

PLAT_FOR_MA

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF GRADUATION
PROJECTS IN DESIGN EDUCATION

Pais Anna

DLA Dissertation and Masterwork

2024. 02. 22.

Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design

Doctoral School

Supervisor: Balázs Püspök

THESES

- › **THESIS 1** Design graduation projects that conclude the master's programme of the university have a strategic significance for both students and institutions alike.

The research topics that are called to the limeline through the students' projects and those statements that the students provide through their works, offer a concise picture about the mind-set of their given faculty, and of their university as a whole regarding professional, ethical and methodological practices. A successful design process and the end result of the MA project may have a most significant influence on the professional improvement and on the career of the students. This insight provides a reason for the institution to give a special attention to the process of how research topics are selected and developed.

- › **THESIS 2** The key to a successful development of a graduation project is a structured course of steps//actions.

Refining and elaborating on a topic is not only important because of the result of the final presentation of a graduation project, but mainly because students become well-grounded professionals while going through those steps of refinement and elaboration. Hence, it is an important goal for us to not only improve the quality of the final products, but also to make the associated learning process help the improvement of the students' designer skills in a structured and effective way.

- › **THESIS 3** Besides helping the design processes from a methodological point of view, it is also important for us to develop the students' self-knowledge.

Self reflections enhance the students' ability to articulate their personal and professional ambitions. In turn, it makes it easier for them to choose a research topic that is in line with their career goal. The continuous, high quality performance that is expected from the students weighs a heavy mental burden on them. Making the challenges sensible, and strengthening their coping skills is a responsibility of the master's course. As providing support in building the students' career is the responsibility of the university from a legal point of view even, it is reasonable to form the university's master's programme in a way that it aligns with its responsibilities.

- › **THESIS 4** Having a thorough knowledge on the Design Thinking methodology is an important professional competence for design faculty students.

Its set of tools not only could help the conscious forming of the design process, but – at least partially – could effectively assist the conscious

handling of personal challenges as well (e.g.: self-knowledge, career plans, motivation). Applying self-reflecting and self-motivating tools is more effective when they are closely related to the design tasks, because those tasks provide an actual framework and an opportunity for self-reflection, making it easier thus for the experiences to go deep and build-in.

► **THESIS 5 A learning environment in a wider sense comprises both digital and physical spaces, and besides well facilitated workshops it comprises study programmes and methodologies.**

The conscious planning of a learning environment significantly influences the success of learning processes and the contentment of students. One of the most important elements of a learning environment of a design programme is to provide such tools that support the students' visual skills and that structure and at the same time document the thought processes of the designers. The ever improving and widening opportunities that digital toolkits offer along with the changing needs and expectations of the newer generation call for the redesign of our former teaching environment.

► **THESIS 6 A condition for the effectiveness of diploma development is to provide a well-framed process and a uniformly defined methodological toolkit not only for the students, but also for their instructors.**

The methodological background and consultation style of supervisors can vary greatly, resulting in varying levels of effectiveness in guiding their students. While some of the students' challenges may be intertwined with professional factors, they are mainly of a personal nature, and many instructors lack effective tools to overcome them. Therefore, specific guidance regarding expected project outcomes and the unified process leading to them is crucial from a quality assurance standpoint for both the institution and the students.

► **THESIS 7 While the development of a master's graduation project relies on independent effort, it is realised with the support of various contributors and facilitating factors.**

Among these, one of the most crucial is the student group itself, as its presence allows for mutual learning and feedback situations. In addition to personalised supervisor assistance, it is important to consider the group of students graduating in the same semester as a cooperative unit and structure their work accordingly. As a result, members of the group can more effectively develop their projects.