SECTION ONE: General Information

Programme Title	MA VISUAL COMMUNICATION
Approval of Specification	09/05/2018
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 Design) Master of Arts Visual Communication Studies Post Graduate Diploma Communication (Graphic Design) Post Graduate Diploma Communication (Illustration and Book Design) Post Graduate Diploma Communication (Typography) Post Graduate Diploma Visual Communication (Digital Design) Post Graduate Diploma Visual Communication Studies Post Graduate Certificate Visual Communication
Mode of Study	Full-time: ☐ ✓ Part-time: ☐ ✓ E-learning: ☐ Distance:☐ Sandwich: ☐
Programme Start Date & Period of Validation	Start Date: October 2018 / Date of Last Update: Click here to enter a date. / Click here to enter a date. 5 Years: ☐✓ Indefinite:☐ Other (Please state):
Awarding Institution	University of Derby: ☐✓ Other (*Please State*):
College Managing the Programme	Arts, Humanities and Education
Institutions Delivering the Programme	University of Derby: ☐ Other (*Please State*): VAKALO ART & DESIGN COLLEGE
Relevant External Reference Points	UK QA Masters degree Characteristics http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Masters-Degree-Characteristics-15.pdf
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 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, now celebrating it's 60th anniversary, 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 the for 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 fast growing demand for digital design within the communication market, which itself has prompted the updating and renaming of the Web Design specialisation course as "Digital Design", which will strenghten the overall appeal of the programme.

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 Design; (e) Visual Communication Studies.

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

In its current phase of development this programme seeks to expand beyond the strict confines of design for graphic applications to a broader notion of visual communication that will include a more extensive and deeper consideration of contexts, which involve the cultural, environmental, ethical and emotional, as well as the virtual (e.g. digital 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 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 you to meet the contemporary challenges in the profession and social practice of visual communication and equips you to pursue a professional career either in Greece or abroad.

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

SECTION THREE: Programme Learning Outcomes

SECTION THREE: PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES

PG Certificate Stage – Level 7

VISUAL COMMUNICATION

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

Intellectual skills:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Express, in a critical and reflective manner, an understanding of your chosen field of enquiry

- Reflect, critically evaluate and define personal approaches and methodologies in your practice

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

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

PG Diploma Stage – level 7

VISUAL COMMUNICATION (GRAPHIC DESIGN)

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

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

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

Transferable skills:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Communicate effectively the distinctiveness of your practice to others
- Manage your own learning reflecting on development and refining individual methodologies

- Managing workloads and meeting deadlines
- Analysing and interpreting new developments in the subject
- Identifying, developing and refining personal strengths
- Interacting with others through collaboration, collective endeavour and negotiation to achieve a high level of effective communication
- Navigating, retrieving, managing and analyzing information from a variety of sources

VISUAL COMMUNICATION (ILLUSTRATION AND BOOK DESIGN)

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

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

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

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

VISUAL COMMUNICATION (TYPOGRAPHY)

Knowledge and Understanding:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Understand the academic concerns of particular relevance to typography as your chosen specialisation within Visual Communication and be fully conversant with a scholarly approach

- Handle, evaluate and apply, in a critical and reflective manner, with competent understanding, the competing critical methodological and theoretical models and literature associated with your field of enquiry.

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

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

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

VISUAL COMMUNICATION (DIGITAL DESIGN)

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

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

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

- Produce, deliver and present work at a professional level, locating Digital design practice in a professional context

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

VISUAL COMMUNICATION STUDIES

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

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

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

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

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

Master of Arts Stage – Level 7

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

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

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

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

VISUAL COMMUNICATION (ILLUSTRATION AND BOOK DESIGN)
Knowledge and Understanding:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:

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

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

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

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

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

Intellectual Skills:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Express in a critical and reflective manner, a sophisticated understanding of your chosen field of enquiry

- Organise and undertake independent scholarship with an appropriate level of originality
- Reflect and critically evaluate, evidencing maturity in the conclusions of your project
- Situate your own work within the context of current debates

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

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

VISUAL COMMUNICATION (DIGITAL DESIGN)
Knowledge and Understanding:
On completion of the Stage you are expected to be able to:
- Demonstrate command of the contemporary and historical debates, issues and themes of particular relevant to your specialist focus in Digital design and be fully conversant with a scholarly approach
- Display command of a high level of practical skills in Digital design including stage set production considerations
- To express in a critical and reflective manner, with sophisticated understanding the competing critical, methodological and theoretical models and literature associated with your field of enquiry

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

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

- Produce, deliver and present work at a professional level, locating your practice in a professional context

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

VISUAL COMMUNICATION STUDIES

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

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

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

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

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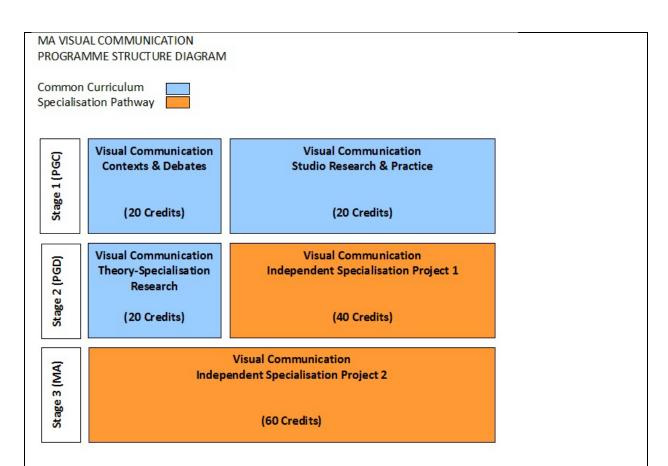
STRUCTURE AND CURRICULUM
The MA Visual Communication Programme is structured in three stages within the Postgraduate HE Level 7. Each of the stages corresponds to an "exit award", namely Stage 1 corresponds to the Postgraduate Certificate (PGC), Stage 2 to the Postgraduate Diploma (PGD) and Stage 3 to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

The programme commences with a common curriculum in the First Stage, at the end of which you select one of the five specialisation schemes (or pathways) offered. In the Second and Third Stages you follow your chosen specialisation scheme programme, which leads to the corresponding named award. (In the Second the Theory single module is laso a common module)
More specifically, the programme includes the following modules and is structured as listed below:

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

The structure of programme delivery is depicted in the diagram below:

MA VISUAL COMMUNICATION PROGRAMME STRUCTURE DIAGRAM

Common Curriculum ▢ (blue)
Specialisation Pathway ▢ (orange)

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)	

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 you to engage in exploration and experimentation supported by theoretical debates and research in order to identify the specialized area of your interest. By the end of the Semester you will have developed and formulated the scope of your major practice project and its contexts, providing the basis for your work in Semesters 2 and 3. Your work will be monitored and guided by a principal supervisor supported by a theory supervisor who will work with you throughput the programme (see also below Section 5.3).

Studio Research and Practice is a practice based double module that provides the ground for the exploration of your preferred areas of visual communication, to test assumptions and received ideas and to work out new ideas and proposals. Experimentation will be encouraged together with the development of practice and research methodologies. Practical work will be informed by social, cultural and philosophical concerns as well as those relating to the ethical and ecological responsibilities of the designer, always in keeping with the commercial, economic and professional requirements. This module will require the application of both practical skills and critical thinking that will lead to the formulation of the context and aims of your brief for the major specialization practice project which you will develop in the next stages of your studies. This brief will determine the area of specialization of your study (and eventually of the name of your award), and will form the basis of your "learning agreement" (see below) for Stages 2 and 3.

The "Contexts and Debates" double module provides you with the opportunity to engage with current theoretical debates, to study and critically analyse complex theoretical texts on issues

of art, design and communication, to discuss the function and social impact of major projects drawn from history, and to develop your skills in research and writing of scholarly texts. Research methodologies, including ethical considerations, and critical analysis and evaluation of findings, form an important part of this module which introduces you to the requirements of a higher academic level and at the same time supports your investigations and research in the parallel practice mode (Studio Research and Practice).

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

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

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

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

To this end, the work you will produce in the "Theory – Specialisation Research 1" single module will be of great assistance. This module aims to extend your knowledge and understanding of visual communication to an advanced level through research and engagement with current literature and debates. It also enables you to engage with broader and deeper issues related to the specialty you have chosen within the field of visual communication, and to strengthen specialised knowledge, skills and insights that will inform the work on your major independent practice project. You will be expected produce the basis of an extended piece of wiriting (to be completed in the Third Semester) in support of your major specialisation project. You will plan a personal programme of research related to the topic of your Independent Specialist projects, so that theory and practice will inform each other – with your "Specialisation Research" work providing additional input.

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

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING (PDP)

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

THE LEARNING AGREEMENT
The Learning Agreement is written jointly by you and your supervisors, and includes information regarding your studies in your chosen specialisation pathway in the Second and Thirds Stages (Semesters) of the Programme.
More specifically, it indicates the plan for the development of your personal specialisation project; and the outline of the schedules (a) of tutorials and contacts with your supervisors, and (b) of lectures, workshops, visits and assignments that will provide you with your pathway-specific learning.
It also includes indicative reading lists and other available resources, and lists any additional support you may require for the development of your 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 your research the Learning Agreement may be modified accordingly during your 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 either of the two proposed programmes (Architectural Design or Visual Communication).

Typically the Teaching schedule will include a sequenced series of lectures/presentations, followed up by seminars and/or workshop sessions, while the learning process will involve the presentation of project work, reviewed in group critiques and personal tutorials. A large part of the learning experience will be in self-directed study, research and practice, while an important role in the T&L process is played by formative assessment

INDEPENDENT SCHOLARSHIP

Central to the process of specialised study at this level is the self-management of your study and the engagement in independent scholarship, which involves rigorous research and the formulation of thoroughly supported arguments and proposals.

Independent scholarship forms an essential, integral and substantial part of programmes leading to the master's degree. In terms of academic credits in this programme, independent scholarship represents 100 credits of the total 180.

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

GUIDANCE AND SUPERVISION

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

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

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

LEARNING AGREEMENT

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

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

WORK-IN-PROGRESS REVIEW PANELS

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

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

TECHNOLOGICALLY ENHANCED LEARNING

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

RESEARCH GOVERNANCE AND ETHICS

All students are required to comply with research governance and ethics principles whilst undertaking their programme of study. This is of particular importance when conducting

research involving other people e.g. for module assessments or Independent Studies. Information on these principles can be found on the University web site at www.derby.ac.uk/research/ethics. You will be required to complete a form entitled "Request for Ethical Approval for Individual Study / Programme of Research", before commencing your Independent Specialisation Project.

SECTION SIX: Assessment

ASSESSMENT

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

ASSESSMENT RATIONALE

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

- Each design task assigned is assessed and marked in relation to the specific criteria explained in the assignment brief. At this specialised level emphasis is placed on the actual outcome (i.e. the work produced) though other parameters such as aptitude, approach to work and general participation in the learning process are taken into consideration.
- At the end of each Stage of the Programme, i.e. week 15, week 30, and week 45, you are assessed in each module of the specific stage and become entitled to either progress to the next Stage or to be recommended for the relevant award as the case may be. (For part-time students the assessment time-points are set at periods of double length i.e. week 30, 60 and 90).
- The overall work you produce in a module is presented as a portfolio and is assessed at the end of each Stage of the Programme, and a final assessment mark is awarded.
- Assessment criteria relate directly to the specified Learning Outcomes, and in order to award a pass, assessors must be satisfied that all such outcomes have been achieved.
- The programme envisages staged assessment in the 15th week of each stage. The Assessment Board will discuss and evaluate work separately, at a specifically convened session, in the event that a student request is made for an exit award at Stage 1 or 2.

ASSESSMENT SCHEDULE

At the end of each stage, you are assessed in all the modules in order to progress or graduate. As outlined above, Stage 1 includes one double and one double module, Stage 2 includes two single modules and one double module, while Stage 3 includes one single and

one triple module. Indicatively each module will include assessment on assignments as indicated below:

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

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

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

ASSESSMENT METHODS

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

- At the assessment at the end of each Stage a "summative" approach is used, by which your work in a module is assessed as a whole. This process requires that you present you work in the form of exhibition of creative artwork and written dissertation to the assessors. The assessors ask questions and evaluate the work presented to reflect the level of achievement attained at that moment, i.e. at the end of the stage.
- Summative assessment in the First Semester is by 50% creative design coursework and 50% written texts. In the Second Semester your written work represents 25%, while design coursework represents 75% of the total assessed work. Normally a similar breakdown applies to Semester 3.
- During the Stage your work-in-progress will be normally assessed at least three times in tutorials that adopt the "formative" approach, providing feedback and explanation, and engaging in dialogue so that the review and evaluation of your work become a formative, i.e. educational experience, where assessment merges with teaching and learning.
- Depending on the instructions you have received with regard to the work required for each module, the marks of the work-in-progress assessment during the stage may be diagnostic to enable you to gauge your performance and to improve your work as necessary, or may be binding to be computed in the overall summative mark at the end of the stage.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR STUDENTS WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

These needs are usually identified in the application process. In all cases they are supported by a special "Protocol" (Support Plan) devised by the College, following consultation with professionals and or carers, and agreed with the student. Teaching and assessment will take into account the nature of the disability and proceed according to established norms. It is noted that Dyslexia, which is the most common disability encountered, is addressed as per Greek education regulations. These provide for oral examinations in the form of questions

and answers in those cases where the normal type of assessed assignment is that of written texts (Min. of Education Circular No. C2 1846/17 May 2000).

SECTION SEVEN: Admission

SECTION SIX: ADMISSIONS

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

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

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

ADMISSIONS PROCESS

The Vakalo College invites applications to its Postgraduate programmes and provides information to any interested party. Enquiries can be made directly to the College through any of the available media (post, telephone, fax, e-mail). Information is made available also through the Internet, in the 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.

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.

EXCEPTION FOR ADMISSIONS WITHOUT THE FORMAL QUALIFICATIONS

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

COMMITMENT TO EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

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

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

LEARNING RESOURCES

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

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

INDUCTION

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

SUPERVISION

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

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

ARRANGEMENTS FOR STUDENTS WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

These needs are usually identified in the application process. They are supported by a special "Protocol" (Support Plan) devised by the College, following consultation with professionals and or carers, and agreed with the student. The College adopts an inclusive

policy according to individual need. With the student's consent the arrangement may include contact with their family.

SECTION NINE: Employabiliby

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

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

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

SECTION ELEVEN: External Links

The Vakalo undergraduate programme is one of the most, if not *the* most, widely known and highly respected design education course in Greece, and employers recognise it as a form of guarantee of quality when seeking candidates to fill vacancies. The links with industry are further strengthened by participation in various live projects with leading Greek and international firms operating locally (e.g. IKEA, Coco-mat) as well as in local and international competitions and workshops (e.g. Open House), where numerous distinctions were won in recent years