PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Course record information	
Name and level of final award:	MA Design for Communication The Design for Communication is a Masters degree that is Bologna FQ-EHEA second cycle degree or diploma compatible.
Name and level of intermediate awards:	Postgraduate Diploma Design for Communication Postgraduate Certificate Design for Communication
Awarding body/institution:	University of Westminster
Teaching Institution:	University of Westminster
Status of awarding body/institution:	Recognised Body
Location of delivery:	Westminster School of Media Arts and Design (Harrow)
Language of delivery and assessment:	English
Mode, length of study and normal starting month:	One year (full time). September start.
[QAA subject benchmarking group](s):	
Professional statutory or regulatory body:	N/A
Date of course validation/review:	June 2013
Date of programme specification approval:	2013-14
Course Leader:	Peter Smith
Course URL: Westminster Course Code: JACS code: UKPASS code:	westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate PMADS01F (FT) W213 (Visual Communication) P035851 (FT)

Admissions requirements

There are standard minimum entry requirements for all undergraduate courses. Students are advised to check the standard requirements for the most up-to-date information.

For most courses a decision will be made on the basis of your application form alone. However, for some courses the selection process may include an interview to demonstrate your strengths in addition to any formal entry requirements.

More information can be found here: westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/how-to-apply

Aims of the course

The aim of this Master degree is to enable graduates whose subject discipline is within art and design to develop their practice and knowledge in ways which prepare them for careers in the design and media sectors of business and industry. In this context, the course aims to support students in becoming highly skilled, effective practitioners, able to conceptualize, problem solve, innovate and manage professional work with expertise and awareness, to possess an in-depth knowledge of their subject area and understand the wider industrial context in which design resides.

Communication designers may have a specialism, for example, in editorial design or branding and offer their expertise to a wide range of clients and contexts from brochure production, to exhibition design and corporate environments. Although they are likely to have a specialism, communication designers normally work across a wide range of sectors, often involving collaboration with other specialists for aspects of a project. As technology has become more prevalent and more accessible to everyone, design has assumed more importance and therefore communication designers need continuously to be able to offer new creative ideas to meet client needs. To achieve this we believe that it is essential for students to engage fully in evolving an approach to the research process, this ensures that they can base decisions on evidence whilst at the same time allowing for the serendipitous. Alongside a capacity to conduct an enquiry, students also need to be aware of technology change and of innovative models of doing business so that they are equipped to think of new ways of positioning products, services and brands in the minds of target audiences. Key features of the course programme include:

- Analysis and evaluation, problem solving and concept development, realisation and implementation of concepts, professional practice and studio management.

Key educational aims includes:

- Develop advanced creative practitioners with the potential to originate, innovate and influence practice in their discipline.
- Equip students with a comprehensive understanding of the core principles and technology underpinning their creative project and the theoretical frameworks in which to locate it.
- Underpin students' creative practice with the entrepreneurial skills and business awareness necessary to turn concepts into commercially viable realities.
- Develop students' skills in independent learning, self-reflection and research skills necessary to sustain advanced creative practice and scholarship.

- Offer a stimulating environment for postgraduate students which is both supportive and flexible in relation to their learning needs and a creative space in which to develop their ideas.

Employment and further study opportunities

Today's organisations need graduates with both good degrees and skills relevant to the workplace, i.e. employability skills. The University of Westminster is committed to developing employable graduates by ensuring that:

- Career development skills are embedded in all courses.
- Opportunities for part-time work, placements and work-related learning activities are widely available to students.
- Staff continue to widen and strengthen the University's links with employers in all sectors, involving them in curriculum design and encouraging their participation in other aspects of the University's career education and guidance provision.
- Staff are provided with up-to-date data on labour market trends and employers' requirements, which will inform the service delivered to students.

The course is an ambitious programme for students who want to realise their creative potential and self-reliance working freelance or as small business operators in the challenging and changing world of the creative communication industries.

The Design Industry Survey 2005 issued by the Design Council indicates that there are increasing employment opportunities for designers in the areas of communication and digital media. The majority of design consultancies and small businesses (employing less than 5 people), including freelance designers, operate predominantly in London and the south east of England. Given this professional context, the course is well located and will educate graduates for an expanding segment of the creative industries sector.

Students may also choose to undertake research degrees (MPhil, PhD) in design related fields.

Course Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements on what successful students have achieved as the result of learning. These threshold statements of achievement and are linked to the knowledge, understanding and skills that a student will have gained on successfully completing a course.

Knowledge and understanding

In-depth understanding of

- Visual identity, including corporate identity and branding core activity in communications design covering everything from printed communications, digital applications and 3D prototyping.
- The role of the designer as an author with a focus on publishing, editorial, magazine, book design, e-book, interactive and website design.
- The creative process including idea mapping, creative blocks & blockbusters, brainstorming and design concept development collaboration to replicate what happens in professional practice.
- The design process and be able to outline, scope, structure and maintain a high quality of research analysis and design concept innovation.
- Design, its relationship to the related disciplines in visual communication, and to contemporary issues and developments in design theory and research.
- Visual design culture in a critical, social and ethical context.

- Communication design in the applied and professional context.
- A range of key texts and contextual debates at the forefront of their discipline and demonstrate a critical engagement with them.
- Leading edge and emergent technology developments and reflect critically on the significance of their impact on evolving processes and practice in the discipline.

Knowledge of:

- A range of business practice models as appropriate to freelance work and small business (SME) development.
- New concepts about business management and leadership and reflect critically on their relevance to the development of new enterprises.
- The innovation process based on contemporary insights, ideas and current practice.
- New methods of communication including mobile technology as a communication channel.
- New ways in media delivery, such as ambient media, guerrilla/viral marketing.
- Experience design, the moments of engagement, or touchpoints, between people and brands.
- Social responsibility including sustainability, future thinking and designing, how we interact with the world and use its resources.

Cognitive and intellectual skills, be able to:

- Evaluate a range of established or emergent research and design methodologies and develop critiques of them, and where appropriate propose new hypotheses.
- Demonstrate the ability to plan and implement original design solutions.
- Apply imaginative vision to critical practice in order to propose new constructs through experimentation with current and emerging technologies.
- Demonstrate the ability to make commercially viable decisions in relation to the integrated design project.

Specific skills

Demonstrate an ability to:

- Develop creative visual solutions to complex communication problems.
- Produce innovative outcomes in response to a range of client requirements.
- Position themselves within professional practice and the communication design business.
- Identity diverse opportunities available within the communication design business.
- Apply research as an analytical and practical tool for designers, with the emphasis on why we do what we do and how we can ensure it is effective, through research, testing, feedback and a rigorous approach to design.
- Manifest a responsible approach to design in a social, cultural and economic sense, in all communications.
- Critically reflect on design concepts to ensure they are working with a clear viewpoint and attention to design detail.

Key transferable skills

An ability to:
- Conceive, develop and manage sustained independent enquiry and take responsibility for the management of own learning and continued professional development.

- Apply ethical, legal, regulatory and/or organisational frameworks to the processes and practice of designing enterprising solutions.
- Apply resourcefulness and entrepreneurial skills to support their own practice and with others through a collaborative process.
- Communicate and present effectively, and professionally publish to a broad and public audience, utilising a range of appropriate media.
- Demonstrate a commercially minded approach to enterprise and business management.
- Negotiation, organise, lead and follow as appropriate within a team.
- Self-manage, self-promote, and work as an autonomous practitioner.
- Communicate complex ideas and concepts, and present and articulate theory and ideas to a high standard.

Learning, teaching and assessment methods

Learning: The Course focuses on both individual practice, group practice and industry led initiatives and so will require students to use both creative and systematic thinking strategies in the development and realisation of their practice. An experimental and speculative approach to learning, coupled with reflection and evaluation, will be encouraged through the programme. The learning will take place through creative studio practice, visual problem solving, testing ideas and a high degree of imaginative and original thought. Collaborative work will also be encouraged as this reflects practice in the creative industries.

Students will also take responsibility for planning their personal development (PDP) and opportunities to review this planning are embedded within modules of the syllabus.

Teaching: The teaching will foster the forms of learning indicated below and will follow the University's guidelines on student-centred, active learning. The main methods of delivery will be through studio practice sessions, tutorials, work reviews, lectures, seminars and presentations. There will also be visits, work placements as well as self-directed study and practice.

Assessment: Summary of assessment methods

You may be marked on work presented in the following ways:

- Oral/visual presentations: These are used both during and at the conclusion of a module. You may be asked to present your work and ideas to the group, and to give feedback in class to other students' presentations.
- Written reports/essays/dissertations: These are usually handed in for marking by your tutor on agreed dates.
- Proposals, self-evaluation statements: These are to help you clarify what you are planning to do, and then assess how well you feel you have done.
- Informal written and visual materials: Blogs, notebooks, workbooks, logbooks, sketchbooks. You may be asked to show these to explain your working processes.
- Group project work (collaborative practice): You may be asked to present work as a group, perhaps taking responsibility for different aspects of the presentation.
- Solo project work (personal practice).

Assessment

The purpose of assessment is to enable students to demonstrate that they have fulfilled the objectives of the study programme for which they are registered and have achieved the standard required for the award they seek. Both formative and summative assessment are used on the course – formative assessment is usually provided at interim points during a module as a guide to current progress. Summative assessment occurs at the conclusion of a module or other unit of work, and is used to evaluate the outcomes of that study. The grading of marks published following summative assessment will reflect the extent to which the learning outcomes have been successfully achieved, and written feedback will provide advice and guidance on areas of strength and weakness, to aid future learning.

Course structure

This section shows the core and option modules available as part of the course and their credit value. Full-time Postgraduate students study 180 credits per year or 6 modules per year.

Module code	Module title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
7CTAD003W	Design Project A	Core	40	20
7CTAD005W	Design Research Methods	Core	20	10
7CTAD001W	Business for Design	Core	20	10
7CTAD004W	Design Project B	Core	40	20
7CTAD002W	Critical Debates in Design	Core	20	10
7CTAD006W	Major Project/Exhibition	Core	40	20

Academic regulations

The current Handbook of Academic Regulations is available at
westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations

How will you be supported in your studies?

Course Management

- Kerstin Mey, Dean of School, holds overall responsibility for all the courses within the School of Media, Arts and Design.
- Peter Roach, Head of Art and Design, leads the department in which this course is delivered.

The course team comprises:

- Peter Smith, Course Leader, responsible for day-to-day and overall management of the course.
- Amanda Sleet, Lecturer, has developed the design research methods module on the course, to ensure the coherence of research and practice.

Other members of the School staff teams may work on the programme where appropriate.

Academic Support

Upon arrival, an induction programme will introduce you to the staff responsible for the course, the campus on which you will be studying, the Library and IT facilities, additional support available and to your Faculty Registry Office. You will be provided with the Course Handbook, which provides detailed information about the course. Each course has a course leader or Director of Studies. All students enrolled on a full-time course and part time students registered for more than 60 credits a year have a personal tutor, who provides advice and guidance on academic matters. The University uses a Virtual Learning Environment called Blackboard where students access their course materials, and can communicate and collaborate with staff and other students

Learning Support

The Academic Learning Development Centre supports students in developing the skills required for higher education. As well as online resources in Blackboard, students have the opportunity to attend Study Skills workshops and one to one appointments.

Learning support includes four libraries, each holding a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at that site. Students[1] can search the entire library collection online through the Library Search service to find and reserve printed books, and access electronic resources (databases, e-journals, e-books). Students can choose to study in the libraries, which have areas for silent and group study, desktop computers, laptops for loan, photocopying and printing services. They can also choose from several computer rooms at each campus where desktop computers are available with the general and specialist software that supports the courses taught at their Faculty. Students can also securely connect their own laptops and mobile devices to the University wireless network.

Support Services

The University of Westminster Student Affairs department provide advice and guidance on accommodation, financial and legal matters, personal counselling, health and disability issues, careers, specialist advice for international students and the chaplaincy providing multi-faith guidance. The University of Westminster Students' Union also provides a range of facilities to support students during their time at the University.

How do we ensure the quality of our courses and continuous improvement?

The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel in 2007. The panel included internal peers from the University, academic(s) from another university and a representative from industry. This helps to ensure the comparability of the course to those offered in other universities and the relevance to employers.

The course is also monitored each year by the Faculty to ensure it is running effectively and that issues which might affect the student experience have been appropriately addressed. Staff will consider evidence about the course, including the outcomes from Course Committees, evidence of student progression and achievement and the reports from external examiners, to evaluate the effectiveness of the course. Each Faculty puts in to place an action plan. This may for example include making changes on the way the module is taught, assessed or even how the course is structured in order to improve the course, in such cases an approval process is in place.

A Course review takes place periodically to ensure that the curriculum is up-to-date and that the skills gained on the course continue to be relevant to employers. Students meet with review panels to provide feedback on their experiences. Student feedback from previous years

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[1] Students enrolled at Collaborative partners may have differing access due to licence agreements.

e.g. from Course Committees is also part of the evidence used to assess how the course has been running.

How do we act on student feedback?

Student feedback is important to the University and student views are taken seriously. Student feedback is gathered in a variety of ways.

- Through Course Committees students have the opportunity to express their voice in the running of their course. Student representatives are elected to Committee to expressly represent the views of their peer. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the student representatives.

- Each Faculty also has its own Faculty Student Forum with student representatives; this enables wider discussions across the Faculty. Student representatives are also represented on key Faculty and university committees.

- All students are invited to complete a questionnaire before the end of each module. The feedback from this will inform the module leader on the effectiveness of the module and highlight areas that could be enhanced.

- The University also has an annual Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey or PTES which helps us compare how we are doing with other institutions, to make changes that will improve what we do in future and to keep doing the things that you value.