Programme Specification

BA (HONS) ILLUSTRATION

Institute of Education, Arts and Society

Academic Level:	6	Credits:	360
UCAS Code:	W220		
Awarding Body:	University of Cumbria		
Delivery Site:	Brampton Road Campus, Carlisle		
Programme Length:	Standard registration period (full time) - 3 years Maximum registration period - 7 years		
Mode of Delivery:	Face to Face		
Pattern of Delivery:	Full Time		
	Total weeks of study:	24 weeks	
	Delivery pattern:	2 x 12 week semesters	
	Standard semester dates:	Yes	
Programme Webpage:	https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/study/courses/undergraduate/illustration/		

Entry Criteria
The University's standard criteria for admissions apply. Please refer to the Applicant Information pages of the University website for more information. For APL, please refer to the University website. Detailed criteria for admission to this programme can be found on the programme webpage.

PROGRAMME AIMS AND OUTCOMES

Programme Aims

1. To enable you to acquire, practice and develop the key visual skills that underpin effective illustration work

2. To enable you to develop as a creative individual with the capacity for independent judgement, initiative, innovation, flexibility, ambition and with a responsible awareness of the social, cultural and ethical contributions of your work

3. To enable you to make appropriate use of developing technologies and develop your digital capabilities to communicate effectively as a socially responsible global citizen

4. To encourage you to work across disciplines and with other people, be open to new ideas, responsive to change and evolve in relation to the developments in illustration practice

5. To encourage you to develop confident, imaginative and creative approaches to problem solving through enquiry, research, understanding, and the use of critical judgement

6. To develop appropriate self-reflective approaches to research, analysis, production and presentation

7. To develop the skills, knowledge and personal/professional confidence that will enable you to identify, generate and access opportunities in industry, or in continuing education

8. To enhance, through increased opportunities for student-centred learning, qualities of personal initiative, self-motivation, management and self-discipline

9. To integrate ethical considerations into your practice by fostering a deep understanding of the societal impact of your work, encouraging responsible decision-making, and ensuring that ethical principles are reflected in all aspects of your illustration practice.

Programme Outcomes – Knowledge and Understanding

After 120 credits of study (CertHE) you will be able to demonstrate:

K1. Your understanding of the ideas and development process, and imagination in the conception, development, production and presentation of illustration artefacts

K2. Knowledge of visual communication theory – message, tone of voice, artefact

K3. Knowledge of the historial contexts that have influenced the development of illustration

K4. Knowledge of the principles, behaviour and dynamics of working in a team

After 240 credits of study (DipHE) you will be able to demonstrate:

K5. Knowledge of the ethical, legal and moral contexts and frameworks that apply to illustration projects

K6. A critical appreciation of the roles of commissioning agent, client, audience and illustrator

K7. Knowledge of the social, political and technological contexts that have influenced the development of illustration

K8. Knowledge of print and on-screen production processes

After 300 credits of study (BA) you will be able to demonstrate:

K9. Your understanding of the principles and practice of problem identification and project management

K10. Knowledge of a variety of sources for research and the conventions and formats for presentation of academic research

K11. Knowledge of a range of methods and technical skills to present your creative work to the client and others involved in the development and production process

After 360 credits of study (BA Hons) you will be able to demonstrate:

K12. An independent, creative and professional approach to illustration projects

K13. Independent critical evaluation skills in the resolution of creative work

K14. Critical interpersonal skills, professional team working practitioners with analytical and contextual reflective abilities.

Programme Outcomes – Skills and other Attributes

After 120 credits of study (CertHE) you will be able to demonstrate:

S1. Your ability to respond appropriately to a brief by visualising a range of ideas and making informed value judgements about their effectiveness

S2. Your ability to develop your ideas through a process of open-minded experimentation and critical evaluation

S3. Personal organisation, time management skills and taking responsibility for your own learning

S4. Your ability to research a given topic and to present your findings in written, verbal and visual formats

S5. Your ability to work meaningfully within a team

After 240 credits of study (DipHE) you will be able to demonstrate:

S6. Your ability to respond creatively and systematically to a wide range of visual problems using your individual visual voice to create original illustration work

S7. Effective verbal, visual and written communication skills with those involved in the process of delivering appropriate illustrative solutions

S8. Effective verbal, visual and written presentation skills

S9. Independent visual research skills

After 300 credits of study (BA) you will be able to demonstrate:

S10. A critical understanding of the production processes and how these influence decision-making in illustration projects

S11. Your independent research skills and the ability to formulate a design project proposal

S12. Your fluency in a range of industry-standard design software packages

S13. Confidence in evaluating and reflecting on your own practic

After 360 credits of study (BA Hons) you will be able to demonstrate:

S14. Your ability to think systematically and strategically and to reflect critically and analytically on your own work

S15. Your ability to work independently in formulating and resolving illustrative briefs

S16. Your ability to experiment with and challenge the conventions of form, function and communication

S17. Your ability to apply subject-specific, cognitive and transferable skills and problem solving strategies to a range of situations.

PROGRAMME FEATURES

Programme Overview

The aim of BA (Hons) Illustration at the University to Cumbria, is to help you become a creative and innovative illustrator with a unique approach to producing high-quality work that can lead to various opportunities such as commissions, employment, self-directed projects, or advanced studies at Master's level.

In a professional context, the term "illustration" encompasses a diverse and dynamic discipline that includes a wide range of creative work. This includes self-authored projects like graphic novels and comic art, concept art for film, television, and video games, as well as more traditional work for magazines, books, advertising, and animation. The common thread among these various disciplines is the unique ability to effectively communicate ideas, narratives, and information to audiences through engaging and memorable visual communication.

Broadly speaking, illustration has traditionally been a freelance industry. However, in recent years, there has been a shift due to the growth and development of internet-accessed print and manufacturing facilities, as well as sales platforms. This has led to the illustrator taking on the role of author creating self-generated work without need of a 'client'. We acknowledge and embrace this expanded role of the illustrator and actively incorporate it into our programme delivery reflecting this exciting development.

Drawing Skills

We will work with you to enhance your drawing skills and underpinning knowledge, laying a strong foundation for your career as an illustrator. Instead of prescribing a specific style or approach to image making, we will provide you with a framework that serves as the basis for all forms of illustration. Ultimately, the style, approach, and level of ambition you choose to pursue will be entirely up to you as a unique, creative individual.

Professional Community

We foster a tight-knit, creative community within a welcoming and collaborative environment, ensuring that you are known and supported throughout your university experience. This level of personalised interaction allows for individual creative growth and the opportunity to pursue your unique illustration goals. You will have access to our spacious, open plan studio shared by all years, providing dedicated workspaces for your and your peers. We embrace professionalism from the start of the programme by providing you with a personal website. By the end of the programme your website will act as your professional, online portfolio, showcasing your work to the world.

Our institutional membership of the Association of Illustrators (AOI) enables you to access their extensive illustration resources and professional advice. You will also learn from visiting lecturers who have included; freelance illustrators, comic artists, children's illustrators, animators and Hollywood concept artists. We will also visit relevant exhibitions and encourage and support you in any entrepreneurial activities that will help place and promote your work in the public realm.

Location and Lifestyle

Our base in Carlisle gives you easy access to the spectacular county of Cumbria, renowned for its world-famous Lake District National Park (a World Heritage Site). This ease of access to nature and

the wider landscape offers opportunities for exploration as well as supporting personal well-being enabling you to benefit from the abundant creative inspiration and lifestyle choices available here.

Our programme aims to provide you with the opportunities to develop your skills, knowledge and above all confidence, enabling you to make appropriate and relevant choices regarding your future career development.

Year One

During the first year, you will have the opportunity to develop confidence, practical skills, and a strong understanding of the basic principles of visual communication, which serve as the building blocks of a professional illustration language.

Distinctive features include:

- Working alongside other art, design and media students
- Exploring the fundamentals of typography, layout and design
- Learning colour and composition theory
- The use of traditional materials and digital media
- Exploring the design process
- Developing presentation skills
- Critical thinking
- Collaborative working
- Exploring a range of workshop areas including printmaking, 3D workshops, audio-visual resources.

Year Two

In year two you will develop and deepen the skills and understanding you developed in Year one through:

- Developing accomplished drawing and illustration skills
- Developing expertise in effectively using a wide range of materials and media
- Showcasing the broad reach of contemporary illustration
- Familiarising yourself with current industry practices
- Advanced critical thinking
- Understanding diverse areas such as visual narratives, editorial and book illustration, packaging, animation, promotion and publicity.

Year Three

In year three you will have the opportunity to explore the specific areas of the illustration industry and profession that interest you most. This year is designed to showcase your mastery of the skills and knowledge you have acquired, allowing you to take full ownership of your creative and professional development. You will do this through:

- Selecting from a broad range of industry aligned briefs
- Exploring a range of outcome types
- Writing your own assessment briefs
- Identifying your own research ambitions
- Collaborating to produce an end of year graduate showcase.

Learning and Teaching

Teaching

A key feature of the BA (Hons) Illustration programme is the opportunity, in first year, to work alongside students studying graphic design, fine art, photography and wildlife media. By learning as an integrated member of this creative community you will experience, first-hand, the methods and techniques used by other visual practitioners. This will foster an appreciation of how your work fits into the wider world of the visual arts and provide you with greater confidence, knowledge and skills as you progress through the levels.

Planned collaborative and interdisciplinary learning tapers off towards the end of Level 4 as more specialist skills, knowledge and understanding become the focus of learning and your identity as a illustrator is nurtured. Collaboration is still encouraged, it is a fact of professional creative life, but the learning is centred on you and the operational contexts illustrators work within.

Most of your studies will be centred around practical projects that have been designed to not only help you practice and improve visual skills, but also develop your study skills, methods of research, critical and analytical abilities, and your ability to manage your time and plan your work.

A wide range of learning, teaching and assessment methods are used in order to develop work related skills:-

- **Lectures** are used by both studio and theory tutors using a variety of media as support. You will be expected to take notes, ask questions and contribute to any group discussions that ensue

- **Seminars, Presentation and Discussion** sessions will explore issues in greater depth with both tutor and student-led formats. These will require you to engage in research and background reading and will consider the relation of theory to practice and help develop wide ranging transferable skills

- **Practical Workshop Sessions** will provide the opportunity for you to develop specialist technical skills and knowledge. They normally take the form of tutor-led studio workshop demonstrations, designed to allow you to focus on, experiment with, develop and personalise specialised skills, media, techniques and concepts

- **Problem based learning** will comprise the majority of your programme. Illustration is a problem-solving discipline. There will never be only one answer to a specific design problem (normally defined by the *project brief*). You will be expected to work on your own or as part of a small team to find a range of possible solutions. This will involve thorough research, synthesising the information you have discovered and developing and presenting a range of appropriate visual responses

- **Group work** is very important in Illustration as collective activities where communication, trust, responsibility and reliability are fundamental requirements. We write projects and tasks that allow you to experience, consider and develop your team-working skills

- **Projects** are the usual vehicle by which you develop your design knowledge and expertise. The project work you undertake during year two and three will form the content of the

professional portfolio of work you will take with you when pursuing employment at the end of the programme

- **Written work** is central to a degree programme. Different forms of written language will be explored to ensure appropriate critical skills and creative authorship are examined

- **E-learning and Blackboard** is the VLE where you can to access project briefs, timetables and lecture notes, to submit module assessments and summative feedback

At **Level 4** you typically have around 10–12 contact hours per week, typically consisting of:

- 2 hours of lectures
- 2 hours of seminars
- 6 hours of supervised studio time
- 0.5 hour of personal tutoring

At **Level 5** you typically have around 9-10 contact hours per week, typically consisting of:

- 2 hours of lectures
- 1 hour of seminars
- 6 hours of supervised studio time
- 0.5 hour of personal tutoring

At **Level 6** you typically have around 9 contact hours per week, typically consisting of:

- 1 hour of lectures
- 1 hour of seminars
- 6 hours of supervised studio time
- 0.5 hour of personal tutoring

Digital Capabilities

There will also be the opportunity to engage with and achieve the UoConnetED Digital Graduate badges throughout your studies. These badges give you the digital knowledge and skills to operate confidently in the digital world. The badges support your learning at degree level and will prepare you for the digital demands of your professional life following graduation.

Independent Learning

When not attending scheduled learning activities you will be expected to continue learning independently through self-study.

Self-directed study forms a natural and expected extension of the formal aspects of the programme. Your ultimate success will be dependent on your willingness to develop, experiment with and extend the concepts and approaches introduced by project briefs. It is only with continued application that lasting and valuable progress can be made.

Teaching Staff

Our illustration team consists of highly experienced professionals with nearly 50 years of combined teaching and industry experience. Our priority is to the development of fundamental skills in both traditional and digital mediums, such as drawing and painting. We are dedicated to cultivating ownership and mastery of these skills, which drives our personal work and programme philosophy.

Members of our illustration team have diverse backgrounds in editorial, publishing, advertising, animation, graphic novels, and more. We have collaborated with galleries, agencies, and art

directors worldwide, and our work has been featured in magazines, journals, and books on various creative subjects ranging from the Arts and Crafts movement to Photoshop.

While illustration is our primary focus, we also have a wide range of interests in contemporary and historical visual culture. We engage in activities such as music, furniture building, artwork restoration, and metalworking alongside our illustrative work.

Through interdisciplinary collaboration, we leverage a wealth of expertise and experiences. Institute-wide programmes provide opportunities for interaction with academic teams across the creative industries, enriching your understanding and creative output.

Through our industry connections we provide exposure to a range of voices from the field at every stage of study, ensuring that your education remains relevant and dynamic.

Assessment

Throughout the programme assessment takes either of two forms: formative assessment or summative assessment.

- Formative assessment is designed to continually monitor student progress and provide feedback that can help enhance your comprehension and application of knowledge and practical abilities. Formative assessment occurs in both structured settings, such as scheduled group critiques, and informal situations, like impromptu discussions about student work. As you advance from Year 1 to Year 3, you will be encouraged to take on a more proactive role in formative assessments
- Summative assessments evaluate learning outcomes at the conclusion of a module, typically at the end of a semester. These assessments involve the submission of work, such as a web portfolio, showcasing the curation and presentation of all aspects of development and final artwork created during the module.

Wherever possible our assessment methods are practice oriented – meaning we embed professional, industry practices within programme delivery and submission mechanisms. For example, utilising a web-based portfolio for presenting, discussing, and submitting work aligns with current industry practice.

You will be continuously involved in the assessment of your own work and that of your peers; developing the critical, interpersonal and team-working skills that are vital to gaining confidence and independence as a creative practitioner.

- **Tutorials** provide individually tailored feedback to you. They can range from one-to-one to small group situations. There will often be informal sessions conducted in the studio on timetabled taught days. As the programme progresses you will be assigned weekly time slots with specialist tutors for more involved and technical feedback reflecting the advanced level at which you are working
- **Crits** (short for 'critique') lie at the heart of an education in Illustration. These take place at the end of a project and will normally comprise a small group of your fellow students, and tutors, where you will be expected to present your work to the group. The effectiveness of

your work and presentation will then be discussed by all present and you will receive a large amount of verbal feedback

- **Portfolio/s** In assessment terms, 'portfolio' refers to the presentation of a body of visual work via an illustrator's presentation portfolio which can be physical and/or digital. We will provide you with a website in level 4 and you will use this throughout your studies to present all aspects of your illustration process. As a result, by graduation you will have industry standard capabilities with regard to sharing and presenting your work. It is important to note that two things make up the 'portfolio' – the qualities of the work itself (is it good illustration / contemporary / fully resolved); and the manner in which that work is presented on the portfolio pages (visual narrative / flow / sequencing / attention-to-detail)
- **Written Assignments** feature at all levels of your degree and give you the opportunity to research and write to an increasing academic standard. Critical theory and themes are explored through modules that test your knowledge and articulation of this in the written format. This culminates in the Independent Research paper in year three, an in-depth and academically rigorous piece of work
- **Blogs and Websites** are introduced in year one as you start to exercise your digital capabilities. By year three your work will be embedded in your personal website for assessment and as your professional digital portfolio.

Feedback

Feedback on formative assessments is delivered promptly through various methods, including in-person discussions in group or one-to-one settings. Additionally, real-time digital tools like Microsoft Forms are utilised to collect feedback through tailored questionnaires for specific modules or assessment briefs.

Feedback on summative assessments utilises a combination of students' personal website portfolios and screen recording software. Summative assessment feedback is delivered verbally and recorded in conjunction with the work under review. Feedback on summative assessments will be returned withing 20 working days in accordance with UoC Learning and Teaching policy.

Graduate Prospects

As a successful graduate of the BA (Hons) Illustration programme you will be able to access a variety of career options. A degree in illustration becomes a passport to enter an extensive range of careers throughout the creative industries.

According to Prospects*, six months following graduation nearly 73% of illustration graduates are in employment, with over a third in employment in the arts, design or media sector, 2.9% continued with further study. These statistics have confirmed to us that employability skills are central to the success of our graduates and so we have embedded the professional skills and working with industry into the programme.

Transferrable skills (these skills are valued by most employers)**:**

- Being able to work independently, but also working effectively with others
- Clear communication and good interpersonal skills

- The ability to manage your time effectively
- Innovation, creativity and problem-solving
- Presentation skills
- Self-evaluation
- Technical, research, critical and analytical skills

Progression Routes:

- Independent freelance illustration practice
- Salaried or freelance employment
- Setting up your own business
- Postgraduate education: MA, MPhil and PhD level study

Examples of Illustration Graduate Destinations:

- Animator
- Book illustrator
- Art director
- Advertising illustrator
- Reportage illustrator
- Editorial illustrator
- Illustration agent
- Studio assistant
- Designer/Maker
- Graphic design assistant
- Printmaker
- Teaching

The scope described by these destinations is testament to the flexibility of the programme that supports all the individual interests of our students. It also speaks to the potential that illustration holds as a great career choice.

* https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/what-can-i-do-with-my-degree/illustration

MODULES

Year 1			
Code	**Title**	**Credits**	**Status**
VCOM4000	Introducing Visual Communication	40	Compulsory
UCIA4030	Cultural Contexts	20	Compulsory
UCIA4020	Collaborative Practice	20	Compulsory
ILLU4050	The Anatomy of an Illustration Project	20	Compulsory
ILLU4060	The Fundamentals of Drawing	20	Compulsory
Students exiting at this point with 120 credits would receive a CertHE Illustration			

Year 2			
Code	**Title**	**Credits**	**Status**
ILLU5070	The Illustrator's Toolkit	40	Compulsory
ILLU5080	Drawing	20	Compulsory
ILLU5090	Illustration Projects	40	Compulsory
ILLU5060	The Critical Illustrator	20	Compulsory
Students exiting at this point with 240 credits would receive a DipHE Illustration			

Year 3			
Code	**Title**	**Credits**	**Status**
ILLU6060	Advanced Illustration Projects	40	Compulsory
ARTD6000	Independent Research Paper	20	Compulsory
ILLU6070	Illustration Showcase	60	Compulsory
Students exiting at this point with 300 credits would receive an Ordinary BA Illustration			
Students exiting at this point with 360 credits would receive a BA (Hons) Illustration			

Key to Module Statuses	
Compulsory modules	Must be taken although it may be possible to compensate as a marginal fail (within the limits set out in the Academic Regulations and provided that all core or pass/fail elements of module assessment have been passed).

Timetables

Timetables are normally available in August. Please note that while we make every effort to ensure timetables are as student-friendly as possible, scheduled learning can take place on any day of the week.

Our Timetabling team work hard to ensure that timetables are available to students as far in advance as possible, however there may be occasional exceptions such as in the case of teaching which falls outside of the usual academic calendar. The UoC academic calendar runs from July to July, so timetabling information for programmes which include teaching sessions in August may not be published until closer to the August delivery.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Student Support

The Student Enquiry Point is a simple way to contact Student Services. Using the Student Enquiry Point tile on the Student Hub you can submit an enquiry to any of the Student Services teams, which includes:

- Careers and Employability
- Chaplaincy for faith and spiritual wellbeing
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Digital Skills
- Disability and Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD)
- International Student Support
- Library
- Money Matters
- Safeguarding
- Skills@Cumbria
- Sports and Fitness Facilities
- University Student Accommodation

As a student at the University of Cumbria you automatically become a member of the Students' Union. The Students' Union represents the views and interests of students within the University.

The Students' Union is led by a group of Student Representatives who are elected by students in annual elections. They also support approximately 400 Student Academic Reps within each cohort across the entire University. The Students' Union represent the views of their cohort and work with academic staff to continuously develop and improve the experience for all University of Cumbria students. You can find out more about who represents you at www.ucsu.me.

You can email at any time on studentvoice@cumbria.ac.uk.

Course Costs

Tuition Fees

Course fees can be found https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/study/courses/undergraduate/illustration/

The following course-related costs are included in the fees:

Course membership of the Association of Illustrators.

Personal portfolio website, hosting and content management system.

We endeavour to provide subsidised enhancement activities such as guest speakers and field trips.

Additional Costs

The following course-related costs are not included in the fees:

There will be some additional costs. For example, you will need to purchase stationery and print and you may wish to purchase textbooks. Extra costs may also be applicable to cover field trips, membership fees etc. although such features are usually options within the programme. It is estimated that these costs are sub £200 annually.

There is no requirement for you to have personal computer hardware or software.

Exceptions to the Academic Regulations

This programme operates in accordance with the University's Academic Regulations and Academic Procedures and Processes with the following permitted exceptions:

Larger modules of 40 and 60 credits are recognised by the QAA to be typical in Art and Design programmes and reflect the pedagogic approach that encourages independent working on significant bodies of work.

The 40 and 60 credit modules are all dedicated visual practice modules and have been designed such to:

- **Enable progression:** the intensity of the modules will establish and ensure a working practice that is maintained throughout the degree from level 4 to 6, and designed so that you will be equipped to meet the increasing expectations as you progress through each level
- **Streamline assessments:** the longer modules allow fewer assessments with a greater emphasis on linking practice to professional outcomes, hence you will be more focused and driven on achieving holistically rather than in separate components
- **Reduce the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs):** as with the streamlining of assessment, this would have the same effect of the ILOs, these can be more focused and relevant to real-world expectations.

In response to student and industry feedback, the modules are designed so that you have a longer period to rigorously develop your work. This aspect allows you to manage bigger projects, develop personal management skills and experience a practice more closely related to the time-frames and conditions experienced in industry. You will be well supported with formative assessment points and interim objectives.

External and Internal Benchmarks

QAA Subject Benchmark Statements: Art & Design (Published: December 2019)

https://creativepool.com/articles/jobdescriptions/illustrator-job-description

Other internal reference points may include:

UoC Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

UoC Academic Regulations and Academic Procedures and Processes

Institute of Education, Arts and Society Business Plan

Disclaimer
This programme has been approved (validated) by the University of Cumbria as suitable for a range of delivery modes, delivery patterns, and delivery sites. This level of potential flexibility does not reflect a commitment on behalf of the University to offer the programme by all modes/patterns and at all locations in every academic cycle. The details of the programme offered for a particular intake year will be as detailed on the programme webpage: https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/study/courses/undergraduate/illustration/