

Programme Description

Bachelor in Graphic Design

Full-time

Campus

180 credits

Valid from 2024

*The study programme was accredited by NOKUT on 12/01/2011 and re-accredited by the Board:
09.12.2021*

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1. Introduction

The Bachelor in Graphic Design at Kristiania University College provides a robust practical and theoretical foundation in visual communication. The programme prepares students for working as graphic designers or further study at master level in the field of graphic design or related disciplines.

Graphic design is a creative, practical and intellectual field of study. The task of a graphic designer is to find visual solutions to communication tasks. In addition to creative skills, it requires the designer to develop concepts, understand target groups, apply relevant methods and critically evaluate the solutions they create. As reflective practitioners, students are asked to see themselves and their practice as a part of society, not as something that is isolated from the rest of the world.

The aim of the programme is to train graphic designers with skills that are in demand both now and in the future. The programme works closely with the industry and reflects the breadth of the discipline. Students are first introduced to exploratory and process-based work with basic design elements and principles before starting to perform industry-relevant graphic design assignments within the fields of information design, interactive design, editorial design and visual identity. During the second half of the programme, students are encouraged to develop their own “voices” as designers through speculative, critical and artistically exploratory graphic design projects.

Creative work is central to most courses. Students perform assignments through the use of both printed and digital media, in 2D and in spaces. These creative courses are complemented by academic courses that help increase students’ historical, strategic, critical and methodological understanding of their own and related fields, thereby enriching and underpinning their creative practices.

Upon completion of the programme, candidates may work as graphic designers or consultants at a design agency, “in house” with a company or organisation or launch their own venture. Relevant jobs can also be found in adjacent industries, such as advertising, PR and communication, film and television, publishing, newspapers, magazines, etc.

Upon completion of the Bachelor in Graphic Design, candidates will hold the qualifications required to apply for admission to master’s degree programmes in Norway and abroad. In Norway, Kristiania’s master’s degree in Design may be relevant, as well as the master’s degree programmes in design at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts and the University of Bergen. Examples of international master’s programmes that students will be qualified to apply for include the master’s in Communication Design at RMIT and the MA Graphic Media Design at the London College of Communication. Please note that some of these programmes have strict admission criteria.

2. Admission requirements

Admission

In order to apply to this programme, you need to fulfil the formal requirements and pass an entrance examination. A strong interest in and some prior knowledge of visual communication and design are also required. This is assessed based on the entrance examination, which must be passed in order to be admitted to the programme. Applicants will be ranked based on a combination of formal requirements and results from the entrance examinations.

In order to fulfil the formal requirements, students must be able to document one of the following:

- General University and College Admissions Certification
- General University and College Admissions Certification following subject training with an apprenticeship certificate or vocational experience and education according to the 23/5 regulation
- Prior learning and work experience

Applications based on prior learning and work experience will be processed individually and the applicant must document that they have the qualifications necessary to obtain the level of expertise required to complete the programme.

Entrance examination

An entrance examination must be submitted/completed together with the application. A description of the entrance examination and the assessment criteria will be published on the University College website in good time before the application deadline. Further information can be found here: <https://www.kristiania.no/studere-hos-oss/opptaksinformasjon/> Please refer to the *Regulations concerning admission to higher education*¹ and the *Regulations concerning admission, courses, degrees and examinations at Kristiania University College*² for further information about admission and formal requirements.

¹ <https://lovdata.no/dokument/SF/forskrift/2017-01-06-13>

² <https://lovdata.no/dokument/SF/forskrift/2018-06-01-813?q=H%C3%B8yskolen%20Kristiania>

3. Learning outcomes

All study programmes at Kristiania have adopted overarching learning outcomes that each student is expected to have achieved having completed the study. The learning outcomes describe what students are expected to know and be able to do as a result of the learning processes undertaken on the programme. Learning outcomes are divided into three categories: knowledge, skills and general expertise.³

Knowledge

The candidate

- will have extensive knowledge of central topics and theories within graphic design, such as design history, design criticism, colour theory, interactive design, composition, marketing, editorial design, semiotics, typography and visual identity.
- will be familiar with research and development in graphic design.
- will be able to give an account of relevant literature, digital resources and professional arenas for graphic design which can be used to update relevant professional and cross-disciplinary knowledge.
- will be familiar with how graphic design is used in various disciplines, contexts and historical perspectives.

Skills

The candidate

- will be able to apply professional knowledge and innovation from research and development when developing and justifying design solutions.
- will be able to reflect on their choice of sources, methods, visual expressions, craftsmanship and presentation of design solutions and can adjust them under guidance.
- will be able to find, organise and interpret visual, textual and other information and apply this to highlight academic questions, both as part of a creative design process and in preparing an academic text.
- will be able to use relevant physical and digital tools to create graphic design to a good standard of craftsmanship.

³ Read more about learning outcomes and the Norwegian National Qualifications Framework here: https://www.nokut.no/siteassets/nkr/nasjonalt_kvalifikasjonsrammeverk_for_livslang_laring_nkr_nn.pdf

General expertise

The candidate

- will be able to critically reflect upon academic and professional ethical issues in relation to the development of graphic design solutions.
- will be able to plan and implement a design process and its phases, independently and in collaboration with peers.
- will be able to convey professional knowledge, experiences and own design solutions using a wide range of expressions.
- will be able to justify and argue for strategic, functional, aesthetic and technical decisions and, through discussion with colleagues, contribute to developing their own and others' design practice.
- will be familiar with new tendencies and trends in the field as well as relevant forums for dissemination and discussion on innovative projects in graphic design and related disciplines.

4. Study programme structure

The *Bachelor in Graphic Design* is a three-year programme that totals 180 credits, of which 172.5 credits are comprised of compulsory courses and 7.5 credits are comprised of elective courses.

The programme covers six semesters and is structured as follows:

Bachelor in graphic design			
First semester	Typography, form and tools 22.5 credits		Introduction to Higher Education 7.5 credits
Second semester	Design History 7.5 credits	Problem-solving in Graphic Design 22.5 credits	
Third semester	Marketing and Consumer Behaviour 7.5 credits	Visual Identity 22.5 credits	
Fourth semester	Elective course 7.5 credits	Corporate Social Responsibility in Graphic Design 15 credits	Graphic Design Criticism 7.5 credits
Fifth semester	Artistically Exploratory Graphic Design 7.5 credits	Self-initiated Graphic Design Project 15 credits	Understanding Industry 7.5 credits
		Alternate pathway: Supervised Professional Training in Graphic Design 22.5 credits	
		Alternate pathway: Student exchanges 30 credits	
Sixth semester	Design Research Methods 7.5 credits	Bachelor's thesis 22.5 credits	

Table 1. Structure of courses in the first to third academic year

Compulsory courses	Elective courses
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4.1 Academic progression

The first four semesters of the programme are built around a number of long practical specialisation courses: “Typography, Form and Tools”, “Problem-solving in Graphic Design”, “Visual Identity” and “Corporate Social Responsibility in Graphic Design”. In these courses, students will practice performing graphic design assignments of increasing complexity. The long practical specialisation courses are complemented in each of the first four semesters by one or two thematically affiliated shorter courses that add contextual, historical, critical or theoretical understanding: “Introduction to higher education”, “Design history”, “Marketing and consumer behaviour” and “Graphic design criticism”.

After two years of studies, students will have acquired the necessary knowledge and skills to solve a broad range of design tasks and are ready to adapt their programme to their independently defined interests. In the fifth semester, students can choose between three different options: supervised professional training at an external company, student exchange at qualified educational institutions abroad or teaching at the University College. The programme concludes with an extensive theoretical and practical bachelor project chosen, planned and executed by the student generating 22.5 credits.

The progression from semester to semester will gradually develop students’ expertise and independence in the field. The programme begins by introducing key elements and principles before applying students’ acquired skills to perform increasingly complex design tasks. At the same time, students are gradually introduced to a broader understanding of what a graphic designer can contribute in terms of professional solutions, strategically anchored commercial problem-solving and active social impact and criticism.

One academic year lasts 10 months and comprises 60 credits. The bachelor in graphic design is a full-time course of study and students are expected to concentrate on their studies as if they were a full-time job (approx. 40 hours a week). The workload involved in a course worth 7.5 credits is estimated to be around 200 hours. The balance between teacher-led tuition and independent work is explained in each course description.

Specialisation courses (including the thesis) account for 150 credits, thus meeting NOKUT’s stipulation that specialisation in a discipline must generate at least 80 credits.

4.2 Courses First Academic Year

First semester: Introduction to fundamental themes, methods and tools.

During the first semester of the programme, students are introduced to fundamental elements and principles in graphic design, different tools, methods and techniques, as well as a process-based working methodology. Students also learn what it means to study at a higher education institution. The aim of the semester is to provide students with the necessary theoretical and

practical foundation required to perform simple design tasks and succeed as students at bachelor's level.

Second semester: Problem-solving and the history of the field

During the second semester, students will further develop their theoretical and practical foundations. By learning about the history of their own and related fields, students acquire theoretical knowledge and methods that are applied to contextualise their own work and the work of others. Graphic design is presented as a problem-solving activity, in which the basic knowledge and skills from the first semester are applied in an industry-related context. This occurs within the framework of three selected disciplines and provides students with an increasing understanding of the complexity of the field.

Course name	Credits	Description
Typography, form and tools	22.5	This course provides students with an introduction to the fundamental building blocks for graphic design. The focus is not on the development of finished “products” or “solutions” but on practical process-based work in which students will explore typography and design elements and principles, as well as their effects, using different methodological, physical and digital tools. Documentation and presentation of the process is an important aspect of the course.
Introduction to Higher Education	7.5	This course provides an introduction to the working and learning methods used in higher education. The aim is to teach students to think critically and provide an insight into scientific and academic thinking. In this course, students will be introduced to scientific methods, the difference between qualitative and quantitative methods, data collection, source criticism, artistic development work, ethics and academic writing, as well as data protection (GDPR) and notification requirements. The critical academic reflection will be linked to the student's field.
Design History	7.5	This course provides an introduction to modern design history, from the industrial revolution through to the present day. Students become familiar with the most important styles in design history, how these styles were characterised and the different historical forces that influenced historical style developments. A critical selection of historical objects and actors of relevance to the associated study programmes will be presented and discussed, with reference to influential contemporary texts. During this course, students will acquire knowledge that equips them to reflect upon their own professional abilities in an historical context and methodological skills that can be used in the interpretation of contemporary and historical design solutions.
Problem-solving in graphic design	22.5	In this course, students learn to solve academic problems through work on practical tasks anchored in three selected basic disciplines within graphic design: information design, interactive design and editorial design. Students will acquire knowledge and skills relating to selected methods, theories and tools through the learning activities of the programme and these will be used to inform and structure design processes, as well to create suitable professional results with an engaging and relevant visual language. Students will work in an industry-related context in which the needs, expectations and desires of users, readers and recipients are taken into account. Furthermore, the course continues to build on the knowledge and skills acquired during the first semester and enables students to solve increasingly large and complex problems later on in the programme.

Table 2. Courses in the first academic year

4.3 Courses in the second academic year

Third semester: Strategic Graphic Design

In this semester, students will learn to develop strategic design solutions. This starts with a theoretical introduction to marketing and consumer behaviour, in which students will acquire an understanding of markets, target groups and consumers. This knowledge will be taken into a large practical course in which students will develop strategically anchored visual identities and design knowledge and skills developed earlier in the programme will be applied in a new and more complex context. During the implementation of the first half of the programme, students will have received an introduction to the basic principles, history and most important disciplines in the field.

Fourth semester: Critical Perspectives on Graphic Design

From this semester, students will start to explore aspects and perspectives of graphic design that extend beyond the commercial business relationship and place it in wider academic, artistic, personal and societal contexts. Students start the semester with a course of their own choosing from a portfolio common to all students at the School of Arts, Design and Media. The rest of the semester is set aside for a critical exploration of the role of graphic design in society. Students examine how graphic design can contribute to solving relevant societal problems and will place a critical spotlight on graphic design as a profession, process and end result through reflection and/or creative practices.

Course name	Credits	Description
Marketing and Consumer Behaviour	7.5	This course provides an introduction to marketing as a discipline, techniques and business philosophy. Students will be taught market and target group analysis, marketing strategy, market planning, impact measurement and control. Particular emphasis will be placed on how consumers navigate the market, the different decision-making processes used by customers and the results of these decisions. Other central topics include relational and societal perspectives on marketing, as well as marketing communications.
Visual Identity	22.5	This course provides an introduction to the development of visual identities anchored in strategic design processes. "Visual identity" refers to the use of visual instruments in the communication interfaces used in products, services, organisations and companies, enabling them to appear in the market with their own identity. Students learn to develop complex visual systems, in which visual elements are primarily understood as identity-creating and holistic thinking is central in all communication interfaces, media and interactive elements. Furthermore, students learn how companies can use visual identities to reach strategic goals and how to structure a strategic design process. Students will acquire knowledge of tools and methods used to strategically anchor design solutions and concepts, as well as how service-dominant logic can be used to develop brands and design solutions.

Corporate Social Responsibility in Graphic Design	15	This course provides an introduction to the opportunities graphic designers have to work towards positive societal changes and emphasises reflection on the role of designers in society in general. A conceptual approach will be used to explore concepts such as “wicked problems”, sustainability and universal design.
Graphic design criticism	7.5	This course provides an introduction to design criticism as a discipline and method for critical reflection. The aim is for students to be able to systematically assess the design projects of others, the design industry, design training and phenomena therein to further develop their abilities to critically reflect upon and complete independent design projects.

Table 3. Courses in the second academic year

4.4 Courses in the third academic year

Fifth semester: Three alternative pathways

This semester offers three alternative pathways. Learning outcomes will depend on which pathway students choose and are therefore an indication of the skills they will have acquired upon completion of the course. Both **Option 1** and **2** include a course that highlights the importance of artistic development work and elective projects in graphic design. After this course, students who have selected Option 1 will plan and complete a project of their own choosing and complete a course in industry knowledge. Students who have selected **Option 2** will spend the rest of the semester completing supervised professional training at a company, where they will acquire relevant industry experience. Students wishing to apply for an exchange to an accredited educational institution abroad may do so as part of **Option 3**. The following tables show the three programme pathways available in the fifth semester:

Option 1

Course name	Credits	Description
Artistically exploratory graphic design (common to option 1 and 2)	7.5	This course provides an introduction to graphic design as an artistically exploratory practice and provides students with a basic introduction to artistic development work as a research tradition. On the basis of a given subject, students will develop an independent art-focused project during the course, emphasising independent academic development through exploration and experimentation. The project will act as a free space released from any consideration of target groups and clients, where students’ own professional interests and intellectual curiosity form the basis for the work. The project will result in an independent “work” or end product that is submitted and presented towards the end of the course. A central objective of this project work is to acquire new insights, awareness and knowledge within the areas that are explored. In extension of the above, the course also emphasises reflection on students’ own work and work process.
Self-initiated Graphic Design Project	15	This course provides students with the opportunity to complete a self-defined graphic design project that continues to build on the knowledge and experience acquired in earlier courses in the programme. Students will independently identify a problem relating to a personal, academic, societal

		or other topic and will solve this problem using relevant insights and working methods, with reference to literature of their own choosing.
Understanding Industry	7.5	This course provides an introduction to issues linked to awareness-raising in relation to how students come across as designers and potential jobseekers. The work in this course provides basic knowledge of starting, running and promoting your own business. Students will prepare project plans, demonstrate how they present quotes to a potential customer, enter into contracts, as well as dealing with budgets and invoices. This course provides a basic introduction to copyright, design protection (patents) and your legal rights as a designer.

Table 4. Courses in the fifth semester, Option 1

Option 2

Course name	Credits	Description
Artistically exploratory graphic design (common to option 1 and 2)	7.5	This course provides an introduction to graphic design as an artistically exploratory practice and provides students with a basic introduction to artistic development work as a research tradition. On the basis of a given subject, students will develop an independent art-focused project during the course, emphasising independent academic development through exploration and experimentation. The project will act as a free space released from any consideration of target groups and clients, where students' own professional interests and intellectual curiosity form the basis for the work. The project will result in an independent "work" or end product that is submitted and presented towards the end of the course. A central objective of this project work is to acquire new insights, awareness and knowledge within the areas that are explored. In extension of the above, the course also emphasises reflection on students' own work and work process.
Supervised professional training in graphic design	22.5	This course provides professional experience of graphic design work. During the supervised professional training period, students will work with real projects and clients at a company. This course provides insight into everyday working life, as well as the opportunity to develop a network of contacts within the industry. Throughout the period, students will document their practical work and will provide a written evaluation and summary of their experiences in the form of a process journal. Students will also attend certain teaching sessions at the University College.

Table 5. Courses in the fifth semester, Option 2

Option 3

Course name	Credits	Description
Student exchanges at partner institutions abroad	30	Students may apply to participate in student exchanges at one of the University College's partner institutions abroad during the fifth semester. Students will follow the teaching at the institution in question and learning outcomes will therefore depend on the courses they choose.

Table 6. Courses in the fifth semester, Option 3

Sixth semester: Independent reflective practice

This final semester begins with a summary and re-contextualisation of methods learnt earlier in the programme in order to provide students with a more detailed understanding of how these can be actively and independently applied as an incorporated part of the design process. The semester concludes with the large bachelor project, in which students will convert

theoretical and practical knowledge and skills acquired during the programme into a large, self-chosen exploratory project with an associated written work.

Course name	Credits	Description
Design Research Methods	7.5	In this course, students will exchange knowledge of methods and techniques learned at earlier stages of the study programme through an interdisciplinary community. Through lectures and practical exercises, students will be exposed to selected methods for data collection, generation and analysis that are of relevance to the represented design disciplines. In this course, students are encouraged to consider design as an exploratory process and the designer as a reflective practitioner. In order to support this perspective, students are asked to reflect upon their own and others' use of methods to contribute towards greater independence in the design process, which will be beneficial for the final thesis.
Bachelor's thesis (Graphic Design)	22.5	In this final assignment, students should demonstrate that they are capable of in-depth study and of applying the knowledge and skills they have acquired throughout the programme. They will undertake a larger design project of their own choosing, resulting in a practical design solution and written piece linking the solution to the theoretical subject matter.

Table 7. Courses in the sixth semester

5. Teaching and assessment methods

5.1 Learning platform and teaching in practice

The bachelor's degree in Graphic Design programme has been structured in such a way that the courses and work on these courses will help students progress towards the intended learning outcomes described in Chapter 2 of this programme description.

In most courses, students will encounter a mixture of different working and teaching methods. In addition to traditional academic teaching methods such as lectures, emphasis will be placed on supervision and practical "workshops" or seminars. Supervision primarily takes place in groups, but individual supervision also occurs. In some courses, students will work together in groups.

There will be extensive use of case studies to bring the various courses to life. Some of these will involve genuine clients to inject an enhanced degree of realism into the projects. Visiting lecturers from the business community and other relevant environments are invited to speak to illustrate and exemplify the different professional situations that students will be expected to master. Visiting lecturers also contribute specialist expertise in the field.

The working, teaching and assessment methods for each course have been selected for the purpose of providing an appropriate and meaningful correlation between the desired learning outcomes, the teaching methods used and the final examination at the end of the course.

As with all higher education, Kristiania sets out requirements concerning students' independent learning work. The University College assumes responsibility for facilitating students' work through properly designed learning. It must be noted that a teacher can only disseminate and facilitate. The actual learning takes place on the part of the individual student and will be the result of the student's own work. In terms of the teaching, students must therefore expect to make a significant personal contribution.

The most important working and teaching methods students will encounter in the bachelor's degree in Graphic Design are:

- Teaching and supervision (including lectures, “workshops”, seminars, group supervision and presentations with feedback).
- Independent study
- Independent work, individually or in groups
- Discussions and presentations
- Professional work at a supervised professional training placement company

Students who require supervision outside of scheduled teaching may access the University College's academic resources, including administrative staff, librarians, digital learning resources (e.g. online films) and student supervisors. These may be contacted by individual students as needed. In addition to literature and assistance with literature searches, the library also offers various training courses in academic writing.

5.2 Examination and assessment methods

An assessment refers to a situation in which a submitted or presented piece of work is assessed against a set of criteria. The criteria are set by the learning outcomes defined for each course. Assessments may be performed by fellow students, teachers or examiners. These generally lead to feedback, either for the purpose of guidance or as a grade (examinations).

At Kristiania, we distinguish between assessment *as* learning, assessment *for* learning and assessment *of* learning. The format of the assessed work (format of assessment) may be the same in all three of these assessment scenarios even if the *purpose* varies.

The purpose of assessment as learning (peer assessment) and for learning (feedback from the teacher) is to create a learning process in order to help students achieve the best possible learning outcomes. We consider these types of assessment to be part of our teaching methods, which can be found in Chapter 4.1.

Assessment of learning is a final assessment (examination), in which the actual learning outcomes achieved are assessed. At Kristiania, examinations are defined as follows: “An examination is a final assignment within a course or a limited sub-course”. The submitted or presented work will be assessed by an examiner and the outcomes of the assessment will be included in the grade transcript.

In the bachelor's degree in Graphic Design programme, students may experience the following examination methods:

- Home examination
- Portfolio examination
- Semester assignment
- Thesis

Compulsory activities have been defined for certain courses. Compulsory activities must be approved before you can take an examination. Such activities may include requirements for one or more works to be submitted (coursework requirements) and/or requirements for participation in defined activities and/or lectures and/or compulsory supervised professional training.

Compulsory activities are graded as Approved/Not Approved and the right to take an examination in a course with compulsory activities requires any such activities to have been graded as Approved. Students will otherwise lose their right to take the examination for the course until the activities have been assessed as Approved.

For further information about examinations and compulsory activities, please see the Kristiania website.

6. Internationalisation and international student exchanges

Students on the *Bachelor in Graphic Design* programme will have the opportunity to participate in an international student exchange and general teaching provides an international context for the programme.

6.1 Internationalisation programmes

In this context, internationalisation means that the course is placed in an international context and that the students are exposed to a diverse range of perspectives.

Internationalisation programmes can involve a number of activities such as the use of international literature, international visiting lecturers, overseas students on student exchanges or student participation in international conferences or workshops abroad (this list is not exhaustive).

For specific internationalisation programmes, please refer to the programme's course descriptions.

6.2 International student exchange programmes

Study exchanges are arranged in the fifth semester of the bachelor's degree in graphic design. Kristiania has entered into agreements with several international educational institutions that provide the opportunity to complete parts of the programme abroad.

The following educational institutions abroad are relevant to the Bachelor in Graphic Design:

- Ecoles de conde Axe Sud (France)
- Ecole de Communication Visuelle (France)
- IADE (Portugal)
- NABA – Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti (Italy)
- University of Hertfordshire (United Kingdom)
- Kingston University (United Kingdom)
- Southampton Solent (United Kingdom)
- Leeds College of Art (United Kingdom)
- Falmouth University (United Kingdom)
- Bilgi University (Turkey)
- Peter Behrens School of Arts (Germany)
- Universidad de Monterrey (Mexico)

Kristiania participates in the following mobility programmes:

- Nordplus in the Nordic and Baltic countries
- ERASMUS+ in Europe
- “Exchange” or “Study Abroad” programme, for students within and outside Europe.

Kristiania has entered into agreements relating to student exchanges for students and the academic relevance of such exchanges will be ensured by the programme coordinator. Exchange courses offered by partner institutions are approved by programme coordinators for academic recognition in relevant Bachelor's degrees and have a value of *30 credits*.

Exchange programmes are open to students who are studying on degree-awarding programmes and have completed a minimum of 60 credits at Kristiania at the time of departure. For both campus-based and online programmes, the exchange will be campus-based.

For nomination to student exchange programmes, requirements usually apply in relation to standardised study progression, grades and personal motivation statements. Evidence of creative/portfolio work may also be required and Kristiania may conduct interviews for exchange applicants. Kristiania aims to send well-qualified and motivated students to recognised educational institutions abroad. Please note that there is a limited number of exchange student places available at these institutions.

The list of partner institutions is subject to change and up-to-date information is published on the Kristiania website.