

Course Information Sheet

BA (Hons) Graphic Design

Mode and course length – Full-Time (4 years)

Location – ARU Cambridge Campus

Awarding Body – Anglia Ruskin University. As a registered Higher Education provider Anglia Ruskin University is regulated by the Office for Students.

Overview

Explore visual language creatively and solve challenging design briefs using our industry-standard technology. Develop your understanding of effective graphic communication to prepare for a career as a professional graphic designer.

Our BA (Hons) Graphic Design will prepare you to work as an informed and technically skilled designer capable of creative and independent thought, with the confidence and ability to succeed in the design industry.

You'll explore many graphic disciplines and learn to apply them professionally, developing your visual literacy using graphics, typography and text-image relationships. Our modules on historical, contemporary and future design practice will give you all the theory and contextual understanding you'll need to solve industry-set design briefs in our studio and workshop-based modules.

You'll experiment with traditional print-based solutions as well as modern commercial practices including site-specific, interactive, mobile media, app generation, graphical interfaces and multimedia work, to come up with ideas that challenge traditional notions of design and visual communication.

Throughout the course, your studies will be supported by an academic team with extensive design industry, research and teaching experience.

You'll also work closely with a number of graphic design studios, including CPL, The District, and Onespacemedia, who will set your live briefs as well as providing lectures and one-to-one critiques, ending with a final review that can often lead to work placements, internships and long-term professional relationships.

Winning or being nominated for an international student design competition can give you a springboard into a design career, with many offering internships as part of the prize or leading to long-lasting professional relationships. As part of the course, you'll submit artwork to the Penguin Random House Student Design Awards in your third year, and in your final year, can choose from the prestigious YCN or D&AD briefs.

Our annual Graphic Design field trip will allow you to travel to Amsterdam, visiting local museums and galleries, creating graphic design on the move and linking up with staff and students from the graphic design course at Avans Hogeschool in Breda.

At the end of the course, you'll show your final-year work at our annual Degree Show, attended by many industry professionals, design recruitment agencies, graphic artists, parents and past students. As a Graphic Design student, you could be selected to produce publicity materials for the event, giving your work even greater exposure, or to receive one of our awards from industry for creative, innovative or commercial excellence.

Course Delivery

Our courses are delivered through teaching and learning methods which provide students with the widest possible exposure to a modern and innovative higher education experience.

These methods vary and could include attendance at lectures and seminars, undertaking laboratory exercises or work-based activities, practical work, performances, presentations, field trips, other relevant visits and e-learning through Canvas, our online

learning management system.

Each course is divided into a number of 'modules' which focus on particular areas, each of which has a specific approach to its delivery. This information is published to students for each module they take via the Module Definition Form (MDF) and Canvas.

Assessment

Our modules allow you to demonstrate your progress by producing coursework to set projects, design tasks and formal briefs. At the end of each trimester you'll submit design work for practice-based modules, and a written document for contextual/theoretical modules. These will then be graded and you'll receive written feedback.

You'll also receive ongoing feedback on your design project concepts and develop your learning in taught sessions, one-to-one discussions, project reviews and group critiques.

Fees

Information about your course fee including any annual fee increases or deposits (if required) can be found in your offer letter.

Additional Costs

Materials - estimated £950 (over three years)

Optional field trip- £200

Modules

Core Modules

Year 1: Foundation in Art and Design

This module will provide students with the necessary skills to begin studying at level 4 in Art, Design and related courses.

Students will be introduced to the core skills necessary to succeed in higher education, including researching and referencing appropriately, demonstrating appropriate ICT skills, and communicating effectively verbally and in writing.

Students will be introduced to practical art and design skills including developing skills of visual storytelling, image-making both in traditional and digital media, visual language and communication, formulating an independent creative response to a broad range of subject matter.

Students will also be introduced to the fundamentals of design from a creative perspective, and to some of the key ideas/movements dominating art, design and culture, during the past few centuries.

Students will work extensively in groups and collaboratively, with students from art and design, architecture and engineering pathways.

The module is made up of the following 8 constituent elements:

- Interactive Learning Skills and Communication (ILSC)
- Information Communication Technology (ICT)
- Composition and Style
- Creative Workshops 1
- Approach to Design
- Critical and Contextual Studies
- Creative Workshops 2
- Specialist Project

Year 2: Design Process 1

Design Process 1 develops a basic level ability in the use of digital practice media and applies this to simple design problems and tasks. The module examines the creative, analytical, aesthetic and interpretative decisions which determine the appearance of graphic outcomes through a series of short projects that involve primary visual research and secondary information gathering. The module is intended to generate a practical awareness of the design process necessary for the implementation of successful design solutions. Studio-based projects and exercises will explore legibility, scale, continuity and visual dynamics. Student managed coursework will involve research into historical, retrogressive and contemporary contexts of graphic and typographic communication. Practical and inclusive lecture and critique sessions, present, examine and address the fundamental issues of design. This format is designed to be broadly relevant across a variety of graphic practices with set tasks and projects undertaken (via a practice based learning contract), either individually or in small teams, to investigate the effects of your design decisions via continual analysis and development. Sessions will explore and address: type and graphic terminology, the chronology of letterform development, contemporary visual language and design aesthetics. This module includes ongoing personal development planning via a PDP Progress File.

Year 2: Introduction to Type Media

The module provides an introduction to typography and to the informed use of professional typographic software. It is designed to equip you with the technical vocabulary necessary for the description and analysis of typographic material, and a working knowledge of industry-standard typographic tools. A brief outline of type history provides an introduction to the classification of typefaces. The module introduces the terminology used in the description of types and the specification of typeset material, identifying key decisions affecting appearance and legibility. The expressive scope of type is explored in relation both to issues of functionality and aesthetic convention. You will undertake a series of short projects designed to explore and demonstrate an understanding of typographic decision-making and the application of type in a range of design contexts.

Year 2: Introduction to Web Design

The module provides an introduction to web design and to the informed use of professional web design software. It is designed to equip you with the technical vocabulary necessary for the description and analysis of web material, and a working knowledge of industry-standard webdesign tools. This module introduces a variety of technologies, both code and non-code based.

You will undertake projects designed to explore and demonstrate an understanding of web design processes and media. These will be presented in a portfolio at the end of the trimester for assessment.

Year 2: Design Process 2

In Design Process 2 you will develop a basic competence in the use of digital media and will apply this to more complex design problems. The module examines the creative and interpretative decisions which determine the appearance of graphic material through the juxtaposition of multiple elements of type, text, colour and graphic forms within a given format. The module is intended to generate a practical awareness of graphic composition necessary for successful communication and design. Studio-based projects and exercises will explore legibility, hierarchy and visual dynamics. Student managed coursework will involve research into contemporary contexts of graphic and typographic communication. Practical interactive lectures present and address the historically fundamental issues of form and design structure; this format is designed to be broadly relevant across a variety of graphic practices with set tasks and projects undertaken (via a practice based learning contract), either individually or in small teams, to investigate: The effects of decisions concerning scale, contrast, structure and alignment. Positive and negative space. The representation of spatial, numerical and textural information. Compositional dynamics and underlying grid structures. Asymmetrical composition in images and typography. Legibility, readability and interpretation in type and image. More formal lectures will address: type and graphic terminology, and the dynamics of composition. Seminars and critiques will formatively assess, analyse and evaluate design compositions; their emotive quality, their functionality and their appropriateness for purpose within graphic design and related fields of practice. Project briefs will address the application of graphic design, communication and audience response from within a range of possible specialist contexts that includes information design, promotion, packaging, publishing, art-editorial and the areas of conceptual or ambient media. This module includes ongoing personal development planning via a PDP Progress File.

Year 3: Design Practice 1

This module involves creative enquiry into graphic visual language: this will entail examining graphic design's relationship to contemporary communications and to popular culture and its scope as a medium for addressing issues of communication and

meaning. Design Practice 1 will track the design and production process, from conceptual proposition, through design presentation, to the relevant production processes; and provides a context for ideas development in relation to a range of professional design applications. It offers the opportunity to focus upon specialist graphic practice in consideration of possible industrial career paths, within set projects and self initiated projects (via a practice based learning contract); e.g. design for publication, packaging, brand development, advertising and promotion, informational graphics or new media design. Lectures will facilitate the generation of continual research and analysis into informed development, seeking fully resolved and original graphic communication. Seminars, group critiques and discourse will analyse and evaluate each stage of the creative design process, to establish effective functionality and appropriate communication within a given area of graphic design or related field of practice. This will include considerations of legibility, meaning and response together with the applications of appropriate media and reprographic technologies. This module includes ongoing personal development planning via a PDP Progress File.

Year 3: Professional Studies in Design

A Design degree course equips graduates for a wide range of career opportunities and differing modes of professional practice. This module is designed to develop your understanding of career paths within the field of design professions, including detailed investigation of both employment and self-employment. Seminars and lectures identify the different professional environments within which designers are employed, the business models within which they operate, and the patterns of career progression they can expect to achieve. The seminars also explore the impact of current developments in communications technology, and examine the role of the designer in a changing media environment. Workshops explore self-employment and entrepreneurship, investigating the practical considerations involved in setting up a studio or agency and the significance of small-scale enterprises within the design sector in the UK. Individual and group tutorials during the module address your personal aspirations and the reflective analysis of your individual qualities as a designer. You will then consider which sectors of the profession may offer the best recognition of your qualities, and the types of working environment most appropriate to you as an individual.

Year 3: Debates and Practices

This module's purpose is to explore the links between critical studies and practice. It is intended to enable you to enrich your knowledge and develop your articulacy about your specialism and draw on wider perspectives in relation to your own work. It will be especially attentive to debates about contemporary practice. The module will be seminar based and may be held in the studio, when appropriate and possible. Discussions will engage theory and history with your own developing ideas about contemporary production. The agenda will be open and respond to current events, work and interests.

Year 3: Design Practice 2

This module involves academic enquiry into graphic visual language: this will entail examining graphic design's role within contemporary communications and its effects upon society both socially and commercially. Design Practice 2 will address the social and cultural responsibilities of graphic communication through speculative and/or experimental projects within different design contexts, and the commercial application of design and graphic communication within industry, competition or 'live' projects. It strengthens your ability to focus upon specialist graphic practice in consideration of possible industrial career paths, within set projects and self initiated projects (via a practice based learning contract); e.g. design for publication, packaging, brand development, advertising and promotion, informational graphics or new media design. Lectures will facilitate the generation of continual research and analysis into informed development, seeking fully resolved and original graphic communication that is able to challenge graphic orthodoxy. Seminars, group critiques and discourse will analyse and evaluate each stage of the creative design process, to establish effective functionality and appropriate communication within a given area of graphic design or related field of practice. This will include considerations of social or cultural impact and response together with the applications of appropriate media and reprographic technologies. This module includes ongoing personal development planning via a PDP Progress File.

Year 4: Graphic Futures

This module directs undergraduate practice within industrial graphic design and professional contexts. These may include the design for publication and print, 3D promotional and packaging material, architectural or environmental graphics, information design or new media applications. You are encouraged to solve challenging design problems utilising an enhanced awareness of contemporary design practice within a modern informational culture. Briefs may include individually commissioned work, live set briefs, or national competitions (via practice based learning contracts). This module will also focus upon the practicalities of

work presentation and the application of self-promotion within design industry in preparation for employment. Lectures, presentations, discourse and seminars will examine creative innovation, design solutions and graphic communication and response - within current graphic design practice. You will be required to submit for assessment your finished project work to an industry standard in a format appropriate to the brief's requirements and/or for commercial reproduction, to schedule design work and meet all production deadlines. This module includes personal development planning via a PDP Progress File.

Year 4: Major Project: Graphic Design

The Major Project is the culmination of the Art and Design undergraduate practice courses. Depending upon your course, you will pursue the Major Project individually or as member of a group. At the outset, you will prepare a demanding proposal for an independent creative project, to be approved by your supervising tutor. In this final project, you will need to demonstrate your capacity to work to a planned schedule, research your options imaginatively, take account of current thinking on the issues your project raises, develop your work in convergent and divergent ways, respond positively to criticism and arrive at creative solutions. You will be expected to display, in both preparatory and finished work, an advanced understanding of the methods, techniques, materials and processes appropriate to your chosen media. Your developmental work will be subject to peer and tutor review and assessed with your finished work.

This module is exempt from the full ethical approval process in accordance with section 6 of the Academic Regulations (www.anglia.ac.uk/academicregs).

Optional Modules

(Subject to availability)

Year 2: Design: Contextual Studies

The module is designed to introduce the skills required during your course of study for researching, analysing and writing about art and design. It provides an overview of some of the major developments in art and design relevant to your subject discipline, considering issues of both industry practice and critical theory in relation to the social, cultural and intellectual climate of their times. The module may draw on examples from graphic design, interior design, fashion, industrial design, architecture, product design, media communications and fine art, but is taught with a particular emphasis on your own discipline. A constant question for us therefore concerns the possible definitions of 'design' itself. As well as this subject-specific content, the module also includes a series of workshops and exercises which introduce the skills of library research, critical analysis of visual imagery, essay writing and academic referencing, which will provide a foundation for your studies later in the course.

This module must be taken by all students, except in the specific circumstances where an international student may be required to take an additional English for Study module instead, in order to improve their English Language level.

Year 2: English for Study 1

This is the first in a series of English for Study modules. It aims to support those students who are at or below IELTS 6.0, or equivalent, in their academic writing/discussion abilities. It develops both students' grammatical accuracy and their ability to extract key points from a variety of spoken texts. It further requires students to demonstrate increasing awareness of essay planning and the importance of summary writing and referencing skills in academic essays. Discussion skills are also developed to ensure students are able to contribute in both seminar and tutorial discussions. The module, taught over two hours per week will consist of a variety of activities including group debates, and discussions, presentations, listening and comprehension exercises from authentic audio, and audio-visual material of academic lectures. Students will also be guided in independent learning, via the Language Centre and Library and the Language Laboratories through a wide range of media resources including newspapers and academic journals, videos, and internet.

Year 2: Graphic Design of the 20th Century

The module examines important shifts in the theory and practice of graphic design throughout the 20th century. This provides a historical and cultural framework for graphic design students enabling them to place their studio work in a broader context. In addition to providing a chronological overview this module introduces a range of theoretical debates surrounding the practice of graphic design. This will enable students to examine graphic languages employed by designers and design movements using

key theoretical concepts from the analysis of visual culture.

The module examines graphic design from its emergence in the early 20th century until its fracturing as a discipline at the end of the century. In covering this period it is important to acknowledge graphic design's international character and use range of examples from many different countries and cultures. Similarly the discipline of graphic design itself must be contextualised and considered in relation to other media practices.

In this module there is an emphasis on developing academic skills that will prepare students for contextual studies in art and design at higher levels. This will focus on basic research skills that will enable students to acquire relevant source materials and knowledge in these specialist areas.

This module must be taken by all students, except in the specific circumstances where an international student may be required to take an additional English for Study module instead, in order to improve their English Language level.

Year 2: English for Study 2

This is the second in a series of English for Study modules. It aims to further develop students' essay writing skills and reading techniques. It concentrates on advanced writing and organisational skills: planning essays, writing introductions, paragraph development and writing conclusions as well as looking at style and the development of argument. Emphasis is also put on the importance of relevant and accurate referencing and paraphrasing and issues surrounding plagiarism and collusion. The module also focuses in on text referencing such as tables and charts etc., and bibliography structure and appendices. Problematic areas of grammar are also looked at including the passive voice, conditionals and inversion to enhance style. The module, taught over two hours per week will consist of a variety of activities including group debates, and discussions, reading comprehension exercises from authentic texts, and academic journals. Students will also be guided in independent learning, via the Language Centre and Library and the Language Laboratories through a wide range of media resources including books, academic journals, videos, and internet.

Year 3: New Media Design: Graphic Design for Screen Based Applications

This module is designed to explore the role of graphic design across new media and screen-based contexts including web design and application interfaces, and to consider the implications and possibilities of new communications phenomena, social networks and viral marketing for the graphic designer. Workshops address the design of motion graphics and digital animation through Flash and AfterEffects software, and the development of web design skills introduced in MOD000090 Introduction to Web Design. Lectures and presentations identify both the creative opportunities and technical constraints of new media and motion graphics for broadcast and interactive applications. These include references from film and TV titling, web graphics and advertising, and consider the use of ambient, viral and guerrilla strategies. A series of individual and small group projects explores both the technical and conceptual issues involved in each of these aspects of practice, addressing the use of new media across a range of both practical and speculative contexts. These projects explore the emerging communication possibilities of new technologies, as well as providing detailed technical instruction on the presentation of the word and image on the screen. Individual and group tutorials throughout the module address the development of students' practice and the progress of each project.

Year 3: Letterpress and Relief Print

Students will be introduced to the fundamentals of metal type composition for the setting of continuous text, the assembly of wood type for display typography, and relief printing methods

Introductory workshop sessions will demonstrate the integration of wood or metal type with relief print images (lino, wood, photopolymer or laser), the creative scope of multi-colour overprinting and debossing, and the contrasting properties of different paper stocks on different presses.

The students' practical experience will be contextualised by two lectures that will outline the historical background of letterpress printing and relief printmaking and address the revival of letterpress as a creative medium in contemporary practice.

After a day of introduction to the workshop and its capabilities, students will devise a personal project (or series of projects) of appropriate volume and challenge.

Year 3: Time-Based Media

This module is designed specifically for level two students with no prior experience of video. As such, the module will provide a thorough introduction to video as a Fine Art medium while leaning heavily on your established practice to provide subject matter and direction. You will be expected to expand your practice through experimentation with digital video acquisition, digital video editing and televisual presentation. The module will begin with presentation and discussion of each student's work to date in order to establish relevant starting points and a group dynamic. This will happen alongside thorough inductions with digital video cameras and Final Cut Pro HD. Such inductions will be staff-led and delivered to the whole group. Once you have gained confidence, individual projects will be supported as appropriate, although group critiques will maintain the group dynamic. You will be expected to identify and engage with the formal properties of video and explore how the additional properties might be employed to expand established practice, for example: time, sound and screen-based presentation. This process will be complemented by presentation and discussion of historical and contemporary time-based art. The focus of assessment will be on intuitive experimentation and self-reflection; the relevance of the work to your existing practice and the understanding of the medium. The focus will not be on the production of a 'polished' product.

Year 3: Information Design

This module explores the principal graphic communication issues and design implications involved within the practice of information design. The module introduces the terminology used within visual informational systems and its design specification for production. It analyses and explores the use of text and symbolic content to facilitate information delivery to a desired audience, and examines the interactive possibilities within such communication. The use of language, type and symbols are explored in relation to functionality and communication. The context, ergonomics and environmental practicalities are considered along with materials, structures and the specification of technology. Within the set projects, established as well as innovative creative solutions are encouraged. Ease of communication and the generation of the desired action or response(s) from the viewer or end-user are central to success in this exciting yet demanding area of practice. Project outcomes may include areas of student practice such as: icon or symbol design, signage, environmental graphics, site-specific promotions, exhibition design, graphical user interface (GUI) or a virtual experience.

Year 3: Graphic Design for the Web

This module is designed to develop students' understanding of content creation for screen design, the module looks in specific detail at the contribution of graphic creativity and visual analysis to the technical discipline of content creation for screens. This defines the focus of the module in professional terms, identifying content creation as a specialism within the broader context of web design and defining the roles graduating students may expect to fulfil within professional web projects. A series of individual and small group projects addresses the use of web graphics across a range of commercial and self-initiated contexts including promotion, publishing, art-editorial, photographic and fine art applications. The projects explore both the technical and conceptual issues involved in each of these aspects of web practice. Workshops provide instruction around topics such as iterative design, workload management, storytelling and learning new technologies. Seminars explore current developments in web design practice in relation to student projects, and examine the role of the designer. Individual and group tutorials throughout the module address the development of students' practice and the progress of each project.

Year 4: Research Project

The Research Project is intended to foster your independent study with the guidance of a tutor. You will devise your own project which will reflect on /co-ordinate with / enhance your own studio work and interests. Self-reflexivity and a critical distance will be encouraged. The seminars provide a forum for students to learn from each other's research. There will be opportunities for individual tutorials with a member of staff. The Research Project may include a variety of relevant topics, including reporting on work experience. It may be illustrated with photographs, drawings, video. The approach is to be discussed with the tutor concerned.

Year 4: Research Assignment

The Research Assignment is intended to foster your independent study with the guidance of a Supervisor. On the Research Assignment module, you will devise your own project which will reflect on / co-ordinate with / enhance your own studio work and interests. Self-reflexivity and a critical distance will be encouraged. The classes provide a forum for students to learn from each other's research. There will be opportunities for individual tutorials with a member of staff. The Research Assignment may include a variety of relevant topics, and the topic will be negotiated with your supervisor. It may be illustrated with photographs, drawings, video. The approach is to be discussed with the supervisor concerned.

Year 4: Working in the Creative Industries

Gaining work experience enhances employability, and work based learning offers you the chance to gain industry knowledge, skills, contacts and networking opportunities.

This module is designed to give you the opportunity to explore a working environment in the industry that they have identified as relevant to their present or future needs. The module will encourage self-managed learning, and serves to increase employability by developing personal organisation, team-working, and networking skills - thereby increasing self-reliance and confidence. The experience can be used as a basis for directing and focussing your career plans, and can influence your final year projects.

You are required to identify, negotiate and agree with an employer (or employers) the terms of the placement in association with a module tutor, to ensure that the module learning outcomes can be achieved. You will create a reflective report on your work experience. This will include: the application procedure you have conducted (CV, letter and portfolio); market and background information on the employer; your role(s) on the placement(s); academic and vocational analysis; skills and experiences (opportunities, advantages, constraints, aptitudes and interests). You will also be asked to include a workplace diary that logs activity and supports an analysis of the learning achieved. The employer will be asked to complete a Student Feedback package on completion of the placement. The work placements may be carried out in a variety of settings depending upon your requirements, areas of interest and availability of opportunities. The minimum period will be 100 hours, and you can undertake more than one placement for the module.