



Programme Handbook *[Validated]*

Faculty of Art & Design

Rhein-Sieg Institute of Arts & Design (RSIAD)

Validated by Middlesex University, London, UK

MA Graphic & Communication Design 2026/2027

Master of Arts (MA) Graphic & Communication Design

Programme Leader: Klaus Honemann

Institutional Link Tutor: Tobias Lingen

Middlesex Link Tutor: Peter Fribbins

Student Name: _____

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Introduction

Your Programme Handbook

The purpose of this Handbook is to introduce you to your programme of study and to direct you to other general information about studying at Rhein-Sieg Institute of Arts & Design and Middlesex University. The material in this document is as accurate as possible at the date of production; however, you will be informed of any major changes in a timely manner. Your comments on any improvements to this handbook are welcome. Please put them in writing (an email will suffice) with the name of the Programme Handbook to

Klaus Honemann – Honemann@rsak.de

Information in Alternative Formats

This handbook can be found online at: **<https://rsiad.de/programmes/ma-graphic-communication-design/>**

If you have a disability which makes navigating the website difficult and you would like to receive information in an alternative format, please contact

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We can supply sections from this publication as:

- a Word document with enlarged type — sent by email or supplied on a CD or memory stick
- printed copy with enlarged type
- printed copy on non-white paper

Other formats (such as Braille or specialist accessible formats) can be arranged on request. We will do our best to respond promptly. To help us, please be as specific as you can about the information you require and include details of your disability.

The University Regulations

As a student enrolled on a programme validated by Middlesex University, you are subject to the University's academic regulations. These regulations set out the framework for assessment, progression, academic integrity and student conduct.

Your programme is delivered at the Rhein-Sieg Institute of Arts & Design (RSIAD), and in some areas, locally approved procedures are applied in alignment with Middlesex University regulations. This includes processes such as academic misconduct, appeals and extenuating circumstances.

You are therefore expected to familiarise yourself with both this Programme Handbook and the relevant regulations and procedures.

The Middlesex University Regulations are available online at:

<https://www.mdx.ac.uk/about-us/policies> (scroll to “University Regulations”)

The RSIAD Academic Regulations can be accessed at: ***<https://rsiad.de/programmes/ma-graphic-communication-design/>***

If you are unsure which regulations or procedures apply in a specific situation, please contact your Programme Leader or Institutional Link Tutor for guidance.

Welcome to MA Graphic & Communication Design

Welcome to the MA Graphic & Communication Design at the Rhein-Sieg Institute of Arts & Design (RSIAD), a postgraduate programme validated by Middlesex University.

This programme has been designed for ambitious creatives who wish to deepen their design practice, strengthen their conceptual thinking, and develop an individual voice within the field of contemporary visual communication.

You will engage with design as both a professional discipline and a cultural force. Through studio practice, critical inquiry and research-informed learning, you will explore how communication design responds to social, technological and aesthetic change.

Throughout your studies, you will be encouraged to experiment, challenge assumptions, refine your methods and produce work of a professional and intellectually rigorous standard.

We are delighted to welcome you to the programme and look forward to supporting your academic and creative development.

Introduction to Rhein-Sieg Institute of Arts & Design

The Rhein-Sieg Institute of Arts & Design (RSIAD) is a specialised higher education provider dedicated to excellence in art, design and creative practice.

Building on the long-standing educational experience of the Rhein-Sieg-Akademie Kunstkolleg, RSIAD combines established expertise in creative education with a contemporary academic framework focused on innovation, critical inquiry and professional relevance.

Recent developments include the expansion of validated higher education provision in partnership with Middlesex University, enabling students to study internationally recognised postgraduate programmes within a focused and supportive creative environment.

RSIAD provides a learning culture in which artistic experimentation, design thinking and academic reflection are closely connected. Students benefit from studio-based learning, small group teaching, close academic support and direct engagement with experienced practitioners.

The institute is committed to continuous enhancement of the student experience and values student feedback as an important part of programme development and institutional improvement. Students are encouraged to share their views through formal feedback opportunities as well as ongoing dialogue with staff.

RSIAD's mission is to develop independent, critically engaged and professionally capable graduates who can contribute meaningfully to the creative industries and wider society.

If you require academic guidance or personal support during your studies, your first point of contact will usually be your Programme Leader, module tutors or the relevant student support team.

Welcome from your Programme Leader



Graphic Design and Communication Design are no longer simply a service, but a form of intervention. In a time of visual overproduction, images often lose their meaning. This is where design begins: not as decoration, but as a practice that questions, challenges, and reorders.

I am less concerned with whether something is “well designed,” and more with whether it says something—whether it takes a position, whether it matters.

In working with our students, I emphasise a simple point: products and services rarely need better explanation, but a narrative.

Design that resembles an instruction manual risks becoming interchangeable.

This programme is not about learning to design things “correctly,” but about developing a position. Students shape their own design voice - precise, reflective, and independent.

We work closely with them to form their individual creative trajectory - their path, their perspective, their authorship in design.

Teaching is understood as a shared process, in the sense of *primus inter pares*: demanding, open, and collaborative.

The standard is high - not out of exclusivity, but necessity.

If you see design as a means of refinement, this may not be the right place. If you understand design as a way to create meaning and take responsibility, then we should talk.

Klaus Honemann

Programme Leader

MA Graphic & Communication Design

Honemann@rsak.de



Welcome from your Link Tutor

As Managing Director and Institutional Link Tutor, I work closely with Middlesex University and with the programme team to help ensure that the academic quality, standards and student experience of the programme are maintained and continuously enhanced.

You are joining a collaborative academic environment that combines the strengths of a specialised creative institution with the academic framework of an internationally recognised UK university. This provides you with the opportunity to develop your practice within a focused and supportive setting while working towards a respected postgraduate qualification.

We value student engagement, open communication and constructive feedback. If you have questions, suggestions or concerns during your studies, you are encouraged to speak with the programme team or contact us directly.

I wish you every success and an inspiring, productive and rewarding time on the programme.

Tobias Lingen

Managing Director & Institutional Link Tutor

Rhein-Sieg Institute of Arts & Design (RSIAD)

Introduction to Middlesex University

Middlesex University is an established UK university with a strong international profile and a long-standing commitment to academic excellence, professional practice and student success.

The MA Graphic & Communication Design is delivered by the Rhein-Sieg Institute of Arts & Design (RSIAD) and validated by Middlesex University. As a student on this programme, you are therefore part of both institutions. You will study within the specialist creative environment of RSIAD while working towards a degree awarded by Middlesex University.

This collaborative model combines the benefits of close academic support, specialist teaching and studio-based learning at RSIAD with the academic standards, quality assurance framework and international recognition of Middlesex University.

As a student on a Middlesex University validated programme, you are entitled to receive a high-quality learning experience aligned with UK higher education standards, fair and transparent academic procedures, and access to the support, governance and quality assurance arrangements applicable to collaborative provision.

The academic regulations for your programme are based on the framework of Middlesex University regulations and are implemented through RSIAD Academic Regulations and procedures approved for this collaborative partnership. These regulations cover areas including assessment, progression, academic integrity, appeals, complaints, deferrals and extenuating circumstances.

You are expected to familiarise yourself with both this Programme Handbook and the applicable academic regulations. Further details and links are provided in the relevant sections of this handbook.

The partnership between RSIAD and Middlesex University is governed through a formal Memorandum of Cooperation, which defines the responsibilities of both institutions and helps ensure that the programme is delivered to the required academic standards.

All validated programmes are aligned with the expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, published by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). This framework supports the quality, standards and continuous enhancement of the student learning experience.

If you require advice regarding regulations, procedures or your student experience, you may contact your Programme Leader, Institutional Link Tutor or the relevant student support team.

The Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC)

This is the formal agreement between Middlesex University and Rhein-Sieg Institute of Arts & Design (RSIAD) on the delivery of the Programme. The Memorandum, among other things, sets out the responsibilities of both Rhein-Sieg Institute of Arts & Design (RSIAD) and Middlesex University. In brief these include:

Responsibilities of RSIAD

RSIAD is responsible for the day-to-day delivery of the programme, including:

- teaching, learning and assessment delivery
- academic guidance and student support
- student administration and local communications
- provision of learning resources, studios, facilities and digital systems
- organisation of timetabling and operational programme management
- first-stage handling of student concerns, complaints and support matters
- implementation of approved academic regulations and procedures

Responsibilities of Middlesex University

Middlesex University is responsible for oversight of academic standards and quality assurance, including:

- validation and approval of the programme
- ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programme quality
- oversight of academic regulations applying to the award
- appointment and engagement of External Examiners
- confirmation of assessment outcomes and award of the final qualification
- participation of Middlesex representatives, including the Link Tutor, in relevant governance processes and Boards of Study (or equivalent meetings)
- operation of final-stage appeals or complaints procedures where applicable under partnership arrangements

Shared Responsibilities

Both institutions work collaboratively to ensure:

- a positive student learning experience
- effective student feedback and representation mechanisms
- fair, transparent and timely academic processes
- continuous enhancement of teaching, learning and student support
- compliance with UK higher education quality expectations

Through this cooperative framework, students benefit from studying within a specialised creative institution while working towards a degree awarded by Middlesex University.

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) UK Quality Code

The Office for Students (OfS) is the statutory regulator of higher education in England, working in the interests of students and prospective students from all backgrounds. The QAA produce the UK Quality Code which outlines the key expectations placed on all UK Higher Education providers. There is specific guidance on how institutions should manage partnership arrangements, such as the programme you are now enrolled on. Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) UK Quality Code, Advice and Guidance: Partnerships.

To ensure the high standards and quality of Middlesex University provision, all programmes are subject to the University's academic quality assurance procedures (which include procedures related to programme approval, monitoring and review). A key feature of these processes is the input from external subject experts (external examiners) who ensure that Middlesex awards are comparable to those of other UK higher education institutions, and that the programme curriculum, teaching, assessment and resources are appropriate. You also have a very important role in enhancing our programmes by feeding back on a regular basis via student surveys, Programme Voice Groups and other formal and informal mechanisms. Your feedback plays a major role in programme monitoring and review.

You can also learn more about Quality Assurance at: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code>
You can learn about what the OfS does for students at:
<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-students/>

The Student Protection Plan

The Student Protection Plan covers an assessment of the range of risks to the continuation of study for our students, and the measures put in place to mitigate those risks, arrangements for refund and compensation. Full details of the Student Protection Plan are available [Student Protection Plan](#)

Academic Calendar

The academic year is structured across two semesters, with teaching normally scheduled on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This timetable structure is designed to support focused study, independent practice and an effective balance between academic commitments and personal or professional responsibilities.

Teaching generally follows the published holiday periods of schools in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW). Weekends are normally free of scheduled teaching.

From time to time, additional academic activities may be arranged outside the regular teaching pattern. These may include guest lectures, workshops, tutorials, critiques, study visits, exhibitions, online sessions or other programme-related events. Students will be notified in advance wherever possible.

Detailed timetables, module schedules and updates will be communicated through official programme channels and the student learning platform.

Period	Dates	Activity
Semester 1 Begins	1 September 2026	Start of teaching
Winter Holiday Period	In line with NRW school holidays	Vacation period
Assessment Point 1	26 January 2027	Semester 1 submissions / presentations
Semester 2 Begins	1 February 2027	Start of teaching
Spring Holiday Period	In line with NRW school holidays	Vacation period
Assessment Point 2	13 July 2027	Semester 2 submissions / presentations
Summer Break	Late July – August 2027	Vacation period

Teaching Pattern

Teaching sessions are normally scheduled on:

- Tuesdays
- Thursdays

Independent study, project development, tutorials and research activity take place throughout the week as required.

Student Representation & Feedback

Activity	Date
Programme Voice Group 1	3 November 2026
Programme Voice Group 2	4 May 2027
End of Year Student Survey	July 2027

Future Academic Calendars

Academic calendars for subsequent academic years will normally be published before the end of the preceding academic year via the student learning platform and official programme communications. Any updates or amendments will be communicated to students in a timely manner.

Part One: Programme Details

Your Programme Team

The MA Graphic & Communication Design is supported by a team of academic staff, practitioners and professional services colleagues who work together to provide a high-quality student experience.

Students are encouraged to contact the appropriate member of staff for academic guidance, administrative support or general enquiries.

Staff Name	Photo	Contact Details	Teaching Modules	Role Description
Klaus Honemann		Honemann@rsak.de	Creative Strategies, Ideation & Concept Development	Programme Leader, Lecturer
Catherine Lubbers		Lubbers@rsak.de	Advanced Visual Communication & Design Systems	Lecturer
Sven Krentz		Krentz@rsak.de	Business Skills in Design	Lecturer

Staff Name	Photo	Contact Details	Teaching Modules	Role Description
Gregor Tamm		Tamm@rsak.de	Research and Critical Studies	Lecturer
Johanna Schlenk		Schlenk@rsak.de	Professional Practice, Industry Collaboration and Mentoring	Lecturer
Francesca Mailandt		Mailandt@rsak.de	Experimental & Emerging Practices	Lecturer
Ronald Meier		Meier@rsak.de	Major Project / Master's Thesis (optionally industry-linked)	Lecturer
Tobias Lingen		Lingen@rsak.de		Managing Director & Link Tutor

Staff Name	Photo	Contact Details	Teaching Modules	Role Description
Sabine Frommel		Frommel@rsak.de		Student Administration
Anja Dósa		Dosa@rsak.de		Student Administration

Link Tutor role description

As stated on the front of this handbook the Link Tutor at RSIAD for this programme Tobias Lingen (Lingen@rsak.de) and the Link Tutor at Middlesex is Prof. Peter Fribbins (P.Fribbins@mdx.ac.uk). Both tutors are jointly responsible for ensuring the programme is delivered according to the arrangements agreed when it was approved. Both link tutors attend the Programme Voice Group where they hear the views of students on the programme, however you can contact either if you have a query or suggestion.

Your Programme

The MA Graphic & Communication Design is a postgraduate programme for ambitious creatives who wish to advance their professional practice, deepen their conceptual thinking and develop an individual voice within the contemporary design landscape.

Graphic and communication design today extends far beyond the production of visual outputs. Designers are increasingly expected to think strategically, respond critically to social and technological change, and create meaningful communication across physical, digital and hybrid platforms.

This programme enables students to explore design as both a professional discipline and a cultural practice. Through advanced studio work, research-informed learning and critical reflection, students develop the skills required to lead, innovate and contribute meaningfully within the creative industries.

The programme is delivered by the Rhein-Sieg Institute of Arts & Design (RSIAD) and validated by Middlesex University.

Importance and Relevance

The creative industries continue to demand designers who can combine conceptual depth, technical capability and professional adaptability.

Graduates of this programme may pursue opportunities in areas including:

- branding and identity design
- editorial and publication design
- digital communication
- creative direction
- design consultancy
- strategic communication
- independent studio practice

- entrepreneurship within the creative sector

Key Features / Unique Selling Points

Students benefit from:

- small cohort teaching and close academic support
- studio-based learning environment
- direct contact with experienced practitioners
- strong emphasis on portfolio development
- integration of theory and professional practice
- internationally recognised UK Master's qualification
- flexible study routes for different student needs
- focus on independent creative identity and authorship

Local and International Context

The programme is delivered in Germany within a European creative and cultural context, while aligned with recognised UK higher education standards through validation by Middlesex University.

This enables students to benefit from local accessibility together with international academic recognition.

Programme Structure

The MA Graphic & Communication Design is available in two approved modes of study:

- 18 months full-time (on campus)
- 24 months part-time (online)

Both routes are designed to achieve the same learning outcomes and award standard.

The programme combines taught modules, supervised project development, independent practice and advanced critical inquiry.

Typical components include:

- advanced design studio practice

- research methods
- critical and contextual studies
- professional practice
- major project / final portfolio

A detailed module structure is provided in the Programme Specification and Module Handbooks.

Detailed timetables are published via the student learning platform.

Learning, Teaching and Student Engagement

Teaching methods may include:

- studio teaching
- seminars
- workshops
- critiques
- tutorials
- presentations
- collaborative projects
- guided independent study
- online learning activities where appropriate

Students are active participants in the learning process and are expected to engage critically, contribute to discussions and respond constructively to feedback.

Opportunities for student engagement include:

- tutorials and formative feedback
- student surveys
- Programme Voice Groups
- informal dialogue with staff
- exhibitions and presentations

Assessment and Feedback

Assessment methods may include:

- practical design projects
- portfolios
- presentations
- written assignments
- reflective statements
- research projects
- final major project outcomes

Assessment briefs, submission requirements and marking criteria are provided within each module. Students receive timely feedback designed to support academic progress and professional development.

Attendance and Engagement

Regular attendance and active engagement are essential to academic success. Students are expected to attend all scheduled teaching sessions, tutorials, assessments and required academic activities unless prevented by approved circumstances.

Attendance is monitored in accordance with institutional policy. Persistent non-engagement may affect academic progression.

Employability and Career Development

The programme is designed to enhance graduate employability through:

- portfolio development
- professional presentation skills
- industry-standard project workflows
- critical communication skills
- self-directed practice
- entrepreneurship and freelance readiness

- career planning guidance

Students may also receive advice regarding employment pathways, postgraduate opportunities and professional development.

Internships, Live Projects and Professional Practice

Professional engagement is supported through the Professional Practice module, which may include live briefs, client-based projects, industry dialogue, portfolio mentoring and professional development activities.

Where appropriate, students may also pursue independent internships, collaborations or external professional opportunities.

Tuition Fees and Payment Options

Tuition fees for the MA Graphic & Communication Design are:

- Full-time (18 months, on campus): €650 per month
- Part-time (24 months, online): €575 per month

Indicative total tuition fees are therefore:

- Full-time: €11,700
- Part-time: €13,800

Tuition fees are normally paid in monthly instalments over the duration of the programme. Students who choose to pay tuition fees in advance may receive a 2% advance payment discount.

Full details of payment arrangements, deadlines and available options will be provided during the admissions and enrolment process.

Fees for future intakes may be subject to review. Applicants and students will be informed in advance of any approved changes.

Additional optional costs may include:

- printing and production costs
- specialist materials
- portfolio presentation costs
- optional software subscriptions
- travel for optional visits or events

Students are encouraged to budget according to their individual working methods.

Transfer Opportunities

The programme is designed as a complete course of study delivered by RSIAD and validated by Middlesex University. Students seeking individual progression or transfer advice should contact the Programme Leader.

Programme Specification

The official Programme Specification for the MA Graphic & Communication Design provides detailed academic information about the programme, including:

- programme aims
- learning outcomes
- module structure
- credit requirements
- curriculum map
- assessment framework
- graduate skills and capabilities

Students are encouraged to consult the Programme Specification alongside this Programme Handbook.

The current approved Programme Specification is available at:

<https://rsiad.de/programmes/ma-graphic-communication-design/>

The Programme Specification referenced is the validated version approved for delivery. Any future amendments will be subject to formal approval processes and communicated to students where relevant.

Teaching and Learning Plans

The MA Graphic & Communication Design is delivered through two approved study modes:

- 18 months full-time (on campus)
- 24 months part-time (online)

Both routes are designed to provide equivalent academic standards, learning outcomes and opportunities for professional and creative development.

Full-Time On-Campus Route

Students studying full-time on campus benefit from face-to-face teaching within a studio-based learning environment. This includes direct interaction with tutors, peer exchange, collaborative learning and regular access to campus facilities and creative resources.

Part-Time Online Route

Students studying part-time online benefit from a flexible delivery model designed to support those balancing study with professional or personal commitments. Online teaching may include live sessions, tutorials, digital critiques, guided independent learning and access to learning resources through the student platform.

Teaching Methods

Teaching and learning activities may include:

- studio practice
- lectures and seminars
- workshops
- critiques
- tutorials
- presentations
- collaborative projects
- research activity
- guided independent study
- online learning activities where appropriate
- Learning Community

The programme aims to create a strong learning community across both modes of study. Students are encouraged to participate actively, share ideas, engage in critical dialogue and contribute to a supportive creative culture.

Independent Learning

At postgraduate level, students are expected to take increasing responsibility for their own learning. Independent research, reflective practice, project development and self-directed study form an essential part of the programme.

Timetabling

Teaching schedules, module delivery details and updates are communicated through official programme communications and the student learning platform.

Your Modules

The MA Graphic & Communication Design is structured through a sequence of compulsory Level 7 modules that progressively develop advanced studio practice, strategic thinking, research capability, professional readiness and independent authorship. All students complete the same academic award requirements, with different sequencing for the full-time and part-time routes.

DES711 – Advanced Visual Communication & Design Systems

15 ECTS / 30 UK Credits

Semester: FT 1 / PT 1

This module develops advanced skills in visual communication and integrated design systems. Students explore how meaning is constructed through typography, image, layout, colour, composition and visual hierarchy across print, digital and cross-platform contexts.

Emphasis is placed on systems thinking, brand worlds, visual identities and coherent communication strategies. Students move beyond isolated artefacts towards integrated design solutions that respond to defined audiences, contexts and communication goals.

Indicative Learning Outcomes:

Students will be able to:

- develop coherent visual communication systems across multiple formats
- apply advanced principles of typography, layout and hierarchy

- design strategically for specific audiences and contexts
- critically evaluate communication outcomes

Indicative Assessment

- Visual Communication Project
- Reflective Commentary

DES712 – Creative Strategies, Ideation & Concept Development

15 ECTS / 30 UK Credits

Semester: FT 1 / PT 2

This module focuses on creative thinking, concept development and strategic ideation. Students explore methods of idea generation, design thinking, narrative framing and conceptual development, translating abstract ideas into clear and compelling communication concepts.

The module supports the creation of original design strategies that respond to briefs, challenges and speculative scenarios within professional and cultural contexts.

Indicative Learning Outcomes:

Students will be able to:

- generate original communication design concepts
- apply ideation methods to professional design practice
- translate abstract ideas into structured outcomes
- critically evaluate conceptual development processes

Indicative Assessment

- Concept Development Project
- Reflective Process Documentation

DES701 – Business Skills in Design

15 ECTS / 30 UK Credits

Semester: FT 1 / PT 1

This module develops essential business and professional skills for careers in graphic and communication design. It addresses studio, agency, in-house, freelance and independent practice contexts.

Students explore budgeting, pricing, contracts, intellectual property, licensing, client communication, project management and portfolio strategy. The module also supports negotiation, pitching and professional self-presentation.

Indicative Learning Outcomes:

Students will be able to:

- demonstrate understanding of professional, legal and economic frameworks
- apply pricing and licensing strategies to design projects
- develop a professional portfolio strategy
- evaluate different career pathways in the sector

Indicative Assessment

- Professional Practice Portfolio
- Business Case / Simulated Client Project
- Reflective Statement

DES702 – Research and Critical Studies

15 ECTS / 30 UK Credits

Semester: FT 2 / PT 2

This module introduces advanced design research methods and critical frameworks relevant to communication design practice.

Students engage with practice-based research, user research, contextual analysis and critical reflection. Themes may include representation, sustainability, authorship, power structures, media environments and emerging technologies.

Indicative Learning Outcomes:

Students will be able to:

- apply design research methods within practice
- contextualise design work critically and theoretically
- produce a coherent research project
- articulate critical reflection through written and visual discourse

Indicative Assessment

- Practice-Based Research Project
- Written Reflection and Critical Discourse (approx. 5,000 words)

DES703 – Professional Practice, Industry Collaboration and Mentoring

15 ECTS / 30 UK Credits

Semester: FT 2 / PT 3

This module focuses on professional and collaborative practice within graphic and communication design.

Students may engage with live briefs, simulated industry projects or collaborative design scenarios supported by mentoring, peer feedback and professional guidance. Emphasis is placed on teamwork, communication, project management, client interaction and professional workflows.

Indicative Learning Outcomes:

Students will be able to:

- work collaboratively in professional or simulated design environments
- respond effectively to briefs, constraints and stakeholders
- reflect critically on collaborative processes
- present work to professional audiences

Indicative Assessment

- Practice Portfolio
- Collaboration Report
- Reflective Evaluation

DES704 – Experimental & Emerging Practices

15 ECTS / 30 UK Credits

Semester: FT 2 / PT 3

This module encourages innovative approaches to graphic and communication design through interdisciplinary and emerging practices.

Students explore digital media, motion design, interactive formats, hybrid systems and emerging technologies. AI-assisted tools may be critically examined with emphasis on ethics, concept and methodology rather than automation.

Indicative Learning Outcomes:

Students will be able to:

- experiment with emerging approaches to communication design
- evaluate new technologies critically
- develop innovative design outcomes
- reflect on experimentation within professional practice

Indicative Assessment

- Experimental Communication Design Project
- Process Documentation and Reflective Report

DES705 – Major Project / Master's Thesis

30 ECTS / 60 UK Credits

Semester: FT 3 / PT 4

The Major Project is the culmination of the programme. Students conceive and realise a substantial independent body of work supported by research, critical reflection and professional practice.

Projects may be self-initiated or industry-linked and may build on earlier module outcomes where appropriate. The module integrates creative production with academic research and demonstrates readiness for professional practice or further research.

Indicative Learning Outcomes:

Students will be able to:

- conceive and realise an independent postgraduate-level project
- integrate practice, research and reflection
- articulate conceptual frameworks through written and visual work
- present and defend work to academic and professional audiences

Indicative Assessment

- Major Project Portfolio
- Written Thesis (approx. 5,000 words)
- Final Presentation

Study Route Summary

Full-Time (18 Months)

- Semester 1: DES711, DES712, DES701
- Semester 2: DES702, DES703, DES704
- Semester 3: DES705

Part-Time Online (24 Months)

- Semester 1: DES711, DES701
- Semester 2: DES712, DES702
- Semester 3: DES703, DES704
- Semester 4: DES705

Additional Module Information

Detailed Module Narratives, including full module aims, learning outcomes, indicative content, teaching activities and assessment guidance, are available for download via the website:

<https://rsiad.de/programmes/ma-graphic-communication-design/>

Students are encouraged to consult the relevant Module Narrative at the start of each module.

Your Feedback Opportunities

Student feedback is highly valued and plays an important role in the continuous enhancement of the MA Graphic & Communication Design and the wider student experience. The programme is committed to maintaining open communication with students and to responding constructively to feedback wherever possible.

Formal Feedback Opportunities

Students may provide feedback through a range of formal mechanisms, including:

- Programme Voice Groups held during the academic year
- module evaluations and end-of-module surveys
- institutional or programme-level student surveys
- representation meetings with staff and student representatives
- feedback opportunities linked to periodic programme review and enhancement activities

Informal Feedback Opportunities

Students are also encouraged to share feedback throughout the year through:

- tutorials and academic meetings
- discussions with module tutors
- conversations with the Programme Leader
- contact with the Institutional Link Tutor
- communication with programme administration or student support staff

How Feedback Is Used

Feedback is reviewed by the programme team and, where appropriate, informs actions such as:

- enhancement of teaching and learning approaches
- review of timetabling and delivery arrangements
- development of student support services
- refinement of learning resources
- curriculum review and future planning

Closing the Feedback Loop

Where appropriate and reasonably practicable, students will be informed of actions taken in response to feedback through meetings, programme communications, student representatives or updates via the student learning platform.

Student Partnership

Students are regarded as active partners in the development of the programme. Constructive feedback, respectful dialogue and student engagement are strongly encouraged.

Part Two - Resources and Support Available

Resources

The Rhein-Sieg Institute of Arts & Design (RSIAD) is committed to providing students with an effective and professionally relevant learning environment supported by appropriate physical, digital and academic resources.

Students on the MA Graphic & Communication Design have access to programme-specific facilities, learning technologies and support systems designed to enhance creative practice, research and academic success.

Programme Location and Specialist Facilities

The MA Graphic & Communication Design is delivered by RSIAD at its campus in Hennef, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany.

Teaching is delivered through a combination of studio-based learning, seminar activity and digital learning environments, depending on the mode of study.

Students may have access to relevant programme facilities including:

- teaching studios and seminar rooms
- critique and presentation spaces
- project work areas
- digital teaching facilities

- wireless internet access
- meeting and tutorial spaces

Facilities may develop over time in response to programme needs and student numbers.

Programme-Specific Resources

Students on the MA Graphic & Communication Design may access specialist resources relevant to communication design practice, which may include:

- design software and digital tools
- presentation equipment
- print and visual communication resources
- shared creative working spaces
- portfolio development support resources
- access to online design research materials

Where specialist resources are required for specific modules, students will be informed in advance.

Library and Learning Resources

Students are supported through a combination of physical, digital and tutor-guided learning resources.

- These may include:
- curated reading lists
- e-books and online journals
- design archives and reference sources
- academic skills guidance
- research methods support
- module-specific learning materials

Further details will be provided during induction and via the student learning platform.

IT Facilities and Digital Access

Students have access to relevant IT systems to support study and communication.

These may include:

- the RSIAD student learning platform / Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)
- Microsoft 365 services, including Teams, OneDrive and related tools

- online submission systems
- digital teaching platforms
- institutional Wi-Fi on campus

Students are responsible for maintaining suitable personal devices and internet access for online learning where required.

Student Learning Platform (VLE)

The RSIAD student learning platform is the primary online environment for programme information and module learning materials.

Students should use the platform regularly to access:

- timetables
- announcements
- learning materials
- submission guidance
- academic updates

Student Email Accounts

Students will be provided with an institutional email account, which will be used for official programme communications.

Students are expected to check their student email regularly and are responsible for reading important notices relating to:

- teaching schedules
- assessment deadlines
- feedback release
- academic processes
- student opportunities

Communication sent to the official student email account will normally be regarded as received.

Student Contact Details

Students are responsible for ensuring that their personal contact details remain accurate and up to date at all times.

This includes:

- current address
- telephone number
- personal email address (where requested)
- emergency contact information

Changes to contact details should be submitted promptly through the designated student administration process or student portal. Failure to maintain accurate contact details may affect the delivery of important communications.

Student Support

The Rhein-Sieg Institute of Arts & Design (RSIAD) is committed to providing a supportive, inclusive and professionally focused learning environment in which students are able to succeed academically, develop personally and prepare confidently for future careers. A range of academic, pastoral and practical support services is available throughout the MA Graphic & Communication Design programme, and students are encouraged to seek advice at an early stage whenever difficulties arise.

The first point of contact for most academic matters is the Programme Leader, who can advise on modules, progression, assessment requirements, academic expectations and general programme-related concerns. For the MA Graphic & Communication Design, the Programme Leader is Klaus Honemann. Students may also seek academic guidance from module tutors throughout their studies through tutorials, teaching sessions and scheduled meetings.

In addition, RSIAD has appointed an Institutional Link Tutor, who supports the academic relationship with Middlesex University and helps ensure that the programme is delivered in alignment with partnership requirements and academic standards. The Link Tutor may be contacted regarding partnership-related academic matters where appropriate. The Institutional Link Tutor is Tobias Lingen.

General enquiries relating to enrolment, timetables, attendance, fees, official documentation and administrative processes should be directed to Student Administration, located at the RSIAD campus in Hennef. Students who are unsure whom to contact should approach Student Administration in the first instance, and enquiries will be referred to the appropriate member of staff or service.

Academic support is available throughout the programme and is designed to help students develop confidence, independence and strong postgraduate study skills. Support may include academic writing guidance, research methods assistance, project planning, time management support, understanding assessment criteria, feedback discussions and

guidance relating to reassessment or progression where necessary. Personal tutoring and individual academic guidance form an important part of the student experience.

Students also receive employability and professional development support through the programme. This may include portfolio development, CV and personal profile advice, interview preparation, presentation skills, freelance and entrepreneurship guidance, industry mentoring and career planning discussions. Professional readiness is embedded particularly within the Professional Practice module, where students are supported in preparing for employment, self-employment or further postgraduate opportunities.

RSIAD is committed to inclusive education and to ensuring that students with disabilities, long-term health conditions, dyslexia or other learning differences are appropriately supported. Students may request reasonable adjustments to learning, teaching and assessment where appropriate. Support may include accessible learning materials, individual support planning, liaison with teaching staff and referral to specialist external services where required. Students are encouraged to disclose support needs as early as possible so that suitable arrangements can be explored in a timely and confidential manner.

Student wellbeing is taken seriously. Students experiencing stress, anxiety, personal difficulties or other wellbeing concerns are encouraged to seek support. RSIAD can provide pastoral guidance, confidential conversations and referrals to appropriate counselling or external professional services where needed. Financial concerns may also be discussed confidentially with Student Administration, which can provide guidance on payment schedules, practical study continuation options and relevant external information sources.

International students are welcome at RSIAD and may seek support regarding settling into study in Germany, orientation, communication with administration, academic expectations and practical local information. Where appropriate, students may also be signposted to visa or immigration guidance services, although responsibility for maintaining valid immigration status remains with the student.

Students studying online or remotely have access to equivalent academic and pastoral support through digital channels. Online support may include live tutorials, video meetings, email guidance, access to digital learning materials and virtual appointments with tutors or administrative staff. Students studying part-time online are encouraged to engage regularly with scheduled sessions and support opportunities in order to remain fully connected to the programme community.

As a specialist institution, RSIAD does not currently operate a formal Students' Union. However, students are represented through alternative internal mechanisms including Programme Voice Groups, elected or nominated student representatives, surveys, consultation meetings and regular dialogue with staff. Student feedback is valued and plays an important role in the enhancement of the programme and wider student experience.

Students considering a change of study mode, interruption of studies or other transfer-related requests should contact the Programme Leader at the earliest opportunity. Any such request is subject to academic regulations, programme availability and formal approval processes.

The Academic Calendar provides information on semester dates, teaching periods, assessment points, holidays and key student events. The current Academic Calendar is published through the student learning platform, official programme communications and Student Administration. Students are responsible for checking published dates and updates regularly.

For all student support enquiries, students may contact RSIAD Student Administration at the Hennef campus or via the official institutional email channels provided during enrolment. Further programme-specific contact details are published on the student learning platform.

Part Three - University Policies You Should Know

Programme Regulations

As a student of Middlesex University there are regulations and policies that you should make yourself aware of before you commence with your studies. These regulations detail the rules around assessment, how grades are awarded, and how assessment is conducted. This includes details on unforeseen circumstances (Force Majeure), academic integrity and misconduct and what you should do if circumstances mean you cannot complete an assessment. Full details of the regulations for all learners at Middlesex can be found at: <https://www.mdx.ac.uk/about-us/policies> (scroll to university regulations)

In addition, students studying at the Rhein-Sieg Institute of Arts & Design (RSIAD) are subject to the RSIAD Academic Regulations and Supporting Procedures, which operate in alignment with Middlesex University Academic Regulations and apply to the local delivery of validated programmes. These include procedures relating to:

- academic appeals
- academic misconduct
- deferrals
- extenuating circumstances
- local assessment administration

The RSIAD Academic Regulations and Supporting Procedures are available at:

<https://rsiad.de/programmes/ma-graphic-communication-design/>
(scroll to Documents)

For further advice regarding regulations, students should contact:

Programme Leader: Klaus Honemann, honemann@rsak.de
Institutional Link Tutor: Tobias Lingen, lingen@rsak.de

- **Academic Appeals**

An Academic Appeal is a formal request that a decision made by an Assessment Board or Programme Progression Board is reconsidered because of special circumstances. Students should normally use the RSIAD Academic Appeals Procedure in the first instance. This procedure operates in alignment with Middlesex University Academic Regulations.

- **Academic Integrity and Misconduct**

Please note that RSIAD uses its own regulations for handling academic misconduct and therefore this section of the Middlesex University Regulations (section F) does not apply to you. More information about the academic misconduct process is available in the RSIAD Academic Regulations and Supporting Procedures, available at: <https://rsiad.de/programmes/ma-graphic-communication-design/>

- **Complaints**

The complaints procedures of RSIAD must be followed and have been fully exhausted before you can follow the Middlesex University Student Complaints and Grievance Procedures (Appendix A for students of collaborative partners) which can be found in the Middlesex University regulations: <https://www.mdx.ac.uk/about-us/policies> (scroll to university regulations)

Research Ethics

An ethical approach to the undertaking of teaching, learning, assessments and research activities is of central importance to Middlesex University. Due consideration should be given to ethics in all aspects of your programme. Ethical process should be followed and/or ethical approval sought, before you carry out any work involving **human participants, human data, animals/products, precious artefacts, materials or data systems**. This applies to students at all levels of their degree.

Research ethics approval seeks to ensure all work is designed and undertaken according to certain principles of ethical research. These include:

1. *Primary concern must be given to the **safety, welfare and dignity** of participants, researchers, colleagues, the environment and the wider community*
2. *Consideration of **risks** should be undertaken before research commences with the aim of minimising risks to those involved – i.e. human participants or animal subjects, colleagues, the environment and the wider community, as well as actual or potential risks to those directly or indirectly affected by the research.*
3. ***Informed consent** should be freely given by participants, and by a trained person when collecting or analysing human tissue (details on accessing and completing online training for gaining informed consent for HTA purposes can be found below in Section 8).*
4. *Respect for the **privacy, confidentiality and anonymity** of participants*
5. *Consideration of the rights of **people who may be vulnerable** (by virtue of perceived or actual differences in their social status, ethnic origin, gender, mental capacities, or other such characteristics) who may be less competent or able to refuse to give consent to participate*
6. *Researchers have a responsibility to the general public and to their profession; as such they should balance the anticipated benefits of their research against **potential harm, misuse or abuse** which must be avoided*
7. *Researchers must demonstrate the highest standards of **ethical conduct and research integrity**. They must work within the limits of their skills, training and experience, and refrain from exploitation, dishonesty, plagiarism, infringement of intellectual property rights and the fabrication of research results. They should declare*

any actual or potential conflicts of interest, and where necessary take steps to resolve them.

*8. When using human tissues for research, **Human Tissue Act and Human Tissue Authority (HTA) requirements** must be met. Please contact the relevant designated person (DP) or the HTA Designated Individual (DI). Further information is provided below in the section: "Human Tissue Authority Information", see 'Governance Structure' document and SOPs etc.*

*9. Research should **not involve any illegal activity**, and researchers must comply with all relevant laws.*

Within taught degree programmes ethical approval **may** have been pre-sought for research activities that form part of specific modules. Please check with your module tutor/your module guide. Note however that **all students completing a dissertation or independent project** will be required to undertake an ethical review process.

Data **MUST** not be collected without first obtaining ethics approval for your research or ascertaining if data gathering has been pre-approved for a module. If you submit work that includes data gathered from or about people without ethical approval this may be treated as academic misconduct and could lead to a fail grade being awarded.

Students undertaking essays, independent projects or research involving human participants, personal data, interviews, surveys, recorded media or sensitive materials are required to complete the RSIAD Research Ethics Screening Form before commencing data collection. The RSIAD Research Ethics Screening Form is available in the download documents section of the programme website:

<https://rsiad.de/ma-graphic-communication-design/>

The completed form must be submitted to the relevant module tutor or supervisor via the RSIAD Moodle platform. Research projects identified as low-risk may be approved at module level. Projects involving higher ethical risk, vulnerable participants, sensitive personal data or external organisations may require additional review by the Programme Leader or designated RSIAD research ethics representative.

Students will receive written confirmation regarding whether ethical approval has been granted and whether any amendments are required prior to the start of data collection.

Research ethics guidance documents, forms and submission procedures are provided through the RSIAD Moodle environment and relevant module documentation.

Data must not be collected prior to receiving ethical approval where required. Failure to comply with research ethics procedures may be treated as academic misconduct.

Learning, Teaching and Assessment

The MA Graphic & Communication Design is founded on a studio-centred and practice-led approach to postgraduate study. Learning is designed to support the development of advanced creative practice, critical thinking, research capability and professional readiness. Students are encouraged to take an active role in their learning, developing independent

approaches to project work while engaging in experimentation, critical dialogue and reflective practice. The programme combines structured teaching with guided independent study, enabling students to progressively develop autonomy and a distinctive creative voice.

Teaching and learning take place through a variety of methods intended to reflect contemporary design education and professional practice. These may include studio-based project work, seminars, lectures, workshops, practical sessions, individual and group tutorials, critiques, presentations, collaborative projects and guided independent study. Online learning activities may also be used where appropriate, particularly to support students studying through the part-time online route. These approaches are intended to encourage iterative development, peer learning, problem-solving and the integration of theory with practice.

Assessment is designed to support both academic achievement and professional development. It is aligned with the learning outcomes of each module and emphasises not only final outcomes, but also process, research, reflection and the development of professional standards. Across the programme, students will encounter both formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment is intended to support learning in progress and may take place through tutorials, interim reviews, critiques, draft submissions or informal presentations. Summative assessment contributes to the final module result and normally takes place at the end of a module or defined teaching period.

Assessment methods are varied and appropriate to the discipline of graphic and communication design. They may include design projects, portfolios, presentations, written assignments, reflective statements, research tasks, process documentation and the final Major Project. Full details of the assessment requirements for each module are provided in the relevant Module Handbook, including submission dates, assessment criteria and guidance on expected standards.

Indicative assessment points are aligned with the Academic Calendar. Students will normally encounter major summative submission periods in early February and mid-July, with formative feedback opportunities taking place throughout the year. Exact dates for each module are published in advance through the student learning platform and official programme communications.

Students are normally required to submit assessed work through the RSIAD Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), using Moodle, unless alternative arrangements are specified. Depending on the nature of the module, some assessments may also involve physical presentations, exhibitions, live pitches or recorded presentations. Students are responsible for ensuring that work is submitted correctly, in the required format and by the published deadline. Confirmation of submission will normally be available through the VLE or via the relevant submission process.

Assessment is undertaken by module tutors and appropriately qualified academic staff in accordance with approved academic procedures. Internal moderation and quality assurance processes are used to support fairness, consistency and reliability of marking. Marks are subject to oversight through formal assessment board processes and, where relevant, review by External Examiners.

Students will normally receive feedback within 20 working days of the published submission deadline. Feedback may be provided in written, verbal or digital form and is intended to help students understand their performance, recognise strengths, identify areas for development and improve future work. Students are encouraged to engage actively with feedback and discuss it with tutors where appropriate.

All modules are assessed using the Middlesex University 20-point grading scale. Within a module, individual assessment components may carry different weightings, such as project outcomes, written elements, presentations or reflective work. These weighted component marks are combined in accordance with the approved module assessment scheme to generate an overall module result. The final module grade is then expressed on the 20-point scale in line with Middlesex University regulations.

External Examiners are independent academic specialists appointed by Middlesex University to help assure academic standards and the quality of assessment. They review assessment processes, samples of student work and marking standards to ensure that awards are comparable with those of other UK higher education institutions. External Examiners do not mark individual student work directly and are not permitted to communicate directly with students.

Progression through the programme is determined by the successful completion of modules and the achievement of the required credits in accordance with approved academic regulations. Students must satisfy the requirements of each stage of the programme in order to progress and ultimately qualify for the MA award. Decisions relating to progression, reassessment and final awards are made by the relevant Programme Assessment Board.

Where students are unable to complete an assessment because of valid and evidenced circumstances, they may apply for a deferral or for consideration of extenuating circumstances in accordance with the RSIAD Academic Regulations and Supporting Procedures. Where a module has not been successfully completed, students may be eligible for reassessment subject to the applicable regulations. Students are advised to seek guidance promptly where circumstances may affect their studies.

Upon successful completion of the programme, students will receive the relevant award certificate from Middlesex University together with a Diploma Supplement. The Diploma Supplement provides additional information about the qualification, programme content and academic context of the award.

External Examiners

External Examiners are one way we assure the academic quality of your programme. They are subject experts who help assure that your Middlesex award is comparable to that at other UK universities by reviewing the programme curriculum, the assessment and the learning resources. Among other things they approve all exam papers before they are taken, attend the assessment board and write a report at the end of the year. You can obtain a copy of this report by contacting your institutional link tutor: lingen@rsak.de

You can read more about the role of External Examiners and quality assurance on the QAA website: <https://www.mdx.ac.uk/about-us/policies/academic-quality/handbook> (section 4)

Attendance and Engagement

Engaging with online and on-campus in-person learning and activities is integral to your success. RSIAD supports you to achieve your full potential through a number of strategies, all of which provide our students with a supportive learning environment online, remotely, face-to-face, or blended. Further information on attendance and engaging with your programme will be available at the student learning platform and from Student Administration.

Health and Safety

The Rhein-Sieg Institute of Arts & Design (RSIAD) is committed to providing a safe, healthy and supportive learning environment for all students, staff and visitors.

Students are expected to behave responsibly, follow all published health and safety guidance, and take reasonable care for their own wellbeing and the safety of others while on campus, participating in programme activities or engaging in online study environments where relevant.

Students should familiarise themselves with emergency procedures, fire evacuation routes, safe use of facilities and any local instructions provided for teaching rooms, studios or specialist equipment.

Where programme activities involve the use of equipment, materials or specialist facilities, students must follow all guidance issued by tutors or authorised staff and must not use equipment unless appropriately instructed.

Students with medical conditions, disabilities, allergies or other circumstances that may affect their safety or participation are encouraged to inform Student Administration or the relevant member of staff so that appropriate support or reasonable adjustments may be considered in confidence.

Accidents, hazards, near misses or health and safety concerns should be reported immediately to a member of staff or Student Administration.

Questions regarding health and safety matters may be directed to Student Administration or the relevant tutor in the first instance. Further information is available through institutional policies and local campus guidance.