Graphic Communications

SCHOOL OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATION AND ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGIES

LOCATION: MAIN CAMPUS, EDMONTON

"As an employer of three graduates of the NAIT Graphics program, I can say that more than anything else they all have an eagerness to learn and improve, a solid base of graphic knowledge on which to build, and a keen interest to think creatively. These are key elements to building a career in the visual communications industry and NAIT was the catalyst in their creative development."

TERRY COWAN
Creative Services Manager
The Brick Group

PROGRAM CONTACT

www.nait.ca/programs/gcs
PH 780.491.3159
E-MAIL gcs@nait.ca

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Look around you – virtually every printed, display, silk screened and even electronic media you see has come through the hands of a graphic communications professional.

Training for entry into this creative, rapidly evolving industry is provided by NAIT's intensive one-year Graphic Communications (GrafCom) program. The program provides a broad overview of the graphic communications processes from the creative planning stage, through graphic design, digital file creation, customer proofing and final output. Students gain practical, hands-on experience with industry-standard software and equipment, completing a broad range of industry-typical projects, with an emphasis on current and future graphic arts technology.

Before undertaking any design or layout project, it is important that students learn the theoretical concepts of the various press, bindery and large format processes that follow the digital file creation; this sets the NAIT Graphic Communications program apart from other technical institutions.

The program has an excellent reputation among the Capital Region's business community; classroom projects often involve design assignments relevant to their current ventures. Direct industry experience is gained through the program's two-week professional experience component, allowing eligible students the opportunity to apply their technical and interpersonal skills effectively within a workplace environment.

The graphics industry is constantly undergoing change, whether it is new software developments, updates in output equipment and technologies, or trends in design elements. The program is in constant contact with industry and supply representatives to be sure the training demands are being met and grads have the skills necessary for employment. Skills acquired in this program have allowed our graduates to seek employment opportunities all across North America.

PROGRAM LENGTH

Graphic Communications is a one-year, full-time certificate program spanning two 15-week semesters. The program starts in September and runs until the end of April.

Currently there are no part-time offerings of the program.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

The program's curriculum is always undergoing change to reflect industry trends and new developments. Successful students will gain fundamental knowledge and skills in the following disciplines:

- applied graphic design and typography
- computer graphics and image manipulation
- page layout and document composition
- computer systems management
- web design fundamentals
- digital pre-press technology and electronic output
- effective communications

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Advances in technology and correspondingly lower costs of publishing hardware and software have significantly widened the scope of computer publishing capabilities, making many applications widely available. Small printing companies, graphic design houses and internal communication departments of large corporations are now equipped to perform many of the production processes previously handled by specialized establishments. These factors have created an increased need for skilled personnel to ensure the efficient production of effective communications.

GrafCom graduates have started their careers with traditional printing companies, graphic design and advertising firms, corporate in-house design, service bureaus, promotional companies, and newspaper and magazine publishers.

"The instructors in Graphic Communications are always there to listen, to encourage and steer us along the right path. But teaching someone to discover answers for him/herself is a harder thing to do, and that's what makes the instructors here exceptional."

TRACY KERYLUK
GrafCom grad

"GrafCom gave me the knowledge and skill necessary to be competitive in the graphics industry. The small class offered one-on-one training, which made learning easier. I'm not yet 30 and am now managing a graphics department for a local newspaper."

CHANDRA FREESTON
GrafCom grad

In the future, new mediums may replace traditional "ink on paper" technology, such as print on demand, e-Books, PDF files, Electronic Scrolls, e-Paper etc. Graduates from GrafCom will still be in high demand as logos, layouts, advertisements, photo manipulations, typography and design skills will still be required for current and future mediums.

STUDENT SUCCESSES

GrafCom students and graduates have consistently performed well in competitive design on both local and national fronts. GrafCom grads have also gone on to become successful employees, business managers, sales reps, freelance artists and company owners.

Students have also participated in logo and identity creations for various non-profit organizations. Students get opportunities to create live jobs, and at the same time become good corporate citizens. A few of the organizations that have benefitted from the efforts of GrafCom students are: Harley Owners Group (Ride for MS), Make A Wish, Lord Strathcona Horse Regiment, da bom SQUAD, ABRA-KID-ABRA, LegalAid, Float Fest and Dance Alberta.

After graduating from GrafCom, Diane and Mike Fillinger secured employment within a local design company to apply their learned skills. Today they are now the owners of Paragraphics, a company specializing in design and print media services.

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

For details on academic requirements, please check online at www.nait.ca/admissions.

Graphic Communications classes are kept small so that students have an optimum learning environment. This class size limitation means that student selection can be competitive, and may be based on academic achievement and skills beyond the minimum prerequisites identified.

Fluency in English is required. Students should have accurate colour perception. An interest in art, drafting or photography and/or computer experience will be an asset to a successful applicant. Students are also expected to have, or to acquire over the duration of the program, a minimum keyboarding speed of 50 wpm.

The Graphic Communications industry needs talented individuals with a combination of skills that can be considered somewhat unusual. That is, the ability to be graphically creative as well as technically minded. Both of these aptitudes are necessary for success in our industry.

Apply online at www.nait.ca.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Program details can be found at www.nait.ca/programs/gcs.

Because space in the program is limited, it is important that students who are accepted are those with serious intent. For this reason, applicants are well advised to take all possible steps to fully understand the program and what being a student entails. Applicants can attend NAIT's Open House, Info Week and program information sessions to speak directly with instructional staff. View the NAIT website for current times and events.

Participating in NAIT's Buddy System engages prospective students in a first-hand classroom experience. Applicants are paired up with current learners to help determine how well GrafCom fits their career goals.

For details on information sessions and how to participate in the buddy system, please email the program at gcs@nait.ca or call 780.491.3159.

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