

the
GRADUATE
SCHOOL

MA Animation Production
Programme Specification

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

The Programme Specification provides a summary of the main features of the **MA Animation Production** course and the learning outcomes that a ‘typical’ student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if they pass the course.

Further detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching and learning methods of each unit may be found in the Unit Descriptors, which forms part of this Handbook.

<u>Key Course Information</u>	
Final Award	Master of Arts
Course Title	Animation Production
Award Title	MA Animation Production
Teaching institution	Arts University Bournemouth
Awarding Institution	Arts University Bournemouth
Offered in the School of:	Graduate School and Research
Professional accreditation	n/a
Length of course / mode of study	53 weeks full-time 105 weeks part-time
Level of final award (in FHEQ)	Level 7
Subject benchmark statement(s)	QAA Master’s degree characteristics
Language of study	English
External Examiner for course:	To be confirmed
<i>Please note that it is not appropriate for students to contact external examiners directly.</i>	
Date of Validation	2013
Date of most recent review	2019
Date programme specification written/revised	2020

Postgraduate Ethos

The Master’s course recognises individuals and their aspirations, and celebrates ideas, making, and creative risk-taking. Our guiding principle is to offer distinctive, exciting and challenging opportunities for you to engage in your respective subject disciplines in order to critically engage with, and redefine, your particular approaches to your practices and position them within your chosen external, creative, economic, and cultural environment.

We support this principle through our passionate engagement with interdisciplinary and collaborative practices, with the integration of theory and practice, with our understanding of the particularities of individual practitioners and the broader world, global view, and with an attitude to career development that creates a dialogue between professionalism and risk taking.

Such a context affords possibilities to engage with fresh, often unpredictable and certainly challenging methodologies and techniques with which you can research, test, develop, interrogate and challenge, through forms of making that enable you to reflect on your own practice and subject discipline. Whilst you will be encouraged to develop your own themes, relationships between the aesthetic, the political, the ethical and 'value' are ever-present and the courses support your engagement with what are often difficult contemporary issues.

Crucial to this endeavour, is that you demonstrate a committed passion for your practice and the particular media within your chosen subject discipline or field of study. Each course devises specific discipline-focused project work to enable you to be suitably informed in taking the right path towards your chosen career in a diverse range of professions /industries or progress to further study at doctorate level. This discipline focus is, however, enhanced by your experience of interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches and activities which enrich your journey. Different levels of teaching delivery structure your learning experience in such a way as to enable you to take broad, overarching transdisciplinary issues or questions, and ground them within the specificities of your discipline and individual practice. Our focus on the relationships between personal professional development and the development of communities of practice through sharing and collaboration is underpinned by the unique AUB reputation for truly collaborative working across disciplines. Through involvement in cross-course groups, shared lectures and other MA activities you will have opportunities to work together with other MA students to form a 'postgraduate network' that will facilitate a wider dialogue around art and design, sustainability, ethics, the political and the often-global reach of creative industries and professions. Our ethos focuses on not only developing your systematic and critical understanding of knowledge and of the application of that knowledge in an appropriate, professional context but also in having the resolve, the skills and the acumen to exercise initiative and personal responsibility in a world which is asking many questions of all of us with respect to our abilities and desires in coexisting with a global community.

In other words, our ethos focuses on the ability for our graduates not only to develop their careers and be employable but also to be engaged in the redefinition of what employment might look like in what are times of tremendous social, political, economic, and ecological change, and indeed upheaval.

Course Description

This MA course is all about enabling you to develop a specialist practice within the diverse field of animation — whether in 2D/drawn, CG, stop motion or other forms of animation — and produce excellent work that synthesises the 'strands' of theory, practice and professionalism.

Your engagement with the MA may involve pre-production, production or post-production specialisms such as character design, storyboarding, concept work, or other specialisms such as puppet-making, or costume design for Animation. You may choose to make an animated film as your final 'outcome', or develop a body of work through one of these other forms of specialist practice. The structure of the MA enables you to interrogate your ideas across practical, theoretical and professional modes of understanding, bringing your work to fruition in the *Masters Project 2* unit.

Through a combination of lectures, staff- and student-led seminars, group critiques and other activities (e.g. studio visits, festivals) you will interrogate your ideas and

refine how you think about animation. The MA encourages collaborative work where possible, with other MA students (on MA Animation Production and other MA courses) and with BA Animation Production students. You will devise a Study Plan that outlines and structures how you will approach your specialist practice, and how you will interrogate it through critical analysis of the theoretical, historical and professional facets of your specialism. There will be regular one-to-one support from tutors and guest lecturers, augmenting the lectures, seminars and other activities noted above. As befits study at postgraduate level, you are also expected to organise and direct your own studies for much of the time, with the support of the tutors/Course Leader.

As well as a 1-year full-time route, the MA is offered on a part-time basis. The part-time route offers an ideal opportunity for people who are already working in industry to further develop their specialist skills and practice, and complete a major body of work across a 2-year period. For both full-time and part-time routes, we strongly encourage applicants who want to interrogate their professional practice, and develop their understanding of the workplace. The full-time and part-time students will share some of the sessions (lectures, seminars and crits), where appropriate, though there will clearly be times when full-time students are in and part-time are not. Where possible, the overlaps between full-time and part-time routes will be used to positively reinforce everyone's experience on the course. For example, the part-time students will be able to 'sit in' on full-time students' crits for the first unit of study, and benefit from this experience prior to undertaking the part-time route's version of the same unit critique later. Subsequently, as the part-time students move into their second year of study, they will welcome the new cohorts of full-time and part-time students, and be able to help induct the new students into the ethos of the MA. In this respect, the MA offers a strong synthesis of tutor/mentor-assisted learning, direct practical experience, and peer-assisted learning.

The alumni of AUB Animation have gone on to work at Aardman, ILM, Lupus Films, Framestore, Pixar, the Moving Picture Company and many other companies. We are proud of the network of AUB graduates who are now employed in animation – many of whom return to talk to current students as Visiting Tutors. A key part of your course 'journey' on the MA is to seek out and interact with those working in your specialist field in animation. (See 'Course Content' below for further details.)

Statement of Student Entitlement

- Tutorials – three supervisory tutorials per 60 credit unit; totalling 9 over the course. In addition, each student is entitled to assessment feedback tutorials on the Strategies for Practice and Master's Project 1 units. A tutorial time of 45 minutes is allocated.
- Group Critique – three critiques; one near to the middle of each unit.
- Staff and student-led lectures and seminars.
- Regularly timetabled group meetings with MA Course Leader and/or relevant tutors.
- Access to the Quiet Study Room during Library hours.
- Access to relevant resources agreed through your Course Leader.
- Agreed attendance on undergraduate workshop/darkroom/resource area inductions.
- Agreed access to relevant studios as required for assessments purposes.
- Postgraduate show where appropriate.
- Agreed access to discipline-related and cross-discipline lectures/seminars on undergraduate programmes.

- Attendance at Gallery events, Research days and other appropriate AUB events.

Course Aims

1. Provide a forum for high-level critical debate and interrogation of approaches to Animation practice.
2. Support students in instigating new directions in their work and developing their practice, research and professional/entrepreneurial understanding.
3. Encourage individual students to critically reflect on their work and contextualise it in relation to wider Animation production cultures.
4. Enable students to develop professional maturity and apply this in the changing world of work.
5. Support students in their in-depth exploration of their chosen research area/specialism, thereby preparing them for a range of employment opportunities in the creative industries or further study at Doctoral level.

Course Outcomes

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

1. Produce advanced individual or collaborative work that acknowledges current practices within the wider creative arena of Animation.
2. Demonstrate an in-depth ability to investigate, understand and critique current issues in Animation and provide original insights into contemporary practice.
3. Demonstrate and apply highly developed conceptual, practical and professional understanding of theories, techniques and processes in Animation.
4. Evaluate your individual practice in relation to critical research at the forefront of the discipline and articulate this through the completion of a body of work and its appropriate contextualisation.
5. Clearly evidence that you have acquired new skills and abilities in communication, presentation, research and independent learning.

Reference Points

UK Quality Code for higher education, including:

- Subject Benchmark Statement: *Master's degree characteristics*
- QAA's Benchmark Statements for
 - (a) Art and Design (February 2017) and
 - (b) Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies (October 2016)

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)

AUB Regulatory Framework and Postgraduate Assessment Regulations

Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Learning and Teaching Strategies

The MA course uses a range of delivery methods including lectures, seminars (staff- and student-led), individual and group tutorials, critiques, workshops and presentations. There is also scope for students, during their professional engagement and industry liaison, to look at ways in which a placement, internship or other engagement could form part of their MA work: in these cases, the Learning Agreement/Study Plan for the unit would be used as the mechanism for ensuring that such work meets the requisite Learning Outcomes for the MA.

The study time allocated to each unit in the course therefore includes formal teaching, tutorial support and independent learning, with the balance of these in line with what would be expected of PGT/Level 7 provision.

Learning outcomes for units are designed to capture the appropriate student activity, including both developmental and research-based activity, the quality of final outcomes, time management and organisational activity, and engagement with academic protocols.

The Postgraduate Network Model (see diagram at end of this section)

All teaching sessions delivered across the postgraduate taught courses are located in a network of learning, which has three different levels. The top level—the *macro* level—is predominantly made up of lectures delivered to the whole Graduate School. These lectures are transdisciplinary in nature in that they address issues and understanding common to all postgraduate courses at the AUB.

These overarching broad themes at the macro level can be interpreted differently by clusters of disciplines. The next level in the network—the *meso* level—therefore involves learning and teaching sessions that provide a disciplinary interpretation and focus to macro level lectures. These are more relevant to students on allied or cognate courses, and preference is given to students from such allied courses to attend these sessions, however students from across the Graduate School can elect to attend any sessions as long as space and resources permit.

The final level in the network—the *micro* level—involves course specific: tutorial sessions, critiques, and project launches. This level contextualises the learning from the top two levels within your individual practice.

While students at undergraduate level are encouraged to learn through their peers, at MA Level this is an imperative through peer learning and group work. Each member of the MA cohort across the Graduate School is an active participant in learning and teaching, and through this postgraduate network, the sharing of good practice is established. Through involvement in cross-course groups, shared lectures and other MA activities you will work together with other MA students to form the postgraduate network that will facilitate a wider dialogue around the Arts, sustainability, ethics, the political and the creative industries.

Using technology to assist and enhance learning

The University is systematically developing technology-enhanced approaches to learning. AUB learning technology provides access to a full range of course

documentation and provides an effective mechanism for the maintenance of course and broader institutional communication. The course adopts a *blended learning* approach where lectures, demonstrations, and tutorials can occur on-line via channels such as Zoom as well as face to face. Third-party content is also integrated within the network model and sessions are collected, scheduled and disseminated through the University's virtual learning infrastructure. Lectures and other sessions within the Graduate School are normally recorded and available to access at times appropriate to your study. This blended learning approach preserves opportunities for on-campus studio culture to emerge through the social and interactive nature of traditional face-to-face learning and teaching, while providing greater flexibility through a wider range of learning experiences that can be accessed off-campus as well as on-campus. This is particularly useful to those with family or work commitments; providing greater flexibility to learn in a time and place of your choosing.

Full- and Part-time Study

The full-time and part-time modes of study are linked in order for both groups to interconnect and generate a vibrant post-graduate course community. The programme is driven by the individual student's research and practice. Whether they are studying full-time or part-time, they will negotiate with their supervisor how to contextualise their research interests within the structure of the course.

There are many of points of contact between full-time and part-time students, and there are also points at which they diverge. During these periods the part-time students are required to work independently. Autonomous learning is an underlying principle of post-graduate study and students opting for the part-time route allow themselves further space in which to develop their practice and thinking. Both full-time and part-time students' progress is monitored regularly via the tutorial system and through interim group critiques. The course seeks a specific commitment from students in which they are able to balance periods of independent study with the demands of seminars, discussions, group critiques, tutorials and presentations.

The part-time and full-time critiques and presentations will be held together whenever possible to encourage the exchange of ideas and views. Through such activities both of the two modes of study will make a positive contribution to the course by enriching individuals' learning experiences. The course is committed to developing a broad base of students all able to make valuable contributions based on their differing perspectives, which will enhance the experience of the whole cohort. Therefore, the structure of the course encourages valuable knowledge transfer enriching both groups' potential for career and creative development.

All new full-time and part-time cohorts will be welcomed by existing part-time students in their second year of study and will be able to learn from their experiences of the course and of the University.

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, we will inform you of what you are expected to learn; what you have to submit; how your work will be assessed; and 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 (e.g. 62, 65, 68). These marks correspond to a low, mid, and high level of achievement within each grade band.

All learning outcomes must be passed to successfully complete the unit.

Award of Merit/Distinction

A Master's Degree with Merit or Distinction may be awarded. Only units at Level 7 contribute towards the determination of a Merit or Distinction.

For further information on assessment and awards, please visit:

<https://aub.ac.uk/regulations>

Course Structure

All students are registered for the award of Master of Arts; however, exit awards are available if you leave the course early.

For the award of Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) you must have achieved a minimum of 60 credits at Level 7; and any specific requirements of the course as outlined in the Course Handbook.

For the award of Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip), you must have achieved a minimum of 120 credits at Level 7; and any specific requirements of the course as outlined in the Course Handbook.

For the award of Master of Arts (MA), you must have achieved 180 credits, of which a minimum of 120 credits must be at Level 7; and any specific requirements of the course as outlined in the Course Handbook.

Course Content

The main driver of the students' work on the MA is their self-identified practice/research focus: this is at the centre of all of their activity, and is what underpins what they do as they take their ideas from initial development, through deeper exploration and contextualisation, to a final resolved body of work. This means there is a deliberate development and critical dialogue between the work produced in each of the three units. Indeed, it is part of the point of the Level 7/MA outcomes, that students should be able to demonstrate initiative, independent learning ability, and a systematic conceptual understanding that can be applied across a range of practical and professional contexts. It is precisely this synthesis of approaches that equips the successful student with the skills to prosper in the 21st Century creative industries. It is this synthesis that underpins all the work on the MA.

In terms of specific 'content', this is framed as advanced intellectual engagement

with a range of appropriate methodologies for understanding, challenging and developing the precepts of Animation Studies as a discipline, and animation production in particular. Examples of such advanced engagement are:

- Critical and theoretical approaches to understanding 'production cultures' of animation (and how animation necessarily overlaps with and 'feeds' other disciplines and industries);
- Detailed recognition of the different aspects of the animation production pipeline and how it functions across a range of appropriate contexts (e.g. through 2D, CG, stop motion, experimental forms, so-called 'concrete' animation¹ etc);
- Nuanced engagement with how the 'stages' of pre-production, production and post-production are actually formed of mutually inter-penetrating processes, any of which can be the focus of MA inquiry, as a specialism (e.g. character design, modelmaking for animation, storyboarding, notions of performance in the animation process, the use of animation in VFX/post- production for live action);
- Discursive analysis of what 'entrepreneurialism' actually means and a properly critical examination of the entrepreneurial and professional opportunities offered by the field of Animation.

The three units of the MA build and develop the complexity of the students' ideas, leading to a final outcome/body of work that reflects the expectations of M-Level study.

At various points in the MA, depending on your specific focus and interests, you may engage with 'live projects' and external partners. Examples of previous engagements include: attendance at the Manchester Animation Festival; visits to studios such as Aardman and Blue Zoo to discuss professional development; working on projects such as *To Build A Fire* (FX Goby, 2016).

In each of the three MA units, you are required to submit a Contextual Journal. These three Contextual Journals reflect upon the Body of Work and integrated research of each unit, enabling you to focus your learning, development and planning. These are ongoing self-referential, reflective documents, updated continuously and made available for assessment at the completion of each unit. In identifying your strengths and weaknesses, your Contextual Journals enable you to take remedial action to improve and/or develop new relevant skills in preparation for the future. As such they evidence a wide range of academic engagement, reflective evaluation, critical analysis, processual thinking, specialist capabilities and professionalism in:

- The **context** that informed your practice: the relevant: theories, subjects, issues, political perspectives, animators, designers, artists, images, literature and so forth.
- The **research** that is 'on', 'for', or 'in' your practice – this includes: research on the ways you practice/the outcomes of your practice; your own research undertaken to enable your practice; and research that is embedded in the practice.
- The **developmental** aspect of the project: both in terms of your own personal

¹ See George Griffin, 'Concrete Animation', *animation: an interdisciplinary journal*, vol 2, no 3, 2007

development as a creative practitioner, the processual development of an emerging body of work, and your specialist professional development.

The *Contextual Journal* in each unit provides a space for you to map your evaluation and application of research methods. Projects might potentially use one or more research methods selected from a wealth of methods that have emerged in the literature. These methods provide ways of obtaining data, of analysing it and of testing your conclusions. Methodology involves the study of methods, and you will begin to identify the assumptions that underlie different methods and to develop the skills necessary to coordinate them and to synchronise them with your theoretical framework.

Your synthesis of theoretical, historical and professional thinking with high-level practical Animation work can be applied in future professional practice or in the undertaking of further study via a research degree (MPhil/PhD). There are opportunities to discuss how practice-as-research could form an important part of such a research degree after your MA.

Intellectual Property Rights for the Creative Industries

Intellectual Property Rights for the Creative Industries is a much-discussed topic when considering the social and economic impact such rights may have on the success of new creative businesses and enterprise initiatives.

Intellectual Property Rights are the rights given to persons over the creations of their minds. They usually give the creator an exclusive right over the use of his/her creation for a certain period of time.

Intellectual Property Rights [IPR] for the Creative Industries can be complex; the changing technology landscape has clearly impacted on previous business models and IPR strategies.

It is recognized that any IPR for the Creative Industries needs to strike a balance between the protection of innovation and the interests of society as a whole.

New Creatives entering industry need a keen awareness of the new synergies emerging between direct income generating opportunities and the wider more diversified business strategies that include: value, brand, shareholder value etc.

The creation of value through providing services is now at the heart of many new business plans, the key challenge being how to translate free services/value/brand into income generation and financially viable business models.

A series of specialist Lectures and workshops will offer an introduction to IPR for the Creative Industries. Each subject specialism will have a specific 'take' and present Case Studies of new business concepts which have successfully implemented IPR.

Specialist Resources

The MA Animation Production course has access to the following resources as part of the Animation Subject Area. Please note that the resources noted below are mainly **shared with BA (Hons) Animation Production** (who obviously make the greatest use of them due to student numbers), but the MA students are able to work in these rooms, and use these resources, subject to availability.

Rooms

- * Newly refurbished open plan studio (A103), with desks for light-boxes or computer workstations as appropriate. This space also has a line-testing bay with stations, store room and staff rooms.
- * Maya computer lab (A130b) – available for work in Maya and digital painting.
- * Production studio (A131) – used as base room for BA 2D digital animation productions, with options for MA students to work in here as well
- * Stop-motion room (A130) – used for teaching small groups of BA (and MA, where appropriate) students in early parts of the year, then converts into the main shooting bay for Level 6 stop-motion productions; subsequently can be used for shooting of MA stop-motion productions.
- * Loft Studio (A201) – base room for Level 6 2D digital productions Software
- * ToonBoom Harmony
- * Storyboard Pro
- * Pencil Check
- * Autodesk Maya
- * Dragonframe
- * Adobe Creative Suite
- * After Effects
- * Photoshop

Computers and Cameras

- * 109x computer workstations with tablets.
- * 2x stop-motion PCs.
- * 2x teaching PCs.
- * 1x Epson DS60000 scanner (networked)
- * 1x Epson GT20000
- * 20x line-testing PCs
- * 2x Epson DS50000 scanner (networked)
- * 98x light desks in studio
- * 14x light for loan
- * 15x bookable armatures and rigs.
- * 10x smaller stages
- * 10x large stages
- * 4x Canon 5D Mark II 24-70mm f2.4*
- * 6x Canon 650D with kit lenses*
- * 2x Nikon D810 Kits with a set of primes lenses in each*
- * 5x Dell Inspiron Laptops
- * 10x Dell Laptops
- * 17x dragon frame controllers
- * 16x bookable webcams
- * 5x Dedo kits (3 in each)
- * 2x Kino Flows
- * 3x FilmGear 300
- * 3x Arri 650 lights
- * 1x LED Life Drawing kit
- * 1x Motion Control Rig

To accompany cameras and lights there are also C-Stands, magic arms, super clamps, reflectors, green screen kits. Hama tripods, Manfrotto video tripods.

*shared with BA (Hons) Visual Effects for Film and Television

Course Units

The units of study are:

- Defining Practice, Theory and Professionalism (60 credits);
- Master's Project 1 (60 credits);
- Master's Project 2 (60 credits).

Study Hours: The designated weekly study hours for part-time students are half of those for full-time students, and for reasons of parity, access to Subject Area resources and academic support must be understood commensurately. The longer study periods (x2) of each unit for part-time students ensures that parity is clearly evident and accounted for between the two modes of study. In this way, the overall study hours and proportionate access for each unit sustains parity of experience for both modes.

Contact Time: Full-time MA students will have one to two days contact a week with a tutor, depending upon the week through the 45 weeks of the course. Part-Time students will have one day a week contact for the first 15 weeks of the course and then one day every other week for the remainder of the course, which is 90 weeks in total. Contact time with a tutor is stated on a weekly basis in the course timetable.

Unit Codes		Unit Titles	Weighting
F/T	P/T		
ANF765	ANP765	Defining Practice, Theory and Professionalism	60
ANF766	ANP766	Master's Project 1:	60
ANF767	ANP767	Master's Project 2:	60

Course Diagram

This diagram shows the proposed start/end dates for each unit and shows teaching weeks only; holiday periods are not included.

Level 7 Full-time						
Trimester One (weeks 1-15)		Trimester Two (weeks 16-30)		Trimester Three (weeks 31-45)		
Induction	ANF765 Defining Practice, Theory and Professionalism (60 credits)	Assessment	ANF766 Master's Project 1 (60 credits)	Assessment	ANF767 Master's Project 2 (60 credits)	Assessment

Level 7 Part-time						
Trimester One (weeks 1-30)		Trimester Two (weeks 31-60)		Trimester Three (weeks 60-90)		
Induction	ANP765 Defining Practice, Theory and Professionalism (60 credits)	Assessment	ANP766 Master's Project 1 (60 credits)	Assessment	ANP767 Master's Project 2 (60 credits)	Assessment