



MCAST

Malta College of Arts, Science & Technology

MQF Level 4

CA4-02-20

**MCAST Advanced Diploma in Graphic Design &
Interactive Media**

Course Specification

Course Description

This is a two year course that prepares students to to communicate ideas and solve problems through creative and innovative solutions. The course is taught by experienced graphic artists and designers and is an opportunity to form an understanding of graphic design and interactive media fundamentals.

Students will become familiar with fundamental principles, skills and media related to contemporary graphic design and interactive media practice. With an emphasis on the creative process, learners will be guided to master technical skills in preparation for more independent study at undergraduate level. Exploratory exercises, real life work and competitions all form part of the curriculum for ultimate effective learning experiences. All this seeks to bridge a link between the College and the creative industry. The course encourages students to develop a portfolio that is unique.

Programme Learning Outcomes

At the end of the programme the learner will be able to:

- 1. Develop creative skills through experimentation and exploration of different media in visual arts.*
- 2. Develop technical skills in a range of graphic design and interactive media software and methods.*
- 3. Demonstrate artistic abilities using multiple techniques.*
- 4. Understand the relationship between contemporary practices, historical, cultural, environmental and social influences.*

Entry Requirements

MCAST Diploma in Art and Design

or

MCAST Diploma in Media

or

4 SEC/O-Level /SSC&P (Level 3) passes

Compulsory: Art

Preferred: English Language

Other Entry Requirements

Applicants may be asked to sit for an interview and/or present a portfolio.

Current Approved Programme Structure

Unit Code	Unit Title	ECVET/ECTS
CAGDN-406-1701	Contextual Studies in Graphic Design	6
CAART-406-1622	Visual Communication	6
CAART-406-1625	Exploring Digital Media	6
CAART-406-1611	Principles of Design	6
CAMED-406-1607	Interactive Media Fundamentals	6
CACRM-406-1617	Communication Skills	6
CAGMA-406-1701	Basics of Game Engines	6
CACRM-406-1614	Digital Post Production for the Moving Image	6
CAMED-406-1701	Animation	6
CAART-406-1637	Layout Design for Print	6
CAART-406-1638	Digital Media Design Practice	6
CAFOT-406-1601	Photographic Media, Techniques and Technology	6
CAART-406-2000	Introduction to Drawing	6
CAART-406-2001	Introduction to Illustration	6
CASFT-406-2014	Basic of HTML and CSS	6
CASFT-406-2013	Basic of UI and UX	6
CAART-406-2002	Fundamentals of Art	6
CADSN-406-2005	Introduction to Entertainment Design	6
CAART-406-2003	Basic of 3D Modelling	6
CACRM-406-1616	Motion Graphics	6
CDKSK-404-1915	Employability and Entrepreneurial Skills	4
CDKSK-402-1914	Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Skills	2
CDKSK-406-1604	English	6
CDKSK-406-1601	IT	6
CDKSK-406-1628	Vocational Competencies in the Creative Arts	6
Total ECVET/ECTS		120

CAGDN-406-1701 Contextual Studies in Graphic Design

Level: MQF Level 4

Credits: 6

Unit Description

This unit aims to build the necessary skills and knowledge required by learners to investigate and comprehend Graphic Design practice and the social, historical and cultural events, theories and debates, with contextual reference and relevance to contemporary developments. Learners will use the knowledge and understanding of historical and contemporary Graphic Design gained in this unit to further inform and develop their practice within their specialist field of study and in the wider context of professional practice.

While exploring the historical context of key events, significant figures movements in the evolution of graphic design, the learner can relate to own design practice, and bring forward such learning to a contemporary social and cultural context.

Graphic Design reflects, translates and communicates social, political and cultural issues - ecology, environment, politics, war, health, education and welfare - visually. In understanding this, the learner is encouraged to interpret, develop and nurture own ideas and communicate observations in contemporary language, which informs and defines own specialist area of interest in design learning towards integration within the creative industry.

Learners will learn to appreciate, critique and evaluate the importance of visual language through historical developments while learning to apply such knowledge in the exploration of own unique visual grammar.

Research and documentation skills will be enforced through the selection and analysis of reliable sources, critique, and evaluation of source material towards the communication of learned skills through visual, verbal and written professional final outcomes.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this unit, learners will be able to:

1. *Research and record key developments in the history of Graphic Design.*
2. *Interpret and critique visually the work of graphic design movements/artists in reaction to and communication of historical social or cultural issues/events.*
3. *Research and report on the social, historical and cultural context of a historical graphic design piece.*
4. *Present a visual essay relating chosen graphic design work/visual language to a contemporary context.*

CAART-406-1622 Visual Communication

Level: MQF Level 4

Credits: 6

Unit Description

This unit introduces a number of design methods and techniques. And aims further, for students to develop skills in communicating ideas visually and succeed an ability of a design practitioner to effectively communicate a message. Different contexts require different means of communication, varying from artistic impressions to commercial persuasion. This unit will therefore introduce learners to a variety of visual communication tools and techniques, to prepare them for more specialized subjects. Students will learn to appropriately apply traditional and digital techniques, whilst encouraged to experiment and develop own ways and styles to convey information.

With practice, participants will also gain the ability to create skilful visual compositions and manipulate formal elements to achieve effective results that meet the purpose. Through research and investigation, participants will also learn to determine a target audience & understand clients. By identifying their needs and requirements students will learn to appropriately address design issues, as well as develop and adapt the ideas to meet those needs and requirements.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this unit, learners will be able to:

1. *Define Design Thinking and identify visual communication techniques.*
2. *Employ a variety of traditional tools and practice techniques to communicate ideas.*
3. *Employ a variety of digital tools and practice techniques to develop visual concepts.*
4. *Evaluate and improve own work.*

CAART-406-1625 Exploring Digital Media

Level: MQF Level 4

Credits: 6

Unit Description

This is a practical skill based unit where students will demonstrate an understanding of digital media applications in a creative context. Learners will demonstrate the ability to use required tools and techniques for digital imaging. Learners should show proficient uses of graphic design software and demonstrate this through a portfolio of work.

In completing the unit, students will have gained knowledge and understanding of the uses of digital media within their creative field and in a contemporary context. They will also develop the ability and understanding to allow them to use design software to a proficient level. This will include being able to save and file work effectively as well as being able to use other design tools for image editing and manipulation.

This unit should link closely to the industry in which the students study as well as serve as a good basic knowledge for further development and study. The students should produce a portfolio of work demonstrating their understanding of the required learning outcomes. This should take the form of a digital sketchbook or portfolio.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this unit, learners will be able to:

1. *Identify the uses of digital media in an Art and Design context.*
2. *Develop creative raster based designs.*
3. *Develop creative vector based designs.*
4. *Save, export and store correct file formats for both raster and vector designs.*

CAART-406-1611 Principles of Design

Level: MQF Level 4

Credits: 6

Unit Description

This unit has a practical outcome and may be linked to work experience or community art. It is intended to allow the learner to identify, contextualise, apply and evaluate the principles of design within a real world context. The unit allows learners to study the principles of design relating to the design process for their chosen specialism for example visual communication, three-dimensional design, fashion design or design crafts (this list is not exhaustive however and may be added to according to learner or programme design needs). Delivery of the unit recognises that there are generic principles of design which are common across disciplines and others which are specialism specific.

Furthermore the unit provides the opportunity for learners to contextualise the principles of design against the design requirements of a simulated¹ or live project brief in a design practice or simulated studio environment. The unit is also intended to allow for study via live case study rather than theoretical analysis, affording the application of acquired knowledge through practical work.

Finally, the work of the unit provides learners with the opportunity to undertake self-evaluation of their experiences in applying the principles of design in a working art and design environment.

¹ **Simulated Live Project** – a project where the delivery cannot take place in a workplace however the project brief is set by and monitored/supported by an external professional designer/maker and in all respects simulates a live project.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this unit, learners will be able to:

1. *Identify the principles of design.*
2. *Contextualise the principles of design against design requirements.*
3. *Apply the principles of design in a design project.*
4. *Evaluate the realisation of identified design principles in a design project or work placement.*

CACRM-406-1616 Motion Graphics

Level: MQF Level 4

Credits: 6

Unit description

This unit is skills-based which will enable learners to show that they have the skills necessary to research, plan, design, create and render a motion graphics sequence while also gaining a deeper understanding by way of an overview of the various disciplines involved.

This unit would suit candidates who wish to create motion graphics for the World Wide Web, multimedia presentations, television, film and other audio-visual environments.

On completion of the unit, learners will be able to interpret the creative and identify the technical requirements of a brief, then research and plan a motion graphics sequence using traditional and/or digital storyboarding techniques. While researching for the project, the learner will be exposed to a range of motion graphics sequences for a range of purposes, from the world wide web, to television and film. The learner will then collect and manipulate appropriate audio/visual assets for use in the final sequence. These assets could be self-generated or existing assets with appropriate copyright clearance. Using image editing, audio editing and video editing and encoding software, the learner will prepare and save the audio/visual assets for integration in a motion graphics application. The prepared assets will then be manipulated to create a coherent motion graphics sequence using tools, techniques, materials and motion graphics/animation software appropriate to the task. Key techniques include key framing assets parameters, such as scale, rotation, opacity and effect parameters. The learner will finally render the final sequence, having recommended appropriate codecs/file formats appropriate to the brief.

The learner will have gained the skills and confidence to successfully plan and execute a complex motion graphics sequence.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit the learner will be able to

- 1. Plan a motion graphics sequence*
- 2. Source assets for use in a motion graphics sequence*

3. *Manipulate and edit assets for use in a motion graphics sequence*
4. *Create a motion graphics sequence to meet the requirements of a given brief*

CAMED-406-1607 Interactive Media Fundamentals

Level: MQF Level 4

Credits: 6

Unit Description

With the ever-increasing demand for social connectivity, interactive media products have become commonplace as a communication tool between the businesses and the individual. The increase in popularity within this field has shifted the designer's role into bringing fitness for purpose and usability to the forefront of interactive product development. For this reason, practitioners must have a fundamental understanding of the design principles required to produce effective interactive media products.

This unit provides a practical basis for learners to study the role and use of interactive media products within the industry, and should stipulate a basis for future career opportunities in interactive product creation.

Throughout the development of this unit, learners should gain a basic working knowledge of interactive media as a communication tool, with special reference to the role of proper design processes in the creation of interactive media products. They should be further guided through the assessment of user needs using research and first-hand enquiry, ultimately synthesizing the necessary elements into a functional prototype or application. The importance of design should be consolidated and represented in the learners' practical work, and consider the properties of the intended interactive systems and hardware.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this unit, learners will be able to:

1. *Demonstrate an understanding of contemporary practices in interactive media.*
2. *Demonstrate an applied knowledge of User-Centered Design and Experience.*
3. *Produce an application for a chosen device.*
4. *Assess a designed interactive media project.*

CACRM-406-1617 Communication Skills

Level: MQF Level 4

Credits: 6

Unit Description

This is a skills based unit and will allow learners to demonstrate that they have the skills and knowledge necessary for competent performance in a competitive interview context within the Art and Design Sector. Learners will learn how to prepare, perform and present art / design work effectively to demonstrate their skill and creativity at the level required by the employer. Learners will also develop the ability to reflect on and evaluate their performance post interview.

This unit is relevant to learners looking to apply for work within the Art and Design sector. On completion of this unit, learners will have the necessary skills to research a range of Art and Design career pathways, prepare for and participate in an interview. This unit introduces the importance of research, communication, presentation skills and reflection in relation to seeking employment. This unit will provide the learner with the necessary skills to identify opportunities, respond effectively to the required application process, create a CV, develop a portfolio tailored to a specified role, participate in an interview, review and evaluate personal performance.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this unit, learners will be able to:

1. *Prepare for an interview for an identified role within the Media sector.*
2. *Create a portfolio for an identified role.*
3. *Participate competently in an interview for an identified role.*
4. *Reflect and evaluate personal performance following an interview.*

CAGMA-406-1701 Basics of Game Engines

Level: MQF Level 4

Credits: 6

Unit Description

This unit aims to introduce the fundamental concepts and techniques of game development using industry-standard software. Through the use of established game engines, learners will gain an understanding of basic concepts in logic and programming, including the specifications and resources required to create and release their own digital game.

Throughout the delivery of this unit, learners are encouraged to explore computer and mobile games currently available to the market and familiarize with the common tools and components available to aid the creation of viable game mechanics. By observing making-of articles and footage, learners will begin to understand the technical detail that goes into creating games, including the various responsibilities in any development studio.

Learners will be taught to understand programming logic, by compiling technical documentation intended at supporting the production of their own digital game. Throughout this time, the learner is encouraged to collect or create the resources needed for their game, supported with a short design document to communicate their ideas. Technical documentation including flowcharts, pseudocode and game walkthroughs will help visualize gameplay mechanics, as well as provide a basis for the code to follow. Workshops and tutorials will set the groundwork for an understanding of basic code terminologies and development techniques, which the learner will further use to create and showcase their own game project.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this unit, learners will be able to:

- 1. Recognise industry tools and techniques in the creation of a digital game.*
- 2. Construct documentation supporting game specifications and internal logic.*
- 3. Apply relevant tools and techniques in the creation of a simple digital game.*
- 4. Revise final outcome to ensure product stability and completeness.*

CACRM-406-1614 Digital Post Production for the Moving Image

Level: MQF Level 4

Credits: 6

Unit Description

This unit will introduce learners to the required understanding of the post-production stage of the digital film. This unit will also develop learners understanding of the post-production process for moving image. This will be achieved through exploring the professional practice of digital finishing and developing their own technical and creative skills.

Knowledge will be tested through exploring various aspects of post-production and finishing. The importance of shooting DSLR footage Flat and the use of intermediate Codecs must be prioritised to obtain the desired results during digital post-production. Understanding the process of effects, grading and chroma-key will be encouraged throughout. Learners will develop an understanding of these qualities through research discussion and given practical examples. This will take the form of a series of tests and in lab/studio, practical exercises which students can then collate in the form of a skills demo reel. Students will also be expected to demonstrate an appreciation that their work is crucial to the final product during a production and can affect the success of failure of such venture.

Throughout the unit, students will be encouraged to test and adopt their learnt skills to develop and produce their own demo reel of test pieces during the practical sessions of the unit. This can also be linked with the Music video or Advertising unit.

Students will be taught that post production does not merely involve the technical elements and processes but is an artistic form. Students will be expected to demonstrate their artistic flair, apart from their technical skills during the practical sessions of the unit (which again can be shown in the music video unit).

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this unit, learners will be able to:

1. *Describe current uses of digital post production and compositing.*
2. *Plan and show the preparation and workflow for digital post production.*
3. *Produce test pieces of compositing, grading, filters/effects and chroma-key using given or own digital moving image material.*
4. *Evaluate the post-production workflow used throughout the unit.*

CAMED-406-1701 Animation

Level: MQF Level 4

Credits: 6

Unit Description

This unit is designed to provide the learner with the knowledge and skills involved in the design and production of a traditional as well as contemporary animation techniques. Primarily Learners are introduced to the history, techniques, and principles of animation through a series of practical examples of both traditional and modern digital animation. This unit would be suitable for learners wishing to develop greater competence in the design, creation and production of animation techniques for various applications.

This Unit will focus on teaching learners animation techniques, starting from traditional disciplines such as, Cel animation, frame by frame, stop motion, time-lapse etc. As well as digital animation, using digital tools, techniques and software. Apart from the tools and techniques, learners will also gain understanding of the design methods applied in animation; establishing a narrative, converting ideas into Shots, story boarding, preproduction, as well as the production of the final animation in different formats for different platforms to a given theme or brief.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this unit, learners will be able to:

1. *Identify and experiment with animation principles, tools and techniques.*
2. *Develop concepts, and produce storyboards and animatics for an animation.*
3. *Plan and produce artwork for an animation.*
4. *Evaluate and present final work.*

CAART-406-1637 Layout Design for Print

Level: MQF Level 4

Credits: 6

Unit Description

Layout Design for Print, whether for information, promotional or editorial visual messages is a crucial aspect of visual communication. We are surrounded by visual communication in our everyday lives from on screen messages, publications, packaging and newsprint. Layout Design for Print production is a complex and challenging skill set incorporating grids and typography. Designers require the ability to select suitable fonts and structures to demonstrate an understanding of the elements used in the creation of a layout and why they work. This unit will give the learner an introduction to the theory of developing typographic and layout design for print.

This is a theory and practical based unit and will allow learners to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the factors that impair and improve visual communication. Learners will develop a deeper understanding of the rules and conventions accepted in the practice within the graphic design industry.

The unit is relevant to learners wishing to further develop their knowledge of graphic design, specifically for print outcomes including corporate literature, packaging, signage and magazine spreads.

Learners will carry out evaluations of the effectiveness of the affecting factors utilised within their own design solutions and those used by others.

Finally, learners should have the underpinning knowledge and understanding of development and should feel confident to extend their experience in the design of visual communications.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this unit, learners will be able to:

1. *Evaluate a range of design features in typography and layout design for print*
2. *Use appropriate terminology within typography and layout design for print*
3. *Apply the use of appropriate computer software and hardware to create typographic and layout design for print*
4. *Confidently apply document set up and export for print and present a hard copy of completed design (print) to a high quality standard.*

CAART-406-1638 Digital Media Design Practice

Level: MQF Level 4

Credits: 6

Unit Description

A skills-heavy unit allowing learners to demonstrate they have the required skills to effectively use appropriate desktop publishing software and other digital tools to create a finished final outcome according to a self-imposed brief. This final outcome should not be restricted to graphic design, but could also involve interactive media or game design elements. Learners will be able to competently use the tools, functions and features of the chosen software package to create a final outcome that is representative of the creative career path they wish to pursue. Prior knowledge or experience in using Adobe software and other packages used for interactive media and game design applications gained through previous units is essential to this unit. A basic level of competence in using ICT is also necessary before commencing this unit.

This unit is relevant to learners wishing to further their knowledge of professional digital design media practice and gain experience showcasing and presenting creative work. On completion of the unit, learners will understand how to produce inspiration boards, display development ideas and showcase final solutions, as well as developing the skills required to produce such work. Learners will become familiar with various tools to aid design and thus gain a certain level of confidence using the software package of their choice.

Learners will have the opportunity to create sophisticated and purposeful visual outcomes, whilst reinforcing their creative design process, from the brief to final solution.

Finally, through the nature of the design briefs and practical tasks involved, learners will undertake some theory work whilst producing practical outcomes. Learners will become familiar with digital media practitioners from different contexts and will therefore build on their knowledge of historical and current developments in graphic design. Ultimately this will further the learners' knowledge and understanding of digital media design practice.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this unit, learners will be able to:

1. *Develop a creative brief after carrying out personal research from varied contextual sources including contemporary digital design media practice.*
2. *Experiment with specialist media, tools and techniques related to their intended area of specialisation within digital design media practice.*
3. *Generate solutions to a negotiated brief and present these items as polished final outcomes.*
4. *Understand the factors at play when reviewing and developing a design outcome.*

CAFOT-406-1601 Photographic Media, Techniques and Technology

Level: MQF Level 4

Credits: 6

Unit Description

The aim of this unit is to develop knowledge, understanding and skills across the range of processes involved in different photographic media, techniques and technology which contribute to the creative photographic process. At the end of the unit, learners will be able to use this knowledge in the creation of their own photographic images.

Through experimentation and learning over a long period of time, a range of skills and techniques have been developed which professional photographers employ and adapt to their own uses. In many cases, a photographer's choice of materials and techniques can create a unique "look" which can become identified with a particular photographer. In the past such identities have made some photographers internationally famous. Some processes involve working with potentially harmful equipment which have health and safety implications. Therefore, learners must be made aware of these implications so that they can work safely without exposing themselves and others to harm. Digital technologies have largely replaced the use of film in photography. Digital photography is now almost exclusively the medium of choice for professional photographers. Progression through the unit allows learners to critically assess their working practices. Learners will acquire the ability to understand the uses and implications of different aspects of these techniques and technologies.

Learners will also be able to creatively review the visual impact of their work and reflect on the effect that the use of different techniques and technologies has had on their work. Learners will also be able to review their work in the light of relevant health and safety practices. As the learners progress through the unit, their personal experience and learning will offer a better understanding of photographic media, techniques and technologies and be able to formulate their preferences and style in their own photographic work.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this unit, learners will be able to:

- 1. Independently assess the uses and impact of various photographic media, techniques and technologies.*
- 2. Use all such media, techniques and technologies safely.*
- 3. Understand the uses and characteristics of various photographic equipment, materials, techniques and properties.*
- 4. Understand their own use of photographic media, techniques and technologies.*