



烟台科技学院
Yantai Institute of Science and Technology



Richmond
American University
London

UK-validated Chinese award
BA (Hons) Visual Communication Design

Programme Specification

2026 – 2027

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1. INTRODUCTION

This document describes the BA (Hons) Visual Communication Design awarded by Richmond American University London, using the protocols required by *The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies* (QAA, 2024).

The degree is delivered within the framework set by policies and regulations of National Standards for Teaching Quality of Undergraduate Majors in General Colleges and Universities of China. Typically, students complete 58 separate courses over the programme which takes 4 years. Normally, each course carries 1-6 Chinese academic credits and the relationship between credit hours and credits of various types of courses are as follows:

Theoretical courses: 16 credit hours = 1 credit

Experimental / Practical courses: 16 credit hours = 1 credit

Practical Learning Arrangements: 1 week= 1 credit

The degrees are also articulated in terms of UK Regulatory Frameworks, chiefly the FHEQ and the Higher Education Credit Framework for England. Each course has been assigned to an appropriate level on the FHEQ, based on the course's learning outcomes and assessment strategies (note that the courses comprising the first year of the 4-year US undergraduate degree are normally at QCF Level 3). Chinese undergraduate credit can generally be translated to ECTS and UK CATS credits in the following manner: 1 China credit = 2 ECTS credits = 4 UK CATS credits. So, a Chinese degree of 120 credits would translate as 240 ECTS credits and 480 UK CATS credits (with a minimum of 360 UK CATS credits at Levels 4-6 on the FHEQ).

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Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided.

More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content, and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each course can be found in course specification documents and syllabi.

The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be verified by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

2. OVERVIEW

Programme/award title(s)	BA (Hons) Visual Communication Design
Teaching Institution	Yantai Institute of Science and Technology
Awarding Institution	Richmond American University London
Date of last validation	May 2025
Next revalidation	2030
Credit points for the award	364 UK CATS Credits (total credits for Level 4 – 6)
Programme start date	September 2025
Underpinning QAA subject benchmark(s)	QAA Subject Benchmark Statement Art and Design (2019): https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/subject-benchmark-statements/sbs-art-and-design-17.pdf?sfvrsn=71eef781_16
Professional/statutory recognition	N/A
Language of Study	Chinese
Language of Assessment	Chinese
Duration of the programme for each mode of study (PT, FT, DL)	FT
Date of production/revision of this specification	Sep 2026

3. ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

The undergraduate major in Visual Communication Design is recognized as a first-class undergraduate program at the school level. In alignment with the evolving trends in visual communication design and media art both domestically and internationally, and in conjunction with market demands, this program has systematically developed an application-oriented curriculum. The curriculum is structured into professional basic courses, specialized courses, and practical learning courses, forming a comprehensive educational framework that emphasizes "Basic Theory + Professional Technology + Innovative Design Ability." Within this framework, foundational courses such as Sketching and Colour Theory are integral in developing students' fundamental modeling skills. Specialized courses, including Advertising Design, Corporate Identity Design, Information Graphic Design, Packaging Design, and Creative Design of Cultural Products, focus on cultivating students' practical abilities in comprehending and applying the artistic theories and methodologies pertinent to Visual Communication Design. These courses also train students in the essential skills of collecting, acquiring, transforming, and processing graphics, images, and text. Additionally, the incorporation of AI-generated content design courses equips students with the capability to master emerging technologies. By analysing and processing extensive datasets and images, these courses offer innovative inspiration and ideas, enhance design efficiency, optimize design solutions, and improve user experience. They also provide diverse design choices and personalized design services, thus fostering a well-rounded and contemporary design education.

4. MISSION

The Visual Communication Design program aims to develop high-quality professionals who can adapt to the needs of local economic and social development. These individuals are expected to possess a humanistic spirit, scientific literacy, and integrity, alongside a thorough understanding of fundamental theories, methods, professional knowledge, and technical skills in visual communication design. They are also expected to master emerging technologies such as AI-generated content design. The curriculum emphasizes the development of strong professional capabilities, practical skills, innovative and entrepreneurial consciousness, and teamwork. Graduates are prepared to engage in various roles, including brand image planning and design, commercial advertisement design, product packaging design, book publication design, UI interface graphic design, and other positions within professional design companies, the design departments of enterprises, and institutions of higher education.

5. PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

BA (Hons) Visual Communication Design

A normal course load per academic year is 30 China credits, equivalent to 120 UK credits. Students complete 120 UK credits at Level 6 in the major.

Please note that students must complete all Liberal Arts requirements AND a minimum of 120 credits at each FHEQ level. The Liberal Arts programme offers more choice amongst levels, so students and advisors must ensure that both Liberal Arts requirements and overall level requirements are satisfied.

Black = Major requirements

Blue = General Education Liberal Arts Core requirements

Table 1: Lower-Division / Levels 3 and 4 Degree Requirements

LOWER-DIVISION REQUIREMENTS		
RQF Level 3	CREDITS (China)	UK CREDITS

100601009	College Basic English Reading, Writing and Translation (1)	1.5	6
100601010	College Basic English Listening and Speaking (1)	0.5	2
100601011	College Basic English Reading, Writing and Translation (2)	1.5	6
100601012	College Basic English Listening and Speaking (2)	0.5	2
101201001	Career Planning	1	4
100803005	Design Introduction	2	8
100803050	Fundamentals of Modelling	4	16
100803051	Design Composition	4	16
100803052	Computer-aided Design (1)	4	16
100803053	Computer-aided Design (2)	4	16
100803055	Graphic Creative Design	4	16
100803054	History of Chinese Arts and Crafts	2	8
101307001	Cognitive Internship	1	4
RQF Level 3 CREDIT TOTALS		30	120

FHEQ Level 4		China CREDITS	UK CREDITS
Minimum Required courses			
100601013	College Basic English Reading, Writing and Translation (3)	1.5	6
100601014	College Basic English Listening and Speaking (3)	0.5	2
100803057	Design Psychology	2	8
100804011	Decoration and Design	4	16
100804009	Layout Design	4	16
100804041	Font Design	4	16
100806028	Photography Technology and Art	4	16
100804010	Logo Design	4	16
100803056	Illustration Design	4	16
100807002	Intangible Cultural Heritage Practice	1	4
100807022	Printing Materials and Techniques	1	4
FHEQ Level 4 CREDIT TOTALS		30	120

Table 2: Upper-Division / Levels 5 and 6 Requirements

UPPER-DIVISION REQUIREMENTS			
FHEQ Level 5		China CREDITS	UK CREDITS
100601015	College Basic English Reading, Writing and Translation (4)	1.5	6
100601016	College Basic English Listening and Speaking (4)	0.5	2
100803020	Three-dimensional Graphic Design Processing	3	12
100805050	Dynamic Image Design	3	12
100804014	Packaging Design	4	16
100804015	Advertising Design	4	16
100806017	AI-Generated Content Design	3	12
100804042	Interface Design	4	16
100805014	Information Graphic Design	4	16
100806020	Creative Design of Cultural Products	4	16

FHEQ Level 5 Credit Totals	31	124
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FHEQ Level 6		China CREDITS	UK CREDITS
Required courses			
101201004	Innovation and Entrepreneurship Education	2	8
101201006	Professional Quality	2	8
101201002	Employment Guidance	1	4
100804013	Corporate Identity Design	4	16
101306001	Guidance for Undergraduate Dissertation (Design)	1	4
100805015	Interaction Design	4	16
100806024	Exhibition Design	3	12
100807007	Design Comprehensive Practice	1	4
101307004	Specialized Comprehensive Practice	2	8
101307002	Undergraduate Practice	4	16
101307003	Undergraduate Dissertation (Design)	6	24
FHEQ Level 6 Credit Totals		30	120

6. PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

Programme-level learning outcomes are identified below. Please refer to the Curriculum Map at the end of this document for details of how outcomes are deployed across the study programme.

Upon completion of the BA (Hons) Visual Communication Design degree, students should be able to:

- Adhere to the national political direction and major policies, have a firm political stance, high humanistic literacy and good sense of social responsibility.
- Understand a range of theories of visual communication design, have artistic design cultivation and appreciation ability, and strong design creativity ability, can carry out design practice research, and form new skills and new methods.
- Closely follow both UK and China's guidelines, policies and regulations on art design, master scientific methods to analyse and solve problems, and use the accumulation of professional knowledge and literacy of visual communication design to solve practical problems encountered in social life and design practice.
- With an international perspective and good language communication and writing skills, follow the development trend of design trends, integrate humanistic quality and business innovation, and adapt to social progress and development in active learning, lifelong learning and professional development.
- Adhere to cultural ethics and professional ethics, value the job, work together, and have a good humanistic quality and innovative spirit.

Knowledge and Understanding (A)

A1: Be familiar with professional norms and industry norms in the field of visual communication design.

A2: Have a broad understanding of modeling theory and the practical ability creating art and design.

A3: Have a broad critical, historical and contextual understanding of the fundamental principles, concepts and technologies in the field of visual communication design.

A4: Understand the main theories, methods, modes and approaches that may be used in the field of visual communication design. Reflect on one's learning and future career planning.

Cognitive Skills (B)

B1: Be able to draw established ideas, concepts and technologies from learning and research, and use the existing knowledge to solve the problems encountered in visual communication design

B2: Recognize and critically understand different concepts and methods in visual art, organization and work.

B3: Select and apply software and tools related to the field of visual communication design.

B4: Be able to critically reflect and evaluate the learning and work processes

Practical and/or professional skills (C)

C1: Master and apply the basic theories and methods of visual communication art and solve a series of problems in the practical field by comprehensive use of artistic techniques, information dissemination, modern scientific and technological means and other achievements and methods.

C2: Master the emerging technology of AI-generated content design to enable designers to improve.

C3: Use new perspectives, new technologies and multidisciplinary knowledge as the basis for improving the level of design works.

C4: Develop the capability of independent operation and expression from planning to later implementation, team cooperation and division of labor, cross-professional communication, competition and cooperation.

Key Skills (D)

D1: Use the appropriate visual style and language to effectively communicate information, views and arguments to the audience.

D2: Read and understand various forms of information and carry out analysis and evaluation tasks related to visual communication design.

D3: Apply a range of methods of literature retrieval and data and master the design tools to complete various visual designs.

D4: Demonstrate creative thinking in visual communication design and have the ability of creative display.

D5: Have innovative design consciousness and understand the origin, current situation and development trend of various design styles and schools.

7. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

Teaching Strategy

The teaching and learning strategy adopted within the **BA (Hons) Visual Communication Design** degree is based on the understanding that all students will be treated as active learners. Clearly, the precise approach will vary from course to course, depending on the learning outcomes relevant to each class.

The generic components of our teaching and learning strategy normally involves a variety of approaches and include delivering many of the following:

- Regular use of formal lecture courses in all courses.
- Workshops and seminars on some courses.
- Use individual and/or team-based projects regularly in all courses.
- Use self-directed and guided reading regularly in all courses.
- Use audio-visual and library resources in some courses.

The combination of teaching and learning approaches mentioned above develops our students' knowledge, thinking skills and practical skills.

Their knowledge is acquired through:

- Specialized lectures.
- Instructions in reading and using the Internet.
- Independent research.

Their cognitive skills are developed through:

- Conducting research.
- Giving presentations and reviewing student work.

Their practical skills are gained through:

- Applying theory to practice.
- Using information technology to retrieve and process data.
- Negotiating through team projects.

Their key skills are gained through:

- Literature searching, mastering design tools and completing design projects.
- Adopting and using appropriate language skills.

Assessment Strategy

The assessment strategies we use with our **BA (Hons) Visual Communication Design** degree speak directly to how we anticipate progression with student learning to take place.

In terms of tracking student learning assessments and in line with the traditions of scientific education in China, our courses adopt a system of continuous assessment on a course-by-course basis throughout the entire semester. This approach typically includes quizzes, group assignments, mid-term exams, final exams, as well as student presentations, projects and class discussions. Not every assessment component applies to every course, but most courses include some or all of these elements. Many of our courses also involve hands-on practical work, site visits, or require attendance at public lectures. Students generally find these activities to be extremely valuable for their learning.

Most of the courses will follow the University Assessment Norms, however some may follow specialised norms, as listed in each CSD. See the Assessment Norms Policy for full details:

<https://yist.ytkj.edu.cn/Policy.htm>

Each senior student will end their programme with a dissertation which will normally have 8,000-10,000 words.

8. ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Admissions

Students are required to take part in the NCEE (Gaokao) organized by the Ministry of Education and apply for our programme. YIST recruits students nationwide. Students majoring in Visual Communication Design also need to take an additional examination of art major, and the Enrollment is based on the admission score line of local art major. The upper limit of the total admissions is determined by the Enrollment Plan approved by the provincial government. Details of the entry requirements may be found at the appropriate page of the University website listed below, where a comprehensive Admissions Policy and Summary of Practice document is also published.

https://yist.ytkj.edu.cn/Policy/zszcAdmissions_Policy.htm

9. EXIT AWARD REQUIREMENTS

According to the *Implementation Rules for Student Status Management of YIST*, students who drop out after study for one academic year or more will be granted a non-graduation Study Certificate. Students who withdraw with less than one academic year study will be given Learning Experience Certificates.

Certificate of Higher Education in Visual Communication (UK)

The UK CertHE can be awarded as an exit award for those students completing the following minimum requirements.

120 credits at FHEQ Level 4

- Pass (normally a GPA of between 1.85 and 2.99 for all Level 4 courses)
- Merit (normally a GPA of 3.0 to 3.54)
- Distinction (normally a GPA of 3.55 and above for all level 4 courses)

Diploma of Higher Education in Visual Communication

The UK DipHE can be awarded as an exit award for those students completing the following minimum requirements.

120 credits at FHEQ Level 4

120 credits at FHEQ Level 5

- Pass (normally a GPA of between 1.85 and 2.99 for all Level 4 & 5 courses)
- Merit (normally a GPA of 3.0 to 3.54)
- Distinction (normally a GPA of 3.55 and above for all level 4 & 5 courses)

The requirements for the UK DipHE are outlined in the sections of Table 1 and Table 2 above pertaining to FHEQ Level 4 and FHEQ Level 5 requirements.

Further details may be found at:

<https://yist.ytkj.edu.cn>

10. STUDENT SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE

There is a range of student support and guidance, for both academic and general wellbeing, available to students. This is accomplished through a range of work-streams and services which positively impact learning as well as the total student life experience.

There are 15 teaching buildings and 34 dormitory buildings in the University, with about 9,000 dormitories. There are 328 classrooms of various types with a total seating capacity of 33,194, and a total of 230 experimental and practical training rooms. Students can study in the teaching area, listen to lectures, perform experimental (training) classes and carry out academic exchanges and cultural and recreational activities. There are 44 outdoor sports grounds and 22 sports support facilities on campus, with a total area of 113,000 square meters. There is also one large sports ground and a gymnasium building. There is also a modernized library with a total area of 33,000 square meters. The library provides a total of 3,200 self-study seats for students. In addition to normal working days, it is also open to students during non-working hours. The opening hours of the library are from 8:00 a.m. to 22:30 p.m. from Monday to Sunday.

The University has set up a Student Affairs Office which is responsible for daily management and service for students. The University arranges a counselor for each class. The University has also set up a Student Financial Aid Management Center which deals with student loans and scholarships, in order to ensure that students enjoy equal access to education. The mental health education center disseminates mental health knowledge to students, provides psychological counseling and offers physical and mental health education courses.

Related web links will be provided in the future.

The University makes a variety of special provisions in exams and assessments for students with a diagnosed learning disability. This might include physical or sensory impairment, a medical or psychiatric condition or a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia and may require additional support or adaptations to our facilities.

Students with a documented specific learning difficulty, mental health condition or physical disability will need to provide the Student Affairs Office with the appropriate documentation concerning additional needs at the point of admission to the University, or as soon as possible after enrolment.

The university will make sure that students with mobility impairments have the required access they need to classroom space, residential areas, and study space.

Students and their inspectors are informed of the provisions after they are approved, and reminders are sent to students and invigilators shortly before the examinations.

11. Placement

The University offers a formal mechanism through which students may receive work-placement opportunities. These placements are supervised under the University's Internship Leadership Office and Teaching Affairs Office and executed by each secondary school respectively.

These placements are supervised, career-related work experiences combined with reflective, academic study that help students apply theoretical knowledge in the workplace. There are two modes of internships: designated internship in companies with partnership of the University and individual internship in workplaces found by students themselves.

Further details may be found in Internship Notice at:

<https://yist.ytkj.edu.cn>

Admissions and Employment Office of YIST provides employment guidance services for students, organizes large-scale enterprise recruitment fairs regularly every year and offers courses like Career Planning and Employment Guidance. Secondary schools organize relevant job fairs for students before graduation, providing them with information consultation, resume development and other services.

12. STUDY ABROAD

YIST students have the option to take a leave of absence and participate in a 'study abroad' program away from the university. Students can choose from a diverse range of partner institutions. All courses taken at other institutions must be pre-approved by the Registry Services at YIST.

<https://ixjy.ytkj.edu.cn/gjy/gjyysiz.htm>

13. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The **BA (Hons) Visual Communication Design** is operated under the policy and regulatory frameworks of Richmond American University London, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, the Framework of Higher Education Qualifications, and the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

Also key to the background for this description are the following documents:

- QAA (2024). UK Quality Code for Higher Education. (www.qaa.ac.uk)
- QAA (2021). The Higher Education Credit Framework for England: Advice on Academic Credit Arrangements. (www.qaa.ac.uk)
- SEEC (2021). Credit Level Descriptors for Higher Education. Southern England Consortium for Credit Accumulation and Transfer (www.seec.org.uk).

Ensuring and Enhancing the Quality of the Programme

The **BA (Hons) Visual Communication Design** features detailed published educational objectives that are consistent with the mission of the institution. All course outlines contain course specific objectives that are regularly monitored by the individual instructors and by the faculty as a group.

The University has several methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of its provision. These include:

- External Examiners
- Internal Moderation
- Student representation
- Curricular change approval process
- Annual Programme Monitoring and Assessment
- Formal Programme Review, every 5 years
- Course evaluation

- Student satisfaction surveys
- Feedback from employers

BA (Hons) Visual Communication Design is provided through a system of ongoing evaluations that demonstrate the achievement of the programme's objectives and uses the results to improve the effectiveness of the programme. Ongoing evaluations are carried out for UK (QAA) reviews.

LIBRARY RESOURCES

Books

Faculty and Students are encouraged to help in the purchase of library resources and submit requests for new purchases relating to and supporting their subject areas and research. Details of selected new acquisitions are publicized on the library subject pages and online catalogue.

The library also purchases academic eBooks to support students required reading, as well as cataloguing open access resources. These books are made available through the library catalogue.

Every year, the library collection is reviewed and non-relevant or out of date stock is withdrawn. Analysis of loans compared to purchases and new publications within core subject areas are used to drive additional purchases to make sure that the collection remains relevant and current.

Journals

At present the Library subscribes directly to approximately 40 periodical titles, including some authoritative Chinese design magazines such as *ZHUANGSHI*, *Package & Design*, *Art and Design*, which can help students broaden their horizons.

In consultation with faculty the Library regularly reviews its periodical subscriptions, ensuring relevant coverage is provided as the curriculum changes.

Online resources

Students can gather materials from the following design websites:

<https://www.zcool.com.cn/>

<https://huaban.com/>

<https://www.vcg.com/>

Library Instruction

Students are encouraged to complete a library induction session online and visit the library during Orientation. In addition, further sessions on subject specific resources, tailored to individual assignments as required, are offered on Upper Division courses. Students can also receive individual, tailored help with resources, research skills and referencing on a one-to-one basis either in person or online throughout their studies.

APPENDIX 1 Curriculum Map

		Knowledge and Understanding				Cognitive Skills				Prof Skills			Key Skills				
		A1	A2	A3	A4	B1	B2	B3	B4	C1	C2	C3	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5
100601009	College Basic English Reading, Writing and Translation (1)												×	×			
100601010	College Basic English Listening and Speaking (1)												×	×			
100601011	College Basic English Reading, Writing and Translation (2)												×	×			
100601012	College Basic English Listening and Speaking (2)												×	×			
101201001	Career Planning								×								
100803005	Design Introduction			×	×	×				×							×
100803050	Fundamentals of Modeling		×	×	×	×				×							
100803051	Design Composition		×	×	×	×				×							
100803052	Computer-aided Design (1)			×	×	×		×			×						
100803053	Computer-aided Design (2)			×	×	×		×			×						
100803054	History of Chinese Arts and Crafts			×	×	×				×			×		×		
101307001	Cognitive Internship	×			×	×	×			×	×	×	×	×	×		
100601013	College Basic English Reading, Writing and Translation (3)												×	×			
100601014	College Basic English Listening and Speaking (3)												×	×			
100803057	Design Psychology			×	×	×				×							×
100804011	Decoration and Design			×	×	×		×				×		×			
100804009	Layout Design			×	×	×		×		×	×	×	×			×	
100804041	Font Design			×	×	×		×		×	×	×	×			×	
100806028	Photography Technology and Art			×	×	×		×		×	×		×			×	
100803055	Graphic Creative Design			×	×	×		×		×		×					×

Programme Specification Publication Dates

[illegible]