

Programme Specification

BA (Hons) Graphic Design



This Programme Specification is designed for prospective students, current students, graduates, academic staff and potential employers. It provides a summary of the main features of the programme and the intended learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided.

Whilst every endeavour has been made to provide the course described in the Programme Specification, the University reserves the right to make such changes as may be appropriate for reasons of operational efficiency or due to circumstances beyond its control. Any changes are made in accordance with the University's academic standards and quality procedures.

This document is available in alternative formats on request.

ARTS UNIVERSITY BOURNEMOUTH

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

The Programme Specification provides a summary of the main features of the **BA (Hons) Graphic Design** course and the learning outcomes that a 'typical' student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she passes the course.

Further detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching and learning methods of each unit may be found in your Course Handbook.

<u>Key Course Information</u>

Final Award	BA Honours
Course Title	Graphic Design
Teaching institution	Arts University Bournemouth
Awarding Institution	Arts University Bournemouth
Professional accreditation	Skillset
Length of course / mode of study	3 years full-time
Level of final award (in FHEQ)	Level 6
Subject benchmark statement(s)	Art and Design
UCAS code	W210
Language of study	English
External Examiner for course: Place of work:	Timothy Donaldson University College Falmouth
Date of Validation	1996
Date of most recent review	2009
Date programme specification written/revised	Revised September 2013

Course Philosophy

The course is designed to provide a dynamic, student-centred, broad-based graphic design learning experience that incorporates both academic understanding and vocational relevance.

It encourages you to question how meanings are made by users and audiences from the range of material and conceptual resources associated with graphic artefacts, recognising that there are social, cognitive and embodied processes involved in acts of graphic communication. These material and conceptual resources are continually changing together with the tools used in making and disseminating graphic products. As Postmen notes:

**“Technological change is not additive; it is ecological.
A new technology does not merely add something;
it changes everything” Neil Postmen (1995)**

Consequently new technologies are approached as opportunities for re-evaluating, re-interpreting and re-valuing existing methods and technologies as much as for providing new areas for exploration.

This shift in communications infrastructure is an important factor, for instance, in how ‘Open Design’ has provided user-centred and user-driven outcomes that challenge the traditional designer-manufacturer-distributor-consumer pattern.

Another type of change involves shifts in working practices emerging from more recent amalgamations of practitioners, analysts and technologists in which graphic design outcomes are developed alongside, and integrated more closely with, new products and services. Our task therefore, is to develop new ways of thinking in wider, more interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary modes based upon these communities of practice.

Consequently, it is within this electronically mediated reality that the course has developed a focus on problem finding and problem solving in ways consistent with a sense of technological, ecological, social and cultural responsibility. It encourages reflection on practice through an iterative approach based on research, analysis, synthesis, and the generation of alternative visual ideas. We aim to continue to produce confident, enquiring graduates who are able to undertake further study, or pursue careers in fields related or loosely related to graphic design practice.

Course Aims

The course aims to:

1. Communicate information, ideas, problems, and solutions to a wide range of audiences; and you will have qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring: the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility, decision making in complex and unpredictable contexts; and the learning ability needed to undertake appropriate training of a professional nature or postgraduate study.

2. Develop knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with the study and an ability to evaluate and interpret these within the context of graphic design;
3. Develop your knowledge and understanding to critically evaluate arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data (that may be incomplete); to formulate judgements and to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution - or identify a range of solutions - to a problem;
4. Develop your abilities to manage your own learning and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (e.g. refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the study of Graphic Design).

Course Outcomes

By the end of the course you will be able to:

1. Evidence comprehensive, practical and theoretical knowledge and understanding of graphic design within relevant contexts.
2. Identify defined aspects of the discipline and specialise within the field of graphic design.
3. Work independently and apply knowledge, skills and understanding appropriately.
4. Self and peer appraise to manage and reflect on learning.
5. Evidence critical and analytical understanding and awareness through practical and theoretical work.
6. Evidence effective problem-solving, research, communication and presentation skills.
7. Successfully realise visual, creative and aesthetic solutions.
8. Be confident, informed and proactive.
9. Pursue career opportunities and post graduate study.

Reference Points

UK Quality Code for Higher Education, including:

- Subject Benchmark Statement: Art and Design
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)

AUB Undergraduate Regulatory Framework

AUB Learning and Teaching Strategy

Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (FQ-EHEA)

Creative Skillset

Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Learning and Teaching Strategies

Learning is realised through taught sessions and independent study. The course is structured progressively and embraces a wide variety of learning and teaching methods and experiences to promote active learning. These include project based learning, workshops, team learning, lectures, seminars, group critiques, educational visits, guided reading and tutorials.

You will develop skills, which include research, critical analysis, problem solving, communication and presentation as well as specialist technical skills. Throughout, the integration of theory and practice is promoted and reinforced rigorously. The learning experiences prepare you for a variety of employment routes and postgraduate study.

During the first year of the course we are introducing a cross-school unit called Visual Thinking that will allow you to work with other disciplines. We have worked closely with the BA (Hons) Acting course to provide posters and promotional print items and have also collaborated with BA (Hons) Architecture on the Innovate:Collaborate:Consolidate project. We are hoping that the ICC project will allow you all to do more work together, and learn from each other through testing ideas, projects, and methods of communication. The Independent Study unit will also encourage opportunities for you to develop cross discipline work.

A team of staff that comprise of professional Graphic Designers, a National Teaching Fellow and relevant visiting practitioners delivers the course.

Formative Assessment will be used to support your learning when undertaking 40 credit units.

Midway through the larger 40 credit units Formative Assessment will take place to help you keep on track, monitor your progress and support your achievement.

You take part in major graphic design competitions, for example at Level 6, the International Society of Typographic Designers Licentiate scheme that gives you the opportunity to attain a specialist professional qualification and the Royal Society of Arts Student Bursary Scheme and the Design and Art Direction student awards competition offer opportunities to participate in industry-based briefs.

Assessment

Each unit is assessed separately and the assessment forms part of the unit. Assessment both provides a measure of your achievement, and also gives you regular feedback on how your learning is developing.

For every unit of your course you will be provided with a Unit Handbook, which will state what you are expected to learn within the unit; the work that you have to submit; and how it will be assessed. The Unit Handbook will also give the deadline for presenting your work for assessment.

You will receive a final mark for each unit in the form of a percentage, which will be recorded on your 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. 42, 45, 48). These marks correspond to a low, mid, and high level of achievement within each grade band.

On successful completion of your Honours degree course, you will be awarded a degree classification based on your unit marks. The final classification is determined using all unit marks at Levels 5 and 6 using two different algorithms, which are detailed in your *Quick Guide to the Regulations*. If the two algorithms produce different results, you will be awarded the higher class of degree.

If you have joined Level 6 having completed a Foundation Degree (FdA) the final classification is determined using only your unit marks at Level 6.

For further information on progression, awards and classifications, please visit <https://my.aub.ac.uk/viewpoint/>

Course Structure

You are registered for the award of BA (Hons); however exit awards are available if you leave the course early, having successfully completed one or two levels. If you successfully complete a level of the course, you will automatically be entitled to progress to the next level.

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

For the award of a Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE), you 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 you leave the University following successful completion of the second year of your course.

For the award of a BA (Hons) you 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 your course.

A BA without Honours may be awarded if you have achieved 300 credits, at least 180 of which are at Level 5 or above and at least 60 of which are at Level 6.

Increasingly we are seeing a greater number of students arriving on the course with interests in pursuing particular disciplines within Graphic Design. In order to offer a greater number of award choices to support your exit profile we intend to offer named awards. During the last term of Level 5 you will be required, through a process of Academic Counselling, to discuss your intentions for a named award to ensure that this is achievable. Since each of these named choices are available within the *Specialist Practice* and *Major Project* units the normal consequences of failure apply. (Each of these units must be passed to gain a named award).

Named Awards available:

- BA (Hons) Graphic Design (Motion Graphics)
- BA (Hons) Graphic Design (Branding)
- BA (Hons) Graphic Design (Information Graphics)
- BA (Hons) Graphic Design (Editorial Design)

Course Content

Level 4

Level 4 provides you with opportunities to develop cognitive, creative and technical skills through integrated theoretical and practical engagement. Units in the first level of the course provide an introduction to fundamental skills, principles, processes and knowledge.

All Level 4 units are designed to provide you with experience in the studio and IT areas and to promote confidence in using technical processes, methods and materials necessary to the study of graphic design. Study at this level provides a broader contextual understanding of the subject. Theory and practice are seamlessly integrated in all units. Skills in research, critical analysis and evaluation, communication of inter-related practices and technologies, are delivered to enhance the student's creative potential. After the first unit, *Introductory Studies* finishes you will undertake the *Visual Thinking* unit which is a cross school, shared unit. This unit is supported by a choice of workshops delivered by all courses. During the same period a School international educational visit is organised.

Level 5

During this level you are required to relate creative aims to critical and contextual frameworks.

Learning agreements drive three units (*Innovate: Consolidate, Defining and Refining Themes and Issues and Independent Study Unit*). This allows us to emphasise the progressive change in teaching methods that allows you to develop more confident and reflective approaches to your learning and demonstrate your increased self-directed learning.

Theoretical understanding in Level 5 builds on work undertaken in Level 4 to extend student knowledge and understanding of the wider contexts and issues of the visual arts, within appropriate theoretical frameworks. In the final term contemporary practice and contextual awareness and research of graphic design is broadened and deepened by the *Defining and Refining Themes and Issues* unit.

During the second year you will be offered an opportunity to consider the named awards and the particular units from which these credits must be derived. Work that you undertake in *Defining and Refining Themes and Issues* may help inform your decisions. Although there is no obligation for you to opt for a named award the following awards will be informed by Academic Counseling, *Defining and Refining*

Themes and Issues unit and derived from the *Specialist Practice* unit at the beginning of Level 6 and the *Major Project*.

- BA (Hons) Graphic Design (Motion Graphics)
- BA (Hons) Graphic Design (Branding)
- BA (Hons) Graphic Design (Information Graphics)
- BA (Hons) Graphic Design (Editorial Design)

Level 6

Level 6 encourages you to confirm your particular creative aspirations, and to extend the scope and depth of their enquiry.

All subsequent units require you to define your study through Learning Agreements, which they negotiate with the teaching team. These provide a focus to enable you to demonstrate the integration of your learning on the course.

The *Major Project* unit provides an opportunity for you to demonstrate the maturity of your creativity, intellectual enquiry and expressive abilities.

Likewise, the *Investigative Study* unit affords opportunities to pursue a programme of advanced independent research, consider links with the *Major Project*, or demonstrate that the level of skills in research; analysis, criticism and communication are appropriate for entry in employment or postgraduate study.

Course Units

Level 4

GDS450	Introductory Studies	40 credits
GDS456	Visual Thinking	40 credits
GDS457	Graphic Design Studies	40 credits

Level 5

GDS550	Visual Systems	40 credits
Or		
GDS556	Erasmus Exchange	40 credits
GDS551	Text, Sequence and Interaction	40 credits
GDS557	Innovate: Consolidate	20 credits
Or		
GDS558	Independent Study Unit	20 credits
GDS552	Defining and Refining Themes & Issues	20 credits

Level 6

GDS650	Specialist Practice	40 credits
GDS651	Investigative Study	20 credits
GDS652	Major Project	60 credits

Course Diagram

This schematic diagram shows the proposed start/end dates for each unit with assessment periods. Further information on the structure of each unit will be included in unit handbooks.

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
Induction week	GDS450 Introductory Studies (40 credits)										GDS456 Visual Thinking (40 credits)										GDS457 Graphic Design Studies (40 credits)								Assessment	

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
GDS550 Visual Systems (40 credits)											GDS551 Text, Sequence and Interaction (40 credits)											GDS557 Innovate: Consolidate (20 credits)							Assessment	
or GDS556 Erasmus Exchange (40 credits)											GDS552 Defining and Refining Themes and Issues (20 credits)							or GDS558 Independent Study Unit (20 credits)												

Level 6																														
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
GDS650 Specialist Practice (40 credits)											GDS652 Major Project (60 credits)																		Assessment	
GDS651 Investigative Study (20 credits)																														

Resources

University Resources:

Library

The course is supported by a Subject Librarian who liaises closely with the team to ensure that the Library resources are relevant and meet student and staff research needs. As part of the AUB's Information Literacy Framework, the Subject Librarian provides sessions on researching and using information, as well as individual support for students in the use of Library resources

The Library holds an excellent range of specialist learning materials including books, journals, CDs, DVDs, and newspapers. It has subscriptions to a wide range of specialist electronic resources focusing on art, design, media and performance, including e-books and e-journals. The Library's facilities include computers, viewing rooms, a presentation space and a silent reading room.

The Library consistently receives high scores in both the in-house and national student surveys, which are carried out annually.

Information technology

The University provides a comprehensive range of IT resources, utilising Apple Macintosh, Windows Personal Computers and specialist resources for its art, design, media and performance disciplines. The University uses Industry standard software from Microsoft, Adobe, Apple, and leading software suppliers and is continually investing in its technology and resources.

IT resources are also available to you via the Library, plus through a number of bookable IT suites and dedicated base room provision. To enable access to learning resources, wireless internet access is also available.

The ITCS section (Information Technology and Communication Services) provides a helpdesk facility for IT enquiries and fault notification. The Helpdesk is open from 8.30am until 5pm from Monday to Friday Email: itcshelpdesk@AUB.ac.uk

Museum of Design in Plastic (MoDiP)

MoDiP is a registered museum of 20th and 21st century design and popular culture with a focus on plastics. Its collection is unique within the UK and has been developed to support teaching and learning at the Arts University Bournemouth.

There are many ways in which MoDiP can play a part in your studies:

- As a source of inspiration – large numbers of items may be viewed, handled and explored in depth, drawn, photographed and filmed
- As the focus of a brief for products and projects relating to course work
- As an exhibition venue – your work can be displayed in relation to the collections and exhibitions and events may be mounted in the museum space

The Museum is in a purpose built space within the Library, designed with wheelchair access in mind, and has the same opening hours as the rest of the University for the viewing of exhibitions. Objects not on display can be borrowed and taken to the studio. To see what is available, go to the [Plastics Network](http://www.plasticsnetwork.org) website (www.plasticsnetwork.org).

The Gallery

The Gallery is a major resource for contemporary visual art at the Arts University Bournemouth and has received regional and national recognition. There are regular gallery events, including collections on loan from galleries and museums, as well as individual exhibitions by some of today's leading artists, photographers, designers and critical writers.

It also functions as a learning resource and is integrated into the teaching, learning, and research practice undertaken at the University.

text + work is the ethos which underpins the exhibition programme at the Arts University Bournemouth. The **text + work** concept promotes and provides a forum for challenging dialogue between innovative contemporary art, design and media practice and its theoretical context.

There are **text + work** gallery events, critical texts, shared and networked exhibitions and a **text + work** website.

Student Support

Academic Guidance

Academic staff are responsible for providing you with feedback on your work and your general academic progress and for providing academic support and guidance through the course. This is provided through "critiques" and written feedback, as well as guidance on practical work and informal discussion about your concerns. These sessions may be individual or, in the case of collaborative work, in small groups.

Academic tutorials are scheduled to allow you to discuss in depth matters relating to creative or theoretical work, or the course in general. You will be entitled to at least one formal recorded academic tutorial per term with a nominated member of the course team.

Support and advice is also provided on an informal basis throughout the course, through discussions between staff and students.

Career Education, Information and Guidance

You will be prepared for employment, and given the opportunity to learn about the various career options available to you, through a wide range of projects which may include live briefs or external competitions. Academic staff remain very familiar with the discipline, and will often still work in the field, and are also able to advise on specific opportunities.

The Careers Service within the University offers impartial, confidential advice, support and guidance, to help you explore and develop your career ideas and manage your future career successfully. The Service offers individual career

guidance interviews, as well as advice on job seeking strategies, CVs and interview skills, self-employment / freelancing and further study opportunities.

The Senior Careers Officer holds regular lunchtime lectures, which cover a range of popular careers topics, including postgraduate study and funding, career planning, networking and self-marketing, and teaching as a career. Full details and dates of forthcoming lectures are available on the Careers intranet pages and on the Student Services notice boards.

The Careers Service also offers specialist events, working in partnership with local employers, AUB alumni and external agencies to bring together a range of art, design, media and performance expertise.

Learning Support

Support for students with disabilities (including dyslexia)

The Arts University Bournemouth is firmly committed to a policy of equal opportunities for all students and positively welcomes applications from people with disabilities and/or additional needs. Throughout all aspects of University life, we actively encourage and support the participation of students with disabilities. We aim to support disabled students by offering needs assessments and support plans, which enable you to achieve your personal goals.

The Learning Support team provides academic support for students with specific learning difficulties including dyslexia. We ask all new home students to complete a 'Quicksan' screening programme when they join the University. This screening is designed to check your learning style (the way you learn best) and whether you might have signs of dyslexia. If appropriate, you will be referred to an educational psychologist for a full assessment.

Students with a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia are able to access individual tutorials aimed at improving your independent study skills and are supported in applying for the Disabled Students' Allowance, which can provide specialist equipment and if appropriate, personal support.

The Senior Disability Officer and Wellbeing Officer provide ongoing support and advice for students with all other types of disability, including mental health difficulties, physical disabilities, medical conditions and sensory impairments.

The Arts University Bournemouth has a duty to anticipate the needs of disabled students, and to make "reasonable adjustments" to ensure that these students can access education and related services. If you feel that some aspect of the learning, teaching or assessment on your course places you at a disadvantage because of your disability, please contact the Senior Disability Officer within Student Services, who will be happy to work with you and your course team to identify any appropriate reasonable adjustments. Contact Barry Gilbert on bgilbert@aub.ac.uk or telephone 01202 363291.

Support for students for whom English is a second language

If English is not your first language you will be invited to complete a brief written exercise during the initial weeks of your course, so that your current academic language skills can be assessed. Our English for Academic Purposes (EAP) tutors, who are part of the Learning Support team, will review the exercise and contact you if

your work indicates that you would benefit from additional support. An EAP tutor will work with you to draw up an Individual Learning Plan, which will set out a structured approach to developing your independent academic and study skills. This may include helping you to develop strategies for interpreting assignment briefs, working on the structure of your written work, or developing your proof-reading skills, for example. The plan will be reviewed each term and will be shared with your course tutor so that they are aware of the work you are doing to improve your study skills. If necessary, your EAP tutor will refer you to a local language school so that you can improve your generic English language levels.

Pastoral support and guidance

Support and advice on non-academic matters is provided through trained and qualified professional staff within Student Services. We have a team of professionally qualified male and female counsellors, with appointments available during weekdays and evenings. Students accessing the service are offered various levels of support ranging from regular weekly sessions, occasional support or just a “one off” consultation. In most cases, you can expect to be seen for a session within two days of making initial contact with the service. If the situation is very urgent and you are very emotionally distressed, we also have a crisis support service and you will be seen by one of our counsellors almost immediately.

Pastoral support is also available from the AUB Chaplaincy. The Chaplaincy at the Arts University Bournemouth is shared with Bournemouth University and is an inclusive Chaplaincy, which welcomes people of all faiths and none. The Quiet Room and the Islamic Prayer Room are in regular use by staff and students and meetings with ministers of any faith can be arranged.

Advice and support with practical issues such as funding, accommodation or childcare is available from the Student Advice, Funds and Accommodation Office within Student Services.

Methods for Evaluating and Improving the Quality and Standards of Teaching and Learning

The course is subject to the University’s rigorous quality assurance procedures, which involve subject specialist and internal peer review of the course at periodic intervals, normally of 5 years. This process ensures that the course engages with the QAA Quality Code.

In addition all courses undertake an Annual Course Review, which takes account of relevant information such as:

- External Examiners’ Reports
- Key statistics including data on application, retention and achievement
- Results of the National Student Survey
- Results of the in-house Student Perception Survey
- Feedback from Student Representatives
- Feedback from relevant employer groups, including the course Industry Liaison Group
- Feedback from Creative Skillset

All courses develop an action plan arising out of this exercise, which is monitored by the Course and Faculty Boards of Study. Your student representatives can keep you informed about progress against the action plan.

Staff development priorities for the course team as a whole are identified through the Annual Course Review process and for individuals through the Staff Performance Review process.

Indicators of Quality and Standards

The Arts University Bournemouth was granted taught degree awarding powers by the Privy Council in 2008 following an intensive period of scrutiny by experienced academics from across the higher education sector.

The University was audited by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) in May 2011 and received a judgement of 'Confidence' in the management of the academic standards of its awards and its management of the quality of learning opportunities. This is the best available outcome and confirms that our quality assurance mechanisms are robust, meaning that we can have full confidence in the standard of course outcomes and the quality of the educational experience we deliver.

More detailed information is available in the following documents:

- Online course information
- Quick guide to the regulations
- Unit Handbooks
- HE Student Regulations – <https://my.aub.ac.uk/viewpoint/>
- AUB Student Guide