

COURSE SUMMARY DOCUMENT

2025-26 ACADEMIC YEAR

COURSE TITLE: Master of Arts (MA) Performance Design

DURATION OF COURSE: One Year (Full Time)

Entry Requirements:

Applicants would normally be expected to have an honours degree in a related visual arts subject area such as Fine Art, Sculpture, Architecture, Costume, Illustration, Theatre Studies, or Production Arts. However, applicants with extensive relevant professional experience will also be considered. Applicants would be expected to have entry-level skills and experience relevant to the subject specialisation they are intending to follow.

Applicants should be able to provide evidence of their suitability for the course by the production of a portfolio of art and performance design work. It is an expectation that applicants understand the required basic skills involved and have knowledge of the role of Performance Designer within a production. Good communication and interpersonal skills are important, and applicants will be expected to demonstrate these at interview,

For speakers of English as a second language an IELTS 7.0 (International English Language Testing System) or equivalent is the minimum requirement with a minimum of 7.0 in each component of reading, writing, listening and speaking.

All applicants will be interviewed by professional practitioners, including the Course Leader. Applicants will be given an opportunity to ask questions of staff and current students where possible.

Course Outline:

The MA in Performance Design provides specialist vocational training preparing you for a career in designing for the stage and screen.

The course is taught over one academic year through a combination of project and production work. Tutors and visiting specialists are working industry professionals and bring the latest industry developments to the course.

You will acquire a broad range of specialist skill sets in both design and making. Specialisation will enable you to acquire practical knowledge and technical skills from a range of School production staff and/or visiting industry professionals. You will be able to explore unique creative collaboration opportunities within the course and benefit from shared learning, knowledge and skills exchange with other postgraduate and undergraduate creatives.

You will be able to create an impressive professional portfolio of projects and realised design work. You will launch your career to a range of industry professionals, one-to-one industry mock interviews and in a graduate exhibition.

Specialisation options require approval by the course leader and may be subject to change according to production schedules. Students will always be consulted about any change which affects their course.

You will explore your specialist design skills on at least one production. Which may include the School's

- Theatre productions which usually take place at internal or external venues
- Short films produced at the School and on location
- Theatre productions which may include touring to schools and regional theatres.

You will learn through group seminars, practical and technical workshops, peer learning, working with other creatives, sessions led by industry experts, independent study, field and production visits, attending industry events and extensive feedback from School tutors and visiting industry professionals.

Core Modules and any Optional Modules:

All modules are compulsory.

Module Name: Performance Design Project (40 credits)

Module Name: Specialisation Project (40 credits)

Module Name: Design for Production (60 credits)

Module Name: Professional Presentation (40 credits)

There are no interim awards available.

Award: MA Performance Design Credit requirements: MA – 180 credits

Method of study (for example, lectures, seminars, work placements) expected: Student learning at BOVTS revolves around a number of productions throughout the academic year. Your learning, to differing degrees, will centre on these productions.

Professional performance designers need to be self-motivated and able to work independently. Reflecting this feature of the industry, based in a well-equipped communal studio environment, much of your time will be spent studying independently.

The Head of Course, normally based in a nearby office / studio, will be available on set times during the working week to provide one-to-one support and critical evaluation.

A range of lectures, masterclasses and one-to-one tutorials delivered by School teachers and visiting industry professionals and peer review learning sessions will provide important underpinning for your learning.

Increasingly much of the information and some of the content of the course is available via the School's Virtual Learning Environment.

Workload including number of contact hours with School staff and expected self-study: This is a full-time course. Students are expected to work independently in a studio-based environment for much of the course. To support student learning a wide range of lectures, masterclasses and one-to-one tutorials delivered by School teachers and visiting industry professionals and peer review learning sessions are provided throughout the year amounting to approximately 20 hours of contact time per week, increasing significantly during production weeks. Students should also expect to undertake approximately twenty-five hours per week independent study.

Classes will normally be scheduled Monday – Friday between 9.00 am and 6.00 pm, with no classes on Wednesday afternoons. The course calendar will be distributed at least two weeks in advance. During production periods there may also be evening and weekend work.

The overall methods of assessment for the Modules (for example exams, course work or practical assignments):

All modules are assessed by coursework (meaning there are no exams). There is continuous assessment of project and production work-based challenges.

You will have many opportunities to share your work-in-progress and be observed in your collaborative interaction providing you with formative feedback and suggestions for improvement before final assessment of your skills is made. You will receive formative feedback from your tutor both in the studio and in formal meetings.

You will be assessed on the demonstration of specialist designer skills used in the production of your designs. You will be assessed on the completed final design presentation stage in projects and a completed production design. You will be required to present this to peers, course tutors, industry professionals and to a performance company and production teams on realised productions.

Along with developing an analytical and critical continuous appraisal of your progress of design development and process, you will also be asked to evaluate your own learning for each project in a written self-assessment.

You are assessed on a pass or fail basis (meaning that degrees are undifferentiated).

The award students will receive on successful completion of their Course:
MA Performance Design validated by the University of the West of England, Bristol.

Where the course is taught:

Bristol Old Vic Theatre School's Downside Road with projects happening in venues across the city

Length of the Modules: Between 7-11 weeks

Staff who are delivering the teaching:

Head of Design, Design Tutor, School staff and visiting industry professionals.

The fees which students can expect to pay:

Tuition fees for UK and Republic of Ireland students on the MA Performance Design course will be £16,000
Tuition fees for overseas students (non-UK) on the MA Performance Design course will be £26,500

Please see the Fees Policy at <https://www.uwe.ac.uk/courses/fees/tuition-fees-policy> for further information.

Any extra costs (in addition to fees) which students may have to pay to complete the course and estimated cost:

The School does have a number of computer terminals that are dedicated to students. However, increasingly much of the information and some of the content of the course is available via the School's virtual learning environment and so you will benefit from having access to your own personal computer and the internet to make the most of your course. It is estimated that a suitable personal computer will cost £1,000.00– £2,500.00 depending on technical requirements of your chosen specialism. (Please check with the Course leader for recommended functionality.) Many software packages are freely available to you as a student, however, we would recommend a student subscription to Adobe Creative Cloud (£16.50 per month approx) and if you are interested in using Sketch-Up, the student licence is £50 per year (approx).

You will need to research the most cost-effective way of accessing the internet. The School has a number of means tested scholarship funds available to assist students with purchases of computer hardware and other essential costs which would otherwise cause financial hardship.

Some course materials and model making materials are provided but students may have to allow funds (approximately £500.00) to provide their own work clothes, equipment and modelmaking supplies and contribute to some costs towards their self- promotion materials.

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