



**1. General Information**

<b>Award</b>	<b>Programme Title</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Mode of Study</b>
MA RCA	Fashion Womenswear	2 Years	Full-time

<b>Awarding Institution</b>	Royal College of Art
<b>Teaching Institution</b>	Royal College of Art
<b>Professional Accreditation</b>	N/A
<b>Qualifications Framework Level</b>	7
<b>Date of most recent validation</b>	2007
<b>Programme Specification Date</b>	2016/17

**2. Philosophy of the Programme**

Integrity, innovation, independence and individuality are the cornerstones of our philosophy, which believes that self-awareness combined with sustained in-depth research provides for a potent design methodology. A postgraduate Fashion student needs to be self-motivated, focused and independent. A greater depth of analytical thought is encouraged by introducing you to a broad cross-section of practicing designers from fashion and a contemporary selection of other creative disciplines.

Its design ethos is a combination of creative self-expression, technical excellence and high professional standards. Its strength is based upon a fearless approach to investigating and questioning the boundaries of identity and fashion design.

We believe that the core of innovation is based on the curiosity and development of personal vision and inspiration, and that bringing this into a valid context offers a position of confidence, which enables our graduates to direct an influential career path within the fashion industry.

**3. Educational Aims of the Programme**



The MA Fashion Womenswear programme aims to:

- provide a stimulating learning environment that enables the development of creative, intellectual and critical potential
- encourage new perceptions and innovative work
- direct and encourage the understanding of research and its application to design
- equip designers with an advanced technical knowledge of the specialist skills and techniques required to translate their ideas into product
- develop students' ability to communicate their ideas coherently and intelligently
- promote understanding and involvement with industry and design technology
- develop students' understanding of the cultural, sociological and economic context of fashion & identity.

**4. Intended Learning Outcomes of the Programme**

Able to:	<b>A. Intellectual Engagement</b>
A1.	Demonstrate originality in the application of knowledge and techniques to a creative problem
A2.	Demonstrate an awareness of the creative, cultural, sociological, commercial and sustainable context of fashion and how it relates to his or her practice
A3.	Demonstrate an understanding of research and its application to design at postgraduate level
A4.	Develop confidence in the ability to engage in written and verbal analysis of his or her own work and that of others
Able to:	<b>B. Practice</b>
B1.	Produce work at an advanced level that integrates thought, creativity and technique
B2.	Develop skills through experimentation and research into both traditional and personal processes
B3.	Demonstrate an advanced knowledge of the specialist skills and techniques required to create, exhibit and document their work
Able to:	<b>C. Professionalism</b>
C1.	Establish a personal design identity and understanding of their positioning within the design industry
C2.	Develop a high level of confidence in the communication of their work



Able to:	<b>A. Intellectual Engagement</b>
C3.	Take responsibility for directing their studies through setting goals and managing time and resources effectively
C4.	Participate as an active, thoughtful and responsible member of a community.
C5.	Develop imaginative and meaningful ways of involving people in your design process.

**5. Programme Structure and Curriculum**

<b>Programme Overview</b>
<p>The Womenswear programme encourages the development of students’ individual design identity through the translation of their personal research into design.</p> <p>Within the discipline there are four areas of separate design specialisation that may be studied: knitwear, footwear, accessory design and millinery. Specialism students will follow their own curriculum but a cross over, in lectures on relevant design topics, research and materials are shared.</p> <p>During the programme, students are given the opportunity to develop their individuality and creativity through concentrating on the following subjects: research and development of design ideas, colour, fabric and yarn sourcing, dedicated technical workshops relevant to the specialism selected, drawing and portfolio presentation. Professional presentations and portfolio development focus on communication skills and the ability of students to present their work coherently and intelligently. The course offers a personalised learning environment, created through one-to-one tutorials and work reviews with the staff and invited guests from industry and the media.</p> <p>External, industry-set projects are selected primarily to provide students with the experience of working professionally, and are timetabled in both first and second years. These professional contacts frequently lead to sponsorship, international placements and freelance design work for our students.</p> <p>In their second year, students work more independently, developing their design ethos that leads through material support, silhouette and cutting experiments to a final collection or narrative. Every student will have the opportunity to show their work at the end of their final year.</p>
<b>Critical &amp; Historical Studies</b>
<p>The RCA provides a unique environment for postgraduate art and design students to reflect upon and develop their own practice, and to engage with students from their own and other disciplines. The role of Critical &amp; 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.</p> <p>There are a series of College-wide seminars and lectures. The first series will relate to your particular</p>



discipline (though it is possible to elect to join a series being offered to students on other programmes) whereas the second series will be more broad-based and cross-disciplinary in nature.

A CHS tutor will give you individual tutorials to support the development of a dissertation which is submitted following a dedicated writing period. The dissertation should be between 6,000 – 10,000 words in length – this is a major piece of work and you will be not be able to submit for the Final Examination until you have passed this assessment.

**6. Learning and Teaching Methods**

**Tutorials**

Tutorials may be one-to-one or group-based. They are the main teaching method used on the programme, and through investigation and debate aim to guide you to identify personal learning requirements for the development of your work. You may request tutorials from other staff in the School or College.

**Work Reviews**

To assess your progress, depth of learning and continued development you make formal presentations of your current work to a Review Panel of staff. This occurs once a term, identifying areas of strength and those requiring focus and expansion,. This then provides you with clear guidance for future direction. The advice given in agreement with you is a guide that you are responsible for following up. Your progress will be taken into consideration at successive Work Reviews.

You will present new and continuing work completed between subsequent Work Reviews, including research, design sketchbooks, toiles and finished garments. In advance of the Review you need to prepare a Self-Analysis Form, which allows you to consider your progress and steer the review itself. This is part of the reflective process of self- development actively encouraged by the programme.

You will receive a written report of the main points arising from the Work Review. The Work Review Panel consists of at least two and usually three of the following:

- Personal Tutor – mandatory
- Head of Programme
- Visiting Professor
- Senior Tutor / Tutors
- Visiting Tutors / Specialism Tutor
- Technician (as appropriate)
- Member of the CHS staff

**Critiques and Presentations**

Group or individual critiques and presentations with staff and external visitors from industry are arranged to encourage participation in critical analysis and to enhance professional practice and communication skills. They may vary in format from portfolio presentation and displays of work to presentation on a model.

**Work Experience (optional)**



Appropriate work experience at this point in your education can provide further knowledge of industry, techniques of working methods and a certain rigour required in design and business. Placements are best arranged for the summer vacation between the first and second years. You are expected to be proactive in organising your own placements.

## 7. Assessment

### General

Regulations for assessment and progression can be found in the College Regulations, sections 2.7 – 2.10.

Students are required to take a formal Interim Examination – normally at the beginning of the third term of the first year. Students must pass the Interim Examination to progress to the final year of the programme.

### 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. Taking the form of a portfolio submission, including sketchbooks, completed projects, garments and supporting work. Following completion of this examination, the Head of the Exam Board 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.

The student is required to present:

- Complete collection, comprising eight outfits, or prototypes – two presented fully accessorised on a model, or eight prototypes depending on your specialism
- Complete portfolio, to include final collection and other relevant connected projects, all supported by sketchbooks and research material, that fully presents your journey across the two years.



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

- Entry is based on a high standard of final-year undergraduate work (as reflected in portfolio or degree classification), or on advanced work of an equivalent level. Your work must also demonstrate a maturity and readiness to undertake postgraduate studies.
- You must normally have obtained a good relevant undergraduate degree or an equivalent qualification. The College recognises as an equivalent qualification any degree, diploma, certificate or other evidence of formal qualification awarded by a university or other higher education establishment where the award is made following the successful completion of a course of at least three years' study, the programme of study being open, as a general rule, only to persons holding a certificate awarded on the successful completion of a full course of upper secondary education. Other qualifications may be approved, providing that the Academic Board for Concessions and Discipline (ABCD) is satisfied that the applicant has the ability to pursue the programme of study successfully.
- The ABCD is empowered to make judgements about the extent to which qualifications or experience gained elsewhere may be accepted in partial fulfilment of its requirements.
- Upon entry to any of the College's programmes you should be able to demonstrate:
  1. The potential to benefit from and contribute to the programme of study or research for which you are applying.
  2. Prior knowledge and experience indicating the potential to achieve the independence necessary for postgraduate study in a specialist discipline.
  3. Enthusiasm and aptitude to confront the issues to be addressed in preparation for a future professional career.
- Applicants should normally be aged over 21 years by 1 September of the proposed year of admission.

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.

### Programme-Specific Requirements

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 programme 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.

We seek to enrol students who:

- are imaginative, self-motivated, determined, passionate about their discipline, technically curious and professionally orientated
- understand that their commitment to the course is a significant investment in their future.

### **Portfolio**

#### **Part I – Online.**

Applications should include:

Recent work, including research and design development, and rendered illustrations and flats of at least four projects  
Garment imagery.

Please state “Fashion Womenswear” and, where appropriate, the area of specialism to which you are applying.

Candidates who do not 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.

#### **Part II – Interview**

If selected for interview your portfolio must include:

- Hard copies of recent work, including research and design development, and rendered illustrations and flats for at least four projects
- Garment images
- A finished toile or garment relating to one of your current portfolio projects
- The interview project responses.
- A research proposal

## **9. Quality Indicators**

*Refer to the Academic Development 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, 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.