School of Design | Lancaster University

Design
Undergraduate Degrees
2025

Design
at Lancaster

Designers increasingly address complex issues faced by businesses and society, such as climate change, ageing populations, inequality, public health problems and rapid technological change. Learn to work in an industry that requires creative, collaborative agile designers capable of creating meaningful experiences in both our physical and digital worlds.

This degree will prepare you for a range of exciting careers within existing and emerging creative industries.

+ A creative design practice that is supported by historical, intellectual and theoretical content.

+ Work in our design studios to develop practical skills in design research, ideation, making, visualisation and presentation using specialist equipment and industry standard software.

+ Real world projects and live briefs that prepare you for professional practice.

+ Guest speakers and external organisations who provide insight into design and related industries.

Top 100

in the world for Art and Design
QS World University Subject Rankings 2024

4th

for Art & Design
Times Good University Guide 2024

6th

for Art and Design Graduate Prospects
Times Good University Guide 2024

Your **degree**

In your first year, you will be introduced to many practical design activities through studio-based teaching, whilst developing a broad knowledge of the theory of design.

During your second year, you will deepen your practical experience via intensive design studio modules focusing on design visualisation, materials and designing for people. You will also have opportunities to study optional modules in design interactions theory and design management.

During your final year, you will undertake design studio modules focusing on contexts and things, as well as conducting a design consultancy project with an external organisation and completing a major project/ dissertation in an area of design that interests you.

Year 1

Design Issues		Fundamentals: Design Studio		Fundamentals: Contemporary Arts and Design

You will gain a coherent, general picture of design as a multidisciplinary profession and an engine of innovation and creativity.

This module emphasises design as a force for social good, as such you will learn about contemporary issues in design that relate to sustainability, health, and wellbeing across a range of contexts.

Through studio-based teaching, you will work both individually and collaboratively to develop your practical research and design skills. You will be introduced to a broad range of design methods and industry-standard software such as Adobe Photoshop and InDesign. You will learn how to critically evaluate designs, conduct user and context research, frame problems, prototype physical and digital solutions, visualise your ideas and present them to a professional standard.

This is a two-part practical studio module designed to help you face the industry challenges of the future. You will study a mix of Human-Centred Design, Graphic Design, User Interactions and Experience (UI/UX). You will learn techniques to help you develop responses to user needs in changing industry contexts.

In the second part of the module, you will further develop your skills by producing a portfolio and prototype. The project will incorporate user research, concept development, iteration, and relevant theoretical sources.

On completing this module, you will demonstrate knowledge of human-centred design and your ability to progress research into viable and meaningful design solutions.

We introduce you to methods, tools, and critical concepts used by academics to understand creative work, its discussion and practice, both historically and today.

You'll be encouraged to think of yourself as a 'creative critic' who uses intelligent observations about the creative world to inform your own writing and making.

+

Minor Module

Availability is subject to entry requirements and timetabling restrictions.

OR

Joint Degree Module

If you are on a joint degree you will take the core module in your second subject (Fine Art or Marketing).

Year 2

Critical Reflections in Creative Arts

This module explores a number of key interdisciplinary philosophical and cultural concepts which will enable you to analyse, engage with, and reflect upon design practice.

The module usually covers six main areas:

+ Aesthetics, Formalism and Beyond
+ Phenomenology
+ Semiotics, Structuralism and Deconstruction
+ Class and Society
+ Feminism, Queer Theory and Gender
+ On Difference

+ Design Studio: People

You will focus on people as both the recipients and potential creators of design.

You will apply methods and tools to gain insights into the diversity of user groups (individuals, community, young, old, etc.) that may be both designed *for* and created *with*.

You will develop a deep awareness about the user experience by conducting research that includes gaining empathy with potential users, prototyping, testing and iterating potential design solutions.

+ Design Studio: Materials

You will develop your making skills using a range of different materials through experimentation and the development of design responses to particular problems. You will explore how an understanding of materials and technology informs and influences the development of design artefacts and how construction methods and associated technologies constrain and support the development of artefacts, both physical and digital in nature.

+ Design Studio: Visualisation

Through design studios and software labs, you will deepen your practical skills using a range of industry standard 2D and 3D software to visualise your design ideas to a high standard. You will also learn about the ways in which designers creatively use visualisation tools and visual thinking to develop their ideas, explore interventions and communicate possible futures to different audiences.

Optional modules

Design Interactions

You will gain a broad, historical and theoretical foundation for designing interactions between people, products and places. We support you in developing practical design skills and understanding how to evaluate interactions.

Design Management

You will learn about the knowledge and expertise design management brings to organisations. This module will prepare you to work with designers on strategic design issues, such as developing innovative services that are delivered through technology and the value of user experience design in various sectors.

Student work

Every year our final year students showcase their designs in a major degree show exhibition, which is open to the public.

www.lancaster.ac.uk/lica/degreeshow

Final Year

Dissertation	+	Design Studio: Things	+	Design Studio: Contexts	+	Design Consultancy

You will complete an independent research project on a topic of your choice. Research skills are taught via lectures/seminars and you will be supported through one-to-one supervision.

The dissertation can be a sustained piece of writing or a combination of writing and a practical output.

This speculative design studio considers the potential futures of emerging technologies (e.g. Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, Robots, Diamond Batteries, Biomimetic Materials, etc.).

You will create a range of artefacts that concretise future worlds in which new technologies might exist. You will learn to critically evaluate the implications of particular futures and learn how to visualise such futures to an external audience in a manner that is both plausible and engaging.

You will consider contemporary issues, such as environmental sustainability, health and wellbeing, and other 'wicked problems', through the exploration of a specific context (i.e. space, place, or practice).

You will conduct design research to develop a critical understanding of the problem context and apply practical design skills that respond to the findings of your contextual analysis.

You will learn what design consultancy is and how to become a design consultant by undertaking a practical design consultancy project with a real-world client.

During this module, you will develop skills in problem definition, data collection and analysis, design conceptualisation, visualisation or making, presentation and report writing.

Projects vary in nature as they respond to the client's needs, but it may take the form of a design audit, a new product development, design guidelines, brand positioning/strategy, or UX research.

Optional modules

Advanced Design Interactions	Innovation and Design	Creative Enterprise

You will learn about advanced, theoretical perspectives for design interactions, building upon the framework for designing interactive products and systems introduced in the second year Design Interactions module. You will extend your knowledge and understanding of the theory, research, and practice of design interactions into specialised areas, including human-computer, human-human, human-place and, human-system interactions.

You will advance your understanding of innovation as a discipline and how to identify and evaluate some of the different modes of innovation, such as incremental, radical and disruptive innovation.

Furthermore, you will practically explore the relationship between innovation and design by developing design concepts that employ 'innovation' thinking.

You will learn about the innovative ways in which creative practitioners produce and deliver their work. You will develop a working understanding of the key management and enterprise skills involved in delivering creative projects.

Degrees and
entry requirements

Degree			Duration	UCAS code	Typical offer
BA (Hons) Design	✈	💼	3 years	W281	ABB
BA (Hons) Fine Art and Design	✈	💼	3 Years	W1W2	ABB, plus portfolio
BSc (Hons) Marketing and Design			3 years	NW52	AAB

✈ Study abroad available

💼 Placement year available

Visit our website for more information on degree options, scholarships and entry requirements (such as BTECs).
www.lancaster.ac.uk

Charlie's career

I am working as a product designer for Formation Lighting, a service driven organisation specialising in bespoke lighting solutions. I am part of a growing design team working on refining the organisation's process for designing and manufacturing custom lighting while also working on new product development.

During my time at Lancaster, I developed an interest in sustainability and the BA Design course was flexible enough to allow me to direct many of my assignments towards sustainable design.

I am now gaining fantastic product design experience working with a company that is committed to developing sustainable lighting solutions by increasing energy efficiency, reducing waste through retrofitting and engaging with the circular economy.

Charlie Gliddon
BA (Hons) Design, graduated 2021

Teaching and **learning**

Design facilities and equipment

As a Design student at Lancaster, you will work in our purpose built design studios, digital art lab, installation spaces and fully equipped workshops. We have specialist fabrication equipment, including laser cutters and 3D printers, accompanied by access to industry standard design software.

Taught elements

You will have a combination of lectures and small group seminars, as well as time spent in our design studio.

Assessment

We use a variety of assessment methods. These include: portfolios, prototypes, essays, presentations, project reports and dissertations.

Your future
career

Placements and internships

Placements and internships are great ways to gain work experience, make professional contacts and help you decide your career path. A wide range of opportunities are available, some of which are paid. Places are not guaranteed but we will help you prepare for the competitive application process.

Our BA (Hons) Design and BA (Hons) Fine Art and Design degrees are available as a four year placement year option. With specialist support, you apply for a professional, paid work placement to conduct in Year 3 and return to Lancaster to complete your degree in Year 4.

You can also apply to the FASS internship scheme which runs paid internships in relevant sectors.

www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass placements

Study abroad and vacation travel

We partner with institutions around the world to provide exciting opportunities to travel, study and work abroad. Potential destinations currently include Australia, Canada and the USA.

Altenatively, we run short trips to destinations such as China, Germany, Ghana, Malaysia and Switzerland during the summer vacation. The trips include meeting local students and businesses as well as some academic study and cultural discovery.

www.lancaster.ac.uk/your global experience

Careers

Our graduates are at the cutting edge of critical design thinking. They are able to respond creatively to the evolving business environment and have the skills and experience to design innovative products, places, services and systems.

You will be equipped to enter a range of design careers such as:

+ Design consultant
+ Brand designer
+ Service designer
+ UX/UI designer
+ Graphic designer
+ Design ethnographer
+ Innovation consultant
+ Design researcher
+ Design manager

Throughout your degree, there will be a wealth of career guidance and support available from the Department and the University's Careers Service, which has specialist Careers Consultants. We have connections with some of the world's top graduate recruiters and employers, and organise careers fairs, workshops, and networking opportunities throughout the year.

www.lancaster.ac.uk/careers

Get in touch

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Important information