

Programme Specification

BA Graphic Communication

For students entering Part 1 in September 2026

UCAS Code: W213

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This document sets out key information about your Programme and forms part of your Terms and Conditions with the University of Reading.

Awarding Institution	University of Reading
Teaching Institution	University of Reading
Length of Programme	3 years
Length of Programme with placement/year abroad	BA Graphic Communication with Placement Experience - 4 years (internal transfer only) BA Graphic Communication with Year Abroad - 4 years (internal transfer only)
Accreditation	N/A
QAA Subject Benchmarking Group	Art and Design

Programme information and content

The programme encourages students to explore a wide range of graphic design topics and skills through an inspiring syllabus that integrates a tailored combination of practice, theory, history, and technology. Projects are focussed on established and emerging discipline-specific professional categories (such as editorial design, UX design, branding), but the approach to each will always involve looking beyond physical act of ‘design’ by helping students understand the contexts that shape such work. The dynamic between audiences, clients and designers is given great prominence through looking at design research, user feedback, professional communication skills and a wealth of opportunities to work on live briefs. The power of designers as agents of change, and future leaders, in a world that is increasingly driven by ‘design thinking’ is emphasised throughout.

Graduates of the programme will have specific strengths around:

- The fundamental design skills of layout and typography
- Design thinking and user-centred design
- Academic and client-facing verbal and visual analytical and persuasive abilities
- The development of a rich and evolving design process – led by curiosity and research, delivered with imagination and rigour

Part 1:

Part 1 covers design fundamentals through exploration of a range of graphic design disciplines, providing the opportunity to explore and develop personal interests.

Part 2:	<p>Part 2 combines disciplines in more challenging and complex ways, allowing insight into the true scope of real-world design practice. Specialism begins through optional projects, and the ability to present and reflect on design through academic writing and client-facing presentations is enhanced.</p> <p>SEMESTER ABROAD An option to study abroad for one semester as part of the standard 3-year course exists in the first semester of Part 2, replacing Reading modules from that period with modules taken at a host institution. Students return to Reading for Semester 2 of Part 2.</p>
Placement/Study abroad year:	<p>YEAR ABROAD An option to study abroad for one year, and thus transfer to a 4-year programme, exists between Part 2 and Part 3. At the end of the year abroad, students return to Reading to complete Part 3 of their studies.</p> <p>PROFESSIONAL PLACEMENT An optional professional placement year, and thus a transfer to a 4-year programme, allows students time between Part 2 and 3 to hone their skills within the design industry. It also provides exposure to the latest visual trends, business practices, communication models and industry innovations. At the end of the placement year, students return to Reading to complete Part 3 of their studies.</p>
Part 3:	<p>Part 3 provides space for a range of optional and specialised projects, a substantial dissertation on any 'graphic design' topic, and a chance to polish professional design skills to a 'ready for work' level that exceeds employer expectations.</p>

Programme Learning Outcomes - BA Graphic Communication

During the course of the Programme, you will have the opportunity to develop a range of skills, knowledge and attributes (known as learning outcomes) For this programme, these are:

	Learning outcomes
1	Organise visual content: Create effective and engaging design solutions by demonstrating an understanding of how people process and react to graphic and typographic content.
2	Challenge the obvious: Create, explore and analyse alternative solutions to solve design problems through a wide range of graphic styles, platforms and formats.
3	Develop research-based approaches to design: Apply quantitative and qualitative, user-based, participatory, visual and ethnographic research methods.
4	Evidence design decisions: Explain and justify design concepts and proposals through a range of written, oral and graphic media.

5	Evolve the design process: Reflect on the successes and failures of projects, and use these insights inform future design process.
6	Identify and analyse graphic artefacts: Interrogate and assess visual communication in its cultural, technical, and historical environments and contexts.
7	Employ technologies appropriately: Select and harness traditional, current and emerging technologies and crafts.
8	Prepare for professional contexts: Alone, in teams or with clients, work and communicate effectively across a range of configurations and environments.
9	Seek and assimilate new knowledge: Assess and incorporate contemporary discourse into design thinking.
10	Embed inclusivity and diversity: Develop an inclusive approach to design, centering the user, designing for diverse users, cultures and contexts.
11	Create change: Combine design research and practice with an awareness of communities, society, markets and the environment to drive positive change for audiences, clients and the design community.
12	[Professional placement year only] Contextualise academic skills in professional contexts: By the end of the placement year programme, students will have contextualised their academic learning in a placement role relevant to their programme of studies and developed their professional experience, skills and knowledge, contributing significantly towards their continuous learning and career prospects as graduates.

You will be expected to engage in learning activities to achieve these Programme learning outcomes. Assessment of your modules will reflect these learning outcomes and test how far you have met the requirements for your degree.

To pass the Programme, you will be required to meet the progression or accreditation and award criteria set out below.

In addition to the learning outcomes stated above if you are on a placement or study abroad programme you will have the opportunity to develop the following learning outcome:

Additional Learning outcomes	
Study Abroad	
By the end of the Study Abroad Programme, students will have adapted to international study contexts in order to achieve the required academic outcomes determined by the host institution.	
Placement	
By the end of the placement year programme, students will have contextualised their academic learning in a placement role relevant to their programme of studies and developed their professional experience, skills and knowledge, contributing significantly towards their continuous learning and career prospects as graduates.	

Module information

Each part comprises 120 credits, allocated across a range of compulsory and optional modules as shown below. Compulsory modules are listed.

Part 1 Modules:

Module	Name	Credits	Level
TG1BP	Brand and Persuasion 1	20	4
TG1DL	Design Literacy	20	4
TG1ID	Information Design 1	20	4
TG1PD	Professional Development 1	20	4
TG1TT	Type and Typography	20	4
TG1UX	User Experience 1	20	4

All modules at Part 1 of the programme are compulsory.

Students with English as a second language who enter the programme with IELTS (or equivalent) below 7.0 will be required to take an additional non-credit-bearing language course provided via the Academic English Programme.

Part 2 Modules:

Module	Name	Credits	Level
TG2BP	Brand and Persuasion 2	20	5
TG2DD	Design Discourse	20	5
TG2ED	Editorial Design	20	5
TG2ID	Information Design 2	20	5
TG2PD	Professional Development 2	20	5
TG2UX	User Experience 2	20	5

All modules at Part 2 of the programme are compulsory.

Students taking a semester abroad in Semester 1 will miss TG2ED, TG2UX and parts of TG2PD and TG2DD. These will be replaced by 60 credits from the host institution. Returning students will take TG2DPD Discourse & Professional Development on their return, a special module combining the remaining elements of TG2PD and TG2DD. This module is not available to other students.

Modules during a placement year or study year (if applicable):

Students on one of the 4 year programmes will take one 120 credit module in either Professional Placement or Study Abroad.

Students may be permitted to undertake a placement year or a study abroad year between Part 2 and Part 3 of the programme. In such cases students will transfer to a 4-year programme. The placement or study abroad year should not normally be shorter than nine months full-time.

If you take a year-long placement or study abroad, Part 3 as described below may be subject to variation.

Part 3 Modules:

Module	Name	Credits	Level
TG3DP	Design Portfolio	60	6
TG3DS	Dissertation	40	6
TG3PP	Professional Practice	20	6

All modules at Part 3 of the programme are compulsory, but some modules allow a choice of projects.

Placement opportunities

Placements:

You may be provided with the opportunity to undertake a credit-bearing placement as part of your Programme. This will form all or part of an optional module. You will be required to find and secure a placement opportunity, with the support of the University.

Study Abroad:

You may be provided with the opportunity to undertake a Study Abroad placement during your Programme. This is subject to you meeting academic conditions detailed in the Programme Handbook, including obtaining the relevant permissions from your School, and the availability of a suitable Study Abroad placement. If you undertake a Study Abroad placement, further arrangements will be discussed and agreed with you.

Optional modules:

The optional modules available can vary from year to year. An indicative list of the range of optional modules for your programme can be found online in the Course Catalogue. Details of optional modules for each part, including any additional costs associated with the optional modules, will be made available to you prior to the beginning of the Part in which they are to be taken and you will be given an opportunity to express interest in the optional modules that you would like to take. Entry to optional modules will be at the discretion of the University and subject to availability and may be subject to pre-requisites, such as completion of another module. Although the University tries to ensure you are able to take the optional modules in which you have expressed interest this cannot be guaranteed.

Teaching and learning delivery:

The programme will be delivered through lectures, seminars, workshops and (predominantly) practical feedback classes with tutors. You will receive regular formative

feedback in whole cohort, small group or one-to-one discussions. Some modules may include group work.

Student-centered learning in the Department is situated within the studios, your shared learning space, where you study with and amongst fellow design students; this core learning environment is informed by group work, collaboration and peer exchange, fostering inclusive and diverse debate.

Elements of your programme will be delivered via digital technology.

The scheduled teaching and learning activity hours and amount of technology enhanced learning activity for your programme will depend upon your module combination. In addition, you will undertake some self-scheduled teaching and learning activities, designed by and/or involving staff, which give some flexibility for you to choose when to complete them. You will also be expected to undertake guided independent study. Information about module study hours including contact hours and the amount of independent study which a student is normally expected to undertake for a module is indicated in the relevant module description.

Accreditation details

N/A

Assessment

The programme will be assessed through a combination of practical work, coursework essays, oral presentations, reflective reports and practical workfiles. Further information is contained in the individual module descriptions.

Progression

Part 1

To achieve a threshold performance at Part 1, a student will normally be required to:

- (i) Obtain an overall weighted average of 40% over 120 credits taken in Part 1;
- (ii) Obtain a mark of at least 40% in individual modules amounting to not less than 80 credits taken in Part 1; and
- (iii) Obtain marks of at least 30% in modules amounting to 120 credits. (A Fail in a Pass/Fail module will be treated as not meeting the minimum threshold requirement for progression or classification. Pass/fail modules are excluded from weighted average calculations but must be passed to avoid failure of the Part or degree.)

In order to progress from Part 1 to Part 2, a student must achieve a threshold performance.

The achievement of a threshold performance at Part 1 qualifies a student for a Certificate of Higher Education if they leave the University before completing the subsequent Part.

Students are able to transfer from a Joint or Major/Minor Honours programme to a Single Honours programme in one of their joint subject areas at the end of Part 1, subject to:

- Meeting the University Threshold Standard at the end of Part 1; and
- Achieving marks of at least 40% in at least 40 credits of modules (e.g., 2 x 20 credit modules) in the subject to which they wish to transfer; and
- Meeting any programme-specific progression rules for the Part 1 Single Honours Programme to which they wish to transfer.

NB Students taking a Major/Minor programme may only transfer to a Single Honours programme in the Major subject and must meet the above requirements.

Students should seek advice about the titles of programmes they may be eligible to transfer to.

Students who transfer from a Joint or Major/Minor Honours programme to a Single Honours programme may not have taken all of the Part 1 modules listed in the Single Honours Programme Specification. The modules which they have taken will be shown on their Diploma Supplement.

Part 2

To achieve a threshold performance at Part 2, a student shall normally be required to:

- (i) Obtain a weighted average of 40% over 120 credits taken in Part 2; and
- (ii) Obtain marks of at least 40% in individual modules amounting to at least 80 credits taken in Part 2; and
- (iii) Obtain marks of at least 30% in individual modules amounting to at least 120 credits. (A Fail in a Pass/Fail module will be treated as not meeting the minimum threshold requirement for progression or classification. Pass/fail modules are excluded from weighted average calculations but must be passed to avoid failure of the Part or degree.)

In order to progress from Part 2 to Part 3, a student must achieve a threshold performance.

The achievement of a threshold performance at Part 2 qualifies a student for a Diploma of Higher Education if they leave the University before completing the subsequent Part.

Professional/placement year

Students are required to pass the professional placement year/study abroad year in order to progress on the programme which incorporates the professional placement year/study abroad year. Students who fail the professional placement year/study abroad year transfer to the non-placement year version of the programme.

Classification

Bachelors' degrees

The University's honours classification scheme is based on the following:

Mark Interpretation

70% - 100% First class

60% - 69% Upper Second class

50% - 59% Lower Second class

40% - 49% Third class

35% - 39% Below Honours Standard

0% - 34% Fail

The weighting of the Parts/Years in the calculation of the degree classification is:

Three year programmes:

Part 2: one-third

Part 3: two-thirds

Four year programmes, including study abroad / placement year

Part 2: one-third

Study abroad/Placement year: not included in the classification

Part 3: two-thirds

Details of the classification method is given in detail in the Assessment Handbook under:

- Section 17: Awards (Bachelor's), or
- Section 18: Awards (Integrated Master's programmes). Students who do not progress to Part 4 of the Integrated Master's will normally be subject to the method detailed under Section 17: Awards (Bachelor's)

Please note that there may be a specific version of the above for your year of entry.

Additional costs of the programme

Costs for the programme are focussed on three areas:

- An appropriately powerful laptop and other associated hardware. These are often on-off costs at the start of the programme. A laptop with a value of £1500–£2500 is common
- A subscription to industry standard software (such as Adobe Creative Cloud): Whenever possible, we try to secure discounted rates. The cost may be between £100 and £250 per year.
- Printing costs: These ongoing costs will vary depending on current modules or topics. A cost of £10–30 per month is common.
- Most books are available through the University Library, but students may choose to buy their own sub-set of core texts. This is optional, but a small annual budget for books that inspire you is recommended.

Costs are indicative and may vary according to optional modules chosen and are subject to inflation and other price fluctuations. Estimates were calculated in 2025.

For further information about your Programme please refer to the Programme Handbook and the relevant module descriptions, which are available at <http://www.reading.ac.uk/module/>. The Programme Handbook and the relevant module descriptions do not form part of your Terms and Conditions with the University of Reading.

BA Graphic Communication for students entering Part 1 in session 2026/27

19 August 2025

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