



ARTWATCH Ghana
accelerating national development through the arts
info@artwatchghana.org | www.artwatchghana.org

PRESS MAY CONTACT:
Agyarko +233 243371268
Sumaila +233 244997598
Essel +233 208990892

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PRESS RELEASE

CHANGE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR VISUAL ART STUDENTS ENTERING GHANAIAN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

In order to maintain and harmonize standards in tertiary education in Ghana with international standards, the National Accreditation Board (NAB) which is mandated to regulate standards in tertiary education in Ghana has over the years instituted several policies to regulate the entrance requirements of candidates into various levels of tertiary education programmes: certificates, diplomas and degrees. However, some institutions especially, private tertiary institutions were flexible in implementing the policies to the fullest and this attracted the attention of NAB in 2011 to issue a fiat to all tertiary institutions to comply strictly with the laid down policy.

Unfortunately, the strict enforcement of this policy has had detrimental effect on the enrollment of SHS visual art candidates into various visual art programmes in our tertiary institutions since 2011. Almost all the programmes except Graphic Design have experienced continuous decline in enrollment till date and this situation is gradually reducing the quantity of trained tertiary Visual Art graduates in Ghana. Evidence proves that in 2011, the Department of Art Education of University of Education, Winneba (UEW) could not admit student for half of the vacancies it declared for the academic year. The school of Applied Art of Takoradi Polytechnic could not enroll 30% of students to fill the vacancies available at the time and the Visual Art departments of Tamale, Wa, Bolgatanga and Ho polytechnics are all experiencing low students enrollment.

Even though 'Artwatch' believes in academic excellence and quality standards in education, we also believe that rigid enforcement of the aggregate C6 requirement in core Mathematics and Integrated Science into all tertiary diploma and first degree programmes in Ghanaian tertiary institutions should be reconsidered.

Apparently, the visual art programmes in our tertiary institutions require special skills, competencies and aptitudes such as creativity, aesthetics, craftsmanship, visual perception, critical thinking, diligence, coordination and affective skills as pre-requisites to excel in those programmes. As much as we believe that scientific and mathematical applications are relevant in Visual Art education and practice, they do not take precedence over the above mentioned aptitudes. We must also realize that these aspects of personal development are not common all among humans, most often they occur as special talents in certain individuals who sometimes may have average or high mathematical aptitude. In contrast to creative art programmes, other programmes such as engineering, physical sciences, social sciences, business, and orders would require high aptitude in mathematics and science as pre-requisite to excel because they are mostly applied in these programmes. Also, the structure of the Senior High school visual art programme is different from the other specialized programmes in the SHS system such as General arts, Home Economics, Technical and others. In all the Visual Art electives, students are expected to achieve 15% knowledge and understanding, 25% application knowledge and 60% practical skills. However, in all the other specialized programmes listed above the structure place emphasis on theory.

'Artwatch' therefore wish to draw the attention of NAB, Ministry of Education and managers of our tertiary institutions to this challenge and admit visual art candidates who get aggregate E8 in core Mathematics, and substitute Integrated Science with Social studies, and rather demand high grades in the visual art electives because they constitute the core of the tertiary Visual Art programmes. Students



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enrolled in tertiary Visual Art institutions pursue specific courses in their elective subject and not the core subject.

We strongly believe this move will help increase enrollment into the visual art programmes in our universities and polytechnics so that they can train adequate highly skilled managerial and middle level art educators and industrial artists who will help in the development of various facets of our national economy.