

PROGRAMME OUTLINE – HIGHER CERTIFICATE IN DESIGN THINKING

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1. Qualification Specifications

Title	Higher Certificate in Design Thinking
NQF Level	5
Qualification Type:	Higher Certificate, Non-professional
Classification of Educational Subject Matter	030299 Design and Applied Arts, Other
Total Credits	120
SAQA Number	97900
CHE Number (HEQC Ref)	H/PR313/E006CAN
Mode of delivery	Contact
Minimum time to complete qualification	1 year full time
Articulation	In vertical articulation, completion of the programme allows for entry into cognate diploma and degree programmes. In horizontal articulation, the programme is comparable to the Higher Certificate in Art and Design offered at other providers.

2. Purpose of the qualification

The purpose of the qualification is to lay a foundation in the broad principles and practices of design. The programme introduces learners to creative and visual thinking, design thinking and the design process, visual communication methods, professional practise and the analysis and critique of design solutions. It offers an integrated combination of conceptual and applied skills and prepares learners to become flexible, problem-solving thinkers outside the boundaries of a single design discipline. The knowledge and skills taught are fundamental to many visual and creative professions, and graduates will be able to transfer these to a variety of design specialisations, including visual communication design, interior design, product design and environmental design. Additionally, the programme focuses on learners' command of the English language, particularly in academic reading and writing pertinent to visual culture and design theory.

3. Rational for the qualification

The programme caters for students who complete the National Senior Certificate with entry into certificate programmes. Graduates of the Higher Certificate are expected to enter the art or design industry in junior positions, or continue with further study in degree or diploma programmes, either at GDC or other providers. As such, the programme functions to widen access to higher education qualifications at level 6 and higher while providing at the same time a standalone qualification producing employable graduates.

4. International comparability

The Higher Certificate in Design Thinking compares to other international qualifications, specifically the one year foundation courses found in the United Kingdom and other commonwealth countries where such programmes function as preparatory courses for university-level education in art and design degree programmes.



Leeds College of Art in the United Kingdom delivers such a one year programme, a Foundation Diploma in Art and Design, which has similar aims and objectives to those provided by the Higher Certificate in Design Thinking. It is intended to enable learners to progress to the degree programmes of their choice at the institution and stresses "problem solving, idea generation and critical thinking". Students "develop a position of independence" and "devise and undertake a significant project in the final stage of the course" which is comparable to the final elective studio project provided by this qualification. Additionally, the course provides a component of "research and reading" that introduces learners to the "breadth of art and design" as with Critical Studies component of the Higher Certificate in Design Thinking.

5. Subjects (components making up the qualification)

All subjects are compulsory and all subjects must be passed in order to complete the programme

Subjects	NQF Level	Credit allocation
Design (LO 1)	5	30
Communication (LO 2)	5	30
Professional Practise (LO 3)	5	30
Critical Studies (LO 4 & 5)	5	30

6. Learning activities

Activity	Hours and Percentage
Lectures	15%
Tutorials	5%
Independent self-study of standard texts	10%
Other: Supervision for studio project-based learning	30%
Other: Independent progress in project-based learning	40%

7. Learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
On completion of the programme, students should be able to:	This has been achieved when:
1) Apply design thinking and the design process in order to generate solutions to basic design problems (Assessed under the subject of Design)	1.1 There is evidence that the student has investigated and researched the context of simple design problems 1.2 Different visual thinking tools (such as mindmapping and sketching) have been used to shape design problems 1.3 A range of creative techniques (such as brainstorming and lateral thinking) have been employed to generate multiple design concepts 1.4 Original and innovative design solutions that reflect an appropriate use of the design elements and principles have been generated 1.5 There is evidence that the appropriate materials, production techniques and processes required to implement design proposals have been investigated 1.6 There is evidence that the student has reflected on the design process and evaluated proposed design solutions
2) Utilise a variety of media, tools and techniques to express design ideas and communicate information visually (Assessed under the subject of Communication)	2.1 A wide range of drawing techniques have been employed in order to produce observational drawings, create images and express concepts 2.2 A variety of media has been used to represent 2 and 3 dimensional design concepts (for example, painting, pen and ink, digital techniques, maquettes) 2.3 Different types of visualisation methods (such as graphs, diagrams, models, collage) have been used to communicate information visually
3) Schedule and manage a simple design project (Assessed under the subject of Professional Practise)	3.1 The milestones / deadlines in a project's lifespan (such as briefing, research, ideation, presentation, feedback, final presentation) have been adhered to 3.2 The student has shown steady and regular progress in the completion of design solutions 3.3 There is evidence that the student has sought out and made appropriate use of resources (such as teaching material, recommended references, the library, expert advice)
4) Interpret, analyse and critique design with reference to visual culture (Assessed under the subject of Critical Studies)	4.1 The student has understood design and visual culture theory and used appropriate vocabularies correctly



	4.2 Design examples have been analysed and interpreted in relation to a range of social, cultural, technological and historical contexts
	4.3 Design examples have been evaluated and critiqued according to function, aesthetic, context and resolution
	4.4 Critical reflections on the ways in which design can be used to challenge or reinforce social, cultural, environmental and ethical issues have been provided
5) Understand simple academic texts, formulate arguments and communicate in an academically acceptable manner (Assessed under the subject of Critical Studies)	5.1 There is evidence that the student has engaged with and interpreted relevant and credible literary sources
	5.2 Simple but informed and defensible arguments have been composed
	5.3 Information has been clearly communicated in an academically acceptable manner
	5.4 Correct and complete referencing methods and techniques have been consistently applied

8. Indicative Syllabus

The programme is not based on separate and independent modules with discrete content areas but instead follows a project and problem-based curriculum. This enables learners to integrate and apply the various skills and knowledge required to practise design. As a holistic programme, set assignments are assessed according to one or more of the four subjects that make up the programme, thus facilitating an awareness of the interrelationship of the many facets that lead to good and responsible design. The four subjects for the programme are:

- **Design**, which focuses on design thinking, the design process and the development of design solutions as described by Learning Outcome 1
- **Communication**, which focuses on the ability to visualise and communicate design ideas through various media as described by Learning Outcome 2
- **Professional Practise**, which focuses on professional conduct, self-regulated learning, project management and adherence to deadlines as described by Learning Outcome 3
- **Critical Studies**, which focuses on a critical understanding of design and visual culture theory in addition to academic writing as described by Learning Outcomes 4 and 5.

The core of the curriculum is made up of two principal components, namely Studio and Critical Studies classes. In the studio classes, the focus is on the activity of designing and learners execute design projects that mirror the practise of problem-solving in the design industry. The learning is experiential, hands-on, authentic, and exposes students to design thinking and how that translates into the design process in a variety of contexts and disciplines. Through set projects, learners explore and shape design problems and manage the design process in order to arrive at design solutions. Studio projects are assessed under learning outcomes 1, 2 and 3. In the first and second quarters of the academic year, studio projects are framed around subjective and autobiographical content, allowing learners to apply their personal experience to the design process. Additionally, studio projects encourage learners to experiment with a variety of media and techniques for communicating ideas and representing design proposals visually. In the third quarter, projects focus on issues relating to sustainability and socially responsible design, with the learners participating in an internationally awarded project called 10Percent. In this, the learners collaborate with other students from the undergraduate programmes offered by Greenside Design Center and engage with real communities and causes, applying their design skills in order to make a difference. The project is interdisciplinary, inter-level and exposes learners to team work, peer-learning and collaborative problem solving. In the fourth quarter, learners elect to frame their studio projects within the context of a specific discipline and are given the opportunity to develop their own briefs in response to problems they have independently identified and researched.

In the Critical Studies classes, the ability to engage meaningfully with the theoretical and critical underpinnings of design is emphasised. Through the writing of essays, students conduct visual analyses of design examples and engage with current theory in design and visual culture. The classes develop critical thinking and academic research skills. Additionally, the classes provide a foundation in academic reading and writing. Students learn about techniques for studying, understanding, paraphrasing and summarizing academic texts as well as techniques for constructing arguments and academic essays. In the first and second quarters of the academic year, the Critical Studies classes examine the design discipline with reference to notions of modernity and postmodernity. The students' personal exploration of design is extended through the analysis and interpretation of design examples in relation to the social, political, cultural and technological contexts that produced them. In the third quarter, emphasis is given to concepts of socially responsible and sustainable design, reinforcing the relationship with studio and the 10Percent community engagement project. In the fourth quarter, Critical Studies investigates the role of design and the designer in contemporary society and encourages learners to reflect on the ways in which design can be used to challenge or reinforce societal, environmental and ethical issues. Critical Studies projects are assessed under learning outcomes 4 and 5.



Additional enrichment classes, such as academic writing and visual communication, set extra tasks that hone specific skills to support the Studio and Critical Studies classes.

9. Recommended readings

- Aspelund, K. 2006. *The Design Process*. New York: Fairchild.
- Barnard, M. 1998. *Art, Design and Visual Culture*. London: Macmillan
- Barnard, M. 2006. (2005) *Graphic Design as Communication*. New York: Routledge
- Booth, W, Colomb, G and Williams, J. 2003. (1995) *The Craft of Research*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Brown, T. 2009. *Change by Design: How design thinking transforms organizations and inspires innovation*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Buzan, T and Buzan, B. 1995. (1993) *The Mind Map Book: Radiant Thinking*. London: BBC Books
- Caplan, R. 2006. *Cracking the Whip: Essays on design and its side effects*. New York: Fairchild
- Ching, F. 1990. *Drawing, a Creative Process*. New York: John Wiley
- Conway, H. (ed). 1987. *Design History: A Student's Handbook*. London: Allen and Unwin
- Counts, E.L. 2004. *Multimedia Design and Production: For Students and Teachers*. Boston: Pearson.
- Edwards, B. 1988. *Drawing on the Artist Within: How to Release Your Hidden Creativity*. Glasgow: Fontana/Collins
- Faimon, P and Weigand, J. 2004. *The Nature of Design: How the principles of design shape our world – from graphics and architecture to interiors and products*. Cincinnati: How Design Books.
- Heller, S. 2004. *Design Literacy: Understanding Graphic Design*. New York: Allworth
- Hollis, R. 2001. (1994) *Graphic Design: A Concise History*. New York: Thames and Hudson
- Jones, J. 1992. (1970) *Design Methods*. New York: John Wiley.
- Julier, G. 2000. *The Culture of Design*. London: Sage.
- Kress, G and van Leeuwen, T. 2006. (1996) *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. New York: Routledge
- Margolin, V and Buchanan, R. (eds). 1995. *The Idea of Design: A Design Issues Reader*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Mau, B. 2005. (2004) *Massive Change*. London: Phaidon
- McDonough, W and Braungart, M. 2002. *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way we Make Things*. New York: North Point
- Norman, D. 2002. (1988) *The Design of Everyday Things*. New York: Basic Books.
- Papanek, V. 1991. (1985) *Design for the Real World: Human Ecology and Social Change*. London: Thames and Hudson
- Pile, J and Gura, J. 2013. (2000) *A History of Interior Design*. London: Lawrence King
- Pilloton, E. 2009. *Design Revolution: 100 Products That Are Changing People's Lives*. London: Thames and Hudson
- Riley, N and Bayer, P. (eds). 2003. *The Elements of Design: The Development of Design and Stylistic Elements from the renaissance to the Postmodern Era*. London: Mitchell Beazley
- Rowe, P. 1998. (1987) *Design Thinking*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Sherwin, D. 2010. *Creative Workshop: 80 Challenges to Sharpen your Design Skills*. Cincinnati: How Books
- Sparke, P, Hodges, F, Coad, E and Stone, A. 1986. *Design Sourcebook*. London: Macdonald
- Sturken, M and Cartwright, L. 2003 (2001) *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Thissen, F. 2004. *Screen Design Manual: Communicating Effectively Through Multimedia*. Berlin: Springer.
- Wise, D. 1990. *The Design Process*. East Sussex: Wayland

10. RPL, moderation and integrated assessment

10.1. Access to the programme, learning assumed to be in place and recognition of prior learning

The admission requirements for the programme are the completion of the South African National Senior Certificate with entry into a Higher Certificate, or the National Certificate (Vocational) Level 4 with entry into a Higher Certificate; and a minimum of 50% for English as a first or first additional language where it is the language of teaching and learning.

Candidates who have completed a different schooling qualification are required to have the qualification evaluated by SAQA, and may undergo an RPL assessment, with the aim of confirming that the candidate satisfies the learning assumed to be in place. To this end, their school results, artistic ability, and basic English skills are assessed by relevant academics.

10.2. Moderation

In accordance with the GDC Assessment Policy, students submit a portfolio of all work at the end of year for summative assessment. The portfolio is assessed by the lecturer and is internally moderated by another GDC lecturer not involved in delivering the programme. Further, an external moderator is also required to moderate the results to ensure that assessment has been rigorous and fair, and to benchmark the quality of work against comparable programmes.

10.3. Integrated Assessment:

In accordance with the GDC Assessment Policy, assessments integrate knowledge, skills, attitudes and applied competence. Assessments include both formative and summative assessment.

