Programme Specification

Title:

Design

Final Award: Master of Arts (MA)

With Exit Awards at:
Postgraduate Certificate (PG Cert)
Postgraduate Diploma (PG Dip)
Master of Arts (MA)

To be delivered from: 2 Sep 2019

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1. Introduction
This document describes one of the University of Lincoln's programmes using the protocols required by the UK National Qualifications Framework as defined in the publication *QAA guidelines for preparing programme specifications*.

This programme operates under the policy and regulatory frameworks of the University of Lincoln.
2. Basic Programme Data

Final Award: Master of Arts (MA)
Programme Title: Design
Exit Awards and Titles
Postgraduate Certificate (PG Cert)
Postgraduate Diploma (PG Dip)
Master of Arts (MA)

Subject(s) Design
Mode(s) of delivery Full Time
Part Time

Is there a Placement or Exchange? No

Awarding Body University of Lincoln
Campus(es) Lincoln Campus
School(s) Lincoln School of Design
Programme Leader Mike Belton (mbelton)

Relevant Subject Benchmark Statements

Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body Accreditation

Programme Start Date 2019-20
3. Programme Description

3.1 Overview
The programme is distinctive in that emphasis is placed on the effective application of analytical and creative thinking processes; an appreciation of ethical concerns; an awareness of the realities of professional life and an ability to articulate and communicate. The curriculum is designed to encourage the development of intellectual maturity, curiosity, personal innovation, risk-taking, independent enquiry, and effective management and planning skills; thus students will develop generic skills alongside their subject-specific knowledge and skills. As it is a practice-based programme combined with research, it also provides opportunities to further develop relevant creative, intellectual and technical skills, which are essential to be able to enter contemporary design practice at a high level.

The curriculum includes key attributes sought by employers, such as effective communication and presentation skills, leading to greater confidence in the workplace. Students will promote their work via a final show, which may take the form of an exhibition or alternative presentation.

Throughout the course students develop awareness of a wide range of practical and technical approaches. Great emphasis will be placed upon the design process, effective research, creative thinking, and individual expression.

The programme is largely practice-led with students entering from various Art, Design and Media undergraduate programmes, such as:


A particular strength of the programme is the cross-disciplinary nature of the student cohort, this enables students from a wide range of design backgrounds to learn best practice from each others particular areas of design. Collaborative projects are encouraged and our students can develop a broad knowledge and appreciation of different design practices.

The course structure is modular and the accumulation of ‘level M’ credits allows for exit points with alternative qualifications. The MA Design programme regularly recruits international students from a wide range of countries, and this helps to foster an outwards-looking attitude in all our students. The sharing of regional practice methods enables students to learn from different design cultures and backgrounds. Collaborative projects between students from different disciplines, further emphasises the sharing of good practice.

Design is a subject area which provides many opportunities for employment. This programme supports student aspiration to ultimately enter employment at a high level of responsibility and creative decision-making. Alternatively, students can widen the scope for opportunities on a national and international level by setting up their own business enterprises and exploring entrepreneurial activities developing design concepts and/or entering into consultancy contracts.

The use of digital communications technology is utilised for speakers from the UK and internationally to give lectures, presentations and perform Q&A sessions with the students. Leading industry practitioners and MA Design alumni regularly speak to the students on the programme in order to keep the cohort up to speed on the latest developments within their particular area of design.
3.2 Aims and Objectives
The MA Design programme aims to provide students with an advanced academic learning experience in the subject of design which will develop intellectual and creative abilities in the student. The specific interests of the student within their area of design practice will be developed, producing an articulate and thoughtful postgraduate.

Successful students aim to progress in one of the following ways upon graduation:

• gain employment at a high level of responsibility and creative decision making in their field of design or a related field
• develop a research proposal leading to further study such as, registration for a PhD.

Broader aims are that: graduates will continue to be life-long learners and contribute to the on-going debates within the industry following graduation whilst making a worthwhile contribution to society generally.

Whilst on the programme, objectives for the students are to:

• engage in advanced study of design theory and practice
• develop a critical and reflective practice within their design discipline
• investigate and develop a design practice research methodology
• extend knowledge and professional skills in managing and pursuing creative design projects
• build a suitable foundation for advanced professional development or research at doctoral level.

Design is an integral part of the Creative Industries and of the business economy. The programme aims to develop students’ creative, technical and entrepreneurial skills and help to support aspiring creative individuals to transform and develop ideas into a new creative business proposal, whilst reducing anxieties of failure – thus easing the transition from ‘drawing board’ to new commercial venture.

Students are encouraged to forge links with industry, and industry-based design projects/ project development will be positively encouraged. This provides benefits which may include opportunities for professional qualifications; work placements; travel bursaries; exhibition venues and publication in selected books and journals.

3.3 Variations to Standard Regulations and Guidance
None
4. Programme Outcomes
Programme-level learning outcomes are identified below.

Refer to Appendix 1 – Curriculum Map for details of how outcomes are deployed across the programme.

4.1 Knowledge and Understanding

On successful completion of this programme a student will have knowledge and understanding of:

1. A clear understanding of post-graduate research methodologies applicable to the students' individual design discipline.

2. The background and context to their design practice: for example, the cultural, technical, economic, environmental, ethical, global, historical, political, sociological, and theoretical contexts which surround the specialist subject area.

3. Awareness of the major arguments surrounding their practice should be demonstrated and more nuanced arguments explored and developed. The ability to make a well-informed contribution to the debates surrounding professional design practice that will be relevant to the future of the creative industries.

4. A systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems, new insights and key technological developments, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their design discipline. A studio diary/logbook is integral in developing a reflective understanding of the students own practice and where they sit within the practice more broadly.

5. A systematic understanding of changing patterns in consumer/user behaviour, driven by changes in technology or society. Plotting past, present and future trends via scholarly articles, first hand interviews, testing, and industry feedback should be present within research.

4.2 Subject Specific Intellectual Skills

On successful completion of this programme a student will be able to:

6. Develop new and enhance existing design, research and project management skills appropriate to their discipline. A professional level of systematic organisation and planning should be demonstrated.

7. Demonstrate an understanding of the designer’s professional relationship with intended audience, client, market, user, consumer etc. An articulation of how the students design proposal meets the end users needs should be present in the form of logbooks, verbal presentations and formal written work. Meaningful and progressive design solutions are the aim of students at postgraduate level.

8. Demonstrate the application of creative problem solving techniques to their design projects that build upon current knowledge and future predictions of consumer/end user trends. Critical self reflection mapped against a thorough research base should lead towards highly original ideas that are, not only novel, but effective.
Demonstrate the ability to identify, utilise and build upon relevant research strands from a wide range of resources. Interpretation of these findings should manifest itself in an iterative and critical approach to concept generation; a critical analysis of these ideas should follow which filters knowledge of the identified design problem through the lens of creativity.

4.3 Subject Specific Practical Skills

On successful completion of this programme a student will be able to:

10 Demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving design problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level.

11 Demonstrate high-level skills in the effective planning, execution, documentation, evaluation and presentation of complex design projects.

12 Demonstrate autonomous decision-making, based upon an objective assessment of their potential design solutions. Affirmation of theories should come from the student and the knowledge they have amassed via formal research and experimentation.

13 Demonstrate initiative in identifying and learning new techniques that are relevant to their project, such as new software or hand tools. Seeking out new resources and making connections between problems and potential solutions should be evidenced within the body of research and logbooks. The structure of the project should be approached as creatively as the design concepts.

14 Demonstrate effective planning of budgets and resources for their projects, such as arranging storage or coordinating other specialist practitioners. Learning from current practitioners should be an integral part of the students’ journey and ‘research’ should be seen as a bridge to future industry networking.

4.4 Transferable Skills and Attributes

On successful completion of this programme a student will be able to:

15 Demonstrate the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development. An awareness of current industry practice should be maintained through reference to blogs, websites, trade publications etc through the use of resources such as the university library. An awareness of newly emerging skills and competences required within the students area of practice should help form the students career plans.

16 Exercise initiative and personal responsibility and make informed decisions in complex and unpredictable situations. Not only should MA Design students amass knowledge and skills, they must be able to think autonomously and apply their knowledge beyond their usual practice.

17 Communicate effectively using AV presentation techniques and equipment. A professional level of planning should be present in the form of predicting potential technology pitfalls and taking the necessary steps to account for these. Students should be very competent with the major forms of presentation and should make very effective use of sound, vision and verbal techniques to present their projects to the best effect.

18 Communicate effectively to both specialist and non-specialist audiences. Being able to communicate projects to audiences with varying levels of prior understanding should be accounted for. Not only should students be able to enlighten the uninitiated to sometimes
complex theories, they should also be able to answer more in-depth questions from experts in the field.

For details of each module contributing to the programme, please consult the module specification document.
5. Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategies

5.1. Learning and Teaching Strategy
The philosophy of the programme is flexibility within a modular structure, focusing on independent learning set within a structure of complimentary modules.

Intellectual skills are developed through the teaching and learning programme outlined in the Programme Structure (section 6) and Programme Outcomes (section 4).

Acquisition of knowledge on this MA Design programme is through a carefully planned programme of teaching and learning. A combination of the following are used to support the programme:

- Lectures
A weekly formal lecture programme, expanding students’ understanding, critical thinking and appreciation of theoretical and practical considerations of the design profession. Research methods, creative problem solving techniques, consumer/end user motivations, self assessment techniques, idea generation and study skills are covered within this curriculum.

- Seminars
Tutor and student-led seminars provide a platform for students' self-development in research and critical discourse at an advanced level, encouraging debating on current issues – contributing to the knowledge base of selected disciplines. This stimulates individual and group work in relation to the understanding of and insight into the theoretical aspects of design. This aids the development of the student’s individual design proposal.

- Specialist subject tutorials
Tutorials are vital to the development of the student’s individual design proposal, evaluating the quality and effectiveness of student's research, study skills and the monitoring of project objectives and outcomes.

- Presentations
Student presentations provide practical experience of communicating their ideas analytically and intellectually, stimulating group discussion and debate.

- Guided independent learning
Student independent learning increases as the course progresses. This offers flexibility to meet students’ individual needs.

- Critiques
Critiques of projects form a regular part of the programme and will lead to much formative assessment of the work. The critiques are initially lead by the tutors but the students are gradually encouraged to lead the critique of their project within their working group and should appoint a note taker to write down the feedback from their colleagues.

- Peer and self-assessment
To develop critical evaluation skills and set further personal goals, students are expected to take ownership of their projects and set personal targets along the path to their project goals. Autonomy in the student should increase as they progress through the various stages of the programme.

Guided independent learning is used as a stepping stone to independent learning and tutorials are
designed to ease the student away from needing tutor-affirmation of their decision making process. Students also take part in workshops and practical sessions for skills development appropriate to their subject specialism.

Workshops
Regular workshops which explain the various facilities available to the students within the school are organised in order for the students to be inducted into the use of specialist equipment. By exposing the students to all of the various software packages, printing facilities and machinery available to them they often see the potential to take their project in an unexpected direction.

5.2. Assessment Strategy
Assessment at a postgraduate level is completed through both formative and summative assessment methods ie:

- Formative – concerned with ongoing progress and providing a vehicle for giving feedback on work completed and/or also ‘in progress’:
  peer assessment
  self-assessment
  tutor feedback (verbal and written)
  Critique
  work in progress tutorials and group tutorials

- Summative – concerned with measuring the quality of work completed by the student against the assessment criteria for the programme of study, evaluating the programme outcomes against the aims and objectives.

These include:
- presentation(s)
- written assignment(s)
- practical assignment(s)
- major project
- final dissemination of major project
- written project
- transferable skills – embedded in assignments.

Assessment criteria relate to the programme’s learning outcomes and are reflected in the assignment briefs, however some or all of the following may apply:
- understanding of key issues and theories
- critical awareness of context
- suitable methods of investigation
- investigation of solutions
- development of judgement and creativity
- development of argument
- quality of analysis of data
- presentation and referencing
- student’s own evaluation
- the level to which the objectives are met
Assessment Map gives a top-level indication of the scheduling and distribution of assessment modes within the programme. Details of module assessment strategy are included with each module specification.

Lincoln School of Design Standard statement: Formative and summative feedback and assessment.

Assessment - context: As stated by the University, all formal assessments which contribute to a student’s progression through or attainment of an award of the University are formally marked or graded. The marks or grades awarded will reflect the traditions and practices of individual cognate subject areas and will be influenced by any relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statements.

The purpose of assessment is:
• To establish a shared understanding between academics and students as to the process, fairness and rigour of teaching, learning, and student attainment.
• To ensure that teaching, learning, and final awards are founded on a spread of academic and professional opinion supported by appropriate and agreed, numerical and textual feedback.
• To ensure that students always have an accurate and understood analysis of their strengths and areas for development, which is calibrated to the validated learning outcomes, approved assessment criteria and personal and professional objectives.
• To provide to external bodies and employers an agreed set of judgements about the strengths and development needs for both students and graduates in a clearly articulated curriculum context.

Formative feedback: is all feedback provided prior to the end of a module moderation process and doesn’t include a mark. This includes verbal and textual feedback and comment given during studio critiques, presentations, seminars, small group discussions and individual tuition as well as advice given more generally in studio, classroom or workshop taught sessions. It is always an individual academic judgement (even where multiple academics are involved) and students should always be clear that the final module mark will be the result of an academic process of moderation which may differ. Feedback should make clear reference to the agreed assessment criteria where and when possible.

Summative feedback and module grading: takes place at the end of a taught or independent study module, and after the end of module moderation meeting, and is accompanied by a mark (on the University 100 point scale). The mark given is supported by textual summative assessment feedback for the module and where necessary, is the subject of a student/staff feedback meeting. Summative assessment grades and feedback must be archived on Blackboard in the appropriate module repository. All feedback will make clear reference to the agreed assessment criteria where and when possible.

Further information can be found here: http://secretariat.blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/academic-policies-2/
6. Programme Structure
The total number of credit points required for the achievement of Postgraduate Certificate (PG Cert) is 60.
The total number of credit points required for the achievement of Postgraduate Diploma (PG Dip) is 120.
The total number of credit points required for the achievement of Master of Arts (MA) is 180.

Masters

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## Appendix I - Curriculum Map

This table indicates which modules assume responsibility for delivering and ordering particular programme learning outcomes.

**Key:**  
- ✓ Delivered and Assessed  
- Delivered  
- ✓ Assessed

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### Appendix II - Assessment Map

This table indicates the spread of assessment activity across the programme. Percentages indicate assessment weighting.

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Appendix III - Benchmark Analysis
This table maps programme learning outcomes to relevant QAA subject benchmark statements or PSRB guidelines.

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Appendix IV: Benchmark Benchmark Statement(s)