

## Programme specification

*(Notes on how to complete this template are provide in Annexe 3)*

### 1. Overview/ factual information

<b>Programme/award title(s)</b>	Foundation Degree in Graphic Design and Illustration
<b>Teaching Institution</b>	Belfast Metropolitan College
<b>Awarding Institution</b>	The Open University (OU)
<b>Date of first OU validation</b>	28.02.2024
<b>Date of latest OU (re)validation</b>	N/A
<b>Next revalidation</b>	28.02.2028
<b>Credit points for the award</b>	240 points
<b>UCAS Code</b>	
<b>HECoS Code</b>	
<b>LDCS Code (FE Colleges)</b>	
<b>Programme start date and cycle of starts if appropriate.</b>	September 2024
<b>Underpinning QAA subject benchmark(s)</b>	QAA Subject Benchmark Statement (Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies) 2019
<b>Other external and internal reference points used to inform programme outcomes. For apprenticeships, the standard or framework against which it will be delivered.</b>	
<b>Professional/statutory recognition</b>	We are working closely with UsFolk Illustration Agency, Clever Ghost and Stride Design.
<b>For apprenticeships fully or partially integrated Assessment.</b>	
<b>Mode(s) of Study (PT, FT, DL, Mix of DL &amp; Face-to-Face) Apprenticeship</b>	Full time - Face to Face Part time - Face to Face
<b>Duration of the programme for each mode of study</b>	Full time- 2 years Part-time 2.5 years
<b>Dual accreditation (if applicable)</b>	

<b>Date of production/revision of this specification</b>	
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Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the key features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might be expected to achieve and demonstrate if they take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided.

More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content, and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in student module guide(s) and the programme handbook.

The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be verified by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

## 2.1 Educational aims and objectives

The Foundation Degree in Graphic Design & Illustration integrates two distinct subject disciplines into one programme to provide students with a comprehensive skill set and a versatile approach to creative problem-solving. By combining graphic design and illustration, students gain a deeper understanding of visual communication and storytelling, as well as the technical skills needed to bring their ideas to life.

The rationale behind this combination lies in the symbiotic relationship between graphic design and illustration. While graphic design focuses on creating visual solutions for communication purposes, illustration adds a unique artistic flair and narrative dimension to these designs. By studying both disciplines together, students learn to blend conceptual thinking, technical proficiency, and creative expression, enabling them to tackle a wide range of design challenges effectively.

Moreover, the course's emphasis on industry links, live projects, and national competition briefs ensures that students receive practical, real-world experience and exposure to professional practices. This hands-on approach not only enhances their skills but also builds their confidence and professional network, preparing them for successful careers in the competitive design industry.

Upon completion of the programme, graduates have various progression routes available to them, reflecting the diverse career opportunities within the design field. Whether they choose to further their studies or enter the workforce directly, students are equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge, and industry connections to thrive in their chosen path.

*The proposed rationale of the programme is to:*

1. Equip learners with the skills and knowledge relevant to employment in the Design and Creative Industries Sectors. With a focus on graphic design and illustration it will encourage creative versatility, enabling graduates to tackle diverse projects, such as branding, advertising, editorial design, and visual storytelling. The course would align with the needs of the local creative industry, which often requires professionals who possess a combination of graphic design and illustration skills making graduates highly sought-after, increasing their

employment prospects, and contributing to the growth of the creative sector within Northern Ireland.

2. To support the participation of learners from a range of disciplines to equip them with the knowledge and skills to enter employment where data is used to shape organisational growth and sustainability.
3. To provide a sustainable pipeline of new talent for employers currently experiencing skills deficit in the developing area of graphic design and illustration.
4. To provide an opportunity for learners to progress to a range of bachelor's degree (Hons) programmes.
5. To provide an opportunity for learners to experience and apply the knowledge and transferable skills in the workplace.

### **Target Audience:**

The target audience is learners who have recently completed BTEC Level 3 Extended Diplomas, A-Levels or equivalent in the subjects.

These learners may wish to undertake a programme of study that combines graphic design, visual communication, illustration, advertising, photography, UX/UI and motion graphics. The learners will learn all these skills in a subject area that they enjoy.

### **Structure:**

- The FD in Graphic Design & Illustration will be structured in a way that supports transfer of academic knowledge and understanding and that this integrates with and supports the development of, vocational skills and competencies, whilst ensuring academic rigour.
- The structure of the Programme will take account of external reference points such as Frameworks for Higher Educational Qualifications, Professional Body accreditation schemes.
- The programme will ensure that the Work Based Learning (WBL) is relevant and contextualised within the scope of the employer's need in this area to promote and ensure the availability of a pipeline of talent. WBL will also be structured to support the enhancement of relevant transferable skills needed for employment in this sector. Cognisance will also be given to ensuring the Programme is representing opportunities for employment across small and medium sized enterprises and self-employment.
- WBL will be supported to enable learners to take on appropriate role(s) within the workplace, giving them the opportunity to learn and apply the skills and knowledge they have acquired as an integrated element of the course. Whilst WBL will be supported and encouraged through a range of media including part time work, integrated work placements and real work environments, it will be defined clearly within the context where the WBL should lead to the identification and achievement of defined and related learning outcomes for the learner.

- The structure of the FD in Graphic Design & Illustration will have at its core, an integrated approach to demonstration of characteristics that include employer involvement; accessibility; articulation and progression, flexibility, and partnerships with industry.
- The learners will take part in extracurricular competitions/initiatives outside of the classroom including those offered by Royal Opera Houses Annual Design Challenge (Winning in the HE category 2 years running), Sony Photography Awards, D & AD New Blood awards and Creative Conscience Awards.

### Progression Pathways

Belfast Metropolitan College aspires to offer the FD in Graphic Design & Illustration as a route to a bachelor's degree with honours course and would explore the options with OU in Graphic Design/Illustration. Alternatively, it is felt the FD in Graphic Design & Illustration provides learners with options for progression to a range of other providers/courses.

#### At Level 4 learners will undertake six compulsory modules:

- Design Processes
- Principles & Techniques
- Exploring Practices
- Studio Focus
- Past, Present, Purpose
- Creative Pathways

#### At level 5 learners will undertake three compulsory modules:

- Discover & Design
- Advanced Practice
- Industry Connections (WBL)

Upon successful completion of Level 4 and Level 5 modules, students will have attained the award of Foundation Degree (FD).

The programme will prepare learners to work in many creative industries covering a wide range of jobs within the Graphic Design and Illustration sectors.

### 2.4 List of all exit awards

Certificate in Higher Education (Cert HE) upon successful completion of 120 credits at Level 4.

Foundation Degree (FD) upon successful completion of 240 credits at Level 5.

### 3. Programme structure and learning outcomes

*(The structure for any part-time delivery should be presented separately in this section.)*

#### **Programme Structure - LEVEL 4**

<b>Compulsory modules</b>	<b>Credit points</b>	<b>Optional modules</b>	<b>Credit points</b>	<b>Is module compensatable?</b>	<b>Year/Semester runs in</b>
Design Processes	30			No	1/1
Principles & Techniques	15			Yes	1/1
Exploring Practises	15			Yes	1/1
Studio Focus	30			No	1/2
Past, Present, Purpose	15			Yes	1/2
Creative Pathways	15			Yes	1/2

**Intended learning outcomes at Level 4 are listed below:**

<b>Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 4</b>	
<b>3A. Knowledge and understanding</b>	
<b>Learning outcomes:</b>	<b>Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods</b>
<p><b>A1:</b> Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the design development process.</p> <p><b>A2:</b> Define and differentiate key principles and concepts in either graphic design or illustrative practice.</p> <p><b>A3:</b> Define and articulate key principles of design roles.</p> <p><b>A4:</b> Identify and describe key movements and leaders within the industry.</p> <p><b>A5:</b> Demonstrate a range of practical skills through exploration of a range of design techniques.</p>	<p><b>Teaching and Learning Methods</b> Lectures, tutor directed tutorials, supervised practical sessions, workshops, group discussions, critiques, guest lecturers, student led seminars and use of the College’s Virtual Learning Environment.</p> <p><b>Assessment Methods</b> Coursework related to assignments, case studies and projects, open book assessments, presentations, portfolio reviews, practical observation and project reports.</p>
<b>3B. Cognitive skills</b>	
<b>Learning outcomes:</b>	<b>Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods</b>
<p><b>B1:</b> Demonstrate problem-solving abilities in graphic design by identifying opportunities and proposing creative solutions.</p> <p><b>B2:</b> Exhibit proficiency in materials and techniques selection, interpretation, and extension of creative concepts in design projects.</p> <p><b>B3:</b> Apply multimedia design strategies effectively in individual and collaborative projects and provide well-justified project management decisions.</p>	<p><b>Learning and Teaching Methods</b> Lectures, tutor directed tutorials, Project-based learning, Workshops, Collaborative Projects, Guest Speakers, Critiques, Case studies, research, and discussion.</p> <p><b>Assessment Methods:</b> Industry-standard projects, development portfolios, collaborative outcomes, research reports, critiques, presentation, discussions.</p>

<b>3B. Cognitive skills</b>	
<b>B4:</b> Analyse and critically assess the impact of historical events, movements, and theories on contemporary graphic design and illustration.	
<b>3C. Practical and professional skills</b>	
<b>Learning outcomes:</b>	<b>Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods</b>
<p><b>C1:</b> Develop practical skills in executing both traditional and modern art techniques.</p> <p><b>C2:</b> Demonstrate practical/professional skills through presentation of final outcomes.</p> <p><b>C3:</b> Apply critical thinking skills to analyse and evaluate the impact of historical and cultural factors on design practice.</p> <p><b>C4:</b> Design, plan and produce content in a variety of industry contexts.</p>	<p><b>Learning and teaching</b> Practical workshops, application of industry standard materials and software, portfolio development, historical and cultural analysis, industry field trips, design challenges, research, and reflection.</p> <p><b>Assessment Methods:</b> Portfolio Reviews, Design projects, Historical and Cultural Research evidence, industry-led assignments, peer and self-assessment, design brief responses.</p>

3D. Key/transferable skills	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
<p><b>D1:</b> Develop effective written and oral communication and numerical skills including the application of IT.</p> <p><b>D2:</b> Use organisation skills (including task, time management and problem solving) both individually and in groups.</p> <p><b>D3:</b> Develop the ability to self appraise and reflect on practice to improve future performance.</p> <p><b>D4:</b> Demonstrate personal and interpersonal skills such as effective planning, organising, time management and teamwork.</p>	<p><b>Learning and Teaching Methods:</b> Transferable and fundamental skills are delivered throughout the course, i.e., lectures, coursework assignments. The teaching and learning of ICT skills will be within the course structure. Workshops include demonstrations such as ICT skills, PowerPoint and other I.T. applications, presentations, and library research skills. Other learning and teaching methodologies include team teaching, demonstration, and peer learning.</p> <p>Workshops with lecturing staff and visiting professionals will support learners with research, academic writing and referencing throughout the year. Teaching and learning will be contextualised with social, ethical and legal relevance to the industry. Collaboration and communication techniques will be utilised through all learning and teaching activities, group discussions and simulations, project based learning activities, report writing and blended and virtual learning platforms.</p> <p>Over the course of the programme, learners are provided with essential information which they must then research, analyse and interpret. Learners will undertake further independent reading to broaden the understanding of specific problems and design principles. This is designed to stretch and challenge learners and develop their ability at Level 4 as preparation for Level 5. Creative thinking and critical analysis are engendered in every aspect of the programme and will be further fostered and encouraged through lecturer mentoring weekly. Discussion</p>

3D. Key/transferable skills	
	<p>and critiques support the development of problem resolution at a higher intellectual level.</p> <p><b>Assessment Methods:</b> Learners will develop subject knowledge from data examination and enhance their understanding of assessments. Throughout the programme learners will develop digital literacy by completing assessments and presentations using suitable methods.</p> <p>The testing of learner knowledge is principally through coursework assignments, reports, online assessment, experimental reports, and class tests. Assessment of teamwork is through submission of teamwork tasks, student/peer and self assessment and oral presentations.</p> <p>Assessment strategies offer students clear guidance regarding future development. Self reflection and peer evaluation constitute an essential part of formative assessment.</p>

**Exit Award: Certificate in Higher Education in Graphic Design & Illustration (Cert HE)**

<b>Programme Structure - LEVEL 5</b>					
<b>Compulsory modules</b>	<b>Credit points</b>	<b>Optional modules</b>	<b>Credit points</b>	<b>Is module compensatable?</b>	<b>Semester runs in</b>
Discover & Design	40			No	2/1
Advanced Practice	40			No	2/2
Industry Connections (Work Based Learning)	40			No	2/1, 2/2

Intended learning outcomes at Level 5 are listed below:

<b>Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 5</b>	
<b>3A. Knowledge and understanding</b>	
<b>Learning outcomes:</b>	<b>Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods</b>
<p><b>A1:</b> Demonstrate the ability to identify design opportunities and develop problem-solving ideas for design outcomes.</p> <p><b>A2:</b> Understand the concepts and processes of your role in a work-based learning environment and its importance within a collaborative context.</p> <p><b>A3:</b> Undertake advanced practical skills and apply them to industry projects.</p>	<p><b>Learning and Teaching</b> Design challenges, workshops, work-based learning opportunities, practical skills labs, collaborative projects, design process analysis, guest speakers.</p> <p><b>Assessment Methods</b> Design projects, portfolios, work-based learning, practical skills demonstration, industry-related assignments, artist statements and reflections.</p>

<b>3B. Cognitive skills</b>	
<b>Learning outcomes:</b>	<b>Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods</b>
<p><b>B1:</b> Exercise critical thinking in the analysis of a range of appropriate materials, principles and concepts to situations within the project.</p> <p><b>B2:</b> Exercise appropriate judgment in planning, selecting, and presenting information, methods, and sources.</p> <p><b>B3:</b> Develop the ability to critically assess and reflect on own performance and peer feedback, providing constructive feedback where needed.</p>	<p><b>Learning and Teaching Methods:</b> Lectures, seminars, tutorials or practical based activities, independent project work and work-based learning activities. As with Level 4, students will be presented with briefs; however, at Level 5, project-based Learning will move to more complex industry defined problems, forcing the students to develop their critical thinking, creativity and communication skills. At Level 5, WBL will guide the students to develop more critical awareness, enabling students to formulate ideas and confidently research and experiment to strengthen their outcomes.</p> <p><b>Assessment Methods:</b> Research proposals, presentations, portfolio evaluation, design brief responses, peer review, feedback, reflective journals</p>

<b>3C. Practical and professional skills</b>	
<b>Learning outcomes:</b>	<b>Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods</b>
<p><b>C1:</b> Plan, design and execute practical activities using techniques and procedures appropriate to the graphic design and illustration industry.</p> <p><b>C2:</b> Plan, design and create assets using appropriate media and digital formats.</p> <p><b>C3:</b> Employ creative solutions to complete an industry relevant production. Using industry techniques and production workflows.</p>	<p><b>Learning and Teaching</b> Lectures, tutor directed tutorials, student led seminars, supervised practical sessions and self-directed learning employing study packs and use of the College's Virtual Learning Environment. Industry visits to studios and labs.</p> <p><b>Assessment Methods</b> Practical activity assessment, asset creation, portfolio review, presentation, documentation of project development and outcomes.</p>
<b>3D. Key/transferable skills</b>	
<b>Learning outcomes:</b>	<b>Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods</b>
<p><b>D1:</b> Identify key problem areas and choose appropriate tools and methods, applying numeracy and literacy skills, information and data analysis for appropriate solutions.</p> <p><b>D2:</b> Demonstrate personal and interpersonal skills such as the effective planning, organising, management of and responsibility for contributing to the bringing of projects to completion on time either independently or as a team member.</p> <p><b>D3:</b> Evaluate own strengths and weaknesses, challenge received opinion and develop own criteria and judgement.</p>	<p><b>Learning and Teaching Methods:</b> Key/transferable skills will be developed through lectures, seminars and tutorials. This also includes ICT skills, information management, library research skills and preparation for placement activities. All transferable skills apply to theoretical disciplines, practical and work-based activities. Other learning and teaching methodologies include team teaching, demonstration, and peer learning. Learners will be provided with key information which they will research, analyse, and interpret, then seek out further reading where they must independently broaden their understanding of specific problems and creative design principles. The fundamental design of the programme is</p>

3D. Key/transferable skills	
	<p>to stretch learners, develop their skills at Level 5 as preparation for Level 6.</p> <p>Work Based Learning at Level 5 enables students to work in industry (or simulated) contexts, driving them to become effective in their time management, taking responsibility for their work and managing working with others in a professional environment.</p> <p>Creative thinking and critical analysis are applied to all aspects of the programme and will be further fostered and encouraged through lecturer mentoring weekly. Discussion and critiques support the development of problem resolution at a higher intellectual level. At Level 5, students are encouraged to develop their self-reflection and set targets with the tutor, reflecting on feedback and responding to this.</p> <p><b>Assessment Methods:</b> Formative and summative assessments will be shown through coursework submissions, essays, and project reports. Other assessment evidence may be generated using Logbooks / Diary / Digital Diary, Reflective Journals, A/V evidence and completed products, peer and supervisory review/evaluation.</p>



Annexe 1: Curriculum map

Annexe 2: Curriculum mapping against the apprenticeship standard or framework  
(delete if not required.)

Annexe 3: Notes on completing the OU programme specification template

### Annexe 1 - Curriculum map **A6, A7, B5 B6, B7, B8, C5, C6, C7, C8, D5, D6, D7 NOT APPLICABLE**

This table indicates which study units assume responsibility for delivering (shaded) and assessing (✓) programme learning outcomes.

Level	Study module/unit	Programme outcomes																															
		A 1	A 2	A 3	A 4	A 5	A 6	A 7	A 8	B 1	B 2	B 3	B 4	B 5	B 6	B 7	B 8	C 1	C 2	C 3	C 4	C 5	C 6	C 7	C 8	D 1	D 2	D 3	D 4	D 5	D 6	D 7	
4	Design Processes	✓				✓				✓								✓			✓					✓		✓					
	Principles & Techniques		✓			✓				✓								✓			✓					✓	✓		✓				
	Exploring Practices					✓				✓	✓							✓	✓									✓					
	Studio Focus			✓						✓		✓										✓				✓		✓	✓				
	Past, Present, Purpose				✓									✓							✓	✓					✓			✓			
	Creative Pathways		✓											✓						✓							✓	✓		✓			

Level	Study module/unit	Programme outcomes																														
		A 1	A 2	A 3	A 4	A 5	A 6	A 7	A 8	B 1	B 2	B 3	B 4	B 5	B 6	B 7	B 8	C 1	C 2	C 3	C 4	C 5	C 6	C 7	C 8	D 1	D 2	D 3	D 4	D 5	D 6	D 7
5	Discover & Design	✓								✓	✓							✓	✓	✓								✓	✓			
	Advanced Practice	✓		✓						✓	✓		✓					✓	✓							✓	✓					
	Industry Connections (Work Based Learning)	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓	✓						✓	✓	✓						✓	✓	✓				

## Annexe 2: Notes on completing programme specification templates

- 1 - This programme specification should be mapped against the learning outcomes detailed in module specifications.
- 2 – The expectations regarding student achievement and attributes described by the learning outcome in section 3 must be appropriate to the level of the award within the **QAA frameworks for HE qualifications**: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/Pages/default.aspx>
- 3 – Learning outcomes must also reflect the detailed statements of graduate attributes set out in **QAA subject benchmark statements** that are relevant to the programme/award: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/subject-guidance/Pages/Subject-benchmark-statements.aspx>
- 4 – In section 3, the learning and teaching methods deployed should enable the achievement of the full range of intended learning outcomes. Similarly, the choice of assessment methods in section 3 should enable students to demonstrate the achievement of related learning outcomes. Overall, assessment should cover the full range of learning outcomes.
- 5 - Where the programme contains validated **exit awards** (e.g., CertHE, DipHE, PGDip), learning outcomes must be clearly specified for each award.
- 6 - For programmes with distinctive study **routes or pathways** the specific rationale and learning outcomes for each route must be provided.
- 7 – Validated programmes delivered in **languages other than English** must have programme specifications both in English and the language of delivery.