Course Specification

BA (HONS)
GRAPHIC DESIGN



AUB Arts University Bournemouth

About the Course Handbook

This Handbook provides you with basic information about your course. Through the approved course specification, it provides you with the aims and outcomes of your course and outlines the content and how this will be delivered.

The course is subject to a rigorous process of quality assurance and enhancement. This may result in changes to individual units as the course develops, to ensure that the relevance and quality of the course is upheld. You will be consulted by a member of the course team before any changes are made.

Information in this Handbook should be used in conjunction with the HE Assessment Regulations. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are aware of the regulations that apply to your course and you should refer to the regulations throughout your studies. If you have any questions, you should speak to your Course Leader, or member of the course team. The Assessment Regulations can be located on the Induction section of Canvas, or https://aub.ac.uk/regulations

Important information about key policies which apply to your academic studies is available on the Induction section of Canvas. Please view this material on the Induction section of Canvas.

If you would like a copy of this Handbook in an alternative format, please contact equalities@aub.ac.uk.

ARTS UNIVERSITY BOURNEMOUTH

COURSE SPECIFICATION

The Course Specification provides a summary of the main features of the **BA (Hons) Graphic Design** course and the learning outcomes that a 'typical' student might be expected to achieve and demonstrate if they pass the course.

Further detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching and learning methods of each unit may be found in the Unit Descriptors, which forms part of the Course Handbook.

Key Course Information	
Final Award	BA (Hons) Graphic Design
Course Title	BA (Hons) Graphic Design
Award Title	BA (Hons) Graphic Design
Teaching institution	Arts University Bournemouth
Awarding Institution	Arts University Bournemouth
Offered in the School of	Arts, Communication
Professional accreditation	n/a
Length of course / mode of study	3 years full-time / 4 years with optional placement year
Level of final award (in FHEQ)	Level 6
Subject benchmark statement	QAA Art and Design
UCAS code	W210
Language of study	English
External Examiner for course:	Details available on request
Please note that it is not appropriate for students to contact external examiners directly	
Date of Validation	Mar 1996
Date of most recent review	June 2024
Date course specification written/revised	August 2024

Course Description

The course is designed to provide a dynamic, student-centred learning experience in graphic design. It offers a broad-based approach that integrates specialist professional knowledge with theoretical academic understanding that is relevant for a wide range of graduate level roles and postgraduate study. Through project-based enquiry led practice, sense making activities, open-minded experimentation, robust critical thinking, and integrated writing output, we encourage students to build their knowledge of design practice and an understanding of its language and culture at every step. Through an iterative process focused on research, analysis, synthesis, and the creation of alternative visual concepts, it promotes reflection on practice.

We believe that conceptual thinking, which results from a creative openness to prototype and explore is what will define the future of graphic design. Thinking through making is core to the course. 'Bringing ideas to life' involves taking a concept or thought and turning it into a tangible reality or action that is expressed through creativity, innovation, and craft. This approach promotes design practice as a conversation not a monologue where students are encouraged to work with one another collaboratively on set and industry-led projects. This

creative experience is at the heart of graphic design, building strong studio communities and wider networks while mirroring industry practice. Co-creation can help to re-frame ideas, challenge assumptions and at the same time builds trust and empathy for the ideas and experiences of others.

We promote a human, nature and planet centred approach that focuses on nurturing positive, progressive, interactions between the designer, the design output and the end user, consumer, or audience. Our aim is to inspire future designers to become responsible practitioners, to gain core conceptual and technical skills, to understand the immense potential for graphic design to influence and shape the way people see, think, and behave in the world. We connect with internal and external speakers through talks and workshops integrated into the AUB Human initiative.

The curriculum embraces the ongoing advancement of innovative technologies and addresses the design challenges brought on by climate emergency, social in-justice, economic inequality, and cultural development. Students learn how to respond ethically, with curiosity, and strategically to new challenges and opportunities by identifying the essential themes relevant to each unit.

Critical thinking, prototyping or innovation of ideas can lead us to speculative designs, such as new systems, services, or ways to communicate differently or improve the way something is done. Students ask critical questions, experiment, and challenge the boundaries of the discipline, igniting a curiosity to explore immersive practice, collide ideas, and share perspectives on changing needs and how users and audiences derive meaning from graphic messages and artefacts.

The course benefits from a deep understanding of professional practice sustained by our passion for conceptually led design projects and co-collaboration with our industry partners and the wider creative sector. At all levels, students participate in activities such as study trips, events, both set and ‘live’ projects, and designer led workshops, all of which are designed to integrate professional and transferable skills. Students become more confident, empathetic designers who are positioned within the context of ‘design practice’ because of this integration. Studio and cultural visits, attendance at the portfolio ‘Network Event’ and placement options inform career ambitions and support the transition from the course into industry or further study.

Distinctive features of the course

- Belief in the power of design to evoke emotions and create meaningful connections to change the way people see, think, and behave in the world.
- Integrates experimental, speculative, iterative approaches to gathering insights, defining problems, and identifying creative opportunities.
- Empowers students with the confidence to advocate for change and to express their creativity in an authentic way.
- Uses co-collaboration principles to design for change and enhance user engagement.
- Embeds a wide range of specialist, professional and transferable skills throughout the course.
- Encourages networking opportunities and significant skill development through interaction with industry partners at the forefront of the sector.

Course Industry Patron Scheme

All courses at AUB are connected formally with an industry Patron, an industry practitioner or business that acts as a critical friend to the course and course team. Many courses work with several industry partners, but the more formal Industry Patron connection offers the opportunity to collaborate and maintain close relations with industry/business. This is a unique concept that ensures AUB courses are industry relevant and maintain current practices while providing further opportunities for students to engage with industry practitioners.

AUB Strategic vision

The BA (Hons) Graphic Design fits with the University's strategic vision in several ways:

Innovation*:* The course is designed to cultivate creative, open-minded thinkers, communicators, and makers who are aligned with the evolving needs of the creative industry. It uses projects as a platform for understanding audiences, testing concepts, and questioning processes, craft, and context in relation to the subject's future. Employing a dynamic, enquiry led approach, it aims to promote active engagement and experimentation among students.

Collaboration*:* The course advocates for design practice as a dialogue rather than a monologue. Students are encouraged to work together on both set and 'live' projects, both within and outside of our course. In addition to reframing concepts and challenging assumptions, co-creation promotes empathy and trust in the ideas and experiences of others. 'Live' projects and events build facilitates external collaborations that establish meaningful employment networks and communities.

Passionate: A human, nature and planet centred approach that focuses on nurturing positive, progressive, interactions between the designer, the design output and the end user, consumer, or audience is promoted by the course which is driven by the course team's passion for the subject. This approach empowers graduates to emerge as responsible practitioners with a clear sense of purpose, flexibility, and the capacity to provide fresh disruptive ideas and perspectives - to be agents of change.

Optional Placement Year

The optional Placement Year offers students the opportunity to:

- Get under the skin of an industry, organisation, and role to assist them with making better-informed decisions about their future career prospects.
- Undertake a placement, which ensures students can take personal responsibility for tasks, duties, and projects within a real-world work setting.
- Develop and recognise their own work ethic and powers of critical reflection.
- Build high-level transferable skills and enhance professional competencies in the workplace.

The Placement Year will be recognised on the degree transcript. As students will remain a registered student for the duration of the Placement Year, they will retain access to all university support services. Students will be allocated a Placement Tutor who will maintain regular remote contact with them. Placements often lead to a permanent role on graduation, providing a greater chance of success for graduates of this course.

Reference Points

UK Quality Code for higher education, including:

- Subject Benchmark Statement: *Art and Design*

- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)
- AUB LTAF (Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework) and Undergraduate Assessment Regulations

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategies

Learning is realised through taught sessions and independent study and is governed by the Assessment Regulations as detailed in AUB's Learning and Teaching Academic Framework.

Assessments are used to monitor students' development and progress during the course and confirm that the learning outcomes have been reached. Every student receives both formative and summative feedback to assist them in identifying their areas of strength and to help them improve their specialised practice and performance.

Midway through each unit formative assessments will be used to review student progress, support learning, and help them stay on track. It is believed that there is room for learning innovation and progress at the point where students' newly learned knowledge and abilities are integrated with their pre-existing understanding and skillset.

To engage students in learning in studio-based environments, the curriculum is structured progressively and incorporates a wide range of teaching and learning strategies. These include project-based learning, team-working, workshops, lectures, speaker-led symposium, pitch-presentations, peer to peer feedback, educational visits, and tutorials.

A team of staff that include professional graphic designers, researchers and relevant visiting practitioners delivers the course. The course is outward facing and works closely with creative agencies and other organisations at local, national, and international levels.

Students will participate in numerous major graphic design competitions. For example, at Level 6, the International Society of Typographic Designers Licentiate scheme allows students to obtain a professional qualification specific to typography. Students can also participate in industry-based briefs through the Royal Society of Arts Student Design Awards and the Design and Art Direction New Blood Student Awards competitions.

All levels of students are given access to 'live' briefs which provides students with the opportunity to highlight their work and articulate ideas in a professional manner while receiving feedback that highlights their strengths and areas for development.

Additionally, there might exist situations in which online delivery is appropriate. In such instances, online lectures, seminars, presentations, and one-to-one tutorials may be included. It is important that students engage with online course delivery in the same way as they would with in-person instruction.

Student Engagement

The process of designing is inherently collaborative, iterative, and interactive, rather than being solely the expression of a single individual's ideas or vision.

Engaging students in peer feedback encourages active participation in the learning process. Giving feedback to peers and receiving feedback from them provides opportunities to enrich dialogue, deepen understanding, and envision more holistic solutions. Developing students' capacity to express ideas coherently, listen intently, and offer constructive feedback can boost motivation and engagement.

- Small group tutorials facilitate dialogue that helps to build confidence in sharing and embracing new ideas, verbally and visually, and promotes collaborative learning.

- Individual tutorials offer reflective learning opportunities and pastoral support as needed.

- Lectures, seminars, and symposium are designed to contextualise the theory, professional practice, and subject specialisms.

- Workshops and demonstrations to acquire and develop practical analogue and digital competencies.

- Self-directed studio practice is required in response to set and 'live' briefs. Independent study increases as the award progresses and students pursue their own individual interests in relation to project briefs.

- Presentations in-person or pre-recorded develop confidence, communication skills, written\oral\visual articulation and increase skills in persuasion and influence.

We arrange study visits to cultural centres to explore exhibitions and design studios to observe how graphic design is evolving. These visits are carefully chosen to establish industry partnerships and align with unit content. However, travel constraints and world events may affect scheduling.

The Use of Learning Outcomes

We have developed Learning Outcomes that align with stages of development and growth and mirror the key themes of the course. The key concepts of the course are organised using the Learning Outcomes. Assessment results for Learning Outcomes are provided in the unit descriptions and outlines. The Mapping document illustrates how these various Learning Outcomes map across the entire course.

Course Assessment

Each unit is assessed separately, and the assessment forms part of the unit. Assessment both provides a measure of student achievement and provides students with regular feedback on how their learning is developing.

Projects involve phases of research, ideation, problem solving, and spotting opportunities for innovation. Students are encouraged to experiment, take risks, and try out new things, to move out of their comfort zone.

At the launch of the unit students will get project briefings, resources that contain an overview of the brief, assessment components, objectives and learning outcomes, assessment methods, assessment matrix and a list of project deliverables needed for assessment. Students must attend briefing sessions to receive additional information on unit descriptor, and an explanation of how the Learning Outcomes connect to the necessary project work.

For every unit of a course, we will inform students of what they are expected to learn; what they need to submit; how their work will be assessed; and the deadline for presenting work for assessment. Some units have multiple briefs and for each topic introduction, specific requirements will be outlined in detail at the appropriate point in the course.

Throughout, the course integration of written work and practice is promoted and reinforced through self-reflective reports, journals, critical evaluations, and written artefacts. The unit descriptors and project briefs will outline the integration of practice and theory, for example 'Pitch Presentation' with integrated 'Process Work' including a 'Reflective Summary' or 'Portfolio' with integrated 'Process Work' and 'Research File.'

A minimum of one unit in level 4 will be assessed on a pass/fail basis, with written feedback but no numerical grade. All other units will be given a percentage mark.

Students will receive a final mark for each unit in the form of a percentage, which will be recorded on a formal record of achievement (transcript). Each component of assessment is graded using a notched marking scale, whereby only certain marks are used within each grade. The only marks available within any ten-point band are *2, *5 and *8 (e.g. 62, 65, 68). These marks correspond to a low, mid, and high level of achievement within each grade band.

All learning outcomes must be passed to successfully complete the unit.

On successful completion of an Honours degree course, students will be awarded a degree classification based on their unit marks. The final classification is determined using all unit marks at level 5 and level 6.

If a student has joined level 6 through either the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) route or having completed a Foundation Degree (FdA), the final classification is determined using only unit marks in level 6.

For further information on assessment, progression, awards, and classifications, please visit https://aub.ac.uk/regulations

Course Structure

All students are registered for the award of BA (Hons); however, exit awards are available if a student leaves the course early, having successfully completed one or two years. If students successfully complete a year of the course, they will automatically be entitled to progress to the next year.

For the award of a Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE), students must have achieved a minimum of 120 credits at level 4. This qualification may be awarded if a student leaves the University following successful completion of the first year of the course.

For the award of a Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE), students must have achieved a minimum of 240 credits of which a minimum of 120 must be at level 5. This qualification may be awarded if a student leaves the University following successful completion of the second year of the course.

For the award of a BA (Hons) a student must have achieved a minimum of 360 credits of which a minimum of 240 must be at level 5 or above, of which a minimum of 120 credits must be at level 6. This qualification will be awarded upon successful completion of the course.

A BA without Honours may be awarded if a student achieves 300 credits, at least 180 of which are at level 5 or above, and at least 60 of which are at level 6.

Core Values and Skills

In developing courses, the University aims to create a curriculum that reflects its values and ethos. It should prepare students for the future not only in enabling them to have a successful career, but also empower students with the critical thinking and making skills and passion to have a positive impact on the world and be an agent for change. AUB has drawn from the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (https://sdgs.un.org/goals) which have informed our values of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion as well as our Graduate Attributes.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

“We are better for our diversity. We are enriched by the depth of respect we have for each other and the strength of our relationships with our people, our places, and the planet. Through our commitment to working with those who are different to us, or challenge us, we grow stronger together, creating new synergies, global connections, and sustainable futures.” (AUB Strategy 2030)

As an organisation we have moral, social and legal obligations to fulfil in terms of EDI, and in doing so our commitment is to put EDI at the heart of every area of activity. It is not covered as a separate, stand-alone section, rather it forms an integral part of the curriculum, throughout a student’s study here.

Graduate Attributes (GA)

Over recent years, there has been an increasing pace of change, technological, social, environmental. This has been further impacted by the world-wide pandemic effecting significant change in the global economy and the employment market.

In this context, the University has recognised the importance of developing AUB graduates who have the attributes to be able to build their career, adapting to different circumstances and embracing changes. A suite of attributes has been defined that we feel are particularly appropriate to the creative courses that we deliver and to AUB’s core values; during a student’s course, both curricular and extra-curricular activities will give students the opportunity to prepare for their working career.

The course will introduce students to topics which are integrated with the curriculum at every stage of learning. This will allow the student to structure their career development journey through level 5 and level 6 of the degree course and consider the following stages: Self Awareness, Opportunity Awareness, Decision Making and Transitioning into Work. These align to the AUB Career Readiness stages: Explore, Focus, Engage and Achieve.

While the landscape may be constantly evolving, individuals with creativity, adaptability, and a willingness to learn new skills can thrive in the creative sector. Keeping abreast of industry trends, networking, and building a diverse portfolio are essential strategies for success in this field.

In practice, this means that each unit of the course, at each level, will include elements of career development and these will be shown explicitly in unit descriptors and outline syllabuses. Whilst students engage with these as they go through each unit, they will all come together in the final unit at each level. Such an approach is designed to support students in the next steps they take after graduation, in whatever direction those may be, and is fundamental to degree studies.

Students will also have the option, between level 4 and level 5 of undertaking an extended period of placement work experience. The course team will be able to discuss this at the appropriate time.

Maintaining Health and Wellbeing

Throughout the course students are encouraged to reflect on their own health and wellbeing, and to develop themselves as a healthy creative practitioner. Students will consider how to develop study and work strategies and habits which maintain and promote their own wellbeing, and to manage their professional activities in a way which safeguards their mental and physical health.

Course staff have designed the course in order that, as far as is reasonably possible, health and wellbeing are promoted. Therefore, it is vital students maintain constructive communication with their colleagues and staff throughout their time on this course.

Course Aims

- Enrich and deepen the student learning journey by creating a community of independent thinkers and makers, who explore experimental, immersive practice, ask critical questions in complex and unpredictable contexts, and confidently challenge the boundaries of the discipline.

- Develop students understanding and abilities across a range of analogue and specialist digital craft skills, embracing innovative technologies pertinent to the role of the contemporary graphic designer, as well as building transferable skills to enable collaboration with different disciplines, to support study and creative opportunities.

- Ignite in our students, a passion for understanding the evolving desires and needs of specific users and audiences. By using an inclusive strategic approach to promote empathy and shape communication design we can drive positive change and create meaningful solutions that resonate with users/audiences.

- Cultivate a supportive environment that values diversity, inclusivity, and open communication, where the individual feels safe to express themselves authentically. Empowering students to advocate for themselves and others on issues which matter to them.

- Enhance our graphic design graduates' entrepreneurial spirit in a world that is changing rapidly by encouraging them to leverage their collaboration skills and challenge myths about the kind of career opportunities that are available today. To imagine the possibilities of hybrid multidiscipline economies in media and design, as well as digital experiences, systems, and service design.

Course Curriculum Themes

The course is designed around ten core themes based on attributes that students will be encouraged to develop. The attributes are competencies or skills that students will demonstrate through their practice. The themes are categories of attributes. These themes develop and build from unit to unit. The total attributes the student will acquire at any point provides them with a profile of attributes that reflect their readiness for employment and entrepreneurship and/or their readiness to undertake further study.

- **Agency** – insight in one's own competences, goal setting, embracing failure or setbacks, monitoring and evaluating discipline, defining personal voice and direction, professional networks.

- **Analytical and research skills** – critical strategic thinking, problem defining/solving, innovative approaches to addressing challenges, attention to detail, information gathering, data collection/analysis, contextualising argument or proposal, citation and referencing.

- **Craft and making skills** – proficiency in analogue, digital tools and materials craft, careful attention to detail, iterative practice, prototyping, realisation of ideas, creation of tangible artefacts.

- **Collaboration** – open and transparent dialogue, trust and mutual respect, collective goals and vision, flexibility to adapt roles, strategic thinking to guide collaboration, co-

ordination and planning, inclusive principles and practices, openness to diverse perspectives and insights.

- **Communication** – clarity of verbal and non-verbal elements: speaking, listening, writing, presentation - in person and pre-recorded. Articulation of thoughts and ideas, feedback, tone of voice, adapting messages to different audiences needs or requirements.

- **Innovation** – positive change, new possibilities, experimentation, disruptive approaches, risk taking, spotting opportunities, adaptability, value creation (enhanced effectiveness, user experience or sustainability).

- **Knowledge** – conceptual frameworks, technical skills, critical thinking, principles and elements, history and theory, techniques and processes, methodologies, aesthetic sensibility.

- **Storytelling skills** – oral/written/visual - concise compelling articulation of concepts, narrative, communicating persuasively, adaptability to different media or contexts.

- **Visualisation skills and strategies** – bringing form and context to ideas - 'bringing ideas to life,' imagination, storyboarding, concept mapping, prototyping, engaging visually to communicate ideas.

- **Sustainable and Ethical theories and practice** – positive decision making in relation to human and non-human needs, consideration of social impact, cultural sensitivity, environmental sustainability, and ethical sourcing of materials.

Course Outcomes

Graduates of AUB's graphic design programme are highly employable for their creative ideas, design process thinking, and teamwork.

The curriculum's key themes support progressive learning and give graduates a stronger critical knowledge of self-efficacy, participatory creativity, emerging technologies, and experimentation.

Graduates need to assume greater responsibility for their choices and recognise the variety of highly transferable and specialised skills that may open new employment opportunities in an evolving creative sector. The curriculum expands on possibilities to cultivate abilities considered essential in the future workplace, such as empathy, agility, curiosity, and adaptability.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- **Show broad, theoretical, and practical knowledge** of graphic design as well as an enhanced understanding of the subject within the evolving creative sector. *(Knowledge/Research)*

- **Utilise analogue and specialist digital craft skills**, to successfully 'bring an idea to life' by developing and articulating visually compelling imaginative solutions. *(Visualisation Skills and Strategies/Craft/Storytelling/Innovation)*

- **Provide evidence of an effective approach** to problem-defining, opportunity spotting, strategic thinking, goal setting, ideation, research, and analysis, as well as communication and presentation abilities*. (Research and Analysis/Communication)*

- **Self and peer appraise to promote a supportive and dynamic environment** through giving and receiving constructive criticism, adapting to different perspectives and insights, and continuously learning. *(Collaboration/Agency)*

- **Recognise how personal perspective, critical judgement,** and insights into inclusive, sustainable, ethical practice may direct and inform personal development as well as influence aspirations for the future. *(Sustainability & Ethics/Agency)*

- **Take ownership of decisions, set goals and be pro-active in shaping their own lives** and positively contributing to the world around them. *(Knowledge/Agency)*

- **Articulate ideas in impactful presentations**, in-person or pre-recorded, to ensure clear communication, audience engagement, persuasion, credibility, and professionalism.
  (Communication/Visualisation Skills and Strategies)

Student Journey

The course commences with an induction week featuring shared activities and events designed to bring the new cohort together, as well as to introduce them to staff and familiarise them with the campus facilities.

The first year provides students with opportunities to develop fundamental skills, principles, processes, and knowledge. These are considered core attributes encompassing the tasks and knowledge expected of all graphic designers. All Level 4 units are designed to provide experience in the studio and computer lab, to promote confidence in using digital processes, methods, and materials essential to the study of graphic design. Additionally, gaining a working knowledge of typography is a key goal for this year, enabling students to effectively structure and arrange information to enhance communication and expression.

This level of study also offers a broader contextual understanding of the subject. Theory and practice are seamlessly integrated across all units. Skills in research, critical analysis, evaluation and communication of inter-related practices and technologies, are delivered to enhance students' creative potential.

Students will explore contemporary global themes and issues related to design practice, contributing to the creative dialogue between theory and practice. Alongside incorporating these concepts into their design work students are encouraged to be curious, take risks, and engage in experimentation – fostering growth as creative individuals, who formulate and communicate visual solutions, either independently or collaboratively.

Throughout the year, emphasis is placed on generating and developing ideas. Units such as *Exploring Graphic Communication* and *Visual Thinking* will help in developing typographic skills, visual language, and to the ability to research, experiment and generate ideas tailored to specific audience needs. The final unit in the year, *Purposeful Curiosity* serves as a bridge to level 5. Here students are introduced to fundamental animation and motion graphic skills while delivering designed solutions. The importance of team working is also recognised within all units and include elements of self-reflection and, peer evaluation.

In the **second year,** students will consolidate and expand their digital, technical, typographic, design thinking and making skills. They will identify different perspectives, specialisms, and modes of critical design thinking, within the broader field of graphic design. Furthermore, students will explore code, moving image and emerging technologies, engaging in individual or collaborative projects with real world applications. To highlight and celebrate their work students will participate in an industry Network Event during the summer term, providing them with opportunities to build their design networks and establish connection within the creative industry.

Units in this year encourage students to engage with the subject from different viewpoints. In *Innovate* students are challenged to embrace critical design practice and become agents of change.
In *Narrative* the focus is on designing motion design sequences and web interactions, students will explore methods of analysing, constructing, and accessing narratives.

In *Experience,* the student will be introduced to immersive design and the user-centred agenda preparing them for Level 6 study and units such as *Future Practice*. In this way, the level 5 experience provides a way of scoping different understandings, skills, and methods of working that can inform thinking in relation to the more self-directed practice, and project-based learning occurring at level 6.

Theoretical and contextual understanding is broadened and deepened in a variety of ways in level 5. Ethical and sustainability issues are addressed in units such as *Experience and Place* where talks and lectures align and integrate with the University's AUB Human initiative. The *Place* unit provides opportunities explore and reflect on practice, in relation to themes and issues that might go on to become the focus of level 6's *Critical Practice* and *Major Project* as well as future career planning.

The *Network Event* encourages and supports students to participate in industry placements during summer break, which may help with the start of a career planning process.

In their **final year,** students continue to expand the scope of their skills, delve deeper into critical enquiry, and confirm their personal creative aspirations. They develop a strategic approach that directs their individual graphic design practice towards future career destinations. In the units *Future Practice* and *Major Project,* a research-oriented approach underpins experimental, disruptive, and speculative methods. This encourages students to take the lead in shaping their own path, empowering their practice. Learning in these units is primarily project based, emerging from the challenges and nuances of each project.

The *Critical Practice* unit offers opportunities for advanced independent research, which can complement the *Major Project.* The integration and consolidation of themes across level 6 units support and enhance creative practice and career aspirations. Additionally, beyond academic writing, students are expected to use their writing skills for reflecting on and organising ideas and process, messaging, specification, copywriting and pitching ideas.

At level 6, all units require students to define their study through Learning Agreements, which are negotiated with the teaching team. These agreements provide focus and enable students to demonstrate agency by integrating their own interests and passions into their learning.

The course emphasises an outward facing perspective, particularly evident at level 6 through engagement with competition briefs and input from visiting speakers. Project briefs may be 'ignited' in workshops led by designers, providing a springboard for research and ideation.

Specialist resources:

Studio based learning to build supportive creative community and facilitate specialist knowledge, skills, and graduate attributes specific to the creative sector.
Computer suite with Macs and PCs with access to appropriate specialist software.
Access to exhibit in appropriate venue near industry/career opportunities.
A4, A3, medium and large-scale digital print facilities for effective prototyping and testing in full colour.

Course Units

Unit code	Unit title	Credit weighting
Level 4 / First Year:		
GDS401	Exploring Graphic Communication	40 credits
GDS402	Visual Thinking	40 credits
GDS403	Purposeful Curiosity	40 credits
Level 5 / Second Year:		
GDS501	Innovate	40 credits
GDS502	Narrative	40 credits
GDS503	Experience	20 credits
GDS504	Place	20 credits
Level 6 / Third Year:		
GDS604	Future Practice	40 credits
GDS605	Major Project	60 Credits
GDS606	Critical Practice	20 credits

Course diagram

This diagram shows the proposed start/end dates for each unit and shows teaching weeks only; holiday periods are not included.

	Level 4																												
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
	Autumn Term										**Spring Term**										**Summer Term**									
Induction week	**GDS401 Exploring Graphic Communication** 40 credits Weeks 1-10 Pass/fail unit										**GDS402 Visual Thinking** 40 credits Weeks 11-20										**GDS403 Purposeful Curiosity** 40 credits Weeks 21-30									

	Level 5																												
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
	Autumn Term										**Spring Term**										**Summer Term**									
	GDS501 Innovate 40 credits Weeks 1-10										**GDS502 Narrative** 40 credits Weeks 11-20										**GDS503 Experience** 20 credits Weeks 21-30 **GDS504 Place** 20 credits Weeks 21-30									

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<tr><td></td><td colspan="30">Level 6</td></tr>
<tr><td>0</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="10">Autumn Term</td><td colspan="12">Spring Term</td><td colspan="8">Summer Term</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="10">GDS604 Future Practice
40 credits
Weeks 1-10</td><td colspan="12">GDS605 Major Project
60 credits
Weeks 11-30</td><td colspan="8"></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="10"></td><td colspan="10">GDS606 Critical Practice
20 credits
Weeks 11-20</td><td colspan="10"></td></tr>
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Image: Lettie Suen | BA (Hons) Graphic Design