

FURTHER INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

Background and History of Warwick Arts Centre

Warwick Arts Centre is a department of the University of Warwick and is one of the largest performing and visual arts complex in the UK outside London, situated at the very centre of the University campus. The creation of an Arts Centre came about primarily through the vision, in the late 1960s, of the founding Vice Chancellor, Lord 'Jack' Butterworth and a local benefactor who wished to make a direct link with local people in Coventry and Warwickshire by providing a first class arts resource 'on the doorstep' in a greenfield environment. The benefactor provided substantial funds for the development of an Arts Centre and encouraged other bodies, including the Arts Council, to support the project.

Warwick Arts Centre, over 40 years later, is a distinctive and special place, integral to University life, an important resource for the arts and for audiences in the region and a significant force in national arts networks, and has a national reputation for its dynamic programme of contemporary arts and entertainment.

Warwick Arts Centre has an Advisory Board, chaired by Kwame Kwei-Armah, Artistic Director of the Young Vic.

City of Culture 2021

From May 2021 – May 2022 Coventry will be UK City of Culture. Warwick Arts Centre and the University of Warwick will play an important role in its success, and several projects and events will be commissioned and created as our contribution.

The University of Warwick

The establishment of the University of Warwick was approved in 1961 and the Charter was received in 1965. The University is situated on a site of over 450 acres given by the City of Coventry and Warwickshire County Council in rural landscape adjoining the main road from Coventry City Centre (3.5 miles from the University) to Kenilworth (3 miles), Warwick and Leamington (7 miles) and Stratford-upon-Avon (16 miles).

Warwick has attained the position of one of Britain's leading universities in the short period since it was founded in 1965. The University is consistently rated in the top group for the high quality of its teaching and research. Warwick was the first research-led University to give priority to widening participation and to lifelong learning. The University cultivates close and productive links with its local and regional community and will continue to expand its work at an international level in both teaching and research. It has a strong tradition of working in collaboration with business and industry and playing an active role in economic regeneration.

The University has over 18,000 students registered on courses of study and research and nearly 6,000 staff working in 30 academic departments, 50 research centres and service departments.

For further information, please see www.warwick.ac.uk.

Year-round Activity

Warwick Arts Centre delivers a high quality, engaging and diverse programme of performing and visual arts, film and alternative content and creative learning. Warwick Arts Centre provides a home where collaboration, innovation and creativity can thrive, an environment where ideas and talent can grow. It has a loyal audience base, served by programming and operational teams with a wealth of knowledge and experience. The Arts Centre is well respected by artists, companies, press and peers.

Part of Warwick Arts Centre's distinctiveness is its role as a University conference venue managed by Warwick Conferences during vacations. This means that performance and visual art are currently programmed during term time only, and pre capital project, closure film and alternative content in the cinema were year round.

By 2022 we aim to have developed a year round programme across all areas taking our work into other parts of campus and off campus, during exam and conference season.

Under new leadership we have used the past two years to challenge our understanding of the potential audience for a dynamic programme at Warwick Arts Centre; to explore taking our artistic programme into communities and working with communities to co-produce, commission and curate and; to bring new and more diverse voices and stories to our spaces.

This transition will mean we will reach out to new communities of people who might not see Warwick Arts Centre as their first choice for a great night out. They might think that it is not for them because we are on a University campus. But we can and we must remove these barriers and others if we are to remain, relevant, viable and for us all.

We have revised our strategic priorities to bring greater focus and make more tangible the changes that we want to make and see over time. Running through this is a greater commitment to making Warwick Arts Centre the most inclusive arts centre in the region open and enjoyed by the diverse populations of Coventry and beyond.

Transformational change

Even pre pandemic, we were acutely aware of a changing operating environment, funding reducing and lifestyle preferences and purchasing habits evolving. More than that: definitions are changing; culture is everywhere; technology is transforming how culture is created and consumed; co-creation and democratisation of space, physical and digital, is increasingly important particularly to younger audiences.

The Warwick 20:20 Project will transform our infrastructure and our capacity to respond to this changing environment and enable us to fully meet our goals to:

1. Present, curate and produce an artistic programme of distinction, drawn from artistic practice produced locally, nationally and internationally.
2. Be a centre of creative learning and participation and national leader in arts education.
3. Be a leading university department for outreach and widening participation. Student and staff participation will grow with our spaces becoming vibrant hubs of community activity, our partnerships and collaborations with academics will develop, and we will attract the very best artists and students to the campus, putting audiences at the heart of our thinking.
4. Successfully balance artistic, service and commercial priorities and, with a seamless analogue and digital presence, we will explore the global cultural realm and make the world of the very best regional, national and international artists available to an ever increasing, inclusive audience.
5. Support artists and new work, creating space for new voices and acting as catalysts for new ideas and innovative practices, through developing partnerships with artists and organisations regionally, nationally and internationally.
6. Support students and young people as producers, curators and performance makers, developing transferable employment skills and embedding the value of lifelong learning.
7. Create conversations, spaces and environments where artists, academics, professionals and communities of interest can meet, developing cross-disciplinary collaboration, new insights and connections, innovation, participation, presentation, and shared experiences.
8. Support the university's research and impact agenda and teaching programmes directly and indirectly, and encourage curiosity and creativity through problem solving in learning.
9. Engage with local and regional communities, widening participation through events on and off campus, maximising social impact and community cohesion.
10. Contribute to the local landscape socially and economically through cultural place making.

We will be a place where collaboration, innovation and creativity thrives, a place where talent and ideas can grow, a place where artists, students, academics and audiences of all ages come together for discussion, inspiration, participation, presentation, and shared experiences.

Connecting technology, arts, culture and creativity, we will be a creative space at the heart of the campus, a creative organisation at the heart of the community, an arts centre embedding arts, culture and creativity at the heart of a world class University.

We will greatly strengthen our financial sustainability ensuring that we can continue to deliver these goals long into the future.

Vision, Mission & Purpose

VISION	We will become an internationally-recognised, nationally respected and locally-relevant Arts Centre known for our passionate advocacy of the arts, creativity, collaboration and innovation
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MISSION	<p>We will deliver distinctive and memorable world-class arts experiences that secure our international and national position and create impact in our local communities.</p> <p>We will achieve our vision through the quality and distinctiveness of our programme, our commitment to supporting emerging talent, the thoughtful design of our physical and virtual environment and our outstanding commitment to service, outreach and engagement with all communities, regardless of age, background, ethnicity or ability.</p>		
Purpose	We're here to share our love for the arts		
Belief	We believe the arts are a place we can all meet		
Principles	GO ON JOURNEYS	FIND COMMON GROUND	BREAK EGGS
Personality	PLAYFUL	WELCOMING	BRAVE

Creative Learning

Every year the project work of the Creative Learning team gives thousands of children and young people inspiring opportunities to work as artists, with artists and share the work they make.

Our Creative Learning work focuses on children and young people who face disadvantage. Nearby, the City of Coventry is one of the fastest growing cities outside London with large minority ethnic communities and nearly 25% of its young people living in relative poverty and are low arts attendees.

The Creative Learning team numbers three dedicated staff plus the Audience Development Officer, who shares line management responsibility with the Marketing Director, ensuring that audience development and learning objectives are shared and can be delivered simultaneously.

Our programmes to date have:

- Built trust and confidence in Warwick Arts Centre from participants, schools and local community leaders.
- Offered a programme of free open access work for schools and families, particularly in the Mead Gallery.

- Developed long term engagement with children and young people with limited access to the arts.
- Given children and young people the opportunity to take on creative roles as artists or producers.

Our approach is one of collaborative partnership:

- Our larger funded programmes are based on strong, collaborative partnerships with schools, community groups and academic departments, working together to achieve the best outcomes for the participants.
- We are increasingly working alongside teachers and community members as commissioners and consultants to enable us to understand the needs of our audiences.
- Family Ambassadors help shape our programme of family friendly work and inform the way we communicate with family groups, acting as a critical friend and sounding board for new ideas and development of the programme and the building.
- We give the artists we employ the opportunity to build work and ideas with us and participants, never being didactic in our guidance; allowing them to be creative and responsive to the work as it develops.
- Creative Learning projects are supported by trusts and foundations, with an increasing focus on evaluation and impact assessment we are able to continue to fund the provision of this work at a time of economic uncertainty for schools and local authorities.

Our Creative Learning objectives are to:

1. Increase audience engagement with young people, families and lifelong learners.
2. Embed the values of Warwick Arts Centre within our practice.
3. Connect the work of Warwick Arts Centre with the research and practice of the University of Warwick.
4. Develop and support local talent.
5. Strengthen our position as a cultural leader in the region.
6. Ensure digital thinking and practice is embedded within our work.
7. Be impact driven in our approach.

Staff Development

The most valuable asset of the organisation is its staff. Warwick Arts Centre has a commitment to developing the skills, knowledge and experience of its staff to ensure the high quality of delivery of our services.

We will continue to ensure that Warwick Arts Centre staff are at the forefront of best practice through a range of programmes of secondment, formal training courses, attendance at conferences and web-based training resources. We will encourage effective HR processes to improve performance across the organisation, including Performance Review.

We will ensure that equality is embedded within the organisation as a value to which everyone adheres. Our policies and practices are clearly stated so that together we work towards collective goals and recognise a collective responsibility to motivate all staff to fulfil the vision.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

We are proud of the strengths and values our diversity represents. We strive to achieve fair and equal representation for all, allowing everyone in our community to contribute and reach their full potential. We provide a welcoming and inclusive working and learning environment, recognising and respecting all individuals' differences.

As an equal opportunities employer, we welcome and encourage applications from all sections of the community regardless of their backgrounds, age, disability, sex/gender, gender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion/belief, or sexual or romantic orientation. We also recognise the importance of diversity of thought within our teams and are fully committed to embracing the talents of people with autism, dyslexia, ADHD and other forms of neurocognitive variation.

We will always seek to make appropriate adjustments to recruitment, workplaces, and work processes to be fully inclusive to people with different needs and working styles. If you need us to make any reasonable adjustments for you from application onwards, including alternatives to the online form or to disclose a neurocognitive condition, please email lorraine.blackwell@warwick.ac.uk

Please see the [Equality Statement](#) from Vice Chancellor, Stuart Croft.

Our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion webpages](#) has more information about the [Equality Act](#) and protected characteristics as well as an overview of current initiatives at Warwick and links to resources, guidance and training.