Periodic Review of Typography & Graphic communication

Introduction

1 An internal review of programmes in the Department of Typography and Graphic Communication was held on 20 and 21 March 2017. The members of the Panel were:

- Professor Clare Furneaux, Teaching and Learning Dean *(Chair)*
- Dr Claire Collins (Henley Business School) (internal panellist)
- Dr Katja Strohfeldt-Venables (Chemistry, Food and Pharmacy) (internal panellist)
- Hans Dieter Reichert (University of Westminster) (external panellist)
- Paul McNeil (London College of Communication) (external panellist)
- Topsy Fletcher (OUP) (external panellist)
- Hawanatu Sesay (BSc Biochemistry, Part 2) (student panellist)
- Vicky Howard, Senior Quality Support Officer, Centre for Quality Support and Development *(Secretary)*

2 The Panel met the following members of staff:

- Dr Rob Banham, UG Programme Director, Exams Officer, DDTL, acting SDTL
- Dr Ruth Blacksell, MA Programme Director, PGT Admissions Tutor
- Ms Sarah Chapman, Teaching Fellow
- Professor John Gibbs, Head of School of Arts and Communication Design
- Professor Eric Kindel, Head of Department of Typography and Graphic Communication
- Mr Gerry Leonidas, Departmental Director of PGT Studies, Senior Tutor, Disability Representative, MA Programme Director, PGT Admissions Tutor
- Ms Kim Marshall, Part 1 Tutor
- Dr Jeanne-Louise Moyes, Part 2 Tutor, Study Abroad Co-ordinator, TEL Officer
- Mr Keith Tam, MA Programme Director, PGT Admissions Tutor
- Professor Sue Walker, Professor
- Mr Geoff Wyeth , Teaching Fellow

3 The Panel met students who represented the following degree programmes:

- BA Graphic Communication

- MA Book Design
- MA Creative Enterprise (Communication Design pathway)
- MA Information Design
- MA Typeface Design

4   The Panel also met recent graduates from the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

General observations

5   The Review Panel held face-to-face meetings with a range of staff from across the Department. Staff were fully engaged with the review process and made the Panel feel very welcome. They provided a useful tour of the Department's facilities. The Review benefitted from a comprehensive and well-organised Blackboard organisation, which was exemplary, and invaluable in reviewing the Department's activities. The Panel extends its thanks to all staff members who participated in the Review.

6   The Panel welcomed the opportunity to meet face-to-face with current students and alumni, who gave a very positive endorsement of the Department and programmes under review. The Panel wishes to express its thanks to these students and alumni, and to all those who contributed to the written Student Submission, for their valuable input to the Review. The programme for the days of the Review was very well-organised and all contributions, whether face-to-face or online, were thoughtful and helpful.

Academic standards of the programmes

Committee structures

7   Overall the Panel was satisfied that the committee structures in place were appropriate and effective for the quality management and enhancement of the programmes.

8   The Panel considered that the membership of the various committees was appropriate and that suitable provision was made for student representation. The Panel noted, however, that a limited numbers of student representatives had attended some Student Staff Liaison Committee meetings over the last year, and would urge student reps to send substitutes if they were unable to attend.

9   The MA Creative Enterprise (MACE) was introduced in 2015-16 and currently has pathways in each of the School's three Departments and is partly delivered by the Henley Business School. Whilst the MA Creative Enterprise (Communication Design pathway) is included in the remit of the Department's Board of Studies for Postgraduate Programmes and is externally examined within each subject area, the Panel noted that the School was currently reviewing arrangements for maintaining overall oversight of the programme via a School-level Board of Studies and Programme Examiners' Meeting. The Panel agreed to recommend to the School that this be introduced immediately (**necessary recommendation a (School)**).

10   The Panel found evidence, in the form of minutes of meetings, that the various Department and programme level committees were fulfilling their formal responsibilities in respect of quality management and enhancement. This included giving proper consideration to External Examiner Reports, National Student Survey

(NSS) and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) results, annual programme reporting and proposals for new programmes/amendments to existing programmes.

Programme design

11   The Panel was provided with a range of evidence including module descriptions, programme specifications, student handbooks, External Examiners' reports, annual programme reports, and samples of students' work and feedback. These, along with discussions with staff and students and the Panel's own deliberations, enabled the Panel to confirm that the academic standards of the programmes under review were appropriate and comparable with programmes in other universities.

12   The Panel considered that, overall, the degree programmes offered were coherent and of appropriate scope. The programmes demonstrated evidence of students thinking critically and creatively and this was supported by the External Examiners.

13   The Panel noted that the aims and learning outcomes of individual modules were properly documented in the relevant module descriptions at undergraduate level. Progression of modules and content over the programme was evidence of a 'spiralled curriculum' and this was confirmed by students in their written submission and identified by the Panel as an example of good practice (**good practice a**). The Panel noted that, following a change to the structure of undergraduate programme specifications across the University from 2016-17, programme learning outcomes had been removed from these documents and would be included in a Further Programme Information area of the University website in due course.

14   The Panel noted the recent changes to the undergraduate programme following a curriculum review, undertaken in response to student evaluation, comments from External Examiners, and the Department's own observations. In 2017–18, the Department would also introduce three new optional modules in Part 1, enabling students to take all 120 credits in Graphic Communication. This opportunity was commended by the students and alumni who met with the Panel on the basis that the UG degree was a new discipline area for students and, many, therefore, wished to be able to focus on it fully at Part 1. A new Part 1 module 'Skills for Design Practice' would be delivered largely online and was intended to foster independent learning; it was agreed that students would need support in studying in this way at Part 1. Further changes would be made to the list of compulsory modules at Part 2 and 3. A number of modules would now also be available to students outside of the Department. The changes were intended to improve the student experience, rebalance the content of the programme, and facilitate the teaching of larger cohorts. The Department would review the impact of programme changes after 2017-18 and before implementing the Curriculum Framework from 2018-19.

15   The Panel commended the integration of history, theory, and practice in the BA Graphic Communication in contributing to student work, which was both articulate and purposeful. The creative programmes demonstrated a clear academic grounding and the link between teaching and research was very strong (**good practice b**).

16   Student work at undergraduate level demonstrated a clear engagement with image-based and text-based work. However, with continually evolving Industry demands, particularly within the Digital field of design, it was advisable that some thought be given to establishing greater clarity of the theory and research taught in Digital Design through industry-relevant labelling (**advisable recommendation a**).

17   The curriculum has been developed since 2011 to include digital and online projects (such as the development of apps), which UG students appreciated and which some regarded as vital to their employment prospects in Industry. It was clear to the Panel that principles of graphic communication and design thinking taught on the UG programme applied in all domains. Nonetheless, the Student Submission and meetings with students included some feedback that a portion of UG students felt that they would benefit from further support in the choice and use of appropriate software (along with the relevant skills training). It was also felt that this support was not consistently available within the current team, resulting in some students expressing a lack of confidence working in digital environments. PGT students, in contrast, believed that self-learning of software programmes was sufficient and that teaching should focus on design theory. The Panel discusses teaching, design software and skills further under 'Employability' below.

18   The learning outcomes of taught postgraduate programmes were clearly laid out in programme specifications. All PGT programmes were delivered and informed by the research expertise of staff and combined academic and practical elements. The module structure of MA in Typeface Design had been reorganised in 2016 to align to the structure of the other PGT programmes and to be more readily adapted to changes in the technological environment of the discipline. The MA Res Typography & Graphic Communication programme also now included a module focussed on the development of a research degree proposal. PGT students who met with the Panel appeared to be highly motivated and recognised the opportunities provided by their programmes to deepen their knowledge via self-learning.

19   As noted in 'Student admission, retention, progression and attainment' below, the Panel felt that recruitment to PGT programmes should be enhanced, including by reviewing the names of programmes to ensure they are understood by and appeal to potential applicants.

Assessment and Feedback

20   External Examiners' reports verified that the standards achieved by learners met the minimum expectations for awards, as measured against the relevant Subject Benchmarking Statements and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications. It was clear to the Panel that comments made by the External Examiners were considered by the Department.

21   The Panel noted some variations to standard University procedures in assessment to meet the needs of design study, including the development of skills through the reworking of practical projects after formative feedback. The Department also had a University-approved system of step marking for work in Part 1.

22   The Panel found evidence that undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes incorporated a variety of assessment methods, including practical projects which prepared students well for their professional careers (**good practice c**). Discussions with students and the Student Submission confirmed that students were generally satisfied with the range of assessment types and External Examiners had commended the Department upon the complementarity of its practical and other assessable work.

23   The Panel noted that the number of assessments seemed to be appropriate for the programmes and that students received a schedule of assignments at the start of each session. Submission deadlines were planned within and across years. The Panel had noted some feedback from UG students on the bunching of deadlines, especially at the

end of Part 2 Term 2, and noted that the Department was currently undertaking a further review of assessment load at Part 2 and of the distribution of student workload across a given term.

24   From the information provided to the Panel, it was clear that the provision of feedback covered a wide range, from oral to written feedback. In particular, the Panel noted that oral feedback was excellent, intense and very much appreciated by the students and provided at timely stages of project work. While students sometimes might struggle to see the full range of feedback provided to them, they certainly appreciated the feeling of "working alongside the academics" and the open environment within the Department. The Panel noted this open environment and continuous provision of oral feedback as an example of good practice (**good practice d**). In general, the students who met with the Panel were fairly satisfied with the feedback they had received and clearly indicated they understand the breadth of feedback.

25   Feedback provision would benefit from more standardization, wherever possible. The Department already engaged fully with e-assessment and e-feedback, wherever appropriate. However, the 'rubric' feedback templates would benefit from further alignment with the learning objectives and marking criteria. This should help to make feedback more transparent to students, which, in turn, should enhance student engagement. The Panel noted the importance of students being familiar with receiving feedback and how to process it and realise its benefits to the design process, a critical skill when entering Industry.

26   Assessment and feedback scores in the NSS were in the range 69%-75% from 2012 to 2015. In 2015-16, 72% of undergraduate work was returned within 15 working days, although students and staff reported that delays tended to be exceptional. The Panel hoped that enhanced communication about feedback timeliness and more consistent adherence to the 15-day turnaround time should help to improve the NSS scores in this category.

27   In light of the above, the Panel has agreed to recommend that the Department work with the Centre for Quality Support and Development (CQSD) to review its standard feedback provision, including development and use of a criteria-based standard feedback form (**advisable recommendation b**).

Quality of learning opportunities offered by the programmes

Teaching and learning

28   The Panel was impressed by the quality of teaching and learning in the Department and noted from its meetings with students, and further evidence in the form of the Student Submission, module evaluations and NSS/PTES results and qualitative responses, that students were generally very satisfied with the quality of teaching on their programmes.

29   Staff drew on a wide range of internationally-recognised academic and professional expertise in the discipline in their teaching, with staff research and scholarship clearly embedded in the curriculum. Staff were also very committed to ensuring students learn, understand, and apply best practice within the professional fields of Typography and Graphic Communication. This was reflected in the teaching and the many

practically-focussed assessment tasks (see 'Assessment and Feedback' above), which were evidence of good practice in a discipline with well-defined and purposeful outputs showing a range of professional skills. A notable example was the use of the Real Jobs initiative in providing live projects with direct client contact and published outputs for students to complete as part of assessed assignments (see 'Employability' below).

30   UG and PGT programmes required and facilitated detailed critical reflection on practical work produced in the light of the histories and theories underpinning the discipline. Students indicated that they had chosen to come to Reading for the reputation of the Department and the academic rigour that this robust contextual framework provided.

31   The Panel reviewed a small sample of assignment briefs from undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. The standard of undergraduate work demonstrated a level of achievement that was equal to or higher than that of equivalent programmes in the sector, with clear evidence of a strong sense of enquiry in the student work, supported by evidence of the acquisition of appropriate technical and professional skills. In general, postgraduate work showed a distinctive maturity and assurance in the execution of self-initiated visual research projects, underpinned by substantial contextual, historical, and theoretical studies. This was particularly evident in the MA in Typeface Design sample, which also demonstrated a strongly international perspective.

32   Research-based methods were embedded in the teaching of practical design applications, so students become critically reflective about their approach to design practice. Students worked as both individuals and within groups, fostering articulate, literate, reflective designers able to work collaboratively and independently. This was demonstrated during the Review by the ways in which students who met with the Panel expressed their understanding of both the range of transferrable skills they were developing and of the consequences of their acquisition for their practice, their academic development and their employability, and was another example of good practice (**good practice e**).

33   Students and alumni highly praised and appreciated staff accessibility; it was clear that academic staff were prepared to advise on and discuss with students their on-going work at almost all times of the working day, both by appointment and on student demand. There was a real sense of collegiality and of a strong, well-maintained community of practice within the Department, including UGs, PGs and staff. This was a model of good practice, but made heavy demands on staff time, especially when experienced key members of the academic team are not replaced on retirement (see 'Learning environment and student support' below). This kind of support was especially valuable in a discipline that typically attracted students with creative, visual skills working towards independent study.

34   With regard to both on-going support and formal teaching sessions, staff commented on the challenges of continuing to teach in a supportive, learner-centred way, meeting the needs of their students, as group sizes increased. The present number of students in the Part 1 intake of 50 was considered as the maximum that could be accommodated, both physically and pedagogically, if the current teaching methods were to continue. This is important in a discipline where students work in groups on practical projects and display their work physically for discussion and assessment. This view was echoed by the UG students, who greatly valued the small cohort sizes and the opportunities afforded for whole-group interactions, presentations and feedback.

35   One of the many great strengths of the Department was the ability to create a sense of community between student groups and between staff and students. This was noted by students at all levels and by alumni (**good practice f**). The Panel also noted the benefits of encouraging more cross-year (or cross level) peer support, with students in later years advising and supporting those at an earlier stage of their studies. This would be especially important when international students from the Undergraduate Foundation Programme (UFP) in Art and Design offered by Cambridge Education Group (CEG) (to be delivered on the London Road Campus from September 2017) join the UG programme from 2018. The Panel therefore agreed to recommend that the Department consider more opportunities for students to mix across year groups and for peer-assisted learning (**desirable recommendation a**). The Department should also refer to comments on opportunities for ensuring greater integration across the MACE cohort (paragraph 39 below).

36   The pride felt by all in the students' work was clear within the Department and it was visually displayed throughout the building. This meant that all students could see the calibre of work being produced across year groups and programmes. This helped to establish a high overall benchmark for standards of achievement. This was another example of good practice, which it was hoped would continue when the Department moves to its new home in the URS building (**good practice g**).

37   The UG programme is aligned well with the Curriculum Framework. This was especially clear in terms of meeting graduate attributes; the pedagogic principles also appeared to be implemented. The academic principles were being followed, although there were challenges in meeting the need for a global perspective in the curriculum. This may be partly accounted to the paucity of material concerning typographic traditions in non-European scripts and to the centrality of the Western design canon, but the Department was aware of these issues and had introduced global perspectives where appropriate. PGT students who met with the Panel confirmed that they studied Latin and non-Latin typefaces.

38   Looking ahead, while the Department has considerable experience in working with international students, these were mainly on PGT programmes. These programmes have a varied student-base, with no two students of the same nationality on the MA Typeface Design this year, for example. The introduction of a sizeable proportion of international students to the BA programme from the CEG's UFP would have a major impact on the UG programme and it was anticipated that many of these international students would be unfamiliar with the Department's teaching and learning methods. The Panel was therefore pleased to note that the Department was working with CEG on developing a UFP curriculum that aimed to prepare their students adequately for continuing on the BA Graphic Communication. However, this would not obviate the need that these students would have for considerable orientation, subject support, and language support throughout their time on the BA and this would have resource implications.

39   The PGT programmes were vital to the Department's identity, and mapped well onto its disciplinary strengths, resources and historical collections. The on-going support for the Department's unique archives and collections of historical typographic and printing artefacts, ephemera, packaging, signage and pictography and their use in teaching and research at PGT and PGR levels are examples of good practice (**good practice h**). The MA Typeface Design was a unique programme, with a strong international reputation

within the type design profession for both its project outputs and the high calibre of its graduates. The other MAs (Book Design and Information Design) appear to be less clearly demarcated in the marketplace. For mid- to long-term planning, the Department might consider ways in which their programmes could extend the sustainable MATD model across other PG courses. The PGT programmes on offer were entirely appropriate to the needs of students and well taught, with highly competent, well-informed, supportive supervision. The students had chosen their programme of study with care and were full of praise for what is provided, including skills training and resources. The new MA Creative Enterprise (taught by SACD and HBS) had its first Communication Design-pathway student this year and the Panel noted the benefits of ensuring greater integration within the non-HBS cohort when numbers were so small to ensure that students have a clear academic peer group.

Student admission, retention, progression and attainment

40 In 2016–17, the School's financial position, resulting in part from below-target PGT recruitment, meant that the BA programme was compelled to recruit above target, enrolling 50 students rather than 40. To achieve higher enrolment, the Department accepted some eight applicants who did not fulfil the advertised ABB/BBB tariff, having instead achieved only CCC or equivalent; entrants in 2015–16 had also included several students at this level.

41 Whilst the Panel recognised the context for this decision, it noted the potential requirement to provide additional support to less able students. It also noted as a risk the possible loss of close supervision and support currently experienced by students as a result of having larger class sizes and less academically mature students. Following discussions, the Panel agreed to recommend to the University that no students under BBB or equivalent be recruited to the programme, with exceptions to be considered on a case-by-case basis (e.g. in the case of mature students) (**advisable recommendation a to the University**).

42 The Panel noted that postgraduate admission numbers were below ideal levels and, with the exception of MA Typeface Design, recruitment to PGT programmes had been short of target in 2015–16 and 2016–17, with Home/EU applications and enrolments particularly affected.

43 The open website for the MA in Typeface Design displayed student work and was considered to be an attractive and effective marketing tool (**good practice i**), as cited by students who met with the Panel. However, marketing of the PGT programmes more broadly would benefit from further enhancement. Students who met with the Panel also suggested that the title of the MA Information Design might be confusing to potential applicants and not fully convey the content of the programme.

44 In light of the above, the Panel agreed to recommend that the Department undertake to strengthen recruitment to all programmes in order to reach a sustainable number of students each year. This included consideration of the names of programmes, promoting programmes at international design conferences, and effective marketing using Marketing Communication and Engagement (MCE), alumni, or its own students through Real Jobs. The Department was also asked to refer to comments on PGT provision under 'Teaching and Learning' above (**advisable recommendation c**).

45 The Panel noted a good transition trajectory from dependent to independent learning and that this was introduced in Part 1 of the BA programme. Changes in programme design in Parts 1 and 2 were intended to support student transitions between these

Parts. PGT students were provided with good guidance on expectations in relation to research and writing to support their transitions to postgraduate study.

46　Progression and attainment of students were clearly being positively influenced by the flexible and caring support being offered by staff. This was highlighted by students and alumni. Individual student needs were taken into account, including taking measures to support students with physical or additional learning needs. This is an example of good practice (**good practice j**).

47　External Examiners reports and responses demonstrated continuing improvements of programmes to optimise student attainment.

Learning environment and student support

48　Staff in the Department have an abundance of specialist expertise to support the highly regarded nature of both UG and PGT programmes and for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

49　There were risks at present to the Department's ability to sustain teaching specialisation and cover due to the loss of two key members of academic staff and the possibility that others may be lost to retirement, or other career directions. There was a critical mass of staff at present and, due to the small size of the Department, individual losses would have a profound impact.

50　In particular, the Panel noted, firstly, the recent decision not to replace two senior members of staff following their retirement and, secondly, the importance of undertaking a holistic review of current staffing provision. Senior staff contributed a great deal, but the Department needed support in terms of lecturers or sessional staff to provide ongoing support for students. The Panel agreed to recommend to the School and the University that they reconsider the decision not to replace these two senior members of staff (**advisable recommendation a to the School and University**). Furthermore, it agreed to recommend to the Department that, if direct recruitment to these posts was difficult, it should consider more flexible ways of making some of this provision through sessionals and visiting speakers (**advisable recommendation d**).

51　The Department's administrative support had changed this academic year as a result of the Professional and Administrative Services review, with teaching and learning administration and student support now provided centrally by the relevant Support Centre. Liaison with support services seemed to be operating well to date, despite a difficult start.

52　The Panel enjoyed a tour of the teaching and learning facilities. The Panel noted that each cohort had its own studio space and that students had access to printing and letterpress facilities. The Student Submission indicated that 62% of students when asked agreed that the studio space and building were suitable for their studies and that they actively used the space for independent learning.

53　The Panel noted that the size of teaching accommodation was not ideal, particularly for increasing undergraduate class sizes. It was pointed out that any further growth in cohort size could not be accommodated in existing studio space. The Department would relocate to the refurbished URS building (scheduled for 2020-21), therefore this pressure would continue for a number of cohorts – and from present URS refurbishment plans, it seemed that the new studio space was not intended to be for larger cohorts.

54   The Panel noted that having discipline-specific studio space for teaching was important for the practical nature of the Department's programmes (and an example of **good practice k**); centrally-bookable lecture theatres and teaching rooms were not appropriate for this.

55   In addition, the Panel agreed to recommend that the Department, with support of the School, consider the replacement of work tables and chairs in some rooms (undergraduate studios) where these furnishings were now in a poor state of repair and were in danger of adversely affecting the student learning experience. Consideration should be made in light of the evolving timeframe for the redevelopment of the URS building and plans for Department's relocation **(advisable recommendation e).**

56   The Panel discussed printing arrangements with students and staff. Students commented on bottlenecks for printing at particular times around submission deadlines. Following student feedback, the Department had recently amended some deadlines in response to a technical issue with printing and would continue to monitor deadlines holistically to avoid bottlenecks (see 'Assessment and Feedback' above).

57   The SED indicated that the Department was unable to offer resources expected by many applicants, including laser cutting, 3D printing, screen printing and photography. Design students at some other UK institutions also received free or discounted subscriptions for software, as well as free or subsidised laser printing and other production services. Students expressed significant concerns around the cost of printing and referred to experiment costs funded by other subject areas within the University and bursaries provided by similar Departments across the sector. Students who met with the Panel commented that they would appreciate receiving a small contribution to their own printing costs. In this context, the Panel agreed to recommend that the Department review the possibility of providing students with some offset against printing costs (**desirable recommendation b**).

58   In light of the programme changes identified under 'Programme design' above and discussions around 'Learning environment and student support', the Panel agreed to ask the Department to monitor the impact of changes to programmes and the impact of new Part 1 modules upon staff workload and the student experience from the 2017 intake. The Panel asked that the Department establish a formal curriculum review process involving students and alumni as part of this exercise (**desirable recommendation c**).

Employability

59   According to the most recent statistics from the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DHLE) survey, 96% of graduates from the undergraduate programme were in graduate-level employment or continuing in education six months after completing their programme; this figure had exceeded 90% for several years.

60   The Panel believed the unique opportunity of the integrated work experience scheme, 'Real Jobs', to be exemplary in its preparation of students for employment. Students worked on real design projects for real clients and fostered direct client engagement, gaining time, budget, and project management experience. Students have the opportunity to become involved with Real Jobs from Part 1 onwards and develop transferable skills, benefitting both students who pursue a career in design and those who do not (**good practice l**).

61   A Part 2 brief set by Industry and further experience in Design Practice 3 delivered further Industry contact and direct feedback. A progressive preparation for employment was evident (**good practice m**).

62   The Department also introduced a four-year option to the BA programme in 2016-17 to allow students to undertake a supplemental year of industrial placement or to study abroad.

63   The varied and high standard of project work available throughout the Review, the willingness of students and alumni to participate in transparent discussion and the high numbers of students present on site beyond working hours, clearly demonstrated the remarkable commitment to the discipline, and the high work ethic established and fostered within the Department. The Panel noted as an example of good practice the excellent preparation of desirable employees who were ready for careers in the real world (**good practice n**).

64   As noted in 'Programme Design' above, with continually evolving Industry demands, particularly within the Digital field of design, it was advisable that some thought be given to establishing greater clarity of the theory and research taught in Digital Design through industry-relevant labelling. The Panel noted that evidence of User Experience (UX) research methodologies was apparent in project work, yet a preoccupation with the User Interface (UI) design technologies dominated the students' consideration of Digital Design. Some students expressed a fear of the area of Digital Design and therefore an unwillingness to step into the field.

65   By helping students recognise the User Experience (UX) research methodologies already taught as being as important as the UI technologies they feel they need to be successful, students would be in a stronger position to recognise that they were already armed with strong Digital Design and UX research skills. UX researchers are as critical to the development and success of the field of Digital Design as UI designers are. The Industry is progressively recognising this and needs the thought-led designers of the University to embrace it. This has potential far-reaching employment implications, both within and beyond the field of Design.

66   The clear commitment of alumni to the Department was a resource worthy of utilising. Alumni now operating in the field of UI design would be a source of technological support when considering the teaching of UI technologies in project work to undergraduate students. The Panel therefore agreed to make the following **desirable recommendations** to the Department:

(d) To consider the further development of alumni relationships in order to enhance their contributions to the Department;

(e) To help students to recognise and develop technical skills for the projects they are required to do, e.g. through workshops run by alumni.

Enhancement of quality and academic provision

67   The Panel considered that the Department made appropriate and effective use of a range of datasets. There was good evidence that the External Examiner reports were being used as supportive inputs and that their recommendations were addressed by the Department. Whilst there are some issues noted in recent NSS scores which need to be

addressed, these were, in part, about managing expectations and perceptions, including in respect of assessment and feedback, and organisation.

68　The Panel was pleased to note that the Department had engaged with the University's Facilitating Learning and Teaching Achievement and Individual Recognition (FLAIR) scheme and that new members of staff felt well supported by colleagues. The Department had also facilitated staff visits to and from universities in China, Japan, Poland, Germany and Cyprus and, in 2016-17, an annual School-wide teaching and learning meeting would take place in the Summer Term in order to share good practice across the Department and School.

69　Whilst the Panel welcomed the recent increase in staff engagement with peer review of learning and teaching, it agreed to ask the Department to embed further peer review in its quality management and enhancement procedures, as a supportive mechanism to share good teaching practice (**advisable recommendation f**).

70　The Student Submission included feedback that the frequency of the SSLCs (which met four times per academic year) meant that issues were not always responded to in a timely fashion. The Department had agreed to address this feedback in 2017–18 by introducing regular informal meetings with Course Reps and Part Tutors.

71　As noted in 'Learning environment and student support' above, the Panel believed that more opportunity could be taken to engage students in the development of curriculum and in changes being planned. There is also a very loyal and engaged alumni network (as noted in the 'Employability' section above) whose advice could be sought to identify and generate change and improvement.

Main characteristics of the programmes under review

72　The Department of Typography & Graphic Communication has a long-standing world-wide reputation, offering a unique approach to design through a combination of practice, theory, and history and drawing on its collections and historical artefacts. The Panel believed that the Department was meeting its aims of producing 'designers who think' and offering courses that specialize in 'design for reading'.

73　All UG and PG programmes were clearly informed by professional practice and research of staff, and influenced heavily by Industry, including through the Real Jobs integrated work experience scheme and the input of expert visitors. The success of the programmes is borne out in outstanding employment statistics and in the enthusiasm of students and alumni who met with the Panel.

74　The Panel noted a number of forthcoming changes to provision, including in respect of increased cohort size, the arrival of international UG students via CEG, programme design, staffing, and relocation to the URS building. Managing recruitment to programmes was also a critical issue at this point. It would be very important for the Department to manage the risks associated with these changes in order to continue to grow sustainably the undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes and to uphold the sense of community and one-to-one and group contact enjoyed by students and staff alike.

Conclusions on innovation and good practice

75　The Panel identified the following as representing particularly good practice:

a) Progression of modules and content over the undergraduate programme was evidence of a 'spiralled curriculum' and this was confirmed by students in their written submission and identified by the Panel as an example of good practice;

b) The Panel commended the integration of history, theory, and practice in the BA Graphic Communication in contributing to student work, which was both articulate and purposeful. The creative programmes demonstrated a clear academic grounding and the link between teaching and research was very strong;

c) The Panel found evidence that undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes incorporated a variety of assessment methods, including practical projects which prepared students well for their professional careers;

d) The Panel noted the open environment and continuous provision of oral feedback as an example of good practice;

e) Research-based methods were embedded in the teaching of practical design applications, so students become critically reflective about their approach to design practice. Students worked as both individuals and within groups, fostering articulate, literate, reflective designers able to work collaboratively and independently. This was demonstrated during the review by the ways in which students who met with the Panel expressed their understanding of both the range of transferrable skills they were developing and of the consequences of their acquisition for their practice, their academic development and their employability;

f) One of the many great strengths of the Department was the ability to create a sense of community between student groups and between staff and students. This was noted by students at all levels and by alumni;

g) The pride felt by all in the students' work was clear within the Department and it was visually displayed throughout the building. This meant that all students could see the calibre of work being produced across year groups and programmes. This helped to establish a high overall benchmark for standards of achievement;

h) The on-going support for the Department's unique archives and collections of historical typographic and printing artefacts, ephemera, packaging, signage and pictography and their use in teaching and research at PGT and PGR levels are examples of good practice;

i) The open website for the MA in Typeface Design displayed student work and was considered to be an attractive and effective marketing tool, as cited by students who met with the Panel;

j) Progression and attainment of students were clearly being positively influenced by the flexible and caring support being offered by staff. This was highlighted by students and alumni. Individual student needs were taken into account, including taking measures to support students with physical or additional learning needs;

k) The Panel noted that having discipline-specific studio space for teaching was important for the practical nature of the Department's programmes;

l) The Panel believed the unique opportunity of the integrated work experience scheme, 'Real Jobs', to be exemplary in its preparation of students for employment. Students worked on real design projects for real clients and fostered direct client engagement, gaining time, budget, and project management experience. Students have the opportunity to become involved with Real Jobs from Part 1 onwards and develop transferable skills, benefitting both students who pursue a career in design and those who do not;

m) A Part 2 brief set by Industry and further experience in Design Practice 3 delivered further Industry contact and direct feedback. A progressive preparation for employment was evident; and

n) The Panel noted as an example of good practice the excellent preparation of desirable employees who were ready for careers in the real world.

Conclusions on quality and standards

76 The Panel has concluded that the quality and standards of the programmes reviewed are appropriate.

Conclusions on new degree programme proposals

77 The Panel received no submissions with regards to new programme proposals.

Recommendations

78 The Panel recommends to the University Programmes Board that the following degree programmes taught by the Department of Typography and Graphic Communication are re-approved to run for a further six years or, in the case of joint programmes, until the Periodic Review of the other discipline:

a) BA Graphic Communication;

b) MA Book Design;

c) MA Creative Enterprise (Communication Design pathway);

d) MA Information Design;

e) MA Res Typography & Graphic Communication; and

f) MA Typeface Design.

79 The report will categorise any issues as follows, in order of priority:

- Those areas where the Review Team believes it is **necessary** for action to be taken urgently to safeguard the standard of provision;

- Those areas where it is **advisable** that the issues be addressed as soon as possible;

- Those areas where it is **desirable** that the issue be addressed over a longer time span.

80 The Panel does not consider that any recommendations must be addressed as a condition of re-approval.

81 The Panel makes the following **advisable** recommendation to the University:

    a) Following discussions, the Panel agreed to recommend to the University that no students under BBB or equivalent be recruited to the BA Graphic Communication programme, with exceptions to be considered on a case-by-case basis (e.g. in the case of mature students).

82 The Panel makes the following **necessary** recommendation to the School:

    a) The Panel noted that the School was currently reviewing arrangements for maintaining overall oversight of the MA Creative Enterprise programme via a School-level Board of Studies and Programme Examiners' Meeting and recommends to the School that this be introduced immediately.

83 The Panel makes the following **advisable** recommendation to the School/University:

    a) The Panel agreed to recommend to the School and the University that they reconsider the decision not to replace two senior members of staff following their retirement.

84 The Panel makes the following recommendations to the Department:

Advisable

a. With continually evolving Industry demands, particularly within the Digital field of design, it was advisable that some thought be given to establishing greater clarity of the theory and research taught in Digital Design through industry-relevant labelling;

b. The Panel has agreed to recommend that the Department work with CQSD to review its standard feedback provision, including development and use of a criteria-based standard feedback form;

c. The Panel agreed to recommend that the Department undertake to strengthen recruitment to all programmes in order to reach a sustainable number of students each year. This included consideration of the names of programmes, promoting programmes at international design conferences, and effective marketing using Marketing Communication and Engagement (MCE), alumni, or its own students through Real Jobs. The Department was also asked to refer to comments on PGT provision under 'Teaching and Learning';

d. The Panel agreed to recommend to the Department that, if direct recruitment to the two senior posts following retirements was difficult, it should consider more flexible ways of making some of this provision through sessionals and visiting speakers;

e. The Panel agreed to recommend that the Department, with support of the School, consider the replacement of work tables and chairs in some rooms (undergraduate studios) where these furnishings were now in a poor state of repair and were in danger of adversely affecting the student learning experience. Consideration should be made in light of the evolving timeframe for the redevelopment of the URS building and plans for Department's relocation; and

f. Whilst the Panel welcomed the recent increase in staff engagement with peer review of learning and teaching, it agreed to ask the Department to embed further peer review in its quality management and enhancement procedures, as a supportive mechanism to share good teaching practice

Desirable

    a. The Department consider more opportunities for students to mix across year groups and for peer-assisted learning;

    b. The Panel agreed to recommend that the Department review the possibility of providing students with some offset against printing costs;

    c. In light of the programme changes identified under 'Programme design' and discussions around 'Learning environment and student support', the Panel agreed to ask the Department to monitor the impact of changes to programmes and the impact of new Part 1 modules upon staff workload and the student experience from the 2017 intake. The Panel asked that the Department establish a formal curriculum review process involving students and alumni as part of this exercise;

    d. To consider the further development of alumni relationships in order to enhance their contributions to the Department;

    e. To help students to recognise and develop technical skills for the projects they are required to do, e.g. through workshops run by alumni.

85   The Panel does not have a recommendation to the University Programmes Board as to whether any proposal(s) for new degree programmes should be approved, as this is not applicable.