

MA Graphic Design

Flexible online study for
contemporary global
creative practice

Global
Exploration
of Graphic
Design

Student Quote

"I have always wanted to study for my master's degree but taking time out to do was just not financially viable. This flexible way of working allows me to do this while continuing to work and develop my professional practice."

Introduction

MA Graphic Design. Flexible online study for contemporary global creative practice

This course has been developed to provide students with a postgraduate journey in graphic design that seeks to examine personal practice in relationship to the ever evolving nature of the subject globally and culturally.

Studying as part of an international cohort, you will learn by considering the similarities and differences of how designers work today; developing a critically informed point of view and practice that has been tested and revealed by briefs and challenges set in relation to issues and themes facing contemporary design and society today. These briefs and creative challenges test cross cultural learning and identity and question the future of how we can work and collaborate, understand and see problems from new perspectives and build the skills to implement our ideas in innovative and creative ways. To support this and provide an ongoing development of ideas, debate and content, the course has called upon some of the world's leading designers, teaching, research and organisations who help ensure the learning experience on the MA is both current and highly connected.

As part of this currency, we also recognise how boundaries, technologies and industry evolve and that graphic design is always moving, adapting and reinventing itself, with great ideas being delivered across a multitude and variety of channels. Whether building upon traditional fields or responding to new or emergent media, audiences and markets, the course accelerates, motivates and encourages students to take their next creative leap; developing a practice and career path that is adaptive and forms a new step in their professional journey and life.

Overall, the course provides an exciting space for

debate and learning in graphic design practice, where great work will grow from insights and learning shared in our online world studio together. We expect new research and avenues for future of the subject to grow from this experience, using technology and innovation in learning that provokes purposeful design thinking.

As an online experience students work remotely but they are also part of a bigger whole, debating their learning continuously and studying in an environment that is highly appropriate for the future of graphic design.

Why Online?

We have chosen an online environment to support students with their next career and business step; to share ideas, culture and learning internationally, to investigate new models of process, and different approaches to exchange and collaboration. This postgraduate experience is highly flexible and relevant for this communication subject, allowing students to access a huge breadth of cross cultural and international thinking via a student network studying from across the globe.

Studying online allows you to continue working and bring a more reflective and rounded understanding of your practice and entrepreneurial skills. You will also have the opportunity to meet tutors, industry partners and fellow students at events across the year and dependant on timing, this may include meeting at international design and creative festivals (e.g. Breda, D+AD, Cannes (Future) Lions, London Design Festival, AIGA, Typo Circle, Graphic Matters, city or campus events where ideas and progress can be shared further.

Student Quote

"I have been fascinated with the breadth and depth of the content that has been provided. The books, webinars, and ideas have sparked interest in areas that I would not traditionally see in this field. I have always wanted to study for my master's degree but taking time out to do was just not financially viable. This flexible way of working allows me to do this while continuing to work and develop my professional practice."

Graphic Design from Falmouth

The course has been developed through the reputation and heritage of graphic design at Falmouth with many of its graduates working in the world's leading and award winning studios and agencies. It is these agencies, professional organisations and award winning practitioners who have helped inform and shape the course, alongside many years and experience of growing new thinking and teaching in the field.

Course structure

The subject will always be about stories and how to tell them; with great ideas and the ability to craft and build them in a relevant and appropriate way. There are also recognised constructs to developing the understanding and motivation for our profession and this belief has helped us form the core pillars of learning that are delivered via the different modules in the course. This approach allows students to develop their own interests within the module structure and different teaching and learning provided. Introductions, lectures, challenges and regular webinar discussions, allow students to engage weekly, both building knowledge and informing approach to the projects set.

Briefs are introduced across the span of each module to allow individuals to pace their work across a given week with their other commitments. Given the breadth of the subject and scope of student interest, it is often possible to select different project challenges that support specific areas of focus within graphic design. However, key themes and areas of work have also been developed for all students to complete that utilise innovative project approach that test and reveal new ideas and research.

Common to each module is a reflective online journal that helps students chart development but

also provides a space for continuous practice and creative experimentation that students may wish grow further as they progress through the course. This is particularly useful across the rotational modules at the centre of the course, so their practice continues to evolve from a variety of angles.

The modules and online learning environment also support personal development through the sharing of work, ideas and innovation, with regard to global collaboration. This is the core ethos of the course and is embedded throughout via personal, peer and tutor reflection. Each module will therefore utilise a variety of learning approaches and incorporates both practical and written assignments and on-going utilisation of case studies. These case studies will include recent interviews and conversation with studios and design practitioners that allow students to gain contemporary insights and also identify specialisms or focus relevant to their own practice horizons.

In the final module, students develop a major project and a comprehensive plan and strategy that summarises and projects their professional direction and creative philosophy. In positioning their practice academically and strategically, students also address their future focus, whether for setting up a new studio, working in-house, freelancing or refreshing their own insights for their current workplace or PhD study. Given this breadth of horizon, students can also negotiate the balance of project work and approach, to ensure their final submission is most appropriate for their next steps.

The conclusion of the course sees students launch their projects and promote themselves, their new studio or design product, whilst also celebrating the work of their whole cohort in a final online show.

Module 01

Contemporary 연대 Practice

30 credits

This module introduces students to the development of graphic design today and the variety of contexts in which it is made and understood. As with the central ethos of the course, it seeks to examine local and global perspectives of the subject and the emergent skills required to address problems and deliver messages for both regional and global audiences.

Learning is delivered through an experience of three core projects, each providing a foundation for the rotational period of study and address both personal and group reflection on the topics delivered. Fundamentally, it is concerned with design and designing and the academic and research skills to enable effective and fully engaged participation in the course. It seeks to establish the fundamental essence of being a graphic designer today and the ability to use curiosity, risk, play and care in the delivery of a message.

Brief 1; Perspectives

This initiative examines the subject of graphic design, its boundaries and genres in relation to personal, regional and global perspectives. It focuses on 'identity' as a theme and the outcome will be based on reflective journal, data analysis and design artefact.

Lectures: challenges

- 01. Introduction:** The course and the student cohort, where and why
- 02. Industry today:** Geo-tagged studio exercise and company analysis
- 03. Fields of practice:** Designers, design, new languages, theory and the new aesthetic
- 04. The self and identity:** Personal values and equities

Brief 2; Process

Whilst it is assumed students will have core craft and design process skills, this initiative aims to take stock of student's experience to date and also introduce classic and new methods of thinking and research.

Lectures: challenges

- 01. Thoughts on ideas:** Defining methods of thinking, curiosity and insight
- 02. Noticing the ignored:** Experiential drawing, capture, writing, recording, play, photography
- 03. Research and theory:** Methodologies, management, catalysts, theories and fiction
- 04. Skills and making:** Personal reflection on skills development and new process model outcome

Brief 3; Press

This assignment explores the arena in which the message is deployed, from the printed page to the interactive screen, from 3d form to environmental installation. Students also begin to address how we 'understand' these messages and the symbolism and semiotics that allow us both to 'read' but also engineer communications today both for the familiar and the new. The outcome sees students create a message in response to an issue or cause revealed and promote in an appropriate medium.

Lectures: challenges

- 01. Message delivered:** Message and medium, pencil, pixel, performance, packaging
- 02. Type and page:** Constructs of typography, systems and theory
- 03. Trends and environments:** Lighting up the message, symbolism and semiotics of the new
- 04. New steps:** Ideas in a different space, problem swap, cultural and paradigm shift

This point in the course marks the start of a series of three modules that rotate as students progress through their two years. The start point to each of these depends on enrolment date, whether in September, January or April.

Module 02

History and 歷史 Futures 未來

30 credits

This module introduces students to how graphic design interprets narrative, to distil, reform or remodel stories for a new purpose. It also is a central module to students understanding a more in-depth critical and contextual understanding to their practice, providing the opportunity for connecting theory and practice (praxis), in conjunction to key themes and issues facing the subject and those who collaborate within it today. This module also begins to question the role that design and the designer have to play in society and the creative community and networks it is part of.

Brief 1; Complex simplicity

This initiative considers how to tell a story relating to a specific aspect of practice and cultural or global difference, with initial research projects being selected to support student's personal interests,

Lectures: challenges

01. **History revealed:** Interpreting typographic vernacular (globalisation)
02. **Story told:** Reforming and projecting a new future in a type design challenge
03. **Big data:** Collecting and visualising the unseen, Morton and the hyperobject
04. **Projecting a new perspective:** Interpreting emerging trends

Brief 2; Visual writing

This assignment examines the implicit link between graphic design and writing, as a way of exploring communication and the rich history and theory of contemporary visual culture. The outcome involves preparatory work that leads to a written, appropriately designed and referenced outcome that can be published and shared more broadly.

Lectures: challenges

01. **Written communication:** Making, researching using words, publishing and new discourse
02. **Research and curate:** Forming and projecting a new future, referencing and process
03. **Content review:** Editing and reflection
04. **Design and critique:** Presenting, promoting and launching.

Brief 3; Society and purpose

This initiative asks students to examine issues locally that have existed historically or may have emerged through changes in society, politics or local need. The second part of the project then asks students to create a catalyst to improve or initiate change of the issue first revealed in their research. Students utilise new methodologies of human centred design principals and deliver outcomes either as analogue or digital responses.

Lectures: challenges

01. **Service design and saving the world:** Principles, histories, manifestos, for good / change
02. **Research and reveal:** Develop key finding, analysis and objectives
03. **Design and develop:** Double diamond design process approach and new cultural projections
04. **Promote and test:** Presenting, launching, evaluate

Module 03

Studio and Entrepreneurship

30 credits

Having already studied emergent fields of practice within the first module, students can now examine some of the building blocks of studio practice from a business perspective. This gives them the fundamental constructs of managing the day-to-day aspects of a studio's life but also provides opportunity to reflect on innovative ways of working at distance and collaboration with other partners around the world. Students will be able to reflect on the subject through specific design studio case studies, structure and strategies for project work and intellectual property guidance required to develop a creative service or product today (although specific financial and taxation detail will require students to study this independently with regard to rules for their own specific country). The latter part of this module sees students develop an actual artefact or entrepreneurial idea that will be personally or culturally inspired, but rooted firmly in a graphic design field.

Brief 1; Business foundations

This first brief considers the business framework for practice and gives students the core knowledge for managing work and defining roles in the creative studio. The outcome will involve putting theory into practice as they write a business plan for their own business, project or creative initiative. This brief allows students to focus on their own interests, background or future career scenarios, whether freelance, studio or in house opportunities.

Lectures: challenges

01. Planning, strategy and management:

Philosophies, roles and approach, e.g. John Maeda

02. Business models, studios, estimating, invoicing and budget management: Test & rehearse

03. Legal and IP frameworks: Comparing different case studies, media use & equity ownership

04. Business / project plans and communication: Client relationships, insight, content, structure

Brief 2; Collaboration

This brief considers the different ways designers can work today and potential methodologies for future practice. Case studies provide insights into how collaboration can inspire new ways of thinking but also underpinning this with insight into the classic relationships between media partners in the delivery of a project. The core outcome requires students to design a digital tool or process to aid collaboration for future working.

Lectures: challenges

01. The collaborative mix: Reflecting on classic models for graphic design working

02. Interdisciplinary insights: New approach and creative partnerships

03. Global studios: Approach and strategy for working today and delivering creative services

04. Collaborative tools: Building new models and tools for future practice

Brief 3; Shop

This assignment explores the idea of the designer as author; as originator of artefacts driven by personal practice, entrepreneurial insight or social need. Case studies provide background to the many new ways designers practice what they preach with a final outcome that could be made and sold.

Lectures: challenges

01. Entrepreneurship: Core characteristics, ethics and theory

02. Designer, author, maker: Case studies exploring trends and outputs of influential studios

03. Market research: Revealing gaps, targets and audiences for a new product or service idea

04. Proposal: Developing ideas and designs for launch of authorial artefact

Module 04

Application and Interactions

30 credits

This module allows students to engage with a variety of opportunities to apply their own practice and knowledge to specific graphic design projects. The briefs allow a scoping of interests but also to question the role and ethics of working as a designer today; how ideas can be applied and how respective audiences can be understood and reached. Throughout this module, students will engage with skills development pertinent to their areas of interest.

The module also examines the relationship between personal and highly strategic briefs and this is achieved by examining self initiated projects, competitions and industry set briefs; the latter being collated from annual opportunities from design studios or client set challenges. These client set briefs (as with the design studio) will be drawn from global organisations that enable students to respond to challenges beyond their normal experience and share learning and differing international perspectives.

Brief 1; Self-initiated

This introductory brief allow students to choose a design challenge that compliments or builds on their own specific interests and enables them to develop aspects of personal identity first explored in Module 1. Whilst stemming from their individual interests, there will be a clear brief, audience and realistic time frame in which to develop their outcome across any media in the 4 weeks available.

One final outcome is expected for delivery at the end of the initial four weeks of this brief.

Lectures: challenges

01. **Brief analysis:** Aims, objectives, brief development and audience
02. **Ideas, craft and context:** Applied thinking, speculative and contemporary theory in design
03. **Development:** Peer reflection, thinking by doing, testing and refining design
04. **Outcome and ambition:** Project story, evaluation and conclusion

Brief 2; Industry set

Students now have the opportunity to test their practice in the context of a client led project and/or a current or past international design competition. Two projects are produced across the eight week period.

For the client brief, a pool of opportunities will be provided, drawn from global brands and industry partners. Students can also negotiate their own live project should they wish but overall the brief aims to challenge working in different cultural contexts and the learning that can be shared from exploring new design opportunities.

The competition briefs enable students to study the specific needs and strategies for competing in international design challenges and the potential for creating award winning work for their portfolio.

Lectures: challenges

05. **Competitive context:** Selecting, building project experience, competitiveness, case studies
06. **Brief and strategy:** Thinking for strategic, brand and global difference, client engagement
07. **Positioning and trends:** Mapping emergent themes, moods and stories
08. **Concept development:** Methodologies for thinking and development processes
09. **Concept development:** Methodologies for thinking and development processes
10. **Design development:** Peer reflection, thinking by doing, testing and refining and design
11. **Design development:** Peer reflection, thinking by doing, testing and refining and design
12. **Outcome and ambition:** Project story, evaluation and conclusion

Module 05

MA Project

Final period of study. 60 credits

This module allows students to construct and develop their final MA project, that is built on learning from previous modules and allows them to position themselves and their work for next steps following the course.

Project work therefore can develop from a number of perspectives; being research or theory led (for further research study at PhD level) or personally or professionally orientated (for independent or studio practice). Whilst this module is largely self-led, there are phases of development to ensure the final project has been developed with rigour and the depth of enquiry to

achieve the correct level of postgraduate attainment. On completing the research and development stages, students make and refine their final work and will need to ensure that the appropriate 'making' facilities are available locally so they can be realistic about their aims and objectives for their projects. The final practice based submission is also delivered with a critical and contextual report, which outlines the key theory and research underpinning their work. As an alternative to this, students may also submit a business orientated plan and strategy, should they be choosing to launch a new studio, product or publication.

Phase 1; Research and discover

The phase of work allows students to develop and refine their project brief and research question, following a review of their work to date. It is also at this stage they outline the contextual positioning and reasoning for approach taken.

01-02. Review: evaluation of work and personal objectives

03-04. Question and refinement: Development of key theme and areas of interest

Phase 2; Define, test and prepare

Students now can move to a rapid testing of the ideas and skills to ensure their subject is explored and the problem for exploration is fully tested and defined.

05-06. Skills and design experimentation: short project warm-ups and project planning

07-08. External evaluation and review: case study presentations

Phase 3; Design development

The core phase of project growth sees students progress independently, using peer review through the online classroom and careful development in alignment to initial brief.

09-10. Design development:Tutor / peer review of work to date

11-12. Design development: ongoing concept and project refinement

Phase 4; Deliver final

Making and promotion period, where the final project is delivered, report written and next steps are formed.

13-16. Iteration and review: Further development, peer review of draft report and writing final report or business plan

17-18. Promotion plan: Group collaboration on work for final online show and writing final report or business plan assignment

19-24. Final studio practice production period,, submission of critical report and career / exit consultation webinars

28-30. Submission and launch of final project, final assessment period

Five Steps

* Modules 2, 3 and 4 are delivered in different order, dependent on the date students join us.

Step 3. Module 3*

Studio and Entrepreneurship

Students can now build the skills that will form a practical and informative foundation for their future design ambition - equipping them with the business insight to plan strategies, monitor progress, finance and manage the daily and long term vision for a graphic design studio or independent work. **30 credits.**

Step 2. Module 2*

History and Futures

Students explore the essential skill of storytelling and how to interpret historical information for future need; explored through data and information design, written and societal orientated themes. **30 credits.**

Step 1. Module 1

Contemporary Practice

Introduces students to the landscape of contemporary graphic design practice and the development of the creative industries - It supports study skills to help review existing practice and process and sets out the principles of study for the rest of the course. **30 credits.**

Contact

联系

Let us know if you have any questions

Speak to one of our course advisers

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