Course Specification

INTEGRATED FOUNDATION YEAR



AUB Arts University Bournemouth

About the Course Handbook

This Handbook provides you with basic information about your course. Through the approved course specification, it provides you with the aims and outcomes of the course, and outlines the content and how this will be delivered.

It also provides some important information about key policies which apply to your academic studies, and explains how students can be involved in the decision-making at both course and University level. You should ensure that have read this, and that you refer to this Handbook throughout your course.

Your course is subject to a rigorous process of quality assurance and enhancement. This may result in changes to individual units as the course develops, to ensure that the relevance and quality of the course is upheld. You will be consulted, either directly or through your elected student representatives before any changes are made.

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of all the information contained within this Handbook, but it is possible that some of the details will change during the course of your studies. Any such changes will be notified to you.

Information in this Handbook should be used in conjunction with the HE Student Regulations. It is your responsibility to ensure you are aware of the regulations that apply to your course; this includes information in this Handbook and in the HE Student Regulations. If you have any questions, you should speak to your Course Leader, or member of your course team.

ARTS UNIVERSITY BOURNEMOUTH

COURSE SPECIFICATION

The Course Specification provides a summary of the main features of the **Integrated Foundation Year, Arts, Media and Creative industries** course and the learning outcomes that a 'typical' student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if they pass the course.

Students are admitted to a named BA (Hons) course with an Integrated Foundation Year, and will progress to that course upon successful completion.

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 the Course Handbook.

Key Course Information	
Final Award	N/A
Course Title	Integrated Foundation Year, Arts, Media and Creative Industries
Award Title	Integrated Foundation Year, Arts, Media and Creative Industries
Teaching institution	Arts University Bournemouth
Awarding Institution	Arts University Bournemouth
Offered in the School of	Crosses all Schools
Length of course / mode of study	1 year full-time
Level of final award (in FHEQ)	
Subject benchmark statement	Subject Benchmark Statements aligned to the undergraduate programmes supported by the Integrated Foundation Year, including Art and Design, Media, Film and Communications, Performing Arts, English, Architecture and Business and Management
UCAS code	
Language of study	English
External Examiner for course:	XXXXXX
Please note that it is not appropriate for students to contact external examiners directly	
Date of Validation	4 August 2026
Date of most recent review	N/A
Date course specification written/revised	N/A

Course Description

The Integrated Foundation Year (Arts, Media and Creative Industries) provides a supported transition into higher education for students who have been offered a place on a named undergraduate degree programme across multiple AUB disciplines.

The course is designed to balance shared, interdisciplinary learning with an awareness of the student's intended specialism, ensuring both breadth of experience and clarity of progression.

Students participate in a cohort-based studio environment where they develop core skills in creative thinking, research, communication, and collaboration, while gradually building an understanding of how their chosen discipline operates within higher education.

Learning spans visual, material, performative, written, and screen-based practices. Activities are designed to build confidence and curiosity, rather than technical specialism.

Through a Problem-Based Learning (PBL) approach, students engage in thematic projects that encourage exploration across disciplines, while reflecting on how their work connects to their intended degree pathway.

By the end of the year, students will have developed a strong foundation in independent learning, creative enquiry, and awareness of their chosen discipline, enabling confident and informed progression to Level 4.

Distinctive features of the course

Discipline-Aware, Not Discipline-Specialist

This course is aligned to a range of undergraduate degrees across arts, media and creative disciplines. While students study as a shared cohort, the curriculum ensures that they maintain an awareness of their intended progression route, supported through light-touch engagement with discipline-relevant practices. The emphasis remains on exploration, confidence-building, and orientation, rather than specialist training.

Problem-Based Learning (PBL)

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is used to integrate academic, creative, and personal development. Projects are structured to allow students to explore ideas through different lenses (visual, narrative, performative, screen-based), while reflecting on how these relate to their emerging interests.

Collaboration

The course promotes peer learning and shared enquiry through collaborative studio practice. This supports the development of confidence, communication, and mutual understanding, which are essential for successful participation in higher education and progression.

AUB Strategic vision

The Integrated Foundation Year (Arts, Media and Creative Industries) aligns with AUB Strategy 2030+ by supporting access, transition, and student success across a diverse range of creative disciplines.

Opportunity for All

The course contributes to AUB's commitment to opportunity for all by providing an inclusive and supported route into higher education, enabling students from diverse backgrounds to build confidence and engage successfully with undergraduate study.

Creative Excellence (Foundational Stage)

The course introduces the foundational principles of creative enquiry, experimentation, and reflective practice, preparing students for further development within their chosen discipline at Level 4.

Future Skills

Through interdisciplinary, project-based learning, students begin to develop adaptability, curiosity, and independent learning habits that underpin future study and progression.

Research, Enterprise and Progression

The course supports progression by developing awareness of how creative disciplines operate within wider contexts, preparing students to engage more fully with professional and industry-related learning at later stages of their degree.

International Reach and Accessibility

The course supports a diverse student cohort through structured, inclusive teaching approaches that reduce barriers to entry and enable students to develop the academic and communication skills required for progression.

Course Aims

The Integrated Foundation Year (Arts, Media and Creative Industries) aims to support students to:

- Develop an understanding of how learning operates within higher education, including independent study, participation, and reflective engagement
- Develop an introductory understanding of their chosen discipline, including its general approaches and expectations at undergraduate level
- Engage with a range of creative practices across interdisciplinary contexts, including visual, written, performative, and screen-based approaches
- Develop the ability to communicate ideas using appropriate formats and methods relevant to creative tasks and project

- Develop confidence in working both independently and collaboratively, taking increasing responsibility for their own learning

- Develop reflective practice and self-awareness, enabling identification of strengths and areas for development in preparation for Level 4 study

Course Outcomes

On successful completion of the Integrated Foundation Year, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of how learning operates within higher education, including independent study, participation, and reflective engagement

- Show an introductory awareness of their chosen discipline, including its general approaches and expectations at undergraduate level

- Apply creative thinking across interdisciplinary contexts, drawing on a range of approaches including visual, written, performative, or time-based forms

- Communicate ideas using appropriate formats and methods relevant to creative tasks and projects

- Work both independently and collaboratively, demonstrating increasing responsibility for their own learning

- Reflect on their learning and development, identifying strengths and areas for further growth in preparation for Level 4 study

Reference Points

- UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)
- Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statements aligned to the undergraduate programmes supported by the Integrated Foundation Year, including Art and Design, Media, Film and Communications, Performing Arts, English, Architecture and Business and Management
- AUB Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework
- AUB Undergraduate Assessment Regulations

Learning, Teaching, and Assessment Strategies

The Integrated Foundation Year provides a supported, structured introduction to higher education across the arts, media, performance, and creative industries. The course is underpinned by a Problem-Based Learning (PBL) approach, which integrates academic study, creative exploration, and personal development within accessible contexts.

Learning is designed to support a gradual transition from broad interdisciplinary exploration to increased awareness of the student's chosen discipline, without pre-empting Level 4 study. Students build confidence through experimentation, collaboration, and reflection, developing the skills required to engage successfully with undergraduate learning.

Teaching focuses on learning how to learn in a creative higher education environment, rather than developing advanced or specialist technical skills.

Progressive Discipline Engagement

The course adopts a staged approach:

- **Term 1 (Discover):** Broad exploration across disciplines, with light-touch exposure to different forms of creative practice
- **Term 2 (Develop):** Increasing opportunities to engage with their intended discipline through guided activities, developing confidence and understanding
- **Term 3 (Define: Major Project):** A self-directed project aligned to the student's chosen pathway, demonstrating readiness for Level 4 study

This staged approach ensures orientation and development, rather than early specialisation.

Students are introduced to foundational tools, processes, and ways of working, such as idea generation, planning, making, and reflection. These are taught at an introductory level, focusing on familiarity and confidence rather than proficiency.

Discipline-related activities (including visual work, writing, performance, and screen-based media) are designed as entry-level experiences, supporting understanding rather than technical mastery.

The course emphasises development and readiness for study, rather than discipline-specific specialisation or technical proficiency.

Assessment

Assessment focuses on learning, experimentation, and reflection, rather than technical or specialist achievement. Students are expected to demonstrate engagement, development, and emerging understanding, rather than discipline-specific proficiency.

For further information on assessment, progression, awards, and classifications, please visit https://aub.ac.uk/regulations

Course Structure

All students are registered for their chosen award of BA (Hons); and will progress to level 4 of their chosen undergraduate degree upon successful completion of the year. If a student withdraws part way through the year, they will not receive an exit qualification. The Integrated Foundation Year does not provide a stand-alone qualification; it is a year of study to prepare the student for the expectations of level 4 study.

Core Values and Skills

In developing courses, the University aims to create a curriculum that reflects its values and ethos. It should prepare students for the future not only in enabling them to have a successful career, but also empower students with the knowledge, skills and passion to have a positive impact on the world and be an agent for change. AUB has drawn from the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (https://sdgs.un.org/goals) which have informed our values of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion as well as our Graduate Attributes.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

“We are better for our diversity. We are enriched by the depth of respect we have for each other and the strength of our relationships with our people, our places and the planet. Through our commitment to working with those who are different to us, or challenge us, we grow stronger together, creating new synergies, global connections and sustainable futures.” (AUB Strategy 2030)

As an organisation we have moral, social and legal obligations to fulfil in terms of EDI, and in doing so our commitment is to put EDI at the heart of every area of activity. It is not covered as a separate, stand-alone section, rather it forms an integral part of the curriculum, throughout your study here.

Graduate Attributes (GA)

Over recent years, there has been an increasing pace of change, technological, social, environmental. This has been further impacted by the world-wide pandemic effecting significant change in the global economy and the employment market.

In this context, the University has recognised the importance of developing AUB graduates who have the attributes to be able to build their career, adapting to different circumstances and embracing changes. A suite of attributes have been defined that we feel are particularly appropriate to the creative courses that we deliver and to AUB’s core values; during your course, both curricular and extra-curricular activities will give you the opportunity to prepare for your working career.

The course will introduce students to topics which are integrated with the curriculum at every stage of learning. This will allow the student to structure their career development journey through levels 4-6 of the degree course and consider the following stages: Self Awareness, Opportunity Awareness, Decision Making and Transitioning into Work. These align to the AUB Career Readiness stages: Explore, Focus, Engage and Achieve.

In practice, this means that each unit of the course will include elements of career development and these will be shown explicitly in unit descriptors and outline syllabuses.

Maintaining Health and Wellbeing

Throughout the course students are encouraged to reflect on their own health and wellbeing, and to develop themselves as a healthy creative practitioner. Students will consider how to develop study and work strategies and habits which maintain and promote their own wellbeing, and to manage their professional activities in a way which safeguards their mental and physical health.

Course staff have designed the course in order that, as far as is reasonably possible, health and wellbeing are promoted. Therefore, it is vital students maintain constructive communication with their colleagues and their staff throughout their time on this course.

Course Content

The Integrated Foundation Year provides a supported transition into Level 4 study across a range of disciplines within the arts, media, performance, and creative industries. The course serves as a bridge for students from a wide range of educational backgrounds, enabling them to adjust to the expectations of higher education and to begin undergraduate study with confidence, curiosity, and a developing sense of creative identity.

Students develop an understanding of how different creative disciplines operate within higher education, while participating in a shared cohort experience that supports exploration,

collaboration, and progression towards their intended degree pathway. By the end of the course, students will have gained a foundational grounding in the key areas of knowledge, skills, and practices that underpin successful study.

By the end of the course, students will have gained a foundational grounding in:

- The structures and expectations of higher education study, including independent learning, participation, and reflective engagement
- Creative thinking processes that support idea generation, experimentation, and problem-solving across a range of disciplines and approaches
- Working across a variety of creative forms, which may include visual, written, performative, and screen-based practices, at an introductory level
- Project organisation and collaboration skills, including planning, communication, time management, and working with others
- Academic and research skills, including how to explore ideas, use sources appropriately, document work, and reflect on their learning

This foundation supports students in developing the confidence and understanding required to progress into Level 4 study within their chosen discipline.

Course Units

IFY301 Discover (40 credits)
IFY302 Develop (40 credits)
IFY303 Define: Major Project (40 credits)

Course Diagram

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

<table>
<tr><td>0</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="10">Autumn Term</td><td colspan="11">Spring Term</td><td colspan="10">Summer Term</td></tr>
<tr><td>Induction week</td><td colspan="10">IFY301 Discover
Weeks 1-10
(40 credits)</td><td colspan="11">IFY302 Develop
Weeks 11-20
(40 credits)</td><td colspan="10">IFY303 Define: Major Project
Weeks 21-30
(40 credits)</td></tr>
</table>

Image: Tom Rogers | BA (Hons) Visual Communication