



UNIVERSITY
of **HULL**

Build Brands. Shape Stories. Master Creative Strategy.

MA Graphic Design:
Branding and Digital Strategy
(Online flexible-learning)



Welcome to the MA in Graphic Design: Branding and Digital Strategy

As team members of this forward-thinking MA, we are proud to welcome you to a course that's built for ambitious creatives who want to lead the future of branding, design thinking and digital innovation. This is more than just a postgraduate qualification, it's an opportunity to sharpen your voice, master strategic tools, and build a portfolio that makes people take notice.

Whether you're already working in design or are ready to elevate your freelance or creative leadership career, this online MA gives you the skills, insight, and confidence to move forward with flexibility that fits around your life.

What follows is a breakdown of the modules you'll study, along with the key themes and outcomes you'll take away from each.



GDBDS1: Foundations of Digital Design



Trimester 1 / 15 credits

As you begin your journey on the MA, this module sets the stage for everything that follows. In 'Foundations of Digital Design', you'll hone your understanding of digital communication, explore what makes design effective in a modern context, and reflect critically on the digital tools and strategies used across branding, marketing and creative industries today.

This module isn't about surface-level design, it's about building strong conceptual thinking, purposeful creativity, and professional awareness. You'll explore how layout, hierarchy, interaction and audience engagement work together in digital design and you'll apply this knowledge through hands-on experimentation and self-directed project work.

We'll also look at the broader context: the ethics of digital platforms, inclusive design, sustainability, and how technology (including AI) is changing the way designers work. It's a chance for you to reflect on your creative identity, push beyond your current practice, and grow the confidence to approach digital projects with clarity and strategic intent.



GDBDS2: User-Centred Design and Research

Year 1 / Trimester 1 / 15 credits

This module is all about designing with purpose (and people) in mind. In ‘User-Centred Design and Research’, you’ll explore how to create design outcomes that respond to real needs, behaviours and expectations. You’ll learn how to put users at the heart of the creative process - whether you’re developing a brand, interface, service or campaign.

We’ll introduce you to a variety of research methods, from interviews and persona building to user journey mapping and usability testing. These tools will help you gather meaningful insight and translate it into design solutions that are both intuitive and impactful.

You’ll also have the opportunity to challenge your assumptions, test your ideas, and refine your creative thinking through an iterative process. The result? Work that not only looks amazing, but truly connects.

This module will change how you think about audiences and give you the tools to design work that’s strategic, inclusive and human-centred from the start.



GDBDS3: Ideation and Concept Development

Year 1 / Trimester 2 / 30 Credits

This is where your ideas come to life—and where your creative thinking will be pushed to the next level. In Ideation and Concept Development, you’ll learn how to take a spark of inspiration and turn it into a fully formed, strategically driven design concept.

You’ll explore advanced methods for idea generation, storytelling, visual experimentation, and problem-solving. We’ll guide you through the full creative process from researching and sketching, to testing and refining (and show you how to generate work that not only meets a brief but adds value), meaning and originality to it.

This module is about making bold, purposeful decisions. You’ll be challenged to think beyond aesthetics and explore the why behind your design choices, considering audience, platform, message and impact at every stage.

By the end of this module, you’ll have the confidence and critical framework to build creative ideas that are not only visually exciting but strategically strong and ready for the real world.



GDBDS4: Digital Strategy and Promotion

Year 1 / Trimester 3 / 30 Credits

In this module, you'll learn how to design with direction, using digital strategy as a powerful tool to shape campaigns, elevate branding, and drive engagement across digital platforms. 'Digital Strategy and Promotion' equips you to build bold, creative responses to the evolving demands of online audiences.

You'll explore how to plan, test and launch digital promotions, learning how design intersects with metrics, platforms, trends and behaviours. We'll show you how to shape messaging, structure campaign content, and use audience insight and analytics to influence creative choices.

You'll also gain a deeper understanding of tools like SEO, social media marketing, content strategy, and ethical digital design - all within a creative context. Whether you're working on your own brand or for clients, this module gives you the confidence to take your ideas into the commercial world and make them matter.



GDBDS5: Digital Dimensions (Field Study)

Year 2 / Trimester 1 / 30 Credits

This is your opportunity to step outside the studio and engage with the commercial digital design sector. In 'Digital Dimensions (Field Study)', you'll carry out a field study that examines how design, branding and digital strategy are applied in practice - from a global agency or independent studio, to cultural sector or emerging digital platform.

You'll choose your own focus and investigate it through interviews, observation, secondary research, or collaboration with a creative business. You might explore how AI is influencing campaign development, how UX teams build audience journeys, or how brand tone is shaped by digital culture. The field is wide open because this module is shaped by your interests.

You'll then translate what you've learned into a reflective and forward-thinking report that links real-world insight with your own design values and professional development.

This module connects theory to practice, giving you a competitive edge as a strategic designer who understands not just how to design, but how the design world truly operates.





GDBDS6: Major Project and Portfolio Showcase

Year 2 / Trimester 2 + 3 / 60 Credits

This is the culmination of your MA journey; the moment where everything you've learned comes together in a final, professionally-led major project that reflects your personal vision, your strategic mindset, and your future direction as a designer.

You'll propose, develop and deliver an ambitious project of your choice which could consist of a brand identity, digital campaign, design innovation, or speculative concept. This is your opportunity to push creative boundaries, demonstrate your critical thinking, and show the world what kind of designer you are and want to become.

Alongside this, you'll craft a professional portfolio that showcases your skills, originality and readiness to take on new opportunities in the design industry, as a freelancer, or taking creative leadership.



