



Making the case for the arts in schools - L-r Henna Javed, Sophie Cole and Sam Fairbairn

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Representatives from Northumbria University, Newcastle have been chosen to talk to MPs about the vital role of teaching arts in schools.

The University runs a one-year secondary school art, craft design teacher education programme which has seen funding drop as more emphasis and investment is made in STEM* and core curriculum** subjects.

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Sophie Cole, Programme Leader for Secondary PGCE Art, Craft and Design, at Northumbria University and students Henna Javed and Sam Fairbairn will present to the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Art Craft Design in Education Committee on Wednesday 22 February. One of only four organisations taking part in the meeting, the Northumbria representatives will specifically discuss the challenges placed on the next generation of arts teachers and the benefits of committing to the 'best career in the world'.

Sophie said: "This is a fantastic opportunity to promote the value arts subjects offer in secondary education. Art is the only subject, which encourages every child's creativity, independence and wellbeing. It develops problem solving and communication skills; arts encourage self-esteem, lateral thinking and mastery- all skills which are personally invaluable but transfer to STEM and core subjects too and for future careers.

"Our graduate teachers have serious commitment to bringing the arts into secondary schools and have an outstanding level of knowledge and skills to ensure that children have access to the full range of art practices, as is their moral - and at the moment - statutory right. This is under threat as governments review the status of arts subjects in schools. This APPG gives my students the chance to tell MPs about the challenges posed to our next generation of art teachers by the unintended consequence of policy shifts away from supporting the arts in school."

Sophie continued: "At Northumbria we have a global reputation for providing academic excellence and the quality of our programme is clear having been

top rated by Ofsted for over 14 years and achieving outstanding feedback from students on our performance. Despite a reduction in overall numbers applying to go to university to study art, as well as for teacher training in art courses across the UK, here at Northumbria we still achieve a high standard of applicants for our programme for what is a truly rewarding and highly important career choice.

“Our programme has rich and longstanding partnerships with equally arts committed schools where the majority of training takes place, we also have great links with regional arts venues and museums especially the BALTIC whose support is phenomenal for our programme but also to art teachers regionally. We also have great relationships with artists and community groups and are interested in developing useful arts research that shows the positive impact art has on health and wellbeing. We are deeply supported by our North East region’s arts community who know how important it is to welcome and retain the next generation of art teachers to inspire the nation’s new creative talent”.

Henna from Newcastle studied a fine art degree. Talking about the meeting, she said: “I am very proud to represent Northumbria University and the next generation of art teachers. Teaching art to secondary pupils is a great career, the personal and professional opportunities are amazing, and working with young people is eye opening and the subject is so engaging for all abilities and ages.”

Sam from Newcastle graduated in graphic design and gained a love of art from her grandad who loved to draw. She said: “I am really nervous about talking to the Committee but art is something I am incredibly passionate about. Art education in schools is important because of the amount of skills students can gain from taking an arts course as well as supporting literacy, visual learning, creativity, enjoyment and satisfaction. It’s a really important part of school wide education. For me it’s a job for life – there is so much to learn.”

Chaired by Washington and Sunderland West MP Sharon Hodgson the committee includes a number of North East MPs; Hartlepool MP Ian Wright, North Tyneside MP Mary Glendon and Newcastle Central MP Chi Onwurah.

The Committee will take place in the Houses of Parliament on Wednesday 22 February at 4-5.30pm. Other speakers include NSEAD’s Special Interest Group

for Initial Teacher Education (ITE), Canterbury Christ Church University who are talking about arts in primary schools and Oxford Brookes University on the role of ITE in the community and Masters programmes.

Applicants to the PGCE Art Craft Design Secondary Education course at Northumbria University need to have an Arts subject related degree; such as craft, animation, fine art, textiles, illustration, architecture or design. For more information about courses on Teacher Training at Northumbria University, visit www.northumbria.ac.uk

For further information, please contact:

Michelle Atkinson, PR and Media Manager

Northumbria University, Newcastle

Tel: 0191 227 3437

E-mail: michelle.atkinson@northumbria.ac.uk

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Notes to editors:

*STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

***Core Subject – Maths, English and Science

- Northumbria University, Newcastle is a research-rich, business-focused, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence.
- Northumbria is ranked in the world's Top 150 Under 50 - Times Higher Education's ranking of the top 150 global universities established after 1966.
- Northumbria's Education courses was ranked 5th The Guardian

University Guide 2017 and 15th in the Sunday Times Good University Guide 2017.

Contacts



Rik Kendall

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Business and Law / Arts, Design & Social Sciences

rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk

07923 382339



Andrea Slowey

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Engineering and Environment / Health and Life Sciences

andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk

07708 509436



Rachael Barwick

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk

07377422415



James Fox

Press Contact

Student Communications Manager

james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk



Kelly Elliott

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk



Gemma Brown

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk