

INSPIRE **WITH** **PLYMOUTH** **UNIVERSITY**

INSPIRING GREAT DESIGN

Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Programme Specification

November 2012

MA DESIGN



Approved by Minor Change 12/11/14

MA Design

Specialist strands/exit awards

MA Design: Design Products

MA Design: Sustainable Futures

MA Design: Spatial Design

MA Design: Maker and Materials

Revised August 2014

Brief description of Programme

MA DESIGN: Approval Documentation: All students wishing to pursue this award would want to develop skills to enhance their employability within the Creative Industries and in particular within the Design sector.

There is one core award – MA Design. It is made up of a number of ‘strands’: Sustainable Futures, Design Products, Maker and Materials and Spatial Design Practice, that the student would apply to and explore from the outset, dependent on personal aims and ambitions. The strands have been developed to reflect the broad nature of Design. What is unique about this award is that it places all these students together in a single learning and research environment so they may learn from each other and gain a broad insight into what Design involves from different but convergent thinking. The four exit awards reflect the broad nature of the design profession and use a range of core modules to embed and deliver the context for designers entering the profession today.

Applicants will be required to apply for the core award or a specific strand/exit award. This would lead to a specified award name as listed above and overviews of these awards are outlined on the following pages.

Distinctive features

The discipline of Design is evolving and responding to rapid commercial and technological advances as well as responding to optimal use of precious resources. We want to be part of a new evolution of design and respond to one of the challenges facing the twenty first century and require an MA course that will allow us to spearhead new opportunities for our students.

The course whilst being distinctive, contemporary and based on our links and experience in industry will offer a very intensive, practice-focused programme not found any where in our region. This practicality enables students to appreciate the functions of the many points of difference and application design has in the professional world. Students will acquire a positive attitude to the applications of new technology (product design now includes service and interaction design) within the

industry and its future markets. The course focuses on skills training and an intellectual underpinning that will enhance the understanding of the task of design and its relationship to business and the professional world.

Students are required to adopt a reflective, analytical and evaluative approach towards design in order to have a greater understanding of the dynamic relationships between design, industry and the public.

There is common taught delivery, where students have the opportunity to collaborate and work in interdisciplinary teams across three core modules before they have an optional strand of the award before the final major, mirroring industry practice early on. Expertise of academic and technical staff will be drawn from:

1. The existing MA Design Team
2. The 3DDesign Subject Area:
(Product Design, Designer Maker and Spatial and Interior Design)
3. Design Culture
4. Technical and digital support in 3DDesign

Students have the opportunity to share experiences, learning with students from every strand of the award as well as study with strand specialist teaching teams. Teaching and technical staff with specific knowledge and experience will contribute as needed: As an example, a student exploring the three core modules, Creative Design Processes, Design and Business and Design Thinking would have experience of working with students and staff from a variety of backgrounds and experience, ensuring a broad understanding of what team working and peer learning might entail for designers.

Entry requirements

Students will normally need a 2.1 honours degree or above or equivalent in a subject relevant to their specialism, however candidates with lower grades will be considered on their individual merits.

Accredited Prior Credited Learning (APCL), i.e. credits achieved from previous study at another institution will also be assessed and acted on in accordance with University/Faculty guidelines and/or rights of progression onto the programme. For example the successful completion of an appropriate **Plymouth University**

International College pathway/qualification will also be assessed and acted on in accordance with University/Faculty guidelines and/or rights of progression onto the programme.

Accredited Prior Experiential Learning (APEL), such as appropriate professional experience and prior experiential learning will be assessed on an individual basis and in accordance with University/Faculty guidelines.

Any application to MA Design would include documentation of the applicants practice and previous educational background, as well as professional expertise, if appropriate. When appropriate, an interview would take place and the team will be looking for a combination of qualities including, evidence of design commitment, a contextual understanding of design and the ability to work consistently at masters level. A good quality BA/BSC or equivalent professional practice experience would be acceptable.

Overseas Applications

Overseas applicants can be accepted through a online portfolio submission, skype interview and are required to have a IELTS's score of 6.5: (PDF guidelines on the website)

Disability

Applicants with disabilities will be considered on the same basis as other applicants. If an offer is made they will then be invited to attend a DAS interview that the Programme Admissions tutor will also attend, to establish their particular needs and support requirements followed by a DAS assessment. It is therefore important that applicants declare any disability prior to interview on the application form. Special interview arrangements will be made if necessary.

N.B. DAS evaluation of individual students by the University specialist unit assesses their needs. The subsequent relevant information is circulated to the teaching team and appropriate technical and provision is made accordingly

Progression routes

Progression to further study at HE level 8 (cycle three) MPHIL PHD is encouraged

for students who have achieved at a high level and who wish to develop critical research through design and enhance their careers.

Programme aims

Typically the student gains a deep and reflective attitude towards the complexity of design practice and develops an individual acumen to design, understanding design can be business facing, enterprising, spirited and innovative.

The programme is intended to enable and encourage students to:

1. Investigate and develop a focus for their specialism of Design study and practice by developing knowledge, competence and confidence through the evaluation and critical analysis of contemporary Design in relation to changing technologies and cultural contexts.
2. Achieve and demonstrate a deep insight and understanding of an area informed by or at the forefront of Design practice through research, critical analysis, discussion, project development and realisation.
3. Engage with a framework of sustained national and international academic debate to develop and demonstrate, a deep understanding of theories, practices and knowledge both relating to existing and/or new Design technologies/thinking.
4. Develop the requisite professional and postgraduate level research, presentation, negotiating and technical skills to work effectively in a professional, business environment and to initiate, coordinate and manage the creation and production of design material, whilst understanding the techniques and practices in and surrounding the Design industry plus the relationship between them.
5. Effectively focus, position and develop their study and practice to achieve a qualification which is appropriate to, and endorsed by, the Design industry; which can enable them to maximise their career opportunities and prospects within their chosen field in the Design industry or, if appropriate, establish a direction for further academic research to MPhil/PhD.

Programme Intended Learning Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for participants to develop and demonstrate the general outcomes listed below. The learning outcomes are referenced to **xxx** Level Descriptors (SEEC, 2010) and adapted for the discipline. These will be contextualised within each participant's coursework.

By the end of the programme, participants will be expected to:

Setting

Identify specific or cross-disciplinary Design contexts, technologies, practices, outputs, ideas and objectives that are at, or informed by the forefront of Design practice and theory, both nationally and internationally

Knowledge and understanding

Develop and demonstrate a deep insight, understanding and knowledge of the identified contexts, technologies, practices, outputs, ideas and objectives through appropriate in-depth modes of research, analysis, critical evaluation and synthesis.

Cognitive skills

Synthesise and distil the understanding and knowledge gained from Design research that relates rationally and effectively to the contexts, technologies, practices, outputs, ideas and objectives.

Performance and practice

Develop and demonstrate professional and effective application and synthesis of relevant technical knowledge and skills.

Personal and enabling skills

Develop and demonstrate the ability to research, investigate, analyse, contextualise and critically evaluate historical and emerging design theories, practices, contexts and outputs through the synthesis of a substantial piece of research.

Teaching, learning and assessment strategies

Modes of Delivery

As students progress through the programme they participate in a sequence of modules that involve a number of different modes of learning. The practice modules and the MA Project are delivered in the form of workshops, self-directed practice, seminars and tutorials. The 'Synthesis' and 'Research' modules are delivered through seminars, tutorials, assignments and self-directed study. Related study visits, individual and group tasks, and studio critiques add to the variety of each student's learning experiences.

Modes of directed and independent learning include:

- Negotiated practice
- Written essays/texts
- Research and practice proposals/presentations
- Small group seminars
- Small group themed workshops (optional)
- Individual tutorials
- Group tutorials
- Group critiques
- Practical workshop demonstrations and H&S introductions
- Field study trips (optional)
- Placements, residencies, commissions etc (optional)
- Use of ILS resources
- Research journals and sketchbooks
- Archive of MA practice and critical writing
- Relevant programme, and university information on student portal

NB: A DAS evaluation of individual students who have declared a disability when applying for the programme is undertaken by the University specialist.

TEACHING, LEARNING & ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES & METHODS

The University's Teaching and Learning Policy states that:

'The primary aim of our collective endeavours is the development of people. Through our teaching and their learning we aim to produce people who have knowledge and understanding and the ability to apply it, and who are equipped with the necessary skills, attitudes and confidence to play a constructive role in society throughout their lives'.

This statement underpins the programme.

Students, as they progress to graduation, will be supported to:

1. Develop a range of post graduate level attributes and skills
2. Plan for and reflect on personal, academic and professional development.
3. Recognise the importance of future employability, as part of the learning experience.

Set out below are the teaching, learning & assessment strategies and methods to be employed by the programme.

Modes of teaching, learning and assessment

The programme includes a sequence of modules that involve a number of different modes of teaching, learning and assessment. The latter are blended and employed to take into account the varied modes of study/practice within the programme from idea generation and creative visualisation to business analysis.

The first four modules are delivered through combinations of self-directed practice/study, lectures/seminars, individual and group tutorials, individual and group seminars/presentations and where appropriate introductory workshops. The latter combinations may be cross-strand or strand-specific depending upon their content and timing within the module. As a general rule, cross-strand sessions take place during the earlier stages of a module in order to address generic themes and for students to develop wider understanding of the contexts of their specialisms. Please note it will be the students' responsibility to take cognisance of, evaluate and assimilate this varied input into their own specialist theory and practice.

The final fifth module, students are required to submit a Major Design Project plus Written Report or a Dissertation. This is delivered primarily through tutorials with a nominated Supervisor appropriate to the student' strand.

Workshops take place at appropriate points in modules in term 1; these workshops introduce all students to a selected range of digital and non-digital processes such as Adobe InDesign and practical machine workshop training etc. These workshops enable students with a creative visualisation focus to broaden and/or refine their skills whilst students that have a business and/or written focus can develop an understanding of other Design activities.

Please note, once introduced to these processes, it is the student's own responsibility to develop the requisite skills to produce their proposals (although technical staff will at certain times be available for technical guidance and troubleshooting). These workshops will be compulsory for students even those who are already proficient or have undertaken inductions to these processes before.

Self-directed study is a substantial part of the programme; students will be expected to take responsibility for their own learning within the framework of the programme structure and defined learning outcomes. In consultation and negotiation with programme teaching staff and in particular their Strand Coordinators, students will determine the direction of their study by establishing a focus to their Design practice, related research, analysis, critical evaluation and synthesis together with related theoretical and contextual written work.

This process of defining a focus and direction of study and establishing appropriate objectives within the timeframe of the programme is a key aspect of postgraduate study, and requires high levels of self-organisation, participation and responsibility.

Student are expected to demonstrate:

1. Commitment to pursuing projects, taking into account relevant deadlines, and taking responsibility of own learning process
2. Active participation within the student group in relation to formal (assessed) projects; constructive feedback during work-in-progress workshops; contributions to informal debate, communication and mutual support
3. A sense of responsibility in the use of equipment.
4. Contribution to the smooth running of the programme.

Individual tutorials take place with the Module Leader/ teacher and/or Strand Coordinator at appropriate formative assessment points during each module, these tutorials evaluate progress and discuss potential areas, developments and directions of further study.

Group tutorials take place with the Module Leader/teacher and/or Strand Coordinator at appropriate formative assessment points in each module. Through group discussion and peer review, these tutorials evaluate students' progress, consider issues and themes that are relevant to all members of the group and highlight potential areas, developments and directions of study. The format of these is dependent upon the nature of the student work being discussed which can include essays, reports, presentations, practical demonstrations and/or the creative visualisation of design outputs depending upon the nature of the student group and the task they are addressing.

Group seminars take place with the Module Leader/teacher and/or Strand Coordinator at appropriate formative assessment points in modules. Through group discussion, student presentations and peer review, these seminars evaluate student's progress, consider issues and themes that are relevant to all members of the group and highlight potential areas and directions of study.

The format of these is dependent upon the nature of the student work being discussed.

Lectures/seminars take place with the Module Leader/teacher and Strand Coordinator during the earlier stages of a range of modules, these Lectures/seminars tend to be presentations on theory and practice delivered primarily by all of the module leaders in order to cover all strands within the module/course. These would usually conclude in a discussion or question and answer session. This diverse but related content accommodates the varied subjects and modes of study/practice within the programme whilst enabling all participants to understand and position their specialism within a broader context with a view to developing links and synergies between specialisms and disciplines.

Assessment

There are two types of assessment. The descriptions below outline how these types of assessment relate to the process of teaching and learning and successfully address the varied modes of study/practice within the programme.

1 Formative assessment & feedback

This is the evaluation of and feedback on student progress, provided by tutors at intervals throughout each module through individual tutorials, group tutorials and seminars. Peer review during Group Seminars and Group Tutorials will also provide feedback on aspects of student progress, including: ideas development, methods and processes, research, presentation and outcomes.

Within most modules formative assessment feedback will be predominantly verbal feedback but may include written feedback on written outputs.

Throughout the programme students will be given regular formative assessment feedback from staff and peers through Group Seminars, Individual and Group Tutorials. It is the student's responsibility to take cognisance of, evaluate and act appropriately on this feedback.

2 Summative assessment & feedback

This evaluation and feedback given at the end of each module, assessing the student's outcome and process against specified criteria, as listed in the Definitive Module Record (DMR) and in the module briefing paper.

Summative assessment feedback will be in the form of written reports via a Personal Development Profile that will be issued within three weeks of module summative assessment submission deadline.

The Summative assessment feedback will be formulated by the appropriate Strand Coordinator that aligns with the student's specialism. The work will be second marked (in order of preference) either by Module Leader or Programme Leader or another Strand Coordinator. This flexibility is required as it is possible that one person may hold all three of the aforementioned roles.

All modules are individually examined and double marked at the final Summative Assessment points. All modules are assessed on the students' understanding of the analytical and critical areas that have been developed within the modules in relation to particular research focus.

Grading

Pass, Merit and Distinction are appropriate bands to reflect student achievement at this level enabling career aspirations and potential.

Mode of Attendance

The programme is offered in full-time and part-time. Full-time students are expected to attend all taught sessions programmed during terms one and two, plus any sessions

organized with their Final Major Project Supervisor during the Summer period. Part-time students can negotiate modes and times of study with the programme leader.

Work experience and or working with an external agency

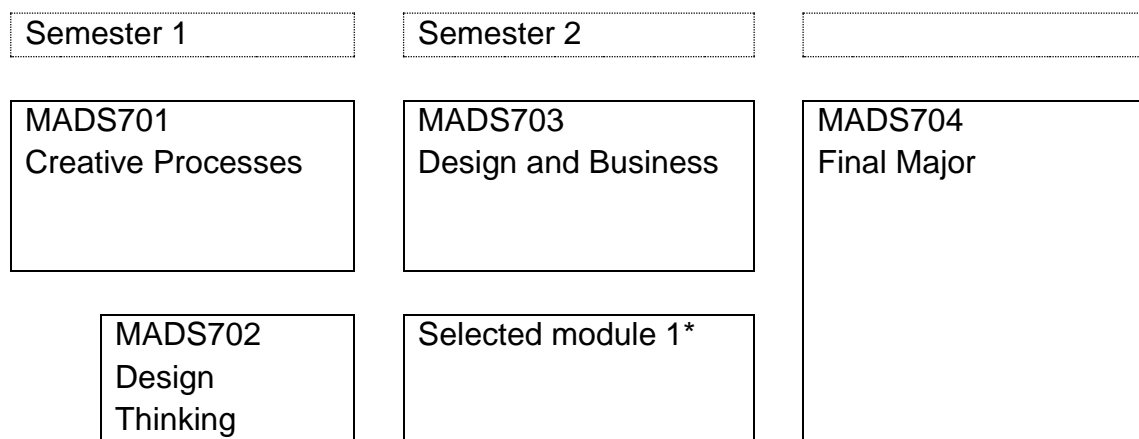
It is anticipated that students will negotiate their own work experience and or collaboration with an outside agency in negotiation with the Module and/or Strand Coordinator. This allows for the student to align the work experience or outside collaboration with their specialism and career ambitions.

Programme structure and pathways

Pathways and structure: MA DESIGN

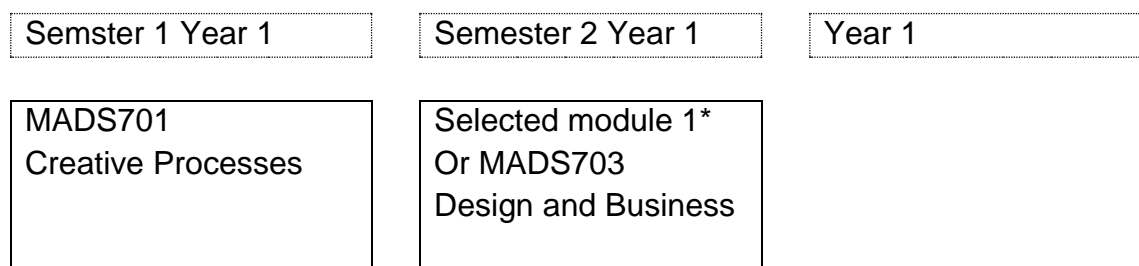
MA DESIGN (in 1 year) Re-validation 2012-2013

September-----January-----April-----
-----August



MA DESIGN (in 2 years)

September-----January-----April-----
-----August



or

MADS702
Design Thinking

September-----January-----April-----
-----August

Semester 1 Year 2

Semester 2 Year 2

Year 2

MADS701
Creative Processes

Selected module 1*
Or MADS703
Design and Business

MADS704
Final Major

or

MADS702
Design Thinking

MA DESIGN

Selected modules* relate to subject specific exit awards.

MA Design: Design Products	MADS705 Designers Eye
MA Design: Spatial Design Practice	MADS706 Space Typologies
MA Design: Maker and Materials	MADS707 Maker Contexts
MA Design: Sustainable Futures	MADS708 Sustainable Futures

Brief Descriptions:

MADS701: Creative Processes: This will provide students with an understanding and appreciation of creative design processes that puts 'users' at the centre of design.

MADS702: Design Thinking: This module explores both historical and contemporary critical contexts of Design research, with an emphasis on the way Design is described and shaped.

MADS703: Design and Business: This module involves different types of projects, stakeholder management, team working, personal learning and problem solving, but more importantly using business as a creative design tool.

MADS: Selected Modules 1*

MADS705 Designers Eye: This enhances the more traditional product design language with a deeper understanding of Design Culture, Environmental and Social issues that help us assess and recognise quality design, and develop a personal 'point of view'.

MADS706 Space Topologies: The module develops advanced methods of spatial practice for designing innovative & contemporary environments

MADS707 Maker Contexts: Based on a negotiated studio project, this module focuses on issues around external contexts and increased development of your professional practice and profile.

MADS708 Sustainable Futures: This module will allow students to explore ideas and materials that forward sustainability concerns and ethical issues.

Exceptions/ special academic regulations

None

Final award title	MA Design MA Design: <i>Design Products</i> MA Design: <i>Spatial Design Practice</i> MA Design: <i>Maker and Materials</i> MA Design: <i>Sustainable Futures</i>
Level 7; MA DESIGN	Level 7 MA
Intermediate award title(s)	PG Cert in Design PG Dip in Design
Level 7	
Awarding institution	Plymouth University
Teaching institution	Plymouth University
Accrediting body	Not applicable
Appropriate benchmark(s)	QAA M-Level Graduate Level Skills & Attributes
UCAS code	UCAS : TBC
JACS code	JACS code TBC (re last validation)

Appendix:

Mapping of intended programme learning outcomes

Mapping document showing intended programme outcomes at each level of the award linked to the SEEC level descriptors (2010), the FHEQ, subject benchmarks and the core modules where these are primarily demonstrated. This is needed for approval and programme modifications, but is not normally included in the programme specification itself.

Date of production: October 17th 2012/December 2012 (re-submission)

Date of most recent approval: November 2012- December 2012 (re-submission)

By (e.g. Approval Panel/ Faculty Board):