

**COURSE  
SPECIFICATION:  
Core Award Data**



**ROBERT GORDON  
UNIVERSITY•ABERDEEN**

**Bachelor of Arts with Honours [BA (Hons)] Contemporary Art Practice**

**AWARDING INSTITUTION**

Robert Gordon University

**INSTITUTION OF DELIVERY**

Robert Gordon University

**COURSE ACCREDITED BY**

None.

**COURSE ACCREDITATION / RECOGNITION**

None.

**AWARDS**

**Stage 1**

Certificate of Higher Education: Contemporary Art Practice is awarded after the successful completion of Stage 1, 120 credits SCQF 7

**Stage 2**

Diploma of Higher Education: Contemporary Art Practice is awarded after the successful completion of Stage 2, 240 credits SCQF 8

**Stage 3**

BA Contemporary Art Practice is awarded after the successful completion of Stage 3, 360 credits SCQF 9

**Stage 4**

BA (Hons) Contemporary Art Practice is awarded after the successful completion of Stage 4, 480 credits SCQF

10

BA (Hons) Contemporary Art Practice (Photography) is awarded after the successful completion of Stage 4, 480 credits SCQF

10

BA (Hons) Contemporary Art Practice (Printmaking) is awarded after the successful completion of Stage 4, 480 credits SCQF

10

BA (Hons) Contemporary Art Practice (Moving Image) is awarded after the successful completion of Stage 4, 480 credits SCQF

10

BA (Hons) Contemporary Art Practice (Sculpture) is awarded after the successful completion of Stage 4, 480 credits SCQF

10

#### **AWARD TYPE**

Undergraduate

#### **MODES OF STUDY**

Full-time

#### **DURATION OF COURSE**

4 Years (one year for each stage of study)

#### **LANGUAGE OF STUDY**

English

#### **LANGUAGE OF ASSESSMENT**

English

#### **UCAS CODE**

WW61

**JACS CODE**

W100

**RELEVANT QAA SUBJECT GROUP**

Art and Design

**DATE OF PRODUCTION / REVISION**

21 September 2015

**INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE**

The Contemporary Art Practice course (CAP) offers a broad and dynamic experience that enables you to develop a visual art practice, relevant and meaningful to your personal ideas and aspirations. Central to the course philosophy is the belief that interaction, dialogue, and critical reflection are key to developing engagement with, and understanding of, the cultural, social, political and philosophical contexts for the production and consumption of contemporary art.

The curriculum is designed around the acquisition of five key skills sets: developmental, technical, intellectual, contextual and professional, with the aim of nurturing a working practice that identifies preferred working methods and hones practical skills alongside critical thinking and contextual understanding. Reflecting how artists operate in the contemporary world, some students may commit to developing an expertise within one of the four CAP studios whilst others will operate across two or more. Across the four CAP studios, students may develop an interest in a variety of contemporary art forms and contexts: exhibition, event, installation, performance, site-specificity, socially engaged, participatory, curatorial or critical writing.

At the start of Stage 4 you will make an informed decision as to the nature of your Honours project which will be reflected in your final award title allowing you to graduate with a BA (Hons) Contemporary Art Practice (Moving Image), BA (Hons) Contemporary Art Practice (Photography), BA (Hons) Contemporary Art Practice (Printmaking) or BA (Hons) Contemporary Art Practice (Sculpture). Those working across media may graduate with the final award title of BA (Hons) Contemporary Art Practice.

CAP aims to create dynamic, confident and capable practitioners who have the variety of transferable skills necessary to actively participate in the national and international arts arena. This may be as a practising artist or through related careers within the creative and cultural industries or through further study at MA and PhD level.

**EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF THE COURSE**

The course aims to foster a broad range of approaches to contemporary art practice in which each student develops a personal skill set comprising a unique combination of technical, intellectual, contextual, critical and professional activities relative to their individual creative practice and future career ambitions.

Stage 1 Certificate of Higher Education: Contemporary Art Practice

The aim of Stage 1 is to enable students to become competent with the fundamental behaviours of the creative process itself: research gathering, idea generation, development and resolution. Specific aims are:

- to expand knowledge and understanding of contemporary art and its relationship within the field of visual culture
- to develop fundamental practical and conceptual skills through the visualisation and realisation of ideas using a variety of materials, methods and technologies
- to develop a personal visual language through individual response to a range of studio projects using a variety of materials, methods and technologies

- to nurture communication skills to enable students to discuss and write about both their own work and the work of other artists

### Stage 2 Diploma of Higher Education: Contemporary Art Practice

The aim of Stage 2 is for students to begin to define an individual approach to research and developmental procedures through an increasingly focused engagement with materials, processes and technologies. Specific aims are: to raise self-awareness of preferred materials, processes and technologies relative to personal ideas and emerging visual language

- to deepen knowledge and understanding of both historical and contemporary fine art forms and contexts
- to enable an increasingly personal response to studio projects in order to prepare students for self-directed study
- to simultaneously develop practical and critical skills in the research, development and realization of ideas
- to develop personalised study skills
- to develop oral and written communication skills

### Stage 3 BA Contemporary Art Practice

The aim of Stage 3 is to support students as they become responsible for self-determining the direction of their emerging creative practice (in both practice and theory) as they move towards independent study. Specific aims are:

to enable students to identify and explore personal themes and interests

- to enable students to identify and test personal research methods
- to enable students to 'locate' themselves in relation to other artists, theoreticians, writers or philosophies, or cultural, societal and political issues
- to simultaneously develop practical and critical skills relative to their emerging practice and personal visual language
- to enable students to consider, test and engage with various contexts in which an audience might encounter contemporary artworks

### Stage 4 BA (Hons) Contemporary Art Practice

BA (Hons) Contemporary Art Practice (Photography)

BA (Hons) Contemporary Art Practice (Printmaking)

BA (Hons) Contemporary Art Practice (Moving Image)

BA (Hons) Contemporary Art Practice (Sculpture)

The aim of Stage 4 is to enable students to demonstrate their ability to undertake a sustained period of independent enquiry in which all aspects of their studio practice approach synthesis: research, development, resolution, context and theory in which they are critically reflective of the work they produce. Specific aims are:

to research, develop and resolve ideas leading to the production of a substantial body of resolved artwork exhibited in a professional manner

- to expand knowledge and understanding by locating their emerging practice through an extended piece of text
- to be able to represent their practice to others, through text, image or voice

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

### SCQF 7

Knowledge and Understanding

- Demonstrate familiarity and working understanding of the basic principles, characteristics, and values associated with practice within Design and Fine Art disciplines.
- Demonstrate working understanding of 'practice' via essays, on-line discussion and studio project work.
- Recognise and discuss historical and contemporary contexts, concepts and theories within visual culture broadly.
- Basic awareness of practical 2D and 3D processes and materials used in the production of studio project work.
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the basic principles and role of drawing within research and the development of ideas.

Practical Skills

- Apply basic research methods to studio based projects and written/theoretical work.

- Use a limited range of 2D and/or 3D, analogue and digital, visualisation and presentation processes and techniques to develop and visualise ideas.
- Use drawing to explore, document, and extend understanding of media and processes.
- Use paper based and electronic systems for research and information retrieval.
- Communicate ideas and theoretical issues using a range of verbal, written and visual media to individual students, staff and groups of individuals.

#### Intellectual Skills

- Research, gather, and collate information from a range of sources, establish key relationships and develop ideas in relation to a given project.
- Demonstrate a basic analysis of project requirements, synthesis of research information, and basic ability to question and evaluate through the development and culmination of a project.
- Relate a limited number of principles, concepts and elements in an explorative, iterative, and organized manner to develop ideas.
- Start to critically reflect and form own value judgements based on criteria and guidance from tutors.
- Plan and manage work appropriately, and work to deadlines with aid of tutor input.
- Develop a basic understanding of personal learning needs through basic evaluation and questioning of working processes.

#### Key Employability and Enterprise Skills

- Communicate in a clear and concise manner in writing and orally
- Begin to successfully communicate ideas and concepts.
- Demonstrate basic ability to manipulate multiple forms of data (including numeric) in the production of studio project work.
- Work effectively both in a team and independently; show willingness to learn from others
- Use standard IT, word processing packages and internet based systems to manage and produce work.

### SCQF 8

#### Knowledge and Understanding

- Demonstrate widening appreciation of the scope of relevant subject topics within specialist practice; map existing and new knowledge into studio project contexts.
- Demonstrate knowledge of key contextual themes, theories and concepts relating to professional, societal, environmental, technological and economic aspects of practice within visual culture.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the impact and relationship of their discipline of study on, and to the wider community of their profession at national and international level.
- Demonstrate a developed knowledge and understanding of the core principles, processes, methods and contexts for practice.

#### Practical Skills

- Produce solutions and ideas of moderate complexity to both abstract and finite problems set in projects that demonstrate conceptual and imaginative use of materials, processes and technologies.
- Use a range of 2D and/or 3D, analogue and digital, visualisation and presentation processes and techniques to develop and visualise ideas for specialist practice.
- Demonstrate a deepening knowledge, understanding and application of visualisation and drawing strategies within thematic and personal research and the development of ideas.
- Communicate moderately complex ideas and theoretical issues using a range of verbal, written and visual media to individual students, tutors and clients.

#### Intellectual Skills

- Research, gather, and collate information from a diverse range of sources, establish key connections and develop ideas within a given context and set of considerations.
- Demonstrate the ability to analyse moderately complex project contexts, synthesising research information, and critically evaluating the progress of work.
- Relate a range of principles, concepts and elements in an explorative, iterative, and organized manner to develop and critically reflect and question ideas.
- Plan and manage work appropriately, and work to deadlines.
- Develop an understanding of independent learning needs through reflection, evaluation and the setting of personal project goals

#### Key Employability and Enterprise Skills

- Communicate in a clear, structured and concise manner in writing and orally, in more formal academic and professional formats, and through longer pieces of writing.
- Express moderately complex ideas verbally as well as through visual and written means.
- Work effectively both in a team and independently, showing a willingness to learn from peers and problem solve in.
- Appropriately identify and apply simple numeric skills to projects.

- Demonstrate competency in the use of IT, information retrieval, word processing, and the integration of text and image in specific contexts.
- Self-manage, including time, project management, and multiple deadline capacities.

## SCQF 9

### Knowledge and Understanding

- Reveal a working understanding of the theory and practice surrounding the profession, together with an ability to apply relevant knowledge to 'live' projects and to increasingly self-directed practice.
- Apply subject specific skills, knowledge and understanding acquired in the course, to placement, work based learning, and external collaborations.
- Reveal an understanding of the differing forms of writing, creative dissemination of ideas and concepts within the creative industries.
- Identify a specific focus to the further development of knowledge within specialist practice and research enquiry in support of studio and theoretical work.
- Show confident familiarity with the understanding and inter-relationships of key contextual themes, theories and concepts relating to professional, societal, environmental, technological and economic aspects of discipline specific practice within visual culture and the wider creative community.

### Practical Skills

- Demonstrate fluency in the definition, origination, development and resolution of solutions and ideas for complex contexts.
- Select, evaluate and apply 2D and/or 3D, analogue and digital, visualisation and presentation processes and techniques to develop and visualise ideas appropriate for specialist practice and evolving personal vision.
- Test learning through self-directed study based on evolving strengths and individual direction.
- Communicate complex ideas, and theoretical issues through a confident use of a broad range of verbal, written and visual media to challenging internal and external audiences.
- Demonstrate planning and organisational skills within a range of individual and team orientated contexts both internal to the School and external.

### Intellectual Skills

- Research, gather, and collate information from a diverse range of sources, establish key connections and develop ideas within specific and self-determined contexts to produce new work.
- Demonstrate the ability to analyse complex and novel project contexts, synthesising research information, and critically reflect evaluating the progression of work in self-directed, team-based, and 'live' project work.
- Relate a range of principles, concepts and elements in an explorative, iterative, and organized manner to develop and critically question ideas with increasing autonomy.
- Demonstrate the ability to develop a personal conceptual framework, form independent judgement, and apply own criteria in reference to a range of practice and theoretical contexts.
- Demonstrate an increasing ability to independently select and apply practical studio and workshop methods to practice and the production of new work.
- Develop a clear understanding of independent learning needs through critical reflection and evaluation, in consideration of the planning of creative strategies for new work in Stage 4.

### Key Employability and Enterprise Skills

- Engage effectively in communication in variety of roles or situations and produce and present clear, well structured pieces of work in a range of contexts.
- Begin to develop a personal visual language, which clearly communicates, presents and demonstrates ideas in a variety of contexts.
- Express complex ideas verbally as well as through visual and written means.
- Interact effectively within a group; demonstrate basic negotiating, leadership and group support skills; interact effectively with peer groups and staff; participate in external situations and begin to apply these skills to support their emerging creative direction.
- Apply a range of numerical skills as appropriate to specialist practice and emerging personal direction
- Demonstrate fluency in the use of IT, information retrieval, word processing, and the integration of text and image in specific and increasingly self-determined contexts.
- Adopt a broad-ranging and flexible approach to study; identify learning needs; pursue activities designed to meet those needs in an increasingly autonomous ways.

## SCQF 10

### Knowledge and Understanding

- Show confident familiarity with the defining concepts and features of specialist practice at a level approaching professional practice.
- Demonstrate detailed knowledge and understanding of the principles, materials, processes and technologies within specialist practice relevant to the individual needs of in-depth, self-directed

study.

- Demonstrate their own specific contextual and critical framework appropriate for the specialist practice, of self-initiated independent study.
- Show confident familiarity with the understanding and inter-relationships of key contextual themes, theories and concepts relating to their own professional practice as situated within, societal, environmental, technological and economic aspects of discipline specific practice.

#### Practical Skills

- Undertake a sustained period of independent, specialist study that demonstrates originality, conceptual and imaginative use of relevant materials, processes and technologies and an awareness of the relevant field and appropriate professional context.
- Undertake a sustained period of self-directed contextual and critical study producing work both written and orally that demonstrates cohesive argument in relation to their independent study or professional field.
- Confidently apply an understanding of their personal practice within an appropriate professional context.
- Confidently select and apply appropriate practical studio and workshop methods to self-initiated projects at a level approaching professional practice.
- Imaginatively communicate self-initiated ideas, and theoretical issues through a confident use of a broad range of verbal, written and visual media to challenging internal and external audiences.
- Demonstrate project management and organisational skills in bringing self-directed work to fruition and public exhibition.

#### Intellectual Skills

- Research, gather, and collate information from a diverse range of sources, establish coherent ideas and strategies for independent proposal led self-directed study.
- Demonstrate ability to independently select and apply practical studio and workshop methods to practice and the production of new self-directed work.
- Demonstrate the ability to independently define and analyse self-directed project proposals, synthesising research information, and critically evaluating the progression of work the level of professional practice.
- Confidently select and apply a range of facts, concepts, and theoretical information in a cohesive and structured independent manner to produce new solutions to self-initiated projects
- Confidently apply own criteria and ability to support independent judgement in an autonomous manner.

#### Key Employability and Enterprise Skills

- Engage effectively in communication in variety of independent roles in a professional manner; give confident oral and visual presentations in a specific range of contexts.
- Confidently apply a personal visual language that clearly communicates, presents and demonstrates in a variety of contexts including work at the threshold of professional practice.
- Confidently express complex ideas verbally as well as through visual and written means.
- Interact effectively within learning or professional groups; demonstrate negotiating, leadership and group support skills; interact effectively with peer groups and staff; participate in external situations and apply these skills to support their independent practice
- Apply a range of numerical skills as appropriate to specialist practice and specific independent study.
- Demonstrate fluency and a specific personal use in the employment of IT, information retrieval, word processing, and the integration of text and image within independent study
- With minimal guidance, manage own learning using a wide range of resources appropriate to specialist independent study, seek out and make effective use of feedback
- Critically reflect and evaluate progress and creative and career direction in readiness for activities post graduation

## **DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF COURSE**

The course philosophy is to support student-centred learning in a studio and workshop based environment in which innovation, creativity and independent thinking are nurtured. All students are provided with their own studio base and access to the school's specialist workshops, computer labs and learning resources are provided on a time tabled and open access basis. Engagement with theory through Contextual and Critical studies both inform and in turn are informed by studio practice.

We provide high levels of teaching contact and tutorial support (both academic and pastoral), including group and one to one tuition across all year levels. Cohort sizes are relatively small and are generally no more than 15-20 in each year level.

The school is a very communal integrated facility enabling easy interaction across subjects for those students who want to explore the boundaries of their discipline.

Professional skills and the development of graduate attributes are key elements of our curriculum and are fully integrated within practical project assignments and self-directed activity. Students are empowered to be pro-active in their professional and personal development to ensure they evolve a sustainable creative practice.

### **Placements:**

CAP: the course offers a number of placement opportunities with organisations such as Peacock Visual Arts, Scottish Sculpture Workshop and The Creative Development Team at Aberdeen City Council. Typically these are short term experiences lasting 2-4 weeks. We are also able to support students who negotiate a placement themselves. Recent examples of this approach have seen students undertake placement at Pace Print Workshop in New York and Inverleith House in Edinburgh.

CAP students are able to gain experience and develop professional skills through regular exhibitions, events and competitions. Exhibitions occur both within the art school as well as in public venues in Aberdeen and Glasgow.

### **International Study:**

An additional feature to all our full-time undergraduate programmes is the opportunity for students to apply for a semester of international study with one of our European partner institutions.

## **WHAT THE COURSE INVOLVES**

Developing a creative art practice requires high levels of motivation, application and engagement, as you, the student, are key to providing the main impetus for your learning. The studio and workshop environments are central to your daily experience and where you will spend the majority part of your time. Studio is a place where you will make, think, reflect, experiment, present, discuss and interact. Some activities, for example research, may see you working away from the studio in a wide range of locations or situations.

Workshops enable you to engage with a range of both traditional and contemporary technologies: from casting, etching and darkroom through to HD video, digital print, and 3D computer modelling. Whilst in Stages 1 & 2 you will be introduced to the fundamental use of such technologies, in Stages 3 & 4 you will engage with materials and processes on your own terms and in increasingly personalised ways: challenging, manipulating, adapting, subverting.

Within all years, parallel yet central to the development of your studio practice is your engagement with Critical & Contextual Studies, delivered through a series of lectures, seminars and on-line forums which require you to write essays, deliver presentations and participate in on-line discussions. Whilst CCS in Stages 1 & 2 introduces you to 'broad fundamentals' that introduce key thinkers, writers, artists and ideas, themes and philosophies, in Stages 3 & 4 you are required to identify increasingly personalised readings as a means of interpreting and critiquing the work and ideas of others, relative to your emerging practice.

A willingness to engage in dialogue is a mainstay of the course and occurs through individual studio tutorial, peer group discussion and studio critique. Professional Skills modules in Stages 3 & 4 enable you to understand and develop the necessary skills for both the exhibition of artworks and your ability to communicate your practice through written statements and visual documentation.

Throughout the course there will be opportunities to work on 'live projects' and test your artworks in increasingly professional environments and situations. Students are expected to be proactive in visiting relevant exhibitions and events relative to individual interests and concerns. Periodically the course organises optional study trips to local, national and international venues.

## **PLACEMENT / PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

The course does not require students to undertake formal placement, however, several short-term placement opportunities may be available on a competitive basis with partners such as SSW (Scottish Sculpture Workshop), Peacock Visual Arts and Edinburgh Printmakers Workshop. It

may also be possible for individual students to negotiate short periods of study within a range of arts related organisations themselves. (For example, a one month placement at PACE Printmaking Workshop in New York).

In Stages 3 & 4 students are supported in undertaking a range of self-organized exhibitions in both internal and external venues that explore contexts for reaching an audience. Such events are organised collectively by several students or sometimes the entire cohort, and involve them, through delegation, in the practical considerations of mounting an exhibition: raising funds, sponsorship, accessing exhibition space, marketing, transportation, curation, and installation. This experience not only makes the student aware of how to produce, present, promote and exhibit work, but also raises awareness of issues around self-organization and working collectively.

In addition, competitive residencies and scholarships in the UK and abroad are also available annually through University Bursaries and external competitions.

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER STUDY**

An Honours degree achieved with at least an upper second (Class 2:1 - possibly Class 2:2 depending on institution and folio of work) will normally provide access to postgraduate and doctoral programmes in higher education institutions.

Recent graduates from Fine Art courses have successfully accessed postgraduate study at some of the most competitive UK based Post Graduate Institutions including Masters courses at Goldsmiths College and Slade School of Fine Art, and PhD study at Glasgow University. Other previous Fine Art graduates have remained in the region and undertaken postgraduate study at Gray's School of Art or Aberdeen University..

## **EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL INDICATORS OF QUALITY AND STANDARDS**

The University employs several mechanisms for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching, learning and assessment, including:

### **Annual Course Appraisals**

These are prepared for each course and reviewed and approved by Course Management Teams and School Academic Boards which consider, amongst other things, feedback generated from Student Evaluation Questionnaires, student achievement and graduate employment information.

### **External Examiners**

Each course has at least one External Examiner appointed to monitor quality in assessment and ensure a parity of awards against national norms. The External Examiner can also embrace the role of "critical friend" to the course management team and can be involved as a valued reflective opinion in course and curriculum development discussions with the course team.

The External Examiner attends Boards of Examiners and will complete a report on each course annually. This requires a formal response from the course team indicating any changes or developments made in relation to any issues or recommendations highlighted by the External Examiner.

A number of experienced academic staff act as External Examiners and participate in review and validation events at other universities and academic institutions. This provides a valuable benchmarking tool for the school and subject area as a whole and experience gained in this capacity feeds directly into the currency and development of the academic environment.

### **Formal Committees**

The University has a number of committees at course, school, faculty and institutional level with responsibility for monitoring and evaluating quality and standards.

Staff/Student Liaison Committees

Course Management Teams

School Academic Boards

Assessment Boards

Faculty Quality Enhancement Sub-Committees

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee and associated Sub-Committees.

Institution-Led Subject Review

Enhancement-led institutional review (ELIR) is one component of the QAA quality enhancement

framework (QEF) across Scotland. The review involves external panel members, on a six-yearly basis to formally review its major subject provision, followed by a three year interim review to monitor progress against actions/issues raised through the review process.

### **QAA and Enhancement Themes**

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) benchmarking statements for Art and Design represent the nature, characteristics and expected standards of an Honours degree in these related subject areas and articulates the graduate attributes and capabilities that those possessing these qualifications should demonstrate.

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) benchmarks underpin course design and delivery and provide general guidance for articulating learning outcomes of the course as a whole, thereby ensuring course and module evaluation against appropriate national standards.

The QAA enhancement agenda and the findings published through conference and working parties are embraced and used by staff to underpin quality of teaching and learning practice and the enhancement of the student experience.

### **SCQF**

Scottish Qualifications Framework (SCQF) statements are used during the design of courses and modules and the relevant Scottish Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level is included within each Module Descriptor.

## **ACADEMIC REGULATIONS**

This course is governed by the provisions of the University's Academic Regulations, which are available at [www.rgu.ac.uk/academicregulations](http://www.rgu.ac.uk/academicregulations). In particular:

*Regulation A1: Courses*

*Regulation A2: Admission*

*Regulation A3: Section 1: Student Appeals (Awards and Progression) Procedure*

*Regulation A3: Section 2: Student Misconduct Procedure*

*Regulation A4: Assessment and Recommendations of Assessment Boards*

### **Entry Requirements**

Applicants must satisfy the University's general admission requirements for undergraduate and postgraduate courses as contained in *Academic Regulation A2: Admission*, including proficiency to a minimum standard in the English language. Specific entry requirements for this course are detailed below.

#### **STAGE 1 ENTRY**

*SQA Higher:* BBC preferably to include English and Art/Design or equivalent.

*GCE A Level:* CC preferably to include English and Art/Design or equivalent.

*Irish Leaving Certificate Higher:* BBC1, preferably to include English and Art/Design or equivalent.

*IB Diploma:* 24, including Visual Arts and English at Higher Level or equivalent.

#### **Alternative Qualifications**

HNC, Access to Higher Education Programmes or equivalent qualifications may also be considered.

Applications are welcome from students where work experience replaces formal qualifications.

Evidence of competence in written work may be required. Equivalent international qualifications plus evidence of proficiency in English for overseas students will be required.

#### **ADVANCED ENTRY**

Entry to Stage 2 and above is subject to the presentation of a portfolio of work

Folios may be predominantly focused on either Photography, Moving Image, Printmaking or Sculpture but relative to Fine Art. Applicants would also be expected to demonstrate an awareness of Contemporary Art and artists. Accompanying qualifications may include HND, Diploma in Foundation Studies in Art or equivalent qualifications.

We welcome applicants with equivalent qualifications to those stated, including SVQs/NVQs, access programmes and some overseas qualifications. Applications from students with non-standard qualifications or work experience may be considered. Evidence of competence in written work may be required. As with standard qualifications, all applications require submission of a portfolio of work.

#### **Interview/Portfolio Review**

Suitable applicants will be invited to attend the School with their portfolio for an informal review/discussion with academic staff. This allows prospective students to meet staff, see the teaching environment and allows the School to explore ambitions whilst reviewing the portfolio. We will discuss each applicants specific interests within Contemporary Art, as well as career

aspirations. It is also an opportunity for prospective students to ask questions.

### Course-Specific Assessment Regulations

There are no course specific Regulations.

### SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be found at <http://www.rgu.ac.uk/areas-of-study/subjects/art-and-design>

### EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The University has a strong commitment to the active promotion of equality across its functions, including its course provision. To this end the University has developed an inclusivity statement which articulates the University's desire to strive towards creating a working, learning and social atmosphere which is inclusive, harmonious and respectful of diversity. The University has also developed an equality and diversity policy and every two years publishes a mainstreaming report, including equality outcomes, which explains how the university is developing and implementing its inclusivity statement. At a course level, course leaders monitor and comment on equalities data through the annual appraisal process. Through this process any significant trends in equalities data are highlighted. Further information can be found at: [www.rgu.ac.uk/about/equality-and-diversity](http://www.rgu.ac.uk/about/equality-and-diversity)

All Schools have a nominated School Contact who can advise on the requirements of the course and the range of course-specific reasonable adjustments that may be made. The current School Contacts are available from: [www.rgu.ac.uk/student-services/disability/page.cfm?page=7853](http://www.rgu.ac.uk/student-services/disability/page.cfm?page=7853).

The University's Disability and Dyslexia Service provides support for students, details of which may be found at: [www.rgu.ac.uk/disability](http://www.rgu.ac.uk/disability)

### NOTE

This document constitutes one of two course documents that should be read together:

**Course Specification: Core Award Data**

**Course Specification: Student Learning Experience**

### CONTACT DETAILS

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In compiling this information the University has taken every care to be as accurate as possible, though it must be read as subject to change at any time and without notice. The University reserves the right to make variations to the contents or methods of delivery of courses, to discontinue, merge or combine courses, and to introduce new courses.

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## DETAILED COURSE STRUCTURE

Full-time				
Stage 1	Semester 1		CREDITS	LEVEL
AA1001	Drawing & Visualisation 1		30	SCQF 7
AA1005	Creative Principles & Methods		30	SCQF 7
AA1009	Contextual And Critical Studies - Introduction to Visual Culture		30	SCQF 7
<b>Total for Semester:</b>			<b>90</b>	

Full-time				
Stage 1	Semester 2		CREDITS	LEVEL
AA1001	Drawing & Visualisation 1		30	SCQF 7
AA1006	Core Fine Art Studies		30	SCQF 7
AA1009	Contextual And Critical Studies - Introduction to Visual Culture		30	SCQF 7
<b>Total for Semester:</b>			<b>90</b>	

**Total for Stage: 180**

Full-time				
Stage 2	Semester 1		CREDITS	LEVEL
AA2700	Contextual & Critical Studies - Fine Art Contexts		30	SCQF 8
AA2701	Studio Practice: Core Skills - Identifying Focus		45	SCQF 8
<b>Total for Semester:</b>			<b>75</b>	

Full-time				
Stage 2	Semester 2		CREDITS	LEVEL
AA2700	Contextual & Critical Studies - Fine Art Contexts		30	SCQF 8
AA2702	Studio Practice: Core Skills - Developing Focus		45	SCQF 8
<b>Total for Semester:</b>			<b>75</b>	

**Total for Stage: 150**

Full-time				
Stage 3	Semester 1		CREDITS	LEVEL
AA3313	Contextual & Critical Studies - Exploring Critical Themes		15	SCQF 9
AA3701	Studio Practice: Identifying Self-Direction		45	SCQF 9
<b>Total for Semester:</b>			<b>60</b>	

Full-time				
Stage 3	Semester 2		CREDITS	LEVEL
AA3204	International Study: Fine Art		60	SCQF 9 B
AA3311	Contextual & Critical Studies - Research & Enquiry		15	SCQF 9 A
AA3702	Studio Practice: Developing Independence		30	SCQF 9 A
AA3703	Professional Skills: Disseminating Practice		15	SCQF 9 A

**Total for Semester: 60**

Route A - Standard

Route B - Exchange

**Total for Stage: 120**

#### Full-time

Stage 4	Semester 1	CREDITS	LEVEL
AA4300	Contextual & Critical Studies - Self Directed Research Enquiry	15	SCQF 10 A
AA4310	Contextual And Critical Studies - Dissertation	--	SCQF 10 B
AA4701	Independent Studio Practice	--	SCQF 10 A B

Note: Route totals are not equal -> Totals for Semester: Route A: 15  
Route B: 0

Route A - Route will not run in Session 2015/16 CAP and CCS Self Directed Research Enquiry

Route B - CAP and CCS Dissertation

#### Full-time

Stage 4	Semester 2	CREDITS	LEVEL
AA4310	Contextual And Critical Studies - Dissertation	30	SCQF 10 B
AA4701	Independent Studio Practice	90	SCQF 10 A B
AA4702	Professional Skills: Representing Practice	15	SCQF 10 A

Note: Route totals are not equal -> Totals for Semester: Route A: 105  
Route B: 120

Route A - Route will not run in Session 2015/16 CAP and CCS Self-Directed Research Enquiry

Route B - CAP and CCS Dissertation

**Total for Stage: 120**



## **COURSE SPECIFICATION: Student Learning Experience**



**ROBERT GORDON  
UNIVERSITY • ABERDEEN**

### **Bachelor of Arts with Honours [BA (Hons)] Contemporary Art Practice**

#### **STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE**

The University's ambition is to be consistently one of the best modern universities in the UK. To achieve this ambition, the University focuses on the needs of students, economies and societies, aiming to:

- enrich the all-round experience of students throughout their engagement with the University;
- enhance the quality and relevance of taught provision;
- increase the diversification of the student population;
- expand the provision of corporate programmes and lifelong learning opportunities;
- grow internationally excellent research and knowledge exchange activities and reputation;
- secure economic and environmental sustainability.

The University believes a professional education starts with excellent teaching and research within a supporting environment, and is about a lifelong and sustainable approach to working and living. The University's portfolio is informed by its commercial and public sector partners, who are instrumental in helping to develop courses to ensure their relevance for the evolving economy and society. Many include practical experience and placements, and are professionally accredited. These contribute to the University's position as one of the UK's top universities for graduate employment.

By combining the best of both academic and professional worlds, the University aims to give its students the best possible start to their careers. A degree from Robert Gordon University is confirmation to a future employer that a student will possess the required blend of learning, skills and experience.

#### **COURSE PHILOSOPHY AND OVERVIEW**

Contemporary Art Practice embraces four core studio areas (Moving Image, Photography, Printmaking and Sculpture) and is supported by a team of discipline-specific artist-teachers, expert technical staff and professional facilities. A major distinctive feature of the course is the dynamic, interdisciplinary and close collaborative relationship between the principal areas and the staff that facilitate them. We pride ourselves on our innovative approaches both to teaching and the practice of contemporary art and our contribution to the wider field of international visual culture.

Whilst the course concentrates on four principle studios areas, the staff expertise extends to the disciplines of installation, performance, drawing, public art, electronic media and animation. This provides students with an opportunity to gain honours awards in a variety of specialist areas. Workshop practice underpins all areas of Contemporary Art Practice and highlights the importance of problem solving and skill development through access to expert tuition and peer learning in professionally equipped shared environments.

We provide an educational experience that supports and encourages exploration and risk-taking through personally driven inquiry. Our studio environment is integral to that inquiry and constitutes a forum for informal and formal peer and tutor support. Studio becomes a place for dialogue, thinking, making, and sharing.

We maintain a thriving relationship with local and national arts organisations, (many of which employ ex graduates from Gray's School of Art). International links include a range of student European exchange options in Stage 3 Semester 2 including AKI Enschede (the Netherlands),

Clermont Ferrand (France), Prague School of the Arts (Czech Republic) and Hannover (Germany). We also have an exchange programme with University of Victoria (Canada). There are also short term placement opportunities with partners including PACE Editions New York (USA), Peacock Visual Arts, Scottish Sculpture Workshop, Limousine Bull Collective, and Edinburgh Printmakers Workshop.

Each year students participate in a vibrant programme of exhibitions, placements, workshops, residencies and events at internal and external venues at both national and international level.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGY

Gray's Teaching and Learning Strategy permeates the attitude, approach, design and delivery of all courses at Gray's School of Art. It takes cognisance of both the academic and professional worlds of specialist art & design practice and collective practice within our cultural, societal and economic structures. It equally uses the '*Guidelines on effective learning and teaching at the Robert Gordon University*' as an internal reference point. The guidelines have been informed by contemporary references considered relevant to the University's context, strategic aims and the distinctive identity of 'the professional University'.

Gray's School of Art strives to educate graduates to be able to engage creatively, think critically, and contribute meaningfully to national and international visual culture and the creative industries – in other words, graduates who are academically and professionally reflexive, and who are able to act competently and confidently in distinct situations, complex scenarios and a range of contexts and forms.

Course design and delivery fosters a student-centered approach. We recognise the need to respect both diverse talents and diverse learning styles, in order to nurture individual learning processes. Personalisation is fostered and directed through learning constituted by a process of development that is informed by the individual's identity, background, experience and aspirations. At the same time, education is perceived as a social process taking place through the interaction of students, staff and other partners: learning is regarded as an indispensable product of a dynamic collaboration between students, staff, researchers, professional practitioners, and the creative industries. Course design not only aims to develop the creative, methodological, entrepreneurial and academic competencies of students but also their personal, interpersonal and professional skills.

Project work involves students as co-producers and equal stakeholders in their own education; expectations and responsibilities of both learner and teacher are unequivocally and clearly communicated and understood. The learning experience supports students as active and engaged partners, where the ambition to learn combined with a willingness to challenge assumptions about learning, are everyday behaviours. Gray's aims to ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place to monitor and respond to student needs in order to deliver a two-way learning process that facilitates the highest levels of achievement and progression.

Implementation of specific pedagogies will be informed by an acknowledgement of the interdependency between theory and practice and an effective use of the learning environment to simultaneously nurture both the practical and intellectual development of our students. Central to our philosophy is recognition of the 'new academic team' and the shared responsibility of all of those involved in the educational environment, including students, academics, application supervisors, technical services officers, librarians, university support services, e-learning technologists etc.

Gray's School of Art defines graduate attributes as the skills, knowledge and abilities, complementary to disciplinary expertise, that all graduates are capable of applying in order to engage, adapt and thrive across a range of future employment and societal contexts. Development of graduate attributes will be informed by the desire to strike a balance between skill-based acquisition and an attitude-based outlook, to produce graduates that are: determined and entrepreneurial creators, flexible collaborators, and active and engaged citizens alert to the ethical, social and environmental implications of their creativity.

The learning and teaching strategy reflects and interrogates the fundamental assumptions of what learning is and how learning takes place within the context of Art and Design, and creative thinking within higher education. The implementation of this learning strategy itself, demands a process of continuous development and enhancement of teaching practices. By ongoing review and evaluation of the core principles of the learning strategy, a critical stance will be developed and maintained, thus ensuring accessibility, transparency and ownership for students, staff, course administrators and external partners.

## **Principal mechanisms for implementing the strategy**

### *The physical studio environment*

The School provides dedicated studio space. This acts as a creative environment for the individual; it is a space for peer interaction, group discussion, presentations, and formal and informal meetings, both individually and collectively, with staff and students throughout the delivery of projects. This is a social and interactive learning environment, and one that reflects the School's strategy for student-centered learning. Students have access to their studio seven days a week.

### *The on-line learning environment*

The Robert Gordon University online learning platform, MOODLE, is used to disseminate course and project information; it provides technical resources and support material, and it is also used to encourage debate, interaction, and reflection both within studio project work, and within the 'Contextual and Critical Studies' (CCS) modules. Critical discourse and debate is facilitated through on-line forums where students are able to respond to both staff led and student led discussion. The School has additionally developed its own resource to support the development of practical and professional skills; this is called Gray's MOODLE Zone and is accessible to all students in the School from their own MOODLE page.

Developments in Personal and Professional Development (PPD) planning will encourage students to develop individual web-based profiles. As students progress through their course, reflection on activities and on their own personal development through the course will be sign-posted through project briefs and supporting professional activities such as 'career inputs' and live project work. Progress Reviews and self-assessment also require students to produce reflective commentary; this will support reflection within PPD. The web-based profile in the latter stages of the student journey, will enable the individual to develop a professional window for their practice, providing a stepped transition from academia to professional life.

### **Studio Projects / studio work**

The course is delivered through projects that nurture the development of the fundamental skills and critical abilities, subject specific skills, and professional attributes. Projects will be staff directed in stages 1 and 2 and studio work increasingly student / self-directed in stages 3 and 4. The 'project' is the vehicle for learning and focuses on experiential learning and enquiry based learning, where the student is an active participant in their own learning experience. Projects will embed four, key components within their structure. These are as follows:

- a working context for the project and rationale for work
- a technical or process orientated aspect
- a theoretical component (contemporary practice context / professional practice aspect / historical)
- a critique / presentation / critical discussion / reflection

Projects will articulate content that ensures effective time management, and understanding of learning outcomes and assessment requirements.

In stages 3 and 4 the emphasis is on individual enquiry and developing independence. Fundamental in the shift toward self-direction and independence are also the terms of reference to the work produced in stages 3 and 4; in this context we speak of the student's 'practice' and not about defined projects. 'Practice' becomes their journey through a series of connected ideas and enquiries that support a body or series of works.

This culminates in the Honours year, where students identify their areas of interest, fundamental research questions, and professional and creative direction and contexts for specific bodies of work. The role of the lecturer becomes one of mentor and facilitator in stage 4.

### **Theory based work**

The 'Critical and Contextual Studies' (CCS) modules are delivered through a series of lectures, supported by seminars and extended and critiqued through on-line discussion forums. Assignments encourage individual research and enquiry through identified readings and support materials. As the course progresses greater independence is facilitated, allowing the individual to identify key themes and concerns within visual culture that relate to their professional direction and specific contextual interests.

The CCS modules develop a student's critical abilities through verbal and written discourse, and develops these through a number of differing formats for presentation.

Studio project work will also encompass reference to either the CCS content or to contemporary issues within the profession. By stages 3 & 4 the interrelationship between studio and CCS is paramount to the students' developing practice.

### **Lectures and Project Briefings are designed to:**

- communicate core historical and contextual themes, theories and concepts within visual culture and professional practice. This includes art & design's integral relationship within societal issues,

culture, economy, technology and environment.

- set out the scope of subject areas and identify areas of linkage and relationship to wider contextual practice in the community of practice.
- Direct students to relevant sources of information, literature, and websites.

**Seminars are designed to:**

- provide opportunities to explore and discuss knowledge and understanding arising from lectures and content through directed reading and personal study
- challenge students with respect to their knowledge-base and develop critical questioning of research sources.

**Critique (or Crit) is designed to:**

- enable the presentation primarily of 'resolved' artworks in studio (or gallery/off-site environments), in order to facilitate the interpretation and analysis of presented work through group discussion. Dialogue may typically include reference to practical, technical, conceptual, contextual or professional issues and is used as a platform to consolidate learning through collective, but staff led, feedback.

**Forums are designed to:**

- enable students to respond to issues of interest and debate that are stimulated by the essay questions, lecture material, and seminar activity. The activity of sharing thoughts and opinions through written responses within an on-line environment enables students to develop appropriate language and test ideas, arguments, and opinions on the wider group. This mechanism promotes learner interactions with both peers and staff.

**Tutorials are designed to:**

- review the development of work and challenge students with respect to their integration of knowledge, practical, intellectual and transferable skill base.
- challenge and identify creative direction.
- promote reflection on skills and strengths and to develop action plans for future work.

**Workshops are designed to:**

- provide instruction on key practical skills.
- integrate into the delivery of projects, so that skills are applied in context.
- provide opportunities for self-directed experimentation, research and development of individual visual language.
- underpin the interchange between making and thinking.

**Stage by stage teaching and learning methods**

It will be evident from the following section that our teaching methods and vehicles for learning will be largely similar through stages 1 – 4 but they will be characterised in the following ways.

In Stage 1, studio project work will be directive and students will work within prescribed parameters. Project work across studio and CCS will introduce new ideas, concepts, and working approaches. Students will be introduced to 'the studio', the 'seminar', the 'critique', the 'forum', and the 'tutorial'.

Typically projects will be short (1-2 weeks) extending to 3-5 weeks in semester 2.

In Stage 2, studio project work will again be directed, but in this year students are immersed within the specifics of their professional field. This specificity will occur within both studio and their CCS modules.

Typically projects will be of a longer duration (3 - 6 weeks) and allow for some customisation through thematic enquiry and self-directed learning. Stage 2 may also involve limited live project work.

In Stage 3, studio project work will become more open-ended and self-directed. Students will be challenged to consider their creative direction and personal voice both within studio and CCS work. This emphasis will permeate all vehicles for learning (seminar / tutorial / critique etc.). Typically projects will be of longer duration (3 – 10 weeks); shorter projects will be used to test project management skills especially in relation to live project work. Stage 3 may also employ team based project work.

In Stage 4, both studio work and CCS are proposal led. They are self-directed pieces of work that represent sustained enquiry over the course of the academic year; this may be one large body of work, or a series of 'works' addressing the needs of the proposal.

**Stage 1 / SCQF level 7**

Students' knowledge and understanding will be developed through studio project work, lecture

delivery, seminars, tutorials, critical debate/critique within the cohort, study trip/external exhibition, and key, directed readings. Introductory knowledge and awareness of broad historical and contemporary themes, theories and concepts within visual culture and creative practice will be demonstrated through written and practical, project work; by the application of differing methodologies within the production of work, and through a basic understanding of the contemporary subject context, demonstrated through on-line forum discussion, written evaluation, written assignment and final project work in semester 2 of stage 1.

**Practical skills:** Through the provision of studio project work, technical workshops and I.T. workshop study, students will have the opportunity to demonstrate a basic ability to generate, and develop ideas in 2 and 3 dimensions, using a range of visual means and making processes, using both analogue and digital technologies.

**Intellectual Skills:** The directed nature of studio project work, seminar, tutorial, on-line forums, studio and project critiques, study trip/external exhibition, and through workshop experience will allow students to demonstrate a novice's ability to analyse project requirements, synthesise research information, question ideas and evaluate outcomes. These methods will allow students to evidence a basic ability to synthesise theory and practice in order to ask questions for further study and contemporary visual practice.

**Key Employability, Enterprise and Transferable skills:** Practical project work, written assignments, seminar, studio critique, and workshop study will allow students to evidence basic time management skills, study skills, writing skills including application of I.T, communication and presentation strategies, team-working skills, verbal presentation and discussion skills, and problem-solving skills within both theoretical and practical study.

**Personal Attributes:** Studio project work, tutorials, and exposure to study trip/external exhibition, but most fundamentally through Personal and Professional Development activity will allow students to develop as individuals. Through exposure to experiences that encourage personal interpretation and enquiry, students will be able to identify personal areas of strength and motivation. Students will reflect upon their performance and attitudes and working patterns in order to begin to become critical practitioners.

## **Stage 2 / SCQF level 8**

**Knowledge and understanding:** Studio project work, lecture, seminars, tutorials, critical debate/critique within the cohort, study trips/external exhibition and key directed readings will provide an introductory knowledge and awareness of key contextual themes, theories and concepts relating to professional, societal, environmental, technological and economic aspects of discipline-specific visual culture. These methods will enable students to demonstrate the production processes and strategies for creative practice and critical thinking within both written and studio projects. Students will become aware of the impact and relationship of their discipline of study on and to, the wider community of practice at a professional level through national and international exemplars. On-line forum discussion, written evaluation, written assignment and final project work will allow students to demonstrate their understanding of the contemporary subject context.

**Practical skills:** Studio project work, both discipline-specific technical workshops and the I.T. workshops will allow students to apply key specialist skills and processes in order to effectively generate, develop and communicate ideas in 2 and 3 dimensions using a range of using both analogue and digital technologies. The customisation of project work through thematic variation will allow for the development of personal visualisation strategies, research methodologies and technical strategies for the production of work.

**Intellectual Skills:** Studio project work, seminars, tutorials, on-line forums, studio and project critiques, study trip/external exhibition, and through workshop experience will allow students to demonstrate the ability to critically analyse project requirements, synthesise research information, and both develop and challenge ideas within their specialist discipline. Tutorials, critiques, seminars and on-line forums will provide a platform to develop critical abilities to synthesise theory and practice, encouraging individual enquiry and new project development through practical studio work and written/research enquiry.

**Key Employability, Enterprise and Transferable skills:** Studio project work, written assignments, seminars, studio critique, and workshop study will allow students to develop effective time management skills, study skills, writing skills including selective application of I.T., communication and presentation strategies, team-working skills, verbal presentation and discussion skills, and problem-solving skills within both theoretical and practical study. Live project work and greater opportunity to develop proposal led project work will develop subject specific professional skills, begin to foster some independent learning and setting of personal project goals.

Personal Attributes: Studio project work, tutorials, study trip/external exhibitions, and Personal and Professional Development activity will expose students to the breadth of discipline-specific study, and its relationship to professional, societal, environmental, technological and economic dimensions of practice; students will begin to develop their own areas of specialist interest and enquiry. Students will not only further the practice of self-evaluation, questioning and reflecting on their own practice, but also foster the attribute of questioning the wider context of professional practice within the discipline.

### **Stage 3 / SCQF level 9**

Students' knowledge and understanding will be developed through studio project work, lecture, seminars, tutorials, critical debate/critique within the cohort, study trips/external exhibition, and key directed readings. Application of knowledge, understanding and the inter-relationship of key contextual themes, theories and concepts relating to professional, societal, environmental, technological and economic aspects of discipline specific visual culture and the wider creative community, will be demonstrated through the production of written and practical project work. Students' independent research enquiry will respond selectively to these themes within the development of work for specific, professional contexts. Students will be conversant with the specialist professional demands of their discipline and will respond to this knowledge through self-directed development of specialist projects in preparation for Honours study.

Practical skills: Studio projects (including 'live' and team based projects), technical workshop and I.T. workshop study will allow students to determine how their subject specialist skills will be employed through directed and self directed project work, to generate, develop and communicate ideas in 2 and 3 dimensions using a selected range of analogue and digital technologies. Teaching and learning methods will encourage students to test personal visualisation and technical strategies for the production of work within professional contexts.

Intellectual Skills: Studio project work, seminars, tutorials, on-line forums, critiques, study trip/external exhibition, and technical experimentation within workshop will allow students to develop and demonstrate the ability to critically analyse complex project requirements, synthesise research information, question ideas and evaluate outcomes within directed and 'live' projects. The projects in studio and CCS will encourage students to demonstrate the intellectual capacity to propose self-directed, time-defined activity and identify appropriate research methodologies, development methods, production processes and evaluation strategies to critically resolve work for both written and practical work.

Key Employability, Enterprise and Transferable skills: Studio project work, written assignments, seminar, studio critique, study trips and placement, and workshop study will allow students to evidence effective time management skills, study skills, writing skills including selective application of I.T., communication and presentation strategies, team-working skills including collaboration and negotiation, verbal presentation and discussion skills, and problem-solving skills within both theoretical and practical studio study. Project will provide opportunity to produce work for competition, client, and exhibition applying their subject specific professional skills and generic transferable skills to a variety of novel situations demanding the synthesis and management of complex activities to resolve effective outcomes. Students will be placed in situations that will require the need for them to identify opportunities, exercise initiative, plan concurrent activities and use effective communication strategies to realise individual and group projects and to plan for future creative direction.

Personal Attributes: Studio project work, tutorials, and engagement in to study trip/external exhibition, and Personal and Professional Development activity will expose students to increased independent study and will demand students to contextualise the relationship to professional, societal, environmental, technological and economic dimensions of practice in relation to their own. Students will identify their own niche areas of subject specialist interest and enquiry and begin to promote these more widely. Students will not only further the practice of self-evaluation, but will start to develop their own voice and personal profile. The development of a more externally-facing, web profile will support and confirm individual creative direction and start to engender the capacity for self-efficacy.

### **Stage 4 / SCQF level 10**

Knowledge and understanding: Self-directed studio project work, seminars, tutorials, critical debate/critique within the cohort, and external exhibition will allow students to apply knowledge and understanding of the inter-relationship of key contextual themes, theories and concepts relating to the professional, societal, environmental, technological and economic aspects of their own area of specific practice within the wider creative community. Students' independent research enquiry will respond to self-initiated themes/concerns/problems for the development of written enquiry and practical work. Students will be conversant with the specialist professional demands of their own practice and will develop work situated for their identified audience/market context. A student's understanding of their specific practice context will be demonstrated through extended

research enquiry, a self-directed body of practical work for public exhibition, and the production of a professional portfolio for interview/publicity/promotion/presentation/pitch.

**Practical skills:** Studio projects, technical workshop and I.T. workshop study, will enable students to implement self-directed study. It will require the application of their subject specialist practical skills to effectively generate, develop and communicate ideas in 2 and 3 dimensions, to resolve work to a professional standard for public exhibition and external scrutiny by the wider creative community.

Students will evidence highly resolved personal strategies for the visualisation, technical production, and presentation of work within professional settings.

**Intellectual Skills:** Self directed studio project work, seminars, tutorials, studio critiques, external exhibition, and workshop experience will enable students to demonstrate their ability to initiate and design complex practical projects, co-ordinating and synthesising research information, development strategies and production methods, towards resolved, studio project outcomes. CCS tutorials, seminars and self-directed research enquiry will provide the stimulus to evidence the intellectual capacity to question multiple sources of information in order to develop niche areas of research interest, research questions and areas of argument.

**Key Employability, Enterprise and Transferable skills:** Self-directed studio project work, written assignments, seminars, studio critique, and workshop study, will demand effective time management practices through self-regulation and planning. Projects will be multi-faceted and will include writing skills, including selective application of I.T., communication and presentation strategies; team-working skills, including collaboration and negotiation; verbal presentation and discussion skills, and problem-solving skills within both theoretical and practical study. The public exhibition of work will require students to apply their specific, subject professional skills and generic, transferable skills, to a self-directed situation/project, demanding the synthesis and management of complex activities to resolve effective outcomes at a professional standard. A student's critical reflection on their professional activities will enable them to have a clear action plan for either further study or professional activities, post graduation.

**Personal Attributes:** Studio project work, tutorials, and engagement in external exhibition, and through Personal and Professional Development activity will engender independent study and the students' own contextualisation of their relationship to professional, societal, environmental, technological and economic dimensions of practice, they will situate their individual practice and enquiry in a position to promote and articulate their individual creative personality to potential employers/clients/audiences.

Students will be able to operate in a dynamic, creative environment, with the ability to be reflexive and responsive to new situations. The development of an externally-facing, web profile, will promote individual, creative practice, and forward career aspirations.

## ASSESSMENT

A variety of assessment methods are used in this course, as deemed appropriate to the subject material being delivered, and material produced as outcomes of that learning. Assessment is designed as an integral aspect of the learning process, and ensures that the student can demonstrate the knowledge, understanding, intellectual skills, and practical ability to work professionally and reflectively within creative environments.

At the beginning of each stage of study, students are provided with an assessment and feedback calendar for the academic year ahead. The assessment timetable is structured to ensure workload and deadline tensions are suitably managed. Students are informed how their assessment will be scheduled and the criteria made transparent in the context of coursework and grading structures.

All modules provide formative assessment opportunities prior to summative assessment. All students are required to reflect on their performance and be an active participant in a discussion concerning their forward direction. The Tutorial Review is the term used to describe formative assessment within the School. This occurs at the mid point of a semester. Summative Assessment feedback is provided at the end of the two semesters. This is clearly identified on the School's feedback calendar.

All modules will require students to review and evaluate their own performance against the assessment criteria at both formative and summative assessment points. The majority of modules throughout the duration of the course require the production of studio project work. At assessment, the students will submit a folio of coursework; it is through this body of work that we

appraise the evidence of the application of knowledge and understanding, application of practical skills, and the intellectual skills of analysis and synthesis through the management and resolution of practical studio work and the development of self-initiated proposals for work. This project work could be individual or developed through group work and presentation. If the latter, the module will employ an aspect of peer evaluation within the make-up of the assessable components within the module.

Written and verbal presentations could both be components of studio projects, and will be assessed as assessable components of modules alongside the practical project work. Written assignments will predominantly be used to assess theoretical and contextual understanding of wider, visual and discipline-specific, visual culture. These will range from referenced essays, dissertations, forum postings, statements, abstracts, critical articles, and creative writing. A student's intellectual and practical skills in using and structuring language and argument, could be assessed through both written and verbal formats.

A student's professional skills will be assessed through professional studies portfolios (specifically in Stages 3 and 4), where students will be required to respond to live project work, develop promotional material and manage external events in the promotion of work through exhibition. Students will also develop integrated visual and text presentations in the form of exhibition/show catalogues, web profiles, blogs, and statements of professional practice.

Assessment of professional skills within placement activities can occur both through a dedicated semester-long module and also through short, discrete placements/residencies/collaborative project work, within main modules. This enables the staff team to flexibly respond to professionally orientated opportunities that arise within the semester.

Assessment strategies will also recognise that the students will require greater support at the earlier stages of their course, but as the course develops, the support will focus more on students becoming autonomous within the assessment process, as a result of their abilities to effectively assess their own performance. In Stage 4, there will be an opportunity for students to define their specialist direction to support their individual strengths.

Practical project work in Stage 4 will require students to prepare a 'Proposal for Work' or 'Statement of Intent', that will outline the context, research strategies, production methods, and output formats, for their Honours exhibition/assessment. Staff will mentor students through this process and respond to a student's individual working patterns as a creative practitioner.

## SUPPORT FOR TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

The University provides a number of means of supporting teaching and learning:

- student induction organised on a course or School basis;
- an ongoing scheme of personal/pastoral support for students;
- an extensive programme of student study skills delivered through the *Library* and the *Study Skills and Access Unit*;
- an extensive library of learning resources;
- close collaboration with industry and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies;
- the University's active participation in the Scottish Funding Council's *Quality Enhancement Themes*, [www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/](http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/);
- support for staff from the *Department for the Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Access (DELTA)*, including credit rated teaching, learning and assessment provision;
- extensive opportunities for student placements with companies or organisations, academic overseas exchange programmes, and support for entrepreneurial activity;
- *CampusMoodle*, <http://campusmoodle.rgu.ac.uk/>, the University's dedicated virtual learning environment;
- a commitment to knowledge exchange and technology transfer through focused research activity, which contributes to the critical underpinning for all taught courses;
- the expanding provision of state-of-the-art, purpose-built facilities and buildings.

The 'Student Handbook' provides detail on the School, course, and working environment. It contains information regarding teaching and assessment, student support services, learning resources including the library and health & safety. It details key contact names and email addresses. The handbook will be located on MOODLE (Gray's MOODLE Zone), and will be organised into sections so that information is readily accessible.

All students are provided with an *academic tutor*. The academic tutor's role is to meet with their

tutees to discuss their progress and to feedback on formative and summative assessment. The academic tutor will change every year. The academic tutor will also respond to pastoral issues that are affecting academic progress and will direct their tutee to other suitable sources of support and guidance within the University if needed.

*Studio tutors* are responsible for the delivery of practical projects. This will encompass the delivery or facilitation of project briefings, lectures, seminars, critiques, and also individual discussion with students. In this respect, studio contact with students from a studio tutor can be 1 to 1, in a small group or with full cohort contact. A studio tutor may also be an academic tutor.

*CCS tutors* deliver the Contextual and Critical Studies modules within the School. Each CCS tutor is also a team member attached to a specific department and/or stage level, and supports the students within these areas. CCS tutors work with studio tutors in delivering content that contextualise studio practice and expands students' understanding of visual culture more broadly.

The physical studio environment is critical to the successful delivery of the course and ability of the student to complete work not only during contact times but also through self-directed and directed study beyond contact time. All students receive dedicated studio space to respond to project work. Access to these spaces is extended beyond the normal working day and into weekends.

Workshops are equally important for the support of students in the production of practical work. Workshops are technician-supported, providing induction, on-going supervision and assurance of health & safety within the workshop environment. Technician-supported workshops with full workshop capacity are open access and time-tabled during the working week.

Gray's School of Art has devised its own resource that sits within MOODLE; 'Gray's MOODLE Zone'. Resources include technical demonstration of workshop processes using video and written/visual materials, health & safety demonstrations linked to workshop inductions, on-line I.T. tutorials using screen capture and step-by-step guides, careers guidance and personal and professional development materials. It also includes videos of external and collaborative projects from across the School, student interviews from across the School, and external links to partners and associates of Gray's to enable students to appreciate cross-School activities. This resource base continues to grow and provides cross-School access for a vast range of support materials that enable students to develop additional skills to those of their subject discipline, thereby providing opportunity for creative differentiation of practice within each discipline area.

Study skills are integrated within the modules that students will take in Stage 1. Additional learning support is also provided for students with specific learning requirements; this is provided by the Study Skills and Access Unit. The School has a Disability Support Officer who liaises with Student Services and the Study Skills and Access Unit.

## MONITORING OF QUALITY AND STANDARDS

This course fully complies with the above procedures. The Course Team meets regularly to review any specific course issues, student feedback and module evaluation, External Examiners' reports and matters arising from Staff Student Liaison meetings. Feedback to Course leaders and Stage leaders from studio tutors and CCS tutors also helps to evaluate and improve ongoing course development. This activity is all formally monitored and managed within the School's management structure via the Design and Fine Art Programme Team Meetings and The School Academic Board.

Feedback from graduates and industrial partners (through the industrial liaison group) enables the Course Team, and the School, to ensure that the School's courses are meeting the requirements of the industry both locally and internationally.

## STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN QUALITY

### Knowledge and Understanding

Students will be able to show confident familiarity with the defining concepts of their specialist study, understanding the inter-relationships of key contextual and cultural themes, theories and concepts relating to their own professional practice as situated within broader societal, environmental, technological and economic aspects of study. Working complementary to this, students will be able to demonstrate their own specific contextual and critical framework in

connection with independent study and specialist practice. Underpinning these abilities, students will have detailed knowledge of specialist technologies, processes and materials in connection with practice and production of work.

#### Practical Skills

Students will be able to undertake a sustained period of independent specialist practice resulting in the production of a body of work at a level approaching professional practice; this will demonstrate conceptual and imaginative use of relevant materials, processes and technologies in the resolution of self-generated ideas. Students will have the ability to situate and communicate their practice effectively within their professional context and have the skills to professionally present work through different media formats to challenging internal and external audiences including public exhibition and live client contexts.

Underpinning practice based work, students will have the complementary skills to communicate complex ideas, theoretical issues and professionally orientated issues through effective written and verbal formats for delivery to a variety of audiences.

#### Intellectual Skills

Students will have the ability to research and synthesise information from a diverse range of sources, and establish coherent ideas and strategies in order to define and analyse proposals for independent proposal-led study. A fundamental attribute is that students will have the ability to critically evaluate the progression of work at the level of professional practice; students will be able to confidently apply their own criteria to support independent judgement in an autonomous manner.

#### Key Employability, Enterprise and Transferable Skills

Students will be able to engage effectively in communication in a variety of independent roles in a professional manner; give confident oral, written and visual presentations in a specific range of contexts including work at the threshold of professional practice. Allied to this will be the ability to interact effectively within learning or professional groups; demonstrate negotiating, leadership and group support skills; interact effectively with peer groups and staff; participate in external situations and apply these skills to support their independent practice.

Students will also be able to apply a range of numerical skills as appropriate to specialist practice and specific independent study and demonstrate fluency and a specific personal use in the employment of IT, information retrieval, word processing, and the integration of text and image within independent study.

With minimal guidance, students will be able to manage their own learning using a wide range of resources appropriate to specialist independent study, seeking out and making effective use of feedback. Fundamental to students' graduate status they will have the ability to critically reflect and evaluate progress, for creative and career direction in readiness for activities post graduation.

## FEEDBACK FROM STUDENTS

In addition to University provisions, students will have regular direct access to academic and studio tutors who administer learning and assessment at module level, ensure follow up, and provide timely feedback through Campus Moodle. Access is also available to the Course Leader who administers the course and has overall responsibility for the learning experience of all candidates.

Student Staff Liaison meetings are regularly scheduled throughout the academic calendar. Dates and times of these meetings are indicated on the Virtual Campus calendar and both students and staff are reminded via e-mail of the event in advance.

## DATE OF PRODUCTION / REVISION

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## NOTE

This document constitutes one of two course documents that should be read together:

**Course Specification: Core Award Data**

**Course Specification: Student Learning Experience**

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In compiling this information the University has taken every care to be as accurate as possible, though it must be read as subject to change at any time and without notice. The University reserves the right to make variations to the contents or methods of delivery of courses, to discontinue, merge or combine courses, and to introduce new courses.

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