UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER
LEADING THE WAY

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Course record information

Name and level of final award	BA Honours Illustration and Visual Communication
Name and level of intermediate awards	BA Illustration and Visual Communication Diploma of Higher Education Illustration and Visual Communication Certificate of Higher Education Illustration and Visual Communication
Awarding body/institution	University of Westminster
Teaching Institution	University of Westminster
Status of awarding body/institution	Recognised Body
Location of delivery	Harrow Campus
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode, length of study and normal starting month	Three years full time: September start Four years with Foundation: September start
QAA subject benchmarking group(s)	Art & Design
Professional statutory or regulatory body	N/A
Date of course validation/Revalidation	December 2018
Date of programme specification approval	March 2021
Valid for cohorts	2021/2022
Course Leader	Elizabeth Grob
UCAS code and URL	https://www.westminster.ac.uk/art-and-design-courses/2019-20/September/full-time/illustration-and-visualcommunication-ba-honours
Westminster course code	W220
HECoS code	(CAH21-01) creative arts and design (CAH21-01) creative arts and design

UKPASS code (PG only)	

Admissions requirements

There are standard minimum entry requirements for all undergraduate courses. Students are advised to check the standard requirements for the most up-to-date information.

For most courses, a decision will be made on the basis of your application form alone. However, for some courses the selection process may include an interview to demonstrate your strengths in addition to any formal entry requirements.

More information can be found here: westminster.ac.uk/courses/undergraduate/how-toapply.

For Illustration and Visual Communication, we do ask qualified applicants to provide an e-portfolio if you are applying from outside of the UK or cannot travel for an interview. If you are a UK based student and able to travel we invite you to attend an interview with your portfolio as part of our selection process.

When submitting an e-portfolio we would prefer you to send a power point presentation or PDF file showing us examples of work you have produced as part of your current school or college coursework plus any additional personal work you feel represents your creativity and practice. The work you include can be in any media or area of art and design practice, whilst drawing is an important aspect of illustration if your work is photographic, animation, graphic design, fine art, multimedia this is absolutely fine for us to see your interests and abilities at this point.

For interview, you can bring either a digital portfolio on a USB or an actual portfolio of your work. Please also bring sketchbooks and note books

Recognition of Prior Learning

We also consider applicants with prior certificated or experiential learning at the same level of the qualification for which they wish to apply. In this case you are advised to visit the following page for further information: *westminster.ac.uk/recognition-of-prior-certifiedlearning.*

Aims of the course The **BA Illustration and Visual Communication** has been designed t*o*

Nurture the individual in their creative, intellectual and professional development within a broad understanding of illustration and visual communication.

Foster critical reflection, visual and cultural awareness to practice and study within a contextualized understanding for the global reach of visual communication today and its impact on social, environmental issues and communities and enterprise, both local and international.

Foster creative and imaginative thinking through visual processes in both material and digital form

Employ drawing as a fundamental tool in the reification of ideas into visual form and a means to give expression to observations and lived experience.

Support creative enterprise and professional development in the field of illustration and visual communication.

What will you be expected to achieve?

Learning outcomes are statements on what successful students have achieved as the result of learning. These are threshold statements of achievement the learning outcomes broadly fall into four categories:

- The overall **knowledge and understanding** you will gain from your course (KU).
- **Graduate attributes** are characteristics that you will have developed during the duration of your course (GA).
- **Professional and personal practice learning outcomes** are specific skills that you will be expected to have gained on successful completion of the course (PPP)
- **Key transferable skills** that you will be expected to have gained on successful completion of the course. (KTS)

Level 4 course learning outcomes: upon completion of level 4 you will be able to demonstrate:

Knowledge and Understanding (KU)
L4.1
Demonstrate a conceptual and contextual understanding of visual culture and image media in the 20th and 21st Century at an introductory level in written form. (*GA* - *critical and creative thinker / global in outlook and engaged in communities)*

L4.2
Understand primary skills in visual literacies and the visual communication (*GA* - *literate and effective communicator / socially, ethically and environmentally aware)*

Personal and Professional Practice (PPP)
L4.3
Work imaginatively and speculatively with a range of material, digital and technical process to make images and related visual outcomes (*GA* - *critical and creative thinker / literate and effective communicator*)

L4.4
Comprehend a set brief or project and produce visual outcomes with set initiative and constraints in this context. (*GA* - *literate and effective communicator /entrepreneurial*)

Key Transferable Skills (KTS)
L4.5
Use drawing as a creative tool and methodology to articulate and record visual information and ideas (*GA* – *critical and creative thinker / literate and effective communicator*)

L4.6
Employ varied technical and digital processes to design and present visual work (*GA* - *literate and effective communicator / entrepreneurial)*

Level 5 course learning outcomes: upon completion of level 5 you will be able to demonstrate:

Knowledge and Understanding (KU)
L5.1

Discuss and debate theoretical concepts and visual practice in 20th and 21st century culture and articulate ideas drawn from discussion in visual and written forms *(GA - critical and creative thinker / literate and effective communicator)*

Personal and Professional Practice (PPP)
L5.2
Employ increasing visual awareness, sophistication and aesthetical judgement in the development of visual artefacts and illustration outcomes. (*GA – literate and effective communicator / critical and creative thinker / entrepreneurial / global in outlook and engaged in communities / socially, ethically and environmentally aware*)

L5.3
Work conceptually, imaginatively and experimentally within a broad range of visual media process and technologies (**GA** – critical and creative thinker / literate and effective communicator /entrepreneurial / *global in outlook and engaged in communities)*

L5.4
Employ drawing as a process for reifying abstract and imaginative thinking into visual concepts, messages and narratives (**GA** - *critical and creative thinker / literate and effective communicator / entrepreneurial*)

L5.5
Engage in independent research, critical and visual inquiry to support the development of future coursework in creative and professional practice and a dissertation. (*GA –critical and creative thinker / entrepreneurial / / socially, ethically and environmentally aware*)

Key Transferable Skills (KTS)
L5.6

Work independently and in collaboration with others in the creation and production of visual outcomes for identified initiatives and contexts. **(*GA – entrepreneurial / global in outlook and engaged in communities*)**

Level 6 course learning outcomes: upon completion of level 6 you will be able to demonstrate:

Knowledge and Understanding (KU)
L6.1
Articulate, argue and critically discuss theoretical concepts drawn from independent reading and research and develop into a substantive written dissertation on a self- selected topic *(GA – critical and creative thinker / literate and effective communicator)*

Personal and Professional Practice (PPP)
L6.2
Determine the direction of your research, practice and lines of visual inquiry in depth, reflectively and in context with the wider culture *(GA – critical and creative thinker / literate and effective communicator / global in outlook and engaged with communities / socially, ethically and environmentally aware)*

L6.3
Produce visual outcomes within a professional framework relating to illustration and visual communication contexts demonstrating originality of thought, visual imagination and sophistication (**GA** - *literate and effective communicator / entrepreneurial / global in outlook and engaged with communities / socially, ethically and environmentally aware*)

L6.4
Make and produce artefacts that demonstrate aesthetical judgement and refinement in the realisation and visualisation *(GA – literate and effective communicator / entrepreneurial*)

Key Transferable Skills (KTS)
L6.5
Determine with increasing confidence and independence the direction of your own creative and professional development. *(GA - literate and effective communicator / entrepreneurial / global in outlook and engaged in communities / socially, ethically and environmentally aware*)

L6.6
Display, present and promote your own practice in the context/s of exhibition, digital and published materials. (*GA - entrepreneurial / global in outlook and engaged in communities*)

How will you learn?

The learning and the teaching of this course supports learning by ensuring that the provision of syllabus, teaching and learning activities are relevant to employment and individual enterprise within the wider subject field, supportive in fostering personal development and creativity, conceptually and intellectually stimulating, current within contemporary critical and cultural contexts and frameworks.

This course is principally practice based, complemented by critical studies lectures and research. Key transferable skills in a wide choice of technologies both the hand-made, material processes and digital creative domain. The acquisition of skills ensures technical currency and employment flexibility.

From a structured first year the course opens up to provide greater choice and self-determination in identifying your individual approach and learning pathway through a framework of core, optional choice and Westminster elective modules.

Location
The course is located on the Harrow Campus at Northwick Park between Wembley and Harrow on the Hill. Whilst being a short tube ride from Baker Street station the campus occupies green spaces exceptional for its close location to central London. The Campus hosts a portfolio of under-graduate, post-graduate, doctorial and foundation students across subjects in the arts, design, media, film, fashion, music, photography and visual communication. The course sits within the College of Design, Creative and Digital Industries that is located across campuses in Regent St, Marylebone and Fitzrovia linking Architecture, Computer Games.

The Learning Environment
The course occupies purpose built, dedicated studios with individual work spaces, storage and internet connectivity and printing facility. The studios accommodate space for large scale work, traditional figure drawing and there are additional facility centres for print-making (autographic paper printmaking and textile printing) 3D workshops, photography, animation and camera rooms with green screen.

Recent investment has been in the EMS – emerging media space and a new FAB LAB (located at Marylebone). These new centres enable digital fabrication, VR and AR experimentation. The most recent addition is the DDS - digital drawing studio with WACOM Cintique interactive screens and tablets for digital artistry, animation and graphic outputs.

The Harrow Library Learning Resource Centre is a hub for group work, computing, research and independent study.

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Communication

The course utilizes the University's online teaching and learning tools and networking systems for communication and the distribution of information https://www.lynda.com/ . The systems we currently use for course information and communication is Blackboard and Google +. The use of electronic media in learning is embedded throughout the course ensuring that you are able to access and source information related to your studies and be in direct communication with staff and peers.

Projects

The course supports contextualized practice through a project framework which is designed to encourage your wider engagement with culture and society and invite you to consider subjects outside of your normal frame of experience. Projects also provide identified initiatives and constraints that encourage innovation, visual problem solving and support you in expanding your ideas and becoming flexible in your thinking and employment of visual processes and technologies. In this way projects reflect commercial enterprise in that commissioned work normally identifies specific demands whether this is a publication - book or magazine, or an awareness campaign, or decorative work for retail and merchandising. A further context is consideration for an identified audience that may be local or global. As you progress through the course projects become increasingly selfdefined which requires you to identify and structure your own topics and research, set time limits and work objectives.

External Enterprise Projects

As part of professional enterprise and gaining an understanding of the workplace we encourage participation in industry led projects and initiatives. We have run external initiatives with Northwest London NSS, Northwick Park Hospital, Transport for London, Landor Associates We also encourage participation in student national and international competitions these include House of Illustration Awards, Creative Conscious Student Awards, Macmillian Prize for Illustration, YCN student awards, D&AD New Blood Awards, Batsford Art Award,

Field Trips and Visits

Students from all levels of the course can participate in the yearly field trip abroad that is a minimal cost for students subsidised by the Quintin Hogg Trust. We also fund trips and visits into central London for exhibitions, events and performances.

Collaborative learning

Throughout the course there are opportunities for collaboration both with colleagues within the course and across course. These may take the form of projects, working on Westminster Elective modules with others University wide. Students from illustration often collaborate with students from film, fashion, music, fine art and photography. One module called 'Pop Goes the Now' encourages students from all courses to come together to make work in groups University wide. We see collaborative work as an excellent way of networking with other students, learning how to negotiate tasks and responsibilities and bringing creative ideas together in new and unexpected ways.

The role of drawing within the course curriculum

The practice of drawing has a special significance on this course as it is a primary means of giving form to imagined thoughts and concepts. It is through drawing (autographic and digital) that abstract thought is reified into an image, story, character or design. We also teach traditional figure drawing and observational / reportage drawing as key to illustration. Drawing also has an aesthetic dimension and is core to developing a visual aesthetic and literacy. Drawing for illustrators may take on particular styles and languages but its core role is the formation of ideas.

Critical Studies

The syllabus in theoretical studies provide a critical framework for examining visual culture today. Illustration and visual communication has a core role to play in culture today and being able to read, evaluate and decode images is an essential part of learning on this course. From Level 4

you will be asked to write various elements for assessment, these include reflective reviews of your own work, project proposals, essays and an 8,000-word dissertation at the end of the course. We have study support for students with any learning / reading / writing difficulties.

Progression through the course

Level 4 - The curriculum at this level serves as an introduction to a range of new techniques, approaches and skill development enabling you to make new exciting work in varied contexts. A set project framework is designed to set benchmarks for your development, to enable you to diagnostically explore visual literacies and visual communication approaches. Theory at this level ensures you have a primary understanding of critical frameworks and debates that have informed contemporary visual culture including image-media.

Level 5 has flexible learning at its core, offering optional module choices that enable you to explore new contexts for your practice and increasingly determine the direction of your studies. You can also take a study abroad semester in this level and there are opportunities for collaborative working with peers and across courses. The professional context for your practice will have more focus in entering student competitions, showing your work and undertaking internships or work placements.

Level 6 This level is where the skills and knowledge you have acquired are synthesized in context with your future career objectives. Professional practice and enterprise is integral to your learning, to prepare you for entering the workplace. Talks and workshops provided by from those working in the industry including creatives practitioners, art directors, creative agencies, small company creatives and representatives from the Association of Illustrators, the Royal Society of Arts as well as our own very successful alumni help you develop knowledge and skills in how to operate in a professional context.

Much of your practice will now be defined by you and your personal supervisor for both your practical and theoretical work. The end of the year culminates in your degree show and an opportunity to participate in New Blood D&AD at Truman Brewery, the creative hub of central London.

How will you be assessed?

The course's assessment strategy is designed to provide both formative (non-marked feedback on progress) and summative evaluation (marked assessment) of achievement in context with the learning outcomes for each module. All module learning outcomes reference course learning outcomes and Westminster graduate attributes that are numerically linked for you to see progression and measure your own achievement through the course. Formative assessment is not marked but provides valuable feedback from peers and tutors informing your development towards the marked summative assessment at the end of the module. You are provided with indicative marks until May your work is scrutinised by external examiners to ensure our marking systems and standards meet those of national standards. These marks go to the exam board where marks are again examined and your overall progression and achievement is confirmed. Methods of assessment are varied and designed to be appropriate for the type of coursework developed in each module. Some modules have synoptic assessment (across module assessment) to bring further coherence to your learning and join varied elements intelligently into one submission. Synoptic assessment is also used to prevent over assessment and synthesize learning holistically.

Assessment submissions normally takes the form of submission of a digital file or presentation of work online or on a blog. Actual artwork is view through exhibition but this does not always form part of assessment. Other forms of assessment include the submission of written coursework

including essays, group presentations, peer reviews and exhibition. Each module identifies learning achievement and the assessment criteria and rationale.

Assessment is therefore designed to:

- Provide you with advice and feedback on your progress, achievement and to signify areas of your practice and study that require further development.
- Set standards of attainment.
- Enable reflection and feedback from both staff and students on the syllabus and learning experience of the module or set of modules.

Employment and further study opportunities

University of Westminster graduates will be able to demonstrate the following five Graduate Attributes:

- Critical and creative thinkers
- Literate and effective communicator
- Entrepreneurial
- Global in outlook and engaged in communities
- Social, ethically and environmentally aware

University of Westminster courses capitalise on the benefits that London as a global city and as a major creative, intellectual and technology hub has to offer for the learning environment and experience of our students.

The development of an informed professional practice is essential in becoming a creative entrepreneur, practitioner, employer or employee within this sector of creative industry enterprise. We help to prepare you for professional life from the onset of the course, initially through learning to work within a brief format with challenges and constraints and then applying your work for external competitions and awards.

Work placements, work experience and internships are supported throughout the course and the Creative Enterprise Centre based at Harrow assists students in setting up placements or internships, and provide a wide range of enterprise focused activities and workshops including industry events, information on all aspect of employment law, making job applications and self-promotion. Throughout the course we encourage you to present your work formally within class and for assessment so you become confident and highly skilled in making a professional portfolio and being able to talk about your work in a public context.

The course offers talks, workshops and lectures from industry practitioners as well as from our recognized alumni. Our students find these talks very confidence building and affirming as well as inspirational on a creative level. The course team includes established young professionals working in illustration, art direction, advertising, publishing, decorative, film-making, animation, and decorative print-making and merchandising. Our recent alumni teach on the course significantly in digital arts.

The course is a member of the Association of Illustrators and Design and Art Direction (D&AD). Each year we have a professional practice talk from the (AOI) that covers all aspects of free-lance practice from copyright law, tax returns, budgeting and contractual engagement with clients, agency work and self-promotion. D&AD offer students a range of industry led competitions and a lauchpad exhibition in Truman Brewery in June for graduating students

nationally called NEW BLOOD. The course participates in this as well as offering students a degree show in central London on our Marylebone Campus.

Our students report positively on the professional engagement activities provided by the course and gain both skill and confidence as they progress. As well as entering the market as free-lance illustrators we encourage a wide approach to income generation through both individual entrepreneurship and through employment. Our graduates also work in related industries such as publishing, advertising and marketing, the media and television and the new industries emerging in the creative digital domain for digital arts and visualisation.

The **BA Honours Illustration and Visual Communication** aims to create graduates who

- Are informed and visually aware of trends and debates in contemporary visual culture both locally and internationally. (*GA Literate and effective communicator*)

• *Possess an awareness for sustainability, community and ethical communication*. (*GA Global in outlook and engaged in communities / Socially, ethically and environmentally aware*)

• *Are flexible and agile in their thinking and can employ a range of creative strategies and skills to solve problems in varied contexts and situations. (GA Critical and creative thinker / entrepreneurial)*

• *Have a range of visual and technical skills in creative media, image-making and visual communication that can be employed and transferred to varied professional applications including illustration. (GA Literate and effective communicator / entrepreneurial)*

• *Can confidently operate in professional environments and engage in enterprise activities in both an employed and free-lance capacity (GA Entrepreneurial / global in outlook and engaged in communities)*

• *Can engage deeply and critically with ideas and concepts in their practice and undertake research and further study at masters level (GA Critical and creative thinker / Literate and effective communicator)*

Course structure

This section shows the core and option modules available as part of the course and their credit value. Full-time Undergraduate students study 120 credits per year. Course structures can be subject to change each academic year following feedback from a variety of sources.

Credit Level 4				
Module code	**Module title**	**Status**	**UK credit**	**ECTS**
4ILLU001W	**Art & Visual Culture**	Core	20	10
4ILLU002W	**Visual Communication Technologies**	core	20	10
4ILLU008W	**Drawing and Visual Literacies**	core	20	10
4ILLU009W	**Image-making Practice**	core	20	10
4ILLU005W	**Introduction to Image Media**	core	20	10
4ILLU003W	**Figure Drawing**	option	20	10
4ILLU010W	**Printmaking**	option	20	10
	Westminster elective or Polylang module	Elective	20	10

Award of Certificate of Higher Education in Illustration and Visual Communication				
Credit Level 5				
Module code	**Module title**	**Status**	**UK credit**	**ECTS**
5ILLU010W	**Contextualised Practice**	core	20	10
5ILLU011W	**Illustration Practice and Enterprise**	Core option	20	10
5ILLU003W	**Interdisciplinary Practice**	Core option	20	10
5ILLU012W	**Critical Enquiry**	core	20	10
5ILLU013W	**Dissertation Proposal**	core	20	10
5ILLU004W	**Graphic Explorations**	option	20	10
5ILLU002W	**Drawing Systems**	option	20	10
5WSEL010W	**Designing Narrative Experiences**	option	20	10
	Westminster elective can be taken in semester 1 or semester 2 or in both semesters ,or polylang modules	Elective/s	20	10

Award of Diploma of Higher Education in Illustration and Visual Communication or
Foundation Degree in Illustration and Visual Communication

Credit Level 6				
Module code	**Module title**	**Status**	**UK credit**	**ECTS**
6ILLU001W	**Visual Communication: Professional Engagement and Enterprise**	option	20	10
6ILLU004W	**Research Informed Practice**	option	20	10
	Westminster Elective semester 1 or Polylang module	elective	20	10
6ILLU002W	**Visual Communication; Dissertation**	core	40	10
6ILLU003W	**Visual Communication: Major Project Production**	core	60	30

BA Illustration and Visual Communication
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Please note: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year. In addition, timetabling and limited spaces may mean you cannot do your first choice of modules.

Professional Body Accreditation or other external references

None

Academic regulations

The current Handbook of Academic Regulations is available at westminster.ac.uk/academicregulations.

How will you be supported in your studies?

Course Management
BA (Hons) Illustration & Visual Communication has an overall management structure and academic leadership led by the course Leader and course team. The day to day delivery of the course is managed by module leaders and level tutor coordinators. Each student as part of the orientation programme is allocated a personal tutor who provides academic guidance and is the first person you contact if you have any issues that are impacting on your studies. In addition to the course team we invite specialists from the fields of illustration, animation and graphic

communication including our own alumni to provide talks, workshops and seminars on aspects of creative and professional practice.

The course sits with BA Animation and BA Graphic Communication Design in the subject area of Design and Visual Communication located in the School of Media and Communication. All three courses are located close to each other in dedicated studio areas and are managed by the Assistant Head of School for Design and Visual Communication.

The Head of College for Design, Creative and Digital Industries with other senior staff have an overview of provision for this School as well as the School of Arts, School of Architecture and Cities, School of Computer Science and Engineering.

The course is structured in two semesters of study per year each semester being 12 learning weeks with one reading week in each semester. Students entering level 5 have the opportunity to undertake a study abroad semester in another country organized by a study abroad coordinator. At each course level, there are opportunities to choose course optional modules or a Westminster elective this choice in your study programme is designed to enrich and widen your learning experience on the course and provide opportunities to work with students on other courses in a collaborative and interdisciplinary way.

Academic Support

Upon arrival, an orientation programme will introduce you to the staff responsible for the course, the campus on which you will be studying, the Library and IT facilities, additional support available and to your Campus Registry. You will be provided with the Course Handbook, which provides detailed information about the course. Each course has a course leader or Director of Studies. All students enrolled on a full-time course and part time students registered for more than 60 credits a year have a personal tutor, who provides advice and guidance on academic matters. The University uses a Virtual Learning Environment called Blackboard where students access their course materials, and can communicate and collaborate with staff and other students. Further information on Blackboard can be found at westminster.ac.uk/blackboard.

Learning Support

The Academic Learning Development Centre supports students in developing the skills required for higher education. As well as online resources in Blackboard, students have the opportunity to attend Study Skills workshops and one to one appointments. Further information on the Academic Learning Development Centre can be found at westminster.ac.uk/academic-learning-development.

Learning support includes four libraries, each holding a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at that site. Students[1] can search the entire library collection online through the Library Search service to find and reserve printed books, and access electronic resources (databases, e-journals, e-books). Students can choose to study in the libraries, which have areas for silent and group study, desktop computers, laptops for loan, photocopying and printing services. They can also choose from several computer rooms at each campus where desktop computers are available with the general and specialist software that supports the courses taught in their College. Students can also securely connect their own laptops and mobile devices to the University wireless network.

Support Services

The University of Westminster Student and Academic Services department provide advice and guidance on accommodation, financial and legal matters, personal counselling, health and disability issues, careers, specialist advice for international students and the chaplaincy providing multi-faith guidance. Further information on the advice available to students can be found at westminster.ac.uk/student-advice. The University of Westminster Students' Union also provides a range of facilities to support students during their time at the University. Further information on UWSU can be found at westminster.ac.uk/students-union.

How do we ensure the quality of our courses and continuous improvement?

The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel in *2018.* The panel included internal peers from the University, academic(s) from another university and a representative from industry. This helps to ensure the comparability of the course to those offered in other universities and the relevance to employers.

The course is also monitored each year by the College to ensure it is running effectively and that issues which might affect the student experience have been appropriately addressed. Staff will consider evidence about the course, including the evidence of student surveys, student progression and achievement and reports from external examiners, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the course.

A Course revalidation takes place periodically to ensure that the curriculum is up-to-date and that the skills gained on the course continue to be relevant to employers. Students meet with revalidation panels to provide feedback on their experiences. Student feedback from previous years is also part of the evidence used to assess how the course has been running.

How do we act on student feedback?

Student feedback is important to the University and student views are taken seriously.
Student feedback is gathered in a variety of ways.

- Through student engagement activities at Course/Module level, students have the opportunity to express their voice in the running of their course. Student representatives are elected to expressly represent the views of their peers. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the student representatives.

- There are also School Staff Student Exchange meetings that enable wider discussions across the School. Student representatives are also represented on key College and University committees.

- All students are invited to complete a questionnaire before the end of each module. The feedback from this will inform the module leader on the effectiveness of the module and highlight areas that could be enhanced.

- Final year Undergraduate students will be asked to complete the National Student Survey which helps to inform the national university league tables.