Definitive Programme Document: Visual Communication

(Master's Degree)

Awarding institution	Bath Spa University
Teaching institution	Bath Spa University
School	School of Art and Design
Department	Design & Communication
Main campus	Sion Hill
Other sites of delivery	Dartmouth Avenue & Newton Park campuses
Other Schools involved in delivery	None
Name of award(s)	MA Visual Communication
Qualification (final award)	MA
Intermediate awards available	PgCert, PgDip
Routes available	1 Year Full Time / 2 Years Part time
Duration of award	1 year full-time
Sandwich period	No
Modes of delivery offered	campus-based
Regulatory Scheme[1]	Taught Postgraduate Framework
Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body accreditation	N/A
Date of most recent PSRB approval (month and year)	N/A
Renewal of PSRB approval due (month and year)	N/A
JACS code	W213
Route code (SITS)	MAVCOMM
Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statements (including date of publication)	Art and Design (February 2017) (As there is no relevant PG Benchmark, the UG benchmark for Art and Design 2017 has provided some context and the postgraduate standards have been taken into account)
Date of most recent approval	February 2013
Date specification last updated	April 2018

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[1] This should also be read in conjunction with the University's Qualifications Framework

Programme Overview

The MA Visual Communication aims to provide you with the skills and abilities to become astute, adaptable and well-informed practitioners in photography, graphic design or illustration. The course is designed to encourage collaborative professional level practice and the development of skills in contemporary software and equipment, in parallel with Masters level academic progress.

The Postgraduate year is made up of three, fifteen-week trimesters. During the course, you will take one research and four practically based modules, culminating in an exhibition, or presentation at the end of the final module.

Each of the MA Visual Communication modules are designed to help you broaden your contextual understanding and develop your particular practice to an advanced, coherent and professional standard. Our aim is to help you improve the contribution you make in your workplace, to open new career opportunities and to enhance the cultural relevance of your work, whilst increasing the personal fulfillment you gain from your practice.

All of our students are expected to develop ideas and projects independently and will be closely supported in this through studio meetings, seminars and tutorials and other course related activities. You will need to accumulate the necessary aesthetic, technical, practical, and research skills to develop your emerging practice. You will also need to demonstrate self-direction in extending networks and creating work-based learning opportunities in collaboration with Bath Spa University students and professionals beyond the university.

Programme Aims

1. To foster an integrated visual communication practice that combines aesthetic, practical and research skills.

2. To encourage the critique of work, including implicit or explicit cultural and historical references.

3. To expand creative and innovative abilities in dealing with complex issues.

4. To increase technical skill and technological understanding of visual communication media.

5. To enhance critical and imaginative powers, understanding, experience and judgement whilst honing problem solving, project management and leadership abilities.

6. To synthesize core skills and to enable informed, aesthetic, contextually engaged and professional outcomes.

Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)
(NB These ILOs are at level 7 of the FHEQ)

A Subject-specific Skills and Knowledge

A1   Comprehensive understanding of the aesthetic components in your chosen visual communication medium, demonstrating skills in making, perception, legibility and originality of production.

A2   Systematic understanding in relation to contemporary visual communication practices, through a carefully selected range of secondary references that demonstrate critical awareness and new insights from the forefront of academic practice in your field.

A3 Understanding of how practice-led research and enquiry guides individual practice, and the original application of this, to create and interpret knowledge in your chosen visual communication discipline.

A4 Critical evaluation of a range of research methods and resources, identifying and applying those relevant to your visual communication practice, describing how this process is a central component of your work.

B Cognitive and Intellectual Skills

B1 Apply knowledge of how to structure, develop and refine comprehensive understanding of Visual Communication practices within a broad cultural context

B2 Demonstrate the ability to discriminate between a range of techniques, processes and advanced research and autonomously apply these to your visual communication practice

B3 Manage complex issues in difficult situations both systematically and creatively, making sound and confident judgments and clear decisions in the absence of complete knowledge

B4 Maintain an adaptive overview of your visual communication practice, allowing continued advancement of knowledge and understanding whilst planning and taking responsibility for future development

C Skills for Life and Work

C1 Autonomous learning (including time management) that demonstrates the exercise of initiative, personal responsibility and decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations and the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development

C2 Team working skills necessary to succeed in the global workplace, with an ability both to work in and lead teams effectively, as well as the ability to act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level

C3 Communication skills that show the ability to communicate clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences' knowledge at, or informed by, the forefront of the academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice, and the conclusions drawn from dealing with complex issues systematically

C4 IT skills and digital literacy that demonstrate the ability to develop new skills to a high level and to approach complex issues systematically and creatively

Intermediate awards

PgCert Intended Learning Outcomes
A3; A4
B1; B2
C2; C3; C4

PgDip Intended Learning Outcomes

A2; A3; A4
B1; B2; B3
C1; C2; C3; C4

Programme content

This programme comprises the following modules

Key:

Core = C

Required = R

Optional = O

Not available for this status = N/A

If a particular status is greyed out, it is not offered for this programme.

Subject offered as single and/or joint programme

MA Visual Communication				Status	
Level	Code	Title	Credits	Single	Joint
7	AR7001-30	Research Methods	30	C	
7	VM7002-30	Developing Practice	30	C	
7	VM7003-30	Practice in Context	30	C	
7	VM7004-30	Practice in a Global Context	30	C	
7	AR7007-60	Masters Project	60	C	

Subject offered with pathways

N/A

[Name of subject				Pathway					
Level	Code	Title	Credits						

Assessment methods
A range of summative assessment tasks will be used to test the Intended Learning Outcomes in each module. These are indicated in the attached assessment map which shows which tasks are used in which modules.

Students will be supported in their development towards summative assessment by appropriate formative exercises.

Work experience and placement opportunities
This is an intense practice led course, which when taken full time requires full engagement for its duration, so there is little extra time available to take a work placement. However, our students are encouraged to develop collaborative live projects and to engage with a range of potential clients or collaborators.

In previous years our students have developed projects in our modules, which subsequently became live collaborative projects that extended beyond their studies

Graduate Attributes

	Bath Spa Graduates…	In MA Visual Communication, this means…
1	Will be employable: equipped with the skills necessary to flourish in the global workplace, able to work in and lead teams	Embedding professional practice into all modules; utilising collaborative design projects to offer opportunities for teamwork and leadership; encouraging students to engage in live industry projects and actively engaging with external input
2	Will be able to understand and manage complexity, diversity and change	Enabling students to apply their creative and technical skills to diverse design opportunities and problems; developing project management skills; engaging with a contemporary social and cultural context and developing a thorough contemporary knowledge and an ongoing interest in technological and cultural developments in Visual Communication
3	Will be creative: able to innovate and to solve problems by working across disciplines as professional or artistic practitioners	By encouraging experimentation and taking creative risks; thinking and problem solving through making; collaborating across disciplines and fields; working across materials and contexts
4	Will be digitally literate: able to work at the interface of creativity and technology	By encouraging students to use in software driven methods of planning and creating; developing students' skills in specialist digital visual communication and making processes; utilising and driving digital platforms, as well as traditional processes, to promote and

		explore visual communication practices
5	Will be internationally networked: either by studying abroad for part of their programme, or studying alongside students from overseas	By integration with UK and international students in the school and on the programme and by offering study abroad opportunities; international field trips; encouraging student participation in international research projects
6	Will be creative thinkers, doers and makers	By ensuring that creative practice and confident attitudes to experimentation are expectations of all students; encouraging and delivering innovation; on this practice-based course that has 'thinking through making' at its heart
7	Will be critical thinkers: able to express their ideas in written and oral form, and possessing information literacy	Will be able to relate critical and conceptual approaches to visual communication by, embedding theory within practice and developing written and analytical skills alongside visual outcomes, to aid discussion and presentation
8	Will be ethically aware: prepared for citizenship in a local, national and global context	Will be committed to developing an ongoing, informed understanding of good practice by exploring wider visual communication issues; exercising responsibility and consideration of others; taking part in international opportunities and projects

Modifications

Module-level modifications

Code	Title	Nature of modification	Date(s) of approval and approving bodies	Date modification comes into effect

Programme-level modifications

Nature of modification	Date(s) of approval and approving bodies	Date modification comes into effect

Attached as appendices:

1. Programme structure diagram
2. Map of module outcomes to level/programme outcomes
3. Assessment map
4. Module descriptors

MA Visual Communication

Course Diagram - Full time route

Trimester 1	Trimester 2	Trimester 3
PG Cert (on completing 60 Credits)	PG Dip (on completing 120 Credits)	Masters (on completing 180 Credits)
AR7001-30 Research Methods 30 Credits	VM7003-30 Practice in Context 30 Credits	AR7007-60 Masters Project 60 Credits
VM7002-30 Developing Practice 30 Credits	VM7004-30 Practice in a Global Context 30 Credits	

Course Diagram – Part time route

	Trimester 1	Trimester 2	Trimester 3
		PG Cert (after 60 Credits)	
YEAR 1	AR7001-30 Research Methods 30 Credits	VM7002-30 Developing Practice 30 Credits	VM7003-30 Practice in Context 30 Credits
	Trimester 1 PG Dip (after 120 Credits)	Trimester 2	Trimester 3
YEAR 2	VM7004-30 Practice in a Global Context 30 Credits	AR7007-60 Masters Project 60 Credits	

Map of Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) against modules

MA Visual Communication

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Status (C,R,O)[2]	Cognitive and Intellectual Skills				Skills for Life and Work							
				A1	A2	A3	A4	B1	B2	B3	B4	C1	C2	C3	C4
7	AR7001-30	Research Methods	C			✓	✓	✓	✓				✓		✓
7	VM7002 -30	Developing Practice	C			✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓
7	VM7003 -30	Practice in Context	C		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
7	VM7004 -30	Practice in a Global Context	C		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
7	AR7007-60	Masters Project	C	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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[2] C = Core; R = Required; O = Optional

Map of summative assessment tasks by module

MA Visual Communication

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Status (C,R,O)[3]	Assessment method													
				Coursework						Practical					Written Examination		
				Composition	Dissertation	Essay	Evaluative Report	Portfolio	Research Folder	Research Poster/ Oral Presentation	Practical Project	Exhibition	Presentation	Set exercises	Written Examination	In-class test (seen)	In-class test (unseen)
7	AR7001-30	Research Methods	C					✓		✓							
7	VM7002 -30	Developing Practice	C						✓		✓		✓				
7	VM7003 -30	Practice in Context	C						✓		✓		✓				
7	VM7004 -30	Practice in a Global Context	C				✓		✓		✓						
7	AR7007-60	Masters Project	C				✓					✓					

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[3] C = Core; R = Required; O = Optional