



Module Specification

Design Contexts

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Part 1: Information

Module title: Design Contexts

Module code: UA1B9S-30-1

Level: Level 4

For implementation from: 2025-26

UWE credit rating: 30

ECTS credit rating: 15

College: College of Arts, Technology and Environment

School: CATE School of Arts

Partner institutions: None

Field: Visual Culture

Module type: Module

Pre-requisites: None

Excluded combinations: None

Co-requisites: None

Continuing professional development: No

Professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements: None

Part 2: Description

Overview: The Design Contexts module is a shared Design Cluster module that introduces students to the subject of design and a suite of different cross discipline design methods. The module supports students to think about design holistically and understand the broader remit of design as well as its application and methods in specific design disciplines. The ideas of fun, play, visit, location, collaboration and reflection are used as learning experiences to explore interdisciplinary methods of working, contexts for design, communication, group dynamics, collaboration, co-

creation, and reflection. The module celebrates the human relationship between creator and user, designer and client, and encourages the exploration of novel and playful methodologies via unexpected collaborations and combinations.

Features: Not applicable

Educational aims: The aim of the Design Contexts module is to provide students with an introduction to the wider methods of design, emphasising its collaborative, interactive and dialogic nature. Students will learn about design through novel and playful interaction and communication. It will provide students with a deeper understanding of interdisciplinary approaches, creative problem-solving, and the dynamic nature of design practice.

Outline syllabus: The skills instilled through this module will equip learners with transferrable knowledge and experience that are appropriate for a breadth of design based disciplines. Indicative content includes

Design methods

Drawing for design

Writing for design

Research for design

Contextual aspects of design

Critical reflective writing

Team working and collaboration skills

Project and time management skills

Work collaboratively with cross disciplinary tutors and/or students in digital and real-world contexts

Professional ethics and responsibility

Presentation and exhibition of work

Part 3: Teaching and learning methods

Teaching and learning methods: The module is typically delivered via school-based project briefs, design tasks, group critiques, design based workshops, technical workshops, group tutorials, field trips and independent study. Taught

sessions build students skills, knowledge and understanding of different approaches to design methods in interdisciplinary design contexts. Opportunities for students to collaborate beyond the boundaries of their individual programme are embedded within the teaching delivery.

Scheduled face to face learning and teaching may include taught studio sessions, lectures, seminars, group tutorials, workshops, fieldwork, external visits and group project critiques. A combination of in person and online or digital delivery is employed. Independent and self-guided study may include engagement with creative, academic and technical development, visual and textual research, workshop activity and learning via the VLE outside of taught sessions.

Module content may involve research, analysis, experimentation and development, testing, prototyping and presentation of a body of work for a specified context. A central module requirement is the development of reflective design journals, which play a key role in learning, teaching, and assessment. The design journals will capture individual processes, research, ideation, design development, critical reflection, and action planning. The module also encourages an ethical, responsible and sustainable approach to the use and sourcing of materials.

Project briefs are supported by a series of themed workshops to introduce students to a suite of design methods that are essential for design based work. Workshop themes may include Drawing for Design, Writing for Design and Research for Design. Drawing for Design presents drawing as a catalyst for ideas and ways of exploring possibilities, and pushing ideas forward rather than just a final presentation tool. Writing for Design introduces students to the utility of writing and may include editorial and copy writing, reflective writing, annotation, contextual writing, storytelling, visual and written essay and academic referencing. Research for Design focuses on how to record, develop and critically interpret research.

The module also provides a central space where students are onboarded to the facilities and learning resources within the School of Arts, introduced to research ethics and what it might mean to be a student of design at UWE and in the South West.

Teaching methods for this module are dynamic, reflective, process-driven, and designed to foster experimental, innovative and collaborative approaches to design. They support the development of a breadth of research methods, encouraging students to apply and synthesise research across a variety of contexts. Students are supported in developing critical, analytical, creative and evaluative skills through a range of inclusive teaching mechanisms. A focus on communication skills, both visual and verbal, helps students express their ideas clearly in various formats, with access to centrally available UWE Study Skills.

The reading and resource list is designed to be accessible and inclusive, supporting a wide range of learning styles by providing materials across multiple formats and media. The reading list has been designed to amplify a diverse range of critical and creative voices, ensuring representation across multiple perspectives, disciplines and global regions.

The module has been designed on an ethos of guiding students, and provides design skills for students to build on as they progress their learning and in the L5 Design Futures module.

Module Learning outcomes: On successful completion of this module students will achieve the following learning outcomes.

MO1 Explore and develop ideas that lead to new perspectives and approaches.

MO2 Show an understanding of safe working practices and reflect on your ethical responsibilities as a practitioner in your field.

MO3 Demonstrate an understanding and awareness of the benefits of collaborative practice in your field.

MO4 Examine source material to develop informed judgments that go beyond initial reactions.

Hours to be allocated: 300

Contact hours:

Independent study/self-guided study = 228 hours

Face-to-face learning = 72 hours

Reading list: The reading list for this module can be accessed at readinglists.uwe.ac.uk via the following link

Part 4: Assessment

Assessment strategy: In line with the UWE Programme Principles, the module takes a programmatic approach to assessment. Assessment is via Portfolio which includes a collection of related work developed over a period of time which may include aspects of drawing, writing and research, and a strong practical element.

Students will receive regular feedback formatively via midpoint group presentations or open studio exhibition, as well as during group tutorials. This provides students with timely and detailed understanding of their progress and provides clear feed-forward guidance regarding future development.

At Level 4 assessment is via a Pass/ Fail approach. This assessment structure is designed to enable students to achieve and evidence the learning outcomes of the module. Students receive personalised feedback against the module learning outcomes. The module is assessed holistically.

Within the Portfolio submission students are expected to present evidence of work which demonstrates engagement with the minimum number of contact hours for the module, as well as the minimum number of independent study hours. The portfolio of work will evidence personal developmental activities.

Students who do not pass at the first sit will be given a re-sit opportunity. The re-sit assessment requirements will be the same as the first sit.

Assessment tasks:

Portfolio (First Sit)

Description: Portfolio of work

Weighting: 0 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4

Portfolio (Resit)

Description: portfolio of work

Weighting: 0 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4

Part 5: Contributes towards

This module contributes towards the following programmes of study:

Graphic Design [Arnolfini] BA (Hons) 2025-26

Illustration [Bower] BA (Hons) 2025-26

Interior Design [Bower] BA (Hons) 2025-26

Interior Design [Bower] BA (Hons) 2025-26

Fashion Communication [Bower] BA (Hons) 2025-26

Fashion Communication [Bower] BA (Hons) 2025-26

Fashion Textiles [Bower] BA (Hons) 2025-26

Product Design [Bower] BA (Hons) 2025-26

Product Design Technology [Bower] BSc (Hons) 2025-26

Interior Design {Foundation} [Bower] BA (Hons) 2024-25

Illustration {Foundation}[Bower] BA (Hons) 2024-25

Graphic Design {Foundation} [Arnolfini] BA (Hons) 2024-25

Fashion Communication {Foundation} [Bower] BA (Hons) 2024-25

Fashion Textiles {Foundation} [Bower] BA (Hons) 2024-25

