

Briefing a print designer

Here's an easy format for briefing a designer. Write your brief before you request quotes because it will help the design agency to give you an accurate cost. Make sure the agency you're approaching has been briefed on our brand. It will save you having to answer a lot of questions from the designers. For a list of suggested designers email University Marketing at marketing@warwick.ac.uk.

THE BASICS

1. Give a brief outline of what the document is for, explaining your objective and target audience.
2. Add any detail you know about the following. You can ask your designers to advise on this too:

Format: Do you want them to design a poster, booklet, flier, brochure etc. If it's a longer booklet/brochure, do you have an idea of word-count or how many pages you think it might take up? Will it be portrait, landscape or are you open to ideas?

Dimensions: This could be an estimate. You may want it to be roughly A5, for example.

Colour: Black and white, 2 colour (black, white and another colour) or full colour? If you are printing litho) are you adding a 5th 'spot colour'? (See our [Quick guide to print](#) for more information on colours in print).

Print: Will you be printing litho or digitally and what sort of paper are you using – coated or uncoated? This is important to know early because it will affect how the designers create the designs. ([See our quick guide to print](#) for information on digital vs litho printing.)

Timings: What is your final deadline and when do you want design work to start? This will enable the designers to plan in studio time and consider resources.

Warwick Project lead: Who will be the designer's main point of contact/who is operationally responsible?

Deadline by which quote is required

FULL JOB DETAILS

Design and layout

Here's where you give more information about what the job will involve. Try to answer the following questions to give a thorough brief:

- Do you want the design to match/complement any materials you already have or are you looking for something completely different?
- Do you want to use particular colours from within the brand palette
- What 'feel' do you want the design to have – bold, elegant, bright, impactful, surprising, subtle?
- Are there any things you know you definitely don't want to see?
- If it's a longer document, do you have an idea of how you want to split up or section the content
- If it's a booklet/brochure, do you have a cover image in mind – people, abstract? Do you want the designers to source/suggest an image or do you already have one you'd like them to work with? Would you like suggestions on print finishes they think might work well with the cover design? You can also ask your printer about this but often designers will know about possible finishes and have useful ideas.

WHAT THE QUOTATION SHOULD COVER

List the elements of the job that the cost they quote you should include. Below are some suggestions and some essential points.

Essentials:

- Artwork (the laying out/designing of the document). Self-explanatory, but it is part of the job you want them to do. State whether there is likely to be extra work required on images, for example to remove of an unsightly hazard sign from a photo of campus, lighten a dark image, create more contrast between the sky and the buildings in an image etc. If so, ask for this to be included in the quote.
- The number of stages of amends you want to allow i.e. how many times do you want to see and make changes to the designed document before it goes to print. Allow between two and four sets.
- Preparation for print. This is likely to include liaising with the printer about finishes to suit the design, packaging of relevant artwork and typesetting information, and minor amends after you see print proofs before the document goes onto the press
- Details of how you want the designers to liaise with you – to avoid surprise expenses/travel costs on your design invoice, state if this will involve travel to Warwick and on how many occasions.
- Supply of confirmation that the copyright of the artwork (the design) belongs to the University of Warwick.
- Ask the designers to flag if at any time they think that the job is going to take longer anticipated and advise us of the anticipated cost. Under ordinary circumstances, the cost you're quoted should be the cost you pay. Any extra work should be approved by you before they do it.

Extras

- If your publication will have a cover, do you want the designers to provide more than one cover concept (where the agency mock-up ideas for a cover for you to choose from)? You might be happy for them to just design one cover without providing different options. We wouldn't recommend asking them to develop more than three possible options as this process take a lot of creative work, which you will be charged for.
- If you'd like to receive the final document and any images they have worked on digitally (as a PDFs and/or InDesign document and Photoshop files) for your archives. If so, do you want these by WeTransfer, on a memory stick, etc.
- Anything else you want included in the cost.