

MA Graphic Design



1. Awarding institution	Middlesex University
2. Teaching institution	Middlesex University
3. Programme accredited by	n/a
4. Final qualification	MA
5. Programme title	Graphic Design
6. JACS code (or other relevant coding system)	W210 (005W207)
7. Relevant QAA subject benchmark group(s)	Art & Design
8. Academic Year	2007–08

9. Reference points

The following reference points were used in devising the programme

- Middlesex University Regulations – <http://www.mdx.ac.uk/regulations/>
- Middlesex University Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategy
- Middlesex University Learning Framework and Curriculum Design Guide
- Middlesex University Corporate Plan
- QAA National Qualifications Framework
- Subject Benchmark Statement AR 055 3/2002 – Art & Design
- Art & Humanities Research Council – Research Skills Training requirements for Research Students
- QAA Institutional Audit 2003
- Student, Staff, External Examiners and Graduates feedback and comments from previous postgraduate programmes

10. Aims of the programme

The programme aims to:

- provide an advanced academic environment encouraging a reflective approach to the research and design process
- establish a systematic investigative approach to design problems and methodologies, and to explore the critical interrelationship between theory and practice
- examine, critically evaluate and develop the language(s) used to think about research and about design
- comprehensively survey and analyse the cultural and social context within which research and design take place
- make metacognitive practices the foundation of learning in research, design, and professional activities.

11. Programme outcomes – the programme offers opportunities for students to achieve and demonstrate the following learning outcomes.

<p>A. Knowledge and understanding <i>On completion of this programme the student will have knowledge and understanding of:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. epistemological problems concerning truth and evidence in research 2. the social construction of graphic design research 3. key concepts in research and graphic design thinking and different research and design methodologies 4. current, related practice at the forefront of their field (visual communication) and the connections between theory and practice. 	<p>Teaching/learning methods Students gain knowledge and understanding through workshops, lectures, weekly seminars and self-directed study.</p> <p>Assessment Students' knowledge and understanding is assessed through coursework, including reports, presentations and dissertation. The criteria for assessment are both generic across level 4 as well as specific to the module.</p>
<p>B. Cognitive skills <i>On completion of this programme the student will be able to:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. articulate research and communication design problems and pertinent questions 2. assess the validity of evidence through rational disputation 3. evaluate the process by which decisions – deliberate or intuitive – are arrived at 4. demonstrate a capacity for critical reflection, identifying appropriate research/design needs and considering the means and methodologies for meeting them. 5. apply metacognitive strategies towards developing their own practice. 	<p>Teaching/learning methods Students learn cognitive skills through workshops, weekly seminars, presentations, coursework and self-directed study.</p> <p>Assessment Students' cognitive skills are assessed through coursework, including participation in weekly seminars, project work, reports and dissertation. The criteria for assessment are both generic across level 4 as well as specific to the module.</p>
<p>C. Practical skills <i>On completion of this programme the student will be able to:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. manage (plan, organize, monitor, progress and complete) a complex research or design project 2. apply discipline-specific conceptual and technical skills at an advanced professional level 3. make effective use of databases and other knowledge resources 4. follow principles and conventions of communication in research and graphic design. 	<p>Teaching/learning methods Students learn practical skills through workshops, weekly seminars, coursework and self-directed study.</p> <p>Assessment Students' practical skills are assessed by coursework, including project work, reports, presentations and dissertation. The criteria for assessment are both generic across level 4 as well as specific to the module.</p>
<p>D.4. Transferable/postgraduate skills <i>On completion of this programme the student will be able to:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. apply reflective practice strategies towards self-managed learning and professional practice 2. make use of a group as a creative resource 3. carry out work by connecting theory with practice 4. communicate effectively orally and in writing with a variety of interlocutors, applying appropriate rhetorical structures 5. plan for effective career development. 	<p>Teaching/learning methods Students acquire transferable postgraduate skills through weekly seminars, coursework and self-directed study.</p> <p>Assessment Students' graduate skills are assessed by coursework, including participation in weekly seminars, project work, reports, and presentations. The criteria for assessment are both generic across level 4 as well as specific to the module.</p>

12. Programme structure and requirements, levels, modules, credits and qualifications

12.1 Overall structure of the programme

The programme is undertaken full-time in one calendar year (September to September) of three consecutive 15-week stages (12 teaching weeks + 3 assessment weeks); and also part-time in five stages (2 in Year One + 3 in Year Two) over two years. At present, there is only one entry point in Stage One (September).

Each 30-credit module requires a total of 18 hours of study per week (comprising taught sessions, independent study, the use of studios and workshops, and presentations by visiting professional practitioners). Full-time students undertaking 60 credits per stage should expect to commit 36 hours per week to their studies, while the study time of part-time students is pro-rata to the amount of credits taken at each stage.

Students take the equivalent of three 60-credit Level 4 modules. There is an exit award after 60 credits (PgCert) and after 120 credits (PgDip). On completion of the PgDip stage, students then take one 60 credit module, to a total of 180 credits for their final award.

The Project Proposal module (30 credits) along with the Foundations of PG Research module (30 credits is taken jointly by all cohorts, assisting the development of a postgraduate culture), induct students into the skills necessary for the initiation and development of a self-directed design research project. These modules consist of regular subject seminars, tutorials and workshops.

Contact teaching is front-loaded in Stage 1, progressing towards an increasingly self-directed mode of study through periodic individual and group supervision. At the end of Stage 1, MA Design Research students who realize that their interests might be best addressed through a studio-based project, may transfer to either MA Graphic Design, MA Interior Architecture or MA Sustainable Design, by prior discussion with and the agreement of programme leader(s). Conversely, those MA students who at the end of Stage 1 realize that their project may be best addressed through research enquiry, may transfer into MA Design Research.

Students attend a series of talks and video presentations by visiting professionals which take place throughout Stages 1 and 2. MA Design Research students participate in an annual in-house conference during Stage 2, where they present their projects to date, as an introduction to the culture of doctoral research.

The final submission of the MA programmes is a major project and a report supported by a verbal presentation, while the final submission of the MA Design Research is a research project and critical dissertation supported by a viva.

12.2 Modules and progression

COMPULSORY ¹ Students must take all of the following:	OPTIONAL ²	PROGRESSION REQUIREMENTS
DES4101 30c DES4102 30c DES4201 60c DES4301 60c	n/a	A minimum of 120 credits as prerequisite to undertake DES4301 <i>Note: PgCert exit award on completion of 60 credits and PgDip exit award on completion of 120 credits</i>

12.3 Non-compensatable modules. Modules may additionally be designated non-compensatable.

¹ Compulsory modules are those that must be taken, that is, the qualification cannot be made unless these modules have been successfully completed. Each of these modules makes a unique contribution to the learning objectives of the programme or subject major/minor.

² Optional modules are modules that may be taken at the discretion of the student. It is not necessary to complete optional modules to achieve the qualification (assuming other awarding conditions are met). Optional modules make a non-unique contribution to the achievement of the learning objectives of the programme or subject major/minor.

Module level	Module code
4	All modules are non-compensatable

13. A curriculum map relating learning outcomes to modules

See the Curriculum Map and the Programme Learning Outcomes at the end of the Programme Specifications.

14. Criteria for admission to the Programme

- Appropriate qualifications or experience
 - a) A good honours degree in a relevant design subject (1st or 2.1) – or recognized equivalent professional qualification
 - b) Applicants with a good honours degree in a non-design subject and substantial experience working within the field, or able to demonstrate an aptitude for working in design or design research (in any design discipline) may be considered.
 - c) Applicants without the normal qualifications but who have extensive and substantial work experience in appropriate areas may be considered through accreditation of prior learning (APEL).

In all cases, admission is dependant on

- Evidence of subject-related skills (through submission of a portfolio of work or equivalent, as hard copy and/or PDF or PowerPoint files)
- Sufficient command of the English language – those applicants for whom English is not the first language must demonstrate evidence of attainment by an IELTS overall score of 6.5 or higher (with no component achieving less than 6), or equivalent. Applicants with less than six in any component score are strongly recommended to undertake the University's Pre-Sessional English Language Course
- Supportive academic/professional references
- An appropriate personal statement which should outline in general terms an area of interest that you would like to make the focus of your study and with reference to the following guideline headings:
 - a) An area of interest or provisional title
 - b) background experience directly or indirectly relevant to your proposed area of study
 - c) any thoughts you may have as to how the research might be done (even though this may change later) and any possible outcome(s)
 - d) an indication of the resources you consider necessary to undertake your investigation
 - e) evidence of an initial exploration in the area of the project of any research and design that has already been carried out by the applicant and/or others.

**see p.37 for note on applicants with disabilities*

15. Information about assessment regulations

The modules in Stage 1 and Stage 2 are graded on Pass/Fail. The final Stage 3 module DES4301 Project Completion is graded in the University 1–20 marking scale, which determines the level of the Award (Pass, Merit or Distinction). For complete assessment regulation details, please refer to the University Regulations. Self-deferral is not allowed on any of the modules – students seeking to defer must consult the Assessment Administrator.

16. Indicators of quality

- QAA Institutional Audit 2003
- RAE 2002 performance 3A/5 – Unit of assessment 64 (Art & Design)
- External Examiners' Reports
- Graduate destinations, updated annually.

17. Particular support for learning

- Regular Newsletter produced by the subject-dedicated librarian
- LR facilities and resources, including specialist books, journals, videos, DVDs, slides, special collections, and computer programmes
- Dedicated studio (with access for disabled students)
- A range of workshops and technical staff and facilities provide the technical input for the realization of any studio-based materials required for the research projects.
- Specialist staff and collections at the Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture (MoDA)
- Academic conferences and symposia (such as the Design Advanced Research Training conference).

18. Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of learning

- Feedback from student representatives
- Staff feedback through regular staff meetings
- Boards of Study conducted each stage
- External examiner reports
- Annual monitoring reports
- Programme review and validation
- School and external staff development events and courses
- Student feedback questionnaires
- Peer observation of teaching

19. Placement opportunities, requirements and support (if applicable)

n/a

20. Future careers: how the programme supports graduates' future career development

The programme provides experiential insight into the benefits of reflective practice, aiding postgraduates to develop as autonomous learners. The nature of the programme, by its emphasis on metacognitive strategies, offers a fundamental skill at an advanced level for reflective professional design practice, research in consultancies or industry, and progression to higher academic qualification such as doctoral research.

21. Other information

None

Please note: this specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information can be found in the following pages of this handbook and in the University Regulations.

Curriculum map - MA Graphic Design

This map shows the learning outcomes of the programmes and the modules in which they are assessed.

	Module	Code	Programme outcomes																	
			A1	A2	A3	A4	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	C1	C2	C3	C4	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5
4	Project Proposal	DES4101			o	o	o	o		o		o		o		o		o		o
	Foundations of Postgraduate Research	DES4102	o	o	o		o	o		o	o	o		o	o	o	o	o		
	Project Development	DES4201			o	o		o	o	o	o	o	o		o		o	o		
	Project Completion	DES4301				o		o	o		o	o	o	o	o	o		o	o	o

Programme learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding		Practical skills	
A1	Epistemological problems concerning truth and evidence in research	C1	Manage (plan, organize, monitor, progress and complete) a complex research or design project
A2	The social construction of design research	C2	Apply advanced discipline-specific conceptual and technical skills at an advanced professional level
A3	Key concepts in research and design thinking and different research and design methodologies	C3	Make effective use of databases and other knowledge resources
A4	Current, related practice at the forefront of their field and the connections between theory and practice.	C4	Follow principles and conventions of communication in research and design.
Cognitive skills		Graduate Skills	
B1	Articulate research and design problems and pertinent questions	D1	Apply reflective practice strategies towards self-managed learning and professional practice
B2	Assess the validity of evidence through rational disputation	D2	Make use of a group as a creative resource
B3	Evaluate the process by which decisions – deliberate or intuitive – are arrived at	D3	Carry out work by connecting theory with practice
B4	Demonstrate a capacity for critical reflection, identifying appropriate research/design needs and considering the means and methodologies for meeting them	D4	Communicate effectively orally and in writing with a variety of interlocutors, applying appropriate rhetorical structures
B5	Apply metacognitive strategies towards developing their own practice.	D5	Plan for effective career development.