

**Updated – version 1.1**

Amendments to study design history

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| Version | Status | Release Date | Comments |
| 1.1 | Current | September 2023 | Study specification details for Intellectual property and copyright have been updated (page 18). |
| 1.0 | Superseded | January 2023 | Original study design. |

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Important information

Accreditation period

Units 1–4: 1 January 2024 – 31 December 2028

Implementation of this study commences in 2024.

Other sources of information

The [*VCAA Bulletin*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/news-and-events/bulletins-and-updates/bulletin/Pages/index.aspx) is the only official source of changes to regulations and accredited studies. The Bulletin also regularly includes advice on VCE studies. It is the responsibility of each VCE teacher to refer to each issue of the Bulletin. The Bulletin is available as an e-newsletter via [free subscription](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Footer/Pages/Subscribe.aspx) on the VCAA website.

To assist teachers in developing courses, the VCAA publishes online [Support materials](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/visualcommunicationdesign/Pages/Index.aspx) (incorporating the content previously supplied in the *Advice for teachers*).

The current [*VCE Administrative Handbook*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/vce-vcal-handbook/Pages/index.aspx) contains essential information on assessment processes and other procedures.

VCE providers

Throughout this study design the term ‘school’ is intended to include both schools and other VCE providers.

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Introduction

Scope of study

Visual Communication Design is distinct in its study of visual language and the role it plays in communicating ideas, solving problems and influencing behaviours. Students learn how to manipulate type and imagery when designing for specific contexts, purposes and audiences. They choose and combine manual and digital methods, media and materials with design elements and principles. In doing so, students learn how aesthetic considerations contribute to the effective communication and resolution of design ideas, and how an understanding of visual language, its role and potential is the foundation of effective design practice.

Students explore how designers visually communicate concepts when designing messages, objects, environments and interactive experiences. They work both together and independently to find and address design problems, making improvements to services, systems, spaces and places experienced by stakeholders, both in person and online. Students employ a design process together with convergent and divergent thinking strategies to discover, define, develop and deliver design solutions. Drawings are used to visually represent relationships, ideas and appearances, while models and prototypes are produced for the purposes of testing and presentation. Students participate in critiques, both delivering and receiving constructive feedback and expanding their design terminology.

During this study, students consider various factors that impact design decisions, including conceptions of good design, aesthetic impact, and economic, technological, environmental, cultural and social influences. Students also consider how best to accommodate the varied needs of people and our planet, both now and in the future, using human-centred design principles, together with ethical, legal, sustainable and culturally appropriate design practices. Students learn about the relationships between design, place and time, acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander design knowledges, histories, traditions and practices.

Rationale

The complex demands of 21st-century living have broadened the scope of the designer’s work, and the potential of design to solve ill-defined problems is recognised across sectors including business, industry and education. In response, VCE Visual Communication Design moves beyond practices focusing largely on appearance and function, and views the work of designers as part of larger systems and services addressing problems in sustainable and strategic ways.

Contemporary designers understand that visual communication is viewed in increasingly fluid and rapidly changing contexts, and that today’s consumers are often co-creators of content and form. In response, they engage deeply with human-centred research practices to uncover problems, opportunities and emerging trends, while empathising with stakeholders’ needs, desires, behaviours and attitudes.

The study of VCE Visual Communication Design, therefore, seeks to cultivate future-ready designers who have a critical and reflective eye, a refined aesthetic sensibility, and who are equipped with the skills, knowledge and mindsets necessary to address the problems of life. Through exposure to the cultures and traditions of design practice, students learn how designers visually communicate ideas and information when designing for people, communities and societies. They develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions required of a multidisciplinary designer who is a reflective, responsible and empathetic practitioner equipped with agency and initiative.

Aims

VCE Visual Communication Design enables students to:

* work independently and in collaboration to find, reframe and address human-centred design problems and opportunities
* apply a design process to discover, define, develop and deliver design solutions
* develop divergent and convergent thinking strategies
* understand conceptions of good design
* develop and apply skills in drawing and making, using a range of media, materials, methods and techniques
* manipulate the design elements and principles to communicate ideas and information
* apply ethical, legal, sustainable and culturally appropriate design practices
* understand design’s influence, and the influences of design in past, present and future contexts, including economic, technological, cultural, environmental and social factors
* deliver and receive critical feedback using appropriate design terminology.

Structure

The study is made up of four units.

* Unit 1: Finding, reframing and resolving design problems
* Unit 2: Design contexts and connections
* Unit 3: Visual communication in design practice
* Unit 4: Delivering design solutions

Each unit deals with specific content contained in areas of study and is designed to enable students to achieve a set of outcomes for that unit. Each outcome is described in terms of key knowledge and key skills.

Entry

There are no prerequisites for entry to Units 1, 2 and 3. Students must undertake Unit 3 and Unit 4 as a sequence. Units 1–4 are designed to the equivalent standard of the final two years of secondary education. All VCE studies are benchmarked against comparable national and international curriculum.

A glossary defining terms used across Units 1–4 in the *VCE Visual Communication Design Study Design* is included in the [Support materials](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/visualcommunicationdesign/Pages/Index.aspx)*.*

Duration

Each unit involves at least 50 hours of scheduled classroom instruction.

Changes to the study design

During its period of accreditation minor changes to the study will be announced in the [*VCAA Bulletin*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/news-and-events/bulletins-and-updates/bulletin/Pages/index.aspx). The Bulletin is the only source of changes to regulations and accredited studies. It is the responsibility of each VCE teacher to monitor changes or advice about VCE studies published in the Bulletin.

Monitoring for quality

As part of ongoing monitoring and quality assurance, the VCAA will periodically undertake an audit of VCE Visual Communication Design to ensure the study is being taught and assessed as accredited. The details
of the audit procedures and requirements are published annually in the [*VCE Administrative Handbook*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/vce-vcal-handbook/Pages/index.aspx). Schools will be notified if they are required to submit material to be audited.

Safety and wellbeing

It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that duty of care is exercised in relation to the health and safety of all students undertaking the study. This duty of care extends to activities undertaken outside the classroom, such as visits to exhibitions, artists’ and designers’ studios or external workshops.

Topics selected by students as subject matter and themes for their research and design projects should be appropriate for the age and development of the students and reflect current community standards and expectations. Teachers should be aware of the sensitive issues that might arise in relation to the choice of theme or subject matter for study. The following strategies may assist teachers when selecting themes for study or when assisting students in developing their artworks:

* Familiarise yourself with the student’s choice of topic or subject matter, with particular attention to any issues that may arise surrounding personal, cultural, school and community standards.
* Read any information you can about the area or topic chosen for study, such as the context for the design problem, exploration of ideas and subject matter.
* Identify any issues that may require additional resourcing, such as different perspectives on controversial historical, social, cultural or political themes.
* Discuss aspects that may be challenging for students with the school leadership and colleagues at your school.

The Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET) provides information about student wellbeing and duty of care, including:

* [DET Student health and wellbeing advice](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/Pages/default.aspx)
* [DET Duty of Care policy](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/duty-of-care/policy)
* [DET Teaching and learning resources – Selecting appropriate materials](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/selecting-suitable-teaching-resources/policy).

This study may involve the handling of potentially hazardous substances and/or the use of potentially hazardous equipment. Students must be made aware of and practise the safe and appropriate use of the materials, techniques and processes they use, in respect to both themselves and the environment. Teachers and students should observe appropriate safety precautions when undertaking practical activities. It is the responsibility of schools to ensure that they comply with health and safety requirements.

Relevant Acts, regulations and codes include:

* Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
* Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 (Vic)
* Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems (AS/NZS ISO 45001:2018)
* Dangerous Goods (Storage and Handling) Regulations 2021 (Vic)
* Code of Practice for the Storage and Handling of Dangerous Goods 2013
* Hazardous Substances Compliance Code, Edition 2, 2019 (Vic)
* Electrical Safety Act 1998 (Vic).

Teachers should ensure they access up-to-date versions of all Acts, regulations and codes.

Employability skills

This study offers a number of opportunities for students to develop employability skills. The [Support materials](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/visualcommunicationdesign/Pages/Index.aspx) provide specific examples of how students can develop employability skills during learning activities and assessment tasks.

Legislative compliance

When collecting and using information, the provisions of privacy and copyright legislation, such as the Victorian *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and *Health Records Act 2001*, and the federal *Privacy Act 1988* and *Copyright Act 1968*, must be met.

Child Safe Standards

Schools and education and training providers are required to comply with the Child Safe Standards made under the Victorian *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*. Registered schools are required to comply with *Ministerial Order No. 1359 Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises*. For further information, consult the websites of the [Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority](https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/Pages/Home.aspx), the [Commission for Children and Young People](https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/) and the [Department of Education](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/child-safe-standards/policy).

Assessment and reporting

Satisfactory completion

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on the teacher’s decision that the student has demonstrated achievement of the set of outcomes specified for the unit. Demonstration of achievement of outcomes and satisfactory completion of a unit are determined by evidence gained through the assessment of a range of learning activities and tasks.

Teachers must develop courses that provide appropriate opportunities for students to demonstrate satisfactory achievement of outcomes.

The decision about satisfactory completion of a unit is distinct from the assessment of levels of achievement. Schools will report a student’s result for each unit to the VCAA as S (satisfactory) or N (not satisfactory).

Levels of achievement

Units 1 and 2

Procedures for the assessment of levels of achievement in Units 1 and 2 are a matter for school decision. Assessment of levels of achievement for these units will not be reported to the VCAA. Schools may choose to report levels of achievement using grades, descriptive statements or other indicators.

Units 3 and 4

The VCAA specifies the assessment procedures for students undertaking scored assessment in Units 3 and 4. Designated assessment tasks are provided in the details for each unit in VCE study designs.

The student’s level of achievement in Units 3 and 4 will be determined by School-assessed Coursework (SAC), a School-assessed Task (SAT) as specified in the VCE study design, and external assessment.

The VCAA will report the student’s level of achievement on each assessment component as a grade from
A+ to E or UG (ungraded). To receive a study score the student must achieve two or more graded assessments in the study and receive an S for both Units 3 and 4. The study score is reported on a scale
of 0–50; it is a measure of how well the student performed in relation to all others who completed the study. Teachers should refer to the current [*VCE Administrative Handbook*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/vce-vcal-handbook/Pages/index.aspx) for details on graded assessment and calculation of the study score.

Percentage contributions to the study score in VCE Visual Communication Design are as follows:

* Unit 3 School-assessed Coursework: 20 per cent
* Units 3 and 4 School-assessed Task: 50 per cent
* End-of-year examination: 30 per cent.

Details of the assessment program are described in the sections on Units 3 and 4 in this study design.

Authentication

Work related to the outcomes of each unit will be accepted only if the teacher can attest that, to the best of their knowledge, all unacknowledged work is the student’s own. Teachers need to refer to the current [*VCE Administrative Handbook*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/vce-vcal-handbook/Pages/index.aspx) for authentication rules and strategies.

Study specifications

For the purposes of this study the following specifications apply. Specific details of the scope of each specification are provided in the unit overviews and in the introduction to the relevant areas of study. Further information can be found in the online support materials for VCE Visual Communication Design.

Visual language

VCE Visual Communication Design is the study of visual language in the context of professional design practice. In VCE Visual Communication Design visual language is a system of communication where ideas and information are conveyed to audiences through visual means. Designers use the components of visual language to resolve problems, combining pictorial, symbolic and typographic elements to influence how people experience or interact with places, systems and things.

Visual communication practices

Visual communication is the practice of using visual language to communicate meaning and influence behaviours. Designers working across specialist disciplines and fields employ visual communication practices when they design messages, objects, environments and interactive experiences. Throughout applications of a design process, designers use drawings, mock-ups, models and prototypes to develop design ideas, concepts and solutions. They select and manipulate design elements and principles, and combine these with materials, methods and media to maximise aesthetic impact and meet stakeholder needs.

Design thinking

Design thinking describes the cognitive processes, strategies and routines used by designers when developing solutions to problems. Designers assess the usefulness of original ideas and develop solutions that are not only innovative, but also effective and fitting in their response to stakeholder needs. Design thinking, therefore, involves both convergent and divergent thinking strategies as well as a flexible and inventive mindset paired with synthesis and critical evaluation.

**Divergent thinking** is open-minded, curious and imaginative. It suspends judgment, focusing instead on
the multiple ways a problem might be solved in unusual, creative or unexpected ways.

**Convergent thinking** is analytical, critical, reflective and comparative. It seeks to summarise, categorise and synthesise information in logical and efficient ways in order to clarify, reframe or resolve problems.

The VCD design process

A design process is both relational and situational, and designers tailor their approach in response to the problem at hand. However, there are modes of thinking and phases of development common to the practice of design, and these have been captured in various design process models devised by academics, companies and professional organisations. The Double Diamond model, developed by the Design Council (UK) is a widely adopted visual interpretation of a design process in which the connections between expansive thinking and focused action are described. Students of VCE Visual Communication Design apply an iterative design process based on the Double Diamond model, passing through and revisiting the four distinct phases of Discover, Define, Develop and Deliver. In the context of this study, this process is referred to as the VCD design process.



**VCD design process** adapted from [Design Council (UK)](http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/) Double Diamond model

Discover

Students begin a design project by gathering insights into the problem at hand, using research methods that are often human-centred to understand the needs and experiences of stakeholders. Students employ divergent thinking as they search widely for new information, suspending judgment and keeping the mind open to new perspectives and possibilities.

Define

Students use convergent thinking strategies to synthesise and make sense of research data. They review, categorise and summarise new information in order to clarify or reframe the problem at hand. Using these insights, students develop a brief in which they identify a client and their communication need/s, and detail the purpose, context, audience or users as well as a list of constraints. These design criteria are used to evaluate the success of design ideas.

Develop

The Develop phase invites students to think divergently once again, seeking and analysing inspiration from a wide range of sources, and generating imaginative ideas aligned with the communication need. They brainstorm with both words and images, and use rapid drawing and making methods to create, recreate, and explore the potential of design ideas. Students experiment with the design elements and principles, while using a range of methods, media and materials in expressive ways. Annotations are used to describe design decisions and evaluate ideas in light of the brief.

Deliver

Students return to convergent thinking when reflecting critically on their design ideas. They use design criteria determined in the brief, together with feedback, to select and refine those with the most potential, creating design concepts for further testing, iteration and evaluation. Students combine methods, media and materials with selected design elements and principles in order to resolve final features and details. Students choose appropriate formats to communicate and present finished design solutions for client approval and the processes of production or implementation for client approval.

Design ideas, concepts and solutions

Design ideas

In the early stages of design development, students use divergent thinking strategies together with a variety of methods, media and materials to visualise potential ways to address a specified problem. Drawings and prototypes are experimental, imaginative and rapidly generated in an effort to capture the essence of emerging ideas. Students aim for a broad range of imaginative options, using combinations of the design elements and principles, while also keeping in mind the needs of audiences or users, and the findings from their earlier research.

Design concepts

Students use convergent thinking strategies to reflect critically on their design ideas. They evaluate their success in light of the specified problem, drawing on feedback before selecting ideas with the greatest potential for further refinement. Students make considered and purposeful decisions when exploring the design elements and principles, and when choosing combinations of methods, media and materials to resolve details and unify aesthetic qualities. Development and documentation drawings are used to visualise, refine, test and evaluate design concepts, and these might be rendered to depict surfaces and textural finishes. Low-fidelity prototypes might also be generated for the purposes of testing and critique.

Design solutions

Students propose a resolved solution using appropriate presentation formats. Presentations might include documentation drawings, models, concept boards, mock-ups or high-fidelity prototypes, and may be accompanied by a written rationale. The manufacture of functional prototypes is not a requirement of this study.

Methods, media and materials

Methods

Methods refer to the manual or digital processes used to evolve design ideas, concepts and solutions. Methods can include but are not limited to drawing, collage, printing, photography, model-making and prototyping.

Drawing

In VCE Visual Communication Design drawing is divided into categories to acknowledge the breadth of its purpose and application. Drawings are produced at each phase of the design process, and can be used for the purposes of development, documentation and presentation. Drawings can be produced either manually or using digital software and applications.

Development drawings

Development drawings are used both in the Develop and Deliver stages of the Visual Communication Design process to visualise design ideas and concepts, and may incorporate abstract, symbolic or realistic representations. They assist in devising, documenting and communicating concepts so that they can be analysed, tested and evaluated. Development drawings may be generated using rapid, informal and expressive drawing techniques, or presented as refined concepts for the purposes of testing or critique. They may be produced either digitally or by hand, and might be rendered to suggest surface textures, materials and the direction of light, shade and shadow. Development drawings include but are not limited to schematic diagrams, ideation sketches, storyboards, mock-ups and illustrations.

Documentation drawings

Documentation drawings define and record technical specifications required for the assembly of three-dimensional objects and environments. They may represent forms in two dimensions, such as orthogonal drawings, architectural plans and elevations, packaging nets andtechnical flats, or in three dimensions, such as perspective and paraline (isometric and planometric) drawings. Documentation drawings include technical conventions, such as symbols, dimensions and scales.

Presentation drawings

Presentation drawings convey resolved design concepts to stakeholders for consideration. They include but are not limited to rendered impressions of buildings, environments or objects, illustrations, documentation drawings and storyboards, and can be a part of mock-ups, concept boards or style guides.

Prototyping

**Low-fidelity** prototyping uses inexpensive and readily available materials, together with efficient methods to construct and test design ideas. **High-fidelity** prototyping uses materials and techniques to emulate the look and feel of a finished product. High-fidelity prototypes may or may not include functioning components.

Media

Media are the manual and digital applications used to visually communicate ideas and information. Manual examples can include but are not limited to pencil, ink, markers, paint and analogue film. Digital examples can include but are not limited to software, apps and online platforms used for graphic, game or interaction design, web development, concept art, illustration, three-dimensional modelling and rendering, photo editing and animation.

Materials

Materials are the surfaces or substrates on or from which designs are made. Examples can include but are not limited to paper, card, textile, metal, plastic, glass, touchscreen or digital interface.

Design elements and principles

Design elements

The design elements are the components of visual language used by designers to communicate information and ideas. In VCE Visual Communication Design students explore the elements of point, line, shape, form, tone, texture, colour and type.

Design principles

The design principles are the conventions used to arrange and organise the design elements. In VCE Visual Communication Design, students explore the principles of figure-ground, balance, contrast, cropping, hierarchy, scale, proportion and pattern (repetition and alternation).

Gestalt principles of visual perception

Gestalt principles describe how the mind typically perceives, interprets, and organises visual information as it attempts to unify and make sense of complex imagery. In VCE Visual Communication Design the Gestalt principles include proximity, continuity, similarity, closure, common fate, figure-ground and focal point.

Fields of design practice

The scope of design practice expands from the design of physical objects and environments to the improvement of experiences and interactions that occur within larger systems and services. Designers aim to produce less rather than more, and to simplify the complexity of both our real and virtual worlds. Contemporary designers prioritise in-depth research, collaborate with experts from various fields and contribute to multidisciplinary teams.

In recognition of the diverse and shifting contexts in which designers work, this study examines how visual communication is used across various fields of practice to design messages, objects, environments and interactive experiences.

Messages

Messages are communicated to audiences using the components of visual language and serve a variety of purposes in the context of design, such as influencing behaviour, educating viewers, guiding decision-making and expressing values and ideals. Messages are embedded in projects such as, but not limited to brand strategy, wayfinding, advertising and social media campaigns, visual merchandising, publications, signage, illustrations, printed collateral, products and packaging, and can be explicit or subtle in tone and presentation. Using visual language to design messages is central to the work of, among others, communication or graphic designers, art directors, interface and web designers, illustrators, and those working in advertising, animation or visual effects.

Objects

Designers generate novel ideas for objects that are used to improve the quality of life for people, communities and societies, while also upgrading or improving existing designs. Among other things, designers develop objects including but not limited to products and packaging, furniture, fittings and homewares, transport, appliances, tools and machinery, costumes, toys, devices and displays. Important factors to consider when designing objects might include but are not limited to human behaviour, ergonomics, the sustainability of materials and manufacturing processes, aesthetics, usability and accessibility. Among those who develop objects the following can include but are not limited to industrial, product, graphic, furniture, jewellery, textile and fashion designers.

Environments

Designers generate ideas for the indoor, outdoor and virtual spaces in which we live, work and play. These include but are not limited to residential and commercial buildings, interiors, performance and exhibition spaces, parks, streetscapes and gardens. Designers of environments consider such factors as location, accessibility, usability, configuration, orientation, aesthetic appeal and emotive potential. They also can be responsible for the environments we see in films and video games. Designers working in the field of environmental design include but are not limited to architects, landscape architects, urban designers, interior designers and stylists, set and event designers, exhibition designers, game designers, concept artists, animators and visual merchandisers.

Interactive experiences

Designers contribute to the shape of interactive experiences both in the physical world and online, ensuring the objectives of users are met when engaging with a product, system or service. Visual language plays a crucial role in facilitating interactive experiences that are efficient, intuitive, satisfying and accessible. In designing interactive experiences, designers can consider the aesthetic qualities and usability of customer touchpoints, wayfinding systems and interfaces encountered in physical spaces or on digital devices including apps, online platforms and social networking services. These may include but are not limited to the display, layout and relationship of icons, symbols, images and type, as well as additional elements such as sound and animation. Interaction designers contribute to larger user-experience (UX) design teams who oversee all components and phases of the customer journey. In VCE Visual Communication Design students develop visual interfaces presented as static design solutions and are not required to produce functional prototypes.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures in design practice

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the first Australians and the oldest continuous living cultures in human history. These two broad groups are made up of a variety of nations across Australia, with diverse cultures, cultural traditions, social and kinship structures, languages and dialects. Teaching and learning in VCE Visual Communication Design prioritises opportunities for students to engage with these perspectives and knowledge systems, and to recognise the significant contribution of Australia’s First Peoples to design.

The inclusion and acknowledgement of a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander designs, designers, design practices and content in VCE Visual Communication Design assists students in building an intercultural understanding and encourages the development of mutual understanding and insight into the diverse ways in which individuals, cultures and communities experience the world. Through the study of traditional, historical and contemporary design knowledge, traditions and practices, students learn about respectful and accurate representations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture in design. They apply protocols relating to the designs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and understand the nature of ethical and respectful conduct and interactions. Teachers and students can access in-depth principles and guidelines about cultural protocols in *The Australian Indigenous Design Charter: Communication Design – Protocols for sharing Indigenous knowledge in communication design practice* (Design Institute of Australia).

Wider protocols relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content in education are also available to support teachers in their design and delivery of the VCE Visual Communication Design curriculum. The Victorian Aboriginal Education Association has developed protocols for Koorie education in Victorian Primary and Secondary Schools. Further resources relating to the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and perspectives can be accessed at [VAEAI](http://www.vaeai.org.au).

Intellectual property and copyright

An essential feature of this study is the development of creative and innovative design solutions that meet specific communication needs. In the development of original ideas, students may find inspiration in the work of others. However, it is important that students understand their legal obligations regarding copyright and trademarks as well as conventions for acknowledging sources of inspiration. Students need to develop an awareness of the legal obligations and risks faced by designers in industry and professional contexts, and to understand how copyright and intellectual property laws apply to their own design work.

Intellectual property is the general term used for property generated through intellectual or creative activity. There are different types of intellectual property, protected in different ways through various pieces of federal legislation and industry codes of practice. Students undertaking this study will most commonly engage with intellectual property forms such as copyright works, trademarks and designs.

The following websites provide up-to-date information on copyright and intellectual property:

[Australian Copyright Council](http://www.copyright.org.au/find-an-answer/)

[Australian Government: Intellectual Property](http://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/)

Acknowledging sources of inspiration and support resources

Students are required to acknowledge all sources of inspiration throughout the design process. They can do this by noting specific titles and publication dates of texts and/or magazines, URL addresses for websites and details of social media profiles where images or information have been sourced. For information acquired from a website, acknowledgment typically includes the title of the website, exact URL and retrieval date. For information acquired from a social media platform, acknowledgement should include the username, site name, exact URL and date of post. This information should be located at the point where sourced material is used in the design process.

Terms used in the study

Good design

Notions of good design are personal, contextual and political. Students of VCE Visual Communication Design are encouraged to draw from both universal and culturally specific understandings, together with personal experiences of good design, to formulate their own conceptions, and use these criteria to guide their design practice.

References to ‘good design’ frequently accompany best-practice design guidelines, policies, principles of practice and criteria for design competitions, such as [Good Design Australia's Good Design Award](https://good-design.org/), industrial designer Dieter Rams’ [Ten Principles for Good Design](https://designmuseum.org/discover-design/all-stories/what-is-good-design-a-quick-look-at-dieter-rams-ten-principles), and the [Good Design series](https://www.ovga.vic.gov.au/good-design) by the Victorian Government Architect.

Human-centred design problems and research methods

VCE Visual Communication Design focuses largely on resolving design problems that impact the lives of people, communities and societies. Students adopt human-centred research methods to better understand those who will be served by their work. These methods delve into the habits, experiences and mindsets of individuals and groups, enabling designers to build empathy and deconstruct ambiguous situations and information. This data is synthesised and interpreted, revealing important insights about the problem at hand. Human-centred research methods are often collaborative in nature, and include but are not limited to interviews, surveys, focus groups, competitor analysis, audience or user personas and ethnographic research.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders are individuals, groups or organisations involved in a design project, that have an interest in the process or outcome. Stakeholders include the project’s client and audiences or users, and may also include others such as specialist practitioners, suppliers, project teams and managers, sponsors, subcontractors and employees.

Design critique

The design critique is a key component of design studio culture and professional practice, offering an opportunity for students to engage in critical discussion about work-in-progress, and both give and receive feedback alongside teachers and peers. Design ideas and concepts, together with the project’s problem and design criteria are presented for review in a group setting, with the student-designer describing the rationale behind decisions made and their relationship to the communication need. Student-critics and teachers respond with constructive feedback that is specific, respectful, descriptive and actionable.

Design pitch

A design pitch is the presentation, explanation and justification of proposed design concepts to a client. Students present their refined concepts to an audience, communicating their design decisions and thinking, and explaining reasons for the selection of methods, materials and media, as well as the design elements and principles.

Circular design practices

Designers who adopt circular design practices consider not only the needs of audiences or users, but also the enduring environmental and social impact of their work. They recognise that design decisions play a key role in minimising waste, pollution and hazardous substances during manufacture or use, and respond by designing with the bigger picture in mind. Circular design practices reject the linear model of make-use-dispose and instead seek ways for designs to retain their value. Designers aim to extend life cycles and regenerate natural systems, prioritising outcomes that are durable, adaptable, and can be repaired, refurbished, repurposed or reused.

Unit 1: Finding, reframing and resolving design problems

In this unit students are introduced to the practices and processes used by designers to identify, reframe and resolve human-centred design problems. They learn how design can improve life and living for people, communities and societies, and how understandings of good design have changed over time. Students learn the value of human-centred research methods, working collaboratively to discover design problems and understand the perspectives of stakeholders. They draw on these new insights to determine communication needs and prepare design criteria in the form of a brief.

This process of discovery introduces students to the phases of the VCD design process and to the modes of divergent and convergent thinking. Students integrate these ways of thinking and working into future design projects, together with their newly evolved conceptions of good design across specialist fields.

Practical projects in Unit 1 focus on the design of messages and objects, while introducing the role of visual language in communicating ideas and information. Students participate in critiques by sharing ideas in progress and both delivering and responding to feedback. Students learn to apply the Develop and Deliver phases of the VCD design process and use methods, media and materials typically employed in the specialist fields of communication and industrial design. Student projects invite exploration of brand strategy and product development, while promoting sustainable and circular design practices. They also consider how design decisions are shaped by economic, technological, cultural, environmental and social factors, and the potential for design to instigate change.

Area of Study 1

Reframing design problems

*How do designers find and reframe human-centred design problems?*

In this area of study, students learn that designers not only deliver design solutions, but also find and reframe problems that can be complex, misunderstood or ill-defined. They draw on conceptions of ‘good design’ and apply research methods to identify human-centred design problems, before preparing a brief defining a communication need. This process asks students to engage with the Discover and Define phase of the VCD design process and includes both divergent and convergent thinking strategies.

Students begin by exploring past and present notions of ‘good design’, such as those proposed in the 1970s by German industrial designer Dieter Rams, more recently by Good Design Australia, and by international design competitions. Students interrogate design examples from a range of disciplines to determine their worth, considering both the role of visual communication in producing positive outcomes and what good design might look like in the future. Students draw on these notions to evolve their own conceptions of good design and when searching for design opportunities.

In collaboration with others, students identify a problem impacting people, communities or societies that might be resolved using good design. They apply a range of human-centred, ethical research methods to understand the problem and perspectives of stakeholders, such as interviews, observations, focus groups and secondary research. In doing so, students learn to embrace ambiguity, empathise and collaborate with others, synthesise information and develop insights from which to determine specific communication needs or opportunities.

After presenting the findings of their human-centred research, students work independently to prepare a written brief, selecting and defining a communication need related to their researched problem. They describe design criteria relating to the communication need, including its purpose, context, audience or users and a list of constraints. There is no requirement in this outcome for design problems to be resolved, although suitable briefs might be chosen for exploration in Unit 1, Outcomes 2 or 3.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to use human-centred research methods to reframe a design problem and identify a communication need.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge

* conceptions of good design across a range of design disciplines and contexts
* the role of visual language in producing good design outcomes
* the Discover and Define stages of the VCD design process
* techniques for effective collaboration in reframing human-centred design problems and identifying communication needs
* human-centred research methods including ethical design research practices
* strategies for convergent and divergent thinking
* techniques for the presentation of human-centred research findings
* the contents of a brief and its role in reframing ill-defined design problems
* design terminology used in research, analysis and evaluation.

Key skills

* identify and analyse past, present and personal conceptions of good design across various design fields
* formulate ideas about good design in future contexts
* use conceptions of good design to identify human-centred design problems
* collaborate with others to explore and reframe design problems using human-centred and ethical research methods
* apply the Discover and Define stages of the VCD design process
* present human-centred research findings
* compose a brief identifying a communication need
* use appropriate design terminology in research, analysis and evaluation.

Area of Study 2

Solving communication design problems

*How can visual language communicate to audiences and shape behaviours?*

In this area of study, students draw on conceptions of good design and their understanding of human-centred design problems when developing visual language for a brand or business. They learn that visual language serves as part of a larger strategy to increase engagement, influence behaviour and reposition the brand or business among audiences or users. It can include but is not limited to a visual identity applied to various outcomes and collateral, a signature colour palette, graphic icons and typography.

Students apply the Develop and Deliver stages of the VCD design process as they respond to a given brief detailing the strategy of a brand or business, its communication need and associated design criteria. They manipulate type and imagery to visually communicate the story of a brand or business through defined language and voice, evoking emotional responses among audiences or users.

Students begin by reviewing the needs of stakeholders identified in the given brief, while adopting conventions to acknowledge sources of inspiration. They learn about the copyright and intellectual property obligations faced by designers working in brand strategy. Using divergent thinking strategies, conceptions of good design and an iterative process, students seek inspiration, brainstorm ideas and use ideation sketching to document potential design concepts. They experiment with the design elements and principles, typographic conventions and Gestalt principles of visual perception, while exploring a range of manual and digital methods, media and materials. Annotations using descriptive and analytical design terminology are used to explain design decisions, and to evaluate the strengths and limitations of ideas.

Students present design ideas for critique, using this feedback together with convergent thinking strategies to guide the selection and refinement of concepts. Students present a resolved design solution that addresses the brief and its design criteria.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to create visual language for a business or brand using the Develop and Deliver stages of the VCD design process.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge

* the role of the brief in developing and evaluating design solutions
* legal and ethical obligations of designers relating to copyright and intellectual property
* methods used to generate, refine and resolve communication design solutions
* the role of divergent and convergent thinking in a design process
* techniques for engaging and influencing audiences or users using visual language
* the features and functions of design elements and principles, including typographic conventions and Gestalt principles of visual perception
* manual and digital methods, media and materials used to develop and produce communication design solutions
* techniques to present and critique design ideas
* techniques to deliver and respond to constructive feedback
* the extent to which resolved design solutions meet the requirements of the brief
* appropriate design terminology.

Key skills

* apply the Develop and Deliver stages of the VCD design process to address a communication need
* identify and apply legal and ethical obligations relevant to communication design practice
* apply divergent thinking strategies when seeking inspiration and generating ideation sketches
* select and use a range of appropriate manual and digital methods, media, materials, design elements and principles to develop visual language for a specified context and purpose
* apply convergent thinking strategies to synthesise, select and refine design concepts
* annotate design ideas and concepts using design terminology to explain and evaluate design decisions
* present design concepts for critique, and both deliver and respond to feedback
* resolve visual language responding to a given brief.

Area of Study 3

Design’s influence and influences on design

*What influences design, and what does design influence?*

In this area of study, students learn about factors that impact design decisions, as well as the impact of design on people and our planet. They consider these influences when designing three-dimensional objects for specific purposes, contexts and users. Students integrate newly developed understandings of good design, and move beyond human-centred mindsets to also consider the needs of other species, our planet and its future. In doing so, sustainability and circular design practices become an area of particular focus.

Students analyse how the design of objects in both past and present contexts have been influenced by economic, technological, cultural, environmental and social factors. They also examine the potential of design itself to shape behaviours, interactions, systems and outcomes. As students respond to a given brief, they use this knowledge to inform their own design of a sustainable, three-dimensional object, adopting circular design practices and mindsets to address issues such as mass production, consumption and material waste. They consider various factors when making design decisions, such as how best to offer culturally appropriate or cost-effective solutions, integrate new technologies or inspire positive social change.

Students employ divergent thinking strategies as they develop design ideas, experiment with design elements and principles and consider combinations of materials and media. Annotations featuring descriptive and analytical design terminology are used to explain design decisions, and to evaluate the strengths and limitations of ideas. At stages throughout the evolution of ideas and refinement of concepts, students present their work for critique and respond to feedback using convergent thinking strategies.

As students explore the Develop and Deliver stages of the VCD design process, they acquire skills in representing and rendering forms using manual and digital drawing techniques. Ideation sketches are generated to document ideas, and paraline and perspective drawings are used to visualise forms and examine details, proportions and the placement of parts. Two-dimensional drawings are also developed to explore and present ideas, such as technical flats and third-angle orthogonal projections. Low-fidelity prototyping is used when appropriate to represent and test design concepts. Students acquire knowledge and skills related to technical drawing conventions, applying these either manually or digitally to resolved documentation drawings.

Outcome 3

On completion of this unit the student should be able to develop a sustainable object, considering design’s influence and factors that influence design.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 3.

Key knowledge

* influences on design such as economic, technological, cultural, environmental and social factors
* the influence of design on behaviours, interactions, systems and outcomes
* sustainable and circular design practices, and their value
* manual and digital methods, design elements and principles relevant to the design of three-dimensional objects
* rendering techniques used to simulate surfaces, materials, texture and form, and depict the direction of light, shade and shadow
* technical drawing conventions appropriate for the documentation of object designs
* appropriate design terminology.

Key skills

* research and analyse past and present influences on design
* research and analyse the influence of design in past and present contexts
* select and use appropriate manual and/or digital methods, media and materials to represent and render forms
* select appropriate design elements and principles when developing a sustainable object
* adopt circular design practices during the Develop and Deliver stages of the VCD design process
* annotate design ideas and concepts using design terminology
* apply two-dimensional drawing methods, such as technical flats or third-angle orthogonal projections, to depict objects from multiple views
* apply three-dimensional drawing methods, such as isometric or perspective drawing, to represent the form and structure of objects
* apply appropriate technical drawing conventions to documentation drawings.

Assessment

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on whether the student has demonstrated the set of outcomes specified for the unit. Teachers should use a variety of learning activities and assessment tasks that provide a range of opportunities for students to demonstrate the key knowledge and key skills in the outcomes.

The areas of study, including the key knowledge and key skills listed for the outcomes, should be used for course design and the development of learning activities and assessment tasks. Assessment must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and should be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe.

All assessments at Units 1 and 2 are school-based. Procedures for assessment of levels of achievement in Units 1 and 2 are a matter for school decision.

For this unit students are required to demonstrate three outcomes. As a set these outcomes encompass the areas of study in the unit.

Suitable tasks for assessment in this unit may be selected from the following:

Outcome 1

Reframing design problems and preparing a brief

* a report or presentation exploring conceptions of good design
* a presentation documenting human-centred research methods and findings relating to a design problem
* a written brief identifying a communication need.

Outcome 2

Developing visual language

* a folio of work demonstrating the Develop and Deliver stages of the VCD design process to create visual language for a business or brand
* presentation of design concepts for a critique

Outcome 3

Designing a sustainable object

* a folio of work demonstrating the Develop and Deliver stages of the VCD design process, and using circular design practices to develop a sustainable object

Unit 2: Design contexts and connections

Unit 2 builds on understandings of visual communication practices developed in Unit 1. Students draw on conceptions of good design, human-centred research methods and influential design factors as they revisit the VCD design process, applying the model in its entirety. Practical tasks across the unit focus on the design of environments and interactive experiences. Students adopt the practices of design specialists working in fields such as architecture, landscape architecture and interior design, while discovering the role of the interactive designer in the realm of user-experience (UX). Methods, media and materials are explored together with the design elements and principles, as students develop spaces and interfaces that respond to both contextual factors and user needs.

Student learning activities highlight the connections between design and its context, and the emotive potential of interactive design experiences in both physical and digital spaces. Students also look to historical movements and cultural design traditions as sources of inspiration, and in doing so consider how design from other times and places might influence designing for the future. Design critiques continue to feature as an integral component of design processes, with students refining skills in articulating and justifying design decisions, and both giving and receiving constructive feedback.

Connections between design, time and place are also central to the study of culturally appropriate design practices in Area of Study 2. Students learn about protocols for the creation and commercial use of Indigenous knowledge in design, with a particular focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander design traditions and practices. Students also consider how issues of ownership and intellectual property impact the work of designers across contexts and specialist fields.

Area of Study 1

Design, place and time

*How does design reflect and respond to the time and place in which it is made?*

In this area of study, students examine the relationships between design, place and time, and learn about the influence of context when designing environments in which to live, work and play. Students analyse how design examples from architecture, interior, exhibition or landscape design reflect and respond to their surrounding context, while considering how designers draw inspiration from other times and places.

Students engage with the Discover and Define phases of the VCD design process to identify environmental design problems specific to a location of choice. They use research methods to establish influential contextual factors such as economic, technological, cultural, environmental and social influences.

After reframing an environmental design problem in the form of a brief, students gather inspiration from both contemporary sources and historical design movements and traditions as they engage with the Develop phase of the VCD design process. They apply divergent thinking strategies and an iterative process to brainstorm design ideas inspired by contextual factors and selected historical design styles. Students use schematic drawings and ideation sketches while experimenting with design elements and principles. They choose appropriate manual or digital drawing methods, media and materials to visualise and render forms, and to explore relationships in space from various viewpoints, such as paraline and perspective drawings, plans and elevations. Annotations featuring descriptive and analytical design terminology are used to explain design decisions and to evaluate the strengths and limitations of ideas.

As students delve into the Deliver phase of the VCD design process, they critique potential design concepts with their peers, and they respond to feedback using convergent thinking strategies to synthesise ideas. They make refinements to selected concepts informed by the brief and its design criteria, presenting their resolved design solution as either a model or documentation drawings with technical conventions that comply with Australian Standards.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to present an environmental design solution that draws inspiration from its context and a chosen design style.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge

* stages of the VCD design process and their role in developing environmental design solutions
* research methods used to identify environmental design problems
* contemporary and historical design styles and traditions
* contextual factors that influence environmental design projects
* economic, technological, cultural, environmental and social factors that impact environmental design projects
* features and functions of the design elements and principles relevant to environmental design projects
* appropriate design terminology used in evaluative annotations
* two-dimensional drawing methods used to visualise environmental design ideas and concepts, such as schematic drawings, plans and elevations
* methods for representing three-dimensional spaces and structures, such as planometric and perspective drawing, and model-making
* resolution of effective design solutions to meet the requirements of a brief
* technical conventions used in documentation drawings relevant to environmental design projects

Key skills

* apply the stages of the VCD design process to generate, refine, resolve and present an environmental design solution
* draw inspiration from contemporary and historical design styles and traditions when responding to an environmental design brief
* respond to contextual factors when designing environments
* consider economic, technological, cultural, environmental and social factors that impact environmental design projects
* select and use a range of appropriate manual and digital methods, media, materials, and design elements and principles to visualise environmental design ideas, concepts and solutions
* annotate design ideas and concepts using design terminology to explain and evaluate design decisions
* present resolution of effective design solutions to meet the requirements of a brief
* apply technical conventions to documentation drawings.

Area of Study 2

Cultural ownership and design

*How do designers evolve culturally appropriate design practices?*

In this area of study, students explore the designer’s ethical and legal responsibilities when drawing on knowledge and designs belonging to Indigenous communities from Australia or abroad. They learn how to adopt culturally appropriate design practices, including protocols for the creation and commercial use of Indigenous knowledge such as those published in the [Australian Indigenous Design Charter](https://indigenousdesigncharter.com.au/australian-indigenous-design-charter/)*.* In particular, students develop a deep appreciation forthe histories, practices and foundational contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Australian design identity, while learning about respectful and appropriate representations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture in design.

Students apply understandings of ownership, intellectual property and culturally appropriate practices to the design of their own personal iconography. Both manual and digital methods are explored, together with combinations of design elements and principles to evolve an original graphic icon or suite of symbols that capture elements of their own identity or life story. They consider qualities such as clarity and consistency, and the capacity to convey meaning through visual language. In doing so, students recognise the potential of design to express not only the knowledges, histories and traditions of others, but also their own personal connections to culture, community or place. This project also introduces students to the fundamental skills of icon design that will be of value when designing an interactive interface in Unit 2, Outcome 3.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to apply culturally appropriate design practices and an understanding of the designer’s ethical and legal responsibilities when designing personal iconography.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge

* ethical and legal responsibilities impacting the work of the designer, such as issues of ownership and intellectual property
* protocols for the creation and commercial use of Indigenous knowledge in design, including representations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture
* culturally appropriate design practices for the creation of personal iconography
* characteristics and functions of design elements and principles
* methods and processes used to generate and present original design solutions
* terminology used to discuss and evaluate culturally appropriate design practices and solutions.

Key skills

* describe the ethical and legal responsibilities of the designer and how issues such as ownership and intellectual property impact design practice
* describe and apply culturally appropriate design practices
* analyse the work and practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander designers
* select and use a range of appropriate manual and digital methods, media, materials and design elements and principles to develop personal iconography
* use divergent and convergent thinking strategies to generate ideas and resolve design solutions
* use terminology aligned with culturally appropriate design practice.

Area of Study 3

Designing interactive experiences

*What is the role of visual communication in shaping positive and inclusive interactive experiences?*

In this area of study, students examine the role of visual communication in shaping positive interactive experiences, and in catering for the diverse needs of users when interacting with devices, systems or services. They explore how interaction designers contribute to larger user-experience (UX) projects, focusing on the design of visual interfaces rather than their underlying functionality. They adopt inclusive practices and principles during the design of a user interface for a digital site or device, prioritising accessibility and usability. In doing so, students synthesise key understandings from previous outcomes: good design, human-centred research methods, design’s influence and the influences on design, and the significance of place and time.

Students engage with the VCD design process to determine an interaction design problem or opportunity. They begin by applying human-centred research methods to understand user objectives and synthesise insights in the form of a brief. Students then use divergent thinking strategies and ideation sketching as they consider ways to address the defined communication need, and approach the design of their chosen user interface. They generate wireframes to explore relationships between the visual components of the interface, and experiment with typographic conventions, visual grids, icons, symbols, pictorial representations, design elements and principles, and Gestalt principles of visual perception.

Students annotate design decisions using appropriate terminology to explain and evaluate the strengths and limitations of potential concepts. Convergent thinking strategies are employed to synthesise ideas, and mock-ups are generated for testing and critique. Students respond to feedback and make refinements to selected concepts before presenting a resolved interaction design solution. They present concepts as static visual representations of content and intended interactions and/or experiences. They are not required to produce functioning prototypes.

Outcome 3

On completion of this unit the student should be able to apply the VCD design process to design an interface for a digital product, environment or service.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 3.

Key knowledge

* the collaborative practices of designers working in the fields of user-experience and interaction design
* aesthetic considerations and conceptions of good design relevant to the design of interactive experiences
* the diverse needs of users when interacting with devices, systems and services
* the role of the brief in guiding the development of design solutions
* applications of the VCD design process relevant to user-experience and interaction design projects
* human-centred research methods used to identify interaction design problems and understand stakeholders
* methods, media and materials used to visualise, test and present interaction design solutions
* appropriate design terminology.

Key skills

* identify and research interaction design problems or opportunities
* document an interaction design need in the form of a brief
* apply the stages of the VCD design process to resolve an interaction design problem
* select and use manual and digital methods, media, materials and design elements and principles appropriate for the design of inclusive interactive experiences suitable for diverse user needs
* present design concepts for critique, and both deliver and respond to feedback
* annotate design ideas and concepts using appropriate design terminology to explain and evaluate design decisions
* test and evaluate the usability and suitability of design concepts
* select suitable static formats for the presentation of a digital interface solution.

Assessment

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on whether the student has demonstrated the set of outcomes specified for the unit. Teachers should use a variety of learning activities and assessment tasks that provide a range of opportunities for students to demonstrate the key knowledge and key skills in the outcomes.

The areas of study, including the key knowledge and key skills listed for the outcomes, should be used for course design and the development of learning activities and assessment tasks. Assessment must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and should be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe.

All assessments at Units 1 and 2 are school-based. Procedures for assessment of levels of achievement in Units 1 and 2 are a matter for school decision.

For this unit students are required to demonstrate three outcomes. As a set these outcomes encompass the areas of study in the unit.

Suitable tasks for assessment in this unit are:

Outcome 1

Environmental design

* a folio of work demonstrating the stages of the VCD design process to present an environmental design solution, drawing inspiration from its context and a chosen design style.

Outcome 2

Culturally appropriate design practices

* investigation of culturally appropriate design practices including representations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, presented in one of the following formats:
* an extended written response
* short-answer responses supported by visual references
* an annotated visual report
* a presentation using digital technologies such as an online presentation or interactive website
* an oral presentation

AND

* creation of personal iconography in a range of design exercises.

Outcome 3

Digital interface

* a folio demonstrating the stages of the VCD design process to propose an interface for an interactive digital product, environment or service.

Unit 3: Visual communication in design practice

In this unit students explore and experience the ways in which designers work, while also analysing the work that they design. Through a study of contemporary designers practising in one or more fields of design practice, students gain deep insights into the processes used to design messages, objects, environments and/or interactive experiences. They compare the contexts in which designers work, together with their relationships, responsibilities and the role of visual language when communicating and resolving design ideas. Students also identify the obligations and factors that influence the changing nature of professional design practice, while developing their own practical skills in relevant visual communication practices.

Students study not only how designers work but how their work responds to both design problems and conceptions of good design. They interrogate design examples from one or more fields of design practice, focusing their analysis on the purposes, functions and impacts of aesthetic qualities. This exposure to how, why and where designers work, what they make and the integral role of visual language in design practice provides the foundation for students’ own investigation of the VCD design process.

Students explore the Discover, Define and Develop phases of the VCD design process to address a selected design problem. In the Discover and Define phases, research methods are used to gather insights about stakeholders and a design problem, before preparing a single brief for a real or fictional client that defines two distinct communication needs. Students then embark on the Develop phase of the VCD design process, once for each communication need. They generate, test and evaluate design ideas and share these with others for critique. These design ideas are further developed in Unit 4, before refinement and resolution of design solutions.

Area of Study 1

Professional design practice

*What are the visual communication practices used by designers?*

In this area of study, students investigate how and where designers work, identifying the role of visual communication in professional design practice. Contemporary designers working in one or more fields of design practice are selected for study. Students compare the contexts in which these designers work, their applications of a design process, and the ways in which they use visual language to communicate ideas and concepts, and present design solutions. Students explore how designers collaborate with both stakeholders and specialists to shape and resolve design problems. They also identify the impact of ethical and legal obligations, including issues of ownership and intellectual property, and the extent to which contemporary designers adopt sustainable and circular design practices. In doing so, students learn how contemporary design practices differ from those in the past and how they may change in the future, identifying the influence of technological, economic, cultural, environmental and social factors.

Alongside their study of contemporary designers, students experiment with visual communication practices typically used in their selected field(s) of design practice, developing the capacity to apply relevant methods, media, materials, conventions and techniques. Students present a minimum of two practical design exercises showcasing their emerging skills. This research and practical experimentation, together with the study of visual language and aesthetic decisions in Area of Study 2, can be used to inform students’ own application of the VCD design process in Area of Study 3.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to compare the ways in which visual communication practices are used by contemporary designers, using research methods and practical exploration.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge

* contexts in which contemporary designers work
* practices and processes, including relevant methods, media, materials and conventions used by contemporary designers
* conceptions of good design in selected design field(s) of design practice
* differences between past, present and future professional design practices in selected field(s) of design practice
* distinguishing characteristics and the role of visual language in selected field(s) of design practice
* roles, relationships and responsibilities of designers, specialists and stakeholders when resolving design problems
* techniques used by designers to evaluate design ideas
* decisions made by designers during the resolution of design problems
* technological, economic, cultural, environmental and social factors influencing design practices
* ethical and legal obligations of designers
* appropriate design terminology.

Key skills

Comparative analysis

* compare contexts in which contemporary designers work
* describe and compare past, present and future professional design practices in selected field(s) of design practice
* analyse and evaluate the characteristics and role of visual language in selected field(s) of design practice
* explain the roles of, and relationships between, designers, specialists and stakeholders when resolving design problems
* describe the techniques used by designers to evaluate design ideas
* explain the economic, technological, cultural, environmental and social factors that influence design practices
* identify and analyse design practices that acknowledge ethical and legal obligations
* use appropriate design terminology.

Practical exploration

* apply visual communication practices and processes used by contemporary designers in selected field(s) of design practice
* use visual language to communicate ideas and/or information to specific audiences, and for specific purposes and contexts in selected field(s) of design practice
* incorporate relevant conventions in documentation or presentation drawings in selected fields of design practice
* use presentation formats characteristic of selected field(s) of design practice
* adopt conceptions of good design aligned with selected field(s) of design practice
* apply legal and ethical obligations relevant to selected fields of design practice.

Area of Study 2

Design analysis

*How do designers use visual language to communicate ideas and information to audiences or users?*

In this area of study, students learn how visual language is used to effectively communicate ideas and information to audiences or users. Students analyse the aesthetic decisions made by designers when producing messages, objects, environments or interactive experiences. They compare two or more design examples, considering how the design elements and principles are used in combination with media, methods and materials to address perceived communication needs. Drawing on conceptions of good design, students describe, analyse and evaluate how aesthetic decisions reflect the purposes, contexts and audiences or users of the selected design examples. They also consider the influence of technological, economic, cultural, social or environmental factors on the selected design examples.

Students can use their investigation into the practices of designers in Area of Study 1 and their study of visual language and aesthetic decisions in Area of Study 2 as a case study to support their own application of the VCD design process in Area of Study 3.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to compare and analyse design examples from selected field(s) of design practice, describing how aesthetic considerations contribute to the effective communication of information or ideas.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge

* techniques for analysing and evaluating design examples from selected field(s) of design practice
* the role of visual language in communicating ideas and information
* aesthetic decisions made by designers, using the design elements and principles
* the relationships between aesthetic decisions and the purposes, contexts and audiences or users of design examples
* methods, media and materials used to create design examples
* the influence of technological, economic, cultural, social or environmental factors on design decisions
* conceptions of good design
* appropriate design terminology.

Key skills

* compare and analyse design examples from selected field(s) of design practice
* describe the role of visual language in communicating ideas and information
* analyse influences on aesthetic decisions made by designers
* analyse and evaluate applications of methods, media and materials, and design elements and principles in selected design examples
* use conceptions of good design to evaluate design examples
* use appropriate terminology during analysis and evaluation.

Area of Study 3

Design process: defining problems and developing ideas

*How do designers apply a design process to reframe problems and develop ideas?*

In this area of study, students explore the Discover, Define and Develop phases of the VCD design process, and apply understandings of good design when addressing a selected design problem. Students begin the Discover phase by using divergent thinking strategies and applying ethical research methods to identify a design problem or opportunity. They gather insights about stakeholder perspectives and other influential factors using a range of research methods such as but not limited to interviews and surveys, audience or user personas, competitor analysis and secondary research.

Students employ convergent thinking strategies as they progress to the Define stage of the VCD design process, analysing and synthesising findings in order to clearly articulate design opportunities. From these findings, students prepare a single design brief for a real or fictional client, defining two communication needs that are distinct from one another in purpose and presentation format. Design criteria is specified for each communication need, with consideration given to the audience or user, the purposes of designed outcomes, possible contexts and design constraints.

The Develop phase of the VCD design process follows the formation of the brief, with students once again using divergent thinking as they employ an iterative process of seeking and analysing inspiration, brainstorming and generating design ideas. This phase of the design process is undertaken twice, as students address each communication need identified in the design brief. Students use methods such as but not limited to ideation sketching and prototyping to document potential concepts; they undertake further research if necessary and share ideas-in-progress with peers for critique. This feedback is used in Unit 4 to select and further evolve design concepts through refinement, testing and evaluation.

Outcome 3

On completion of this unit the student should be able to identify two communication needs for a client, prepare a brief and develop design ideas, while applying the VCD design process and design thinking strategies.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 3.

Key knowledge

* the Discover, Define and Develop phases of the VCD design process
* the role of convergent and divergent thinking in the VCD design process
* ethical research methods to identify and analyse a design problem
* the role of the brief in defining communication needs
* methods and techniques used to generate design ideas
* key features and functions of the design elements and principles
* legal and ethical obligations relevant to the designer’s work
* techniques for engaging in critiques to present design ideas and both respond to and deliver constructive feedback
* conceptions of good design
* appropriate design terminology.

Key skills

* apply the Discover, Define and Develop phases of the VCD design process
* use divergent and convergent thinking strategies when defining problems and developing ideas
* use design research methods to define communication problems
* apply legal and ethical obligations relevant to the designer’s work
* document a brief defining two distinct communication needs and presenting design criteria including purposes, contexts, audience or user characteristics and design constraints
* generate a range of design ideas drawing on design criteria documented in the brief
* annotate design ideas using design terminology to explain and evaluate design decisions
* use the design elements and principles to develop design ideas
* present design ideas for critique, and both respond to and deliver constructive feedback
* use appropriate design terminology.

School-based assessment

Satisfactory completion

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on whether the student has demonstrated the set of outcomes specified for the unit. Teachers should use a variety of learning activities and assessment tasks to provide a range of opportunities for students to demonstrate the key knowledge and key skills in the outcomes.

The areas of study and key knowledge and key skills listed for the outcomes should be used for course design and the development of learning activities and assessment tasks.

Assessment of levels of achievement

The student’s level of achievement in Unit 3 will be determined by School-assessed Coursework and a School-assessed Task.

School-assessment Coursework

The student’s level of achievement in Unit 3 Outcomes 1 and 2 will be determined by School-assessed Coursework. School-assessed Coursework tasks must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and must not unduly add to the workload associated with that program. They must be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe.

Where teachers provide a range of options for the same School-assessed Coursework task, they should ensure that the options are of comparable scope and demand.

The types and range of forms of School-assessed Coursework for the outcomes are prescribed within the study design. The VCAA publishes [Support materials](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/visualcommunicationdesign/Pages/Index.aspx) for this study, which include advice on the design of assessment tasks and the assessment of student work for a level of achievement.

Teachers will provide to the VCAA a numerical score representing an assessment of the student’s level of achievement. The score must be based on the teacher’s assessment of the performance of each student on the tasks set out in the following table.

Contribution to final assessment

School-assessed Coursework for Unit 3 will contribute 20 per cent to the study score.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Outcomes | Marks allocated | Assessment tasks |
| **Outcome 1**Compare the ways in which visual communication practices are used by contemporary designers, using research methods and practical exploration. | **30****20** | A comparative case study of designers in selected design field(s) presented in one of the following formats:* a written report
* an annotated visual report
* a response presented in a digital format, such as an online presentation or interactive website.

**AND**Two practical design exercises documenting emerging skills in selected field(s) of practice.  |
| **Outcome 2**Compare and analyse design examples from selected field(s) of design practice, describing how aesthetic considerations contribute to the effective communication of information or ideas. | **50** | A comparative analysis of design examples presented in one of the following formats:* a written report
* an annotated visual report
* a response presented in a digital format, such as an online presentation or interactive website.
 |
| **Total marks** | **100** |  |

School-assessed Task

The student’s level of achievement in Unit 3 Outcome 3 and in Unit 4 Outcomes 1 and 2 in will be assessed through a School-assessed Task. Details of the School-assessed Task for Units 3 and 4 are provided on [page 40](#SAT) of this study design.

Contribution to final assessment

The School-assessed Task contributes 50 per cent to the study score.

External assessment

The level of achievement for Units 3 and 4 is also assessed by an end-of-year examination (see [page 41](#examination)), which will contribute 30 per cent to the study score.

Unit 4: Delivering design solutions

In this unit students continue to explore the VCD design process, resolving design concepts and presenting solutions for two distinct communication needs. Ideas developed in Unit 3, Outcome 3 are evaluated, selected, refined and shared with others for further review. An iterative cycle is undertaken as students rework ideas, revisit research and review design criteria defined in the brief. Manual and digital methods, media and materials are explored together with design elements and principles, and concepts tested using models, mock-ups or low-fidelity prototypes.

When design concepts are resolved, students devise a pitch to communicate and justify their design decisions, before responding to feedback through a series of final refinements. Students choose how best to present design solutions, considering aesthetic impact and the communication of ideas. They select materials, methods and media appropriate for the presentation of final design solutions distinct from one another in purpose and presentation format, and that address design criteria specified in the brief.

Area of Study 1

Design process: refining and resolving design concepts

*How do designers resolve design problems?*

In this area of study, students reflect critically on feedback received in Unit 3, Outcome 3 as they evaluate, select and evolve design ideas into concepts for further refinement and testing. In doing so, students explore the Deliver phase of the VCD design process.

Students engage in an iterative cycle as they rework ideas, revisit research and review the client’s needs. They manipulate the design elements and principles in response to the brief and develop expertise in a range of appropriate manual and digital methods, materials and media. Development and documentation drawings, together with mock-ups, models and low-fidelity prototypes, may be used to assist with visualising, testing and resolving design concepts. During this process, students move from divergent to convergent thinking, drawing on conceptions of good design when synthesising ideas and using annotations to evaluate their potential. The refinement of design concepts for each communication need continues as two separate design processes, with students ensuring that these are distinct from one another in purpose and presentation format.

Students resolve selected design concepts and devise a pitch of one concept for each communication need to communicate their design thinking and decision making to an audience or user. Students explain the reasons for their selection and use of particular materials, media and methods, design elements and principles, and formats for presentation. They consider responses to their pitch and further refine each selected concept, in preparation for the presentation of final design solutions.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to refine and resolve distinct design concepts for each communication need, and devise and deliver a pitch to communicate concepts to an audience or users, evaluating the extent to which these meet the requirements of the brief.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge

* the Deliver phase of the VCD design process
* the role of the brief and convergent thinking when refining and resolving design concepts
* features and functions of the design elements and principles used to create and resolve design concepts
* manual and digital methods, media, materials and conventions used to create design concepts
* methods and techniques used to evaluate, test and resolve design concepts
* techniques used to deliver a pitch to present and explain design concepts
* the extent to which design concepts meet the requirements of the brief
* conceptions of good design
* legal and ethical obligations relevant to the designer’s work
* appropriate design terminology.

Key skills

* apply the Deliver phase of the VCD design process
* select and apply a range of manual and digital methods, materials, media and conventions, together with the design elements and principles to resolve design concepts
* use convergent thinking strategies to refine and resolve design concepts
* test and evaluate the suitability and quality of refined design concepts, drawing on the requirements of the brief
* devise and deliver a pitch that supports the presentation of one design concept for each communication need
* apply practices that fulfil the designer’s ethical and legal obligations
* use appropriate terminology to document the refinement and resolution of design concepts.

Area of Study 2

Presenting design solutions

*How do designers propose solutions to communication needs?*

In this area of study, students present design solutions for each of the communication needs addressed in Area of Study 1. They choose how best to use visual language to communicate solutions to stakeholders, considering aesthetic impact through applications of design elements and principles. Students select materials, methods and media appropriate for the presentation of final design solutions that are distinct from one another in purpose and presentation format, and that address design criteria specified in the brief.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to produce a design solution for each communication need defined in the brief, satisfying the specified design criteria.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge

* appropriate presentation formats for the delivery of two distinct design solutions
* techniques to apply methods, media and materials to deliver design solutions
* components of visual language, including design elements and principles, used to address distinct communication needs specified in the brief
* visual language used to communicate solutions to stakeholders.

Key skills

* select suitable presentation formats that meet communication needs defined in the brief
* select and apply a range of methods, media and materials to deliver distinct design solutions
* select and apply components of visual language, including design elements and principles to address the distinct communication needs specified in the brief.

School-based assessment

Satisfactory completion

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on whether the student has demonstrated the set of outcomes specified for the unit. Teachers should use a variety of learning activities and assessment tasks to provide a range of opportunities for students to demonstrate the key knowledge and key skills in the outcomes.

The areas of study and key knowledge and key skills listed for the outcomes should be used for course design and the development of learning activities and assessment tasks.

Assessment of levels of achievement

The student’s level of achievement in Unit 4 will be determined by a School-assessed Task.

School-assessed Task

The student’s level of achievement in Unit 3 Outcome 3 and in Unit 4 Outcomes 1 and 2 will be assessed through a School-assessed Task.

Contribution to final assessment

The School-assessed Task contributes 50 per cent to the study score.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Outcomes | Assessment tasks |
| **Unit 3Outcome 3**Identify two communication needs for a client, prepare a brief and develop design ideas, while applying the VCD design process and design thinking strategies. | * Research using divergent and convergent thinking to identify and analyse a design problem.
* A brief that identifies two communication needs and develops design criteria including the purposes, contexts, audience or user characteristics and design constraints.
* Generation of a range of ideas drawing on the design criteria documented in the brief.
* Presentation and critique of design ideas to a group based on the client needs and criteria documented in the brief.
* Deliver and respond to feedback using written reflective and critical evaluations.
 |
| **Unit 4Outcome 1**Refine and resolve distinct design concepts for each communication need, and devise and deliver a pitch to communicate concepts to an audience or users, evaluating the extent to which these meet the requirements of the brief. | * A folio of work presenting the development of design concepts for two distinct communication needs.
* Evaluation, testing and resolution of design concepts.
* Devise and deliver a pitch of one design concept for each of the two distinct communication needs.
* Documentation of the development, refinement and resolution of design concepts.
 |
| **Unit 4****Outcome 2**Produce a design solution for each communication need defined in the brief, satisfying the specified design criteria. | * Two distinct final presentations in two separate presentation formats that fulfil the communication needs and design criteria outlined in Unit 3, Outcome 3.
* Use of visual language and appropriate methods to communicate solutions to an audience or users.
 |

External assessment

The level of achievement for Units 3 and 4 is also assessed by an end-of-year examination.

End-of-year examination

Contribution to final assessment

The examination will contribute 30 per cent to the study score.

Description

The examination will be set by a panel appointed by the VCAA. All the key knowledge and key skills that underpin the outcomes in Units 3 and 4 are examinable.

Conditions

The examination will be completed under the following conditions:

* Duration: 1 hour and thirty minutes.
* Date: end-of-year, on a date to be published annually by the VCAA.
* VCAA examination rules will apply. Details of these rules are published annually in the
[*VCE Administrative Handbook*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/vce-vcal-handbook/Pages/index.aspx).
* The examination will be marked by assessors appointed by the VCAA.

Further advice

The VCAA publishes specifications for all VCE examinations on the VCAA website. Examination specifications include details about the sections of the examination, their weighting, the question format(s) and any other essential information. The specifications are published in the first year of implementation of the revised Unit 3 and 4 sequence together with any sample material.