

Programme Specification

Every taught course of study leading to a UAL award is required to have a Programme Specification. This summarises the course aims, learning outcomes, teaching, learning and assessment methods, and course structure. Programme Specifications are developed through course validation and are formally approved by UAL Validation Sub Committee (VSC). They are available to prospective students through the course web page, and must be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure currency of information (for example, following any minor modification or local developments).

Awarding Body	University of the Arts London (UAL)
Teaching Institution	London College of Communication
Final Award	MA Graphic Media Design
Relevant QAA Benchmark Statement	Art and Design
Date of production/revision	July 2016

This section is available to provide any introductory information on the course. It might include explanation of the position of courses which form a named pathway within an 'umbrella' programme.

Master of Arts Graphic Media Design is a 15 month full time (45 weeks) or 27 month part time (80 weeks) course.

The course calls for curious, thoughtful and critical individuals keen to employ practice-led research to critically engage with the practice, theory and history of graphic design and its associated domains.

Your self-authored, practice-led enquiry will drive the negotiated programme of study in collaboration with the course tutors, fellow course participants and external partners (where applicable). Your long-term independent enquiry will be punctuated with specialist workshops; course-led briefs; tutor, peer and expert critique forums; site-visits; lectures and talks from leading practitioners, thinkers and doers. All the while, the course will work alongside you to establish the priorities of your practice, acknowledging prior experiences and future agendas.

As active agents/actors in the practices and the subjects associated with, but not limited to, graphic design, you will consciously work towards establishing a sharpened understanding of your own particular field of study and practice, through the completion of a major project. This will drive and shape the focus of

your time on the course and will be tested through iterative engagement with identifiable associated stakeholders – collaborators, experts, users, commissioners, public/s, etc.

You will join and participate in a critical studio environment where practice-based, theoretical, historical contexts will be explored, critiqued and contemplated alongside one another. This integrated approach opens up new opportunities for you to explore the practice, the writing and the reading as blended visual research tools ripe for critique, invention and application.

Upon completion of MA Graphic Media Design, you will acquire a developed critical disposition attuned to the nuances, complexities and blind-spots of the practice and subjects related to graphic design. This will be evident in your graduating portfolio demonstrating an agile, design-oriented mind-set and a confidence to tackle complex scenarios with rigour, ingenuity and determination. This sharpened understanding promotes exciting paths forward within the expanded and divergent field/s of graphic design.

As part of the wider Postgraduate Design School programme, MA Graphic Media Design also offers you the opportunity to engage, experiment and explore beyond the structure of the course itself. The Design School supports an exciting and proactive wider postgraduate community through a range of initiatives, such as the Graduate School and UAL chair associated projects.

Graduates from MA Graphic Media Design move forward with a matured understanding of their own practice and an identifiable, informed position in relation to the profession and associated fields. The course also supports progression routes to research at MPhil/PhD level, and to advanced self-directed experimental practice.

Course Aims

The aims of the course identify the rationale underlying the student's educational experience and own personal achievement from studying on the course and its affect upon the student's long term achievement and career.

This course aims to:

- Provide an open and culturally engaged framework that is equipped to

support practical growth, academic discussion and personal/professional development pertinent to your future in the expanded field of graphic design and/or further study

- Support you in acquiring an analytical, critical and informed understanding of the historical, theoretical, ethical and professional contexts in which your practice resides and/or refers to
- Enable you to engage and respond to challenges at the forefront of the discipline, and associated domains of knowledge, with a view to communicating innovative and soundly-conceived propositions to a variety of specialist and non-specialist audiences
- Promote the value of risk taking and adventure as valid, worthwhile and productive endeavours within and alongside your academic and professional pursuits
- Support you in identifying blind-spots within established cultural systems, codes and processes through practice-led research methodologies and processes
- Offer opportunities for you to socialise your perspectives, skills and interests within a dynamic environment, where you are considered a proactive, original and purposeful contributor
- Engage you in a review of specialised and contemporary industrial contexts that refer to your future practice-based ambitions.
- Provide a forum for you to acquire the knowledge, abilities and methods – creative, practical, conceptual, theoretical, analytical, technical and organisational – that enable you to propose, research, develop and complete a self-directed project that reflects originality, critical analysis, evaluation and academic rigour.

Course Outcomes

The course enables the student to demonstrate the following subject knowledge and understanding, intellectual and academic skills, practical subject skills, key attributes and transferable skills. Each outcome should be detailed below.

The outcomes that you will have demonstrated upon completion of the course, are (the applicable university marking criteria are in brackets at the end of each course outcome):

Initiate and author an informed research proposal that demonstrates a mature understanding of the complex and unpredictable nature of the expanded field of graphic design **(Research); (Analysis); (Subject Knowledge); (Communication & Presentation);**

Present coherent arguments and advocate for particular visual research methodologies and design propositions **(Research); (Analysis); (Subject Knowledge); (Experimentation); (Communication and Presentation);**

Critically employ historical, theoretical, ethical and professional knowledge of graphic design in formulating concepts, ideas and outputs **(Research); (Analysis); (Subject Knowledge); (Personal & Professional Development);**

Produce, analyse and reflect upon a diverse body of self-initiated research and experimentation that demonstrates an aptitude for managing and communicating complexity to diverse audiences **(Research); (Analysis); (Technical Competence); (Experimentation); (Personal & Professional Development); (Communication and Presentation);**

Employ and appreciate the issues/benefits of relevant tools and processes in producing advanced, innovative and original design outputs across physical and digital domains **(Research); (Technical Competence); (Experimentation); (Personal & Professional Development); (Communication and Presentation); (Collaborative and/or Independent Professional Working);**

Speculate on new and effective approaches to the subject and practice of graphic design that acknowledges other relative fields of knowledge

**(Research); (Analysis); (Subject Knowledge); (Experimentation);
(Communication and Presentation);**

Communicate and work with collaborators effectively to achieve research and design goals **(Personal and Professional Development); (Collaborative and / or Independent Professional Working);**

Present a portfolio of research and a self-directed major practical project that has been rigorously planned, is academically informed and offers outcomes and applications that meet professional standards **(Research); (Analysis); (Subject Knowledge); (Technical Competence); (Experimentation); (Communication and Presentation); (Personal & Professional Development); (Collaborative and/or Independent Professional Working).**

Learning and Teaching Methods:

Provide a summary of the relevant learning and teaching methods for the course.

At the core of our learning and teaching methods is a shared Critical Studio made up of you, your peers, course tutors and associated external guests/experts from time to time. We propose a blended approach to theory and practice as central to a sustained, critical and productive practice. The Critical Studio takes various different forms, where you will be able to share your understanding with others and obtain guidance to identify solutions to practical or theoretical problems.

- **Workshop:** the focus of the workshop sessions will vary dependent on the stage of the course, the requirements of the cohort and the opportunities for engagement with external experts throughout your time on the course. Typically however, these will be group sessions designed to explore a particular skill, concept or subject - practice-led or written.
- **Seminar:** smaller focused group session led by your course-tutor, your peers or an external guest to deal with the priorities of your development at any given point.

- Lecture: throughout the course you are invited to attend a curated lecture series to underpin and support studio activity; introduce new perspectives; and offer opportunities to open a discussion about the material with the other guests.
- Academic tutorial: one-to-one tutorial where you will receive individual council concerning your understanding and practical application of theory and skills. These sessions are normally hosted by your personal tutor.
- Personal tutorial: you will be assigned a personal tutor throughout the year who you will have a 20 minute minimum tutorial with each term, which can take in academic or pastoral concerns.
- Self directed learning: independent study undertaken by you to research, write, experiment, prototype and prepare assignments and to extend your knowledge and understanding. This can be undertaken at home, using college facilities or elsewhere.
- Speakers and visits: throughout the course you will be introduced to a range of leading thinkers and practitioners to provide you with varied perspectives of contemporary issues and recent events.
- Assessed assignments: you are required to submit relative unit assignments for the course team to measure your attainment of the learning outcomes and help you develop the key skills that will form an important aspect of their learning.

Assessment Methods:

Provide a summary of the relevant assessment methods for the course.

- Projects
- Reflective Report
- Research Proposal
- Portfolios – practical, written
- Critical Context Paper & Rationale

Reference Points

List any policies, descriptors, initiatives or benchmark statements used in the development of the course.

The following reference points were used in designing the course:

- The College Learning and Teaching Strategy
- The College Assessment Strategy
- The UAL and College approach to Personal and Professional Development
- The Learning and Teaching policies of the University of the Arts London
- University of the Arts London Level Descriptors
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
- Art and Design subject benchmark statement
- Consultation with leading design practitioners and educators operating within LCC, UAL and external to the institution
- Consultation with current students and alumni

Programme Summary

Programme structures, features, units, credit and award requirements:

Each course is divided into units, which are credit-rated. The minimum unit size is 20 credits, with the maximum unit size being 60 credits.

The MA Graphic Media Design course structure equals 180 credits.

Each unit descriptor indicates the number of learning hours associated with that unit. The proportion of hours devoted to types of learning will vary according to the purpose and nature of the unit.

Unit 1

Unit 1: Critical Perspectives and Methodologies functions as an introduction to postgraduate study, critical and reflective practice, and alternative working approaches that blend graphic design practice, history and theory.

Within our critical studio model — a space where theory, history and practice meet, inform and influence one another — you will learn to approach practice-led enquiry and design writing as visual research tools. This blended approach is

employed to build a confidence in moving past the familiar to the unknown, through close readings of the variables that shape contemporary graphic design practice. A curated lecture series, anchored by key reference material, will support the studio-based delivery.

This period of study will conclude with the submission of a carefully designed Research Portfolio comprised of your practice-based and writing outputs across the unit. Outlining your emergent research interests and taking in particular perspectives/subjects/questions/observations, your aim is to put forward a sound and convincing understanding of the field/s of study that will frame your research agenda/s throughout the following units.

Unit 2 and 3

The next stage of the course is made up of two units - Unit 2: The Collaborative Unit and Unit 3: Design Enquiry & Definition. Both of these units build upon your experience in Unit 1 and are expected to directly influence and inform one another by prompting you to identify, define and challenge your understanding of the design territories that shape your individual and peer groups collective perspectives.

Unit 2: The Collaborative Unit urges you to independently initiate opportunities to socialise your research through building relationships with key stakeholders associated with your research agenda/s i.e. users, commissioners, producers, fellow practitioners/researchers, subject or technical experts, etc. This may take place through meetings, studio visits, set projects, site visits, interviews, focus groups, field trips, co-design activities or otherwise. These activities may take place locally or remotely, though an excellent opportunity for you to establish links with relative industry partners within the thriving design culture here in London.

Within Unit 2, you will also work with your fellow participants on the course to devise and realise an opportunity to share your work-in-progress and test your propositions with a relative public/s. This may take the form of a publication,

exhibition, event, symposium, a workshop series, etc to be negotiated with the course team.

Alongside Unit 2, you will also continue establishing a hypothesis for your Major Project in Unit 3 by testing its currency in varied ways through practice-led design methodologies and processes; readings and writings around your field/area of study; and on-going critical reflections thereon. The products of this enquiry will feed directly into your Major Project Definition which you will submit as part of your Unit 3 submission.

Unit 4

Within this final stage of the course, you will further your knowledge and extend your critical/professional understanding through the consolidation and realisation of Unit 4: Major Project. You are expected to produce work demonstrating significant synthesis of research and practice drawing on the skills and knowledge acquired across the first three stages of the course. Your Major Project will demonstrate both in content and form your advanced understanding of graphic design practice, history and theory.

Distinctive features of the course:

Identify and list those characteristics that distinguish your course from other, similar courses. Refer to both the student experience on the course and future possible career opportunities.

Critical Studio Practice

Rooted in the logic of thinking-through-making (concept, text, artefact, event, etc.), you will deal with challenges (course and self-initiated) through a broad range of processes and media that incorporate traditional and emergent methodologies and technologies. An integrated approach to theory and practice is constant throughout the course delivered by accomplished tutors with particular expertise across contemporary graphic design practice, theory and history. Though challenging, this approach enables a distinct opportunity to develop an informed body of work that is relative and progressive, with a view to producing new and unlikely perspectives on and for the world.

Resourcing Excellence

The London College of Communication has an excellent history of bringing the practical, theoretical and conceptual to a meeting point for experimentation, debate and production. The exceptional resources available to our students span both the traditional and contemporary spectrums – from Letterpress, Screenprint, Photography, 3D construction and Bookbinding studios to 3D printing, the DigiLab suite and others. The UAL Futures platform offers further opportunities for our students to join an active and growing community concerned with creative technology.

Independent & Collaborative Working Practices

As a contemporary graphic design practitioner, it is increasingly important to build fluency in articulating and socialising your thinking, doing and feeling. Throughout your time on the course, you will explore new strategies to identify your stakeholders and their relation to a field of study/enquiry you will establish. This will take place through frequent presentations, seminars, tutorials and interviews with your peer group, the course team, visiting practitioners, external experts, the wider UAL body and elsewhere dependent on the priorities of your research. This pursuit will occur independently and in collaboration with your peers and the course team.

The course also explores ideas of the contemporary design studio. At points throughout the course you will work collaboratively in reading-writing-review-design groups offering an opportunity to test and examine new modes of working. We appreciate new modes of working through digital and technological developments, and welcome on and off-site collaboration through such faculties.

Course Team

The MA Graphic Media Design course team are engaged in continuing professional practice across different specialist fields. We are also engaged in research concerning graphic design history, theory and pedagogy and through membership and activity in specialist research hubs and organisations, locally and internationally. This opens up opportunities for collaboration, discussion and employment for the course team and our students.

Design Discourse

The Design School has long been a 'go-to' establishment for informed opinion and critical contributions to contemporary design discourse within key industry periodicals; local, national and international academic forums; and also in the form of publications commissioned and distributed by leading international publishers.

Your studio-led sessions and self-directed study will be supported by a curated lecture programme of leading practitioners offering a sharp focus upon alternative methods and approaches to graphic design related challenges and opportunities that acknowledge social, cultural, economic, political, technological and ethical contexts. In recent years, our students have attended lectures, seminars and discussions with leading practitioners, critics, artists and writers operating in local and international contexts.

Participants within this course are situated within a thriving, active and progressive site of award-winning pedagogic development and critical subject debate. As such, discussions about learning and teaching approaches are brought into the dialogue, promoting a sharper understanding of *how* you learn, as much as *what* you learn. Such insight is pivotal moving forward to successfully engage in a design climate that is famously unpredictable and calls increasingly for entrepreneurial, collaborative, nomadic, polymorphic practitioners.

Network

It is understood the very first undergraduate graphic design course in the UK was established by renowned designer Tom Eckersley at the London College of Printing. This places MA Graphic Media Design in an excellent position to build and maintain connections with the staff, alumni and external partners who have engaged with the course and its counterparts within the Design School LCC over the years. The social, academic and business aspects of our students' developments are cultivated throughout their time on the course across a range of formats specifically for post-graduate students.

LCC Graduate School

LCC Graduate School brings together a vibrant community of postgraduate students, alumni and staff from across the Design School and the Media School. Through a dynamic programme of extra-curricular activities, the Graduate School fuels debate, challenges convention, motivates connections and fosters a collaborative interdisciplinary environment within LCC and the wider UAL postgraduate community. Our students will have the opportunity to attend talks, workshops, work reviews, site visits, interviews and many other events. Funding for collaborative endeavours in and outside of LCC/UAL and a mentorship programme post-graduation offer excellent opportunities to integrate and contribute to the field, practice and subject of graphic design.

Research Community

The Design School at LCC champions the pursuit and engagement of scholarly activity at all levels, and particularly within the postgraduate department. A growing PhD community offers opportunities for our students to seek expert academic guidance, engage in research-oriented workshops and contemplate further academic progression onwards to PhD. Fields of research are identifiable through a growing number of distinct research hubs, such as 'Design & Activism', Design School and Creative Research into Sound Arts Practice (CRiSAP), Media School.

The Site of Engagement

MA Graphic Media Design runs alongside a suite of established and newly developed post-graduate courses spanning the rich and diverse spectrum of the current and emergent practices in the fields of visual communication, illustration, interaction design, service design, branding and identity, advertising, documentary, journalism, photography, publishing, public relations, sound arts and screenwriting. This diversity of individual and collective pursuits promotes a rich discursive arena for all engaged.

Self-directed Learning

A defining aspect of postgraduate study is the independent, self-directed approach. You are expected to timetable and manage your own learning according to your ambition and intentions. Your success or failure on the course will depend, to a great extent, on how rigorously and responsibly you take this self-direction

and how well you respond to tutorial advice and advice from peers and collaborators. The level of self-management required will increase throughout the course.

Flexible Modes of Engagement/Learning

The MA Graphic Media Design course structure appreciates the varied requirements and aspirations of the contemporary practitioner interested in the pursuit of post-graduate study in the subject. The course is delivered in two modes to accommodate those interests and external commitments - full-time (45 weeks) and part-time (80 weeks). This is a particularly distinctive feature as we are one of the few courses in the United Kingdom to offer this option for postgraduate study in the subject.

Both the full and part-time modes have an excellent history in working with participants at varied stages in their careers. The part-time mode has proven particularly successful as it supports those who continue to work alongside their study. Participants have joined the course as: progressing students from undergraduate, PG Cert and PGDip courses locally from UAL, nationally and internationally; recent graduates/freelancers immersing themselves within a thriving design community in London; graphic design lecturers/researchers/academics from notable institutions throughout the country; established independent design practitioners; and cross-disciplinary participants from varied fields such as biophysics, law, civil service and government policy departments.

Recruitment and Admissions

Admission Policy/Selection Criteria

Summarise relevant details contained in the validation papers i.e. list the methods used in selection such as interviewing. Selection criteria should be fully listed.

The MA Graphic Media Design course team welcomes thoughtful, critical and productive participants concerned with the effective articulation of design.

An Honours degree in a relevant subject, or a professional or academic qualification recognised as equivalent to an Honours degree. If you do not have the required qualifications, but do have professional experience, you may be eligible to gain credit for previous learning and experience through the Accreditation of Prior and Experiential Learning (APEL) i.e. professional experience or a combination of courses and work experience.

Applicants from non-traditional backgrounds, as well as those already within employment, are also welcome, as the course has been designed to accommodate flexibility in educational engagement. Your experience is assessed as a learning process and tutors will evaluate that experience for currency, validity, quality and sufficiency.

Entry Requirements

List the entry requirements relevant to the course.

An applicant will be considered for admission who has already achieved an educational level equivalent to an Honours Degree in a relevant subject.

This educational level may be demonstrated by:

- a) Possession of the qualifications named above;
 - b) Possession of equivalent qualifications;
 - c) Prior experiential learning, the outcome of which can be demonstrated to be equivalent to formal qualifications otherwise required, or;
 - d) A combination of formal qualifications and experiential learning which, taken together, can be demonstrated to be equivalent to formal qualifications otherwise required.
- If your first language is not English you should check you have achieved the correct IELTS level in English. Further information is available on the

Language Requirements page: <http://www.arts.ac.uk/study-at-ual/language-centre/language-requirements>

- International Applicants – visit the Support for International Students page <http://www.arts.ac.uk/lcc/courses/support-for-international-students/> for contact details for International Admissions
- Applicants whose first language is not English must demonstrate their competence in English to a minimum IELTS Level 6.5, achieving no less than 5.5 in each of the four skills, for entry on to an MA course by the production of an IELTS Certificate or evidence of an equivalent level of achievement.

Admission with Academic Credit

An applicant may be considered for admission at a point in the course later than the start of the planned programme of study, provided that the applicant has fulfilled, in a way judged to be equivalent, the requirements of the intended programme of study prior to the proposed point of entry.

In order for an applicant to be admitted under the above, the University must be satisfied that by successfully completing the remaining part of the course, the applicant would have fulfilled the objectives of the course and have the opportunity to attain the standard required for the award.

To see the University's Regulations on Admissions, please go to the following link: <http://www.arts.ac.uk/study-at-ual/academic-regulations/course-regulations/1-admissions/>

Admission Procedures

The selection procedures for the course must adhere to the Equal Opportunities Policy of UAL.

1. Application forms are available on request with supporting information about the course.
2. Completed applications to be accompanied by appropriate certificates and evidence of all professional activity paid or unpaid.

3. **Portfolio, Study Proposal and Personal Statement**

All applicants will be expected to submit a portfolio, study proposal and personal statement with their application.

Portfolio

Applicants must present a portfolio evidencing their aptitude, skill and engagement in the field of graphic design or a relative neighbouring practice.

Please submit an edited selection of work (10-20 images, 4-5 projects maximum) accompanied by a short caption for each project acknowledging the motivation, development, realisation and impact (one-two sentences maximum). Please indicate your role and contribution to any collaborative projects included. We welcome developmental work, sketches, tests, process-led experimentation in the portfolio.

Portfolios are accepted digitally on a memory stick, a link to an online portfolio or a Dropbox/WeTransfer link. We advise you to submit an edited selection (10-20 pages, 4-5 projects maximum) accompanied by a short explanation of each project acknowledging the motivation, development, realisation and impact (where possible). Please indicate your role and contribution to any collaborative projects included. We are interested to observe a research narrative in your portfolio and welcome developmental work, sketches, tests, process-led experimentation.

Please note, the portfolio form does not allow you to upload files.

Personal statement (150 words)

Please say why you are applying for this course, outlining relevant prior experience and your current knowledge of contemporary graphic design debates, developments and discussions.

Study proposal (300-500 words maximum)

Applicants must submit a study proposal outlining the intentions of their MA research in the form a short research statement. The proposal should outline the research focus, aims and objectives, intended methodology and evidence of contextual understanding. Please illustrate your proposal with key visual references.

The LCC AP(E)L policy is applied.

Course Diagram | Full Time

Course Diagram MA Graphic Media Design Full-time																																																										
Autumn Term (Term 1 11 Weeks)											Spring Term (Term 2 10 weeks)										Summer Term (Term 3 10 weeks)										Undergraduate Summer Period (14 weeks)						Autumn Term (Term 4 11 weeks)																					
week 1	week 2	week 3	week 4	week 5	week 6	week 7	week 8	week 9	week 10	week 11	week 12	week 13	week 14	week 15	week 16	week 17	week 18	week 19	week 20	week 21	week 22	week 23	week 24	week 25	week 26	week 27	week 28	week 29	week 30	week 31	week 32	week 33	week 34	week 35	week 36							week 37	week 38	week 39	week 40	week 41	week 42	week 43	week 44	week 45	week 46	week 47						
Freshers Week											Christmas Break										Easter Break																Induction Week																					
Unit 1: Critical Perspectives & Methodologies (60 credits)											Unit 2: Collaborative Unit (20 credits)										Unit 3: Design Enquiry & Definition (40 credits)										Design Enquiry & Definition cont'd						Unit 4: Major Project (60 credits)						PG Summer Break Independent Study / Writing Up Period						PG Overlap Period with new year intake Sept 2017									
											S										S										S												S															

S = Summative Assessment Point (Your Assignment Brief will give you details on the deadline date, time and how to hand in your assignment)
Formative assessment points will be indicated by your tutor in your unit handbooks or assignment brief

Course Diagram | Part Time

Course Diagram MA Graphic Media Design Part time																																																																																
Autumn Term (Term 1 11 Weeks)											Spring Term (Term 2 10 weeks)										Summer Term (Term 3 10 weeks)										Undergraduate Summer Period (14 weeks)						Autumn Term (Term 4 11 weeks)																																											
week 1	week 2	week 3	week 4	week 5	week 6	week 7	week 8	week 9	week 10	week 11	Christmas Break										week 12	week 13	week 14	week 15	week 16	week 17	week 18	week 19	week 20	week 21	Easter Break										week 22	week 23	week 24	week 25	week 26	week 27	week 28	week 29	week 30	week 31	week 32	week 33	week 34	week 35	week 36	Induction Week														week 37	week 38	week 39	week 40	week 41	week 42	week 43	week 44	week 45	week 46	week 47
Year 1	Freshers Week	Unit 1: Critical Perspectives & Methodologies (60 credits)										Critical Perspectives & Methodologies cont'd										Unit 2: Collaborative Unit (20 credits)										PG Summer Break Independent Study						PG Overlap Period with new year intake Sept 2017																																										
																						Unit 3: Design Enquiry & Definition (40 credits)																Collaborative Unit cont'd																																										
Year 2	Freshers Week											Unit 4: Major Project (60 credits)										Major Project cont'd										PG Summer Break Independent Study						PG Overlap Period with new year intake Sept 2018																																										
																																						Major Project cont'd																																										

S = Summative Assessment Point (Your Assignment Brief will give you details on the deadline date, time and how to hand in your assignment)
Formative assessment points will be indicated by your tutor in your unit handbooks or assignment brief