



## Programme Specification

Please note that this specification is subject to change, in line with the national guidance on the response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

### 1. General information

|   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| <b>Awarding institution:</b>            | Royal College of Art |
| <b>Programme title:</b>                 | MRes RCA             |
| <b>Award:</b>                           | Masters              |
| <b>Qualification framework level:</b>   | Level 7              |
| <b>School/Department or equivalent:</b> | Research Office      |
| <b>Programme duration:</b>              | 12-months            |
| <b>Total UK credits:</b>                | 180 credits          |
| <b>Mode of study:</b>                   | Full time            |
| <b>Date valid from/to:</b>              | 2021-2022            |

### 2. Programme Philosophy

The Masters of Research (MRes) RCA is a 180-credit programme that will offer students the opportunity to develop and demonstrate mastery in the theory, methods and practice of research within an art and design environment. This interdisciplinary programme will provide students with an intensive introduction to advanced research methods and enable them to apply and extend those methods through collaborative projects and a guided independent personal research project.

### 3. Educational Aims and Outcomes of the Programme

#### **Programme Aims**

This interdisciplinary programme will aim to:

- Develop and sustain a network of innovative researchers able to work across cultural, disciplinary and sectoral boundaries
- Foster strategic collaborations between the College and academic, industry, public sector and charity partners
- Provide a focus point for the exchange of knowledge on the theory, methods and practice of research across the College community
- To provide students with the intellectual, technical and professional tools with which to complete a high-quality research projects, whether at doctoral level or within the cultural/creative sectors

#### **What will I be expected to achieve?**

Upon completing the MRes programme you will have developed your understanding and practice of research within an art and design environment. You will have a set of research resources that includes theories, methods and practices across a range of contexts and from varying perspectives. These will enable you to confidently and effectively devise and shape your own independent research projects within academia and/or industry.

### **Programme-Specific Learning Outcomes**

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|----------|---|
| Able to: | <b>A. Intellectual Engagement</b>   |
| A1.      | Develop and sustain a network of innovative researchers able to work across cultural, disciplinary and sectoral boundaries;   |
| A2.      | Foster strategic collaborations between the College and academic, industry, public sector and charity partners;   |
| A3.      | Provide a focus point for the exchange of knowledge on the theory, methods and practice of research across the College community;   |
| A4.      | To provide students with the intellectual, technical and professional tools with which to complete a high-quality research projects, whether at doctoral level or within the cultural/creative sectors; |

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| Able to: | <b>B. Practice</b>  |
| B1.      | Demonstrate an advanced understanding of the tools, methods, theories and techniques of research in Art and Design; |
| B2.      | Experiment in the development, evaluation and presentation of complex research projects;                            |
| B3.      | Effectively communicate the aims, methodologies and outcomes of their research to a range of different audiences;   |
| B4.      | Effectively explore and articulate the potential of their research to achieve impact beyond the academic sphere;    |

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| Able to: | <b>C. Professional Development</b>   |
| C1.      | Take responsibility for directing their studies through setting goals and managing time and resources effectively; |
| C2.      | Participate as an active, thoughtful and responsible member of a research community;                               |
| C3.      | Demonstrate an understanding of and sensitivity to the principles and policies of ethical                          |

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|     | research;   |
| C4. | Effectively plan and manage a complex research project;   |
| C5. | Define their professional identity through self-reflection informed by theoretical, social and cultural awareness;                          |
| C6. | Engage constructively with research partners in order to form collaborations that benefit both their research and the partner organisation. |

#### 4. What will I learn?

Working both collaboratively and individually you will explore research design and methodologies through a cycle of theory, action, reflection and dialogue with your peers. At all times you will be strongly encouraged and given the space to interrogate, generate and experiment with new ideas with a range of research challenges.

Throughout the course, we will encourage and promote experimentation, flexibility and collaboration. We aim to offer you a thorough grounding in research theory and practice that both directly and indirectly relates to art and design. We aim to work with you in developing your confidence and ability to work independently, individually and in collaboration with communities across different research cultures and communities. It is this adaptability which will provide you with the tools to thrive as researchers in your chosen career, whether in academia, industry or individual practice.

#### Curriculum Map

|               | Unit Title                | Credits | Award                    |
|---------------|---------------------------|---------|--------------------------|
| <b>Part 1</b> | Group Research project    | 40      | Postgraduate Certificate |
|               | Research Cultures         | 20      |                          |
| <b>Part 2</b> | Research in Practice      | 20      | Postgraduate Diploma     |
|               | Research Methods          | 20      |                          |
|               | Research Identities       | 20      |                          |
| <b>Part 3</b> | Personal Research Project | 60      | Master of Research       |

## 5. How will I learn?

Please note that these are subject to change, in line with the national guidance on the Covid-19 response.

The programme, teaching and activities are planned for on campus working with some specific sessions held online and/or asynchronously. Where it has been approved that students can undertake fully online study, models of teaching will be adjusted to facilitate this and tutors will work with students to ensure their projects continue to address the specified Learning Outcomes.

Teaching Sessions will be structured around the following types:

- *Structured learning programme*: comprising of lectures and master-classes by practitioners and senior academics;
- *Workshops*: class-based activities around a set task (a 'brief');
- *Seminars*: tutor-led classes where you will be asked to reflect on material that you have read or studied in advance;
- *Project Assignments*: project activities to support the structured teaching programme
- *Tutorials*: both group and one-to-one tutorials to support the development of your research.

The programme combines an experiential element involving group and individual projects with a structured learning programme and short related project assignments that reinforce the learning. The lectures, master-classes and workshops develop the knowledge, skills and practices that students will apply in their Personal Research Projects.

The structured learning programme and workshops comprise 3 or 6 –hour sessions spread throughout Parts 1 – 2 and all modules are delivered as a half or full day session. Classroom materials will be made available in advance on Moodle, the College's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), along with tools for student self-study, project monitoring and self-assessment

## 6. Assessment and feedback

### Assessment

There are three formal points of assessment in the MRes RCA. Parts 1 and 2 will be assessed through coursework. Students will be asked to submit a portfolio of individual unit assignments, evidence of peer and tutor feedback and a reflective statement that provides a summation of intellectual, technical and professional development. Part 3 – the Personal Research Project – will be assessed through a written submission and an oral examination of at least 30 minutes duration.

The three Parts are equally weighted. Students who successfully complete Part 1 will be eligible for the award of *Postgraduate Certificate in Research Methods*. Students who successfully complete Parts 1 & 2 will be eligible for the award of *Postgraduate Diploma in Research Methods*. Students who fail Part 1 or Part 2 will be given the opportunity to resubmit within a month. Students who fail their Personal Research Project will be required to resubmit their project within three-months.

**Information regarding individual assessments will be included in the Unit Descriptors and will be available to students at the beginning of the academic year.**

## 7. What award can I get?

To be awarded an RCA MRes degree you need to gain 180 credits at level 7 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). This will involve successfully completing all units. If you fail a unit at the first attempt, you will be offered an opportunity to resit the unit. If you are successful, you will be awarded the credits for that unit. If you are unsuccessful, you cannot progress further in your programme.

Exit awards:

If you have gained at least 60 credits at level 7 of the FHEQ, you may be eligible for the exit award of Postgraduate Certificate.

If you have gained at least 120 credits at level 7 of the FHEQ, you may be eligible for the exit award of Postgraduate Diploma.

An exit award is a final award from the College and cannot be rescinded. For more detailed information about the College's assessment, progression and awards policies see the Regulations.

## 8. Admissions

### **Cross-College requirements**

#### Academic Entry Requirements

Candidates 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 College's 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.

#### Portfolio

All applicants are required to submit a portfolio as part of the application process. A portfolio is a

showcase of an applicant's work as an artist or designer and can be made up of images, videos or writing examples. The portfolio helps us to better understand the applicant and allows them to show evidence of their ability and motivation to undertake a given programme.

Each programme is looking for different things in a portfolio; each Head of Programme provides specific advice on portfolio requirements in the online application system. We advise prospective students to consider these requirements carefully before submitting their application.

### Applicant Qualities

Generally, we are looking for applicants to demonstrate their:

- creativity, imagination and innovation;
- ability to articulate the intentions of the work;
- intellectual engagement in areas relevant to the work;
- technical skills appropriate to the work;
- potential to benefit from the programme and achieve MA standards overall.

### English Language

Applicants who are not a national of a majority English-speaking country will need to demonstrate their English language proficiency. The College accepts a range of English language qualifications. The full list can be seen at <https://www.rca.ac.uk/studying-at-the-rca/apply/entrance-requirements/english-language-requirements/>

Applicants are exempt from this requirement if they have received a 2.1 degree or above from a university in a majority English-speaking nation within the last two years.

If a student would need a Tier 4 visa to study at the RCA, they will also need to meet the Home Office's minimum requirements for entry clearance.

### Admission Process

Applications must be made directly to the College through our online application portal: <https://www.rca.ac.uk/studying-at-the-rca/apply/application-process/ma-application-process/>

Upon completion of that first stage of the application process, candidates will be invited to submit a portfolio of their work, a 300-word statement of intent and a video communicating clearly their motivations, personal interests and why they are pursuing a Masters degree at the Royal College of Art. These materials are reviewed by members of the programme team who will communicate an academic decision to the College Registry, who manage the process of offer-making in line with the College's recruitment targets. In some cases, where the programme team is not able to make an admission decision based solely upon the work submitted by the applicant, we may invite the candidate to undertake an interview with us.

Applications are considered chronologically by date and time of final portfolio submission. Whilst a

programme still has vacancies, successful candidates will be made an offer of a place. Once a programme becomes full, subsequent successful applicants will be placed on a waiting list, and may be made a firm offer should a place become available for them.

### **Programme-Specific requirements**

Candidates should have a good first degree in a related subject. We welcome applications from students of all ages, and view both prior academic and professional experience as valuable.

Specific advice on programme portfolio requirements is provided by the Head of Programme in the online application system. Please consult the College website for further information on programme-specific admission and portfolio requirements:

<https://www.rca.ac.uk/study/schools/mres-degree/>