

# University Centre Colchester (UCC)

## Staff Profile

Name:	Dr Abbie Cairns
Job title/role:	ITE Tutor
Subjects taught/administrative responsibilities:	Tutor for Certificate/ Postgraduate Certificate/ Post Graduate Certificate in Education (Levels 5, 6, 7) – Year 2 Part Time. This role involves in course delivery, academic supervision, and supporting trainee teachers' development of professional practice and reflective skills.
Qualifications and Membership of Professional bodies:	<p>BA (Hons) Fine Art, Norwich University of the Arts</p> <p>PGCE, University Centre Colchester</p> <p>MA Fine Art, University of Suffolk</p> <p>PhD, Norwich University of the Arts</p> <p>AFHEA (Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy)</p> <p>CeP (Certified Practitioner of Learning Development)</p> <p>Member and Council Member of NSEAD (National Society for Education in Art and Design)</p> <p>Member of SET (Society for Education and Training)</p> <p>Member of BERA (British Educational Research Association)</p>
Experience in Education:	I have taught and supported learners across a wide range of adult, higher, and community education contexts, including ACL Essex, WEA, Norwich University of the Arts, University of East Anglia, University of Suffolk, and University Centre Colchester. Within my role I bring a decade of experience working with diverse adult learner groups, vocational education, and teacher education programmes.
Biography and personal interests:	<p>With a background in Fine Art and a passion for creative education, I combine academic research with teaching practice to support the next generation of FE educators. I am especially interested in peer learning, the use of arts-based methods in professional education, and nurturing practitioner dual and multifaceted professional identities.</p> <p>I have an interest in academic journals and work with the Journal of Vocational Education and Training to promote historical and contemporary research in the field of vocational education.</p>
Professional practice / research interests:	<p>My current research explores the professional identity development of vocational educators. My research often draws on autoethnographic techniques and storytelling. My broader interests include dual and multifaceted professionalism, creative research methodologies, and practitioner inquiry in the FE sector. I am the author of Exploring your FE Teacher Identity (Routledge), a practical guide for vocational and technical teachers.</p> <p>Cairns, A. (2025) 'The role of imagination in autoethnographic research,' International Journal of Art and Design Education. DOI: 10.1111/jade.12570.</p> <p>Cairns, A. (2025) 'The role of subject-specific continuing professional development for vocational teachers in further education: an artist-teacher in adult community learning perspective,' Research in Post-Compulsory Education. DOI: 10.1080/13596748.2025.2469008.</p>