

Programme Specification

BA (Hons) Commercial Photography



This Programme Specification is designed for prospective students, current students, graduates, academic staff and potential employers. It provides a summary of the main features of the programme and the intended learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided.

Whilst every endeavour has been made to provide the course described in the Programme Specification, the University reserves the right to make such changes as may be appropriate for reasons of operational efficiency or due to circumstances beyond its control. Any changes are made in accordance with the University's academic standards and quality procedures.

This document is available in alternative formats on request.

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

The Programme Specification provides a summary of the main features of the **BA (Hons) Commercial Photography** course, and the learning outcomes that a 'typical' student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she passes the course.

Further detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching and learning methods of each unit may be found in your Course Handbook.

<u>Key Course Information</u>

Final Award	BA Honours
Course Title	Commercial Photography
Teaching institution	Arts University Bournemouth
Awarding Institution	Arts University Bournemouth
Professional accreditation	None
Length of course / mode of study	3 years full-time
Level of final award (in FHEQ)	Level 6
Subject benchmark statement(s)	Art and Design Communication, media, film and cultural studies
UCAS code	W644
Language of study	English
External Examiner for course	Nathan Tromans Senior Academic, Acting Deputy Head Birmingham Institute of Art and Design <i>Please note that it is not appropriate for students to contact external examiners directly</i>
Date of Validation	2012
Date of most recent review	N/A
Date programme specification written/revised	September 2012

Course Philosophy

The course aims to provide a wide range of learners with the opportunity to develop a specialist career in Commercial Photography. By focussing on contemporary commercial practice, students can locate their work in a number of contexts including editorial/documentary, advertising, fashion and portraiture.

Our ethos is to support and encourage technically proficient and professionally astute photography students to develop and critically reflect on their practice as they mature as autonomous creative decision makers. Students on the course will have the opportunity of setting the creative agenda of contemporary commercial photography. Our aim as a course is to nurture graduates who have the potential to determine rather than pursue market trends. We seek to engender a liberating rather than a prescriptive approach to learning within which students can develop innovative solutions to creative challenges. We celebrate how cultural diversity and a broad range of interests contribute to an enhanced group dynamic and can provide an enriched experience through the establishment of a mature position in contemporary practice. We expect our students to be prepared for what lays before them, striving to make their mark as the new talent in a sophisticated and creative environment.

Course Aims

- To focus your professional knowledge and career potential, including opportunities for work placements and other work-related learning that will support your career development.
- To promote your personal development by undertaking academic and creative research which could lead to further study at postgraduate level.
- To develop your abilities in communication and presentation.

By encouraging creative maturity and conceptual awareness of industry practices, the course will provide graduates with the critical and analytical skills required to challenge conventional commercial output. Therefore they will not only successfully respond to the wishes of clients, but also through the development of their own 'visual voice', be able to offer alternatives to those who already work within the photographic marketplace.

The course will offer the commercially focussed student the opportunity to take greater responsibility for their career development by being able to locate and articulate their practice within contemporary discourse. Graduates from BA (Hons) Commercial Photography will be able to define clearly the working contexts for their practice with due consideration to markets, key practitioners and the current critical debates that inform production and consumption. For example; genre practices within commercial photography such as fashion, portraiture, still-life, and documentary, are subject to changes in aesthetic taste and working methodologies, and vary from one commercial context to another. In addition, students will have a grasp of the fundamental and current critical positions affecting their area of specialism, for example the impact of third-wave feminism and media criticism on fashion practice, as well as of the critical discourse surrounding the notions of consumption and the 'commercial'.

The professionally focussed research integral to the ethos of the course also offers the opportunity for further study at postgraduate study.

Course Outcomes

By the end of the course students will be able to:

1. Apply creative and professional skills related to photography and the visual communications and photographic industries.
2. Show evidence of effective problem solving, research, communication and presentation skills.
3. Apply a critical and theoretical understanding of photography both within a historical and contemporary context.
4. Apply a critical and analytical understanding of photographic practice.
5. Have the ability to place own work in a commercial context and identify defined career objectives within the creative/photographic industries.
6. Have the ability to locate own work in an academic context and to identify appropriate opportunities for study at postgraduate level.
7. Apply successful creative solutions to commercially focused outcomes.
8. Work independently and apply knowledge, skills and understanding appropriately.

Reference Points

UK Quality Code for Higher Education, including:

- Subject Benchmark Statement: Art and Design; Communication, media, film and cultural studies
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)

AUB Undergraduate Regulatory Framework

AUB Learning and Teaching Strategy

Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Learning and Teaching Strategies

The course outcomes will be met by deploying a wide variety of teaching and learning methods including workshop projects, studio projects, lectures, seminars, group critiques, guided reading and tutorials.

The methods employed will, whenever possible, lead the student into the disciplines required of a creative practitioner and promote the transferable skills of self-management and self-reliance.

The course is structured progressively to provide increased opportunities for autonomous learning.

The progressive promotion of student-centred learning reflects maturity as a student and allows learning towards individual goals.

Teaching is directed at supporting individual engagement in learning although there will be opportunities to work in teams to enable learning of the value of peer cooperation.

The integration of theory and practice is promoted and reinforced through a team teaching approach. Lectures, seminars and tutorials may be delivered by team members, as appropriate, in the creative environment of the studio.

The methods employed will, wherever possible, induct students in the disciplines required of a creative practitioner in commercial photography along with transferable skills (managing self, professional skills and Team working), and value and credit any relevant previous experience. A key method will be the promotion of work related learning, including work placements; visits to the workshops or studios of relevant practitioners or organisations; guest lectures or workshops led by visiting practitioners; 'live' or simulated project briefs. Learning and career planning will be consolidated through the encouragement of skills in personal planning, reflection and development.

Teaching is directed at supporting individual engagement in learning although there will be opportunities for students to work in teams to enable them to learn the value of peer co-operation. Also, it is anticipated that, due to the vocational and professional orientation of the course and to enable students to benefit from the range of resources and disciplines within the University, opportunities will exist for students to collaborate in teams with peers in, for example, fashion or model making. It is also envisaged that live project work may benefit from the collaboration of students from all levels of the course.

The study time allocated to each unit in the course incorporates a balance of teaching support and learning. The progressive promotion of student-centred learning reflects the anticipated maturity of students and allows them to direct their learning towards individual goals. For example, the teaching in Level 4 is directed at providing students with the knowledge, concepts and skills to take increasing responsibility for the management of their own learning as they progress through to Level 5. Level 6 of the course allows the student to confirm their particular creative concerns and to extend the scope and depth of their enquiry, taking the major responsibility for their study. Teaching support reflects these expectations, as mature learners, through tutorial support that complements the autonomous nature of their study.

Negotiated Learning Agreements are the principle means of defining learning goals and monitoring progress and achievements, providing the opportunity for student to extend their interests and abilities and demonstrate their capacity for sustained independent and professional work.

Guidance and counselling to help students in realising their learning potential will be provided at the start of each term.

Assessment

Each unit is assessed separately, and the assessment forms part of the unit. Assessment both provides a measure of your achievement, and also gives you regular feedback on how your learning is developing.

For every unit of your course you will be provided with a Unit Handbook, which will state what you are expected to learn within the unit; the work that you have to submit; and how it will be assessed. The Unit Handbook will also give the deadline for presenting your work for assessment.

You will receive a final mark for each unit in the form of a percentage, which will be recorded on your formal record of achievement (transcript). Each component of assessment is graded using a notched marking scale, whereby only certain marks are used within each grade. The only marks available within any ten-point band are *2, *5 and *8 (eg 42, 45, 48). These marks correspond to a low, mid, and high level of achievement within each grade band.

On successful completion of your Honours degree course, you will be awarded a degree classification based on your unit marks. The final classification is determined using all unit marks at Levels 5 and 6 using two different algorithms, which are detailed in your *Quick Guide to the regulations*. If the two algorithms produce different results, you will be awarded the higher class of degree.

If you have joined Level 6 having completed a Foundation Degree (FdA) the final classification is determined using only your unit marks at Level 6.

For further information on progression, awards and classifications, please visit <https://my.aub.ac.uk/viewpoint/>

Course Structure

All students are registered for the award of BA (Hons); however exit awards are available if you leave the course early, having successfully completed one or two levels. If you successfully complete a level of the course, you will automatically be entitled to progress to the next level.

For the award of a Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE), you must have achieved a minimum of 120 credits at Level 4. This qualification may be awarded if you leave the University following successful completion of the first year of your course.

For the award of a Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE), you must have achieved a minimum of 240 credits of which a minimum of 120 must be at Level 5. This qualification may be awarded if you leave the University following successful completion of the second year of your course.

For the award of a BA (Hons) you must have achieved a minimum of 360 credits of which a minimum of 240 must be at Level 5 or above, of which a minimum of 120 credits must be at Level 6. This qualification will be awarded upon successful completion of your course.

A BA without Honours may be awarded if you have achieved 300 credits, at least 180 of which are at Level 5 or above, and at least 60 of which are at Level 6.

Course Content

Level 4

Level 4 of the course provides you with the creative and practical skills that you will build upon during the course. It introduces you to a variety of traditional and digital photographic techniques and processes through units in *Principles and Practices* and *Digital Imaging & Production* giving you a strong technical foundation in location, studio, lighting, camera and digital production techniques.

Photographic themes and concepts in photography are addressed through consideration of *Historical and Critical Studies in Photography*. Photography projects and written assignments are used to reinforce learning and enable you to exercise your developing knowledge and practical skills, for example in the unit *Creative Photographic Practice*. During these units guest lectures by visiting photographers and industry professionals will be given to underpin your holistic knowledge of contemporary commercial photographic practice. Your preparation for future employment and/or freelance work is enhanced through the integration of Transferable Skills in course units.

The work-related focus of the course is promoted by the involvement of practising photographers or other visual communication professionals who provide advice and support for the development of your career plans during guest lectures. This will be consolidated towards the end of Level 4 when you undertake the *Placement* unit overseen by the unit leader (negotiated between the student and the tutor/s). This draws together your achievements on the course so far and gives you live opportunities to apply your learning in the workplace. The timing of the *Placement* unit is such that, potentially you are able to extend your work experience beyond the formal end of the unit to the conclusion of the summer vacation period. In these circumstances, arrangements for your end of level assessment in June can be negotiated.

Level 5

Level 5 of the course builds upon the skills and knowledge gained in Level 4 and provides opportunities for you to develop your (photographic) genre specific interests.

You are encouraged to reflect on your particular professional interests and to take responsibility for your learning in your choice of topics for project work (negotiated between the student and the tutor/s via Learning Agreements) through the unit *Creativity in Context and* culminating in the unit *Photographic Futures*. Projects for this unit are designed to develop your creative, research and conceptual skills combined with commercial and professional awareness and understanding. Where possible opportunities for live project work or projects set by external practitioners are accommodated, thereby extending your understanding of the professional demands of photography. During the level you will also continue to develop your digital skills and promotional awareness through the unit *Professional Futures*; this unit will provide you with the opportunity to present yourself as a photographer via the internet, while developing your own branding.

The unit *Critical Approaches to Photography* provides an overview of 20th and 21st century developments in photography and critical theory together with the development of research and written communication skills, allowing for a more critical

engagement with photographic practice, while preparing students for their major written work during study at Level 6.

Level 6

Level 6 of the course builds on the platform of skills and knowledge gained during Levels 4 and 5. The Level 6 adopts an extremely focused approach to individual student's career ambitions, developing student's specific creative and conceptual skills in order to gain a more complex understanding of the particular discourse with which they wish to be professionally engaged.

Graduates are capable of advancing and challenging accepted ways of working within the industry, allowing them the opportunity to reach their creative potential. Critical and theoretical research will have informed their commercial practice. Gaining a BA (Hons) award in this discipline equips graduates to compete at the highest level of professional practice as well as providing a platform for potential post-graduate study. After three years of extensive investigation, graduates will possess all the attributes necessary to define the future of contemporary commercial photographic practice. This is evidenced through and articulated by an accomplished and developed commercial portfolio and the critical skills with which to locate this work within an ever more complex visual culture.

The unit structure enhances the delivery and professional integrity of the course by enabling appropriate specialists to deliver units of study. The units in Level 6 are the culmination of students professional understanding of specialism. Two major units, *Specialist Practice* and *Major Project*, provide the opportunity for two bodies of work that will essentially become the student's professional portfolio. The unit *Investigative Study*, for which a critically informed analysis of a subject related topic will be produced, will help to inform practical work, while supporting aspirations for future study at post graduate level.

Course Units

Unit code	Unit Title	Credit Weighting
Level 4		
CPH450	Principles and Practices	40
CPH451	Digital Imaging & Production	20
CPH452	Creative Photographic Practice	20
CPH453	Historical and Critical Studies in Photography	20
CPH454	Placement	20
Level 5		
CPH550	Creativity in Context	40
CPH551	Critical Approaches to Photography	20
CPH552	Photographic Futures	40
CPH553	Professional Futures	20
Level 6		
CPH650	Specialist Practice	40
CPH651	Investigative Study	20
CPH652	Major Project	60

Course Diagrams

This schematic diagram shows the proposed start/end dates for each unit with assessment periods. Further information on the structure of each unit will be included in unit handbooks.

Level 4																														
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Induction week	CPH450 Principles and Practices (40 credits)													CPH452 Creative Photographic Practice (20 credits)										CPH454 Placement (20 credits)						
	CPH451 Digital Imaging and Production (20 credits)													CPH453 Historical and Critical Studies in Photography (20 credits)																

Level 5																														
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
	CPH550 Creativity in Context (40 credits)													CPH552 Photographic Futures (40 credits)										Tutorials						
	CPH551 Critical Approaches to Photography (20 credits)													CPH553 Professional Futures (20 credits)																

Level 6																																
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
CPH650 Specialist Practice (40 credits)											CPH652 Major Project (60 credits)																			Assessments	Show Preparation	HE Show
CPH651 Investigative Study (20 credits)																																

Resources

University Resources:

Library

The course is supported by a Subject Librarian who liaises closely with the team to ensure that the Library resources are relevant and meet student and staff research needs. As part of the AUB's Information Literacy Framework, the Subject Librarian provides sessions on researching and using information, as well as individual support for students in the use of Library resources

The Library holds an excellent range of specialist learning materials including books, journals, CDs, DVDs, and newspapers. It has subscriptions to a wide range of specialist electronic resources focusing on art, design, media and performance, including e-books and e-journals. The Library's facilities include computers, viewing rooms, a presentation space and a silent reading room.

The Library consistently receives high scores in both the in-house and national student surveys, which are carried out annually.

Information technology

The University provides a comprehensive range of IT resources, utilising Apple Macintosh, Windows Personal Computers and specialist resources for its art, design, media and performance disciplines. The University uses Industry standard software from Microsoft, Adobe, Macromedia, Apple, Quark and leading software suppliers, and is continually investing in its technology and resources.

IT resources are also available to you via the Library, plus through a number of bookable IT suites and dedicated base room provision. To enable access to learning resources, wireless internet access is also available.

The ITCS section (Information Technology and Communication Services) provides a helpdesk facility for IT enquiries and fault notification. The Helpdesk is open from 8.30am until 5pm from Monday to Friday Email: itcshelpdesk@aub.ac.uk

Museum of Design in Plastic (MoDiP)

MoDiP is a registered museum of 20th and 21st century design and popular culture with a focus on plastics. Its collection is unique within the UK and has been developed to support teaching and learning at Arts University Bournemouth.

There are many ways in which MoDiP can play a part in your studies:

- as a source of inspiration – large numbers of items may be viewed, handled and explored in depth, drawn, photographed and filmed
- as the focus of a brief for products and projects relating to course work
- as an exhibition venue – your work can be displayed in relation to the collections and exhibitions and events may be mounted in the museum space

The Museum is in a purpose built space within the Library, designed with wheelchair access in mind, and has the same opening hours as the rest of the University for the viewing of exhibitions. Objects not on display can be borrowed and taken to the studio. To see what is available, go to the [Plastics Network](http://www.plasticsnetwork.org) website (www.plasticsnetwork.org).

The Gallery

The gallery is a major resource for contemporary visual art at Arts University Bournemouth and has received regional and national recognition. There are regular gallery events, including collections on loan from galleries and museums, as well as individual exhibitions by some of today's leading artists, photographers, designers and critical writers.

It also functions as a learning resource and is integrated into the teaching, learning, and research practice undertaken at the University.

text + work is the ethos which underpins the exhibition programme at Arts University Bournemouth. The **text + work** concept promotes and provides a forum for challenging dialogue between innovative contemporary art, design, and media practice and its theoretical context.

There are **text + work** gallery events, critical texts, shared and networked exhibitions and a **text + work** website.

Student Support

Academic Guidance

Academic staff are responsible for providing you with feedback on your work and your general academic progress, and for providing academic support and guidance through the course. This is provided through "critiques" and written feedback, as well as guidance on practical work and informal discussion about your concerns. These sessions may be individual or, in the case of collaborative work, in small groups.

Academic tutorials are scheduled to allow you to discuss in depth matters relating to creative or theoretical work, or the course in general. You will be entitled to at least one formal recorded academic tutorial per term with a nominated member of the course team.

Support and advice is also provided on an informal basis throughout the course, through discussions between staff and students.

Career Education, Information and Guidance

You will be prepared for employment, and given the opportunity to learn about the various career options available to you, through a wide range of projects which may include live briefs or external competitions. Academic staff remain very familiar with the discipline, and will often still work in the field, and are also able to advise on specific opportunities.

The Careers Service within the University offers impartial, confidential advice, support and guidance, to help you explore and develop your career ideas and manage your future career successfully. The Service offers individual career guidance interviews, as well as advice on job seeking strategies, CVs and interview skills, self-employment / freelancing, and further study opportunities.

The Senior Careers Officer holds regular lunchtime lectures, which cover a range of popular careers topics, including Postgraduate study and funding, Career planning, Networking and self-marketing, and Teaching as a career. Full details and dates of forthcoming lectures are available on the Careers intranet pages and on the Student Services notice boards.

The Careers Service also offers specialist events, working in partnership with local employers, AUB alumni, and external agencies to bring together a range of art, design, media and performance expertise.

Learning Support

Support for students with disabilities (including dyslexia)

The Arts University Bournemouth is firmly committed to a policy of equal opportunities for all students and positively welcomes applications from people with disabilities and/or additional needs. Throughout all aspects of University life, we actively encourage and support the participation of students with disabilities. We aim to support disabled students by offering needs assessments and support plans which enable you to achieve your personal goals.

The Learning Support team provides academic support for students with specific learning difficulties including dyslexia. We ask all new Home students to complete a 'Quickscan' screening programme when they join the University. This screening is designed to check your learning style (the way you learn best) and whether you might have signs of dyslexia. If appropriate, you will be referred to an educational psychologist for a full assessment.

Students with a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia are able to access individual tutorials aimed at improving your independent study skills, and are supported in applying for the Disabled Students' Allowance, which can provide specialist equipment and, if appropriate, personal support.

The Senior Disability Officer and Wellbeing Officer provide ongoing support and advice for students with all other types of disability, including mental health difficulties, physical disabilities, medical conditions and sensory impairments.

The Arts University Bournemouth has a duty to anticipate the needs of disabled students, and to make "reasonable adjustments" to ensure that these students can access education and related services. If you feel that some aspect of the learning, teaching or assessment on your course places you at a disadvantage because of your disability, please contact the Senior Disability Officer within Student Services, who will be happy to work with you and your course team to identify any appropriate reasonable adjustments. Contact Barry Gilbert on bjgilbert@aub.ac.uk or telephone 01202 363291.

Support for students for whom English is a second language

If English is not your first language you will be invited to complete a brief written exercise during the initial weeks of your course, so that your current academic language skills can be assessed. Our English for Academic Purposes (EAP) tutors, who are part of the Learning Support team, will review the exercise and contact you if your work indicates that you would benefit from additional support. An EAP tutor will work with you to draw up an Individual Learning Plan, which will set out a structured approach to developing your independent academic and study skills. This may include helping you to develop strategies for interpreting assignment briefs, working on the structure of your written work, or developing your proof-reading skills, for example. The plan will be reviewed each term and will be shared with your course tutor so that they are aware of the work you are doing to improve your study skills. If necessary, your EAP tutor will refer you to a local language school so that you can improve your generic English language levels.

Pastoral support and guidance

Support and advice on non-academic matters is provided through trained and qualified professional staff within Student Services. We have a team of professionally qualified male and female counsellors, with appointments available during weekdays and evenings. Students accessing the service are offered various levels of support ranging from regular weekly sessions, occasional support or just a “one off” consultation. In most cases, you can expect to be seen for a session within two days of making initial contact with the service. If the situation is very urgent and you are very emotionally distressed, we also have a crisis support service and you will be seen by one of our counsellors almost immediately.

Pastoral support is also available from the AUB Chaplaincy. The Chaplaincy at Arts University Bournemouth is shared with Bournemouth University and is an inclusive Chaplaincy, which welcomes people of all faiths and none. The Quiet Room and the Islamic Prayer Room are in regular use by staff and students, and meetings with ministers of any faith can be arranged.

Advice and support with practical issues such as funding, accommodation or childcare is available from the Student Advice, Funds and Accommodation Office within Student Services.

Methods for Evaluating and Improving the Quality and Standards of Teaching and Learning

The course is subject to the University’s rigorous quality assurance procedures which involve subject specialist and internal peer review of the course at periodic intervals, normally of 5 years. This process ensures that the course engages with the QAA Quality Code.

In addition all courses undertake an Annual Course Review which takes account of relevant information such as:

- External Examiners’ Reports
- Key statistics including data on application, retention and achievement
- Results of the National Student Survey

- Results of the in-house Student Perception Survey
- Feedback from Student Representatives
- Feedback from relevant employer groups, including the course Industry Liaison Group

All courses develop an action plan arising out of this exercise, which is monitored by the Course and Faculty Boards of Study. Your student representatives can keep you informed about progress against the action plan.

Staff development priorities for the course team as a whole are identified through the Annual Course Review process, and for individuals through the Staff Performance Review process.

Indicators of Quality and Standards

The Arts University Bournemouth was granted taught degree awarding powers by the Privy Council in 2008 following an intensive period of scrutiny by experienced academics from across the higher education sector.

The University was audited by the QAA in May 2011 and received a judgement of 'Confidence' in the management of the academic standards of its awards, and its management of the quality of learning opportunities. This is the best available outcome, and confirms that our quality assurance mechanisms are robust, meaning that we can have full confidence in the standard of course outcomes, and the quality of the educational experience we deliver.

More detailed information is available in the following documents:

- Online course information
- Quick guide to the regulations
- Unit Handbooks
- HE Student Regulations – <https://my.aub.ac.uk/viewpoint/>
- AUB Student Guide