Course Specification

MA
ILLUSTRATION (ONLINE)



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 your course and outlines the content and how this will be delivered.

The 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 by a member of the course team before any changes are made.

Information in this Handbook should be used in conjunction with the HE Assessment Regulations. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are aware of the regulations that apply to your course and you should refer to the regulations throughout your studies. If you have any questions, you should speak to your Course Leader, or member of the course team. The Assessment Regulations can be located on the Induction section of Canvas, or https://aub.ac.uk/regulations

Important information about key policies which apply to your academic studies is available on the Induction section of Canvas. Please view this material on the Induction section of Canvas.

If you would like a copy of this Handbook in an alternative format, please contact equalities@aub.ac.uk.

ARTS UNIVERSITY BOURNEMOUTH

COURSE SPECIFICATION

The Course Specification provides a summary of the main features of the **MA Illustration Online** 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 the Course Handbook.

Key Course Information	
Final Award	Master of Arts
Course Title	Illustration (Online)
Award Title	MA Illustration
Awarding Institution	Arts University Bournemouth
Professional accreditation	None
Length of course / mode of study	2 years part-time
Level of final award (in FHEQ)	Level 7
Subject benchmark statement	QAA Masters' degree characteristics
Language of study	English
Date of Validation	July 2023
Date of most recent review	Not applicable
Date course specification written/revised	March 2024

Course Description

The MA Illustration (Online) degree at Arts University Bournemouth is a part-time, flexible course that enables students to explore, refine and reflect on the practical aspects of their craft in a setting that suits them. In tandem with this, our students gain new understanding of their craft through engaging with the historical, contemporary and professional contexts of their subject. This enables them to become active and valuable participants in the growing international illustration community.

The degree welcomes individuals from a diverse range of backgrounds, whether academic or professional, who seek to realise their own creative ambitions while celebrating a contemporary and expansive notion of what illustration can be. The flexible delivery method suits working professionals who would like to explore and understand how the academic principles of the subject can further underpin and expand their own creative practice. Whilst the breadth of subjects covered within the course enables practitioners and artists in other creative fields that wish to further develop their skills in the field of illustration, it provides a supportive and inspiring space to do so. Our innovative unit structure and learning platforms enable students to study at their own pace, and with regular intakes throughout the year, meaning students can start the course at a time that suits them.

A Master's degree in illustration instills in a student the ability to approach all aspects of an illustration career with academic rigor and professional level practical skills. Our units are varied and diverse to ensure a balance between developing students own creative practice, exploring how illustration exists as a medium in a contemporary context and through units

that focus on career planning, understand how students can situate and market their own work within it.

Learners will go on a creative journey through the course with students from their own intake, enabling them to build friendships and future professional contacts as well as having a supportive group of likeminded peers learning in the same manner. Within each unit, students will be introduced to a new exciting group of other creative practitioners. Throughout the course students are encouraged to expand their understanding of contemporary practice and, through units that focus on career planning, understand how they can situate their own work within it.

Distinctive features of the course

Interdisciplinary Approach: This course uniquely combines multi-modal creative practice with a systems thinking approach, aligned with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

Research Emphasis: Unlike other Illustration courses, this programme places significant focus on ethical, societal and environmental aspects of creative-critical practice.

Practicality: Hands-on learning, portfolio creation, and public-facing projects ensure students gain practical, real-world experience.

Professional Development: The course fosters goal setting, project management, and collaboration, preparing students for the professional world.

Course Industry Patron Scheme: All courses at AUB are connected formally with an industry Patron, an industry practitioner or business that acts as a critical friend to the course and course team. Many courses work with several industry partners, but the more formal Industry Patron connection offers the opportunities to collaborate and maintain close relations with industry / business. This is a unique concept that ensures AUB courses are industry relevant and maintain current practices while providing further opportunities for students to engage with industry practitioners.

AUB Strategic vision

The new MA Illustration (Online) course fits with the university's strategic vision in several ways:

Innovation: Developing a MA Illustration (Online) course supports AUB in broadening its scope by offering a unique curriculum which combines creative and critical thinking with industry practice and an ethical, socially engaged ethos. It also allows students to develop valuable entrepreneurial skills, and a pro-active, flexible, resilient mindset that prepares themselves for a career as a creative professional or in other creative careers using the transferable skills and experience gained.

Collaboration: The course will involve collaborations across different courses within AUB but also with relevant industry partners.

Internationalisation: A course in MA Illustration (Online) will attract international students who are interested in creative leadership combined with design skills. This will enrich the diversity of AUB and enhance the student experience.

Course Aims

The course aims to:

1. Provide a creative and intellectual environment that allows students to develop their creative illustration practice through critical debate and inter-disciplinary exchange.

2. Enable students to identify and develop complex artistic, research, technical and entrepreneurial skills needed to accomplish their own illustration practice and skills with a high level of creativity and professionalism.

3. Encourage students to critically reflect on their own achievements and evaluate their own work in ways that meaningfully extend and enhance their practice or provide progress toward PhD study.

4. Enable students to develop professional maturity and to understand and discuss their work in the context of their discipline as well as conducting advanced research skills in the social, political and cultural spheres in which practical work will be situated.

5. Develop a rich cultural community of shared practice that actively engages students to consider new digital technologies, cultural diversity, ethics, sustainability, both nationally and globally.

6. Enhance students' ability to self-direct creative projects autonomously, demonstrating originality in tackling and solving problems, planning and implementing tasks at a professional level.

Course Outcomes

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

1. Demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of contemporary illustration practices and how their own work is situated within it.

2. Evidence a high level of innovation and creativity when applying relevant artistic, research, technical and entrepreneurial skills to their own practice.

3. Identify and reflect on their own achievements and how they will relate to their further education and career aspirations.

4. Demonstrate the ability to discuss their own work and the work of others in a mature and analytical manner.

5. Evidence their ability to engage with new forms of working, whether digital or analogue and to integrate and reflect on cultural and ethical topics.

6. Demonstrate a robust level of self-awareness and autonomy in organising and presenting themselves and their practice across a range of academic and professional platforms.

Reference Points

UK Quality Code for higher education, including:

- Subject Benchmark Statement: Master’s degree characteristics
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)
- AUB Learning Teaching and Assessment Framework (LTAF)
- AUB Postgraduate Taught Assessment Regulations
- AUB Graduate Attributes

Learning, Teaching, and Assessment Strategies

A range of teaching and learning methods are used, based around a repeating cycle of acquisition, inquiry, practice, production, discussion, and collaboration. Both synchronous and asynchronous delivery are co-ordinated through Canvas; the VLE utilised by the University.

Students engage with learning materials and activities on Canvas each week, building towards the completion of an assignment related to the core themes of the unit.

Key delivery methods are outlined below:

Lectures
Lectures are pre-recorded videos integrated with the unit content providing acquisition of knowledge around key issues, ideas, and contexts. In addition, each unit may have up to two guest lectures provided by a relevant non-AUB speaker from industry or academia to provide additional insights into the unit topics. These also include written and interactive online learning resources such as texts, diagrams, images as well as reading lists and links to other online material. Technical and making skills are demonstrated through a mixture of recorded sessions and explanatory texts.

Seminar Activities
These are optional, online, weekly events that provide more opportunities for live discussion and interaction with tutors or fellow students. They are led by the Unit Tutor and provide an opportunity for students to share their perspectives and seek guidance or clarity on course content and assessments. Seminars do not take place in the final unit when they are replaced by individual supervision tutorials.

Discussion For a (Open Studio with Support)
These are asynchronous spaces where students can post messages, ask questions, and discuss ideas with tutors or fellow students. They mirror the open studio with support delivery type where learners will be encouraged to engage in critical debate, share ideas or progress on their work with the wider cohort.

Assessment Types

Creative Artefact
A relevant piece/collection of final illustrated work in a medium suitable to the unit. This assessment method allows for different options for creative assessed outcomes to be implemented, allowing the student to create high quality portfolio pieces relevant to contemporary illustration and their own creative practice. A clear description of the expected creative artefact is provided via the unit brief along with expected amount of work required.

Case Study
A case study enables students to explore an identified problem or issue within a real-world context. This would usually involve the student undertaking a broad range of reading or research to analyse what is happening within the specific case being investigated.

Presentations
During the preparation and delivery of presentations, students will learn to synthesise research findings, communicate complex ideas, and connect with tutors or fellow students in a professional manner. Presentations will be submitted online and may be live or recorded in advance depending on the unit aims.

Group Presentations
A group presentation would require a student, or a group of students, to formally present information to an audience or panel; this could be in person or via a video recording. During

the preparation and delivery of presentations, students will learn to synthesise research findings, communicate complex ideas, and connect with tutors or fellow students in a professional manner.

Industry Report:
Annotated and illustrated digital book that documents research, analysis and findings relating to a chosen area of contemporary illustration.

Business Plan
A written overview of the way in which the student intends to build their professional practice.

Essay
A piece of critical writing that presents the students critical analysis and opinion of the themes covered in the unit.

Visual Report
Annotated and illustrated digital book that documents research, analysis and findings relating to a chosen area of contemporary illustration to be further explored in the masters project.

Process Work
Students will use Process Work to document and analyse work that builds throughout a unit, developing critical thinking skills and knowledge of relevant illustration techniques. Students will use this book to undertake and collate their experiments in each unit, exploring different creative approaches and connecting practice to wider theories related to their practice. Similarly, students will collect documentation and evaluate work toward their thesis project in a larger process book for the final unit of the course.

Reflective Commentary
At the outset of the course, students will begin a reflective journal that allows them to discuss and critically evaluate their work and development as an illustrator. Learners will be encouraged to contribute to this regularly and some units will also require them to reflect on practical experiences as an element of assessment. A written reflective commentary provides an overview of a student's reflection upon their learning experience once they have reached the end of a project.

Student Engagement
The asynchronous delivery method of the unit encourages students to interact with course materials and with their peer group at times that suit them. Student engagement is continuous throughout the week, making use of discussion forums within canvas to collaborate and share insights between the group. The synchronous online seminars each week enable the course group to discuss ideas and to develop as sense of community that will grow throughout their time on the course.

Assessment

Each Unit is assessed separately, and the assessment forms part of the Unit. Assessment both provides a measure of student achievement, and also provides students with regular feedback on how their learning is developing.

For every Unit of a course, we will inform students of what they are expected to learn; what they need to submit; how their work will be assessed; and the deadline for presenting work for assessment.

Students will receive a final mark for each Unit in the form of a percentage, which will be recorded on a 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.

On successful completion of a Masters' Degree (MA), a Merit or Distinction may be awarded. Only Units at Level 7 contribute towards the determination of a Merit of Distinction.

For further information on assessment, progression, awards, and classifications, 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 a student leaves the course early. If students successfully complete a level of the course, they will automatically be entitled to progress to the next level.

For the award of Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) students 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), students 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), a student 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. This qualification will be awarded upon successful completion of the course.

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.

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 the course, both curricular and extra-curricular activities will give students the opportunities to prepare for their 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 the course and consider the following stages: Self Awareness, Opportunities, 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. Whilst students engage with these as they go through each Unit, they will all come together in the final Unit. Such an approach is designed to support students in the next steps they take after graduation, in whatever direction those may be, and is fundamental to degree studies.

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 course is designed with three stages which are each made up of various units.

Stage 1: Introduction

Within this stage students undertake the first unit, Introduction and Exploration. This unit introduces them to the core academic proficiencies and learning methods of postgraduate education.

Introduction and Exploration (15 Credits)

Studying for a postgraduate degree allows a student to build and expand on their existing levels of knowledge and practical skills. With students joining us from a diverse range of backgrounds and different levels of experience, this unit aims to provide all students with the core skills that will enable to them to explore all aspects of their practice and have a successful time on the course.

Stage 2: Carousel Units

Each of these independent units are subject specific, skills-based projects that enable students to explore a dynamic and varied range of topics and working methods relating to illustration. These carousel units are self-contained and designed to be non-linear so they can be taken in any order as determined by the intake time of year. Each must be completed to progress to stage 3.

Identities and Authorship (15 credits)
In this unit we examine concepts of self, its relation to identity and authorship and how context is integral to our understanding of an illustration. After establishing a thorough grounding in the concepts relating to our own identity, we will next expand our view to include considerations for how other people identify both socially and culturally.

Narrative and Sequence (15 credits)
This unit investigates connections between the sequencing of images and the generation of narrative, looking at both historical and contemporary sources to gain an understanding of the theories that relate to visual literacy and the reading of an image. Through the application and experimentation with these theories, an illustrator can either collaborate or compete with the author; reinforce meaning or juxtapose imagery to create a new meaning.

Tools and Craft (15 credits)
Within this unit we experiment with, and evaluate, the act of mark making and consider how the different tools that we use to translate our ideas onto our chosen medium can imbue the resulting work with different meanings.

Collaboration and Connection (15 credits)
Collaboration is core to the AUB graduate experience, enabling students to experience a diversity of thought and build empathy and understanding through shared experience via working with others both within and outside the course.

Professional Practice (15 credits)
Throughout the course students will consider the position of the illustrator as both an artist and a design professional. This unit builds on this continuous strand of research and encourages students to consider their work within a professional setting, giving them the skills to be able to present, value and sell their work.

Ideas and Ownership (15 credits)
How do we generate ideas, and can an idea be owned? During this unit we explore ideation methods, concept of style and gain an understanding of copyright and intellectual property. Alongside this we will consider the impact of new tools such as AI generated imagery on the contemporary illustration profession.

Report and Interpret (15 credits)
The skills of an illustrator are often used to document the visual world and relay it in some form. But in that documentation the Illustrator can recreate, interpret and reposition ideas and messages based on context and viewpoint. In this unit we explore the role of the illustrator in this process and question the impartiality of the discipline.

Stage 3: Master's Project
In this final stage, that represents the culmination of the course, a supervisor guides and supports students in the creation of their Master's Project.

Research Methods (15 credits)
Throughout the course students are introduced to themes and research methods that inform and support their learning. Within this unit learners deploy these skills via undertaking their own research and development into a chosen topic. This then culminates with the writing of a detailed proposal of study that students will action in their Master's Projects.

Master's Project (45 Credits)
This unit requires students to work independently under supervision, to produce a resolved, research-informed, practical project on a selected topic of their choice. This builds on the proposal that the student creates as part of the Research Methods.

Course Units

Stage 1: Introduction

ILD700 Introduction and Exploration (15 credits)

Stage 2: Carousel Units

ILD701 Identities and Authorship (15 credits)
ILD702 Narrative and Sequence (15 credits)
ILD703 Tools and Craft (15 credits)
ILD704 Collaboration and Connection (15 credits)
ILD705 Professional Practice (15 credits)
ILD706 Ideas and Ownership (15 credits)
ILD707 Report and Interpret (15 credits)

Stage 3: Masters Project

ILD708 Research Proposal (15 credits)
ILD709 Master's Project (45 credits)

Course Model

The workload is balanced across a number of consecutive units which all run independently. There are three stages of study and two progression points in the course where students move from the introductory unit to the seven carousel units, and from the carousel stage to the final two project units. There is no progression within the carousel units which are designed to be taken in any order as determined by the students intake time of year. All units are a core part of the course and there are no options to select or deselect units.

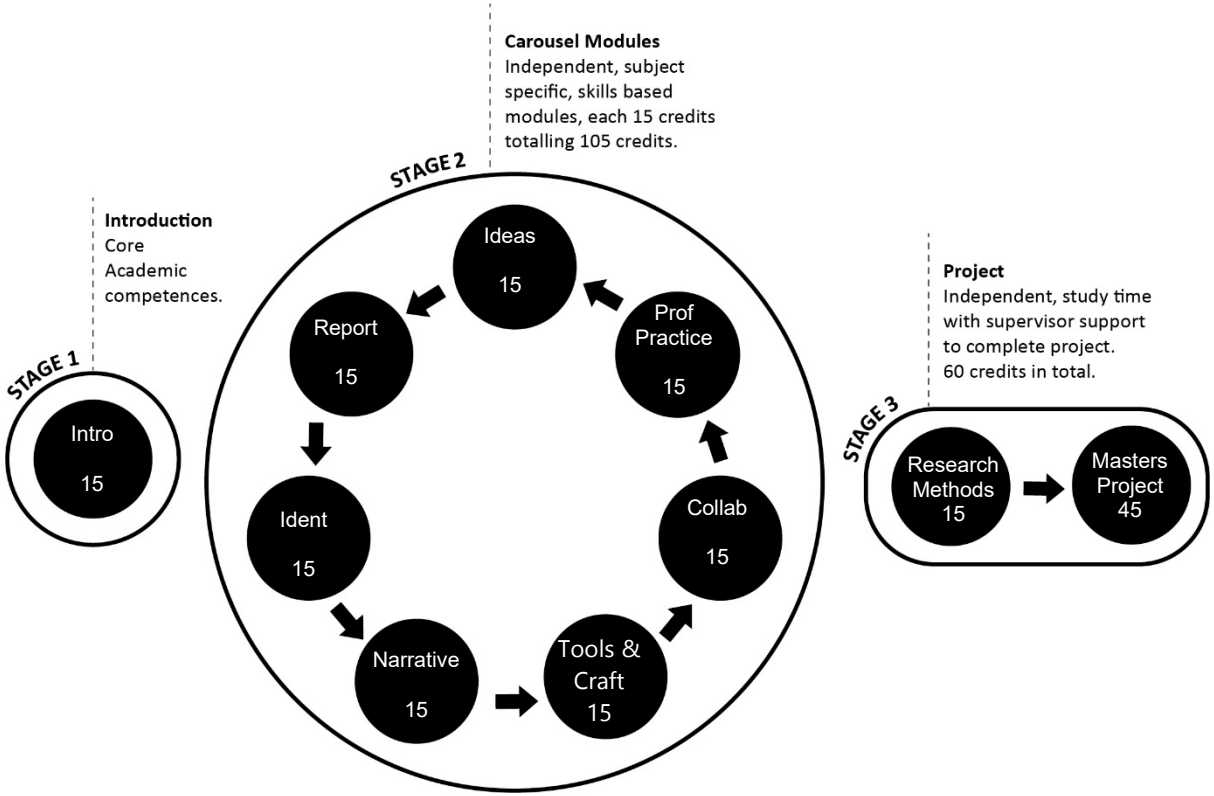


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