



## Programme Specification

### 1. General information

<b>Programme title:</b>	Design Products
<b>Award:</b>	MA
<b>Qualification Framework level:</b>	Level 7
<b>School/Department or equivalent:</b>	Design
<b>Campus location(s):</b>	Battersea
<b>Total UK credits:</b>	180
<b>Date valid from/to</b>	2022-23

### 2. Programme Philosophy

#### **Programme Philosophy**

Design Products explores new terrain for designing products aiming to evolve new design disciplines and practices. We question 'what is a product?' and the assumption of adding products to uncover critical questioning to inform cutting edge creative practices for designing better futures. Our programme ethos focuses on a range of ideas for exploring these new areas for product design practice including design subtraction, multi-species design, circularity, questions for action, products delimited, design doing, design justice and decolonising design. We anticipate that these areas will evolve and adapt year-to-year.

We work in collaboration with industry but also explore new locations and relationships for designing products: the experiences and impacts they generate whether these are design interventions or working with start-ups, governments, or global agencies. We measure the success of our design impacts against the United Nations Sustainability Development Goal's and the design territory of products within systems.

Learning will develop during the programme through terms 1 and 2 via a series of short projects focussed on experimentation and developing a strong and adaptive personal creative process building a portfolio of projects culminating in the Independent Research Project in term 3.

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

#### **Programme aims**

- Explore a series of key future design agendas to uncover new terrain for Designing Products and practices from people to ecosystems;
- Experiment with positioning new and emerging technologies in advanced design practice;
- Facilitate the exploration of new disciplinary directions;
- Critically question and appraise current approaches to Designing Products and the definition of a product;
- Develop an approach to Design Products which puts the understanding of impact from individual to social, multi-species and global at the heart of design activity.

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

**Upon successful completion of the programme, you will be expected to meet the requirements of both the College-wide Learning Outcomes and your programme-specific Learning Outcomes.**

#### College-Wide Learning Outcomes

You should be able to:

- Interrogate and articulate the intentions of your work in relation to the critical and conceptual context of your field(s) of study;
- Independently plan and produce work that is informed by developments at the forefront of your field(s) of study;
- Evaluate and critique the principles and methods of research in your field(s) of study, and apply these principles to your creative, professional and/or scholarly practice;
- Demonstrate originality in how you translate knowledge into practice;
- Communicate your creative, professional and/or scholarly practice to a non-specialist audience;
- Critically reflect on the likely public impact of your creative, professional and/or scholarly practice, and on your responsibilities as a practitioner;
- Define your professional ambitions and identify the challenges involved in meeting them.

#### Programme-Specific Learning Outcomes

- Locate your practices in relation to leading ideas in the field;
- Argue for how your own design practice is situated within the forefront of the discipline;
- Articulate the range of ethical issues when developing designs for advanced practice;
- Demonstrate ability to experiment with leading edge making practices;
- Understand, adapt, experiment, and deploy (proposals or) new technological solutions to advanced design challenges;
- Experiment, test and prove technologies across a range of appropriate mediums
- Demonstrate how your designs impact on the United Nations Sustainability Development Goals;
- Independently manage multiple requirements in delivering advanced practice projects;
- Clearly communicate concepts and creative process using a range of media, techniques and presentation formats.

#### 4. What will I learn?

##### Curriculum Map

Term 1	Term 2		Term 3
Locating Practice (15 credits)	Grand Challenge (15 credits)	School-wide elective (15 credits)	Independent Research Project (60 credits)
Experimental Design (30 credits)		Advanced Practice (15 credits)	
AcrossRCA (30 credits)			

##### Programme Structure

Unit Title	Term	Credit Value	Core or Elective?
Locating Practice	1	15	Core
Experimental Design	1	30	Core
AcrossRCA (College-wide unit)	1-2	30	Core
Grand Challenge (School-wide unit)	2	15	Core
School-wide elective	2	15	Elective
Advanced Practice	2	15	Core
Independent Research Project	3	60	Core

In the first term we help you locate their own practice at the forefront of the design products landscape (*Locating Practice*). This is supported by enhancing research skills and identifying additional technical and intellectual skills to develop new and improved design methods and approaches connecting research and making. *Experimental Design* allows you to expand the range and ambition of their design practice through various forms of experimentation to uncover new skills, methods and ideas. This unit covers a broad spectrum of experimentation from methods to materials, technology, making, manufacturing, futures, social and participatory.

The second term engages with *Advanced Practice* by deepening your own creative methods through specialist focus via elective programme platform options, based on programme ethos themes and School-wide electives. Programme specialist design input is delivered via platform electives in the *Advanced Practice* unit. You will also collaborate with other School of Design programme disciplines in a team-based School-wide *Grand Challenge* tackling a major emerging strategic design issue. There are also opportunities to take part in commercially sponsored projects in terms 2 and 3 depending on availability.

In the third term you will demonstrate that they can draw together learning from terms 1 and 2 by independently developing, managing and delivering a high-resolution advanced Design Products project (*Independent Research Project*). The emphasis here is showing how you have brought together skills, learning and design practices from across terms 1 and 2 to design and deliver a project that sits at the forefront of the design products landscape and enables the delivery of a design discourse that argues for the new design space within which it sits. The Independent Research Project (IRP) will be delivered through a supervision model, and it is expected that students will spend the majority of their time on personal study and making. We anticipate that students will have the option of completing term 3 (IRP) remotely or in their own studio/employment/placement/designer in residence subject to a satisfactory IRP proposal agreed in advance.

#### Grand Challenge (School-wide unit)

In **term 2** all School of Design students will participate in the *Grand Challenge*, School-wide unit. The aim of this unit is to connect and challenge all students in the School through the introduction of a 'wicked' design problem that requires a cross disciplinary approach to problem solving involving an external international scientific or industry partner (or both). This unit and lecture series has been hugely successful in connecting and disrupting disciplines, people, philosophies and approaches to design thinking whilst providing our student body with very unique networking opportunities.

#### AcrossRCA (College-wide unit)

Across **terms 1 and 2**, you will participate in **AcrossRCA**. This unit aims to support students to meet the challenges of a complex, uncertain and changing world by bringing them together to work collaboratively on a series of themed projects informed by expertise within and beyond the College. These projects will challenge you to use your intellect and imagination to address key cultural, social, environmental and economic challenges. In doing so, you will develop and reflect on the abilities required to translate knowledge into action, and help demonstrate the contribution that the creative arts can make to our understanding and experience of the world.

#### Independent Research Project

##### ***How the project will work***

You will be expected to apply to the programme with an initial major project proposal and then iterate this throughout terms 1 and 2 as the effect of learning shapes and improves practices,

methods and aims. The project will then be supported by targeted strategic supervisions from lecturers and support from technical resources.

### **What the College expectations are**

The College expectations are to deliver an opportunity and space for students to experiment in term 3 with the freedom to showcase their learning towards demonstrating mastery through an IRP project and related design discourse in the discipline of design products.

### **What access/support students require**

Occasional supervisory meetings with staff will take place with the aim of strategically focussing the project trajectory and how it aims to generate a design discourse for a new position in the field. In addition, we envisage a small number of structured peer reviews and seminars to enable learning and progression across the group. In terms of making. We aim to offer a blended model for students who would like to complete the IRP in their own studio, employment, placement, designer in residence or online. This would be subject to an IRP proposal and arrangements agreed in advance.

## **5. How will I learn?**

You will learn through a range of teaching typologies in each unit including briefing, critique, exhibition, group tutorial, individual tutorial, lectures, seminars, demonstrations, workshops, peer reviews and independent study. Each unit will comprise of one or more projects which will develop learning up to the assessment point.

We will formally assess learning once in each unit with a formative and summative assessment. A critique or demonstration will be used for either the formative or summative assessment with asynchronous assessment methods including explanatory short video, desktop display, portfolio, visual presentation, and demonstration used for the other assessment point. The formative assessment will provide you with feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of their work-to-date and recommend strategies for improving learning to enhance the outcome of the summative assessment.

You will submit a range of formats depending on the unit project briefs ranging from 2D drawings, sketches and diagrams to test rigs, proof of principle, demonstrators, simulations, prototypes and models.

## **6. Assessment and feedback**

### **Regulations**

Regulations for assessment and progression can be found [here](#). Please familiarise yourself with these.

### **Unit assessment**

The programme uses a range of assessment methods, including synchronous, such as:

- **Critique** – a group review of work led by one or more academics;
- **Demonstration** – students will perform or demonstrate their design or intervention to prove its qualities in relation to the design brief and learning outcomes.

We will also compliment these with asynchronous assessment methods including:

- **Explanatory short video** - a 3-5 minute video which functions as a stand-alone pitch for the final design proposal;
- **Desktop display** – a display of project material curated to explain the design proposal and learning journey;
- **Portfolio** – a document containing a presented set of unit projects illustrating a series of design proposal and highlighting learning outcomes;
- **Visual presentation** – a stand-alone graphical presentation which can sit alongside a designed product, artifact or intervention that explains the design intent and design discourse;
- **Exhibition** – a public dissemination of the design project used for interactively testing reactions to the proposal.

You can expect a range of formal feedback on your work including:

- **Tutorials** – individual verbal feedback on a project or stage;
- **Group Tutorials** – shared feedback on work using exemplars and learning from the progress of others;
- **Seminars** – thematic investigation of an important Design Products concept where conversation and advice can be applied back to own work;
- **Critiques** - staff will give verbal feedback, question, and critique projects.
- **Demonstrations** - following a demonstration, students will be given succinct feedback on areas to improve and highlights of successful features;
- **Assessment notes** - following assessment project overview notes will be provided to complement verbal and other feedback delivered during the unit to highlight strengths and weaknesses towards meeting the learning objectives;
- **Workshops** – conceptual and applied practical skill sessions where verbal feedback on own learning and adaptation of skills will be given.

Throughout all of the units you will be expected to keep notes of comments and verbal feedback providing an aid to reflective learning. Informal feedback may also occur in peer reviews and on an ad-hoc basis.

## 7. What award can I get?

To be awarded an RCA MA 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 at resit 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 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

<b>Cross-College requirements</b>
N/A
<b>Programme-Specific requirements</b>