

**UNIVERSITY FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS**

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION FOR:**

**MA FINE ART**

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION [ACADEMIC YEAR 2021/22]**

*This Programme Specification is designed for prospective students, current students, academic staff and potential employers. It provides a concise 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. More detailed information on the teaching, learning and assessment methods, learning outcomes and content of each unit can be found in the Unit Descriptors.*

## Section A – Material Course Information

Validating Body	University for the Creative Arts <sup>1</sup>		
Teaching Body	UCA		
Final Award Title and Type	Master of Arts		
Course Title	Fine Art		
Course Location and Length	Campus: Canterbury	Length: Full-time: 1 year Part-time: 2 years	
Mode of Study	Full-time	✓	Part-time ✓
Period of Validation	2017/18 to 2021/22		
Name of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body	Not Applicable		
Type of Accreditation	Not Applicable		
Accreditation due for renewal	Not Applicable		

### Entry criteria and requirements<sup>2</sup>

A good Honours degree or equivalent qualification in the subject or a related discipline and/or relevant work experience, demonstrating an ability to study at postgraduate level.

Consideration will also be given to applicants who can make a strong case for admission in relation to a particular project and can demonstrate their potential to satisfactorily complete the course.

Applicant's portfolios should reflect a strong commitment to the area for which they are applying. Their work and application should also reflect an individual identity and creative thinking. They should also indicate a clear area of investigation that could be developed towards a project proposal.

#### *Minimum English language requirements:*

For students whose first language is not English, a certificate is required as evidence of the necessary level of English. For postgraduate study an average IELTS score of 6.5 (TOEFL 550 (CBT 213) or [equivalent](#) is required.

You may be offered a place on a course on the condition that you improve your English language and study skills. We offer [pre-sessional English language courses](#) which can improve your IELTS score by a maximum of 1.0 and 0.5, or equivalent.

<sup>1</sup> Regulated by the Office for Students

<sup>2</sup> This should be the standard University Criteria unless otherwise approved by the Academic Board and include UCAS entry profile for undergraduate courses.

Overall methods of assessment <sup>3</sup>	Written exams:	Practical exams:	Coursework:
	0%	0%	100%
Overall Learning & Teaching hours <sup>4</sup>	Scheduled:	Independent:	Placement:
	14.3%	85.7%	0%
	250 hours	1500 hours	0 hours
General level of staff delivering the course <sup>5</sup>	The University's current recruitment policy for Lecturers and Senior Lecturers states that they must have either an MA or equivalent professional practice in a relevant discipline or field. All lecturing staff are encouraged to work towards a teaching qualification or professional Recognition by the Higher Education Academy and this is a requirement for Senior Lecturers. Senior Lecturers are required to be professionally active or engaged in research in their discipline. All Lecturers and Senior Lecturers undertake scholarship in their disciplines. There are also Sessional Staff to link courses with professional practice and Technicians to provide technical support.		
Language of Study	English		
Subject/Qualification Benchmark Statement: QAA Master's Degree Characteristics			
Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)			

<sup>3</sup> As generated by the most popular unit descriptors and calculated for the overall course stage data.

<sup>4</sup> As generated by the most popular unit descriptors and calculated for the overall course stage data.

<sup>5</sup> Include general information about the experience or status of the staff involved in delivering the course, for example Professor, Course Leader, Senior Lecturer

## The course structure

The structure of all of the University's awards complies with the University's [Common Credit Framework](#). The Common Credit Framework includes information about the:

- Rules for progression between the stages of a course;
- Consequences of failure for reassessment, compensation and exit awards;
- Calculation and classification of awards;

Unit codes and titles	Level	Credit value	Elective/ Core	Most popular student choice of optional elective units or elective options in core units?
CART7001 Context & Method	7	30	Core	
CART7005 Exploring Practice	7	30	Core	
CART7003 Project Development	7	60	Core	
CART7004 Final Project	7	60	Core	

## Section B - Course Overview

The core aim of the MA Fine Art course is to provide a structured context for the development of individual research projects at Masters level. As such, the course is designed to enable students to explore various strategies for supporting and developing art making in the context of the ideas that make such practices meaningful within contemporary fine art, as well as broader cultural, social and geographic contexts.

The MA Fine Art course offers full time and part-time modes of study and can be completed over one or two years respectively.

The overarching philosophy of the MA Fine Art course is based on three principles: engaging community, critical rigour and the development of professional practice. Through a range of opportunities, projects and partnerships, Fine Art students are encouraged to understand and position themselves and their research within the context of professional practice. Throughout the course students network and forge links with regional arts organisations and creative industries. As such, the course philosophy sees professional practice in a dialectical relationship to practice and research, in which students are continually prompted and challenged to critically consider their role within and outside the university.

The course provides a range of opportunities for direct public engagement with local arts organisations, through both studio research and live contexts.

The specific milieu of arts development and infrastructure within East Kent and the specific rural-urban identity of the region, particularly in respect of public arts development, art in the public realm and cultural regeneration is key to this relationship, in which a uniquely rich network of local organisations and industry professionals and practitioners have emerged in recent years. These have included Turner Contemporary in Margate, The Creative Foundation and Strange Cargo in Folkestone, Dover Arts Development and Stour Valley Creative

Partnership in Ashford, as well as a number of smaller local organisations, including Limbo and CRATE in Margate, B&B project space in Folkestone and Art in Romney Marsh, all of whom our students have worked with in recent years.

A key driver for centralising our position in relation to these organisations has been our hugely successful Brewery Tap Project Space in Folkestone's Creative Quarter. It is currently run through our MA programmes at Canterbury and is an exhibition and community space developed to enable students to test ideas and collaborate externally in the region.

As such, the course offers a unique opportunity for students to vocationalise their education in relation to the creative industries, or for professionals to theorise their practice in an academic context.

The course team contributing to the Masters programme represents a breadth of practice, with highly regarded professional profiles that contribute to a dynamic research culture within the University. They are highly committed to developing a supportive academic community in which to do this, with a focus on delivering academic experiences that promote knowledge, understanding and practice of the discipline, as well as the acquisition of transferable skills.

From the beginning, the course emphasizes a hands-on approach to making art in the studio, with individually tailored support from a team of professionally practicing artists and theorists. The course is firmly embedded in the field of contemporary art, encouraging invention and experimentation alongside a radical questioning of established ways of seeing, thinking and making. Correspondingly, the philosophy of the course is open-minded, adaptive and flexible, and our distinctiveness develops out of the diversity of approaches exemplified by our students and staff.

The MA Fine Art course uses exhibitions, presentations, screenings, guest lectures, workshops and study-visits as teaching tools. Professional development forms a central component of a student's time on our postgraduate course, with many of the skills learnt and developed in each unit seen as transferable. Throughout the course, they present 'work in progress' to their peer group, industry partners, guest lecturers and course tutors. These sessions offer students the opportunity to discuss work in a professional and group context, in order to continually develop their critical and communication skills.

An 'Ideas in Theory and Writing' seminar programme runs through the spine of the course (in the 'Context & Method', 'Project Development' and 'Final Project' units) and is refined from year to year in response to the development of the contemporary context, as well as staff and student research. The seminars are predicated on a holistic approach to developing a contemporary art practice in which methodologies for cultivating thinking, writing and speaking are valued alongside making.

## Section C - Course Aims

The aims of the MA Fine Art course are to:

- A1 Provide a structured interdisciplinary context in which students can rigorously pursue a self-directed research project whose outcomes are embodied within the production of an original body of work within the field of Fine Art.
- A2 Encourage the development of each student's own critical reflection as the basis for developing as independent learners capable of advancing their own skills, knowledge, research and professional practice.

A3	Provide students with the means for establishing and understanding the place of their own work within contemporary academic debates in fine art and its professional contexts.
A4	Encourage the development of research strategies that reflect the contemporary context in theoretical discourse and creative practice and form the basis for informed speculation about future directions in fine art practice.
A5	Provide a balance, appropriate to the demands of individual projects, of taught elements, individual research and collective debate.
A6	Encourage the development of research strategies that reflect the contemporary context and theoretical discourses within curatorial practice and form the basis for informed speculation about future directions in the field.
A7	Provide a balance, appropriate to the demands of individual projects, of taught elements, individual research and collective debate.

## Section D - Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of MA Fine Art students are able to:	
<i>Knowledge:</i>	
<b>LO1</b>	Initiate and implement an individual self-directed research project using research methods, materials, techniques and processes appropriate to fine art practice.
<b>LO2</b>	Demonstrate a thorough understanding of and critical engagement with, the relevant practical, theoretical and professional contexts of their project and be able to situate and interpret their own work within this context.
<i>Understanding</i>	
<b>LO3</b>	Demonstrate an ability to employ analysis, synthesis and evaluation to a range of external sources and to their own practice to inspire and inform the generation, development and application of original ideas.
<b>LO4</b>	Demonstrate a reflective and evaluative approach to their own work, which allows them to act independently in identifying, implementing and sustaining individual research and practice at a professional level.
<i>Application:</i>	
<b>LO5</b>	Demonstrate an ability to communicate complex and speculative concepts, methods and proposals effectively in spoken, written and visual forms.
<b>LO6</b>	Identify the potential for their work within specific professional contexts and develop appropriate communication skills for engagement with this audience.

## Section E - Learning, Teaching and Assessment

### Learning & Teaching Strategies

The course aims to provide an overview of a range of practices, ideas and methodologies that may be adopted, adapted or used to frame the development of an individual student's MA project. Lectures, seminars and salons are delivered throughout the course and are conceived to present and review issues that impact upon contemporary fine art practice and discourse.

At postgraduate level, students are expected to identify, develop and manage their own MA project and further develop the skills needed for autonomy of research. This progressive move towards greater autonomous learning is an integral part of the structure of a master's course, and teaching & learning practices encourage students to develop independent learning skills as thoroughly as possible.

The MA Fine Art course uses exhibitions, presentations, screenings, guest lectures, workshops and study-visits as teaching tools. Professional development forms a central component of a student's time on our postgraduate course, with many of the skills learnt and developed in each unit seen as transferable. Our students are actively encouraged to show and distribute their work outside the university context: as groups, individually and in relation to partners. Throughout the course, they present 'work in progress' to their peer group, industry partners, guest lecturers and course tutors. These sessions offer students the opportunity to discuss work in a professional and group context, in order to continually develop their critical and communication skills.

Visiting lecturers further the knowledge, understanding and professional opportunities for students whilst on the course. In the last year these have included Adam Chodzko, Bob and Roberta Smith, Gustav Metzger, Yu-Chen Wang, Doug Fishbone, Martin Creed, Amanda Loomes, Webb-Ellis, Matt Calderwood, Sean Dawson, Alicia Paz and Richard Dyer; as well as lectures from our partner and local arts organisations; Turner Contemporary, The Creative Foundation, Strange Cargo, Whitstable Biennial and Stour Valley Arts.

#### *Seminars:*

Seminars are delivered throughout the course and are conceived to present and review issues that impact upon contemporary fine art practice and discourse. The seminar programme is not fixed and develops from year to year in response to the development of the contemporary context and in response to both staff and student research. The programme aims to provide an overview of a range of works, ideas and methodologies that may be adopted or adapted in the development of an MA project.

#### *MA Forums & Work in Progress Sessions:*

Students present work in progress at key points in each phase of the course to their peer group and tutors. These sessions offer students the opportunity to discuss work in a group context, and practice their critical and articulation skills.

#### *Exhibition/Viewing/Screening:*

The MA Fine Art course uses exhibitions, presentations and/or screenings as teaching tools. These viewings are useful in bringing students together, and disseminating good and innovative practice.

#### *Tutorials:*

Formal tutorials are recorded through written notes and, together with assessment notes, build up a profile of progress through the course. They are not, however an element of the formal assessment process. Information of a personal nature given during these tutorials can be kept

confidential if you wish or can involve the University Counselling and Welfare Service, if appropriate. The subjects usually raised during a personal tutorial are primarily creative or study issues: academic progress; course structure and curriculum; assessment procedures; assessment results; specific project guidance; study plan; etc.

*Open and Independent Study:*

Open study entails access to studio and technical equipment, as well as library and other resources. It is not supervised or tutored, except for safety reasons in some technical areas (when there may be technician support). Students structure their own time and work independently of tutorial assistance.

The responsibility of conducting research and producing research evidence in the form of notes, sketches, research papers, etc., is recognised as an important element of independent study.

*Communications and Online Learning:*

Given the nature of independent study at postgraduate level the MA Fine Art course utilises MyUCA (the university's online student learning and support system) to effectively communicate information to students and disseminate core course and reference materials. Students are also encouraged to utilise the forum and blog facilities within the system to develop communities of practice in discussing issues related to seminars, as well as various aspects of the course such as exhibition planning.

**Assessment Strategies**

Assessment is through visual, written and verbal presentation of work and takes the form of both formative and summative assessment. We consider assessment to be part of the learning process, and promote deep learning through self-assessment and discussion in the context of assessment feedback. Assessment criteria are cross-referenced to national subject benchmarks to ensure that the course assessment design leads students to meet the standards expected of postgraduate students in art and design.

The emphasis on creativity and criticality, rather than the prescription of specific modes, also represents an anticipatory approach regarding inclusivity of assessment practices. This means academic approval for alternative forms of submission in response to assessment requirements can be granted on the basis of realistic and equitable proposals. The assessment of such work is effectively managed through specifically developed unit criteria that reference students' capacity to 'analyse' or 'critically position' their ideas and practice rather than to the specific form of an outcome.

Assessment practices adopted by the course are consistent with the University's Assessment Policy. Assessment criteria specific to each unit and generic grading descriptors ensure a consistency of approach to assessment.

**Section F - Enhancing the Quality of Learning and Teaching**

The course is subject to the University's rigorous quality assurance procedures which involve subject specialist and internal peer review of the course at periodic intervals, normally of 5 years. This process ensures that the course engages with the applicable national Subject Benchmarks and references the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

All courses are monitored on an annual basis where consideration is given to:

- External Examiner's Reports
- Key statistics including data on retention and achievement
- Results of the Student Satisfaction Surveys
- Feedback from Student Course Representative