

# Open Window Honours degree

## BACHELOR OF ARTS HONOURS IN VISUAL COMMUNICATION

HEQC Ref number: H/PR229/E001CAN

SAQA Ref number: 62991

### INTRODUCTION

The programme is designed for people with an interest in the field of visual communication design. The programme is appropriate for first-degree qualification students who are looking to develop their academic skills and practical expertise to professional standards. The programme will ensure postgraduate abilities and focuses primarily on advanced conceptual understanding and academic insight in an area of focus; a polished utilisation of technical skills; advanced problem-solving abilities and a sound understanding of professional practice.

Specialisation disciplines include: **animation, video, interactive media design, communication design and illustration**. Students will be given the opportunity to showcase their work at the end their studies utilising appropriate space and methods of display.

Through a series of **workshops, critiques and seminars**, structured as learning opportunities in both practical and theoretical components, students engage in research and problem-solving skills in order to promote professionalism in design practice. Students rehearse presentations and pitching on professional level to successfully communicate information and ideas. The critiques done by industry specialists have an elective structure and are mostly directed towards the honing of practical outcomes. The theory-based seminars will address key issues confronting the contemporary visual communicator and is structured within the Visual Culture component.

### COURSE STRUCTURE

**PRACTICAL COMPONENTS:** The following practical components are required

1. **Own choice:** Independent project reflecting the student's area of focus and interest. This component must result in a professional presentation applicable to the choice of discipline.

As the compulsory practical component of the Honours course at The Open Window, students are required to create an independent, non-commissioned project focusing on a particular discipline **reflecting the student's own area of specialisation**. Students need to keep in mind that their choice of discipline for the practical project will also influence the topic for their dissertation. (Minimum of 36 credits)

2. **Industry projects:** Execution of projects for clients as part of an in-house studio or under the supervision of a recognised industry partner. The second component entails the execution of practical projects as part of a commissioned-based learning facility. Full-time students will have access to this structured facility. Students who are employed and study part time may use their own professional industry-related projects to credit this component. These projects must, however, be presented in adherence to the practical and research requirements. (Maximum of 24 credits)

### THEORY COMPONENTS

#### Dissertation

As one component of the Honours course at The Open Window, students will be expected to write a dissertation of at least 50 pages. The dissertation is intended to serve as support and/or theoretical grounding for the practical project, and should combine theoretical research, analysis, and original insight. Depending on the topic,

the student might also use quantitative research results.

The topic of the dissertation is open to the student's discretion, within reason. The student's choice of topic is limited by the student's choice of discipline in their practical project. If, for example, a student chooses to create a video for their practical project, the dissertation has to focus on video and/or film. By the same token, choosing to create interactive media presentations for the practical project would limit the student to material related to Interactive Media.

This structure allows for elective focus on the part of the student, without necessitating a series of disparate courses.

While the broad choice of topic for the dissertation is influenced by the choice of practical project, the precise relation between the two remains relatively flexible. For example, should the student choose to create a documentary video, he/she could write the dissertation on a variety of video-related material: marketing and production cycle of documentary film, OR the film language of a particular documentary filmmaker, OR the use of documentary in political contexts, etc.

### Visual Culture

Visual Culture contains the following components

- Research skills
- Knowledge of cultural, art and design history
- Familiarity with contemporary cultural discourses.

Should a candidate not be familiar with the cultural discourses set out in the programme guide, The Open Window might require the candidate to enrol for Visual Culture 3, modules 1 and 2. Such studies might be undertaken parallel with Visual Culture 4.

Applicants who did not complete their Visual Culture at The Open Window during the last three years are required to complete a reading list prior to enrolment.

### BUSINESS PRACTICE

Workshop-based programme including themes on entrepreneurial issues, media business law, human resource management and advanced marketing research.

### Summary

NQF Level	F/C/E	ID number	Unit Standard Title	Credits	TOTAL
<b>Research methodology      Convener: Henri Laurie      (24)</b>					
7	F	242915	Apply research methodologies in order to compile in a major research report in a public sector context	6	
7	F	117434	Conduct research	6	
7	F	10117	Conduct proper research to identify and explain target markets and product positioning on a professional level	6	
7	E	11522/328	Describe research problems (in the context of Visual Communication)	6	24
<b>Visual Culture      Convener: Hougaard Winterbach      (24)</b>					
7	F		Apply knowledge of cultural, art and design history in academic context	12	
7	F		Demonstrate an understanding of contemporary cultural discourses.	12	24
<b>Professional Practice / Business Practice: Convener: Anette Barnard</b>					

(12)					
7	E		Apply developed marketing and advertising concepts.	6	
7	E	<a href="#">7871</a>	Start up and manage a small business	2	
7	E		Place achieved outcomes within an entrepreneurial context and within a financial perspective	2	
7	E		Demonstrate an understanding of managing a company within the boundaries of media and labour law	2	12
<p><b>Practical Components:</b></p> <p>Conceive, envision, creatively investigate and resolve visual, auditory and kinaesthetic communication problems on a professional level.</p> <p>Develop and explore an area of expertise and critically position his/her own work in relation to that field.</p>					
<p><b>Practical Component: Own choice / Elective      Conveners: HODs</b> (Minimum 36)</p>					
7	E		Select and undertake an approved research project executed in a specialised area (sector) in Visual Communication	12	
7	F		Produce work of conceptual and professional standard	12	
7	F		Produce work of industry standard on technical level	12	36
<p><b>Practical Component: Commissioned      Convener: Frikkie Vermeulen</b> (Maximum 24)</p>					
7	E		Produce work of high conceptual standard	7	
7			Adhere effective production and design process principles in addressing the communication problem	5	
7	C		Produce work professional industry-related projects	7	
7	C		Apply effective project management	5	24
					<b>120</b>

## PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

The learner must be able to present a body of work, structured within a selected field of choice, produced to a professional level of technical, conceptual expertise and supported by appropriate academic research.

### CRITICAL OUTCOMES

Deliver appropriate design solutions which rely on responsible and creative thinking:

- Understand the meaning of a visual environment (contextualising) and have insight into the design process as a cultural, economic, social, ethical, ecological and ideological product (insight) and finding.
- Understand and utilise the intrinsic function of design components within a multimedia context.
- Collect, organise, analyse and evaluate the necessary information to address a specific problem within the creative and marketing domain.

- Demonstrate artistic sensibility and knowledge of dominant and contemporary approaches and styles.
- Critically evaluate the communicative and functional aspects of image, text, sound and movement to create a successful message.
- Demonstrate effective presentation skills (from concept to final artwork) by creating rapport and negotiations within the applied field.
- Develop and maintain applicable campaign, media and creative strategies.
- Construct practical solutions by applying the outcomes of solution-focused theoretical research.
- Organise and manage oneself and a creative team to the benefit of the client and the creator.

#### VALUE OUTCOMES / ASSOCIATED ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- Active support and building of academic and disciplinary integrity.
- Demonstrate responsible work ethic: Working creatively but prudently in service of the product/brand and design as a whole.
- Explore his/her competencies in harmony and respect with cultural and environmental sensitivities, thereby developing a macro-vision on the design and multimedia industries and their role as visual communicators in it.
- Striving for excellence in the field of visual communication design.
- Values and ethics for the visual communicator are instilled
- Communication is clarified to all stakeholders within the boundaries of the contact's understanding of the visual communication process.
- Professional conduct, behavioural and ethical practices within teamwork is explored.
- Constructive criticism and conflict situations are dealt with using facilitation methods.
- Brainstorming techniques are used and creative outcomes are measured against applicability to target markets, product positioning and branding requirements.
- Roles and responsibilities of the visual communication designer are explained and mirrored.
- Production processes are explained and demonstrated within the different media sectors (print, screen, video and sound).
- Technical considerations are explained within the different media sectors (print, screen, video and sound).
- Marketing theories are tested against existing campaigns and evaluated.
- Design for television, world wide web, print, promotional; and point-of-sale material is described and techniques applied.
- The function of design is discussed and applied to corporate identities, editorial design, information design, branding and marketing material.
- Creative problem solving and design are applied in various media: websites, print media, interactive media, animation, photographic and traditional media

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## ADMISSION CRITERIA

### Entry requirements:

At least 360 credits, of which at least 120 credits will be from the First Degree Visual Communication (NQF level 6) or equivalent qualification are required.

**Open Window students:** To gain access to the Honours degree the applicant must have obtained a Degree in Visual Communication Design at The Open Window: Students who passed the degree with an average higher than 60 % may apply to enrol for the Honours Degree level.

**Other institutions:** An Academic Committee (AC) will conduct selection of students who obtained Degree level from other institutions. Only students who have passed comparable courses at tertiary level will be considered: BA Information Design, BA Fine Arts, BA Graphic Design, B.Arch. These students will be required to study a list of reading material that will ensure a basic understanding of concepts covered in the Visual Culture programme. Depending on the area of expertise that the applicant wishes to pursue, the AC will give guidelines on ensuring proper level of entry. Orientation lectures will bring students on par.

**Recognition of prior learning (RPL):**

Credit for experience-based competencies will be awarded to a learner who has provided evidence that his/her skills adhere to the requirements of the specified outcomes of the programmes offered.

RPL procedure: Make an appointment with the HOD, a lecturer/expert in the field and Academic Director (during selection interview). To submit an academic record is optional, but creative work in a portfolio is compulsory for this meeting.

The level of proficiency will be verified by at least two expert assessors (HOD + lecturer/expert). Competency tests might be required in subjects such as IMD and Animation.

**Provisional Candidature:**

When an applicant for an Honours degree does not demonstrate an appropriate academic research background, provisional candidature will be considered in the following circumstances:

An applicant will be asked to successfully adhere to the requirements of all or parts of the graduate program offered by The Open Window. For example if a student who completed his/her studies at another institution and wants to do an Honours in Animation, they might be required to complete Visual Culture 2 module 2 and Visual Culture 3 modules 1 and 2.

An extended research proposal may be required. The student will not be required to enrol for a subject, pay fees or do an exam. No record of the unit undertaken will appear on an academic record.

**Procedures for selection:**

1. Applicants must adhere to above mentioned requirements
2. Make appointment for selection interview (First week in April)
3. During interview provide latest academic records and present final year portfolio (exit level on NQF 6)
4. Upon initial go-ahead prepare proposal (according to guidelines set by VC department). Proposals must reach Henri Laurie (henri@openwindow.co.za) by the first week in May.
5. Outcomes of final selection based on proposals will reach applicants by the end of May
6. Classes will commence in June (Date will be specified)

## CONTACT SESSIONS and TEACHING METHODOLOGY

**Duration of the course:**

One and a half year, starting June

OR

One year, starting January

**Contact sessions:**

Visual Culture: 2 hours every 2<sup>nd</sup> week

Dissertation: 2 hours per month (to be scheduled with practical + theory tutors)

Practical components: 4 hours every second week

Business practice: 2 hours per month

## ASSESSMENTS AND MARKING

### Theory components:

- Internal evaluation of written essay submission
- External evaluation of written essay submission, coursework, workshops, seminars, a contextual essay/mini dissertation and major projects
- Continuous assessment in every section
- Year marks are determined by the unit totals. Students must pass every unit.

### Practical component:

- Final marks are aggregates of three progress marks.
- Formal assessments will take place every 3-4 months. Formal assessments involve moderators (internal).
- Final assessment takes place in October and includes a full external moderation

### Re-examinations:

- Re-examinations in the Business Unit and Visual Culture.
- No other re-examinations are allowed

## WHAT WILL BE ASSESSED, WHEN, HOW AND BY WHOM?

### Exhibition component

Projects such as works of illustration, design, animation, installation or any outcome resulting from creative investigations shall be presented in a professional gallery or appropriate venue approved by the AC. Approval for the exhibition space must be done at least 6 months before the final exhibition.

### Components

Upon evaluation the following components must be presented:

- The practical projects presented in a formal environment
- Three copies of a printed catalogue/portfolio
- Three copies of an interactive DVD on the practical work
- Three copies of the written thesis

One of each of the above mentioned items must be retained permanently in the library and the archives.

## THE EXAMINATION

Four independent examiners will award marks.

The examination panel consists of:

- A moderator from industry,
- a moderator from an academic institution,
- the supervisor (assigned tutor),
- an expert in the chosen field of study

The examiners evaluate the exhibition independently without communicating with each other.

Reports on the examination will be provided and candidates must pass all requirements to obtain the qualification.

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## COSTS (2010)

Full-time study (1 year)	R32 200
Part-time study (18 months)	R48 300
Registration fee	R 5 000

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## GUIDELINES

### **Documents issued on request:**

- How to write a proposal
- Reading list for Visual Culture

### **Documents available upon enrolment:**

- Programme Guide
  - Timetable and year-planner
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**For further information contact the Academic Director**

**Francisca Badenhorst**

Work number      +27124708681  
Fax number        086 5699168  
Email                fran@openwindow.co.za