

University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee - Friday 29 May 2009

Statement of Intent – Development of MDes Programmes in
Communication Design; Graphic Design; Illustration and
Photography

Mrs Jackie McCluskey, Senate Office

The Glasgow School of Art
School of Design**DRAFT**2 year programme:
M.Des in Communication Design1 year programmes:
M.Des in Graphic Design
M.Des in Illustration
M.Des in Photography

April 2009

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Draft Programme Data**Provisional Programme Title**

Master of Design (M.Des) in Communication Design

Academic Award(s) to be conferred

SCQF level 11/SHE level 5

Stage	Award	Credits	Nominal Learning Hours	Weeks
1	Postgraduate Certificate	60	600	15
2	Postgraduate Diploma	60	600	15
3	Master of Design	120	1200	30
		240	2400	60

Funding source

Self funding

Mode of study/duration

2 years (60 weeks) full time

Awarding institution

The Glasgow School of Art / Glasgow University

Date of first intake

September 2010

Professional body association

None

Details of Memorandum of Cooperation

GU Memorandum

University Academic Regulations

<http://senate.gla.ac.uk/calendar/current/contents.html>

Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Groups

Art and Design

Draft Programme Data

Provisional Programme Title

Master of Design (M.Des) in Graphic Design
Master of Design (M.Des) in Illustration
Master of Design (M.Des) in Photography

Academic Award(s) to be conferred

SCQF level 11/SHE level 5

Stage	Award	Credits	Nominal Learning Hours	Weeks
1	Postgraduate Certificate	60	600	15
2	Postgraduate Diploma	60	600	15
3	Master of Design	60	600	15
		180	1800	45

Funding source

Self funding
PSAS fees bursaries

Mode of study/duration

1 year (45 weeks) full time; 2 years (90 weeks) part time

Awarding institution

The Glasgow School of Art / Glasgow University

Date of first intake

September 2010

Professional body association

None

Details of Memorandum of Cooperation

GU Memorandum

University Academic Regulations

<http://senate.gla.ac.uk/calendar/current/contents.html>

Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Groups

Art and Design

Introduction

The proposed suite of new Visual Communication taught postgraduate programmes – the two year M.Des in Communication Design, and one year programmes in Illustration, Photography and Graphic Design – are being introduced in the School of Design in order to facilitate an increase in postgraduate student numbers at the GSA, and to further expand teaching provision in Design beyond the undergraduate curriculum.

The two year programme being proposed for validation is a broad one that can accommodate work being produced by students working both within and between specialist areas of communication design. This will mean that students on the programme would be free to explore their individual specialisms in the areas of photography, illustration and graphic design (the main areas of communication design currently taught at undergraduate level at GSA), should they wish to remain within such parameters. At the same time, students troubling the boundaries of specialist practice within communication design would not be confined to one area of production; further, the framework's structure and programme content delivery will support and facilitate interdisciplinary work. The programme format adopted will be a 2 year, 240 credit 'higher masters' model, similar to that of the MFA. The sustained length of the programme will suit those students who wish to devote additional time to the production of an enhanced portfolio of work.

Being introduced alongside this programme are three one-year programmes, of a 'standard masters' (or 180 credits) format. These are for students wishing to explore, at postgraduate level, subject specialisms in photography, illustration and graphics. These programmes will share their first two thirds (the first 30 weeks, or 120 credits) with the two year Communication Design programme.

Postgraduate provision in the School of Design has been limited in recent years to the M.Des in Textiles as Fashion. However, there will be some notable growth in the present academic cycle (2008-09): as part of its revalidation, the M.Des in Textiles as Fashion is being rebranded as an M.Des in Textiles and Fashion; an M.Des in Design Innovation, with pathways in Transformation Design, Environmental Design and Service Design, is currently undergoing validation, and will launch in September 2009. The design and introduction of the two year M.Des in Communication Design, along with the affiliated one year programmes, will contribute significantly to an increase in postgraduate numbers in the School of Design.

Expansion of postgraduate provision within the School of Design has become a pressing need. The Glasgow School of Art Strategic Plan for 2004-08 (2007-08 Update) identified 'an ambition... to increase the percentage of postgraduate students from its current 9% to 15% in 2008 and 22% by 2015.' The Strategic Plan for 2008-2012 contains the aim that, by 2012, GSA will have 'reached 20% of our student community at postgraduate level through new taught and research provision'. These ambitions are echoed in the School of Design's Strategic Plan for 2007-08, which notes the urgent requirement to expand the range of taught postgraduate programmes in design. Further, the International Recruitment Review and Strategy, 2007-08, noted that 'we are clearly missing out on a postgraduate design market, especially where there is the sector providing most growth across our disciplines. We have low numbers from all countries... This is quite clearly due to the lack of programmes we offer in comparison to our competitors.' This review specifically recommends the introduction of a postgraduate programme in Graphic Design.

At present, postgraduate numbers are a very small percentage of total numbers in the School of Design: in 2007-08, there were c.680 undergraduate students across design disciplines, and 7 students taking the M.Des in Textiles as Fashion. If undergraduate numbers hold steady, a postgraduate cohort in the School of Design of 15% would equate to 120 students; a cohort of 20% would be 170 students. Evidently, there is a significant amount of growth needed here: the four programmes being introduced in this proposal are

envisioned as a significant contributor towards such expansion, alongside the other developments occurring within the School of Design.

The proposed taught postgraduate programmes are all fully compliant with the PGT Common Academic Framework. All courses delivered are in multiples of 15 credits; three exit stages (PgCert, PgDip, M.Des) are built into the programme structures; students on the programmes would meet with those on other taught postgraduate programmes through a Stage 1 core research skills course, and electives in other Stages. One 15 credit course will be shared with the M.Des in Design Innovation, in order to support a sense of postgraduate community in the School of Design, and to cut down on costs. It is envisioned that there will be additional opportunities for sharing of teaching between postgraduate degrees in the School of Design.

Across the UK, there are a number of taught postgraduate programmes in Communication Design and specialist areas of visual communication that would act as competitors for the one year and two year programmes. Kingston University has a one year MA in Communication Design, as well as a programme in 'Communication Design and the Creative Economy' of the same length. Communication Design is delivered as a one year MA at Southampton, Plymouth, and Winchester School of Art; the University of Westminster runs a 'Design for Communication' MA. Both Central Saint Martins and the Royal College of Art run two year programmes in Communication Design (the RCA MA is in 'Communication Art and Design'). These programmes reveal that there is an already existing market for postgraduate study in Communication Design in the UK. (In addition, Visual Communication is taught as a one year MA postgraduate programme at Birmingham Institute of Art and Design, and at Swansea Metropolitan University). As well as these programmes of study, specialist masters in illustration, photography and graphic design are taught at a range of institutions across the UK. Illustration, for instance, is taught as an MA at places including Nottingham Trent, University College Falmouth, Hertfordshire, Sunderland, Kingston, and Buckinghamshire New University.

There are also competitor programmes in Scotland. The University of Dundee has an MSc in Communication Design. Edinburgh College of Art offers masters programmes (of both one and two years duration) in Graphic Design, Illustration, and Photography. This should not prevent GSA from introducing any of the proposed programmes: not only will the new programmes allow the institution to build on the reputation of the undergraduate provision within Visual Communication, but Glasgow remains the most exciting city in Scotland to be working in for contemporary design practitioners (indeed, the location of GSA in the heart of the city will serve to enhance the appeal of the programmes).

Why one year and two year programmes?

The staff responsible for devising the new M.Des in Communication Design believe it is imperative that the programme should be a two year masters. Of course, it is recognised that there are risks inherent in launching a new two year programme of study: some students may prefer a one year fee outlay, and time commitment; students on the programme would not be able to apply for some bursaries, which only support one year masters programmes; initial start-up costs will be slightly higher (and thus the financial 'risk' involved greater), as there will be more curriculum content to develop, and more external links to establish.

A number of factors, however, make the development and launch of a two year programme possible. First, the Postgraduate Common Academic Framework at GSA, to which all of the new programmes will adhere, allows for two different types of masters programmes: 45 week 'standard' masters and 60 week 'higher' masters options. As the Definitive Framework Document for the Postgraduate Common Academic Framework notes,

“Higher” Masters programmes involve learners in significant additional work and the award of additional credit. Due to the volume and level of learning outcomes involved, it is appropriate that such programmes are offered over a period of two years (60 weeks) of full-time study... (4.19.7, p.25).

As will become clear (see programme, stage, and course learning outcomes below), the planned M.Des in Communication Design has a large number of learning outcomes associated with its three stages; it is appropriate that a two year structure is adopted in order to best deliver these. Second, GSA already has a proven track record in delivering a two year taught postgraduate programme in the form of the MFA. The MFA programme is internationally renowned and a reliable recruiter for competitive places every year. Further, its success reveals that, if the quality and reputation of the course is strong enough, students will commit to two years of taught postgraduate study. (The personnel in the School of Design responsible for the M.Des in Communication Design will seek guidance and advice from the MFA staff throughout the development of the new programme). Third, a significant number of masters programmes in the UK have a duration of two years – 22%, according to Wendy Davies, in her Universities UK report *Mastering Diversity*. The Bologna Agreement of 1999, signed by higher education ministers in 29 European countries, and which provided a ten year plan for introducing a two cycle Bachelors and Masters degree system, did not specify how long the delivery of taught postgraduate programmes should last. Indeed, as a recent HEPI document entitled ‘The Bologna Process and the UK’s international student market’ reveals, most taught masters programmes in European countries last for two years:

whereas the majority of UK undergraduates who wish to undertake second cycle study do so through a twelve month Masters degree, the majority of EHEA [European Higher Education Area] members have adopted a two year Masters with a strong emphasis on research. It needs to be emphasized that while it is true that 3-2-3 years for the 3 cycles leading to a PhD is the pattern chosen by many European countries, the Bologna agreement does not require or even commend this...

The shorter length of many UK taught postgraduate programmes contributes to their appeal for some international students. However, there has been some recent criticism from certain European territories of the 12 month model for masters programmes, and what can be delivered of value within such a restricted time frame. These varying positions and issues are highlighted here simply to expose that a market evidently exists for two year taught postgraduate programmes, both in the UK and elsewhere; indeed, this is the preferred length of masters study in many European countries.

Of course, if a prospective student should be choosing between different programmes of postgraduate study, a two year programme must have ‘value added extras’ that elevate it above one year alternatives. For the M.Des in Communication Design, these will include:

- nationally and internationally renowned staff
- possibilities for joint projects with students on similar length programmes at Central St Martins and the RCA: through already existing links, collaborative projects will be constructed to bring GSA postgraduate Communication Design students into productive contact with the cohorts on these London-based programmes
- links with organizations and companies including Johnson Banks, Browns, Design Bridge and Navy Blue
- high calibre visiting tutors and guest speakers
- ‘live’ projects
- exchanges and placements.

In order to reduce the running costs of the two year programme, build a postgraduate community within Visual Communication, and offer the option of specifically specialist study, the one year programmes in Graphic Design, Illustration, and Photography will be launched simultaneously. These programmes will also offer a cheaper option of study for those who cannot afford the time and money for a two year postgraduate programme.

Intended student numbers

As already identified, in order to meet a target of 20% of postgraduate numbers in the School of Design, assuming that undergraduate figures hold firm, the PG cohort needs to reach 170. Significant steps have already been taken in reaching this target: the revalidated M.Des Textiles as Fashion will become an M.Des in Textiles and Fashion, giving equal weighting to both (and re-launching in September 2009); the new M.Des in Design Innovation, whose first cohort will join GSA in 2009, will launch with three distinct pathways of study; a new postgraduate programme in Product Design Engineering, co-delivered with Glasgow University, is presently being developed. However, each of these programmes of study will require time to grow its own cohort of students; further, there will necessarily be limits to how many students each can take without negatively impacting on the quality of the learning and teaching experience. More new postgraduate programmes are needed in the School of Design, in other words; the M.Des programmes in Visual Communication will operate as major recruiters of masters students to the School of Design.

The new suite of Visual Communication M.Des programmes will appeal to a variety of potential students, including:

- existing GSA students; not only will the programme be pitched to GSA students through open day events, but likely candidates for each M.Des will be identified as early as possible by staff teaching across disciplines;
- Communication Design: undergraduate design students with an interest in interdisciplinarity;
- Graphic Design/Illustration/Photography: undergraduate students with an interest in exploring further their subject specialisms;
- individuals working in the area of visual communication who want to return to study and enhance their practice.

Although it is expected that most applicants to the new programme will have some experience of studying visual communication subjects at an undergraduate level, each application will be considered on its own merits.

It is envisioned that this suite of M.Des programmes will have a particular appeal to overseas candidates. HESA statistics for 2006-7 highlight that, of all overseas students coming to study creative arts and design in the UK (10,450), more than 50% study design (5,400), in contrast to around 10% studying fine art (1,010). HESA identify the top markets for overseas students coming to the UK to study design subjects as China, Taiwan, South Korea, India, the United States, and Japan (with smaller numbers coming from Thailand, Canada, Malaysia and Hong Kong). GSA already attends annual fairs to promote its undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in East Asian territories, as well as the US and Canada; a concerted effort could be made to sell the new M.Des programmes in these territories. (North American art and design students are accustomed to the idea of two year masters programmes; the MFA model is widespread in the US and Canada). Anecdotal evidence from the Head of Recruitment at GSA has identified the interest in studying design subjects at postgraduate level expressed by potential students from East Asian countries.

In the first instance, it is hoped that the new programmes would attract a cohort of around 10 students (50% Home/EU, 50% OS). This would hopefully grow over coming years; there is the potential for the programme to house a significant number of students.

M.Des in Communication Design

Rationale: educational aims and intentions

The M.Des in Communication Design is practice-led and process-oriented in relation to definitions of broad design practices. It is also committed to the acquisition of principles within design theory relating to educational and commercial contexts. The programme provides rigorous methods for the interrogation of visual and textual research, posing questions relating to the role of the designer in society, and fundamental questions regarding personal and social responsibility.

The programme aims to:

- Offer each individual student the opportunity to critically develop his or her own work in the context of a rigorous but supportive intellectual climate;
- Encourage students to identify and explore key contextual issues relevant to their practice as contemporary designers;
- Develop students' awareness and knowledge base in communication design philosophy, theory, practice and research in the context of innovative forms of communication design;
- Enable Communication Design graduates to critically evaluate their work and that of their peers in the context of contemporary design practices;
- Enable students to achieve the highest possible standards in their work, so that graduates have the confidence, maturity and intellectual and interpersonal skills necessary to function successfully in the communication design field;
- Equip students with the highly developed intellectual, practical and interpersonal skills deemed necessary for careers in design.

Learning outcomes

Programme learning outcomes

By the end of the M.Des in Communication Design, students will be able to:

- Understand communication design contexts, and demonstrate a general knowledge of the socio-cultural, technological and political debates affecting the contemporary practice of communication design;
- Demonstrate a high level of communication skills in the presentation of ideas and design concepts;
- Relate broad communication design principles, methods and ideas to their practice;
- Demonstrate the application of knowledge gained in communication design outputs;
- Demonstrate the ability to conceptualise, manage and carry through to completion a major research project.

Stage learning outcomes

At the end of each stage, each student should have the ability to work with and/or demonstrate:

	Stage 1 PgCert	Stage 2 PgDip	Stage 3 M.Des
Knowledge and Understanding	<p>A critical understanding of the principles and rationale for reappraisal of previous work.</p> <p>A basic understanding of the principles and rationale of independent research.</p>	<p>An understanding of the critical balance between research and practice in the planning of a significant project within communication design.</p> <p>An enhanced understanding of studio practice in relation to interdisciplinary contexts.</p>	<p>The ability to make informed judgments and decisions in relation to current issues within communication design practice.</p> <p>The ability to contextualize one's own work within broader contemporary practices.</p>
Applied Knowledge and Understanding	<p>The development of work for publication and/or display within a critical feedback session.</p> <p>The beginnings of an articulation of the student's own perspectives on design, authorship and collaboration.</p>	<p>The development of a body of work for public display that reflects contemporary discourses in design to a professional standard.</p> <p>The capacity to undertake appropriate research in order to define and develop a relevant topic of inquiry.</p>	<p>The development of a body of work for public display and/or publication for final assessment, which is a full articulation of the student's 'own voice'.</p> <p>The exercise of autonomy, independence and rigorous critical analysis in the conception and production of a critical reflective journal and iterations towards a solution.</p>
Professional Practice: Communication, Presentation, Working with Others	<p>An appropriate response to the views and positions of others, and an ability to offer substantial constructive criticism to others.</p> <p>An awareness of the ethical issues</p>	<p>A heightened awareness of his/her own position within and contribution to the wider contexts of communication design practice, including the ability to present and discuss his/her</p>	<p>Good practice and cooperation when working in professional contexts, including working constructively with others in a variety of institutional and professional situations.</p>

arising from communication design and research practice.	own work to designers and non-designers. The ability to make informed choices regarding the multidisciplinary aspects of the development of individual learning experiences.	
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Proposed programme structure

Year 1

PgCert	PgDip
15	15
15	15
15	15
15	15

Stage	1	2
GSA mand. course	15	
SoD course (CCCP)	15	
GSA open elective		15
Vis Com core	30	45

Year 2

M.Des	M.Des
15	15
15	15
15	15
15	15

Stage	3	3
GSA open elective		15
Communication Des core	90 (across both terms)	
Critical reflective journal		15

In line with the PGT Common Academic Framework, this programme will be constructed from credit rated courses, each of a multiple of 15 credits. Students will be able to exit from the programme at 3 points, with a PgCert (after 15 weeks), a PgDip (after 30 weeks), or a full M.Des (after 60 weeks).

In Stage 1, students will take a mandatory 'basic skills' course, along with all other taught postgraduate students at GSA. They will also take the School of Design course 'Culture, Context and Contemporary Practice', joining students on the M.Des in Design Innovation. These courses will be supplemented by Core Element 1: Critical Reflection on Proposals (30 credits). As part of the application process for the programme, students will be asked to submit a proposal of 500 words, outlining what they intend to do during the two years of the programme. This proposal will not only be used in evaluating applications, but serve as the basic template for what the student will do throughout their time as a postgraduate student at GSA.

At Stage 2, students will opt for one elective course from the range of Stage 2 PGT electives available across GSA (and as part of the development of this programme, new open electives will be put together which can be offered across the institution by staff and departments within the School of Design). In addition, they will take Core Element 2: Contextualising Design Studio Practice (45 credits). Among other concerns, this course will interrogate notions of authorship and collaboration, as well as exploring relevant social, political, cultural, commercial and educational contexts.

Across Stage 3, students will take Core Element 3: Consolidation of Studio Practice (90 credits). In the second half of Stage 3, they will opt for one elective course from the range of those available across GSA. In addition, they will produce a critical reflective journal (Core Element 4) for 15 credits.

Specific aims, learning outcomes and mode of delivery of courses

The aims of each stage reflect the intended learning outcomes of the M.Des in Communication Design programme. Each stage builds upon the learning outcomes and aims of the previous stage. The achievement of specific learning outcomes is necessary to progress from one stage of the programme to the next. Courses are designed to enable students to achieve the set learning outcomes. In addition to the core courses, a range of mandatory and elective courses support students further to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme and extend their knowledge and skills in directions chosen by the student.

Please note: aims and learning outcomes for the Core Research Skills mandatory course and for the available elective courses are not provided here.

Stage 1: Postgraduate Certificate

At stage 1 (15 weeks, 60 credits total), the programme is delivered through two courses:

Core Element 1: Critical Reflection on Proposals (30 credits)

GSA mandatory course: Core Research Skills for Postgraduates (15 credits)

School of Design course: Culture, Context and Contemporary Practice (15 credits)

Core Element 1: Critical Reflection on Proposals

Aims

The course aims are to:

- Introduce the principles and rationale for re-appraisal of own work;
- Review previous works, particularly in relation to student proposals;
- Encourage students to critically evaluate their practice in relation to recent issues within historical, critical and theoretical fields of enquiry;
- Develop the students' ability to formulate and express critical positions in a variety of appropriate forms;
- Introduce students to fundamental principles of, and the rationale for, research in relation to studio practice;
- Allow students to understand the relevance of design in relation to historical, contemporary, socio-cultural and political contexts and discourses.

Learning outcomes

At the end of the course each student should have the ability to demonstrate and/or work with:

- A critical understanding of the principles and rationale for re-appraisal of previous work;
- A critical understanding of re-evaluation and iteration of existing design knowledge, skills and thinking.

Each student should have the ability to:

- Apply the outcomes of critical re-appraisal into the planning of new work;
- Relate critical issues in her/his work to wider historical, critical and theoretical discourses;
- Develop the beginnings of an articulation of design sensibilities in context;
- Communicate his/her critical self-evaluation to peers using appropriate methods;
- Communicate with staff and specialists;
- Respond to the views and positions of others.

Mode of delivery

At this stage, students are supported in their critical re-appraisal of previous work by critical feedback sessions, individual tutorials, lectures and seminars. Each student will present work to a group of fellow students and tutor(s).

Stage 2: Postgraduate Diploma

At Stage 2 (15 weeks, 60 credits total), the programme is delivered in two courses:

Core Element 2: Contextualising Design Studio Practice (45 credits)

GSA electives (15 credits)

Core Element 2: Contextualising Design Studio Practice

Aims

This course aims to:

- Further develop students' ability to critically evaluate their practice in relation to recent design issues within historical, critical and theoretical fields of enquiry;
- Enable students to begin to resolve their practice on the basis of critical re-appraisal;
- Develop students' abilities to present their work to a professional standard;
- Promote a level of creativity, originality and initiative in response to critical, theoretical and historical issues;
- Develop the ability to identify and formulate new critical insights into established practice;
- Foster further skills and confidence in the preparation and presentation, both written and oral, of research-based critical analysis.

Learning outcomes

At the end of the course, each student should have the ability to demonstrate and/or work with:

- An understanding of the critical balance between research and practice in the planning of a significant project within design studio practice;
- The intellectual and creative abilities necessary to identify and characterise problems and issues arising from historical and theoretical aspects of practice.

Each student should have the ability to:

- Demonstrate a high level of originality and creativity in the development of knowledge and practice;
- Develop original and informed responses to problems and issues arising from critical analysis;

- Translate the principles of research to a written topic relevant to his/her own studio practice;
- Apply a significant range of the skills and techniques associated with current developments in design;
- Work constructively with others in a variety of educational, institutional and professional situations;
- Respond in an informed manner to the views and positions of others;
- Use a range of skills, techniques and media to communicate with peers and staff via seminar presentations.

Mode of delivery

Students are supported in the planning and execution of projects to create a body of work, which contributes to the end of year assessment, by critical feedback sessions, individual tutorials, lectures and seminars. Each student will at some point also present work to a group of fellow students and tutor(s), and in an end of year exhibition.

Stage 3: M.Des in Communication Design

At stage 3 (30 weeks, 120 credits total), the programme is delivered in three courses:

Core Element 3: Consolidating Design Studio Practice (90 credits)

Core Element 4: Critical Reflective Journal (15 credits)

GSA electives (15 credits)

Core Element 3: Consolidating Design Studio Practice

Aims

The course aims to:

- Enable students to produce a body of work that demonstrates a resolution of practice and critical understanding;
- Prepare students for the publication and presentation of work in collaboration with their peers and professionals in the field;
- Allow students to confidently contextualise their own work within the parameters of contemporary design practices.

Learning outcomes

At the end of the course, students should have the ability to:

- Demonstrate informed judgments and decisions in relation to current issues within design practice;
- Demonstrate a heightened awareness of their own position within and contribution to the wider contexts of art and design;
- Demonstrate a critically informed reflection upon progress thus far, and the possibilities for their future development as designers;
- Develop a significant artistic project for public exhibition and/or publication;
- Bring the results of critical re-appraisal and research to a design solution via a variety of articulations and iterations within the contemporary practices of design;
- Exhibit good practice and cooperation when working in professional contexts;
- Take responsibility for selection and display of own work whilst demonstrating respect and sensitivity to that of others;
- Respond in an informed and constructive manner to the views and positions of others.

Mode of delivery

Students are supported in planning and executing a substantial body of new work, by individual tutorials with Communication Design staff and visiting lecturers.

Core Element 4: Critical Reflective Journal

Aims

The course aims to:

- Enable students to work with a significant level of autonomy in the production of a critical reflective journal;
- Further develop the ability to identify and formulate critical insights into established practice;
- Further encourage informed critical reflection upon the relations between the student's own practice and current issues within the field of design;
- Encourage students to devise and explore alternative modes for the effective presentation of research material and articulations as proof of research.

Learning outcomes

At the end of the course, each student should have the ability to:

- Demonstrate an advanced understanding of the relations between studio practice and theory;
- Demonstrate an attitude equipped to identify, conceptualise and define new problems and issues within historical/critical discourses, especially in terms of their relation to studio practice;
- Execute a significant project of original research and development in the production of a dissertation;
- Demonstrate serious and extended critical engagement with current issues in design practice;
- Exercise autonomy, independence and initiative in the conception and production of a critical reflective journal;
- Make informed decisions concerning appropriate means for presentation of research material.

Mode of delivery

All students will be allocated a minimum number of tutorials at strategic points throughout the course. Additional tutorials are available on a sign-up basis. Each student will also present work in progress to a group of fellow students and tutor(s). This will take the form of an oral seminar presentation using appropriate media and techniques.

M.Des in Illustration
M.Des in Graphic Design
M.Des in Photography

Rationale: educational aims and intentions

The M.Des programmes in Graphic Design, Photography and Illustration are practice-led and process-oriented in relation to definitions of broad design practices. They are also committed to the acquisition of principles within design theory relating to educational and commercial contexts. The programmes provide methods for the interrogation of visual and textual research, posing questions relating to the role of the designer in society, and fundamental questions regarding personal and social responsibility.

The programme aims to:

- Offer each individual student the opportunity to critically develop his or her own work in the context of a rigorous but supportive intellectual climate;
- Encourage students to identify and explore key contextual issues relevant to their practice as contemporary designers;
- Enable graduates to critically evaluate their work and that of their peers in the context of contemporary design practices;
- Equip students with the highly developed intellectual, practical and interpersonal skills deemed necessary for careers in design.

Learning outcomes

Stage learning outcomes

At the end of each stage, each student should have the ability to work with and/or demonstrate:

	Stage 1 PgCert	Stage 2 PgDip	Stage 3 M.Des
Knowledge and Understanding	<p>A critical understanding of the principles and rationale for reappraisal of previous work.</p> <p>A basic understanding of the principles and rationale of independent research.</p>	<p>An understanding of the critical balance between research and practice in the planning of a significant project within studio practice.</p> <p>An enhanced understanding of studio practice in relation to discipline-specific contexts.</p>	<p>The ability to make informed judgments and decisions in relation to current issues within design practice.</p> <p>The ability to contextualize one's own work within broader contemporary practices.</p>
Applied Knowledge and Understanding	<p>The development of work for publication and/or display within a critical feedback session.</p> <p>The beginnings of</p>	<p>The development of a body of work for public display that reflects contemporary discourses in design to a professional</p>	<p>The development of a body of work for public display and/or publication for final assessment.</p>

Professional Practice: Communication, Presentation, Working with Others	an articulation of the student's own perspectives on design, authorship and collaboration.	standard. The capacity to undertake appropriate research in order to define and develop a relevant topic of inquiry.	
	An appropriate response to the views and positions of others, and an ability to offer substantial constructive criticism to others. An awareness of the ethical issues arising from design research and practice, in both education and industry.	A heightened awareness of his/her own position within and contribution to the wider discourses of design practice, including the ability to present and discuss his/her own work to designers and non-designers. The ability to make informed choices regarding the discipline-specific aspects of the development of individual learning experiences.	Good practice and cooperation when working in professional contexts, including working constructively with others in a variety of institutional and professional situations.

Proposed programme structure

PgCert	PgDip	M.Des
15	15	15
15	15	15
15	15	15
15	15	15

Stage	1	2	3
GSA mand. course	15		
SoD course (CCCP)	15		
GSA open elective		15	
Vis Com core	30	45	45
Learning Journal			15

In line with the PGT Common Academic Framework, this programme will be constructed from credit rated courses, each of a multiple of 15 credits. Students will be able to exit from

the programme at 3 points, with a PgCert (after 15 weeks), a PgDip (after 30 weeks), or a full M.Des (after 45 weeks).

Stages 1 and 2 of the proposed M.Des programmes in Illustration, Graphic Design and Photography are identical in form to those of the M.Des in Communication Design. Although the work produced by students on the one year programmes is likely to be more discipline-specific, course descriptors remain the same.

In Stage 1, students will take a mandatory 'basic skills' course, along with all other taught postgraduate students at GSA. They will also take the School of Design course 'Culture, Context and Contemporary Practice', joining students on the M.Des in Design Innovation. These courses will be supplemented by Core Element 1: Critical Reflection on Proposals (30 credits). As part of the application process for the programme, students will be asked to submit a proposal of 500 words, outlining what they intend to do during the two years of the programme. This proposal will not only be used in evaluating applications, but serve as the basic template for what the student will do throughout their time as a postgraduate student at GSA.

At Stage 2, students will opt for one elective course from the range of Stage 2 PGT electives available across GSA (and as part of the development of these programmes, new open electives will be put together which can be offered across the institution by staff and departments within the School of Design). In addition, they will take Core Element 2: Contextualising Design Studio Practice (45 credits). Among other concerns, this course will interrogate notions of authorship and collaboration, as well as exploring relevant social, political, cultural, commercial and educational contexts.

Across Stage 3, students will take Core Element 3: Final Portfolio (45 credits). In addition, they will produce a critical reflective journal (Core Element 4) for 15 credits.

Specific aims, learning outcomes and mode of delivery of courses

The aims of each stage reflect the intended learning outcomes of the M.Des in Illustration, Graphic Design and Photography programmes. Each stage builds upon the learning outcomes and aims of the previous stage. The achievement of specific learning outcomes is necessary to progress from one stage of the programme to the next. Courses are designed to enable students to achieve the set learning outcomes. In addition to the core courses, a range of mandatory and elective courses support students further to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme and extend their knowledge and skills in directions chosen by the student.

As Stages 1 and 2 of the one year programmes are identical to the first two stages of the two year programme, please see descriptors above for aims and intended outcomes for those blocks of credits. In Stage 3, the critical reflective journal has the same format and size as that produced during the second half of the final stage of the two year programme. Only the following course is unique:

Core Course 3: Final Portfolio (45 credits)

Aims

The course aims to:

- Enable students to produce a body of work that demonstrates a resolution of practice and critical understanding;
- Prepare students for the publication and presentation of work;
- Allow students to confidently contextualise their own work within the parameters of contemporary design practices.

Learning outcomes

At the end of the course, students should have the ability to:

- Demonstrate informed judgments and decisions in relation to current issues within design practice;
- Demonstrate a heightened awareness of their own position within and contribution to the wider contexts of photography, illustration or graphic design;
- Demonstrate a critically informed reflection upon progress thus far, and the possibilities for their future development as designers;
- Develop a significant portfolio of work for public exhibition, publication, and/or final assessment;
- Take responsibility for selection and display of own work whilst demonstrating respect and sensitivity to that of others;
- Respond in an informed and constructive manner to the views and positions of others.

Mode of delivery

Students are supported in planning and executing a body of new work, by individual tutorials with illustration, graphic design, and photography staff and visiting lecturers.

Anticipated demand on staffing, resources and services

The initial developments of the suite of new taught postgraduate programmes in Visual Communication have been orchestrated by Paul Stickley, as part of his remit within the School of Design as Head of Visual Communication. Clearly, putting together the curriculum content for the new programmes, and managing their launch, will require some dedicated staff time. In the first year, these are expected to be:

- 0.2 FTE programme leader (this will be covered by the Head of Visual Communication, at no additional staffing cost)
- 0.2 FTE input from member of staff in Visual Communication
- 180 hours of back-fill VL provision, to cover 2 x 0.2 FTE input from members of staff in Visual Communication
- 0.1 FTE administrative support
- 0.1 FTE technical support

Studio space will be required to accommodate the student cohort for these programmes; this will be a significant challenge during its development. There will also be a necessary outlay on consumables: computers, printers, stationery materials, camcorders, software licences, etc. However, costs will be kept down by sharing of courses with other programmes of study within the School of Design and across GSA. Further, it is hoped that some of the components of the programme (whether courses, or projects within those courses) will operate as commercial interests, attracting the investment of external partners.

For a full breakdown of expected costings, please see the attached financial rationale.

Compatibility of the proposal with the School's existing portfolio of programmes

The proposed M.Des programmes will be fully integrated with, and contribute to, the GSA taught postgraduate Common Academic Framework. They will derive elements from the framework (a structure based on 15 credit courses, the Stage 1 mandatory course, and so on), and will make available new open elective courses of study to other programmes. Common courses will be developed across the School of Design at postgraduate level that can fruitfully link together students studying on the M.Des Textiles and Fashion, the M.Des in Design Innovation, the M.Des in Communication Design, and the M.Des programmes in Illustration, Graphic Design, and Photography (as well as other forthcoming postgraduate programmes within the School of Design).

Finally, the one year and two year Vis Com programmes will complement the array of other postgraduate programmes already available at GSA. Perhaps most crucially, the introduction of these programmes will facilitate the growth of postgraduate numbers at GSA – and contribute to the development of a distinctive postgraduate community.

Draft project plan

Action	Date
Production of Statement of Intent for Vis Com M.Des programmes	March 2009
Presentation of Statement of Intent to GSA committees (SoD board of studies, PG committee...)	April/May 2009
Begin advertising for Vis Com M.Des programmes	June 2009
Begin recruitment for Vis Com M.Des programmes	Sept 2009
Stage 1 Validation for M.Des programmes	Nov 2009
Stage 2 Validation for M.Des programmes	March 2010
Launch of Vis Com M.Des programmes	Sept 2010