



UNIVERSITY OF
PORTSMOUTH

COURSE SPECIFICATION

MA Visual Communication

COURSE SPECIFICATION

Course Title	MA Visual Communication
Final Award	MA
Exit Awards	PGCert, PgDip, MA
Course Code / UCAS code (if applicable)	P3851FTC
Mode of study	Full time
Mode of delivery	Campus
Normal length of course	1 Year
Cohort(s) to which this course specification applies	From January 2026
Awarding Body	University of Portsmouth
Teaching Institution	University of Portsmouth
Faculty	Faculty of Creative and Cultural Industries
School/Department/Subject Group	School of Architecture, Art and Design
School/Department/Subject Group webpage	https://www.port.ac.uk/about-us/structure-and-governance/organisational-structure/faculty-of-creative-and-cultural-industries/school-of-architecture-art-and-design
Course webpage including entry criteria	https://www.port.ac.uk/study/courses/postgraduate-taught/ma-visual-communication
Professional and/or Statutory Regulatory Body accreditations	None
Quality Assurance Agency Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) Level	FHEQ 7

This course specification provides a summary of the main features of the course, identifies the aims and learning outcomes of the course, the teaching, learning and assessment methods used by teaching staff, and the reference points used to inform the curriculum.

This information is therefore useful to potential students to help them choose the right course of study, to current students on the course and to staff teaching and administering the course.

Further detailed information on the individual modules within the course may be found in the relevant module descriptors and the Course Handbook provided to students on enrolment.

Please refer to the [Course and Module Catalogue](#) for further information on the course structure and modules.

Educational aims of the course

- To allow students to enhance and extend their scholarship, research skills, practical skills and knowledge in relation to the subject of Visual Communication. This is achieved through the development of independently focused study in relation to specific tasks that critically engage with and position themselves at the forefront of the subject. Historical, contemporary, theoretical, contextual, technological and positionality discourses constitute an essential role in defining engagement with the subject of Visual Communication both academically and professionally.
- To provide a challenging and stimulating study environment that facilitates developing and extending intellectual and practical learning including subject specific skills and knowledge.
- To enable students to develop specialist interests and knowledge by way of negotiated learning.
- To provide an opportunity for students to develop critically engaged research and responses in relation to Visual Communication.
- To allow students to explore cross-disciplinary approaches to critically engaged practice.
- To provide students with the skills and knowledge required to maximise career and further postgraduate and research opportunities.

Course Learning Outcomes and Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategies

The [Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education \(QAA\)](#) sets out a national framework of qualification levels, and the associated standards of achievement are found in their [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#) document.

The Course Learning Outcomes for this course are outlined in the tables below.

A. Knowledge and understanding of:			
LO number	Learning outcome	Learning and Teaching methods	Assessment methods
A1	Ideas, concepts, proposals, solutions or arguments developed at an advanced level related to the field of study (A&D).	Group tutorials, individual tutorials, seminars, workshops, lectures	Formative: Tutorials and reviews. Summative: Portfolio
A2	Developing ideas through to outcomes at an advanced level, for example; materials, images, artefacts, environments, products, systems and processes, or texts underpinned by extended self-directed study (A&D).	Group tutorials, individual tutorials, seminars, workshops, lectures	Formative: Tutorials and reviews. Summative: Portfolio
A3	Critical, contextual, historical, conceptual, economic, social, environmental and ethical dimensions of the discipline in particular at an advanced level. (A&D)	Group tutorials, individual tutorials, seminars, workshops, lectures	Formative: Tutorials and reviews. Summative: Portfolio
A4	Contextual dimensions of the discipline with respect to professional practice (A&D).	Group tutorials, individual tutorials, seminars, workshops, lectures	Formative: Tutorials and reviews. Summative: Portfolio
A5	Self-management skills in planning and managing their workloads and meeting deadlines (A&D).	Group tutorials, individual tutorials, seminars, workshops, lectures	Formative: Tutorials and reviews. Summative: Portfolio

B. Cognitive (Intellectual or Thinking) skills, able to:			
LO number	Learning outcome	Learning and Teaching methods	Assessment methods
B1	Critically evaluate, articulate and synthesise knowledge and understanding, attributes and skills in effective ways in the contexts of creative practice and research.	Group tutorials, individual tutorials, seminars, workshops, lectures	Formative: Tutorials and reviews. Summative: Portfolio
B2	Make appropriate use of the interaction between intention, process, outcome, context and the methods of dissemination (A&D).	Group tutorials, individual tutorials, seminars, workshops, lectures	Formative: Tutorials and reviews. Summative: Portfolio
B3	Critically reflect upon, and formulate reasoned responses to the critical judgements of others.	Group tutorials, individual tutorials, seminars, workshops, lectures	Formative: Tutorials and reviews. Summative: Portfolio
B4	Employ both convergent and divergent thinking in the processes of observation, investigation, speculative enquiry, visualisation and/or making (A&D).	Group tutorials, individual tutorials, seminars, workshops, lectures	Formative: Tutorials and reviews. Summative: Portfolio
B5	Critically discriminate between alternative arguments and approaches at an advanced level (HAAD).	Group tutorials, individual tutorials, seminars, workshops, lectures	Formative: Tutorials and reviews. Summative: Portfolio

C. Practical (Professional or Subject) skills, able to:			
LO number	Learning outcome	Learning and Teaching methods	Assessment methods
C1	Generate ideas, concepts, proposals, solutions, arguments independently and/or collaboratively at an advanced level of engagement in response to set briefs and/or as self-initiated activity (A&D).	Group tutorials, individual tutorials, seminars, workshops, lectures	Formative: Tutorials and reviews. Summative: Portfolio
C2	Select, experiment with and make appropriate use of materials, processes, technologies and environments showing understanding of quality standards and attention to detail at an advanced level. (A&D)	Group tutorials, individual tutorials, seminars, workshops, lectures	Formative: Tutorials and reviews. Summative: Portfolio
C3	Demonstrate understanding of the critical, contextual, historical, conceptual economic, social environmental and ethical dimensions of the discipline at an advanced level (A&D).	Group tutorials, individual tutorials, seminars, workshops, lectures	Formative: Tutorials and reviews. Summative: Portfolio
C4	Articulate ideas and information comprehensively in visual, oral and written forms at an advanced level (A&D).	Group tutorials, individual tutorials, seminars, workshops, lectures	Formative: Tutorials and reviews. Summative: Portfolio
C5	Demonstrate the ability to exercise self-management skills in managing their workloads and meeting deadlines in relation to work at an advanced level (A&D).	Group tutorials, individual tutorials, seminars, workshops, lectures	Formative: Tutorials and reviews. Summative: Portfolio

D. Transferrable (Graduate and Employability) skills, able to:			
LO number	Learning outcome	Learning and Teaching methods	Assessment methods
D1	Communication: Communicate information, arguments and ideas cogently and effectively within a range of discourses as appropriate to particular audiences, and in written, spoken or other form using appropriate visual aids and information technology (IT) resources. (HAAD)	Group tutorials, individual tutorials, seminars, workshops, lectures	Formative: Tutorials and reviews. Summative: Portfolio
D2	Information Technology: The ability to make effective use of IT for research and communication. (HAAD)	Group tutorials, individual tutorials, seminars, workshops, lectures	Formative: Tutorials and reviews. Summative: Portfolio
D3	Problem-solving: the ability to apply knowledge and experience resourcefully in complex and open-ended contexts. (HAAD)	Group tutorials, individual tutorials, seminars, workshops, lectures	Formative: Tutorials and reviews. Summative: Portfolio
D4	Improving Own Learning: Critically reflecting on one's own learning and development. (A&D)	Group tutorials, individual tutorials, seminars, workshops, lectures	Formative: Tutorials and reviews. Summative: Portfolio
D5	Self-management: Study independently, set goals, manage workloads and meet deadlines. (A&D)	Group tutorials, individual tutorials, seminars, workshops, lectures	Formative: Tutorials and reviews. Summative: Portfolio

Academic Regulations

The current University of Portsmouth [Academic Regulations: Examination & Assessment Regulations](#) will apply to this course.

Support for Student Learning

The University of Portsmouth provides a comprehensive range of support services for students throughout their course, details of which are available at the [MyPort](#) student portal.

In addition to these University support services this course also provides:

CCI Creative Careers: Support to add degree-related and relevant work experience for CV building including a work placement year, summer or short internships and part-time work.

CCI Creative Skills: One to one support sessions and group tutorials in creative software and skills relevant to CCI courses and future careers.

CCI Academic Skills: Access to resources to support learning strategies and techniques through one to one tutorials or group workshops.

CCI Student Support Advisor: Help to find appropriate academic, pastoral or practical support.

Specialist equipment and facilities relevant to the course.

Evaluation and Enhancement of Standards and Quality in Learning and Teaching

The University of Portsmouth undertakes comprehensive monitoring, review and evaluation of courses within clearly assigned staff responsibilities. Student feedback is a key feature in these evaluations, as represented in our [Policy for Listening to and Responding to the Student Voice](#) where you can also find further information.

Reference Points

The course and outcomes have been developed taking account of:

Insert additional reference points or delete as required

- [University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Specification](#)
- [University of Portsmouth Vision](#)
- [Office for Students Conditions of Registration](#)
- [University of Portsmouth Code of Practice for Work-based and Placement Learning](#)
- [Quality Assurance Agency UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#)
- [Quality Assurance Agency Qualification Characteristic Statements](#)
- [Quality Assurance Agency Subject Benchmark Statement](#) for **Art and Design (A&D) & History of Art, Architecture and Design (HAAD)**
- Quality Assurance Agency Framework for Higher Education Qualifications Requirements of Professional and/or Statutory Regulatory Bodies: **N/A**
- Vocational and professional experience, scholarship and research expertise of the University of Portsmouth's academic members of staff
- National Occupational Standards

Changes to your course/modules

The University of Portsmouth has checked the information provided in this Course Specification and will endeavour to deliver this course in keeping with this Course Specification. However, changes to the course may sometimes be required arising from annual monitoring, student feedback, and the review and update of modules and courses.

Where this activity leads to significant changes to modules and courses there will be prior consultation with students and others, wherever possible, and the University of Portsmouth will take all reasonable steps to minimise disruption to students.

It is also possible that the University of Portsmouth may not be able to offer a module or course for reasons outside of its control, for example, due to the absence of a member of staff or low student registration numbers. Where this is the case, the University of Portsmouth will endeavour to inform applicants and students as soon as possible, and where appropriate, will facilitate the transfer of affected students to another suitable course.

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