Visual Communication Design Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of the Study Specifications and the Terms used in the study?

The Study Specifications are the key concepts and provide the structure of VCE Visual Communication Design. The Study Specifications are on pages 12-18 of the study design.

The Terms used in the Study on pages 19-20 also provide definitions of terms used in all Areas of Study in Units 1-4 and are examinable. Teachers should unpack the Specifications and Terms used in the Study as an introduction to Visual Communication Design. Further information about the Study Specifications and Terms used in the Study are in the Learning approaches under Planning in the Support Materials on the VCE Visual Communication Design study design webpage.

#### Are the Gestalt Principles applied in Units 1 -4?

The Gestalt Principles are defined in the Study Specifications on page 16 with the Design elements and Design Principles. They are relevant principles in all fields of design practice and should be considered when analysing and generating, developing and refining visual communications. The Gestalt Principles are intrinsically embedded into all the Key Knowledge and Skills across Units 1-4.

How is Visual language defined across Units 1-4?

Across Units 1-4 visual language is used to communicate ideas, information, and solutions to stakeholders. As defined in the Study Specifications, designers use visual language by combing pictorial, symbolic and typographic elements relevant to the field of design practice. Teachers should familiarise their students with the characteristics of visual language relevant to all fields of design practice: Environments, Objects, Messages, and Interactive Experiences.

Unit 1 Area of Study 2 focuses on developing the student’s knowledge of visual language in the Develop and Deliver stages of the VCD design process. In Unit 2 Area of Study 2 students investigate how meaning can be conveyed using visual language in culturally appropriate design practices.

In Unit 3 Area of Study 2, students research and analyse the use of visual language, aesthetic considerations and decisions, and how they contribute to the communication of information or ideas. Aesthetic considerations include the use of design elements and principles, Gestalt principles of perception and the conventions of the field of design practice working together to communicate information and ideas to users or stakeholders.

#### What is the relationship between design ideas, concepts and solutions, and the phases of the VCD design process?

Design ideas, Design concepts and Design solutions are explained in the Study specifications on page 14 of the Visual Communication Design study design. They are closely related to the phases of the VCD design process and use either convergent or divergent thinking strategies combined with design elements, design principles, the Gestalt Principles, and methods, media and materials.

Design ideas are generated using divergent thinking strategies and can be generated and developed at the Discover, Define and Develop phases of the VCD Design process. Design ideas can be written or visual. In Unit 1 and 2, students brainstorm, develop and present design ideas. In Unit 3 Area of Study 1, students investigate the techniques used by designers to evaluate design ideas in their design practice. They apply this knowledge in Unit 3 Area of Study 3 where they generate, develop and present design ideas drawing on design criteria documented in a design brief. In Unit 4 these design ideas are evaluated, selected, and evolved into design concepts.

Design concepts are developed, resolved and refined from Design ideas using convergent thinking in the Deliver phase of the VCD design process. In Units 1 and 2, students develop and present design concepts in all four fields of design practice. In Unit 4, convergent thinking is applied in the Deliver phase of the design process to resolve and refine design concepts from the design ideas presented in Unit 3.

Design solutions are resolved design concepts and are presented in a format appropriate to the field of design practice in the Deliver phase of the VCD design process. In Units 1 and 2, students present design solutions in all four fields of design practice. In Unit 4 Area of Study 2, in the Deliver stage of the VCD design process, students present two distinct design solutions for two distinctly different communication needs.

#### What is the relationship between development, documentation and presentation drawings, and the phases of the VCD design process?

Development, Documentation, and Presentation drawings are explained in the Study specifications on page 15 of the study design under Methods. These drawings are produced at different stages of the VCD design process. Development, Documentation and Presentation drawings can be produced using manual and digital methods.

Development drawings are used in both the Develop and Deliver stages of the VCD design process to visualise design ideas and concepts. In Units 1 and 2, students develop knowledge and skills in the use of development drawings and drawing conventions specific to all four fields of design practice, and the drawings are used to generate and develop ideas, and to resolve and refine concepts. In Units 3 and 4, development drawings are used specifically in Unit 3 Area of study 3 when students are generating and developing ideas, and in Unit 4 Area of Study 1 when they are developing, resolving and refining concepts.

Documentation drawings are mainly used to define and record technical specifications of objects and environments. Documentation drawings are used to develop concepts and present final solutions in the Develop and Deliver phases of the VCD Design process. Unit 1 Area of Study 3 specifically refers to the use of documentation in the field of Objects and Unit 2 Area of Study 1 refers to the use of documentation drawings in the field of Environments.

It is important to note that both development and documentation drawings can be completed within the same aspect of the design process.

Presentation drawings convey resolved ideas to stakeholders and users, and generally present finalised design solutions. Documentation drawings are often used in Presentation drawings to show technical specifications of final solutions.

#### What are the conventions of the fields of design practice?

Each field of design practice has conventions that are unique to the field. Design principles and the Gestalt Principles are the conventions used to arrange the design elements and apply across all fields of design practice.

In the fields of Environments and Objects, technical drawing conventions such as symbols, dimensions and scales are applied to documentation drawings. A technical drawing specifications guide, including the conventions of two-dimensional and three-dimensional drawing methods, is published as support material on the Visual Communication Design study design page.

In the field of Messages and Interactive experiences conventions include typographic conventions (such as font styles, kerning, tracking and pictorial representations), packaging nets, printing, grids, layouts, site maps and wire frames. Further information regarding conventions for Messages and Interactive experiences are included in the Planning section of the Support materials for Visual Communication Design.

In Units 1 and 2 each Area of Study focuses on a specific design field and students must study the conventions relevant to the field of design practice. Units 3 and 4 provide students with the opportunities to focus on one or two fields of design practice and their conventions.

#### How are aesthetic impacts, considerations and decisions defined in VCE Visual Communication Design?

In VCE Visual Communication Design aesthetics are the way the Design elements, design principles, Gestalt principles, methods, materials and media work together to communicate ideas and information. The relationship of these factors will vary in each field of design practice and the use of conventions.

Aesthetic considerations are important in establishing examples of good design in each field of design practice. Aesthetic considerations are an intention that guides a design. The designer intends to create a visual effect that will satisfy the user or audience preferences.

Aesthetic decisions are the choice made by a designer based on the considerations and the aesthetic purposes and functions of design elements, design principles and Gestalt principles.

#### What are the listed factors that influence design practice in VCE Visual Communication Design? What is the difference between functions and factors?

Across Units 1-4 technological, economic, social, cultural and environmental factors are considered in design practice. The factors can vary depending on the field of design practice. In some fields of design practice context can be considered a factor.

In VCE Visual Communication design, function relates to the use and features of Design elements, Design principles and the Gestalt principles of visual perception. Function is closely related to aesthetic impact, considerations and decisions.

#### How is context defined in VCE Visual Communication Design?

Across Units 1 – 4 the definition of the context of visual communications is often influenced by the field of design practice. Context can be the location and time where the visual communication is created, located or viewed. Context can also refer to the location and place where designers work such as client and studio-based practices that are local and/or international.

What are the legal obligations relevant to the different fields of design practice in Visual Communication Design Units 3 and 4?

The legal obligations of designers are explained in the Study Specifications on page 17 of the Visual Communication Design study design. Students should understand the legal obligations regarding copyright and trademark use and understand the legal obligations faced by designers in industry and professional contexts. They need to understand how these legal obligations are applied to their own work. Some of the relevant legal obligations for each field of design practice can include the following:

* Messages – copyright, trademark, use of style guides, creative commons
* Objects – patents, design registration, safety standards
* Environmental – safety standards, building code, council regulations, accessibility
* Interactive experiences – copyright, data privacy, accessibility.

However, this is not a definitive list and legal obligations can depend on the context and characteristics of the field of design practice and the examples that the students study.

#### How many designers and fields of design practice should the students study in Unit 3 Area of Study 1 and 2?

Unit 3 Area of Study 1 and 2 are interrelated and the Areas of Study prepare the students for their study in a specific field (or fields) of design practice in Unit 3. It is up to individual schools to design the teaching and learning for Outcome 1 and 2 taking into consideration their student cohort. In Unit 3 Area of Study 1 students should study more than one designer for the outcome. They are required to compare the contexts in which the designers work so the designers can come from the same field of design practice or different fields of design practice. Students must also describe and compare past, present and future professional design practices so they must study historical and contemporary design practices. In VCE Visual Communication Design a contemporary designer is defined as a designer who is practising current to the year of study for Units 3 and 4, and should be working at least post 2000, to be deemed contemporary.

In Unit 3 Area of Study 2 students are required to compare and analyse more than one design example. Therefore, the examples can come from the same field of design practice or different fields. In both Areas of Study 1 and 2, the key knowledge and skills for the outcome must be specific to the field of design practice of the selected designer and design examples.