towards, ethical research considerations. The sensitive nature of the research will be stressed to researchers before and during the progress of their work. Discussion about research activity may not be allowed outside the programme in order to protect participants who may be students or staff.

Although the timescale for completion of the bulk of small research projects will be the end of July 2016, the curriculum focus of the case studies may suggest future developmental work for 2016/17, as curriculum benefits are put in place. This will be part of the on-going nature and dissemination of the project findings, where appropriate, but these would be subject to recommendations from the primary report in the summer of 2016.

The research methods are expected to follow ideas and approaches from education theory and cultural theory, especially those, for example, in the ethnographic field, which reflect the fact that there may be no present limit of what might be observed, and no end point in terms of participants' knowledge acquisition, except in terms of interim project deadlines made for research evaluations. Other projects may take the form of action research that would allow for active dissemination within future pedagogic settings.

We welcome a range of research proposals, both large and small-which respond to areas of the Project's aims and objectives. Please see attached Proposal Form. This must be completed in all cases for projects to be considered as part of this study.