Programme Specification

Award and title: BA (Hons) Illustration

School:	School of The Arts
Subject area:	Illustration
Entry from academic year:	2024-25
in the month(s) of	September
Awarding institution:	York St John University
Teaching institution:	York St John University
Delivery location:	York St John University
Programme/s accredited by:	Not applicable
Exit awards:	Certificate of Higher Education Illustration Diploma of Higher Education Illustration BA (Ord) Illustration
UCAS code / GTTR / other:	W2W3
Joint Honours combinations:	Not applicable
QAA subject benchmark statement(s):	Art and Design 2019
Mode/s of study:	Undergraduate periods of study[1] for full time / part time
Language of study:	English
Paired with Foundation Year	No
Study abroad opportunities:	Yes
Opt-in YSJU Placement Year opportunity:	Yes

Introduction and special features

BA (Hons) Illustration engages with current developments in illustration practice across a dynamic breadth of art forms, media and practices. The programme emphasises practice-based creative and critical enquiry to develop, sustain and extend your practice, developing confidence, competence and increasing specialisation towards your personal ambitions and professional aspirations. The programme will provide a foundation in illustration practice centred on drawing, image making (both still and sequential) and narrative construction. It will engage you in the genres of illustration including comics, animation, picturebooks, editorial illustration artists books and zines as well as exploring new possibilities such as the illustrator as author. You will learn both analogue and digital technologies to extend your practice. From this foundation you will evolve your own specialist practice through studio based and live projects leading to a professionally directed final year where you will focus your practice towards your personal, academic and professional ambitions.

A critical strand provides a framework for thinking about the future of your practice and the future of illustration, drawing on historical, contemporary and theoretical perspectives. This will enable you to situate and focus your practice clearly and be able to ask research questions which lead you into research investigations and make reasoned conclusions.

Illustration is articulated as an interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary practice and throughout the programme you will have opportunities to collaborate with students on other programmes as well as external

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[1] The standard period of study will apply unless otherwise stated

professionals. In particular, you will have the opportunity to work with animators, creative writers, artists, photographers and games designers. Through this you will also learn the value of your skills and knowledge and ways that you can exploit these for your future.

The programme requires you to develop a creative 'mind-set' of independence, versatility, adaptability and innovation. This 'mind-set' is the basis upon which you will evolve your 'skill set' in response to the changing demands in the worlds of work and professional practice. This skill set comprises highly developed levels of professional awareness, critical and creative thinking, articulacy and literacy, cultural entrepreneurialism and the ability to exploit in-demand practical skills in different contexts.

An important aspect of this supportive studio culture is the technical provision. Through workshops and technical demonstrations students experience the full range of facilities (printmaking, woodwork/metal work, laser cutting, camera handling, riso printer, model making, digital print output and related tools and software) by the midpoint in the programme. This allows you to experience a range of subject specialist options in relation to your illustration practice. In the latter half of the programme (Level 5 semester 2 onwards) you will define a relevant and focused diet of support options (choosing from the first 3 semesters input) in relation to your practice from the specialist technical team.

In Levels 5 and 6, you will have opportunities to develop your learning through external engagement, work-based learning opportunities such as internships and live projects with industry professionals. As part of the Art and Design suite of programmes, you will have access to well-established study abroad opportunities within influential institutions worldwide.

Illustration is situated within a supportive studio culture, with regular exhibitions and shared learning and social activities. Trips to exhibitions and major cultural cities are a regular feature throughout all three levels of the programme. Subsidised national and international trips to key cities enable you to enrich your cultural sources and references.

At the end of the programme you will mount a graduate exhibition for the public and industry and creative sector.

In summary, the programme offers a number of special features including:
- A material led practice approach
    - Visiting speakers programme
    - Engagement with live projects through external partners
    - Supported work-based learning opportunities
    - Access to both digital and analogue equipment for capture and postproduction
    - Specialist technical support in breadth of Illustration media, tools and methods
    - Subsidised national and international trips (circumstances permitting)
    - Exchange options
    - All students will undertake Adobe Accreditation as industry standard training.

Admissions criteria
You must meet the minimum entry requirements which are published on the programme specific webpage. In addition, you must have:

- A portfolio of 15-20 physical / digital visual images
- An interview which may be face to face or virtual

If your first language is not English, you need to take an IELTS test or an equivalent qualification accepted by the University (see https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/international/how-to-apply/english-language-requirements/).

If you do not have traditional qualifications, you may be eligible for entry on the basis of Recognition of prior learning (RPL). We also consider applications for entry with advanced standing.

Programme aim(s)

1. To provide a high-quality education in Illustration that affirms its contribution to culture & society and its cross disciplinary interaction with other fields of knowledge

2. To provide innovative teaching that promotes a comprehensive understanding of the potential of contemporary Illustration practice driven by critical and material engagement, underpinned by intellectual enquiry.

3. To develop learning and skills in problem solving through sustained enquiry, technical engagement, critical self-awareness and independence.

4. To encourage and support creative risk taking, experimentation, and curiosity which engenders unforeseen, imaginative and innovative responses.

5. To encourage independence, autonomy, collaboration, reflection and flexibility for students to develop a personal approach to their practice.

6. To support and encourage widening and diversifying practices that acknowledges student's roles in, and contributions towards, society, social justice, economy and environment.

7. To broaden diversity of cultural experience to develop self-awareness and expand ambitions, experience and knowledge.

8. To offer opportunities for professional experience, networking and resourcefulness through work-related learning, through both internal and external collaborative project work.

Programme learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of the programme students will be able to:

Level 4
4.1 Collate, evaluate, and interpret research material.

4.2 Demonstrate curiosity, open mindedness, and reflection in approaching Illustration practice.

4.3 Demonstrate skills and technical competence in Illustration practice.

4.4 Demonstrate responsibility and diligence in developing individual and/or group work including fulfilling briefs and meeting deadlines.

4.5 Demonstrate an understanding of approaches to practice, including key histories, concepts, artefacts, and processes.

4.6 Communicate ideas and information utilising appropriate academic conventions in visual and verbal forms.

Level 5
5.1 Critically analyse divergent research material and form questions, arguments, and conclusions.

5.2 Demonstrate an emerging experimental, technical, and reflective refinement of Illustration practice.

5.3 Demonstrate professional self-management and collaborative skills by planning workloads and meeting deadlines, accommodating change and uncertainty.

5.4 Apply critical skills of observation, description, and interpretation, to situate artefacts within appropriate contexts by synthesising primary and secondary sources.

5.5 Communicate ideas and information to engage an audience utilising appropriate academic conventions in visual and verbal forms.

5.6 Establish an enterprising attitude towards professional Illustration practice, developing networks and locating audiences

Level 6
6.1 Construct and apply coherent arguments through the systematic analysis of divergent ideas, materials, and methods.

6.2 Synthesise critical skills of observation and interpretation by situating artefacts within appropriate historical, intellectual, cultural, or institutional contexts.

6.3 Articulate a professionally engaged practice that is informed by intellectual curiosity, experimentation, reflection, and scholarly rigour.

6.4 Demonstrate ingenuity and technical expertise to resolve high quality creative work, which communicates effectively with a particular audience.

6.5 Demonstrate initiative, autonomy, problem solving and care by responsibly managing and supporting work.

6.6 Contextualise and evaluate the logistical, professional, and ethical dimensions of Illustration practice with independent and innovative consideration.

6.7 Demonstrate resourcefulness and innovation using critical judgement to develop a sustainable and equitable approach to Illustration practice.

Programme structure

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensatable (NC) or compensatable (X)
						Module status
ART4013M	4	1	Drawing	40	C	NC
ART4018M	4	1	Context: Making art and artists	20	C	X
ART4014M	4	2	Visual Narratives	40	C	NC
ART4019M	4	2	Presenting representation	20	C	X
ART5013M	5	1	Engagement	30	C	NC
ART5020M	5	1	Making, sensing, thinking	20	C	X
ART5018M	5	1 & 2	Professional Networks (Illustration)	20	C	X
ART5014M	5	2	Exhibition	30	C	NC
ART5021M	5	2	Art: Ethics and aesthetics	20	C	X
ART5022M	5	1 or 2	Professional Networks (Exchange)	10	C*	X
ART6010M	6	1	Advanced Studio (Illustration)	30	C	NC
ART6014M	6	1	Dissertation	30	C	NC
ART6011M	6	2	Degree show (Illustration)	40	C	NC
ART6016M	6	2	Professional Futures (Illustration)	20	C	X

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the table above as non-compensatable. A non-compensatable module is one that must be passed at the relevant level (with a mark of 40) in order to progress.

*ART5022M is a module offered only to students who are studying abroad for one semester. They will take this module in the semester they are not abroad instead of ART5018M

Learning, teaching and assessment

Learning, teaching and assessment in Illustration is centred on a progressive acquisition of skills, knowledge and experience through studio, critical and external projects which build your knowledge of your subject and your own practice. This form of practice-based learning is aimed at introducing you to the core practices of Illustration, (drawing, still and sequential image making and narrative construction) and the range of genres and possibilities within Illustration practice as it intersects with other disciplines such as art, media, advertising and publishing, or social agendas such as sustainability, social justice, economics, culture etc.

From this foundation you will evolve a personal focus based on your interests and strengths towards a resolution. Through developing skills such as problem solving, experimentation, reflection, critical engagement you will learn how to become an autonomous, resourceful and innovative practitioner.

Learning and teaching will take place within the University, in studios, workshops seminars and lectures and also externally through live projects, work-based learning initiatives and virtually through digital engagement on the web, in online archives, social media and through the University's Virtual Learning Environment. All these sites of learning integrate to stimulate, support and expand your development as a reflective Illustration practitioner.

Teaching activities are focused on an interactive engagement with you and your work. You will have regular informal tutorials in studio as well as regular formal portfolio review tutorials. Seminars and reading groups will engage you in critical debates, and workshops will engage you in skills development. Subject-specific technicians and technical tutors will support your work through workshops, demonstrations and informal tutoring. A programme of visiting speakers will connect you to current thinking, research and practice in Illustration and related disciplines.

A key interactive mode of learning is the critique as formative assessment where a group of peers, tutors or professionals will engage in a collective discussion about your work. Your participation in critiques will provide a critical framework for you to develop skills of analysis, reflection leading to a greater degree of self-

awareness. The many modes of formative assessment (including crits, tutorials, presentations) will also provide a greater knowledge of how to reach benchmarks set at summative assessment stage. You will therefore be aware of your levels of achievement as you progress through the modules and levels of study.

Portfolio and assessment
Assessment in the programme is centred on the development of your portfolio which captures the range and diversity of your work, both practically and critically, and helps you to make connections between different aspects of your practice. Self, peer, tutor and professional assessments provide an ongoing dialogue about your work. You will have regular one-to-one and small group tutorials which look in depth at your practice and agree feedforward actions with your academic tutor, enabling you to focus and direct your learning.

One of the crucial ways that you develop as an independent practitioner is through assessment and evaluation. During the programme you will experience a range of approaches to assessment. You will experience assessment of your work by tutors, peers and also your own self assessments which ultimately are the most important as they demonstrate your own understanding of your practice. Assessment should be an ongoing dialogue which is centred on your work whether practical or theoretical; this dialogue is captured in your reflective portfolio.

Formative assessment is always focused on identifying your strengths and areas for development in order to focus your personal, academic and professional development. You will initiate and maintain a reflective portfolio which captures all your learning and enables you to make connections on your work within the curriculum and also externally to give a holistic perspective on your practice and direction. You will have regular one-to-one or small group tutorials centred on your portfolio with your academic tutor; this will collate formative assessment responses from all projects and activities happening in the review period as well as your self-evaluations of these activities in order to discuss and agree feedforward actions for you to develop your practice. Assessments will use the University assessment matrix which accounts for a range of assessment criteria in order to make it clear where your strengths and areas for development are.

Summative assessments usually take place at the end of the module and reflect the cumulative body of work that you have undertaken during the module and which is reflected in a numerical mark. This cumulative approach is intended to enable you to respond to feedback and develop your work. It is also intended to encourage you to take risks with your work in the knowledge that you can reflect, refine and redirect your practice following formative feedback. For this reason, modules will formally end with some form of collection, exhibition or portfolio review which enables the work to be summarised and assessed. This will usually provide an opportunity to discuss and clarify your work to an audience of tutors and/or peers.

Programme learning outcomes, Generic Assessment Descriptors, marking and feedback
The programme learning outcomes (PLOs) are mapped to module specifications. The PLOs are written broadly so they can apply across the modules. In some instances, the same PLOs are mapped to multiple modules, but may be interpreted in a different way, for example, 'practice' in a theory module can be interpreted as your scholarly writing practice, whereas in a studio module, this will be interpreted as your making practice. To pass a module you must demonstrate through the assessment for that module, the PLOs that have been mapped to it. When marking your work, we use Generic Assessment Descriptors (GAD), the GAD details the marking criteria for each assessment, we have also mapped the PLOs to it, this enables you to understand how your work will be marked. The GAD will also be used when we provide feedback so that you can see why you are succeeding and how to improve.

Progression and graduation requirements

The University's general regulations for undergraduate awards apply to this programme.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the Programme Structure section as non-compensatable.

Internal and external reference points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:
- [University mission and values](#)
- [University 2026 Strategy](#)
- [QAA subject benchmark statements](#)
- [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#)
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Date written 21/10/21 / revised:
Programme originally approved: