

CORE MODULES: FdA Digital Marketing and Communications

You must take modules worth 120 credits at each level of the course. Each module is worth a specified number of credits.

Year one for full-time students (Level 4)

Media and Marketing Environment (30 credits)

- This module introduces students to the dominant external environmental factors that determine the constraints and the opportunities that confront businesses in the media and marketing industries as well as businesses in general. It explores the framework of external analysis using political, economic, social, legal, ecological, ethical and technological factors in the business environment. The module will begin to enable students to analyse the wider environmental issues on marketing and media issues, and attention will also be paid to the competitive environment and how this interacts with globalisation, and technological and social change to create complex strategic options for contemporary businesses. This module will also introduce students to critical perspectives in their study of media – specifically digital, networked media (mobile, screen and web-based) and of their own practices of media consumption as consumers and citizen. The module will help to familiarise students with concepts and frameworks to study media, media technologies, cultural and social change; to enable students to develop critical viewpoints in their evaluation of popular discourses surrounding today's media. Formative assessment of both individual and team work is provided throughout the module in addition to the summative assessment listed below: a 1,000 word critical reflection of learning within the module and the student's individual application of skills to the group presentation assessment. 3,000 word assignment discussing the application of models of media and marketing communication and their relevance to 21st century society. 15 minute group presentation (10% peer assessment).*

Academic and Business Skills (15 credits)

- This module aims to equip the students with the necessary skills to become an independent self-managing learner within an HE environment as well as preparing students in understanding the skills employers are looking for in graduates. Students will be encouraged to develop their practical and academic skills which are fundamental to being an undergraduate on a Digital Marketing, Media and Communications Degree. These will include the importance of developing assessment literacy, planning for assignments, undertaking research and interpreting data and developing good academic writing skills. The module will also introduce the students to the importance of reflection and career development as they assess the level of knowledge and skills they have and how they can develop these whilst at university and from gaining work experience that will enhance their employability. One of the challenges students encounter is working in groups on activities and towards assessment and so the students will be introduced to theories relating to building and maintaining high performance groups and have the opportunity of putting these into practice. Students will be encouraged to consider the concept of lifelong learning and to do this and will be encouraged not only to do a Personal Development Plan (PDP) as part of their assessment for this module but to update this at regular intervals during their University experience. Assessment is through a report of 2,500 words leading to a PDP which outlines a choice of career path, the essential skills that the student needs to develop and experience that the student will need to develop as they journey through University. A verbal presentation to the equivalent of 500 words, which will allow the student to practice developing an argument and persuading an audience.*

Introduction to Digital Publishing (15 credits)

- In this module students will learn and develop an array of skills that will support their learning surrounding the more theoretical concepts of digital marketing and communications. Students will be introduced to the necessity of displaying strong writing skills in an online publishing format; a vitally important task according to industry employers. The taught sessions and coursework run hand-in-hand to build an understanding of what the internet is, how it works, how readers use it and therefore how we can best apply that knowledge to be successful in digital publishing. Key areas of focus are how writing for websites differs from print, how to gather information using social networks, and how to publicise our work effectively on those same media. The module will feature an introduction to web design, CMS use, SEO keyword techniques and basic HTML. All of this will be put into practice as students build platforms for their own professional development. The intention is that students showcase how to write clickable copy that comments on the digital marketing industry, and use their sites as an effective means of getting a foothold in the industry. On a more academic level, the course is designed to provoke plenty of thought on how the rise of the online world has changed the face of digital marketing. The ethics of speed vs accuracy and “the future” will all be on the agenda as we cover the latest developments in this fast-moving space. Assessment is through: a portfolio of online work, published live on students’ blogs, and includes a series of copy, and a presentation. By the end of the course, learners will have a firm foundation in the online skills required to be a successful digital marketer in the modern age.*

21st Century Marketing (30 credits)

- This module provides first year students with a core foundation of established theories and models of marketing. The module provides an understanding of how marketing operates as a key functional area within business and how it critically interacts with other areas such as accountancy, human resource management and business management. The emphasis of the module is upon examining the role that marketing management can play in implementing and controlling the marketing mix processes as well the role of market research in improving business products and services and understanding customer needs. The module will cover marketing principles as applied to a range of industries and sectors including FMCG, not-for-profits, public sector and the arts/media. This consideration will cover aspects of business-to-consumer and business-to-business marketing, with an analysis of the different approaches these markets require. The module will also provide students with an opportunity to reflect on the ethical considerations of marketing management and the role which marketing can play in either aiding or negatively impacting organisational and industrial sustainability. The module will consist of 24 x 3 hour sessions in which student-led activity, discussion and research will be under-pinned by lecturer-led input and direction. The focus of the module will be on the application of theory to real-world, practical businesses and case studies. Assessment is through: a 2,500 word group critical analysis of an organisation’s current marketing practices – mid semester (based on a four question template). A 3,500 word marketing audit and strategy on a company of students’ choice due at the end of the module.*

Digital Asset Development (15 credits)

- Gaining a foundation in digital asset development and developing proficiency with the common tools required to create these assets is beneficial for a practitioner within the digital marketing industry as it enable individuals to translate marketing concepts to a visual medium and improve the quality of any assets developed for campaigns. This module gives learners the opportunity to gain hands-on experience with digital asset creation tools that are commonly used in the digital marketing industry. The module will be run as a supervised workshop where each week the learner will be instructed in underlying principles and how they are implemented by the chosen software, and expected to complete a set of exercises. Learners will develop skills in vector and bitmap asset creation while developing an understanding of the benefits and limitations of each technique in order to justify any decisions made. The skills taught in this module are intended to provide a suitable foundation for learners to enhance the visual impact of independently developed software applications both in their later studies and future career. Assessment is through; a portfolio of staged, practical workshop exercises, demonstrations, personal interviews and a logbook, to be submitted together at the end of the semester. A report on design, implementation and evaluation as a conclusion to the logbook.*

Writing for Media Platforms (15 credits)

- *Key industry figures have identified strong written skills as a vital sign for digital marketers and those who aim to work in a communications capacity. In this module, students will learn and develop the vital tools that they require to be strong, creative writers on differing media platforms. The coursework linked to this module will see students focus on producing a portfolio of written work that will instil not only solid written skills, but also give an insight into the key formats where these skills are required. Students will be introduced to product descriptions, guest blogs, copywriting and press releases, in both a print and digital landscape. Within these formats, learners will be introduced to well-established conventions of writing, similar to those displayed in a journalistic environment; such as strong introductions, use of quotes and appropriate attribution of research, keywords and engaging target audiences. Running parallel to this will be an insight into some of the wider implications of writing that will be addressed in future modules such as “Copywriting, Images and Ethics in Level 5. On a more academic level, the course allows students to reflect upon and critically evaluate the skills they have developed during this module. This is not only aimed at providing an account of the work that has been produced, but also to evaluate this work alongside key industry standards, using theory to intertwine overall work production and concepts. Assessment is through: a portfolio of written work, to include press releases, product descriptions and guest posts representing a total word count of 2,000 words; plus a 1,000 word essay that critically reflects upon the development of the student’s written work.*

Final year for full-time students (Level 5)

Career Management and Employability (15 credits)

- *This module helps students to develop their employability skills and capabilities that are needed to compete successfully in the graduate labour market. It seeks to provide students with the knowledge, support and insight into the world of work and how to develop their overall employability for their chosen career path. The module will help to develop key skills surrounding sector and company research, writing CV’s, preparing for interviews and Graduate Assessment Days. The lectures and seminars will provide key inputs to help you engage with key employability concepts, insights and techniques, drawn from business, management and other disciplines such as psychology, sociology and humanities. There will be a range of guest speakers from outside employers who will provide information regarding current trends in the graduate market, how to prepare key documents such as CV’s, covering letters as well as marketing and presenting yourself to employers. Assessment is through; a portfolio of documents, including a Personal development Plan (2,000 words) and a 1,000 word critical reflection.*

Social Media Marketing (15 credits)

- *This module explains the essential concepts and techniques needed to develop and manage an effective social media strategy. The module covers complete social media management, from a strategic perspective to specific platforms, techniques and tactics. This module combines traditional communication and consumer management theory with practical, real-world social media application. The module is designed to provide students with a practical portfolio of evidence to demonstrate their social media publishing skills to potential employers. The module introduces to students the uses of social media platforms in helping organisations to achieve their aims, as well as explaining how new platforms can integrate into traditional campaign management. Assessment is through; the team-based development of a comprehensive portfolio of evidence of the practical application of student-generated strategies; students will develop strategies to meet the needs of a specified brief and will research, plan, design and implement a social media campaign; this will result in a wealth of student-generated evidence and artefacts which can be used, along with other practical modules to help students develop a comprehensive portfolio of professional digital marketing evidence.*

Measuring Success (15 credits)

- Analytics as part of digital campaign measurement and scrutiny have been identified as one of the key skills required by employers for digital marketers and content managers. The module will help introduce the skills future marketers and digital content creators will need to analyse and predict the success of their campaigns and content. The course will outline how to analyse marketing data using Excel, the most widely used industry tool for small-scale data management, and will also provide a practical insight and opportunity for students to apply their learning to a Google analytics analysis of their own web-based content. This module will be a fascinating mix of theory and application and the students will complete the module with a wide skill-set from basic data presentation and interpretation to advanced analysis and forecasting (e.g. regression analysis and A-B testing). In addition, they will have the opportunity to see these skills applied to their own real-world data and create a portfolio of evidence to showcase their skills to future employers. Assessment is through: an on-going web-based analytics assessment, which will involve the learners using Google analytics code embedded within their own web-based content (e.g. blog, website) or native YouTube analytics and reporting on their findings and data. In addition, the module will have a final assessment in the form of a 2-hour case study exam (again offering an opportunity to analyse a data set and critically analyse and interpret the data for a professional audience).

Copywriting, Images and Ethics (15 credits)

- In this module students will learn and develop an understanding of legal and ethical issues that shape the work of those within the digital marketing and communications industry. Students will be introduced to a range of key legal concepts and be required to think critically on their wider impact. This will enable students to competently adhere to these restrictions within their own practice, both within their work on the programme and in the workplace. The taught sessions examine the constraints placed upon digital marketers and the practices of copy creation and the sourcing and creation of digital assets. Sessions will show how the introduction of the internet has added new layers of legal construction and enhanced the access to which digital marketers have to legitimate resources for their work. The module will feature an introduction to defamation, copyright, intellectual property. Trademark and patent law and the inherent link to the application of these issues within digital media. Discussions will be held on the internet; for example, has the emergence of the internet and social media improved or hindered the collection of assets in digital marketing? Wider implications of ethical digital marketing will be examined; for example, the need for representation of accurate information. Assessment is through; a production of a case study scenario, to be handed in part way through the semester; a plain English guide to the legal and ethical constraints that digital marketers face; each of the assessments provide learners with the opportunity to put their knowledge into context, displaying a clear understanding of what they have learned and researched.

Integrated Campaign Management (30 credits)

- This project-based module is designed to allow students to demonstrate their practical digital skills in the form of a capstone integrated campaign project. The management of the project is, in itself, a central component of the module and students will work in teams to produce a formal specification using sound campaign management and planning methods, a professional project plan and progress indicators. Close supervision with the module team will also help to ensure students' projects are realistic and appropriate to the level of study and provide a clear demonstration of the professional skills which have been developed at this point in their studies. The module has been designed to allow students to begin, or add to, their own professional portfolio. The modules will bring together earlier learning in practical and creative topics such as writing for media, digital asset development, design and marketing to allow students to create team-based evidence of their professional competencies. The module will develop learning from level 4 and level 5 modules while allowing students to decide the focus of their own campaigns, either responding to briefs put forward from local business partners, or in response to their own interests (e.g. social media awareness, charitable campaigns or supporting the students' own start-ups.) This module will allow for a practical application of a range of tools used in marketing communications, such as social media platforms, digital art applications, HTML/CSS, public relations, digital advertising, campaign management, metrics and campaign evaluation. The module will also provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate their wider planning and management skills, from strategic to operational levels. Students completing this module will gain the knowledge and skills required to help them pursue a career in the digital marketing industry whether in an in-house or agency role. Assessment is through a 4,000 word equivalent team-based portfolio, to include:
 - A project proposal
 - The project plan
 - Digital campaign artefacts
 - Campaign metrics and evaluation document

In addition, a 10 minute team pitch to justify decision-making in the project design, planning and evaluation metrics, plus Q & A. A 1,000 word personal reflection document detailing the lessons learned through project work, effectiveness as a member of a team, and identifying skills gaps for future development.

Understanding Consumer Behaviour (15 credits)

- *Consumer behaviour is the study of the processes involved in helping us understand how individuals or groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products and services to satisfy their needs and desires. In other words, it is the study of when, why, how and where people choose to buy, or not to buy, the products and services they consume. It is essential that marketers understand the decision-making process that consumers use when approaching purchase and what influences it when they are preparing marketing strategies and campaigns. By doing so it can help marketers design better campaigns and messages that can influence the consumer behaviour at each stage of the process from searching, gathering information, the criteria used to evaluate alternatives and what prompts a call to action and purchase. This module will enable students to understand the complexity of the consumer decision-making process and the influences upon this. This will enable students to analyse marketing strategies and campaigns and see how they have been designed to influence consumers at each stage of the decision-making process. Students will be able to choose a brand of their choice and critically evaluate their marketing strategies and campaigns. Assessment is through: a 3,000 word report which is a critical evaluation of a marketing campaign and how theories and models of consumer behaviour have influenced its design.*

Project Preparation (15 credits)

- *This module encourages students to further their independent learning skills and prepares them to plan and write effectively. It provides them with opportunities to develop further a critical approach to their learning, and to enhance their ability to assess, analyse and compare a range of writing styles for different situations. The skills and knowledge attained in this module are designed to encourage an academically rigorous approach to study, stressing that the same thoroughness in thinking and structuring as is necessary in effective writing in industry. The lecturers will, where possible, demonstrate that these purposes are mutually complementary. Students are expected to question, investigate and inform their understanding of an aspect of the industry in detail and depth. Furthermore, lecturers will provide regular feedback via tutorials, in order to support student learning, in order to aid them in developing their approaches to research, and to debate key ethical questions appropriate to their project ideas.*

Assessment is through:

Students are required to critically analyse existing media research and to write a detailed proposal for a major projects, drawing on a range of theory in the field and planning their methodology in detail:

- *The topic must be relevant to current issues in the field of Digital Marketing and Communications*
- *The 2,000 word proposal should be of a standard to be suitable to show a potential employer or funder if the student wishes to set up as a freelance.*
- *The proposal shall be written as though the student were preparing to conduct further in-depth research of the topic.*
- *The proposal may be for (subject to approval by the module leader):*
 - *A written research paper*
 - *The development of a digital artefact such as, but not restricted to, an application or website.*
 - *A feasibility study for the development of a digital product or service.*
 - *In addition the student is required to present a 10 minutes critique of an existing research project.*