Name of College: Arts
Name of Department: Arts and Design

Programme Specification
September 2013

Programme Title
MA Visual Communication

Programme(s) valid from September 2013 for a period of 5 years
JACS code: W200

Valid for delivery at:
University of Derby

UNIVERSITY of DERBY

www.derby.ac.uk

Contents   **Page Number**

SECTION ONE: GENERAL INFORMATION

PROGRAMME TITLE/JOINT HONOURS SUBJECT TITLE
MA Visual Communication

AWARD TITLE AND INTERIM AWARDS
Master of Arts Visual Communication (Graphic Design)
Master of Arts Visual Communication (Illustration and Book Design)
Master of Arts Visual Communication (Typography)
Master of Arts Visual Communication (Web Design)
Master of Arts Visual Communication Studies

Post Graduate Diploma Communication (Graphic Design)
Post Graduate Diploma Communication (Illustration and Book Design)
Post Graduate Diploma Communication (Typography)
Post Graduate Diploma Visual Communication (Web Design)
Post Graduate Diploma Visual Communication Studies

Post Graduate Certificate Visual Communication

MODE OF STUDY
All programmes are delivered in the full-time mode. A part-time schedule is also offered.

PROGRAMME START DATE
Start date: September 2013
Period of Validation: Five years, 2013-17

AWARDING INSTITUTION
University of Derby, UK.

FACULTY MANAGING THE PROGRAMME
Faculty of Arts, Design and Technology

IINSTITUTION DELIVERING THE PROGRAMME
Vakalo Art & Design College

RELEVANT EXTERNAL SUBJECT BENCHMARK STATEMENTS
This validation process of this proposed MA Visual communication programme has taken particular consideration of the 2008 Art and Design/ History of Art, Architecture and Design QAA Subject Benchmarks. As the programme involves areas pertinent to the subjects of communication and cultural studies the validation process has also taken into consideration the 2008 Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies QAA Subject Benchmark with reference to "Communications, culture and society", "Histories", and "Culture and identity", as bearing particular relevance to the programme content and aims. The design of the programme has been informed by the QAA Master's Degree Characteristics. Finally it is stated that the programme conforms to Post Graduate Regulatory Framework of the University of Derby.

EXTERNAL ACCREDIATION/RECOGNITION
The British Accreditation Council for Independent Further and Higher Education (BAC)
The Ministry of Education, Life-long Learning and Religious Affairs of the Hellenic Republic

JACS CODE(S)
W200

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION LAST UPDATED
06th Feb 2013

SECTION TWO: OVERVIEW AND PROGRAMME AIMS

OVERVIEW

The MA Visual Communication programme seeks to provide education in two-dimensional design at a high academic level that will explore issues and will develop concrete proposals related to the visual communication in social and commercial, individual and collective contexts.

The programme based on the decade-long experience of successful operation of the first-ever MA Design course in Greece run by the Vakalo College, and draws from the practice of current postgraduate programmes in the UK, especially those of the University of Derby. It still remains without counterpart in Greek state Higher Education.

The programme includes a range of thematic areas that correspond to specific recognizable specialisations and enable students to select a route of their own choosing to develop their specialised study. It offers five specialty schemes and provides scope for the development to the highest standards of both the technical/creative and the critical/contextual aspects of the designer's work.
The specialty schemes are: (a) Graphic Design; (b) Illustration and Book Design; (c) Typography; (d) Web Design; (e) Visual Communication Studies.

On enrolment you join a common curriculum of core modules. The programme is designed to support you to make the most appropriate choice of one of the five specialty schemes offered, at the end of the First Semester, which you will follow through to the completion of your studies (Semesters 2 and 3). The specialty you elect to pursue determines the name of the award you will be entitled to.

In its current phase of development this programme seeks to expand beyond the strict confines of design for graphic applications to a broader notion of visual communication that will include a more extensive and deeper consideration of contexts, which involve the cultural, environmental, ethical and emotional, as well as the virtual (e.g. web design).

Its principal aim is to produce designers that will take on the constantly increasing and ever more complex and challenging tasks of the visual communication designer to improve and enhance communication, in social and commercial fields, in the private or public spheres, to address and to attempt to resolve issues related to interactivity among people, individuals or groups, among people and their environment, taking into account all the technical, technological and formal aspects of visual communication as these function in contemporary contexts.

PROGRAMME AIMS

The MA Visual Communication Programme, initially validated in 2000 as "MA Visual Communication & Interactive Media" (the first such programme to operate in Greece), is designed to meet the requirements and specifications of the British higher education system at this level, through its validation by the University of Derby.

In this sense the Programme provides the context for the pioneering development of design education in Greece at postgraduate level, meeting internationally defined standards and ensuring levels of achievement comparable to those of British Universities.
It represents an updated and enhanced development of the initially validated programme offering more focused specialised study and greater contextual/theoretical engagement.

The Programme therefore prepares you to meet the contemporary challenges in the profession and social practice of visual communication and equips you to pursue a professional career either in Greece or abroad.

More specifically, the Programme aims to enable you to:
1. Acquire technical and intellectual skills at a high level of specialisation in order to resolve complex and demanding design problems, to meet the requirements of the rapidly developing visual communication market both locally and internationally, with the expansion of urban environments, the change of land uses and the growing incomes and/or aspirations of urban dwellers;
2. Achieve conceptual and critical understanding of visual communication to effectively engage with contemporary issues and contribute to ongoing debates, analysing current research and advanced scholarship, related to social, ethical and environmental questions and the role of the visual communication designer in these contexts;
3. Acquire the technical know-how in the use of a broad range of state-of-the-art equipment and tools, as well as the confidence in selecting the appropriate media and approach to each individual design task
4. Undertake extensive and rigorous research, to evaluate the views of others and to critically self-reflect on your own proposals, assuming responsibility and accountability for your own proposals, views and idea;
5. Develop methodologies for your design work and strategies for your future career through self-assessment of your output and self-management of your study (utilising to this end the specific support offered through PDP);
6. Cultivate the spirit of investigation and enquiry based on a systematic questioning of received and embedded ideas, seeking innovative approaches to the practice of design;
7. Achieve independence of thought, individuality and originality, to contribute to the further development of the subject, locally, nationally and internationally, functioning in the design industries with the potential for a distinguished career.

SECTION THREE: PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES

PG Certificate Stage – Level 7

VISUAL COMMUNICATION

Knowledge and Understanding:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Evidence knowledge and understanding of ethical considerations and social impact of Visual Communication projects
- Evidence awareness and understanding of competing critical theoretical research and methodological models associated with your field of inquiry

Intellectual skills:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Express, in a critical and reflective manner, an understanding of your chosen field of enquiry
- Reflect, critically evaluate and define personal approaches and methodologies in your practice

Subject specific skills:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Handle and utilize specialist software, media and techniques relevant to your specialist interest within Visual Communication
- Express critical and reflective understanding of your chosen discipline in a professional manner

Transferable skills:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Communicate progress to others
- Reflect on learning developing and refining individual methodologies
- Manage workloads and meet deadlines
- Identify personal strengths
- Utilise feedback and respond to criticism
- Navigate and retrieve information from a variety of sources

PG Diploma Stage – level 7

VISUAL COMMUNICATION (GRAPHIC DESIGN)

Knowledge and Understanding:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Understand the academic concerns of particular relevance to graphic design as your chosen specialisation within Visual Communication and be fully conversant with a scholarly approach
- Handle, evaluate and apply, in a critical and reflective manner, with competent understanding, the competing critical methodological and theoretical models and literature associated with your field of enquiry.

Intellectual Skills:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Express, in a critical and reflective manner, understanding of graphic design as your field of enquiry
- Organise and undertake independent scholarship with an aim for originality

- Reflect and critically evaluate, evidencing maturity in the development of your graphic design project

Subject specific skills:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Produce, deliver and present work at a professional level, locating graphic design practice in a professional context

Transferable skills:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Communicate effectively the distinctiveness of your practice to others
- Manage your own learning reflecting on development and refining individual methodologies
- Managing workloads and meeting deadlines
- Analysing and interpreting new developments in the subject
- Identifying, developing and refining personal strengths
- Interacting with others through collaboration, collective endeavour and negotiation to achieve a high level of effective communication
- Navigating, retrieving, managing and analyzing information from a variety of sources

VISUAL COMMUNICATION (ILLUSTRATION AND BOOK DESIGN)

Knowledge and Understanding:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Understand the academic concerns of particular relevance to illustration and book design as your chosen specialisation within Visual Communication and be fully conversant with a scholarly approach
- Handle, evaluate and apply, in a critical and reflective manner, with competent understanding, the competing critical methodological and theoretical models and literature associated with your field of enquiry.

Intellectual Skills:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Express, in a critical and reflective manner, understanding of illustration and book design as your field of enquiry
- Organise and undertake independent scholarship with an aim for originality
- Reflect and critically evaluate, evidencing maturity in the development of your illustration and book design project

Subject specific skills:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Produce, deliver and present work at a professional level, locating illustration and book design practice in a professional context

Transferable skills:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Communicate effectively the distinctiveness of your practice to others
- Manage your own learning reflecting on development and refining individual methodologies
- Managing workloads and meeting deadlines
- Analyzing and interpreting new developments in the subject
- Identifying, developing and refining personal strengths

- Interacting with others through collaboration, collective endeavour and negotiation to achieve a high level of effective communication
- Navigating, retrieving, managing and analyzing information from a variety of sources

VISUAL COMMUNICATION (TYPOGRAPHY)

Knowledge and Understanding:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Understand the academic concerns of particular relevance to typography as your chosen specialisation within Visual Communication and be fully conversant with a scholarly approach
- Handle, evaluate and apply, in a critical and reflective manner, with competent understanding, the competing critical methodological and theoretical models and literature associated with your field of enquiry.

Intellectual Skills:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Express, in a critical and reflective manner, understanding of typography as your field of enquiry
- Organise and undertake independent scholarship with an aim for originality
- Reflect and critically evaluate, evidencing maturity in the development of your typography project

Subject specific skills:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Produce, deliver and present work at a professional level, locating typography practice in a professional context

Transferable skills:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Communicate effectively the distinctiveness of your practice to others
- Manage your own learning reflecting on development and refining individual methodologies
- Managing workloads and meeting deadlines
- Analyzing and interpreting new developments in the subject
- Identifying, developing and refining personal strengths
- Interacting with others through collaboration, collective endeavour and negotiation to achieve a high level of effective communication
- Navigating, retrieving, managing and analyzing information from a variety of sources

VISUAL COMMUNICATION (WEB DESIGN)

Knowledge and Understanding:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Understand the academic concerns of particular relevance to web design as and be fully conversant with a scholarly approach
- Handle, evaluate and apply, in a critical and reflective manner, with competent understanding, the competing critical methodological and theoretical models and literature associated with your field of enquiry

Intellectual Skills:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Express, in a critical and reflective manner, understanding of web design as your subject of enquiry
- Organise and undertake independent scholarship with an aim for originality
- Reflect and critically evaluate, evidencing maturity in the development of your web design project

Subject specific skills:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Produce, deliver and present work at a professional level, locating web design practice in a professional context

Transferable skills:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Communicate effectively the distinctiveness of your practice to others
- Manage your own learning reflecting on development and refining individual methodologies
- Managing workloads and meeting deadlines
- Analyzing and interpreting new developments in the subject
- Identifying, developing and refining personal strengths
- Interacting with others through collaboration, collective endeavour and negotiation to achieve a high level of effective communication
- Navigating, retrieving, managing and analyzing information from a variety of sources

VISUAL COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Knowledge and Understanding:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Understand the academic concerns of particular relevance to the studies of history, theory and current practice of visual Communication and be fully conversant with a scholarly approach
- Handle, evaluate and apply, in a critical and reflective manner, with competent understanding, the competing critical methodological and theoretical models and literature associated with your field of enquiry

Intellectual Skills:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Express, in a critical and reflective manner, understanding of the of visual Communication as your field of enquiry
- Organise and undertake independent scholarship with an aim for originality
- Reflect and critically evaluate, evidencing maturity in the development of your visual Communication studies project

Subject specific skills:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Produce, deliver and present work at a professional scholarly level, locating studies in the history, theory and current practice of visual Communication in a professional context

Transferable skills:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Communicate effectively the distinctiveness of your practice to others

- Manage your own learning reflecting on development and refining individual methodologies
- Managing workloads and meeting deadlines
- Analyzing and interpreting new developments in the subject
- Identifying, developing and refining personal strengths
- Interacting with others through collaboration, collective endeavour and negotiation to achieve a high level of effective communication
- Navigating, retrieving, managing and analyzing information from a variety of sources

Master of Arts Stage – Level 7

VISUAL COMMUNICATION (GRAPHIC DESIGN)

Knowledge and Understanding:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Demonstrate command of the contemporary and historical debates, issues and themes of particular relevant to Visual Communication in general, and graphic design in particular and be fully conversant with a scholarly approach
- Display command of a high level of practical skill in graphic design
- To express in a critical and reflective manner, with sophisticated understanding the competing critical, methodological and theoretical models and literature associated with your field of enquiry

Intellectual Skills:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Express in a critical and reflective manner, a sophisticated understanding of your chosen field of enquiry
- Organise and undertake independent scholarship with an appropriate level of originality
- Reflect and critically evaluate, evidencing maturity in the conclusions of your project
- Situate your own work within the context of current debates

Subject Specific skills:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Efficiently engage in the scheduling and realisation of production of the final versions of your creative proposals in graphic design
- Produce a persuasive, professional presentations of the required deliverables, including all support documentation and justification of your own distinctive contribution
- Produce, deliver and present work at a professional level, locating your practice in a professional context

Transferable skills:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Communicate effectively the outcomes of your project to others
- Analysing and responding to new developments in the subject
- Communicating and promoting personal strengths
- Navigating, retrieving, managing, analyzing and evaluating information from a variety of sources

VISUAL COMMUNICATION (ILLUSTRATION AND BOOK DESIGN)

Knowledge and Understanding:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Demonstrate command of the contemporary and historical debates, issues and themes of particular relevant to Visual Communication in general, and illustration and book design in particular and be fully conversant with a scholarly approach
- Display command of a high level of practical skill in illustration and book design
- To express in a critical and reflective manner, with sophisticated understanding the competing critical, methodological and theoretical models and literature associated with your field of enquiry

Intellectual Skills:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Express in a critical and reflective manner, a sophisticated understanding of your chosen field of enquiry
- Organise and undertake independent scholarship with an appropriate level of originality
- Reflect and critically evaluate, evidencing maturity in the conclusions of your project
- Situate your own work within the context of current debates

Subject Specific skills:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Efficiently engage in the scheduling and realisation of production of the final versions of your creative proposals in illustration and book design
- Produce a persuasive, professional presentations of the required deliverables, including all support documentation and justification of your own distinctive contribution
- Produce, deliver and present work at a professional level, locating your practice in a professional context

Transferable skills:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Communicate effectively the outcomes of your project to others
- Analysing and responding to new developments in the subject
- Communicating and promoting personal strengths
- Navigating, retrieving, managing, analyzing and evaluating information from a variety of sources

VISUAL COMMUNICATION (TYPOGRAPHY)

Knowledge and Understanding:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Demonstrate command of the contemporary and historical debates, issues and themes of particular relevant to Visual Communication in general, and typography in particular and be fully conversant with a scholarly approach
- Display command of a high level of practical skill in typography
- To express in a critical and reflective manner, with sophisticated understanding the competing critical, methodological and theoretical models and literature associated with your field of enquiry

Intellectual Skills:

On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:

- Express in a critical and reflective manner, a sophisticated understanding of your chosen field of enquiry
- Organise and undertake independent scholarship with an appropriate level of originality
- Reflect and critically evaluate, evidencing maturity in the conclusions of your project
- Situate your own work within the context of current debates

Subject Specific skills:

On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:

- Efficiently engage in the scheduling and realisation of production of the final versions of your creative proposals in typography
- Produce a persuasive, professional presentations of the required deliverables, including all support documentation and justification of your own distinctive contribution
- Produce, deliver and present work at a professional level, locating your practice in a professional context

Transferable skills:

On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:

- Communicate effectively the outcomes of your project to others
- Analysing and responding to new developments in the subject
- Communicating and promoting personal strengths
- Navigating, retrieving, managing, analyzing and evaluating information from a variety of sources

VISUAL COMMUNICATION (WEB DESIGN)

Knowledge and Understanding:

On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:

- Demonstrate command of the contemporary and historical debates, issues and themes of particular relevant to your specialist focus in web design and be fully conversant with a scholarly approach
- Display command of a high level of practical skills in web design including stage set production considerations
- To express in a critical and reflective manner, with sophisticated understanding the competing critical, methodological and theoretical models and literature associated with your field of enquiry

Intellectual Skills:

On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:

- Express in a critical and reflective manner, a sophisticated understanding of your chosen field of enquiry
- Organise and undertake independent scholarship with an appropriate level of originality
- Reflect and critically evaluate, evidencing maturity in the conclusions of your project
- Situate your own work within the context of current debates

Subject Specific skills:

On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:

- Efficiently engage in the scheduling and realisation of production of the final versions of your creative proposals in web design

- Produce a persuasive, professional presentations of the required deliverables, including all support documentation and justification of your own distinctive contribution
- Produce, deliver and present work at a professional level, locating your practice in a professional context

Transferable skills:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Communicate effectively the outcomes of your project to others
- Analysing and responding to new developments in the subject
- Communicating and promoting personal strengths
- Navigating, retrieving, managing, analyzing and evaluating information from a variety of sources

VISUAL COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Knowledge and Understanding:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Demonstrate command of the contemporary and historical debates, issues and themes of particular relevant to Visual Communication and be fully conversant with a scholarly approach
- Display command in the understanding and study of the technical and practical aspects of visual Communication
- To express in a critical and reflective manner, with sophisticated understanding the competing critical, methodological and theoretical models and literature associated with your field of enquiry

Intellectual Skills:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Express in a critical and reflective manner, a sophisticated understanding of your chosen field of enquiry
- Organise and undertake independent scholarship with an appropriate level of originality
- Reflect and critically evaluate, evidencing maturity in the conclusions of your project
- Situate your own work within the context of current debates

Subject Specific skills:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Efficiently engage in the scheduling and realisation of production of the final versions of your project in visual Communication studies
- Produce a persuasive, professional presentations of the required deliverables, including all support documentation and justification of your own distinctive contribution
- Produce, deliver and present work at a professional level, locating your practice in a professional context

Transferable skills:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Communicate effectively the outcomes of your project to others
- Analysing and responding to new developments in the subject
- Communicating and promoting personal strengths
- Navigating, retrieving, managing, analyzing and evaluating information from a variety of sources

SECTION FOUR: PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

STRUCTURE AND CURRICULUM

The MA Visual Communication Programme is structured in three stages within the Postgraduate HE Level 7. Each of the stages corresponds to an "exit award", namely Stage 1 corresponds to the Postgraduate Certificate (PGC), Stage 2 to the Postgraduate Diploma (PGD) and Stage 3 to the Master of Arts award (MA). The term "exit award" means that you are entitled to either of the interim awards if you decide to stop after successfully completing either Stage 1 or Stage 2. Each stage covers one semester, and they can be also designated as First, Second and Third Semesters, respectively.

The programme commences with a common curriculum in the First Semester, at the end of which you select one of the five specialisation schemes (or pathways) offered. In the Second and Third Semesters you follow your chosen specialisation scheme programme, which leads to the corresponding named award.

More specifically, the programme includes the following modules and is structured as listed below:

Level	Module Title	Status	Credits
	Stage 1(First Semester)		
7	Visual Communication Contexts and Debates	Core	20
7	Visual Communication Studio Research and Practice	Core	40
	Stage 2 (Second Semester)		
7	Visual Communication Theory – Specialisation Research	Core	20
7	Visual Communication Independent Specialisation Project 1	Prescribed	40
	Stage 3 (Third Semester)		
7	Visual Communication Independent Specialisation Project 2	Prescribed	60

First Semester (Postgraduate Certificate Stage)
In this Semester there are two modules, one single "Contexts & Debates" and one double "Studio Research & Practice", providing a sound mix of theory and practice. These modules aim to encourage you to engage in exploration and experimentation supported by theoretical debates and research in order to identify the specialized area of your interest. By the end of the Semester you will have developed and formulated the scope of your major practice project and its contexts, providing the basis for your work in Semesters 2 and 3. Your work will be monitored and guided by a principal supervisor supported by a theory supervisor who will work with you throughput the programme (see also below Section 5.3).

Studio Research and Practice is a practice based double module that provides the ground for the exploration of your preferred areas of visual communication, to test assumptions and received ideas and to work out new ideas and proposals. Experimentation will be encouraged together with the development of practice and research methodologies. Practical work will be informed by social, cultural and philosophical concerns as well as those relating to the ethical and ecological responsibilities of the designer, always in keeping with the commercial, economic and professional requirements. This module will require the application of both

practical skills and critical thinking that will lead to the formulation of the context and aims of your brief for the major specialization practice project which you will develop in the next stages of your studies. This brief will determine the area of specialization of your study (and eventually of the name of your award), and will form the basis of your "learning agreement" (see below) for Stages 2 and 3.

The "Contexts and Debates" double module provides you with the opportunity to engage with current theoretical debates, to study and critically analyse complex theoretical texts on issues of art, design and communication, to discuss the function and social impact of major projects drawn from history, and to develop your skills in research and writing of scholarly texts. Research methodologies, including ethical considerations, and critical analysis and evaluation of findings, form an important part of this module which introduces you to the requirements of a higher academic level and at the same time supports your investigations and research in the parallel practice mode (Studio Research and Practice).

On concluding the First Semester you will finalise your Learning Agreement with your supervisors. This will specify the specialisation scheme you will follow in the next stages of the programme. This will be ratified by the Programme Committee, and you will enrol accordingly in the Second Semester.

Second Semester (Postgraduate Diploma Stage)
On joining Semester 2 you will register in one of the specialisations offered based on your "learning agreement" which will have been concluded at the end of the First Semester.

The second semester comprises two modules. More specifically it includes the "Theory-Specialisation Research" single module and the "Specialisation Project 1" double module.
The engagement with both theory and practice is maintained, while added support is provided with regard toy your chosen specialisation field in a way that enhances both your practical and contextual work.

According to the specialisation route you have chosen to follow and registered for in the Second Semester you will select the corresponding area of study offered in the "Specialisation Project 1" double module you will devise and develop the concept of your major project based on the brief formulated in the previous stage and you will set out a plan for its realisation spanning both the Second and Third Semesters. This plan will be part of the learning agreement that will determine the scope and aims of your major project. This module is perhaps the cornerstone of your studies as you develop the concept of your major project, involving research, originality, innovation which in turn mean self-management, experimentation and risk-taking. This is the time of decision-making and assuming responsibilities. Here you will apply your subject-specific skills to the best of your ability to produce convincing and coherent proposals. This module, consistent with the philosophy of the programme and building on the work accomplished in the First Semester enables you to engage with broader and deeper issues related to the specialty you have chosen within the field of visual communication, and to develop specialised knowledge, skills and insights that will inform the work on your major independent practice project. In this module you will benefit from contact with visiting specialist academics and professional practitioners.

To this end, the work you will produce in the "Theory – Specialisation Research 1" single module will be of great assistance. This module aims to extend your knowledge and understanding of visual communication to an advanced level through

research and engagement with current literature and debates. It also enables you to engage with broader and deeper issues related to the specialty you have chosen within the field of visual communication, and to strengthen specialised knowledge, skills and insights that will inform the work on your major independent practice project. Yoy will be expected produce the basis of an extended piece of wiriting (to be completed in the Third Semester) in support of your major specialisation project. You will plan a personal programme of research related to the topic of your Independent Specialist projects, so that theory and practice will inform each other – with your "Specialisation Research" work providing additional input.

Third Semester (Master's Stage)
In the Third Semester there is one triple practice module "Specialisation Project 2 - Realisation".

The "Specialisation Project 2 - Realisation" is the culmination of your Master's major practice project and will enable you to realise the work as envisaged in the plan set out in the previous semester. This triple module provides a most significant period of time in which to create a body of highly developed practice meeting the challenges you have set. You will be expected to work in accordance with the requirements of independent scholarship, with an enquiring mind and a questioning approach, testing, analysing and critically evaluating your work throughout.
You will also engage you with the further development and completion of the extended written text in support of your project, which you began in the previous semester. You will be expected to submit a text of academic scholarship of high standards, demonstrating critical and original thinking.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING (PDP)

The programme supports you in creating, implementing and maintaining a Personal development Plan (PDP) through all three semesters. The development of your plan is a structured and supported process, organised and monitored by the College Quality Manager, who will work closely with your Principal Supervisor to provide pastoral support and to support the development of your PDP. The PDP will be delivered in the following Modules: Semester 1: Studio Debates and Contexts; Semester 2: Theory-Specialisation Research; Semester 3: Independent Specialisation Project 2. The PDP constitutes a specific component of the work in these modules and is assessed as a separate assignment, involving diaries of your own self-monitoring of your progress and self-reflection on your work and performance, schedules and plans, as well as responses to questionnaires issued. The items submitted are assessed holistically, as part of the module portfolio, with a specific weighting indicated at the outset of the semester in the relevant assignment handouts.
The aim of the Personal Development Plan is primarily to render you aware of the extent to which you meet programme learning outcomes, to reflect on your performance and to seek to improve your participation in the programme. At this level the PDP also aims to facilitate the integration of the academic/scholarly and practical/professional aspects of the your work and to enable you to develop as a well-rounded, high-level practitioner through continuous reflection on your studies, recording progress, noting weak areas that need improvement, developing strengths, planning for the future, developing the foundations for a successful career.
The PDP will also provide useful reference for formulating a Learning Agreement for your major independent project that will in line with your interests and potential, and to effectively communicate your progress at the work-in-progress reviews during Semesters.
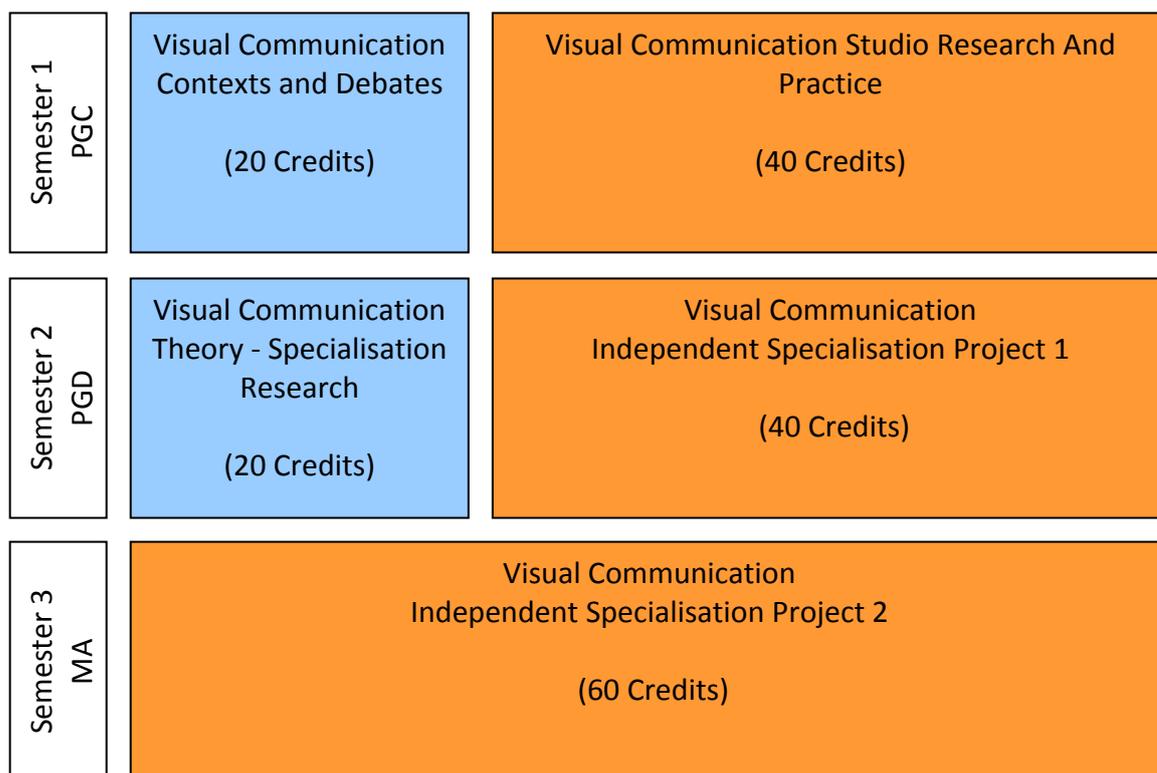
The structure of programme delivery is depicted in the diagram below:

MA VISUAL COMMUNICATION
PROGRAMME STRUCTURE DIAGRAM

Core Modules
Prescribed Modules

Semester 1 PGC	Visual Communication Contexts and Debates (20 Credits)	Visual Communication Studio Research And Practice (40 Credits)
Semester 2 PGD	Visual Communication Theory - Specialisation Research (20 Credits)	Visual Communication Independent Specialisation Project 1 (40 Credits)
Semester 3 MA	Visual Communication Independent Specialisation Project 2 (60 Credits)	

SECTION FIVE: PROGRAMME DELIVERY

LEARNING AND TEACHING METHODS

A range of teaching and learning methods are used throughout the Programme including project work, lectures and presentations, seminars, group critiques, personal tutorials, invited specialist speakers and study visits.

Discussion and peer evaluation is particularly encouraged. Specific strategies, including student-led seminars and dialogic debates are developed in the Theory modules, while guidance is also offered with regard to research methodologies, historical/theoretical analysis and current debates in Design, focusing on issues relevant to either of the two proposed programmes (Architectural Design or Visual Communication).

Typically the Teaching schedule will include a sequenced series of lectures/presentations, followed up by seminars and/or workshop sessions, while the learning process will involve the presentation of project work, reviewed in group critiques and personal tutorials. A large part of the learning experience will be in self-

directed study, research and practice, while an important role in the T&L process is played by formative assessment

INDEPENDENT SCHOLARSHIP

Central to the process of specialised study at this level is the self-management of your study and the engagement in independent scholarship, which involves rigorous research and the formulation of thoroughly supported arguments and proposals. Independent scholarship forms an essential, integral and substantial part of programmes leading to the master's degree. In terms of academic credits in this programme, independent scholarship represents 105 credits of the total 180.

In this programme you are expected to submit work produced through independent scholarship in the form of an *exhibition* of creative design proposals (artwork and applications), accompanied by a supporting *dissertation* (an analytical, critical and evaluative written document derived from published and/or primary sources).

GUIDANCE AND SUPERVISION

Throughout the course you will be provided with guidance and support with the aim not of [providing you ready-made solutions but of enabling you to self-manage your work and to develop methods of independent research and study.

At the beginning of the programme you will be assigned a Principal Supervisor who will be your mentor and "critical friend" throughout the programme, providing support through tutorials. Your principle Supervisor will work closely with you in the First Semester as you will establish your 'area of focus' in the Practice Module, and will supervise your major independent specialisation project in the Second and Third Semester.

Also at the beginning of the programme you will be assigned a Theory Supervisor, who will get to know your personal interests and knowledge with regard to contextual issues, and will provide supervision in connection with the development of your final project Dissertation in Semesters 2 and 3, to support your practice-based independent specialisation project.

LEARNING AGREEMENT

At the beginning of the Second Semester a "Learning Agreement" will be established for those modules involving independent scholarship (Independent Specialisation Project –1 & Independent Specialisation Project –2). It will be based on the specific "area of focus" you selected, from the total of five specialisations offered, at the end of the First Semester, and that you will have formulated in the form of a major project brief. The Learning Agreement will also include your commitment to follow the Specialisation Research module that is related to your selected area of study.

The Learning agreement will be developed with your Principal Supervisor, with additional support offered by the Theory Supervisor, in the first three weeks of the Second Semester, and will be discussed and confirmed in special sessions of the programme staff chaired by the MA supervisor in weeks 2 and 3 of the Second Semester.

WORK-IN-PROGRESS REVIEW PANELS

At least twice in each semester you will be called to have your work in all modules reviewed by the programme staff as a whole. The aim of these meetings is to support the development of your work through challenge and debate that promotes critical thinking.

The panels that review your work-in-progress comprise the entire staff of the programme, who will engage you in debate about your specialization and related issues including current literature, research, ethics, responsibilities, international perspectives, and other considerations such as social, economic and cultural.

TECHNOLOGICALLY ENHANCED LEARNING

The Vakalo College has developed the On-line Student Resource Centre to support your learning and to enhance your communication with staff. This electronic facility will be employed together with the University of Derby On-line (UDO) portal which is accessible to all Vakalo students. Special workshop demonstration will enable you to learn how to use these resources.

RESEARCH GOVERNANCE AND ETHICS

All students are required to comply with research governance and ethics principles whilst undertaking their programme of study. This is of particular importance when conducting research involving other people e.g. for module assessments or Independent Studies. Information on these principles can be found on the University web site at www.derby.ac.uk/research/ethics. You will be required to complete a form entitled "Request for Ethical Approval for Individual Study / Programme of Research", before commencing your Independent Specialisation Project.

ASSESSMENT

This external validation MA programme operates within the Regulatory Framework of the University of Derby and conforms with its regulations on assessment. The following remarks outline the rationale, method and schedule of the specific regulations through which your work will be assessed in this programme.

ASSESSMENT RATIONALE

Overall, assessment seeks to ascertain the extent to which you have met the learning outcomes set by the programme. More specifically assessment monitors and evaluates the development of your technical skills and of your intellectual and imaginative abilities; your capability to engage in analysis and to be original and inventive; your understanding of the cultural, economic, historical and technological contexts that affect the profession of the designer, which will be demonstrated in your practical project work, which you are required to present, explain and support.

- Each design task assigned is assessed and marked in relation to the specific criteria explained in the assignment brief. At this specialised level emphasis is placed on the actual outcome (i.e. the work produced) though other parameters such as aptitude, approach to work and general participation in the learning process are taken into consideration.
- At the end of each Stage of the Programme, i.e. week 15, week 30, and week 45, you are assessed in each module of the specific stage and become entitled to either progress to the next Stage or to be recommended for the

relevant award as the case may be. (For part-time students the assessment time-points are set at periods of double length i.e. week 30, 60 and 90).

- The overall work you produce in a module is presented as a portfolio and is assessed at the end of each Stage of the Programme, and a final assessment mark is awarded.
- Assessment criteria relate directly to the specified Learning Outcomes, and in order to award a pass, assessors must be satisfied that all such outcomes have been achieved.
- The programme envisages staged assessment in the 15th week of each stage. The Assessment Board will discuss and evaluate work separately, at a specifically convened session, in the event that a student request is made for an exit award at Stage 1 or 2.

ASSESSMENT SCHEDULE

At the end of each stage, you are assessed in all the prescribed modules in order to progress or graduate. As outlined above, Stage 1 includes one double and one double module, Stage 2 includes two single modules and one double module, while Stage 3 includes one single and one triple module. Indicatively each module will include assessment on assignments as indicated below:

Stage 1 Modules:
VC Contexts & Debates (Double):   a. Contextual Essay
                                         b. Seminar Paper
                                         c. Self-Reflective Diary (PDP)
VC Studio Practice & Research (Double): a. Research & Experimentation Asgmnts
                                         b. Specialist Project Brief and Rationale

Stage 2 Modules:
VC Theory –Specialisation Research (Single):Specialisation Project support texts
VC Specialisation Project 1 (Double):   Specialist Project Concept

Stage 3 Modules:
VC Specialisation Project 2 (Triple):   Specialist Project Realisation (inc. tect)

ASSESSMENT METHODS

Your work is assessed by staff members and the tutors entrusted with the teaching of specific components of the Programme. They evaluate work in relation to Learning Outcomes and overall student performance.

- At the assessment at the end of each Stage a "summative" approach is used, by which your work in a module is assessed as a whole. This process requires that you present you work in the form of exhibition of creative artwork and written dissertation to the assessors. The assessors ask questions and evaluate the work presented to reflect the level of achievement attained at that moment, i.e. at the end of the stage.
- Summative assessment in the First Semester is by 50% creative design coursework and 50% written texts. In the Second Semester your written work represents 25%, while design coursework represents 75% of the total assessed work. Normally a similar breakdown applies to Semester 3.
- During the Stage your work-in-progress will be normally assessed at least three times in tutorials that adopt the "formative" approach, providing feedback and explanation, and engaging in dialogue so that the review and

evaluation of your work become a formative, i.e. educational experience, where assessment merges with teaching and learning.

- Depending on the instructions you have received with regard to the work required for each module, the marks of the work-in-progress assessment during the stage may be diagnostic to enable you to gauge your performance and to improve your work as necessary, or may be binding to be computed in the overall summative mark at the end of the stage.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR STUDENTS WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

These needs are usually identified in the application process. In all cases they are supported by a special "Protocol" (Support Plan) devised by the College, following consultation with professionals and or carers, and agreed with the student. Teaching and assessment will take into account the nature of the disability and proceed according to established norms. It is noted that Dyslexia, which is the most common disability encountered, is addressed as per Greek education regulations. These provide for oral examinations in the form of questions and answers in those cases where the normal type of assessed assignment is that of written texts (Min. of Education Circular No. C2 1846/17 May 2000).

SECTION SIX: ADMISSIONS

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

As you are admitted to join a programme validated by the University of Derby, leading to a degree awarded by it, admission to this MA programme is governed by the provisions regarding "standard entry requirements" of the University.

The normal entry requirement is a good honours degree [First or Upper Second Class Honours] or a postgraduate qualification. Possession of a further qualification is an advantage. Applicants wishing to gain entry with advanced standing on the strength of prior certificated and non-certificated learning may seek Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL). Entrants for the Master of Arts degree should be able to demonstrate suitability for a demanding postgraduate programme.

ADMISSIONS PROCESS

The Vakalo College invites applications to its Postgraduate programmes and provides information to any interested party. Enquiries can be made directly to the College through any of the available media (post, telephone, fax, e-mail). Information is made available also through the Internet, in the School's website. To participate candidates must possess the required qualifications as follows:

Required formal qualifications: Candidates for the Vakalo School MA programmes must possess a good University degree, BA (Hons.) or other equivalent. "Good" normally refers to a level of achievement of at least Upper Second Class or equivalent mark in non-British HE certificates.

Required substantial qualifications: An interest for a profound engagement with design, a capacity for critical thought, a high standard of technical skills and the ability to address complex design issues.

Candidates for the MA Visual communication programme are normally holders of a Visual Communication, Graphic Design, Illustration, Typography, or other relevant first degree.

VAKALO COLLEGE CANDIDATES

Students in Stage 3 of the UoD validated Vakalo undergraduate programmes Graphic Design are invited to a presentation of the postgraduate programme, normally in April of each year. Any student who considers themselves eligible may submit an application for entry to the programme related to the pathway they are currently following.

APPLICATION

Candidates submit an application to Vakalo School's Registry, filling a form issued by the School, listing their qualifications and indicating the specialisation course they wish to follow, not later than 15th September. The applications are processed by the MA co-ordinator who acts as admissions officer. Once eligibility is established all candidates (including also those coming directly from the Vakalo) are invited for an interview.

INTERVIEWS

Interviews are held in late September separately for either pathway. Following the submittal of the applications, the candidate is informed of the date of the interview, where he/she presents a portfolio of work and responds to the questions of the interview panels, with the aim of establishing whether the candidate has the substantial qualification to participate in a postgraduate programme. Two separate interview panels are set up, one for each pathway, as follows:
MA Visual communication Programme Leader
Practice Module Tutor
Theory Module Tutor

VAKALO COLLEGE CANDIDATES

Students applying directly from Stage 3 of the UoD validated Vakalo undergraduate programme are invited to interviews but are not required to present a portfolio of work, unless they wish to present additional work that they have produced beyond the Vakalo school programmes.

COMMUNICATION OF RESULTS

Within a week of the interview results are communicated, and successful candidates are invited to enrol.

EXCEPTION FOR ADMISSIONS WITHOUT THE FORMAL QUALIFICATIONS

As an exception the School may consider applications by persons who do not possess the formal qualification, but can demonstrate that they possess the substantial qualifications and the intellectual and technical abilities to follow a postgraduate programme of studies. Such candidates follow the same procedure of submitting an application and being invited to an interview and portfolio presentation, together with any evidence of professional experience and other involvement in the field of design, within the field of the discipline related to the pathway they are applying for.

COMMITMENT TO EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

The Vakalo College states that it follows procedures for the selection of students to participate in its programmes. In every case the College is committed to processing all applications in a fair and impartial manner. It is also committed to providing equal opportunities to all candidates irrespective of gender, origin, religion, as well as to ensuring access to persons with special needs. Finally with regard to the personal information of candidates and enrolled students the College strictly adheres to the legislation concerning "protection of personal data".]

SECTION SEVEN: STUDENT SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE

HUMAN RESOURCES

With a large number of teaching staff deployed relative to the number of students (SSR 1:2), students are closely and effectively supported and guided through the program. A systematic schedule for tutorials is developed at the outset, without foregoing the general Vakalo policy of readiness for individual contact with students over and beyond this schedule. Assignments are clearly set and support material is provided. Further, close monitoring of the development of student projects together with the provision of frequent feedback ensure that the student is aware of their progress and performance at all times.

LEARNING RESOURCES

The Vakalo College Library, in recently refurbished new premises and the fully operational and continuously improved On-line Student Resource Centre (OSRC), together with access to UDO, provide ample support for your research and independent study.

You will be allocated your own workstation in the programme workshop, equipped with regularly updated equipment (both hardware and software).

INDUCTION

There is an induction programme (including IT and Learning Centre use) and you will receive a programme handbook that provides all the essential information about the programme and the support we provide for your learning.

SUPERVISION

The programme leader, assisted by tutors, oversees all students enrolled on the programme. In addition you will be allocated a supervisor who will monitor your progress in your practice projects on an individual basis throughout the course, as well as a theory tutor to supervise your written work. Further, both supervisors will provide any advice required in the first semester with regard to the choice of the area of specialisation for your major independent project.

Within a small group, in a student-friendly climate, personal issues can be more easily identified and referred to the Programme Coordinator who is the person entrusted with pastoral care of students.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR STUDENTS WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

These needs are usually identified in the application process. They are supported by a special "Protocol" (Support Plan) devised by the College, following consultation with professionals and or carers, and agreed with the student. The College adopts an inclusive policy according to individual need. With the student's consent the arrangement may include contact with their family.

SECTION EIGHT: POST PROGRAMME OPPORTUNITIES

POST-PROGRAMME OPPORTUNITIES

The programme is designed to provide you with the skills and knowledge to be immediately employable in the visual communication professions, either in communication design offices or as free lance practitioners. The quality and standard of its programmes have ensured that the Vakalo College has enjoyed a good reputation among the art and design professions for more than a half-century. Its name and the qualities of its graduates are widely recognised and appreciated by Greek firms and professionals. A large number of sources wish to recruit directly from the College, and a flow of advertisements for job opportunities and vacancies is received by the College. These advertisements are screened by the Chief Administrative Officer who forwards them to the Programme leader. Those deemed suitable are either transmitted to students or kept in files which are made available to students. Often the School is requested to recommend students and letters of reference are issued. The School has set up an e-mail communication network with all graduates informing them of job opportunities.

The current global financial downturn notwithstanding, the general prospect for a growing design market both locally and internationally still stands. Especially with regard to the Greek market, it is not only the still prevalent model of financial and life-style development that provides ground for a continuation in the expansion of demand for visual communication services (especially in tourism and leisure industries), but also the increasing awareness and development of policies to regenerate inner cities in Greece that involve extensive changes in land use and redesign of large urban areas.

Additionally you will be able to seek a career abroad as you will be a holder of a British University degree title, and a carrier of the Vakalo's good name. Though not numerous, a Vakalo 'expat' contingent may be found in Britain, Spain and the US, building careers in these countries. Equally you will be able, if you so wish, to seek further studies abroad.

SECTION NINE: EMPLOYER LINKS

EMPLOYER LINKS

The review and redesign of the Vakalo MA programme was prompted by perceived needs in the current design market, and following consultation with prominent designers, academics, artists and stage designers that confirmed the basic tenets of the proposed programme. Further, their high opinion of the quality of the education offered by the College boosted the Vakalo's self-confidence and conviction that an

improved postgraduate programme could and should be developed and delivered in Greece. But it is not only locally that the programme is noticed: Graphic and Web Design projects have won international distinctions, graduates have moved on to prestigious international schools for further studies, and several are pursuing successful careers abroad. Additionally it is noted that and independent education consultant in the US has ranked the Vakalo for two consecutive years among the top 50 interior design colleges in the world.