

graphic communication

A Level

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Exam board: OCR



What is this subject about?

This dynamic A Level course will develop your capabilities and understanding of graphic design and how to communicate information and ideas. You will be encouraged to use a wide range of media for both 2D and 3D work and will investigate areas such as:

- advertising
- packaging design
- design for print
- communication and computer graphics

You will learn about commercial processes and materials used in manufacturing a range of graphic products as well as study the work of leading graphic designers.

Our aim is to feed your imagination and open your eyes to the possibilities of 2 dimensional design and the difference you can make to the world. This course is delivered in 2 coursework units over the two years. Project work is supported by lectures, demonstrations, professional experience and tutorials.

What will I study over the two years?

In the first year you will develop your design skills including sketching, developing and recording ideas and develop your understanding of how to design and make, using a variety of approaches and techniques.

Through a series of activities and short projects you will develop your appreciation of graphic communication, and the use of a range of techniques and processes for commercial production. This will include the use of drawing and computer skills to communicate your ideas using CAD/CAM as part of the design process.

You will become familiar with major design movements and the work of other designers in order to broaden your appreciation of good design. There is an emphasis on learning how and why designs are developed, and how you as a designer can make improvements.

In your second year you will have more freedom to explore your own area of graphic design and you will take on the role of a professional designer through a mixture of set and self-generated projects giving you a wide portfolio to demonstrate your skills to universities and potential employers. You will undertake a detailed 'personal study' with practical outcomes from a personal starting point.

How is the course assessed?

Assessment is 60% coursework, in the form of a Personal Investigation which is presented as a design portfolio and practical outcome(s). There are also marks allocated to a written Related Study (20% of the coursework grade). In addition to the coursework there is an Externally Set practical which is worth 40% of the overall A Level mark. Projects are marked by the teachers and externally moderated by the examination board.

What skills will I need and develop in this course?

On this course you will develop investigative, analytical, experimental, practical, technical and expressive skills, aesthetic understanding, critical judgment and presentation skills. You will experience working with a broad range of media and develop an enthusiasm for art, craft and design.

What can the course lead to in terms of higher education and future careers?

Any field of design, but especially Graphic Design, Packaging Design, Advertising and Media.

What are the formal entry requirements for this course?

Aside from the general criteria that the college requires, you will need to achieve at minimum of:

- Grade 4 or above in GCSE Art & Design
- And/or a grade 4 in any Design and Technology related GCSE (Product, Graphics, Resistant Materials).

Students who have not studied an art or design subject at GCSE still achieve success on this course. You will need to talk to the Design department and complete some creative tasks which must be presented at enrolment. Acceptance on to the course will be at the discretion of the Head of Department.

What extra support/enrichment activities are on offer?

The course will include a number of design related trips and visits aimed at broadening your understanding of design throughout the two years of the course. In addition 'live' projects will be carried out with companies and there will be a number of talks by guest speakers.

Which courses might combine with this subject?

Graphic Communication (2D Graphic Design) can be combined with Fine Art, Photography, Media, Fashion or BTEC Art and Design. However you should be aware that there will be continual coursework throughout the year and you will need to manage your time accordingly. This combination will give you a strong portfolio for applications for Art Foundations or Design related degrees. This course also combines well with Business for those wishing to progress to Design Management or Business. It can provide a creative and practical dimension to a science or humanities programme.

What is the difference between Graphic Communication, 3D Design, and BTEC Art and Design?

Graphic Communication is a focused graphics course which means that unlike the BTEC Art and Design course you will not do any fine art. Most of the work will be computer based (unlike 3D Design which has much more emphasis in the workshop). However you will use CAD/CAM to create packaging. In the first year you are set themed projects or given briefs to work to. In the second year emphasis is placed on individual design briefs, this means that you will be allowed to investigate Graphic Design, Advertising, Packaging Design, Web and Games Design.