

ARTS UNIVERSITY BOURNEMOUTH

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

The Programme Specification provides a summary of the main features of the **MA Film Practice** course and the learning outcomes that a 'typical' student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if she/he passes 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	Film Practice
Award Title	MA Film Practice
Teaching institution	Arts University Bournemouth
Awarding Institution	Arts University Bournemouth
Offered in the School of:	Graduate School and Research
Professional accreditation	None
Length of course / mode of study	53 weeks/Full Time
Level of final award (in FHEQ)	Level 7
Subject benchmark statement	QAA Master's degree characteristics
Language of study	English
External Examiner for course:	Mark Thomas Manchester Metropolitan University
<i>Please note that it is not appropriate for students to contact external examiners directly</i>	
Date of Validation	2019
Date of most recent review	2019
Date programme specification written/revised	2020

Postgraduate Taught Degree 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 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.

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

MA Film Practice is a uniquely positioned programme that offers students the opportunity to develop and realise their creative ambitions through practice-based research, in an inclusive, integrated and highly stimulating environment. The course is underpinned by a team of lecturers, who are experienced practitioners and research active in a wide variety of film practice modes.

The MA Film Practice course asks reflective practitioners to interrogate the nature, context and position of their work in relation to the film and wider creative industries. Your study originates in your passions, the practice related questions you want answered, and this enquiry will generate your Research Question, which the course will ask you to address. The course recognises and celebrates an expansive understanding of film practice, its audience and the sites and contexts in which it can be presented. Your practice-based research will be developed across a focused programme of study, through a critical approach to individual and collaborative practice and reflective enquiry.

The course gives you the opportunity to potentially produce short films, and other audio-visual projects, that show an awareness of contemporary life and ideas, practice awareness and expertise, but also experimental dramas, documentary hybrid forms and art films, all works that emphasize innovation, a commitment to examining form and content.

The course has a really experienced and multi-talented staff, who cover a broad range of professional and research activities, from feature films to art projects. These individuals have the necessary awareness and range to nurture the development of diverse and challenging projects. Each student has two supervisors (course leader and personal tutor) who are responsible for their pastoral and tutorial cares.

You may come to the course as an active professional and/or film graduate who wants to develop your own practice awareness through intensive practice-based research. Or you may arrive as a graduate from subject areas outside film, including animation, photography, fine art, creative writing, graphic design, drawing and painting, amongst others. If so, you should already be using film within your creative practice and be able to demonstrate a clear rationale for doing so.

Whatever your background, the course will encourage you to further your own ideas and realise your aspirations for future employment and/or freelance practice. Your work will be considered in a international context, and critically examine the emergence of approaches that challenge orthodox practices.

Statement of Student Entitlement

- All students are entitled to three supervisory tutorials per unit, totalling nine over the course. In addition, feedback tutorials and group critiques will accompany each of the units' projects.
- 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 film 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 towards PhD study.
4. Enable you to develop professional maturity and to understand and discuss your work in the context of your discipline as well as the social, political 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 and sustainability.

Course Outcomes

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

1. Produce a high level of individual and collaborative work that acknowledges and potentially challenges current orthodoxies within film practice 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 film 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 work with respect to relevant issues of sustainability, ethics and the cultural and political environment in which your practice sits.

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

Learning and Teaching Strategies

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.

Course Leaders in the Graduate School will meet at the beginning of every year to plan combined sessions for the forthcoming year. This planning will take into account student numbers on each course.

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.

Lectures and screenings

Lectures are used to focus on aspects of film practice and provide information for you as you progress through the course. They are generally followed by question and answer sessions. Screenings of historical and contemporary film practice artefacts are designed to provide context and inspiration for the students in the development of their own work. These will often involve an introduction and/or discussion by a tutor or visiting professional. Masters students will also screen work as part of their growing critical skillset.

Practical workshops and exercises

Practical workshops will provide students with technical skills and creative knowledge in the fundamental components of film practice. Sessions will focus on practice related areas, such as storytelling and script development, its development, visualisation, audioization and final realisation. A series of technical and creative exercises will challenge students to put their new knowledge into practice and link their learning outcomes to their own research goals.

Seminars, group criticism and peer learning

Discussion seminars and group criticisms are important opportunities for generating dialogue and interrogating practice. These tutor and student-led sessions primarily focus on the individual and collaborative work produced in the units. You will become confident in discussing and verbally articulating your practice and that of your collaborators in preparation for working within the creative industries or further study.

Tutorials and self-directed study

You will be allocated a personal tutor, who will provide academic guidance at tutorials and present an overview of individual progress. Personal tutors will normally have extensive and current professional experience in your own research area and be available to support you during the study period. In order to ensure that you benefit as much as possible from the tutorials, it is essential to be properly prepared. This provision is complemented by a second tutorial supervisor, usually the Course Leader, who has overall responsibility. The dual tutorial combination provides for a focused and comprehensive tutorial and pastoral oversight. Tutorials can often face-to-face but can also be delivered online.

At Masters level you are expected to undertake a high proportion of self-directed study. You are required to determine appropriate research and practical resource requirements and, with the agreement of the Course Leader, your personal tutor and other designated staff, ensure that access to these resources is agreed under course and AUB guidelines.

Visiting professionals

The course invites visiting film practitioners to contribute to the Professional Lecture Programme. These talks are vital, in that they enable you to understand how the creative industries really operate. These practitioners will discuss their professional practice and experience. These visits energise the course as they engender lively and current debate.

Study visits

These can involve visits to cinemas, festivals, galleries and exhibitions. There are added costs notified in advance of the visits.

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.

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 (eg 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 at least once per term to make you fully aware of your progress on the course and monitor your development.

Award of Merit/Distinction

A Master's Degree with Award 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>

Description of Assessment Components

Body of Work

The body of work is guided by your understanding of your own practice-based research and your discussions and negotiations with your tutors and peers. Each unit has instructions regarding the specific definition of Body of Work but in general it will comprise of:

- Your film exercises and completed works; evidence of your creative audio/visual work that allows you to meaningfully demonstrate and display the outcome of your study.
- A research portfolio of written and visual work that evidences the progress of your work, the course's collaborative film exercises, provides a context for its production, sets out a theoretical framework and offers synthesis of your developmental process.
- A critical and analytical evaluation, a series of analytical papers, one per unit (Research Positional Paper, Research Development Paper, Research Resolution Paper) which shows evidence of practical and analytical conclusions and outcomes to your original research question.
- Evidence of research methods, academic protocols, analysis, the development of a theoretical argument, critical evaluation and reflection.

Presentation

During the course, you will be asked to give presentations – some assessed, some not assessed. Although you may 'present' your work in other contexts (e.g. research and practice proposals, group critiques, tutorials), the term 'presentation' usually refers to a formal process where you talk about work-in-progress, placing it in context, using visual aids such as Powerpoint and test shoots. The expectation with a presentation is that you do not simply 'show' work, but that you critically contextualise it.

Contextual Journal

The Contextual Journal highlights insights in three important areas:

- The **context** that informed your practice: the relevant: theories, subjects, issues, political perspectives, 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 development as a creative practitioner, and the processual development of an emerging body of work.

The Contextual Journal 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.

This also connects your study and professional development, which could initiate doctoral study and/or enable professional progression. To further aid this students engage in professional development sessions – these include masterclasses from industry professionals, an industry day in London where industry professionals give presentations and hold surgeries, an engagement with Creative Screenskills and the relevant professional bodies and the network.

Course Content

This uniquely positioned programme offers the opportunity for students to develop and realise their creative ambitions through practice-based research. The course is underpinned by a team of lecturers who are experienced practitioners and researchers in a wide variety of film practice modes.

All three units require the completion of set film exercises, which display an awareness of practice based study and evidence of progress towards your research goals through individual and collaborative experimentation:

1. Strategies for Practice: Identification - Art As Inspiration
2. Master's Project 1: Research - One Plus One
3. Master's Project 2: Resolution - Final Project

Also, you are required to produce a critical and analytical evaluation for each unit, which evidences research methods, academic protocols, critical, contextual and conceptual analysis and applied reflection:

1. Strategies for Practice: Identification - Research Positional Paper (3,000 word) that examines your original research question and clearly identifies contextual and conceptual intentions.
2. Master's Project 1: Research - Research Development Paper (3,000 word) that advances your research and indicates its direct application.
3. Master's Project 2: Resolution - Research Resolution Paper (between 3,000-4,000 words) that shows evidence of practical and analytical conclusions and outcomes to your original research question.

As part of all three units you will produce a Contextual Journal, which will be a illustrated and written submission that documents the development of your practice and research and will include: academic engagement, reflective

evaluation, critical analysis (through practice and literature reviews), processual thinking, technical and specialist skills, and your developing professionalism.

Strategies for Practice: Identification

This unit, is designed to orientate you and offers an introduction to all that follows. Through a series of lectures, film exercises, workshops, critiques and seminars, film and your relationship to it is examined. These different elements are structured to relate your practice (the work that you desire to make) and research (the critical questions you want to answer) to historic and contemporary film discourses (that consider aesthetics, technology, form, content, cultural and social concerns) and develop your work's conceptual purpose within an informed frame of reference. A Research Audit will be conducted, which will indicate your specific interests, share them with the tutors and your peers, allow the identification of its scope and purpose, and what resources and supervision it will require.

This unit, through its varied elements, encourages independent study and collaborative work, focused through Art As Inspiration, which aims to facilitate authorial awareness and direction. Undertaking practice based research means that your film exercises and experiments form the basis for your project development; an ethos that relates to every level of filmmaker, no matter their experience or focus, and offers the opportunity to build on existing knowledge and generate new understanding.

Your progress, through the unit, will focus your developmental intent and aid the formulation of the next two units (Master's Project Research and Resolution). This is supported by practice based research and personal tuition. The process of making work (and critiquing it in individual and group tutorials), better understanding your field of practice, analysing and composing your research (through developing a written and practical body of work), will further enhance your practice related awareness and will help you become a more complete and reflective practitioner.

Master's Project 1: Research

The second unit builds on all you have accomplished in the first. It encourages you to further develop your specific practice related interests and apply them directly to your research question. Your research, through practical tests, contextual investigations and interrogative analysis, will expand your understanding, whilst, also, focusing your own purpose, the form and content of your final project.

The proposed nature of your project will, in many ways, decide the direction of your research, for instance, a film drama requires a different approach and resources to a documentary, and these considerations will determine your focus and requirements, the degree of collaborative engagement, your creative relationships, how you plan to present the completed project. Experimentation is a vital part of this process, which is focused through One Plus One, which consists of a series of practice related exercises, because only through exploration (sometimes taking a leap of faith) will you find a satisfying creative and applicable solution.

Your research will interrogate related conceptual and contextual concerns, analysing your position and developing the best strategy for facilitating your final project. An important part of this process is 'testing' your perspective and engaging

with other opinions, therefore personal and practice based tutorials, presentations and critiques, with both staff and students, are a vital part of this process. Your critical awareness, working methods, relatable structures, will help make the final stage of your study achievable, one which will find worthwhile fruition in the final unit, Master's Project 2: Resolution.

Master's Project 2: Resolution

In the third unit you will implement your final project plan, which was initially identified in Strategies for Practice: Identification and then developed and refined in Master's Project 1, producing a completed major project of audio/visual work(s). You will assess the project's means of presentation (e.g. single screen and/or installation) and dissemination (e.g. festival and/or digital platform) resolving the outcomes of your project in ways that communicate to both specialist and non-specialist audiences. You will also complete a critical and analytical evaluation of your progress, which considers the practical and conceptual outcomes to your original research question, that applies appropriate research methods, academic protocols, critical analysis and displays active reflection.

Course Units

Unit Code	Unit Title	Credit Weighting
FRF754	Strategies for Practice: Identification Materials, methods, contexts	60
FRF755	Master's Project 1: Research Investigate, propose, experiment	60
FRF756	Master's Project 2: Resolution Resolution, presentation, 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						
	Trimester One (weeks 1-15)		Trimester Two (weeks 16-30)		Trimester Three (weeks 31-45)	
Induction	FRF754 Strategies for Practice: Identification (60 credits)	Assessment	FRF755 Master's Project 1: Research (60 credits)	Assessment	FRF756 Master's Project 2: Resolution (60 credits)	Assessment