

**UNIVERSITY FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS**

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION FOR:**

**MFA PHOTOGRAPHY**

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION [ACADEMIC YEAR 2020/21]**

*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	University for the Creative Arts		
Final Award Title and Type	Master of Fine Art		
Course Title	Photography		
Course Location and Length	Campus: Farnham	Length: Full-time - 2 years	
Mode of Study	Full-time	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Part-time
Period of Validation	2017/18 – 2021/22		
Name of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body	Not Applicable		
Type of Accreditation	Not Applicable		
Accreditation due for renewal	Not Applicable		
<p>Entry criteria and requirements<sup>2</sup></p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p><u>Minimum English language requirements:</u> If your first language is not English a certificate is required as evidence that you have an average IELTS score of 6.0 or equivalent. If you are applying as an international student from a country outside the EU and require a visa to study in the UK, you will also need a minimum of 5.5 in each individual component.</p> <p>You may be offered a place on a course on the condition that you improve your English language and study skills. We offer <a href="#">pre-sessional English language courses</a> which can improve your IELTS score by a maximum of 1.0 and 0.5, or equivalent.</p>			
Overall methods of assessment <sup>3</sup>	Written exams:	Practical exams:	Coursework:
Course Stage 1	0%	0%	100%
Course Stage 2	0%	0%	100%
Overall Learning & Teaching hours <sup>4</sup>	Scheduled:	Independent:	Placement:
Course Stage 1	12.5%	83.3%	4.2%
	150 hours	1000 hours	50 hours
Course Stage 2	8.3%	87.5%	4.2%
	100 hours	1050 hours	50 hours

<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.

<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.

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)	

### 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	If elective is this the most popular student choice?
<b>Year 1</b>				
FFPH7013 Critical Perspectives	7	30	Core	
FFPH7009 Exploratory Practice (Photography)	7	30	Core	
FFPH7014 Research and Development	7	60	Core	Two options in unit: work placement and non-work placement. Work placement most popular.
International Exchange*	7	60	Elective	No
<b>Year 2</b>				
FFPH7011 Advanced Practice (Photography)	7	60	Core	Two options in unit: work

<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

				placement and non-work placement. Work placement most popular.
FFPH7015 Final Project (Practice)	7	60	Elective	Yes
FFPH7016 Final Project (Practice and Written)	7	60	Elective	No
FFPH7017 Final Project (Dissertation)	7	60	Elective	No
International Exchange*	7	60	Elective	No

*\*only one period of International Exchange of up to 60 credits is permitted*

### Section B - Course Overview

The distinctive feature of this course is in its ambitions to develop a high level of professional and research based knowledge on the subject of photography that, with the opportunity for international exchange, will give the course a unique perspective and will enable students to be successful in an internationally expanding field. The MFA Photography course at Farnham is committed to developing a wide range of international connections both with other educational institutions for research and exchange as well as international archives: the course intends to foster and promote a broad historical and contemporary knowledge of world photography. This course aims to direct students into the widest possible range of future careers in photography through embracing numerous approaches to study students are able to direct their own learning pathway through the course and resolve their outcome on a manner that suits their identified career direction.

The course will encourage applications from students from a wide range of backgrounds, enhancing the mix of ideas on the course and enabling students from different disciplines/backgrounds to influence each other and bring new debates to the subject of photography. The aspirations of the course are multiple in that they enable students to develop understanding of practical and theoretical research in photography. The course helps students to develop a high level of understanding of context and the working world of photography, in particular to gain an understanding of professional contexts through the work placement opportunity, and to engage students in an in-depth understanding of photography as a global subject through our excellent international connections. In doing so, students have the opportunity to benefit from the research activity and professional network coming from within the photography department at Farnham. The MFA course at Farnham is distinctive because it offers:

- A unique partnership exchange with the National Institute of Design in India, enhancing global knowledge of photography and employment opportunities worldwide.
- The opportunity for postgraduate study in a range of disciplines within the context of photography.
- Students are able to pursue a study that specialises in a particular field of photography such as: fine art; editorial; publishing and book design; curating; fashion; moving image; advertising and critical writing.
- An inter-disciplinary approach to the subject.
- Opportunities for international exchange with high quality partners providing equivalent courses and placement opportunities.
- Covers a broad range of photography related topics that are designed to enable the individual student to gain a more in depth understanding of their subject field.
- Is structured to enable the individual student to define their area of inquiry through both practical and theoretical projects
- Directs students to position their project content historically and to identify comparable contemporary practices and if appropriate, to realise the project's commercial viability. Involvement with the significant photography research projects, such as the BookRoom: [www.thebookroom.net](http://www.thebookroom.net), [www.globalarchivephotography.com](http://www.globalarchivephotography.com) and [www.fastforward.photography](http://www.fastforward.photography) as well

- as engagement with high achieving research orientated staff.
- The disciplines of cultural studies, sociology, art history, social history as a means of interpreting

### Section C - Course Aims

- A1 Offer a creative and intellectual environment in which students can rigorously pursue a project of self-directed study and the systematic production of a body of work on a topic of specific interest within the field of Photography
- A2 Promote in-depth rigorously conducted research to ensure that students are able to contextualise their own work in relation to the leading edge practice in Photography
- A3 To establish a cross-disciplinary postgraduate community enabling a critical dialogue to enhance innovation and break down boundaries between creative individuals and practices
- A4 Support students with the means for establishing and understanding the place of their own projects within the context of relevant and contemporary professional debate and future practice
- A5 Provide students with the opportunity for extended critical debate, a high degree of critical reflection and integration of theoretical and practical concerns as part of the realisation of an ambitious body of work

### Section D - Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course students are able to:

#### Knowledge

- L01 Articulated ideas, concepts and processes to a specialist and broad audience, putting into practice new knowledge acquired in a professional context

#### Understanding

- L02 Acquired a critical understanding of the relevant practical, theoretical and professional contexts related to Photography as well as broader debates of current creative practice
- L03 Exercised a high degree of independent thought, learner autonomy and experimentation in the implementation of individual projects

#### Application

- L04 Planned and implemented a project of self-directed and systematic research using appropriate research skills and methods
- L05 A clearly articulated, sustained and ambitious body of work that places the MFA Photography project within relevant critical debates and professional contexts, drawing on and extending current ways of thinking

### Section E - Learning, Teaching and Assessment

### Learning and Teaching Strategy

Courses at the University for the Creative Arts are founded on the principle that the most effective educational experience combines structured teaching and independent study. Courses are designed to give students maximum responsibility for the management of their own learning. In general, students will find that the level of structured teaching is greater in the early stages of the course, with increasing self-directed study and project work as they develop their knowledge and understanding.

The course team are committed to developing a supportive academic community with a focus on delivering academic experiences that promotes knowledge, understanding and practice of photography, as well as the acquisition of transferable skills and knowledge of international communities of photography. The course provides introductions to a range of practices, ideas and methodologies that may be adopted, adapted or used to frame the development of an individual student's MFA project. Lectures, seminars and reviews are delivered throughout the course and are designed to present and review ideas and work that are relevant to the contemporary debates in photography.

They will often be supported by seminars, which provide an opportunity for interaction between staff and groups of students, and allow students to extend and examine the issues raised. Seminars are also used to support the delivery of practice.

Students will undertake a number of projects, which combine guided learning and independent study. The outcomes of projects vary depending on the purpose of the unit; for example, it may be a slide presentation, a written report or a product. Each project culminates in some form of review or critique. Many projects are set in a practical workshop situation, using materials, processes and techniques to generate research and an understanding of theoretical principles.

Many projects require students to write Project Proposal, whereby the student negotiates his/her own schedule of work and outcomes (which must be related to the stated outcomes of the unit). This allows a student to focus on particular areas which reflect his/her own interests and aspirations.

Self-managed independent study forms an essential part of the course. Independent study includes preparation for assessment or work on projects, but also supplementary work such as further research (including attending museums, galleries or other places of interest). Some units require students to work in groups (either to share research and experience, or in some cases to submit a group assignment). This is carefully managed to ensure that all students are aware of effective group processes.

The use of information technology, including dedicated software packages, is built into the course where appropriate.

The formal teaching on the course is supplemented by a range of visiting lecturers, students will have the chance to attend presentations by artists, critics, industry professionals and academics from other institutions.

Throughout the course, students are supported through a series of group and/or individual tutorials, in which students discuss their general academic progress and agree future courses of action (including choices of option, where appropriate).

### Assessment Strategy

A range of assessment methods are used, which provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of a range of skills, as well as subject-specific and technical knowledge. For each unit a timetable for assessment will be published, together with a clear statement of assessment requirements, criteria and assessment methods.

Whilst assessment is the way in which the University measures performance and determines suitability for progression to the next stage of the course, it is also used to provide feedback to students and to enable them

to identify strengths and weaknesses, and hence ways in which performance might be improved.

The assessment scheme is designed to enable students to develop and demonstrate a sound understanding of central principles and technical procedures in the early part of the course, with an increasing level of research and independent study required in the later stages. These later assessments usually build on the knowledge and skills acquired in the early units.

The specific course outcomes are delivered through the full range of assessment requirements.

Students also develop generic skills during the course of the course. These are not independently assessed, but contribute to the overall assessment of units (and may be reflected in the assessment criteria). Methods of assessment include written assignments, practical assignments, oral presentations, and formal peer assessment.

Written communication skills are assessed through a range of written assignments. Oral communication skills are assessed, in particular, through oral presentations, although they will also contribute to marks for other units (for example, communication skills might be one aspect of the mark awarded for individual contribution to a group project).

## **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 Representatives