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**Programme Specification**

**Title of Course: MA Aesthetics and Art Theory**

**Date Specification Produced: October 2012**

**Date Specification Last Revised: February 2020**

This Programme Specification is designed for prospective students, current students, academic staff and employers. It provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the intended learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if they take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the teaching, learning and assessment methods, learning outcomes and content of each module can be found in the Course Handbook on Canvas and in individual Module Descriptors.

**SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION**

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| **Title:** | MA Aesthetics and Art Theory |
| **Awarding Institution:** | Kingston University |
| **Teaching Institution:** | Kingston University |
| **Location:** | Penrhyn Road/Knights Park |
| **Programme Accredited by:** | NA |

**SECTION2: THE PROGRAMME**

1. **Programme Introduction**

This unique programme combines a grounding in philosophical aesthetics in the modern European tradition with study of contemporary art theory. The programme pays particular attention to the influence of Immanuel Kant's philosophy and aesthetic theory, and to the debates that structured the development of post-Kantian aesthetics in Germany, France and the Anglophone world. In addition to close textual analysis of fundamental works by philosophers and critical theorists, the course involves detailed critical engagement with major developments in modern and contemporary art. The MA appeals to students with a background in fine art, art history or art theory, as well as to students with a background in general or analytical Philosophy, or related subjects like cultural studies, visual culture, and literature. It provides an ideal preparation for doctoral research in art, visual culture or philosophy, and other related fields in the humanities and social sciences. The MA also prepares graduates for a wide range of careers in the arts, education, and the creative industries.

The MA in Aesthetics and Art Theory is taught by internationally recognized specialists at the UK's most dynamic and inventive centre for research in modern European philosophy, the CRMEP. Since its inception in 1994, the CRMEP has developed a national and international reputation for teaching and research in the field of post-Kantian European philosophy, characterised by a strong emphasis on broad cultural and intellectual contexts and a distinctive sense of social and political engagement. Core staff teaching on this programme are recognised as leading philosophers in their fields; unusually, in philosophy, many are also well-known for their writing about contemporary art. The MA programme is enhanced by the CRMEP's lively series of research events, including collaborative projects with UK and European Art Institutions. The CRMEP also has strong links with the Philosophy Department at the University of Paris 8, including staff exchanges and a joint MA. MA Aesthetics and Art Theory students may take advantage of the Erasmus arrangement with Paris 8 and spend part of their time studying there.

The course also includes an optional integrated work placement or placements, which enables students to further develop their professional skills and enhance their employability. From the start of the course, students who select this option will begin to work to secure (a) placement(s) suitable for their course and career, supported and advised by the Careers and Employability Services team and the Professional Placement Module Leader. Workshops are provided on CV creation, interview techniques and placement searching, with drop-in sessions to provide additional support. In order to take the Professional Placement module, students need to have arranged a placement, approved by the Course Leader, by the end the preceding teaching block. Students undertake the placement either before the final module, or following the completion of the final module. During the placement students will be supervised (online) by a tutor who, if possible, will visit during the placement. Depending on the location of the placement, meetings might take place face-to-face or via video conferencing platforms. The placement module will make use of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Canvas for communication and dissemination of information between students and staff as well as making online learning materials available. Students will be required to keep a critical diary of the tasks and duties undertaken during their placement, to provide a framework for a reflective essay and work placement report, which is submitted for assessment at the end of the placement. They will also assemble and collate samples of work and evidence of achievement produced during their placement which will also be submitted for assessment. Placement providers will be asked to appraise the students’ work and this feedback will be made available to the student. The placement module will be assessed on a pass/fail basis.

This integrated placement(s) provides students with a valuable opportunity to apply and develop their knowledge and skills in a professional working environment, enabling them to deepen their knowledge of the industry, develop their self-confidence, and strengthen their CV. Students undertaking placement activities are in a stronger position to gain the skills and experience which are valued by employers.

1. **Aims of the Programme**

The general aims of the Programme are:

* to offer students the opportunity to study modern European philosophy and contemporary art theory to an advanced level within a taught programme.
* to enhance students’ knowledge of the main lines of inquiry in contemporary art theory, informed by an awareness of their grounding in the development of the post-Kantian philosophical tradition.
* to enable students to develop an advanced understanding of current debates in the field of contemporary art theory.
* to foster students’ ability to develop general philosophical skills, both in class discussions and in individual written work, of interpretation, analysis, criticism and argument.
* to provide training in advanced research skills and the use of research resources, both physical and electronic.
* to develop students’ ability to construct a complex argument and to express that argument in clear and accurate English prose.
* to provide students with a solid foundation for further postgraduate research or professional development.
* The 2-year programme with integrated placement(s) also provides students with an opportunity to enhance their professional skills, preparing them for higher levels of employment, further study and lifelong learning

This programme allows for three exit qualifications: Masters (180 credits), post-graduate Diploma (120 credits), and post-graduate Certificate (60 credits).

1. **Intended Learning Outcomes**

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, skills and other attributes in the following areas. Where appropriate, the programme outcomes are referenced to the QAA subject benchmarks for Philosophy\* and the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (2014), and relate to the typical student.

\* There is no benchmark statement relating specifically to Philosophy at Level 7. Where appropriate, we are guided by the most recent QAA benchmark statement for Philosophy at Honours level.

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| **Programme Learning Outcomes** | | | | | |
|  | **Knowledge and Understanding**  **On completion of the course students will have advanced knowledge and understanding of:** |  | **Intellectual skills**  **On completion of the course students will be able to:** |  | **Subject Practical skills**  **On completion of the course students will be able to:** |
| A1 | The main concepts introduced and discussed by Immanuel Kant in his *Critique of Judgement*, in the light of recent and current critical debates | B1 | Interpret and analyse complex and difficult philosophical texts, informed by current critical practice | C1 | Work independently and manage their time effectively |
| A2 | The formative role of Kant’s *Critique of Judgement* from the nineteenth to twenty-first-century aesthetic tradition | B2 | Consider and critically examine unfamiliar ideas and terminology | C2 | Prepare and deliver effective oral presentations of their work |
| A3 | The main ideas and arguments of two or more major thinkers within the post-Kantian tradition of European philosophy, as presented in canonical texts | B3 | Recognize methodological errors, rhetorical devices and unnoticed assumptions | C3 | Locate appropriate electronic and physical research resources and plan a programme of library-based research appropriate to an MA dissertation |
| A4 | The distinctive concepts, features and modes of argument and presentation of contemporary art theory. | B4 | Construct and sustain complex arguments about matters of a fundamental and abstract nature, and express them in clear and accurate English prose. | C4 | Organise and sustain wide-ranging research over a period of time and to structure and present a complex argument in a coherent fashion |
|  |  |  |  | C5 | Demonstrate professional skills (including self-presentation, communication, interpersonal/teamwork, research and information literacy, numeracy, time-management and project-planning, management and leadership skills, and ethical practice). |

In addition to the programme learning outcomes identified overleaf, the programme of study defined in this programme specification will allow students to develop a range of Key Skills as follows:

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| **Key Skills** | | | | | | |
| **Self-Awareness Skills** | **Communication Skills** | **Interpersonal Skills** | **Research and information Literacy Skills** | **Numeracy Skills** | **Management & Leadership Skills** | **Creativity and Problem Solving Skills** |
| Take responsibility for own learning and plan for and record own personal development | Express ideas clearly and unambiguously in writing and the spoken work | Work well with others in a group or team | Search for and select relevant sources of information | Collect data from primary and secondary sources and use appropriate methods to manipulate and analyse this data | Determine the scope of a task (or project) | Apply scientific and other knowledge to analyse and evaluate information and data and to find solutions to problems |
| Recognise own academic strengths and weaknesses, reflect on performance and progress and respond to feedback | Present, challenge and defend ideas and results effectively orally and in writing | Work flexibly and respond to change | Critically evaluate information and use it appropriately | Present and record data in appropriate formats | Identify resources needed to undertake the task (or project) and to schedule and manage the resources | Work with complex ideas and justify judgements made through effective use of evidence |
| Organise self effectively, agreeing and setting realistic targets, accessing support where appropriate and managing time to achieve targets | Actively listen and respond appropriately to ideas of others | Discuss and debate with others and make concession to reach agreement | Apply the ethical and legal requirements in both the access and use of information | Interpret and evaluate data to inform and justify arguments | Evidence ability to successfully complete and evaluate a task (or project), revising the plan where necessary |  |
| Work effectively with limited supervision in unfamiliar contexts |  | Give, accept and respond to constructive feedback | Accurately cite and reference information sources | Be aware of issues of selection, accuracy and uncertainty in the collection and analysis of data | Motivate and direct others to enable an effective contribution from all participants |  |
|  |  | Show sensitivity and respect for diverse values and beliefs | Use software and IT technology as appropriate |  |  |  |

1. **Entry Requirements**

The minimum entry qualifications for the programme are:

From BA: Normally a good (2:1 or upper-second class honours, or better) undergraduate degree or its equivalent in a relevant or related subject (including but not limited to philosophy, history, politics, cultural studies, fine art and visual culture, modern languages). Applicants with other kinds of qualifications will be considered on an individual basis.

A minimum, overall IELTS score of 6.5 or equivalent is required for those for whom English is not their first language.

1. **Programme Structure**

This programme is offered in full-time, part-time and ‘with professional placement’ mode, and leads to the award of MA Aesthetics and Art Theory (interim awards: PG Cert Aesthetics and Art Theory; PG Dip Aesthetics and Art Theory).

Entry is normally at level 7 with BA or equivalent qualifications (See section D). Transfer from a similar programme is possible at level 7 with good passes in comparable level 7 modules – but is at the discretion of the course team. Intake is normally in September.

**E1. Professional and Statutory Regulatory Bodies**

N/A

**E2. Work-based learning**

Work placement is an integral part of the 2-year programme and students will receive support from the award-winning Careers and Employability Services team.

While it is the responsibility of individual students to secure appropriate placements, the Careers and Employability Services team offers each student support at all stages of the application process, including writing CVs, completing application forms, participating in mock interviews, assessment centre activities and psychometric tests. Sourcing and applying for placement(s) gives students the opportunity to experience a competitive job application process.

The experience of the work placement period enables students to apply their learning in the professional work environment, to reflect upon their own personal experience of working in an applied setting, to focus on aspects of this experience that they can clearly relate to their prior learning, and to evaluate the relationships between academic skills and employers’ expectations. Students will be assessed during and at the end of this period, through a portfolio of work, which will be marked as pass/fail.

**E3. Outline Programme Structure**

The degree consists of 180 credits, four modules of 30 credits each and a final dissertation of 60 credits.

All students will be provided with the University regulations. Full details of each module will be provided in module descriptors and student module guides.

Students on the 2-year programme (with integrated placement) must complete all modules except the final ‘capstone project’ module, by the end of TB2, and then work in their placement(s) for a maximum of 12 months. The student should confirm that their placement opportunity is available by the end of May, and the course team will confirm whether this is acceptable within two weeks. Students on placement(s) must complete a portfolio assessment which includes a reflection on how they have applied the skills they have developed during the previous year, within a professional working environment.

A comprehensive list of all possible options is provided here. The option list in any given year will be carefully constructed to ensure that the course curriculum is coherent, enabling students to achieve the programme learning outcomes via their chosen selection of modules.

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| **Level 7** | | | | |
| **Compulsory modules** | **Module code** | **Credit**  **Value** | **Level** | **Teaching Block** |
| Kant and the Aesthetic Tradition | PH7701 | 30 | 7 | 1 |
| Philosophy Dissertation | PH7001 | 60 | 7 | 2 and 3 |
| **Option Modules** | | | | |
| Romantic Philosophy of Art | PH7702 | 30 | 7 | 1 |
| Art Theory: Modernist, Avant-garde, Contemporary | PH7703 | 30 | 7 | 2 |
| Plasticity and Form | PH7704 | 30 | 7 | 2 |
| Philosophy of Art History | PH7705 | 30 | 7 | 1 |
| Kant and His Legacy | PH7801 | 30 | 7 | 1 |
| Hegel and His Legacy | PH7802 | 30 | 7 | 1 |
| Nietzsche and Heidegger | PH7803 | 30 | 7 | 2 |
| Recent French Philosophy | PH7804 | 30 | 7 | 2 |
| Topics in Modern European Philosophy | PH7805 | 30 | 7 | 2 |
| Political Philosophy | PH7806 | 30 | 7 | 2 |
| Critique, Practice, Power | PH7901 | 30 | 7 | 1 |
| Modes of Subjection | PH7907 | 30 | 7 | 2 |
| Recent Italian Philosophy | PH7903 | 30 | 7 | 1 |
| German Critical Theory | PH7904 | 30 | 7 | 2 |
| Marx and His Legacy | PH7905 | 30 | 7 | 2 |
| Philosophy and Psychoanalysis | PH7906 | 30 | 7 | 2 |
| Professional Placement | HU7100 | 120 | 7 | TB3 (Yr 1) and  TB1&TB2 (Yr 2) |

Students must choose ONE of the following modules: PH7702 Romantic Philosophy of Art, PH7703 Art Theory: Modernist, Avant-garde, Contemporary, PH7704 Plasticity and Form, PH7705 Philosophy of Art History.

Students exiting the programme with 60 credits are eligible for the award of PgCert in Aesthetics and Art Theory.

Students exiting the programme with 120 credits are eligible for the award of PgDip in Aesthetics and Art Theory.

NB Not all modules run every year.

1. **Principles of Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

The Programme has been designed to take account of the KU Curriculum Design principles. The Programme uses a range of teaching and learning methods that encourage students’ active engagement throughout. Teaching and learning methods are designed to suit the content and learning outcomes of the modules. Lectures are knowledge focussed, explaining core aspects of the syllabus and its intellectual context, as well as offering models of interpretation and commentary. Seminar discussions explore the understanding of set texts and lecture materials and develop skills of exegesis, argumentation and oral presentation. Brief (formatively assessed) oral presentations help students develop their own understanding of the essentials of particular texts and topics and help students gain confidence in public speaking and response. As both presenters and respondents students engage in peer review and develop critical questioning skills. Individual and group tutorials offer opportunities to discuss essay topics and any issues students may find particularly difficult on the modules, and are used to receive detailed feedback on assessed written work. Individual and group tutorials are arranged with module tutors; on core modules and some option modules doctoral Teaching Assistants (CRMEP PhD students) also run tutorials. Students also learn autonomously through independent study of set texts, library research, peer engagement and discussion both inside and outside the class, and through individual writing. Development of academic skills is threaded throughout the whole course.

The regular extra-curricular research events schedule is also partly designed to complement and extend formal teaching and learning on the MA. (See <https://www.kingston.ac.uk/faculties/kingston-school-of-art/research-and-innovation/crmep/>). Research seminars, lectures, conferences and workshops include topics relevant to the MA and offer students the opportunity to engage with a wider national and international research community. An annual CRMEP Graduate Conference, organised by a team of PhD and MA students, allows students to participate in organisational and decision-making processes. Students who present papers at the conference also benefit from the experience of speaking and responding to a large public audience, and from further formative peer and faculty assessment. As well as formal class contact in lectures, seminars and tutorials, the extra-curricular events programme also allows for and encourages significant, informal staff-student contact as part of the enhanced learning and teaching environment. On-line learning technologies are also used throughout the course, to communicate with students, to make learning materials available to students and to foster on-line learning where appropriate.

Assessment in all modules (including the Dissertation module) is both formative and summative. All 30-credit modules are formatively assessed (by staff and peers) through seminar discussions and students’ oral presentations. 30-credit modules are also summatively assessed either through a 1500-word written exercise and a 3500-4000-word essay or with one 5000-6000-word essay alone. The 1500-word written exercise is designed to ensure that students have grasped the basic philosophical content in the early stages of each module; to identify, early on, any problems that individual students may need to address and to identify the means to do so; to identify and devise strategies for building on individual student’s strengths; and to build confidence and skills in academic writing. Individual feedback tutorials in which the written exercise are discussed also allow staff and teaching assistants to provide formative guidance and advice in preparation for the essay. The longer essays gives students the opportunity to explore topics in greater depth. Students take advantage of pre-essay tutorials to discuss and receive formative advice on essay plans; the summative assessment of essays includes written comments that provide formative guidance on skills for the preparation of the dissertation. In summative assessments the emphasis falls squarely on the development of the ability to demonstrate comprehension and to communicate aspects of difficult topics in writing. This is a major transferable skill and intense preparation for any further postgraduate (for example doctoral) study.

Formative assessment and peer engagement are also prominent features of the four Research Skills seminars which are included as part of the Dissertation module PHM7001. Seminars cover: i) accessing and using library and electronic resources, with the Philosophy Subject Librarian; ii) writing, composition and editing skills; iii) preparation of the dissertation proposal and writing the dissertation; and iv) oral presentations by students on agreed dissertation topics. The first three of these seminars comprise formal skills teaching; in the fourth seminar students practice and extend oral presentation and response skills, receiving and participating in formative peer assessment, as well as receiving feedback from staff. In the Dissertation module, students apply the skills and knowledge acquired during the taught phase of the degree to the preparation of an extended piece of research-based writing (12–15000 words). Students are assigned an appropriate supervisor from the Philosophy team to guide them through this largely self-directed phase of the degree. Students meet regularly with their supervisor while preparing their dissertation to discuss the scope and intellectual content of the dissertation, research strategy and, as appropriate, early drafts of parts of their dissertation.

1. **Support for Students and their Learning**

In addition to structured teaching, guidance is available for students throughout the year through the provision of specific pre-set Office Hours, during which all members of the teaching staff are available for consultation with students. Students are encouraged to meet with teaching staff at such times, and at other times by appointment, for individual tutorial sessions. Students are also assigned a personal tutor, normally the tutor teaching the core module or the Philosophy Director of Studies. In addition to help and advice from module tutors the personal tutor tracks tutees’ achievement, makes any appropriate recommendation for further support, and acts as the first contact for academic support and advice of all kinds. Provision is made for students to change personal tutor if necessary.

Students are supported by:

* A Module Leader for each module
* A Course Leader to help students understand the programme structure
* Personal Tutors to provide academic and personal support
* A placement tutor to give general advice on placements
* Technical support to advise students on IT and the use of software
* A designated Course Administrator
* An induction week at the beginning of each new academic session
* Staff Student Consultative Committee
* VLE/Canvas – a versatile online interactive intranet and learning environment accessible both on and off-site
* LinkedIn Learning – an online platform offering self-paced software tutorials
* A substantial Study Skills Centre that provides academic skills support for both UG and PG students
* Student support facilities that provide advice on issues such as finance, regulations, legal matters, accommodation, international student support etc.
* A Student Achievement Officer who provides pastoral support
* Support for students with disabilities
* The Union of Kingston Students
* Careers and Employability Services Team, who will provide support for students prior to undertaking work placement(s).

1. **Ensuring and Enhancing the Quality of the Course**

The University has several methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of its provision. These include:

* External Examiners
* Boards of Study with student representation
* Annual Monitoring and Enhancement
* Periodic review undertaken at subject level
* Student evaluation including MEQs (module evaluation questionnaires) and a Postgraduate survey.
* Moderation policies
* Feedback from employers

1. **Employability Statement**

The MA in Aesthetics and Art Theory degree fosters a range of skills highly desirable to employers, such as high level communication skills, the capacity to deal effectively with substantial quantities of complex information, skills in analysis, critical and creative thinking, research skills, self-management and the capacity to work to deadlines, meticulousness in written presentation, the ability to work both independently and constructively with others.

While some MA in Aesthetics and Art Theory students will be studying to begin or enhance a career path in teaching, research or in the creative industries, other graduates will go into a variety of careers, including public policy, media/journalism, publishing, arts administration, management, marketing, leisure and tourism, IT and a variety of public service and therapeutic fields. For those interested in further research, the course provides an excellent foundation for MPhil/PhD level study in related fields.

The 2-year integrated work placement programme is designed to provide students with enhanced opportunities for securing professional employment at the end of their degree, providing skills and experience that employers are looking for in their work force. These are supported by the services of the Careers and Employability Services team, providing drop-in and scheduled events to support students in the preparation of CVs, applications, and preparation for interviews and assessment centres.

Achievements of recent alumni of the Programme can be seen at <https://www.kingston.ac.uk/faculties/kingston-school-of-art/research-and-innovation/crmep/recent-alumni/>

1. **Approved Variants from the Undergraduate Regulations**

N/A

1. **Other sources of information that you may wish to consult**

**Course page on the KU website**

<https://www.kingston.ac.uk/postgraduate-course/aesthetics-art-theory-ma/>

**Development of Programme Learning Outcomes in Modules**

This map identifies where the field/course learning outcomes are **summatively** assessed across the modules for this field/course. It provides an aid to academic staff in understanding how individual modules contribute to the field/course aims, a means to help students monitor their own learning, personal and professional development as the field/course progresses and a checklist for quality assurance purposes.

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|  |  |  | **Level 7** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | **Module Code** |  | PH7001 | PH7701 | PH7702 | PH7703 | PH7704 | PH7705 | PH7801 | PH7802 | PH7803 | PH7804 | PH7805 | PH7806 | PH7901 | PH7906 | PH7903 | PH7904 | PH7905 | PH7907 | HU7100 |
| **Programme Learning Outcomes** | **Knowledge & Understanding** | A1 | S | S |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| A2 | S | S | S | S | S |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| A3 | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| A4 | S | S | S | S |  | S |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | S |  |
| **Intellectual Skills** | B1 | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| B2 | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| B3 | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| B4 | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| **Practical Skills** | C1 | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| C2 | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| C3 | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| C4 | S |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| C5 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | S |

**Students will be provided with formative assessment opportunities throughout the course to practise and develop their proficiency in the range of assessment methods utilised.**

**Technical Annex**

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| **Final Award(s):** | MA Aesthetics and Art Theory |
| **Intermediate Award(s):** | Postgraduate Diploma in Aesthetics and Art Theory, Postgraduate Certificate in Aesthetics and Art Theory |
| **Minimum period of registration:** | 1 year full-time, 2 years full-time (with Professional Placement); 2 years part-time |
| **Maximum period of registration:** | 2 years full-time, 3 years full-time (with Professional Placement); 4 years part-time |
| **FHEQ Level for the Final Award:** | Masters |
| **QAA Subject Benchmark:** | There is currently no benchmarking statement specific to Philosophy at postgraduate level. |
| **Modes of Delivery:** | Full-time, Part-time and ‘with Professional Placement’ |
| **Language of Delivery:** | English |
| **Faculty:** | KSA |
| **School:** | Arts, Culture and Communication |
| **Department:** | Humanities |
| **Course/Route Code:** | PFAAT1AAT01 (Full-time) |
|  | PFAAT1AAT99 (Full-time with Professional Placement)  PPAAT1AAT02 (Part-time) |