



CAMBRIDGE  
SCHOOL OF  
VISUAL &  
PERFORMING  
ARTS

# TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

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Date of Policy	August 2025
Next Review Date	August 2026
Key Staff	Senior Deputy Head, Deputy Head – Teaching & Learning, Provost, Dean of Student Experience
Lead for Review	Deputy Head – Teaching & Learning, Provost

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## RATIONALE & AIMS

This policy outlines the principles and expectations that guide teaching and learning at CATS Cambridge and CSVPA, ensuring a high-quality educational experience for all students. We aim to:

- Promote Equitable Progress and Wellbeing: Foster an inclusive learning environment where every student achieves meaningful progress and receives comprehensive support for their wellbeing.
- Cultivate Intellectual Curiosity and Risk-Taking: Establish a culture that values academic exploration, scholarly activity, and the courage to take intellectual risks.
- Develop Engaged and Lifelong Learners: Equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to actively and positively contribute to society, and to embrace lifelong learning.
- Establish Clear Expectations: Provide a transparent framework of expectations for all stakeholders involved in the teaching and learning process at CATS Cambridge and CSVPA.

## RESEARCH BASIS

At CATS Cambridge, our core ethos is to empower every student to become an enthusiastic, confident, and resilient lifelong learner, equipped with the critical skills, values, and attitudes necessary to thrive in an ever-evolving world. This vision is realised through a synergistic blend of exemplary teaching, grounded in robust pedagogical principles, and a nurturing, supportive environment. We are committed to fostering not only academic excellence but also the development of future-ready individuals, aligning with the CATS Cambridge Future Skills Framework (FSF).

Our pedagogical approach is informed by leading educational research, including:

- The CATS Cambridge Future Skills Framework (FSF): This framework provides a strategic lens through which we identify and cultivate the essential skills students need to navigate future challenges and opportunities. It is built upon the IBDP Learner Profile, High Performance Learning (Eyre, 2016) and Round Square frameworks (Hahn) and emphasises a reflective approach to learning with foci on scholarship, creativity, resilience, collaboration and compassion.
- Coe et al.'s work on effective teaching (What Makes Great Teaching? (2014) and the Great Teaching Toolkit: Evidence Review (2020)): We prioritise evidence-based practices, focusing on elements such as clear explanations, questioning techniques, and the importance of practice and feedback as essential elements of effective teaching and learning.
- John Hattie's Visible Learning (2009): We embrace Hattie's emphasis on making learning visible, employing strategies to provide students with clear learning intentions, success criteria, and effective feedback. We strive to create a culture of metacognition, where students understand their own learning processes and take ownership of their progress.
- Dylan Wiliam's Inside the Black Box (1998) and subsequent publications highlights the importance of effective use of formative assessment. We embed

these practices throughout our teaching to gather real-time data on student understanding and adapt instruction accordingly and ensure that every student receives personalised support and timely feedback. We cannot develop genuinely reflective learners without this.

- Peter Liljedahl's *Building Thinking Classrooms* (2020) encourages a culture of problem-solving and critical thinking. The development of students '21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills' is incredibly important to us as we seek to create collaborative learning environments where students engage in rich, meaningful tasks that foster deep understanding to enable them to thrive after they leave us.
- Barak Rosenshine's *Principles of Instruction* (2012) emphasise explicit teaching, scaffolding, and the importance of reviewing and practicing new concepts. This structured approach has yielded positive results in our Maths department. Bearing in mind the nature of our cohorts, routine and recall really help our students to solidify their learning, ensuring that they build a solid foundation of knowledge and skills.
- *Leveraging ESL Learners' Prior Knowledge* (Cummins): The curriculum explicitly recognises and actively leverages ESL learners' existing knowledge, skills, and cognitive abilities developed in their first languages, understanding that this "common underlying proficiency" provides a strong foundation for academic success in English.

We aim to create a learning environment that:

- Fosters intellectual curiosity and a love of learning.
- Develops critical thinking, problem-solving, and creative skills.
- Promotes effective communication and collaboration.
- Cultivates resilience, adaptability, and growth.
- Prepares students to be responsible and engaged global citizens.

Through this holistic approach, we are dedicated to empowering our students to not only achieve academic success but also to become confident, capable, and compassionate individuals who are prepared to make a positive impact on the world.

## PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Teachers are expected to be proactive in continuously improving their studio/classroom and professional practice with view to maximising the learning and personal development that their teaching elicits for each of their students. Their improvement should be focused on ensuring that they are offering all their students the very best of opportunities to realise their potential. This expectation therefore extends beyond studio/classroom interaction to all aspects of school life.

The School recognises that, as a CGS school, we abide by the CATS Global Schools' Teacher Standards. They are a useful and authoritative framework that is tailored to the unique needs of our student body. As such, they are shared with all teachers, who are expected to be fully conversant with them, maintaining and developing their studio/classroom practice accordingly.

Teachers are also expected to acquaint themselves with and be mindful of the criteria employed by the Independent Schools' Inspectorate (ISI) and the approach that ISI adopts to evaluating the educational quality of a school through work scrutiny and lesson observations. Teachers should note that the ISI will assess the quality of a school's classroom practices based on the students' personal development as well as their academic and creative achievements.

Teachers should know their subjects thoroughly and are responsible for maintaining and developing their subject knowledge and for ensuring that they are fully aware of, and understand, the examination board/awarding body specifications and assessment criteria for the programmes of study and qualifications which they teach.

Teachers are expected to be experts in the art and science of learning; and are expected to be model life-long learners, as such they should model good learning habits in their lessons and in the way that they conduct themselves. They should ensure that their teaching practice effectively balances the teaching of content with teaching their students how to learn effectively.

CATS Cambridge is developing its own Future Skills Framework (FSF) to further develop students' core transferable skills. This provides a framework around all that we do and is fundamentally delivered by Personal Tutors. However, all CATS Cambridge and CSVPA teachers are expected to actively develop students' complex problem solving, creativity, critical thinking, reflective and digital literacy skills in the learning experiences that they curate.

## LESSONS

Lessons must be meticulously planned, demonstrating a clear understanding of content depth and appropriate duration, aligned with explicit learning objectives, assessment criteria, and diverse, effective teaching strategies. Drawing upon Coe et al.'s emphasis on 'what makes great teaching,' lessons should prioritize activities that maximize student learning time and engagement. Furthermore, in line with Hattie's visible learning principles, lessons should be designed to foster both academic achievement and students' personal development, with a particular focus on enhancing English language proficiency and cultivating reflective, empathic, collaborative, and creative scholars and artists.

Teachers are encouraged to leverage the school's resources, including Padlet, UpLearn, mini-whiteboards, Promethean boards, MS Teams (CATS virtual learning environment), and Canvas (CSVPA virtual learning environment), to enhance learning experiences, promoting student agency and problem-solving through interactive and visual tools.

To ensure equitable participation, teachers must employ effective questioning techniques and manage discussions and debates, as advocated by Rosenshine's principles of instruction, including scaffolding and checking for understanding. Teachers should ensure that all students are challenged to achieve their best using the skills of an Expert teacher, which will include effective questioning and class management.

Regular written work should be assigned and marked in accordance with the School's Assessment and Reporting Policy. Feedback should be clear, actionable, and followed up to ensure student comprehension, aligning with Rosenshine's emphasis on providing effective feedback and checking for student understanding. Teachers must confirm that each student understands the steps necessary to improve, fostering a growth mindset and promoting continuous improvement, as highlighted by Hattie's work on the power of feedback.

## ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

At CATS Cambridge and CSVPA, we are committed to fostering reflective and self-directed learners in alignment with the principles of effective feedback and metacognition. As such, at CATS Cambridge we implement cognitive wrappers around all summative assessments. This formalises the process of encouraging students to engage in self-evaluation and reflection. At CSVPA this process of self-evaluation and reflection is embedded in the learning outcomes of the qualifications. Good practice dictates that teachers must utilise a variety of formative assessment methods in daily teaching practices to ensure that learning is effective.

We view AfL as crucial for the effective planning and delivery of lessons that are responsive to the individual learning needs of our students. Teachers should proactively plan frequent AfL opportunities, ensuring that learning is made visible. Furthermore, teachers should carefully select and vary their AfL techniques, to ensure appropriateness and effectiveness. Further detailed guidance on AfL practices can be found in our Assessment and Reporting Policy.

## MAINTENANCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF SCHEMES OF WORK AND COURSE DESCRIPTORS

Heads of Departments, Pathway Leaders and subject teachers are responsible for the ongoing maintenance and development of schemes of work for all programmes of study within their respective subjects. These schemes of work must adhere to the School's prescribed pro-formas, ensuring alignment with our core values and fostering a consistent standard of planning across all departments. This approach, which emphasises structured planning, promotes effective lesson design and coherent curriculum development.

Specifically, course descriptors and schemes of work must be completed using the designated templates. This standardisation ensures clarity and facilitates effective implementation of evidence-based teaching strategies through the communication of clear learning intentions/outcomes. Additionally, the structured approach supports the implementation of effective questioning and formative assessment techniques.

Furthermore, the review of schemes of work by Heads of Department/Senior Management is crucial. This review ensures that schemes of work remain dynamic, relevant, and responsive to the needs of our students.

## PUNCTUALITY AND SUPERVISION

Lessons should start at the designated time. To that end:

- Teachers and students should arrive punctually.
- Where a lesson is not followed by a break, teachers should release students at least 2-3 minutes before the designated start time of the next lesson.
- Latecomers should be dealt with in a way that does not impact the learning of the rest of the group.

During their timetabled lessons teachers are expected to remain in their studio/classroom to teach, supervise and support their students.

Some learners with SEN/D may require soft starts, timetable variations, additional breaks. These will be noted on the ILP.

All CATS Cambridge teachers should note that it is the School's policy **NOT** to have a break in double lessons.

## CLASSROOM ROUTINES

Although different teaching styles and approaches to classroom management are welcomed, it is essential for the purposes of providing a consistent, positive, and purposeful learning environment that the School's classroom routines are applied consistently by all teachers. Whilst the autonomy of teachers in their classrooms is expected, the start of all lessons must involve the following:

- Teachers greeting students at the beginning of the lesson.
- Students should place bags on the floor and all personal mobile devices and peripherals in the box at the front of the classroom, the phone box on the wall, or out of sight in their bags, unless explicitly told otherwise by the teacher.
- A learning objective/outcome may be shared.
- A task/activity for students to be engaged with, to expand their knowledge on the theme of the lesson or settle into the room and engage with the environment.
- The register must be complete within 10 minutes of the start of the lesson.

## MANAGEMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS

It is the subject teacher's responsibility to ensure that they have appropriate teaching and learning materials to effectively deliver the relevant schemes of work. Requests for teaching and learning materials should be made via Head of Department (CATS Cambridge) or Teams approval (CSVPA).

Subject teachers are responsible for ensuring that all their students their notes and assessed work are effectively organised along with the teaching and learning materials with which they have been issued. Subject teachers are also responsible for ensuring that all of their students properly record work that is set.

As an international school, it is not uncommon for new students to join the School up to half a term or, on occasion, even longer after a course has started. It is essential that teachers are able to provide late arriving students with a full pack of the teaching and learning materials that have already been issued, these can be found on the school VLE which all students have access.

## ADDITIONAL LEARNING SUPPORT

Teachers should be able to identify which students need additional support and make adaptations to facilitate continued progress. They should also know which students are receiving Additional Learning Support (ALS) or need reasonable adjustments (as per the Equality Act) and should discuss the progress of such students with the Learning Support Co-ordinator/ SENCo. As per the SEND CoP the teacher will continue to have responsibility for their progress if they are receiving additional support. It is the subject teacher's responsibility to ensure that they have read and act on the advice offered by the School's LSC/SENCo. As far as possible, assistance for students with SEND and other learning needs consists of a partnership between the relevant academic department, the students' PTs and HDs, Parent (where relevant), the student and the SENCo/LSC.

Students on the School's SEND register **must be** clearly highlighted in their subject teachers' mark-books or tracker.

## ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Nearly all of the students studying at CATS Cambridge and CSVPA are learning in English with English as an additional language (ESL). Teachers must make sure that they are aware of each of their students' level of English and that they adapt their teaching accordingly. Where they encounter difficulties, subject teachers should be proactive in seeking out advice from the student's Teacher of ESL and/or the Head of ESL & Languages.

CATS Cambridge and CSVPA teachers should also be mindful that they have a role to play in improving students' English. Every contact point should be seen as an opportunity to do so. Teachers in all departments have a responsibility for ensuring that spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors are corrected.

CATS Cambridge teachers **must** ensure that the standard of each of their student's English is clearly annotated in their mark-book.

## MAINTAINING AND DEVELOPING TEACHING AND LEARNING

The quality of teaching at CATS Cambridge and CSVPA is maintained and developed through:

- Lesson observations
- Formal lesson observations conducted by the School's SLT/SMT and the Heads of Department;



- Learning Walks
- Peer lesson observations;
- Teachers are encouraged to identify their CPD needs and relevant training opportunities in consultation with their line manager; and by regular professional discussion of subject matter.

The School is keen for teachers to continually seek to improve their students' learning and encourages teachers to experiment with new pedagogical approaches or projects in their classrooms. Proposals for projects should be agreed with the teacher's head of department or SLT/SMT before the project is initiated.

There is a detailed induction programme for new teachers, and the Head of Department or Line Manager is responsible for monitoring the teaching in their subject area.

The teaching community works together to ensure that continuing professional development and innovation in teaching and learning are integral to all areas of the CSVPA/CATS Cambridge curriculum.

At CSVPA, the Learning and Teaching Committee has the responsibility to:

- Ensure a strategic approach to learning & teaching is aligned with the education strategy
- Encourage engagement with pedagogic theory in teaching practices
- Facilitate innovation in learning and teaching, including the sharing of best practice within and across disciplines
- Monitor & report on matters relating to the quality of teaching and performance of courses
- Consider the impact of changes to regulations, frameworks or policies on the quality of learning and teaching, and make recommendations to the Academic Quality & Standards (AQSC) on the same
- Consider, advise and report on proposals to change, develop, revalidate and discontinue programmes of study and to make recommendations to AQSC.

## MISSING LESSONS

CATS Cambridge teachers who have to be away during the day must provide cover for their lessons in line with the Cover Work Policy. CSVPA tutors will notify their Line Manager before 8am on the day of their absence to ensure cover can be found.

It is the teacher's responsibility to provide instructions for the work to be completed in their lessons whilst they are absent. Work set should be able to be completed by students with the cover teacher's supervision but should not necessarily require the member of staff providing cover to teach.

## APPENDIX

[CGS-Teaching-Standards\\_2023-05\\_v6.pdf](#)

[Interactive version :: Independent Schools Inspectorate \(isi.net\)](#)

[The Independent School Standards - Guidance for independent schools \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)