

EXPLORE YOUR CREATIVE POTENTIAL

PRE-DEGREE & SIXTH FORM STUDY FOR AMBITIOUS CREATIVES
JOIN US IN AUTUMN 2025



“TEACHERS GIVE STUDENTS OPPORTUNITIES TO DEVELOP NEW SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE BY ACCESSING THE UNIVERSITY’S HIGHER EDUCATION ART AND DESIGN RESOURCES. OFSTED REPORT, 2023

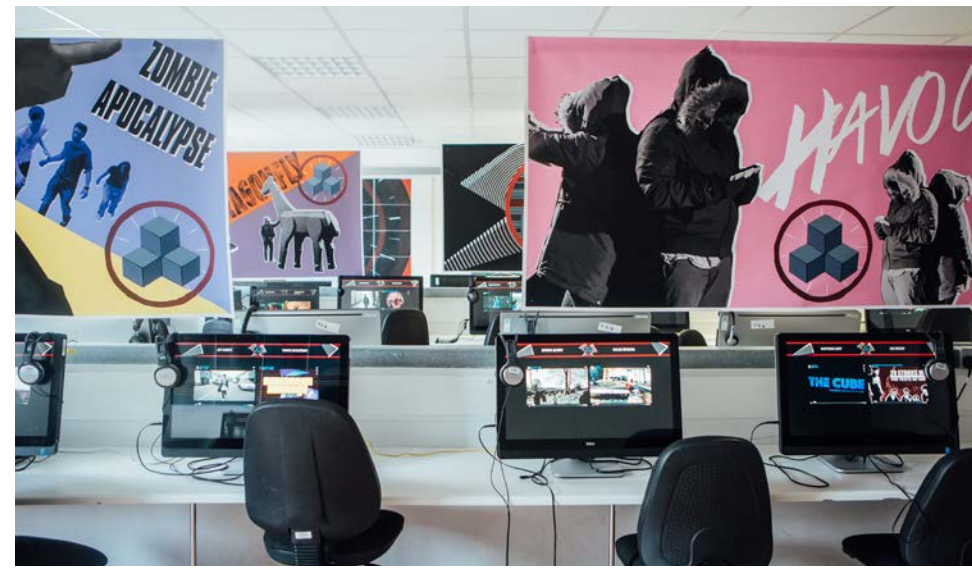
WHAT OUR STUDENTS SAY

Erin Williams, a Photography student from Torpoint, Cornwall, said: “I’m very pleased that I got a Distinction! I was hoping to do well but this is better than I’d expected and I’m proud that my work has paid off. I struggled learning in a conventional school, I didn’t do well in classrooms or in exams, so I don’t think staying in that setting for A-Levels would have suited me at all. The environment and working styles for Pre-Degree study at Arts University Plymouth appealed to me much more.”

“I’ve really enjoyed the freedom that was given to us in our projects and appreciated the support that my teachers here have given me. The course team supported and prompted me but were never patronising. It was my teachers at Arts University Plymouth who helped me to look at the kinds of work that I enjoy and helped me to decide what to do next.”

WE GET GREAT RESULTS

Our students are committed, and well supported to ensure they complete their course in full. **97% of our UAL Extended Diploma students received their full qualification in 2024, with 38% of our students obtaining a Distinction, which is equivalent to 3 A*s at A-level (168 UCAS points).** We’re also proud that **70% of Extended Diploma students achieved a high grade.** This puts Arts University Plymouth above the national benchmark for students achieving Distinctions on Extended Diploma qualifications, preparing the students for degree-level higher education or to progress onto a career in the UK’s booming creative industries.



WHAT IS AN EXTENDED DIPLOMA?

Our tailor-made UAL Level 3 Extended Diplomas across six different pathways are specialised creative qualifications, designed by artists and designers, for artists and designers. Awarded by University of the Arts London (UAL), they are assessed by coursework, equivalent to three full A-Levels or a maximum of 168 UCAS points, and are recognised by UCAS, universities throughout the UK, and by employers.

Students will be supported to progress to Higher Education at Arts University Plymouth, another university or into employment. We normally offer places to students who have at least four GCSEs at grade 9 to 4 (or A* to C in the old grading scheme), including English and preferably with one in a creative subject, and who show commitment and enthusiasm for art and design through examples of creative work.

WHAT IS A FOUNDATION DIPLOMA?

This is a post A-Level one-year course that prepares the student for degree level study with a maximum value of 112 UCAS points and has Pass, Merit and Distinction outcomes. This course is free of charge for eligible students - check our website or get in touch to find out more.

The Foundation Diploma course prepares students for progression to one of our outstanding Bachelor’s degree programmes here at Arts University Plymouth, or to study at degree level at other prestigious universities. It is an opportunity to develop yourself in an independent way, it’s about finding your artistic voice. You do that by putting your preconceived ideas to one side, having an open mind, being flexible and playfully experimenting with materials, ideas, themes, projects, processes, ideas, techniques, and academic theories. It’s a well planned, well-organised course with plenty of room for movement and manoeuvre, so you are able to find what truly excites you.

MEET OUR SPECIALISTS

WILL DARCH
SUBJECT LEADER - FILMMAKING & MEDIA PRODUCTION

Following a career with media production companies including BBC and TwoFour, Will moved into teaching in 2014 alongside working on his own projects in filmmaking, music video production and podcasting.

How would you like your students to feel while they study with you?

Our course provides students with the tools to harness their potential and act on the inspirations around them. Filmmaking is a collaborative process and you will be surrounded by fellow creatives to draw from and challenge each other.



CAMILLE DALAIS-LEACHER
TEACHER - FASHION AND TEXTILES + ACADEMIC SKILLS LECTURER

With an MA in Scriptwriting and a BA (Hons) degree in Media & Cultural Studies, Camille teaches students on the Extended Diploma in Fashion and Textiles and also specialises in teaching GCSE English.

What makes you most excited to be part of Arts University Plymouth?

The University is continually evolving with accessibility, creativity and technology. We inspire young people to feel comfortable being individuals, pushing boundaries and embracing mistakes; resulting in resilience and problem solving skills.

HOW TO APPLY

For post-GCSE study you can apply online through the Arts University Plymouth website by selecting your chosen course within the courses area and clicking the ‘Apply Now’ option.

EXTENDED DIPLOMAS

Applications can be made at any time during the year, with Interview Evenings held once a month.

Interview Evenings are an opportunity for us to learn about you, your creative potential and why you are interested in studying with us.

You can tell us about any learning difficulties or disabilities you may have so we can offer you the appropriate support. It is also a good moment for you to find out what we offer and gain an understanding of the student experience.

FOUNDATION DIPLOMA

You can apply at any time during the year. However, we receive a high number of applications and have a limited number of places for this course, so we recommend that you submit your application as early as possible.

Our application form asks for details of your previous qualifications and any relevant work experience, as well as a short personal statement where you can tell us about yourself and your interests. At this point, we will invite you for an interview.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

EXTENDED DIPLOMAS

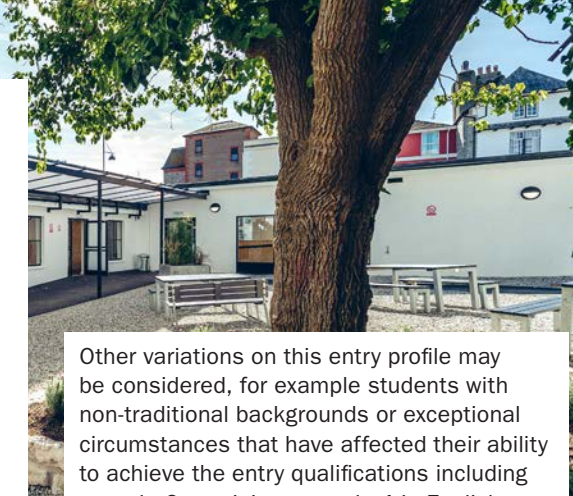
We offer places to students who have a minimum of four GCSEs (grades 9 - 4 or A* - C) preferably with one in a creative subject, and including both English and Maths at grade 9-4.

JULIA STEAN
SUBJECT LEADER - FASHION & TEXTILES

Julia has over 20 years of experience as an educator, including teaching Pre-Degree, Foundation Diploma and Undergraduate level students, and she previously ran her own business creating bespoke home furnishings.

What are you most proud of from your time teaching at Arts University Plymouth?

My former students have progressed into such a wide range of careers within the creative industries, from footwear and underwear designers, to tailors, printed textile designers, fashion photographers and influencers. I am most proud of seeing students develop their individual skills, strengths and confidence across the two-year journey while they study with us.



Other variations on this entry profile may be considered, for example students with non-traditional backgrounds or exceptional circumstances that have affected their ability to achieve the entry qualifications including a grade C or minimum grade 4 in English and Maths.

FOUNDATION DIPLOMA

The Foundation Diploma in Art & Design requires five GCSEs, including C or grade 4 in both English and Maths, plus a full Level 3 qualification such as an Extended Diploma or at least two A-Levels grade A* - E, preferably with one in a creative subject.

All applicants will be invited to an interview where they will be able to discuss their portfolio or showreel of creative work and commitment and passion for art, design and media.

SUPPORTING GCSE ENGLISH & MATHS

Those applicants who have not yet achieved a grade C or 4 or above in GCSE Maths and/or English may be made a conditional offer and then invited to take a diagnostic test before we can confirm your offer of study. The diagnostic test will assess your level of Maths and/or English and your aptitude to study up to two GCSEs alongside a full Level 3 Extended Diploma programme (equivalent to three A-Levels).

For those students who are made an offer of study conditional upon resitting or completing their GCSE Maths and/or English to a grade C or 4, they will be required to attend two weekly Maths and/or English classes and an exam on campus, in addition to their Extended or Foundation Diploma timetable.

WELCOME

Our specialist Pre-Degree study programmes offer ambitious creatives the opportunity to gain the sought-after skills necessary to progress onto Higher Education study or industry. We know that modern life places complex demands on graduates looking for work, and that GCSE-level and A-level students can feel like they have to make a choice between pursuing academic excellence or learning the vocational skills that will best prepare them for their future careers.

That’s why, in addition to our creative UAL Level 3 Extended Diplomas in Creative Practice, Art, Design and Communication (equivalent to three A-Levels), we understand that art students are keen to explore and develop their creative practice in social and industrial contexts. Arts University Plymouth, both as an educational institution and as an inclusive, creative community, is a natural home for this kind of activism. Pre-Degree students have been working on projects with organisations such as Pollenize, a community interest company who work with local community groups to improve and reward spaces in and around the Plymouth area to help bees and insects thrive. We work with the Prince’s Trust to develop business ideas and start up plans where students could also benefit from accessing £500 grants and business mentorship for a year. All of this whilst also taking part in national competitions with ARTiculation, a national speaking, listening and critical awareness competition, and the Royal Opera House Design Challenge.

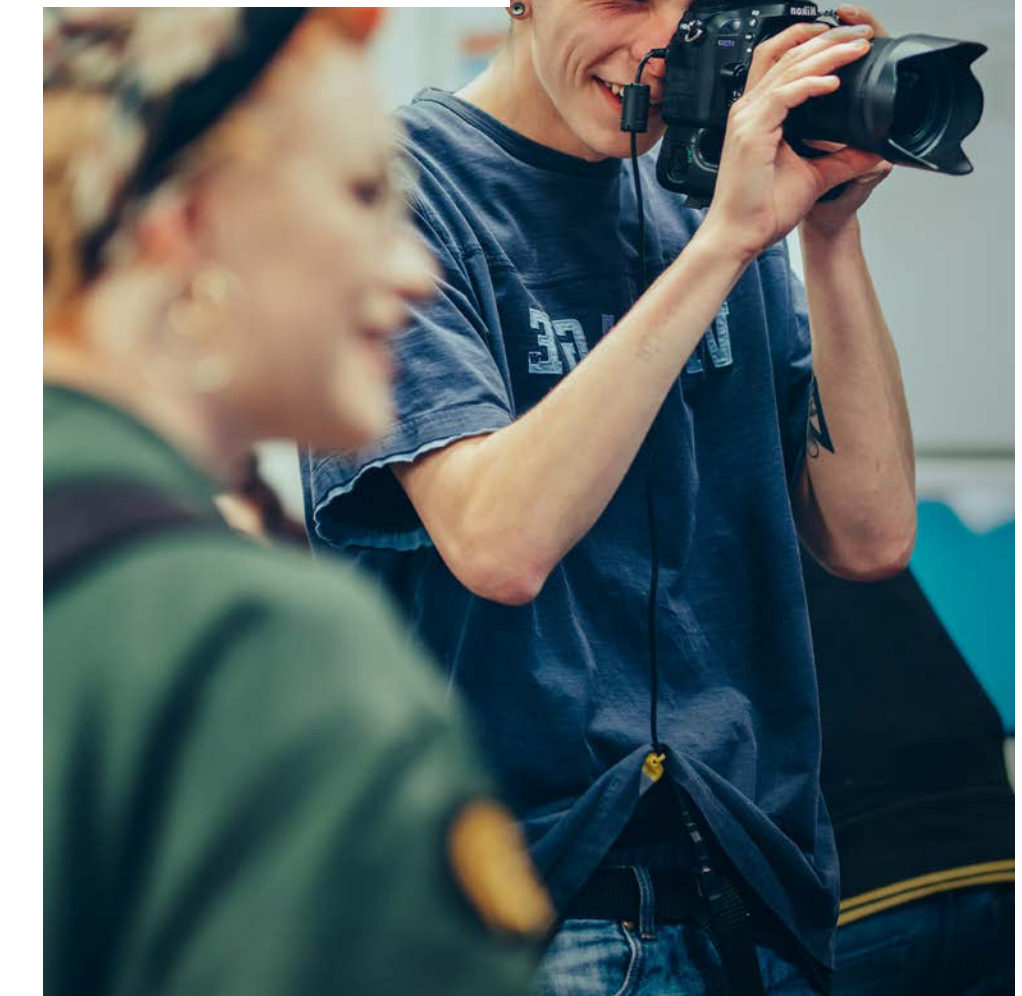
Your arrival at Arts University Plymouth is the most exciting creative threshold, it’s your gateway to an extraordinary range of specialist degrees in art, craft, design and media education. This is a place to discover who you are and where your creative path is leading into the global marketplace that is the creative industries internationally.



STEVEN FORSYTH
HEAD OF PRE-DEGREE & SIXTH FORM

PRE-DEGREE & SIXTH FORM

Our Pre-Degree & Sixth Form campuses at Palace Court and Palace Studios are home to over 300 16-19 year-old students studying Extended Diplomas and our Foundation Diploma. Covering subjects such as arts, fashion, film, game arts, illustration, crafts, photography and graphic design, it is here that we provide a safe and creative environment, where young people can grow, learn new skills, and become more independent.



TOBIE LOATES
SUBJECT LEADER - PHOTOGRAPHY

Tobie began shooting black-and-white film on a 35mm camera in the 1990s, specialising in the use of classic photography kit. He continues to practise as a commercial photographer with a passion for landscapes.

Tell us about your background as an artist and what influences you?

The world around me influences what I do, from travel and documentary to landscapes and people. My love of the ocean and having surfed for over thirty years has inspired much of my landscape work.

CHOOSING YOUR COURSE

UAL FOUNDATION DIPLOMA IN ART & DESIGN

A one year diagnostic course that explores a range of different specialist practice within the Art and Design industry. From fine art to filmmaking, fashion to illustration, this course encourages you to explore all the potential possibilities of a career in Art and Design and prepares you for Higher Education studies with lectures and seminars exploring art history, theory and contemporary practice. Over the course of the year, you will develop critical projects which explore social, cultural and environmental themes, building an experimental and innovative approach to materials which culminates in a final self initiated project and public exhibition.

UAL LEVEL 3 EXTENDED DIPLOMA IN CREATIVE PRACTICE: ART & DESIGN

This exploratory course provides a fast-paced introduction to materials, techniques and processes, supporting practical work with contextual studies covering a wide range of art, design and media practices. Creating your own unique response to themes like culture, social justice and the environment, you'll develop an understanding of traditional and contemporary art and design practice through practical projects. Potential careers could include fine artist, designer, illustrator, craftsperson, curator, architect, or art historian.



UAL LEVEL 3 EXTENDED DIPLOMA IN CREATIVE PRACTICE: PHOTOGRAPHY

This route provides a dynamic environment for aspiring photographers to develop their technical and creative skills, including access to some of the best photographic resources in the region. Balancing theory with practical work, you will be encouraged to bring your outside interests into your photographic projects, studying traditional and digital techniques while gaining industry standard skills in studio lighting, Photoshop, location techniques and even underwater photography.

UAL LEVEL 3 EXTENDED DIPLOMA IN CREATIVE PRACTICE: FILMMAKING & MEDIA PRODUCTION

This practical, industry-focused route in one of the region's best equipped media departments will help you find and develop your niche as a filmmaker, director, producer or animator. From scripts and shooting to production, you'll work as part of a cross-disciplinary team, learning the skills needed to succeed as a freelance sole trader, such as a YouTuber, or as part of an agency or production team.

UAL LEVEL 3 EXTENDED DIPLOMA IN CREATIVE PRACTICE: GRAPHICS, ILLUSTRATION & GAME ARTS

This flexible route will help you to develop your drawing and design skills, experimenting with materials and techniques while you learn how to communicate ideas in powerful and memorable ways for graphic design, illustration and game arts. You'll also develop specialist digital skills in creative image manipulation and 3D computer modelling, as well as developing an understanding of the context of interactivity and games design, including the evolution of mobile technology for handheld devices and apps.

UAL LEVEL 3 EXTENDED DIPLOMA IN CREATIVE PRACTICE: FASHION & TEXTILES

This is a fast-paced, practical route for makers and designers, giving you the skills to develop ideas and design for the fashion and textiles industries. With projects across fashion, textiles, styling, promotion and fashion business, future careers could include fashion designer, interior designer, stylist, textile designer, print designer, costumier or milliner.



GET IN TOUCH

All of the dates and timings for our Open Days and events are published on our website - for more information and to book your place, visit aup.ac.uk/open-days

You're also welcome to turn up at the event without prior booking. If you're travelling to visit us for an Open Day or would like advice on places to eat or stay while in the city, get in touch for our recommendations and deals.

If you have any questions about any of our courses, have a general enquiry, or would like more information on our Open Days, please get in contact using the following channels.

Pre-Degree & Sixth Form Campus

Palace Court & Palace Studios

Buckwell Street

Plymouth

Devon, PL1 2DA

☎ 01752 203434

✉ hello@aup.ac.uk

🌐 aup.ac.uk/ask-a-student

📱 [f](#) [i](#) [t](#) [x](#) [v](#)

@artsuniplym

OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Check out our YouTube channel for how-to videos, vlogs from our students about life as an art student, and talks from some of our amazing visiting lecturers. Our YouTube channel has everything you need to discover what it is really like studying at an independent arts university.



Cover Image Credits: Work by Yasmin Howarth, Extended Diploma Fashion & Textiles (2022) and Foundation Diploma (2023) graduate. Photographed by Luke Frost, Extended Diploma Photography (2018) graduate.



YOUR GUARANTEED UNIVERSITY PLACE

In 2023, two thirds of our students progressed on to a university of their choice or other higher education. Many choose one of our award winning degrees including BA (Hons) Graphic Design, BA (Hons) Costume Production and BA (Hons) Film & Screen Arts.

We know our Pre-Degree students are well prepared to succeed at university, so we guarantee them a place on one of our BA (Hons) degrees. Students achieving a Pass or higher, and who meet our entry criteria will be offered a place on an Arts University Plymouth degree course.



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

You'll see plenty of new words and abbreviations while conducting your research into your next steps after GCSEs, but we've highlighted the 'need-to-know' phrases below.

Further Education (FE) - Education below the level of a university degree for people who have finished their GCSEs.

Level 3 Qualification - The Level 3 Extended Diploma is a full time two-year course which gives you a qualification equivalent to three A-Levels.

Post-16 or Pre-Degree - The level of study after GCSEs, including vocational training and work-based learning - an alternative to A-Levels.

Higher Education (HE) - An optional stage of learning beyond secondary level, usually offered by universities and colleges. You can apply for this level of education once you have completed A-levels, BTECs, or IBs.

Alumni - A group of former pupils or students of one particular school, college or university.

HEI - Higher Education Institution.

UCAS - Universities and Colleges Admissions Service. The website that will process student applications to Higher Education.

Personal Statement - A piece of text applicants write to demonstrate their suitability to study on a particular course.

Entry Requirements - What an applicant needs to have to get onto their course of choice. This may include qualifications, subject specialisms, interviews, portfolio reviews, admission tests, and more.

