Course Specification

MA
GRAPHIC DESIGN



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 **MA Graphic Design** course and the learning outcomes that a 'typical' student might reasonably 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	Master of Arts
Course Title	Graphic Design
Award Title	MA Graphic Design
Teaching institution	Arts University Bournemouth
Awarding Institution	Arts University Bournemouth
Professional accreditation	None
Length of course / mode of study	1 year full-time / 2 years part-time
Level of final award (in FHEQ (Framework for Higher Education Qualifications))	Level 7
Subject benchmark statement	Art and Design Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies
Language of study	English
External Examiner for course:	Details available on request
Date of Validation	May 2014
Date of most recent review	June 2024
Date course specification written/revised	August 2024

Course Description

As graphic designers we design acts of communication that are yet to happen. We consider the materials, users, and spaces (whether virtual or physical) that are instrumental to this communication taking place. We provide visual and other cues in the things that we design, that enable people to share in the meanings we imagine.

This process of communication is resolved on this course through the study of cognition, which provides insights into the ways that form, and meaning are fused in our experiencing of designed objects.

Students will systematically interrogate and evaluate their own design practice and use design methods to analyse and comprehend situations and behaviour, thereby generating alternative and insightful visual solutions. Students apply to the course predominantly from graphic design courses but are welcomed from a variety of backgrounds (if they can show an aptitude for typography) where they may have studied photography, architecture, illustration, interaction design, three-dimensional design, fine art, or subjects such as journalism, philosophy, psychology, anthropology, or sociology. Whatever students' backgrounds, they will be required to reflect on their worldview—the underlying assumptions and understanding

that guides and constrains their practice—and to use this reflection as a starting point from which to further develop. Students' practice can take many forms: it can be self-expressive, or socially orientated; print, screen-based or three-dimensional. It can focus on a piece of research, an aspect of a well-defined area of design, such as branding, experimental typography, publishing, and user-centred design, or on something more unconventional, defined as part of their study.

Graphic designers often work in groups, sometimes comprising members from different disciplines. The course provides many opportunities to work in interdisciplinary ways alongside other MA courses. Many sessions are delivered to these interdisciplinary groups. The broader theoretical and contextual issues introduced in these sessions are situated both within the discipline of graphic design and students' own projects and explored through tutorials with supervisors and other students on the course. The course progresses through taught sessions towards a research project that involves more independent study. The taught sessions aim to develop a critical awareness of the methods and practices appropriate to the students' area of interest. In the final two units, Scoping the Challenge Space and Resolving the Solution Space, students will then develop a theoretical framework, methodology and research methods that support their research focus.

As well as encouraging students to embrace group working the course also promotes autonomous ways of working and learning, encouraging students to make decisions about their practice and to then reflect on them critically. As graphic designers, students should anticipate the possible consequences of the students' design interventions, including the meanings constructed through their practice, in relation to ethical, inclusivity and sustainability issues as well as to other relevant contexts. Creative approaches are required that respond to complex situations in which many problems reside. Outcomes are not constrained by media or by limited interpretations of what it is to be a graphic designer. Consequently, an outcome might involve the design of an experience or service, as much as it might concern more conventional forms of graphic production. Students may also use the course to develop their research interests in the field to produce a body of writing that may lead to future PhD study or a monograph.

Distinctive features of the course

Distinctive features of MA Graphic Design at AUB (Arts University Bournemouth) include:

- The course introduces a cognitivist framework to inform graphic design practice.

  The structure of the course commences with a re-framing of graphic design practice, followed by two further units which enable students, in over 30 weeks of study in the full-time mode, to scope a project of their choosing, and then resolve it.
  The course utilises a level 7 engagement with research. Here students are introduced to principles of doing research, to provide a platform that facilitates a critical understanding of extant research in their field of study, so that this critical understanding can be used to leverage their practice.
- Student cohorts comprising multifarious disciplines, professional experiences, ethnicities, dispositions, life circumstances, and neurodiversity are shaped into relevant and impactful communities of contemporary practice.

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 MA Graphic Design course fits with the university's strategic vision in several ways:

Innovation: At level 7 it is appropriate for students to identify the emerging macro trends that provide scope for innovation. It is important too, not to be simplistic in the ways in which we describe innovation, which can occur at a plethora of levels, from using a software tool involving AI (Artificial Intelligence) in a new way, to providing an alternative and speculative vision of social interaction. Scoping the Challenge Space is intended as a place on the course where students can identify opportunities to innovate at a level appropriate to their project. The course also uses theory to support innovation, referencing bisociation, hybridity, and conceptual blending. It is the responsibility of all students to familiarise themselves with and to adhere to current AUB (Arts University Bournemouth) policies relating to academic protocols and the use of AI.

Collaboration: A prerequisite for collaboration is the engendering of a sense of trust (a) between collaborators, and (b) with the assessment framework that will be used to measure their performance. By establishing educational and social settings within the course through such things as Macro lectures, shared workshops, critiques, and so forth, the students develop relationships which can then lead to collaboration. The Reflective Journal is a useful tool for recording the collaboration of individuals. In terms of assessment there are Learning Outcomes in Scoping the Challenge Space, linked to both the practice-based outcomes and collaborative engagement. This provides assessors with the tools to evaluate the success of any collaborative venture together with the engagement of the individual concerned with respect to their role in the team. Once again, a simplistic understanding of collaboration is avoided through discussions of multidisciplinary, cross-disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary practice, together with the ways that collaboration is incorporated into contemporary graphic design processes and methodologies.

Internationalisation: The course is highly attractive to international students who are motivated to study in this field, historically comprising students from American, Chinese, French, Indian, Italian, Iranian, Japanese, Nigerian, Turkish, Rumanian, Thai, and Vietnamese backgrounds. In contributing to the university's internationalisation goals, these students bring invaluable knowledge and experience to their peers and the institution in terms of challenging, decolonising and diversifying the curriculum. The breadth of assessment methods, providing for example, formats such as the Presentation Pitch, which is less reliant on English language, provides ways to avoid disadvantaging international students.

Course Aims

The course adopts a student-centred approach to learning predicated on the things that students can do. To reflect this approach the Aims and Learning Outcomes on the course are based around six themes: identify, analyse, reflect, and evaluate, conceive, and integrate, apply, and finally align. These activities should not be understood as operating sequentially, or as being mutually exclusive, to identify something often requires analysis for example. Nevertheless, there are things that students will identify as being of significance and forms of analysis that students will use to build understanding and make judgments, and it is in this way that these terms can be used as a framework to assess the students' learning.

This course aims to:

1. Develop strategies for **identifying** the problems, opportunities, and drivers, as well as the material and semiotic resources, critical to communication using graphic design. In addition, to identify relevant theory, data, and methodologies to underpin design

practice and research. Finally, to identify career aspirations and avenues for futher study or employment.

2. Facilitate the **analysis** of complex situations and the potentials for graphic expression, to break them down into their constituent elements, thereby enabling understanding and informing design practice. Furthermore, the analysis of relevant design, art, literature, and research.
3. Encourage **reflective** and reflexive ability in support of the students' graphic design practice and research, and the development of methodologies and criteria to **evaluate** design solutions, arguments, and research, both in terms of the students' own work and that of others.
4. Encourage ideation strategies that support the **conception** of original designed outcomes, insights and arguments that **integrate** semiotic resources and meanings in ways that achieve communicative goals.
5. Enable the **application** of relevant research, technical, conceptual, and professional skills to support communicative goals.
6. Provide the awareness that enables students to **align** their research and design practices with social and ethical values and to the protocols linked to study, research, and professional activity.

Course Outcomes

By the end of this course, a graduate will be able to:

1. **Identify** issues, problems, drivers, research, values, situations, current graphic design practices, subject knowledge, theories, communities of users, channels of communication, conceptual frames, materials, technologies, personal learning needs, and career aspirations, all of which should be relevant to their graphic design practice.
2. **Analyse** through research, investigation, making, thinking, and observation, key ideas, and information relevant to their practice, discoverable in data, artefacts, texts, narratives, design methods, surveys, and performances.
3. **Reflect on and critique** their own work and that of others with regard to assumptions, arguments, claims, research methods, social attitudes, ideologies, design processes, design outcomes, and user behaviours, in order to discover new insights.
4. **Conceive** of appropriate, and perhaps new, configurations of arguments, narratives, hybrid forms, representations, production techniques, uses of materials, ways of behaving, and methods of dissemination for the purpose of achieving communicative goals. And **integrate** theories, research conclusions, concepts, representations, and graphic design resources (such as type, layout, image, formats, sequences, methods of interaction) to form meaningful graphic design outcomes that function as intended, to identified communities of users.
5. **Apply** appropriate conceptual, research, practical, and professional skills to optimally resolve designed outcomes. In addition, apply independent and collaborative ways of working, some of which demonstrates risk-taking and an experimental engagement with the discipline.
6. **Align** design and research practice to ethical, social, sustainability, and political values and to the protocols of study, research, and intellectual property.

Reference Points

UK Quality Code for higher education, including:

- Office for Students' (OfS's) regulatory framework: 4.17 Degree for a descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 7 on the FHEQ: Master's degree.
- Subject Benchmark Statements: (a) Art and Design and (b) Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies.
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), 2nd Edn (2024).

- AUB LTAF (Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework) and Postgraduate Taught Assessment Regulations (2023).

Learning, Teaching, and Assessment Strategies

MA Graphic Design aligns with other AUB campus courses in reflecting the shared University values of Collaboration, Connection, Innovation and Passionate. In accordance with the pedagogical framework laid out by the institution, postgraduate course delivery is strategically designed to:

- Maintain the highest quality and consistency of student experience.
- Provide teaching and assessment that is credible, progressive, and innovative.
- Apply a curriculum that is enlightened, agile and meaningful.
- Ensure students deploy core techniques of disciplinary enquiry and analysis.
- Enable an experiential and transformative learning journey.
- Enable future professional practice and careers across a diversity of graduate roles.

Students on the MA Graphic Design course benefit from belonging to the wider community and provision of shared learning opportunities alongside subject specific sessions. At MA level, students are strongly encouraged to engage with their peers, developing essential skills through peer learning and group work. Students are encouraged to play an active role in collaborative learning activities, initiating such activities as part of a continuing experiential learning journey that starts before joining the course and continues afterwards.

Through participation in cross-course collaborative assignments, working groups, transdisciplinary lectures, study skills workshops, drawing lessons, educational trips, and student-led events, MA students work together to establish the roots of good practice and form potentially valuable peer networks. Establishing trust among students is vital in promoting an environment in which collaboration thrives. Through mutual support, students can engage in activities, such as idea testing and peer review. This environment stimulates broader conversations around the arts, sustainability, ethics, socio-political issues, and the creative industries, acting as a catalyst for innovation, enriching the learning experience and empowering students to excel in their creative research activities.

The University embraces blended and technology-enhanced approaches to learning. AUB learning technology effectively provides course, school and institutional-wide communication and is integrated into teaching delivery as appropriate. A range of technical workshops are offered to support the student in the use of digital media, from good housekeeping and file management practices to more sophisticated video, sound, and image-manipulation software.

MA Graphic Design

The course provides a cognitivist theoretical and conceptual framework that scaffolds learning in a way that builds incrementally from the first unit. As students' progress through the course, they move from taught assignments to self-directed projects defined by a Learning Agreement. Independent learning is an important element in Master’s study and students learning is typically focused by project-based learning where what is learned is, to some extent, contingent upon what is appropriate to the project identified in the Learning Agreement. This project-based approach provides a methodology sympathetic to lifelong learning, in that it replicates the situation students are likely to encounter in their professional experience where new problems, tools, and resources require the acquisition, development, or even, creation of new knowledge.

Lectures

Academic member of staff, or guest speaker, delivers information via a presentation to a cohort.

Seminar Activity

A group session that would usually relate to a lecture topic or subject related topic aligned to the Learning Outcomes and assessment requirements of the unit.

Seminar (group discussion of a topic)
Critique (peer and/or staff feedback on work in progress)
Peer Review (students discuss or feedback on each other's work)

Tutorials (Individual)

Engagement of staff with students individually to discuss their work or progress with learning or achievement of assessment tasks.

Progress tutorial (scheduled)
Progress tutorial (sign-up)

Tutorials (Group)

Engagement of staff with students in a group to discuss their work or progress with learning or achievement of assessment tasks.

- Progress tutorial (scheduled)
- Progress tutorial (sign-up)

Open Studio with Support

Opportunity for students to use studio space in their own time with academic or technician demonstrator support available. These sessions count as formal taught contact time.

Educational Visits

A supervised trip organised for students off campus to a destination, organisation or business relevant to their learning for the unit.

Student Engagement

The course provides a wealth of opportunities for students to engage with their learning. In addition to the more formalised timetabled sessions, there are workshops on offer from the printroom, bindery, and workshop. Film screenings, exhibitions, life drawing sessions provide further opportunities.

Through the Learning Agreement that drives both Scoping the Challenge Space and Resolving the Solution Space students are able to negotiate and engage with setting the focus of their learning.

Full-Time and Part-Time Modes of study

The option of choosing a Full-Time or Part-Time study mode (FT (Full Time) and PT (Part Time)) is regarded as a highly positive aspect of this course. Allowing for greater inclusivity, diversity and flexibility, this choice enables experiential and cultural integration of huge benefit to our community.

Whilst FT students work throughout the week in AUB studio spaces, those taking the PT mode must ensure they have adequate off-campus space to sustain their developing practice and thinking appropriately. Whether accommodation, visas, jobs, families, or other personal circumstances affect this decision, please be assured that whether PT or FT, students can expect to be taught by the same staff and have equitable access to learning.

As the designated weekly study hours for PT are half of those for FT students, and for reasons of parity, access to subject area resources and academic support are understood commensurately. The longer study periods (x2) of each unit for PT students ensure that parity of study hours and experience are accounted for between the FT and PT modes.

Autumn and Spring intakes

MA Graphic Design accepts intakes at two different points in the year (subject to viability). Both FT and PT modes are available to those starting in September (Autumn), whilst January (Spring) only allows for FT mode. The rolling nature of cohorts means that there are always existing students to welcome newcomers onto the course and act as mentors. As well as learning from their skills, experience, and knowledge of the University, students can gain real understanding of what is expected in the Units ahead by attending their critiques and Assessment Presentations.

Assessment

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

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.

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 achieved with a minimum mark of 50 to successfully pass the unit.

On successful completion of a Master's Degree (MA), a Merit or Distinction may be awarded. Only units at Level 7 contribute towards the determination of a Merit of Distinction.

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

Assessment at AUB is aligned to the unit Learning Outcomes and consists of two types:

Formative Assessment is used throughout the learning process to assess students' progress and understanding. It may take place in tutorials, seminars, critiques, and other discussions about their work and provides ongoing feedback on students' learning-in-process. By identifying positive practices and thinking to potentially take forward and develop it serves to enhance their progress. This kind of dialogue-based, written, or recorded feedback (or 'feedforward') is usually ungraded.

Summative Assessment is used at the end of each study period, reflecting upon what students have achieved. It evaluates evidence of their outcomes, skills acquisition and learning achievements. Marks are graded using a matrix of assessment criteria aligned to the Learning Outcomes to ensure the greatest possible clarity.

Unit Assessment Feedback
Assessment Feedback for all units provides Summative explanation of what has been done well and what could have been done better, as well as feedforward commentary on how the work might be further developed in the future.

Assessment of Collaborative or Group Work
In the event of collaborative or group work produced and submitted for assessment, the contribution of each student will be assessed individually against the Learning Outcomes according to their specific input. The Learning Agreement will serve to indicate the individual contribution to the task for each individual student and is confirmed by a member of the course team. Consideration is given to how any unsuccessful group work might be rectified for resubmission. In theory, this approach allows students who participate in a collaborative project with a final group output that is subpar or fails to still have the opportunity to receive a high grade based on their individual contribution.

Course Structure

All students are registered for the award of Master of Arts; however, exit awards are available if a student leaves the course early. If students successfully complete a level of the course, they will automatically be entitled to progress to the next level.

For the award of Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) students must have achieved a minimum of 60 credits at Level 7; and any specific requirements of the course as outlined in the Course Handbook.

For the award of Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip), students must have achieved a minimum of 120 credits at Level 7; and any specific requirements of the course as outlined in the Course Handbook.

For the award of Master of Arts (MA), a student must have achieved 180 credits, of which a minimum of 120 credits must be at Level 7; and any specific requirements of the course as outlined in the Course Handbook. This qualification will be awarded upon successful completion of the course.

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 knowledge, 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 the students' 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 the students' course, both curricular and extra-curricular activities will give students the opportunity to prepare for the students' 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 the 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.

In practice, this means that each unit of the course 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. 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.

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 their staff throughout their time on this course.

Course Content

Framing Graphic Design Practice comprises a range of projects that begin with re-visiting the fundamentals of the subject discipline. Although such fundamentals are likely to be familiar, students are encouraged to analyse and critically evaluate how and why they are manifested in their practice. If a student's first degree was in a subject other than in the one on which students are registered, or if students are less familiar with working with critical language and debates, these introductory projects will give them the opportunity to develop skills and adjust to new ways of working. Students will be challenged to articulate and question some of the basic assumptions that may underpin their practice.

Assignments in Framing Graphic Design Practice make reference to theories from the cognitive humanities delivered through weekly course lectures. Theories such as Frame Theory, Conceptual Metaphor Theory, and Embodied Cognition are used as a means to analyse practice, the nature of communication, and to develop understanding. This

theoretical framework, introduced in Framing Graphic Design Practice, illustrates how theory can be applied to graphic design practice. Students can choose to continue to use this framework in the subsequent units or can develop their own theoretical framework related to their interests and world view.

As the Framing Graphic Design Practice unit progresses students will be encouraged, in the Boundaries assignment, to survey promising areas of investigation in preparation for the next unit, Scoping the Challenge Space. Students will identify theories relevant to their emerging study focus and methods appropriate to these concerns for generating new knowledge and understanding. The use of AI is encouraged on the course as long as its use is aligned with academic protocols concerning referencing and is used appropriately. AI is useful in helping designers to develop speculative views of the world, or of scoping territory, but is less useful as a way of depicting factual events for example.

Scoping the Challenge Space and Resolving the Solution Space involve periods of independent study that determine the focus of students' practice. They build upon, and contrast with, the predominantly taught mode of delivery in Framing Graphic Design Practice and sustain and fuse the understanding and application of research methods, completion of project plans with presentations to students and staff. Scoping the Challenge Space requires students to formalise their intentions in a Learning Agreement, and to interrogate contextual issues relevant to their study focus through their practice. Consequently, Scoping the Challenge Space provides an opportunity to explore and define a field of study through secondary research and through experimental practice. Here, students will study the ways that different design and research methods can be applied to develop fresh insights into their chosen topic. Some of these approaches can be speculative, emergent, and playful in nature while others are rooted in more formalised methods of enquiry.

The conclusions reached in Scoping the Challenge Space provide a starting point for Resolving the Solution Space. Here, students will carry through their plan of action identified in the Learning Agreement, this might involve using the insights gained in Scoping the Challenge Space to:

- Leverage a creative response to a chosen topic.
- Solve a practical or theoretical problem or question.
- Develop further research or experimentation.

Students will also establish ways of presenting and disseminating the outcomes of their project in ways that communicate to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.

Embedded in both final units is an opportunity to focus the students' practice through professional development. This focus is introduced through live projects and/or competition briefs and students are encouraged, where appropriate, to approach this element through collaboration. This can be within the students' own course group or across disciplines. Professional development can take the form of an assignment spanning both the final units and will be based on project-based work with clear business focus. Equally, students wishing to follow a more research-based route can develop a project that will prepare them for study towards a PhD. This assignment can be separate from or integral to the students' project work occurring in Scoping the Challenge Space and Resolving the Solution Space.

If students are already practicing as a designer, creative business principles and practices are likely to be familiar and students are encouraged to analyse and critically evaluate how and why they are manifested in their practice. If students have progressed straight from undergraduate studies or students are less familiar with critical language and debates in professional practice, this supporting business element will give students the opportunity to develop skills and adjust to new ways of working.

Students will be challenged to articulate and question their position as practicing professionals in the current economy, as well as plan ahead and explore their options as practicing designers and/or researchers once students have completed the MA.

Course specific assessment strategy

There are two summative tasks occurring within each unit:

1. The Reflective Journal constitutes 20% of the final mark and is drawn from information collected in the Research File and other sources.
2. The Portfolio of Work constitutes 80% of the total marks for the unit. The 'pitch deck' Presentation Pitch forms the basis of the Portfolio of Work and contains a variety of different elements. It is primarily visual, although it can include bulleted lists, captions, and titles.

The Reflective Journal together with the Portfolio of Work go hand in hand to provide an account of students' learning that can be summatively assessed.

The Reflective Journal is an illustrated, written submission within which students reflect on their learning by evidencing a wide range of attributes including academic engagement, reflective critical evaluation (of the students' own practice), critical analysis (through practice and literature reviews), processual thinking, technical and specialist skills, and professionalism. The reflective journal provides a personal record of a student's reflections on their learning experiences during a unit. Usually taking the form of a written document or blog, it is a space where students record and reflect upon their own work, progress, and outcomes, providing personal responses to situations that have occurred during their study. Alternative forms of assessment may be agreed in discussion with course tutors. In addition to this reflection on action, the Reflective Journal is expanded on the course to include contextual information relating to the students' project.

The Reflective Journal highlights insights in three important areas:

- The context that informed the students' practice: the relevant theories, subjects, issues, political perspectives, designers, artists, images, literature and so forth.

- The research that is 'on,' 'for,' or 'in' the students' practice – this includes: research on the ways students practice/the outcomes of the students' practice; the students' own research undertaken to enable the students' practice; and research that is embedded in the practice.

- The developmental aspect of the project: both in terms of the students' own personal development as a creative practitioner, and the processual development of an emerging body of work.

The Reflective Journal provides a space for students to map their evaluation and application of design and research methods. Projects might potentially use one or more research methods selected from a wealth of methods that have emerged in design literature. These methods provide ways of obtaining data, of analysing it, and of testing the students' conclusions. Methodology involves the study of methods, and students will begin to identify the assumptions that underlie different methods and to develop the skills necessary to coordinate them and to synchronise them with their theoretical framework.

There is one formative task occurring within each unit:
The Research File: There is a length specified for the Research File, however—since it is assessed formatively—failing to reach this length, or alternatively exceeding it, will not have any repercussions on the marks awarded. The Research File is used primarily as a place where students can record their thoughts, collect secondary research, and document

practice. It can include extensive extracts of texts from books, journals, or websites as well as AI generated information, but in all cases, this should comply with academic referencing protocols.

Specialist resources
In terms of physical resources all MA Graphic Design students have access to:

- SH307 the MA Graphic Design baseroom.
- AUB Library
- The Gallery, AUB
- The Bug exhibition Space
- Main Lecture Theatre (SH001)
- Lecture Theatre 2, (B001)
- Lecture Theatre 3, (A025)
- Equipment and Materials Stores
- The print room
- The bindery
- The workshop
- The Innovation Studio

Course Units

Unit Code		Unit Title	Credits
(F/T)	(P/T)		
GDF701	GDP701	Master's 1: Framing Graphic Design Practice	60
GDF702	GDP702	Master's 2: Scoping the Challenge Space	60
GDF703	GDP703	Master's 3: Resolving the Solution Space	60

Course Diagram

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

Level 7 Full-Time mode of study Autumn start (45 weeks)													
	Trimester One				**Trimester Two**				**Trimester Three**				
Wk. 0	Weeks 1-15				Weeks 16-30				Weeks 31-45				
Induction	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	
	GDF701 Master's 1: Framing Graphic Design Practice (weeks 1-15) (60 credits)			Assessment	**GDF702 Master's 2: Scoping the Challenge Space (weeks 16-30)** (60 credits)			Assessment	**GDF703 Master's 3: Resolving the Solution Space (weeks 31-45)** (60 credits)				Assessment

Level 7 Full-Time mode of study January start (45 weeks)													
	Trimester One				**Trimester Two**				**Trimester Three**				
Wk. 0	Weeks 1-15				Weeks 16-30				Weeks 31-45				
Induction	JAN	FEB	MAR	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	
	GDF701 Master's 1: Framing Graphic Design Practice (weeks 1-15) (60 credits)			Assessment	**GDF702 Master's 2: Scoping the Challenge Space (weeks 16-30)** (60 credits)			Assessment	**GDF703 Master's 3: Resolving the Solution Space (weeks 31-45)** (60 credits)				Assessment

Level 7 Part-Time mode of study September start (90 weeks)																								
	Trimester One								**Trimester Two**								**Trimester Three**							
Wk. 0	Weeks 1-30								Weeks 31-60								Weeks 61-90							
	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A
Induction	**GDP701 Master's 1: Framing Graphic Design Practice (weeks 1-30)** (60 credits)							Assessment	**GDP702 Master's 2: Scoping the Challenge Space (weeks 31-60)** (60 credits)							Assessment	**GDP703 Master's 3: Resolving the Solution Space (weeks 61-90)** (60 credits)							Assessment

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