

Information to Help You Prepare for Year 3 - Academic Year 2024/2025

Yr 3 is all about you as an individual and the portfolio you create to help you take your next step. Although we are actively encouraging you to get organised and think ahead, your final year should be an enjoyable one that still has room for creative experimentation and spontaneity along the way. It should still be fun.

What sort of job would you like when you graduate? Where in the country or the world would you most like to work? Would you prefer to work for yourself, be part of a small design studio or a large corporation? It's never too soon to start researching the job market and begin making connections. You will begin to establish what prospective employers expect of you. Start to gain an insight into Graphic Design as a profession.

The summer break is a long one. Use some of it to explore any potential work placement opportunities that could be undertaken during Year 3. The more research and preparation you can do before you return for your **Independent Project**, the better.

Keep a notebook over the summer to record ideas for potential projects and examples of design work that you consider to be interesting and inspiring.

Not everyone will have a design job as their first or immediate priority. Perhaps you are considering continuing your studies to MA level or pursuing a PGCE qualification. These options can be discussed further next academic year but are worth thinking about now as they may influence your choice of projects.

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Summer Brief & When You Return

Visit either a supermarket or DIY store. Identify an item which you feel has scope for improvement in its graphic design. Choose an item that forms part of a set or range. For example - soup, pasta, paintbrushes or sandpaper. If possible, buy or photograph the products. You will need all of the information that appears on the existing packaging to be included on your new proposal.

Re-design the packaging of three items from a set or range (eg. three flavours of soup or three grades of sandpaper). If you choose a product that has an existing logo as part of its design - Kellogg's or Tesco for example - you are **not** required to redesign the actual logo. If in doubt, ask. Also remember that this is a Graphic Design task first and foremost. You could change the actual packaging format - switching from a cellophane bag to a box, or a plastic bottle to a glass one for example - but this project is not about designing a new type of jar or container, it's about what goes *on* that jar or container. Be clear on your decision of product, price-point and target audience.

As an added consideration in your redesign, you could attempt to make the new packaging design less impacting on the environment in some way - material used, number of colours etc. This is optional.

The formative deadline for this brief will be approximately four weeks after you start back. You should return in late September with the project well under way, hopefully nearing completion. We can then use tutorial time productively to refine and complete a strong project to start your final year. It is recommended that you check with a member of staff that your product choice is a suitable one if you have any doubts.

On your return, you will also receive a topic to re-search, leading into your second set project which will be an Information Graphics task. This research will generate the content for a project that will start when you hand in the Packaging project. Some general research into historical and contemporary uses of Information Graphics would help you to prepare for this project.

You will then need to take control and mostly initiate your own projects for the remainder of the year.



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Graduate Portfolio - Personal Projects

The **Graduate Portfolio Module** consists of:

- > **Starter Projects - Re-packaging and Infographic**
- > **Personal Projects**
- > **External Projects**
- > **Competition Brief**
- > **Exhibition Brand Identity Pitch**
- > **Personal Website**
- > **Role in End of Year Exhibition**

The following notes focus on **Personal Projects** and **External Projects**. The other areas of **Graduate Portfolio** will be discussed later in the year.

Personal Projects provide you with an opportunity to work very creatively and with lots of control, free of the constraints often imposed upon a professional graphic designer. A real working environment will rarely afford you the luxury to experiment and explore unusual ideas. Use your time productively to build upon existing skills and explore new possibilities.

Use the **Personal Projects** to convey something you feel passionately about, something that intrigues you, something that enrages or pleases you, something you aspire to - to visually express your feelings about the world in which we live. Use them to try new things or to build upon existing strengths.

You may like to think beyond the usual formats and materials normally associated with graphic design. In reality the boundaries between design disciplines are becoming

increasingly blurred and your personal work may recognise this by incorporating your own illustration, photography, printmaking or any other medium. Refer back to the different challenges you have encountered on Yr 1 and Yr 2. Surprise us with something different!

Hopefully you will have plenty of ideas already. If not, you may like to consider a sporting or cultural event happening over the next year or in the near future. You could even invent your own. Are there any significant anniversaries in 2024/2025 that would generate an interesting project? Or perhaps you could find sources of inspiration from a current news story.

Use the long summer break to consider possibilities and make a start wherever possible. Collect data and information, take photographs, make notes. Give some thought to the idea of 'quick' projects and 'slow' projects in addition to projects of a more usual timespan.

Come back ready to discuss your thoughts and plans to embark on exciting, enjoyable projects. Year 3 of the course really is what *you* make it.

Graduate Portfolio - External Projects

Up to this point of the course there has been an important person missing from your design projects - a customer! Although staff have voiced their opinions, made many suggestions and encouraged your personal development, ultimately you have made the final decisions about each project (or job) yourself.

External Projects are a means of introducing you to real working practice and will mean you have to embrace a whole new range of challenges beyond just being creative. When you begin a career in Graphic Design you may be surprised at the additional skills and attributes you will need to survive. You will need to meet with prospective clients and present yourself accordingly. Communication skills become very important - meeting people face to face and liaising on the telephone and via e-mail and social media for example.

The maturity to accept and respond to criticism will be vital to your development, as will patience and the ability to compromise. Time management will become essential and you will soon find yourself dealing with printers and photographers, handling budgets, selecting materials, arranging delivery to deadline etc... External Projects need to be substantial. Try to aim for brochures, websites or exhibition stands rather than just business cards or flyers. However, consider all possibilities as you may be able to take the initiative to expand a small project into something bigger. These projects are absolutely invaluable to a portfolio. They can demonstrate that someone has recognised your ability, trusted you and invested time and money into a project for which you have ultimately been responsible.

The best possible outcome of an External Project is a piece of live work that both the client and yourself are proud of. It would be even better if you received payment, but ultimately the experience gained is really valuable at this stage. You should keep a diary to chart the progress of the projects and ideally be able to produce a signed letter from a satisfied client to present with your work when complete. In a 'best case scenario', External Projects will actually result in real, printed or live screen based work, but speculative work for someone who is planning on setting up a business is usually acceptable, providing your communication is treated with due professionalism.

External Projects are self generated. The department is often approached with 'live projects' and design jobs are sometimes required within the University. These projects will be made known to you as and when they arrive, but are not to be relied upon. It is up to you to find a client. The client will often be a friend or relative with a business interest. Use the summer break to explore possibilities and make contacts. You may wish to approach someone whose business, cause or charity is of interest to you personally.

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Expectations for Yr 3

Our requirement is that the work you present at interim Viva* presentations - just before Christmas and just before Easter - and finally, at the end of the academic year, is of suitable quality and quantity.

Discussion and advice for Graduate Portfolio (your practical work) is on a timetabled weekly basis and will soon establish whether both quality and quantity are reaching an appropriate standard. Your weekly tutorials will range from larger group classes to small groups of three or four. We will expect you to talk about your work much more than in Yr 1 and Yr 2.

The third year of the course is all about you and your portfolio. We expect you to actively prepare for the year in advance, building up a list of potential projects that allow you the individual freedom to tailor your portfolio to your own needs and aspirations.

We acknowledge that this new found freedom can sometimes be a mixed blessing, as the absence of set briefs and set deadlines can be problematic for some students. Your working routine is quite different to Yr 1 and Yr 2, where the whole group was working on the same project brief, to the same deadline. With this in mind, we cannot overemphasize the importance of your own commitment to attendance on Yr 3.

You need Personal and External Projects by the end of Yr 3 for the Graduate Portfolio module.

You may have more Personals than Externals or vice versa, but the ratio cannot exceed 75:25.

*Vivas are compulsory, individual assessment points at which you present your completed and current work. The Christmas Viva is a general progress check, and the Easter Viva allows us to predict your Graduate Portfolio degree classification.

When you return in September, try to have a design brief prepared for the following:

A Personal Project

An External Project (if possible)

In addition, we would like you to research student design competitions, as we ask everyone to engage with a nationally recognized competition brief on Yr 3. Next year's competition briefs will not be announced yet, but start looking for competitions that interest you, and get a feel for the standard of the winning work from this year. Have a look at the following: Penguin Design Awards; D&AD Awards; RSA Awards; Creative Conscience Awards.

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Guidance on Writing Your Own Brief

Your project briefs so far have adhered to a fairly consistent structure. Use this structure as a template and break the project down methodically. You must establish a written brief for every project. You will encounter problems if you work without a brief.

1. The Introduction

Use the Introduction to summarise the nature of the project you intend to do. Include any details we need to be aware of to fully understand your starting point and motivation. Assume that the person reading this brief has no prior knowledge of the subject area that you are dealing with.

2. The Brief

This is where you need to be much more specific about the actual outcome of the project. What is it you are designing? What size is it? How many colours can you use? Any technical information should appear in this section.

3. Outcomes / Goals

On your final year, every project you complete should be considered as an opportunity to add volume and/or variety to your portfolio. This section of the brief may actually generate the ideas for projects. What type of work do you want to do when you graduate? If you are not certain at this point, aim to produce a portfolio with good variety to keep your options open. If you already have a clear idea of what you want to do, write briefs that allow you the scope to develop in these specialist areas: web design or packaging design for example. This is the section where you outline the reasons for doing this particular brief and what you will personally achieve through completing it.

4. Submission Information

In this final section, you should give an outline of your timescale for this particular brief. As a rough guide, you should be working at least as productively as you were on Yr 2. Use this work rate as an approximate means of allocating time to a brief. We will be happy to advise you on this, or any other area.
