BIG CREATIVE EDUCATION APPRENTICESHIPS TRAINING ACADEMY

Ofsted Outstanding Provider

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ADMISSIONS POLICY – September 2027 entry

Updated June 2026
Approved by the Governing Body

1. Overview and Mission Statement

1.1 Big Creative Academy is an institution for 16-18 year olds specialising in the creative industries. Our curriculum is specialised and offers subjects that provide links to the creative sector. Students will study their chosen creative specialism as well as Maths or English (dependent on entry grades) and Wellbeing to support personal development. The Academy will have strong links with industry that will help ensure young people have the skills, experience and knowledge to progress in their chosen careers. We are an institution that seeks to engage students that have an interest and aptitude in creative subjects and may not have had access to excellent specialist teaching and equipment thus far in this phase of their education.

1.2 This policy has been written with reference to and complies with the DfE's School Admissions Code, September 2021.

1.3 In accordance with the School Admissions Code, Big Creative Academy consults on admission arrangements every seven years or when there are significant planned changes to provision. The most recent consultation took place in October 2021.

2. Admissions Authority

2.1 Big Creative Academy's Admissions Policy will be clear, fair and transparent, based on the School Admissions Code and associated legislation.

2.2 Big Creative Academy operates as its own admissions authority. Our Admissions Policy is published on our website at www.bigcreative.education.This information will include how many places will be offered in the offer year, the minimum academic requirements for entry, and how places will be allocated if the Academy is oversubscribed. It will also include details of how Big Creative Academy will operate its waiting list.

3. Planned Admissions Number (PAN) and Capacity

3.1 The capacity of Big Creative Academy is 572 in September 2026, and this is our published admissions number for September 2027 entry.

3.2 Applications will be accepted for entry in September 2026 from students born between 1 September 2009 and 31 August 2011. Please see Appendix A for the applications timetable.

3.3 Big Creative Academy runs 26 groups of 22 learners, with year groups and courses in the following subjects.

Subject	Year Group	Number of students
UAL Level 3 Diploma in Music Performance	Year 12	44 students
UAL Level 3 Diploma in Music Production	Year 12	22 students
UAL Level 3 Diploma in Drama	Year 12	44 students
UAL Level 3 Diploma in Performing Arts	Year 12	22 students
UAL Level 3 Diploma in Film and Content Creation	Year 12	44 students
UAL Level 3 Diploma in Graphics and Photography	Year 12	22 students
UAL Level 3 Diploma in Art & Design	Year 12	44 students
UAL Level 3 Diploma in Fashion	Year 12	22 students
UAL Level 3 Extended Diploma in Music Performance	Year 13	22 students
UAL Level 3 Extended Diploma in Music Production	Year 13	22 students
UAL Level 3 Extended Diploma in Drama	Year 13	44 students
UAL Level 3 Extended Diploma in Performing Arts	Year 13	22 students
UAL Level 3 Extended Diploma in Film and Content Creation	Year 13	44 students
UAL Level 3 Extended Diploma in Graphics and Photography	Year 13	22 students
UAL Level 3 Extended Diploma in Media	Year 13	44 students
UAL Level 3 Extended Diploma in Art & Design	Year 13	44 students
T Level in Fashion	Year 13	22 students
UAL Level 4 Foundation Diploma in Art & Design		22 students
UAL Level 4 Foundation Diploma in Performance		22 students

4. Minimum Entry Requirements

4.1 Applicants must be between the ages of 16-18 on 31 August 2027.

4.2 Applicants for Level 2 courses must have at least 3 GCSEs at Grade 3 / Grade D or below (or equivalent) including English Language.

4.3 Applicants for Level 3 courses must have at least 5 GCSEs at Grade 4 / Grade C or above (or equivalent) including English Language and a Grade 3 / Grade D at Maths.

4.4 Prospective students will be offered places on a conditional basis until they receive their GCSE results.

4.5 Interested applicants who have taken iGCSEs or other alternative qualifications should contact the school to discuss what our equivalent minimum expectations are.

4.6 Big Creative Academy reserves the right to make contextual admissions in the event of learners showing clear talent for their subject.

4.7 In-year admissions and admissions of those outside the stated age group are at the discretion of Big Creative Academy.

4.8 Students progressing internally must meet the minimum entry requirements, securing at least a pass for their diploma and GCSE English Language at Grade 4 / Grade C. Places are subject to agreement with tutors and a careers progression interview.

4.9 All students will be expected to enrol on a programme of study comprising a minimum of 580 planned hours per year, including wellbeing and careers. Those students who have not achieved a GCSE Grade 4 / Grade C in English Language or Maths will be required to study these qualifications alongside their other subjects.

5. Recruiting with integrity

5.1 It is vital that Big Creative Academy staff recruit with integrity onto vocational qualifications. They will designate learners onto courses that stretch and challenge them and are appropriate to their needs. Big Creative Academy will ensure that learners have the correct information and advice on qualifications they may wish to follow and that the qualifications will meet their needs.

5.2 The recruitment process should include assessing each young person and making justifiable and professional judgments about the learner's potential to successfully complete the qualification. This includes checking the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of mandatory units as well as selecting the most appropriate route of optional units, where applicable. Such assessment must identify, where appropriate, the support that will be made available to the learner to facilitate access to the assessment.

5.3 Where the recruitment process identifies that the learner may not be able to demonstrate attainment and thus gain achievement in all parts of assessment for the selected qualification, this must be communicated clearly to the learner. A learner may still decide to proceed with studying a particular qualification and not be entered for all or part of the assessment.

5.4 Big Creative Academy will ensure that learners and parents receive the appropriate assistance and are aware of:

a) the range of options available, including any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary, to enable the demonstration of attainment across all required assessment
b) any restrictions on progression routes to the learner as a result of not achieving certain outcomes.

6. Equality and diversity

6.1 The Academy, in operating admission arrangements, will do everything it reasonably can to enable every student to perform at their best, and in making acceptance decisions will not discriminate between students on grounds of gender, disability, faith, ethnicity, or sexual preference provided they meet the criteria for entry.

6.2 Big Creative Academy will work with the local authority/key worker/parent to provide education to students who cannot attend due to medical conditions, and students who are returning to education. Re-integration plans will be implemented as required.

7. Application Process

7.1 Students or parents/guardians may explore the courses we offer on our website obtain a by visiting our website at www.bigcreative.education. Our prospectus is also available on the website to view, or you may request a copy by post.

7.2 We strongly recommend visiting Big Creative Academy during an open day before applying. This will enable applicants to understand the way in which the Academy works but is not a requirement for admission.

7.3 Applicants should apply online for a course they are interested in, and they will receive details of our open evening and interview requirements in return. Completing predicted grades is part of the application process.

7.4 All applicants who meet the minimum entry requirements will be interviewed for their chosen programme. Dependent on the subject, there may also be auditions for places. We may also wish to see a portfolio of work. This is to establish the applicant's aptitude and talent for their chosen area of study.

7.5 Big Creative Academy will admit students who are able to demonstrate:

a) Meeting the entrance criteria
b) Aptitude and talent for their chosen specialism
c) A clear commitment to a career in the creative arts and a real determination to study, practice and succeed
d) Attendance at a workshop or open evening

7.6 Experienced Academy staff will evaluate the above criteria using a combination of the following:

a) Submitted application with a digital portfolio, audition or self-tape on why you would like to study at Big Creative Academy
b) Review of a digital portfolio, audition or self-tape
c) References from school or college tutors
d) Attendance at an open evening or workshop

7.7 Applicants will not be considered a priority if they from a school or organisation with whom Big Creative Academy has a progression agreement.

7.8 Applicants will not be considered a priority if they have not attended an open evening or workshop, or have not submitted a completed application.

7.9 Big Creative Academy will admit any learners with a statement of special educational needs whose statement names Big Creative Academy. This is dependent on an assessment of being able to meet the learner's needs and the learner meeting the minimum entry requirements.

7.10 Once all applicants have been interviewed and assessed Big Creative Academy will discuss the candidates and award places. Decisions to offer a place will be based on the criteria set out in paragraphs 7.5, 7.6, 7.7 and 7.8.

7.11 Successful applicants will be informed via an offer letter detailing any conditions (for example achievement of grades to meet eligibility criteria).

7.12 In the event of over-subscription candidates not chosen will be placed on a reserve list and informed of their place on the list in order to enable them to evaluate their options (see section 7 below).

7.13 Unsuccessful applicants will also be informed via letter. Brief feedback will be provided on request to unsuccessful candidates.

7.14 Applicants offered a place must formally accept the offer within 14 days of the date of the letter or the offer may be withdrawn.

7.15 Big Creative Academy reserves the right to withdraw an offer of a place where information received from a third party who works with the applicant or a disclosure is made that leads the Academy to believe that the student may be of a risk to others or requires specialist intervention or an environment that will better meet the needs of the young person.

Third parties made include:

a) Youth offending officer
b) Social worker/key worker
c) Police officer
d) Previous educational establishment

7.16 Safeguarding guidance states that all applicants have a duty to disclose any unspent criminal convictions, failure to disclose may result in withdrawal.

7.17 Prior education providers have a duty of care to share information on high-risk students, students with additional needs and students at risk of harm.

8. Oversubscription Criteria

8.1 In the event of a course being over-subscribed by learners of equal ability and potential, places will be allocated on the basis of the following criteria:

a) the extent to which the learners meet the entrance criteria
b) looked after children and previously looked after children who have ceased to be looked after due to an adoption, child arrangements or a special guardianship order having been made in respect of them. Applicants must meet the minimum entry requirements.
c) In receipt of income support in their own right
d) Students who in Year 11 of secondary school were eligible for and receiving free school meals
e) Students who for medical or social reasons need to access education at the Academy. Evidence supporting the applicant's case will need to be submitted with the application. This should be in the form of a letter form a medical specialist or social working setting out the precise reasons why the student needs to access the Academy.
f) Current or former learner at Big Creative Academy or Big Creative Training
g) Former learner at school or organisation with whom Big Creative Academy has a progression agreement
h) Distance from the Academy measured by a straight line measured from the front door of the applicant's home to the main gate of the school

8.2 The final criteria (distance) will always be utilised in the event of a tie-breaker. In the case of flats or multiple occupancy measurement will be taken from the main entrance of the building. If this results in a tie, places will be allocated randomly and this process overseen by someone independent of Big Creative Academy.

9. Waiting List

9.1 It may be that some applicants do not receive their predicted grades, or decide not to attend Big Creative Academy. We will therefore establish a waiting list, with applicants prioritised in line with our over subscription criteria.

9.2 Applicants' places will be held on the waiting list until such time as they are offered a place or they request in writing to be removed from the waiting list.

9.3 The waiting list will remain open to 31 December each year.

10. Late applications

10.1 Applications received after the deadline will only be considered should places remain after the consideration of all applications received on or before the deadline. If following consideration of all applicants the school is oversubscribed applicants may request that they are placed on the Academy's waiting list.

11. Admissions Appeals

11.1 The objectives of the admissions appeals procedure are to ensure that:

a) applicants are able to have concerns about the admissions process heard
b) the Academy's admissions appeals procedures are clear
c) throughout the process of admissions the proper procedures are followed

11.2 If an applicant is not offered a place after the review and the applicant believes that this is because the admissions procedure has not been properly and fairly applied, they may appeal in writing to the Principal. Appeals may be made by post or email.

11.3 This letter must refer to the admissions criteria and should detail the reasons for the appeal. Appeals must be received in writing within 20 days of the date of the review decision letter.

11.4 Big Creative Academy will write acknowledging receipt of the appeal. If the Principal is not satisfied that the appeal is made on an allowable basis (i.e. failure by the Academy to follow its published admissions procedure) the letter will say this and there will be no further consideration of the matter.

11.5 If the appeal is allowable the Principal will decide whether to:

a) uphold the original decision to refuse a place, or
b) refer the application back to be considered afresh.

11.6 The decision of the Principal will be communicated in writing within 20 days of the appeal.

APPENDIX A: TIMETABLE OF ADMISSIONS PROCESS FOR SEPTEMBER 2027 PLACES

Determination Year (2025/26)

Date	Relevance
1 October 2025	Earliest date to start consultation on proposed arrangements should it be required. Consultation **must** last a minimum of six weeks
November 2025	SLT meeting to agree course file for September 2026 entry, approved by governing body
31 January 2026	Deadline for consultation on proposed arrangements
28 February 2026	Deadline for admission arrangements to be determined even if they have not changed from the previous year and a consultation has not been required, and appropriate bodies notified.
15 March 2026	Deadline for admission authorities to send a copy of their full determined admission arrangements to their local authority. Publish arrangements on the Big Creative Academy website.
June 2026	New prospectus for admission year compiled
8 August 2026	Deadline for admission arrangements information to go to the local authority to allow them to compile composite prospectus.

Offer Year (2026/27)

Date	Relevance
12 September 2026	Deadline for local authorities to publish composite prospectus
October 2026 and ongoing	Applications open; interviews begin Open evenings for prospective applicants and opportunity to meet teaching staff.
Rolling	Places awarded and offer letters sent
Two weeks after offer	Successful candidates accept places
Two weeks after interview	Unsuccessful candidates notified
Two weeks after interview	Waiting list candidates notified
April - July 2027	Keep in touch taster sessions
August 2027	GCSE results; enrolment; clearing process for unfilled places

Admission Year (2027/28)

Date	Relevance
September 2027	New intake starts at Big Creative Academy