

MA GRAPHIC COMMUNICATION DESIGN



MA Graphic Communication Design

Awarding Body	University of the Arts London
College	Central Saint Martins
School	S School
Programme	CSM Graphic Communication Design (L031)
Course AOS Code	CSMMAGCDX01
FHEQ Level	Level 7 Masters
Course Credits	180
Mode	Extended Full Time
Method	Face to Face
Duration of Course	2 years
Teaching Weeks	60 weeks
Valid From	2025/26
Collaboration	N/A
UAL Subject Classification	Communication and Graphic Design
PSRB	N/A
Work placement offered	N/A
Course Entry Requirements	<p>The standard entry requirements for this course are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An honours degree <p>Or</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An equivalent EU/international qualification. <p>AP(E)L – Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning</p> <p>Exceptionally applicants who do not meet these course entry requirements may still be considered. The course team will consider each application that demonstrates additional strengths and alternative evidence. This might, for example, be demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Related academic or work experience • The quality of the personal statement • A strong academic or other professional reference <p>Or a combination of these factors.</p> <p>Each application will be considered on its own merit but we cannot guarantee an offer in each case.</p> <p>English language requirements</p> <p>IELTS level 6.5 or above, with at least 5.5 in reading, writing, listening and speaking (please check our main English language requirements webpage).</p>
Selection Criteria	<p>We select applicants according to potential and current ability in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative intelligence and aesthetic sensitivity demonstrated by design portfolio • Flexibility, self-awareness and capacity to cultivate a research-driven practice • Written and verbal communication skills • Capacity to reflect critically on graphic communication design • Independence, sense of purpose and a capacity to commit to coursework • Relevant previous experience • Alignment of personal aims and objectives to the curriculum.

Awards and Percentage of Scheduled Learning Year 1

Awards	Credits
Postgraduate Certificate (Exit Only)	60

Year 2

Awards	Credits
Postgraduate Diploma (Exit Only)	120
Master of Arts	180

Scheduled Learning Split by Level

Level 7	18%
Total Scheduled Learning Split	18%

Course Aims and Outcomes

The Aims and Outcomes of this Course are as follows:

Aim/Outcome	Description
Aim	Facilitate the development of critical enquiry through open-ended exploration with the media, methods, and skills of graphic communication design.
Aim	Support an engagement with graphic communication design practice as a tool for relating to—and intervening in—complex networks of cultural, social, and environmental conditions.
Aim	Promote critical dialogue and the continual co-creation of our discipline by drawing together a community of practitioners with a broad range of knowledge and experiences.
Outcome	Use graphic communication design to frame open-ended questions and structure a rigorous research enquiry.
Outcome	Identify and activate positions within your practice to interrogate or intervene in existing knowledge, practices, and contexts.
Outcome	Engage in iterative and process-driven experimentation and develop methods of investigation that inform or arise from your positions.
Outcome	Communicate effectively and engage in critical dialogue with publics through interconnected written and studio practice.
Outcome	Engage critically and skilfully with form and production to project your research practice into new territory.
Outcome	Advance your practice through critical self-reflection.

Distinctive Features	
1	Open practice: This course provides a structured and open framework for the development of a critical practice in an expanding field of graphic communication design. Our community of designers works across established specialisms such as typography, book design, and illustration, as well as emerging digital and social practices.
2	Enquiry through experimentation: We engage with graphic communication design and writing practice as forms of research. Through rigorous experimentation with visual media and tools of communication we ask questions, interrogate existing knowledge, and propose new forms of knowledge.
3	Contextualized practice: We position graphic design as a relational practice that not only reflects but actively reconfigures its cultural, social, and environmental contexts.
4	Critical exchange: This course gathers together a highly international student and staff community, and the wide variety of their individual experiences provides a foundation for critical examination of historical and contemporary contexts for practice.

Course Detail

MA Graphic Communication Design explores how the production of knowledge is intertwined with its form, context, and circulation. The course takes an expanded approach to the idea of research, combining studio and writing practice to engage critically with graphic design as both a creative practice and a subject of study. Through iterative and open-ended experimentation with visual media and tools of communication, students develop work that investigates existing knowledge, activates positions, and projects new forms of knowledge—within and beyond the discipline.

Engaging with studio and writing practice as a form of rigorous enquiry, students and staff together explore how graphic design is a situated and relational discipline that both reflects and reconfigures its cultural, social, and environmental conditions. From this position, our community of practitioners critically interrogates the academic and professional contexts for practice as well as the very nature of the discipline itself, continually co-defining and re-defining the expanding field of graphic design.

MA Graphic Communication Design, along with BA Graphic Communication Design and a small group of PhD students, is part of the Graphic Communication Design programme. In addition to sharing an academic team and studio spaces, the programme offers a range of extracurricular events, lectures, live briefs, and other activities.

Engaging with climate, racial and social justice in the Graphic Communication Design Community at Central Saint Martins

The accelerating climate and ecological emergency is exposing the unsustainability and injustice of the political, social, and economic systems that have created them. An overarching goal for our programme community has necessarily become to question how graphic communication design practices can critique and intervene in the systems of extraction and exploitation that have led us to the brink of collapse.

Historically, graphic design has serviced various imbalanced power structures, and in this way, has contributed to perpetuating climate, racial and social injustices. At the same time, our discipline's media and methods provide powerful tools for negotiating and communicating the complexities of the current moment.

The need for high quality and carefully nuanced communication is increasing as the complexity of intersecting crises escalates. In the context of widespread disinformation and cultures of media illiteracy, graphic communication design's capacity for enhancing existing forms of public discourse – and generating new

forms – is much needed.

Our programme is distinct in both its scale and its diversity and is well positioned to engage with our present challenges. We will consider these kinds of questions from a range of creative perspectives:

- How might graphic and communication design engage **proactively** with wider institutions and systems?
- What role might **our practices** play in envisioning just and sustainable alternatives?
- What is the role of communication in redefining and recreating relations between humanity and nature?

As a community, we will collectively reimagine current and future role(s) for graphic communication design in the face of these urgent crises. We see this as a serious and vital challenge—the future has yet to be designed!

Course Units

On MA Graphic Communication Design, coursework and learning build successively across three units. In response to project briefs set by tutors and through independent planning, you will develop a body of studio and written work that explores graphic design as a research practice, articulates your positions, and extends the propositions of your work through attention to form and production.

Presentation, discussion, and critique are essential to the development of your practice and provide the foundation for learning on the course. This will happen in group and individual tutorials as well as through tutor-led, peer-to-peer, and self-reflective assessment. In addition, you will interrogate existing and new contexts of practice through reading groups and seminars, and you will develop a critical engagement with form through short making-led workshops.

A series of course lectures consolidates knowledge across all units and further supports progression through the curriculum by providing broader context for the study and practice of graphic communication design.

A note on unit titles: In the field of logic, the arrow symbol [→] is used to indicate a material implication. For example, Methods → Positions could be read as Methods imply Positions. The double-headed arrow [↔] is used to indicate a material equivalence. Thus, Methods ↔ Positions could be read as either Methods means the same as Positions or Methods if and only if Positions. In the case of unit titles in MA Graphic Communication Design, these symbols are used to indicate that differentiated aspects of practice are, in fact, not only cumulative but co-defining.

Unit 1: Methods

In Unit 1 you will challenge conventional notions of research by exploring how the media, methods, and skills of graphic communication design practice can be used to enquire, to interrogate, or to speculate new forms of knowledge. Guided by studio briefs set by tutors, you will initiate a series of iterative and process-led experiments. These experiments will develop your understanding of, and capacity to engage in, open-ended enquiry through making. In lieu of singular and closed outcomes, each of your projects will grow through systematic engagement in a method.

Unit 2: Methods ↔ Positions

In Unit 2 you will explore how positions arise through, or are inherent in, experimentation with methods and media. You will situate yourself within the discipline of graphic design, such as in context of a medium, production process, or mode of distribution. You will also explore how graphic design frames your engagement with broader contexts, such as social and environmental conditions, institutions, markets, technologies, other fields of study, etc.

Your coursework will develop through continued iterative and process-led experimentation, and by critically contextualising your practice through reading, writing, and association. This will enable you to explore how a research practice articulates, enacts, and publishes (makes public) new forms of knowledge through and about graphic design.

Unit 3: Methods ↔ Positions ↔ Projections

In Unit 3 you will project your research practice into new territory through a more critical interrogation of the relationship between the form of a message, its medium, and its context. Building on your iterative, experimental, and process-led work from previous units, you will consider how engaging with the details of production opens more possibilities for your work.

You will also consider how projections, as acts of publication, distribution, and/or circulation, are relational and contextual. You will explore how your practice develops through its interaction with networks, publics, and audiences.

Important note concerning academic progression through your course: If you are required to retake a unit you will need to cease further study on the course until you have passed the unit concerned. Once you have successfully passed this unit, you will be able to proceed onto the next unit. Retaking a unit might require you to take time out of study, which could affect other things such as student loans or the visa status for international students.

CSM Academic Support is delivered by a team of academics and practitioners working alongside your course to help you progress and achieve your maximum potential as a student. Academic Support can help you to develop your skills in different areas, including critical thinking, research and writing, time management, presentations and working independently and collaboratively. These may be offered as part of your timetabled classes or as bookable tutorials and workshops.

Mode of study

MA Graphic Communication Design is offered in extended full-time mode which runs for 60 weeks over two academic years. You will be expected to commit to 30 hours per week to study, which includes teaching time and independent study.

The course has been designed in this way to enable you to pursue studies, while also undertaking part-time employment, internships, or care responsibilities.

Credit and award requirements

The course is credit-rated at 180 credits.

On successfully completing the course, you will gain a Master of Arts (MA degree).

Under the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, an MA is Level 7. All units must be passed in order to achieve the MA but the classification of the award is derived from the mark for the final unit only.

If you are unable to continue on the course, a Postgraduate Certificate (PG Cert) will normally be offered following the successful completion of 60 credits, or a Postgraduate Diploma (PG Dip) following the successful completion of 120 credits.

Learning and Teaching Methods

The learning and teaching methods devised for this course include:

- Staff-led briefs
- Negotiated briefs
- Lectures
- Workshops
- Tutorials
- Discussions and critiques
- Tutor-led, peer-to-peer, and self-reflective assessment

Your engagement with technical workshops at CSM

The development of technical skills relevant to your practice are an important part of your learning on MA Graphic Communication Design. Throughout your studies, you will interact with a range of workshop facilities related to contemporary and historical media and methods in graphic design within areas including: Print & Production, Digital Media, Film & Video and/or Photography. Your engagements will include some organised introductions, inductions, and technical sessions associated with specific units and taught sessions. At the same time, MA GCD is a media agnostic course in which you are expected to take responsibility for identifying which media and methods are most important to your learning and develop your practice by consulting proactively with the relevant workshops and technicians to mature your skills on an independent basis—this is particularly important during your final year of study.

Assessment Methods

- Presentations
- Media-based projects
- Written work
- Self-evaluation

Reference Points

The following reference points were used in designing the course:

- FHEQ Level 7 Descriptor
- Art and Design Benchmark Statement

Course Diagram

MA Graphic Communication Design – PLEASE NOTE DUE TO VACATION DATES, SPECIFIC DELIVERY WEEKS MAY CHANGE.

S=summative assessment

LEVEL 7 - Year 1																														
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
Unit 1: Methods (60 credits)																				S	Unit 2: Methods ↔ Positions (60 credits)									
LEVEL 7 - Year 2																														
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
Unit 2 continued										S	Unit 3: Methods ↔ Positions ↔ Projections (60 credits)																			S

The University will use all reasonable endeavours to provide the Course and the services described in this Output. There may be occasions whereby the University needs to add, remove or alter content in relation to your Course as may be appropriate for example the latest requirements of a commissioning or accrediting body, or in response to student feedback, or to comply with applicable law or due to circumstances beyond its control. The University aim to inform you of any changes as soon as is reasonably practicable