



BA (Hons) Graphic 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

BA (Hons) Graphic Design

2. Course Code (and UCAS Code if applicable)

C2172S (W210)

3. Awarding Body

University of Portsmouth

4. Teaching Institution

University of Portsmouth

5. Accrediting Body

None

6. QAA Benchmark Groups

Art and Design 2016

History of Art, Architecture and Design 2016

Communication, Media, Film, and Cultural Studies 2016

7. Document Control Information

Version 6, August 2018

8. Effective Session

2018/2019

9. Author

Sarah Houghton

10. Faculty

Creative and Cultural Industries

11. Department

School of Art, Design and Performance

Curriculum

12. Educational Aims

- To provide a challenging and stimulating study environment
- To provide a framework allowing students to follow a flexible and coherent programme of study
- To enable students to study a subject area and to develop subject specialist interests, knowledge and skills

- To provide students with the opportunity to develop key skills
- To provide students with the opportunity to study up to a maximum of 20 credits worth of elective units
- To provide students with the skills and knowledge to maximise career and postgraduate study opportunities
- To provide a broad historical knowledge of Graphic Design
- To provide a detailed knowledge of Graphic Design and its contexts
- To develop an understanding of the variety of theoretical and critical approaches to issues in design and culture
- To enable students to develop high levels of skills of critical judgment
- To inform creative practice through research
- To communicate ideas through a developed visual design language
- To enable students to develop a high standard of communication skills
- To develop an understanding of the relationship of the Graphic Designer to audiences and clients
- To provide students with the opportunity to develop entrepreneurial skills

13. Reference Points

- University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Document
- The UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)
- Subject Benchmark Statements: Art and Design (2016), History of Art, Architecture and Design (2016), Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies (2016)
- Vocational and/or professional experience, the scholarship and the research expertise of academic members of staff

14. General Learning Outcomes

Level 4

Certificates of Higher Education are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with their area(s) of study, and an ability to evaluate and interpret these within the context of that area of study
- an ability to present, evaluate and interpret qualitative and quantitative data, in order to develop lines of argument and make sound judgements in accordance with basic theories and concepts of their subject(s) of study

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems related to their area(s) of study and/or work
- communicate the results of their study/work accurately and reliably, and with structured and coherent arguments
- undertake further training and develop new skills within a structured and managed environment

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility

Level 5

Diplomas in Higher Education are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles of their area(s) of study, and of the way in which those principles have developed
- ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in an employment context
- knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in the subject(s) relevant to the named award, and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study
- an understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis
- effectively communicate information, arguments and analysis in a variety of forms to specialist and non-specialist audiences, and deploy key techniques of the discipline effectively
- undertake further training, develop existing skills and acquire new competences that will enable them to assume significant responsibility within organisations

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making

Level 6

Bachelor's degrees/Bachelor's degrees with honours are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of key aspects of their field of study, including acquisition of coherent and detailed knowledge, at least some of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of defined aspects of a discipline
- an ability to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry within a discipline
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
 - to devise and sustain arguments, and/or to solve problems, using ideas and techniques, some of which are at the forefront of a discipline
 - to describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research, or equivalent advanced scholarship, in the discipline
- an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge
- the ability to manage their own learning, and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (for example, refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the discipline)

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- apply the methods and techniques that they have learned to review, consolidate, extend and apply their knowledge and understanding, and to initiate and carry out projects
- critically evaluate arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data (that may be incomplete), to make judgements, and to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution - or identify a range of solutions - to a problem
- communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences

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 contexts

- the learning ability needed to undertake appropriate further training of a professional or equivalent nature

15. Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- Discuss the key aspects of the subject area
- Apply appropriate techniques of analysis to the subject area
- Research topics and devise and sustain arguments related to the subject area
- Develop design concepts and devise research and development programmes to achieve successful creative resolutions
- Discuss historical and contemporary practice and issues related to the subject area.
- Take responsibility for own learning in an Honours degree programme
- Communicate information in a manner appropriate to the subject and the intended audience
- Show initiative and be able to make and justify decisions
- Acquire a command of practical and technical skills of the subject

A. Knowledge and Understanding of:

- A.1 The broad critical and contextual dimensions of the students' discipline (6.5 A&D)
- A.2 The major developments in current and emerging media and technologies in their discipline (6.5 A&D)
- A.3 The significance of the work of other practitioners in their discipline (6.5 A&D)
- A.4 The development of the field addressed by the degree programme and its key intellectual tools (4.2 HAAD)
- A.5 The processes through which artefacts are designed and made in the cultures studied (4.2 HAAD)
- A.6 The role of technology in terms of media production access and use (4.2 CMFCS)
- A.7 Professional, technical and formal choices which realise develop or challenge existing practices and traditions, and of the possibilities and constraints involved in production processes (5.4 CMFCS)
- A.8 The legal, ethical and regulatory frameworks that affect media and cultural production, manipulation, distribution, circulation, and consumption (CMFCS 5.4)

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

- B.1 Generate ideas independently and/or collaboratively in response to set briefs and/or self-initiated activity (6.4.1 A&D)
- B.2 Articulate and synthesise their knowledge and understanding, attributes and skills in effective ways in the context of creative practice, employment, further study, research and self-fulfilment (4.4 A&D)
- B.3 Apply, consolidate and extend their learning in different contextual frameworks and situations both within and beyond the field of art and design (4.4 A&D)
- B.4 Manage and make appropriate use of the interaction between intention, process and outcome, context and the methods of dissemination (6.4 A&D)
- B.5 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)
- B.6 Carry out various forms of research for essays, projects creative productions or dissertations involving sustained independent enquiry (5.3 CMFCS)

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

- C.1 Initiate, develop and realise distinctive and creative work within various forms of writing or of aural, visual, audio-visual, sound, or other electronic/digital media (5.4 CMFCS)
- C.2 Inform creative practice through research and problem solving, managing the use of interaction between intention, process outcome, context (6.8 A&D)
- C.3 Select, test and experiment, as appropriate, with forms, materials, processes and environment. (4.4 and 6.4 A&D)
- C.4 Produce work that demonstrates the effective manipulation of sound, images and/or the written word (5.4 CMFCS)
- C.5 Practice Graphic Design to professional standards (4.1 A&D)
- C.6 Be adaptable, creative and self-reflexive in producing output for a variety of audiences and clients and in a variety of media forms (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 (6.6A&D)
- D.3 Work productively in a team showing abilities at different times to listen, contribute and lead effectively (5.6 CFMCS)
- 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 (6.6 A&D)

16. Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

Basic Information about the subject area is conveyed through a combination of briefings, lectures, seminars, demonstrations, workshops and tutorials with an emphasis on group teaching and peer learning.

Teaching and Learning methods over three levels enable the students to acquire the cognitive skills of a self-reflexive independent learner through briefings, workshops, presentations and group critiques. Lectures, seminars and tutorials support learning. The development of research skills is an integral part of project-based units and is further developed through research methods units.

Teaching and Learning methods demonstrate the skills and knowledge that relate to the professional needs of the Graphic Design industries. These are delivered through practical projects, lectures, workshops, seminars and tutorials which enable the student to understand the relationship between developing ideas into successful outcomes which address the requirements of the creative industries. Through work experience or simulated work experience the understanding of entrepreneurial and other work-based concepts are explored. Through 'crits' and presentations students develop an understanding of audience and client.

Elearning supports practical, professional and subject skills.

Although embedded in part, in all units, some units have been designed to enhance key skills, through which students articulate a critical awareness, develop information retrieval skills in visual, written and oral forms and work collaboratively.

Students are introduced to a range of learning strategies including independent learning.

17. Assessment Strategy

Levels 4 and 5 are assessed through practical projects, research folders and presentations. Level 6 work involves portfolio coursework, major independent project and core major project and Viva Presentation.

Level 6 work is assessed through self-directed independent and brief-led projects, research folders reports and oral presentations. A variety of assessment methods are used and assessment strategies provide for both formative and summative feedback across all levels.

Level Four

One aspect of the assessment strategy at Level 4 is to assist in the acquisition of key technical skills and to instil a sense of confidence in their usage. Also the assessment strategy addresses creative and critical awareness and the confident expression of these through peer evaluation, critiques, or presentation. The assessment strategy introduces two-part assessment: a research element and an artefact. This is an introduction to the course's emphasis on research as a core activity in the design process. Peer evaluation is used for the purpose of group formative assessment and shared critical engagement.

Level Five

At Level 5 the assessment strategy reinforces the two-part assessment pattern of the research element and the artefact for the majority of the units taught. Critiques and group evaluations create many opportunities for formative assessment.

Level Six

At Level 6 most assessment takes place at the end of the second teaching period, when final year work is based around the production of a portfolio for employment. The assessment pattern for the major project takes the form of two units comprising research and resolution, maintaining continuity with the previous level. The students also have the opportunity to exhibit their work publicly.

18. Course Structure, Progression and Award Requirements

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

This is a 3 or 4 year programme depending on whether a student elects a sandwich placement. The University encourages the 4 year option since students gain invaluable experience from an industrial placement. The placement year usually takes place at the end of the second year and a placement student should expect to be in employment for a full calendar year.

One credit is equivalent to 10 hours of learning. Each level comprises a maximum of 120 credits. Units are offered as 20, and 40 credits.

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

Elective units totalling 20 credits are offered in Level 5 and provide the opportunity for students to study a variety of topics (including languages and/or key skills) outside of their main subject areas.

Careers guidance is embedded at Level 5 in Professional Practice Units and at Level 6 in Professional Practice Units and through tutorial support.

As an alternative to the sandwich placement students can undertake a Study Abroad year under the Erasmus Scheme or with other exchange programme partner institutions.

19. Employability Statement

Employability skills are embedded within the curriculum and include a range of activities.

Professional practice delivered at Level 5 closely simulates a commercial situation and working with an external partners on live briefs and competitions such as the YCN. Practising alumni guide and

¹ www.port.ac.uk/unitwebsearch

critique with examples of commissioned work from their own practice. Entrepreneurship and presentation skills are also key elements. At Level 6, employability is delivered via design briefs set and partially assessed by professional design organisations such as the Royal Society of Arts, the British Design and Art Direction Association and the International Society of Typographic Designers with the possibility of accreditation through the submission of a portfolio of work.

Work placements occur at all levels through the alumni network or personal initiative. Freelance work is made available to student through the Department of Employability and other routes. Portfolio surgeries are conducted by alumni and Industry professionals at Levels 5 and 6.

PDP is conducted to review employability skills at all levels and in conjunction with folio review and career decision making.

Students are offered the opportunity of a sandwich placement year between levels 5 and 6.

On completion of the year-long work placement the student returns to full time study to complete Level 6.

At Level 6, employability focuses on personal promotion and includes presentation skills (verbal, visual and written), networking, production of a personal identity scheme including a statutory, website, CV, business card and portfolio etc. They are also given the opportunity to work with a client in a freelance capacity and take Adobe Certified Associate examinations.

An alumni website provides access to professional designers both formally and informally.

Presentations enable the student to present their work orally to a critical audience and to see it in relation to their career development.

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, counselling etc.
- The Academic Skills Unit (ASK).
- CCI Creative Skills Centre and CCI Academic Skills Centre.
- CCI Creative Careers Centre.
- 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 etc.
- Feedback is provided for all assessments.
- Personal Development Planning (PDP) for all awards.
- Project specific websites accompany a number of units.
- All units are on the University of Portsmouth E-Learning environment.
- Formative feedback is offered during each unit. Summative written and/or oral feedback is provided for each assessment.
- Individual learning plan and personal development planning.
- The Course has a pattern of industrial contacts.
- Support prior to and during placements and exchanges.
- Excellent specialist workshop and computer facilities.
- Studio facilities foster creative development.

- For students that elect for a placement year there is a placement supervisor and a placement handbook.
- All placement locations are carefully vetted in terms of health and safety as well as their potential to support the programme learning outcomes. This is in line with the University of Portsmouth's Code of Practice for Work Based and Placement Learning.

21. Admissions Criteria

A. Academic Admissions Criteria

- 104-112 points to include a minimum of 2 A levels or equivalent. Applicants will be required to attend an interview with portfolio.
- Applicants without art and design qualifications or experience may be asked to submit a digital portfolio in advance of an invitation to interview.
- A range of qualifications as specified on the course page on the University of Portsmouth website.
- Applicants whose first language is not English must provide evidence of English language ability with a minimum IELTS score of 6.0 (normally with not less than 5.5 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 Regulations²](#)).

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

Whilst the course is not formally accredited, there is a possibility for students to individually gain membership of:

² http://policies.docstore.port.ac.uk/policy-107.pdf?_ga=2.35873504.1363879306.1532935696-1470967879.1491987462

- The International Society of Typographic Designers,
- RSA Fellowship
- Adobe Certified Associate

B. Periodic Programme Review (or equivalent)

The BA (Hons) Graphic Design course participated in a successful Periodic Review on 29th November 2017.

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 2015³](#)*).

D. Others / Awards

- iSTD - 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018
- New Designers - Designer of the year - 2014
- New Designers – Webb DeVlam Associate prize – 2014
- New Designers – People’s vote screening prize 2015
- Design Council - Future pioneers – shortlist - 2013, 2014
- PETA - Respect for Animals 2004, 2010
- Royal Society of Arts, 2009, 2010, 2018
- Young Creative Networks prize, 2010, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017
- Strong Island “One’s to watch” award – 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018

26. Further Information

Further information may be found in:

- Student Handbook
- University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Document
- University of Portsmouth Prospectus
- [University of Portsmouth⁴](#) and [Faculty of Creative and Cultural Industries⁵](#) websites

³ http://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/reports/university-of-portsmouth-her-15.pdf?sfvrsn=5071f581_4

⁴ www.port.ac.uk/

⁵ http://www2.port.ac.uk/faculty-of-creative-and-cultural-industries/?_ga=2.258035018.1363879306.1532935696-1470967879.1491987462