



1. General Information

Award	Programme Title	Duration	Mode of Study
MA (RCA)	Digital Direction	15 month	Full time (accelerated) Part time* (*Home/EU , term 4 only)

Awarding Institution	Royal College of Art
Teaching Institution	Royal College of Art
Professional Accreditation	N/A
Qualifications Framework Level	7
Date of most recent validation	May 2017
Programme Specification Date	2018/19

2. Philosophy of the Programme

Communication lies at the heart of our School. In a climate of continually shifting technological, social, political and cultural contexts, new communication paradigms are emerging that require innovative and forward-thinking strategies, methods, and processes. Enabled and informed by advances in digital technology, contemporary media platforms and time-based content are increasingly integrated, mobile and fluid, seamlessly embedded in multiple types of environments, infrastructures and products, and user-controlled with an engagement in more democratic forms of content generation and curation, requiring new responses to the growing impact in social, cultural, political and industrial environments. The proposed MA Digital Direction aims to inform and enhance our understanding of the role of communication within these broader contexts;



specifically, that of media and storytelling in a digital era. Appealing to creative professionals, this mix of practice will address the need for innovative creative leaders and content generators who can engage with fast changing social and industrial contexts and to develop innovative delivery strategies that leverage the power of emerging multiple media ecologies.

3. Educational Aims of the Programme

The MA Digital Direction programme aims to:

- develop students' that have a material understanding of both digital and post-digital cultures and practice across media and communication design.
- develop the professional, intellectual and technical skills of students, and provide a centre of excellence for the training of digital directors to develop content-led strategic leadership for the creative industries.
- develop students' ability to both embrace and harness the change presented by rapid technological development across media and communication design.

4. Intended Learning Outcomes of the Programme

Able to:	A. Intellectual Engagement
A1.	Students will be able to demonstrate a systematic and coherent understanding of discrete ways in which technological developments are shaping innovative practice in the contemporary media and communications environment.
A2.	Students will be able to demonstrate a critical awareness of the potential of emerging technologies and associated modes of practice to both enhance and disrupt the contemporary media and communications environment for diverse audiences.
A3.	Students will be able to demonstrate an ability to deal with the complexity presented by the contemporary media and communications environment in agile and innovative ways.

Able to:	B. Technical Skills
B1.	Students will be able to assemble innovative non-linear and time-based media using the professional skills of post-digital filmmaking and interactive



Able to:	B. Technical Skills
	communication design.
B2.	Students will be able to direct and edit complex narrative content across moving image, audio and experience contexts using a range of software platforms.
B3.	Students will be able to plan and produce experimental mixed reality content for augmented and virtual reality contexts using relevant 3D software workflows.

Able to:	C. Professional Development
C1.	Students will be able to demonstrate an advanced knowledge of digital practices at the cutting-edge of the design, media and communications industries.
C2.	Students will be able to demonstrate an ability to provide creative leadership in the development of complex innovative multiple-media projects including an ability to articulate complex media strategies to professional audiences.
C3.	Students will be able to demonstrate an ability to ensure that the needs of diverse audiences are considered in the deployment of powerful multiple-media projects.

5. Programme Structure and Curriculum

Programme Overview
<p>MA Digital Direction will be structured as follows:</p> <p>Term 1 Unit 1: Programme – Media Architectures (40 credits) Unit 2: School-wide Electives (20 credits) (MADD to deliver Transmedia Storytelling) CHS: College-wide Core (CHS) (40 credits)</p> <p>Term 2 Unit 3: Programme – Assembly and Amplification (40 credits) Unit 2: School Electives (20 credits – continues)</p> <p>Term 3 Unit 4: Programme – Immersive Adventures (40 credits)</p> <p>Term 4 Unit 5: Programme - Independent Research Project (60 credits)</p> <p>Formative and Summative assessment points are indicated on the indicative timetable found in the Appendix. The programme assessment points are located at the end of each Unit of study, with a final examination and viva to take place following completion of all Units and the final Independent Research Project. The programme places an emphasis on a generative model of learning, establishing foundations of skills and critical thinking</p>



through Unit learning outcomes, which then culminates in a synthesis of theory and practice in the final project.

Programme Units and Credit Ratings

- **MADD 1 Media Architectures** - (40 Credits)
- **MADD 2 School-Wide Elective (Transmedia Storytelling)** - (20 Credits)
- **CHS College-Wide Critical Historical Studies** - (40 Credits)
- **MADD 3 Assembly and Amplification** - (40 Credits)
- **MADD 4 Immersive Adventures** (40 Credits)
- **MADD 5 Independent Research Project** - (60 Credits)

Programme Curriculum Map

MA Digital Direction (15 Month)			
Term One	Term Two	Term Three	Term Four
Unit 1 Media Architectures (40 Credits)	Unit 3 Assembly and Amplification (40 Credits)	Unit 4 Immersive Adventures (40 Credits)	Unit 5 Independent Research Project (60 credits)
Unit 2 School-Wide Elective: Transmedia Storytelling (20 Credits)			
College-Wide Critical Historical Studies (CHS) – (40 credits)			

6. Learning and Teaching Methods

Tutorials

The Programme provides students with three main types of tutorial support throughout their course of study: personal, pastoral and group reviews - to discuss progression and work in progress. Pastoral support also forms part of regular in-depth tutorials with an assigned personal tutor delivered at a minimum of one formative tutorial meeting per term with an associated progress report. In addition, in terms 1, 2 and 3, students will receive one tutorial for post-summative Unit assessment feedback and agenda setting with an associated progress report. In term 4, a post-examination meeting takes place for feedback and an 'exit' interview. Group reviews will be scheduled within each Unit and during each project as appropriate, reflecting on individual and collaborative work as well as engaging in peer-review feedback processes.



Blended learning is also an appropriate aspect of this Programme, where students use online platforms (e.g. blogs, technical podcasts) for reflecting and gaining tutor and peer feedback on their work, alongside more conventional modes of learning.

Theory/Practice Seminars

Theory/practice seminars enable discussion, debate and explore the broader key concepts in media and communications practices, social, participatory and critical design, broadcasting and Digital Humanities. Each seminar will be led either by students, active practitioners and/or researchers drawn from across the School of Communication and the wider college research community and based around key texts/practice that students will be expected to have read or viewed. Theory/practice seminars will address the following topics such as: digital aesthetics, the practice of data, narrative practice, time-based media, documentary, participatory cultures, immersive media environments.

Lectures

Lectures are provided by key staff, visiting lectures and guests who may bring new perspectives and insights to particular themes and subject domains offered by each Unit. The Lecture is delivered as conventionally understood.

Workshops (Technical and Professional)

Workshops which are skills and knowledge-based are designed to introduce students to practices in the production of and strategic understanding of communication design/media-led digital and post/non-digital practice. Workshops provide students with the practical and critical tools to apply to Unit projects and/or to their own self-initiated work. Workshops may include, for example, digital filmmaking, audio production, social strategy, AR/VR prototyping and expanded spatial practices. Workshops are specific to each Unit and are detailed in the relevant descriptors.

Projects

Projects are the core learning and teaching method for the programme. Projects can be structured to suit the ambitions of an individual student or a collaborative group. Each Unit has a set project – focused on making – that leverages the knowledge and skills delivered through seminars, workshops, tutorials, critical reviews and technical instruction. Projects for each Unit can vary in length and intended outcome. They build on the core principles of experimentation, strategic and critical thinking and a material understanding of both digital and post/non-digital cultures and practices. Some projects may also build on the College, School or Programme’s industry/professional and commercial/non-profit partnerships providing a ‘live’ context to their learning and giving the opportunity to locate work in a specific context.

Critical Forum



The Critical Forum is a student-led weekly opportunity to engage with tutor(s) and the programme peer-group in support of current design project work. The Forum is structured to encourage self-reflective practice, experimentation, independent thought, and to foster an in-depth critical understanding of making and thinking. The Forum also supports the programme’s aim in developing student confidence and ‘thought’ leadership. Key to the successful outcome of the Critical Forum is that each year students agree (together with staff) a group structure and develop the aims and objectives of the weekly Forum meetings.

7. Assessment

General

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

Summative Assessments

Due to the unitised nature of this extended provision an interim exam is not proposed, rather Summative Assessment points will take place at the end of each Unit delivery.

A Final Examination takes place following the completion of Unit 6: Independent Research Project. Students will prepare an oral presentation and a portfolio of process and final work as outlined in the Unit descriptor, for the Final Examination Board. The normal composition of the Board includes: the Head of Programme, Dean/Associate Dean or a member of the academic staff, a Senior tutor level of above - nominated by the Dean (Chair); one tutor/senior tutor from the programme and the student’s personal tutor where he or she is not otherwise a member of the final Examination Board.

A School Examination Board is convened to agree the pass list and to recommend final examination results to ABCD for ratification. External Examiner(s) are also involved in the process of Examination; the details of which are explained in the College Academic Regulations.

Required assessment elements are fully detailed within the Programme’s Unit Descriptors. The full-time and part-time modes share assessment point apart from Unit 6 Independent Research Project which extends into Term 5.

Submission and assessment normally falls within the following weeks:

Full-Time mode:

MADD 1 Media Architectures : Term 1 Week 12

MADD 2 School-Wide Elective (e.g. Transmedia Storytelling): Term 1 Week 13; Term 2 Week 9



CHS College-Wide Critical Historical Studies - Dissertation Submission Term 2 Week 10
MADD 3 Assembly and Amplification: Term 3 Week 2
MADD 4 Immersive Adventures: Term 3 Week 15
MADD 6 Independent Research Project: Term 3 Week 12

Part-Time Mode:

MADD 1 Media Architectures : Term 1 Week 12
MADD 2 School-Wide Elective (e.g. Transmedia Storytelling): Term 1 Week 13; Term 2 Week 9
CHS College-Wide Critical Historical Studies - Dissertation Submission Term 2 Week 10
MADD 3 Assembly and Amplification: Term 3 Week 2
MADD 4 Immersive Adventures: Term 3 Week 15
MADD 6 Independent Research Project: Term 5 Week 12

The process for referrals or illness is outlined in the College Academic Regulations and students can seek advice from the Head of Programme, Personal tutor or the Student’s Union.

Final Examination

All units on the programme (240 credits) will have been completed by the time of the final examination. After the work has been assessed by the staff team, the viva (oral presentation) is the main event in the Final Examination process. Discussion in the viva focuses on the Independent Research Project and a portfolio of documentation and process work. At the Exam, you will have 15 minutes to speak about the work providing the context, rationale and findings of your research and practice outcome(s).

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 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.

Applicants will be expected to meet the eligibility requirements for English language as specified in the College's Academic Regulations - section 2.1.

Programme-Specific Requirements

Students will normally have completed a first degree undergraduate qualification in a related subject or be able to evidence equivalent professional experience in fields such as filmmaking, broadcasting, media and communication, graphic design, illustration, HCI, and digital production.

Portfolio

All candidates are required to submit an online portfolio of work to be assessed by the programme's senior staff team. Candidates should create an online portfolio that best reflects their abilities, experience and interests. The portfolio must follow College guidelines for uploading work such as using the College application site and giving a brief description for each piece of work. Links to personal websites or dropbox folders are not acceptable.

Candidates are selected on the basis of a body of work that demonstrates an advanced understanding of the subject and sufficient technical skill to realise intentions, evidence of commitment to the subject, intellectual curiosity, open-mindedness, the ability to



collaborate, to engage in debate and respond to criticism, and the ability to engage in sustained and consistent study.

If invited for an interview, students should bring with a portfolio containing a selection of their online submission in its finished physical form, as well as their most recent work or work in progress, together with supporting research material. It is useful to include a combination of self-initiated work as well as project and professional work.

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.