Nottingham Trent University Course Specification

	Basic Course Information	
1.	Awarding Institution:	Nottingham Trent University
2.	School/Campus:	Architecture, Design and the Built Environment
3.	Final Award, Course Title and Modes of Study:	MA Design: Products and Furniture FT/PT
4.	Normal Duration:	FT 1 Year/PT 2 Years
5.	UCAS Code:	N/A

6.	**Overview and general educational aims of the course**

MA Design: Products & Furniture

The MA Design: Products & Furniture course is aimed at the designer who wishes to develop innovative products, furniture, systems or services. The course encourages a broad and diverse range of approaches to design practice that reflect the designer's personal philosophies and creative methodologies while engaging in the realities of designing for new and emerging markets. Designers are encouraged to explore the multidisciplinary field of design and challenge the norms in design thinking. The course sets out to challenge pre-conceived attitudes to the relationship between traditional craft skills, new technology and modern manufacture; encouraging the cross fertilisation of ideas and approaches informed by collaborative working and hands on experience. Modules will help students to consider not only materials and manufacturing, but also a broad range of strategies and approaches to help explore and understand markets, social needs and end users. The MA offers you the opportunity to develop advanced practice in your discipline and specialise in existing or emerging areas of the product design arena.

The key aim of this course is to provide you with the range of learning opportunities required for you to fully develop your own creative design practice. Through the advancement of conceptual, multidisciplinary, developmental, aesthetic and technological skills and design strategies, you will formulate an approach towards future career aspirations within the product design and associated industries. You will develop a comprehensive understanding and critical awareness of emerging technologies, materials and philosophies, including recent thinking with regards to innovative design technologies and materials. The expected areas of related employment include commercial design practice, design consultancy, design management, PhD study, and the manufacturing industry.

The course promotes a diverse range of methodologies to designing products, as driven by users, markets, sustainability, ethics, technological and critical practice. Students are encouraged to take exploratory approaches to developing their thinking about

design through experimentation, and to develop innovative creative approaches to design communication through prototyping and visualisation using a wide range of expressive tools.

The modules studied on the course offer students with a broad range of educational experiences, providing a grounding in Research Methods and Design Tools and providing opportunities to develop professional design research, implementation and communication skills, and to build a critical understanding of the intersection of creativity, production and the evolving drivers of design practice. The course also benefits from the collaboration and support of both established and new links with commercial organisations, industry professionals and university experts. Industrially linked projects are strongly encouraged and supported.

The course emphasizes the importance of independent learning, collaborative team working, creative problem solving and self-organisation skills. All students develop a practice based project for their final Major Study Project via the creation of a Learning Agreement as part of the Design Research Methods module; this is written in consultation with tutors and informs the final Learning Outcomes for each student. Industrially linked projects are strongly encouraged and supported on an individual basis.

Rapid advancements in communication media and product manufacture require an openness to change, an ability to communicate in a diverse range of 2 & 3D media (across both traditional and digital media) and work in a collaborative manner increasingly across multidisciplinary teams and international markets. The students ability to prioritise, plan and manage work and time effectively in this global business environment is essential.

As a student on the Product Design course, you will benefit from the internationally recognized research activities undertaken by the Product Design subject area, which has been supported by grants from variety of funding organisations including the European Union, UK Government and UK Research Councils, the Royal Society, the Arts Council, and industry. The Product Design group is regularly involved in international collaborative projects, and works closely with industry on different research and development schemes. The team also organise a number of high quality refereed international conferences and contribute to well respected research journals across the world, and liaise with policy and membership organisations for design, including the British Design Innovation and the Design Research Society.

7.	**Course outcomes** Course outcomes describe what you should know and be able to do by the end of your course if you take advantage of the opportunities for learning that we provide.
	Knowledge and understanding By the end of the course you should be able to:

- Situate your work within the context of design theory and practice and critically reflect on the wider social, ethical, economic, global, environmental and sustainability issues in your discipline.
- Demonstrate extensive knowledge appropriate to product design and comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to your practice.
- Demonstrate originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in product design.
- Demonstrate a systematic understanding of the role and potential of evolving design and production processes and critically evaluate their part in successful designed outcomes.
- Appraise and anticipate trends through analysis of projected cultural, economic and technological developments.

Skills, qualities and attributes
By the end of the course you should be able to:

- Work independently, demonstrating self-direction and the ability to learn independently and act autonomously to meet the creative and intellectual ambitions of your design practice.
- Display the initiative to drive team outcomes and engage collaboratively with peers/colleagues while managing your time effectively.
- Demonstrate your development as a reflective practitioner by applying increased critical judgment and originality in relation to solving problems and evaluating complex design solutions against conflicting constraints.
- Create conceptual design outputs with clearly defined parameters encompassing the whole of the design process from initial brief to manufacture of production prototypes or simulations.
- Communicate appropriately and effectively in spoken, written and visual media.
- Show inventiveness and independence of thought in the application of knowledge and skills in product design that identifies and creates new opportunities, furthers your professional development and demonstrates the advancement of your profession.

8.	**Teaching and Learning Methods**

A learning and teaching framework has evolved within the Product Design courses within the School over a number of years. Via regular summative and formative feedback, review and reflection, best practices have been incorporated into the teaching and learning across all modules. This framework enables collaborative working, consultation and presentations between all students studying at postgraduate level within the subject area.

The learning and teaching strategies are designed to develop independent learning and

research skills. Taught modules will be centred on lectures supported by seminars, workshops (following induction) and tutorials. A range of assessment and presentation methods are employed, and where possible or relevant are complimentary to other modules and projects.

The Product Design Community
The Product Design Subject Area places a great deal of importance on the development of a strong student design community, based around the utilization of studio based learning, one which aids supportive, peer-to-peer learning and helps to set work in a professional context. The design community is further supported through the provision of high quality workshop recourses and expert technical support available to all students. Product Design at NTU is open to a wide breadth of creative approaches, this enables you to explore and experiment with new methodologies, styles and techniques and develop your practice in a nurturing environment. The range of approaches to developing the design community includes:

- Structured Induction Events
- Structured Learning Agreement
- Skills Audit
- Team/Multidisciplinary Working
- Studio Working
- Established Student Support (Language & Student support services)
- Workshop Mentorship
- Dedicated regular postgraduate team meetings.
- Staff student liaison meetings (once per term)
- Group tutorial system

The Learning Agreement will enable you to make informed choices about your Major Study Project, and to foster a spirit of interdisciplinarity and teamwork. The content of the Major Study Project module is defined by your Learning Agreement and is agreed during the first element of the module, this ensures that you select a project based on your own aspirations and knowledge, which is driven and supported by key events and lectures within the postgraduate framework. The learning agreement is a negotiated document to be developed and agreed by you, your academic supervisors and other potential collaborating parties involved in the project. The learning agreement defines the Major Study Project module aims and objectives, its resource requirements and aids the planning of work relative to the learning outcomes for the module

The Skills Audit responds to the potentially disparate levels of knowledge and understanding of entrants into the course. The Skills Audit for each individual student ensures that modules incorporate the appropriate systematic and linear activities and support workshops to address your individual learning requirements. These audits

appraise levels of understanding and knowledge in the context of your chosen course of study. Based on evidence gathered through early induction activities, it enables you to identify areas which need to be focused on, as well as emphasising the need for you to take responsibility for negotiating your learning; identify your strengths, weaknesses and areas for development within various skills areas.

Learning and teaching methods will comprise lectures to introduce and develop concepts and to explore the application of these concepts; studio working, workshops and laboratories to develop skills and appreciate concepts; seminars and tutorials to provide academic support; case study and project work to develop a deeper understanding of concepts and applications; and project presentations by students to develop confidence and identity in professional practice.

Teaching materials will be available to support the learning process utilising new technologies for blended and e-learning where applicable. Such teaching materials will typically comprise written information, recommended reading, tutorial questions, self-assessment tests and computer based learning and teaching instructions. It is a normal practice of the School to invite external professional staff to contribute to learning material and to give lectures or run workshops. The Web and the University's own NOW system will also be used for communication between students and staff.

Working as a member of a small team, the Professional Collaboration module will provide challenging simulated work environments to enable you to engage in the design and management of real-world design projects with industrial partners. As a result of this collaborative project you will be able to demonstrate skills in team work, strategy for the creative industries, leadership, problem solving and decision making.

The Products and Furniture: Major Study Project module that runs across the whole course will allow you to integrate new knowledge gained in the taught modules, and through a range of activities and outcomes, to demonstrate your ability to bring business acumen and design flair together in the creation of new forms of entrepreneurial activity.

Modules are designed to expand student's awareness and understanding of Product Design while developing a wider appreciation of design's role within modern society, and the impact of new thinking in business on the design industry. A core competency of a designer at this level is for them to develop a reflective approach to their practice necessitating independent, critical thought, inquiry, analysis and creative problem-solving. All these courses will promote intellectual curiosity and the development of designers as multi-faceted professionals, confident in interdisciplinary practice. The course also focuses on the needs of future professional design practice and work to promote the understanding of both local and international business and support

entrepreneurial approaches to developing products and services, and the development of strategic design for business success.

9.	**Assessment Methods**

The course uses a variety of methods of assessment to ensure that you can demonstrate the range of higher-level learning outcomes and these are tested through a series of coursework submissions. Assessment will take place at the conclusion of each module or element.

Assessment throughout the courses is based on the submission of coursework. Tasks and briefs, often multiple, are set within modules and structured to enable students to address the course learning outcomes, ensuring that assessment is directed towards the achievement of those outcomes and are discipline specific. Assessment methods are selected such that they are the most effective in enabling students to demonstrate achievement of outcomes. All module learning outcomes are aligned to assessment and grading criteria that describe the level of learning being achieved against each learning outcome.   Individual modules create learning opportunities which encourage, reinforce and enhance students' learning processes, developing their ability to think, evaluate, create, make judgements, communicate and act. The courses use a variety of assessment techniques so that a team of academic assessors may evaluate the quality of your output for the modules and elements; evidenced by project development work and outcomes. These assessments are derived from the following forms of evaluation:

- Presentations: Oral, Audio/Visual (group/individual)
- Reports and reflective journals (group/individual)
- Reviews of design development work and models/prototypes (realised in 2D, 3D or 4D formats)
- Exhibitions of work/project outcomes
- Project Dissertation

All modules on the Postgraduate Design: Products programmes are assessed through 100% course work.

In order that student work is appropriately judged and marked consistently, assessments are panel marked (typically by 2-3 academic staff) for presentations, reviews of design development work and assessment of exhibitions or sample marked and checked ('moderated and verified') by other academic colleagues for the reading of reports, journals and dissertations.

The ethos of combining theory and practice is strongly reflected in the nature of assessments. All, are coursework based, requiring students to undertake practical work

together with research and critical evaluation in order to demonstrate the link between theory and practise.

You will receive regular verbal and written feedback about the progress you are making at each tutorial through discussion with staff and peers and via completion of tutorial record forms. You will also receive feedback from staff and students during presentations, workshops and seminars. At the end of each module you will receive written feedback supported by tutorial contact where you can discuss the outcomes of the assessment in more detail.

10.	**Course structure and curriculum**

The MA Design: Product and Furniture course can be undertaken either on a full-time basis over one year (53 weeks), or on a part-time basis over two years (106 Weeks). The course learning outcomes and curriculum for the full-time and part-time modes of study are the same regardless of the attendance mode. There is a single start date for the course (for both FT & PT routes) which commences annually in October. The year is broken into three fifteen week terms (six for PT route) and includes breaks for public holidays, University closure days and a summer study period.

1 Year Full-Time Route (3 x 15 week Terms)		
Term 1.	**Term 2.**	**Term 3.**
Research Methods 20 Credits/Core	**Professional Collaboration** 20 Credits/Core	**Products and Furniture: Major Study Project** Element 3: Realisation & Evaluation Core
Design Tools 20 Credits/Core	**Products and Furniture: Major Study Project** Element 2: Design & Development Core	
Products and Furniture: Major Study Project Element 1: Context & Rationale Core		

2 Year Part-Time Route					
Year 1 (3 x 15 week Terms)			**Year 2** (3 x 15 week Terms)		
Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
Research Methods 20 Credits/Core	**Design Tools** 20 Credits/Core	**Products and Furniture: Major Study Project** Element 2: Design & Development Core	**Products and Furniture: Major Study Project** Element 3: Realisation & Evaluation Core		
Products and Furniture: Major Study Project Element 1: Context & Rationale Core	**Professional Collaboration** 20 Credits/Core				

The course comprises of four modules, three of which are 20 credit point (15-week duration FT/30-week duration PT) dedicated to developing different aspects of the

designer's skills, knowledge and experience while the fourth module is a larger 120 credit point module dedicated to the individual student's own personal specialist project. The Products and Furniture: Major Study Project module runs for the entire duration of the course and is split into three Elements which are assessed at the end of each term (or the end of each second term for part-time students) and culminate in a public exhibition at the end of the course.

Summary of Course Structure and Curriculum

1. Design Research Methods (20 Credit Point: Core Module/Shared with MSc Design: Products)
2. Design Tools (20 Credit Point: Core Module/Shared with MSc Design: Products)
3. Products and Furniture: Major Study Project, Element 1: Context & Rationale (part of the 120-credit point module/Core Module)

Assessment points for the above three modules/elements are held in week 15 for full-time students or week 30 for part-time students.

4. Professional Collaboration (20 Credit Point: Core Module/Shared with MSc Design: Products)

5. Products and Furniture: Major Study Project, Element 2: Design & Development (part of the 120-credit point module/Core Module)

Assessment points for the above two modules are held in Week 30 for Full-Time students or Year 2, Week 15 for Part-Time students.

6. Products and Furniture: Major Study Project, Element 3: Realisation & Evaluation (part of the 120-credit point module/Core Module)

The assessment point for the above element of the Major Study Project is held during the final weeks of the Postgraduate year (Year 2 for PT).

Achievement of 180 credit points at Masters level leads to the award of a Master of Arts in Design: Products and Furniture.

11.	**Admission to the course**

Entry requirements
For current information regarding all entry requirements for this course, please see the `Applying' tab on the course information web page.

12.	**Support for Learning**

The School is committed to assisting you in achieving the best results possible during your studies, providing you with a wide range of academic support and advice. A comprehensive learner support system is adopted by the course, which also can include input from the University and student union, tailored to meet your needs.

The School is keen that all students, irrespective of background and characteristics such as age and nationality, have equal opportunities to succeed with their studies. There is a section in NOW for students within the school to access materials to help you with your studies.

Induction courses will run at the beginning of your studies and will ensure that you are made aware of the full range of support facilities in the University as well as giving you specific information about resources, procedures and practices needed to undertake the course. These include Health and Safety, workshop practices, and library induction. Welcome and induction courses are shared across the subject area postgraduate courses, encouraging a cross disciplinary student community.

You will receive support throughout your studies from our experienced and committed teaching and technical support staff. Staff members teaching on the course are members of professional institutions and most are active researchers, many undertaking industrial consultancy.

The Course Leader is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the course, with Module Leaders in charge of the separate module learning activities and assessments. Course Managers are responsible for the overview of all post graduate provision within the subject area and works closely with Course Leaders to ensure parity and a high level of student experience across courses. School and University Resources, including dyslexia support, counselling services and language support, are available if required. Subject specialists from careers service, and library and learning resources are also available to support you during your studies.

Project work on this course is well supported by extensive resources including the machining and manufacturing workshop, well equipped laboratories of wide range of subject areas, modern CAD/CAM studios, and a dedicated studio for the master's students in the Product Design department. The HIVE business incubator unit, based at Nottingham Trent University, works closely with this course to help the graduates to facilitate the formation of their own company and complementary product solutions. The staff will help secure any intellectual property rights resulting from the course activities.

In addition to email, social, online media and the University's virtual learning

environment (NOW), are used by individual module and course leaders to communicate effectively with students.

If you are an international student and English is not your first language, language support can be provided by the University where appropriate to enhance your learning experience and to improve your presentation skills. If necessary, English language classes are available from the University Language Centre. These classes form a course of English for Academic Purposes and are separate from the degree course. The University Student Support Services offer a range of general, specialist and professional support services for students.

| 13. | **Graduate destinations / employability** |

This course has been developed to meet the needs of industry in the UK and overseas. It is specifically designed to increase the employability of its graduates in a business context by identifying new service, strategy and product opportunities, and conducting projects in collaboration with industrial partners. You will become more strategically aware and technically literate, and will communicate concepts and outcomes at an advanced level in an ever-changing global market place. On completion, graduates will have acquired skills and knowledge to set up their own businesses, to work in manufacturing industries, design consultancies, and research and development organisations, or to progress to PhD study by engaging in further research.

The University Employability Service is available to all students, offering individual consultation and support.

| 14. | **Course standards and quality** |

There are well-established systems for managing the quality of the curriculum within the School. The course is subject to, and fully complies with, the University's requirements in respect of course standards and quality; this involves:

1. The appointment of external examiners to the course. External examiners are appointed to each course and report annually on the appropriateness of the curriculum, the quality of student work and the assessment process.
2. Monitoring of the course and the production of an annual Interim Course Report. At the end of each year the Course Leader writes an evaluative report, informed by staff and student feedback. This is then discussed by the Course Committee and the School Academic Standards and Quality Committee and actions are identified.
3. Periodic review of the course. Periodic Course Review is the mechanism by which course teams reflect on the validity, currency, and the academic quality of the provision once every three years. This is a face-to-face discussion with

external stakeholders and students centering on key data sets provided in advance of the meeting to enable appropriate consideration of the current and future quality and standards of the course. The outcome of the review is a three-year Course Development Plan.

4. A Course Committee covering all postgraduate courses within the department of Product Design are held three times a year, student representatives, elected by their peer group, attend and contribute to discussion.

5. Staff/Student liaison committees are held three times a year where all postgraduate students are invited to attend.

6. Formal module evaluation is gathered by anonymous questionnaire at the culmination of each module.

The course is referenced to the QAA generic descriptors for level 7 (master's level courses) taken from the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education October 2014 and informed by the Chartered Society of Designers Genetic Matrix™ which underpins all of the Chartered Society of Designers initiatives including: CSD membership categories, Pathway to Chartered Designer status and the CSD Course Endorsement Programme. The CSD Genetic Matrix is a recognised framework for professional design practice offering metrics benchmarking in both design practice and study.

15.	**Assessment regulations**
	This course is subject to the University's Common Assessment Regulations (located in its Academic Standards and Quality Handbook). Any course specific assessment features are described below:
	There are no course specific exceptions from the University regulations

16.	**Additional Information**	
	Collaborative partner(s):	None
	Course referenced to national QAA Benchmark Statements:	The course is referenced to QAA Benchmarks for Masters Level, NTU Postgraduate and Graduate Attributes and all learning outcomes are expressed at Masters Level (QSF Level 7)
	Course recognised by:	N/A
	Date implemented:	
	Any additional information:	
	None	