Get ready for BA(Hons) Graphic Design

I hope that you are looking forward to starting at UWE Bristol. As your Programme Leader, I warmly welcome you onto Level 4 (1st year) BA(Hons) Graphic Design.

I have provided some information below that will help you to prepare for starting with us.

If you are entering direct to level 5 (2nd year) – please read the [Level 5 entry information](#).

If you are entering direct into Level 6 (3rd year) – please read the [Level 6 entry information](#).

I look forward to meeting you.

Colum Leith
Programme Leader

Before you start

We are looking forward to welcoming you in the week commencing 15 September for Starting Block and the beginning of your programme.

Starting Block will help you settle into university and to help you get to know your teaching team and course mates. We will help you find your way around, get used to our systems, and practice the skills you need to make a strong start. Look out for further emails and explore the [Starting Block website](#) with more details.

Your [timetable](#) will be available to you via MYUWE (login required) once you have started the registration process. Please visit the ['Understanding your teaching timetable'](#) website to find out when your timetable will be published.

Preparing and arrival
You can find everything you need to know about registration, Starting Block and the start of teaching, on our [Preparing and Arrival](#) webpage. Take a look at our website to familiarise yourself with our facilities and services such as the [library](#), [study skills](#), [academic support](#), [health and wellbeing support](#) and much more.

Registration
Once you have satisfied all admissions requirements, we'll send you your login details for our IT systems to enable you to activate your university email account. Once your account has been activated, you'll gain access to the [MYUWE](#) platform where you can register. Note that your login details for MYUWE are different to those used for the UWE Welcome website. Registration for September programmes will only be open from August onwards. You can find guidance and further information on our [Registration](#) website.

ID card - upload your photo now
We can only print your ID card if you have added your photo to [MYUWE](#). To avoid delays, upload your photo as soon as you receive login details. For help, go to our [student card](#)

[guidance](#).

Engage with your programme

Start your learning – the **Summer Preparation Project** tasks should be completed during the summer and be ready for the first day:

Introductory Task 1:
Bring in on first taught day of module

While teaching the alphabet to children, teachers and parents often make use of ABC books or posters to communicate complex ideas in a simple manner. These are called ABC primers.

Usually with ABC primers, letters are connected to words: A is for Apple, B is for Ball, etc. But taken as a complete set of 26 letters, cultural and social settings can be explored and a defined set of ideas can be presented. It is also interesting to see how learning a language is connected to ideas depending on where the primer is devised and for who – which is one of the reasons why the International Phonetic NATO alphabet (Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, etc.) was hard to develop and had so many different variations.

This assignment tasks you with creating your own ABC primer and design it, either as a booklet, set of individual pages/images or motion piece.

Size and format are up to you.

If created as a moving/motion piece, please ensure you provide a link to your work (upload to vimeo/youtube/other) and provide us with support printouts of the work.

You could explore a personal interest (architecture, film, politics, science) or else look to make a cultural/social commentary as was done by the poet Lucille Clifton when she created *The Black BC's*, where a poem for each letter of the alphabet introduced contributions by significant black people from American history and culture or *A is for Activist*, an ABC board book written and illustrated for the next generation of progressives

Other examples of ABC Primers:

[L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze transcriptThe](#)

[ABC Book of Horror](#)

[New England Primer Alphabet](#)

Introductory Task 2:
Bring in on first taught day of module

Make a mechanism that can be used for drawing, bring this in on first images day

Be inventive. Think

kinetic. Make it portable.

Practice operating it.

Bring it with you to Bristol.

Watch this: [Olafur Eliasson short film](#)

Look up:

https://www.cabinetmagazine.org/issues/28/knowles.php

Introductory Task 3:
Bring in on first taught day of module

We would like to set up a design-based Instagram account if you don't already have one.
Post 5 images of your Drawing Mechanism being used by yourself or others.
Post 5 images of the drawings generated.

Read around your subject
A key skill which is required to achieve a high level of success within your chosen programme is the ability to think critically about key issues and practices. To help you to enhance these skills and be ready to engage with your studies, you should start to read and research around your subject before you arrive. Explore the Library web pages to see the wide range of resources available to you once you become a UWE Bristol student.

At the beginning of each module and/or in relation to particular projects you will receive details of required and suggested reading. The following books are very useful to you in relation to most aspects of the course, covering technical and generic information about graphic design. Whilst you can access them from libraries, you may wish to buy one for yourself, otherwise bookmark them and read around the subject using these as a guide.

- Roberts, L. & Wright, R. "Design Diaries: Creative Process in Graphic Design" Laurence King
- Quentin Newark "What is Graphic Design?" Rotavision
- Phil Bains & Andrew Haslam "Type & Typography" Laurence King Publishing
- Ellen Lupton "Thinking with Type: A Critical Guide for Designers, Writers, Editors, and Students (Design Briefs)" Princeton Architectural Press

Please if you do buy any, only buy cheap used copies online as you can access them fully when you arrive

Each year, as part of your programme of study you will be introduced you to key contexts, concepts and debates that are relevant to art and design practices. Taught sessions will develop your critical thinking, research and communication skills, all of which will feed your studio work and all of which are fundamental to you becoming a successful creative practitioner.

Preparatory reading

Hooks, Bell (2010) 'Teaching 1: Critical Thinking', *Teaching Critical Thinking: PracticalWisdom*, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 7-11. Available here

Connect with others

Follow the programme on Instagram and Twitter @typenowhere
typenowhere.com UWE Bristol Graphic Design

Be prepared

Access support

Check the information on our [Disability web pages](#) so you know what you need to do. If you need any urgent additional mobility or other support to fully access all activities during your studies, contact me as your programme leader.

Get equipped

The University has computers on all our campuses for you to use during your studies. These provide access to our core digital learning tools and any specialist software required for your course. You may have scheduled sessions in computer labs or other specialist facilities, and you will be able to use open-access PCs for self-study.

UWE Bristol licenses many specialist software packages for use on personal laptops for the duration of your course. If you're struggling to meet the financial demands of your course, please contact the Student Money Service team for advice and guidance.

See the UWE website for detailed information on [choosing your IT equipment](#) including [recommended specifications](#).

For this programme we recommend the **Enhanced OR Intensive Specification**.

Specialist applications used on the course include: **list specific IT hardware and software here**. These applications work on **Windows and Mac** devices but not on tablets or Chromebooks.

Graphic Design Equipment List

Please make sure that you have a good range of equipment and look after it. You may already have some of the items listed below and there is a materials shop on the Bower Ashton campus where you can purchase from an extensive range of quality art and design materials. You can get advice about which are most appropriate as the course progresses. There is also a range of art shops near the Arnolfini in the city centre.

A Diary or wall chart calendar	Putty rubber
Personal notebook	Glue stick
A3 layout pad	Masking tape
A4 sketch book	Blue Tac
Range of pencils 2H to 6B	A3 Cutting mat
Colour materials: colour pencils; marker pens; water colour paints; acrylic paint; pastels	Portfolio/Portfolio box: at least A2 in size and substantial enough to protect your work
Scissors	Perspex rule
A Bone Folder (available from Bower Ashton campus shop)	300mm steel rule
Cutting knife /scalpel	A portable hard drive / memory sticks & cloud storage/Google drive etc.
Bookbinding Needles (available from Bower Ashton campus shop)	

Further useful items you might use during your time here

- A pair of sensible walking shoes
- A bicycle
- A City of Bristol map
- 35mm / DSLR Camera
- Waterproof coat
- Binoculars
- Flask / Water bottle / Mug
- A novel
- A good range of weblinks / bookmarks, covering: design, news, society, music & culture.

International students

The Global Student Support Team offer information and advice to ensure you receive all the support you need to get the best from your time at UWE Bristol. They are here to help you to settle in when you first arrive at UWE Bristol and organise social events to help you to adapt to your new environment.

Who to contact if you have questions

For any questions about the programme, please contact me: **Colum Leith** via email at colum.leith@uwe.ac.uk

Please note: this information has been provided on the assumption that you will meet the conditions of your offer and be eligible to take up your place.

Entry: September 2025   Last updated: Spring 2025