

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

ARTS UNIVERSITY BOURNEMOUTH

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

The Programme Specification provides a summary of the main features of the **MA Graphic Design** 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 within this Handbook and the online Unit Information, which is available on your course blog.

<u>Key Course Information</u>	
Final Award	Master of Arts
Course Title	Graphic Design
Award Title	MA Graphic Design
Teaching institution	Arts University Bournemouth
Awarding Institution	Arts University Bournemouth
Offered in the School of:	Graduate School
<i>Contact details:</i> Telephone number Email	01202 363706 graduateschooloffice@aub.ac.uk
Professional accreditation	None
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	<i>QAA Master's degree characteristics</i>
Language of study	English
External Examiner for course:	Tracy Tomlinson University of Derby
	<i>Please note that it is not appropriate for students to contact external examiners directly.</i>
Date of Validation	2009
Date of most recent review	2014
Date programme specification written/revised	September 2014

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 interdisciplinarity 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 which places professionalism and risk taking in dialogue.

Such a context affords possibilities to engage with fresh, often unpredictable and certainly challenging methodologies and techniques with which you can research, test, develop, progress, interrogate, take risks, make and confidently 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 the courses and their inherent multifaceted, creative, artistic outcomes, is that you demonstrate a committed passion for your practice and the particular media within your chosen subject discipline. 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. 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, i.e. the practice of complementarity. 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

The Graphic Design course encourages designers to explore ways of developing understanding between co-communicators. You will do this by systematically interrogating design practice, through using design methods to analyse and comprehend situations and behaviour and by generating alternative and novel visual solutions. Students apply to the course predominantly from graphic design courses but are welcomed from a variety of backgrounds (if they can show an aptitude for typography) where they may have studied photography, architecture, illustration, interaction design, three-dimensional design, fine art, or, subjects such as journalism, philosophy, psychology, anthropology or sociology. Whatever your background, you will be required to reflect on your worldview; the underlying assumptions and understanding that guides and constrains your practice, and to use this reflection as a starting point from which to further develop. Your practice can take many forms: it can be self-expressive, or socially orientated; print, screen-based or three-dimensional. It can focus on an aspect of a well-defined area of design, such as branding, experimental typography, publishing, and user-centred design, or on something more unconventional defined as part of your study.

Graphic designers often work in groups, sometimes comprising members from different disciplines. The MA Graphic Design course provides many opportunities to work in interdisciplinary ways as it sits alongside the courses of other disciplines. A number of taught sessions occur in these interdisciplinary groups. More typically however you will be developing your project with your supervisor and other students on your course. The course progresses through taught sessions towards a research project that involves more independent study. The taught sessions aim to develop a critical awareness of the methods and practices appropriate to your area of interest. In the Master's Project units, you will then develop a theoretical framework, methodology and research methods that support your research focus.

As well as encouraging you to embrace group working the course also promotes autonomous ways of working and learning, encouraging you to make decisions about your practice and to then critically reflect on them. As a graphic designer you should anticipate the possible consequences of your design interventions, including the meanings constructed through your practice, in relation to ethical and sustainability issues as well as to other relevant contexts. Creative approaches are required that respond to complex situations in which many problems reside. Outcomes are not constrained by media or by limited interpretations of what it is to be a graphic designer. Consequently, an outcome might involve the design of an experience or service, as much as it might concern more conventional forms of graphic production.

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

The course aims to:

1. Encourage intellectual progression by providing a stimulating forum for critical debate and inter-disciplinary approaches to practice.
2. Support you in developing the research methods and skills required in the gathering, sampling and analysing of data, in order to find and solve complex problems.
3. Encourage you to reflect critically on your achievements and to evaluate them within a challenging environment that will enable you to meaningfully extend your practice professionally and/or toward PhD study.
4. Enable you to develop professional maturity and understand and discuss your work in the context of your discipline as well as the social and cultural spheres in which your work will be situated.
5. Develop a rich cultural community that actively engages creative practice in issues of ethics, sustainability and the political.

Course Outcomes

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

1. Produce a high level of individual or collaborative work that acknowledges and potentially challenges current practices within both graphic design and the disciplines and communities associated with it.
2. Demonstrate advanced ability through making and thinking to research, investigate, describe and critique issues and situations thereby providing original insights into contemporary practice.

3. Demonstrate and apply highly developed and advanced practical and conceptual understanding of materials, techniques and processes and to raise questions for further study or professional development.
4. Show acquisition of appropriate skills and acumen in communication, presentation and autonomous learning in relation to career aspirations.
5. Develop your practice with respect to relevant issues of sustainability, ethics and the political.

Reference Points

UK Quality Code for higher education, including:

- Subject Benchmark Statement: *Master's degree characteristics*
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)

AUB Regulatory Framework and Postgraduate Assessment Regulations

AUB Creative Learning Plan

AUB Strategic Plan

AUB Employability Framework

Learning and Teaching Strategies

Peer Learning and Group Work

While students at undergraduate level are encouraged to learn through their peers, at MA level this is an imperative. Each member of the MA cohort is an active participant in learning and teaching, and through this, the sharing of good practice is established. In cross-course groups, students work together to deliver student-led seminars and presentations on topics that arise from the seminars.

In discipline-specific group meetings, students and staff have the opportunity to discuss the issues at the forefront of their discipline.

Lectures and Gallery Talks

Lectures are used to focus on issues and provide information for you as you progress through the course. They are generally followed by question and answer sessions.

Gallery talks usually take the form of an event supporting an exhibition and would include a presentation of work and/or dialogue with exhibitors that are drawn from a broad range of practitioners – such as artists, photographers, performers, designers, crafts persons, writers, critics and curators.

Seminars

Seminars are important opportunities for generating dialogue and interrogating practice. These explore issues related to practice in context and opportunities follow with student-led response seminars for specific aspects, issues or areas of individual and/or collective inquiry to be developed in detail.

Tutorials

Tutorials provide an opportunity to discuss your individual progress on the unit and on the course. They are used to air specific issues raised through the work, provide

critical observation and recommend new direction and research strategies. The tutorial following a formal assessment is known as an assessment feedback tutorial. Supervision may be provided to you by a tutor delegated from another course if appropriate.

Group Critique

Group critique involves all students and forms distinctive learning and teaching points in the year. These events may occasionally be led by a visiting lecturer (see below) and supported by the MA Course Leader and other MA course tutors. Discussion primarily focuses on the individual work produced in the units and takes place mid-way through each phase.

Visiting Professionals

The course invites several visiting artists/designers to contribute to the discussion in seminars and group critique. Visiting practitioners describe and discuss their work and maintain a lively and current debate.

Industry Liaison Groups

Set up to recognise the importance of maintaining awareness of current developments/practices within the professional workplace and as a pro-active element with subsequent influence on curriculum design, and meeting at individually predetermined points throughout the academic year, Industry Liaison Groups comprise members drawn from professional practice and organisations, AUB academic staff, AUB technical support staff, AUB alumni and representatives from the student cohort. Their aim is to support and advise on matters relating to student progression into the work environment and they play a significant role in informing course reviews, course revalidation and the development of the professional aspects that are intrinsic to particular course units.

As an informal group, the industry related members, in view of personal commitments, do not necessarily attend every meeting, rather, an organic approach is adopted where different 'voices' are invited to be involved. The revolving nature of the group can in this way bring a more enlightened and diverse range of conversations and sharing of views.

Study Visits

These involve visits to galleries and museums, theatres and performances, design collections, trade fairs, expositions, biennales and design practices here in the UK, the EU and worldwide. There are added costs notified in advance of the visit. Student attendance at academic and discipline specific conferences is encouraged.

Using technology to assist 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.

Postgraduate network

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.

Full and Part Time Modes of Study

The part-time and full-time overlap offers the students several opportunities. The part-time students will have the valuable and informative experience of attending the critiques, group and individual presentations scheduled for full-time students providing them with relevant skills and knowledge. This will provide a real understanding of what is expected of them. In addition, the full-time students will gain from part-time students' assistance in the preparation of their MA show. 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. Part-time students in their second year will be able to act as mentors to the new students.

As well as this dynamic synergy between the full- and part-time modes of study, it has to be recognised that the course is driven by the individual student's practice and research, and how they choose to contextualise this and make it work within the structure of the course. There are considerable points of contact between full and part-time (some of which are also noted above), but there are also key points where the PT and FT delivery diverge and during which the part-time students are required to work independently. An ability to study independently is the underlying principle of postgraduate courses and, students opting for the PT route on this course allow themselves the further 'space' in which to develop their practice and thinking. A consequence of this is more independent study, but progress is monitored via meetings with tutors, such as the mid-unit reviews for PT students.

It is important to note, then, that the course seeks a specific commitment from students, where they are able to balance the demands of periods of independent postgraduate study with the discussions, seminars, group critiques and tutorials/reviews. It is also crucial that the different study modes (PT and FT) are seen as something to be embraced, as a positive contribution to the course as a whole, enabling as they do, the integration of a wide range of approaches and experiences to practice and theory.

It is important to recognise that the designated weekly study hours for PT are half of those for FT 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 PT students ensure that parity is clearly evident and accounted for between the two modes (FT and PT) of study. In this way, the overall study hours and proportionate access for each unit sustain parity of experience for FT and PT students.

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. This is made available through Unit Information, which is on your course blog.

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.

You are assessed, broadly speaking in two ways: formatively and summatively.

Formative assessment provides feedback that will help you to develop your learning. It should be seen as 'ongoing' assessment in the sense that it enables you to pinpoint strengths and weaknesses and address them appropriately. Formative assessment may take place in tutorials, seminars, critiques and other discussions about your work.

Summative assessment generally takes place at the end of a unit of study. It is an overall evaluation of your acquisition of the skills and knowledge developed in that part of the course.

There will be specific tutorials and formative assessment events once per term to make you fully aware of your progress on the course and monitor your development.

Assessment of collaborative work

In the event of collaborative work being produced and submitted for *collaborative* assessment it will generally follow the procedure outlined below.

1. The intention for assessed collaboration should be identified through the individual student's Study Plans and PDPs, and must have the prior agreement in principle of the Course Leader/relevant tutor(s).
2. A parity meeting will devise and implement an academically rigorous assessment method/procedure that will be submitted for approval of, and ultimately confirmation by, the Course Leader. Such confirmation will be conveyed to each student involved in the collaborative activity and agreement made with each that the procedure is fully understood.
3. An important component of this procedure will be a requirement for each student to provide a written (qualitative and quantitative) self-evaluation and evaluation of others' role within, and contribution to, the development and

outcome of the 'submitted work'*. These evaluations will be used to *inform* the assessment process.

4. Following assessment and the subsequent parity meeting, *individual* marks will be agreed that will create the 'practice' component of the overall unit mark.

**Submitted work* – understood here as a generic term to cover whatever the manner or form in which this may be offered – *presentation / performance / artefacts / et al.*

Distinction

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

For further information on assessment and awards, and the criteria for the award of Distinction please visit: <https://viewpoint.aub.ac.uk>

Course Structure

All students are registered for the award of Master of Arts; however, exit awards are available if you leave the course early. If you successfully complete a level of the course, you will automatically be entitled to progress to the next level.

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

Strategies for Practice comprises a range of projects that begin with re-visiting the fundamentals of the subject discipline. Although such properties are likely to be familiar you are encouraged to analyse and critically evaluate how and why they are manifested in your practice. If your first degree was in a subject other than in the one you are registered, or if you are less familiar with working with critical language and debates, these introductory projects will give you the opportunity to develop skills and adjust to new ways of working. You will be challenged to articulate and question some of the basic assumptions that may underpin your practice.

As the Strategies for Practice unit progresses you will be encouraged to survey promising areas of investigation in preparation for your Master's Project 1. You will identify theories relevant to your emerging study focus and methods appropriate to these concerns for generating new knowledge and understanding.

Taught sessions divide into two different kinds, there are shared sessions that are compulsory for all postgraduate network students to attend, and MA specialist sessions which are particular to individual MA courses. MA specialist sessions

require compulsory attendance for students on specific courses but, could if space permits, be open to all students in the postgraduate network.

Course Leaders will meet at the end of every year to plan combined sessions for the forthcoming year. This planning will take into account student numbers on each course. So, for example, if student numbers permit, in week 1 you will participate in 'Inter-MA presentations' where each student presents their work to all students on the postgraduate network. If, however this is impractical due to the number of students involved, then courses will work in pairs so that the students from two different courses will present to each other. Pairs of courses working in this way will rotate every year to ensure the relationships between all postgraduate network courses endure over time.

The assessment component Professional Development Portfolio (PDP) describes business, academic and curatorship foci within which you will develop your particular career aspirations. Innovation, collaboration and communication are key skills taught by professionals and academics in all the units. These units promote the processes necessary for you to engage in new technological advances, develop critical and theoretical frameworks, business awareness and self-direction and an understanding of the trans-disciplinary nature of contemporary creative practices.

Set within a community and culture of makers, you will engage in dialogue and debate with your peers. This experience provides dynamic and interactive sessions, which are vital to the enhancement of new thinking and ideas generation as well as offering a critical arena for discussion and progression of your work.

Professional Development Portfolio sessions that are embedded in each unit are also delivered as combined sessions. The form of the PDP acknowledges different approaches: Curatorship and Editing, Business and Enterprise, and Academic Enquiry. These individual groups are not however understood as mutually exclusive discrete ways of engaging with PDPs. You will therefore attend sessions that engage with each of these perspectives and apply them in ways in which you determine to be appropriate.

The PDP 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 design 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.

Master's Projects 1 & 2 involve periods of independent study that determine your major body of practical work. They build upon, and contrast with, the predominantly taught mode of delivery in Strategies for Practice and sustain and fuse the understanding and application of research methods, completion of project plans and presentations to students and staff. Master's Project 1 requires you to formalise your intentions in a Study Plan, and to interrogate contextual issues relevant to your study focus through your practice.

In Master's Project 2 you will carry through your plan of action identified in the Study Plan and establish ways of presenting and disseminating the outcomes of your project in ways that communicate to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.

Course Units

Unit Code F/T	P/T	Unit Title	Credit Weighting
GDF756	GDP756	Strategies for Practice: Materials, methods, contexts.	60
GDF757	GDP757	Master's Project 1: Investigate, propose, experiment.	60
GDF758	GDP758	Master's Project 2: Resolution, presentation and evaluation.	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 mode of study (45 weeks-over 53 weeks)													
	Term One				Term Two				Term Three				
0	Weeks 1-5				Weeks 16-30				Weeks 31-45				
	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEP	
Induction week	GDF756 Strategies for Practice (weeks 1-15) (60 credits)				GDF757 Master's Project 1 (weeks 16-30) (60 credits)				GDF758 Master's Project 2 (weeks 31-45) (60 credits)				Assessment of Master's Project 2 exhibition

Level 7 part-time mode of study (90 weeks over 105 weeks)

Week 0	Weeks 1-30		Weeks 31-60		Weeks 61-90					
Induction week	GDP756 Strategies for Practice (60 credits)		Assessment	GDP757 Master's Project 1 (60 credits)		Assessment	GDP758 Master's Project 2 (60 credits)		Assessment of Master's Project 2 exhibition	Submission and assessment of PDP Professional Evaluation