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**Programme Specification**

**Title of Course: MA Communication Design**

**Date Specification Produced: November 2012**

**Date Specification Last Revised: July 2020**

This Programme Specification is designed for prospective students, current students, academic staff and employers. It provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the intended learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if they take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the teaching, learning and assessment methods, learning outcomes and content of each module can be found in the Course Handbook on Canvas and in individual Module Descriptors.

**SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION**

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| **Title:** | MA Communication Design |
| **Awarding Institution:** | Kingston University |
| **Teaching Institution:** | Kingston University |
| **Location:** | The Design School,  Kingston School of Art, Knights Park |
| **Programme Accredited by:** | Not applicable |

**SECTION2: THE PROGRAMME**

1. **Programme Introduction**

The Master of Arts in Communication Design is a one-year full-time and two-year part-time course. The structure is designed to help students progress and develop their independent learning, encouraging them to construct and explore projects concerned with areas of particular personal interest. The overarching course philosophy, based upon an emphasis on research, methodology and design thinking, allows individual and personal concerns to be explored through focused study in one of two specialist disciplinary areas: Graphic Design or Illustration.

A significant aspect of study on the course is its articulation with other taught Masters courses in the Design School at Kingston School of Art. This integrative learning environment whereby students further develop their disciplinary interests and study in the wider context and understanding of the influences and impact of thinking from other related design subjects is an important aspect of the identity and the community of interdisciplinary practice at Masters level in the School.

Each specialist pathway provides an intensive period of study that is made up of both course-specific modules and core modules within the Design School’s Postgraduate Framework and programme of study (PGF). These core modules offer the opportunity for the wider interdisciplinary understanding of individual concerns and focused practice-based approaches to communication design. The notion of interdisciplinarity is at the centre of the MA Communication Design and the courses within the PGF and students will be introduced to a wide range of approaches from across the fields of design within the School.

The course combines research-informed and practice-led teaching, ensuring it is at the leading edge of critical thought in relation to its subject area, and also professionally relevant. Industry links are made throughout the course and students’ learning is enhanced by lectures delivered by visiting practitioners. The Final Major Project is the capstone project of the course, which helps students to reflect on the knowledge and skills that they have acquired during their studies and learn how to present them to a wider audience including future employers, and via which they are encouraged to establish connections with real-world partners that will be valuable on completion of the course.

This research-led programme addresses the discipline of communication design by reinforcing the importance of research, investigation, creativity and imagination in the process of making design. This provides a focus on the significance of problem finding as well as well as problem solving. Throughout their study, students will be required to describe the methods and processes that support the testing of their ideas as they develop the final ‘capstone’ project for assessment. The philosophy of the course is that the process and outcome have equal significance in the study of communication design at postgraduate level.

The programme acknowledges students’ previous experience and that their study will continue to develop their personal approach to design practice. This will enable them to prepare for future employment or to engage in the extension of their study at Doctoral level. MA Communication Design encourages students to look critically at the practice of graphic design or illustration; in particular the understanding of the fundamental processes at work in the application of word and image essential to negotiate an enduring and sustainable career in the changing technological and global framework of the communications industries.

The role of the visual communicator continues to adapt and develop to accommodate new approaches to the subject and the mediation of information and messages. The debate about the notion of authorship within the practice of communication design has grown to include new modes of activity concerned with the origination of content as well as form. The technological foundations of the subject also continue to grow and the general practice has also altered significantly as a result. The understanding of content has never been more important to the role of the contemporary designer/image maker and to what and how we communicate. The MA Communication Design course builds on this knowledge and aims to provide a deeper understanding of how designers can utilise both old and new methods and technologies to build new and challenging forms of communication.

The notion of visual storytelling is central to the many forms of communication design that now exist whether they are fixed in traditional linear and sequential ways or are based in dynamic and interactive screen-based environments that are non-linear or non-sequential. This background presents new challenges and opportunities to designers, in particular to develop new and sustainable ways of thinking and working. This important aspect of study informs the ‘visual tools’ and ‘visual research methods’ of inquiry that students will examine and develop and that will support the work that they will produce. These visual tools and methods will allow them to build a major capstone project that is both critically informed in its foundation, tested in its creation and development and is purposeful in its outcome.

Students will be part of a larger interdisciplinary ‘community of practice’ of other designers and makers. This community will allow them to take part and benefit from a wide range of lectures and debates in both formal and informal settings.

The course is concerned with making design and has an emphasis on practical design, supported by interdisciplinary theoretical and contextual components and the application of clear research methods. Our goal is to help students develop the critical design thinking and the understanding of interdisciplinarity that will underpin their practice in the future. This praxis – the relationship between thinking and doing - is an important part of the philosophy of the course and it is expected that, as the student’s work develops, it will demonstrate this.

The Postgraduate Diploma phase of the course provides a detailed knowledge of core theory and skills. Students will develop an appreciation of current debates that are shaping the future of the subject and gain an informed view of their own practice. The skills and knowledge gained will provide students with a firm foundation from which to undertake design research and are a platform for their personal and professional development in the practice of communication design. The course also provides them with the background skills and knowledge that are applicable to a diverse range of working environments. During this stage students will develop their major project idea and produce a definitive Major project proposal.

The MA builds on the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired earlier in the Postgraduate Diploma phase and applies these in the creation of an original, design research project. This involves the completion of a Major Project, the capstone project, on the basis of extensive research, rigorous investigation and a critically informed methodological approach. Students will develop a programme of investigation and analysis that supports them in the further development of their personal research project. As they move towards the submission of their final major project they will be required to test their ideas; exploring the context of their project as well as identifying key issues in the work such as appropriate critical discourses, forms, materials or media through which they can effectively communicate their ideas.

The course includes an integrated work placement or placements, which enables students to further develop their professional skills and enhance their employability. From the start of the course, students will begin to work to secure (a) placement(s) suitable for their course and career, supported and advised by the Careers and Employability Services team and the Professional Placement Module Leader. Workshops are provided on CV creation, interview techniques and placement searching, with drop-in sessions to provide additional support. In order to take the Professional Placement module, students need to have arranged a placement, approved by the Course Leader, by the end of the preceding teaching block. Students undertake the placement following the completion of the final module. During the placement students will be supervised (online) by a tutor who, if possible, will visit during the placement. Depending on the location of the placement, meetings might take place face-to-face or via platforms such as Microsoft Teams. The placement module will make use of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Canvas for communication and dissemination of information between students and staff as well as making online learning materials available. Students will be required to create monthly blog posts of the tasks and duties undertaken during their placement, to provide a framework for a reflective essay, which is submitted for assessment at the end of the placement. They will also assemble and collate samples of work and evidence of achievement produced during their placement which will also be submitted for assessment. Placement providers will be asked to appraise the students’ work and this feedback will be made available to the student. The placement module will be assessed on a pass/fail basis.

This integrated placement(s) provides students with a valuable opportunity to apply and develop their knowledge and skills in a professional working environment, enabling them to deepen their knowledge of the industry, develop their self-confidence, and strengthen their CV. Students undertaking placement activities are in a stronger position to gain the skills and experience which are valued by employers.

1. **Aims of the Programme**

The aims are to:

* Provide a framework for academic and personal development that enhances students’ abilities in critical reflection, allowing them to speculate on new and effective approaches to the subject and to engage with problems and insights at the forefront of the discipline.
* Enable students to acquire a critical, analytical, systematic and comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the historical, theoretical, ethical and professional contexts in which their creative practice is situated and to develop their approach to research, resolution and their professional application in the practice of design.
* Equip students with the knowledge, abilities and methods – creative, conceptual, theoretical, analytical, technical and organisational – that enable them to propose, research, develop and complete a self-directed project that reflects originality, critical analysis, evaluation, and academic rigour*.*
* The 2-year programme with integrated placement(s) also provides students with an opportunity to enhance their professional skills, preparing them for higher levels of employment, further study and lifelong learning.

1. **Intended Learning Outcomes**

The programme outcomes are referenced to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, including the QAA Master’s Degree Characteristics 2015 and the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (2014), an awareness of the undergraduate subject benchmarks for Art and Design, and relate to the typical student. The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, skills and other attributes in the following areas.

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| **Programme Learning Outcomes** | | | | | |
|  | **Knowledge and Understanding**  **On completion of the course, students will be able to:** |  | **Intellectual skills**  **On completion of the course, students will be able to:** |  | **Subject Practical skills**  **On completion of the course, students will be able to:** |
| A1 | Know the design process and problem solving in both disciplinary and interdisciplinary contexts | B1 | Demonstrate an ability to engage and undertake sustained, research, critical analysis and evaluation | C1 | Utilise appropriate visual material from a variety of primary and secondary research sources |
| A2 | Critically appraise both traditional and current approaches to Communication Design and the relationship between theory and practice | B2 | Recognise relevant and appropriate theoretical and practical ideas and integrate these within the design process | C2 | Use a broad range of materials, processes and presentation techniques appropriate to context, projects and audience successfully |
| A3 | Apply advanced critical knowledge of the contemporary contexts of design in evaluating own and others’ work | B3 | Demonstrate a self-critical and reflective approach to their own work | C3 | Effectively communicate ideas through the appropriate level of visual, written and oral presentation skills |
| A4 | Demonstrate a knowledge of the practices and ideas: methods, materials, processes and technologies appropriate to design | B4 | Demonstrate individual creativity, vision, personal expression and intellectual ability in their chosen professional specialism | C4 | Show awareness of issues of selection, accuracy and uncertainty in the collection and analysis of data. |
|  |  |  |  | C5 | Demonstrate professional skills (including self-presentation, communication, interpersonal/teamwork, research and information literacy, numeracy, time-management and project-planning, management and leadership skills, and ethical practice). |

In addition to the programme learning outcomes identified overleaf, the programme of study defined in this programme specification will allow

students to develop a range of Key Skills as follows:

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| **Key Skills** | | | | | | |
| **Self-Awareness Skills** | **Communication Skills** | **Interpersonal Skills** | **Research and information Literacy Skills** | **Numeracy Skills** | **Management & Leadership Skills** | **Creativity and Problem Solving Skills** |
| Take responsibility for own learning and plan for and record own personal development | Express ideas clearly and unambiguously in writing and the spoken work | Work well with others in a group or team | Search for and select relevant sources of information | Collect data from primary and secondary sources and use appropriate methods to manipulate and analyse this data | Determine the scope of a task (or project) | Apply scientific and other knowledge to analyse and evaluate information and data and to find solutions to problems |
| Recognise own academic strengths and weaknesses, reflect on performance and progress and respond to feedback | Present, challenge and defend ideas and results effectively orally and in writing | Work flexibly and respond to change | Critically evaluate information and use it appropriately | Present and record data in appropriate formats | Identify resources needed to undertake the task (or project) and to schedule and manage the resources | Work with complex ideas and justify judgements made through effective use of evidence |
| Organise self effectively, agreeing and setting realistic targets, accessing support where appropriate and managing time to achieve targets | Actively listen and respond appropriately to ideas of others | Discuss and debate with others and make concession to reach agreement | Apply the ethical and legal requirements in both the access and use of information | Interpret and evaluate data to inform and justify arguments | Evidence ability to successfully complete and evaluate a task (or project), revising the plan where necessary |  |
| Work effectively with limited supervision in unfamiliar contexts |  | Give, accept and respond to constructive feedback | Accurately cite and reference information sources | Be aware of issues of selection, accuracy and uncertainty in the collection and analysis of data | Motivate and direct others to enable an effective contribution from all participants |  |
|  |  | Show sensitivity and respect for diverse values and beliefs | Use software and IT technology as appropriate |  |  |  |

1. **Entry Requirements**

The minimum entry qualifications for the programme are:

A good BA (Hons) degree or equivalent qualification in graphic design or a related subject, such as moving image, graphic communication, illustration, 3D design, advertising, photography, packaging, computer-related design, architecture or fine art.

Applicants with relevant experience but not necessarily the qualifications or disciplinary background identified above, and who demonstrate the necessary skills and intellectual achievement needed to undertake the course will also be considered.

A minimum IELTS score of 6.5, TOEFL 88 or equivalent is required for those for whom English is not their first language. Applicants from one of the recognised [Majority English Speaking Countries (MESCs)](http://www.kingston.ac.uk/international/studying-at-kingston/language-requirements/#mesc) do not need to meet these requirements.

Recognition of Prior learning (RPL):Applicants with prior qualifications and learning may be exempt from appropriate parts of a course in accordance with the University's policy for the recognition of prior certificated learning (RPCL) and prior experiential learning (RPEL).

1. **Programme Structure**

This programme is offered as full field in full-time, part-time and ‘with professional placement’ modes, and leads to the award of the Master of Arts in Communication Design. Entry is at level 7 with Degree or equivalent qualifications (See section D). Intake is in normally in September of each year.

**E1. Professional and Statutory Regulatory Bodies**

Not applicable.

**E2. Work-based learning**

Work placement is an integral part of the 2-year programme and students will receive support from the award-winning Careers and Employability Services team.

While it is the responsibility of individual students to secure appropriate placements, the Careers and Employability Services team offer each student support at all stages of the application process, including writing CVs, completing application forms, participating in mock interviews, assessment centre activities and psychometric tests. Sourcing and applying for placement(s) gives students the opportunity to experience a competitive job application process.

The experience of the work placement period enables students to apply their learning in the professional work environment, to reflect upon their own personal experience of working in an applied setting, to focus on aspects of this experience that they can clearly relate to their prior learning, and to evaluate the relationships between academic skills and employers’ expectations. Students will be assessed during and at the end of this period, through a portfolio of work, which will be marked as pass/fail.

**E3. Outline Programme Structure**

The course is part of the University’s Postgraduate Regulations (PR) and The Design School Postgraduate Framework.

The MA Communication Design is made up of five modules that are assigned to three phases referred to as Teaching Blocks (TB) all at Level 7. Phases are progressively more challenging as students progress through the field. Each Teaching Block is normally made up of 2 modules each worth 30 credits with the exception of the Major Project in TB3, which is worth 60 credits. Typically, students should complete 60 credits at the end of each TB. The course is delivered full-time over one year, and part-time over two years. All students will be provided with the University regulations and the course handbook.

Students on the 2-year programme (with integrated placement) must complete all modules by the end of TB3 and then work in their placement(s) for a maximum of 12 months. The student should confirm that their placement opportunity is available by the end of the preceding teaching block, and the course team will confirm whether this is acceptable within two weeks. Students on placement(s) must complete a portfolio assessment which includes a reflection on how they have applied the skills they have developed during the previous year, within a professional working environment.

Full details of each module will be provided in module descriptors and student module guides.

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| **Level 7** | | | | | |
| **Compulsory modules** | **Module code** | **Credit**  **value** | **Level** | **Teaching Block** | **Mode** |
| **Visual Grammar, Literacy and Intelligence** | DE7400 | 30 | 7 | TB1  TB1/TB2 | F/Time  P/Time (Yr1) |
| **Designing Research** | DE7300 | 30 | 7 | TB1  TB1 | F/Time  P/Time (Yr1) |
| **Visual Storytelling: Narrative and Sequence** | DE7401 | 30 | 7 | TB2  TB2/TB3 | F/Time  P/Time (Yr1) |
| **Creative Futures** | DE7301 | 30 | 7 | TB2  TB1 | F/Time  P/Time (Yr2) |
| **The Major Project** | DE7302 | 60 | 7 | TB3  TB2/TB3 | F/Time  P/Time (Yr2) |
| **Professional Placement (Design)** | WP7001 | 120 | 7 | TB1, TB2, TB3 (Yr 2) |  |

Students exiting the programme with 60 credits are eligible for the award of PG Certificate in Communication Design.

Students exiting the programme with 120 credits are eligible for the award of PG Diploma in Communication Design.

1. **Principles of Teaching Learning and Assessment**

The Design School promotes and sustains a distinctive pattern of teaching and learning practices. Teaching and learning strategies have developed in close relation to the design subjects, disciplines and the creative industries. The ways in which students develop knowledge and understanding of their subject is equally distinct, with a strong emphasis being placed on the management of increasingly complex studio-based practical design projects. Although the nature of the design project is that of a holistic design experience the aims of the modules are distinct in the practical project undertaken by the student and as such are assessed individually and collectively in relation to the modules aims.

Students are strongly encouraged to develop their own informed and creative approach, taking into account contemporary research, current industry and design practices. This is achieved through the teaching philosophy in the School, which highlights the importance of knowledge of the contemporary and future design context and through awareness of the forces and issues that influence society and industry to meet the needs of present and future generations.

The approach to Teaching, Learning and Assessment within the MA Communication Design and the Design School Postgraduate Framework of core modules is informed by Kingston University’s Strategic Plan. In particular this provides an emphasis on key aspects of our approach:

* The encouragement and support of high quality teaching informed by research and best practice.
* An environment that will create, test, share and spread knowledge for its own sake.
* Those delivering teaching will be engaged in the development of their discipline.
* The course team will enable students to have the choices and the skills needed for fulfilling professional employment.

A combination of staff and student-lead learning principles have been used in the design of the curriculum and the overarching approach to learning and teaching related to both disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge – described by KU as the relationship between *producing* and *pursuing* and *producing* and *authoring*. These principles relate to the exploration of the discipline in response to questions, problems, scenarios and lines of inquiry formulated by tutors and the progressive development of individual approaches based on the formulation of questions by the student. As the course progresses, this can also be expressed as the development from:

*How can I answer* ***this*** *question?* to *How can I answer* ***my*** *question?*

The identity and structure of the course and the Design School PG framework are built upon the understanding that high quality and transformative learning occurs when students are:

* Engaged in authentic, challenging, enquiry-based activities.
* Working collaboratively with peers in a community of shared disciplinary and interdisciplinary practice.
* Able to reflect on and theorise their learning.

This has informed the development of shared learning outcomes across the courses within the PG framework and the focus of these outcomes on the practice of research and its relationship to purposeful making and enquiry in design.

The teaching and learning of practical design projects incorporates:

* Analysis of the project brief, research and insight gathering in to the ‘theme’ or objective and subsequent problem finding for problem solving.
* Analysis of context.
* Tools and strategies for design thinking and the design process.
* The promotion of workshop practices and creative material usage and manipulation.
* Teaching communication and presentation tools and techniques.
* Teaching digital tools for design and realisation
* Tutorials, lectures, seminars and workshops
* Developing students’ ability to confidently communicate orally
* Project reviews and critiques to promote peer project discussion and debate.
* Encouraging within students self-reflection and self-criticism in relation to a sustainable design practice.

The continual and iterative nature of the design process requires a continual process of formative assessment and feedback through the use of studio tutorials, reviews and group critiques. Summative assessment at the end of the module and formal feedback is provided following review of the submitted/presented project work. Summative assessment at the end of the course is based on the final module DE7302 and occurs at the end of Teaching Block 3 through the submission of a major practical design project, the capstone project.

The delivery of modules will be by means of lectures, seminars, workshops, group critique, individual tutorials, demonstration, projects, briefings, study visits, peer learning, independent learning and study skills.

* **Lectures** - A member of staff or invited guest will provide taught input, often followed up by group discussion to ensure a full understanding and to encourage critical analysis of the material.
* **Seminars** - Seminars normally consist of structured student or staff-led presentations followed by discussion. The seminar is usually based upon a topic which has been previously prepared and circulated. Active participation and quality of presentation and discussion in seminars is expected. Student discussion and critical debate is encouraged.
* **Reviews** - On these occasions a group of students and members of staff and, if appropriate, invited guests from industry will discuss the work of one or more students who are present. Group reviews can take place in studio: teaching/work space, if appropriate, the work to be discussed might alternatively be more formally exhibited as at the end of DE7300. Discussion of this kind provides an ideal arena for the realisation of common issues and for the dissemination of ideas. Reviews also provide an invaluable form of self-appraisal, since the student will not only receive individual oral feedback, but will indirectly learn by means of the discussion centred upon the work of other members of the group.
* **Tutorials** - Opportunities to strategically discuss a range of issues relating to individual development and to clarify existing knowledge, to support project initiatives, and to guide and facilitate further independent creative learning and thought. They also provide opportunities for formative assessment where students receive feedback on completed work and feedforward on work in progress.
* **Demonstration** - This often involves the first introduction to a material, technology, process, technique or equipment not previously experienced by a group of students. It is intended to make students aware of the potential and characteristics of the ‘subject’ and it is not intended that every student will necessarily go on to learn and apply the skills or knowledge.
* **Study Visits** - By definition, a study visit will involve travelling to strategic venues of interest which may vary from visits to galleries and museums or to course specific events such as shows, exhibitions, or visits to industry or sites. They form an essential part of the students’ learning experience as they provide the opportunity to see examples of design and industry in multiple ‘real life’ contexts.
* **Projects** - The term ‘project’ is used in two ways. Set projects consist of a set of objectives and procedures, which are often linked to a given theme or design problem and are designed for a particular group of students. This kind of project usually has a strict deadline. Students also devise their own projects (self-initiated briefs). This kind of project comprises a body of work which reflects the specific interests of the student and which may be developed over a period of time which isagreed between theindividual student and a member of the academic staff.
* **Capstone Project** -A capstone project is designed to be a culminating educational experience for students. It aims to summarise and synthesise all or part of a student’s academic career at university. Capstone projects help students to reflect on the knowledge and skills that they have acquired during their degree and learn how to present them to a wider audience including future employers.
* **Briefing**- A briefing takes place to make known and explain specifics of projects; theme, aims & objectives, learning outcomes, timetable etc.
* **Peer Learning** - A vital component of teaching and learning practices of the design courses. The work of the course is largely studio based, and thus enables students to take notice of each other’s work and discuss issues informally. Peer learning also takes place through other activities such as group reviews and seminars.
* **Independent Study** - It will be recognised that all students engage in forms of independent learning in relation to the broad issues of the subject. Formal tuition will often be based upon the expectation of some level of self-motivated personal development. Independent study and the individual selection of a range of projects, both set and self-initiated, lead to the development of individual portfolios of work in the later stages of the course and for entry into the student’s individual choice of career.
* **The VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) Canvas** - is an online environment that aims to make the most effective use of a range of virtual teaching and learning tools. The School is involved in the development of online materials to support course, school and faculty content. The aim is to develop a flexible set of virtual resources demonstrating skills, processes and methods valuable for enhancing creativity and knowledge throughout the Design School. Additionally, the VLE­ – Canvas – seeks to enhance communication, a sense of community and inter-course discussion and debate.
* **LinkedIn Learning** – all courses based in the Kingston School of Art offer students free access to the online video tutorial platform LinkedIn Learning. This provides a wide range of subjects to choose from, many with downloadable exercise files, including software tutorials covering photography, graphics, web design, audio and music, CAD and Microsoft Office software, as well as courses on Business and Management skills. Some of these are embedded in the curriculum and offer additional self-paced learning, others may be taken at will by students wishing to broaden their employability skills in other areas.
* **Work Placement** – the integrated work placement is primarily reliant on independent activity on the part of the student, with some support from their tutor.  During the period of the placement(s) students will be supervised (online) by a tutor who, if possible, will visit during the placement. Depending on the location of the placement, meetings might take place face-to-face or via platforms such as Microsoft Teams. The placement module will make use of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Canvas for communication and dissemination of information between students and staff as well as making online learning materials available.

1. **Support for Students and their Learning**

**The Personal Tutor Scheme**

**The Aims of the Design School Personal Tutor Scheme**

* To provide appropriate academic advice and guidance throughout a student’s studies by monitoring progress and identifying individual needs.
* To provide a holistic overview and guidance for individual study and the development of personal practice.
* To provide a formalised structure for the ongoing process of formative feedback and personal development embedded in studio culture and teaching.
* To help to develop a student’s ability to be self-reliant and reflective and their ability to use feedback/feed forward to best advantage.

**Key Features of the Design School Personal Tutor scheme**

* Personal Tutors will be allocated at the beginning of the academic year.
* The introductory/welcome tutorial meeting will occur at the beginning of the academic year. Subsequent tutorials will follow and respond to key/stages in the academic year.
* Students will keep the same personal tutor throughout their year/s of study.
* One-to-one meetings will vary in length depending on the profile and needs of individual students.

The Design School employs permanent staff members to lead level 7. The permanent nature of the staff affords them substantial and visible presence for students and as such is designed to be supportive and helpful. Teaching and learning within the course is enhanced through the strategic use of HPL staff with project related skills, knowledge and expertise. Under the personal tutor scheme permanent staff will assume this role and their responsibilities will include:

* To help students to make the transition to Masters level study and understand how to use feedback on the postgraduate course
* To encourage students to be proactive in making links between their course and their professional and/or academic aspirations
* To explore students’ research aspirations
* To help students gain confidence in contributing to, and learning from, constructive peer review
* To encourage students to become part of a wider disciplinary and/or professional community
* To help students to prepare for the dynamics of supervision

Students are supported by:

* A Module Leader for each module
* A Course Leader to help students understand the programme structure
* Personal Tutors to provide academic and personal support
* A Placement Tutor to give general advice on placements
* Technical support to advise students on IT and the use of software
* A designated Course Administrator
* An induction week at the beginning of each new academic session
* Staff Student Consultative Committee
* Canvas – a versatile online interactive intranet and learning environment accessible both on and off-site
* LinkedIn Learning – an online platform offering self-paced software tutorials
* A substantial Academic Success Centre that provides academic skills support for undergraduate and postgraduate students
* Student support facilities that provide advice on issues such as finance, regulations, legal matters, accommodation, international student support etc.
* A Student Achievement Officer who provides pastoral support
* Disabled student support
* The Union of Kingston Students
* The Careers and Employability Services Team who provide support for students prior to undertaking work placement(s).

In addition, students are supported by:

**The Studio Structure**

All courses within the Design School place the studio at the heart of the learning support experience. The studio is both a physical environment and a design education ethos. It affirms course and student identity with each course occupying its own dedicated space. The typical developmental curriculum journey from principles to processes to practices may be mapped to individual studio experiences. The studio provides a natural and readily available environment for peer-to-peer learning and group work. It also accommodates 1:1 contact and individual learning.  A strategic programme of lectures, seminars and workshops supports the studio learning experience.

**Workshop Structure**

The diverse range of Faculty workshop spaces provide an integral resource to support studio learning. They are an extension of the studio space but equipped with particular, specialist facilities.

**Staff Structure**

The staff support structure maps to the studio system. Course Directors coordinate the course and studio space. They are operational figureheads who work together with staff teams and Hourly Paid Lecturers [HPLs] (incorporating Module Leaders) to deliver the appropriate learning and teaching experience. Staff mediate this experience across each stage of the course, moving from an explicit to implicit role in students’ development, enabling students to learn how to learn and become more progressively independent. Dedicated technicians provide workshop space learning support in conjunction with the academic staff teams.

**Infrastructure**

The School adopts an infrastructure of learning support means beyond the immediacy of academic courses. These broadly divide into key mechanisms and enhancement opportunities, including:

* Up-to-date knowledge of relevant University systems and procedures
* Student Support Office
* NUS
* Mentoring Scheme
* RPCL (Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning) / RPEL (Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning) processes
* Postgraduate Survey
* SSCC (Staff Student Consultative Committee)
* BOS (Board of Study)
* Annual Monitoring and Enhancement
* Erasmus Exchange programmes
* Information on Scholarships and Bursaries
* Alumni and Graduate Experience
* Personal Tutor Scheme

1. **Ensuring and Enhancing the Quality of the Course**

The University has several methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of its provision. These include:

* External Examiners
* Boards of Study with student representation
* Annual Monitoring and Enhancement
* Periodic review undertaken at subject level
* Student evaluation including MEQs (Module Evaluation Questionnaires) and a Postgraduate Survey
* Moderation policies
* Feedback from employers

1. **Employability Statement**

All courses in the Design School address the issue of employability through engaging directly with industry and external partners and institutions. This is supported in course teaching by the professional and industrial expertise of course teams as well as visiting specialist practitioners. This ethos of professionalism is planned and delivered through the course curriculum at all levels so that students are effectively equipped for the world of work on their graduation from the course.

The course and School have strong and well-established links to the design industry both nationally and internationally. This is significant for the course as a high percentage of students are from and, post graduation, return to a wide range of international locations. Modules within the course structure are intended to address the changing nature of the discipline of communication design and the emerging global workplace: DE7301 Creative Futures (TB2), for example. Where relevant and practical the course works in collaboration with organisations and business – recent projects have been undertaken with Illy Coffee in Italy in the production of a magazine that was distributed around Europe and with Draught Associates in London who reviewed portfolios, provided professional guidance and offered internships. Competitions are offered within the delivery of the course as activities intended to provide opportunities for those students who wish to allow an additional focus to their portfolio: DE7301 Creative Futures (TB2). The course also organises a regular programme of professional lectures and studio visits. An additional aspect to these activities has been in the development of collaborative projects with Hongik University in Korea – the focus to this work has been the exploration of the use of new technologies to create professional networks and new opportunities for designers.

The 2-year integrated work placement programme is designed to provide students with enhanced opportunities for securing professional employment at the end of their degree, providing skills and experience that employers are looking for in their work force. These are supported by the Careers and Employability Services team, providing drop-in and scheduled events to support students in the preparation of CVs, applications, and preparation for interviews and assessment centres.

Many graduates leave to work in the graphic design section or pursue creates as freelance illustrations working for publishing houses, editorial and advertising companies.

1. **Approved Variants from the Postgraduate Regulations**

None

1. **Other sources of information that you may wish to consult**

**QAA Master’s Degree Characteristics 2015**

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/master's-degree-characteristics-statement.pdf?sfvrsn=6ca2f981_10>

**Course pages on the Kingston University website:**

MA Communication Design: Graphic Design

<https://www.kingston.ac.uk/postgraduate-course/communication-design-graphic-design-ma/>

MA Communication Design: Illustration

<https://www.kingston.ac.uk/postgraduate-course/communication-design-illustration-ma/>

**Development of Programme Learning Outcomes in Modules**

This map identifies where the programme learning outcomes are assessed across the modules for this programme. It provides an aid to academic staff in understanding how individual modules contribute to the programme aims, and a means to help students monitor their own learning, personal and professional development as the programme progresses and a checklist for quality assurance purposes.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | | **Level 7** | | | | | |
|  | **Module Code** | | DE7400 | DE7300 | DE7401 | DE7301 | DE7302 | WP7001 |
| **Programme Learning Outcomes** | **Knowledge & Understanding** | A1 | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| A2 | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| A3 | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| A4 | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| **Intellectual Skills** | B1 | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| B2 | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| B3 | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| B4 | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| **Subject Practical Skills** | C1 | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| C2 | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| C3 | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| C4 | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| C5 |  |  |  |  |  | S |

**Students will be provided with formative assessment opportunities throughout the course to practise and develop their proficiency in the range of assessment methods utilised.**

**Course Diagram**

**FULL-TIME**

**Teaching Block 1 Teaching Block 2 Teaching Block 3**

**The Major Project**

DE7302 60

**Visual Storytelling:**

**Narrative and Sequence**

DE7401 30

**Visual Grammar, Literacy and Intelligence**

DE7400 30

**Creative Futures**

DE7301 30

**Designing Research**

DE7300 30

**PART-TIME – YEAR 1**

**Teaching Block 1 Teaching Block 2 Teaching Block 3**

**Visual Grammar, Literacy and Intelligence**

DE7400 30

**Designing Research**

DE7300 30 30

**Designing Research**

DE7300 30

**Visual Storytelling: Narrative and Sequence**

DE7401 30

**PART-TIME – YEAR 2**

**Teaching Block 4 Teaching Block 5 Teaching Block 6**

**The Major Project**

DE7302 60

**Creative Futures**

DE7301 30

**Technical Annex**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Final Award(s):** | MA |
| **Intermediate Award(s):** | PG Certificate  PG Diploma |
| **Minimum period of registration:** | FT – 1 year  FT – 2 years (with Professional Placement)  PT – 2 years |
| **Maximum period of registration:** | FT – 2 years  FT – 3 years (with Professional Placement)  PT – 4 years |
| **FHEQ Level for the Final Award:** | Masters |
| **QAA Subject Benchmark:** | None at PG level, but aware of the UG Benchmarks in Art & Design |
| **Modes of Delivery:** | Full-time, Part-time and ‘with Professional Placement’ |
| **Language of Delivery:** | English |
| **Faculty:** | Kingston School of Art |
| **School:** | Design |
| **Course/Route Code:** | **MA Communication Design: Illustration**  PFCIL1CIL01 (FT)  PPCIL1CIL01 (PT)  PFCIL1CIL99 (with Professional Placement)  **MA Communication Design: Graphic Design**  PFCGD1CGD01 (FT)  PPCGD1CGD01 (PT)  PFCGD1CGD99 (with Professional Placement) |
|  |  |