UNIVERSITY OF FORWARD THINKING WESTMINSTER⌗

Programme Specification

Course record information

Name and level of final award:	BA (Hons) Graphic Communication Design
Name and level of intermediate awards:	Diploma of HE
	Certificate of HE
Awarding body/institution:	University of Westminster
Status of awarding body/institution:	Recognised Body
Location of delivery:	Harrow Campus
Language of delivery and assessment:	English
Course/programme leader:	Colin Bailey
Course URL:	http://www.westminster.ac.uk/courses/subjects/art-and-design/undergraduate-courses/full-time/u09fugid-ba-honours-graphic-communication-design
Mode and length of study:	Full time
University of Westminster course code:	W50
JACS code:	
UCAS code:	W211
QAA subject benchmarking group:	Art and Design
Professional body accreditation:	
Date of course validation/review:	2010/11
Date of programme specification:	July 2015

Admissions

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The course seeks applicants through the UCAS system and in accordance with the requirements detailed in the University Prospectus.

Selection is made by members of the staff team on the basis of:

Educational qualifications

All students will be required to have obtained passes in Maths and English at GCSE level (Grade 'C' or above)
and
2 'B's at A-Level
or
BTEC National Diploma (M/M/P)
or
Art and Design Foundation (Pass)

Letter of Application (supplied as part of the UCAS application form)

Confidential Report (supplied as part of the UCAS application form)

Personal presentation at interview (if applicable)

A portfolio of work

A portfolio of work, and/or, prior accredited experience

A supplementary questionnaire is used by the course (when time allows) in order to give applicants the opportunity to discuss their understanding of this course in particular.

The course adheres to all aspects of the University Equal Opportunities policy and encourages a wide range of applicants from all educational and ethnic backgrounds.

English Language requirements for overseas students are:
IELTS (6.0)
or
TOEFL (550 paper/213 computer)

Applicants will not be accepted onto the Graphic Communication Design course if the staff are not confident of their potential to complete the course.

Equal opportunities

The University of Westminster is committed to promoting Equal Opportunities in all its dealings with students, staff, applicants and public.

The University aims (subject to complying with legislative requirements in force from time to time) to ensure that applicants, and students, are treated solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins, age, marital status, family responsibility, trade union activity, political or religious belief, socio-economic background or disability (provided that they have the necessary attributes to undertake the course).

The University opposes any form of discrimination, including harassment, on these grounds and will deal fairly, quickly and confidentially with any complaint brought forward under this policy.

Mechanisms for lodging a complaint, as well as the disciplinary proceedings which may ensure for any member of the University whose behaviour is found to be in breach of this policy, are detailed in the *Equal Opportunities Notes for Guidance*.

Course outline

The Graphic Communication Design BA(Hons) course comprises six semesters offered over three academic years. The academic year is thirty-six weeks long and as a full-time student you are expected to allocate this period of time to your studies.

The full-time study load for each semester normally consists of four units of study which are called modules. These modules usually correspond to the standard format operated within the University. However, several modular units are sometimes combined to provide a double or triple module. This enables students to undertake larger projects which are not possible within the time available in a standard module.

A standard module is normally delivered over twelve learning weeks, with the proportion of direct tuition to independent study varying between modules dependent on the module content.

Each module which you complete successfully is worth 15 credits. (30 credits for a double module and 45 credits for a triple module). As you move through your course you will accumulate credits which will contribute towards the award of your degree on completion of your course. Details of the number of credits required for the award of your degree can be found in the *Course Specific Regulations* section of this handbook.

The modules which you may study are described within the introductions to each Level.

Each module description provides details of:

- the aims and learning outcomes for that module (what you should know and be able to do at the end of the module)

- the assessment requirements (what you will be expected to present for assessment at the end of the module)

- the criteria which will be used to assess your work

The credits which you accumulate by successfully completing modules on this course are recognized by the Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (CATS). They may be used by you if you discontinue your studies and at some point in the future wish to resume them. They may also be used to calculate your point of entry into another course if you change your place of study to an institution operating a similar CATS scheme.

If you decide to terminate your studies on completion of your first level of study you may be eligible for the award of a Certificate of Higher Education.

If you decide to terminate your studies on completion of your second level of study you may be eligible for the award of a Diploma of Higher Education.

The normal work load for a full-time student is 120 credits per academic year (equivalent to 8 modules). No student may enroll for more than 135 credits (9 modules) in any one academic year. You are required to complete your degree course in a maximum of six years.

Undergraduate modules are offered at three levels:

Level Four modules

These modules are of an introductory nature and introduce the students to a variety of theoretical, conceptual and production debates and processes. They normally provide the opportunity to acquire proficiency in key skills and concepts relating to the study of Graphic Communication Design.

Modules at this level are of a similar standard to those normally encountered at Level One of a full-time undergraduate degree but, in order to cater for students from a wide variety of educational backgrounds, this will be interpreted flexibly.

Level Five modules

These modules build upon the experience and knowledge which are established at Level Four.

The standard is that which is normally encountered at Level Two of a full-time undergraduate course.

The knowledge and skills which are required at Level Five are those which will have been established at Level Four.

Level Five modules require a greater degree of independent study together with an ability to support project work with independent research. Self reflection, personal development and direction are also features of this level.
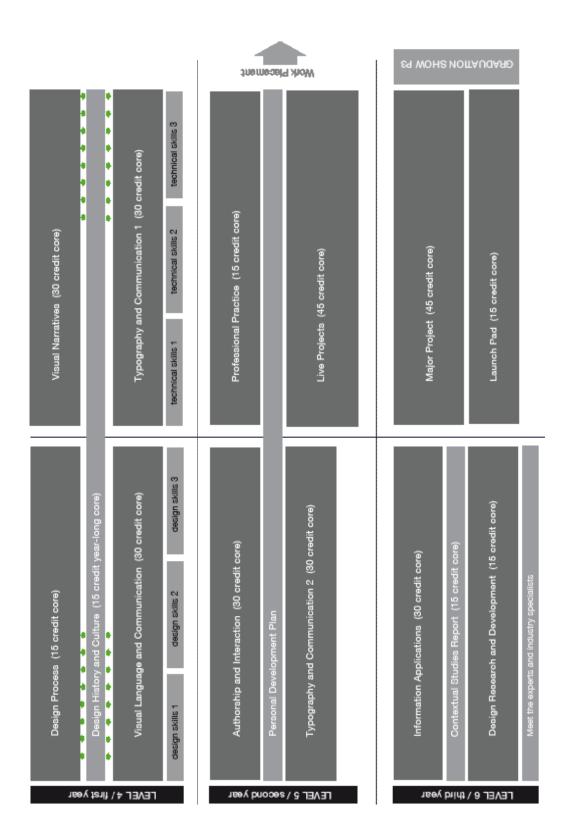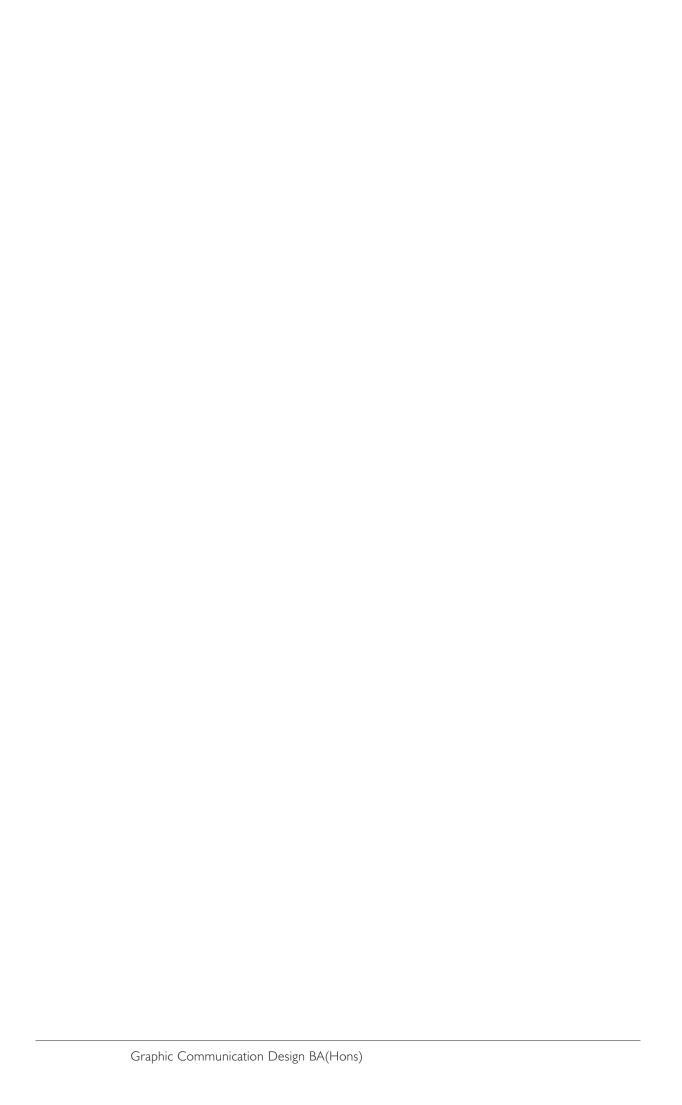
Level Six modules

These modules offer an increasing degree of latitude for you to explore, in greater depth, those elements of information design in which you have developed a particular interest and experience.

After the acquisition of design principles and their gradual and progressive application to design problems, you are encouraged to face the higher level challenges of synthesis and innovation in order that you can contribute to a critical examination of the opportunities which exist within the realm of professional practice.

Level Six modules require sustained independent and high quality work and the ability to analyse, synthesize and apply creatively what has been learnt during the programme of study.

Course diagram

LEVEL 4 / first year

Design Process (15 credit core)

Design History and Culture (15 credit year-long core)

Visual Language and Communication (30 credit core)

design skills 1

design skills 2

design skills 3

Visual Narratives (30 credit core)

Typography and Communication 1 (30 credit core)

technical skills 1

technical skills 2

technical skills 3

LEVEL 5 / second year

Authorship and Interaction (30 credit core)

Personal Development Plan

Typography and Communication 2 (30 credit core)

Professional Practice (15 credit core)

Live Projects (45 credit core)

Work Placement

LEVEL 6 / third year

Information Applications (30 credit core)

Contextual Studies Report (15 credit core)

Design Research and Development (15 credit core)

Meet the experts and industry specialists

Major Project (45 credit core)

Launch Pad (15 credit core)

GRADUATION SHOW P3

Course rationale

the course aims to encourage creativity,
individuality and personal growth through
the study of graphic communication design
within a stimulating, secure and well
managed learning environment

we place emphasis on the application
of our skills to develop ideas and present
information in ways that are engaging,
meaningful, useful and worthwhile

Aims and learning outcomes

The course aims to:

provide students with a sound design methodology and appropriate range of creative, intellectual and technical skills which are sustainable and transferable within a dynamic professional life

enable students to identify, redefine and resolve communication design problems through highly developed critical and reflective judgement

enable students to identify emerging opportunities, and gain a range of transferrable skills that allow them to respond to change

encourage student self-awareness and confidence in their interaction within their discipline, and with the world of work

provide students with knowledge and critical understanding of the historical, theoretical, and cultural contexts of their discipline

Learning outcomes:

on successfully completing the course a student should:

possess a portfolio of high quality communication design artefacts which reflect and serve your interests and aspirations, and are relevant to the pursuit of a career in design practice

have highly developed skills of analysis and synthesis in the organization, representation and communication of ideas and information

have a high degree of aesthetic sensibility, intellectual acuity and technical proficiency appropriate to the communication of engaging designed artefacts

possess a range of technical skills, appropriate to your interests and aspirations, that are sustainable within a rapidly evolving technological environment

through confidence in your abilities, be prepared to accommodate change, and identify opportunities for the application of your skills within design practice

be able to effectively articulate your professional skills and attributes in verbal and written form for a range of work related situations

have a sound knowledge of the historical, theoretical and cultural contexts of the practice of design, and be able to effectively demonstrate this through oral and written forms

Personal development plan

Graphic Communication Design is a rapidly changing discipline, offering a wide range of career opportunities. Progressively throughout the course you are given a greater degree of autonomy and responsibility for your learning experience in relation to your personal interests and aspirations. Students and staff will be concerned to monitor and match personal learning experience and career aspirations to developments and within changing professional practices.

The introduction of the *Personal Development Plan* (PDP) and the *Higher Education and Career Management Skills* policy have been considered and integrated as important elements within individual modules, and within the course as a whole.

Although the aims of PDP are taught, practiced and assessed, they are not presented in the form of one Personal Development 'Plan' outcome. It is the nature of design practice, and of the course, that you will be required to reflect on your learning, interests and needs as you move through the course.

The second year of the course is very much about self reflection, where you will be required to consider your skills and interests in relation to the course and the world of work.

The *Professional Practice* module in semester two of the second year will be particularly concerned with individual students awareness of their skill, needs, interests and aspirations in relation to options within the course, and within design practice. Your personal reflection will enable you to focus and set goals for the future. It will enable you to reflect on how, and if, your academic experience supports these aspirations. It will also help you to focus and develop any specialist interests you have within the curriculum and to identify any strengths or weaknesses in your particular design and technical skills and abilities.

Your refection on your needs and future development will be particularly important in helping you to select topics for the *Live Projects* module in semester two of the second year and the *Information Applications* and *Major Project* in semester two of the third year. In the *Launch Pad* module in semester two of the third year, your awareness of your personal development will enable you to produce an effective CV and supporting material to focus and communicate your professional aspirations.

In personal tutorials in each semester of the three years your personal development plan will be a reference point for the discussions you have with your personal tutor.

Subject benchmarks

The *Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education* has specified *Subject Benchmarks* for disciplines within the subject area of Art and Design. *Graphic Communication Design* is such a discipline.

Below is a summary of the levels of knowledge, understanding, attributes and skills expected as a minimum to achieve the Honours Degree in *Graphic Communication Design*.

Standards of achievements

Subject-specific knowledge and understanding, attributes and skills

The student will have presented evidence which demonstrates some ability to generate ideas independently and/or collaboratively in response to set briefs and/or as self-initiated activity.

This evidence will also demonstrate proficiency in observation, investigation, enquiry, visualization and/or making.

Ideas will have been developed through to outcomes which confirm the student's ability to select and use materials, processes and environments.

The student will have made connections between intention, processes, outcome, context, and methods of dissemination.

Student's work will have been informed by aspects of professional practice in their discipline. This will be evidenced by some knowledge and understanding of:

the broad critical and contextual dimensions of the student's discipline

the issues which arise from the designer's relationship with audiences, clients, markets, users, consumers, and/or participants

major developments in current and emerging media and technologies in their discipline

the significance of the work of other practitioners in their discipline.

At the lower end of the third class honours classification, an honours degree in Graphic Communication Design confirms that the holder has acquired technical knowledge and practical skills. The student will be able to use materials, media, techniques, methods, technologies and tools associated with the discipline studied, and will be familiar with good working practices.

Generic knowledge and understanding, attributes and skills

At the minimum threshold level, students will have demonstrated that they have some ability to:

exercise self management skills in managing their workloads and meeting deadlines

accommodate change and uncertainty

analyse information and experiences, and formulate reasoned arguments

benefit from the critical judgments of others and recognise their personal strengths and needs

apply interpersonal and social skills to interact with others

communicate ideas and information in visual, oral and written forms

present ideas and work to their audiences

apply information skills to navigate, retrieve, and manage information from a variety of sources

select and employ communication and information technologies.

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Higher Education & Career Management Skills

In addition to those skills which are specific to the study and practice of *Graphic Communication Design*, you will need to employ a wider range of skills both in your academic experience of the course and in your future professional practice as a designer. These may be defined as key or transferable skills, such as the *Higher Education and Career Management Skills*.

You already possess and practice many of these skills at a high level, others you may need to develop to ensure that you achieve your academic and career aspirations.

Similarly, although the skills are integrated into the academic aims and content of the course overall, they are not all incorporated into every module. Some skills, such as task-centred working are central to the design process, as is creative and innovative thinking. Others, such as skill in leadership, may relate mainly to practice within a team.

Importantly, the *HE & CM* skills provide a reference against which you may map and monitor your personal development.

Those skills which are incorporated into each module are indicated in the tables as: *T*aught and *A*ssessed; *T*aught but not formally assessed; *P*racticed as part of the overall experience of the module.

First Year / Level 4

		Design Process	Design History and Culture	Visual Language and Communication	Visual Narratives	Typography and Communication 1					
group working	Team and group working	P		P	P	P					
	Leadership										
	Negotiation	P									
	Conflict management										
	Task-centred working	PA	P	P		P					
learning resources	Use and range of learning resources	TA	TA	TA	P	PA					
	Research techniques	TA	TA	P	P	PA					
	Professional working										
self evaluation	Self awareness	P	P	P	P	PA					
	Self motivation	P	P	P	P	PA					
	Reflection on personal development	P	TA	P	P	PA					
	Critical analysis	TA	TA	TA	PA	TA					
	Challenge opinion	P	T	P							
	Respond to feedback	P	P	P	P	P					
	Reflection on others' functioning	TP	P	P	P	P					
management of information	Information and data retrieval	TA	TA	PA	PA	TA					
	Creative and innovative thinking	P	P	TA	PA	TA					
	Business awareness										
	Research strategy	TA	TA	P		P					
autonomy	Ability to learn independently	TA	P	P	P	P					
	Management of own learning	T	P	P	P	P					
	Time management	P	P	P							
	Self critical	T	TA	P	P	P					
	Supportive of others	P	P	P	P	P					
communication	Report writing	TA	TA	PA	PA	PA					
	Oral communication	P	P	P	P	P					
	Presentation	P	P	PA	P	PA					
	Use of IT	P	P	TA	PA	PA					
	Debating	PA	P								
	Consulting	P		P							
problem solving	Application of methods/tools	TA	P	TA	P	PA					
	Identification of problem essentials			PA		P					
	Action planning	P		P							
	Decision making	PA	P	TA		P					

T = Taught
P = Practiced
A = Assessed

Second Year / Level 5

		Authorship and Interaction	Typography and Communication 2	Professional Practice	Live Projects						
group working	Team and group working	P	P	PA	P						
	Leadership										
	Negotiation										
	Conflict management										
	Task-centred working	P	TA	PA							
learning resources	Use and range of learning resources	TA	PA	TA	PA						
	Research techniques	TA	P	TA	TA						
	Professional working			TA	PA						
self evaluation	Self awareness	P		TA	TA						
	Self motivation	P	P	PA	PA						
	Reflection on personal development	P	P	PA	PA						
	Critical analysis	TA	PA	PA	PA						
	Challenge opinion	TA		P	P						
	Respond to feedback	P	P	P	P						
	Reflection on others' functioning	P	P		P						
management of information	Information and data retrieval	TA	PA	TA	TA						
	Creative and innovative thinking	TA	PA	TA	TA						
	Business awareness			TA	P						
	Research strategy	TA	P	TA	TA						
autonomy	Ability to learn independently	P	P	PA	P						
	Management of own learning	P	P	PA	P						
	Time management	P	PA	P	P						
	Self critical	PA	P	P	PA						
	Supportive of others	P		P	P						
communication	Report writing	TA	P	TA	TA						
	Oral communication	P	P	PA	P						
	Presentation	PA	PA	TA	PA						
	Use of IT	TA	TA	TA	PA						
	Debating			PA	P						
	Consulting			P	P						
problem solving	Application of methods/tools	TA	P	TA	TA						
	Identification of problem essentials	P	P	TA	TA						
	Action planning	P		P	PA						
	Decision making	PA	PA	TA	TA						

T = Taught
P = Practiced
A = Assessed

Third Year / Level 6

		Information Applications	Contextual Studies Report	Design Research and Development	Major Project	Launch Pad					
group working	Team and group working	PA	P		PA	PA					
	Leadership					P					
	Negotiation	PA			P	P					
	Conflict management					P					
	Task-centred working	TA	P		TA	PA					
learning resources	Use and range of learning resources	T	TA	P	PA	P					
	Research techniques	PA	TA	PA	P	TA					
	Professional working	TA	P		PA	TA					
self evaluation	Self awareness	P	TA	PA	PA	TA					
	Self motivation	P	P	P	P	PA					
	Reflection on personal development	P	TA	PA	PA	TA					
	Critical analysis	TA	TA	PA	TA	TA					
	Challenge opinion	TA	P	P	P	P					
	Respond to feedback	P	P	P	P	P					
	Reflection on others' functioning	P			P						
management of information	Information and data retrieval	PA	TA	TA	PA	PA					
	Creative and innovative thinking	TA	TA	PA	TA	TA					
	Business awareness	P			P	P					
	Research strategy	TA	TA	TA	PA	P					
autonomy	Ability to learn independently	P	P	P	P	PA					
	Management of own learning	P	P	P	P	PA					
	Time management	P	P	P	P	P					
	Self critical	P	TA	PA	PA	PA					
	Supportive of others					P					
communication	Report writing	PA	TA	P	PA	PA					
	Oral communication	P	PA	P	PA	PA					
	Presentation	TA	PA	PA	PA	PA					
	Use of IT	TA	TA	P	TA	TA					
	Debating	P	PA	P	P	P					
	Consulting	P	PA	P	P	P					
problem solving	Application of methods/tools	TA	TA	PA	TA	PA					
	Identification of problem essentials	TA	PA	TA	TA	TA					
	Action planning	P	TA	PA	PA	PA					
	Decision making	TA	TA	TA	PA	PA					

T = Taught
P = Practiced
A = Assessed

Teaching and learning strategies

Teaching and Learning
The course team have identified a range of strategies available to them in the delivery of the course. Each of these strategies has its own characteristics and it is a matter of professional judgement as to the appropriate mix of teaching strategies at each point of the course. However, the use of particular methods will relate to, and be dictated by, the stated goal of developing throughout the course an increasing degree of learner autonomy. Many of these methods can best be described as 'student centred learning': they demand, and depend upon, a high level of student participation. As a consequence of this, it is necessary to introduce you to these methods gradually and explicitly in order to allow you opportunities to develop competence in their use and to develop this progressively at each level of the course.

The strategies include:

Project work
Projects are task related learning based on a specific problem and may vary from a short exercise to an extended piece of design work requiring research, development and prototype testing.

Workshops
Workshops are structured experiences with clearly defined boundaries allowing students a safe place to acquire skills and experience which may be applied to other learning activities.
Seminars are a forum of ten to twelve participants in which issues and ideas are shared and discussed. They may be staff or student led and may focus on required reading or research.

Group work
Group work focuses on the acquisition of interpersonal skills in the process of working with others. One of it's major concerns is to utilize the peer group as a learning resource.

Critique sessions
Critique sessions are events in which students and their peers evaluate their work in discussion with tutors.

Reading lists
Reading lists facilitate the acquisition and integration of existing knowledge and experience into the students' developing understanding. They provide an essential addition to both the studio based work and theoretical studies. Their use is vital in the development of a full and deep understanding of the course content.

Training
Training is seen as defined practical demonstration and practice of any skill from working with computers, to interpersonal or presentation skills.

Testing
Testing through specific task-related activities is sometimes used to verify learning and the acquisition of basic skills and knowledge.

Library research
Library research is seen as an essential skill in the designer's repertoire. In addition to required reading identified by the course, you are expected to develop your own lines of enquiry relating to both theoretical and studio studies and contributing to project work and seminars.

Blackboard
The course makes use of this important means of communication. It provides students with up-to-date information on events and requirements, and contains many features that support and enhance student learning.

Learning agreements
Learning agreements demand that you develop skills in planning, negotiating, innovating, reflecting, implementing and evaluating both design proposals and your own learning experience. Agreements may have one or two requirements for a simple task or be sufficiently comprehensive to cover an entire module. They are essentially a vehicle for your self development and will be introduced by staff when project work is open ended and the final product outcome is not specified.

Guided Independent Study
Each module will include periods of Guided Independent Study that are designed to encourage autonomy, and develop important self-learning skills. The range of practices and activities employed varies according to each module, but the outcomes are usually followed up and discussed within the module.

Assessment
Assessment processes are designed to fit their purpose. Therefore, a simple test might be used to assess the success of a computer training session; a peer group evaluation seminar to assess progress on a design proposal; a formal presentation to tutors to assess a complex design project.

Presentations
Presentations from staff to students may be made to introduce a new topic or project. They may be formal or informal and can range from guest lecturers presenting their design work to a project briefing session. You will be required to make presentations to help you focus on specific stages of a developing design in order to develop their presentation, transferable and communication skills and to enable staff and peers to provide feedback on their design proposals.

Group tutorials
Group tutorials will be held with small groups of students and a tutor. They provide more personal feedback and responses for individuals who often also set the agenda for the session. Tutorial groups may form learning support groups or sub-divide into co-counselling pairs or trios for additional meetings without the involvement of tutors.

Individual Tutorials
Individual tutorials, with module leaders and staff, take place throughout the course at appropriate stages in order to allow students to develop and progress their ideas.

Personal tutorials
Tutorials with your Personal Tutor, will also allow you to reflect on your skills, abilities and interests in the focus for your future development.

Illustrated lectures
Illustrated lectures provide a group focus for active participation in the examination of contemporary and historical works, exemplifying hypotheses, ideas, issues and philosophies.

Critical journal
The function of the Critical Journal is to provide the necessary means for recording and reflection. In it, you document projects, give some order to experience, review and criticize the events and themes of your programme, and comment on personal progress and aspirations. It is seen as an important learning device for enabling you to develop a personal response to the programme and begin to identify an individual interests.

Student workload
As a student on the Graphic Communication Design BA(Hons) course you are expected to participate fully in the programme as offered. This means that you must attend regularly and, importantly, you must attend all structured and timetabled events. Failure to do so will place your academic progress in jeopardy. The normal working week for attendance in the studio is four days from 10.00am–4.00pm as a minimum.

Patterns of attendance
Attendance patterns vary at different times during your course. However, you are expected to maintain contact with your tutor at all times during the academic year. It is your responsibility to be aware of and meet all deadlines which are published. You are expected to maintain contact with the University and the course by using your e-mail facility regularly, emptying your pigeon hole regularly and attending all meetings of your year group.

Class materials
Level Four students are required to have a selection of studio working tools. These must include: a selection of rulers of different lengths; a selection of colour felt-tipped pens; a collection of coloured pencils; at least one A4 sketch book; an A3 and A2 layout pad; a compass and drawing materials; a craft knife; a scalpel and blades; a cutting mat; a stapler; a hole punch; an external digital storage device; various adhesives and sundry stationery items.
Level Five students are required to support their design practice by the purchase of a supplementary storage device and a number of disks. This is essential in order to prevent valuable assessment work being stored on insecure server space.
Loss of design work in this manner is not acceptable as an excuse in the event of non-submission of project work.
Level Six students should note that it is advisable to consider the purchase of their own computer at some time before the commencement of Level Six studies. This is not essential as the University is well equipped with both hardware and software, however, in most cases students do benefit from such a purchase. Costs associated with the presentation of final year projects should be anticipated by each student as they prepare for graduation.

Copyright
All material produced by students during the course using the University of Westminster facilities and/or submitted for assessment shall be regarded for copyright purposes as belonging to the University of Westminster. Outside the educational context of the University of Westminster course, exhibitions and critical sessions, permission will be required for publication, public exhibition, transmission or exploitation of any such material. Permission will not be unreasonably withheld.

Study or work placements
The course provides opportunities for you to gain experience of the professional practice of design. As well as the links which are maintained with the design profession by means of our part-time visiting lecturers, the course offers the opportunity to undertake a studio placement during the Professional Practice module. Students also have access to the *Course Database* which exists as a general resource for the course, and for students on the Professional Practice module in level five, and for the Launch Pad module in Level Six.

In addition, you are encouraged to make contact with industry and with other education institutions. Sometimes these links can lead to requests for a period of exchange or for a work placement. In the event of this occurring, the course will look favourably on any such request and will support you in your endeavour whenever it is compatible with the overall aims of the course and with your academic development.

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Assessment strategy

The assessment strategy for the Graphic Communication Design BA(Hons) course is in accordance with the School of Media, Arts and Design *Assessment Strategy* and the University of Westminster *Handbook of Academic Regulations*.

Students should refer to the university handbook called *Essential Westminster 2910/11* which is available at: westminster.ac.uk/essential-westminster

The assessment strategy and models in the course aim to:

enable students to demonstrate that they have met the learning outcomes for each module, and establish their level of attainment within the module.

provide a focal point for students to reflect on their academic performance and its relationship to their personal development.

serves as a forum where students demonstrate attributes and generic skills not always formally assessed within the module.

establish indicators within the module and to be matched against national benchmarks in the subject.

Assessment strategies and methods within the course are mapped on to *Higher Education and Career Management Skills* and reflect the Art and Design subject benchmarks as specified by the *Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education* (QAA). In doing this the course encourages, and the assessment strategy allows, increasing autonomy for the individual student as they progress through the course. Students may negotiate their learning, experience, and outcomes through Learning Contracts, Rationales, Critical Evaluations and Critical Journals as components in the assessment model of specific modules. The Learning Outcomes in each module are described at the minimum or 'threshold' level. They indicate what a student must achieve to pass the module (40%). The grading of marks above or below this level indicate attainment. Criteria are the standards of achievement which will be looked for. The criteria that will be applied to students' work at each level of the programme. Criteria will closely and directly match the stated learning outcomes for modules, levels, and for the Graphic Communication Design programme as a whole. It should be remembered that marks do not designate degree classification but are indicators of achievement within modules and, more generally, progress through the course.

The assessment methods and models vary across modules and are mapped onto module aims and learning outcomes as specified in each module description. At the beginning of each module students are provided with this description together with a timetable for the module indicating dates for coursework submission and any assessment points.

The course uses formative, diagnostic and summative assessment not only to establish academic achievement and marks but also as positive learning tools that enable students to monitor and reflect on their progress and performance within each module, and across the course. They also play an important part as landmarks in achieving personal development goals.

Formative and diagnostic assessment are informal and serve as a means to monitor individual progress through the module. They may be in the form of staff assessment, self-assessment, peer-group assessment.

Continuous and summative assessments are formal points where academic staff appraise students response to the module and record a level of achievement in terms of marks.

With the exception of contextual study modules most modules on the course provide students with an opportunity to work in groups. Those students wishing to do so are required to submit a rationale to the module leader for agreement. Also, a statement agreeing on the assessment and marking of the group. Normally, students would be marked equally except where assessable module components require individual responses. In most cases student groups will not be permitted to self-allocate module components or project tasks. Groups should not exceed four students.

The majority of modules on the course are practical and the assessments are of course work. The assessable components vary within each module according to aims and learning outcomes and may include research notebooks/journals, project work, written reports, and presentations. As the course progresses, an increasingly important element of the assessment process is a viva presentation. This enables students to demonstrate and develop a wide range of personal and generic skills.

In conforming to School and University Academic Regulations, the course exceeds the minimum requirement in terms of double-marking. In some modules such as contextual/theoretical studies double marking is appropriately by sampling. In most project based modules all assessable work is double marked.

All students will be provided with written feedback for each module, as is required in School Regulations. However, verbal feedback from staff and the student peer group continues to be important in the assessment processes described above. Published module results and marks are discussed in tutorials as part of the assessment feedback process.

All second and third year students are required to be present during the visits of the external examiners in Semester 1 and Semester 2.
The examiners have access to all the assessable work for the modules under consideration and may interview any student. At the end of the process the examiners give the students group feedback. The events are considered important learning experiences on the course.

Level Four

Level Four modules introduce students to a variety of historical, theoretical and conceptual issues, and to processes related to the generation, development and production of designed outcomes. This level is characterized by the introductory nature of project-based design modules.

Aims of Level Four

enable you to establish a historical overview and framework related to visual communication, and introduce you to a range of theoretical issues related to design and communication

establish a range of research methods and working practices to enable analysis and promote critical awareness

establish a range of design processes that encourage the exploration and examination of ideas and information, and allow for the development of sound design thinking and making skills

enable you to develop the ability to synthesise your ideas in the production of designed outcomes

introduce the methods which will enable you to demonstrate your communication skills articulated through written and verbal means

Semester One

In Semester One the course strives to establish basic concepts associated with graphic communication: design as a means of communication, working methods and processes, the historical contexts, theory and themes of design, and the role and use of information technology.

During these modules students interact with content through the medium of projects, seminars and a range of teaching and learning methods.

These modules also provide the environment within which you are introduced to the concept of independent learning, which is seen as a stimulating and productive process which will be developed and monitored throughout the course.

Contextual and theoretical components feature strongly throughout the year, as do group work and an introduction to peer assessment.

The MGRA401 Design Process 15 credit module takes an integrated approach to theory and practice, introducing skills common to both making and writing about design work. You will develop working methods that will enable you to research, review and select, and generate and develop ideas through visual exploration.

This 15 credit module, MGRA402 Design History and Culture, provides an integrated approach to theory and practice. It provides a sound contextual framework for the introduction of the historical and theoretical themes of the course. The content is aligned and linked to the practice-based modules in semester 1 and 2.

The practical module MGRA403 Visual Language and Communication serves to introduce some of the basic concepts and priciples that underpin design practice. It aims to provide you with an overview of the various aspects of design relating to communication, and to the ideas and themes of the course.

Semester Two

The design and technical skills 30 credit module MGRA403 Visual Narratives introduces the various forms of visual storytelling. Practical projects and workshops will allow you to explore ways by which ideas and information may be presented in linear and non-linear forms. It will be supported by technical workshops and related theory inputs.

The MGRA404 Typography and Communication 30 credit module explores the expressive and creative potential of type and typography, and its use in the design and presentation of ideas and information. It introduces the basic principles of typography and graphic communiction, and you will be encouraged to further develop your ability to generate and develop ideas through visual exploration.

Learning outcomes

On successfully completing Level Four of the course you should:

have an awareness of historical and cultural issues, and theoretical contexts relating to the practice of communication design

have acquired a level of skills in research processes, critical analysis and working methods which enable you to realise and reflect on design ideas

be aware of the processes of design, and range of working methods that are sustainable and allow for the exploration and development of designed outcomes

have acquired an appropriate level of intellectual, creative and technical skills through positive engagement with the curriculum

be able to work independently or in a group within a range of established working situations

have a basic understanding of the dynamics of a range of media and technologies, and critical skill in their selection and application within design

be able to demonstrate the ability to articulate ideas, and document information in a variety of written and verbal forms

In addition to the above, you will have gained an understanding of the course themes. You will have demonstrated in the production of visual and written projects that you are competent in the use of a variety of media and are able to use these to communicate information.

In addition, the QAA National Qualifications Framework have established a level of attainment in skills which are not directly related to your discipline but are transferable and apply nationally. They are as follows:

Group working: can work effectively with others as a member of a group and meet obligations to others (for example tutors, peers and colleagues).
Learning resources: can work within an appropriate ethos and can use and access a range of learning resources.
Self evaluation: can evaluate own strengths and weakness within criteria largely set by others.
Management of information: can manage information, collect appropriate data from a wide range of sources and undertake simple research tasks with external guidance.
Autonomy: can take responsibility for own learning with appropriate support.
Communication: can communicate effectively in a format appropriate to the discipline(s) and report practical procedures in a clear and concise manner.
Problem solving: can apply given tools/methods accurately and carefully to a well defined problem and begin to appreciate the complexity of the issues in the discipline.