

Course Specification

Course Summary Information		
1	Course Title	BA (Hons) Graphic Design with Foundation Year
2	Course Code	US1389F
3	Awarding Institution	Birmingham City University
4	Teaching Institution(s) (if different from point 3)	N/A
5	Professional Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) accreditation (if applicable)	N/A

6	Course Description
	<p>BA (Hons) Graphic Design with Foundation Year (4 Year Programme)</p> <p>This Foundation Year (Level 3) has been specifically designed to allow you to undertake an additional year of study to build stronger creative footings that ensure successful progression through your chosen degree.</p> <p>Working in a friendly, lively and energetic environment, you will be given the freedom to expand your knowledge of practical skills, creative exploration and conceptual thinking, underpinned by broad critical understanding, academic writing and emerging theoretical principles.</p> <p>Dedicated Foundation tutors, BA staff and experienced technicians will support you throughout the year and work closely with you to prepare you for progression. There will be a range of opportunities to work on collaborative and individual projects, aimed to build your social skills and identify your role as a developing practitioner.</p> <p>Throughout the year you will be challenged with projects that question your current creative experiences and explore a breadth of experimentation to broaden your technical and critical understanding.</p> <p>You will be encouraged to analyse methods and materials appropriate for creative development and to question your position in relation to historical, contemporary, and future world scenarios. Both practical and written research tasks will be supported by one-to-one tutorials and small discussion groups to help you constructively build academic and social confidence.</p> <p>The two first semester modules will form the building blocks for future work and will explore core principles of creative practice focussing on the development of technical confidence, study skills and productivity.</p> <p>The two final semester modules will encourage a positive integration between research and practice, challenging decision making and technical competency. This semester is designed to empower you with independent learning skills appropriate for your future BA studies.</p>

On successful completion of the Foundation Year, you will have the flexibility to change direction and switch courses onto a related undergraduate degree programme within the College of Art and Design or the College of Digital Arts at BCU.

To progress onto your BA Programme, you must successfully pass all four core modules (totalling 120 credits).

BA (Hons) Graphic Design – level 4-6

BA Graphic Design here at BCU is an exciting, engaging, and stimulating course that will equip you with the skills, knowledge, and confidence needed to enter the creative industries. Our team of experienced and knowledgeable staff will support you on your journey, helping you to bring your creative ideas to life. You'll develop a variety of design approaches and creative problem-solving techniques, giving you the resilience to succeed in your chosen career path.

As designers, we play an important role in society, and we have the ability to make meaningful change to our world. You will be encouraged to develop a critical eye through briefs that challenge you to go beyond the surface, providing sustainable & culturally conscious solutions to real-world issues.

What's covered in the course?

During your time with us, you will develop the practical and intellectual skills required to succeed in a dynamic and ever-changing environment. Our modules are designed to provide you with exciting and engaging learning experiences which will prepare you for a career in graphic design. Our first year of study focuses on creative play and risk-taking, along with building up core skills and an understanding of design principles and areas of practice. In your second year, you will get the chance to work on live briefs and to gain real-world industry experience, along with advancing your creative and technical skills to a higher level. Our final year is all about developing autonomy within your practice, cultivating a deeper approach to critical thinking, and readying yourself to enter the creative industries.

On the course you'll get the chance to explore a wide range of areas of practice within graphic design, including branding, packaging, motion design, editorial, typography, UX/UI, art direction, and advertising, as well as delving into emerging technologies such as VR/AR and 3D rendering. Rather than specialising in just one of these areas of practice, we encourage our students to adopt a multi-disciplinary approach, making them desirable to employers and giving them the adaptability, they need to flourish in their creative futures. Collaboration is not only facilitated but actively encouraged on our course, and you'll have the chance to work with students from other disciplines including illustration, photography, digital marketing and more.

One of our main focuses is employability, and all students who study with us will receive targeted support with professional skills and will leave with an industry-ready portfolio.

7 Course Awards			
7a	Name of Final Award	Level	Credits Awarded
	BA (Hons) Graphic Design	Level 6	360
	Bachelor of Arts with Honours Illustration with Professional Placement Year	Level 6	480
7b Exit Awards and Credits Awarded			
	BA(Hons) Graphic Design - pass & progression to Level 4	Level 3	120
	BA(Hons) Graphic Design - Certificate of Higher Education	Level 4	120
	BA(Hons) Graphic Design - Diploma of Higher Education	Level 5	240
	BA(Hons) Graphic Design	Level 6	300

8 Variation from the University Regulations	
	Not applicable

9 Delivery Patterns			
Mode(s) of Study	Location(s) of Study	Duration of Study	Code(s)
Full Time with a Foundation Year	Margaret Street/ City Centre	4 years	US1389F
Full Time	City Centre	3 years	US1389

10 Entry Requirements	
	The admission requirements for this course are stated on the course page of the BCU website at https://www.bcu.ac.uk , or may be found by searching for the course entry profile located on the UCAS website.

11	Course Aims
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide an exciting and dynamic curriculum that blends practical skills and theoretical knowledge in graphic design. • To explore the historical, cultural, and contextual theories shaping contemporary graphic design practices. • To foster creative problem-solving skills essential for designing innovative, and imaginative visual solutions. • To equip you with effective communication skills to articulate design concepts and collaborate in professional contexts. • To advance critical thinking and reflection to address complex, real-world challenges. • To Enhance employment skills in readiness for future employment or further study.

12	Course Learning Outcomes
	Knowledge & Understanding
1	Explore and critique relevant historical and contextual factors, applying appropriate research methodologies to inform design development.
2	Address complex, real-world challenges through design-led interventions driven by critical, strategic, and creative approaches.
3	Explore the impact of both current and emerging technologies on the future of graphic design practice.
4	Use the process of design thinking to understand users, challenge assumptions, redefine problems, and create innovative solutions to prototype and test.
5	Generate independent conclusions by questioning, reviewing, and assessing information and experiences, both in relation to your own practice and the work of appropriate design practitioners.
	Skills & Other Attributes
6	Confidently apply appropriate practical and technical knowledge through a wide range of approaches to graphic design.
7	Articulate ideas and information comprehensibly in visual, oral and written forms; present ideas and work to audiences in a range of situations.
8	Generate a range of potential ideas and visual developments and apply this to the production of creative work.
9	Use a range of professional skills for individual and collaborative shared project outcomes
10	Evaluate career aspirations in relation to local, national and global design practices through engagement with opportunities and creative industry professionals.

13	Level Learning Outcomes
	Upon completion of Level 3 students will be able to:
1	Critique layout and documentation strategies to support the progression of ideas.
2	Employ experimentation in the development of practice-based work.
3	Independently source a range of contexts and global references that inform practical work.
4	Develop ideas in response to critical decision making.
5	Self-initiate and sustain a reflective creative practice.
6	Establish skills in the presentation of work and ideas to an appropriate audience.

7	Reflect on the learning experience through written, visual and oral forms of communication.
8	Identify the historical and future contexts of the chosen subject area.
9	Recognise how creative risk-taking, problem solving, and technical exploration inform creative understanding.
10	Recognise equality, diversity, and inclusivity through participation in interdisciplinary group projects.
Upon completion of Level 4 / the Certificate of Higher Education, students will be able to:	
1	Identify key historical periods, contextual influences, basic theories, and concepts that have shaped graphic design practice.
2	Investigate sustainable, ethical, and inclusive graphic design principles, materials, and practices.
3	Define key current and emerging technologies relevant to graphic design practice.
4	Describe how the design thinking process can be applied to a range of problem-solving approaches.
5	Recognise key design concepts in both your own work and other design practitioners to the further contextualise and develop ideas.
6	Explore fundamental technical skills appropriate to graphic design practice.
7	Articulate ideas, information, problems, and solutions in visual, written, and oral forms.
8	Utilise creative thinking skills through different approaches to idea generation.
9	Apply a range of collaboration and team working skills to resolve group work
10	Identify relevant contemporary professional practice and learn fundamental networking techniques.
Upon completion of Level 5 / the Diploma of Higher Education, students will be able to:	
1	Apply innovative design solutions informed by historical, cultural and contextual influences.
2	Integrate sustainable, ethical, and inclusive design principles and practices within the design process.
3	Analyse the advantages, opportunities, and limitations of integrating various current and emerging technologies into graphic design practice.
4	Implement techniques of design thinking to explore effective problem-solving strategies.
5	Analyse information from diverse sources, using appropriate methods and frameworks.
6	Appropriately select and apply a range of technical skills to develop and resolve creative outputs.
7	Integrate appropriate communication methods (visual, written, and oral) to a range of audiences.
8	Generate a range of ideas and explore the benefits of risk-taking and iterative development within graphic design practice.
9	Utilise and apply skills in practical settings that reflect professional environments.
10	Build a profile across appropriate professional platforms and establish a creative portfolio.
Upon completion of 60 credits at Level 6 / the Bachelors Degree, students will be able to:	
1	Synthesise knowledge of history, cultures, theory and context into the production of informed visual graphic outcomes
2	Justify the use and application of sustainable, ethical, and inclusive design practices, with consideration of appropriate techniques and solutions within the design process.
3	Critically assess the ethical, environmental, and societal implications of adopting current and emerging technologies in graphic design practice.
4	Explore advanced problem-solving techniques to create innovative design solutions.
5	Synthesise connections between theories, ideas and experiences to generate refined and sophisticated conclusions.
6	Utilise advanced technical skills in the production of refined creative outcomes.
7	Develop advanced communication skills (visual, written, and oral) across a wide range of mediums and contexts.
8	Use refined methods of idea generation to produce a wide range of sophisticated concepts.

9	Develop collaborative project outcomes that integrate a diverse skill set to achieve common objectives.
10	Consolidate your professional networks through events, social media, and online platforms to promote an industry ready portfolio.

14	Course Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy
	<p>Knowledge and understanding along with practical skills are acquired through formal lectures, seminars, group and personal tutorials, work checks, critiques, demonstrations, individual and collaborative projects, development of soft and technical skills, workshops, studio practice, critical studies, reflective journals and problem-based learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Practical study has an emphasis on iterative creative development use hands-on and digital technologies, appropriate to ideas, including effective use of AI, and creative software packages.• Project-based assignments use industry live briefs, linked to developing employability skills.• Creative play and creative risk-taking is important and embedded within the course philosophy.• Knowledge is assessed by several methods including practical project and written work. Grades are awarded for problem analysis, research, creativity, technical skills and project resolution.• E-learning on the virtual learning environment is used as an integral part of the programme with three modules on the course have a blended delivery, where 30% is online.• Individual learning within a multidisciplinary approach is combined with collaborative and interdisciplinary dialogue and exchanges.• Projects has its own written brief outlining aims and objectives, and the criteria for assessment. Assessment criteria for each module are specified and align directly with the module learning outcomes.• Assessment is formative and summative. All modules focus on intellectual, cognitive, and practical skills and these are reflected in module assessment criteria. Students are encouraged to use their imagination, organisational and collaborative abilities, and develop entrepreneurial and employability skills.

15	Course Requirements																																																							
15a	<p>Level 3:</p> <p><i>In order to complete this course a student must successfully complete all the following CORE modules (totalling 120-credits):</i></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="background-color: #ffffcc;">Module Code</th> <th style="background-color: #ffffcc;">Module Name</th> <th style="background-color: #ffffcc;">Credit Value</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>VIS3004</td> <td>Understanding Practice</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>VIS3001</td> <td>Creative Development and Production</td> <td>40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>VIS3002</td> <td>Perspectives on Practice</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>VIS3003</td> <td>Creative Realisation</td> <td>40</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Level 4:</p> <p><i>In order to complete this course a student must successfully complete all the following CORE modules (totalling 120-credits):</i></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="background-color: #ffffcc;">Module Code</th> <th style="background-color: #ffffcc;">Module Name</th> <th style="background-color: #ffffcc;">Credit Value</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>TBC</td> <td>Fundamental Practice: Graphics</td> <td>40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TBC</td> <td>Professional Futures: Communication</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TBC</td> <td>Design at Play</td> <td>40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TBC</td> <td>Design for Change</td> <td>20</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Level 5:</p> <p><i>In order to complete this course a student must successfully complete all the following CORE modules (totalling 120-credits):</i></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="background-color: #ffffcc;">Module Code</th> <th style="background-color: #ffffcc;">Module Name</th> <th style="background-color: #ffffcc;">Credit Value</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>TBC</td> <td>Emerging Technologies</td> <td>40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TBC</td> <td>Professional Futures: Collaboration</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TBC</td> <td>Defining Practice: Graphics</td> <td>40</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>In order to complete this course a student must successfully complete at least 20-credits from the following indicative list of OPTIONAL modules.</i></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="background-color: #ffffcc;">Module Code</th> <th style="background-color: #ffffcc;">Module Name</th> <th style="background-color: #ffffcc;">Credit Value</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>ADM5000</td> <td>Work Placement</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ADM5XXX</td> <td>Independent Creative Entrepreneur</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ADM5XXX</td> <td>Industry Projects</td> <td>20</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Module Code	Module Name	Credit Value	VIS3004	Understanding Practice	20	VIS3001	Creative Development and Production	40	VIS3002	Perspectives on Practice	20	VIS3003	Creative Realisation	40	Module Code	Module Name	Credit Value	TBC	Fundamental Practice: Graphics	40	TBC	Professional Futures: Communication	20	TBC	Design at Play	40	TBC	Design for Change	20	Module Code	Module Name	Credit Value	TBC	Emerging Technologies	40	TBC	Professional Futures: Collaboration	20	TBC	Defining Practice: Graphics	40	Module Code	Module Name	Credit Value	ADM5000	Work Placement	20	ADM5XXX	Independent Creative Entrepreneur	20	ADM5XXX	Industry Projects	20
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Level 6:

In order to complete this course a student must successfully complete all the following CORE modules (totalling 120-credits):

Module Code	Module Name	Credit Value
VIS6041	Advancing Practice	40
VIS6042	Independent Enquiry	20
VIS6039	Major Project	40
TBC	Profession Futures: Presentation	20

15b Structure Diagram

Please note list of optional modules is indicative only. Students' choice will not be guaranteed for optional modules but a fair and transparent process will be adopted and shared with students.

Include a structure diagram for each mode of study. Level 4 is completed as an example including modules which extend the whole year.

Level 3

SEMESTER ONE	SEMESTER TWO
Understanding Practice (20 Credits – core)	Perspective on Practice (20 credits – core)
Creative Development & Production (40 credits – core)	Creative Realisation (40 credits – core)

Level 4

SEMESTER ONE	SEMESTER TWO
Fundamental Practice: Graphic (40 credits – core module)	Design at Play (40 credits – core module)
Professional Futures: Communication (20 credits – core module)	Design for Change (20 credits – core module)

Level 5

Emerging Technologies(40 credits – core module)	Defining Practice: Graphics (40 credits – core module)
Professional Futures: Collaboration (20 Credits)	<i>Option module</i> Work Placement (20 credits) Industry Projects (20 credits) Independent Creative Entrepreneur (20 credits)

Level 6

Advancing Practice (40 credits)	Major Project (40 credits)
Independent Enquiry (20 credits)	Professional Futures: Presentation (20 credits)

16 Overall Student Workload and Balance of Assessment

Overall student workload consists of class contact hours, independent learning and assessment activity, with each credit taken equating to a total study time of around 10 hours. While actual contact hours may depend on the optional modules selected, the following information gives an indication of how much time students will need to allocate to different activities at each level of the course.

- Scheduled Learning includes lectures, practical classes and workshops, contact time specified in timetable.
- Directed Learning includes placements, work-based learning, external visits, on-line activity, Graduate+, peer learning.
- Private Study includes preparation for exams.

The balance of assessment by mode of assessment (e.g. coursework, exam and in-person) depends to some extent on the optional modules chosen by students. The approximate percentage of the course assessed by coursework, exam and in-person is shown below.

Level 3

Workload

30% time spent in timetabled teaching and learning activity

Activity	Number of Hours
Scheduled Learning	360
Directed Learning	600
Private Study	240
Total Hours	1200

Balance of Assessment

Assessment Mode	Percentage
Coursework	75%
Exam	0%
In-Person	25%

Level 4

Workload

18% time spent in timetabled teaching and learning activity

Activity	Number of Hours
Scheduled Learning	230
Directed Learning	741
Private Study	240
Total Hours	1200

Balance of Assessment

Assessment Mode	Percentage
Coursework	95%
Exam	0%
In-Person	5%

Level 5

Workload

% time spent in timetabled teaching and learning activity

Activity	Number of Hours
Scheduled Learning	201
Directed Learning	759
Private Study	240
Total Hours	1200

Balance of Assessment

Assessment Mode	Percentage
Coursework	80%
Exam	0%
In-Person	20%

Level 6

Workload

% time spent in timetabled teaching and learning activity

Activity	Number of Hours
Scheduled Learning	156
Directed Learning	804
Private Study	240
Total Hours	1200

Balance of Assessment

Assessment Mode	Percentage
Coursework	90%
Exam	0%
In-Person	10%