

# **BA (Hons) User Experience Design**

Programme Specification 2020/21

<b>Awarding Body</b>	University of the Arts London
<b>College</b>	London College of Communication
<b>School</b>	Design
<b>Programme</b>	Interaction Design and Visual Communications (L039)
<b>FHEQ Level</b>	Level 6 Degree
<b>Course Credits</b>	360
<b>Mode</b>	Full Time
<b>Duration of Course</b>	3 years
<b>Valid From</b>	September 1st 2020
<b>Course Entry Requirements</b>	<p><b>Home/EU/International</b></p> <p>The course team welcomes applicants from a broad range of backgrounds from all over the world. The course attracts students who apply direct from A-level (or equivalent) or from Foundation Diploma in Art and Design, or other art or design courses, as well as mature students who may have previously worked in industry.</p> <p><b>The standard entry requirements for this course are as follows:</b></p> <p>80 UCAS tariff points, which can be made up of one or a combination of the following accepted full level 3 qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Levels at grade C or above (preferred subjects include: English; History; Media; Business; Art and Design, or other subjects within Social Sciences)</li> <li>• Pass at Foundation Diploma in Art &amp; Design (Level 3 or 4)</li> <li>• Merit, Merit, Pass at BTEC Extended Diploma (preferred subjects: Art and Design, IT &amp; Computing)</li> <li>• Merit at UAL Extended Diploma</li> <li>• Access to Higher Education Diploma (preferred subject: Digital and Creative Media, Film and Production, Computing)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OR equivalent EU/International qualifications, such as International Baccalaureate Diploma at 24 points minimum</li> </ul> <p><b>And 3 GCSE passes at grade 4 or above (grade A*-C).</b></p> <p><b>APEL - Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning</b></p> <p>Applicants who do not meet these course entry requirements may still be considered in exceptional cases. The course team will consider each application that demonstrates additional strengths and alternative evidence. This might, for example, be demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Related academic or work experience;</li> <li>• The quality of the personal statement;</li> <li>• A strong academic or other professional reference;</li> <li>• A combination of these factors.</li> </ul> <p>Each application will be considered on its own merit but we cannot guarantee an offer in each case.</p> <p><b>English Language Requirements (International/EU)</b></p> <p>IELTS level 6.0 or above, with at least 5.5 in reading, writing, listening and speaking. Please check our main <a href="#">English language requirements</a> page for more information.</p> <p>All classes are conducted in English. If English is not your first language you will be asked to provide evidence of your English language ability when you enrol.</p>
<b>Selection Criteria</b>	<p>The portfolio, along with the details on your UCAS application (including the academic reference and your personal statement) will be assessed against the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Visual language: quality of structure, use of line, shape - 2D or 3D, form, scale, space, light, colour, texture and time.</li> <li>▪ Ideas generation: quality of ideas and thought process, expression of design thinking.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Research and its application (including images from sketch books): evidence of investigation and use of appropriate resources.</li><li>▪ Materials, media exploration and experimentation; experimentation and testing of materials to achieve outcomes.</li><li>▪ Contextual awareness and its influence on the portfolio; understanding and application of subject knowledge and context.</li></ul>
<b>Scheduled Learning and Teaching</b>	<p>During your course you will engage with learning and teaching that includes both online and face-to-face modes. The advertised scheduled activity for the course will be delivered through a combination of live, synchronous and asynchronous on-line learning. This is often described as blended learning.</p> <p>Definitions of our learning and teaching modes can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p>

# Awards and Percentage of Scheduled Learning

## Year 1

<b>Percentage of Scheduled Learning</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Awards</b>	<b>Credits</b>
Certificate of Higher Education	120

## Year 2

<b>Percentage of Scheduled Learning</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Awards</b>	<b>Credits</b>
Diploma of Higher Education	240

## Year 3

<b>Percentage of Scheduled Learning</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Awards</b>	<b>Credits</b>
Bachelor of Arts	360

# Course Aims and Outcomes

The Aims and Outcomes of this Course are as follows:

<b>Aim/Outcome</b>	<b>Description</b>
Aim	Develop you as a designer who has a material understanding of digital culture in order to create meaningful human centred design with digital tools and platforms.
Aim	Provide you with the knowledge and skills to support your study of information and interface design as a creative, ethical and dynamic activity.
Aim	Assist you in developing a personal design methodology and enable you to speculate on new, innovative and sustainable approaches to the subject.
Aim	Enable you to appreciate, explore, critically interrogate and challenge the status quo of the subject through independent and collaborative enquiry.
Aim	Assist you in placing information and interface design in an historical, social, cultural, theoretical, technical and professional and ethical context.
Aim	Equip you with the necessary technical and transferable skills to assist you in determining your professional future.
Outcome	Produce human centred, ethically and ecologically considered design outcomes. (Knowledge, Realisation, Process)
Outcome	Visually structure information to enhance complex communication goals through the production of interactive design and interactive data visualisations. (Knowledge, Realisation, Process)
Outcome	Produce digital design prototypes that both understand user experience (UX) and demonstrate the strong application of user interface (UI) principles. (Knowledge, Realisation, Process)
Outcome	Systematically identify and investigate appropriate sources related to projects subject matter specifically including the ethics of working with data. (Enquiry)

Outcome	Examine and interpret varied research material and engage in the methodologies specific to information and interface design in order to inform outcomes. (Enquiry)
Outcome	Understand and apply the cultural, ethical and technological subject knowledge that informs the underlying principles related of information and interface design. (Knowledge)
Outcome	Take risks, experiment, identify and solve problems, test ideas and use appropriate materials in the realisation of concepts. (Process)
Outcome	Demonstrate digital skills in the final execution of ideas appropriate to both information and interface design. (Realisation)
Outcome	Show clarity of purpose, appropriate and ethical use selection of tools and platforms, awareness of appropriate conventions and sensitivity to the needs of the audience and the planet in the production and presentation of ideas related to user experience design. (Communication)
Outcome	Manage your learning through reflection, planning, self-direction, subject engagement, and commitment. (Process)
Outcome	Demonstrate suitable behaviour and inclusive approaches for working in a professional context alone or with others. (Process)

<b>Distinctive Features</b>	
1	<p><b>Information Design + Interface Design:</b> The highly distinctive approach of this course is to marry the discipline of information design to the practice of interface design. This is in recognition that information design principles underpin all good interface design and that the digital skills required for areas such as interactive data visualisation are founded upon the same technical basis as interface design. This means you will be well placed to take advantage of the growing need of designers with such skills upon graduation.</p>
2	<p><b>The Interface as Critical Tool:</b> Whilst many courses in this area focus on 'interactivity' as the site of design/production this course proposes that the interface is the critical site of design. This means that we train you not just to design the 'interactive' component of an interface but that you are able to bring aesthetic and cultural concerns to bear just as a graphic designer designing a book would bring to the printed page. This also means that we consider an interface in its broadest terms - i.e. the point at which two things meet - and this could be where a cultural data set meets an architectural scale installation just as much as the more everyday interface design tasks.</p>
3	<p><b>Interactive Data visualisation:</b> The course extends the practice of information design and 'infographics' by teaching students to produce interactive data visualisations. There is a need for this as data sets increase in size and complexity designers are unable to provide the level of insight required in some situations with static graphic forms. The practice of interactive data visualisation has also developed specific technical platforms based on web technologies and the course gives a foundational introduction to some of the most used in the design industry.</p>
4	<p><b>Data as a medium:</b> Through information design and interactive data visualisation the course explores the rapidly expanding territory of data driven visualisation and interactivity. This distinctive approach at undergraduate level ensures you are well placed to become digital innovator building on the expanding data structures upon which so much social experience is conducted.</p>
5	<p><b>Sustainable Skills, Open platforms + Digital Culture:</b> The course identifies a discrete digital skill set that ensures you will have an approach to digital design practice that will facilitate lifelong learning. This is achieved by focusing on open source platforms, which are based around highly maintained, supported web technologies. This foundational approach to digital creativity will ensure you are able to benefit from the shared digital commons during the whole of your professional life. This means as a graduate you will understand that technologies evolve and you will be comfortable with this and you will feel comfortable contributing to, as well as benefiting from, the digital commons.</p>

6	<p>The Diploma in Professional Studies (DPS). This unique year long optional course, offers students the opportunity to undertake up to three placements anywhere in the world. Students on BA (Hons) Information &amp; Interface Design will be able to capitalise on this opportunity.</p>
7	<p>Programme Community: The course is established within a programme area that ensures the course is aligned with undergraduate courses in games design, interaction design arts as well as postgraduate provision in interaction design communication and games design. This means that as well as access to the production resources and technical expertise in these areas you will have access to a broad range of industry speakers from these disciplines. This presents a unique peer group with which to develop relationships that will enable collaboration across disciplines.</p>

## Course Detail

BA (Hons) User Experience Design is a practice-led course that focusses on the role interfaces and computational technologies play in shaping contemporary culture.

You will become skilled in numerous practical and creative design methods that enable you to create informed and experimental user experiences.

### What to expect

You will learn to use code, data and other digital materials alongside traditional design methods to realise your creative ambitions.

This comprehensive design practice will enable you to design, prototype and build user interfaces, data visualisations, responsive installation pieces and other user-driven interactive experiences.

You will also have the opportunity and support to address emerging technologies such as extended reality (XR), wearable technology, digital fabrication and artificial intelligence within a design context.

The course encourages a rigorous approach to research, encouraging a deep knowledge of existing digital technologies, platforms and tools - asking how or why they are used and what the resulting personal and social implications are.

The course prepares students for numerous roles in an emerging and expanding professional field in the creative industries or further post-graduate education.

### Work experiences and opportunities

There are opportunities to work on industry and live briefs at different times during your studies.

You will be encouraged to take a critical and experimental approach to briefs reflecting the value young innovative designers provide to industry. You will work with partners from the creative industries as well professionals and experts from various fields that can benefit from user experience design.

The course is in regular contact with businesses in the creative and technology sectors who are recruiting for graduate schemes and junior design roles.

Guest speakers are also regularly invited to come in and provide insight and advice to students. There is an opportunity for a short exchange with a European institution and also an industry placement year ([Diploma for Professional Studies](#)).

## **Course Structure**

The academic year for this course is divided into 2 blocks.

The 1st block is of 15 weeks' duration from late September to mid-February. In accordance with the University timetable, there will be a four week holiday in December.

The 2nd block is also of 15 weeks' duration from mid-February to the end of June with a four week holiday for Easter.

## **Mode of Study**

BA (Hons) User Experience Design runs for 93 weeks in full time mode. It is divided into 3 stages over 3 academic years. Each stage lasts 33 weeks.

## **Course Units**

In 2019 UAL declared a Climate Emergency and pledged to 'make sustainability a required part of the student learning experience'. In response to the climate and ecological crisis the Design School set in place an ambitious Sustainability Action Plan to fully embed responsible practices within the curriculum and in everything we do. As part of this initiative we have updated our course handbooks against a set of social and environmental sustainability principles to ensure that learning outcomes reflect the urgent need to equip students with the understanding, skills and values to foster a more sustainable planet. Our aim is to change the way students think and to empower them to work towards a sustainable future.

In common with all courses at the University of the Arts London, this course is credit-rated. The course is 3 years, levels 4-6. Each year requires you to achieve 120 credit points. To be awarded the BA (Hons) User Experience Design qualification, you need to accumulate a total of 360 credits.

## **Year 1**

### **Introduction to User Experience Design (20 credits)**

This unit introduces you to the subject specialisms of BA (Hons) User Experience Design as well as to effective learning and studentship at undergraduate level.

It will orientate you to the practices and knowledge needed to understand your discipline and help you to develop your skills for independent and collaborative learning, reflection and your own self development.

### **Information Visualisation and Typography (40 credits)**

This unit introduces you to the foundational practice of graphic design and specifically the practice of information visualisation and typography.

You will be introduced to how formal graphic elements such as geometric forms and shapes are combined to produce meaningful visual messages in the broader context of visual communication.

### **Design and Coding for the Web (40 credits)**

This unit introduces you to the practices of designing and coding for the web.

You will be introduced to the fundamental skills of web technologies, including how to work with various media, define typography, create structured and responsive layouts and control transitions and animations.

In addition to this you will be introduced the digital skills required to create user interfaces using modern HTML, CSS, and JavaScript.

### **Contextual & Theoretical Studies (20 credits)**

This unit introduces you to histories, theories and debates in relation to user experience design and visual and material culture.

It will focus on the development of 20th and 21st century ideas in design and explore the common themes and cross-fertilisations that occur between theory and culture.

## **Year 2**

### **Interactive Data Visualisation Studio (40 credits)**

This unit introduces you to interactive data visualisation both technically and conceptually building upon the long-established practice of information design. You will interrogate selected data sets and produce interactive visualisations that enhance understanding and communication.

### **UX/UI Studio (40 credits)**

You will be introduced to the user experience design process that incorporate comprehensive user research and analysis, interface design, prototyping and user testing in the context of digital design.

### **Contextual & Theoretical Studies 2 (20 credits)**

The aim of this unit is to develop broader knowledge and understanding of the historical, social, practical, theoretical and cultural ideas, practices and phenomena of contemporary culture, design, art and media in its broadest sense (from architecture to sound design).

You will have the opportunity to further contextualise aspects of art, media, design and social theory by focusing upon a specific option and by writing a Thesis Proposal.

### **Professional Practice (20 credits)**

## **Year 3**

There are two pathway options in term one and two of Year 3. One route involves an 8,000 – 10,000 word piece of written work (Route A), or the other route combines a 4,000 – 5,000 word piece of written work plus a Competition Project (Route B).

### **Digital Design Portfolio: Routes A and B (40 credits)**

This unit involves building on your two years' experience of developing design responses to various challenges and briefs through a series of self-initiated projects.

These will reflect the particular skillset you have developed and are a chance to position yourself in the field of design and form your identity as a designer by creating a public-facing online portfolio of your work.

### **Contextual and Theoretical Studies 3: Route A (40 credits) Or Contextual and Theoretical Studies 3: Route B (20 credits)**

These units are the culmination of the Contextual and Theoretical Studies component of your course, and provides you with the opportunity to utilise the knowledge and analytical skills acquired in relation to visual culture and critical theory in the realisation of a self-determined piece of written work.

### **Competition Project: Route B (20 credits)**

If you elect to undertake a (Route B) 20 credit dissertation this unit offers the chance to engage in an additional selected design competition project.

You will be presented with a range of briefs selected from design awards schemes and other calls for entry to established arts festivals or residencies.

### **Major Digital Studio: Routes A and B (40 credits)**

This unit involves the creation and the production of a self-directed major project.

You will develop a rigorous project proposal that will consider your individual experiences and skills - both practical and theoretical - gained over the last three years.

This project will form an important part of your design portfolio and is usually displayed at your graduate exhibition.

#### **Learning and Teaching Methods**

- Self-directed
- Independent study

#### **Assessment Methods**

- Portfolio of Work
- Prepared writing
- Crits and presentations

#### **Reference Points**

The following reference points were used in designing the course:

- The learning and Teaching policies of the University of the Arts London
- The College (LCC) policies and initiatives
- Level descriptors
- QAA Art & Design Benchmark statements
- Industry panels and experts
- AIGA definition of Graphic Design here <http://goo.gl/kPkph>
- Text Matters definition of Information Design here <http://goo.gl/SnAjhv>
- Tech Target definition of Data Visualisation here <http://goo.gl/M8ygcz>
- UX/UI from Fast Co design Professional roles here <http://goo.gl/upBAjV>

# Course Diagram

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
Level 4 – Year 1																														
Block 1															End of Block	Block 2														
Intro to UX Design (20)											S	Design & Coding for the Web (40)														S				
Information Visualisation & Typography (40)												S	CTS1 (20)													S				
Level 5 – Year 2																														
Block 1																Block 2														
Interactive Data Visualisation Studio (40)												S	UX/UI Design Studio (40)													S				
Professional Practice (20)												S	CTS2 (20)													S				
Level 6 – Year 3																														
Block 1																Block 2														
Digital Design Portfolio (40)												S	Major Digital Project (40)													S				
Route A: CTS 3 (40)												S	Route B: Competition Project (20)													S				
CTS Route B (20)												S																		

The University will use all reasonable endeavours to provide the Course and the services described in this Output. There may be occasions whereby the University needs to add, remove or alter content in relation to your Course as may be appropriate for example the latest requirements of a commissioning or accrediting body, or in response to student feedback, or to comply with applicable law or due to circumstances beyond its control. The University aim to inform you of any changes as soon as is reasonably practicable.

© 2020 University of the Arts London