Job Description

Job Title:	**Digital Designer**
Department:	Creative Studio, Office of the Vice-President, University Relations
Reports To:	Director, Creative Studio
Jobs Reporting:	None
Salary Grade:	USG 9
Effective Date:	September 2024

Primary Purpose

The University of Waterloo, a renowned public research institution in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, seeks a talented Digital Designer to shape and enhance our digital transformation initiatives, **with a primary focus on designing for the university's websites**. The role is pivotal in driving significant improvements in user engagement and institutional reputation. As part of our commitment to innovation, research, and educational excellence, we value diversity, equity, and inclusion. In this dynamic and collaborative role, you'll bring creative ideas to life across various digital platforms including websites, digital publications, and social media.

Key Accountabilities

Designing Digital Experiences

- **Create visually engaging designs** across digital platforms with a **particular emphasis on websites,** ensuring they are aesthetically appealing and user-friendly.
- **Incorporate user-centered design principles** by leveraging UX/UI best practices and applying user feedback to optimize the experience.
- **Incorporate current trends in UX/UI design principles** by leveraging best practices and applying user feedback to optimize the experience.
- **Ensure accessibility and inclusivity** by designing content that complies with AODA and WCAG guidelines, making digital content accessible to all users.
- **Maintain brand consistency** by aligning all designs with the university's visual identity, ensuring that digital outputs reflect the institution's strategic objectives.

Collaboration and Cross-Functional Communication

- **Work closely with cross-functional teams** including content creators, marketing, and technical teams to align design solutions with broader project requirements and goals.
- **Facilitate creative brainstorming sessions** by collaborating with stakeholders to curate mood boards, explore creative ideas, and develop innovative design concepts.
- **Present design proposals** to campus colleagues and senior leadership, articulating the strategic impact and value of design decisions.
- **Collaborate on multimedia content creation**, including videos, animations, and interactive experiences, ensuring alignment with the university's branding and communication goals.
- **Ensure alignment with messaging** by working alongside content creators to ensure that all digital content respects and represents diversity and inclusivity.

Strategic Thinking

- **Align design initiatives with institutional objectives** by ensuring all projects contribute to enhancing the university's reputation, recruitment, and community engagement efforts.
- **Advocate for inclusive design principles** by incorporating diverse user needs into all stages of the design process.
- **Leverage analytics and user feedback** to continuously improve design outcomes, using data to solve UX/UI challenges and optimize the user experience.
- **Anticipate and adapt to future trends** by staying informed on the latest developments in design, technology, and education, integrating these insights into long-term strategies.
- **Participate in workflow redesign** to address resource constraints, enhance efficiency, and ensure the delivery of high-quality design work under tight deadlines.

Design Leadership

- **Lead the refinement of the university's visual identity**, ensuring consistency across all digital and communication channels, including the development of comprehensive brand guidelines.
- **Mentor junior designers and co-op students**, fostering a creative and innovative culture while helping team members grow their design skills.
- **Champion innovation within the Creative Studio** by adopting new design technologies and methodologies that elevate the quality and effectiveness of the university's communications.
- **Participate in the Creative Community of Practice**, contributing to a collaborative environment where best practices and creative ideas are shared across teams.
- **Troubleshoot complex design challenges** in multi-channel marketing campaigns, providing expert guidance to ensure effective communication across various media platforms.

Technical Proficiency and Compliance

- **Expertly utilize design software** such as Adobe Creative Suite, Figma, and content management systems to create high-quality digital content and assets.
- **Ensure compliance with accessibility standards** by preparing files for AODA compliance and using tools to test and validate the accessibility of digital content.
- **Develop responsive web designs** that are optimized for mobile and desktop experiences, ensuring seamless interaction across devices.
- **Manage digital asset archives** by ensuring that all graphic files are properly organized, updated, and archived for future use.
- **Stay informed on WCAG and best practices**, ensuring all digital outputs are accessible and inclusive for all users.

**All employees of the University are expected to follow University and departmental health and safety policy, procedures and work practices at all times. Employees are also responsible for the completion of all health and safety training, as assigned. Employees with staff supervision and/or management responsibilities will ensure that assigned staff abide by the above, and actively identify, assess and correct health and safety hazards, as required.*

Required Qualifications

Education

- A Bachelor's degree and/or diploma in graphic design or a closely related field

Experience

- **5+ years of professional design experience**, with a proven track record of success in the field.

- **Demonstrated knowledge with current trends in UX/UI design principles.**
- **Portfolio showcasing creativity and experience**, demonstrating a range of digital design skills and projects.
- **Experience in videography** and related areas, including conceptualizing and storyboarding engaging digital/video content.
- **Extensive experience in web, interactive, digital advertising**, and digital communications design and technology.
- **Comprehension of basic HTML/CSS and standard UX web practices.**
- **Experience creating emails and working within distribution platforms**, ensuring effective digital communication strategies.
- **Responsive web design and mobile web development experience**, creating optimized designs for various devices.
- **Digital application development experience**, ensuring functional and accessible digital solutions.
- **Strong familiarity with accessibility requirements**, particularly regarding the **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)**.

Knowledge/Skills/Abilities

- **Proficiency in design software**, including Adobe Creative Suite, Premiere Pro, After Effects, Figma, and content management systems/templates (CMS).
- **Solid knowledge of assistive technologies** and accessibility testing tools, ensuring compliance with accessibility standards.
- **Passion for web and digital marketing**, always striving to deliver a best-in-class digital experience.
- **Understanding of WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines)** and best practices, ensuring that digital content is accessible for all users.
- **Ability to prepare content/files for AODA compliance**, ensuring accessibility for users with disabilities.
- **Organizational and technical skills**, demonstrating the ability to manage multiple design projects and produce high-quality digital assets efficiently.
- **Expertise in digital design systems**, brand identity, art direction, and direct marketing campaigns.
- **Knowledge of project management methodologies**, enabling the streamlining of design processes and enhanced team efficiency.

Nature and Scope

Contacts: The incumbent will have the ability to effectively communicate with colleagues, clients, and vendors

Level of Responsibility: The incumbent will possess a strong understanding of design, typography, layout, colour theory in print and digital environments, proof reading, in a client service-oriented, inhouse funded design and production environment. The position demonstrates an understanding of needs of the design team.

Decision-Making Authority: Ability to make problem-solving decisions related to design creation and production, personal interactions and collaboration, work flow, consultation

Physical and Sensory Demands: Minimal demands typical of a position operating within an office environment

Working Environment: Minimal exposure to disagreeable conditions typical of a position exposed to stress and pressure associated with a fast-paced environment and changing priorities. Given the nature of the work, hours outside of the normal working hours are expected

Flexibility to adapt to unexpected and time sensitive demands.

What We Bring

As part of our team, you'll benefit from:

• Bold Ambition: We're committed to driving transformation in the PSE (Post-Secondary Education) industry.

• Dedicated Leadership: Our leadership team is focused on your growth and success.

• Excellence: We bring our best every day.