



Module Specification

Design Research Project

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Part 1: Information

Module title: Design Research Project

Module code: UA1B9U-30-3

Level: Level 6

For implementation from: 2027-28

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 module advances students critical thinking skills through analysing appropriate contexts to gain a deeper understanding of a subject and meaningful interpretation in a real-world context. Outcomes for this module can be realised in a variety of forms including still or moving image, practice, sound or writing.

Features: Not applicable

Educational aims: The aim of this module is to facilitate students to connect practical specific work to a deeper analytical, theoretical and contextual backdrop. Through a body of research, the module develops critical and creative thinking skills for areas of specialised interest within design.

Outline syllabus: The syllabus is designed to foster independence and autonomy, and content is developed to guide the breadth and variety of research across programmes within the Design Cluster as it aligns to the specific interests of students. Students are supported in the development of their independent research through tutorials, set tasks and negotiated access to technical resources. The module enables students to become critical, creative and analytical thinkers in ideation and project development with the ability to organise and manage supervised, self-directed projects. Indicative content includes

Negotiated body of independent subject specific research

Theoretical or contextual aspects of design

Critical analysis

Communication of ideas

Project management

Professional ethics and responsibility

Presentation and exhibition of work

Part 3: Teaching and learning methods

Teaching and learning methods: In line with the University Learning and Teaching strategy, this module fosters the development of ready and able graduates who are “ambitious, collaborative, innovative, inclusive and enterprising”.

The module is typically delivered via a school-based brief, workshops, lectures, tutorials and independent study. Taught sessions support students in developing their research ideas, specialist focus and identifying appropriate practice-based, practice-led or practice-informed methodologies. Individual supervision tutorials provide guidance to clarify research aims, appropriate methods and approach. They

support with project planning and management, research and design methods, critical thinking and problem solving, independent study and how to navigate resources. 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.

Teaching methods for this module are dynamic, reflective, process-driven, and designed to foster experimental and innovative approaches to design based research. They support the development of a breadth of research methods, encouraging students to apply and synthesise research across a variety of contexts. 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 to build on design skills and learning outcomes achieved at Level 5. Teaching moves from an ethos of co-creating to fostering independence.

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

MO1 Design an independent research project, producing insights that are informed and imaginative.

MO2 Analyse and evaluate concepts, processes and methods in order to form critical opinions and/or creative solutions.

MO3 Communicate complex ideas with clarity, devising approaches and outputs that are appropriate to your discipline.

MO4 Demonstrate autonomy in planning, managing, and executing projects, demonstrating resilience and resourcefulness in overcoming obstacles.

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: This module takes a programmatic approach to assessment. Formative feedback and summative assessments provide the opportunity for students to understand and reflect upon their achievements and to support the monitoring of progress by tutors and students.

Summative assessment is via Portfolio and recognised as a collection of related work which may include reflective or contextual written work and may include a strong practical element. This assessment type allows students to demonstrate achievement across all the learning outcomes of the module, while providing flexibility to recognise a breadth of design based research approaches, methods, insights and formats. Outcomes for this module can be realised in a variety of forms including still or moving image, practice, sound or writing. Portfolio submission is recognised by 3 options outlined as:

Design Research Projects that are written must meet a word count of 6,000 words.
Design Research Projects that combine writing and practical work must meet a word count of 3000 words supported by an equivalent body of practical work.
Design Research Projects that are practical must contain an equivalent substantial body of practical work.

Formative feedback may include presentation of work in groups, open studio presentation and peer to peer discussion. Students are required to participate in evaluating their peers' work. Additionally, individual project components like design research journals, prototypes, essay or report plans, critical reflections,

communication and presentation will receive formative feedback during one-on-one tutorials with subject specialist tutors. Formative feedback occurs regularly throughout the module to help students track their progress and receive timely guidance for improvement.

The module handbook will provide clear expectations on academic integrity, including guidance on plagiarism and correct referencing. Additional support will be offered through UWE Library Service and UWE Study Support sessions.

At Level 6 numerical marking is utilised. Learning outcomes are assessed via school level assessment rubrics that ensure levels of achievement are clearly articulated and that all students are marked with parity across the student body. Students are assessed holistically. If students do not pass the first attempt, they will be given a resit opportunity. The re-sit assessment requirements will be the same as the first sit.

Assessment tasks:**Portfolio (First Sit)**

Description: Portfolio of work

Weighting: 100 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4

Portfolio (Resit)

Description: Portfolio of work

Weighting: 100 %

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

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