University of Plymouth

Faculty of Arts and Humanities

School of Art, Design and Architecture

Programme Specification

Award Title(s)

BA/BSc (Hons) Digital Media Design

Amended by Minor Change: 4/1/2019

1. BSc/BA (Hons) Digital Media Design

Final award titles:
BA/BSc Digital Media Design (Interaction Design)
BA/BSc Digital Media Design (Information Design)
BA/BSc Digital Media Design (Game Design)
BA/BSc Digital Media Design (Live Media Design)

UCAS code: W283/W284
JACS code: W283/W284

2. Awarding Institution: University of Plymouth

Teaching institution(s): University of Plymouth

3. Accrediting body(ies) N/A

4. Distinctive Features of the Programme and the Student Experience

BA/BSc (Hons) Digital Media Design is an innovative hybrid media design course. Students engage in a wide range of creative technology areas that ultimately enable them to design and build innovative digital media products and experiences for both the cultural and applied industries.

Since its inception in 1992 the programme has tracked and anticipated the evolution of a volatile digital media industry. This evolution has transformed traditional media industries, such as publishing and broadcasting, and nurtured the emergence of new market places and networked cultural forms.

From its early engagement with the World Wide Web and desktop 'multimedia', the programme is now critically and practically engaged with the next generation of internet and mobile technologies, pervasive media, imaging and gaming technologies, physical computing and the 'Internet of Things'.

The programme engages students through the creative use of digital technologies to develop innovative and critical forms of interactive media through four named Awards that reflect future career paths:

- Interaction Design: embraces the evolution of computing away from the screen into the physical realm of place and space. As such it now encompasses the Internet of Things and Physical Computing.

- Information Design: engages skills and practices that focus on the manifestation of information, visualisation, sonification and simulation. It engages with a range of cutting edge imaging technologies and processes used for the manifestation of micro, macro, material, immaterial and imaginary worlds.

- Game Design: Historically students on the Digital Media Design Programme have excelled in this field, both in terms of developing for game platforms, such as PlayStation, Nintendo, mobile phones and the web, but also through non standard gaming platforms, novel physical interactions and installations.

- Live Media Design: addresses animation, screen and audio-visual media from the emerging context of live, immersive and pervasive 2D and 3D audio-visual media and performance.

Digital Media Design is an excellent example of how a trans-disciplinary approach to higher education can provide a framework for learning, research and enterprise. The programme develops students who are able to operate at the technical depth that new forms of software development demand, and do so with a creative insight that allows them to generate innovative solutions and opportunities to apply them. Sometimes very artistic, other times very industrially orientated, the work of students and graduates has always been imaginative and thought provoking.

The Programme actively engages with future technologies through its Emergent Technology Labs and ‘open innovation’ workshops. In addition, it has a rich interaction with industry through its test-bed of ‘Special Operations’ projects that beta test the latest technologies and collaboratively prototype future scenarios.

Digital Media Design is partnered and sponsored by leading players in the Digital Media Industry, such as IBM through the IBM Smart Planet Lab and Sony Professional Broadcasting, as well as rich interactions through the Industrial Placement year.

Digital Media Design allows students to explore the most contemporary evolution of digital technologies and their applications, such as ‘Social Media’, the ‘Internet of Things’, augmented reality, virtual worlds, wearables and physical computing.

Consequently, the programme has a strong ‘network’ ethos that runs through its use of technology, its underpinning with contemporary cultural theory and a practical application to relationships with industry and the extended social network of students.

The programme has developed a strong design and production ethos to enhance student creative and technical practice that embraces ‘participatory’, ‘user centric’ and more classical HCI design methodologies and strategies.

Embedded throughout the programme is a critical theoretical framework that sees technology as an agent of innovation for social and cultural change.

The Programme benefits from cutting edge interaction, information and game design facilities, such as streaming media servers, mobile labs, Full Dome Immersive Vision Theatre and access to scientific imaging technologies such as atomic force and scanning electron microscopy.

The optional placement year in this four-year programme remains an exceptional opportunity for students to work in an industrial context in which a host of technical and creative skills are acquired, as well as the professional and personal developments that are made through working on ‘real’ projects in ‘real’ teams.

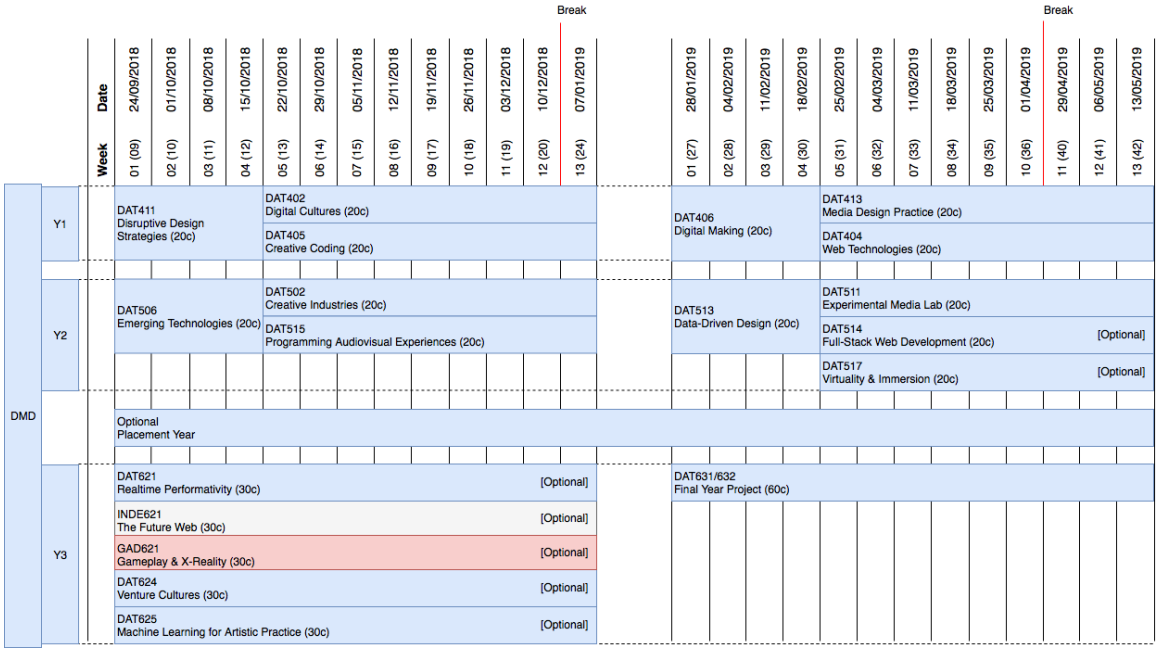
The Programme has had significant history of success with supporting the formation of graduate companies and graduate employment within the broad field of Digital Media Design.

The Digital Media Design Programme’s teaching and learning activities are informed by a strong integration with a world-class community of research-active staff and visiting practitioners and researchers.

5. Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Group(s)

In order to achieve a complete and coherent approach across the broad range of themes and to embrace the inter/trans-disciplinary nature of Digital Media Design, the Computing QAA Benchmarks have been extended to include relevant Benchmarks from Art and Design and Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies. The programme has also been developed with reference to the SEEC Credit Level Descriptors for Higher Education.

6. Programme Structure



Award Themes:

Four themes have been identified that characterise the activities of the Digital Media Design Programme. Whilst the output of the programme has traditionally engaged with an extremely broad range of activity the following terms have emerged as being both relevant to industry and as an aggregation of the kind of practice that students engage in.

- Interaction Design: The term interaction design has emerged as a complex coalescence of theories, practices and histories following the need to create and shape computationally interactive systems and artefacts for human use. ID has its routes in Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) but has rubbed shoulders with physiology, engineering and electronic communications and more recently product design practices. This is the consequence of the evolution of computing away from the screen into the physical realm of place and space. As such it now encompasses the Internet of Things and Physical Computing.

- Information Design: Information Design embraces skills and practices that focus on the manifestation of information, visualisation, sonification and simulation. Within the context of the Digital Media Design Programme this activity encompasses digital animation, 3D modelling, data mining, real time data visualisation, virtual reality systems, immersive Dome environments and scientific imaging technologies. The theme engages with issues around transdisciplinarity and information literacy. Information Design engages with a range of cutting edge imaging technologies and processes used for the manifestation of micro, macro, material, immaterial and imaginary worlds.

- Game Design: This theme is a pragmatic recognition of an expanding market and application of the other themes. Historically students on the Digital Media Design Programme have excelled in this field. This is both in terms of developing for game platforms, such as PlayStation, Nintendo, mobile phones and the web, but also through non-standard gaming platforms, novel physical interactions and installations. Through relationships with Pervasive Media Studios, Serious Games Institute at Coventry University and numerous alumni and placement companies, we anticipate the Digital Media Design Programme building on its existing reputation through this themed approach.

- Live Media Design: This theme addresses the relationship between media technologies and computing and the historical context of exploration of this relation through the exploration of intermedia through, performative, interactive and live art production that aims to innovate in the production of new contexts and media forms. The increasing relevance of real-time computing to audio-visual media production and performance across a broad range of industries with the emergence and increasing refinement of performance technologies for audio-visual work, in the interactive arts, music, stage and theatre, marketing, museum and animation and film industries. Student engagement with live projection in the immersive vision theatre, pervasive media and augment reality, across festival street projection events such as Animated Exeter and student placements and alumni working in VJ industries all support the increasing relevance of innovation in live and interactive media.

  The Themes serve two functions:
  - To focus and manage student Options and Projects in the Final Stage
  - Provide an explicit point of engagement for industry with the Programme and its graduates.

The Theme structure in the Final Stage of the programme is designed to tutor students on an appropriate selection of module options to best suit their chosen route and award title. This is seen as a process of negotiation that runs on top of the module, Project and Dissertation structure.

Theme Leaders begin this negotiation toward the end of Stage 2 and continue the process through the optional Placement. The DAT201 module, Strategies for Digital Media Design 2 is the main focus of this negotiation and the process is continued by the Regional Placement Tutor. Student then selects their options within the context of the Themes prior to their return for the Final Stage.

Although the majority of the modules in the proposed programme are taken by all students, there is a clear distinction between the BA and BSc routes. There is a

difference in emphasis between the two versions of the programmes - the BSc will have a more technical systems perspective, whereas the BA will have a more significant cultural, creative, artistic and social perspective. In order to reflect this divergence in perspective, assessment criteria vary between the two final year project modules (one for BA and one for BSc). Despite these differences in emphasis, both BA and BSc students are expected to engage fully with all aspects of the degree, including software development, media content creation, user experience design, social aspects and so on. This approach follows the model successfully employed on the Digital Media Design Degree for a number of years.

In line with university recommendations, the years of study contribute to the final degree classification in the following proportions:

- Year 1: 10%
- Year 2: 30%
- Year 3: 60%

7. Programme Aims

The aims of this programme are:

A) Career Skillset: To provide students with a knowledge base and skillset suitable for a career in Internet and web related industries.

B) Research and Industry: To ensure the relevancy of course content through the integration of the research expertise of staff and through links with industry.

C) User-centred design: To sensitise students to the importance of understanding the needs of users and the implications these have for the design of user-centred systems.

D) Culture and Society: To produce graduates with the ability to understand impact (both positive and negative) of networked systems on culture and society.

E) Critical communication: To produce graduates with skills in critical evaluation, logical argument and effective communication.

8. Programme Intended Learning Outcomes

8.1 Knowledge and understanding

On successful completion graduates should have developed:

1. knowledge and understanding of essential facts, concepts, principles and theories relating to computing and computer applications as appropriate to the programme of study.
2. knowledge of the cultural, social, historical, political and contemporary contexts which surround communication design and to promote considered, innovative, original and experimental solutions to communication design problems.
3. awareness of the economic forces which frame the media, cultural and creative industries, and the role of such industries in specific areas of contemporary political and cultural life.
4. an understanding of key production processes and professional practices relevant to media, cultural and communicative industries, and of ways of conceptualising creativity and authorship.
5. an understanding of how narrative structures are capable of conveying a range of opinion, viewpoints and experience.

8.2 Cognitive and intellectual skills

On successful completion graduates should have developed:
1. ability to evaluate and analyse the extent to which a computer-based system meets the criteria defined for its current use and future development.
2. ability to deploy appropriate theory, practices and tools for the specification, design, implementation and evaluation of computer-based systems.
3. ability to engage critically with major thinkers, debates and intellectual paradigms within the field and put them to productive use.
4. ability to evaluate systems in terms of general quality attributes and possible trade-offs presented within the given problem.
5. ability to demonstrate an awareness and appreciation of graphic design as a subject

8.3 Key and transferable skills

On successful completion graduates should have developed the ability to:
1. present succinctly to a range of audiences (orally, electronically or in writing) rational and reasoned arguments that address a given information handling problem or opportunity. This should include assessment of the impact of new technologies.
2. deploy effectively the tools used for the construction and documentation of computer applications, with particular emphasis on understanding the whole process involved in the effective deployment of computers to solve practical problems.
3. initiate, develop and realise distinctive and creative work within various forms of writing or of aural, visual, audio-visual, sound or other electronic media;
4. experiment, as appropriate, with forms, conventions, languages, techniques and practices.

8.4 Employment related skills

On successful completion graduates should have developed:
1. recognition of the professional, moral and ethical issues involved in the exploitation of computer technology and be guided by the adoption of appropriate professional, ethical and legal practices.
2. ability to work as a member of a development team, recognising the different roles within a team and different ways of organising teams.

8.5 Practical skills

On successful completion graduates should have developed:

1. ability to recognise practical constraints and computer-based systems (and this includes computer systems, information systems, embedded systems and distributed systems) in their context: recognise and analyse criteria and specifications appropriate to specific problems, and plan strategies for their solution.
2. ability to recognise any risks or safety aspects that may be involved in the operation of computing equipment within a given context.
3. ability to operate computing equipment effectively, taking into account its logical and physical properties.
4. ability to produce work showing competence in operational aspects of media production technologies, systems, techniques and professional practices.
5. ability to understand how communication problems can be solved through the use of both type and photographic image.
6. the use of typography as a communication tool

9. Admissions Criteria, including APCL, APEL, and DAS arrangements

All applicants must have GCSE (or equivalent) Maths and English at Grade C or above.

Entry Requirements for BA/BSC (Hons) Digital Media Design	
A-level/AS-level	112 points on the UCAS tariff or equivalent, **including** General Studies
BTEC National Diploma/QCF Extended Diploma	**18 Unit BTEC National Diploma/QCF Extended Diploma**: DMM **12 Unit BTEC Diploma:** D*D*
UAL Level 3 Extended Diploma	Merit (120 points)
Access to Higher Education at level 3	Pass a named Access to HE Diploma (e.g. Preferably Art and Design, Humanities or Combined) with at least 33 credits at Merit/Dist.
Welsh Baccalaureate	Awards additional A-level equivalent points, depending on grade (A-E)
Scottish Qualifications Authority	112 points to include 2 Advanced Highers
Irish Leaving Certificate	Irish Highers Grades H2 H2 H3 H3 H3 (112 points) or equivalent
International Baccalaureate	28 overall English & Maths accepted within If overseas and not studying English within IB – MUST have **IELTS**: 6.0 overall with 5.5 in all elements

Proficiency in English	GCSE/IGCSE English Grade C/4 or IELTS 6.0 (5.5 in all elements) or equivalent

10. Progression criteria for Final and Intermediate Awards

- Certificate of Higher Education, 120 credits at Level 4 or above
- Diploma of Higher Education, 240 credits, of which at least 120 are at Level 5 or above
- Ordinary Degree, 320 credits of which 80 are at Level 6 and a further 120 at Level 5 or above

11. Exceptions to Regulations

N/A

12. Transitional Arrangements

N/A

13. Mapping and Appendices:

13.8. ILO's against Modules Mapping

See appendices

13.9. Assessment against Modules Mapping

See appendices

13.10. Skills against Modules Mapping

See appendices