THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

Postgraduate Virtual
Open Days

MA Design for Change

School of Design Edinburgh
College of Art

Dr. Rachel Harkness

EDINBURGH extraordinary futures await

What We Will Cover Today:

- **Design for Change MA Programme Overview** (Introductions to the Teaching Team; Real World Challenges; Programme Ethos; How We Teach-Learn)

- **Programme Structure** (Structure; Electives; Student Work Examples; MA Show)

- **Employability/What Do Our Graduates Do?**

- **How to Apply** (inc. What We Look for in Applicants and Applications; Scholarships; Additional Links)

- **Questions and Answers**

Context: Join us at the heart of the city of Edinburgh!

The University

Context: Edinburgh College of Art

Programme Overview

What makes Design for Change distinctive?

- Situated in the surrounding place and culture of the city of Edinburgh and the country of Scotland.
- Situated within UoE, with links to allied disciplines including Anthropology; Geography; Business; Philosophy; Engineering; etc.
- Non-discipline specific; but rooted in the methods and praxis of design, social design, design anthropology and design culture studies.
- Integrated within a Design School with 13 distinct programmes (from Animation to Textiles, Film Directing to Design Informatics)
- Access to multiple workshops for creation and production of work in a variety of media.
- Intensive engagement in a studio-based environment alongside emphasis on social methods such as the creative ethnographic and the participatory.
- A tight international and interdisciplinary cohort dedicated to making change and bringing all sorts of skills to the table (c.40 students per year).
- Working on real-world challenges – "wicked problems".
- Growing alumni network of global change-makers.

Programme Overview: Introductions

Dr. Rachel Harkness

Lecturer in Design Ecologies; School of Design
Programme Director, Design for Change (MA) and
Course Organiser

Prof. Craig Martin

Professor; School of Design
Course Organiser

Dr. Arno Verhoeven

Senior Lecturer; School of Design
Course Organiser

Programme Overview: Introductions cont.

Emily Ford-Halliday

Lecturer in Fashion; School of Design
Course Organiser and Tutor

Dr. Giovanni Marmont

Lecturer in Social Design; School of Design
Course Organiser and Tutor

Overview: Real World Challenges

Overview: Real World Challenges

Overview: Programme Ethos

- Addressing "wicked problems" that individuals, groups and communities face (and thereby challenging the idea of neat 'solutions' somewhat).
- Proposing change through interdisciplinary and creative designs, considering new collaborations, relations, scenarios and transitions.
- Taking a critical approach to the idea of 'change' itself.
- Equipping ourselves with the tools and methods for building new, sustainable, more equitable futures.
- Encouraging student involvement, non-hierarchy and a respectful and inclusive studio culture

Design for Change Student Numbers

640 applicants in 2024/25

34 students on course (X FT and X PT)

- UK: 1 student

- Europe: 2 students

- International: 31 students

Backgrounds (Undergraduate degree)

- E.g. Product Design, Graphic Design, Global Sustainability Management, Textiles, Fashion Design, Jewellery and Silversmithing, Social/Cultural Anthropology, Human Geography, Industrial Design, Service Design.

Overview: How We Teach-Learn?

- Studio-driven
- Creatively
- Workshop-based
- Project-led
- Theoretically-informed
- Experientially

Overview: How We Teach-Learn?
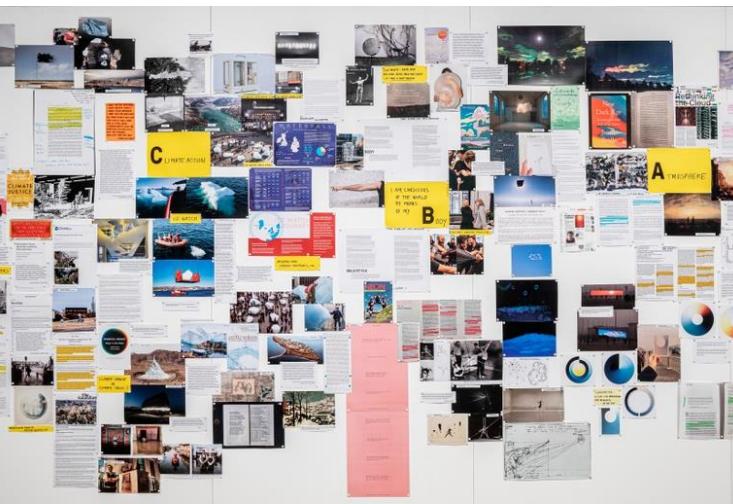
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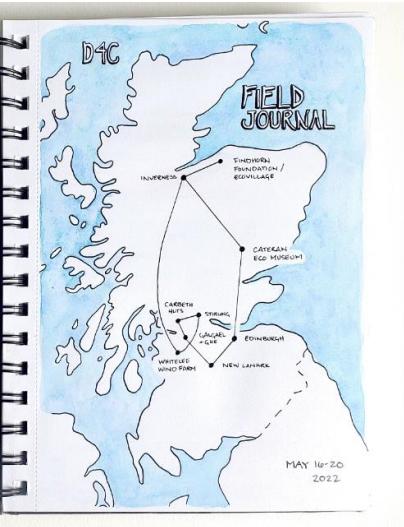
- Studio-driven
- Creatively
- Workshop-based
- Project-led
- Theoretically-informed
- Experientially

Programme Structure:

SEM 1	SEM 2	SUMMER
2 of 3 dLabs:	**1 of 2 dLabs:**	
dLab	dLab	
AND/OR	OR	Dissertation* 60CR
dLab	dLab	
AND/OR	AND	
dLab	D4C: Projects and Practices	
AND	AND	
Option	Option	

STUDENTS REQUIRE AN AVERAGE OF 50% ACROSS ALL 120CR ON PROGRAMME; NO LESS THAN 80CR OF COURSEWORK BEING ABOVE 50% THRESHOLD IN ORDER TO PROGRESS

*can be placement

EXIT: MA DEGREE
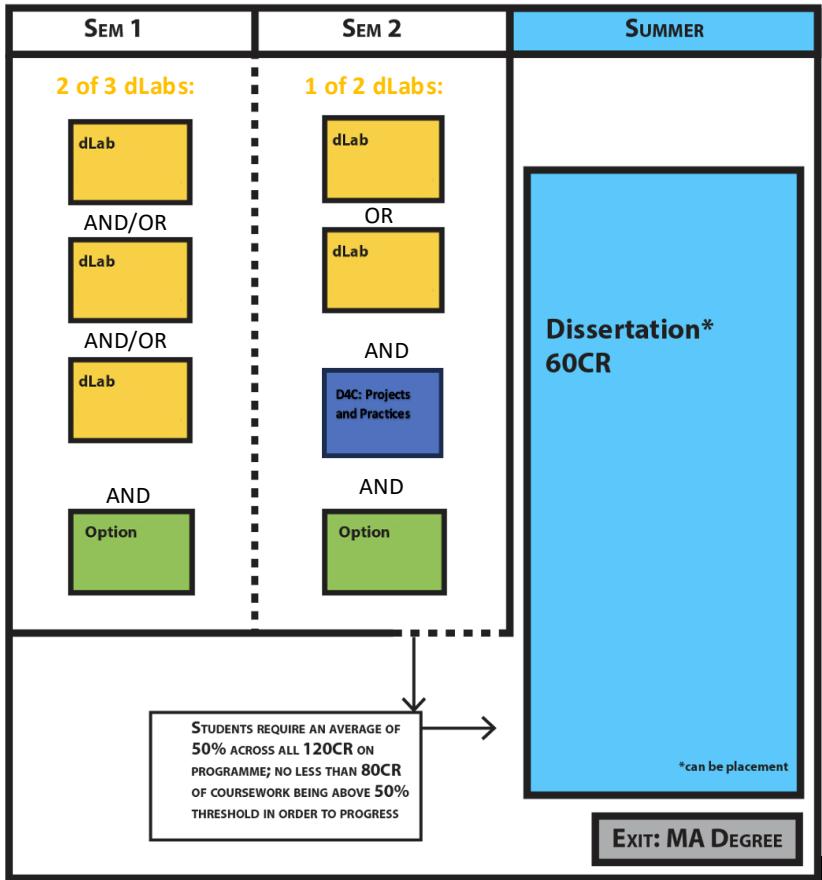
5 **Design Labs (dLabs)** from which you do three.
You choose:
2 from

- Social Change
- Environmental Change
- Inclusive Change

1 from

- Technical Change
- Political Change

2 options (called **Electives**) from across Design/ECA and allied disciplines based across University of Edinburgh

A dedicated course on creative methods (called **Designing for Change: Projects and Practices**) to lead into…

Supervised **Dissertation** course which is an independent project that is accompanied by a written text and usually also an MA Show exhibition contribution.

Programme Structure: The Courses from Design for Change

Semester 1

- dLab(1): Design for Social Change
- dLab(3): Design for Environmental Change
- dLab(4): Design for Inclusive Change

Semester 2

- dLab(2): Design for Technical Change
- dLab(5): Design for Political Change

- Designing for Change: Projects and Practices

Summer Term

- Dissertation

Programme Structure: Examples of Elective Options in the Curriculum

Semester 1

- Understanding Technology
- Anthropology and Environment
- Design, Play and Games
- People First: International Development
- Interactive Visual Design
- Environmental Design: Materials, Ecologies, Futures

… and more

Semester 2

- Disseminating Design Practices
- Everyday Cultures
- Technology Commercialisation and the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem
- Design Thinking
- Health, Nature and Greenspace

… and more

Programme Structure: What a typical week looks like…

- ~9 class hours per week and ~26 independent study hours. (Making a 35hr week = Full Time)

- Students engage with teaching staff and other students in the Design for Change studio which is a flexible teaching-learning and design-study space, with a small common room area with sink and lockers and soft chairs attached.

- We strongly encourage independent study to take place in the studio with your fellow students, whenever classes are not taking place. Additionally students like to use the library spaces and also sometimes work at home.

- Assessments vary from course to course but are to a brief (that is we teach/learn in a project-driven manner) and usually can be expected to fall mid-semester and at end of the semester. Some of our assignments are group-based, some individual; some are creative essay or written formats, some are creative non-written formats such as portfolios or objects.

- We traditionally do some visits to places and people who are demonstrating and/or living designs for change in between Semester 2 and the start of the Dissertation course. These non-credit bearing fieldtrips are a valued and popular part of the degree.

Programme Structure: What a typical week might look like…

|	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morning	Independent Study	Design for Change Studio Class	Elective Tutorial / Independent Study	Independent Study / Elective Lecture	Independent Study
Afternoon	Design for Change Studio Class	Independent Study	Independent Study/Clubs	Independent Study	Independent Study

Programme Structure: Student Projects: Dissertation
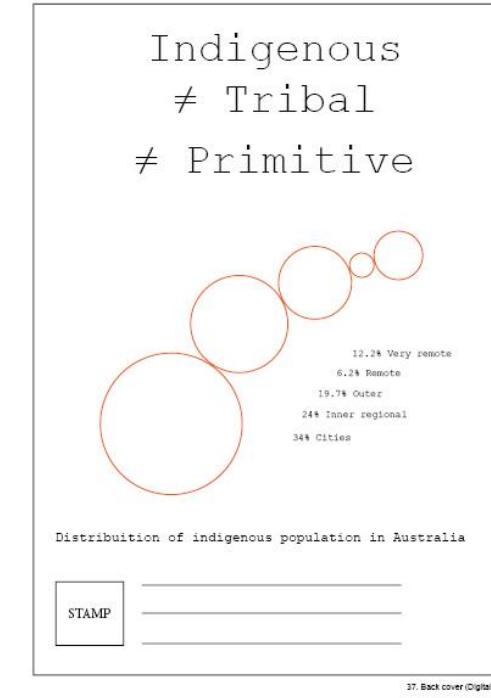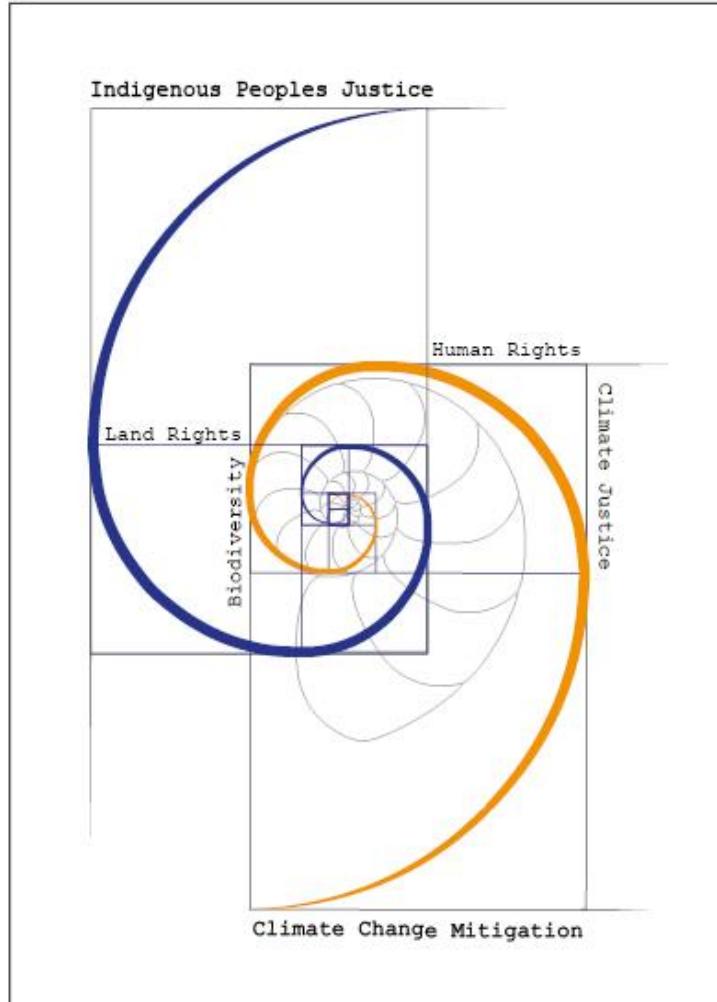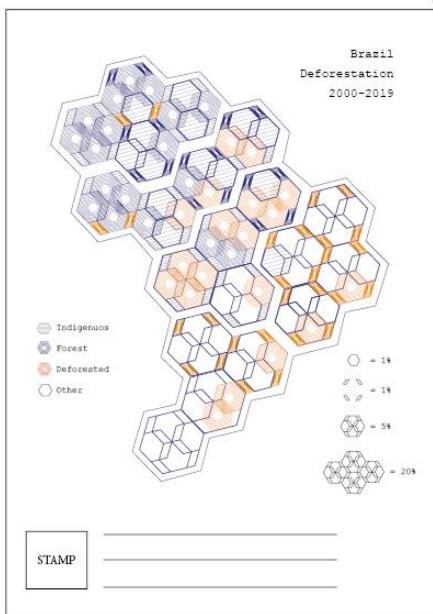
Irene Delfanti
- D4C [20/21]
- Unlearning Western Practices, a case for Design and Biodiversity

Programme Structure: Student Projects: Dissertation
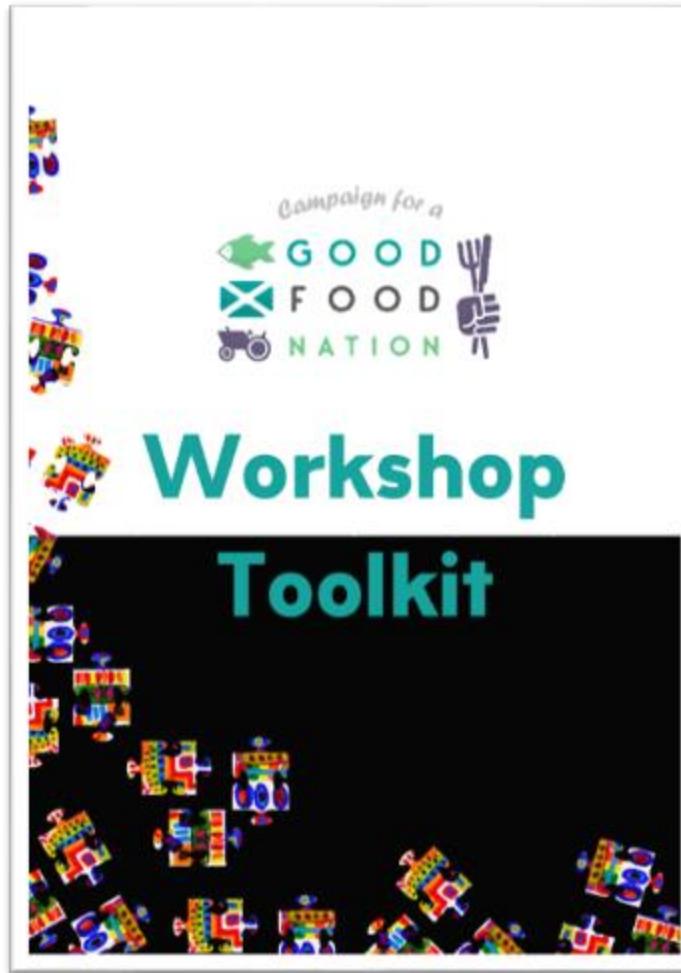
Diana Carolina Garduño Jiménez
- D4C [18/19]
- Re-designing our Food Systems: A Decolonial Workshop Toolkit

Programme Structure: Student Projects: Dissertation

6.1: THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL CIRCULARITY

JAAN-PEHCHAAN

domestic work

middle-class professionals

SOCIAL-CIRCULARITY IN JAAN-PEHCHAAN

SOCIAL BARRIER

↑ privilege

↓ privilege

SOCIAL-CIRCULARITY AS FRAMEWORK

Social-circularity Closing loops

SPECULATIVE ECONOMY (CIRCULAR RELATIONSHIP)
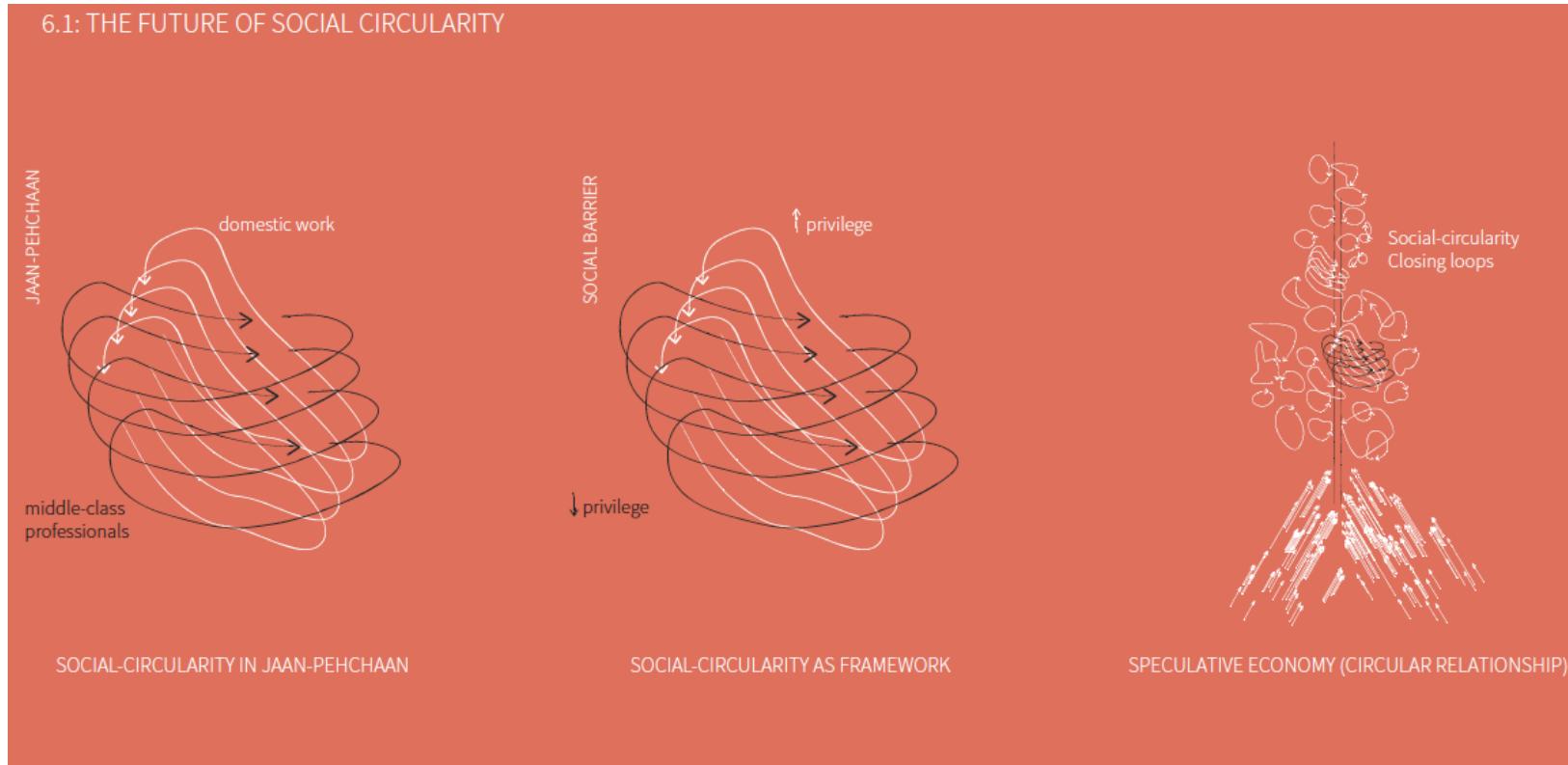
Farzan Dalal
- D4C [19/20]
- Jaan-Pehchaan: Service design project on social inclusion of internal migrant workers in India through increasing social relationships and connections.

Programme Structure: Student Projects: Dissertation

Juliet Seger
- D4C [19/20]
- "The Human Touch" – design-led exploration of labour, technology and gender in clothing manufacture.

Programme Structure: MA Show (TBC)
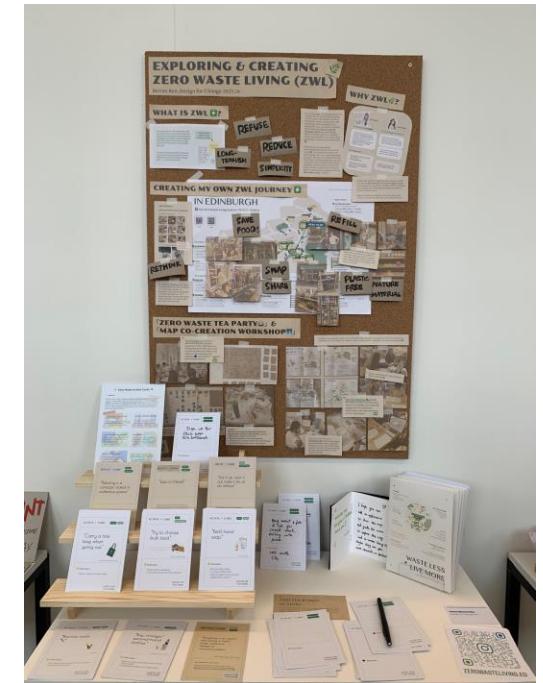
- D4C MA Show [23/24]
- Students had digital posters and a video about their work available to view on the screen(s). They also displayed process boards (literally showing their process) on the walls and select artefacts and documents on the plinths

Employability
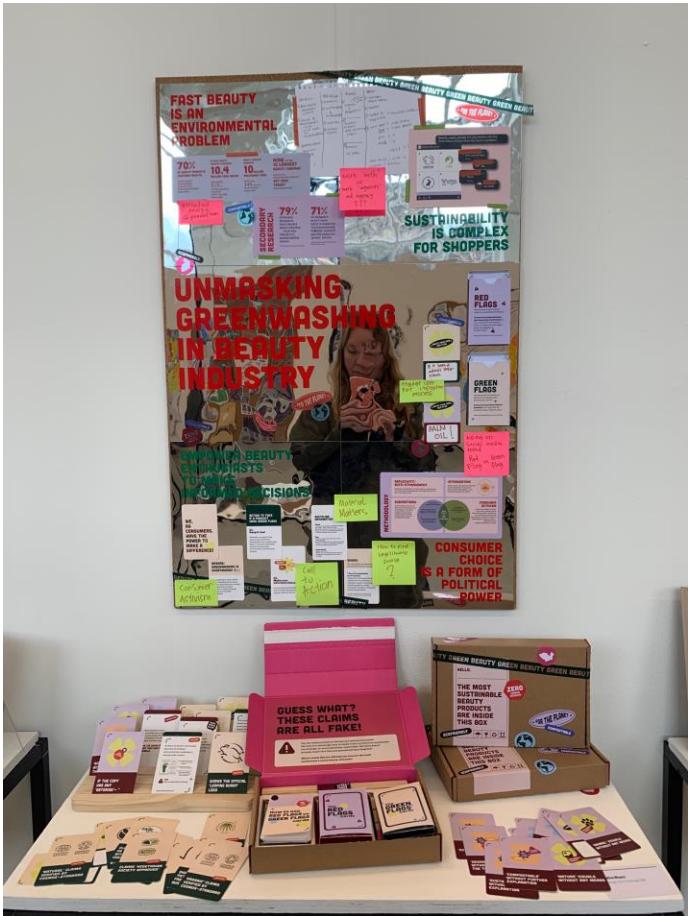
Key focus on transferrable skills offered by multi-disciplinary approach to design

- Communication skills
- Collaboration
- Working with people and in people-centred ways
- Design praxis
- Critical thinking
- Systems thinking
- Experimental and art-based methodologies
- Design thinking
- Intersection of grassroots and policy-based approaches
- Timely, real-world projects
- Work-based placement dissertation option
- Research skills

Employability: Examples of Student Destinations

- Project Officer at Nourish, Scotland
- Designer/Co-founder at Future Practical Studio
- Project Analyst at Innocent Drinks
- UX Designer at FATHOM_/Shaping Places
- Design Researcher at Community Land Scotland
- Service Designer at Department of Justice (GOV UK)
- Design Researcher at Cloudforest, Environmental Services
- Self-directed start-ups with seed funding from University of Edinburgh (based on dissertation projects)
- Research Assistants
- Tutors and Lecturers
- PhD Studies

How to Apply

Visit the Degree Finder and search for Design for Change MA (eca):
https://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/postgraduate/degrees/

In your application, please include:

- A **Personal Statement.** Tell us about yourself and about why you want to study Design for Change!

- A **Portfolio.** Evidence of your ability to communicate in non-textual forms as well as your motivation to engage in creative design-led practices which embrace a wide variety of media, materials and techniques. (NB. The important formatting requirements.)
  - Include **a link to a 2-minute video** outlining an issue-based challenge you might like to address through design-led change – show us how and why?
  - Include **a collection of visual support material which demonstrates your affinity and aptitude for engaging in creative, design-led work.**

How to Apply: What We Look for in Applicants

Somebody that possesses:
- A good first degree in a relevant discipline (not necessarily design);
- An affinity with designerly and creative practices;
- A desire to challenge prevailing ideas of what we mean by 'design' and an openness to learn;
- A belief in the potential of design (and design research) to help implement and influence change;
- Advanced English language skills – very important;
- Curiosity and criticality.

How to Apply: What We Look For in Applications

"What makes for a good application?" "What are you looking for in an application?"
These are common questions – and they often seem to indicate that applicants believe we are looking for things and objects in portfolios; when in fact **we are most interested in process and approaches.**
What does this mean?

Our criteria for evaluating applications are the extent to which we can see evidence of :
- Understanding of the Programme's context and values (e.g. that we are interdisciplinary or even non-disciplinary and attentive to issues of justice);
- Designerly, creative and imaginative competencies and affinities (bearing in mind that we encourage applicants that come from varied backgrounds);
- Abilities to research (through design and fieldwork, but also through literature and other academic resources), analyse your findings and synthesise and communicate them convincingly.
- Thoughtful evaluation and reflection of own process and progress as well as wider issues and movements for/of change.

Ultimately we are also looking for uniqueness, in the sense that we are looking to see **you** in your application and for this to bring distinctness to your portfolio elements and personal statement.

How to Apply: What We Look For in Applications cont.
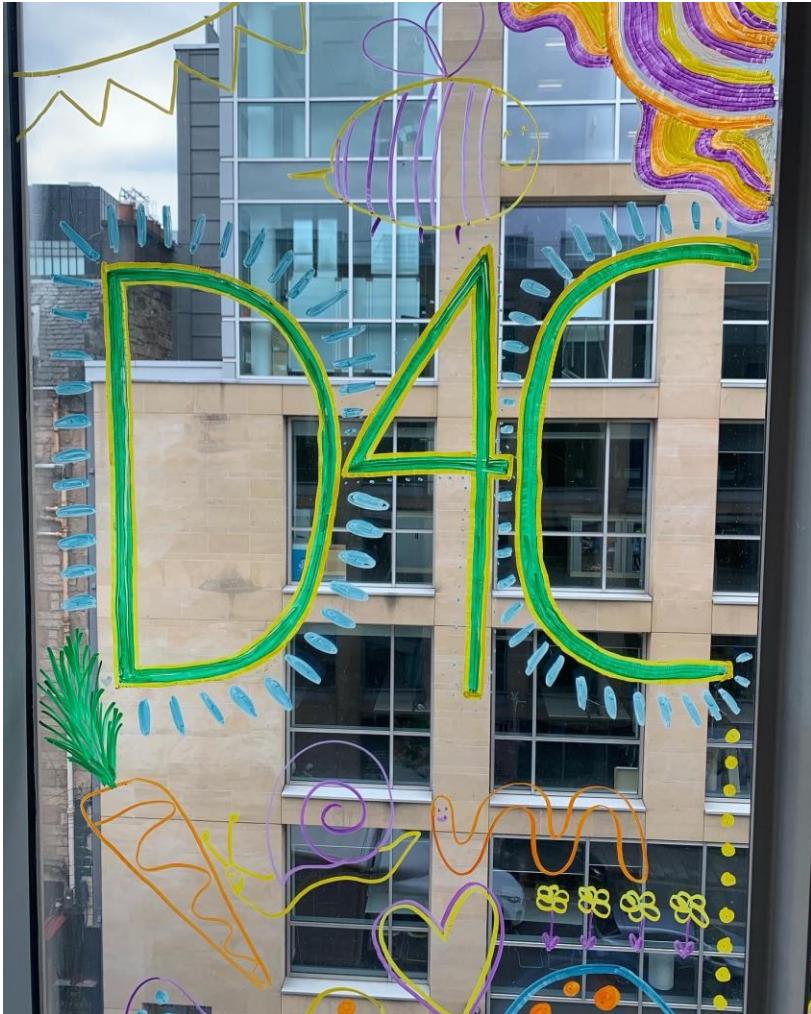
In summary, does your whole portfolio show us evidence of:

- working like a designer and/or creative, with an aesthetic and material sensibility;
- analytical thinking skills about contemporary issues relevant to the programme;
- skills in synthesizing of ideas into opportunities to communicate change;
- skills in evaluating your own work and using designerly judgment in progressing your projects;
- strong contextual awareness of the role that design (along with other disciplines) can, or cannot play, in developing and delivering appropriate change…or at the very least a keen desire to explore this.

We particularly value original, personally-specific and non-formulaic applications.

How to Apply: Scholarships / Financial Support

See the University's funding information for postgraduates here:
https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-funding/postgraduate

Funding for UK students, including Scottish-domiciled student loans – info here
https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-funding/postgraduate/uk-eu

Scholarship Schemes within ECA:
- Andrew Grant Scholarships, £10,500 each https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-funding/postgraduate/international/humanities/edinburgh-college-of-art/andrew-grant
- John L Paterson Scholarship £8000 https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-funding/postgraduate/uk-eu/humanities/edinburgh-college-of-art/john-l-paterson
- EU Scholarships Scheme https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-funding/postgraduate/international/humanities/edinburgh-college-of-art/eca-eu-scholarships-scheme

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Edinburgh College of Art

SCHOOL
OF DESIGN

www.eca.ed.ac.uk

Postgraduate Study

MA
DESIGN FOR
CHANGE

MA   1 Year Full Time

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| SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE & LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | SCHOOL OF ART | SCHOOL OF DESIGN | SCHOOL OF HISTORY OF ART | REID SCHOOL OF MUSIC |

Additional Links:

Our **official programme page**, including some of our alumni profiles here:
https://www.eca.ed.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/design-change-ma

This page also has a video where a number of previous students talk about the programme and their experience of it.

Follow Design for Change MA on Instagram @d4c_edi (although we don't post much!)

Asking questions (Microsoft Teams)

Type your question in the **Chat**, and we'll do our best to answer as many as we can.

Desktop
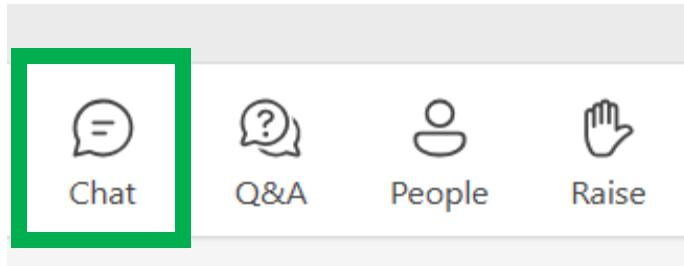
- If we don't manage to answer, please email futurestudents@ed.ac.uk

## Mobile
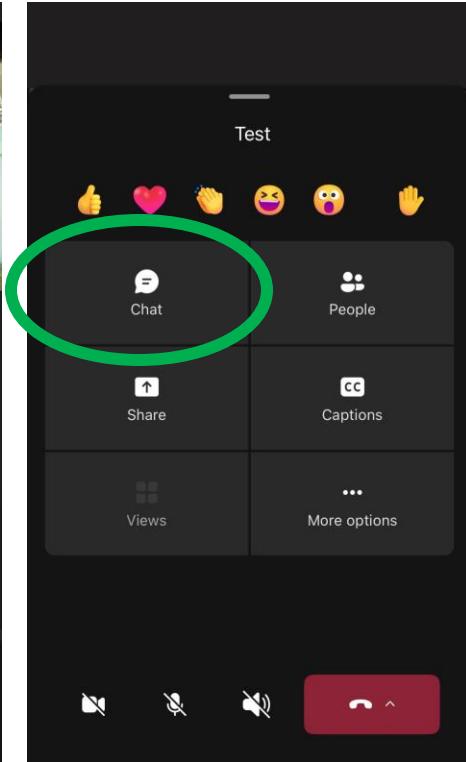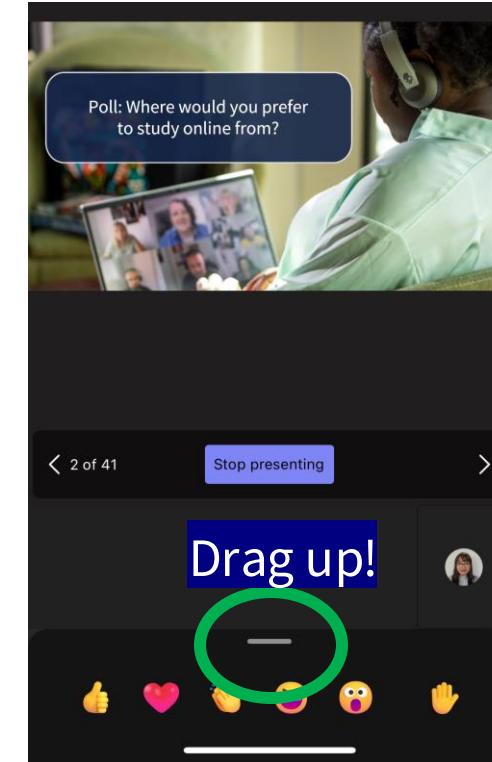
Did you get the info you were looking for?

- Programme-specific info: https://postgraduate.degrees.ed.ac.uk/

- Chat to our Students: https://edin.ac/student-chat-pg

- Any other questions (including, Fees & Admissions) email: futurestudents@ed.ac.uk

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Read our students' blogs at
blogs.ed.ac.uk/studentstories

Contact details for follow-up questions

- We apologise if we did not get through all of your questions in the time allotted for this session. If you have further questions that have not been answered, please email: futurestudents@ed.ac.uk

- The address above should be emailed for help with the application systems, technology and any questions to do with the process of applying and your specific application once in-progress.

- If you have a specific Programme-related query, which is not to do with any of the above, then you can get in touch with the Design for Change Programme Director, Dr. Rachel Harkness on r.j.harkness@ed.ac.uk

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Thank you

Dr. Rachel J. Harkness

r.j.harkness@ed.ac.uk