

# INTERNETWIS

**student  
assessment  
scheme  
2026**



**D&AD**

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

Dear Students and Tutors

**This year marks an exciting new chapter for the Student Assessment Scheme as we embark on a landmark project partnership with D&AD. For the first time, students will have the opportunity to have their work assessed not only by the ISTD team – with the potential to gain membership to the Society – but there will be the option to respond to the fifth brief and submit to D&AD via their project requirements and if successful, offering the chance to earn an industry-recognised accolade and also gain ISTD membership.**

The ISTD Student Assessment Scheme, established in 1975, is widely regarded as a model of academic rigour and professionalism. It's important to note that our assessment is **not a competition** – it is an opportunity to gain membership to a professional Society.

Our aim through the Student Assessments is to provide students with the opportunity to explore and develop typography as an integral part of the design process, placing typographic thinking at the heart of design education.

The **Tutor and Student Guide** offers further insight into what we expect from a submission and how it will be assessed. A core principle of the process is that each project – as in professional practice – should deliver an objective typographic solution that communicates strategically to a defined audience. Visual excellence alone is not enough if it does not address the central challenge of the brief. Our assessment recognises achievement across every aspect of the submission – from the design process itself through to the final outcome.

**In addition to accepting digital submissions online, students are also welcome to submit physical final outcomes if they wish. We hope this hybrid approach encourages accessibility and participation for all students.\***

Registration for the 2026 Assessment opens in February 2026.  
Regional submission deadline dates will also be confirmed at that time.  
**Please visit <https://assessment.istd.org.uk> for further details.**

We would like to thank all the students and tutors who contribute to the Assessment each year – the standard of work is consistently outstanding, and we applaud your commitment to both the Society and the wider design profession.

As always, the success of this year's projects, the coordination of our assessments, and everything else that makes ISTD possible is achieved through the goodwill and voluntary efforts of our Education Team, the ISTD Board, and members around the world. We extend our sincere thanks to all for your valuable contributions.



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\*Middle East and South African regions can only accept digital submissions due to logistical considerations.  
All enquiries regarding the assessment scheme should be sent to [education@istd.org.uk](mailto:education@istd.org.uk)

## EDUCATION TEAM

The Society's education activities are generated and co-ordinated by the ISTD Education Team. Originally a group of design academics with a geographic coverage of the British Isles, it has expanded to represent our international activities and members in professional practice.

The Student Assessment briefs are the result of months of correspondence, involving all members of the team, the wider ISTD membership network and others who share our common interest and commitment to typographic education.

**Jill Spratt** Ulster University, Northern Ireland HEAD OF EDUCATION/MAIN CO-ORDINATOR

**Becky Chilcott** chil3, Fremantle, Australia AUSTRALASIA CO-ORDINATOR

**Jillian Coorey** Kent State University, Ohio, USA NORTH AMERICA CO-ORDINATOR

**Brenda Dermody** Technological University Dublin, Ireland IRELAND CO-ORDINATOR

**John Paul Dowling** National College of Art & Design, Dublin, Ireland

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**Hilary Kenna** Dun Laoghaire Institute Of Art Design & Technology, Dublin, Ireland

**John Kortbaoui** Notre Dame University, Louaize, Lebanon MIDDLE EAST CO-ORDINATOR

**Belinda Magee** University of Greenwich, England

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**Andy Neal** Falmouth University, England

**Annette O'Sullivan** Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand

**Michael C Place** Studio.Build, Leeds, England

**Tony Pritchard** Designer, Writer and Educator, England

**David Quay** The Foundry Types, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

**Louise Reddy** Technological University Dublin, Ireland IRELAND CO-ORDINATOR

**Jack Renwick** Jack Renwick Studio, London, England

**Caroline Roberts** Pentagram, London, England

**Gabriel Solomons** Beneficial Shock! Ltd, Wiltshire, England

**Barrie Tullett** University of Lincoln, England

**Tiffany Turkington-Palmer** Flow Communications, Johannesburg SOUTH AFRICA CO-ORDINATOR

**Tina Carter** Day 1 Communications, West Sussex, England

**David Wrenne** Cardiff School of Art & Design, Wales DEPUTY HEAD OF EDUCATION/MAIN CO-ORDINATOR

# TUTOR AND STUDENT GUIDE

## INTRODUCTION

The ISTD Student Assessment Scheme is reviewed annually to ensure that it reflects current best practice in both design education and industry. This guide for tutors and students offers context to our assessment criteria.

## STRATEGY

We use the term **strategy** rather than **rationale** to emphasise that design demands strategic, objective thinking that considers how we communicate with and influence our audience. The strategy must clearly articulate how the solution/concept has responded to the selected brief and how it is suitable for its intended audience.

## RESEARCH

The design concept should be informed by thorough and rigorous research. This research should identify and document a range of possible directions that explore information and key data on the subject. The material gathered should also offer insight into the preferences, behavioural patterns and usage of the intended audience.

The use of mind-maps/concept maps/brainstorming is the most frequent precursor to research. While not requiring students to adopt this approach, when carried out thoroughly, it can offer useful research directions. When submitting research we encourage students to consider presenting the logical progression of their project from interrogation of the brief, strategic planning that focuses your research, consolidation of strategy, initial concepts and selection of one solution for development. We trust that this provides a useful focus for developing efficiency in research planning.

## TARGET AUDIENCE

Students are required to define a context and identify a target audience for their project. This should be informed by the research findings and described in the strategy. There needs to be a clear and logical link between the research findings, the communication objectives and the proposed design outcomes.

## CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT, DESIGN & REALISATION

Separating these elements from research intends to focus on developing the form, extent and scale of the eventual design outcome(s). It demands consideration of how to interpret the emotional, intellectual and material aspects of the chosen concept into an appropriate, feasible form that will satisfy the demands of the brief and express the student's considered concept. We require focused and rigorous testing of possible formats, materials and production processes. This experimentation should be informed by the research into conventional and unconventional best practice. Avoid using subjective opinion or unsubstantiated statements such as 'I really like this' or 'I think my project is really good'. Focus on showing how your project outcomes meet the communication aims and objectives established in your design strategy. Development work should be presented in an incremental manner which clearly identifies the progress of the design process. Realisation encompasses the development and testing of the design through to the production of the final prototype.

## TYPOGRAPHIC SKILLS

This addresses the crafting of type and is probably the area that best distinguishes our remit from other areas of graphic design practice. As designers we use both words and images to communicate, therefore our project briefs do not demand the exclusive use of type. However, our focus on typography requires a student to adopt an essentially typographic approach. Type can be used expressively, but it also contains information that must be appropriately interpreted and understood by the viewer. This demands the use of typographic skills to ensure accuracy, legibility and readability.

The capacity of standard software to support typographic control enables student designers to generate sophisticated and nuanced typography. Unfortunately, we see many instances of the use of default settings for leading, line feed, point size, and gutters (auto-leading and a 4.233mm gutter are not a designer's conscious choices). We trust that this prompt will ensure that due time and effort are spent in expressing the typographic craft skills that membership of the Society demands.

## SPECIFICATIONS

The requirement to produce a set of specifications is intended to promote a depth of engagement with the craft of typography and to support an understanding of the technical aspects of production. The specifications should demonstrate how and why design decisions have influenced the form of the project outcome and how this impacts on the experience of the user or audience, for instance, we use a margin at a fore-edge because the reader's thumb could otherwise cover the type while holding the page. Similarly, the layout of any given space should reflect your good understanding of how the reader is intended to navigate it both efficiently and, hopefully, enjoyably.

There are no absolutes in specifying, but one constant is that the submitted prototype must be specified to broad norms of professional/commercial production – not how the dummy was produced. Printed outcomes still require appropriate specification of substrates/stock, binding and print format(s).

## PRESENTATION

'You never get a second chance to make a first impression' is worth mentioning as it pertains to our assessment. We are assessing whether a student should be considered for membership of ISTD. The sequence of opening the submission and how easy it is to identify each element gives us a sense of the student's approach – even before we have started to inspect the work. Similarly, everything that is submitted reflects your capability and attitude – not just the final prototype/dummy.

# ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

## STRATEGY (10%)

- Each submission must be accompanied by a strategy of 250–500 words, succinctly articulating the thought process underpinning your design proposals and how it employs typographic design to communicate with and influence the specified target market/audience. It should express what underpins your concept and how it has directed your research – not just a description of the various elements or a ‘log’ of what you did.
- While the Strategy will be read by assessors, write it to be understood and deemed feasible for adoption by a client.

## RESEARCH (10%)

- All submissions must be supported by relevant primary and secondary research which contextualises and reinforces the proposed design concept. We expect to see research into formats, typography, colour and materials relative to your topic and your audience.
- Your research work should show that a range of ideas have been explored before developing your selected concept. Ensure that you present this material in a clear and consecutive order that allows us to follow your thought and design process.
- You must cite fully your bibliographic/web sources and, where relevant, credit images. These do not need to be included in your design unless appropriate for publishing.

## CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT, DESIGN AND REALISATION (40%)

- Central to the realisation of your design concept must be the use of typography. The inclusion of images/illustrative content should be carefully considered as your solution must be essentially typographic. Images may be used but they should be there to support the typography, not take the place of it.
- Your design development should show that a range of approaches have been explored before choosing and developing your selected concept. Ensure that you present this material in an order that allows us to follow your thought/design process – including why you chose the particular format/s for your submission.
- Design development on screen must be described through hard-copy evidence.
- You must cite fully your bibliographic/web sources and, where relevant, credit images.

## TYPOGRAPHIC SKILLS (20%)

- The hierarchy of information in both print and screen formats must be clearly expressed through the inclusion and formatting of at least 500 words of text into your final submission.
- It is essential that you demonstrate rigorous attention to typographic detail across all elements of your submission. Ensure that you check: spelling and hyphenation; punctuation; capitalisation; quote marks; widows/orphans; hyphens/dashes; rags; justification/rivers – show your craft skills.
- Legibility, whether in print or on screen, must be considered – and resolved.
- In screen-based submissions, consideration should be given, where relevant, to the relationship between sound and movement.

## SPECIFICATIONS (10%)

- Appropriate typographic and professional production specifications for your media must be included – not those used to generate your prototype/dummy/mock-up.
- Using your layouts, present fully annotated typographic specifications and grid(s) where appropriate. We require sufficient examples to show your different typographic treatments – not necessarily all of the pages/screens in the document or outcome.
- Specification of paper stock and other materials used in print production should reflect materials used industrially – not those used to create the final prototype/dummy.
- Refer to the Specifications Guides pages.

## PRESENTATION (10%)

- Your presentation should be easy for assessors to navigate through with everything clearly labelled.
- Ensure that screen-based submissions have been tested for use. Occasionally we cannot open files – these proposals sadly fail.
- All submissions must include PDF(s) of images that reflect:
  - concept origination
  - design development
  - form and usage
  - layout/grid system
  - media/material choices
  - typographic choice
  - typographic detailing
  - presentation images of the outcomes
- Finally, check that all of the requirements of your chosen brief are included and clearly identified.

# REGISTRATION, FEES AND SUBMISSION

## ENTRY

Full-time under- and post-graduate students at universities and colleges – internationally – are eligible. As membership of the Society is awarded to successful entrants, only the work of individual students can be assessed.

**ISTD does not accept entries that are the collaborative work of two or more students.**

## SUBMISSION LANGUAGE

As an international society we aim to support the use of language that is most appropriate for a project outcome. We welcome submissions that present dual or multilingual solutions, but we do require that the Strategy and Submission document is submitted in English so the efficacy and rationale can be equitably reviewed. If you require any further information please contact the ISTD Head of Education.

## ONLINE REGISTRATION

Details of how to register and pay are available on our website. Please make sure you read the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

Registration for all assessments must be carried out by named tutors – not by students – using our online website system. This allows online payment of fees and can issue invoices where required.

## ASSESSMENT WEBSITE

<https://assessment.istd.org.uk>

## FEES

The Registration Fee is **£35 per student** (Institutional Member **£28**). Projects that are submitted for assessment and have not been registered and/or have not paid the Registration Fee will not be assessed.

Upon Registration, further information, including arrangements for submission, will be sent via email.

**\*Please check back regularly on our website for further details confirming the dates of our Submission Deadlines via: <https://assessment.istd.org.uk>**

## DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSIONS

The deadline for submission of work to each of our Assessments will be confirmed on the Registration Deadline for that assessment but will generally be around 3–5 weeks later. Please contact the regional coordinator(s) for further information.

## \*NEW\* SUBMISSION FORMAT OPTION

All submission requirements should be uploaded to our online assessment platform. Each student will be emailed a personal upload link once they have been registered and their fee paid. You may also submit physical final outcomes to some of our regional venues to support your digital assessment, but this is optional and not a mandatory requirement. Further details will be published online with the Submission Guidelines in due course.

## ASSESSMENT

Each submission is assessed by a two-person team, usually comprised of a member from education and one from industry. All material is examined, taking around 30–40 minutes. The outcome is ratified by a team of moderators who maintain parity across the assessment teams. If necessary, the entry is passed on to a second stage panel for further appraisal. All entries gaining Merits and Commendations are further assessed for ratification. Results and reports will normally be published within a month of each of the regional Assessment events. Tutors and students will be notified by email.

## AWARDS

All successful students and their tutors, will be invited to a Student Awards ceremony. Nominated tutors with successful students also receive Tutor Certificates. Communication regarding event information will go out following the completion of the regional assessments.

## IMPORTANT NOTE

ISTD makes digital records of all successful student submissions and reserves the right to use this material as it deems appropriate.

ISTD will not accept claims for payment in respect of using any such recorded material.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Do you accept entries from anywhere?**

Yes. As long as they meet the ISTD entry criteria. Work could be sent to our Main Assessment in UK or included in one of our other international assessments in Ireland, Middle East, South Africa, Australasia or North America.

### **Registration. I am a student who wants to register. Can I do this myself?**

No. All registration and payment must be done by tutors/professors.

### **I am a Masters/postgraduate student and would like to submit work for Assessment? Is this possible?**

Yes. As long as you are registered on a recognised course/programme you can be registered by your tutor/professor. While the vast majority of students who submit work are undergraduates we recognise that postgraduate students – for many reasons – should be given the same opportunities.

### **I submitted work last year and was not successful. Can I submit again this year?**

As long as you are enrolled on a recognised course/programme you can be registered by your tutor/professor. Some students submit in their penultimate year of study and have another attempt in the Final Year.

### **I am working on one of last year's project briefs that I found interesting. Can I submit it for assessment?**

No. We only assess the project briefs for the current year's assessment.

### **I have registered a number of students but now find that I have one or two more who wish to register. Is this possible?**

Yes. We prefer to have all students registered at the same time but can, at our discretion, accommodate additions, as long as they are made before the Registration Deadline.

### **I have produced a physical outcome in response to the brief – do I need to physically send this for assessment?**

No. It is not a mandatory requirement to send us your physical outcomes. All students must digitally submit their projects as per the submission requirements. It is optional if you wish to send your physical outcomes for assessment in addition to your digital files.

### **Payment of Registration Fees. I am cautious of making payments by internet. Is your site secure?**

Yes. The payment system is handled directly through a secure payment gateway. ISTD does not have access to any of your financial information.

### **Please clarify how to pay the Registration Fee?**

Two methods to pay are as follows, both require credit or debit cards:

- Pay for each student using their card details at the time of registration. They could enter their own details to maintain individual security.
- Collect money from students and make a single, combined payment on their behalf using your card. Some institutions may wish to pay for their students by credit/debit card or invoice – see below for further advice.

### **I want to register a student whose fee will be paid by my institution. I need an invoice.**

Payment by invoice is only available on registration of five or more students – the invoice payment option becomes available on registration of the fifth student. On selecting this option – the confirmation/registration notification that you receive by email serves as the invoice. Please make sure that you send a copy of this to your finance department, to ensure that the fees are paid by your institution before the assessment date.

### **I have registered and paid the fee for one of my students who now wants to withdraw. Can they be reimbursed?**

We do not reimburse registration fees. However, we are able to change the registration to that of another student, using the existing fee.

### **We are a non-UK institution and wish to pay in our local currency.**

All payments must be made in GBP (pounds sterling). If you are paying an invoice via bank transfer it is important that you instruct your bank accordingly – and that all currency exchange costs and all bank charges are paid by yourselves. ISTD must receive the full amount of the registration fees in GBP into the ISTD bank account.

### **Got a question?**

If you have a question that has not yet been answered above, please contact [education@istd.org.uk](mailto:education@istd.org.uk)

# INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERSHIP

The ISTD Student Assessment Scheme began in 1975. The Society had been considering requests to accredit courses but the Assessment Scheme was an option that offered benefits to both tutors, students and, ultimately, to industry.

Institutional Membership allows us to improve ongoing communication between ISTD and tutors and, importantly, maximise the benefits to typographic education through use of our considerable archive of student typographic design. Our hope is that, as this area develops, we may develop the benefits.

Tutors should be aware that Academic membership of the Society (MISTD) is also possible for those working in typographic education who would not qualify by means of a professional portfolio of work.

**For further information please visit:**  
<https://www.istd.org.uk/apply>

**INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERSHIP – £245\***  
offers the following:

## REGISTRATION FEES

Member institutions receive a 20% discount on student Registration Fees for the Student Assessment.

## PUBLICATIONS

Member institutions receive copies of ISTD related publications, such as our journal *Typographic* and all other occasional publications during each year of membership. Institutional members are also entitled to discounted back-issues of publications bought online.

## MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATE

Each member institution receives an annual Institutional Membership Certificate that may be displayed publicly.

## ISTD LOGO

The ISTD logo may be used by member institutions for marketing purposes (with conditions for use).

## INVITATIONS

Invitations and, where applicable, discounts to all ISTD events, including exhibition openings, talks, lectures and workshops.

## STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Staff from member institutions qualify for the opportunity to participate in one of our Student Assessments and be mentored by one of the ISTD Education Team.

## CONSULTATION

Staff from member institutions have preferential access to the Education Team for consultation on the Student Assessment Scheme and other ISTD Education activities.

## INSTITUTIONAL PRESENTATIONS

Presentations on the work of ISTD and the Annual Student Assessment, by the Head of Education or members of the Education Team, can be arranged with member institutions.

**Further information please visit:**

<https://www.istd.org.uk/institutional-membership>

\*Annual one off payment.

## 1

## TRADE MATTERS

Traditional craft industries, now vanished or endangered, used to play a vital role in cementing communities. Why might they not do so again?

**Michael Prodger**

In response to a world of mass consumption and global trade, there is a renewed interest in locally rooted production, the circular economy and “slow” practices. This growing movement seeks to combat poor consumer habits that negatively impact on the world and our environment. Perhaps Prodger's question has more relevance now more than ever and moves beyond nostalgic tendencies.

In his recent publication, *Craftland*, James Fox explores endangered crafts and trades that once played critical roles in communities across Britain. This is not an isolated occurrence, trades and crafts face similar challenges on a global stage. Once the cornerstone of the village around the world, the forge was a place for news and updates in the community as the blacksmith repaired tools, often having his own distinctive marks that made the work unique. The cobbler repaired shoes, the thatcher mended the roof, the drystone wall was assembled. The materials and practices of many trades could be seen as environmentally sound, align with slow practices and the circular economy and were distinctive of the locality, weavers used local practices, sourced local materials and often adopted styles and patterns linked to their local region or village. Choose a trade that you feel deserves attention of the wider world, it may be a trade that is local to your own town or region. Make a case for the craft and attempt to show how/if/why it can play a vital role in society again?

### THE BRIEF

Conduct a rigorous investigation that facilitates an in-depth exploration in your chosen trade. From your analysis, establish the unique and interesting insights that you would like to bring to your chosen audience. Your research should explore the history, techniques and social role of a chosen trade. Explore causes of its decline and barriers to revival. Evaluate the trade's potential contributions to sustainable/local economies and community life today. How might the trade be sustained, adapted or reintroduced?

Experiment with opportunities leveraged from your research to develop an appropriate format (film, book, installation etc...) and arrive at a creative design solution that effectively communicates your chosen message to your intended audience.

### STRATEGY AND RESEARCH

You need to define a context, identify a target audience and build a strategy that rationally underpins the development of appropriate outcomes. We expect rigorous sketchbook research with evidence of your responses to the information that you uncover. We also expect to see a range of initial potential directions explored. Your sketchbook content should reflect the development of your strategic and interpretive thinking. It should be vibrant and organic – full of visual references; notations; sketches; exploration of materials and ideas.

### TARGET AUDIENCE/DELIVERABLES

Your project outcomes should be determined by their suitability and potential to influence your chosen target audience – as expressed in your strategy.

### SUBMISSION GUIDANCE/REQUIREMENTS

Your submission should include sufficient appropriate material to show that you have addressed the brief comprehensively and clearly expressed your design and typographic skills.

#### It must include:

- Strategy
- Research
- Design development
- Specifications/Grid(s)
- Final outcomes

Your **Strategy and Specifications should be submitted in a single document** that will be assessed not only for its design but will incorporate the required minimum 500 words that should reflect your ability to handle text matter and information hierarchy.

## 2

## WEATHER DEPENDENT

Everyone has a story about the weather. This may be the single thing each of us holds in common. And though the weather varies greatly from here to there, it is, ultimately, one weather that we share. Small talk everywhere has occasioned the popular distribution of the weather. Some say talking about the weather is talking about oneself. And with each passing day, the weather increasingly becomes ours, if not us.

**Roni Horn, Weather Reports You**

Over some years artist Roni Horn has been working with a small team in the south west of Iceland gathering personal testimonies from people talking about the weather. These 'weather reports' include descriptions, reflections, memories and stories based on experiences of the weather that range from the matter-of-fact to the marvellous. The different nuances and usages of language suggest that the weather is not just a matter of meteorological conditions but is, in Horn's words, 'a metaphor for the physical, metaphysical, political, social and moral energy of a person and a place.'

#### THE BRIEF

Weather surrounds us. From the day-to-day conditions of the atmosphere to more extreme weather events, such as heat waves, droughts, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, and winter storms. Categorised by their intensity and duration, these weather events can have significant environmental and societal impacts. Using weather as your starting point, you are asked to explore the theme, from the mundane to the extreme.

You are invited to investigate and interpret or subvert your subject matter with rigour and creativity. You might tell the story of the everyday through weather reports, or be inspired by mysterious happenings such as mast years, irregular patterns of the El Niño and La Niña, or recent occurrences such as polar bears taking over an abandoned weather station in the Russian Arctic. Whichever route you choose, follow your research and take us with you on this journey. Produce a typographic tour-de-force that presents a compelling narrative. Consider format and context, audience and messaging in your thinking, and consider how typography can express your content.

#### STRATEGY AND RESEARCH

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## 3

## POWER

Power has to be visible. It has to look like power.

**Mary Beard**

Power, in all its forms, moves through every part of our lives, from political systems and social hierarchies to natural forces, emotional states, and digital networks. Power is not only about control. It can be wind or water, electricity or code, protest or silence. It may live in the tapestry of language, in mobilisation, in stillness, or in the charge of emotion. Power can take the shape of tension, flow, imbalance, disruption, or force – often felt before it is fully understood.

**THE BRIEF**

Investigate the complexity of power through typographic design. Whether you interpret power as domination or resistance, movement or stasis, visibility or invisibility, it always relies on how it is perceived and experienced.

Your task is to conceptualise, design, and produce a typographic response that expresses a personal, cultural, political, or abstract interpretation of power. Typography must be central – not just as a tool for communication, but as a means to embody, question, or reveal power in form.

Consider how typography can express, conceal, or support power. Think about how type might convey energy, silence, imbalance, momentum, or resistance.

Your goal is to create a design outcome that is both critically and creatively engaging, exploring the systems, structures, or sensations through which power operates – in whatever way you choose to define it.

**STRATEGY AND RESEARCH**

You need to define a context, identify a target audience and build a strategy that rationally underpins the development of appropriate outcomes. We expect rigorous sketchbook research with evidence of your responses to the information that you uncover. We also expect to see a range of initial potential directions explored. Your sketchbook content should reflect the development of your strategic and interpretive thinking. It should be vibrant and organic – full of visual references; notations; sketches; exploration of materials and ideas.

**TARGET AUDIENCE/DELIVERABLES**

Your project outcomes should be determined by their suitability and potential to influence your chosen target audience – as expressed in your strategy.

**SUBMISSION GUIDANCE/REQUIREMENTS**

Your submission should include sufficient appropriate material to show that you have addressed the brief comprehensively and clearly expressed your design and typographic skills.

**It must include:**

- Strategy
- Research
- Design development
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Your **Strategy and Specifications should be submitted in a single document** that will be assessed not only for its design but will incorporate the required minimum 500 words that should reflect your ability to handle text matter and information hierarchy.

## 4

## WHAT IF WOMEN RULED THE WORLD

Would war be a thing of the past? Would the Earth be protected rather than exploited?

**Judy Chicago**

Some years ago, a Guardian Article asked 19 women the question 'What if Women ruled the World', and each set out their thoughts in a short paragraph:

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2017/jul/05/what-if-women-ruled-the-world>

Imagine a society structured around the matriarchy, not the patriarchy. This is not simply a gendered reversal of power but a provocation to rethink systems of authority, language, and communication. How might our visual, political, and social landscapes change if the values historically coded as feminine, were at the centre of global culture? Is it true that women are innately caring and collegiate and men thrusting and ambitious? Is women's leadership a guarantee of kindness and compassion? Would the world invert to write the wrongs of history? How can we imagine, articulate, and communicate this new world, whatever it might be?

#### BRIEF

Craft a typographic response that might reimagine manifestos, constitutions, signage, propaganda, or data visualisations that rewrite how leadership and authority are expressed. Alternatively, you might explore the language of resistance, activism, and transformation through feminist history, myth, and protest.

Your submission should engage critically and creatively with both feminist ideas and typographic expression, asking not only what the message is but how it speaks.

#### Possible approaches could include:

- A reimagined charter or declaration for a female-led world.
- A visual manifesto or publication exploring new social hierarchies or communication systems.
- A screen-based or performative outcome that examines language, and representation.
- A typographic installation or campaign that makes feminist futures visible in public space...

Whatever your approach, your work should be typographically led, conceptually rigorous, and grounded in strong research.

#### STRATEGY AND RESEARCH

You need to define a context, identify a target audience and build a strategy that rationally underpins the development of appropriate outcomes. We expect rigorous sketchbook research with evidence of your responses to the information that you uncover. We also expect to see a range of initial potential directions explored. Your sketchbook content should reflect the development of your strategic and interpretive thinking. It should be vibrant and organic – full of visual references; notations; sketches; exploration of materials and ideas.

#### TARGET AUDIENCE/DELIVERABLES

Your project outcomes should be determined by their suitability and potential to influence your chosen target audience – as expressed in your strategy.

#### SUBMISSION GUIDANCE/REQUIREMENTS

Your submission should include sufficient appropriate material to show that you have addressed the brief comprehensively and clearly expressed your design and typographic skills.

#### It must include:

- Strategy
- Research
- Design development
- Specifications/Grid(s)
- Final outcomes

Your **Strategy and Specifications should be submitted in a single document** that will be assessed not only for its design but will incorporate the required minimum 500 words that should reflect your ability to handle text matter and information hierarchy.

## 5

## SHAPE HOW THE WORLD READS

## THE BACKSTORY

The way we read is forever changing, but our need to connect through words never will. Penguin has spent nearly a century ensuring that great writing belongs to everyone — turning literature into a democratic art form. Since 1935, its bold iconic covers have made extraordinary ideas feel accessible to all. Its catalogue features remarkable writers like Arundhati Roy, Dan Brown, George Orwell, Greta Thunberg, Malorie Blackman, Philip Pullman, Stormzy, Yuval Noah Harari, Zadie Smith and thousands more.

Monotype, founded in 1999, builds on a typographic legacy that dates back to 1887. From the mechanical age of typesetting to the dawn of AI-assisted design, Monotype has continually redefined how creativity, technology, and human expression come together in type — shaping how the world reads, feels, and connects. In 2025, Monotype's Fonts, Feels, & Reels global study found that 69% of Gen Z and 72% of Millennials say the right font helps their words say exactly what they mean, and 78% of all respondents report that well-selected fonts boost engagement. Fonts are not background details — they are how stories are felt and understood in a world where reading is constantly evolving. Together, Penguin and Monotype want to celebrate the emotional power of typography — and its role in helping people connect with words in new ways as how, where, and why we read continues to change.

## WHAT'S THE CHALLENGE?

Create a type-led idea that explores diverse reading habits and the changing nature of reading — and how typography can help us experience stories, ideas, and information in new, meaningful ways. Think about how people read today: on screens and signs, in captions and chats, through visuals, and motion. Reading is no longer confined to traditional print — it's everywhere, shapeshifting across platforms, languages, and moments of attention. Your response should explore how typography can reinvent the act of reading for a modern world. How can type bridge the gap between how we consume words and how we feel them? Whatever you create, it's about making something that your audience sees themselves in — that your work makes them connect more deeply with words, stories, and ideas.

## WHO ARE WE TALKING TO?

Your work should speak to today's readers — however they define themselves. They might scroll, play, or watch; they might read a headline, a lyric, a protest sign, or a post. They could be lifelong book lovers or people rediscovering reading through new formats and technologies.

## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

## A sense of community

How has reading changed in communities — and how might type evolve to meet that change? How does typography influence the way your community communicates, belongs, or resists? Maybe it's a sense of nostalgia, a recognisable typographic symbol or a new way of expressing a design that transforms the meaning.

## Inclusivity and expressions

How can type help more people feel included in reading; across languages, abilities, and cultures? How can you make writing more accessible, more resonant or more impactful for your chosen audience?

## Building experiences

What happens when reading becomes visual, interactive, or multisensory? What happens when typography becomes an experience — something you can feel, move through, or interact with? Can your design create a more tactile experience for those that interact with it, or maybe it's about digital worlds.

## Emerging tech

What does storytelling look like in an age of short form, AI, and gaming? Could emerging tools (like motion, variable type, or AI) open new creative possibilities for storytelling through type?

## Things to avoid

This isn't about book covers. It's about reimagining what reading looks like, sounds like, and feels like — in motion, in public spaces, online, or anywhere stories live.

And remember...The most powerful ideas will use typography to reimagine what it means to read and connect.

## THE IMPORTANT STUFF

The only requirement is that this is a typography led response. You do not need to create a custom typeface for this, but if you want to, you can.

There's no fixed format. Your idea could be:

- A campaign that reimagines how people read and engage with stories today.
- A typeface designed for a new kind of reading experience.
- A digital or physical platform that makes reading feel more emotional or inclusive.
- A motion or interactive piece that turns reading into an experience of its own.
- A reinvention of a traditional type-led object or format.

## Monotype revision series (inspiration):

[monotype.com/type-trends](https://monotype.com/type-trends)

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



Monotype.



Brief set by  
Monotype and Penguin  
Random House

In Collaboration with  
Natalie Prout

## 5

## SHAPE HOW THE WORLD READS

Students this year have the unique opportunity to submit their response to this brief to both the ISTD Student Assessment Scheme and the D&AD New Blood awards.

**ISTD ASSESSMENT**

Students are registered by their tutor via [assessment.istd.org.uk](https://assessment.istd.org.uk) and submit their project by the deadline for their region and responding to all submission requirements. If successful, the student will be awarded membership to the society.

**D&AD NEW BLOOD**

Students submit by the 17 March 2026. Winning students will be awarded a Pencil and membership to ISTD. Access the brief and submit via [dandad.org/awards/new-blood-awards](https://dandad.org/awards/new-blood-awards).

**SUBMIT TO BOTH ISTD & D&AD**

Why not increase your chances of success by submitting your project to both schemes!

**STRATEGY AND RESEARCH**

You need to define a context, identify a target audience and build a strategy that rationally underpins the development of appropriate outcomes. We expect rigorous sketchbook research with evidence of your responses to the information that you uncover. We also expect to see a range of initial potential directions explored. Your sketchbook content should reflect the development of your strategic and interpretive thinking. It should be vibrant and organic – full of visual references; notations; sketches; exploration of materials and ideas.

**TARGET AUDIENCE/DELIVERABLES**

Your project outcomes should be determined by their suitability and potential to influence your chosen target audience – as expressed in your strategy.

**SUBMISSION GUIDANCE/REQUIREMENTS**

Your submission should include sufficient appropriate material to show that you have addressed the brief comprehensively and clearly expressed your design and typographic skills.

**It must include:**

- Strategy
- Research
- Design development
- Specifications/Grid(s)
- Final outcomes

Your **Strategy and Specifications should be submitted in a single document** that will be assessed not only for its design but will incorporate the required minimum 500 words that should reflect your ability to handle text matter and information hierarchy.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



**Monotype.**



Brief set by  
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# TYPE AND LAYOUT SPECIFICATIONS GUIDE

You must demonstrate your control of all the typographic elements in your layouts by detailing their use through annotated specifications. The diagrams below and on the following page give guidelines for possible methods of annotation.

**Grids** should detail all aspects – horizontal and vertical grid spacing/margins/gutters. The sample below shows the use of the baseline grid. Column/text block measures should be included.

**It is only necessary to clearly evidence the extent of your system – not to detail every page/screen of your submission.** You should include the specifications in a single document that combines Strategy and Specifications.

**Typo/graphic Specifications** should detail your use of type/glyphs and other graphic elements. The main focus is your typographic treatment of texts – particularly the hierarchy of information. Consider, for instance, your detailing for headlines; sub-heads; body text; cross-heads; standfirsts; call-outs; captions; headers; footers; folios; bullets; rules; fleurons and any other typographic devices that may be used. In all instances give the size, body/leading, weight and colour.

Media choice will determine the appropriate information for your specifications. The list above relates to print-based matter. Specifications for screen-based/broadcast type should include the appropriate information and terminology for those media. **Type and lettering used as illustrative matter need not be specified.**

**Running Headline**  
6 pt Foundry Sans Normal colour: 100% black

**Gutter**  
4mm

**Caption**  
8/10 pt Foundry Sans Italic (2pt leading/10pt body) colour: 100% black

**Head margin**  
15mm

**Folio**  
6 pt Foundry Sans Demi colour: 50% black

**Rule**  
4pt x 3 column colour: 50% black

**Heading 1**  
36 pt Times Italic 3 column measure colour: 100% black

**Paragraph**  
3-line drop cap Foundry Sans Demi colour: 100% black

**Body Text**  
9/12pt Foundry Sans Normal (3pt leading/12pt body) Ranged Left 57mm measure 3mm paragraph indents colour: 100% black

**Heading 2**  
9/12pt Foundry Sans Demi (3pt leading/12pt body) colour: 100% black

22 International Society of Typographic Designers

*The devil is in the detail*

**O**mmy nostrud min ulla amet gocker ullam consent pratisim quat auguer sed ercil in hent vel et iriusci blath feuguerillan. Henis accum dolesse quamcor iriusto cor in volore eugjat ver augiam, vent autat ute velismo dolortionse doloborpero dit praessecte feu faccum quamcorperit. Inci tation veliquat, vel iniscil und iquipisi. Blaorting er iriusci duisci blan ut lore mincilit luptat nit ipis delessequat veliquatetum im zzriustis acipis nullandre commodignibh ea feum dolor sustismod.

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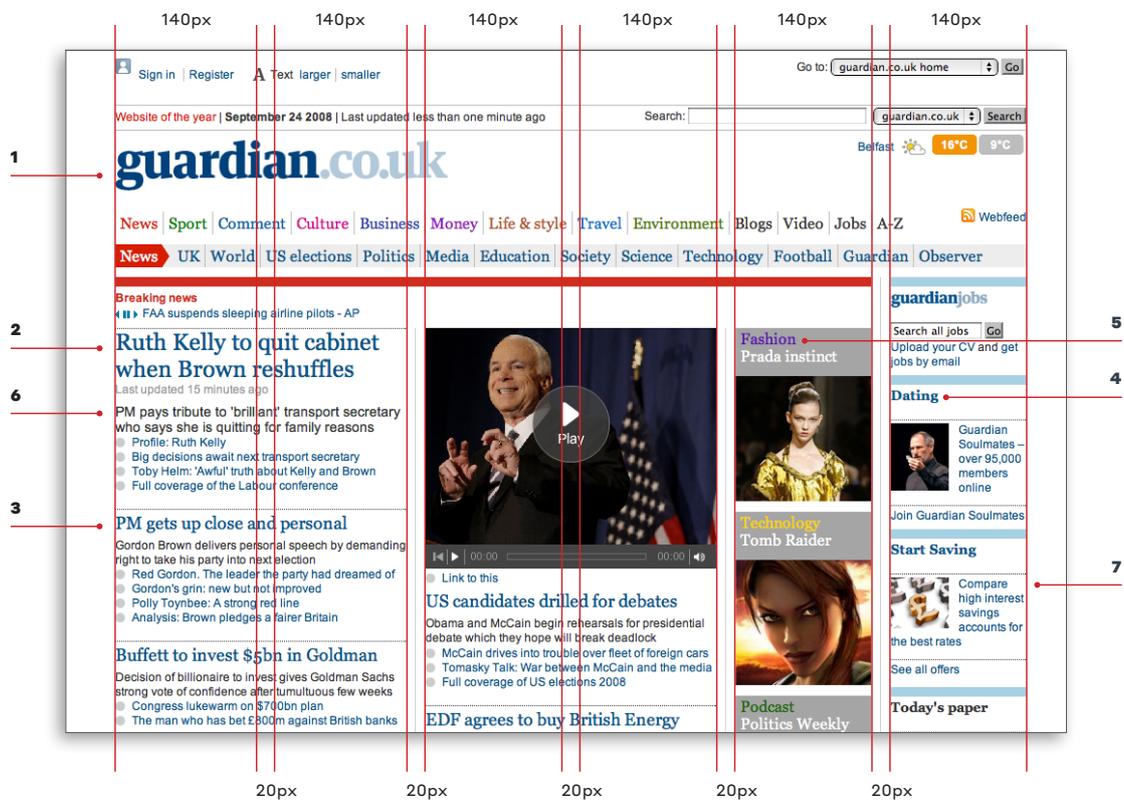
International Society of Typographic Designers

Dum, quat. Putpat lore tis alisl ip exeros et,

# TYPE AND LAYOUT SPECIFICATIONS GUIDE

## Screen-based Annotation

This illustration offers an alternative method of annotation to that on sheet #1 – in this case for specification of a screen-based submission. Either method is acceptable – clarity of information is the main criterion.



1  
 <img src='...'guardian\_logo.gif' />

2  
 <h1>  
 font-family: Georgia, serif;  
 font-size: 24px;  
 line height: 1.2em;  
 font-weight: normal;  
 colour: #005689;

3  
 <h2>  
 font-family: Georgia, serif;  
 font-size: 18px;  
 line height: 1.2em;  
 font-weight: normal;  
 colour: #005689;

4  
 <h3>  
 font-family: Georgia, serif;  
 font-size: 14px;  
 line height: 1.2em;  
 font-weight: bold;  
 colour: #005689;

5  
 <h3>  
 font-family: Georgia, serif;  
 font-size: 24px;  
 line height: 1.2em;  
 font-weight: normal;  
 colour: #005689;

6  
 <p>  
 font-family: Arial, sans-serif;  
 font-size: 14px;  
 line height: 1.2em;  
 font-weight: normal;  
 colour: #333;

7  
 <p>  
 font-family: Arial, sans-serif;  
 font-size: 12px;  
 line height: 1.3em;  
 font-weight: normal;  
 colour: #005689;

# STRATEGY AND SPECIFICATIONS DOCUMENT

Your **Strategy** and **Specifications** should be submitted as a single document that will be assessed not only for its design but will incorporate the required minimum 500 words that should reflect your ability to handle text matter and information hierarchy.

This is partly to reduce the need for screen-based pieces to meet that textual word count in the prototype but also to establish parity of typographic ability across media.

Careful consideration should be given to your layout, hierarchy and typographic detailing. This document should clearly articulate your project intentions and how you will use typography to express your communication. It will be the first artefact the assessors will review. You can view some student examples of combined Strategy and Specifications documents in our Behance portfolio:

<https://www.behance.net/gallery/113804717/Strategy-and-Specification-examples>



Strategy & Specifications 04

## Strategy

→

Between 1949 and 1961 more than 3.5 million East Germans had migrated to the West. On the 13th of August, 1961, construction of the Berlin Wall was begun. Its purpose was to stop the exodus from the communist regime in the East to the more prosperous West Germany. The few who were brave and fortunate enough to have escaped beyond the Wall have left us with extraordinary and inspiring stories.

Escaping the Berlin Wall is a response to the ISTD brief, to celebrate the theme of migration. The publication is ultimately inspired by those who were brave enough to defy the German Democratic Republic and to escape that regime for greater freedom and a higher quality of life in the West. The aim of the publication is to generate a deeper appreciation for the freedom that many all too easily take for granted. For the target audience, the general public, the publication seeks to highlight the devastating impact that follows from attempts to divide people by building walls and physical boundaries. It serves as a reminder that walls are not what the world needs.

The inspiration for Escaping the Berlin Wall comes from an interest I've had in the language and history of Germany from a young age, being the son of two history teachers. I originally wanted to explore the theme of migration through an assessment of the Great Irish Famine. On reflection, it seemed that the inspiring human stories of those who escaped beyond the Berlin Wall have a more contemporary resonance. With divisions like in many countries and ongoing plans to build new walls to keep people apart, the challenges remain daunting for many migrants who continue to risk their lives every day in a pursuit of a better life.

The publication is split into three sections. The main central section presents the stories of the escapes. This is preceded by an opening section to provide historical context, and is followed by a closing section on Germany post the fall of the Wall in 1989. The publication, with the compelling stories of human endeavour it presents, is designed to be accessible for all.

The stories of escape beyond the Wall have lent themselves to bold compositions consisting of book-like walls of type, with large spread pages and reveals reflecting the idea of division. The publication's design is mainly inspired by aspects of Stasi reports and other documents used to monitor the movements of individual people. A monospace typeface contrasts with a contemporary Swiss sans-serif to give the publication a modern perspective on the subject. The no-fill bold slant type emerged from the concept of freedom that impelled people to leave the East for the West.

Small graphic elements such as blood splatters and asterisks reinforce the Stasi documentary style. The small arrows were developed from the notion of an auzang (exit), from a sign showing people leaving the East and escaping to the West. These arrows are used consistently throughout to capture ideas of escape and the quest for freedom that is central to the publication. The arrows serve as a key line and a set of graphic devices to inform the reader of the content of the article.

Several contrasting facing pages can be found in the publication, achieved by the use of different paper stocks or red reversals. This offers a further reflection on the division which the Wall drove between East and West Berlin. The page dimensions are resonant of the Wall's insurmountable tall slates. Colours like IGR red and concrete grey provide the reader with a Cold War period setting. A professional finish and tactile feel are realised by binding the publication in grey book cloth, while the four metal rings give a further echo to the Stasi report style.

Escaping the Berlin Wall

## Typography

→

The publication consists of two typefaces, Helvetica Now (Text and Display) and Odissia. When researching the Berlin Wall, typography and publications within Germany and Europe at the time, I discovered that Helvetica was created in 1957, just four years prior to the Berlin Wall being built. Helvetica grew in popularity and by 1961 it was used widely within Switzerland as well as Germany.

I originally began the publication's design process using 1957's Helvetica but switched to it's 2019 facelift, Helvetica Now by Monotype, as it offered greater versatility, more weights and attention to the finest of details, while still keeping its Swiss style and spirit of Max Miedinger. That gave Helvetica Now the edge to be the front runner for the publication.

I knew that I wanted one International Swiss sans-serif with many weights, to have a lot of 'freedom' in the publication's type, but I needed a second typeface to accompany yet contrast Helvetica Now. After many explorations of different styles and fonts I chose the 2016 monospace typeface, Odissia, as my second.

Odissia's choice was inspired by the Stasi files of East Germany and its document file feeling to it. It's monospace design with each letter having a set amount of space reminds me the book-like slates of the Wall. Although it is a contrast to Helvetica Now, this highlights the division between the two Germanys - the liberal and modern West to the traditional Soviet East. Odissia gives the publication a personality that Helvetica Now couldn't and informs the reader of a certain era and genre of read.

Strategy & Specifications 04

Helvetica Now Text Bold

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
( ) ? & !  
1234567890  
.,:;-'"

Helvetica Now Display Bold

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
( ) ? & !  
1234567890  
.,:;-'"

Helvetica Now Text Medium

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
( ) ? & !  
1234567890  
.,:;-'"

## **FURTHER GUIDANCE AND ADVICE**

### **Type design projects**

We sometimes receive projects which have created a typeface in response to a brief. These tend to result in the design of a display face and would require that the typeface is used in context of a broader designed submission, rather than the typeface being the sole design outcome.

In these circumstances, we are not assessing type design exclusively, but rather how the designed typeface has been used within the context of a typographic design solution which demonstrates a range of typographic skills.