MA Visual Communication: Graphic Design

Award Document 2018/19

Course Map - MA Visual Communication: Graphic Design

Stage 1

Study Block 1	Study Block 2	Study Block 3
AD720 **Research Practice** Compulsory (20 credits)	**AD740** **Creative Futures** Compulsory (20 credits)	**AD750** **Independent Major Project** Compulsory (60 credits)
VCG710 **Visual Grammar** Compulsory (40 credits)	**VCG730** **Design Practice** Compulsory (40 credits)	

General Course Information

Status	Approved
Qualification (course type)	Postgraduate Course
Course Title	MA Visual Communication: Graphic Design
Intermediate Qualification(s)	PG Dip, PG Cert
Awarding Institution	
Location of Delivery	OFF CAMPUS (DISTANCE OR BLENDED LEARNING)
Duration of course	1 years
Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body Accreditation	
Accreditation Renewal Date	
UCAS Code	
Relevant External Benchmarking	- Art & Design (2017) - QAA - Master's Degree Characteristics Statement (2015) - QAA - Enterprise and entrepreneurship education: Guidance for UK Higher Education providers (2012) - QAA

Course Aims

For entry onto our Master's programmes at CSVPA we recognise a wide variety of qualifications and/or relevant experience. We encourage applications from people of all ages, backgrounds and cultures, with demonstrable experience and interest in their subject whom we believe will benefit from study at postgraduate level.

The minimum entry qualifications for our MA programmes are:

- A good BA (Hons) degree or equivalent qualification in art or design or a closely related subject.
- A portfolio demonstrating appropriate skills, research and prior experience of the subject.
- A Personal Statement that tells us about you, your approach to practice, and your ambitions and aspirations for the future.

All portfolios and applications will be approved by the Head of Department or relevant Course Leader. Where possible, we will invite you to meet us through an informal interview online or in person.

Applications without the qualifications or disciplinary background identified above but who demonstrate relevant experience, necessary skills and intellectual achievement needed to succeed on the course will be considered on an individual basis. Equivalent experience should be evidenced with a professional CV. In some cases students may be required to complete a Graduate Diploma or Pre-Master's before progressing onto MA programmes.

The minimum level of attainment required for admission onto a programme in the Postgraduate regulations is a score of 6.5 overall with a minimum of 5.5 in each component of the British Council IELTS Academic English Test, or equivalent.

Please follow the links below for additional information on our entry requirements along with the specific requirements of the course as well as information on fees and funding.

http://www.csvpa.com/art-and-design/ma-art-design/course-details/entry-requirements.htm#menu

http://www.csvpa.com/art-and-design/ma-art-design/course-details/about.htm#menu

http://www.csvpa.com/art-and-design/ma-art-design/course-details/fees.htm#menu

http://www.csvpa.com/art-and-design/ma-art-design/course-details/student-finance.htm#menu

MA Visual Communication: Graphic Design at CSVPA is a flexible studio-based and student-centred programme designed to develop the professional skills and creative expertise needed for a career in graphic communication design and related fields today.

Throughout the 12-month programme based in our central Cambridge studios, you will advance your specialist knowledge of your chosen area of communication design as well as find inspiration and exciting new directions by experimenting with methods, materials and processes that help develop your own style and approach. Set and self-initiated projects will help refine essential design skills needed for typographic and editorial design, advertising, corporate branding and packaging, information design, motion graphics, and web, interface and interaction design. As well as refining your knowledge of fundamental principles and traditional print and screen-based skills necessary for future careers in commercial work, you will be supported to explore the expanded field of contemporary graphic design, including motion graphics, digital and interactive design, UX and information design, interface design and user-centred approaches. You will be encouraged to apply your design thinking to critical and socially-oriented projects that challenge established conventions and roles. Building on collaborative and social engagement projects in SB1, through reflection on professional responsibilities and the ethics of visual communication in the digital and post-digital world, in SB2 you will be encouraged to explore the possibilities offered by immersive, 3D or multi-platform digital and/or experiential environments in which graphic design is encountered by diverse audiences and users today.

Past students have worked on diverse projects including participatory installations; social campaigns; interactive design including app design for language learning, self-help and mental health, charity campaigning, and fashion retail experience; holographic and augmented reality; artificial learning; and digital experience for interior design.

In addition to facilities and expertise offered at CSVPA, students have been supported to collaborate with technology experts in Cambridge including engineers at University of Cambridge, Cambridge Makespace, as well as local digital printing industries.

Core expertise is supplemented with targeted workshops from Visiting Lecturers working in contemporary design, including industry professionals in VS/UX/IXD, motion graphics and branding, and TV. Workshops and live briefs have

in the past been led by Elana Jeeaoo, Senior Visual Designer, Ustwo; creative agency The District; David Tang, Lead Designer at NBC Universal; and Tom Meredith, Creative Director of *ELLE* magazine.

You will develop the research skills at the heart of the design process and be introduced to current thinking in critical design practice to help you develop your own voice and locate your own practice within relevant theoretical, ethical, technological and global contexts.

Practical knowledge is enriched through lectures and seminars that explore questions of design authorship, and historical and theoretical positions on graphic communication and visual storytelling as an essential site of meaning in the 21st century.

Opportunities for internships or mentoring within the programme help you make industry contacts, build your CV, and prepare you for future work in a creative agency or studio by giving you experience of working within a professional creative environment. Workshops and talks from Visiting Lecturers from industry provide professional insight and career advice. Support for professional practice will give you the confidence to network, build your personal brand and presence online, identify opportunities for freelance work, and refine an impressive and distinctive portfolio.

Our inter-disciplinary staff team are available to support all students across our postgraduate programmes, giving you the flexibility to work across the field of communication design in order to build a professional portfolio that demonstrates both core skills and creative flair. As well as refining your expert knowledge of the language and methods of communication design, our staff can support you to develop additional skills in animation and moving image, illustration or photography to realise a variety of final outcomes and ambitions.

Local-Global

We celebrate the 'local', encouraging our students to engage with Cambridge's historic surroundings, home to one of the most dynamic student communities in the world. Located in one of the UK's top ten hotspots for technology and creative entrepreneurship, our students take advantage of opportunities offered by expertise in the city's universities and the region's Silicon Fen, forging collaborations that link creative arts practice to the design and technology industries on their doorstep—as evidenced in previous MA projects in interactive digital design and holographic experience, education, and fashion technology and materials.

At the same time we are an international community with staff and students from all over the world: we work together to develop both our home and international students as the informed and responsible graduates that will be tomorrow's global citizens. Induction activities and cross-disciplinary collaborative projects embed our shared values, professional responsibilities and ethical behaviours from the start. Throughout our postgraduate programmes we work together to build the foundations of a solid and supportive community of practice, actively sharing the diversity of our experience and knowledge while building lasting international networks for the future.

Resources:

All students on our MA programmes have access to a wide range of resources to support the hybrid nature of contemporary practice across art and design. Resources include wood and metal 3D workshops; wet dark room and digital suites; drawing studio; live performance studio; studio facilities for product, fashion and portrait photography; industrial sewing machines and Gerber technology; industry-standard software including Adobe Creative Suite and Maxon Cinema 4D.

Educational Aims:

The course provides students with the experience and expertise to pursue career possibilities in the expanding creative industries and cultural sector in the UK and worldwide across the field of graphic and communication design, art and creative direction, digital media and interactive design, branding, visual marketing and digital content production.

Career advice is embedded throughout the programme. Teaching and Learning is provided by a team of experienced HE staff and supported by Visiting Lecturers in practice and/or industry, working in the fields of graphic design, promotional branding and media, illustration, animation, and design research.

Industry-set briefs give students experience of responding to live briefs, and have included briefs set by a digital design and branding agency, a motion graphics/tv company, and magazine and media organisation.

1:1s provide students with advice on preparing for careers, while visiting speakers share their own career histories and advice on getting into relevant industries. Workshops enable students to develop professional skills necessary for their chosen careers. Visiting Lecturers have included a Creative Director from *ELLE* magazine; interactive media and digital app designer; digital illustrator; digital content producer.

Our embedded work placements encourage students to research and identify a variety of opportunities in the creative industries and field of communication design, including editorial design, graphic design, creative direction, art direction and advertising.

The programme's emphasis on self-directed learning, research-informed practice, and the development of advanced research skills and methodologies prepares students for the pursuit of further study and research degrees at postgraduate level.

Previous graduates of CSVPA's MA programmes have gone on to careers in freelance fashion photography, art direction and styling; in-house and freelance graphic and web design; illustration; teacher training

Course specific employability skills

Career/future study opportunities

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Structure of Course Delivery

Course Structure

MA Visual Communication: Graphic Design is delivered over one calendar year for full-time students. You will study for three Study Blocks. Each block consists of 12 teaching weeks plus 3-4 assessment weeks.

Study Block 1 invites you to build your knowledge of the essential skills in graphic communication design. After a diagnostic and exploratory induction, in the module **Visual Grammar** you will undertake a series of individual and collaborative projects that help you strengthen your knowledge of the fundamental principles of graphic design, develop your own creative and visual language, and explore and try new methods and materials both traditional and digital, through projects that explore formats across typography, editorial design, branding and motion graphics. You will make connections to the history and theory of graphic communication to reflect on the critical importance of visual communication in the 21st century. This is supported by **Research Practice,** in which you will develop the advanced research skills necessary for postgraduate study, and apply them in practical projects that explore the historical and contemporary landscape of design and help you to build a critical framework in which to locate yourself and your developing practice.

Study Block 2 looks ahead, and is designed to prepare you for your future in professional practice. In **Design Practice,** you will be supported to respond to professional and live briefs, building confidence to identify your own area of focus and the development of your own self-initiated project that deepens expertise and maps an area of future interest. Your position as an emerging practitioner will be strengthened through **Creative Futures**, in which you will work with other MA students to explore the critical, technological, environmental, geo-political and ethical issues that impact on contemporary creative practice—and the ways in which artists and designers today are responding to the challenges we face today, while speculating about what tomorrow may bring.

As part of this module you will have the opportunity apply for an internship (including competitive internships offered by our partner Hearst Magazines UK). Alternatively, you will identify and approach an industry mentor, or design and develop a professional or industry-facing project around your own emerging practice.

By building on your engagement with the contemporary professional practice of your discipline and the exploratory projects you have completed, you will have the confidence to design and develop a proposal for your final **Independent Major Project**, to be realised in Study Block 3.

Over the summer term you will focus on an independent research-based project that gives you the freedom to take your practice in your own individual direction. You will lead the project—but you will be guided and supported every step of the journey, with regular group seminars, 1:1 tutorials and technical support to deliver your final outcome. You will continue to chart your progress in your ongoing Critical Reflection Journal, and your final project will be supported by an analytical and critical report that puts it into relevant critical context. You will also be supported in perfecting a professional portfolio.

The MA culminates in a group show where you will consider the professional and public presentation of your **Independent Major Project**, working together to design and promote an event that celebrates the end of your studies —and marks the next step into an exciting creative future.

Course Assessment Strategy

Our MA programmes at CSVPA use both formative assessment and summative assessment to support students' success.

Formative assessment (assessment <u>for</u> learning) provides opportunities for students to identify their strengths and weakness, and focus on areas to work on. Formative assessment is carried out throughout the programme, and is an integral part of weekly seminars, tutorials and review of portfolio and reflective journals. Formative feedback and developmental 'feedforward' is delivered through regular peer review, group crits and 1:1s, as well as more formally at the end of projects. Key skills of self-reflection, communication and interpersonal abilities are developed through these sessions that are both tutor and progressively student-led. All students are required to present, listen and feed back to their peers. Formative assessment within each module provides guidance, direction and support as individual approaches to project work are developed towards the submission for summative assessment at the completion of each module. Feedback provided is designed to guide deep understanding of student's individual progress against the aims of each module—and the course in general. All students are required to keep an ongoing log of all feedback as part of the reflective journals, and submit this in support of project work at assessment points.

Summative assessment is carried out at the end of each module and is based on the extent to which the student has met the module Learning Outcomes; comments, indicative grades mapped against assessment criteria and developmental feedback is provided alongside the numerical grade. Summative assessment is intended to identify what has been learned (assessment <u>of</u> learning) and therefore assessed marks count toward the module grade awarded. The assessment strategy and criteria are clearly described in every written brief and mapped appropriately to the module Learning Outcomes. Assessment criteria are additionally communicated at each project briefing and mid-point review.

Assessment for the MA takes many forms. For all modules, a portfolio of assessment is required, that may consist of a number of different elements that record and measure student engagement with teaching and learning activities. Portfolio assessments are designed to be holistic in order to encourage deep learning and in recognition of the independent learning necessary at MA-level.

Portfolio of assessments. A portfolio of assessment is a body of work created in response to the learning activities undertaken throughout a module, and demonstrates engagement with, and fulfilment of module and course Learning Outcomes. As a body of work it records and reflects a wide variety of skills, tasks and abilities that present a holistic view of student engagement, offering a developmental record of learning, and a platform for further study.

A portfolio of assessment may include:

- Practical creative project outputs and visual summaries
- Evidence of exhibitions or presentations
- Proposals for future research
- Evidence of primary and secondary research
- Concept, mood and research boards
- Technical dossiers
- Reflective journals
- Design development work
- Sketchbooks
- Written context or project reports
- Oral presentations
- Critical essays

Legacy TPA table

Module Code	Level	Module Name	Credit	Semester 1/2/3	Compulsory (C) Option (O)	Assessment methods*	Contributing towards the Learning Outcomes (Taught (**T**), Practised (**P**) and/or Assessed (**A**))						
							1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
VCG710	7	Visual Grammar	40	1	C	PO	TPA	TPA	TP	TPA	TP	TP	TP
AD720	7	Research Practice	20	1	C	PO, ES	TPA		TPA	TP	TPA	TP	TP
VCG730	7	Design Practice	40	2	C	PO	TPA	TPA	TP	TPA		TPA	
AD740	7	Creative Futures	20	2	C	PO, RE	TPA		TPA	TPA	TPA	TP	TPA
AD750	7	Independent Major Project	60	3	C	PO, ES	TPA	TPA	TPA	TPA	TPA	TPA	TPA