

Course Specification

Course Summary Information		
1	Course Title	MA Visual Communication
2	Course Code	PT0967
3	Awarding Institution	Birmingham City University
4	Teaching Institution(s) (if different from point 3)	Not Applicable
5	Professional Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) accreditation (if applicable)	Not Applicable

6	Course Description
	Visual Communication at BCU is a dynamic and progressive course, that challenges the way we look at images and text in a present-day context. The world is saturated with visual stimulus and our students are trained to navigate through this, finding ways to impart new information, through graphic design, typography, moving image, illustration and photography. Students on the course are adept at communicating through visual language. Staying ahead in an ever-changing field requires embracing technological advances; you will learn to employ the essential knowledge and skills needed for the new emerging creative industries, and you will be expected to explore, experiment, and push the boundaries of design and image making, whilst being part of a mature and relevant course that has existed for over 50 years. The MA Visual Communication course is delivered over one year for full-time students, and two-years for part-time. The first stage, the PG Certificate, allows students to understand the possibilities of communication using different visual means. Students learn how to convey innovative ideas and messages that are impactful, thought-provoking, and authentic. You'll have the chance to learn in our studios and workshops, as well as with our partnerships, with organisations, and industry. You will be involved in learning, teaching, researching, and demonstrating professional development within visual communication. Learning will be achieved through the development of a critical understanding of practice. You will be taught methods that will cover both theory and practice, the key to understanding advanced practice-based principles. As you develop you will establish evaluative criteria and learn how to apply this knowledge to practice. Because Visual Communication has broad scope, (e.g. lens based, time based, narrative based), you will be encouraged to specialise in one of the following areas, all under the single named award of MA Visual Communication: MA Visual Communication (Graphic Communication), or MA Visual Communication (Illustration). These alignments have been one of the main attractions of applicants to this course. As a creative practitioner you are inspired to create and engage with industry, this can be through live briefs or collaborations, this will allow you to develop specialist knowledge in graphic design and illustration. The course provides an immersive learning experience for both advanced practitioners and recent graduates within the field of visual communication. We place emphasis on internationalisation as a proportion of our students come from overseas and we value the richness and diversity of cultural knowledge that this brings.

	The Pg certificate stage encourages both individual and group work of an experimental nature, and students are required, and expected to engage with the relevant theories of visual communication which are then culturally and contextually applied to projects that they are beginning to develop, some of which continue through to the Masters stage. This also includes the module, 'Research Through Practice', shared collaboratively with all postgraduate courses in the School of Arts adding a rich seam of continuity through to the Final Project. The diploma stage ensures students develop live networks, demonstrate initiative, personal responsibility and engage with professional activities and live briefs. This will include visits to agencies, exhibitions, research centres, networking events. Finally, the module 'Professional Project' enables students to undertake a sustained, in-depth and theoretically informed research project that explores their areas of personal interest and specialism.
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7	Course Awards		
7a	Name of Final Award	Level 7	Credits Awarded
	MA Visual Communication	Level 7	180
	MA Visual Communication (Graphic Design)	Level 7	180
	MA Visual Communication (Illustration)	Level 7	180
	Master of Arts with Professional Placement	Level 7	240
7b	Exit Awards and Credits Awarded		
	Postgraduate Certificate Visual Communication	Level 7	60
	Postgraduate Diploma Visual Communication	Level 7	120
	Postgraduate Diploma Visual Communication (Graphic Design)	Level 7	120
	Postgraduate Diploma Visual Communication (Illustration)	Level 7	120

8	Variation from the University Regulations
	<i>Not applicable</i>

9	Delivery Patterns		
	Mode(s) of Study	Location(s) of Study	Duration of Study
	Full Time	City Centre	12 months
	Full Time with Placement	City Centre	18 months
	Part Time	City Centre	24 months
			PT0967 PT1440 PT1825

10	Entry Requirements
	The admission requirements for this course are stated on the course page of the BCU website at https://www.bcu.ac.uk , or may be found by searching for the course entry profile located on the UCAS website.

11	Course Aims
	Students of MA Visual Communication are provided with a specialist education to develop a greater understanding and critical appreciation of visual culture and the opportunities to specialise therein. Through a forward looking and innovative curriculum students explore and experiment in traditional and progressive practice from, for example, traditional illustration or bench animation to emerging motion design technologies like generative AI in all areas of visual communication. Broadly specialising in Graphic Design and Illustration the course will teach student how to: • Develop communication expertise across diverse mediums whilst understanding different cultural perspectives and learning to employ effective tools, both analogue as well as the latest digital technology. • Explore and enhance employability skills that will place you at the forefront of your specialist subject. Through live briefs and interdisciplinary collaborations, the course puts an emphasis on contemporary practice, including themes that affect us all e.g. sustainability and equality, diversity and inclusion. • Autonomously critique and challenge current processes to innovate new theory and practice. This will enable deeper understanding of ethical implications and regulatory concerns around design principals, using your skills to raise awareness and advocate for positive change. • Collaboratively optimise professional spaces and project management through studio cultures that encourage high levels of research, design, innovation, and creativity.

12	Course Learning Outcomes
Knowledge and Understanding	
1	Develop and advance your emergent knowledge and understanding of visual communication.
2	Synthesise research methods and/or methodologies and their practical application, as appropriate to the individual's visual problem solving.
3	Formulate effective strategies for learning within your chosen specialism.
4	Apply innovative understanding, creation, interpretation, and practical application.
5	Evaluate the ethical, sustainable, and societal impact associated with contemporary practice.

Skills and other Attributes	
1	Synthesize your emergent knowledge and understanding of communication.
2	Define and analyse problems and work effectively both independently and collaboratively.
3	Implement your own learning to identify opportunities for development.
4	Execute self-directed projects to comprehensively resolve creative endeavours.
5	Articulate ideas and information comprehensibly to range to audience and situations.

13	Level Learning Outcomes
	<i>Upon completion of 60 credits at Level 7 / the PG Cert, students will be able to:</i>
1	Explore advanced problem-solving techniques to create innovative design solutions.
2	Utilise your understanding through integrated approaches to theory and practice.
3	Deploy referenced research to produce useful insights in response to a brief or challenge.
4	Strategize methods, processes, and tools to solve complex challenges.

	<i>Upon completion of 120 credits at Level 7 / the PG Dip, students will be able to:</i>
5	Explore analytical skills to promote critical awareness of issues within your specialism.
6	Develop your professional networks and platforms to promote an industry ready portfolio.
7	Engage in a professional context, contributing constructively toward shared goals and tasks.
8	Critically assess ethical concerns of adopting current and emerging technologies.

14	Course Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy
	The course is delivered through a variety of Learning and Teaching strategies including through investigation, acquisition, discussion, practice, collaboration and production methods appropriate to the aims and learning outcomes of the different Stages of the course. Although the modules appear to be distinct, engagement with the course is holistic and fluid. MA Visual Communication has a 50-year heritage, throughout which alumni have contributed continuously to the development of international design strategies, design pedagogy and industry excellence. Importantly, this feedback into course and curricular design to inform teaching and learning through innovation and real world practices. The learning and teaching strategies include: • <i>face-to-face lectures</i> (provide you with an in depth understanding of the topic) • <i>artist/design presentations</i> (lecture series) • <i>workshops</i> (provide you with hands on experience, practically learning new skills, how to operate machinery or to work with and/or immerse yourself within a subject, materials or particular content) • <i>group tutorials</i> (an opportunity for peer-to-peer learning whilst developing useful transferable skills for working in the real world) • <i>group projects</i> (Some modules may require you to research and work as part of a team. This reflects real world scenarios whilst encouraging cross fertilisation of ideas and an opportunity for peer-to-peer learning) • <i>seminars</i> (designed to encourage dialogue and interactivity and you will work with a tutor to analyse and examine the material/topic in various ways) • <i>research field trips</i> (cover a range of learning and teaching strategies that lie <i>outside</i> the institution and normally within the UK) • Virtual Learning Environments (Moodle is the University's e-learning environment/ Microsoft Teams) • the opportunity to network with our partners and other professionals to provide a unique insight into the global design strategies. Assessment: Assessment is formative and summative. The work presented for the assessment will demonstrate the extent to which the student is currently <u>fulfilling</u> or has <u>fulfilled</u> the learning outcomes for the module. Formative Assessment

In all modules there are various opportunities for formative feedback and feedforward in the form of tutorials and formal reviews/crits, which provide verbal and/or written feedback. All of these, together with opportunities for students to engage in peer learning and assessment, provide opportunities for the student to attain a higher level of performance in the final summative assessment.

Summative Assessment

This final assessment giving the mark for the module, is known as a summative assessment. An evaluation of achievement is identified through specified assessment criteria aligned to each of the module learning outcomes. The assessment of submitted work is carried out by staff teaching on the modules. Students will receive written feedback for each summative assessment.

15	Course Requirements																		
15a	Level 7: <i>In order to complete this course a student must successfully complete all the following CORE modules (totalling 180 credits):</i> <table><tr><th>Module Code</th><th>Module Name</th><th>Credit Value</th></tr><tr><td>ART7929</td><td>Advanced Critical Practice</td><td>40 Credits</td></tr><tr><td>ART7919</td><td>Research through Practice</td><td>20 Credits</td></tr><tr><td>ART7928</td><td>Contextual and Professional Practice</td><td>40 Credits</td></tr><tr><td>ADM7018</td><td>Independent Creative Entrepreneur</td><td>20 Credits</td></tr><tr><td>ART7929</td><td>Professional Project</td><td>60 Credits</td></tr></table>	Module Code	Module Name	Credit Value	ART7929	Advanced Critical Practice	40 Credits	ART7919	Research through Practice	20 Credits	ART7928	Contextual and Professional Practice	40 Credits	ADM7018	Independent Creative Entrepreneur	20 Credits	ART7929	Professional Project	60 Credits
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ART7929	Advanced Critical Practice	40 Credits																	
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ART7928	Contextual and Professional Practice	40 Credits																	
ADM7018	Independent Creative Entrepreneur	20 Credits																	
ART7929	Professional Project	60 Credits																	

15b Structure Diagram
Level 7

Course Structure: MASTERS VISUAL COMMUNICATION (FT)									
Year 1									
Cohort	S1 wks 1-4	S1 wks 5-8	S1 wks 9-12	S2 wks 1-4	S2 wks 5-8	S2 wks 9-12	S3 wks 1-4	S3 wks 5-8	S3 wks 9-12
September Full-Time	Module: Advanced Critical Practice (40 Credits)			Module: Contextual and Professional Practice (40 Credits)			Module: Professional Project (60 credits)		
	Module: Research Through Practice (20 Credits)			Module: School Module (20 Credits)					
Course Structure: MASTERS VISUAL COMMUNICATION (PT)									
Year 1									
Cohort	S1 wks 1-4	S1 wks 5-8	S1 wks 9-12	S2 wks 1-4	S2 wks 5-8	S2 wks 9-12	S3 wks 1-4	S3 wks 5-8	S3 wks 9-12
September Part-Time 1	Module: Advanced Critical Practice (40 Credits)			Module: Contextual and Professional Practice (40 Credits)			S3 Summer Break in Studies		
Course Structure: MASTERS VISUAL COMMUNICATION (PT)									
Year 2									
Cohort	S1 wks 1-4	S1 wks 5-8	S1 wks 9-12	S2 wks 1-4	S2 wks 5-8	S2 wks 9-12	S3 wks 1-4	S3 wks 5-8	S3 wks 9-12
September Part-Time 2				Module: Professional Project (60 credits)			Professional Project (continues)		
	Module: Research Through Practice (20 Credits)			Module: School Module (20 Credits)					

16 Overall Student Workload and Balance of Assessment**Workload Level 7****8.3% time spent in timetabled teaching and learning activity**

Activity	Number of Hours
Scheduled Learning	150
Directed Learning	1290
Private Study	360
Total Hours	1800

Balance of Assessment

Assessment Mode	Percentage
Coursework	100%
Exam	
In-Person	