Postgraduate Programme of Design Courses
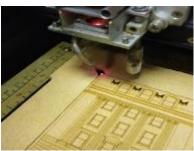
MA Design and Visualisation
leading to the award of MA Design and Visualisation

STUDENT GUIDE

Introduction

The MA Design and Visualisation course has the ambitious intention of challenging much of conventional design presentation techniques in order to prepare its graduates for the future demands of a changing design profession. Alongside some standard essentials skills that you will require in design visualisation, we teach skills that are unique to this course, such as the use of new technology in solving teaching problems.

This course shares three its five modules on existing postgraduate awards that have demonstrable success for four decades. The course has emerged in line with changes in the design profession and education, and in response to changing demands of employers. A high percentage of our students will complete their programme of studies successfully and move on, to secure jobs in a variety of positions, or to pursue research degrees. Students who have come from the teaching profession have benefited from having a higher degree that allows them to pursue their career with a broader perspective and greater scope than was previously open to them.

We select enthusiastic, committed and intellectually curious applicants who will be prepared to contribute to the critical intellectual engagements that make our course a worthwhile experience for both students and staff. Our varied teaching and assessment methods are focused towards promoting independent and deep learning.

The course is located in a school that provides a well-equipped learning environment based on the main campus of the Faculty. We also offer many other highly successful postgraduate and undergraduate design courses that add to the bustling life of the department. The course team is comprised of staff with substantial academic/professional experience, and is supportive of students' individual learning needs.

What we offer

- A small course of intended to be around 15 full-time students each year, which means close, individual attention to students' learning needs. Part-time students (around 5 expected each year) join in with full-time students for modules as appropriate.
- A high quality, intellectually challenging and broad-based tuition in the skills and knowledge you will need to function effectively in a range of professional roles in product design industries, in design education or in a research environment.
- A very accessible team of lecturers, with expertise and experience in a wide range of subject areas of design practice, design research, and related fields, but with particular interest in your learning experience.
- A very broad-based resource environment to aid your learning, including generalist and specialist workshops and computing facilities with hardware and software carefully specified to complement your own.
- A programme of study that provides a learning experience in which lead lectures are complemented by tutorials and seminars to underpin your personally chosen project.
- An active and ambitious school with a broad-based portfolio of postgraduate courses that creates a lively environment for learning and other extra-curricular activities
- A department that is based in one of the largest Art, Design and Media faculties in the UK, with a very diverse local, national and international student population that gives a very cosmopolitan feel

What you will study

- You will study Design and Visualisation based modules and one module per trimester studied by other postgraduate's students in the school, plus a personally chosen project that accounts for approximately half of the MA credits.
- Digital Visualisation techniques using the Faculty's digital design and rapid manufacturing equipment.
- Modules that pursue several themes that are unique to the course: Techniques for product analysis and a predictive model of product evolution are used to develop new design methodologies.
- Case studies used on the course include examples of successful product development from recent collaborations between staff, students and local manufacturers.
- Your personal project topic will be chosen by yourself, with guidance from your supervisor, and can be based on any subject that interests you and is relevant to the award for which you are enrolled.

- The personal project module has a research stage that prepares you for the critical investigation that forms the first part of your personal project, and is delivered through a short series of key lectures, an intranet-based learning support programme, and tutorial surgeries.
- All modules on the programme are credit-rated. Each of the three trimesters is worth 60 credits, making 180 credits for the award of MA. If you leave the course for any reason before accumulating 180 credits, you will be awarded a Postgraduate Certificate (60 accumulated credits) or a Postgraduate Diploma (120 accumulated credits)
- Your work will be assessed using the percentage system, where 50 is the pass mark. If you pass all your assessed modules in trimesters one and two, you will get a post-graduate diploma. If you get an average mark of 70 or above for all three trimesters you will be awarded an MA with distinction
- All standard (20 credit) modules on the programme are valued at 200 hours. 40 credit and 60 credit modules are valued at 400 and 600 hours respectively. This refers to the notional amount of time that will be required to study each module successfully.

Modules on this course

ARC7454 Design Visualisation (40 credits)
This module will enable you to develop methodologies of visualisation in traditional techniques such as 2D Sketching, technical illustration etc. The module will allow you to explore workshop based techniques in scaled model making techniques using high level 3D model making processes. It is also designed to develop skills in animated or other forms of advanced computer based visualisation techniques such as augmented reality that will enhance your knowledge and abilities required to act as a competent digital design specialist in presenting interactive media. You will learn to develop appropriate methods using software techniques to demonstrate understanding of a service sector or product, selecting and adapting methods as appropriate, and evaluating the effectiveness of the chosen methods as applied in practice.

ARC7453 Design Realisation (20 credits)
You will have to choose one of the following briefs according to your past experience and career aspirations.

Product Option
This brief provides you with a broader and clearer understanding of 'typical' product design outputs and the associated design processes behind them. Drawing from established theories, policies and practice, including case studies, the core principles of product evolution are used to identify and appreciate the key issues that designers are likely to engage with at different stages of a product's development. How new ideas, and/or technologies, are ultimately applied at key evolutionary stages of a product's development (during or beyond) also depends upon the designer's individual approach to the design process. Students are therefore shown how to recognize different design processes and then subsequently identify with the appropriate methodologies that suit their own personal approach.

Interior Option

This brief provides students with the opportunities to engage at an advanced level with the perspectives of commercial markets, design processes and models of design management. These inter-related skills will be defined by using a combination of theoretical and practical analysis applied to the evolution of contextually specific design sectors. In doing this, you will define alternative theorems and strategies relating to the construction and deconstruction of design ideas, mechanisms, and processes as part of the student's own design practice.

ARC7455 Competition or Collaboration (40 Credits)

You will have to choose one of the following briefs according to your past experience and career aspirations.

Product Option

This brief provides you with the opportunities to engage with alternative notions of ideas and concept generation through deconstructing and then reconstructing new design based narratives. By challenging the expectations and conventions of existing products, alternative directions and product opportunities are possible. Creative thinking will be focused specifically on the near horizon and longer-term future perspectives for specific Product Design sectors. In doing this, students will define innovative 'Post Optimal' theorems, case studies and trends which can be further explored in relation to their own design process and practice.

Interior Option

This brief provides you with the opportunities to engage in advanced critical analysis that will aid the mapping of design futures of interior products and interior spaces. Predictive critical thinking will be focused specifically on the near horizon and longer-term future perspectives for specific Interior Design Sectors. In doing this, students will define innovative 'Post Optimal' theorems, case studies and trends which students can explore in relation to their own design process and practice.

ARC7459 Co-LAB (Live Project Postgraduate) (20 Credits)

You will have the opportunity to work on an annually determined set of Elective Project briefs that you can choose from ranging from Product, Interior, Architecture and Landscape. An elective is a module which is a compulsory part of your programme of study. It will normally be in a different subject and give you the opportunity to broaden your studies. These electives have been designed to develop specific key skills and count towards classification. You should choose an elective according to your career aspirations. You will be advised to discuss your choice of elective with your Personal Tutor and/or the School offering them.

ARC5000 Major Project (Practice or Theory) (60 credits)

A detailed investigation into the commercial, technical and human factors that apply to a student's chosen project (as developed through the tutorial/seminar programme and subject to the approval of the course staff). In this personal project you will demonstrate mastery of the

research techniques applied in earlier modules, resulting in a definitive project brief and either a formal project hypothesis or product/interior concepts for evaluation and development.

This module introduces you to a range of research methods, contexts, procedures and resources appropriate to the level and scope required for research practice. Learning methods developed is applied in the personal project research brief.

You will undergo evaluation and development of the product or spatial concepts through drawings, models and professional presentation of design features, or the testing of a project hypothesis, resulting in a substantial report supported by research findings or design work (theory-led) and a multimedia presentation of the project outcomes. Even the most practice-based projects must be presented in the context of relevant theory, and theory projects must contain some practical element (balance to be negotiated with your course tutor).

The length of the course

- The full-time course comprises 45 weeks within an academic year that starts and finishes in August. The postgraduate certificate trimester starts from Mid-September to early January, the postgraduate diploma trimester starts from early January to late April, and the masters trimester from late April to the end of July. Students may take a short vacation during the Christmas and Easter vacation but not during semester time in consultation with their course director.

What you will come out with

- A more developed understanding of the main processes and structures of spatial design, the manufacturing industry, design practice, and of products as digital artefacts.
- Technical competency in one or more of your chosen mainstream software used in industry for digital visualisation.
- An in-depth informed and confident skill in conducting design research.
- A further developed ability to work with complex ideas and think analytically and reflexively.
- A range of transferable skills that employers prize highly: for instance the ability to work on your own initiative, be a good team worker, work to tight deadlines, flexibility and resourcefulness, the ability and willingness to learn quickly and independently, the ability to present yourself and your ideas coherently and persuasively.

Possible career outlets

A lot of our former students have gone on to use their acquired knowledge and skills in a variety of jobs including:
- Design practice – in-house and consultancy for TV characters, TV environments, TV motion graphics, Advertising, Films / VFX / PreVis, Web banners / adverts, Product configurators, Posters (still & moving), iPads / Tablets / Apps, Historical re-constructions, E-Books / Magazines, Product Design, Architecture, Video games, Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), Marketing / Comms, Infographics / HUDs, Navigation systems /, TV/Film credit sequences, Augmented Reality (AR).

- Design entrepreneurship – self employment
- Design advisory services such as Digital training manuals, Pathfinding, Interfaces / GUIs
- Education / Training / Research – as teachers/lecturers of design related topics
- Medical research such as 'key hole' surgery simulators.
- Design Research, as research assistants on funded projects, or as research students studying for an MPhil. or PhD.

How you can apply, or find out more about the course

You can get an application form from the Faculty Office on 0121 331 5800, or find more information about the course at the Faculty web site:
http://www.bcu.ac.uk/courses/design-and-visualisation-ma-2017-18

You can contact the course director, Dr Panch Suntharalingam, on 0121 331 5848 or by e-mail: panch.suntharalingam@bcu.ac.uk

Full-Time Route:

Trimester 1

Module code	Module name	Credit value
ARC7453	Design Realisation (options: Product or Interior brief)	40M
ARC7454	Design Visualisation	20M

Trimester 2

Module code	Module name	Credit value
ARC7455	Competition or Collaboration	40M
ARC7459	Co-Lab (Live Project Pg.)	20M

Trimester 3

Module code	Module name	Credit value
ADM7000	Major Project	60M