Shillington Graduates Reflect on their Online Learning Experience

Have you been thinking about studying graphic design online? Shillington recently launched a new part-time online course starting on 21 September, so now you can study and work from wherever you are in the world! The course provides an innovative environment for learning, where lectures, demos and critiques are delivered by your teachers during class time.

Shillington students from across our global campuses had to

transition from in-person classes to remote learning earlier this year due to the pandemic. Though it was an adjustment for all, we were able to quickly shift to an online learning format. Read on to hear from these recent graduates about their experiences studying online and how they were able to successfully manage their time learning and studying from home. We hope these insights will help you decide if the online course is right for you!

Highlights on remote learning

The global course is the perfect way to network, stay engaged and develop connections with your classmates from around the world.

Coming from a scientific background, Liam Speranza was looking for an immersive program that would allow them to develop a strong design portfolio. Seeing the student work from past graduates convinced them that Shillington was the right choice.

Volto student project by Liam Speranza

> ***“The remote course really prepared me to work on tight timelines. I’m better able to trust my design process and manage my time because of the online course.”***

Prior to the course, Marielle Rousseau was working as an actress and voice-over artist. She realised that there was still a big part of her creative self that was unexplored, which led her to find Shillington. Studying in the New York course provided her a “wonderful bridge between design student and working designer…the remote course bridged that gap and helped us ease into the process of working on our own. We also developed a stronger connection as a class, reaching out to each other for critiques, help and support.”

B-Side student project Marielle Rousseau

Georgia Latham had a varied career trajectory before starting at Shillington. After university, she worked as a political researcher before moving to rural Japan to work as a teacher for two years. She's always loved a creative outlet and the academic path, so Shillington was a natural next step along her path. She realised that design would allow her to use her "intellect while simultaneously flexing [her] creative side," especially because a second degree was not an option. Reflecting on the course, Georgia says "the one-on-one time you get with your tutors is unparalleled. In fact, I feel like you build stronger relationships with your tutors from the amount of focused time you are able to have with them. On that note, the teachers at Shillington are excellent. They are

vibrant practising designers who will go out of their way to help you.”

Brisbane graduate Sophie Bo Schmidt left her job as a UX consultant to pursue the online course. She always wanted to have the visual design skills to execute her designs, which was her initial motivation to study at Shillington. Studying in the course allowed her to discover not her interest in UI, branding, type and collage.

Home swap app student project by Sophie Bo Schmidt

Reflecting on the online course, Sophie says the “experience was both supportive and collaborative. We had lectures from teachers from the other campuses, which was quite cool. The fact that we met each other’s pets, kids, roomies meant we got

to know each other in different ways than we would have in class.”

> *“I got a lot of individual feedback, ideas and links with inspiration, that I could use to push my work further.”*

Structuring your time while learning from home

Studying and working from home can be a challenging task without the structure. It’s important to have a set routine while also taking regular breaks for a healthy work balance. We asked our students how they structured their time to see what an optimal routine looks like while studying remotely.

After a degree in digital management and a career as a captain for a UK based airline, Marc Morrell pursued the course because he wanted to change his career to design. Shillington equipped him with the skills needed to make the change. To excel in the course, he says, “I planned my days the night before, set to a strict schedule for working and took breaks.”

Shogun packaging student project by Marc Morrell

Before Shillington, Steve Till was working in a government role, but didn’t feel satisfied with his work and the lack of growth. After extensive research, he was convinced about Shillington’s short term course to be the change he needed. He says, “the structure that Shillington provided was fantastic. I treated each day at home like a normal workday and started on time, shut the door and got to work. Working back later if need be and again at night after I had some time away and with family.”

For Liam, making actionable lists for the daily tasks was an important part of their routine and blocking out time for each assignment. The popular Pomodoro method (work for 25 minutes, rest for 5 minutes) was especially helpful to accomplish this.

Rachel Chea came to Shillington after working for an ad agency where she was responsible for the art direction, strategy and project management on campaigns. Since a lot of her skills were self-taught, she wanted to pursue a course to gain confidence in her skills with a foundation in design. To optimize her time learning from home, Rachel did her best to create a sense of structure in her schedule. Just like Liam, she adapted the Pomodoro technique to help her gain more structure to her day.

> ***"I tried my best to maintain the same structure that I would've had during in-person classes in regards to working within the same 8-5 time frame, putting a time limit on certain tasks and taking regular breaks."***

Online vs in-person learning

When deciding on studying online vs in-person, you need to take into consideration your learning style. We asked our graduates how their online learning experience compared to the in-person classroom.

For Liam, the remote course was different from being in a studio environment, but they did feel a "greater sense of community from peers and felt like the time I spent getting feedback was more productive. Self-discipline and motivation are also important factors in working remotely and helped Marc through the course, plus the added benefit of not having to worry about commuting to school!

Be the Cowboy handmade student project by Georgia Latham

Georgia says she thinks “the skills of building relationships, team brainstorming and decision-making and presenting online are going to be increasingly useful [working online]. Also, learning online had the same exact content as the in-person course, with the lectures and briefs being “relevant and at the forefront of the industry.”

Steve Till really enjoyed working from home, especially without the extra commute. He says, “I found less distractions around looking at others work. I learnt more and feel much more confident in myself having completed the course from home as I was forced to resource myself.”

What would be your advice for a student studying online?

Liam Speranza: “You need to find the one thing that can keep you driven when studying and working remotely. For me, it was the community. It can be intimidating to learn remotely, but Shillington’s format kept me feeling connected to other students and driven for both my and their successes.”

> ***“Take the plunge, dig deep and trust the process. Shillington can truly change your life; I know it did for me. Now that I’m a working designer, I know I have the tools to succeed and that my career can only grow from here.”***

Rachel Chea: “Treat every day of remote learning as if you were going to an in-person class. This means sticking to a morning routine, preparing your workspace accordingly before class and making a to-do/task list each day. Also, I would recommend finding one or more work buddies that you can FaceTime or chat during the day to keep each other accountable and help maintain a sense of community.”

Sophie Bo Schmidt: “To me getting a good office setup where I could close the door and be (relatively) undisturbed was crucial. It is definitely not less intense studying from home, so you really need to get yourself organised to get the most out of it. More importantly, as a student, I feel you need to make an effort to create a good atmosphere, especially in a remote course where this may not come as natural. Be willing to share good vibes, tunes, discuss each other’s work and generally support and cheer on your fellow students.”

Kimi Zou: “Keep a daily routine and also learn to break down a project into mini-steps and set your own deadlines for those steps, so that you can stay on track without overworking yourself.”

Anti-contagious streetwear student project by Kimi Zou

Marc Morrell: “Education and learning are messy processes, it’s never a plug and play solution. You have to develop a support network amongst your classmates on appropriate channels and understand that the journey will only really make sense at the end.”

Georgia Latham: “Stick to the deadlines. The briefs are so quick (that’s part of their advantage) so you need to be ruthless with yourself. To be fair, if you’ve ever considered going freelance, it’s excellent training. Also, give yourself a break!”

> ***“The discipline of sticking to deadlines is also invaluable for future clients and employers.”***

Aurora Suriel Melchor: “Remote learning requires a higher level of discipline, so it’s important to structure your time well and drop any other commitments that can distract you.”

Steve Till: “Make sure that you can communicate effectively with other students and teachers. Have weekly plans and structure to your days and take breaks, live your normal life as much as possible. Your designs will be better for it.”

Still wondering if the Shillington online course is right for you? The graduates that we spoke to all agree that the course helped them gain new skills and expand their design knowledge. The polished portfolios of the graduating classes are proof of what you can accomplish in under a year. Students got to foster great connections with both teachers and classmates alike—unified by their passion for design.

Big thanks to our graduates for sharing their experiences studying online!

Want to study design part-time online and graduate with a portfolio showcasing your best work? Join the Global Classroom and kickstart your creative career with Shillington’s new online course.

Join us at the next online information session to learn more about Shillington, hear from teachers and past graduates!

Collage artwork by Brisbane Shillington graduate Sophie Bo Schmidt

https://www.shillingtoneducation.com/blog/shillington-graduates-reflect-online-learning-experience/