

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 Commercial Photography** 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	Commercial Photography
Award Title	MA Commercial Photography
Teaching institution	Arts University Bournemouth
Awarding Institution	Arts University Bournemouth
Offered in the School of:	Graduate School
<i>Contact details:</i> 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	Master's Degree Characteristics 2010
Language of study	English
External Examiner for course:	To be confirmed
<i>Please note that it is not appropriate for students to contact external examiners directly.</i>	
Date of Validation	2016
Date of most recent review	N/A
Date programme specification written/revised	September 2016

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 course is founded on the assertion that commercial photography is a powerful form of mass communication that potentially connects with an audience of millions. What defines it as commercial is that it is conceived and created with a specific audience in mind, 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 commercial contexts to produce innovative work.

The MA Commercial 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 and portrait 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. You will expand your commercial potential by applying genre practices across contexts; for example, the aesthetics of documentary can be applied to advertising, editorial, and fashion outcomes.

The course enables you to develop an in-depth and critically informed understanding of the commercial 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 commercial work.

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 *Redefining Practice* unit and *Master's Project 1 & 2 units*. A tutorial time of 45 minutes is allocated.
- Group critique: six critiques in total, two per unit.
- Staff and student-led lectures and seminars.
- Regularly timetabled group meetings with MA Course Leader and/or relevant tutors.

- Access to relevant resources agreed through your Course Leader.
- Agreed attendance on undergraduate workshop/darkroom/resource area inductions.
- Agreed access to photography studios and equipment.
- Postgraduate show where appropriate.
- Agreed access to discipline-related and cross-discipline lectures/seminars on undergraduate and post-graduate programmes.
- Attendance at Gallery events, Research days and other appropriate AUB events.

Course Aims

General aims are to produce Master's graduates with:

1. The ability to apply originality to the production of photographic solutions for commercial contexts that positions them as a future leader in the field.
2. An in-depth understanding as to how their practice is informed by current and established critical debates in photography and applied discourses.
3. A continuing investment into the methodical investigation of emerging imaging technologies and professional practices in order to be able to respond effectively to creative and entrepreneurial opportunities.
4. The ability to exercise personal decision making in the production of innovative work that extends their practice, challenges and exceeds stakeholders' expectations, and communicates complex ideas to a wider audience.
5. A high level of transferable professional skills such as enterprise, networking, self-promotion and small business marketing, and the ability to determine their career progression.
6. The ability to critically evaluate and develop research and practice to a comprehensive level for the undertaking of advanced employment opportunities or further study at Doctoral level.

Course Outcomes

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

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 commercial 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 commercial outcomes.

4. Critically reflect upon your work in order to direct and advance your professional practice through the development of high-level 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 commercial outcomes or undertake PhD study.

Reference Points

UK Quality Code for higher education, including:

- QAA Master's Degree Characteristics 2010
- 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

The MA Commercial Photography course consists of formal teaching (lectures, seminars, workshops), group critiques of work-in-progress and tutorial 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 Commercial 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 synthesis is inherent in our Creative Learning Plan:

The philosophy of a maker culture states that learning should be participatory, experimental, risky, collaborative, self-directed, innovative, networked, peer led and should be respectful of the processes of making as well as of the final creative output, (page 1).

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 in doing so meet the objectives of the Strategic Plan as they are able to assist in:

Developing our professional links with the industry, (Aims page1).

Developing distinctive curricula and learning resources linked to the creative industries, (Aims page1).

These outside industry connections will encourage the course team and students in:

Responding with an entrepreneurial and innovative attitude in all that we do.

Producing graduates and enterprising students who are sought after by leading players in industry.

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 through this, the sharing of good practice is established. In combined sessions MA students from other programmes will have the potential to 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. Full-time and part-time modes of study will be integrated where possible as this makes a positive contribution to the individual student's learning experience. The diverse nature of full-time and part-time students leads to the integration of a wide range of approaches and experiences to practice and theory.

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. Work related tutorials 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 and takes place mid-way through and at the end of each unit.

Visiting Professionals

The course invites several visiting professionals to contribute to the discussion in seminars and group critique. Students from both BA and MA programmes will be able

to access the photography visiting lecturer programme in which 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 of 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, trade fairs, 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 full-time and part-time modes of study are linked in order for both groups to interconnect and generate a vibrant post-graduate course community. The programme is driven by the individual student's research and practice. Whether they are studying full-time or part-time, they will negotiate with their supervisor how to contextualise their research interests within the structure of the course.

There are many of points of contact between full-time and part-time students, and there are also points at which they diverge. During these periods the part-time students are required to work independently. Autonomous learning is an underlying principle of post-graduate study and students opting for the part-time route allow themselves further space in which to develop their practice and thinking. Both full-time and part-time students' progress is monitored regularly via the tutorial system and through interim group critiques. The course seeks a specific commitment from students in which they are able to balance periods of independent study with the demands of seminars, discussions, group critiques, tutorials and presentations.

The part-time and full-time critiques and presentations will be held together whenever possible to encourage the exchange of ideas and views. Through such activities both of the two modes of study will make a positive contribution to the course by enriching individuals' learning experiences. The study modes are likely to attract different types of applicants and this will lead to the integration of a wide range of approaches and experiences to practice and theory. Students could range from experienced photographers wishing to update their practice or refocus their career to a recent graduate with interests in cutting edge industry methods and the application of social networks for the dissemination of work. The course is committed to developing a broad base of students all able to make valuable contributions based on their differing perspectives, which will enhance the experience of the whole cohort. Therefore the structure of the course encourages valuable knowledge transfer enriching both groups' potential for career and creative development.

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.

Study Hours: The designated weekly study hours for part-time students are half of those for full-time 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 part-time students ensures that parity is clearly evident and accounted for between the two modes of study. In this way, the overall study hours and proportionate access for each unit sustains parity of experience for both modes.

Contact Time: Full-time MA students will have one to two days contact a week with a tutor, depending upon the week through the 45 weeks of the course. Part-Time students will have one day a week contact for the first 15 weeks of the course and then one day every other week for the remainder of the course, which is 90 weeks in total. Contact time with a tutor is stated on a weekly basis in the course timetable online and in print in the unit handbooks.

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.

The MA Commercial Photography course assesses you by examining your practical work in photography, but also how you interrogate and critically contextualise your practice. You are also expected to engage fully in the professional arena appropriate to your specialist practice. This means that you produce a body of practical work (though exactly what form this takes will be by negotiation), along with contextual documentation, and other written material that analyses, reflects and evidences your study.

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

The course structure allows for a flexibility of approach, as the Commercial Photography Master's students are creative practitioners in the broadest sense of the term, as their practice will include a wide range of creative engagements. Some will be involved with emerging technologies not typically associated with stills orientated commercial capture but are increasingly demanded of the contemporary practitioner. Other students will be engaged in much more traditional activities in which technology is less significant, such as documentary photography. Either way, the students will hone their own visual identity and creative branding, as practicing commercial photographers.

The MA Commercial Photography course offers the opportunity to study in the genres of advertising, fashion, editorial, portrait or documentary photography, whichever genre the student chooses to pursue will define their experience of the course. In each genre they 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 commercial experience and specialist knowledge. Several of the staff are leading practitioners in their field with decades of commercial 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 any MA Commercial Photography student with a wealth of knowledge and experience to guide their study and shape their future career. These specialist staff will be assigned appropriately to the students to guide and refine their development.

Commercial 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 MA community offers an outstanding opportunity for collaboration within a post-graduate context and encourages links that may well develop further after graduation. Combined events 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 will encourage students to make industrial links and work on live projects as part of their Master's study. This may include students working very closely with external organisations to achieve a highly creative post-graduate level outcome and possibly make industrial links that continue post-graduation.

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 Commercial Photography course encourages the appropriate use of frontier technologies and will support this where possible.

Although the course comprises of three units (listed below) 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. Students will develop projects through individual tutorial support and in agreement with their 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.

Course Units

Unit Codes		Unit Titles	Weighting
F/T PYF760	P/T PYP760	Redefining Practice: Methodologies, Contexts and Experimentation	60
PYF761	PYP761	Master's Project 1: Investigation & Exploration	60
PYF762	PYP762	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)												
	Trimester One				Trimester Two				Trimester Three			
	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEP
0	Weeks 1-15				Weeks 16-30				Weeks 31-45			
Induction	PYF760 Redefining Practice (60 credits)			Assessment	PYF761 Master's Project 1 (60 credits)			Assessment	PYF762 Master's Project 2 (60 credits)			Assessment

Level 7 Part-time mode of study (90 weeks – over 105 weeks) YEAR ONE												
Trimester One				Trimester Two				Trimester Three				
OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEP	
Weeks 1-15				Weeks 16-30				Weeks 31-45				
PYP760 Redefining Practice (60 credits)							Assessment	PYP761 Master's Project 1 (60 credits)				

Level 7 Part-time mode of study (90 weeks – over 105 weeks) YEAR TWO											
Trimester One				Trimester Two				Trimester Three			
OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEP
Weeks 46-60				Weeks 61-75				Weeks 76-90			
PYP761 Master's Project 1 <i>continued</i> (60 credits)			Assessment	PYP762 Master's Project 2 (60 credits)							Assessment