



Xiamen University
The University for the Creative Arts (UK)

厦 门 大 学
英 国 创 意 艺 术 大 学

PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT

Module Handbook

Academic Session 2024-25

BA (Hons) Digital Media Arts

Institute of Creativity and Innovation

Xiamen University & The University for the Creative Arts



Professional Context

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Unit code: XDMA6003
Level: 6 (Year 4)
Location: ICI, XMU, Xiamen
Academic Year: 2024-2025

Duration: 10 weeks
Credit Value: 20 credits
Total learning hours: 200 hours

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1 UNIT DESCRIPTION

This unit is designed to prepare you for work or further study on graduation. You'll do this through further refinement of your aspirations in reference to your skills and interests within digital media arts. You'll produce a portfolio of work, develop connections to the digital media arts industry and develop strategies to get your work seen by others.

We want you successfully to transition from this course to work or further study either in digital media arts or related industries.

You will target studios and individuals who work within your chosen area of expertise. You will develop promotional materials and develop an online presence which will enable you to interact with industry professionals. You will develop a strategy to secure internships and/or other formal engagement with industry.

2 UNIT AIMS

The aims of this unit are:

- A1:** Further develop an understanding of specialist digital media arts practice and career aspirations and opportunities.
- A2:** Encourage primary and secondary research into current digital media arts practice.
- A3:** Develop your portfolio with the explicit purpose of securing work on graduation.
- A4:** Develop self-promotion strategies and to communicate with industry.

3 LEARNING OUTCOMES

On satisfactory completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- LO1:** Demonstrate thorough research, detailed analysis and focused application of your research into the digital media arts field through which you specify your career aspirations.

LO2: Describe your targeted role within the digital media arts field (including adjacent and complimentary roles) designing material with the intention of securing work or further study within this area.

LO3: Communicate professionally with your peers and an external audience.

4 INDICATIVE TEACHING & LEARNING METHODS

The distribution of teaching hours and self-study hours for the unit are as follows:

No. of hours of scheduled activity – Taught	90
No. of hours of scheduled activity – Supported self-directed study	44
No. of hours of self-directed study	66

Regarding the unit's learning methods, timetabled delivery will include:

- Lectures
- Seminars
- Tutorials
- Project supervision
- Demonstration
- Practical classes and workshops
- Supervised time in studios
- Guided independent study

5 UNIT CONTEXT AND KEY THEMES

In the Professional Context unit, we focus on preparing you for the transition from academic study to professional practice, with a strong emphasis on curation and exhibition management as key components of your final major exhibition. This unit is designed to complement your technical skills development (as seen in the Professional Toolkit unit) by

integrating professional practice, self-promotion, and industry engagement into your creative workflow.

The unit is structured around the following key themes:

1. Curation and Exhibition Design

You will explore advanced curatorial strategies that focus on selecting, organizing, and presenting digital media artworks in a way that resonates with diverse audiences. These strategies emphasize thoughtful consideration of spatial design, audience interaction, and the cultural context of your work, ensuring that your final exhibition is both impactful and professionally executed through careful planning and presentation.

2. Professional Practice and Industry Engagement:

This unit will guide you to developing a professional presence both online and in person by using strategies like self-promotion, digital marketing, and networking. You'll learn how to talk to industry professionals and get internships, grants, residencies, and competition spots while keeping your artistic goals clear.

3. Portfolio Development and Documentation

A key focus will be on refining your portfolio to showcase your technical and conceptual skills through a curated narrative tailored to your target audience, while you also document your creative process, curatorial decisions, and exhibition planning in a digital research journal, demonstrating your readiness for professional opportunities.

4. Exhibition Management

Practical skills in managing exhibition logistics such as budgeting, project planning, and resource allocation are developed to ensure you can execute exhibitions of professional standard. Simultaneously, you will learn how to balance creative vision with practical constraints, preparing you for real-world challenges in the Digital Media Arts industry.

5. Reflection and Self-Development

You will adapt to the evolving demands of digital media arts and achieve long-term success through reflection on progress, evaluation of skills, and strategic planning for



ongoing self-development in response to industry trends and technological advancements.

By integrating these themes, the Professional Context unit ensures that you are not only technically proficient but also professionally prepared to navigate the digital media arts industry and present your work effectively in your final major exhibition.

6 ASSESSMENTS

6.1 ASSESSMENTS OVERVIEW

The unit “Professional Context” is 100% coursework.

There is one summative assessment which will be accomplished and submitted at the end of the semester of the unit.

There will be two assessable tasks across this unit that will be distributed as follows:

- A portfolio of technical and conceptual outcomes produced using analogue and digital processes including promotional materials and an online presence.
- A Digital research journal documenting your process and including your research, annotated notes, and self-reflection.

For your portfolios, assessors will look for evidence of Learning Outcomes LO1 and LO2.

For your online research journal, assessors will look for evidence of Learning Outcomes LO1 and LO3.

6.2 SUBMISSION DETAILS

For the Assessment you will submit:

Assessment task	Submission location	Submission date
A portfolio of technical and conceptual outcomes produced using analogue and digital processes including promotional materials and an online presence.	myUCA	28th of April, 3 PM.
A digital research journal documenting your process and including your research, annotated notes, and self-reflection.	myUCA	28th of April, 3 PM.

6.3 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Assessors will look for evidence of the following:

Technical and conceptual quality of portfolio outcomes, including curated promotional materials and online presence.	LO1, LO2
Depth of research, analysis, and application of digital media arts practice.	LO1
Professional communication strategies (e.g., promotional materials, online presence), demonstrating curatorial decisions for audience engagement.	LO3
Critical reflection and documentation of process in the research journal, including evaluation of curatorial approaches.	LO1, LO3

Assessors will use the following adjectives to describe the level of ability demonstrated in a submission:

90-100	Exceptional	50-59	Satisfactory
80-89	Excellent	40-49	Competent
70-79	Very good	30-39	Low
60-69	Good	0-29	Limited

For example, using this unit's assessment criteria, feedback from assessors could look like this:

Assessment criterion:	Feedback:	Criterion mark:	Overall mark:
Quality of online portfolio and its ability to demonstrate creative outcomes.	This submission demonstrates a strong ability to...	63	67
Ability to research industry trends and link them to career aspirations.	This submission demonstrates a strong ability to...	65	
Ability to communicate effectively online and curate work for a professional audience.	This submission demonstrates a strong ability to...	70	
Depth of your critical analysis and reflection on your creative processes.	This submission demonstrates a strong ability to...	68	

7 TIMETABLE

Full Timetable can be found on MyUCA.

5 READING LISTS AND REFERENCE MATERIAL

Follow the myReadingList link on this unit's myUCA page for links to online resources and e-books.

Bright, Jim. (2015). How to write a brilliant CV. (5th ed.) Harlow: Pearson.



Lawler, Brian P. (2009). Official Adobe Print Publishing Guide: The Essential Resource for Design, Production, and Prepress, Berkeley: Adobe.

Landa, Robin. (2002). Thinking Creatively: New Ways to Unlock Your Visual Imagination. Cincinnati, Ohio: North Light.

Wilson, Jerry S. and Blumenthal, Ira. (2008) Managing Brand You: 7 Steps to Creating Your Most Successful Self, New York: Amacom.

Klaus, Peggy. (2004). Brag!: The Art of Tooting Your Own Horn Without Blowing It, London: Warner Books Inc.

9 KEY CONTACTS AND STUDENT SERVICES

Your Year Leader remains your main point of contact. However, if you have specific needs or concerns, please connect directly with one of the teams below:

Student status, deadline extensions ('mitigating circumstances'), and general paperwork support:

Sue Burton and Vicky Howlett are our **Course Administrators**, based in Campus Registry. If you need to submit a 'mitigating circumstances' claim (the procedure that grants deadline extensions), you'll need to complete the form available [here](#) and submit it to our Course Administrators. Course Administrators can help with paperwork relating to student status, and are responsible for the release of marks.

Email Sue Burton and Vicky Howlett at fineart&photography@uca.ac.uk.

Research support:

Petra Killoran is our course's **Liaison Librarian**. Petra is available for small group or one-to-one tutorials to support you with research strategies, using the academic databases, finding and evaluating resources, and Harvard referencing.

Email Petra Killoran at petra.killoran@uca.ac.uk or use the tutorial booking system here: <https://ucreative.libguides.com/tutorials>.

Writing and planning support:

Liz Scopes and Ellen Brown are our **Learning Development Tutors**, available for small group or one-to-one tutorials to help you with any aspect of your academic work, including: understanding briefs and unit documents, time-management, organisational skills, presentations, planning, research journals, reading strategies, note-taking, essay planning, academic writing, help with vocabulary, etc.

Email Liz Scopes at escopes@uca.ac.uk or Ellen Brown at ebrown4@uca.ac.uk.

Disabilities and dyslexia support:

Karole Amooty is our **Learning Support Manager** with whom you can discuss your disability and special learning needs. Karole can coordinate diagnostic screenings and learning support (from supplying equipment to scheduling a learning support adviser or trained dyslexia tutor to work with you).

Email Karole Amooty at kamooty2@uca.ac.uk.

Computer support and resetting passwords:

The **Information Technology support team** are based on the first floor of the library and provide support for the University's computing facilities, and assistance with software, printing, photocopying, and trouble logging-on.

Please visit the first floor desk to reset passwords, or call 01252 892 710.

Career, CV and work placement support:

Steve Gordon and Kasia Majewska are our **Careers Advisers**. They offer one-to-one tutorials on topics such as discussing options and plans for future careers or study, writing CVs, covering letters and job applications, organising work placements, preparing for interviews, networking, and career management.

Email Steve Gordon at sgordon5@uca.ac.uk, Kasia Majewska at kasia.majewska@uca.ac.uk, or visit the careers site at <https://uca.jobteaser.com>.

Problems and feelings causing you concern:

Counsellors are available on all campuses for you to talk in a safe and confidential setting about problems and feelings that are causing you concern such as: homesickness, anxiety, depression, family/relationship difficulties, bereavement, eating difficulties, drugs/alcohol problems.

Visit <https://www.uca.ac.uk/student-services/counselling/> or contact the **Gateway desk** on the ground floor of the library, or at gatewayfarnham@uca.ac.uk, or on 01252 892 709 for details.

Financial concerns:

Specialist Advisors can offer information, advice, and guidance. They are members of the National Association of Student Money Advisers (NASMA) and can discuss financial problems with you in confidence. To book an appointment, please contact the **Gateway desk** on the ground floor of the library, or at gatewayfarnham@uca.ac.uk, or on 01252 892 709.

General support:

The UCA Students' Union (UCASU) represents all students at UCA. They are available for advice and support on a range of subjects. If you're not sure where to go with a problem, the SU may be able to help identify the right person or team.

Email the Surrey President, Stefan Renas Gutierrez Yildirim, at surrey.su@uca.ac.uk or consult the rest of the team at <https://ucasu.com/contact/>.

10 ACADEMIC GLOSSARY

Analysis	A process of examining, dissecting, or ‘probing’ something. It can involve asking questions (why?, what caused/influenced?, what are the consequences of?) and seeking possible explanations.
Assessment (formative)	Interim assessment with feedback so that you can improve work before hand-in. Formative feedback also occurs during tutorials.
Assessment (summative)	Final graded assessment, with feedback and marks that contribute toward your final award.
Context	What surrounds a thing; a ‘setting’. This could be physical (a location), conceptual (ideas), professional (peers), etc.
Crit (or review)	A discussion on the potential or success of work. A critique can also refer to a text discussing a piece of work or idea.
Framework	Essential supporting structure (i.e. the theories or values that guide your work).
Plagiarism	The act of claiming the thoughts, strategies, claims, or work of another maker/author as one's own. This is taken very seriously and breeches university policies. Self-plagiarism (claiming your own old work as new work) is also forbidden.
Research	The work you do to inform your work. Secondary research involves digesting material produced by others (e.g. locating and reading books or articles, note-making). Primary research involves producing your own material (experimenting, testing, observing, responding, etc.). Contextual research materials addressing themes or subjects that have your attention are just as important as visual research materials.
Self-directed study	Time for developing or making work independently, or under guidance from an academic.
Tutorial	A session where student and academic discuss work in detail. Tutorials may be in small groups or one-to-one sessions.