

UNIVERSITY FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION FOR:

BA (HONS) GRAPHIC COMMUNICATION

This document is a hybrid version for 2017/18¹

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION 2017/18

This Programme Specification is designed for prospective students, current students, academic staff and potential 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 he/she takes 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 unit can be found in the Unit Descriptors.

¹This version combines Section A of the new 2016/17 Programme Specification template (which combines the following sections of the Programme Specification 2015/16: A, B, C, F and table of units) and the following sections of the 2015/16 Programme Specification for the course: Course Aims; Course Outcomes; Summary of Distinctive Features of the Course; Learning, Teaching & Assessment; Enhancing the Quality of Learning & Teaching.

Section A – Material Course Information

Validating Body	University for the Creative Arts ²	
Final Award Title and Type	BA (Hons)	
Course Title	Graphic Communication	
Course Location and Length	Campus: Farnham	Length: 3 years
Period of Validation	2015/16 to 2019/20	
Name of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body	Not Applicable	
Type of Accreditation	Not Applicable	
<p>Entry criteria and requirements³</p> <p>As the UK’s highest-ranking creative arts university, we want to attract the best and most creative minds in the country – so we take a balanced approach to candidate assessment, taking both individual portfolios and exam results into account.</p> <p>That’s why your portfolio is an especially important part of your application to study with us – and we can help. Our academics can offer you expert advice on how to showcase your creative work and build a portfolio that will make your application stand out.</p> <p>More advice on how to create an exceptional portfolio is also available here, along with specific portfolio requirements for this course.</p> <p>Along with your portfolio, the standard entry requirements** for this course are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 112 new UCAS tariff points (equivalent to 280 old UCAS tariff points) from accepted qualifications*, or • Pass at Foundation Diploma in Art & Design (Level 3 or 4), or • Distinction, Merit, Merit at BTEC Extended Diploma, or • Merit at UAL Extended Diploma, or • 112 new UCAS tariff points from an accredited Access to Higher Education Diploma in appropriate subject <p>And four GCSE passes at grade A*-C and/or grade 4-9 including English (or Functional Skills English/Key Skills Communication Level 2).</p> <p>Other relevant and equivalent level 3 UK and international qualifications are considered</p>		

² Regulated by the Higher Education Funding Council for England

³ This should be the standard University Criteria unless otherwise approved by the Academic Board and include UCAS entry profile for undergraduate courses.

on an individual basis, and we encourage students from diverse educational backgrounds apply.

If your first language is not English, you will need an IELTS score of 6.0 or equivalent. If you require a visa to study in the UK, you will also need a minimum score of 5.5 in each individual component.

**To see the accepted QCF qualifications, visit: <http://uca.ac.uk/study/accepted-qualifications/>*

*** We occasionally make offers which are lower than the standard entry criteria, to students who have faced difficulties that have affected their performance and who were expected to achieve higher results. In these cases, a strong portfolio is especially helpful.*

Overall methods of assessment ⁴	Written exams:	Practical exams:	Coursework:
Stage 1	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Stage 2	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Stage 3	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Overall Learning & Teaching hours ⁵	Scheduled:	Independent:	Placement:
Stage 1	35.2%	64.8%	0.0%
Stage 2	29.3%	57.3%	13.3%
Stage 3	26.3%	73.7%	0.0%
General level of staff delivering the course ⁶	The University's current recruitment policy for Lecturers and Senior Lecturers states that they must have either an MA or equivalent professional practice in a relevant discipline or field. All lecturing staff are encouraged to work towards a teaching qualification or professional Recognition by the Higher Education Academy and this is a requirement for Senior Lecturers. Senior Lecturers are required to be professionally active or engaged in research in their discipline. All Lecturers and Senior Lecturers undertake scholarship in their disciplines. There are also Sessional Staff to link courses with		

⁴ As confirmed for the KIS course stage data: the overall percentage in terms of Written exams; Practical exams and Coursework

⁵ As confirmed for the KIS course stage data: the overall percentage by stage

⁶ Include general information about the experience or status of the staff involved in delivering the course, for example Professor, Course Leader, Senior Lecturer

	professional practice and Technicians to provide technical support.		
Mode of Study	Full-time	✓	Part-time
Language of Study	English		
Subject/Qualification Benchmark Statement: Art and Design			
Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)			

The course structure

The structure of all of the University's awards complies with the University's Common Credit Framework. All students are registered for a particular award. Exit awards are available to students in line with 6.7 of the Common Credit Framework.

Unit codes and titles	Level	Credit value	Elective/ Core	If elective is this the most popular student choice?
Year 1				
FGCM4001 - Guiding Principles and Ways of Working	4	30	Core	
FGCM4002 - Principles in Practice I	4	30	Core	
FGCM4004 - Visual Communications: Context and Theory	4	30	Core	
FGCM4003 - Principles in Practice II	4	30	Core	
Year 2				
FGCM5007 - Graphic Communication in the Professional Context	5	30	Core	
FGCM5002 - Specialist Ways of Working	5	30	Core	
FGCM5008 - Contextual and Theoretical Perspectives	5	30	Core	
FGCM5003 - Publishing and Narrative	5	30	Core	
FGCM5004 - Specialist Ways of Working in the Professional Context (Study Abroad - Outgoing)	5	30	Elective	No
FGCM5009 - Contextual and Theoretical Perspectives (Study Abroad - Outgoing)	5	30	Elective	No
Study Abroad with Host Institution	5	60	Elective	No
FGCM5006 - Publishing and Narrative (Study Abroad - Incoming)	5	30	Elective	No
FGCM5005 - Graphic Communication in	5	30	Elective	No

the Professional Context (Study Abroad – Incoming)				
Year 3				
FGCM6001 - External Context	6	30	Core	
FGCM6003 - Dissertation	6	30	Elective	No
FGCM6004 – Combined Dissertation/Critical Reflection	6	30	Elective	Yes
FGCM6002 – Final Major Project	6	60	Core	

COURSE AIMS

- A1 Provide opportunities within the curriculum for students to develop a specialist focus and application to direct their work in preparation for career progression within the communication industries closely aligned to graphic design/visual communication practice or post-graduate further study.
- A2 Provide a diverse and supportive programme of study that encourages the development of individual technical and conceptual potential and a passion for graphic design as a communication strategy and problem solving tool.
- A3 Develop critical, practical, professional and social perspectives in which to work and to contextualise the graphic communication subject area.
- A4 Ensure the employability of graduates by providing a range of direct industry experience, knowledge and skills that are applicable to a wide range of graduate careers in the communication industries.

COURSE OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the course students are able to:

Knowledge

Understanding

Application

- LO1 Apply a systematic and detailed knowledge of graphic communication principles and technical skills in relation to associated industries and environments.
- LO2 Respond technically and conceptually to a diverse array of communication needs and to produce outcomes that demonstrate technical and conceptual problem solving skills.
- LO3 Engage in sustained research, reflection and critical analysis of complex

problems and contexts that inform creative practice.

LO4 Exercise initiative, personal responsibility, autonomy, engage in teamwork and other attributes in the context of employability and continuous learning and development.

SUMMARY OF DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE COURSE

Highlight the key features of the course you would wish potential applicants/students to know about which would inform their choice of course.

Graphic Communication as a subject worthy of exploration at undergraduate level, is a way of 'thinking and doing' underpinned by guiding principles and methodologies combined with the intellectual process of problem solving. It is fully responsive to technological innovation, cultural and economic change.

The course does not believe in moral or conceptual absolutes and as such invites its students to critically engage with all principles and mindsets associated with graphic communication. The overarching course philosophy is one of critical pedagogy. Course content, delivery methods and teaching strategies place emphasis upon the questioning of the roles, responsibilities and ways of working of those in the communication industries. It is only with this critical engagement and debate can we foster an environment for students to become confident employable practitioners. No weight or bias is given to students who wish to explore the potential that graphic communication has as leverage for social change any more than students wishing to focus upon commerce. All students are encouraged to explore and test the breadth and depth of possibility that graphics possess as a means of communicating messages, meaning or instruction. Critical and graphical testing and subverting of perceived norms is encouraged.

An awareness of changes to technologies and the role of technology within graphic communication is central to course delivery and content. The course is designed to be as future-proof as possible, in that the unit titles and the purpose of the units does not constrain content. Also central to the course is the need to be responsive to ethical, cultural and economic considerations in communication media.

Course content and structure is geared towards delivering a broad array of opportunity to specialise and develop a personal and professional approach to the discipline. First year units compliment one another but are not pre or co-requisites. Stage two of the course affords depth and/or breadth of enquiry and action. Here, students presented with units that contain creative briefs written specifically to encourage depth of enquiry and focus upon specialist methodologies or potential careers. Specialist areas include packaging, brand identity and brand management, editorial design, narrative and publishing, graphics for promotion and advertising, specialist information design, typography and finally an investigation into craft and technologies where the media itself becomes a carrier of meaning and information.

Stage three is the culmination of all that came before it; providing the opportunity for students to demonstrate their subject focus, cultural engagement, awareness of current design practice and their status as autonomous practitioners.

The employability of our students and our reputation in the communication industries has helped inform the curriculum remodelling. Our students also benefit from a highly

regarded series of lectures and portfolio surgeries from industry figures that represent the breadth of specialist areas explored in stage two. Recent visits have been from practitioners as diverse as digital user interface designers, typographers and way-finding information specialists. Briefs and creative content are written in consultation with leading figures in graphics, branding, typography, advertising, publishing and television. Further evidence of vocational relevance is demonstrated with students winning national and international design competitions over the last five years and most recently having work shown digitally in collaboration with Fabrica – the research centre for Benetton across major European cities and into New Delhi, India. A recent destination survey indicates that 75% of our graduates are in degree related fields of employment, an enviable statistic.

LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT⁷

Learning and Teaching Strategy (of the course)

Assessment Strategy (of the course)

A key strength of the programme is the way in which tutors and students work together to assess work in progress. A series of regular formative critique sessions allow you to present work in progress, discuss concept development. This ensures that term long and indeed year long units and the briefs and tasks contained within are monitored and assessed regularly, greatly reducing the likelihood of under achievement or at worst, academic failure. The critique sessions take place in small groups and provide a safe working space to improve presentation skills and to increase students' ability to critically appraise and test work in progress for suitability and controlled experimental ways of working.

For each unit a timetable for assessment will be published, together with a clear statement of assessment requirements, criteria and methods.

Experience of the world of work plays a vital role in demonstrating the need to work towards being 'industry ready'. Work experience can and does take many forms from internships, work experience placements and live briefs.

The teaching of technical processes is also a core element of the course, particularly in stage one to facilitate as many means of creative problem solving as possible, broadening the students' creative methodologies. These include industry standard digital design software and an array of other associated processes including print media, litho printing, laser cutting and increasingly time based media software.

You will use information technologies for research as well as to assist in the production of creative outcomes. The role of the library is reiterated as being key to their independent enquiry and study. In addition, throughout the course there is a strong emphasis placed upon self reflection with students required to produce a design journal that visually and textually demonstrates their methodologies, experimentation, concept development and reflection upon the unit as a whole.

⁷ Include reference to the following, where appropriate: PDP, online learning, independent learning, exchange, placement, employability & employer engagement

Your course is founded on the principle that the most effective education experience combines structured teaching and independent study. The course is designed to give you the maximum responsibility for the direction of your learning. In general, you will find that the level of structured teaching is greater in the earlier stages with increasing self-directed study and project work as you develop technical and conceptual skills and design methodologies.

You will undertake a number of projects that combine guided learning and independent study. The outcomes of projects vary depending on the purpose of the unit. Many projects are set in practical workshop situations, using materials, processes and techniques to generate research and an understanding of theoretical principles in practice.

Some projects require you to write a rationale or statement of intent whereby we negotiate your proposed outcomes and work schedules. These must relate directly to the aims and outcomes of the unit. This allows you to focus on a particular area that reflects specialist areas of interest and career aspirations.

Self-managed independent study forms an essential part of the course. Independent study includes preparation for assessment or work on projects outside of formal timetabled studio time but also supplementary activities such as visiting galleries and museums and primary and secondary research.

A unit or creative brief may require you to work in groups, facilitating an understanding of the need to work with others. This is carefully managed to ensure that all feedback and grades are reflective of your work undertaken including a reflection or summary of the practice of working in teams with defined roles and responsibilities.

The use of information technologies is a core element of delivery and communication including communicating via blogs, forums and virtual learning environments. These are increasingly being seen as essential modes not just for communication of learning materials but also as a means of sharing relevant cultural and professional stimuli.

The formal teaching of the course is further supplemented by organised off-site activities including visits to creative agencies, particularly those where live briefs are involved. As mentioned above, the guest lecture programme is a core strength that demonstrates that it is not simply the course tutors that provide valuable input into their learning but other industry practitioners, academics from other institutions and so on.

Throughout the course you are supported through personal tutorials to ascertain progress and intellectual satisfaction. It is important to note that tutorials are not simply to support students who may be achieving modest grades via modest creative output but also to support and advise students who are achieving well. Tutorials are also used to help students choose appropriate specialist ways of working from stage two onwards.

Whilst assessment is the way that the University measures performance and determines suitability for progression to the next stage, it is also used to provide feedback to the students to enable them to reflect upon their progress, to identify strengths and areas for improvement and hence, how to improve performance. Written formative and summative assessment provides evidence of critical feedback from tutors.

The specific course outcomes are delivered through the full range of assessment requirements. The work of the first two years is consolidated in the Honours year.

Within this final year an important vehicle for the assessing of intellectual understanding is the dissertation and/or in combination with a reflective essay demonstrating the knowledge of concepts, critical theory and crucially in relation to their own practice.

ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

The course is subject to the University's rigorous quality assurance procedures which involve subject specialist and internal peer review of the course at periodic intervals, normally of 5 years. This process ensures that the course engages with the national Subject Benchmarks in Art & Design and references the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

All courses are monitored on an annual basis where consideration is given to:

- External Examiner's Reports
- Key statistics including data on retention and achievement
- Results of the Student Satisfaction Surveys
- Feedback from Student Course Representatives