



# MA Data Visualisation Design

## *Programme Specification*

### **Primary Purpose**

Course management and quality assurance.

### **Secondary Purpose**

Detailed information for students, staff and employers. Current students should refer to the related Course Handbook for further detail.

### **Disclaimer**

The University of Portsmouth has checked the information given in this Programme Specification. We will endeavour to deliver the course in keeping with this Programme Specification; however, changes may sometimes be required arising from annual monitoring, student feedback, review and update of units and courses. Where this activity leads to significant changes to units and courses, there will be prior consultation of students and others, wherever possible, and the University will take all reasonable steps to minimize disruption to students. It is also possible that the University may not be able to offer a unit or course for reasons outside of its control, for example; the absence of a member of staff or low student registration numbers. Where this is the case, the University will endeavour to inform applicants and students as soon as possible. Where appropriate, the University will facilitate the transfer of affected students to another suitable course.

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## Course Details

### **1. Named Awards**

MA Data Visualisation Design

### **2. Course Code (and UCAS Code if applicable)**

C2646F, C2646P

### **3. Awarding Body**

University of Portsmouth

### **4. Teaching Institution**

University of Portsmouth

### **5. Accrediting Body**

N/A

### **6. QAA Benchmark Groups**

Adapted for Postgraduate from:

Art and Design (ADHA) 2016

History of Art and Design (HAAD) 2016

Communication, Media, Film & Cultural Studies (CMFCS) 2016

### **7. Document Control Information**

Version 2, September 2017

### **8. Effective Session**

2017/2018

### **9. Author**

Dr Juergen Moritz

### **10. Faculty**

Creative and Cultural Industries

### **11. Department**

School of Art and Design

## Curriculum

### **12. Educational Aims**

The MA Data Visualisation Design programme aims to:

Provide a framework allowing students to follow a coherent and flexible program of study, which allows students to enhance and extend their academic, professional, technical and design skills and

knowledge in relation to the subject Data Visualisation, Information and Interaction Design, as well as contribute to the respective community of practice and inquiry. This is achieved through a combination of lecture and seminar content provided, and the development of self-directed research driven study that critically engages with and positions itself at the forefront of the subject. Within the academic environment students develop a wider range of intellectual, analytical and problem-solving skills, which are then appropriately applied. Historical, contemporary and theoretical contextual discourses constitute an essential role in defining and positioning engagement with the subject of Data Visualisation Design as situated in Art and Design. Contextual awareness of social, cultural and technological developments and critical interrogation within their subject areas combine to locate the successful graduates at the forefront of contemporary practice.

In addition, general aims of the course are to:

- To allow students to enhance their practical and research skills, scholarship and knowledge in relation to the subject of data visualisation, visual communication, information and interaction design. To enable students to develop specialist interest and self-directed research driven study that critically and creatively engages with and challenges the subject.
- To provide opportunities to develop the practice of creating meaningful stories with and about data, an understanding positioned in historical, contemporary and theoretical contextual discourses related to Data Visualisation Design and related disciplines, and to engage with the subject both academically and professionally.
- To provide students with an intellectually challenging study environment where they can question, reflect and respond to cultural, ethical and political debates and issues related to challenges of data visualisation design in the wider society.
- To provide a challenging and stimulating study environment that facilitates to develop as critically reflective practitioners in a creative, questioning, informed and socially responsible manner.
- To provide opportunities for exchange and communication with, and service of, professional communities, exploring live data sets from real world scenarios (for example from within the university, or externally with industry or 3rd sector organisations)
- To develop independent research and project ideas to create innovative, forward thinking design solutions and experiences for a digital and data driven world, which may consider multiple disciplines.

### 13. Reference Points

The programme and its outcomes have been developed taking into account:

- University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Document
- The research and scholarship and subject expertise of academic members of staff
- Subject Benchmark Statements of Art and Design (A&D - QAA 1216 02/17), History of Art, Architecture and Design (HAAD – QAA 1217 02/17), Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies (CMFCS – QAA 1741 10/16) and Computing (QAA 1427 02/16)
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)
- QAA Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education

### 14. General Learning Outcomes

#### Level 7

Master's degrees/Postgraduate Certificates/Postgraduate Diplomas are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice

- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
  - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline
  - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
  - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
  - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations
- the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development

## 15. Learning Outcomes

### A. Knowledge and Understanding of:

- A.1 Generate Ideas, concepts, proposals, solutions or arguments developed at an advanced level related to the field of study (independently and/or collaboratively in response to set briefs and/or as self-initiated activity). (A&D 6.8)
- A.2 The critical, contextual, historical, conceptual and ethical dimensions of current and emerging data visualisation, information and interaction design practices in particular, and art and design in general (6.9 A&D)
- A.3 Developing ideas through to outcomes at an advanced level, for example images, artefacts, environments, products, services, systems and processes, or texts underpinned by extended self-directed study. (A&D 6.8)
- A.4 The designer's relationships with audiences, clients, markets, users, consumers, participants, co-workers and co-creators (6.9 A&D)
- A.5 The development of the field addressed by the MA programme and its key intellectual tools (4.2 HAAD)
- A.6 The processes through which data visualisation design practice is conceived and developed, and of the contexts in which people appropriate, use and make sense of data through digital multisensory interfaces and artefacts (4.4 CMFCS).

### B. Cognitive (Intellectual or Thinking) Skills, able to:

- B.1 Critically evaluate, articulate and synthesise knowledge and understanding, attributes and skills in effective ways in the contexts of creative practice, employment, further study and research (A&D 4.4)
- B.2 Manage and exploit the interaction between intention, process and outcome, context and the methods of dissemination (6.4 A&D)

- B.3 Apply, consolidate and extend their learning in different contextual frameworks and situations both within and beyond data visualisation design (A&D 4.4)
- B.4 Employ both convergent and divergent thinking in the processes of observation, investigation, speculative enquiry, visualisation and/or making. (A&D 6.8)
- B.5 Critically discriminate between alternative theoretical arguments and approaches at an advanced level. (HAAD 4.7)
- B.6 Demonstrate research and information retrieval skills, including ability to gather, integrate and organise material critically and evaluate its significance within appropriate intellectual, professional and cultural frameworks (6.10 A&D)

**C. Practical (Professional or Subject) Skills, able to:**

- C.1 Initiate, develop and realise distinctive and creative work within various forms of writing or visual, interactive, multisensory or physical/tangible digital interfaces and artefacts (5.4 CMFCS)
- C.2 Inform creative practice through research and problem solving (5.6 CMFCS)
- C.3 Experiment, as appropriate, with forms, conventions, languages, techniques and practices (5.4 CMFCS)
- C.4 Produce work that demonstrates manipulation of digital content for effective visual communication and sense-making (5.4 CMFCS)
- C.5 Develop modes of practice and solutions appropriate to contexts of application to professional standards (5.4 CFMCS)
- C.6 Be adaptable, creative, self-reflexive and self-disciplined in producing output for a variety of audiences and clients and in a variety of data visualisation designs and applications (5.4 CMFCS)

**D. Transferable (Graduate and Employability) Skills, able to:**

- D.1 Employ self-management skills to study independently, set goals, manage workloads, meet deadlines and anticipate and accommodate change (A&D 6.6)
- D.2 Employ critical awareness, to analyse information and experience, formulate independent judgments and articulate reasoned argument through reflection, review and evaluation and identify personal strengths and needs (6.6 A&D)
- D.3 Communicate effectively and work productively in a team showing abilities at different times to listen, contribute and lead effectively (5.6 CMFCS)
- D.4 Articulate ideas and information coherently in visual, oral and written forms (6.6 A&D)
- D.5 Employ information skills in order to source, navigate, select, retrieve, evaluate and manipulate and manage information from a variety of sources: select and employ communication and information technologies (6.10 A&D)
- D.6 Formulate reasoned responses to the critical judgement of others (6.10 A&D)

## 16. Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

Research methods relevant to art and design practice are introduced via lecture and seminar content, and students are provided with a generic research question to develop, which challenges them to understand the scope of postgraduate level.

Demonstration of the skills and knowledge that relate to the professional needs of data visualisation, information and interaction designers is conveyed through a series of lectures and practical workshops, and students develop their own practical and research skills by responding to lecture content through developing prototype artefacts as a response, in a range of media. Students are also encouraged to be self-reflexive in becoming an advanced practitioner in their field. Theoretical content is delivered through a series of lectures, which is then discussed in group seminars to allow

students to start articulating their understanding and making links between contextual research to their own practice. Use is made of the NESTA toolkit for creative enterprises through a series of creative collaborative brainstorming exercises. The student teams are then provided with a client-related exercise, so students develop understanding of work contexts and appropriate concepts and methods, and are further supported through group tutorials. The Major project is largely independent study driven, and mainly supported through tutorials and group reviews for guidance and feedback.

All units have an emphasis on peer exchange and group critique and have been designed to enhance transferable skills. Tutorials support conceptual development. Students articulate critical awareness, develop information retrieval skills in visual, written and oral forms

The pedagogical approach is mainly aligned with constructive learning, problem-based learning and emergent learning, allowing a sufficient scaffolding to ensure students can develop their own approach to and ownership of their learning, providing a safe environment for risk taking and pushing the boundaries of creative subjects.

## 17. Assessment Strategy

Work is assessed through a portfolio of coursework, group and independent projects. A variety of assessment methods are used and assessment strategies provide for both formative and summative feedback. Course work is assessed through a variety of artefact formats: digital archives, reflective journals, digital artefacts/prototypes, resolution, proposals, reports and individual and group presentations. The units are arranged to integrate programme learning outcomes as presented in Section 14.

## 18. Course Structure, Progression and Award Requirements

See [Unit Web Search](#)<sup>1</sup> for full details on the course structure and units

This is a 1-year full-time or 2-year part-time postgraduate programme leading to the award of MA Data Visualisation Design. The course offers a total of 180 credits for the award comprising 4 units of 30 credits and 1 unit of 60 credits. One credit is equivalent to 10 hours of learning.

Standard University rules apply - The regulations must be consulted for a full description of exit awards.

Students who have been assigned at least 60 credits at Level 7 are eligible to exit with a Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert) Data Visualisation Design. Students who have been assigned at least 120 credits at Level 7 are eligible to exit with a Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip) Data Visualisation Design.

## 19. Employability Statement

- The course has embedded varied transferrable skills appropriate to a range of careers opportunities (particularly focussed in the delivery of digital creative economy, enterprise and innovation content and within self-led projects).
- All MA Data Visualisation Design students become involved in a group project, responding to a live brief, which will involve a real dataset drawn from internal (HEI) or external clients from industry and the 3rd sector. Here, students learn to work in a team, to deadlines and to the constraints of professional clients, including internal and external communication and testing ideas against contemporary industry/wider context relevance.
- MA Data Visualisation Design students will be introduced to principles of Enterprise following the NESTA toolkit for creative enterprise education, and develop their own business idea in the creative digital economy.
- Practitioners as visiting speakers – drawing on a number of experts from industry to introduce current practices and ensure a transdisciplinary outlook

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<sup>1</sup> [www.port.ac.uk/unitwebsearch](http://www.port.ac.uk/unitwebsearch)



- Relevant job opportunities and student design competitions are highlighted through email and the @digimites twitter feed.
- Students are encouraged and required to continually disseminate their outputs and to engage with digital and social media networks and communities, publishing work online and interaction in discussion with professional communities of practice and inquiry.
- University services offer a range of support for employability through Purple Door (Careers and Employability service) and CCI Creative Careers, and also deliver specifically tailored sessions for creative postgraduate students as part of the curriculum
- MA Data Visualisation Design students are encouraged to take full advantage of CCI funding opportunity as they are offered, for example the Professional Practice Fund enabling students to exhibit their work.

## **Course Management**

### **20. Support for Student Learning**

- The Course is managed by a Course Leader
- Extensive induction programme introduces the student to the University and their course
- Each student has a personal tutor, responsible for pastoral support and guidance
- University support services include careers, financial advice, housing and counselling
- The Academic Skills Unit (ASK)
- The Additional Support and Disability Advice Centre (ASDAC)
- Excellent library facilities
- Student course and unit handbooks provide information about the course structure and University regulations
- Feedback is provided for all assessments
- Personal Development Planning (PDP) for all awards
- Excellent specialist workshop and computing facilities
- Studio facilities foster creative development

### **21. Admissions Criteria**

#### **A. Academic Admissions Criteria**

- A minimum of a second-class honours degree in a related subject including design, media, communications, illustration, information technology and cultural and theoretical studies, or equivalent professional experience and/or qualifications.
- An online portfolio submission may be required as part of the selection process.
- Additional evidence of in-depth engagement in the subject and/or relevant work experience is ideal.
- Applicants whose first language is not English must provide evidence of English language ability with a minimum IELTS score of 6.5 (normally with not less than 6.0 in any one component) or equivalent.
- Prior (formal and/or experiential) learning may be assessed and accredited.

#### **B. Disability**

The University makes no distinction in its admissions policy with regard to disability and will endeavour to make all reasonable adjustments in order to make it possible for students to study at Portsmouth on a course of their choice.



## 22. Evaluation and Enhancement of Standards and Quality in Learning and Teaching

### A. Mechanisms for Review and Evaluation

- Course Leader's Annual Standards and Quality Evaluative Review
- Head of Department's Annual Standards and Quality Evaluative Review
- Unit and Course Level student feedback considered at Board of Studies
- Unit Assessment Board consideration of student performance for each programme
- Annual Standards and Quality Reports to Board of Studies, including consideration of Subject and Award External Examiner Reports
- Periodic Programme Review
- Student Representatives and Student/Staff Consultative Committees
- National Student Survey
- National Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey
- Staff Performance and Development Review
- Peer Review and Development Framework
- Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee

### B. Responsibilities for Monitoring and Evaluation

- Unit Co-ordinators for unit content and delivery
- Course Leader for day-to-day running of course
- Board of Studies with overall responsibilities for operation and content of course
- Head of Department
- Associate Dean (Academic)
- Associate Dean (Students)
- Quality Assurance Committee
- Unit, Award and Progression Board of Examiners

### C. Mechanisms for Gaining Student Feedback

- Student Representation on Board of Studies
- Student Staff Consultative Committees
- Unit and Course Level student feedback questionnaires
- University participates in external student surveys, e.g. National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) and International Student Barometer (ISB)

### D. Staff Development Priorities

- Academic staff undertake activities related to research, scholarship, teaching and learning and student support and guidance
- Annual staff performance and development reviews match development to needs
- Managers undertake a variety of management development programmes
- New academic staff required to undertake appropriate University of Portsmouth learning and teaching programmes
- All academic staff encouraged to seek Higher Education Academy membership
- Academic staff undertake initial and continuing professional development within the Academic Professional Excellence Framework (APEX) programme which is aligned with the Higher Education Academy (HEA)'s UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF)
- Support staff are encouraged to attend short courses in areas such as minute taking, and specific IT packages

## 23. Assessment Regulations

The current University of Portsmouth academic regulations will apply to this programme (see [Assessment and Regulations<sup>2</sup>](#)).

## 24. Role of Externals

Subject External Examiners who will:

- Oversee unit assessment and usually attend Unit Assessment Boards
- Review unit assessment strategy
- Sample assessment artefacts
- Present report to Unit Assessment Boards

Award External Examiners (usually also a Subject External Examiner) who will:

- Oversee and attend Award/Progression Boards
- Scrutinise and endorse the outcomes of assessment
- Ensure that the standard of the award is maintained at a level comparable with that of similar awards elsewhere in the United Kingdom

## 25. Indicators of Standards and Quality

### A. Professional Accreditation/Recognition

Not applicable

### B. Periodic Programme Review (or equivalent)

The course will be subject to normal monitoring and review policy and procedures.

### C. Quality Assurance Agency

QAA Higher Education Review, March 2015, judgements about standards and quality meet UK expectations (for full report see [Higher Education Review of the University of Portsmouth, March 2015<sup>3</sup>](#)).

### D. Others

None.

## 26. Further Information

Further information may be found in:

- Student Handbook
- University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Document
- University of Portsmouth Prospectus
- [University of Portsmouth<sup>4</sup>](#) and [School of Art and Design<sup>5</sup>](#) websites

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<sup>2</sup> [www.port.ac.uk/departments/services/academicregistry/qualitymanagementdivision/assessmentandregulations/](http://www.port.ac.uk/departments/services/academicregistry/qualitymanagementdivision/assessmentandregulations/)

<sup>3</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Documents/University%20of%20Portsmouth/University-of-Portsmouth-HER-15.pdf](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Documents/University%20of%20Portsmouth/University-of-Portsmouth-HER-15.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [www.port.ac.uk/](http://www.port.ac.uk/)

<sup>5</sup> [www.port.ac.uk/school-of-art-and-design](http://www.port.ac.uk/school-of-art-and-design)