

# **PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION**

## **MA GRAPHIC ARTS**

**Part One – Programme Specification**

1	Basic Data	3
2	Educational aims of the programme	4
3	Learning outcomes of the programme	6
4	Programme structure	13
5	Entry requirements	16
6	Assessment Regulations	16
7	Student Learning: distinctive features and support	16
8	Reference points/benchmarks	17

## Programme Specification

### Section 1: Basic Data

<b>Awarding institution/body</b>	University of the West of England, Bristol
<b>Teaching institution</b>	University of the West of England, Bristol
<b>Faculty responsible for programme</b>	Faculty of Creative Arts
<b>Programme accredited by</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Highest award title</b>	MA Graphic Arts
<b>Default award title</b>	
<b>Interim award title</b>	PGDip Graphic Arts PGCert Graphic Arts
<b>Modular Scheme title (if different)</b>	Postgraduate Programme Modular Scheme
<b>UCAS code (or other coding system if relevant)</b>	W21D12
<b>Relevant QAA subject benchmarking group(s)</b>	Art and Design
<b>On-going/valid until* (*delete as appropriate/insert end date)</b>	
<b>Valid from (insert date if appropriate)</b>	September 2012

**Authorised by...**

**Date:...**

**Version Code**

3.1

*For coding purposes, a numerical sequence (1, 2, 3 etc.) should be used for successive programme specifications where 2 replaces 1, and where there are no concurrent specifications. A sequential decimal numbering (1.1; 1.2, 2.1; 2.2 etc) should be used where there are different and concurrent programme specifications*

## **Section 2: Educational aims of the programme**

### **General aims of the postgraduate modular scheme**

- to become the recognised West/South West regional centre for postgraduate study and research in Art, Media and Design;
- to create a portfolio of postgraduate awards that reflects the developing needs of Bristol as a centre for the creative, cultural and media production industries;
- to establish clear links between staff and student research, teaching and learning;
- to create programmes of study which are sympathetic to the needs and interests of international students;
- to provide flexible programme structures enabling individuals to take advantage of a wide range of learning situations, thereby increasing potential for participation at postgraduate level

### **Educational aims of the postgraduate modular scheme**

- to recognise the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, conceptual clarity, creativity, innovation and originality as being key characteristics of postgraduate level art, media and design practice;
- to support the development of creative and intelligent work in communication media, the fine and applied arts, design and visual culture;
- to provide students with the necessary knowledge and understanding, intellectual practical, transferable and subject specific skills to pursue programmes of study at advanced level;
- to enable individuals to consolidate and build on previous academic experience thereby preparing them for work and further study.

### **Educational aims: Graphic Arts**

- to give students the creative, conceptual technical and professional skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to develop their practice through the application and implementation of graphic/communication design processes, techniques and technologies;

The programme of study advocates an experimental and exploratory approach to the development of artworks, artefacts and text which recognises the diverse range of traditional and new, conventional and un-conventional media through which graphic arts outcomes can be achieved. The curriculum is designed to increase knowledge and understanding of the subject discipline at the same time as encouraging individuals to develop and engage with different forms of communication design practice. Through individual experimentation and exploration, students may develop new and unexpected approaches to practice, which may form the basis of further research at MPhil/PhD level.

- to make students autonomous in the design and production of interactive artworks, artefacts and texts through the implementation of a coherent methodology based upon an understanding of research, analysis of content and intention, audience, production and evaluation. This incorporates editorial responsibility, organisation of information, selection of media and the application of text and/or imagery to meet a communication need.

The programme is designed to give students an overview of design process as appropriate to the creation and presentation of communication design (graphic and

illustration) artefacts, artworks and texts. Through an understanding of the design process, professional standards and practice, students should be able to apply a methodology independently, in order to solve design problems encountered in the workplace. Whilst technologies may vary, the design process follows a logical progression which can be transferred to many different contexts.

- To enable students to develop a coherent body of work through a combination of contextual knowledge and understanding, critical reflection and the implementation of appropriate research strategies and methods

The programme of study, in line with all awards in the postgraduate scheme, advocates contextual knowledge and understanding as being critical to the development of reflective creative practice and critical to the development of intelligent, innovative and interesting work. At each stage of the award, students are required to provide a contextual, critical analysis of their practice in relation to a range of appropriate contemporary, historical, cultural, social and professional reference points. As students enter the final stages of the award, this contextualisation should also demonstrate an understanding of their position in relation to professional practice.

- To provide a programme of study at postgraduate level which prepares students to identify their potential to work in a broad range of professional contexts.

Throughout the programme, students meet with practitioners from professional environments. Students are able to focus their study and locate their own practice within graphic arts practice, from the individual designer/author generating personal content/ authorship, independently sourcing content, or working as a visual mediator on behalf of a third party/client. They are able to develop technical expertise and skills appropriate to their individual practice. Through core and option modules students are able to explore their creative and entrepreneurial ideas in a professional context.

- To provide a structure that enables students from a range of art, design and media backgrounds to explore their creative practice through graphic arts.

The programme is designed to provide advanced study in communication design for students from a graphic design, illustration and related disciplines. However, the convergence of media, and the increased volume of opportunities for practitioners with a developed understanding of communication design, make the programme suitable for people with a broad range of creative backgrounds developed within education and commercial practice. The status of Bristol as a 'media city', offers scope for live projects, work experience, placements visits and professional practice talks as well as recruitment to the pathway.

### Section 3: Learning outcomes of the programme

*The award route provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas:*

#### **A Knowledge and understanding**

Learning outcomes	Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategies
<b>A Knowledge and understanding of:</b>	<b>Teaching/learning methods and strategies:</b>
1. Artworks, artefacts and texts relevant to the development of knowledge and understanding of historical and contemporary practice in graphic arts and visual communication practice,	1) During the introductory module, students are introduced to a broad range of practices and practitioners of particular relevance to the development of the specialism. These examples consider a range of different approaches to practice in this area and the application of imagery and text in various media. This introduction is built on throughout the programme through workshops, seminars, student presentations, lectures and visiting speakers.
2. Relevant methodologies and research methods together with relevant databases, archives, journals and key texts;	2) The introductory module introduce the topic of research in relation to the subject and this is built on in the research methods option module. Short projects are set encouraging students to access a range of sources, and familiarise themselves with key texts, archives, databases, web sites etc. All students keep a learning journal documenting the developing relationship between contextual critical reflection and the student's emerging creative practice.
3. Knowledge and understanding of key processes and practices employed in the production of graphic arts outcomes;	3 – 4) The programme is structured to ensure the sequential development of the knowledge and practical experience necessary for students to develop their creative practice through one or more of the media available to them, and relevant to the intention of their work. Professional practice is reflected throughout the programme and encourages students to develop those skills and strategies used in professional context. Seminars, critiques and tutorials, consider professional standards, project management and organisation,
4. Professional practice relevant to the visual communication industries;	

5. The major theories and debates that contribute to the understanding of graphic arts as a creative, critical and reflective practice.

employment and contractual matters, copyright, intellectual property, collaboration and teamwork, interpersonal skills, presentation etc. The opportunities for live projects and links with industry and work-based learning in later modules support the development of professional attitudes.

5) The introduction and Analysing practice modules introduce students to a wide range of debates directly related to the nature of the subject and a broad range of theoretical debates and methodological issues which have been developed in relation to modern culture and which continue to impact on art, design and media practice. Lectures, seminars, directed reading and tutorials test and support the understanding of contextual knowledge. The 'Research Methods' option module also introduces a range of research skills and workshops thus enabling students to source and access information necessary to the development of their knowledge and understanding.

**Assessment:**

Testing of the knowledge base 1 - 5 is achieved through a combination of assessed projects presentations of work in progress and written assignments. Students make presentations as part of the assessment of modules one, two and four. Students are required to keep Learning Journals throughout the programme to record the contextual and practical development of their work. These Journals are submitted at all assessment points.

The final module combines reflective, critical contextual and professional understanding with the development of creative practice. Students will present their final outcome(s) of practical work with an illustrated evaluation of not less than 6,000 words.

## B Intellectual Skills

<p><b>B Intellectual Skills</b></p> <p><i>To enable students to:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Analyse new and/or abstract ideas and information;</li> <li>2. Apply ideas and concepts to the development of independent practice;</li> <li>3. Evaluate and argue alternative approaches through the development and evaluation of a body of work;</li> <li>4. Consider the relevance of a proposal in relation to personal and professional development;</li> <li>5. Accurately assess and evaluate their own work and that of others;</li> <li>6. Synthesise material drawn from a wide range of sources;</li> <li>7. Recognise potential for creativity and innovation through the pursuit of a multidisciplinary approach to graphic arts practice.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</b></p> <p><i>Intellectual skills are developed through ..</i></p> <p>1 - 5) Students develop appropriate terminology and practice presentation and discussion skills throughout the programme through seminar discussions, tutorials, directed and self-directed study. Peer group learning and presentations of individual project work enables students to present, test, modify and argue their point of view. Such presentations also invite critical evaluation of a peer group working to achieve a similar level of knowledge and intellectual skill through personally negotiated projects.</p> <p>6 – 7) All work is project based. The project is designed to encourage the implementation of a methodology that recognises research, development, realisation and dissemination as key components. Students develop skills in each component as they progress through the course. Independent study encourages students to explore their creativity through the synthesis of concepts developed and explored through the application of practical media.</p> <p><b>Assessment</b></p> <p>1 -7) Intellectual skills are assessed through the presentation of practical work and the evaluation of that work (the level of progress; application of strategy; influence of key practitioners; synthesis of knowledge into the work) as evidenced in the learning Journal. The relationship between the critical evaluation and the development of the practice is central to the assessment process. Presentations test the integrity of concepts and strategies as well as encouraging students to actively engage in debate about meaning, relevance and intended audience.</p>
--	--



## C Subject, Professional and Practical Skills

<b>C Subject/Professional/Practical Skills</b> <i>To enable students to:</i>	<b>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</b> <i>Subject, professional and practical skills are developed through ..</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research develop and present a body of work that demonstrates the development of appropriate skills together with an understanding of a communicative intention, contextual framework, a personal (editorial) point of view, a potential audience and a market;</li> <li>2. Demonstrate an ability to select appropriate media and exploit its potential as a means of exploring, interpreting and realising the intention of the work;</li> <li>3. Demonstrate an ability to organise and integrate imagery and words/type/text with sensitivity, aesthetic judgement and imagination towards the exploration and realisation of a communication intention;</li> <li>4. Negotiate access to, and use, a range of resources and facilities necessary for the successful completion of the work, in such a way as to demonstrate the creative potential of those resources;</li> <li>5. Show how subject knowledge and understanding has influenced the development and treatment of the work;</li> <li>6. Demonstrate knowledge of professional protocol relevant to the student's chosen area of practice within graphic arts/visual communication.</li> </ol>	<p>1 - 4) The structure of the programme is fundamental to the development of subject/professional and practical skills. Research methods and consideration of contemporary practice and debates in the subject are used as the vehicle for the teaching and learning of concepts and skills necessary for the research, analysis, production and evaluation of innovative approaches to graphic arts. Lectures, seminars and practical work in the introduction and analysing practice module engage the students with debates and argument relevant to the subject, promoting the need for informed opinion and an editorial point of view. Design process is developed through practical projects based on research, analysis of intention, the origination and/or sourcing of text/content, determining audience and the appropriate selection and application of media.</p> <p>The development of practical skills in various media such as illustration, typography, print, book-binding, motion graphics etc. are supported by technical workshops, and lectures, seminars and visiting practitioners.</p> <p>5) Students discuss their own work and that of other students throughout the programme, reflecting on their progress in relation to contemporary themes and practise, and identifying their influences. Tutorials and lectures introduce concepts and practices from which students are expected to develop their own interpretations.</p> <p>6) The development of practical project work throughout the programme integrates issues of professional methods, standards and protocols. Students are encouraged, where appropriate to engage with live projects.</p>

	<p><b>Assessment</b></p> <p>1 - 6) are assessed through the submission of practical work, including evidence of research and development (sketchbooks, working drawings, texts, storyboards, learning Journal etc.) The supporting work is important in showing the extent to which ideas have been tested and explored. Critical evaluation tests the student's ability to reflect on the development of their practice and demonstrates the depth and breadth of their contextual and critical understanding. Presentations test the conviction and integrity of concepts and strategies as well as encouraging students to actively engage in debate about meaning, relevance and audience.</p>
--	--

## D Transferable Skills and other attributes

<b>D Transferable skills and other attributes</b>	<b>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</b>
<p><i>To enable students to:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Deploy and adapt skills to meet the demands of a range of sometimes unpredictable or unexpected situations;</li> <li>2. Demonstrate the means by which self-reflection on their own work and that of others can improve performance;</li> <li>3. Be effective and autonomous in problem solving;</li> <li>4. Engage purposefully in debate in a professional manner and produce detailed and coherent project reports;</li> <li>5. Sustain the management of a project and communicate the outcome of that project appropriately;</li> </ol>	<p><i>Transferable skills and other attributes are developed through ..</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) is developed through engagement with the programme of study. The first module specifically introduces the knowledge and skill base of the programme. This is then tested and developed through engagement with a series of projects.</li> <li>2) is developed through seminars and critiques. The diversity of the student group requires individuals to consider the different educational profiles of the group in relation to the development of specialist skills.</li> <li>3) Students are expected to manage their time and work independently in the development of their work. Taught sessions explore the development of work undertaken independently. As the programme of study develops students increasingly negotiate, manage and sustain their project work over longer periods of time as the demands of the project work increases.</li> <li>4) through the presentation of proposals students learn to acknowledge responsibility for their work and for the presentation of that work. Although it is accepted that student's confidence to discuss their work and articulate ideas may vary, all students have ample opportunity to develop these skills to a professional level.</li> <li>5) in the final module students produce a summative project which builds on the knowledge/skills gained in previous modules. They are given the opportunity to discuss and receive feedback on the development of this project through student-led seminars and individual/small group tutorials.</li> </ol>

6. Recognize their own strengths and contribution when collaborating with, or working alongside, other practitioners and professionals in a professional context.

6) practical work, seminars, case studies and live projects enable students to work with others in a variety of practical and professional contexts and consider the importance of effective working relationships.

1 – 6) the student will already demonstrate the ability to develop these skills in order to enter the course, the extent to which they further enhance their creative independence, confidence and ability to manage will depend on the skills and abilities of individuals. The peer group will be critical to the development and testing of these skills.

### **Assessment**

1 – 6) All skills are assessed through the evidence of research, development, realisation and evaluation evident in the body of practical work, supporting material and learning journal, presented for assessment. Critical evaluation further tests the ability of students to progress independently and to deploy and adapt appropriate skills in the realisation of their work. The impact of individual contributions to the development of others will not be formally assessed unless students are working collaboratively.

## **Section 4: Programme structure**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The programme is structured to encourage the parallel development of practical work with research and contextual knowledge and understanding. Content and editorial standpoint, in respect of a communication intention, are seen as the starting point for the exploration of graphic arts media. Therefore, in the introductory module, students are required to explore and discuss debates in current graphic arts/communication design practice through research writing and the development of practical work. Practical skills are developed, and supported through technical workshops, so that students can build on, and/or extend their ability in different media, appropriate to realising communicative outcomes. Critical evaluation is central to the philosophy of the course. The Learning Journal, as a vehicle for cumulative reflection on the level of progress, application of strategy, research, influence of key practitioners and synthesis of knowledge into the work, is introduced from the outset and is a requirement in all practice modules. A written summative, critical evaluation, based on (and evidenced by) the Learning Journal is also introduced early in the programme to secure the relationship between critical reflection and the development of practice.

The PG Cert stage builds a base of research, knowledge, investigation and debate around issues of contemporary practice in the area. Alongside this is the interrogation of design methodologies, working process and the means through which individual communication practice can be realised. From this basis students can progress and develop their own practice during the PG Dip through formulation and negotiation of individual programmes of work. Option modules provide the options for students to reinforce their research and/or entrepreneurial, enterprise.

The final stage demands that students apply the knowledge gained on previous modules to produce and present a final body of work that draws together, and integrates research and practice into professional, innovative and ambitious responses to the subject. At this stage students are also required to make a critical evaluation of their work, defining the technical, cultural, critical, historical, professional and practical considerations that have informed the development of their work. This evaluation must evidence a personal point of view in relation to their work itself, confirming that students have the awareness, skills and knowledge necessary to continue their practice beyond the programme.

### **4.2 Interim Award Requirements**

#### **4.2.1 Postgraduate certificate in Graphic Arts**

Introduction to Graphic Arts (Core) 30 Credits

plus

Analysing Practice in Graphic Arts (Core) 30 Credits

#### **4.2.2 Postgraduate Diploma in Graphic Arts**

Developing Practice: Graphic Arts (Core) 30 credits

Plus

Research Practice: UA1AFR-30-M

#### **4.2.3 Master of Arts in Media (Graphic Arts)**

Extended Practice in Graphic Arts (Core) 60 Credits

### **4.3 Module Diet including compulsory/core/optional modules**

#### **4.3.1 Postgraduate Certificate in Graphic Arts**

Students take:

Introduction to Graphic Arts (Core) 30 Credits

Plus

Analysing Practice in Graphic Arts (Core) 30 Credits

PG Cert – total credits 60 credits

#### **4.3.2 Postgraduate Diploma in Graphic Arts**

Students take:

Developing Practice: Graphic Arts (Core) 30 credits

Plus

Research Practice: UA1AFR-30-M

PG Diploma – total credits 120 credits

#### **4.3.3 Master of Arts in Graphic Arts**

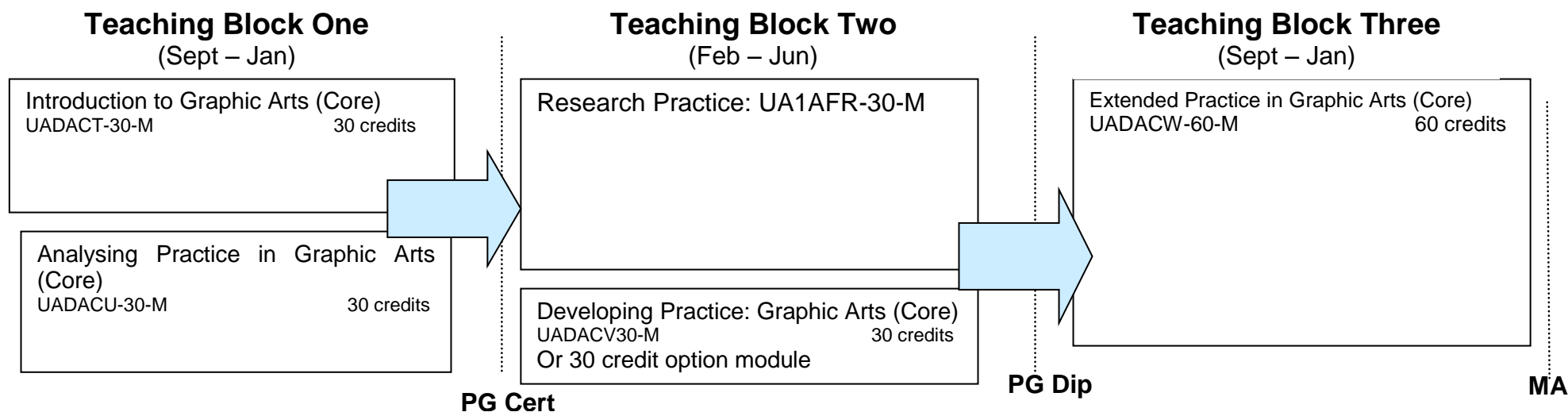
Students take:

Extended Practice: Graphic Arts (Core) 60 credits

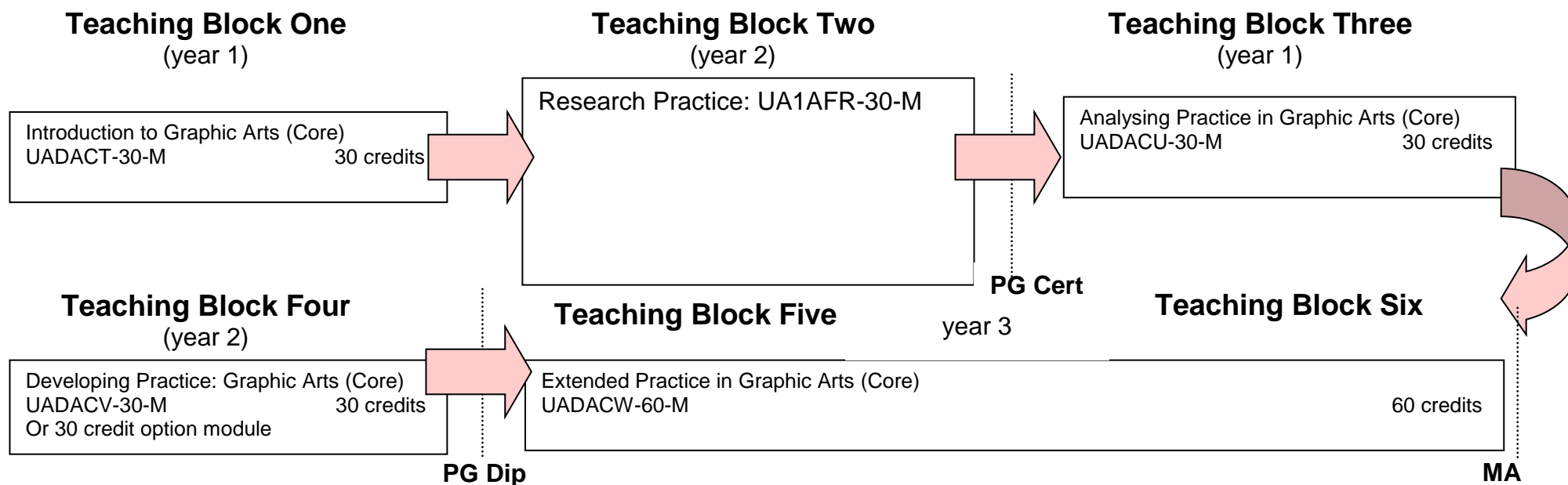
Masters – total credits 180 credits

# MA Graphic Arts

## FULL-TIME (3 TEACHING BLOCKS) 18 MONTHS



## PART-TIME (6 TEACHING BLOCKS) 36 MONTHS



## **Section 5: Entry requirements**

The MA Graphic Arts pathway will seek to recruit students who can demonstrate exceptional ability and commitment to developing their practice as visual communication designers. All students will normally be expected to have a good undergraduate degree.

Students must have some prior art and design experience at a level which demonstrates their capacity to undertake the programme. Candidates must be able to demonstrate enthusiasm for the subject, their motivation and aspirations from continuing their creative development at this level and on this type of programme. Students will normally be interviewed. The interview will focus on the candidate's interest in the subject, and will be informed by a statement of intent written by all applicants.

The programme will be taught in English and all students will be expected to have obtained an appropriate level of English literacy and comprehension (TOEFL 6.5 or above). The programme places emphasis on the understanding of research and methodology in relation to creative practice and the contextualisation of such a practice within the production process. The programme is demanding in its requirements at each stage and all applicants will be expected to demonstrate that they are both capable and willing to fulfil the demands of the pathway.

## **Section 6: Assessment Regulations**

a) **MAR** Regulations are wholly in accordance with MAR

## **Section 7: Student learning: distinctive features and support**

The MA Graphic Arts pathway is based on engagement with the debates and issues that are key to research and practice in contemporary visual communication practice, interrogating the role and function of the communication designer in contemporary society and the changing forms through which graphic communication outcomes can be developed and disseminated. In engaging with this material students develop their research skills, ability to access, analyse and evaluate information, and practical ability relative to the subject.

Interaction of students, debate and collaboration is encouraged throughout, with opportunities for students to come together within the pathway and with students from across the range of MA Media practice pathways.

The programme locates editorial responsibility at the heart of individual practice, whether the practitioner is developing or sourcing their own content, or acting as visual mediator for a third party/client. The constant is the concern of communication. Communication with intention: What is being said; who is it for; what response or reaction do you seek?

This course interrogates the methods of design process that are relevant to visual communication. It helps students to develop a sophisticated understanding of design process and the dynamics of communication. It gives freedom for students to explore visual communication through whatever media or combination of media appropriate.

Individual practice can be supported across a range of processes, including, illustration, book works, print, screen and motion graphics. Workshop facilities and staff expertise help students develop their work within structured workshops, and



negotiated project work. The integrity of previous student experience is recognised and the potential to strengthen their practice or broaden the range of media they select.

An innovative and exploratory approach to the use of media is encouraged: to find interesting and memorable ways to explore and present communicative outcomes and explore the creative and communicative potential of conventional and unconventional media. A sophisticated level of understanding of language, written texts, typography and visual language are developed through practical tasks, workshops and individual practice, and tested through personal reflection, critique and debate in presentations, seminars and tutorials.

The structure of the pathway, together with pathways in cognate disciplines is distinctive in recognising the inter-disciplinary approaches that some students may adopt. By creating the opportunity for collaboration across pathways students can develop original approaches to their practice and develop skills that mirror current professional practice which relies on teamwork, collaboration and inter-personal co-operation. This also encourages students to contextualise their practice within the broader framework of critical and cultural theory.

Opportunities for live projects and the location of work in a professional context is encouraged when appropriate, and professional practice issues are developed throughout the course to enable students to progress their careers beyond graduation. This includes an option module in 'enterprise in the creative industries'.

The contextualisation of practice forms the basis for the curriculum, developed through the programme and evidenced on an individual level in the Learning Journal which students develop as they progress through the programme. The synthesis of contextual understanding and practice is finally tested and evaluated through the production of a 6000 word evaluation which accompanies the final presentation of practical outcomes. This illustrated evaluation report is developed from the learning journal and outlines the individual student's professional and practical reference points as well as evaluating the progress and realisation of their work.

## **Section 8 Reference points/benchmarks**

### **8.1 *Subject benchmarks (QAA Unit)***

QAA Unit: Art and Design

Subject benchmarks: Art and Design

### **8.2 *University teaching and learning policies:***

8.2.1 The Graphic Arts pathway encourages links between staff research projects and teaching and learning, and relates closely to activity in the Faculty's research centres.

### **8.3 *employer interaction/feedback:***

8.3.1 Links with, and opportunities for collaboration with and location of elements of individual practice in professional contexts, has influenced the planning and development of this pathway. Visiting professionals, visits, seminars and lectures, staff research and practice are features of programme delivery in communication design at UG and PG levels. Participation in regional and national research and practice locates the provision as an active partner in the creative and cultural activity of the city.

This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the 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 learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of individual modules can be found in module specifications. These are available on the University Intranet.

Programme monitoring and review may lead to changes to approved programmes. There may be a time lag between approval of such changes/modifications and their incorporation into an authorised programme specification. Enquiries about any recent changes to the programme made since this specification was authorised should be made to the relevant Faculty Administrator.

