

COURSE SPECIFICATION - BA (Hons) Visual Communication



1. General information

Course Title	Visual Communication
UCAS code	W211
Course / Award Title	BA (Hons)
Awarding Institution	Leeds Arts University
Institution at which course is delivered	Leeds Arts University
Professional Accreditation (if applicable)	N/A
Relevant QAA Benchmark(s)	Art & Design 2017

Awards	Credits	Duration	Mode of study
BA (Hons) Visual Communication	360 (180 ECTS)	3 years	FT
BA Visual Communication*	300 (150 ECTS)	3 years	FT
DipHE in Visual Communication*	240 (120 ECTS)	2 years	FT
CertHE in Visual Communication*	120 (60 ECTS)	1 year	FT
*Exit award only			

2. Course Aims

This course aims to provide you with:

The BA (Hons) Visual Communications course offers a truly multidisciplinary environment underpinned by design methods. Students on the course create work which both, reflects their own interests, and responds to the requirements of the contemporary creative industries. We provide an opportunity to develop a personal and professional understanding of visual communication within a range of contexts including: studio-based practice, live projects, collaborative learning and work-related learning. Through a carefully structured three-year process, students will learn to become autonomous practitioners capable of applying intellectual and practical skills in a chosen area of visual communication or further study.

Learning and teaching is based on design problem-solving methods, which draws upon the academic and industry experience of the staff team. Delivery methods are structured to facilitate the development of core practical and theoretical design principals, and media specific technical skills. This pedagogy utilises paradigms and terminology from film, television, graphic design, photography, illustration and event design.

The course mirrors much of contemporary industry, where illustrators, videographers, graphic designers, photographers, spatial designers etc. work alongside one another, in multidisciplinary teams, and learn from each other's methods and approaches. Students graduate with a well-developed ability to work with others in creative and collaborative contexts. The course has a commitment to preparing students for the requirements of the creative industries where graduates are employed in range of ways including salaried positions, freelance working and portfolio careers.

This course aims to provide you with:

- A multidisciplinary course of study which enables you to visually communicate employing a range of technical skills and design disciplines
- A high quality and challenging multidisciplinary design education in a stimulating and appropriately resourced environment
- An academically rigorous honours level experience that engages with industry practices and discourses suitable to contemporary creative industries
- An opportunity to apply your skills and understanding of visual communication in meaningful and purposeful ways
- Opportunities to develop your personal and professional understanding of Visual Communication within contexts including: live projects, collaborations, placements and work-related learning
- The ability to apply theoretical and practical skills in your chosen area of communication practice
- The ability to custom design your creative skillset for sustained employment responsive to emerging design issues and trends

On successful completion of the course, you will be able to:

- Respond to complex and challenging creative briefs using your own individual design methods and approaches
- Communicate effectively within a professional context
- Practice self-identified media skills to a professional standard
- Engage in critical debates around contemporary design issues
- Conduct design research in an effective and useful manner appropriate to your chosen field within the creative industries
- Communicate effectively through visual, verbal and written means

3. Distinctive Features

Distinctive features of the course:

- Multidisciplinary course of study embracing a range of visual communication approaches, methods and genres
- A broad-based approach to design which includes graphic design, photography, moving image and illustration (in both two and three dimensions)
- A learning environment that supports the development of deep and autonomous learning
- Introduces you to the application of visual communication in meaningful ways, with a focus on working with clients, collaborators and audiences
- A consistent emphasis on real, external projects and work-related learning throughout all three levels of the course
- Creates opportunities to collaborate with peers, external groups, and/or establish enterprise projects
- Integration of history, ideas and practices in design, into creative projects of your own devising, whilst encouraging you to contextualise your practice and engage with wider critical debates
- Offers a course of study that encourages and supports questioning, experimentation and innovation

4. Course Structure

4a. Module Framework

Level 4	Credit Points	ECTS	Learning Hours
LAUVC401 Visual Exploration	60	30	600
LAUVC404 Professional Contexts 1	60	30	600
Level 5	Credit Points	ECTS	Learning Hours
LAUVC501 Visual Literacy	60	30	600
LAUVC502 Professional Contexts 2	60	30	600
Level 6	Credit Points	ECTS	Learning Hours
LAUVC601 Negotiated Practice	60	30	600
LAUVC602 Communication Practice	60	30	600

4b. Course Map / Structure

Level 4	
Semester One	Visual Exploration (LAUVC401) <i>60 credits</i>
Semester Two	Professional Contexts (LAUVC404) <i>60 credits</i>
120 credits (60 ECTS credits) Certificate of Higher Education (Exit Award)	

Level 5	
Semester One	Visual Literacy (LAUVC501) <i>60 credits</i>
Semester Two	Professional Contexts 2 (LAUVC502) <i>60 credits</i>
120 credits (60 ECTS credits) Diploma of Higher Education (Exit Award)	

Level 6	
Semester One	Negotiated Practice (LAU601) <i>60 credits</i>
Semester Two	Communication Practice (LAU602) <i>60 credits</i>
120 credits (60 ECTS credits) BA (Hons) [COURSE]	

*Students who fail to complete 360 credits but have accumulated no fewer than 300 credits will be awarded an Ordinary degree.

5. Course Learning Outcomes

Learning is assessed at each level of the course. This develops from introductory work within the specialism of the course at level 4, through development of skills and ideas at level 5, progressing to application and synthesis of skills, originality, and theory in practice at level 6 as indicated by the FHEQ qualification descriptors.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) comprise the Level Learning Outcomes, which define what you are expected to be able to do on completion of each level. Level Learning Outcomes are achieved through successfully completing all modules at that level. Expectations for your learning are expressed within each module.

Level 4 (CertHE)

Level Learning Outcomes	Modules
<i>By the end of Level 4, you will be expected to:</i>	
4.1 Demonstrate an awareness and understanding of the relationship between the theoretical and practical contexts of visual communication.	LAUVC401 LAUVC404
4.2 Demonstrate an ability to problem solve, generate informed ideas and evaluate their appropriateness for communication issues.	LAUVC401 LAUVC404
4.3 Evidence an applied familiarity of visual communication materials, tools, techniques and processes to produce work that responds to communication issues and needs.	LAUVC401 LAUVC404
4.4 Demonstrate appropriate communication and self-management skills to enable independent learning.	LAUVC401 LAUVC404
4.5 Demonstrate an understanding of the professional and contextual location of creative practice.	LAUVC401 LAUVC404

Level 5 (DipHE)

Level Learning Outcomes	Modules
<i>By the end of Level 5, you will be expected to:</i>	
5.1 Demonstrate a critical awareness and applied understanding of the relationship between the theoretical and practical contexts of your own creative concerns.	LAUVC501 LAUVC502
5.2 Demonstrate an ability to generate informed ideas, concepts, proposals, solutions and/or arguments, and apply using the language, materials, processes and techniques of a designated discipline.	LAUVC501 LAUVC502
5.3 Evidence an appropriate application of materials, tools, techniques and processes to produce work that responds to critically informed communication issues and needs.	LAUVC501 LAUVC502

5.4 Demonstrate an understanding of the professional and contextual location of your practice, and the communication and self-management skills required to enable independent learning within this context.	LAUVC501 LAUVC502
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Level 6 (BA Hons)

Level Learning Outcomes	Modules
<i>By the end of Level 6, you will be expected to:</i>	
6.1 Demonstrate an independent critical understanding, specific knowledge and specialist understanding of the professional and contextual location of your practice.	LAUVC601 LAUVC602
6.2 Evidence the synthesis of your knowledge and understanding to generate effective creative solutions within visual communication in order to progress into employment or other progression opportunities.	LAUVC601 LAUVC602
6.3 Evidence a high level of process and professional skills that demonstrate a critically informed application of the materials and professional skills relevant to your own design approach to visual communication.	LAUVC601 LAUVC602
6.4 Use information, experiences and a range of appropriate communication methods to present yourself as a professional practitioner.	LAUVC601 LAUVC602

6. Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategies

Our overall approach to engagement is outlined in our statement on [Higher Education teaching & learning at Leeds Arts University](#).

6a. Teaching and Learning

Level 4

The first year introduces you to the underlying concepts and principals of Visual Communication, contextualising their relevance to contemporary practice within the creative industries. It also introduces the breadth of practice covered by the course via the fields of: illustration, moving image, photography and graphic design. You will explore the connections between design theory and practice, learning how to create effective and engaging work in a range of creative industry related contexts.

During the second semester there will be a greater emphasis on developing projects of your own and becoming an autonomous learner. This will be encouraged through the development of your creative projects. Regular taught sessions will provide a stable core framework for you to work in, and independent study will be supported through individual and group tutorials.

You will begin to develop an awareness and understanding of the relationship between your own practice and the contemporary creative industries. Through staged research tasks, you will investigate a specific self-identified aspect of the creative industry in greater depth. You will investigate case studies of industry practices and roles, employability and employment. You will begin to develop key transferable skills and understanding of professional presentation practices. You will begin to develop the skills to be a reflective practitioner, to analyse, evaluate and reflect on your strengths and weaknesses as a learner. The second semester is externally-focussed with a curriculum supported by talks from visiting professionals.

Level 5

During the second year you will identify, and then develop, the focus of your communication practice, and individual design methods. From this you will begin to develop a bespoke design skillset based on the needs of the work you are creating. Teaching will facilitate your individual research into relevant areas of the creative industries and provide strategies for networking. You will identify the media and approaches relevant to your industry position and base your selection of briefs and projects upon these. There will be opportunities to explore a range of collaboration and engagement, both within, and beyond the university. Through an integrated approach to theory and practice you will advance, broaden and promote depth in your learning.

The first semester will provide a core framework of teaching from academic staff and instruction and support from workshop staff. Your learning will be supported by timetabled tasks. Workshops and tutorials will help you identify skills central to your practice. Alongside this you will be supported to develop awareness of learning approaches that are most effective for you, and use these to support your research and skills acquisition. Through this approach your development as an autonomous learner is supported.

During the second semester you will investigate the specific areas of the professional world that relate to your emerging practice, and develop a deepened understanding of the relationship between your own practice and the contemporary creative industries. You will continue to develop skills appropriate to your practice, and apply them to real life-projects (whether self-directed, client-based or competitions). You will develop a portfolio of work to help secure work-related learning experiences such as: assisting professional practitioners; answering client defined briefs; collaborating beyond the course; work-experience. You will learn to pitch your ideas in an industry context and create promotional tools, both digital and physical, which relate to the creative field in which you aim to work.

Level 6

In the third year, you will continue to develop and deepen professional and entrepreneurial skills in an area of practice you identify as relevant to your own individual design methodology. You will undertake a critically-engaged project and facilitate it through external links, exhibitions and conferences. On graduating, you'll be ready to make a positive contribution to your chosen profession and to society, leaving us with a bespoke skill set, a clearly defined design methodology, and a clear strategy for moving on to employment, self-employment or further study.

In the first semester, through negotiation with tutors you will identify a design research question to deepen your critical understanding of your individual practice. You will use primary and secondary research techniques to explore the potential markets and audiences for your practice, and through self-negotiated briefs you will establish working connections with appropriate parts of the creative industries beyond the university. You will extend your ability to communicate and collaborate appropriately with external partners, and to respond effectively to design communication briefs set by them. You will question and critique your bespoke design skillset in response to a changing cultural landscape through one or more research-led projects. This process will be documented in your Design Report. You will develop an awareness of entry-level professional standards within your chosen field of practice and continue developing the technical skills appropriate to entry-level employment within it. During the first semester you will determine the approaches you are using, through a combination of taught sessions and autonomous learning in preparation for the final semester, where you will take full responsibility for the direction of your practice, whilst still actively supported by academic and workshop staff.

The second semester provides an opportunity to produce a body of work which will function as a showcase for your skills and creative vision. Your work will reflect your individual critical concerns and the requirements of your chosen field of practice. Through negotiation with tutors

you will develop a brief which facilitates the research, design and production of visual communication products, which will demonstrate your abilities and potential to future employers, clients and collaborators. You can work alone or in collaboration with other students or practitioners outside the university. Your work can be created to meet the requirements of existing communication formats: publications, film competitions etc. or to present new possibilities and potentials for contemporary visual communication practice. Your bespoke design skillset will provide the foundation upon which all your work is built.

You will develop the capability to work at an entry-level of professional standards within your chosen field. Demonstrating: technical skills; aesthetic understanding; transferable skills of professional practice including the project management of a complex design project.

Throughout the module delivery across all three years you will be encouraged to undertake independent study to supplement and consolidate what is being learnt and taught.

6b. Assessment

The aim of assessment is to inform you of your individual progress as you work through the course. Feedback is an essential element of assessment and explained in more detail in 6c. Assessment also ensures that you are meeting the required academic standards for the award.

Assessment reflects the teaching and learning content and is an integral part of the learning process. Specific assessment strategies and submission requirements are explained in the briefs that you will receive at the start of each module. Assessment is designed to reflect creative and academic practice and is aligned with the appropriate level of study. As far as possible assessment will be authentic in simulating professional practices.

Your creative output therefore is the application of your learning, and will demonstrate the extent to which you have learned, developed, assimilated and mediated your knowledge, understanding and skills into appropriate forms for submission requirements. You will evidence module expectations, as expressed as 'what you are expected to learn' in module specifications.

The assessment of the modules is holistic; all material presented for assessment in each module is taken as a whole and a single mark is arrived at. Most assessment is by portfolio submission, the exact nature and content of which is determined by the subject matter, content and learning expectations for each module and is specified in your module briefs.

Your work will be assessed holistically according to the undergraduate Assessment Criteria and Marking Scheme. These criteria are used to evaluate your learning against the learning expectations specified for each module. Levels are clearly differentiated by learning outcomes, module expectations, teaching and learning approaches and assessment design.

6c. Feedback

Tutors will provide feedback, both in support of your ongoing development, as well as in direct response to your work formally within assessment contexts.

Provision of ongoing feedback - defined as information communicated to students with the intention of improving learning - is a significant and distinctive strength of the course. It is demonstrated through frequent and ongoing discussions between staff and students.

Formative

You will receive formative feedback on your progress throughout the module in a number of ways. You will partake in ongoing evaluation within the teaching and learning on the course,

developing skills in reflection and dialogue and receive ongoing formative feedback from the teaching staff and peers. All the modules on this course contain formal formative feedback sessions where you will receive feedback on your progress to meet this developmental aim.

Examples of formative feedback include (without being limited to):

- Peer Reviews
- Group Tutorials
- Individual Progress Tutorials

Summative

At the end of the module you will receive summative feedback represented by a grade with tutor comments on your work. This feedback will help you to understand how you performed on the module, clarify your strengths and identify areas for further consideration.