SECTION ONE: General Information

Programme Title	MA DIGITAL DESIGN
Approval of Specification	10/05/2022
Award Title & Interim Awards	**Final Awards:** MA Digital Design **Interim Awards:** Post Graduate Diploma Digital Design Post Graduate Certificate Digital Design
Mode of Study	Full-time: ☐ ✓ Part-time: ☐✓ E-learning: ☐ Distance:☐ Sandwich: ☐
Programme Start Date & Period of Validation	Start Date: October 2022 | Date of Last Update: 5 Years: ☐✓ Indefinite:☐ Other (Please state):
Awarding Institution	University of Derby: ☐✓ Other (*Please State*):
College Managing the Programme	Arts, Humanities and Education
Institutions Delivering the Programme	University of Derby: ☐ Other (*Please State*): VAKALO ART & DESIGN COLLEGE
Relevant External Reference Points	QAA Subject Benchmarks for Art and Design 2019
External Accreditation/ Recognition	N/A
JACS Code(s)	W212

SECTION TWO: Overview

Background/Context:

The Vakalo Art & Design College has been operating since 1958. Its UG programmes were first validated by the University of Derby in 1996. Four years later, in 2000, the PG programmes were also validated.

In developing and operating higher education programmes of studies in design at master's level, Vakalo College is responding to an evident need in the contemporary world of constant innovation for the formation of better equipped and better informed designers, with a deeper grasp of design issues both social and environmental.

In the local context, Vakalo College, about to commence its 65th year of operation, developed in tandem with design consciousness in Greece, and in many respects, it could be said that the College itself was instrumental in the cultivation and 'raising' of that consciousness in the post-war era. Furthermore, design culture has been expanding very rapidly in Greek society since the 1990s when the country began to fully participate in global socio-economic developments – and it is in that period that Vakalo sought an international partnership. The existing programmes in the last two decades further developed during a period of transformation from analogue to digital. Within the rapidly growing market for digital services, increasing use and teaching of digital technology as a design tool led to the development six years ago of an undergraduate specialist pathway dedicated to digital design. As involvement in digital design expanded and the market grew further, Vakalo recognised it was time to develop a post-graduate programme to provide a higher level of learning, to meet the challenges within a rapidly changing design environment, calling for deeper research, innovation and critical digital design practitioners.

Overview of the Programme:

OVERVIEW

The MA Digital Design programme seeks to provide education in design at a high academic level that will explore issues and will develop concrete proposals related to the field of Digital Design both in terms of marketable applications and innovative-experimental creative proposals.

The programme draws on the decade-long experience of successful operation of the first-ever MA Design course in Greece run by Vakalo College, and draws from the practice of current postgraduate programmes in the UK, especially those of the University of Derby.

The programme includes a range of thematic areas that correspond to specific recognizable specialisations, which help enable students to select a route of their own choosing to develop specialised master's 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) User Experience Design; (b) User Interface Design; (c) Branding Design; (d) Motion Design; (e) Digital Culture-Theory.

On enrolment, students join a common curriculum in both modules of the first Stage. The programme is designed to support students align with one of the five specialty schemes at the end of the First Semester, which they will follow through to the completion of their studies (Semesters 2 and 3).

The programme seeks to expand beyond the strict confines of design for digital applications to a broader notion of Digital Design that will include a more extensive and sophisticated consideration of contexts, involving the cultural, environmental, ethical, aspirational, theoretical/philosophical aspects (e.g., Digital Cultures Theory), as well as research and experimentation for innovative proposals.

Its principal aim is to foster critically aware designers responsive to changing contexts; designers equipped to facilitate and enhance aspects of contemporary life, work, leisure and more.

Key Characteristics:

The curriculum is structured as a three-semester staged course with specific aims and outcomes for each stage. Each semester (or Stage) carries 60 HE Level 7 credits and runs for 15 weeks. The total of credits for an MA award is 180 and the total duration of the three stages of the course is 45 weeks, covering a 12-month period (including six weeks of vacation see last paragraph in this section below). For part-time study the duration is 24 months, and each semester runs for 30 weeks.

Students pursue a common curriculum in the first semester (Stage 1) providing a basis for apposite theoretical and research methodologies. At this point, students are encouraged to align with a range of Digital design specialty areas: - User Experience Design, User Interface Design, Branding Design, Motion Design, Digital Cultures-Theory. Their choice then helps articulate focus in Stages 2 and 3 and the development of their major specialisation project.

The programme will normally commence in the third week of October. The first Stage will run to the third week of February (including a two-week Christmas break). The second Stage will end in the second third week of June (including a two-week Easter break). The third Stage will end in the third week of October. Students referred for resubmission of work will normally be assessed by end February of the following calendar year.

Programme Aims:

PROGRAMME AIMS
The Programme aims to prepare students to meet the contemporary challenges of Digital design, thus equipping them to pursue a professional career either in Greece or abroad.

More specifically, the Programme aims to enable students 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 Digital design market both locally and internationally.

2. Achieve conceptual and critical understanding of Digital design 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 Digital designer in these contexts.

3. Acquire technical knowledge in a range of state-of-the-art equipment and tools, as well as the confidence in selecting the appropriate media and approach to individual design tasks.

4. Undertake extensive and rigorous research, to evaluate the views of others and to critically self-reflect on their own proposals, assuming responsibility and accountability for their own proposals, views and ideas.

5. Develop methodologies for their design work and strategies for their future career through self-assessment of their output and self-management of their study (utilising to this end the specific support offered through PDP).

6. Cultivate the spirit of investigation and critical enquiry based on a systematic questioning of received and embedded ideas, thus 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

SECTION THREE: PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES

PG Certificate Stage – Level 7

Knowledge and Understanding:
On completion of the Stage students are expected to be able to:
- evidence knowledge and understanding of ethical considerations and social impact of Digital Design projects
- evidence awareness and understanding of competing critical theoretical research and methodological models associated with their field of inquiry

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

Subject specific skills:
On completion of the Stage students are expected to be able to:
- handle and utilize specialist software, media and techniques relevant to their specialist interest within Digital Design

- express critical and reflective understanding of their chosen discipline in a professional manner

Transferable skills:
On completion of the Stage students 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

Knowledge and Understanding:
On completion of the Stage students are expected to be able to:
- Understand the academic concerns of their chosen specialisation within Digital Design 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 their field of enquiry.

Intellectual Skills:
On completion of the Stage students are expected to be able to:
- express, in a critical and reflective manner, understanding of their field of enquiry in Digital Design
- organise and undertake independent scholarship with an aim for originality
- reflect and critically evaluate, evidencing maturity in the development of their specialist design project

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

Transferable skills:
On completion of the Stage students are expected to be able to:
- Communicate effectively the distinctiveness of their practice to others
- Manage their 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 analysing information from a variety of sources

Master of Arts Stage – Level 7

Knowledge and Understanding:

On completion of the Stage students are expected to be able to:
- demonstrate command of the contemporary and historical debates, issues and themes pertinent to Digital Design and their individual specialisation, and to be fully conversant with a scholarly approach.
- display command of a high level of practical skill in digital design
- to express in a critical and reflective manner, with sophisticated understanding the competing critical, methodological and theoretical models and literature associated with their field of enquiry

Intellectual Skills:

On completion of the Stage students are expected to be able to:
- express in a critical and reflective manner, a sophisticated understanding of their 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 their project
- situate their own work within the context of current debates

Subject Specific skills:

On completion of the Stage students are expected to be able to:
- efficiently engage in the scheduling and realisation of production of the final versions of their creative design proposals
- produce a persuasive, professional presentations of the required deliverables, including all support documentation and justification of their own distinctive contribution
- produce, deliver and present work at a professional level, locating their practice in a professional context

Transferable skills:

On completion of the Stage students are expected to be able to:
- Communicate effectively the outcomes of their project to others
- Analyse and respond to new developments in the subject
- Communicate and promote personal strengths
- Navigate, retrieve, manage, analyse and evaluate information from a variety of sources.

SECTION FOUR: Programme Structure & Curriculum

The MA Digital Design 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 students are entitled to either of the interim awards if students 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 Stage (Semester), at the end of which students align with one of the five specialisation schemes offered. In the Second

and Third Stages (Semesters) students follow their chosen specialisation scheme programme.

The programme structure is depicted conceptually as below:
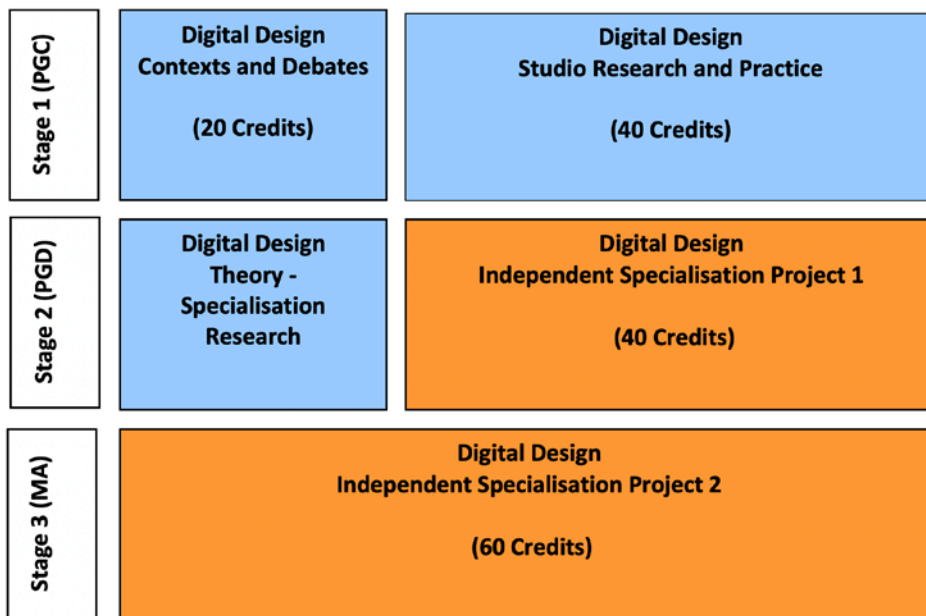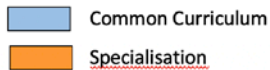
The programme includes the following modules and is structured as listed below:

Level	Module Title	Status	Credits
	Stage 1(First Semester)		
7	Digital Design Contexts & Debates	Common	20
7	Digital Design Studio Research & Practice	Common	40
	Stage 2 (Second Semester)		
7	Digital Design Theory –Specialisation Research	Common	20
7	Digital Design Independent Specialisation Project 1	Specialisation	40
	Stage 3 (Third Semester)		
7	Digital Design Independent		

Specialisation Project 2	Specialisation	60

The structure of programme delivery is depicted in the diagram below for full time and part time respectively:

MA DIGITAL DESIGN
PROGRAMME STRUCTURE DIAGRAM – FULL-TIME

WEEKS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Stage 1 (60 credits)	1st Semester														
Module 7VA513	DIGITAL DESIGN CONTEXTS & DEBATES													(20 Credits)	
Module 7VA514	DIGITAL DESIGN STUDIO RESEARCH & PRACTICE													(40 Credits)	
Stage 2 (60 Credits)	2nd Semester														
Module 7VA515	DIGITAL DESIGN SPECIALISATION RESEARCH – THEORY 1													(20 Credits)	
Module 7VA516	DIGITAL DESIGN INDEPENDENT SPECIALISATION PROJECT 1													(40 Credits)	
Stage 3 (60 Credits)	3rd Semester														
Module 7VA517	DIGITAL DESIGN INDEPENDENT SPECIALISATION PROJECT 1													(60 Credits)	

MA DIGITAL DESIGN
PROGRAMME STRUCTURE DIAGRAM – PART-TIME

WEEKS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Stage 1 (60 cr)																														
Mod 7VA513	DIGITAL DESIGN CONTEXTS & DEBATES																												(20 Credits)	
Mod 7va514	DIGITAL DESIGN STUDIO RESEARCH & PRACTICE																												(40 Credits)	
Stage 2 (60Cr)																														
Mod 7VA515	DIGITAL DESIGN SPECIALISATION RESEARCH – THEORY 1																												(20 Credits)	
Mod 7VA516	DIGITAL DESIGN INDEPENDENT SPECIALISATION PROJECT 1																												(40 Credits)	
Stage 3 (60 Cr)																														
Mod 7VA517	DIGITAL DESIGN INDEPENDENT SPECIALISATION PROJECT 1																												(60 Credits)	

First Semester – Stage1 (Postgraduate Certificate Stage)
This Semester comprises 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 students to engage in exploration and experimentation supported by theoretical debates and research in order to identify the specialized area of their interest. By the end of the Semester students will have developed and formulated the scope of their major

practice project and its contexts, providing the basis for their work in Semesters 2 and 3. Their work will be monitored and guided by a principal supervisor supported by a theory supervisor who will work with students throughout 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 their preferred areas of Digital design, to test assumptions and received ideas, and to work out new ideas and proposals. Experimentation will be encouraged alongside 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 assist students to make an informed decision regarding the specialization students will pursue, by aligning with one of the following areas: -

(a) User Experience Design; (b) User Interface Design; (c) Branding Design; (d) Motion Design; (e) Digital Cultures - Theory

This decision-making process will require the self-evaluation of both practical skills and critical thinking to help formulate the context and aims of their brief for the major specialization practice project for the next stages of their studies. A "learning agreement" will be formulated at this stage to facilitate forwards trajectory (see below) for Stages 2 and 3.

The ***Digital Design Contexts and Debates*** single module provides students with the opportunity to engage with current theoretical debates, to study and critically analyse complex theoretical texts on issues pertaining to digital and visual cultures and to discuss the function and social impact of major projects drawn from history. The module fosters academic skills in research and written scholarship. Research and theoretical methodologies, ethical considerations, critical analysis and evaluation of findings, are significant to the module, thus introducing students to the requirements of a higher academic level and at the same time supporting their investigations and research in the parallel practice mode (Studio Research and Practice).

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

Second Semester – Stage 2 (Postgraduate Diploma Stage)

On joining Semester 2 students will have aligned to one of the specialisation areas based on their "learning agreement" which will have been concluded at the end of the First Semester. The second semester comprises two modules: - ***Theory-Specialisation Research***, a single module, and ***Specialisation Project 1***, a double module.

The engagement with both theory and practice is maintained, while added support is provided with regard to their chosen specialisation field in a way that enhances both their practical and contextual work.

According to the area of specialisation, students will devise and develop the concept of their major project based on the brief formulated in the previous stage and students 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 their major project. This module is perhaps the cornerstone of their studies as students develop the concept of their major project, involving research, originality and innovation, which in turn mean self-management, experimentation and risk-taking. This is the time of decision-making and assuming responsibilities. Here students will apply their subject-specific skills to the best of their ability to produce convincing and coherent proposals.

This module enables students to engage with broader and deeper issues related to students' areas of specialisation within the field of Digital design, thus developing specialist knowledge, skills and insights foundational to their major independent practice project. Students will benefit from contact with visiting specialist academics and professional practitioners.

To this end, the work students will produce in *Theory – Specialisation Research 1* will be of great assistance. The latter aims to extend their knowledge and understanding of Digital design to an advanced level through research and engagement with current literature and debates. It also enables students to engage with critical, theoretical and philosophical issues pertinent to their specialist field of Digital design, strengthening specialist knowledge, skills and insights that will inform the work on their major independent practice project. Students will be expected to produce the basis of an extended piece of writing (Research Text or Dissertation), to be completed in the Third Semester, in support of their major specialisation project. Students will plan a personal programme of research related to the topic of their Independent Specialist projects, so that theory and practice will inform each other.

Third Semester – Stage 3 (Master's Stage)
In the Third Semester there is one triple practice module *Specialisation Project 2 – Realisation*. It is the culmination of their Master's major practice project and will enable students to realise the work as envisaged in the plan set out in the previous semester. This triple module provides the time and locus to create a body of highly developed practice responding to the challenges students have set. Students will be expected to work in accordance with the requirements of independent scholarship - enquiring, questioning, testing, analysing and critically evaluating their work throughout.

Students also engage with the further development and completion of the extended written text initiated in the previous semester. They 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 students in creating, implementing and maintaining a Personal Development Plan (PDP) through all three semesters. The PDP will be delivered embedded in the following Modules: Semester 1: *Digital Design Contexts and Debates*; 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 their own self-monitoring of their progress and self-reflection on their work and performance, schedules and plans, as well as responses to questionnaires issued. The result of the PDP assessment is computed within the overall module mark, as per the instructions issued by the module tutors in each case.

The aim of the Personal Development Plan is primarily to render students aware of the extent to which they meet programme learning outcomes, to reflect on their performance, and to seek to improve their participation in the programme. At this level the PDP also aims to facilitate the integration of the academic/scholarly and practical/professional aspects of their work and to enable students to develop as a well-rounded, high-level practitioner through continuous reflection on their studies, recording progress, noting areas of weakness that need improvement, developing strengths, planning for the future, and developing the foundations for a successful career.

The PDP will also provide useful reference for formulating a Learning Agreement for their major independent project that will align with their interests and potential, and to effectively communicate their progress at the work-in-progress reviews during Semesters.

THE LEARNING AGREEMENT

The Learning Agreement is written jointly by students and their supervisors. It includes information regarding their studies in their chosen specialisation in the Second and Third Stages (Semesters) of the Programme.

More specifically, it indicates the plan for the development of their personal specialisation project; and the outline of the schedules (a) of tutorials and contacts with their supervisors, and (b) of lectures, workshops, visits and assignments that will provide students with their specialist-specific learning.

It also includes indicative reading lists and other available resources and lists any additional support students may require for the development of their project.

The Learning Agreement is approved by the Vakalo-Derby Academic Liaison and forwarded to the UoD translator/moderator to be submitted to the UoD moderator for approval. It is signed off by the Project Manager (UoD Partnership Lead).

Depending on the actual development and findings of their research, the Learning Agreement may be modified accordingly during their studies. In such cases, an updated version is submitted at the beginning of the Third Stage of the Programme.

SECTION FIVE: Learning & Teaching

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 regarding research methodologies, historical/theoretical analysis and current debates in Design, focusing on specific issues relevant to the overall field of Digital Design.

Typically, the Teaching schedule will include a sequenced series of lectures/presentations, followed up by seminars and/or workshop sessions, as well as masterclasses led by acclaimed professionals, 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 self-directed study, research and practice. An important role in the teaching and learning process is played by formative assessment.

INDEPENDENT SCHOLARSHIP

Central to the process of specialised study at this level is the self-management of study and engagement in independent scholarship, involving rigorous research and the formulation of thoroughly supported arguments and proposals. In terms of academic credits in this programme, independent scholarship represents 100 credits of the total 180.

In this programme students are expected to submit work produced through independent scholarship in the form of a final presentation of creative design proposals (artwork and applications), accompanied by a supporting *dissertation* or equivalent.

GUIDANCE AND SUPERVISION

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

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

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

LEARNING AGREEMENT

As described above, at the beginning of the Second Semester a "Learning Agreement" will be established for Semesters 2 and 3 which articulates the development and realisation of each student's major independent research project. It will be based on the specific area of specialisation selected at the end of the First Semester, which students will have formulated in the form of a major project brief. The Learning Agreement will also indicate their commitment to follow their area of specialisation.

WORK-IN-PROGRESS REVIEW PANELS

At least twice in each semester students will be called to have their work in all modules reviewed by the programme staff as a whole and peer-evaluated by all students in the group. The aim of these meetings is to support the development of their work through challenge and kinds of debate which promotes critical thinking.
The panels that review work-in-progress comprise the entire staff of the program, who will engage students in debate about their 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, apart from providing an online resource platform where all students have accounts, and the link to the University of Derby online Library, has developed in recent years a well-equipped lab where students can book workstations to use current software to support their work.
Further, Vakalo tutors regularly offer specially prepared videos to provide guidance and generate ideas in various parts of the programme.

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. Students will be required to complete a form entitled

"Request for Ethical Approval for Individual Study / Programme of Research", before commencing their Independent Specialisation Project.

SECTION SIX: Assessment

ASSESSMENT

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

ASSESSMENT RATIONALE
Overall, assessment seeks to ascertain the extent to which students have met the learning outcomes set by the programme. More specifically assessment monitors and evaluates the development of their technical skills and of their intellectual and imaginative abilities; their capability to engage in analysis and to be original and inventive; their understanding of the cultural, economic, historical and technological contexts that affect the profession of the designer, which will be demonstrated in their practical project work, which students 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, students 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 students 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, students are assessed in all the modules in order to progress or graduate. As outlined above, Stage 1 includes one single and one double module, similarly Stage 2 includes one single module and one double module, while Stage 3 includes one triple module.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

Student 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 student work in a module is assessed as a whole. This process requires that students present their work in the form of exhibition of creative artwork and written dissertation or equivalent 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.
- During the Stage their 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 their work become a formative, i.e. educational experience, where assessment merges with teaching and learning.

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 the recognised disabilities, such as Dyslexia, are addressed as per Greek education regulations. (Min. of Education Circular No. 251/22806/A5/2021

SECTION SEVEN: Admission

SECTION SIX: ADMISSIONS

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

As students 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 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). 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 College's website. To participate candidates must possess the qualifications as follows:

Required formal qualifications: Candidates for the Vakalo College's 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.

Candidates for the MA Digital Design programme are normally holders of a Digital Design, Graphic Design, or Motion Design first degree (BA or other equivalent).

Non-standard entry The Vakalo College welcomes applications from other related fields, or from experienced practitioners, following interview and presentation of portfolio or other related evidence of academic or professional learning / experience, as a mix of backgrounds may be conducive to a richer variety of approaches and exchange of ideas. 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 MA Programme they are applying for.

VAKALO COLLEGE CANDIDATES

Students in Stage 3 of the UoD validated Vakalo undergraduate programmes in Digital 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 UG pathway they are currently following.

APPLICATION

Candidates submit an application to Vakalo College's Registry, filling a form issued by the College, 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 each MA programme. 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. An interview panel is set set up as follows:
MA Digital Design Programme Leader
Practice Module Tutor
Theory Module Tutor
Interviewers seek to determine commitment, creativity, an interest for a profound engagement with design, a capacity for critical thought, a high standard of technical skills and ability to address complex design issues.

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 College programmes.

COMMUNICATION OF RESULTS

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

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 EIGHT: Student Support & Guidance

SECTION SEVEN: STUDENT SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE

HUMAN RESOURCES

With a large number of teaching staff deployed relative to the number of students (SSR 1:3), 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 premises and the continuously improved on-line student resource platform (edu4schools, developed by a company whose clients include the Ministry of Education and the Athens Academy), together with access to UDO, provide ample support for student research and independent study.
Students will be allocated their 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 students will receive a programme handbook that provides all the essential information about the programme and the support we provide for their learning.

SUPERVISION & SUPPORT
The programme leader, assisted by tutors, oversees all students enrolled on the programme. Their role is the equivalent of the PAT tutor role on UoD programmes. In addition, students will be allocated a supervisor who will monitor their progress in their practice projects on an individual basis throughout the course, as well as a theory tutor to supervise their 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 their 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 NINE: Employability

By joining and completing this programme, students acquire a profound understanding of the issues involved in design, and develop skills related to design thinking, research methodologies and problem solving, with respect to demanding complex design tasks. They are encouraged to be creative, innovative and critical in their approach, and are offered guidance and support in developing a substantial body of design work to professional specifications. The knowledge and capabilities, as well as the intellectual and communication skills acquired through their participation in this programme, coupled to the Vakalo educational ethos, sustained by a committed high quality academic staff team, provides them with a competitive edge in Greece in terms of employability in Greece, and certainly brings them on a par with designers in the international market. The College also offers guidance on career issues, the writing of CVs and the preparation of portfolios.

The strong signs of recovery of the economy following the financial crisis and as the covid pandemic restrictions eased created favourable conditions where all specialisations offered in this programme appeared to be in demand. Indeed, it appears that digital design services are in high demand and in many cases press reports note that supply cannot satisfy current demand.

Overall, Vakalo graduates, even in these difficult times, enjoy a high rate of employability in Greece, mainly due to the good name of the College, while several Vakalo alumni have found steady employment in premium locations overseas, such as London, Paris, Madrid and New York.

SECTION TEN: Post Programme Opportunities

POST-PROGRAMME OPPORTUNITIES
The programme is designed to provide students with the skills and knowledge to be immediately employable in the Digital design profession, either in Digital 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 College is requested to recommend students and letters of reference are issued. The College 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 Digital design 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 students will be able to seek a career abroad as students 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 students will be able, if students so wish, to seek further studies abroad.

SECTION ELEVEN: External Links

EMPLOYER LINKS
The Vakalo undergraduate programme is one of the most, if not *the* most, widely known and highly respected design education course in Greece, and employers recognise it as a form of guarantee of quality when seeking candidates to fill vacancies. The links with industry are further strengthened by participation in various live projects with leading Greek and international firms operating locally (e.g. IKEA, Coco-mat) as well as in local and international competitions and workshops (e.g. Open House EVGE- Greek and European Graphics and Illustration Awards), where numerous distinctions were won in recent years. Furthermore, the 'expat' Vakalo community, especially its larger contingent in the UK, has emerged as a useful international network that provides interaction, consultation and support both in terms of programme development and employment opportunities.