University of Plymouth

Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Business

School of Art, Design and Architecture

Programme Specification

BA (Hons) Illustration

Definitive Document Approved: 4/12/14

Date of Implementation: Sep 2015
Amended by Minor Change: 17/11/17, 19/12/18 & 4/12/19
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Final award title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>UCAS code</td>
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<td></td>
<td>JACS code</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Awarding Institution</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Accrediting body</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Distinctive Features of the Programme and the Student Experience</td>
<td>3 - 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Group(s)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Programme Structure</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Programme Aims</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Programme Intended Learning Outcomes</td>
<td>15 - 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Admissions Criteria, including APCL, APEL and DAS arrangements</td>
<td>17 - 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Progression criteria for Final and Intermediate Awards</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Exceptions to Regulations</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Transitional Arrangements</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Mapping and Appendices</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. BA (Hons) Illustration

Final award title:
BA (Hons) Illustration
BA (Hons) Illustration: Animation & the Screen
BA (Hons) Illustration: Children’s Markets
BA (Hons) Illustration: Comics & Visual Narratives
BA (Hons) Illustration: Printmaking

UCAS code     W222
JACS code     W220

2. Awarding Institution: University of Plymouth
   Teaching institution(s): University of Plymouth

3. Accrediting body(ies) n/a
4. Distinctive Features of the Programme and the Student Experience

Emphasis is placed on studio based learning activity and students are encouraged to contribute to the development of a stimulating communal educational environment complemented by well resourced workshops.

Drawing is a fundamental activity within the course, which combined with conceptual and contextual enquiry, design processes, traditional technologies and practices, supports, compliments and enhances explorations within newer digital developments and emerging markets and technologies.

The cultivation of individual visual voices is sought beyond any homogenised style.

Theoretical, critical, historical and contextual elements of illustrative practice are either integrated into practical projects, or are delivered through discrete, but complementary modules, which provide additional opportunities for the development of generic skills.

Field study trips and locational work locally, nationally and abroad are integral, important aspects of this programme. These are tied in with Illustration specific external events and exhibitions such as the Bologna Children’s Book Fair, Italy | Pictoplasma Character Design and Animation, Berlin | House of Illustration, London.

Staff research interests, outputs and professional practice at national and international levels inform and enrich the delivery of the curriculum.

Regular visiting practitioners and speakers offer a diversity of viewpoints and opinion enabling students to enter further into current debates within Illustrative practice.

This is supplemented by a highly skilled team of technicians who deliver specific practical workshops in printmaking, letterpress, book binding, photography, ceramics, textiles, wood and metal as well as digital software.

The library is open for 24/7, 365 days per year and offers a vast range of resources in the form of both online and printed publications such as books and journals as well as digital resources such a moving image databases.

The library offers specialist subject support including study skills guidance.
Digital resources include ARTstor / Imagers (sight and Sound) / Box of Broadcasts / Up media / Media Hub which can be accessed online.

In gaining practical knowledge and understanding of the resources the students are thus taught many key transferable and subject specific skills.

**Level 4**
The fundamental elements of image creation are explored as students are introduced to the main building blocks of the course: character, drawing, printmaking, conceptual thinking and problem solving, picture making and narrative sequences. Students are encouraged to take risks and become experiential learners whilst challenge their preconceptions and established habits whilst developing confidence with unfamiliar approaches, media and writing and communication skills.

The integration of theory and practice is cultivated throughout the three years.

End of year shows are timetabled for each stage to celebrate the work created.

**Level 5**
Students start to identify a framework for and begin to experiment more fully within their own practice and areas of interest. The strand options are introduced via a thematic brief allowing students to select from a range of outcomes and formats and so acquire primary and secondary experience of the implications of working for various formats and audiences.

Work-based learning may be undertaken.

Group activity is a feature within modules.

There is the opportunity to study abroad in Semester One in Japan or in Semester Two at various institutions via both the Socrates Exchange Scheme and the International Student Exchange Programme.
All Level 5 modules are optional although only either one of the exchange modules can be selected. This is to ensure that students experience enough of the course for successful entry into Level 6.

Work based learning and participation in local, national and international live briefs and competitions is encouraged and can be negotiated as part of the project work throughout Levels 5 and 6.

**Level 6**

Intellectual maturity, curiosity, personal innovation, independent enquiry and effective management and planning skills are expected criteria at this level. Students’ own theoretical enquiry compliments and informs their studio practice. Students normally produce a written dissertation, ILLUS630 (20 credits) or they can utilise a presentation format along with their written work, ILLUS631 (20 credits) or otherwise opt for ILLUS362 ‘Practice, Research & Analysis’ a more practical based alternative to either ILLUS630 or ILLUS631 or they may expand their writing by opting for ILLUS363 ‘The Extended Dissertation’ (40 credits).

ILLUS600 is designed to help students reflect upon their ambitions for the year ahead and for postgraduate opportunities. At the assessment point for this module students may confirm their desire to follow a specific exit award strand subject to the criteria laid out in the Stand section below.

Professional practice elements such as lectures, seminars, visits from Illustration agents and project outputs seek to ensure that students are informed and prepared for their proposed further career, whether as freelance illustrators or in the broader art and design worlds, education or further postgraduate study.

A graduation show and a London show (as applicable) are organised to showcase students’ work and assist in employment opportunities.

**The Strands**

Student strand choice is supported by the following activities:
• Level 4 overview and Level 5 individual strand presentations by the stand leaders
• Review of outputs at the end of ILLUS50 and ILLUS510
• Further review at the end of ILLUS60
• One-on-one advice from personal tutors, year tutors and strand leaders
• Visiting practitioners discussing their practice informs students of the type of directions available

In Level 4 the range of Illustration practice is discussed and at the end of the academic year the strands are outlined in more detail.

Level 5 ILLUS500 is a thematic module, which asks students to select a particular format or context for their negotiated brief. This enables students to directly experience the demands of a particular strand whilst gaining an understanding of the other strands and the core award route. ILLUS510 offers another opportunity to select a strand outcome – either following the same route as ILLUS500 or choosing a different strand or the core award route.

The final declaration of choice of exit award study route is made at the summative assessment of ILLUS600.

The decision to select a particular strand rests with the student after complying with all of the following criteria:

1) Work produced at Level 5 in either ILLUS500 and / or ILLUS510 is within the parameters of the chosen strand.

2) Final work produced for ILLUS600 must clearly demonstrate an ability to operate within the parameters of the chosen strand

3) The student will have had a tutorial with the relevant strand leader as well as the Programme Leader with the outcome that all three parties are confident that the student has made the correct choice and that an agreement has been signed by all.

Students progressing from partner institutions directly into Level 6 must comply with criteria 2 and 3 above, plus evidence a portfolio of work, which clearly demonstrates an ability to operate within the parameters of a particular strand.
These are supplemented by the standard University processes for transfer between modules, pathways and degree programmes.

**BA Hons Illustration: Animation & the Screen**
will attract students who are fascinated by the worlds of animation, games and production design for live action films and want to approach it from an illustrative point of view. Key elements would be character design | concept and production design | storyboards | animatics | drawn, 3D and digital moving image as well as the study of animation history and contexts.

**BA Hons Illustration: Children’s Market's**
incorporates all forms of communication aimed at under 16 years old. It is not restricted to picture book publishing and seeks to be innovative within this exciting visual arena. Narrative sequence and character design feature as well as the history and theories of communicating visually with a child audience.

**BA Hons Illustration: Comics & Visual Narratives**
seeks to capitalise upon the growing interest in and respect for the comics medium within the UK and worldwide, at both self-publishing, authorial and mainstream levels. Whilst not ignoring certain tightly defined mainstream genres such as Manga, students would be encouraged to push at the boundaries of comic narratives and the genre itself. Theory, narrative panelled structures and the historical context of comics will be studied.

**BA Hons Illustration: Printmaking**
Students will be those not only attracted to the hand crafted traditional techniques and who wish to extend and deepen their knowledge of the processes, but also those who wish to question and explore the notion and use of printmaking within a digital world from an illustrative perspective. Theoretical study will underpin practical application of the medium.

**Assessment**
Assessment is both formative and summative.
Assessment is presented as an integral part of teaching and learning, in which
students are expected to play a central part through a process of self evaluation and dialogue. Students are invited to do this by responding to a number of agreed and published criteria as well as reflecting more broadly on the learning experience. The Grading Criteria Matrices employed ensures transparency, in that the evaluation of any aspect of performance can be tracked by both student and assessing tutors it also identifies the nature and levels of performance that may be achieved.

Learning Outcomes having been achieved, students are graded by the quality and way they have responded to the challenges presented, or (in negotiated or self directed study) they have identified and negotiated themselves.

A number of assessment formats are used. These range from the simple submission of finished work (supported by back up material, together with students’ own evaluation of the learning achieved) to an interview with a presentation or display of work; extending further to the submission of a structured written report or audio visual presentations and visual research journal submission through to more formal essay writing.

Modules that provide team learning may be assessed by team result, but the assessors reserve the option to respond to an individual’s particular performance if this is more appropriate.

All modules that contribute to the award classification (Levels 5 and 6) are subject to double marking.

All modules at all levels are subject to the scrutiny of the programme external examiner.

To pass each module students must achieve the Learning Outcomes that are defined on the module record. It is the quality of how this is achieved (the assessed skills) that is being evaluated when assessed. The Assessed Learning Outcomes are contained on the briefing papers, on the Personal Assessment Profile and on the Definitive Module Record.
Feedback processes
Student feedback is provided in a number of ways:

- Through a combination of verbal dialogue and written form in tutorials, seminars, critiques and formative assessments during modules
- In written form, via the Personal Assessment Profile
- Through module, term and year review meetings during or at the end of learning periods

Each student is required to make notes during tutorials on a given pro-forma which asks for the identification of 3 action points. These forms are signed by the tutor as an accurate record of the discussion. The collated set of notes provides each student with the narrative of and the responsibility for their learning. These sets are then submitted at summative assessment points to evidence individual involvement in the teaching events.

A ‘Buddy note’ taking system is in place, which deeply involves students in each other’s critique of work and provides ‘instant’ recorded feedback, enabling each student to reflect upon the points covered. This also helps students gain a greater self-awareness of how their own work is perceived.

Every module undertaken is assessed and students are asked to evaluate their own performance each time. Self evaluation is an important, continuous process of professional practice and is part of the learning experience. The procedure is designed to encourage students to adopt responsibility for their own learning.

Towards the end of each module students are given the appropriate Personal Assessment Profile. Students reflect on a number of performance criteria as outlined on the profiles and explained on the appropriate Grading Criteria Matrix, in addition to providing a commentary on learning in the module.

When students have responded to the questions on the profile it is sent to the module tutor who along with the assessing tutors comment on performance and the work produced, taking into account student observations and using the same performance criteria of assessment. The module tutor will register a grade or mark (depending upon level of study) on the form and submit the same to Markbook. The completed profile is then returned to the student as a record of progress.
Students are also invited to provide the Module Leader with feedback on their experience of the module during timetabled reviews.

An Advisory Tutor System is in place. Each student is allocated a member of the core teaching team, who is allocated tariff hours to facilitate the pastoral support of their students.

Records of meetings and student progress (PAP) forms are kept in the course office in confidential, individual files and are openly available to the student upon request.

**Preparation for Employment and Personal Development**

Emphasis is placed upon careers and PDP in several ways:

Students are asked to fill in questionnaires to help identify their aims and aspirations at various points:

1) before arriving at interview
2) during Induction Week
3) at the beginning of each new academic year

PAP forms (Personal Assessment Profiles) are completed at the end of every module by every student and have space for them to reflect upon their learning achieved and to propose plans for future development. These forms and the questionnaires, are retained by students for their own records and copies are kept in personal tutorial files for reference by the teaching team.

Communities of learning and collaborative group work are features of the programme enhancing peer-to-peer learning experiences.

Small group work reviews, where students present their work verbally and visually help to foster confidence in presentation skills.

Students keep updated professional portfolios as a record of current achievement and development.

Specific practical and software skills are attained via studio projects and workshop introductions. Students are given opportunities to train and become adept with the software necessary to gain entry level design work in the professional marketplace as a starting point to underpin their future careers.

Students have the opportunity in Level 5 to study overseas part of the Socrates Exchange Scheme or with the direct link with Hokkaido College of Art & Design,
Japan. Students who have taken part report a greater self-confidence and sense of direction as a direct result.

Field study trips overseas and nationally, extend learning, broaden experience and help to raise self-confidence.

Level 5 and 6 students have opportunities to tailor their studies to individual career ambitions.

Level 5 and 6 students are able by negotiation, to tailor their studies to incorporate work-based learning opportunities as they arise.

The programme regularly disseminates information on live briefs and competitions – some suitable for extra-curricular activities and others for inclusion within module outputs. The current programme has a proven track record of success at national and international levels.

End of year shows for Levels 4, 5 and 6 underline and celebrate achievement and help students in the selection and editing of their work.

Programme publicity and internal University links, such as the collaboration with Short Fiction publication, Widening Participation workshops and events such as the Jill Craigie Cinema public screenings give students opportunities to compete to showcase their work and extend their experiences and skills.

Opportunities exist to participate in national events such as the Bristol Art Book Event as organiser, exhibitor and vendor.

Professional Practice talks and workshops on subjects such as book keeping, copyright and networking, along with visits from visiting practitioners and agents give students insight into the professional world. Invited alumni give talks about further study at M level and / or professional life post-graduation.

Students in Level 6 may opt for ILLUS640 which requires a substantial reflective and practical report of their chosen areas of desired employment or further study as well as requiring the design and production of promotional materials. This enables students to be fully prepared for the market place upon graduating. Students not taking this module would be opting for the extended dissertation (ILLUS633) option in conjunction with ILLUS621, which contains elements of professional practice.
Level 6 students are given the opportunity to take part in key London Graduate showcases, such as D&AD New Blood in Shoreditch, making their work accessible to hundreds of potential clients and employers.

Students can access the University employability services such as CV writing services during their studies and for up to three years post-graduation.

5. **Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Group(s)**

The programme operates within the guidelines for Art and Design.

The programme has also been developed with reference to the SEEC Credit Level Descriptors for Higher Education.
6. Programme Structure

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Easter 36, 37, 38
3 weeks

Degree show
7. **Programme Aims**

The programme is intended to:

7.1 provide supportive communities of learning environments within which a range of appropriate teaching and learning strategies deliver an intellectually and creatively challenging programme of study, enabling students to develop confidence in their abilities and own practice, underpinned by coherent research and practical methodologies.

7.2 develop the use of drawing in its broadest senses as a tool of perception, understanding and interpretation of a student’s own worldview and to aid in the development of a personal visual language.

7.3 ensure its relevance by drawing upon research, scholarship and creative and professional practice to provide an academic framework that stimulates debate and cultivates and nurtures individual enquiry and expression as a goal in itself, encouraging innovation and the questioning of received habits, codes and conventions of thought, production and signification, enabling students to see risk taking and any subsequent failure encountered as positive learning opportunities in the development of a creative practitioner.

7.4 promote an informed awareness of the cultural, social, historical and contemporary contexts and influences upon illustrative practice and allied art and design fields and of the creative links between these and in turn informing students of the breadth of potential markets in both traditional and emerging formats and to appreciate their contribution to contemporary culture.

7.5 develop a range of conceptual, practical and technical abilities, both analogue and digital, for continuing practice in chosen areas of illustration expertise, thus equipping students to perform competently and confidently with the understanding and knowledge of the skills to communicate effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences and to be successfully entrepreneurial.
7.6 develop key (transferable) and practical skills to support and complement illustration specific skills and hence prepare students for personal development, further study, professional practice and employability in a wide range of careers.

7.7 widen access and offer opportunities for the study of illustration from A level, 14-19 Diplomas, Foundation and Access to BA level and to facilitate progression to MA, MPhil or PhD.

8. Programme Intended Learning Outcomes

8.1. Knowledge and understanding

On successful completion graduates should have developed:

1) a broad awareness of the critical, contextual and socio-cultural dimensions of their area of practice and have the ability to make creative links.

2) the appropriate methods, technologies and materials with which to respond to the changing and interdisciplinary nature of contemporary culture, through the production of artefacts and the written word.

3) an understanding of the positions and roles of the artist / designer in society today along with an understanding of the ethical, social and cultural consequences of creative practice.

8.2. Cognitive and intellectual skills

On successful completion graduates should have developed:

1) the ability to form views and generate ideas, creative solutions and alternatives to effectively visually communicate solutions evolved in response to briefs and problems.
2) the ability to synthesise, interpret and evaluate information from a number of sources to gain a coherent understanding of theory and practice.

3) the ability to question, research, explore and respond to ideas, processes, materials and other stimuli with the confidence to take risks and other speculative actions and to make constructive use of failure and recognise these as integral aspects of the creative process.

8.3. Key and transferable skills

On successful completion graduates should have developed the ability to:

1) evaluate their own abilities, skills, achievements and understanding in order to organise and manage an effective pattern of work either independently or in collaboration with others.

2) learn within a variety of contexts and to use digital technologies as a communication and research tool through the internet, archives and libraries.

3) demonstrate effective communications through various forms of written work, reports, essays, dissertations, oral and visual presentations.

8.4. Employment related skills

On successful completion graduates should have developed:

1) the confidence and ability to liaise effectively and within professional codes of practice with external agencies.

2) the ability to demonstrate independent thinking to take on responsibility, respond to briefs and subsequently plan, time manage and organise projects.
3) knowledge of a range of technologies within both traditional and digital processes with which to respond to briefs.

8.5. Practical skills

On successful completion graduates should have developed:

1) a practical body of work, which shows an understanding of the levels of professional practice, required within as applicable, authorial and/or commercial fields.

2) the necessary skills to present work to an audience/client in a coherent and professional manner.

3) a range of practical skills, which utilise processes and equipment in an effective and creative manner, in accordance with good professional practice and able to be applied to a variety of situations and contexts.

9. Admissions Criteria, including APCL, APEL and DAS arrangements

All applicants must have GCSE (or equivalent) Maths and English at Grade C or above.

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<th>Entry Requirements for BA Hons Illustration</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A-level/AS-level</strong></td>
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<td>Candidates apply via UCAS and either submit a digital portfolio with Skype interview or bring a portfolio to interview in person. Conditional offers are made on points and portfolio. Normal entry requirements are between 96 – 144 UCAS points consisting of at least two A levels with 112 UCAS points the norm. All subjects except General Studies considered. Key skills are not included in the points calculation.</td>
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<td>As above A-level/AS-level, plus Pass access with 33 Credits at Merit/or Distinction</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Welsh Baccalaureate</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As above to include 120 from the WB Core</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Qualifications Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irish Leaving Certificate</td>
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<tr>
<td>International Baccalaureate</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

FdA courses within UPC with a Progression Accord: entry to Level 6 is on provision of gaining a pass level for the FdA.

**APCL, APEL, DAS**

The programme follows the University policy on APL. We welcome applications from prospective students from a variety of backgrounds and career paths and with a range of needs. After assessment by DSA the appropriate support is put in place to enable each student to work to their highest level.

10. **Progression criteria for Final and Intermediate Awards**

- Certificate of Higher Education, 120 credits at Level 4 or above
- Diploma of Higher Education, 240 credits, of which at least 120 are at Level 5 or above
- Ordinary Degree, 320 credits of which 80 are at Level 6 and a further 120 at Level 5 or above

11. **Exceptions to Regulations**

All Level 4 modules are pass / fail and do not contribute to the final award classification

All Level 4 modules are non-compensatable as they are pass / fail.

Compensation is limited to 20 credits in Levels 5 and 6.

The dissertation modules, ILLUS630, ILUS631 and ILLUS632 are exceptions to this regulation.
12. Transitional Arrangements
   n/a

13. Mapping and Appendices:
   13.1. PILO’s against Modules Mapping
         See appendices
   13.2. Assessment against Modules Mapping
         See appendices
   13.3. Skills against Modules Mapping
         See appendices
   13.4. QAA Benchmarks
         See appendices
13 APPENDIX 4

QAA Subject Benchmark Statements
Art and Design 2008

13.4.1 Subject knowledge and understanding, attributes and skills:
typical standard of achievement

The principal aim of undergraduate education in art and design is to facilitate acquisition of appropriate knowledge and understanding, development of the necessary personal attributes, and application of the essential skills, which will equip and prepare students for continuing personal development and professional practice.

The emphasis given to the following learning outcomes will vary according to the main discipline(s) studied and the aims of the specific programme, while individual levels of achievement will be reflected in the classification of the award. At the typical level of achievement, students graduating with an honours degree in art and design should be able to:

a) articulate and synthesise their knowledge and understanding, attributes and skills in effective ways in the contexts of creative practice, employment, further study, research and self-fulfillment

b) apply, consolidate and extend their learning in different contextual frameworks and situations, both within and beyond the field of art and design.

13.4.2 Subject-specific knowledge and understanding, attributes and skills

These are considered to be fundamental to the study and practice of the student's chosen discipline(s). Many are also potentially transferable to other contexts.

At the typical level of achievement, these will be evidenced in a body of work, which demonstrates the graduate's ability to:

a) generate ideas, concepts, proposals, solutions or arguments independently and/or collaboratively in response to set briefs and/or as self-initiated activity
b) employ both convergent and divergent thinking in the processes of observation,
c) investigation, speculative enquiry, visualisation and/or making
d) select, test and make appropriate use of materials, processes and environments
e) develop ideas through to outcomes, for example images, artifacts, environments, products, systems and processes, or texts
f) manage and make appropriate use of the interaction between intention, process, outcome, context, and the methods of dissemination
g) be resourceful and entrepreneurial

13.4.3 Graduates in art and design will have developed skills in communication and expression through visual and plastic forms and, typically, will be able to use visual languages to investigate, analyse, interpret, develop and articulate ideas and information. Their work will be informed by and will inform professional practice in their discipline(s), including:
a) the critical, contextual, historical, conceptual and ethical dimensions of the student’s discipline in particular, and art and design in general
b) the artist’s or designer’s relationship with audiences, clients, markets, users, consumers, participants, co-workers and co-creators
c) the implications and potential for their discipline(s) presented by the key developments in current and emerging media and technologies, and in interdisciplinary approaches to contemporary practice in art and design.

13.4.4 An honours degree in an art and design discipline also confirms that the holder has acquired relevant technical knowledge and practical skills, and will be able to employ materials, media, techniques, methods, technologies and tools associated with the discipline(s) studied with skill and imagination while observing good working practices and professional/legal responsibilities relating to the subject.

13.4.5 Generic knowledge and understanding, attributes and skills
These are normally integrated into the subject curriculum but are neither specific nor unique to art and design. They have applications in a wide range of contexts.
Typically, holders of an honours degree in an art and design discipline(s) will have demonstrated the following:

**Self-management** - students will have the ability to:

a) study independently, set goals, manage their own workloads and meet deadlines
b) anticipate and accommodate change, and work within contexts of ambiguity, uncertainty and unfamiliarity.

**Critical engagement** - students will have the ability to:

c) analyse information and experiences, formulate independent judgments and articulate reasoned arguments through reflection, review and evaluation
d) source and research relevant material, assimilating and articulating relevant findings
e) formulate reasoned responses to the critical judgments of others
f) identify personal strengths and needs, and reflect on personal development.

**Group/team working and social skills** - students will have the ability to
g) interact effectively with others, for example through collaboration, collective endeavour and negotiation.

**Skills in communication and presentation** - students will be able to:

h) articulate ideas and information comprehensibly in visual, oral and written forms
i) present ideas and work to audiences in a range of situations
j) use the views of others in the development or enhancement of their work.

**Information skills** - students will have the ability to:

k) source, navigate, select, retrieve, evaluate, manipulate and manage information from a variety of sources
l) select and employ communication and information technologies.

**Personal qualities** - students will have:

m) an enthusiasm for enquiry into their discipline and the motivation to sustain it.