

Course Specification

Course Summary Information		
1	Course Title	BA (Hons) Product Design with Foundation Year
2	Course Code	US1510F
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) Product Design with Foundation Year</p> <p>This Foundation Year 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.

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

BA (Hons) Product Design (3 Year Programme)

BA (Hons) Product Design with Professional Placement Year (4 Year Programme)

Contemporary product design spans industries such as consumer electronics, Furniture, medical devices, automotive and more. It combines creativity, functionality, and technical knowledge to create innovative, sustainable products that meet user needs and are feasible to produce. Today's designers must navigate rapid technological advancements, sustainability challenges, and user experience to create functional and socially responsible designs.

Our BA (Hons) Product Design course provides an enriching experience, offering you the essential knowledge, skills, and understanding to create relevant products and furniture. With a strong emphasis on 'learning through making', our approach integrates innovation, user-centred design, social awareness, sustainability, and commercial understanding.

Throughout the course, you'll explore diverse manufacturing scales within product and furniture design, guided by contemporary design philosophies. We emphasise hands-on experiences, introducing you to materials, methods, and technologies, both digital and analogue, empowering you to develop your unique creative design focus.

We promote the importance of sustainable, inclusive, and ethical design practices, enhancing your learning experience. This encourages you to take an active role in contributing to a better world through considered and thoughtful design.

Situated in the heart of the 'manufacturing midlands,' our course offers you a unique opportunity to shape your identity as a Product and Furniture designer in a region celebrated for its creativity and industrial legacy.

Our curriculum extends beyond the design studio, fostering your professional growth through collaborative projects and active involvement with creative industries. This not only prepares you for future employment but also equips you for further exploration of your creative passions.

Furniture Design specialism

All students will be introduced to core modules exploring the fundamentals of designing products and furniture. You will have the opportunity to focus exclusively on Furniture Design from semester 2 of your second year, starting with the Design Focus module, before specialising further in your final year. If you choose to specialise in Furniture Design, you will cover the same curriculum but opt for furniture-related project briefs. This option will suit those students who wish to develop and enhance their making skills through the design, development and production of furniture and related products. You will be able to explore furniture design across various production scales, from bespoke to mass manufacture. You will graduate with BA (Hons) Product Design (Furniture Design)

7	Course Awards		
7a	Name of Final Award	Level	Credits Awarded
	BA (Hons) Product Design	Level 6	360
	BA (Hons) Product Design (Furniture Design)	Level 6	360
	Bachelor of Arts with Honours Product Design with Professional Placement Year	Level 6	480
	Bachelor of Arts with Honours Product Design (Furniture Design) with Professional Placement Year	Level 6	480
7b	Exit Awards and Credits Awarded		
	Foundation Certificate	Level 4	120
	Certificate of Higher Education Product Design	Level 4	120
	Diploma of Higher Education Product Design	Level 5	240
	Bachelor of Arts Product Design	Level 6	300
	Bachelor of Arts Product Design (Furniture 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 St & Parkside	4 Years	US1510F
	Full Time	City Centre	3 Years	US1510
	Full Time with Professional Placement Year	City Centre	4 years	US1511

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"> • Provide a stimulating and dynamic curriculum that blends practical skills and theoretical knowledge in product and furniture design. • Explore the historical, cultural, and industrial contexts shaping contemporary product design practices. • Foster creative problem-solving skills essential for designing impactful, ethical, and market-relevant products. • Encourage critical thinking and reflection on the societal and environmental impact of design decisions. • Develop an ethos of discovery, experimentation, and hands-on exploration to define, develop and deliver innovative solutions. • Equip students with effective communication skills to articulate design concepts and collaborate in professional contexts. • Enhance graduate employment prospects in careers within product design and related fields, or for progression to further study.

12	Course Learning Outcomes
	Knowledge & Understanding
1	Critique relevant historical and contextual factors, applying appropriate research methodologies to inform design decisions and subject knowledge.
2	Evaluate the societal impact of sustainable, inclusive, and ethical practices in product design
3	Explore the impact of current and emerging technologies on product development, practice and production
4	Explore a range of design principles and processes to develop and create products and furniture that meet the needs of the user
5	Critically evaluate information and experiences to develop independent conclusions that inform and direct your design processes
	Skills & Other Attributes
6	Apply iterative design, technical knowledge and material understanding to develop design opportunities and directions
7	Use 2D and 3D digital software appropriate to industry requirements and standards
8	Produce three-dimensional outcomes through the application of analogue and digital prototyping methods
9	Demonstrate professional collaboration by effectively contributing to collective objectives through constructive participation, communication, and teamwork
10	Demonstrate effective problem-solving, self-reflection and evaluation to create innovative products and furniture

13	Level Learning Outcomes
	Upon completion of Level 4 / the Certificate of Higher Education, students will be able to:
1	Describe historical, cultural and contextual factors in product and furniture design, using relevant sources
2	Investigate ethical design practices, considering sustainability and inclusivity
3	Define key current and emerging product development technologies
4	Explore design principles and processes to develop ideas and concepts
5	Recognise key design concepts in your work and the work of others to contextualise and develop ideas further
6	Explore the relationship between iterative design, material research and technical knowledge in product development
7	Use 2D and 3D digital software to create basic technical drawings and models, applying standard conventions
8	Utilise basic analogue and digital prototyping methods to represent design concepts
9	Recognise the value of collaboration through participation in group activities and effective communication.
10	Explore problem-solving methods to identify design issues and reflect on potential improvements
	Upon completion of Level 5 / the Diploma of Higher Education, students will be able to:
1	Analyse historical, cultural, and contextual factors, applying relevant research methodologies to inform development
2	Integrate sustainable, ethical, and inclusive design principles and practices within the design process.
3	Analyse the impact of current and emerging technologies on product design practice and production processes, evaluating their advantages and challenges in real-world applications
4	Apply user-centred design principles to develop product and furniture ideas that effectively meet specific user needs
5	Evaluate information to form independent conclusions that drive the evolution of design concepts
6	Apply iterative design principles to develop and improve product concepts
7	Produce high-quality CAD models and technical drawings, integrating industry-standard practices for product design
8	Apply prototyping techniques to create physical outcomes that accurately represent design concepts
9	Contribute to design projects by collaborating with peers, maintaining clear communication
10	Integrate design thinking and problem-solving techniques to develop design concepts
	Upon completion of 60 credits at Level 6 / the Bachelors Degree, students will be able to:

1	Synthesise theoretical, historical, cultural, and contextual factors, applying advanced research methodologies to inform and substantiate a design direction.
2	Justify design decisions and outcomes by critically evaluating and synthesising sustainable, inclusive, and ethical factors in the context of contemporary design challenges.
3	Create products and furniture that address user needs, balancing aesthetic value and functional performance through an integrated design approach.
4	Formulate independent, evidence-based conclusions from in-depth analysis to drive the evolution of innovative design concepts.
5	Refine product concepts through rigorous informed decision-making, iterating at each stage of the development process.
6	Create convincing representational prototypes that effectively communicate aesthetic, functional, commercial, and material intentions
7	Communicate design outcomes effectively to diverse stakeholders, demonstrating professional clarity and impact in verbal, visual, and written forms..
8	Synthesise and implement innovative design solutions, underpinned by critical evaluation and self-reflection to resolve complex design challenges.

14	Course Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy
	<p>The course structure is designed to equip students with the intellectual, cognitive, and practical skills essential for success in the design industry. Assessment combines formative and summative approaches, ensuring students receive ongoing feedback to refine their work and develop outputs that mirror industry and employment. This approach prepares students to manage real-world challenges.</p> <p>Practical application is a core focus, with collaborative projects developing communication and teamwork skills. Live projects offer the opportunity to engage with real-world scenarios, applying innovative approaches to professional challenges. Access to 3D workshops and CAD training ensures students experience a range of industry-aligned approaches, from material exploration to digital fabrication.</p> <p>A blend of physical and virtual learning environments supports the course. VLE resources such as e-portfolios and online blended learning extend learning beyond the classroom, fostering collaboration and enabling students to track their developmental journey. These tools encourage reflective practice and the professional presentation of work.</p> <p>Independent learning is encouraged to build autonomy and self-awareness, supported by structured activities that help students manage time effectively and address individual learning needs. Regular design critiques provide a platform for evaluating progress, with tutors offering targeted feedback to challenge thinking and guide further research and refinement.</p> <p>This integrated approach ensures students leave the course with a robust portfolio of skills, practical experiences, and professional competencies, ready to contribute effectively to their chosen product design specialism.</p>

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: #ffff00;">Module Code</th> <th style="background-color: #ffff00;">Module Name</th> <th style="background-color: #ffff00;">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: #ffff00;">Module Code</th> <th style="background-color: #ffff00;">Module Name</th> <th style="background-color: #ffff00;">Credit Value</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>DES4016</td> <td>Design Essentials</td> <td>40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DES4017</td> <td>Professional Futures: Communication</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DES4018</td> <td>Design and Production</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DES4019</td> <td>Design in Context</td> <td>40</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: #ffff00;">Module Code</th> <th style="background-color: #ffff00;">Module Name</th> <th style="background-color: #ffff00;">Credit Value</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>DES5020</td> <td>Design for Industry</td> <td>40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DES5021</td> <td>Professional Futures: Collaboration</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DES5022</td> <td>Design Focus</td> <td>40</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>In order to complete this course a student must successfully complete at least 20 credits (60 credits when opting for Study Abroad) 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: #ffff00;">Module Code</th> <th style="background-color: #ffff00;">Module Name</th> <th style="background-color: #ffff00;">Credit Value</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>ADM5008</td> <td>Industry Project</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ADM5009</td> <td>Independent Creative Entrepreneur</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ADM5000</td> <td>Work Placement</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ADM5xxx</td> <td>Study Abroad</td> <td>60</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	DES4016	Design Essentials	40	DES4017	Professional Futures: Communication	20	DES4018	Design and Production	20	DES4019	Design in Context	40	Module Code	Module Name	Credit Value	DES5020	Design for Industry	40	DES5021	Professional Futures: Collaboration	20	DES5022	Design Focus	40	Module Code	Module Name	Credit Value	ADM5008	Industry Project	20	ADM5009	Independent Creative Entrepreneur	20	ADM5000	Work Placement	20	ADM5xxx	Study Abroad	60
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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
DES6013	Professional Futures: Presentation	20
DES6014	Major Research Project: Discover/Define	40
DES6015	Major Design Project: Develop/Deliver	60

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.

Level 3

SEMESTER ONE	SEMESTER TWO
Core Understanding Practice (20 Credits) Creative Development and Production (40 credits)	Core Creative Realisation (20 credits) Perspective on Practice (40 credits)

Level 4

SEMESTER ONE	SEMESTER TWO
Core Design Essentials (40 credits) Professional Futures: Communication (20 credits)	Core Design and Production (20 credits) Design in Context (40 credits)

Level 5

Core Design for Industry (40 credits) Professional Futures: Collaboration (20 credits)	Core Design Focus (40 credits)
	Optional Independent Creative Entrepreneur (20 credits) Industry Project (20 credits) Work Placement (20 credits) Study Abroad (60 credits)

Level 6

Core Major Research Project: Discover/Define (40 credits) Professional Futures: Presentation (20 credits)	Core Major Design Project – Develop/Deliver (60 credits)
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16	Overall Student Workload and Balance of Assessment
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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

17% time spent in timetabled teaching and learning activity

Activity	Number of Hours
Scheduled Learning	212
Directed Learning	674
Private Study	314
Total Hours	1200

Balance of Assessment

Assessment Mode	Percentage
Coursework	100%
Exam	
In-Person	

Level 5
Workload
16% time spent in timetabled teaching and learning activity

Activity	Number of Hours
Scheduled Learning	190
Directed Learning	704
Private Study	306
Total Hours	1200

Balance of Assessment

Assessment Mode	Percentage
Coursework	100%
Exam	
In-Person	

Level 6
Workload
16% time spent in timetabled teaching and learning activity

Activity	Number of Hours
Scheduled Learning	188
Directed Learning	636
Private Study	376
Total Hours	1200

Balance of Assessment

Assessment Mode	Percentage
Coursework	100%
Exam	
In-Person	