

Work-Based Learning - GD

Level: 4

Career Cluster: Media Arts

Program: Design and Digital Arts

Pathway(s): Graphic Design

Course Catalog Description

This course gives students the opportunity to apply graphic design skills in real-world settings through client projects, internships, mentorships, or supervised professional experiences. Students strengthen career readiness, professional communication, project management, and portfolio development while producing work aligned to industry expectations.

Summary

This course provides advanced students with an opportunity to extend their learning through authentic work-based experiences that connect classroom instruction to professional practice. Students apply design principles, technical production skills, and creative problem-solving in real-world contexts such as client-based projects, internships, mentorships, school-based enterprises, or supervised freelance work. Emphasis is placed on workplace readiness, professional communication, project management, and the ability to respond effectively to feedback while producing work that meets industry expectations. Throughout the course, students strengthen their understanding of design workflows, audience needs, branding, collaboration, and production quality while building confidence in their ability to contribute in professional settings. Students also develop a portfolio, refine their personal brand, and reflect on their growth as designers and emerging professionals as they prepare for postsecondary education, careers, and continued success in the graphic design industry.

Notes

Compared with the previous work-based learning course, this revised version is more specific, detailed, and intentionally aligned to the Graphic Design pathway. The earlier course provided a broad framework focused on general employability, supervisor-approved training plans, documentation of hours, and reflection on career goals. In contrast, this updated course expands the learning into clearly defined sections that address professional preparation, design workplace expectations, client-based projects, revision and production quality, design workflows, project management, portfolio development, and a culminating presentation. It also adds graphic design-specific examples of real-world experiences, clarifies how students apply technical skills in authentic professional settings, and strengthens expectations around industry-standard workflows, communication, critique, and career readiness. Overall, the new document shifts from a general WBL structure to a more comprehensive and pathway-specific course that better reflects advanced graphic design practice and preparation for postsecondary and career success.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Career Launch & Professional Preparation

Objective: Build career awareness and workplace readiness for a successful work-based learning placement.

- Analyze career pathways in graphic design, branding, marketing, and digital media
- Identify personal strengths and areas of interest (branding, UI, social media, print, etc.)
- Develop a professional resume, portfolio draft, and personal brand identity
- Create a Work-Based Learning Plan with measurable goals
- Demonstrate understanding of workplace expectations and professional conduct

Real-World Experience Ideas

- Portfolio review with industry partner
- Mock interviews
- Client/mentor matching

2. Professional Design Practice & Workplace Expectations

Objective: Strengthen employability skills and apply professional design workflows in workplace settings.

- Demonstrate professional communication with clients, peers, and supervisors
- Apply time management, organization, and deadline management
- Use feedback professionally to revise and improve work
- Analyze how workflows, project roles, and deadlines function in design environments

Real-World Experience Ideas

- Project timelines and communication logs
- Team-based design workflows
- Client feedback meetings

3. Client-Based Design Projects

Objective: Apply core graphic design knowledge and skills through authentic client-based projects.

- Apply design principles to real-world client needs
- Create products such as branding, marketing materials, social media graphics, or layouts
- Conduct research and analyze target audiences
- Present design concepts and justify decisions

Real-World Experience Ideas

- Brand identity package for a local organization
- Social media campaign design
- Event marketing materials
- Website or UI mockups

4. Production, Revision, and Quality

Objective: Produce refined, professional-quality work through revision, critique, and quality control.

- Apply iterative design processes including critique, revision, and testing
- Produce high-quality deliverables aligned to industry standards
- Analyze how client feedback and constraints impact final outcomes
- Ensure accessibility, usability, and audience clarity in designs

Real-World Experience Ideas

- Design critiques with industry professionals
- Revision cycles based on client feedback
- Production-ready file preparation

5. Design Workflow, Tools, and Project Management

Objective: Use industry-standard tools, workflows, and project management practices to complete design work efficiently.

- Manage multi-step design projects using appropriate tools and workflows
- Organize design files, assets, and deliverables professionally
- Use collaborative tools and project management strategies
- Analyze how workflow decisions impact efficiency and outcomes

Real-World Experience Ideas

- Asset management and file organization for client projects
- Project management board for tracking deliverables and deadlines
- Collaborative workflow using shared design files and feedback tools

6. Advanced Work-Based Learning (Toward Career Readiness)

Objective: Demonstrate increasing independence and career readiness through advanced work-based learning experiences.

- Demonstrate independence in completing design tasks
- Meet professional expectations for productivity and quality
- Apply creative problem-solving to real-world challenges
- Evaluate career readiness based on feedback and performance

Real-World Experience Ideas

- Internship or extended project
- Freelance work with supervision
- Business or entrepreneurship model

7. Portfolio Development & Personal Brand

Objective: *Develop a professional portfolio and personal brand that reflect skills, growth, and career goals.*

- Curate a portfolio of high-quality design work
- Organize projects to show process, growth, and specialization
- Develop a personal brand and design style
- Present portfolio work professionally

8. Project & Presentation

Objective: *Synthesize learning in a culminating project and presentation that demonstrate professional growth and readiness.*

- Complete a comprehensive design project
- Present to an audience (industry panel, client, or educators)
- Justify design decisions using technical vocabulary and process evidence
- Reflect on growth, challenges, and future goals

Real-World Experience Ideas

- Branding package for a real client
- Social media campaign for a nonprofit or school program
- Publication design (magazine, digital campaign, etc.)
- UX/UI concept design
- Personal freelance business proposal

Additional Information

WBL Experience Options (Learning THROUGH → AT Work)

- Client-based design projects
- Internship with design, marketing, or media team
- Freelance or supervised entrepreneurship (branding, social media, etc.)
- School-based enterprise (print shop, marketing team, event design)

End-of-Course Outcomes

- Apply advanced graphic design skills to real-world or client-based projects
- Demonstrate professional communication, collaboration, and workplace behavior
- Manage design projects from concept through production using industry workflows
- Create design solutions that meet client needs, audience goals, and quality expectations
- Apply iterative design processes including critique, revision, and refinement
- Build and curate a professional portfolio aligned to career goals
- Reflect on work-based learning experiences to evaluate strengths and growth areas
- Develop a postsecondary or workforce plan in graphic design or related fields

Assessment Structure

- Work-Based Learning Plan
- Client Project Deliverables
- Weekly Reflection Logs
- Employer / Mentor Feedback
- Portfolio Review
- Project + Presentation