

ARTS UNIVERSITY BOURNEMOUTH

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

The Programme Specification provides a summary of the main features of the **MRes Arts** course and the learning outcomes that a 'typical' student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if that student 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 Research
Course Title	MRes Arts
Award Title	MRes Arts
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	Full-time 1 year, Part-time 2 years
Level of final award (in FHEQ)	Level 7
Subject benchmark statement	QAA Masters degree characteristics QAA Benchmark Statements for Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies QAA Benchmark Statements for Art and Design
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	2020
Date of most recent review	N/A
Date programme specification written/revised	2020

Postgraduate Taught Degree Ethos

The Masters' courses recognise individuals and their aspirations, and celebrate 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 discipline or field of study 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, where applicable, 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 or research-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 or research 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 or research project 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

The MRes Arts is a postgraduate taught programme of study supporting makers and thinkers who wish to undertake a critical and creative study within and across the disciplines of art, design, architecture, media and performance. It is designed to allow you to develop research skills and methods appropriate to your field of practice and situate your research within a broader field of innovative and cross-disciplinary research practices. Central to the MRes Arts at AUB is a concern with making, where

making is understood in a broad sense as the making of things, objects and environments as well as the making of discourse and culture. Making in this sense always involves considerations of the material and the immaterial, including the social, the economic, the political and the ideological. Whatever making you engage in, you will be encouraged to refine, challenge and interrogate conceptual understandings of what is made and for whom, who is making and where making takes place. By engaging in such an expanded field of making, you will develop new ways of seeing, reading and conceptualising your interaction with things, the environment and others to define a research practice that is both ethically and environmentally responsible.

As a student on the MRes Arts programme you will come with varied prior experience and will contribute to a rich, cross-disciplinary environment that encourages you to explore ideas, methods and resources outside and beyond established fields of arts practice to widen your critical and contextual understanding of your subject. Studying for the MRes Arts award will allow you to undertake high-level independent research underpinned by a rigorous understanding of relevant research methodologies and their application in the 'practice' of research. A structured programme of lectures, seminars and workshops will help you to build your knowledge and understanding of the theoretical contexts within which your research is situated. In this way, the programme also provides opportunities for you to systematically question existing and established practices and theories to build critical awareness of issues at the forefront of maker culture research. As part of the course, a supervised Independent Research Project will allow you to apply this learning in your specific area of study.

Starting with your initial project proposal, you will be expected to refine your proposal through a set of research questions and a body of work developed through the first unit Research Practices in the Arts. This will include contextualising your research through a literature review and compiling an annotated bibliography. Following this, you will prepare a Study Plan that will form the basis of your Independent Research Project, undertaken in the next two units. Two supervisors will be appointed to support you in your Independent Research Project, at least one of whom will have expert knowledge of your subject area. The Independent Research Project will culminate in an integrated thesis.

Alongside the body of work that you develop in each unit, you will enrich your studies with appropriate cultural, curatorial and academic activities to produce a Research Journal. Through the Research Journal you will record your critical reflections on your research process and document your engagement with the wider context of maker research. Your Research Journal will act as a logbook of your research process and enable you to facilitate planning, identify new learning needs and build a profile that reflects your research interests. The Research Journal is key for the preparation of your career aspirations and so you will be encouraged to be creative in its 'making' by considering appropriate formats and media in communicating your research practice to a wider audience.

An enquiring mind is essential for this course, and you are expected to develop work and manage the research project independently. The MRes Arts provides a structure of critical support through peer discussion and critique alongside supervisory tutorials. In all these sessions, you are encouraged to critically engage with the contexts, histories and theories relevant to your area of study and fully exploit these opportunities to mature your thinking and improve your communication of complex

ideas to specialist and non-specialist audiences. By the end of the course, you should be able to manage and undertake a complex research project through an in-depth and independent investigation, offering a valuable foundation for progression to PhD study. The course will thus provide you with the intellectual and professional skills necessary to complete high-quality research projects within academic careers and/or within the cultural and creative industries.

All MRes Arts students will be a part of, and contribute to, the wider research community at AUB and able to engage with the varied staff and student expertise across the Graduate School. Some of the taught sessions may be shared with other MA students and a programme of lectures offered by the Graduate School will provide further opportunity for dialogue between students and staff from all courses. In addition, throughout the year there will be opportunities to connect with PhD students through combined PGR symposia, presentations and workshops held at AUB. The MRes also supports cross-course collaborations where mutual benefit for students and their projects is desirable and deemed appropriate.

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 Research Practices in the Arts and Independent Research Project 1 units. A tutorial time of 45 minutes is allocated.
- Group Critique – three critiques; one near to the middle of each unit.
- Staff and student-led lectures and seminars.
- Regularly timetabled group meetings with the 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 assessment 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. provide opportunities to build critical awareness of issues at the forefront of maker culture research and develop a rich cultural community that actively engages makers and thinkers in the broader issues of sustainability, ethics, politics and social diversity.
2. support students to develop comprehensive skills in research, analysis, conceptualisation and argumentation.

3. encourage intellectual progression by providing a stimulating forum for critical debate and cross-disciplinary approaches to practice and theory to promote original thinking through systematic questioning of relevant practices and theories.
4. encourage critical reflection of contexts, histories and theories in order to evaluate and extend practices towards an understanding of appropriate methodological approaches.
5. introduce modes and formats of presentation of research to develop communication skills for specialist and non-specialist audiences.
6. prepare a foundation for PhD study and/or research-oriented careers in academia, cultural and curatorial practices, residency programmes and the creative industries.

Course Outcomes

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

1. engage critically with issues at the forefront of maker culture research and to challenge disciplinary boundaries through systematic questioning of relevant practices and theories
2. demonstrate comprehensive skills in research, analysis, conceptualisation and argumentation.
3. demonstrate and apply highly-developed critical and reflective understanding of cross-disciplinary approaches to practice and theory to promote original thinking.
4. encourage critical reflection of contexts, histories and theories in order to evaluate and extend practices towards an understanding of appropriate methodological approaches.
5. communicate complex ideas confidently using varied modes and formats of presentation to specialist and non-specialist audiences.
6. prepare a foundation for PhD study and/or research-oriented careers in academia, cultural and curatorial practices, residency programmes and the creative industries.

Reference Points

UK Quality Code for higher education, including:

- Subject Benchmark Statement: Master's degree characteristics
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)
- QAA Benchmark Statements for Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies
- QAA Benchmark Statements for Art and Design

AUB Regulatory Framework and Postgraduate Taught 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 Masters' level this is an imperative through peer learning and group work. Each member of the MA/MRes 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 Masters' activities you will have the opportunity to work together with other Masters' students to form the postgraduate network that will facilitate a wider dialogue around the arts, sustainability, ethics, cultural diversity and the creative industries.

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.

Lectures at the macro level fall into two groups there are keynote lectures that introduce strands of enquiry that are then followed up and elaborated on in thread lectures.

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. They explore issues raised from relevant literature, particular research projects, Graduate School macro lectures and/or student-led enquiry. Seminars also help to contextualise learning delivered through other sessions.

Tutorials

Tutorials provide an opportunity to discuss your individual progress on the unit and on the course. They are used to air specific issues raised through the work, provide critical observation and recommend new direction and research strategies. The tutorial following a formal assessment is known as an assessment feedback tutorial. Supervision may be provided to you by a tutor delegated from another course if appropriate.

Group Critique

Group critique involves all students and forms distinctive learning and teaching points during your programme of study. These events may occasionally be led by a visiting lecturer (see below) and supported by MA/MRes tutors. Discussion primarily focuses on the individual work produced in the units and takes place midway through each phase.

Supervisory team

Students will develop their Independent Research Project in consultation with their supervisory team for the duration of the course. The supervisory team will be composed of two tutors to combine research experience with subject expertise. Supervision of students will be provided by staff academically qualified to provide a critical context for their work; invited critics and industry professionals will offer an industry-appropriate context for their work.

Visiting Professionals

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

Research Groups

AUB has a number of research groups established in particular areas of staff research expertise and interest. MRes students will have the opportunity to join and contribute to relevant research group activities.

Industry Liaison Groups

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

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

Study Visits

These involve visits to galleries and museums, theatres and performances, design collections and archives, trade fairs, expositions, biennales and design practices here in the UK, the EU and worldwide. There are added costs notified in advance of the visit. Student attendance at academic and discipline-specific conferences and symposia 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. The course adopts a *blended learning* approach where lectures and demonstrations can occur on-line via channels such as Zoom, MS Teams, Skype, Panopto or other as well as face to face.

Full (FT) and Part Time (PT) Modes of Study

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

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

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

It is important to recognise that the designated weekly study hours for PT are half of those for FT students, and for reasons of parity, access to subject area resources and academic support must be understood commensurately. The longer study periods (x2) of each unit for PT students ensure that parity is clearly evident and accounted for between the two modes (FT and PT) of study. In this way, the overall

study hours and proportionate access for each unit sustain parity of experience for FT and PT students.

Assessment

Each unit is assessed separately, and the assessment forms part of the unit. Assessment both provides a measure of your achievement, and also gives you regular feedback on how your learning is developing.

For every unit of your course, we will inform you of what you are expected to learn; what you have to submit; how your work will be assessed; and the deadline for presenting your work for assessment.

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 identify 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.

Other assessment methods include *Criterion-referenced assessment* which occurs through use of Learning Outcomes in Unit Assessments, and *Ipsative assessment* where the iterative nature of some aspects of delivery provide opportunities for gauging the student's current level of performance with previous levels of performance. Such opportunities are present in the *Study Plan* where students build on and re-present their *Study Plan* at different points in the course, also in the *Research Journal* which records practice over time. Ipsative assessment is fed-back in individual tutorials.

Assessment of collaborative work

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

1. The intention for assessed collaboration should be identified through the individual student's Study Plan and Research Journal, and must have the prior agreement in principle of relevant tutor(s).
2. A parity meeting will devise and implement an academically rigorous assessment method/procedure that will be submitted for approval of, and ultimately confirmation by, the Course Leader. Such confirmation will be conveyed to each student involved in the collaborative activity and agreement made with each that the procedure is fully understood.
3. An important component of this procedure will be a requirement for each student to provide a written (qualitative and quantitative) self-evaluation and evaluation of others' role within, and contribution to, the development and outcome of the 'submitted work'*. These evaluations will be used to *inform* the assessment process.
4. Following assessment and the subsequent parity meeting, individual marks will be agreed that will create the 'body of work' component of the overall unit mark.

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

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>

Intellectual Property Rights for the Creative Industries

Intellectual Property Rights for the Creative Industries is a much-discussed topic when considering the social and economic impact such rights may have on the success of new creative businesses and enterprise initiatives. Intellectual Property Rights are the rights given to persons over the creations of their minds. They usually give the creator an exclusive right over the use of his/her creation for a certain period of time. Intellectual Property Rights [IPR] for the Creative Industries can be complex; the changing technology landscape has clearly impacted on previous business models and IPR strategies. It is recognized that any IPR for the Creative Industries needs to strike a balance between the protection of innovation and the interests of society as a whole. New Creatives entering industry need a keen awareness of the new synergies emerging between direct income generating opportunities and the wider more diversified business strategies that include: value, brand, shareholder value etc. The creation of value through providing services is now at the heart of many new business plans, the key challenge being how to translate free services/value/brand into income generation and financially viable business models.

Course Structure

All students are registered for the award of Master of Research (MRes); 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 your 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 your Course Handbook.

For the award of Master of Research (MRes), 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 your Course Handbook.

Course Content

The MRes Arts is designed to allow you to develop mastery in research skills and methods appropriate to your field of practice or area of study. A programme of structured learning facilitates the acquisition of these skills, and a supervised Independent Research Project allows you to apply this learning.

The first unit, **Research Practices in the Arts**, introduces all MRes students to practical and theoretical approaches to research through a series of seminars and workshops. On completion of the first unit, you will have refined the focus of your intended investigation and set out the contextual parameters of your research question. This equips you to apply your research skills to your individual project through the next two units: **Independent Research Project 1 and 2**.

In contrast with the predominantly taught mode of delivery in research Practices in the Arts, **Independent Research Project 1** allows you to independently explore your research question through experimentation, case study or pilot study, and to test your methodological approach. Formative assessment mid-way through the unit offers you the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of your approach, revise your Study Plan, confirm your research direction for the rest of your studies.

Having confirmed your research direction and identified an achievable study plan to answer your research question, **Independent Research Project 2** allows you to work towards concluding your investigation and devise appropriate formats of presentation.

Alongside the body of work produced for each unit, you will submit a **Research Journal**, which is an ongoing working document that provides a space for you to reflect critically and creatively on the process and progress of your research. Typically, the Research Journal will evidence your engagement with the wider postgraduate network of the Graduate School and your ability to make your research 'matter' socially, materially and culturally beyond the confines of the course. Most importantly, the Research Journal embodies the **developmental** aspect of your

research project: both in terms of your own personal development as a creative researcher, and the processual development of an emerging body of work. You are therefore encouraged to think of the Research Journal as a creative piece of work that integrates theory and practice through experimental approaches to writing and making: it may be a bound book, an online blog or an embroidered cloth.

Your **Study Plan** should be conceived of in similar terms as a textual artefact that fulfils the purpose of providing you and your tutors with a record of your plans and aspirations and act as a guide to your independent research project: it may take the form of a poster on the wall or a curtain to look at from your bed.

Course Units

Unit Code	Unit Title	Credit Weighting
REF701/REP701	Research Practices in the Arts	60 credits
REF702/REP702	Independent Research Project 1	60 credits
REF703/REP703	Independent Research Project 2	60 credits

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	REF701 Research Practices in the Arts (60 credits)		Assessment	REF702 Independent Research Project 1 (60 credits)		Assessment	REF703 Independent Research 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	REP701 Research Practices in the Arts (60 credits)		Assessment	REP702 Independent Research Project 1 (60 credits)		Assessment	REP703 Independent Research Project 2 (60 credits)		Assessment