MCAST

Malta College of Arts, Science & Technology

MQF Level 6

AD6-04-19

MCAST B.A.(Hons) in Graphic Design

Course Specification

Course Description

Communicating messages successfully via graphic design requires a high level of understanding of the visual art of representation. This highly contextualised curriculum draws on contemporary design practice, together with theoretical and historical cultural material. The degree will equip students with the knowledge to explore and challenge creative boundaries, through real-life design scenarios. They will hone their skills in fundamental design principles such as layout, form, typography, iconography and colour. Students will analyse a wide range of professional design problems, and find creative and innovative solutions using various media. Traditional and digital tools will be explored in disciplines such as, editorial design, web design, signage, advertising and packaging.

Programme Learning Outcomes

At the end of the programme the learner will be able to:

1. Research and investigate a broad range of historical and contemporary graphic design work and applications
2. Apply complex theories to practical realistic work situations in the graphic design industry
3. Challenge assumptions and accepted conventions in graphic design to develop industry-standard as well as innovative design solutions
4. Analyse and evaluate a wide range of design solutions

Entry Requirements

MCAST Advanced Diploma in Photography
or
MCAST Advanced Diploma in Art and Design
or
MCAST Advanced Diploma in Creative Media Production
or
MCAST Advanced Diploma in Graphic Design and Interactive Media
or
2 A-Level passes and 2 I-Level passes
Compulsory A-Level: Art, or Art and Design, or Graphical Communication, or equivalent.

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Current Approved Programme Structure

Unit Code	Unit Title	ECVET/ECTS
CADSN-506-1504	Visual Thinking	6
CAGDN-506-1501	Interactive Editorial Design	6
CAGDN-506-1504	Digital Media in Visual Arts	6
CAWEB-506-1504	Introduction to User Interface & User Experience Design	6
CAGDN-506-1505	Introduction to Graphic Design Principles	6
CAIMA-506-1501	Contextual Studies in Interactive Media	6
CAWEB-506-1503	Introduction to Web Development	6
CAGDN-506-1603	Lens Based Media	6
CAGDN-506-1503	New Media, Culture and Technologies	6
CAART-506-1515	Critical Studies and Research Methods	6
CAGN-506-1510	Design for Digital Application	6
CAGDN-506-1508	Typographic Composition	6
CAGDN-506-1512	Tactile Graphics	6
CAAMT-506-1501	Animation for Communication	6
CAGDN-506-1506	Grids & Composition	6
CAGDN-506-1511	Editorial Design and Publishing	6
CAGDN-506-1507	Symbols and Visual Communication	6
CAGDN-506-1509	Corporate Brand Creation & Communication	6
CAART-606-1524	Personal Style & Self Promotion	6
CAART-606-1633	Law & Ethics	6
CAMRK-606-1601	Marketing and Advertising	6
CADSN-606-1602	Communication Design	6
CAGDN-606-1601	Sound & Image	6
CAGDN-606-1602	Spatial Graphics	6
CAPRJ-606-1608	Graphic Design Open Project	6
CDKSK-606-1615	Entrepreneurship	6
CDKSK-506-1605	English	6
CDKSK-506-1526	Critical Thinking	6
CADIS-612-1501	Dissertation	12
Total ECVET/ECTS		**180**

CADSN-506-1504 Visual Thinking

Unit level (MQF): 5

Credits: 6

Unit description

This unit introduces a number of idea-generating techniques to demonstrate that creative thinking is a skill that can be continually developed. In addition, this unit aims to develop the learner's skills in communicating their ideas visually through incentive and stimulating assignments, and, where possible have topical and/or contemporary assignments embedded with cultural relevance. In addition, learners will be encouraged to experiment and take risks with their work. Learners will also have the possibility to participate and create discussions, engaging in peer to peer criticism to open the potential and interest of ideas.

Learners will also engage in integrated research to include analysis of the brief, prepare their initial ideas, and investigate and explore materials, processes and techniques. They will also have the possibility to practice communicating their ideas across specialist applications, both traditional and alternative.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit the learner will be able to:

1. *Research and exploit idea generation techniques and methods to experiment and explore their characteristics and suitability.*
2. *Apply visual techniques to own work to communicate specific information and ideas.*
3. *Develop own visualised ideas into working concepts.*
4. *Present and evaluate a finished creative solution to a given brief.*

CAGDN-506-1504 Digital Media in Visual Arts

Unit level (MQF): 5

Credits: 6

Unit description

In this unit learners will be introduced to a range of digital media and post production software used by journalists for different aspects of their work. Learners will have the possibility to grasp the knowledge and skills required to use such software effectively in their job as media practitioners.

Therefore, learners will become familiar with a range of tools and techniques of the various digital media production software used today. Firstly, learners will research and understand the essential technical aspects of working with digital media. Then learners will learn the correct digital file management and development of a media project.

Learners will apply tools and techniques using video editing, image editing and design software to produce a body of work presented in different formats. This unit will act as an introduction to these programs, thus learners will become competent with the basic tools and techniques of each software program.

Finally, learners are to utilize each software program learnt to produce work for a specific media project. Then learners will present their final outcomes in an appropriate manner. In addition, learners will evaluate their own final outcomes as well as their use of digital media software to produce a specific media project

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit the learner will be able to:

1. *Understand the technical aspects of working with digital media.*
2. *Understand the main principles of using post production tools and techniques using image editing and design software.*
3. *Apply post production tools and techniques using video editing, image editing and design software as required to complete your own media project.*
4. *Present own work to a given audience and evaluate methods of improvement.*

CAWEB-506-1504 Introduction to User Interface & User Experience Design

Unit level (MQF): 5

Credits: 6

Unit description

The aim of this unit is to introduce learners to the ever-changing concepts and theories of User Interface and User Experience Design. For starters, the learners will begin with the basic theories and concept in this field such as Layout, Visual Design, Branding, Wireframes, Usability Testing, User Research and User Stories and how to achieve them respectively.

Learners will examine a diversified portfolio of work, ranging from different platforms where UI/UX design is applied. These various examples of interfaces will be broken down into different case studies in order to understand better the concepts behind the creation of such experience designs. Elements in the design such as layout and visual design will be given a purpose while the experience of the user will be further discussed in relation of user research and user journey. Product Research will provide the learners with the ability to create good sound designs. Than basing on the results from the product research the learners will create Personas and Scenarios that will reflect the user group for whom they are designing.

The learner will then proceed to combine the concepts learned for both UI/UX together into a concept of their own. Starting off with sketches of layout designs which will then be translated into wireframes were the flow (UX) of the interface can be decided. The learner will then proceed to finalize the design on their software of preference (Sketch, Invision, Adobe Experience, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop). The renders of the final design can be animated using the mentioned software for a better understanding of the User Experience as a final prototype.

Once the UI/UX concept is completed, the learner will evaluate the design through various methods of usability testing and experience walkthroughs in order to determine the effectiveness of their final design. This might lead to refinements in the design as deemed necessary.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit the learner will be able to:

1. *Understand the basic concepts and theories involving UI and UX Design.*

2. *Prepare and build experience interfaces that are intuitive, pleasant and flowing.*
3. *Produce a prototype example that illustrates both UI and UX concepts.*
4. *Evaluate the created UI and UX Interface viability.*

CAGDN-506-1603 Lens Based Media

Unit level (MQF): 5

Credits: 6

Unit description

This unit aims to give learners the necessary skills to proficiently use cameras and sound equipment to capture appropriate images as well as using video and sound editing software effectively. This unit will focus on developing a deeper understanding of lens based media and their application to practical media, photgraphy and journalism.

Learners will utilise a range of camera techniques to produce creative solutions to a variety of media projects. As well as further develop their existing knowledge of Still Image, Moving Image and Video Journalism as a tool to provide creative solutions to enhance their visual language and aid in visual story telling and the solving of visually creative problems. Image, video, sound capture and file optimisation will play key roles in the learner's journey throughout this unit.

Upon completion of the unit learners will have kick-started their personal journey to being able to identify key media techniques and their uses within the three streams of learning journalism, photography and media and also understand more first-hand how these techniques can be applied to various media platforms and outlets.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit the learner will be able to:

1. *Understand the techniques and technical aspects of a variety of lens-based media.*
2. *Produce digital still images by experimenting with different lens based media equipment and techniques.*
3. *Produce an audio-visual production using the suitable lens based media in own area of study.*
4. *Present documentation of own work showing personal reflection and learning curve.*

CAART-506-1515 Critical Studies and Research Methods

Unit level (MQF): 5

Credits: 6

Unit description

The unit is intended for use in a range of creative arts programmes and has both theoretical and practical outcomes in the form of personal research activity and the production of a proposal for a degree year dissertation.

The unit provides an overview of research theory and methodology, including primary, secondary, qualitative, and quantitative and practice led research methods. In addition to providing practical instruction on writing research proposals.

This unit also provide the learners with skills to critically analyse research findings and also see the differences between descriptive and critical writing as well as the accepted academic formats for writing essays, papers and reports using accepted academic referencing and citation systems.

In this unit, based upon lectures which present relevant content related to the creative arts theoretical contexts, learners will prepare and undertake practical activity in the preparation of a proposal for a vocationally relevant research study. Which will comprise of a planned literature review and the use of vocationally relevant methods to undertake primary research.

Learners will also undertake critical analysis of research findings and prepare written work to an accepted academic format using accepted citation and referencing. The work of the unit culminates in learners undertaking an individual self-evaluation of the effectiveness of their research processes and activity.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit the learner will be able to:

1. *Organize the research gathered using research theory, methodology and practice led research for a potential dissertation topic*
2. *Analyse critically the findings from own research and present it in an appropriate format.*

3. *Produce in given format the research proposals in academic writing style using accepted academic referencing and citation systems.*
4. *Present orally and in writing the final proposal for a vocationally relevant research study within own area of interest in the creative arts.*

CAGN-506-1510 Design for Digital Application

Unit level (MQF): 5

Credits: 6

Unit description

The purpose for this unit is to introduce learners to Design for Digital Application. The aim is to bridge the gap between the physical side of design which gives a more tactile experience together with a digital experience in the form of an application. Focusing on particular brands that made this adaptation for the screen we can establish patterns and techniques that can then be implemented. Also, important key designers and projects that exploited digital technology will be discussed in order to underline the importance of the unique experiences created.

A number of examples will be tackled with particular focus on how something tactile can evolve into something digital such as a Mobile Application, mainly to understand how a Graphic Designer works and liaises with Web Designers/Developers. The examples chosen will highlight key factors that will enable the learner to further understand the concepts and theories that are being implemented. Whilst looking at the transition that can be made from tactile to digital, it is pivotal to understand the differences between print and screen content such as typography, colour and sizes and how they translate from one to the other.

Hence this unit will equip the learners with the tools necessary to create a concept of their liking, where they will translate something that has a tactile experience into a digital experience, in the form of an application which can also be a website. The fulcrum of the concept will boil down to the level of interactivity that the learner will put into his respective concept. Few of the interactive elements that can be included in the concepts are: Flash rollover, hot spots and parallax.

Once the final concept is completed, that is renders or animated UI mock ups, the learner will evaluate the design through various methods of usability testing and experience walkthroughs, in order to determine the effectiveness of their final design. This might lead to refinements in the design as necessary.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit the learner will be able to:

1. *Understand basic concepts and theories surrounding Design for Digital Application.*
2. *Prepare and evolve a tactile experience into a digital experience.*
3. *Produce a digital prototype example that illustrates the transition from tactile to digital.*
4. *Evaluate the created prototype experience application refining if necessary.*

CAART-606-1524 Personal Style & Self Promotion

Unit level (MQF): 6

Credits: 6

Unit description

Understanding personal style and developing a self-promoting image is fundamental to anyone who aspires to work in the creative arts sector. It is easy to rest in the safety of a familiar style and such a unit will inspire learners to push their boundaries, leave their comfort zone and develop new styles of work with a range of different media, then use these to design a campaign of self-promotion across a range of platforms.

This is a practical unit that enables learners to explore a personal response to different styles using a wide range of media in a wide range of outcomes that culminate in a body of work that serves as a self-promotional tool and promotes the learner within the creative arts sector by helping him/her build a broad skill set. Learners will have the possibility to achieve the latter through research, experimentation with different media and also the development of their own self-image. The unit also aims to develop skills to communicate a personal style and explore ways of creating a self-promotional tool and portfolio of work.

The unit compliments the visual components of the course by creating a vehicle in which to showcase work and act as a portal to the learners' self-image. Throughout their courses, learners should already have investigated a specialism with an individual style of expression and visual outcomes. Learners will explore a broad range of media to communicate a range of messages in a contemporary context. Learners will be encouraged to experiment and explore the limits of their preconceived notions and their abilities. Contemporary styles in visual communication will be seen in context and learners will be encouraged to work towards their continuous progression in the understanding of their own self-image.

Learner's preconceived ideas about their personal style should be challenged. In a world where new forms of communication constantly change and where a sophisticated audience demands new approaches, the development of personal style should be seen as a continuous activity. It is important that learners experiment with different media both in print and digital to test their enthusiasm for a particular style.

By the end of this unit, learners would have produced a sequential portfolio of work that demonstrates a willingness to experiment with different media and develop the promotion of their own identity as someone working within the very competitive

creative arts sectors. Learners should also test their own convictions in the style they lean towards and in their ability to use it to communicate a wide range of messages to different audiences.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit the learner will be able to:

1. *Research the historical origins of a chosen personal style applied to a contemporary context.*
2. *Select a specialized medium or media to create a self-initiated project in a contemporary context.*
3. *Determine own identity and personal visual style when creating self-promotional material.*
4. *Compile a professional portfolio of work specifically to a chosen career path in the creative arts industry.*

CAART-606-1633 Law & Ethics

Unit level (MQF): 6

Credits: 6

Unit description

In this unit, learners will have a first approach to law and ethics and to their applications to art and communication.

They will have the opportunity to have a sight of what is law, what are juridical systems, how to compare them and what are their historical roots. They will be guided into juridical concepts like "rule of law", "right" and "source".

They will then apply the juridical approach to their activity. They will learn how their activity can be labelled from a juridical point of view, then work on the right of expression and its juridical and factual limitations. Then they will work on copyright and defamation.

In addition to this, learners will have the occasion to approach ethics. They will work on some ethical concepts like "good" and "bad", "right" and "wrong" as well as approach some ethical systems. Thus learners will realize how one can know or decide that something is good or bad and focus on some contemporary ethical issues.

Moreover, learners will also apply the ethical approach to their activity. They will explore their personal ethical system and discover their inner values, working on them and also on the influence that ego and emotions have on them. Finally, learners will then identify possible ethical issues in their activity and in team working.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit the learner will be able to:

1. *Understand what is a juridical point of view in relation to work in the different sectors of the creative arts.*
2. *Understand the definition of an ethical point of view in relation to various areas of the creative arts.*
3. *Identify possible juridical problems related to own area in creative media.*
4. *Choose which ethical approach to use in relation to own creative media area.*

CAMRK-606-1601 Marketing and Advertising

Unit level (MQF): 6

Credits: 6

Unit description

Throughout this unit, learners will be looking at the historical and contemporary context as well as the application of both marketing and advertising in the area of Graphic Design. Learners will also look at possible future development in both marketing and advertising with a particular focus on the evolution of digital trends. Although the emphasis of the unit is on the digital aspect of advertising and marketing, learners are encouraged to explore the application of traditional methods such as print advertising. Learners can opt to experiment with such methods and find ways of how to work them into their multi-channel strategy.

In the area of advertising, learners will be looking at: traditional media including print advertising and its potential in the digital age, new media and technologies, web advertising, guerrilla advertising, theories such as marketing mix, semiotics, and diversification. Certain topics like display advertising and search engine advertising will touch on both marketing and advertising and can be introduced in a way that links the topics together. In the area of marketing, learners will be exploring SEO, display advertising, targeting audiences, email marketing, web presence, social media and mobile, consumer behaviour, business models, data and analytics.

This shall lead learners towards designing a project brief and creating a marketing plan that includes multi-channel strategies. Learners will then design advertising material according to their brief and test these out on multiple channels. The adverts should ultimately be tested for their effectiveness using various or chosen methods of data and analytics.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit the learner will be able to:

1. *Define key moments in the historical and contemporary context of marketing and advertising in graphic design.*
2. *Prepare a marketing plan that includes multi-channel strategies for a design brief.*
3. *Produce a range of advertising media aimed at specific target audiences.*
4. Measure the effectiveness of the Marketing Plan using data and analytics.

CAPRJ-606-1608 Graphic Design Open Project

Unit level (MQF): 6

Credits: 6

Unit description

Graphic design has become a term that contains a plethora of creative areas that combine visuals and information. When learners transition to employees, they might find themselves working in a particular area of Graphic Design such as: Branding and Identity, Editorial Design, UX and UI, front-end development, illustration and animation amongst others. All these areas require specific training, and in this unit learners have the opportunity to identify which area in Graphic Design they would like to specialise in to then develop a project that is tailored to it. This is a Unit that would benefit from group work, where each learner can focus on their area of specialisation to work towards a larger project.

Since the unit will be learner-driven, it is essential that learners pinpoint specialist software and training that they will require to produce their open project, and state how they plan to acquire this knowledge through a proposal.

This unit can potentially be combined with other Units, such as 'Spatial Graphics', where the learners can create a site-specific project. The word 'open' is key to this unit as it should allow learners to creatively interpret the design brief rather than dictate specifics.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit the learner will be able to:

1. *Identify a number of creative graphic design projects in a specific area of interest.*
2. *Develop a proposal for a creative graphic design open project.*
3. *Produce creative material using specialist skills in a graphic design open project.*
4. *Present and evaluate own graphic design open project.*