Programme Specification

Award and title: BA (Hons) Graphic Design

School:	School of the Arts
Subject area:	Design
Entry from academic year:	2022/23
in the month(s) of	October
Awarding institution:	York St John University
Teaching institution:	York St John University
Delivery location:	York St John University
Programme/s accredited by:	Not applicable
Exit awards:	Certificate of Higher Education Graphic Design Diploma of Higher Education Graphic Design BA (Ord) Graphic Design
UCAS code / GTTR / other:	
Joint Honours combinations:	
QAA subject benchmark statement(s):	Art and Design 2019 https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/subject-benchmark-statements/sbs-art-and-design-17.pdf?sfvrsn=71eef781_22
Mode/s of study:	[Undergraduate periods of study](#)[1] for full time
Language of study:	English
Paired with Foundation Year	No
Study abroad opportunities:	Yes
Opt-in YSJU Placement Year opportunity:	Yes

Introduction and special features

Within the exciting and competitive field of Graphic Design you will learn relevant skills by undertaking a mixture of experimental, unique simulated, collaborative, and live industry-based projects and this will prepare your successful career in the subject. Graphic Design is broad and varied, and in this programme you will explore areas such as typography, branding, editorial, user experience, packaging, and motion graphic design to develop your own, unique voice.

The world is continually changing and the role of the designer with it. Studying BA (Hons) Graphic Design at York St John University will enable you to gain a fuller understanding of not only discipline specific theory but a broad multidisciplined and universal comprehension of design, contextually sympathetic with a wide commercial and civic remit toward changes in human living, environment, and economy. This ensures that you will become highly invested in and adapted towards independent enquiry, are self-sufficient and flexible, qualities evidenced in a growing community of successful alumni.

You will be introduced to Graphic Design principles, theory, and practice by engaging in criticism, analysis, and debate and by undertaking experimental and conceptual projects that encourage novel and original ways of thinking in an individual way. This programme is delivered, by a core team of industry expert lecturers and technicians, visiting lecturers and professional designers who embrace the combined role of designer, including researching, writing, making, and communicating.

---

[1] The standard period of study will apply unless otherwise stated

The Graphic Design programme explores how communication through design can affect positive change within the context of global challenges such as social justice and climate change. Innovative solutions which seek to resolve these issues can be achieved by highly effective, innovative, forms of visual communication. Each level of the course occupied over the duration of three years, begins by establishing a competency-based approach and then fostering an intellectual capacity to experiment, test and apply strengthening transferrable skills.

The programme sits alongside a suite of design disciplines including Animation, Games Design, Interior Design and Product Design. This creates a community of practice which encourages collaboration and shared experience.

We aim for students to graduate as confident 'citizen designers' with critical, empathetic skills in mind and ensuring their status as future communicators in an ever complex and challenging world.

Admissions criteria

You must meet the minimum entry requirements which are published on the programme specific webpage. In addition, you must have:
- Portfolio of creative work
- Attend a course specific interview

If your first language is not English, you need to take an IELTS test or an equivalent qualification accepted by the University (see https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/international/how-to-apply/english-language-requirements/).

If you do not have traditional qualifications, you may be eligible for entry on the basis of Recognition of prior learning (RPL). We also consider applications for entry with advanced standing.

Programme aim(s)

The aims of the programme are to:

- Provide a specialised and personalised education relevant to employment in the subject of Graphic Design and related areas
- Develop a comprehensive knowledge of contemporary Graphic Design theory and related creative processes, and professional practice
- Provide skills and knowledge necessary to experiment with and make creative use of new and emerging technologies related to Graphic Design
- Provide a clear view of the subject of Graphic Design, allowing you to utilise critical, analytical, and reflective approaches in a developed portfolio of work.

Programme learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of the programme students will be able to:

Level 4
PLO 4.1
Demonstrate awareness of the practical and contextual understanding of Graphic Design

PLO 4.2
Demonstrate judgement and self-critique in the development of initial ideas through to final outcomes

PLO 4.3
Demonstrate understanding and application of the design process including: interpretation, observation, investigation, enquiry, ideation, experimentation, production and evaluation

PLO 4.4
Communicate and present their study/work clearly, accurately, and reliably, and with structured and coherent arguments

PLO 4.5
Evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems related to their area(s) of study and/or work

PLO 4.6
Identify and engage with relevant academic literature to inform understanding.

Level 5
PLO 5.1
Demonstrate knowledge and critical understanding of the established principles of Graphic Design

PLO 5.2
Define and apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, including, where appropriate, situating your practice in a professional context

PLO 5.3
Construct and apply knowledge of the fundamental methods of enquiry in Graphic Design and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems

PLO 5.4
Interact effectively with others, for example, through collaboration, collective endeavour and negotiation

PLO 5.5
Construct convincing ideas, concepts, proposals, solutions or arguments independently and/or collaboratively as self-initiated activity and/or in response to diverse set briefs

PLO 5.6
Source, evaluate, and analyse relevant academic literature to inform understanding.

Level 6
PLO 6.1
Demonstrate an independent and critical understanding of the profession of Graphic Design including an awareness of the professional and contextual location of their emerging practice

PLO 6.2
Evidence the synthesis of their knowledge and understanding informed by research, practice, and theory in their discipline(s), including: the critical, contextual, historical, conceptual, economic, social, environmental and ethical dimensions of their emerging practice

PLO 6.3
Critically evaluate and analyse information, experiences, arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data, to make judgements, and to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution - or identify a range of solutions - to a problem

PLO 6.4
Professionally and appropriately communicate and present complex information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences

PLO 6.5
Exercise self-management skills in managing workloads and meeting deadlines whilst accommodating change and uncertainty

PLO 6.6
Construct relevant research methods and methodologies, and present fluent oral and written communication that adheres to academic conventions.

Programme structure

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensatable (NC) or compensatable (X)
					Module status	
DES4020M	4	1	Context of Practice	20	C	X
DES4009M	4	1	Design Process	20	C	X
DES4012M	4	1	Graphic Design Principles	20	C	X
DES4017M	4	2	Graphic Design Practice 1	60	C	NC
DES5016M	5	1	Critical & Contextual Studies 1	20	C	X
DES5017M	5	1	Personal & Professional Practice 1	20	C	X
DES5018M	5	1	Collaborative Practice	20	C	X
DES5021M	5	2	Graphic Design Practice 2	60	C	NC
DES6015M	6	1&2	Critical & Contextual Studies 2	20	C	X
DES6016M	6	1	Personal & Professional Practice 2	40	C	NC
DES6019M	6	1&2	Graphic Design: Major Project	60	C	NC

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the table above as non-compensatable. A non-compensatable module is one that must be passed at the relevant level (with a mark of 40) in order to progress.

Learning, teaching and assessment

Formative feedback and feed forward are embedded throughout the programme, ensuring you are supported to develop and evolve your individualised immerging Graphic Design practice. Feed forward will encourage you to reflect on tutor and peer insights to enhance and apply directly to concurrent and subsequent modules and briefs. This will prepare you for formative and summative assessment.

The programme is divided into three distinct, but related phases of learning. This begins at level 4. At this level you will be introduced to the fundamental principles in Graphic Design via short, engaging projects which foster visual literacy and critical awareness. You will also learn how contexts of practice and theory exist together by examining key principles, methods, and techniques, both practical and digital. The programme will encourage and support you to evaluate, interpret, argue, and present to relevant audiences undertaken in an open minded, experimental, and individual way.

In level 5 you will apply, critically evaluate, and analyse by communicating to specialist and non-specialist audiences. You are encouraged to do this through diverse and complex projects, either with a live client presented by industry professionals, or by undertaking professional competition briefs. A further option to study abroad for one semester is also available to you, should you choose, with a carefully partnered institution.

In level 6, you will undertake an autonomous approach to your studies, through the identification of self-initiated briefs and projects, supervised by academics and industry professionals. You will independently apply knowledge and skills specific to your interests and insights in order to develop a professional portfolio. This is further strengthened by theoretical writing and the presentation of your work to an external audience.

You will have access to academic writing support throughout the programme.

Module content is delivered through a blend of briefings, lectures, and seminars.

Module briefings introduce and explain the aims, objectives and rationale for the module, enabling you to understand the overarching context for each module.

Regular briefings communicate key information at various points within a module. Key information may include: progress updates, preparation for timetabled sessions, live and/or competition brief opportunities, and exhibitions.

Lectures introduce you to the core themes, theories, principles and contextual information relating to the module content.

Seminars provide the opportunity in small groups to discuss ideas and concepts relating to module content. Seminars will enable you to develop a deeper understanding of module content.

Assessment types and methods inform and support your individual progress on the programme. The assessment methods within each module reflect creative and academic practice ensuring authentic professional formats are applied consistently. These methods include portfolio submissions and presentations. Your portfolio submissions will be assessed holistically, enabling you to demonstrate your emerging practice effectively within the context of the module aims and learning outcomes.

Group and peer critiques will provide ongoing formative feedback alongside individual tutorials to support your approach to each module and facilitate an increasingly independent approach to your studies.

You will graduate from York St John University with distinct interdisciplinary, entrepreneurial knowledge and skills.

Progression and graduation requirements

The University's general regulations for undergraduate awards apply to this programme.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the Programme Structure section as non-compensatable.

Internal and external reference points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:
- University mission and values
- University 2026 Strategy
- QAA subject benchmark statements
- Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications

Date written / revised:
Programme originally approved: