

## **JOHN CURTIN COLLEGE OF THE ARTS: A UNIQUE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

As Western Australia's only Selective Arts School, John Curtin College of the Arts is the premier college for gifted arts students.

Offering a suite of arts programs, the Arts College facilitates an exciting new approach to learning through an arts-infused curriculum where integration of arts into the other seven learning areas enhances understanding in these areas. The specialised differentiated curriculum for gifted and talented Arts students and those identified as academically talented provides them with opportunities for extension and enrichment.

Rich in the history of Fremantle and the Arts, the college has been offering programs for gifted and talented dance and drama students since 1973 and was the first school in Australia to offer theatre arts and dance as specialist subjects. The school was officially recognised as a College of the Arts in 2000, changing its name from John Curtin Senior High School to John Curtin College of the Arts to emphasise its specialisation in the arts.

The college is 95% selective (local intake continues for non Gifted and Talented courses) and teachers are merit selected based on their understanding of the principles and practice of gifted and talented education. More than 1600 selected students from across the state are given the opportunity to participate in a range of Gifted and Talented (GAT) Arts programs including Media Arts, Ballet, Contemporary Dance, Drama, Music, Music Theatre and Visual Arts. The college also has an Approved Specialist Soccer Excellence Program.

The college provides a specialised differentiated curriculum for gifted and talented Arts students and those identified as academically talented, providing them with opportunities for extension, enrichment and acceleration. Students have the advantage of being able to interact with peers across the Arts, and work in an Arts environment that provides extensive opportunities to learn.

Students have access to state-of-the-art facilities, specialist teachers and links to tertiary and industry bodies. They are given opportunities to participate in performances, exhibitions, concerts and other activities, working closely with industry professionals.

In order to cater for the academic needs of highly able students, the college provides academic excellence programs in humanities, mathematics and science. The school is consistently in the top 20 schools of the State for academic performance.

Learning occurs within a caring, supportive and inclusive environment that is responsive to students' abilities, needs and learning styles, and which challenges and engages them to achieve excellence in their particular field. Learning is underpinned by the college values of creativity, innovation and imagination; respect, care and compassion; excellence; a fair go; responsibility; and integrity.

Expert, merit selected teachers in all learning areas demonstrate high levels of knowledge, understanding and commitment to excellence in their specific disciplines. They are often gifted performers with expertise in their own field and are well connected with industry. Teaching staff are expected to complete professional development in the delivery of gifted and talented education.

Access to arts industry based professionals to support the learning of students is unique to the college. These professionals include tutors in the Arts, artists in residence, and guest directors, choreographers and performers, who provide flexibility and diversity to the programs.

John Curtin College of the Arts is one of the few State schools with its own state-of-the-art performing arts facility on campus. The fully resourced, 450 seat Curtin Theatre is superbly equipped for theatrical, dance and musical performance, offering unparalleled learning opportunities. The school also gives students the unique opportunity for public performances in dance, drama, musical theatre and music. Public exhibitions for visual arts and media arts are also a feature of the college.

In addition students have access to the college's Ellen Street theatre for small and intimate productions, as well as three dance and rehearsal studios, art studios and a media arts studio.

Well developed support services exist at the college to provide for the pastoral care of all students and student safety is a major priority at the college.

The college is a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) for certificate courses media arts, visual arts, production, front of house, music and dance.

Many ex-students who have achieved success in film, TV, theatre, public life, academically and sport return to the college as guest performers, directors and speakers. Further measure of the success of John Curtin in nurturing excellence in the Arts can be found in the extent to which ex-students progress to further studies in the great Arts education academies around Australia and overseas.

John Curtin College of the Arts was the first school to have a specialist soccer program in Australia. Established in 1990, the specialist Soccer Excellence program at John Curtin has firmly established itself as the state's leading soccer program in secondary schools. A significant number of former students play in professional teams internationally and the program has produced many State and National representatives.

While the achievements of the extraordinary talented graduates who make careers in the Arts gives occasion to rejoice, the college also numbers among its graduates citizens making major contributions to Western Australia and Australia across the professions, as parliamentarians, in public service, business, academia and in sports. The common thread that binds them is that while at John Curtin they had access to a unique and high quality Arts enriched education that remains a major influence in their lives.

Teaching staff at John Curtin College of the Arts are expected to demonstrate commitment to:

- Creating an environment of excellence based on shared and agreed goals.
- Using a well-constructed differentiated curriculum to address the needs of all students in their classes.
- Utilising effective assessment/diagnostic evidence as a basis for student differentiation.
- Providing curriculum materials for individual gifted and talented learners, in which students are differentiated, accelerated, enriched and extended, as appropriate.
- Collaborating with colleagues in planning and structuring learning programs and activities.
- Ongoing professional learning. Teachers will be prepared to model learning, engage in reflective practices and ongoing professional development, particularly in the area of gifted and talented education.
- Modelling the values of the college.
- Working with parents and the wider community to support students' learning.
- A dress code which reflects the professional ethos of the college.

As a selective school, there is an expectation of all staff to understand and engage in different research methods and styles that reflect current research and practice in gifted and talented education.