

MDes Graphic Communication For students entering Part 1 in 2003

UCAS code: W214, E214

Awarding Institution:
Teaching Institution:
Relevant QAA subject benchmarking group(s):
Faculty of Arts and Humanities
Date of specification: September 2005
Programme Director: Mr Paul Stiff
Programme Adviser: Mr Paul Stiff
Board of Studies: Typography & Graphic Communication
Accreditation: Not appropriate

The University of Reading
The University of Reading
Art & design
Programme length: 4 years

Summary of programme aims

The programme aims to provide an integrated education in design for students who wish to explore in depth the theory, history and practice of the subject. It provides a supportive learning environment where students develop intellectual, visual, technical and social skills to a high level and acquire the ability to learn independently forming a basis for continuing professional development. The programme also aims to stimulate students to develop their own interests, to demonstrate originality in solving problems, and to advance their knowledge and understanding of both current research and scholarship, and professional practice.

Transferable skills

The University's Strategy for Teaching and Learning has identified a number of generic transferable skills which all students are expected to have developed by the end of their degree programme. In following this programme, students will have had the opportunity to enhance their skills relating to problem-solving, information handling, communication (both written and oral), numeracy, team working, use of information technology and career management.

The practical modules of the programme contribute directly to the development of key skills. By the end of the programme, students are expected to have developed the skills of problem solving; effective communication in speech and writing; critical analysis and coherent argument; researching and evaluating evidence; undertaking self-directed and independent work; taking leadership and project management roles; commercial awareness; understanding of the role of technology in the workplace.

Programme content

The following profile lists the compulsory and optional modules. Each Part comprises 120 credits. In Part 1 the remaining 60 credits can be made up from modules elsewhere in the University. In Parts 2 and 3, up to 20 credits can be taken from modules available elsewhere in the University, in consultation with an adviser.

Part 1 introduces the history, theory and practice of typography and graphic communication, provides direction on the use of relevant digital technology, and forms a basis for structured and analytical approaches to design. In Part 2 there is opportunity to engage with practical design and this is supported by core modules in theory and history. In Part 3 the practical work deals with complex design problems and issues, field work in Italy develops analytical capabilities drawing on established techniques of enquiry, further study of a theoretical, historical or practical area is carried out and research and professional development skills are acquired. In the final year, the dissertation enables students to develop a conceptual understanding of one particular area and to engage in an advanced scholarly study of this area. Design skills are developed to a high level informed by an understanding of a body of knowledge derived from academic research and professional practice.

Part 1 (three terms)		<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
<i>Compulsory modules (60 credits)</i>			
TY1HG	<i>Introduction to the history of graphic communication</i>	20	C
TY1TP	<i>Introduction to typographic theory and practice</i>	20	C
TY1DM	<i>Introduction to digital design methods</i>	20	C

Part 2 (three terms)		<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
<i>Compulsory modules (100 credits)</i>			
TY2GC	<i>History of graphic communication</i>	20	I
TY2TT	<i>Theory of typographic and graphic language</i>	20	I
TY2PT	<i>Development of practical design</i>	60	I

Optional module (20 credits)

TY2TD	<i>Typographic detailing</i>	20	I
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This module may be replaced by 20 credits taken from elsewhere in the University.

Part 3 (three terms)		<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
<i>Compulsory modules (90 credits)</i>			
TY3PT	<i>Practice of typography and graphic communication</i>	40	H
TY3PC	<i>Typography of complex texts</i>	20	H
TY3IT	<i>Design contexts: the classical tradition of letterforms in Rome and Florence</i>	20	H
TY3RS	<i>Research and professional development skills</i>	10	H
TY3LF	<i>History of letterforms and typography</i>	10	H

Optional modules

Not all optional modules will necessarily be available in any year. Admission to optional modules will be at the discretion of the Programme Director.

A maximum of 20 credits to be selected from the options below:

TY3DI	<i>Designing to inform</i>	10	H
TY3SD	<i>Screen design: planning and development</i>	10	H
TY3TI	<i>Image and text</i>	10	H
TY3DR	<i>Design for reading</i>	10	H
TY3TL	<i>Typography and language</i>	10	H
TY3ET	<i>Empirical approaches to typography</i>	10	H
TY3BD	<i>Book design in the fifteenth century</i>	10	H
TY3TB	<i>Twentieth-century book design</i>	10	H
TY3CL	<i>Use of colour in documents</i>	10	H

Up to 20 credits may be taken from elsewhere in the University.

Part 4 (three terms)		<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
<i>Compulsory modules (120 credits)</i>			
TY4PT	<i>Practical typographic design</i>	60	M
TY4DS	<i>Dissertation</i>	60	M

Career Management Skills contributes 5 credits' worth of marks to the average for Part 4.

Progression requirements

To proceed to Part 2, students require 60 credits within the Department of Typography & Graphic Communication. They must obtain at least 40% in TY1HG, TY1TP and TY1DM; achieve an

overall average of 40% in 120 credits taken in the examination; achieve a mark of at least 30% in individual modules amounting to not less than 100 credits taken in Part 1.

To proceed from Part 2 to Part 3, all students should have acquired 120 credits with an overall average of 50%. At least 100 of these credits should be within the Department of Typography & Graphic Communication. They must obtain 50% in TY2PT and an average of 50% across TY2TT and TY2GC. They must achieve a mark of at least 30% in individual modules amounting to not less than 100 credits taken in Part 2.

To qualify for the award of the degree, it is necessary to pass overall. To pass with honours it is necessary to obtain at least 40% in modules TY4PT and TY4DS.

Summary of teaching and assessment

There are formal lectures in some modules and a large part of the teaching takes the form of seminars or practical work in studios and workshops.

Modules are assessed by a mixture of essays, reports, seminar presentations, formal examinations (with seen and unseen papers), a dissertation and projects. All compulsory practical modules are assessed through submission of a body of practical work. At the end of Part 2 this is based on TY2PT. At the end of Part 3 this is based on TY3PT and TY3PC. At the end of Part 4 this is based on TY4PT.

The conventions for classification are included in the Programme Handbook but you should note that for classification purposes, Part 2 modules receive a weighting of 20%, Part 3 and Part 4 modules receive a weighting of 40%.

Admission requirements

All applicants are considered on their individual merits and the Department may vary these requirements if it sees fit. Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained: Grade C or better in English in GCSE; and achieved

UCAS Tariff: 260 points from 3 A levels (preferably not all practical subjects); 280 points from 4 subjects (e.g. 3 A levels and 1 AS level); 280 points from 2 subjects (if a 12 unit AGNVQ is taken, the additional A level should be in a non-practical subject). The AGNVQ should also be in a subject that is relevant to Typography & Graphic Communication (e.g. Art and Design, Media Studies, Business Studies)

International Baccalaureat: 30 points

Irish Highers: BBBBC

Mature applicants

Applications from mature candidates are welcomed. A mature applicant is more likely to receive an offer of a place if he or she has undertaken recent study, for example 2 or more A levels or an Access course, but each case is assessed on its individual merits. We recommend you contact an admissions tutor as soon as possible to discuss your individual circumstances.

International applicants

Applications from international candidates are welcomed. If you are not offering A levels we advise you to contact either an admissions tutor before applying in order to discuss the acceptability of your qualifications. IELTS Band 7 (or equivalent) will be required for those whose education has not been undertaken in English.

Admissions Tutors: Mr Eric Kindel

Support for students and their learning

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support includes IT Services, which has several hundred computers and the University Library, which

across its three sites holds over a million volumes, subscribes to around 4,000 current periodicals, has a range of electronic sources of information and houses the Student Access to Independent Learning (S@IL) computer-based teaching and learning facilities. There are language laboratory facilities both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme. Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Personal Tutors, the Careers Advisory Service, the University's Special Needs Advisor, Study Advisors, Hall Wardens and the Students' Union.

Induction includes meetings during 'Freshers' Week' with introductions at University, Faculty and Department levels. The Department Handbook provides extensive information about the programme and the Department. Support for students in their studies is provided through the University's Personal Academic Record (PAR) scheme, in which students meet their personal tutors regularly to review their progress. The Department's year tutor system enhances the personal tutor system, with year tutors available to offer advice on the choice of modules within the programme. The emphasis throughout the programme is on individual and small-group learning rather than class teaching.

The Design & Print Unit within the Department supports students' learning experience in many ways, playing a key role in our work experience scheme, part of some practical modules. Within the University and the Department there are several important collections which form the bases for seminar presentations, and potential resources for dissertations. The Department has its own computers (Apple Macintoshes) and related hardware (e.g. scanners, laser printers, digital cameras) with a range of professional software relevant to the subject.

Career prospects

Our graduates have found work as designers with journal and magazine publishers, university presses, academic publishers, charities, design studios, computer companies, and museums and galleries. Others work freelance and set up their own business.

Opportunities for study abroad or for placements

There are no formal arrangements.

Educational aims of the programme

The programme aims to provide an integrated education in design for students who wish to explore in depth the theory, history and practice of the subject. Teaching is informed by research into the various aspects of typography and graphic communication. The programme provides a supportive learning environment where students can develop intellectual, visual, technical and social skills. It also aims to stimulate students to develop their own interests within the broad field of enquiry offered by the subject.

Programme Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, skills, qualities and other attributes in the following areas:

Knowledge and Understanding

<p>A. Knowledge and understanding of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Principles of typographic design derived from academic research and professional practice2. Elements of graphic language and their interrelationships3. History of typography and graphic communication4. Established techniques of enquiry5. One particular area of the subject in depth6. The complexities of the design process and how to choose relevant working methods and tools	<p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</p> <p>The teaching of the subject has three aspects: theory, history and practice. Theory and history inform practice and practical experience enables discussion of theoretical issues and historical examples. Theory and history are mainly taught through lectures, seminars and a field course. Established techniques of enquiry are introduced in the field course and lectures and used in the dissertation. Detailed knowledge of one specific area is acquired through researching and writing a dissertation. Practical projects and work experience, including professional assignments, provide an insight into design process and methods. Work experience involves students in close contact with external clients and technical staff.</p> <p><i>Assessment</i></p> <p>Theory and history (1–5) are assessed through a mixture of coursework, examinations and the dissertation. Practical work (6) is assessed by projects. Compulsory practical modules are globally assessed at the end of Part 2, Part 3 and Part 4. Optional practical modules are individually assessed.</p>
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Skills and other attributes

B. Intellectual skills – able to:

1. Conduct independent research
2. Critically review literature
3. Generalise knowledge and methods from one area of study to others, where appropriate
4. Analyse examples of graphic language
5. Analyse and solve complex design problems
6. Plan, conduct, and write up a piece of basic experimental research
7. Demonstrate visual awareness and judgement

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Briefed exercises and self-directed study in close consultation with a supervisor develop research skills. Lectures and seminars (including on-site seminars on the field course with note-taking, sketching and photography) promote analysis of graphic language. Project and professional assignments provide the opportunity to analyse and solve design problems and analyse examples of graphic language through critiques. Work in the practical modules also develops visual awareness and judgement. The skills required for basic experimental research are taught through practicals and fieldwork.

Assessment

The dissertation is the primary vehicle for assessing students' research skills (1–3). Coursework essays provide additional forms of assessment in modules taken earlier in the programme. Written examinations and essays assess 4. Assessment of practical work includes 5 & 7. Coursework assesses 6.

C. Practical skills – able to:

1. Assess requirements of project brief
2. Explore alternative approaches to a complex problem
3. Research and plan practical design work
4. Evaluate critically
5. Use appropriate technologies to a suitable level of skill
6. Present a body of practical design work in a professional manner

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Practical skills are taught within the practical modules with projects and professional assignments using studio and computing facilities. Some lectures (e.g. on typographic theory) feed into the development of practical skills by examining a range of design outcomes.

Assessment

Global assessment of body of practical work at the end of Part 2, Part 3 and Part 4. Individual assessments of optional practical modules.

D. Transferable skills – able to:

1. Solve problems
2. Articulate ideas effectively in speech and writing
3. Manage time
4. Work as a team member or take a leadership role
5. Use a variety of computer applications
6. Handle a variety of information sources
7. Use basic statistical techniques
8. Appreciate current professional developments
9. Plan career

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Presentations within seminars and written coursework develop communication skills. Practical work involves problem solving, managing time, working within teams and using various computer applications. Time management is also necessary for submitting coursework. Lectures, seminars and self-directed study provide experience of information handling. Experimental research projects introduce basic statistical techniques. A series of briefings, exercises and self-directed study cover career development skills.

Assessment

Coursework is used to assess 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9. Although the skills associated with 3, 4, 5 are not directly assessed, they contribute to effective outcomes of projects and professional assignments, assessed at the end of Part 2, Part 3 and Part 4.

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably expect to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in module and programme handbooks.