

University of Derby

College of Arts, Humanities and Education

Department of Art & Design

Programme Specifications

MA Visual Communication

MA Architectural Design

MA Digital Design

Programme valid from May 2023 to September 2028

Valid for delivery at: **Vakalo Art & Design College**, Athens, Greece



SECTION ONE: General Information

Programme Title	MA VISUAL COMMUNICATION	
Approval of Specification	09/05/2023	
Award Title & Interim Awards	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 (Digital Media Design) Master of Arts Visual Communication Theory Post Graduate Diploma Communication (Graphic Design) Post Graduate Diploma Communication (Illustration and Book Design) Post Graduate Diploma Communication (Typography) Post Graduate Diploma Visual Communication (Digital Media Design) Post Graduate Diploma Visual Communication Theory Post Graduate Certificate Visual Communication	
Mode of Study	Full-time: <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part-time: <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> E-learning: <input type="checkbox"/> Distance: <input type="checkbox"/> Sandwich: <input type="checkbox"/>	
Programme Start Date & Period of Validation	Start Date: October 2023 Click here to enter a date.	Date of Last Update: Click here to enter a date.
	5 Years: <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Indefinite: <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please state):	
Awarding Institution	University of Derby: <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Please State):	
College Managing the Programme	Arts, Humanities and Education	
Institutions Delivering the Programme	University of Derby: <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please State): VAKALO ART & DESIGN COLLEGE	
Relevant External	QAA Subject Benchmarks for Art and Design 2019	

Reference Points	
External Accreditation/ Recognition	N/A
JACS Code(s)	W200

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 July 1996. Four years later, in June 2000, the PG programmes were also validated.

In developing and operating higher education programmes of studies in design at Master's level, the 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 the 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 postwar 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 the Vakalo sought an international partnership.

The Vakalo MA programmes have been operating for over two decades and have produced results of high quality, having undergone a series of successful revalidations. Despite the severe economic crisis that has been with us the for best part of the last decade and the current environment of uncertainty brought about by two years of the global covid pandemic and sudden war as this programme is being submitted, demand for visual design has not receded. On the contrary, design as a whole, in terms of innovation and creativity, is in greater demand and especially so in the field covered by this programme, namely communication design, which together with the ever growing demand for digital design services within the communication market, create favourable conditions for professional development among graduates of a programme of study such as the one here proposed.

Overview of the Programme:

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) Digital Media Design; (e) Visual Communication Theory.

On enrolment students join a common curriculum in both modules of the first Stage. The programme is designed to support students to make the most appropriate choice of one of the five specialty schemes offered, at the end of the First Semester, which they will follow through to the completion of their studies (Semesters 2 and 3). The specialty they elect to pursue determines the name of the award they 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. digital media 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.

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 a 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).

Students pursue with a common curriculum in the first semester (Stage 1) providing a basis of PG level theory and research methodology, as well as offering scope for an exploration of a range of architectural design specialty areas (Graphic Design, Typography, Book Design & Illustration, Digital Media Design, Visual Communication Studies), enabling students to select their specialisation course to be pursued in Stages 2 and 3 through the development of their major specialisation project.

The specialty they elect to pursue determines the name of the award they will be entitled to.

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

Programme Aims:

The Programme prepares students to meet the contemporary challenges in the profession and social practice of visual communication and equips 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 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 their own proposals, assuming responsibility and accountability for their own proposals, views and idea;
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 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

SECTION THREE: PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES

PG Certificate Stage – Level 7

VISUAL COMMUNICATION

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 Visual Communication 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 digital software, media and techniques relevant to their specialist interest within Visual Communication
- 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

VISUAL COMMUNICATION (GRAPHIC DESIGN)

Knowledge and Understanding:

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

- Understand the academic concerns of particular relevance to graphic design as their 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 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 graphic design as their field of enquiry
- Organise and undertake independent scholarship with an aim for originality
- Reflect and critically evaluate, evidencing maturity in the development of their graphic 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 graphic 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 analyzing information from a variety of sources

VISUAL COMMUNICATION (ILLUSTRATION AND BOOK DESIGN)

Knowledge and Understanding:

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

- Understand the academic concerns of particular relevance to illustration and book design as their 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 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 illustration and book design as their field of enquiry
- Organise and undertake independent scholarship with an aim for originality
- Reflect and critically evaluate, evidencing maturity in the development of their illustration and book 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 illustration and book 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
- 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 students are expected to be able to:

- Understand the academic concerns of particular relevance to typography as their 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 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 typography as their field of enquiry
- Organise and undertake independent scholarship with an aim for originality
- Reflect and critically evaluate, evidencing maturity in the development of their typography project

Subject specific skills:

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

- evidence mastery of analog and digital tools and produce, deliver and present work at a professional level, locating typography 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
- 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 (DIGITAL MEDIA DESIGN)

Knowledge and Understanding:

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

- Understand the academic concerns of particular relevance to Digital Media 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 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 Digital Media Design as their subject of enquiry
- Organise and undertake independent scholarship with an aim for originality
- Reflect and critically evaluate, evidencing maturity in the development of their Digital Media Design project

Subject specific skills:

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

- evidence mastery of analog and digital tools and produce,, deliver and present work at a professional level, locating Digital Media 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
- 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 THEORY

Knowledge and Understanding:

On completion of the Stage students 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 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 the of visual Communication as their field of enquiry
- Organise and undertake independent scholarship with an aim for originality
- Reflect and critically evaluate, evidencing maturity in the development of their Visual Communication Theoryproject

Subject specific skills:

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

- evidence mastery of analog and digital tools and produce, deliver and present work at a professional scholarly level, locating their theory investigations in the history, theory and current practice of visual Communication 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
- 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 students 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 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 proposals in graphic design
- Produce a persuasive, professional presentations of the required deliverables, through effective use of appropriate analog and digital media, 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
- 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 students 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 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 proposals in illustration and book design
- Produce a persuasive, professional presentations of the required deliverables, through effective use of appropriate analog and digital media, 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
- 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 students 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 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 proposals in typography
- Produce a persuasive, professional presentations of the required deliverables, through effective use of appropriate analog and digital media, 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
- 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 (DIGITAL MEDIA DESIGN)

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 of particular relevant to their specialist focus in Digital Media Design and be fully conversant with a scholarly approach
- Display command of a high level of practical skills in Digital Media 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 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 proposals in Digital Media Design

- Produce a persuasive, professional presentations of the required deliverables, through effective use of appropriate analog and digital media,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
- 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 THEORY

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 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 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 project in visual Communication Theory
- Produce a persuasive, professional presentations of the required deliverables, through effective use of appropriate analog and digital media,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
- 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 & Curriculum

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 students are entitled to either of the interim awards if they 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, at the end of which students select one of the five specialisation schemes (or pathways) offered. In the Second and Third Stages they follow their chosen specialisation scheme programme, which leads to the corresponding named award. (In the Second Stage the Theory single module is also a common module).

The modular structure of the programme is presented in the table below:

MA VISUAL COMMUNICATION
PROGRAMME STRUCTURE DIAGRAM

Common Curriculum ■
Specialisation Pathway ■

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

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

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

This list represents schematically the **student journey** in this programme, developing through three stages, each corresponding to a semester which can be summarised as follows:

- In the first stage students engage in an investigation through a series of workshops in a studio environment in order to make an informed choice of the specialism they wish to pursue in the development of their major personal research project. This investigation takes place in the Studio Practice double module, and their choice is crystallized in the project proposal they submit which forms part of their learning agreement that sets the goals of their research and creative work. At the same time, students are supported in terms of contextual input and research methodologies by the delivery of the Contexts and Debates single module. Thus, the theoretical informs the practical enhancing the overall result of the student's performance.
The core aim of the first stage is to enable students to formulate their own distinctive idea or *concept* for a professional project.
- In the second stage students embark, as per their learning agreement, on the development of their project (in the Independent Specialisation Project 1 double module), presenting the concept and ground work of their design proposal, supported in their investigation by a series of master classes led by professionals who provide further valuable input. Additionally contextual and theoretical research is conducted in the 'Specialisation Research-Theory' single module which allows students to more deeply analyse their topic and enables them to locate their work in current contexts and to more effectively support their proposals. Thus, again as in Stage 1, the theoretical informs the practical creating an enhanced unified whole.
The core aim of the second stage is to enable students to develop their own distinctive design language to express a proposal to full professional specifications
- In the third stage students work as independent researchers and practitioners (in the 'Independent Specialisation Project 2' triple module) to produce their proposal as a full-blown professional project, supported only by a series of PATs, where their Supervisors act mostly as consultants. The overall process culminates in the presentation of the finished product and all supporting contextual, research and preparatory material (texts and drawings) in an exhibition in order to be assessed.
The core aim of the third stage is to enable students to produce work as professionals.

The structure of programme delivery is depicted in the diagram below for full time and part time respectively:
(NB for Full-time attendance each semester runs for 15 weeks, while for Part-time each semester is double in length, i.e. 30 weeks. All modules are Core).

VAKALO ART & DESIGN COLLEGE
MA VISUAL COMMUNICATION
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)	1 st Semester														
Module 7VA501	VISUAL COMMUNICATION CONTEXTS & DEBATES													(20 Credits)	
Module 7VA502	VISUAL COMMUNICATION STUDIO RESEARCH & PRACTICE													(40 Credits)	
Stage 2 (60 Credits)	2 nd Semester														
Module 7VA503	VISUAL COMMUNICATION SPECIALISATION RESEARCH – THEORY 1													(20 Credits)	
Module 7VA505	VISUAL COMMUNICATION INDEPENDENT SPECIALISATION PROJECT 1													(40 Credits)	
Stage 3 (60 Credits)	3 rd Semester														
Module 7VA507	VISUAL COMMUNICATION INDEPENDENT SPECIALISATION PROJECT 2													(60 Credits)	

It is further elucidated that in Stage 1 the teaching schedule is attended jointly by both FT and PT students, but PT students have double the time to develop their work.

In stage 2 the teaching schedule of FT and PT students is separate. FT students follow their schedule along the 15-week stage, while teaching for the PT mode is delivered for the two modules in succession, as in the diagram below. This arrangement is dictated by the fact that PT Stage 2 coincides with the Greek summer and the holiday season.

in Stage 3 there is not taught component.

VAKALO ART & DESIGN COLLEGE
MA VISUAL COMMUNICATION
PROGRAMME STRUCTURE DIAGRAM – PART-TIME
DELIVERY OF TAUGHT COMPONENT

END-OCTOBER															END-JUNE															
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)	TAUGHT COMPONENTS (JOINT FT&PT ATTENDANCE)																													
Mod 7VA501	VISUAL COMMUNICATION CONTEXTS & DEBATES																									(20 Credits)				
Mod 7VA502	DIGITAL DESIGN STUDIO RESEARCH & PRACTICE																									(40 Credits)				
	END-JUNE					START AUGUST					START SEPTEMBER										END FEBRUARY									
	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 2 (60Cr)	TAUGHT COMPONENTS (PT RUN)																													
Mod 7VA503	VISUAL COMM. SPECIAL. RSRCH – THEORY 1																									(20 Credits)				
Mod 7VA505	VISUAL COMM. INDEP. SPECIAL. PROJECT 1																									(40 Credits)				
	END FEBRUARY															END NOVEMBER														
	NO TAUGHT COMPONENT																													
Stage 3 (60 Cr)	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
Mod 7VA507	VISUAL COMMUNICATION INDEPENDENT SPECIALISATION PROJECT 2																													(60 Credits)

First Semester – Stage 1 (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 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. Student work will be monitored and guided by a principal supervisor supported by a theory supervisor who will work with them 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 the students' 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 the students' briefs for the major specialization practice project which they will develop in the next stages of their studies. This brief will determine the area of specialization of their study (and eventually of the name of their award), and will form the basis of their "learning agreement" (see below) for Stages 2 and 3, by aligning with one of the areas described above, as follows:

(a) Graphics Design; (b) Typography; (c) Illustration and Book Design; (d) Digital Media Design; (e) Visual Communication 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. Once the topic and brief are finalised, and the research scope determined, students will be expected to submit an application for ethical approval for their project.

The **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 register in one of the specialisations offered based on their "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 to their chosen specialisation field in a way that enhances both their practical and contextual work.

According to the specialisation route students have chosen to follow, and registered for in the Second Semester, they will select the corresponding area of study offered in the

“Specialisation Project 1” double module. They formulate and develop the concept of their major project based on the brief formulated in the previous stage and they 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 they develop the concept of their 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 they will apply their subject-specific skills to the best of their 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 students to engage with broader and deeper issues related to the specialty they have chosen within the field of visual communication, and to develop specialised knowledge, skills and insights that will inform the work on their major independent practice project. In this module students will benefit from contact with visiting specialist academics and professional practitioners. This will enable them to explore and develop a range of skills with regard to the requirements of professional practice, as the curriculum fosters team-work, peer evaluation and constructive responses to criticism, and provides guidance on communicating with audiences, public speaking and presentation of ideas in a dialogic environment. Further they review the progress of their research (revisiting if needed the ethics approval) and completing the first part of their work on their independent project.

To this end, the work produced in the **“Theory – Specialisation Research 1”** single module will be of great assistance. This module aims to extend student knowledge and understanding of visual communication to an advanced level through research and engagement with current literature and debates. It also enables students to engage with broader and deeper issues related to the specialty they have chosen within the field of visual communication, and to strengthen specialised 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 – with the “Specialisation Research” work providing additional input.

Third Semester – Stage 3 (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 the students’ Master’s major practice project and will enable them 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 they have set. Students 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 their work throughout.

They will also be encouraged and supported to further strengthen their communication and presentation skills to convey the merits of their creative, intellectual and technical endeavours, to demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of the views of others, and to assume responsibility for their work and ideas. In this respect they will be expected to comprehend and respond to any issue of research ethics that may arise, by a regular review

of their initial application, which will also be submitted (in its amended form, if applicable) with their finalised project.

Students also engage with the further development and completion of the extended written text initiated in the previous semester, which supports and complements their creative proposal. They will be expected to submit a text of academic scholarship of high standards, demonstrating critical and original thinking, and an ability to locate their work in current contexts.

Module Learning Outcomes

Each of the modules described above includes specific learning outcomes (see Module Specification Document) that correspond to the Programme Learning Outcomes Listed in Section Three, as can be seen in the Mapping Table appended at the end of this document.

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 in the following Modules: Semester 1: Visual Communication 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 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 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 them to develop as a well-rounded, high-level practitioner through continuous reflection on their 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 the students' major independent project that will be in line 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 the student and their supervisor, and includes information regarding their studies in their chosen specialisation pathway in the Second and Thirds 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 pathway-specific learning.

It also includes indicative reading lists and other available resources, and lists any additional support they 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 the students' 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 with regard to research methodologies, historical/theoretical analysis and current debates in Design, focusing on issues relevant to Visual Communication.

Practices referring to current University of Derby strategies in terms of teaching excellence are adhered to, such as Peer Observation, Student Feedback and Dissemination of Good Practices. Team teaching also helps complement a discursive forum for monitoring teaching and quality and learning support. Additionally, staff research continually informs teaching, while student and alumni research projects are presented and discussed, thus providing clear models of best practices in terms of research processes and methods to encourage and guide current students to engage in their own research investigations.

One of the core elements in the Learning and Teaching philosophy of the Vakalo College is to provide for diversity, taking into consideration both different backgrounds (of ethnicity, race and gender) and different approaches to learning (which may include disabilities or hidden disabilities). These considerations, in line with University Policy, are embedded in the teaching briefs and content of academic staff, while the close student-staff contact and the frequent Personal Academic Tutorials ensure that any issue related to inclusion and diversity is addressed.

Teaching and learning, apart from building a strong designer profile (the basis for any meaningful employment), enhances the students' employability prospects by offering students contact with market requirements through professional-led workshops and presentations, live projects with major companies and social welfare organisations, with acclaimed professional practitioners also assessing student work.

Teaching and Learning also engages students in team-work, exploring work methods vital in their future professional life, namely those of working with others and of constructively utilising criticism.

Students are further supported in putting together work-portfolios, provided with guidance on interviews with employers, and public speaking.

Students are encouraged and supported to assume ownership of and responsibility for their proposals and to be convincing and self-confident in presenting and supporting their projects, elements that will serve them well in their future employment, developing an outlook of a practitioner prepared to evaluate risks and undertake a leading role. Equally these skills will support investigations of novel ideas and engagement with original research and experimentation.

Typically the Teaching schedule will include a sequenced series of lectures/presentations, followed up by seminars and/or workshop sessions, as well as master classes 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 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 their 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 100 credits of the total 180.

In this programme students 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 programme students will be provided with guidance and support with the aim not of providing ready-made solutions but of enabling them to self-manage their work and to develop methods of independent research and study.

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

Also at the beginning of the programme students will be assigned a Theory Supervisor, who will get to know their personal interests and knowledge with regard to 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 comprise the development and realisation of the students’ major independent research project. It will be based on the specific area of specialisation they selected, from the total of five pathways offered, at the end of the First Semester, and that they will have formulated in the form of a major project brief. The Learning Agreement will also indicate their commitment to follow the Specialisation Pathway that will lead to the named award of their choice, and for which they enrol.

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 all students in the group. The aim of these meetings is to support the development of their work through challenge and debate that promotes critical thinking.

The panels that review student work-in-progress comprise the entire staff of the programme, 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.

This form is filled out and submitted at the end of Stage 1 (Studio Research and Practice Module), once the topic and scope of research for the development of the Independent Specialist Project is determined in the students' Learning Agreement. This Project is pursued in Stages 2 and 3 (Visual Communication Design Independent Specialist Project 1 & 2 Modules) during which the Ethics Approval form is reviewed to consider any additional needs and requirements that may arise.

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 creative project work, as well as their ability persuasively communicate, explain and support their proposals, and their understanding of professional requirements and constraints, as well as the relevance of their work to the broader local and international design field.

In short, assessment evaluates student performance in all four areas of the intended outcomes, with regard to Knowledge and Understanding, Intellectual, Subject-specific and

Transferrable skills, as described above in the Section Three (see pages 4-6), and the outcomes specified in each module description.

Both Assessment and Teaching & Learning strive to ensure that students acquire professional-level skills in all areas so as to enable them to successfully participate in the market.

Assessment also includes considerations of diversity, with regard to different student backgrounds in terms of ethnicity, race and gender, or different approaches to learning (including learning support), or specific needs for those with disabilities and hidden disabilities, and ensures inclusion of all individuals in the learning process and a fair evaluation of their efforts.

- 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 communication skills, teamwork, response to criticism and peer assessment, awareness of business implications of proposals, and assuming ownership of their work 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. Portfolios of work may include both creative design work and written texts, together with evidence of research, both textual and visual, evidence of oral presentations, and the development process of their creative proposals. All assessed components of a module have a “must pass” requirement and no compensation is offered within modules.
- 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 to the next stage or graduate. As outlined above, Stage 1 includes one double and one double module, similarly Stage 2 includes one single module and one double module, while Stage 3 includes one triple module.

Indicatively the student portfolios assessed in each module will include assignments as listed below:

Stage 1 Modules:

Visual Com. Contexts & Debates (Single):	a. Contextual Written Text (Essay, Seminar Paper/ Presentation) b. Research Methodology Assignment c. Self-Reflective Diary (PDP)
Visual Com. Studio Practice & Research (Double):	a. Design Research & Experimentation Assignments b. Specialist Project Brief and Rationale
<u>Stage 2 Modules:</u>	
Visual Com.Theory –Specialisation Research (Single):	Specialisation Contextual Research texts (incl PDP)
Visual Com. Indep. Specialisation Project 1 (Double):	Specialist Creative Project Concept & Development (Presentation of work in progress incl. support material)
<u>Stage 3 Modules:</u>	
VC Indep. Specialisation Project 2 (Triple):	Specialist Creative Project Realisation (Final Proposal Presentation in Exhibition Form, incl. Research Text & PDP)

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 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, in a dialogic context, where assessment merges with teaching and learning. This method follows the studio based culture and the tradition of the ‘art school crit’ that engages students in self-assessment and fosters an understanding of the students’ strengths and weaknesses and awareness of their own participation in the education process. In this respect the goal envisaged in university policy of ‘assessment and feedback enriching the development of Learning and Teaching through student participation’ may be attained.

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.

Students who may encounter unforeseen difficulties due to a variety of reasons during their studies can also be supported through special arrangements. The policy of the College in this respect involves a Plan with three options, from which the students may choose the most suitable plan following consultation with their Principal Supervisor and the Programme Leader. The options are: (i) Special schedule, (ii) convert to Part-time mode, or (iii) take a year out (ABS academic break of study) (all with individual study plans).

SECTION SEVEN: Admission

SECTION SEVEN: 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.

Entrants for the Master of Arts degree should be able to demonstrate suitability for a demanding postgraduate programme that involves **intellectual skills**, writing of texts with **academic rigour**, consideration of **contextual issues** and questions of **aesthetics**, together with the ability to engage in PG **research** and persuasively support and present **market-level proposals**, while acquiring high-level **technical skills**..

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 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.

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

Non-standard entry. It is noted that the Vakalo welcomes applications from other related fields, or from experienced practitioners, following interview and presentation of portfolio or other related evidence of academic or professional, as a mix of backgrounds may be conducive to a richer variety of approaches and exchange of ideas.

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

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 school 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 are allocated workstations in the college lab, equipped with regularly updated equipment (both hardware and software).

INDUCTION

There is an induction programme (including IT and Learning Centre use) and students receive a programme handbook that provides all the essential information about the programme and the support provided 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 Vakalo College Dean who is the person entrusted with pastoral care of students. With regard to student support, the adherence to University policy and the underlying philosophy of the Vakalo throughout its 65-year history with regard to inclusion and diversity, is reiterated, ensuring close consideration of both different backgrounds (of ethnicity, race and gender) and different approaches to learning (which may include disabilities or hidden disabilities), to provide the appropriate support and guidance to all students.

THE 'STUDENT VOICE'

The 'student voice' is constantly present at Vakalo. Election of student representatives ensures a formal channel of communication, while management has scheduled meetings with all cohorts of all programmes twice per year. Beyond this management is easily accessible in a student-friendly 'small school' environment for meetings at short notice to address any issue or proposal regarding studies or student life.

At the end of each academic year a questionnaire is filled by students that gives a good picture of student perception of programme delivery and school services. Overall results are submitted to UoD Partnership Lead, who meets with students, after assessment – as part of the visits (physical or virtual) in June for the Undergraduate and in November for the Postgraduate programmes, with comments entered in the PL's "visit report" – which a very useful monitoring tool.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR STUDENTS WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS (Support Plan)

These needs are usually identified in the application process. Students with additional needs 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 and/or carer. With regard to the Assessment of their performance please refer to Section Six above.

SECTION NINE: Employability

The course equips students with a profound understanding of the issues involved in design, and enables them to develop skills related to design thinking, research methodologies and problem solving, while they will be encouraged and supported to be creative and critical in their approach. Further, they are exposed to and required to become competent in a wide range of traditional and digital media, mastering the technical and production aspects of design. This mix of capabilities acquired through their studies will place them in a most favourable position in terms of employability at the current juncture in Greece, and beyond. The College offers guidance on career issues, the writing of CVs and the preparation of portfolios. With regard to their future career prospects the excellent links and reputation of the Vakalo provide a constant flow of information on job vacancies and career opportunities sent by employers to the Vakalo, which are transmitted to students through the Vakalo admin services.

The strong signs of recovery of the retail sector and the construction industry following the financial crisis, in tandem with the gradual lifting of pandemic restrictions, created favourable conditions where all specialisations offered in this programme appear to be in demand, in all visual communication areas where even within the pandemic business boomed, in terms of online services. The prospects appear favourable as the tourism sector which depends on effective visual and information communication is currently booming.

In this context, students completing this programme will be able to pursue successful careers and make a significant contribution in a sector of this immense market that would, indicatively, comprise one or more of the following areas of expertise: branding, advertising, book design, editorial design, illustration, typeface design, website design, screen based design, motion graphics and animation, visual communication theory teacher and commentator.

Overall, Vakalo graduates even in these times of uncertainty, 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 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 uncertainty 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, as well as a noticeable expansion of packaging and promotion of sustainable farming and organic products), Additionally students will be able to seek a career abroad as students will be holders 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 they so wish, to seek further studies abroad, either in more specialised programmes to acquire additional professional qualifications, or programmes that lead to research degrees (M.Phil or PhDs). Opportunities for such programmes and degrees are very limited in Greece, as the sector is still in its early stages. However, the Vakalo may offer information on opportunities existing in several European countries and the USA. Specifically with regard to the UK, the Vakalo may facilitate contact with our partners the University of Derby to explore any possibilities existing there, and assist students in preparing enquiries and applications. Additionally, the Vakalo Partnership Lead can provide information and advice to any student interested in further studies. It is to be noted that a series of successful applications for further post-graduate studies have been submitted through this process to a variety of top colleges worldwide through the years, such as the Royal College of Art in London, the Pratt Institute in New York and the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam.

SECTION ELEVEN: External Links

The Vakalo postgraduate programme is one of the most 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 have developed over the years creating an extensive network with most major employers in the field, but also with a number of smaller but very active creative offices in the vibrant environment of current day Athens, which is often hailed as a city of great energy. Links 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 have been won in recent years, as well as sponsoring events (e.g. Digitized – a design conference). These extensive links with industry provide a steady flow of employment opportunities for Vakalo students. 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.

SECTION ONE: General Information

Programme Title	MA ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN	
Approval of Specification	09/05/2018	
Award Title & Interim Awards	<p>Final Awards: MA Architectural Design (Interior Design) MA Architectural Design (Landscape Design) MA Architectural Design (Spatial Design) MA Architectural Design (Theatre Design) MA Architectural Design (Hotel Design)</p> <p>Interim Awards: Post Graduate Diploma Architectural Design (Interior Design) Post Graduate Diploma Architectural Design (Landscape Design) Post Graduate Diploma Architectural Design (Spatial Design) Post Graduate Diploma Architectural Design (Theatre Design) Post Graduate Diploma Architectural Design (Hotel Design)</p> <p>Post Graduate Certificate Architectural Design</p>	
Mode of Study	Full-time: <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part-time: <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> E-learning: <input type="checkbox"/> Distance: <input type="checkbox"/> Sandwich: <input type="checkbox"/>	
Programme Start Date & Period of Validation	Start Date: October 2023 Click here to enter a date.	Date of Last Update: Click here to enter a date.
	5 Years: <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Indefinite: <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please state):	
Awarding Institution	University of Derby: <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Please State):	
College Managing the Programme	Arts, Humanities and Education	
Institutions Delivering the Programme	University of Derby: <input type="checkbox"/> 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)	K100	

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, the 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 the Vakalo College, about to commence its 66th 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 postwar 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 the Vakalo sought an international partnership. Despite the severe economic crisis that has been with us for the best part of the last decade and has drastically reduced investment in the construction sector, design awareness has not receded – on the contrary, design in terms of innovation and creativity is in greater demand in the field covered by this programme, with regard to the design and redesign of private, commercial and spaces and further strengthened by the great boom in the tourist industry, which itself has prompted the development of a new pathway focusing on Hotel Design.

Overview of the Programme:

OVERVIEW

The MA Architectural Design programme seeks to provide education in three-dimensional design at a high academic level that will explore issues and will develop concrete proposals related to the architectural design of social spaces both private and public.

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) Interior Design; (b) Landscape Design; (c) Spatial Design; (d) Theatre Design; (e) Hotel Design.

On enrolment students join a common curriculum in both modules of the first Stage. The programme is designed to support students to make the most appropriate choice of one of the five specialty schemes offered, at the end of the First Semester, which they will follow

through to the completion of their studies (Semesters 2 and 3). The specialty they elect to pursue determines the name of the award they will be entitled to.

In its current phase of development this programme seeks to expand beyond the strict confines of design for interior spaces to a broader notion of architectural design that will include a more extensive and deeper consideration of contexts, which involve the cultural, environmental, ethical and aspirational, as well as the fictional (e.g. stage design).

Its principal aim is to produce designers that will take on the constantly increasing and ever more complex and challenging tasks of the architectural designer to improve living and working places, commercial and leisure spaces to address and to attempt to resolve issues related to social life in private and public spaces, taking into account all the technical and formal aspects of architectural design as these function in contemporary contexts.

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 a 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).

Students pursue a common curriculum in the first semester (Stage 1) providing a basis of PG level theory and research methodology, as well as offering scope for an exploration of a range of architectural design specialty areas (Interior Design, Landscape Design, Spatial Design, Theatre Design, Hotel Design), enabling students to select their specialisation course to be pursued in Stages 2 and 3 through the development of their major specialisation project.

The specialty they elect to pursue determines the name of the award they will be entitled to.

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 prepares students to meet the contemporary challenges of architectural design and equips 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 architectural design 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 architectural 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 architectural designer in these contexts;

3. Acquire the technical know-how in the use of a broad range of state-of-the-art digital 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 their own proposals, assuming responsibility and accountability for their own proposals, views and idea;

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 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

SECTION THREE: PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES

PG Certificate Stage – Level 7

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

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 Architectural 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 digital software, media and techniques relevant to their specialist interest within Architectural 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

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN (INTERIOR DESIGN)

Knowledge and Understanding:

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

- Understand the academic concerns of particular relevance to interior design as their chosen specialisation within Architectural 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 interior design as their field of enquiry
- organise and undertake independent scholarship with an aim for originality
- reflect and critically evaluate, evidencing maturity in the development of their interior design project

Subject specific skills:

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

- evidence mastery of analog and digital tools and produce, deliver and present work at a professional level, locating interior 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

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN (LANDSCAPE DESIGN)

Knowledge and Understanding:

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

- Understand the academic concerns of particular relevance to landscape design as their chosen specialisation within Architectural 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 landscape design as their field of enquiry
- organise and undertake independent scholarship with an aim for originality
- reflect and critically evaluate, evidencing maturity in the development of their landscape design project

Subject specific skills:

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

- evidence mastery of analog and digital tools and produce produce, deliver and present work at a professional level, locating landscape 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

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN (SPATIAL DESIGN)

Knowledge and Understanding:

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

- Understand the academic concerns of particular relevance to spatial design as their chosen specialisation within Architectural 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 spatial design as their field of enquiry
- organise and undertake independent scholarship with an aim for originality
- reflect and critically evaluate, evidencing maturity in the development of their spatial design project

Subject specific skills:

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

- evidence mastery of analog and digital tools and produce produce, deliver and present work at a professional level, locating spatial 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

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN (THEATRE DESIGN)

Knowledge and Understanding:

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

- understand the academic concerns of particular relevance to theatre 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 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 theatre design as their subject of enquiry
- organise and undertake independent scholarship with an aim for originality
- reflect and critically evaluate, evidencing maturity in the development of their theatre design project

Subject specific skills:

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

- evidence mastery of analog and digital tools and produce produce, deliver and present work at a professional level, locating theatre 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

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN (HOTEL DESIGN)

Knowledge and Understanding:

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

- understand the academic concerns of particular relevance to the history, theory and current practice of hotel 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 the of hotel design as their field of enquiry
- organise and undertake independent scholarship with an aim for originality
- reflect and critically evaluate, evidencing maturity in the development of their hotel design project

Subject specific skills:

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

- evidence mastery of analog and digital tools and produce produce, deliver and present work at a professional scholarly level, locating studies in the history, theory and current practice of hotel design in a professional contexts

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

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN (INTERIOR DESIGN)

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 of particular relevant to Architectural Design in general, and interior design in particular and be fully conversant with a scholarly approach
- display command of a high level of practical skill in interior 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 proposals in interior design
- produce a persuasive, professional presentations of the required deliverables, through effective use of appropriate analog and digital media, 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
- Analysing and responding to new developments in the subject
- Communicating and promoting personal strengths
- Navigating, retrieving, managing, analysing and evaluating information from a variety of sources

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN (LANDSCAPE DESIGN)

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 of particular relevant to Architectural Design in general, and landscape design in particular and be fully conversant with a scholarly approach
- display command of a high level of practical skill in landscape 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 proposals in landscape design
- produce a persuasive, professional presentations of the required deliverables, through effective use of appropriate analog and digital media ,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
- Analysing and responding to new developments in the subject
- Communicating and promoting personal strengths
- Navigating, retrieving, managing, analysing and evaluating information from a variety of sources

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN (SPATIAL DESIGN)

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 of particular relevant to Architectural Design in general, and spatial design in particular and be fully conversant with a scholarly approach
- display command of a high level of practical skill in spatial 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 proposals in spatial design
- produce a persuasive, professional presentations of the required deliverables, through effective use of appropriate analog and digital media, 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
- Analysing and responding to new developments in the subject
- Communicating and promoting personal strengths
- Navigating, retrieving, managing, analysing and evaluating information from a variety of sources

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN (THEATRE DESIGN)

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 of particular relevant to their specialist focus in theatre design and be fully conversant with a scholarly approach
- display command of a high level of practical skills in theatre design including stage set construction considerations
- 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 proposals in theatre design

- produce a persuasive, professional presentations of the required deliverables, through effective use of appropriate analog and digital media, 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
- Analysing and responding to new developments in the subject
- Communicating and promoting personal strengths
- Navigating, retrieving, managing, analysing and evaluating information from a variety of sources

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN (HOTEL DESIGN)

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 of particular relevant to Hotel Design and be fully conversant with a scholarly approach
- display command in the understanding and study of the technical and practical aspects of hotel design within the current context of the tourist industry
- 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 project in hotel design
- produce a persuasive, professional presentations of the required deliverables, through effective use of appropriate analog and digital media, 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
- Analysing and responding to new developments in the subject

- Communicating and promoting personal strengths
- Navigating, retrieving, managing, analysing and evaluating information from a variety of sources

SECTION FOUR: Programme Structure & Curriculum

The MA Architectural 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 select one of the five specialisation schemes (or pathways) offered. In the Second and Third Stages (Semesters) students follow their chosen specialisation scheme programme, which leads to the corresponding named award.

The modular structure of the programme is presented in the table below:

MA ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN
PROGRAMME STRUCTURE DIAGRAM

Common Curriculum ■
Specialisation Pathway ■

Stage 1 (PGC)	Architectural Design Contexts & Debates (20 Credits)	Architectural Design Studio Research & Practice (20 Credits)
Stage 2 (PGD)	Architectural Design Theory-Specialisation Research (20 Credits)	Architectural Design Independent Specialisation Project 1 (40 Credits)
Stage 3 (MA)	Architectural Design Independent Specialisation Project 2 (60 Credits)	

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

Level	Module Title	Status	Credits
<u>Stage 1 (First Semester)</u>			
7	Architectural Design Contexts & Debates	Common	20
7	Architectural Design Studio Research & Practice	Common	40
<u>Stage 2 (Second Semester)</u>			
7	Architectural Design Theory –Specialisation Research	Common	20
7	Architectural Design Independent Specialisation Project 1	Specialisation	40
<u>Stage 3 (Third Semester)</u>			
7	Architectural Design Independent Specialisation Project 2	Specialisation	60

This list represents schematically the **student journey** in this programme, developing through three stages, each corresponding to a semester which can be summarised as follows:

- In the first stage students engage in an investigation through a series of workshops in a studio environment in order to make an informed choice of the specialism they wish to pursue in the development of their major personal research project. This investigation takes place in the Studio Practice double module, and their choice is crystallized in the project proposal they submit which forms part of their learning agreement that sets the goals of their research and creative work. At the same time, students are supported in terms of contextual input and research methodologies by the delivery of the Contexts and Debates single module. Thus, the theoretical informs the practical enhancing the overall result of the student's performance.

The core aim of the first stage is to enable students to formulate their own distinctive idea or *concept* for a professional project.

- In the second stage students embark, as per their learning agreement, on the development of their project (in the Independent Specialisation Project 1 double module), presenting the concept and ground work of their design proposal, supported in their investigation by a series of master classes led by professionals who provide further valuable input. Additionally contextual and theoretical research is conducted in the 'Specialisation Research-Theory' single module which allows students to more deeply analyse their topic and enables them to locate their work in current contexts and to more effectively support their proposals. Thus, again as in Stage 1, the theoretical informs the practical creating an enhanced unified whole.

The core aim of the second stage is to enable students to develop their own distinctive design language to express a proposal to full professional specifications

- In the third stage students work as independent researchers and practitioners (in the 'Independent Specialisation Project 2' triple module) to produce their proposal as a full-blown professional project, supported only by a series of PATs, where their Supervisors act mostly as consultants. The overall process culminates in the presentation of the finished product and all supporting contextual, research and preparatory material (texts and drawings) in an exhibition in order to be assessed.

The core aim of the third stage is to enable students to produce work as professionals.

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

(NB for Full-time attendance each semester runs for 15 weeks, while for Part-time each semester is double in length, i.e. 30 weeks).

VAKALO ART & DESIGN COLLEGE
MA ARCHITECTURAL 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)	1 st Semester														
Module 7VA508	ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN CONTEXTS & DEBATES												(20 Credits)		
Module 7VA509	ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN STUDIO RESEARCH & PRACTICE												(40 Credits)		
Stage 2 (60 Credits)	2 nd Semester														
Module 7VA510	ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN SPECIALISATION RESEARCH – THEORY 1												(20 Credits)		
Module 7VA511	ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN INDEPENDENT SPECIALISATION PROJECT 1												(40 Credits)		
Stage 3 (60 Credits)	3 rd Semester														
Module 7VA512	ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN INDEPENDENT SPECIALISATION PROJECT 2												(60 Credits)		

It is further elucidated that in Stage 1 the teaching schedule is attended jointly by both FT and PT students, but PT students have double the time to develop their work.

In stage 2 the teaching schedule of FT and PT students is separate. FT students follow their schedule along the 15-week stage, while teaching for the PT mode is delivered for the two modules in succession, as in the diagram below. This arrangement is dictated by the fact that PT Stage 2 coincides with the Greek summer and the holiday season.

In Stage 3 there is not taught component.

VAKALO ART & DESIGN COLLEGE
MA ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN
PROGRAMME STRUCTURE DIAGRAM – PART-TIME
DELIVERY OF TAUGHT COMPONENT

END-OCTOBER															END-JUNE																			
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)	TAUGHT COMPONENTS (JOINT FT&PT ATTENDANCE)																																	
Mod 7VA508	ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN CONTEXTS & DEBATES																								(20 Credits)									
Mod 7VA509	DIGITAL DESIGN STUDIO RESEARCH & PRACTICE																								(40 Credits)									
END-JUNE															START AUGUST					START SEPTEMBER					END FEBRUARY									
	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 2 (60Cr)	TAUGHT COMPONENTS (PT RUN)																																	
Mod 7VA510	ARCH. DES SPECIAL. RSRCH-THEORY 1																								(20 Credits)									
Mod 7VA511	ARCH. DES. INDEP. SPECIAL. PROJECT 1																								(40 Credits)									
END FEBRUARY															END NOVEMBER																			
NO TAUGHT COMPONENT																																		
Stage 3 (60 Cr)	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				
Mod 7VA512	ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN INDEPENDENT SPECIALISATION PROJECT 2																								(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 architectural design, 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 assist students to make an informed decision regarding the specialization students will pursue, by choosing one of the pathways offered, namely:

(a) Interior Design; (b) Landscape Design; (c) Spatial Design; (d) Theatre Design; (e) Hotel Design

This decision-making process will require the application of both practical skills and critical thinking that will lead to the formulation of the context and aims of their brief for the major specialization practice project which students will develop in the next stages of their studies. Once the topic and brief are finalised, and the research scope determined, students will be expected to submit an application for ethical approval for their project. This brief will determine the area of specialization of their study (and eventually of the name of their award), and will form the basis of their “learning agreement” (see below) for Stages 2 and 3.

The “Architectural 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 of art, design and architecture, to discuss the function and social impact of major projects drawn from history, and to develop their 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 students to the requirements of a higher academic level and at the same time supports 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 register in one of the specialisations offered based on their “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 to their chosen specialisation field in a way that enhances both their practical and contextual work.

According to the specialisation route students have chosen to follow and registered for in the Second Semester students will select the corresponding area of study offered in the “Specialisation Project 1” double module 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, 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, consistent with the philosophy of the programme and building on the work accomplished in the First Semester enables students to engage with broader and deeper issues related to the specialty students have chosen within the field of architectural design, and to develop specialised knowledge, skills and insights that will inform the work on their major independent practice project. In this module students will benefit from contact with visiting specialist academics and professional practitioners. This will enable them to explore and develop a range of skills with regard to the requirements of professional practice, as the curriculum fosters team-work, peer evaluation and constructive responses to criticism, and provides guidance on communicating with audiences, public speaking and presentation of ideas in a dialogic environment. Further they review the progress of their research (revisiting if needed the ethics approval) and completing the first part of their work on their independent project.

To this end, the work students will produce in the “Theory – Specialisation Research 1” single module will be of great assistance. This module aims to extend their knowledge and understanding of architectural design to an advanced level through research and engagement with current literature and debates. It also enables students to engage with broader and deeper issues related to the specialty students have chosen within the field of architectural design, and to strengthen specialised 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 – with the “Specialisation Research” work providing additional input.

Third Semester – Stage 3 (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 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 a most significant period of time in which to create a body of highly developed practice meeting the challenges students have set. Students 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 their work throughout.

Students also engage with the further development and completion of the extended written text in support of their project, which they have begun in the previous semester. They will be expected to submit a text of academic scholarship of high standards, demonstrating critical and original thinking.

They will also be encouraged and supported to further strengthen their communication and presentation skills to convey the merits of their creative, intellectual and technical endeavours, to demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of the views of others, and to assume responsibility for their work and ideas. In this respect they will be expected to comprehend and respond to any issue of research ethics that may arise, by a regular review of their initial application, which will also be submitted (in its amended form, if applicable) with their finalised project.

Students also engage with the further development and completion of the extended written text initiated in the previous semester, which supports and complements their creative proposal. They will be expected to submit a text of academic scholarship of high standards, demonstrating critical and original thinking, and an ability to locate their work in current contexts.

Module Learning Outcomes

Each of the modules described above include specific learning outcomes (see Module Specification Document) that correspond to the Programme Learning Outcomes Listed in Section Three, as can be seen in the Mapping Table appended at the end of this document.

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 in the following Modules: Semester 1: Architectural 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 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 their major independent project that will be in line 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, and includes information regarding their studies in their chosen specialisation pathway in the Second and Thirds 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 pathway-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 with regard to research methodologies, historical/theoretical analysis and current debates in design, focusing on issues relevant to all areas covered by the programme.

Practices referring to current University of Derby strategies in terms of teaching excellence are adhered to, such as Peer Observation, Student Feedback and Dissemination of Good Practices. Team teaching also helps complement a discursive forum for monitoring teaching and quality and learning support. Additionally, staff research continually informs teaching, while student and alumni research projects are presented and discussed, thus providing clear models of best practices in terms of research processes and methods to encourage and guide current students to engage in their own research investigations.

One of the core elements in the Learning and Teaching philosophy of the Vakalo College is to provide for diversity, taking into consideration both different backgrounds (of ethnicity, race and gender) and different approaches to learning (which may include disabilities or hidden disabilities). These considerations, in line with University Policy, are embedded in the teaching briefs and content of academic staff, while the close student-staff contact and the frequent Personal Academic Tutorials ensure that any issue related to inclusion and diversity is addressed.

Teaching and learning, apart from building a strong designer profile (the basis for any meaningful employment), enhances the students' employability prospects by offering students contact with market requirements through professional-led workshops and presentations, live

projects with major companies and social welfare organisations, with acclaimed professional practitioners also assessing student work.

Teaching and Learning also engages students in team-work, exploring work methods vital in their future professional life, namely those of working with others and of constructively utilising criticism.

Students are further supported in putting together work-portfolios, provided with guidance on interviews with employers, and public speaking.

Students are encouraged and supported to assume ownership of and responsibility for their proposals and to be convincing and self-confident in presenting and supporting their projects, elements that will serve them well in their future employment, developing an outlook of a practitioner prepared to evaluate risks and undertake a leading role. Equally these skills will support investigations of novel ideas and engagement with original research and experimentation.

Typically the Teaching schedule will include a sequenced series of lectures/presentations, followed up by seminars and/or workshop sessions, as well as master classes 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 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 their 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 100 credits of the total 180.

In this programme students 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 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 their work and to develop methods of independent research and study.

At the beginning of the programme students will be assigned a Principal Supervisor who will be their mentor and “critical friend” throughout the programme, providing support through tutorials. Their principle Supervisor will work closely with students in the First Semester as students will establish their ‘area of focus’ in the Practice Module, and will supervise their major independent specialisation project in the Second and Third Semester.

Also at the beginning of the programme students will be assigned a Theory Supervisor, who will get to know their personal interests and knowledge with regard to 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 comprise the development and realisation of the students’ major independent research project. It will be based on the specific area of specialisation they selected, from the total of five pathways offered, at the end of the First Semester, and that they will have formulated in the form of a major project brief. The Learning Agreement will also indicate their commitment to follow the Specialisation Pathway that will lead to the named award of their choice, and for which they enrol.

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 all students in the group. The aim of these meetings is to support the development of their work through challenge and debate that promotes critical thinking.

The panels that review their 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.

This form is filled out and submitted at the end of Stage 1 (Studio Research and Practice Module), once the topic and scope of research for the development of the Independent Specialist Project is determined in the students’ Learning Agreement. This Project is pursued in Stages 2 and 3 (Architectural Design Independent Specialist Project 1 & 2 Modules) during which the Ethics Approval form is reviewed to consider any additional needs and requirements that may arise.

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 creative project work, as well as their ability persuasively communicate, explain and support their proposals, and their understanding of professional requirements and constraints, as well as the relevance of their work to the broader local and international design field.

In short, assessment evaluates student performance in all four areas of the intended outcomes, with regard to Knowledge and Understanding, Intellectual, Subject-specific and Transferrable skills, as described above in the Section Three (see pages 4-6), and the outcomes specified in each module description.

Both Assessment and Teaching & Learning strive to ensure that students acquire professional-level skills in all areas so as to enable them to successfully participate in the market.

Assessment also includes considerations of diversity, with regard to different student backgrounds in terms of ethnicity, race and gender, or different approaches to learning (including learning support), or specific needs for those with disabilities and hidden disabilities, and ensures inclusion of all individuals in the learning process and a fair evaluation of their efforts.

- 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 communication skills, teamwork, response to criticism and peer assessment, awareness of business implications of proposals, and assuming ownership of their work 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. Portfolios of work may include both creative design work and written texts, together with evidence of research, both textual and visual, evidence of oral presentations, and the development process of their creative proposals. All assessed components of a module have a “must pass” requirement, and no compensation is offered within modules.
- 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 to the next stage or graduate. As outlined above, Stage 1 includes one double and one double module, similarly Stage 2 includes one single module and one double module, while Stage 3 includes one triple module.

Indicatively the student portfolios assessed in each module will include assignments as listed below:

Stage 1 Modules:

Arch. Des. Contexts & Debates (Single):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Contextual Written Text (Essay, Seminar Paper/ Presentation) b. Research Methodology Assignment c. Self-Reflective Diary (PDP)
Arch. Des.. Studio Practice & Research (Double):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Design Research & Experimentation Assignments b. Specialist Project Proposal and Rationale

Stage 2 Modules:

Arch. Des. Theory –Specialisation Research (Single):	Specialisation Contextual Research texts (incl PDP)
Arch. Des. Indep. Specialisation Project 1 (Double):	Specialist Creative Project Concept & Development (Presentation of work in progress incl. support material)

Stage 3 Modules:

Arch. Des. Indep. Specialisation Project 2 (Triple):	Specialist Creative Project Realisation (Final Project Presentation in Exhibition Form, incl. Research Text & PDP)
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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 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, in a dialogic context, where assessment merges with teaching and learning. This method follows the studio based culture and the tradition of the ‘art school crit’ that engages students in self-assessment and fosters an understanding of the students’ strengths and weaknesses and awareness of their own participation in the education process. In this respect the goal envisaged

in university policy of 'assessment and feedback enriching the development of Learning and Teaching through student participation' may be attained.

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).

Students who may encounter unforeseen difficulties due to a variety of reasons during their studies can also be supported through special arrangements. The policy of the College in this respect involves a Plan with three options, from which the students may choose the most suitable plan following consultation with their Principal Supervisor and the Programme Leader. The options are: (i) Special schedule, (ii) convert to Part-time mode, or (iii) take a year out (ABS academic break of study) (all with individual study plans).

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. Entrants for the Master of Arts degree should be able to demonstrate suitability for a demanding postgraduate programme that involves **intellectual skills**, writing of texts with **academic rigour**, consideration of **contextual issues** and questions of **aesthetics**, together with the ability to engage in PG **research** and persuasively support and present **market-level proposals**, while acquiring high-level **technical skills**..

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 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.

Candidates for the MA Architectural Design programme are normally holders of an Interior Design, Architecture, Spatial Design, Product Design, Furniture Design, Stage/Theatre Design or other relevant first degree.

Non-standard entry The Vakalo welcomes applications from other related fields, or from experienced practitioners, following interview and presentation of portfolio or other related evidence of academic or professional, as a mix of backgrounds may be conducive to a richer variety of approaches and exchange of ideas.

VAKALO COLLEGE CANDIDATES

Students in Stage 3 of the UoD validated Vakalo undergraduate programmes Interior 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 Architectural 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 school programmes.

COMMUNICATION OF RESULTS

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

EXCEPTION FOR ADMISSION 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 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 Vakalo College Dean who is the person entrusted with pastoral care of students. With regard to student support, the adherence to University policy and the underlying philosophy of the Vakalo throughout its 65-year history with regard to inclusion and diversity, is reiterated, ensuring close consideration of both different backgrounds (of ethnicity, race and gender) and different approaches to learning (which may include disabilities or hidden disabilities), to provide the appropriate support and guidance to all students.

THE ‘STUDENT VOICE’

The ‘student voice’ is constantly present at Vakalo. Election of student representatives ensures a formal channel of communication, while management has scheduled meetings with all cohorts of all programmes twice per year. Beyond this management is easily accessible in a student-friendly ‘small school’ environment for meetings at short notice to address any issue or proposal regarding studies or student life.

At the end of each academic year a questionnaire is filled by students that gives a good picture of student perception of programme delivery and school services. Overall results are submitted to UoD Partnership Lead, who meets with students, after assessment – as part of the visits (physical or virtual) in June for the Undergraduate and in November for the Postgraduate programmes, with comments entered in the PL’s “visit report” – which a very useful monitoring tool.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR STUDENTS WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS (Support Plan)

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 and/or carer.

With regard to the Assessment of their performance please refer to Section Six above.

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 the construction sector following the financial crisis, in tandem with the gradual lifting of pandemic restrictions, created favourable conditions where all specialisations offered in this programme appeared to be in demand. The prospects appear favourable as the tourism sector which is generating a rapid expansion of hotel and Airbnb facilities construction, as well as the design and redesign of extensive leisure resorts, is currently booming. Further there is growth also in the broader hospitality market with restaurants, cultural venues, indoor an outdoor spaces design and redesign, as well as in the housing market, in a period of steady growth in the economy.

In this context, students completing this programme will be able to pursue successful careers and make a significant contribution in one or more sector of this large market that would, indicatively, comprise the following areas of expertise: hotel and rooms-to-let design, holiday resort design, restaurant and bar/cafe/terrace design, residential spaces design (apartments, houses, villas), commercial spaces design (shops, retail outlets, service sector offices), theatre stage design, public spaces design, landscape design.

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 architectural design profession, either in architectural 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 uncertainty 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 architectural 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 holders 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 they so wish, to seek further studies abroad, either in more specialised programmes to acquire additional professional qualifications, or programmes that lead to research degrees (M.Phil or PhDs). Opportunities for such programmes and degrees are very limited in Greece, as the sector is still in its early stages. However, the Vakalo may offer information on opportunities existing in several European countries and the USA. Specifically with regard to the UK, the Vakalo may facilitate contact with our partners the University of Derby to explore any possibilities existing there, and Assis students in preparing enquiries and applications. Additionally, the Vakalo Partnership Lead can provide information and advice to any student interested in further studies. It is to be noted that a series of successful applications for further post-graduate studies have been submitted through this process to a variety of top colleges worldwide through the years, such as the Royal College of Art in London, the Pratt Institute in New York and the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam. 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 College is one of the most, if not *the* most, widely known and highly respected design education institution in Greece, and employers recognise it as a form of guarantee of quality when seeking candidates to fill vacancies. The postgraduate programmes, now entering their third decade enjoy a strong reputation locally as providing high level education in their fields. The links with industry have developed over the years creating an extensive network with most major employers in the field, but also with a number of smaller but very active creative offices in the vibrant environment of current day Athens, which is often hailed as a city of great energy. Links 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 have been won in recent years, as well as sponsoring events (e.g. Digitized – a design conference). These extensive links with industry provide a steady flow of employment opportunities for Vakalo students. 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.

SECTION ONE: General Information

Programme Title	MA DIGITAL DESIGN	
Approval of Specification	09/05/2023	
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: <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part-time: <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> E-learning: <input type="checkbox"/> Distance: <input type="checkbox"/> Sandwich: <input type="checkbox"/>	
Programme Start Date & Period of Validation	Start Date: October 2023 Click here to enter a date.	Date of Last Update: 15 May 2022 Click here to enter a date.
	5 Years: <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Indefinite: <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please state):	
Awarding Institution	University of Derby: <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Please State):	
College Managing the Programme	Arts, Humanities and Education	
Institutions Delivering the Programme	University of Derby: <input type="checkbox"/> 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

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.

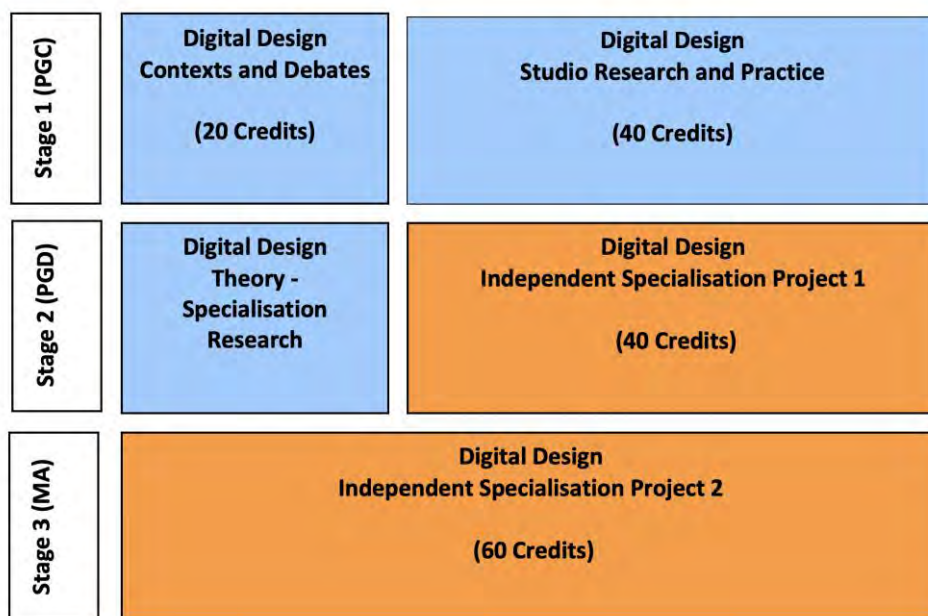
The programme commences with a common curriculum in the First Stage (Semester), at the end of which students align with one of the five specialisation schemes offered. In the Second

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

The programme structure is depicted conceptually as below:

Common Curriculum

Specialisation



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

Level	Module Title	Status	Credits
<u>Stage 1 (First Semester)</u>			
7	Digital Design Contexts & Debates	Common	20
7	Digital Design Studio Research & Practice	Common	40
<u>Stage 2 (Second Semester)</u>			
7	Digital Design Theory –Specialisation Research	Common	20
7	Digital Design Independent Specialisation Project 1	Specialisation	40
<u>Stage 3 (Third Semester)</u>			
7	Digital Design Independent Specialisation Project 2	Specialisation	60

This diagram represents schematically the **student journey** in this programme, developing through three stages, each corresponding to a semester which can be summarised as follows:

- In the first stage students engage in an investigation through a series of workshops in a studio environment in order to make an informed choice of the specialism they wish to pursue in the development of their major personal research project. This investigation

takes place in the Studio Practice double module, and their choice is crystallized in the project proposal they submit which forms part of their learning agreement that sets the goals of their research and creative work. At the same time, students are supported in terms of contextual input and research methodologies by the delivery of the Contexts and Debates single module. Thus, the theoretical informs the practical enhancing the overall result of the student's performance.

The core aim of the first stage is to enable students to formulate their own distinctive idea or *concept* for a professional project.

- In the second stage students embark, as per their learning agreement, on the development of their project (in the Independent Specialisation Project 1 double module), presenting the concept and ground work of their design proposal, supported in their investigation by a series of master classes led by professionals who provide further valuable input. Additionally contextual and theoretical research is conducted in the 'Specialisation Research-Theory' single module which allows students to more deeply analyse their topic and enables them to locate their work in current contexts and to more effectively support their proposals. Thus, again as in Stage 1, the theoretical informs the practical creating an enhanced unified whole.

The core aim of the second stage is to enable students to develop their own distinctive design language to express a proposal to full professional specifications

- In the third stage students work as independent researchers and practitioners (in the 'Independent Specialisation Project 2' triple module) to produce their proposal as a full-blown professional project, supported only by a series of PATs, where their Supervisors act mostly as consultants. The overall process culminates in the presentation of the finished product and all supporting contextual, research and preparatory material (texts and drawings) in an exhibition in order to be assessed.

The core aim of the third stage is to enable students to produce work as professionals.

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

(NB for Full-time attendance each semester runs for 15 weeks, while for Part-time each semester is double in length, i.e. 30 weeks).

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)	1 st Semester														
Module 7VA513	DIGITAL DESIGN CONTEXTS & DEBATES													(20 Credits)	
Module 7VA514	DIGITAL DESIGN STUDIO RESEARCH & PRACTICE													(40 Credits)	
Stage 2 (60 Credits)	2 nd 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)	3 rd 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)	

It is further elucidated that the teaching schedule in Stage 1 is attended jointly by both FT and PT students, but PT students have double the time to develop their work. In stage 2 the teaching schedule of FT and PT students is separate. FT students follow their schedule along the 15-week stage, while teaching for the PT mode is delivered for the two modules in succession, as in the diagram below. This arrangement is dictated by the fact that PT Stage 2 coincides with the Greek summer and the holiday season.

VAKALO ART & DESIGN COLLEGE
MA DIGITAL DESIGN
PROGRAMME STRUCTURE DIAGRAM – PART-TIME
DELIVERY OF TAUGHT COMPONENT

END-OCTOBER															END-JUNE																									
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)	TAUGHT COMPONENTS (JOINT FT&PT ATTENDANCE)																																							
Mod 7VA513	DIGITAL DESIGN CONTEXTS & DEBATES																											(20 Credits)												
Mod 7va514	DIGITAL DESIGN STUDIO RESEARCH & PRACTICE																											(40 Credits)												
	END-JUNE														START AUGUST										START SEPTEMBER										END FEBRUARY					
	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 2 (60Cr)	TAUGHT COMPONENTS (PT RUN)																																							
Mod 7VA515	DIG. DSGN SPECIAL. RSRCH – THEORY 1																											(20 Credits)												
Mod 7VA516	DIGITAL DSGN INDEP. SPECIAL. PROJECT 1																											(40 Credits)												
	END FEBRUARY														END NOVEMBER																									
	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 3 (60 Cr)	NO TAUGHT COMPONENT																																							
	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. Once the topic and brief are finalised, and the research scope determined, students will be expected to submit an application for ethical approval for their project. Also, 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 their 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. This will enable them to explore and develop a range of skills with regard to the requirements of professional practice, as the curriculum fosters team-work, peer evaluation and constructive responses to criticism, and provides guidance on communicating with audiences, public speaking and presentation of ideas in a dialogic environment. Further they review the progress of their research (revisiting if needed the ethics approval) and completing the first part of their work on their independent project.

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. They will also be encouraged and supported to further strengthen their communication and presentation skills to convey the merits of their creative, intellectual and technical endeavours, to demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of the views of others, and to assume responsibility for their work and ideas. In this respect they will be expected to comprehend and respond to any issue of research ethics that may arise, by a regular review of their initial application, which will also be submitted (in its amended form, if applicable) with their finalised project. Students also engage with the further development and completion of the extended written text initiated in the previous semester, which supports and complements their creative proposal. They will be expected to submit a text of academic scholarship of high standards, demonstrating critical and original thinking, and an ability to locate their work in current contexts.

Module Learning Outcomes

Each of the modules described above include specific learning outcomes (see Module Specification Document) that correspond to the Programme Learning Outcomes Listed in Section Three, as can be seen in the Mapping Table appended at the end of this document.

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.

Practices referring to current University of Derby strategies in terms of teaching excellence are adhered to, such as Peer Observation, Student Feedback and Dissemination of Good Practices. Team teaching also helps complement a discursive forum for monitoring teaching and quality and learning support. Additionally, staff research continually informs teaching,

while student and alumni research projects are presented and discussed, thus providing clear models of best practices in terms of research processes and methods to encourage and guide current students to engage in their own research investigations.

One of the core elements in the Learning and Teaching philosophy of the Vakalo College is to provide for diversity, taking into consideration both different backgrounds (of ethnicity, race and gender) and different approaches to learning (which may include disabilities or hidden disabilities). These considerations, in line with University Policy, are embedded in the teaching briefs and content of academic staff, while the close student-staff contact and the frequent Personal Academic Tutorials ensure that any issue related to inclusion and diversity is addressed.

Teaching and learning, apart from building a strong designer profile (the basis for any meaningful employment), enhances the students' employability prospects by offering students contact with market requirements through professional-led workshops and presentations, live projects with major companies and social welfare organisations, with acclaimed professional practitioners also assessing student work.

Teaching and Learning also engages students in team-work, exploring work methods vital in their future professional life, namely those of working with others and of constructively utilising criticism.

Students are further supported in putting together work-portfolios, provided with guidance on interviews with employers, and public speaking.

Students are encouraged and supported to assume ownership of and responsibility for their proposals and to be convincing and self-confident in presenting and supporting their projects, elements that will serve them well in their future employment, developing an outlook of a practitioner prepared to evaluate risks and undertake a leading role. Equally these skills will support investigations of novel ideas and engagement with original research and experimentation.

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.

Formative assessment is a dialogic process where the work presented by the student is extensively discussed and feedback is provided in a two-way process allowing for the strengths and limitations of the student's performance to emerge and be understood.

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. This form is filled out and submitted at the end of Stage 1 (Studio Research and Practice Module), once the topic and scope of research for the development of the Independent Specialist Project is determined in the students’ Learning Agreement. This Project is pursued in Stages 2 and 3 (Digital Design Independent Specialist Project 1 & 2 Modules) during which the Ethics Approval form is reviewed to consider any additional needs and requirements that may arise.

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 creative project work, as well as their ability persuasively communicate, explain and support their proposals, and their understanding of professional requirements and constraints, as well as the relevance of their work to the broader local and international design field.

In short, assessment evaluates student performance in all four areas of the intended outcomes, with regard to Knowledge and Understanding, Intellectual, Subject-specific and Transferrable skills, as described above in the Section Three (see pages 4-6), and the outcomes specified in each module description.

Both Assessment and Teaching & Learning strive to ensure that students acquire professional-level skills in all areas so as to enable them to successfully participate in the market.

Assessment also includes considerations of diversity, with regard to different student backgrounds in terms of ethnicity, race and gender, or different approaches to learning (including learning support), or specific needs for those with disabilities and hidden disabilities, and ensures inclusion of all individuals in the learning process and a fair evaluation of their efforts.

- 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 communication skills, teamwork, response to criticism and peer assessment, awareness of business implications of proposals, and assuming ownership of their work 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. Portfolios of work may include both creative design work and written texts, together with evidence of research, both textual and visual, evidence of oral presentations, and the development process of their creative proposals. All assessed components of a module have a “must pass” requirement, and no compensation is offered within modules.
- 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 to the next stage or graduate. As outlined above, Stage 1 includes one double and one double module, similarly Stage 2 includes one single module and one double module, while Stage 3 includes one triple module.

Indicatively the student portfolios assessed in each module will include assignments as listed below:

Stage 1 Modules:

Digital Des Contexts & Debates (Single):	a. Contextual Written Text (Essay, Seminar Paper/ Presentation) b. Research Methodology Assignment c. Self-Reflective Diary (PDP)
Digital Des Studio Practice & Research (Double):	a. Design Research & Experimentation Assignments b. Specialist Project Brief and Rationale

Stage 2 Modules:

Digital Des Theory –Specialisation Research (Single):	Specialisation Contextual Research texts (incl PDP)
Digital Des Indep. Specialisation Project 1 (Double):	Specialist Creative Project Concept & Development (Presentation of work in progress incl. support material)

Stage 3 Modules:

AD Indep. Specialisation Project 2 (Triple):	Specialist Creative Project Realisation (Final Proposal Presentation in Exhibition Form, incl. Research Text & PDP)
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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, in a dialogic context, where assessment merges with teaching and learning. This method follows the studio based culture and the tradition of the ‘art school crit’ that engages students in self-assessment and fosters an understanding of the students’ strengths and weaknesses and awareness of their own participation in the education process. In this respect the goal envisaged in university policy of ‘assessment and feedback enriching the development of Learning and Teaching through student participation’ may be attained.

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.

Students who may encounter unforeseen difficulties due to a variety of reasons during their studies can also be supported through special arrangements. The policy of the College in this respect involves a Plan with three options, from which the students may choose the most suitable plan following consultation with their Principal Supervisor and the Programme Leader. The options are: (i) Special schedule, (ii) convert to Part-time mode, or (iii) take a year out (ABS academic break of study) (all with individual study plans).

SECTION SEVEN: Admission

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 that involves **intellectual skills**, writing of texts with **academic rigour**, consideration of **contextual issues** and questions of **aesthetics**, together with the ability to engage in PG **research** and persuasively support and present **market-level proposals**, while acquiring high-level **technical skills**..

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 they present a portfolio of work and respond 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 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

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 students are 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 Vakalo College Dean who is the person entrusted with pastoral care of students. With regard to student support, the adherence to University policy and the underlying philosophy of the Vakalo throughout its 65-year history with regard to inclusion and diversity, is reiterated, ensuring close consideration of both different backgrounds (of ethnicity, race and gender) and different approaches to learning (which may include disabilities or hidden disabilities), to provide the appropriate support and guidance to all students.

THE 'STUDENT VOICE'

The 'student voice' is constantly present at Vakalo. Election of student representatives ensures a formal channel of communication, while management has scheduled meetings with all cohorts of all programmes twice per year. Beyond this management is easily accessible in a student-friendly 'small school' environment for meetings at short notice to address any issue or proposal regarding studies or student life.

At the end of each academic year a questionnaire is filled by students that gives a good picture of student perception of programme delivery and school services. Overall results are submitted to UoD Partnership Lead, who meets with students, after assessment – as part of the visits (physical or virtual) in June for the Undergraduate and in November for the Postgraduate programmes, with comments entered in the PL's "visit report" – which a very useful monitoring tool.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR STUDENTS WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS (Support Plan)

These needs are usually identified in the application process. Students with additional needs 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 and/or carer.

With regard to the Assessment of their performance please refer to Section Six above.

SECTION NINE: Employability

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.

The areas in which the students graduating from this programme of study can find employment are some of the most rapidly developing sectors of the design market, as the need for digitalised services is constantly growing and has been further accelerated by the conditions caused by the covid-19 pandemic restrictions in movement and physical contact of people. The expanding use of digital devices and applications to navigate and facilitate our daily lives and the conduct of business, commerce and culture, and to enhance personal and interpersonal experiences as well as recreation and play, renders the digital designer an important player in the contemporary world.

In this context, students completing this programme will be able to pursue successful careers and make a significant contribution in a sector of this immense market that would, indicatively, comprise the following areas of expertise:

- Front End Web Development: Html, CSS, Java Script (Web Assembly);
- UX & UI (User Experience and User Interface) Design;
- Authoring & Imaging Tool Design (Software Programmes);
- Interactive Programmes and Apps (E.G. Mobile Phones);
- Game Design: Concept/Creative (Visuals)/Prototype/ Testing;
- Motion Graphics: Commercial/Promotional/Creative/Experimental;
- Mapping and Scientific Imaging

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. Given that digital design as a creative and business field, is fairly new in Greece, students who complete this programme of study can aspire to make a contribution that may shape the things

to come in this sector and push the boundaries of this discipline further, allowing Greece to assume a significant role in the rapid international developments in digital design.

The programme prepares them and enables them to expand the scope of their engagement and either as professional practitioners or researchers move further into other areas of this multifaceted and fascinating discipline such Artificial Intelligence and Virtual and Augmented Reality.

Additionally students will be able to seek a career abroad as students will be holders 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 they so wish, to seek further studies abroad, either in more specialised programmes to acquire additional professional qualifications, or programmes that lead to research degrees (M.Phil or PhDs). Opportunities for such programmes and degrees are very limited in Greece, as the sector is still in its early stages. However, the Vakalo may offer information on opportunities existing in several European countries and the USA. Specifically with regard to the UK, the Vakalo may facilitate contact with our partners the University of Derby to explore any possibilities existing there, and Assis students in preparing enquiries and applications. Additionally, the Vakalo Academic Liaison Officer can provide information and advice to any student interested in further studies. It is to be noted that a series of successful applications for further post-graduate studies have been submitted through this process to a variety of top colleges worldwide through the years, such as the Royal College of Art in London, the Pratt Institute in New York and the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam.

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 have developed over the years creating an extensive network with most major employers in the field, but also with a number of smaller but very active creative offices in the vibrant environment of current day Athens, which is often hailed as a city of great energy. Links 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 have been won in recent years, as well as sponsoring events (e.g. Digitized – a design conference). These extensive links with industry provide a steady flow of employment opportunities for Vakalo students. 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.