



Programme syllabus

Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Visual Communication +Change, 180 högskolepoäng

Visual Communication +Change, 180 credits

Level

First cycle

Date of Ratification

Approved 2014-09-15.

Revised 2026-02-24.

The programme syllabus is valid from autumn semester 2026.

Prerequisites

General entry requirements + English 6. Or: English level 2

Description of Programme

Visual communication plays a pivotal role in the lives of all people and affects economies both locally and globally. Historically, as well as today, visual communication is deeply intertwined with consumption and political ideologies, and thus also with the challenges the world faces – not least the climate crisis. However, this also presents opportunities: throughout time, artists, designers, and activists have both challenged prevailing societal norms and contributed to profound changes. Through the representation of societal critique, ideas, and dreams, visual communication can make a difference.

How can visual communication be used as a tool for bringing about change?

In the programme Visual Communication + Change, students approach this question with creativity, curiosity, and critical thinking. The programme is designed for those who wish to use visual communication to make a difference in the world and combines artistic practices informed by knowledge about sustainability, with a focus on contributing to sustainable changes at both local and global levels.

The programme has an artistic basis, resting on four foundational pillars: image-making, encompassing photography, collage, moving images, animation, and composition; typography; visual narration, including illustration, information graphics,

visual mapping, UI design, digital platforms, and screen-based publishing; collaborative processes, such as interaction design, artistic and practice-based research, and collaborations with societal stakeholders.

Teaching is primarily delivered in the form of lectures, seminars, and workshops conducted in a classroom setting and in the university's workshops. Great emphasis is placed on the students' own creative and exploratory work, individually and in groups, with regular feedback in the form of supervision, presentations, and examinations. The students meet a range of practising designers, artists, and researchers – both among teaching staff and through visits by guests from the broad field that visual communication encompasses. During the programme, students are also introduced to practitioners and researchers engaged in sustainability and change initiatives.

Leading and conducting collaborative design processes, with a focus on messages about sustainability, is a recurring theme. Many courses are carried out in close cooperation with the wider community, including industries, businesses, organisations, authorities, and the local population. Several of the courses have a distinct international perspective.

Once they have completed the programme, the students are well prepared to work within the broad field of visual communication in interdisciplinary environments focusing on sustainable change at local and global levels. This includes working individually or in networks with graphic design, illustration, and moving images within organisations committed to sustainable transformations, such as communication companies, cultural institutions, and non-profit organisations, as well as part of initiatives driven by local communities and municipalities, and individual entrepreneurship. The programme also prepares students for further studies at the master's level.

Visual Communication + Change is an international programme, preparing students for an international career and promoting diversity in the student group. All teaching is delivered in English.

Objectives

Qualitative targets quoted from the Higher Education Ordinance

Knowledge and understanding

For a Degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts the student shall

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding in the principal field (main field of study), including knowledge of the practical and theoretical foundation of the field, knowledge and experience of methods and processes in the field as well as specialised study within the field.

Competence and skills

For a Degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts the student shall

- demonstrate the ability to describe, analyse and interpret design, techniques and content as well as to reflect critically on his or her artistic approach and that of others in the main field of study
- demonstrate the ability in the main field of study to create, realise and express his or her own ideas, identify, formulate and solve artistic and creative problems autonomously and to undertake artistic tasks within predetermined time frames
- demonstrate the ability to present and discuss his or her works and artistic issues in

speech, writing or in other ways and in dialogue with different audiences, and

- demonstrate the competence and knowledge required to work autonomously in a professional capacity.

Judgement and approach

For a Degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts the student shall

- demonstrate the ability to make assessments in the main field of study informed by relevant artistic, social and ethical issues
- demonstrate insight into the role of art in society, and
- demonstrate the ability to identify the need for further knowledge and ongoing learning.

Programme-specific objectives

After having completed the programme, the student should be able to:

- demonstrate the ability to artistically conduct communication assignments and efforts across various areas of communication, both at a strategic and at an applied level
- display knowledge and understanding of theories and processes of change
- reflect upon their own role as a visual communicator in society
- demonstrate the ability to work constructively and creatively in groups within and across subject boundaries as well as with the wider community
- analyse, interpret, and critically examine different contexts from sustainable social, cultural, economic, and ecological perspectives, in their role as a visual communicator.

Content

Programme coordinator and programme council

The programme is led by a programme coordinator responsible for quality assurance, development, and coordination of the programme. A programme council works towards the long-term and strategic development of the programme.

Programme overview

The programme consists of semester-long foundation blocks divided into modules. The programme progressively builds students' knowledge, understanding, and ability, based on two central ideas of progression:

1. from visual communication at a detailed level to visual communication at a general level
1. from individual, local values, interests, and motivations to global perspectives.

The two areas of progression intersect and are integrated in all courses, supported by the synergy of practice, theory, and artistic creation. This approach enables learning through practice, experience, theory, articulation, and reflection. Throughout the programme, students are continuously introduced to design-related methods and research tools.

Courses in the programme

*= course belonging to the main field of study

YEAR 1

Visual Communication 1: Identities, 30 credits* (G1N)

During the first semester of the programme, students are introduced to fundamental design tools for visual communication. At the same time, they explore the concept of

identity from ecological, individual, cultural, social, and collective sustainability perspectives, thus allowing them to position themselves as visual communicators in the world.

The various course modules aim to provide students with a solid foundation for creation within the areas of composition, image-making, visual narration, and typography, as well as an understanding of the role that visual communication plays in sustainable futures. Great emphasis is placed on fostering a safe and creative work environment for both individuals and groups. Students are introduced to and gain experience with both analogue and digital design tools and processes. In the last module of the semester, students have the opportunity to explore, visually represent, further develop, and integrate their experiences from previous modules. The work is conducted both individually and in groups.

Modules:

Visual Narration I: Perspectives on Biodiversity, 7.5 credits

Image-Making I: Individual Identity, 7.5 credits

Typography I: Cultural Identity, 7.5 credits

Visual Narration II: Publishing I – Collective Identity, 7.5 credits

Visual Communication 2: Critical perspectives in visual communication, 30 credits* (G1F)

During the programme's second semester, students build upon their knowledge and experiences from the previous semester by delving deeper into fundamental analogue and digital tools for visual communication, such as typography, image-making, and visual analysis. In conjunction with this, students explore design history and contemporary design practices from a critical perspective, in relation to ecological, economic, cultural, and social sustainability. In this way, students establish a foundation for understanding how design can contribute to both sustainable and unsustainable solutions.

This semester also provides a basic introduction to moving images and interaction design. Students develop an understanding of the significance of context within analogue and digital visual communication. The work is carried out both individually and in groups.

Modules:

Image-Making II: Critical Perspectives in the History of Visual Communication, 7.5 credits

Typography II: Social Sustainability and Critical Perspectives in Visual Communication, 7.5 credits

Image-Making III: Moving Image I – Economic Sustainability and Critical Perspectives in Visual Communication, 7.5 credits

Collaborative Processes I: Interaction Design I – Ecological Sustainability and Critical Perspectives in Visual Communication, 7.5 credits.

YEAR 2

Visual Communication 3: Futures, 30 credits* (G1F)

During the programme's third semester, students explore future scenarios and proposals for change in relation to ecological, economic, cultural, and social sustainability. They

build on their knowledge and experiences from previous semesters by delving deeper into more complex tools for visual communication, focusing on image-making and visual narration. Throughout the semester, students study critical design history in depth, which in turn serves as a basis for creating equitable and fair design projects.

In the various course modules, students deepen their understanding of and creative ability to use visual narration to communicate complex societal issues. They work both individually and in groups with critical approaches such as speculative fiction, intersectionality, norm criticism, regenerative life cycles, and critical perspectives on digital innovations in today's society.

Alternatively, students can choose to study abroad at a comparable level. In such cases, courses are selected in consultation with the programme/subject coordinator.

Modules:

Visual Narration III: Speculative Utopias & Dystopias, 7.5 credits

Visual Narration IV: Intersectionality & Norms, 7.5 credits

Image-Making IV: Moving Image II – Regenerative Rituals, 7.5 credits

Image-Making V: Beyond Big Tech Solutions, 7.5 credits

Visual Communication 4: Staying with the trouble, 30 credits* (G2F)

During the fourth semester, students build upon their knowledge and experiences from the previous semesters by delving even deeper into more complex tools for visual communication, focusing on collaborative design processes. Throughout this semester, students harness their understanding of contemporary contexts, design histories, and potential futures to form a more nuanced understanding of how to address intricate issues such as inclusion, diversity, and power structures in today's society. These issues are studied in relation to ecological, economic, cultural, and social sustainability, using Donna Haraway's concept of "Staying with the Trouble" as a starting point.

In the various course modules, students get the opportunity to anchor, explore, and develop knowledge, understanding, and skills in collaboration with local/regional institutions, organisations, and communities. They also further hone their skills in interaction design and delve further into various fields within visual communication, as per their own choice. At the end of the semester, in the third module, students have the option of doing an internship placement.

Modules:

Collaborative Processes II: Interaction design II – Inclusivity & Diversity, 7.5 credits

Collaborative Processes III: Visual Communication in a Rural Context, 15 credits

Typography III: Publishing II – Power Structures in Visual Communication, 7.5 credits

YEAR 3

Visual Communication 5: Narratives for Change, 30 credits* (G2F)

During the fifth semester of the programme, students continue to build on knowledge and experiences from previous semesters by applying advanced tools for visual communication, with a focus on publishing, image-making, and highly complex collaboration processes.

Students explore visual narration aiming to effect change in specific contexts, in relation to ecological, economic, cultural, and social sustainability. The various course

modules focus on change, power, and responsibility within visual communication. Students investigate and reflect upon how various popular movements and campaigns have used visual communication to convey their messages in specific societal contexts and delve deeper into stylistic approaches and the similarities and differences between propaganda and advertising and their history, present, and future. The semester concludes with a complex interdisciplinary project on the theme of change, further enhancing students' knowledge and ability to work creatively within a group.

Modules:

Typography IV: Publishing III – Global Economy & Visual Communication, 7.5 credits

Image-Making VI: Global Politics & Visual Communication, 7.5 credits

Collaborative Processes IV: Holistic Sustainability & Visual Communication, 15 credits

Visual Communication 6: Professional Field Placement, 30 credits* (G2E)

During the final semester, students explore a prospective professional field, positioning their own practice within the expanded realm of visual communication in relation to sustainability and in collaboration with society. Students continue building upon their knowledge and experiences from previous semesters by delving even deeper into advanced tools for visual communication, focusing on the planning, conducting, and contextualising of an independent degree project in the main field of study.

Modules:

Degree Project I: Planning, 7.5 credits

Degree Project II: Conducting, 15 credits

Degree Project III: Contextualising, 7.5 credits

Societal relevance

A majority of the programme's courses are delivered in the form of projects in collaboration with the surrounding society. During the fourth semester, the student is given the opportunity to conduct a five-week internship placement. The student decides where to conduct the practice placement in consultation with the person responsible for the programme.

Internationalisation

In the third semester, students are given the opportunity to benefit from the university's full range of agreements with international institutions. Courses abroad are chosen in consultation with the programme coordinator.

The programme is delivered in English to facilitate international admissions and to provide students with access to a future international professional field. The Department of Design actively participates in international networks such as Cumulus and Desis (which serve as platforms for knowledge exchange through joint projects), as well as in student and teacher exchanges.

Sustainable societal development

The focus of the programme is visual communication from a sustainability perspective. The courses in the programme include critical design, visual communication history from a critical perspective, power structures, and social and cultural sustainability (including opportunities to provide people with access to complex information) through visual communication.

The sustainability perspectives that permeate the programme include aspects of

intersectionality and norm criticism, which are explored in increasing depth throughout the programme. The aim is to provide students with tools to incorporate these perspectives into their practice, with an emphasis on training students in critical thinking about how norms affect the design process and the potential consequences this can have for work methods and visualisations. The programme aims to foster diversity within the student group.

How said perspectives are integrated into and examined in the programme is outlined in the individual course syllabuses.

Quality Development

Quality efforts are clearly linked to the university's vision and strategy, as well as to the programme's programme and course syllabuses. Within the subject, such efforts occur at teacher conferences and subject meetings, and in ongoing discussions with students, formalised in course evaluations. Programme evaluations in semester 6 and course evaluations conducted at the end of each course are relayed back to students, detailing what improvements have been made. Programme and course evaluations are archived by the department. Students, teaching staff, and representatives from the wider community actively participate in the monitoring and development of the programme through the programme council. The programme is continuously developed to meet the needs of the external world.

The Faculty of Arts and Humanities has a quality system for monitoring and developing its programmes. An education board prepares programme syllabuses and other matters related to quality issues, such as degree awarding powers and programme offerings, before decisions are made by the faculty board. Revised and new course syllabuses are prepared in a syllabus committee before decisions on approval are made by the head of department or the dean.

Once a year, programme and course offerings are reviewed in accordance with the faculty's plan for systematic quality assurance.

Degree

After having completed their studies in accordance with the requirements stated in the Qualification Ordinance of the Higher Education Ordinance and in Linnaeus University's local qualification ordinance, the student may apply for the award of a degree. Those who complete the Visual Communication + Change programme can obtain the following degree:

Bachelor of Fine Arts with Specialization in Visual Communication

Main field of study: Design

Konstnärlig kandidatexamen med inriktning mot visuell kommunikation

Huvudområde: Design

The degree certificate is issued in two languages (Swedish and English). A Diploma Supplement in English is enclosed with the degree certificate.

Other Information

The Visual Communication + Change programme provides students with opportunities to network with the outside world, well-equipped facilities, a low student-teacher ratio, care for individual development, and support with the English language.

Those who complete the Visual Communication + Change programme will be eligible for education at the master's level.

Students should anticipate additional costs for materials and certain study trips each semester.