



1. General Information

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

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	2019/20

2. Philosophy of the Programme

In Information Experience Design [IED], we design experiences to communicate information, creating installations and interventions using a range of senses, modes and media, including sound and moving image. We approach social and technological systems critically, and work across art and design, grounded in theories and research methods from science and philosophy.

Creative practitioners today can no longer afford to be constrained by traditional specialisms and outdated definitions of art, design, science and technology. IED thus takes a post-digital and post-disciplinary approach, working across these areas, undertaking advanced research and practice on the intellect, the senses and the imagination, using a wide range of digital and physical media, materials and methods. IED looks beyond the object, product and screen to content, context and concept; and beyond binary concepts such as human, artificial and natural, aiming for individual and societal transformation.

IED is about information and experience, not technology. We use investigative and experiential research through a range of methods to create transformative, immersive and multisensory experiences. IED develops a mind-set as well as a skillset. No specific technical skills are required; applicants come from diverse backgrounds in design, science, fine art, technology and the humanities, with a common critical interest in research, materials and making. Our pathways in Sound Design, Moving Image Design, and



Experimental Design are interrelated, focused around different ways of approaching IED's core aim of transforming information into experiences.

3. Educational Aims of the Programme

Overall, the programme aims to develop students' powers of analysis and critical judgement, to inform technological and/or aesthetic innovations. Underpinning this is a well-developed philosophical understanding of relevant subject areas, student work and its context. Students should be able to articulate their ideas and intentions, communicating them, with cultural sensitivity, to a wide audience.

Specifically, the programme aims to:

- Be the leading programme of its kind in the world in terms of practice and research;
- Produce confident practitioners with expert understanding of contemporary art & design practice relevant to the needs of society, with a holistic understanding of the social and environmental implications of their actions;
- Create new academic relationships with others doing similar work, research and study;
- Maintain an atmosphere within which students feel free to experiment, and to question existing practice, but to do so from the position of being well-informed;
- Help students develop an understanding of research and its relation to practice, and to make judgments that are critically informed both aesthetically and professionally;
- Encourage students to develop the social skills which are increasingly necessary in designing informational experiences; and
- Prepare students technically for professional life by ensuring that they are fully acquainted with the processes of generation, reproduction and distribution of information and experiences; and to retain a balance between new and traditional media and processes.



4. Intended Learning Outcomes of the Programme

Able to:	A. Intellectual Engagement
A1.	Identify principles and methodologies that enhance how to meet contemporary information experience design challenges
A2.	Demonstrate a clear understanding of how to create meaning across an experience
A3.	Translate abstract issues into tangible design proposals, grounding projects with real-world social, cultural, technological, and economic issues
A4.	Engage in intellectual and creative research in order to develop self-awareness, and to contextualise your work
A5	Evidence and articulate the intellectual processes involved in the production and communication of your work

Able to:	B. Technical Skills
B1.	Engage with relevant tools, materials and processes from functional, aesthetic, commercial and critical perspectives
B2.	Employ the necessary skills for communicating and testing ideas through appropriate media
B3.	Identify and exploit the aesthetic and functional possibilities of different tools and materials

Able to:	C. Professional Development
C1.	Develop an individual design approach that relates to the context within which you wish to practice
C2.	Develop imaginative and meaningful ways of involving people in the design process
C3.	Present work clearly and engagingly, in ways that are appropriate to the audience
C4.	Demonstrate an ability to work as part of a team in different roles and contexts, identify when and how to access expertise in realising your design ambitions, manage ongoing relationships with collaborators
C5.	Take responsibility for developing project briefs and managing time and resources effectively.
C6.	Contribute new developments, confidently and imaginatively, in information experience design



C7	Participate thoughtfully and professionally when working and collaborating with others
C8	Communicate and present your work using traditional or contemporary media, and/or public facing events to a relevant audience outside of the College environment

5. Programme Structure and Curriculum

Programme Overview
<p>Year One</p> <p>Aligning with the School-wide academic framework, the main practical work takes place in School-wide Electives in Terms 1 and 2. The Informed Practice unit runs alongside, providing a grounding in relevant theory and methods, which are put into practice in projects where students engage directly with themes and frameworks for practice. Term 3 enables students to focus primarily on dissertations. Linked seminars are held across all three terms, with core curriculum and skills being front-loaded in Term 1. Each student has a Personal Tutor for the year, who organises regular tutorials including at least one in-depth individual tutorial per student per term.</p> <p>Year Two</p> <p>Through the Experiential Research unit, Year 2 students explore a chosen topic in depth, to propel them into their self-directed practical work, with Work in Progress show as a key milestone. In the Design Project unit, they set their own brief and timetable with their Personal Tutor, presenting their project in the Final Exam. They have a Personal Tutor for the year, and regular tutorials continue as before. Thematic frameworks help to maintain their progress as Y2s specialise, and there are occasional commercial or other projects offered.</p>
Critical and Historical Studies
<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 & 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 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.</p> <p>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</p>

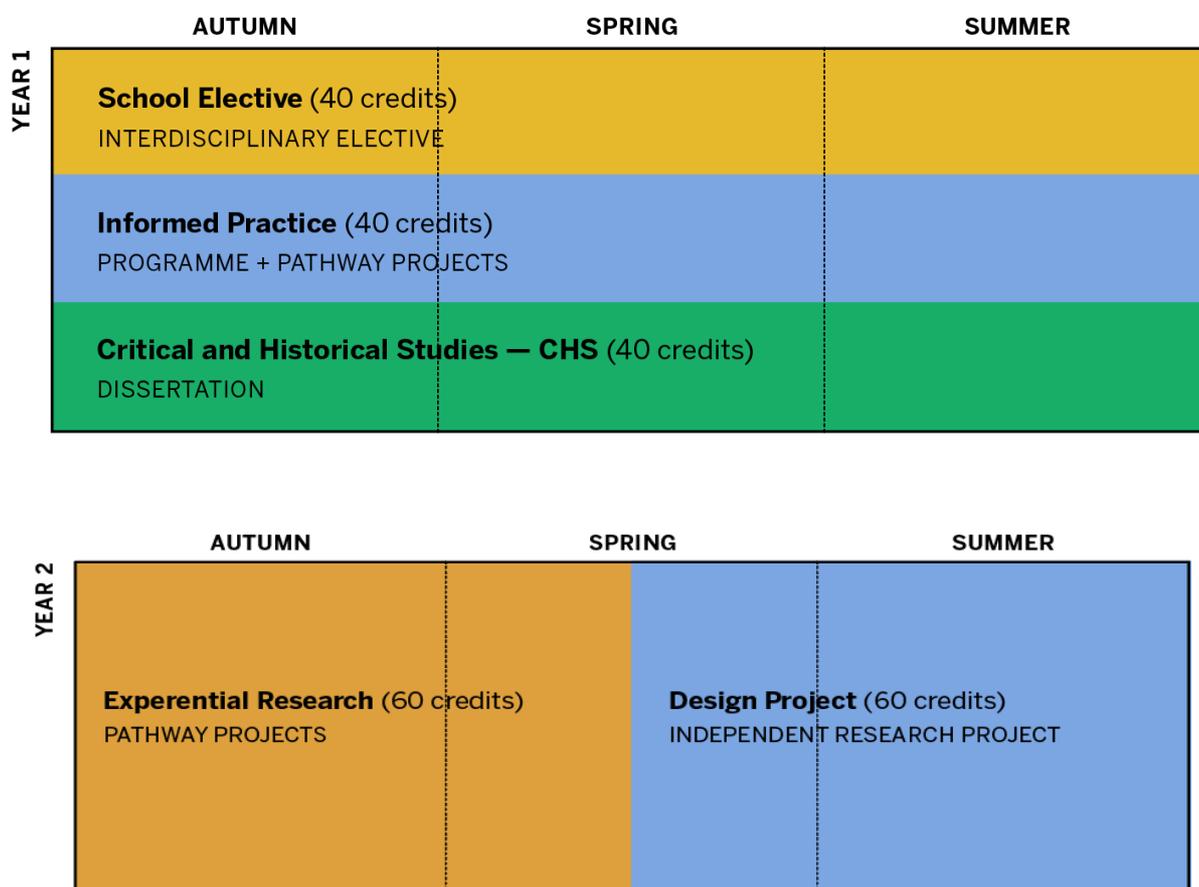


between 6,000 – 10,000 words in length – this is a major piece of work and you will be not be able to submit for the Final Examination until you have passed this assessment.

Programme Units and Credit Ratings

- School Elective, 40 credits
- Informed Practice, 40 credits
- Critical and Historical Studies (CHS), 40 credits
- Experiential Research, 60 credits
- Design Project, 60 credits

Programme Curriculum Map



6. Learning and Teaching Methods

Tutorials

Students should expect a minimum of two in-depth tutorials each term, in which discussion will encompass all the student’s current work and development. Tutorials are an opportunity to talk at length with the Personal Tutor, in private if necessary.



Tutorials offer the opportunity for students to talk about the work being done or planned, and for their tutor to offer advice and critique.

Several themes underlie most tutorials and will be returned to again and again, regardless of the nature of the work. The first relates to the intention of the work as a piece of communication – it is one of the tutor’s concerns that the student’s professional future is considered; they will relate the student’s work to their own professional experience, and will criticise and advise based on that experience.

The student’s relationship with the tutor is based on discussion and collaboration rather than authority. The tutor doesn’t expect the student to follow their advice slavishly, or even expect the student to agree with their criticism.

Personal work plays a valuable part in developing professional work, so students are encouraged to maintain this, and this work will be a part of tutorial discussions. The individual vision of each student, and the intensity with which they can be focused on a given problem without becoming over-indulgent, is very important – it is an essential ingredient, in our view, of work as a way of life rather than simply as an occupation.

Whilst a student might decide not to follow specific aspects of their tutor’s advice, the tutor will expect continuing progress from the student, regarding the quantity and quality of the work produced. One thing we don’t accept is lack of commitment.

Projects

Projects help develop students’ awareness of current issues, expressive capacity, social responsibility, and conceptual thinking. Students develop their own approach, in small groups or individually.

Projects in all three IED pathways are strongly focused on production and experimentation with craftsmanship, multiple senses and modes of communication, materials and techniques. We take a systems approach to topics, zooming in and out of phenomena to develop close and distant readings. We also maintain strong links with multiple fields and cultures.

In Year 1, electives include one or more project briefs. Informed Practice provides a series of additional projects from which students can choose. Alongside these, and additionally in the third term are occasional additional projects, commissions or competitions, sometimes in collaboration with other programmes and/or external collaborators.

Year 2 is dominated by the research, design and construction of a final major project which serves as a key point of assessment followed by exhibition in the Final Show. Experimental Research starts the year with projects to help frame and ground students’ own practice.

Elective Projects

These projects are designed to focus on particular issues or themes, and – by limiting the number of students working on a specific project – to enable a deeper level of debate and critique. These elective projects may make use of the programme’s industrial/professional and academic contacts; a project may be built around an actual commission, or designed with a specific end use, such as an exhibition or publication.



Workshops

In addition to the workshop spaces maintained by the College's technical services, timetabled workshops are run by IED staff, open to all first and second year students. These have previously included beginner to advanced topics in programming and electronics, graphic design, sound recording, editing, synthesis and sampling, drawing and sketching, film and video scripting, storyboarding, shooting and editing, means of display such as projection and projection mapping.

7. Assessment

General

Regulations for assessment and progression can be found in the College Regulations. Your progress through the course is reviewed informally through tutorials on a continuous basis. Students are assessed by two formal examinations, Interim and Final.

Continuous Assessment

Continuous assessment enables the student's performance and progress to be understood and accounted for through a wide variety of academic contact points, recognising that students are able to perform in different ways and through different means and aspects of the curriculum while still achieving the requisite performance standards. This assessment is validated through a structure that ensures that student performance is evaluated from a range of perspectives and by a range of different tutors who are able to triangulate their experience of the student and enable parity of assessment across the cohort.

The School Elective and Information Practice units in Year 1 and Experiential Research units in Year 2 are assessed wholly or in part through a process of continuous assessment. This relies on staff who have had experience of the student coming together at the end of the unit in a Unit Assessment Meeting, chaired by the Head of Programme or a Senior Tutor, to review the student's self-evaluation and to share their experience of the student in relation to the relevant learning outcomes.

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 involves a Viva-Voce, which takes place in the final term of a programme of study

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.

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.

8. Admissions

Cross-College Requirements

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

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. Work must also demonstrate a maturity and readiness to undertake postgraduate studies.

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 Academic Board for Concessions and Discipline (ABCD) is satisfied that the applicant has the ability to pursue the programme of study successfully.

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.

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

Programme-Specific Requirements



No specific technical skills are required by applicants; rather, students come from diverse backgrounds in design, science, fine art, engineering and technology, with a common critical interest in data, research, design and technology. The quality of the student will be demonstrated by the standard of a portfolio of work and qualified by the award of an Honours degree in the subject or appropriate associated subjects.

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.