UNIVERSITY FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION FOR:

MA VISUAL COMMUNICATION

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[1]
Teaching Body	University for the Creative Arts
Final Award Title and Type	Master of Arts
Course Title	Visual Communication

Course Location and Length	Campus: Canterbury		Length: Full time: 1 year[2] Part time: 2 years[3]
Mode of Study	Full-time	✓	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

Entry criteria and requirements[4]

Standard UCA MA entry requirements (for courses requiring a portfolio):

- A good Honours degree or equivalent qualification in the subject or a related discipline **and/or**
- Relevant work experience, demonstrating your 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.

Portfolio

For this course, we'll require you to attend an Applicant Day and bring your portfolio for assessment. Further information on how to compile a portfolio and the specific requirements for examples of work to be included will be provided on the Applicant Portal after you've applied.

If you are unable to attend an applicant day, you will be able to submit a portfolio electronically via the Applicant Portal.

Minimum English language requirements:

If your first language is not English a certificate is required as evidence that you

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[1] Regulated by the Office for Students

[2] Students may enter the course in September or February.

[3] PT mode suspended 2020/21 & 2021/22 and withdrawn from 2021/22.

[4] This should be the standard University Criteria unless otherwise approved by the Academic Board and include UCAS entry profile for undergraduate courses.

have an average IELTS score of 6.5 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.

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.

Overall methods of assessment[5]	Written exams:	Practical exams:	Coursework:
Course	0%	0%	100%
Overall Learning & Teaching hours[6]	Scheduled:	Independent:	Placement:
Course	13.9%	86.1%	0%
	250 hours	1550 hours	0 hours
General level of staff delivering the course[7]	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 Statement			
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;

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[5] As generated by the most popular unit descriptors and calculated for the overall course stage data.

[6] As generated by the most popular unit descriptors and calculated for the overall course stage data.

[7] Include general information about the experience or status of the staff involved in delivering the course, for example Professor, Course Leader, Senior Lecturer

- 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?
Course				
CVCM7001 Defining Your Practice	7	60	Core	N/A
CVCM7002 Context and Method	7	30	Core	N/A
CVCM7003 Project Development	7	30	Core	N/A
CVCM7004 Realisation and Dissemination (Final Project)	7	60	Core	N/A

Section B - Course Overview

MA Visual Communication at UCA Canterbury is designed to prepare graduates for professional practice and academic careers. Graduates will enter the professional world with a confident design voice and an outstanding body of work. They will become creative leaders developing careers within the broad field of visual communication, they are likely to work within one or more of the following specific areas – print media, editorial content, book arts, social media, interaction design, motion design, web design, environmental/exhibition design and advertising.

This course appeals to a wide range of applicants, from home students returning to education after a period in work to international students with undergraduate experience in other discipline areas. Typically, applicants hold an undergraduate degree in graphic design, visual communication, illustration, communication design or other directly related areas, and/or have professional design experience. However, applicants are considered that indicate a strong aptitude for graduate study within the discipline of visual communication. This includes those who have studied or worked in related fields such as industrial and interior design, architecture, fine arts, film and journalism; or beyond – this course allows applicants with aptitude to develop their interests and aspirations over the period of the course (aptitude will be determined through portfolio, personal statement and interview as appropriate).

To reflect and support this wide range of students the course is front-loaded with skills workshops in areas such as printmaking (inc. screen printing/letterpress etc.), digital print, digital motion, desktop publishing, web and app design. Alongside the development of skills students learn how to research, analyse and generate ideas through our seminar and tutorial programme.

This course is comprised of both one year full-time and two year part-time modes.

Students are encouraged to discover and develop new skills to strengthen and inform their practice, but are also urged to interrogate those very skills in order to understand them and innovate through them.

The course understands that the skill sets required for print, motion, and digital design are broad, complementary and interrelated. This approach differentiates this course from the MA Graphic Design course in Epsom that instead offers a narrower and specialist focus. Another distinction is the Canterbury location itself, with its city centre location, access to the coast and the channel tunnel (developing cross–European links that are already embedded in our BA programmes) and the fast train link to London.

We believe the most intriguing and successful designers are cultural innovators who through their practice inform, persuade, and entertain. Our graduates develop a voice as authors and innovators engaged in identifying and solving design problems within cross-disciplinary environments. We approach design as an agent of change – a strategy for positively transforming behaviours in desirable and sustainable ways.

Throughout the duration of this course students will encounter leading visual communication practitioners, as visiting lecturers, and also through our seminar, workshop and lecture series. There will also be opportunities for creative industry based project activities and client facing projects that the course team run alongside scheduled course activities.

In the first unit 'Context and Method' you will develop through the field of visual communication an appreciation of the various theoretical discourses that have informed, and been informed by, practice.

The second unit 'Project Development' will enable you to develop a body of work in reference to a self-initiated project proposal, evaluating and testing the aims of this proposal over a sustained period of self-directed study.

Through the unit 'Defining Your Practice' you will investigate and explore the potential of a range of specific themes and approaches to contemporary visual communication practices and craft skills. You will be able to define your creative practice specifically within the broad field of visual communication.

The summation of the course is 'Realisation and Dissemination'. This unit is the culmination and consolidation of your studies in the form of a resolved piece, or body of work, it will demonstrate coherence and innovation at a professional level. Your outcome for this unit will be displayed through an exhibition.

Section C - Course Aims

A1   Encourage the development of creative, confident, informed and contemporary working practices to enable professional employment, further postgraduate research and lifelong learning.

A2   Promote in-depth rigorous engagement with the expanded field of Visual Communication through a curriculum that closely combines practice with theory.

A3   Offer practitioners the opportunity to transition from other creative disciplines to Visual Communication through curriculum that covers technical, theoretical and conceptual tuition.

A4 Promote informed and focussed independent learning through placing the student at the centre of the learning experience.

A5 Provide an approach to the subject that is experimental, flexible, adaptable, s ustainable, and informed by rigorous research.

Section D - Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course students are able to:

Knowledge:

LO1 Research
Identify and rigorously investigate specific sources using appropriate research methods leading to new concepts or insights into existing Visual Communication practice.

LO2 Analysis
Methodically and critically analyse and evaluate existing knowledge proposing new hypotheses.

Understanding:

LO3 Subject Knowledge and Understanding
Demonstrate a comprehensive and critical understanding of Visual Communication and its underlying principles.

LO4 Experimentation
Demonstrate experimentation, risk taking, problem solving and deduction in relation to both ideas and materials in order to advance your practice.

Application:

LO5 Technical Competence and Understanding
Demonstrate advanced skills and processes appropriate to Visual Communication and present work in a highly sophisticated manner appropriate to the audience and context.

CO6 Personal and Professional Development
Demonstrate commitment to the subject, engagement and attendance with the course, appropriate planning, organisation, critical reflection and self-directed project management.

Section E - Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Learning and Teaching Strategy

MA Visual Communication is a studio-based course, with the environment of shared working space and workshop areas strongly impacting upon the overall pedagogic approach. The course is delivered through a series of units that comprise of a range of project briefs, workshops and written assignments. Scheduled activity primarily consists of group critiques, individual tutorials, workshops and lectures.

The course is overseen by the Course Leader for Graphic Design: Visual Communication/Illustration & Animation and primarily delivered by a diverse team of lecturers; all subject specialists, designers, academics and researchers. They are supported by a range of visiting practitioners and lecturers.

Assessment Strategy

Assessment is approached as an ongoing process, with emphasis placed upon the feedback that students receive on a day-to-day basis, from both tutors and peers. Work is assessed holistically by portfolio at the end of each unit, allowing for a breadth of work and the consideration of individual strengths and weaknesses. Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria are written under the same headings for each unit, allowing students to clearly chart their progress.

At the summative assessment point, students receive a 1:1 tutorial alongside their written feedback which allows tutors to respond to individual student needs and facilitate discussion around their work and future career.

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