

Programme Specification

Award and title: BA (Hons) Product Design

<i>School:</i>	School of the Arts
<i>Subject area:</i>	Design
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2026-27
<i>in the month(s) of</i>	September
<i>Awarding institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Teaching institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Delivery location:</i>	York St John University
<i>Programme/s accredited by:</i>	York St John University
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Certificate of Higher Education Product Design Diploma of Higher Education Product Design BA (Ord) Product Design
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	Art and Design 2019 https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/subject-benchmark-statements/sbs-art-and-design-17.pdf?sfvrsn=71eef781_22
<i>Mode/s of study:</i>	Undergraduate periods of study ¹ for full time
<i>Language of study:</i>	English
<i>Paired with Foundation Year</i>	No
<i>Study abroad opportunities:</i>	Yes
<i>Opt-in YSJU Placement Year opportunity:</i>	Yes

Introduction and special features

Product design is everywhere, changing people's lives for the better. You will solve problems through design and undertake an increasingly individual exploration of both processes and practices. This investigation takes place practically through materials and process, and theoretically through research and analysis, and is rooted in professional practice. The relationship between critical theory, professional contexts and design practice is key, as your confidence as an emerging product designer takes shape.

Studio and workshop practice in Product Design is supported by an extensive range of professional and industry standard materials, technologies and processes. You will be working with highly qualified and experienced academic staff, all of whom are themselves practicing designers. In addition, you will be supported by qualified technical demonstrators, in workshops, studio and digital contexts. The skills that you will acquire on the product design course are considered by many employers in the creative industries as being indispensable for a successful working future in the modern global economy.

Studying Product Design at York St John University will enable you to develop and apply high levels of creative, technical, and professional skills. It is designed for students who are looking for a sustainable and career relevant degree course, one that they can see has real connections to the world of work. The

¹ The standard period of study will apply unless otherwise stated

programme provides opportunities to engage with practising designers who teach on the programme. You will discover new ways of researching and practicing as a designer and have access to work experience with employer partner networks. Should you wish, there is also the opportunity to undertake a semester abroad at one of our partner Universities in America or Europe. You will practice in a professional design environment with state-of-the studio and technical workshop and ICT facilities.

The programme is both inclusive and accessible and aims to build on its existing reputation and alumni network already placed in the design profession.

The programme sits alongside a suite of design disciplines including Animation, Games Design, Interior Design and Graphic 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.yorks.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 unique and discipline specific education in product design with industry expertise at its core
- Engage with contemporary disciplinary themes and contexts to produce radical and visionary product design proposals within the context of global culture and society, with people and their needs at the heart of ...
- Develop the knowledge and skills necessary to pursue a career in product design practice and/or related fields.

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 Product 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 Product 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 Product 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 Product 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	Module status	
					Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensable (NC) or compensable (X)
DES4020M	4	1	Context of Practice	20	C	X
DES4014M	4	1	Product Design Principles	20	C	X
DES4009M	4	1	Design Process	20	C	X
DES4019M	4	2	Product 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
DES5023M	5	2	Product 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
DES6021M	6	1&2	Product Design: Major Project	60	C	NC

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the table above as non-compensable. A non-compensable 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 immersing Product 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 course 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 Product 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 students, should they choose to, 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 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-compensable.

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: