



1. General Information

Award	Programme Title	Duration	Mode of Study
MA (RCA)	Animation	2 Years	Full-time

Awarding Institution	Royal College of Art
Teaching Institution	Royal College of Art
Professional Accreditation	n/a
Qualifications Framework Level	M
Credit Value	240 UK credits
Date of most recent validation	2015/16
Programme Specification Date	2016/2017

2. Philosophy of the Programme

MA Animation is a full-time, two-year Masters that offers students an opportunity to explore the boundaries and parameters of the language, grammar and material processes of animation. Animation itself is an 'indiscipline' that synthesises all other art forms. It is the place where drawing, painting and sculpture meet poetry, puppetry, dance, photography, literature, philosophy, drama, film, architecture, kinetic, light and sound art.

The programme aims to support you to create innovative work of the highest standard. The curriculum is structured around practice, research, experimentation and critique with particular emphasis on developing the content, through research and writing, as well as on structure, sound and editing. The two pathways – Documentary Animation and Experimental – offer you a specialist focus, but fluidity between the both pathways is encouraged. You are encouraged to deepen your own specialist understanding of animation and to develop your own personal style, but also to challenge yourself with new ideas and broaden your perspective. Throughout your studies you will benefit from the



multi-disciplinary environment of the School of Communication and you are encouraged to make contacts with other programmes, both within the College and outside. This has led to fruitful collaborations, particularly in the areas of sound design, music and cinematography.

Our ambition is to develop artists and directors who are able to take risks, lead on creative projects and influence the future of the subject. This continues a tradition of over 30 years, in which our graduates have won multiple top international awards and gone on to prominent creative roles in industry.

3. Educational Aims of the Programme

- The MA Animation Programme aims to:
- develop students’ distinctive voices as animation directors and designers, and encourage an individual response to the challenges of practical animated filmmaking and study;
 - develop the professional and intellectual skills of students;
 - provide a centre of excellence for students to become skilled animation directors who improve their knowledge of direction, writing, animation, design, sound-design and editing;
 - broaden and deepen the study of animation through research by students who extend the boundaries of the discipline;
 - encourage new solutions to the creative challenges of animation to extend and inform the practice and to keep the art and industry vital;
 - improve students confidence and oral communication skills through team work and regular presentations to a variety of informed and knowledgeable groups.

4. Intended Learning Outcomes of the Programme

Able to:	A. Intellectual Engagement
A1.	Initiate and develop innovative moving image projects, specifying the creative and technical challenges involved.
A2.	Demonstrate originality in the application of new knowledge and techniques to a creative problem.



Able to:	A. Intellectual Engagement
A3.	Integrate primary and secondary research in the development of his or her written or film projects.
A4.	Place his or own work within a wider field of contemporary and historical debate.
A5.	Demonstrate a sensitivity to the responsibility of the filmmaker to his or her audience and to the subject being represented.
A6.	Effectively communicate your intentions and knowledge, by oral, written and/of visual means.
A7.	Demonstrate a strong understanding of structure with considered sound and image juxtaposition.

Able to:	B. Technical Skills
B1.	Produce work at an advanced level that integrates thought, creativity and technique.
B2.	Experiment in the use of materials, processes and environments in order to translate ideas into moving image practice.
B3.	Identify and acquire the specialist skills required in the production, display and documentation of a moving image project.
B4:	Take responsibility for archiving your own media in preparation for screening and exhibition to a professional standard.

Able to:	C. Professionalism
C1.	Work responsibly and effectively with performers, and other contributors to his or her project.
C2.	Engage in constructive discussion with tutors and peers on his or her own



Able to:	C. Professionalism
	work, and contribute to the wider debates in animation, film and related fields.
C3.	Reflect on, articulate and document his or her progress throughout the programme.
C4.	Demonstrate the self-motivation, initiative and discipline necessary to deliver creative projects within budget and schedule.
C5.	Studentship: Contribution to the course and peers support.



5. Programme Structure and Curriculum

First Year

The First Year is designed to ground you in core theories and methods that will both build on and provoke a re-examination of your previous ways of working. During the year, your studio practice is informed by weekly lectures and seminar groups run by Critical and Historical Studies that culminate in the writing of a dissertation. In addition, a series of screenings, artists talks and drawing classes are offered by the Animation Programme and the School of Communication.

The first term consists of regular workshops specific to the Programme that are designed to develop new ways of working and to enable you use the facilities independently. These are common to all First Year students on the Animation Programme. You will also choose one from a range of electives that are offered by the three programmes in the School of Communication and cover a variety of issues and approaches.

Your Pathway specialism starts in the second term with a range of dedicated workshops that encourage research and concept generation. To put this into practice, you are asked to initiate and produce a First Year Project, which can take the form of a short film, installation or interactive project. Students may work individually or in collaboration. You will present the aims and objectives behind your project at a group critique and these must be outlined in a written Statement of Intent (approx. 500 words). Storyboarding, time management and budgeting are discussed in one-to-one and group tutorials with the programme staff.

In the third term, a written Statement of Outcome about your First Year Project, Interim exam and Reflection Tutorial will allow you to critically reflect on your progress before you undertake the planning, research and development work needed for your Second Year Graduation project. During this term, professional practice and networking is encouraged. You will assist Second Year students on their graduation project for approximately 2 weeks and visits to professional animation artists and production studios will be arranged.

Critical & Historical Studies

The RCA provides a unique environment for postgraduate art and design students to reflect upon their own practice, and to engage with students from their own and other disciplines. The role of Critical & Historical Studies (CHS) is to support the



studio programmes in enabling these critical engagements to take place. The courses offered by CHS to first year studio-based MA students propose an intellectual framework within which they can begin to establish a coherent relationship between theory and practice.

In the autumn and spring terms there are a series of College-wide seminars and lectures. The autumn term series will relate to your particular discipline (though it is possible to elect to join a series being offered to students on other programmes) whereas the spring term series will be more broad-based and cross-disciplinary in nature.

In the spring and summer terms, a CHS tutor will give you individual tutorials to support the development of a dissertation which is submitted at the end of the First Year. The dissertation should be between 6,000 – 10,000 words in length – this is a major piece of work and you will not be able to submit for the Final Examination until you have passed this assessment.

Second Year

In the Second Year, you are expected to initiate and take responsibility for the management and production of your Graduation Project. You will submit a Statement of Intent that outlines your intended concept prior to a Project Idea Presentation. As with the First Year Project, Your work may take the form of a short film, installation or interactive project and you can choose to work collaboratively or independently on this.

During the Autumn and Spring terms, you will have the opportunity for guidance, support and feedback through workshops, specialist and personal tutorials. Contact with musicians, composers, actors and scriptwriters is encouraged. Group Progress Review critiques will take place near the end of both terms as a valuable opportunity for feedback and support from your peers, which you are expected to contribute towards. The majority of your audio and visual material should be generated before the Easter break.

The focus of the final term is on postproduction and plans for installations and exhibition for the Summer Show. Second Year students have priority over equipment in the final term. You must have completed a rough edit for the Pre-Assessments (see below). Between Pre-Assessments and Final Examinations, you will complete your final edit and sound mix. Final Examinations follow in mid-term when you will submit your finished film and a Statement of Outcome. Immediately after the Final Examination, you must submit your showprints for the Summer Show.

Throughout your studies, visiting speakers, studio visits, live briefs and competitions enable you to become familiar with professional practice. Exit Tutorials, Professional



Preparation and Feedback sessions at the end of the final term help to prepare you for life after graduation.

During this year, you are expected to observe professional standards. Unfinished or late work is not acceptable for the Summer Show.

6. Learning and Teaching Methods

Personal Tutorials

- **Individual Tutorials** are scheduled with your Personal Tutor, and there are also opportunities to sign up for one-to-one tutorials with other Animation tutors, Visiting Lecturers and specialist professionals. It is also possible to arrange tutorials with staff from other RCA Programmes. You should expect to have a minimum of two tutorials per term with your Personal Tutor. It is important that you come prepared for your tutorials and take a pro-active role. It is good practice to make a list of action points following each tutorial and check these with your tutor if necessary.
- **Exit Tutorials** enable your Personal Tutor to give you advice on your future trajectory before you graduate.

Group and Joint Tutorials

- **Tutorial Groups** are timetabled at key points throughout the year, encouraging peer review in a small group setting with the student's Personal Tutor.
- **Workshop Crits** enable workshop tutors to offer critical feedback during and at the end of each workshop.
- **Work-in-Progress Forums** offer an informal setting in which you can show your research and work-in-progress to your peers for support and discussion. You are expected to take an active role in providing feedback to your fellow students.
- **Progress Review Crits** involve presenting your work to your fellow students, staff and invited guests for a more formal critique.
- **Reflection Tutorials** provide you with an opportunity to present a mini-retrospective of your work to staff and your fellow students towards the end of your first year for feedback and discussion.
- A **Professional Feedback Session**, will allow you to get very specific feedback and careers advice from a group of professionals from a range of backgrounds following a screening of your Graduation Project.



Personal Tutorials
Workshops
Workshops offer an intensive learning experience focused on a particular topic or technique. A range of specialist subjects will be covered that include creative writing, sound, animation techniques, movement, directing voice and film language.
Electives
The School of Communication offers a series of multi-disciplinary Electives. Animation students choose one of these in the First Term. This is optional in the Second Term as your main focus will be on your First Year Project.
Master classes
Visiting artists and professionals show their work and give an insight into their techniques and thought processes.
Visits
Organised field trips led by tutors can include visits to animation studios, exhibitions, museums and archives.

7. Assessment

General
Regulations for assessment and progression can be found in the College Regulations, sections 2.7 – 2.10. Your progress through the course is reviewed informally through tutorials on a continuous basis. All MA students in the College have two formal examinations, Interim (Year 1) and Final (Year 2).
Pre-Assessment
To help you prepare for examination, a Pre-Assessment is arranged as a



rehearsal and valuable feedback session approximately two weeks prior to the Interim and Final Examinations. Staff, students and invited guests will respond to your work. By this stage, all animation should be completed and in the form of a rough edit with indicative sound.

Interim Examination

The Interim Examination is a formal examination of each student’s work that evaluates progress part way through his or her studies. Each student will be asked to present and discuss work completed-to-date. Following completion of this examination, the Head of Programme drafts a brief report on the development of each students’ work, attendance record, and application to their subject including any other relevant observations. This report goes to the Academic Board for Concessions & Discipline, with the recommendation that a student does or does not progress. If a student’s Personal Tutor is not present at the Interim Examination, their report contributes to the overall assessment.

If at Interim Examination a student’s work is considered to be a borderline fail, a programme of work may be set for further examination to enable progression. For more information, please see the RCA Regulations.

Final Examination

The Final Examination is the culmination of a MA degree. Each student’s work is assessed by a panel of academics, and a sample of a cohort’s work is reviewed by an External Examiner. If your Personal Tutor is not present at the Final Examination, their report contributes to the overall assessment.

The Final Examination is in two parts:

- a) A Viva-Voce, which takes place in the final term of a programme of study
- b) A School Examination Board, chaired by the Dean of School, will be held to recommend results to the Academic Board for Concessions & Discipline for ratification.

If at Final Examination a student’s work is considered to be a borderline fail, the student may be required to retrieve the work within an academic term, or at a referral examination within 12 months. For more information, please see the RCA Regulations.

8. Admissions

Cross-College Requirements



Refer to the College Prospectus for details of cross-College entrance and portfolio requirements for the MA Entrance Examination.

Candidates for all MA courses are assessed on their existing qualities as demonstrated in their work and in their interview, as well as on their potential to benefit from the course and to achieve MA standards overall. The assessment will consider: creativity, imagination and innovation evident in the work; ability to articulate the intentions of the work; intellectual engagement in relevant areas; appropriate technical skills; overall interview performance, including oral use of English. Candidates who do speak English as their first language are required to produce evidence that within the previous two years they have achieved at least 93 in the TOEFL internet test with an additional writing test score of TWE 24 or an IELTS exam score of 6.5 with 6 in writing.

Programme-Specific Requirements

The programme selects a challenging range of artists each year to facilitate cross-pollination between different and engaging means of expression. Applicants are normally expected to have a degree in art and design or equivalent experience. In recent years, the profile of successful applicants to the programme has diversified to include those with a background in science, humanities and architecture as well as those from moving image, communications and fine art.

Portfolio

Applicants must submit a showreel of animated/moving image work, no longer than 15 minutes, demonstrating an aptitude for sequential thinking. Their particular role on any collaborative projects should be clearly indicated. Applications without a showreel of moving-image work cannot be considered.

A portfolio of support work demonstrating other aspects of ideas and skills, which may include 3D objects, drawings, photographs, scripts, storyboards etc., is helpful in the selection process, and this is ideally submitted in digital form. If applicants are invited for an interview, they may bring additional material and original artwork and/or models.

9. Quality Indicators

Refer to the RCA Quality Handbook for more details of the College's quality and standards procedures.

- All academic programmes at the Royal College of Art are revalidated on a six-yearly cycle. Revalidations involve external subject experts and internal panel members appointed by the College's Academic Standards Committee (ASC).



- Programmes are required to submit an annual Review to ASC, the primary purpose of which is to evaluate the experience of students enrolled on both its MA and MPhil / PhD courses.
- External Examiners are appointed for a maximum of three years to ensure that:
 - the academic standard for each award is set and maintained at an appropriate level and that student performance is properly judged against this;
 - the standards of awards are comparable with those of other UK higher education institutions;
 - the process of assessment and examination is fair and has been fairly conducted.
- An Internal Moderator is appointed by the Senate on the recommendation of ASC to ensure that there are appropriate mechanisms in place for the objective assessment of student work and to ensure comparability of examination practices between programmes within the College.
- Students have the opportunity to provide feedback through regular programme-level meetings (at least one each year considers the delivery of the MA programme and the External Examiner report); and through an annual College-wide MA student survey. A Student Representative Council brings forward issues from Course Forums and programme-level meetings to the President and Vice-President of the Students' Union who then, where appropriate, present these issues at College committees or to the Senior Management of the College.