

the
GRADUATE
SCHOOL

MA Photography
Programme Specification

This Programme Specification is designed for prospective students, current students, graduates, academic staff and potential employers. It provides a summary of the main features of the programme and the intended learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided.

Whilst every endeavour has been made to provide the course described in the Programme Specification, the University reserves the right to make such changes as may be appropriate for reasons of operational efficiency or due to circumstances beyond its control. Any changes are made in accordance with the University's academic standards and quality procedures.

This document is available in alternative formats on request.

ARTS UNIVERSITY BOURNEMOUTH

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

The Programme Specification provides a summary of the main features of the **MA Photography** course and the learning outcomes that a 'typical' student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she passes 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	MA Photography
Award Title	MA Photography
Teaching institution	Arts University Bournemouth
Awarding Institution	Arts University Bournemouth
Offered in the School of:	Graduate School
Contact details:	
Telephone number	01202 363706
Email	graduateschooloffice@aub.ac.uk
Professional accreditation	None
Length of course / mode of study	1 year full-time, 2 years part-time
Level of final award (in FHEQ)	Level 7
Subject benchmark statement	Art and Design Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies
Language of study	English
External Examiner for course:	Professor Jonathan Shaw Coventry University
<i>Please note that it is not appropriate for students to contact external examiners directly.</i>	
Date of Validation	2015
Date of most recent review	N/A
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 /industries or progress to further study at doctorate level. This discipline focus is, however, enhanced by your experience of interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches and activities which enrich your journey. Different levels of teaching delivery structure your learning experience in such a way as to enable you to take broad, overarching transdisciplinary issues or questions, and ground them within the specificities of your discipline and individual practice. Our focus on the relationships between personal professional development and the development of communities of practice through sharing and collaboration is underpinned by the unique AUB reputation for truly collaborative working across disciplines. Through involvement in cross-course groups, shared lectures and other MA activities you will have opportunities to work together with other MA students to form a 'postgraduate network' that will facilitate a wider dialogue around art and design, sustainability, ethics, the political and the often-global reach of creative industries and professions. Our ethos focuses on not only developing your systematic and critical understanding of knowledge and of the application of that knowledge in an appropriate, professional context but also in having the resolve, the skills and the acumen to exercise initiative and personal responsibility in a world which is asking many questions of all of us with respect to our abilities and desires in coexisting with a global community.

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

Course Description

MA Photography course is a balance of art and commerce and is founded on the assertion that photography is a powerful form of communication that potentially connects with an audience of millions. The course offers the opportunity to make professional work within, or crossing genres, whether it's for publication, or the gallery. What defines it as professional, is that it is conceived and created with a specific audience in mind and is conscious of how meaning is affected by socio-

political criteria. It can be utilised in a variety of ways: to stimulate commerce; promote new trends; deliver complex narratives; and inform and express opinions. In the process, opportunities arise for creative practitioners working in professional contexts to produce innovative work.

The MA Photography course is structured in such a way that learning develops systematically and with an emphasis on the independent learning abilities required for continuing professional development and the advancement of your career.

The course allows you to undertake advanced study in a wide range of areas including advertising, documentary, editorial, fashion, portrait and fine art photography. Through originality in the application of contemporary academic research and professional practices to the production of new complex work, you will challenge the accepted conventions of the genres.

By a combined approach of practice, theory and professionalism, the course will provide a challenging and stimulating environment in which you are able to develop your full potential, with the aim of becoming a practitioner at the forefront of the discipline in your future career. You will expand your potential market by applying genre practices across contexts; for example, the aesthetics of documentary can be applied to advertising, editorial, fashion or fine art outcomes.

The course enables you to develop an in-depth and critically informed understanding of the photography industry. You will engage with key themes in emerging and established critical analyses that underpin each professional genre. This will equip you with the theoretical understanding to progress your practice and effectively articulate your concepts through the production of advanced outcomes to specialist and non-specialist audiences.

You are encouraged to make industrial links across a broad range of organisations relevant to your chosen professional specialism. Using these links, you will learn to manage and exceed client expectations through the application of your new academic understanding to the production of inventive saleable work.

Course Aims

1. Encourages your ability to apply originality in the production of photographic solutions for professional contexts that provide the potential for you to become a future leader in the field.
2. Facilitate an in-depth understanding of how your practice is informed by current and established critical debates in photography and applied discourses.
3. Promotes a continuing investment into the investigation of emerging imaging technologies and professional practices in order to be able to respond effectively to creative and entrepreneurial opportunities.
4. Supports you in the process of personal decision making in the production of innovative work that extends your practice, challenges and exceeds stakeholders' expectations, and communicates complex ideas to a wider audience.

5. Provides you with the opportunity to develop high level transferable professional skills such as enterprise, networking, self-promotion and small business marketing, and the ability to determine your career progression.
6. Equips you with the strategies to critically evaluate and develop research and practice to an advanced level for the undertaking of advanced employment opportunities or further study at Doctoral level.

Course Outcomes

1. Produce complex and advanced work that is informed by critical debates at the forefront of the discipline, and evidences originality in the application of ideas.
2. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of photographic genres and contexts, and communicate effectively through the presentation of visual outcomes to targeted and wider audiences.
3. Demonstrate and apply in-depth conceptual, practical and professional understanding of current practices and techniques to innovative outcomes.
4. Critically reflect upon your work in order to direct and advance your professional practice through the development of advanced image making skills.
5. Act autonomously in the production of solutions to complex problems, and advance your career through the continued development of entrepreneurial skills.
6. Advance your knowledge and understanding through continued critical reflection and autonomous learning in order to produce highly effective advanced outcomes or undertake PhD study.

Reference Points

UK Quality Code for higher education, including:

- Subject Benchmark Statement: QAA's Benchmark Statements for (a) Art and Design (February 2017) and (b) Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies (October 2016)
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ Level 7)

AUB Regulatory Framework and Postgraduate Assessment Regulations

AUB Creative Learning Plan

AUB Strategic Plan

AUB Employability Framework

Learning and Teaching Strategies

The Postgraduate Network Model

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.

Specialist support

You will receive specialist support depending on your Study Plan, which is driven by your own interests and direction. The holistic approach to the MA Photography course is one in which practice, theory or professional studies are seen as a whole and therefore it is essential to engage with staff, other students and guest speakers. Through making wider contact with the industry and functioning as an independent learner and pursuing self-directed study you will be able to place yourself and understand your relationship to others in the field.

Developing as a professional photographer requires a balance of individualised creative skills and open-minded collaborative working and we believe that the environment at the AUB enables this synthesis to happen.

This interconnection between fellow students importantly extends to our network of alumni, many of whom are highly successful and well respected professionals. Together the mentors and alumni will make a significant contribution to the learning environment and experience of the students and their potential career progression.

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

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

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 (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.

Award of Merit/Distinction

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

For further information on assessment and awards, please visit:

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

Course Content

The course structure allows for a flexibility of approach, as a Photography Master's student you will be a creative practitioner in the broadest sense of the term and be involved with emerging technologies as well as heritage media. Either way, you will hone your skills and develop your own visual identity as professional practitioner.

The MA Photography course offers you the opportunity to study in the genres of advertising, fashion, editorial, portrait, documentary and fine art photography which ever genre you choose this will define your experience of the course. In each genre you will develop a systematic and comprehensive understanding of techniques and knowledge relevant to that specialism combined with a critical awareness of developments in that area of professional practice.

These specialist areas of study will be supported by the staff team, who have extensive professional experience and specialist knowledge. Several of the staff are leading practitioners in their field with decades of professional level experience. In addition, there will be a team of well-known and respected industry practitioners including photographers and associated roles such as agents and picture editors, to act as mentors and visiting tutors. The range of skills and specialist knowledge offered by this combination of academic staff, visiting tutors and mentors, provides you with a wealth of knowledge and experience to guide your study and shape your future career. These specialist staff will be assigned appropriately to guide and refine your development.

Professional Photography draws upon many subjects including Graphic Design, Illustration, Film, Animation, Fine Art and Fashion all of which are AUB Masters programmes. Thus, the AUB Masters community offers you an outstanding opportunity for collaboration within a post-graduate context and encourages links that may well develop further after graduation. Combined assignments on common themes that cross over the various MA programmes will be offered whenever possible and these will also provide an opportunity for networking and collaboration.

The course encourages you to make industrial links and work on live projects as part of your Master's study. This may include you working very closely with external organisations to achieve a highly creative post-graduate level outcome and these links may lead to career development opportunities.

The course is structured in a way that learning develops systematically and with emphasis on independent study that will lead to continuing personal and professional development. Digital technologies have driven an ever-increasing trend towards the blurring of boundaries between the various art practices and this has presented challenges and opportunities for today's professional photographic practitioners. The MA Photography course encourages the appropriate use of frontier technologies and will support this where possible.

Although the course comprises of three units these should be seen as one integrated body of study. Depending upon your own individual approach you will be given the opportunity to run one major project across *Master's Project 1 and Master's Project 2*, or produce a different project for each unit. Each Master's project will be assessed separately so a project that runs over the two will be assessed in two equal parts. You will develop projects through individual tutorial support and in agreement with your Supervisor, but collaborative skills are essential, leading to the development of innovative and creative solutions.

The course is project focused and briefs are negotiated with your Supervisor. The course builds towards the completion of a major body of work through self-initiated practical assignments, which are supported by written commentaries.

Contextual Journal (Guidelines) The Contextual Journal is rigorous academic document that is designed to improve your skills, including writing, oral presentation, and critical skills. You are required to review the nature of your practice through self-reflection, tutorials, critiques and mentoring sessions. The Contextual Journal enables you to focus your learning, personal development and planning. It helps identify strengths and weaknesses at an early stage so that you can focus your studies in order to improve and/or develop new relevant skills. It is a personal document that is maintained by you and made available for assessment at the completion of the unit. The Contextual Journal is designed to cover the three core themes of the course Practice, Theory and Professionalism which are considered essential to your development as a creative professional. One of the main aims of the course is the contextualising of your research and practice and the identification and development of individual entrepreneurial and graduate opportunities.

The ***Contextual Journal*** evidences three main themes:

- **Practice**
This includes research on the ways you practice and reflections on the outcomes of your practice. It includes evidence of the research undertaken and the research that is embedded in the practice.
- **Theory**
You will contextualise your practice within current critical debates in photography and associated discourses and theories.

- **Professionalism**

This evidences your continued professional and career development.

The Study Plan

For the units Master's Project 1 & 2 a Study Plan is required in which you outline the rationale for the period of study that is to follow. The Study Plan is developed in consultation with staff and identifies a critical synopsis of the research questions, or study focus that you wish to address and the methods that you will employ, including the theoretical framework supporting your study.

The overarching aim of the course is to produce professional photographers with an original and distinctive visual voice that have a thorough understanding of contemporary practices within their specialist genre. Individuals who are responsive to change and can plan and adapt accordingly and seize on opportunities. Individuals who have the drive and talent to become leaders in their field.

Course Units

Unit Codes	Unit Titles	Weighting
PYF765/PYP765	Defining Practice: Methodologies, Contexts & Experimentation	60
PYF766/PYP766	Master's Project 1: Investigation & Exploration	60
PYF767/PYP767	Master's Project 2: 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	PYF765 Defining Practice (60 credits)	Assessment	PYF766 Master's Project 1 (60 credits)	Assessment	PYF767 Master's Project 2 (60 credits)	Assessment

Level 7 Part-time						
	Trimester One (weeks 1-30)		Trimester Two (weeks 31-60)		Trimester Three (weeks 61-90)	
Induction	PYP765 Defining Practice (60 credits)	Assessment	PYP766 Master's Project 1 (60 credits)	Assessment	PYP767 Master's Project 2 (60 credits)	Assessment

Glossary

Body of Work	Practice of any kind that can be submitted in fulfilment of learning outcomes. The body of work could be an individual artefact, a piece of writing, film, performance, installation, a digital outcome or a mixture of any or all of these things.
Contextual Journal	A written journal produced over the course of your Master's that contextualises your practice.
Credit	'Notional learning hours' are used to describe the size of a unit, and indicate the length of learning time which it is estimated will be taken, on average, to achieve the specified learning outcomes. This includes all the study time for the unit including contact hours (lectures, demonstrations, seminars, tutorials etc), directed study, independent study, and assessment activity (including preparation). In accordance with practice across the UK HE sector, one credit is allocated for ten notional learning hours, one whole Master's Course comprises 180 credits or 1800 notional learning hours. Credit is not used for grading but quantifies the volume of learning and is thus used to determine eligibility for progression or awards.
Cross-disciplinary	Cross-disciplinary practice involves understanding one discipline from the perspective of another.
Interdisciplinary	Interdisciplinary practice describes activity that integrates or shares, theory, methods, tools, types of data, and so forth from different disciplines.
Keynote Lectures	Longer, macro level lectures that introduce a theme or major topic. Keynote lectures can be live face-to-face lectures, streamed live, and recorded.
Learning Outcomes	The result of each unit is expressed as a series of Learning Outcomes. Attainment of these is the objective of the unit; measuring their attainment is the purpose of assessment. The expression of unit objectives as Learning Outcomes, and how they are assessed, is included within each unit descriptor and published for students.
Macro Level	These sessions are more transdisciplinary in nature and are relevant to all courses that make up the Graduate School. They are often informed by staff research. Macro level lectures include Keynote and Thread Lectures.
Meso Level	These sessions are the bridge between the more transdisciplinary macro sessions and the course specific micro sessions. Meso level seminars, workshops and demonstration are delivered to related courses that share approaches, understanding or methods.

Methodology	The study of methods. Methodology concerns an evaluation of which methods provide valid steps in creating new knowledge. Choosing a methodology is an important part of a research process as this will determine the method that you use to investigate your research question. Particularly, how you will collect and analyse data in a way that aligns with the theory underpinning your research. This choice will be based on your beliefs about what is possible to know (ontology) and assumptions about how you can know (epistemology).
Micro Level	These sessions are specific to your chosen course discipline, they include unit briefings, individual and group tutorials, critiques and presentations.
Multidisciplinary	Multidisciplinary practice involves collaborators from different disciplines working on the same project, each drawing on the knowledge and methods of their individual disciplines.
Postgraduate Network Model	The network of teaching sessions delivered across the Graduate School. These operate on three broad levels: the macro, meso and micro levels.
Praxis	The thinking in doing, and the doing in thinking. Praxis is the symbiotic relationship between theory and practice.
Primary Sources	These are the objects that are the foci of research. They could be a document, interview, film, painting or artefact, for example. Primary sources provide data that can then be analysed.
Reflection	Thinking about action as it is happening (reflection in action) or sometime after it took place (reflection on action).
Reflexivity	Is the correspondence between our understandings that we project onto the world through our actions and the understandings that result from what gets reflected back.
Research	In the <i>Research Excellence Framework</i> , research is defined as ‘a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared.’
Secondary Sources	Are explanations/descriptions of the analysis of primary sources that have already been carried out. Secondary sources provide mediated accounts that can be critically reviewed and contrasted.
Seminars	These small group sessions help to contextualise learning delivered through other sessions. They explore issues related to practice in context where student-led responses

are encouraged and individual and/or collective inquiry is developed in detail.

Study Plan

A plan for a proposed course of study or research.

Tertiary Sources

Provide ways to locate primary and secondary sources, they include: library catalogues, bibliographies, indexes, databases, and so forth.

Theory

A coherent system of ideas with explanatory power.

Thread Lectures

Smaller usually 10-15 minute sessions that expand on the topics introduced in Keynote lectures. These can be face-to-face, recorded or can include third-party content.

Transdisciplinary

Transdisciplinary practice attempts to 'transcend' disciplinary boundaries by locating all practice within one holistic framework.

Tutorials

A teaching session involving lecturer/s and one student or a small group of students. These typically occur at the micro level within the Postgraduate Network Model as a means of reviewing progress and developing ideas.

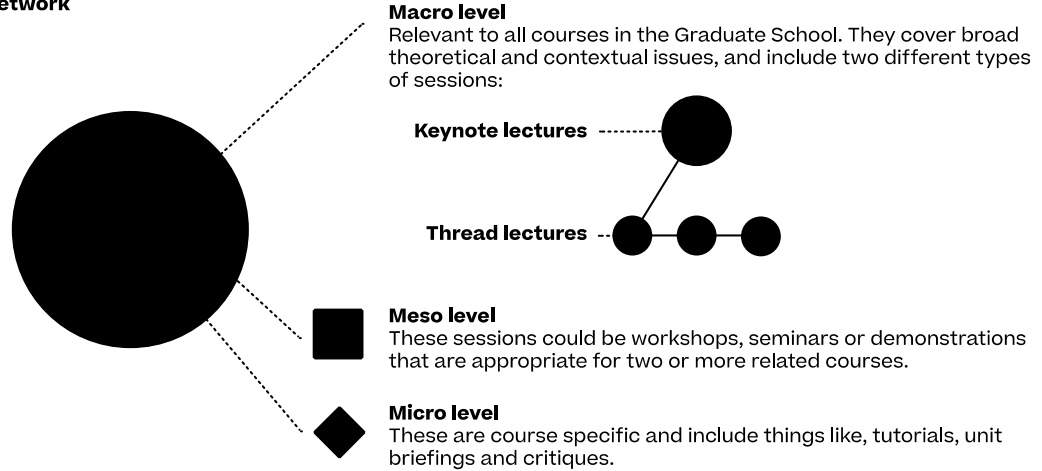
Units

Self-contained blocks of learning, each of which has a coherent set of aims and learning outcomes, and associated assessment processes.

The Postgraduate Network Model

All of your taught sessions fit within a network comprised of three different levels: macro, meso and micro.

The network



These different types of sessions link up in different ways to form a network.

