

Programme Specification

Awarding Body	University of the Arts London (UAL)
Teaching Institution	London College of Communication
Final Award	MA Interaction Design Communication
Relevant QAA Benchmark Statement	Art & Design
Date of production/revision	July 2016

Master of Arts Interaction Design Communication is a full-time (30 weeks for PG Dip, 45 weeks for MA) practice-led design course that investigates both the theory and practice of interaction design in a broad, speculative and critical context. Its unique approach is that it explores interaction design as a specific form of design with particular communication design effects. This means the course addresses an expanded field of interaction, design and communication practice affording opportunities for you to develop rigorous experimental practice.

This approach equips you with both the intellectual abilities and practical skills to propose and produce innovative design solutions rooted in research, iterative design practice and applied contextual understanding.

With a focus on synthesising thought through rigorous design prototyping (making), digital processes and user perspectives the course provides an opportunity for experimental practice in an area of design that increasingly explores the intersection of the physical and digital domains.

The course places you in a position to work across digital and interactive communication design, interaction design for products services, data environments and innovation processes for networked products services. The course is as interested in questions just as much as answers and can also lead to further design research at MPhil/PhD level as well as to advanced self-directed experimental design practice.

The design of the course meets the terms and conditions for the award of the title of Master of Arts Interaction Design Communication / Postgraduate Diploma Interaction Design Communication as approved by the University of the Arts London.

Course Aims

This course aims to:

- Provide you with the opportunity to develop as a professional practitioner within the expanded field of Interaction Design Communication.
- Provide you with an understanding of industry in order you understand the

specialised industrial context of practice in this field.

- Develop your ability to employ rigour in the analysis, synthesis and evaluation of Interaction Design Communication theory and practice, through the completion of a major project.
- Enable you to solve problems with self-direction and originality, and to act independently in planning and implementing Interaction Design Communication projects.
- Provide you with the opportunity to produce speculative design solutions that use critical ideas to propose areas of innovative design practice.
- Provide you with the opportunity to develop your specialism within the expanded field of Interaction Design Communication.
- Enable you to prototype digital and analogue design artefacts using processes widely used in industry and practice.
- Enable you to communicate complex ideas from critical and user centred perspectives to advocate a particular direction.
- Enable you to ask critical questions of established systems and processes and products.
- Develop your ability to work collaboratively and express complex ideas to diverse audiences.

Course Outcomes

The outcomes that you will have demonstrated upon completion of the course, are (the applicable university marking criteria are in brackets at the end of each course outcome):

- Produce innovative project work within the expanded field of Interaction Design Communication across the physical and digital domains. **(Research, Analysis, Subject Knowledge, Experimentation, Technical Competence, Communication and Presentation, Personal and Professional Development, Collaborative and / or Independent Professional Working)**
- Demonstrate an understanding of the expanded field of Interaction Design Communication through advanced practice. **(Research, Analysis, Subject Knowledge, Experimentation, Technical Competence, Communication and Presentation)**
- Use relevant digital and analogue design prototyping platforms and processes to realise projects. **(Research, Analysis, Subject Knowledge, Experimentation, Technical Competence)**

- Understand and use a range of software and media tools to communicate complex ideas. **(Experimentation, Technical Competence, Collaborative and / or Independent Professional Working)**
- Demonstrate an understanding of critical ideas that frame experimental practice – through practice and written reflection. **(Research, Analysis, Subject Knowledge, Experimentation)**
- Present complex ideas to diverse audiences. **(Personal and Professional Development, Collaborative and / or Independent Professional Working)**
- Demonstrate an understanding of the value of Interaction Design Communication methodologies in framing design questions and proposing design solutions. **(Subject Knowledge, Communication and Presentation, Collaborative and / or Independent Professional Working)**
- Articulate user perspectives within complex design processes. **(Research, Analysis, Subject Knowledge)**
- Work collaboratively to achieve research and design goals. **(Personal and Professional Development, Collaborative and / or Independent Professional Working)**

Learning and Teaching Methods:

The above course objectives are taught using the following learning and teaching methods:

- Lectures/large group learning: the main areas of theory and its practical applications will be covered in a planned series of tutor-led sessions.
- Workshop & seminar learning: practical sessions that will enable the student to experiment with a skill or technique relevant to the area of study. Students will be able to share their understanding with others and obtain guidance from lecturers to identify solutions to practical or theoretical problems.
- Academic tutorials: individual assistance is provided by lecturers to assist students in their understanding and practical application of theory and skills. This is important for clarifying the requirements for assessed work. These tutorials also specifically support the development of the thesis and project proposal element of phase three.
- Self-directed learning: independent study undertaken by the student to research, write and prepare assignments and to extend their knowledge and understanding. This can be undertaken at home or using college facilities.
- Outside speakers and visits: these provide students with a perspective of contemporary issues and recent events.
- Assessed assignments: these assess the student's attainment of the learning

outcomes and develop the key skills that will form an important aspect of their learning. The completion of assignment briefs are therefore regarded as a method.

Assessment Methods:

The above course objectives are assessed using the following assessment methods:

- Practical project work and computer based activities
- Prepared writing i.e. academic reports, essays etc.
- Responses to case studies
- Oral presentations
- Personal presentations of prepared work
- Simulations and role plays
- Workshop based activities
- Written research projects
- The creation of a portfolio of collection of work, which may contain a number of different activities i.e. creative artefacts with supporting process documentation and/or reports and evaluations.

Reference Points

The following reference points were used in designing the course:

- The College Learning and Teaching Strategy
- The College Assessment Strategy
- The UAL and College approach to Personal and Professional Development
- Feedback from current employers in the interaction design industry
- The Learning and Teaching policies of the University of the Arts London
- University of the Arts London Level Descriptors
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
- Art and Design subject benchmark statement
- Feedback from current students
- Consultation with staff team

Programme Summary

Programme structures, features, units, credit and award requirements:

Each course is divided into units, which are credit-rated. The minimum unit size is 20 credits, with the maximum unit size being 60 credits.

The MA course structure involves 6 units, totalling 180 credits. If you are unable to continue or decide to exit the course, there are two possible exit awards; a Postgraduate Certificate will be awarded on successful completion of the first 60 credits and a Postgraduate Diploma will be awarded on successful completion of

the first 120 credits.

In order to be awarded a Master Degree you must successfully complete 180 credits. The final award classification is comprised of the marks from the final major project unit only.

Please see the course diagram below for a full break down of the unit structure.

Distinctive features of the course:

Special features of this Course include:

- **The Expanded Field of Interaction, Design and Communication:** The subject mix of interaction design, speculative design, critical design and communication design is a distinctive feature of the course that enables students to work across these three domains in a highly fluid way that is representative of contemporary design and media practice. This builds on LCC's position as a leader in the development of communication design as a discipline and represents an opportunity to study and expanded field of interaction, design and communication.
- **Applied Critical Thought:** The integrated approach of the course to critical thinking provides you with the opportunity to work with critical ideas in an applied design context – for example psycho-geographic practice as empirical research or engaging with other critical theories of space to generate user perspectives – this ensures that ideation processes take on both the macro as well as micro opportunities for innovation and speculation crucial to building a portfolio of highly engaged work.
- **Design Prototyping (making):** The course introduces you to prototyping methodology through a range of innovative and contemporary processes and platforms including Arduino for physical computing and electronics prototyping to the more quick and dirty processes of paper prototyping and video prototyping. These allow you to feedback understanding quickly into a highly iterative design process. This enables you to understand issues of scope, function and outcome from multiple perspectives.
- **Portfolio Building:** The practice-based nature of the course is derived from the understanding that the primary tool for successful graduate progression in this field is the portfolio of work. The course aims to give students the opportunity to build a strong portfolio of critically agile work over the course that will enable them to progress to their chosen destinations. These projects may manifest themselves in the portfolio as outcomes such as installations, films, web projects, apps or other design artefacts or prototypes.
- **Low Tech / High Tech:** You will connect past and future, physical and digital, learn how to use a real world approach with computing and computational thinking in the real world. This innovative and experimental approach is driven by

course staff who founded the cross institutional LT/HT community of practice. Members are involved in exploring practice with technologies involving textile, sound, light, electronics and programming and finding commonalities in practice and engaging in new processes where they combine both Low Tech / High Tech approaches. This community provides opportunities for you to engage with related practice across UAL colleges with other members specifically at CSM and CCW.

- **Collaboration in Research and Practice:** The course requires that you work in groups to explore critical ideas and produce design outcomes collaboratively. This is particularly true in the first phase of the course and is crucial in building your ability to work in multi-skilled teams. You will also be expected to keep a weblog of your research and practice to ensure that your peers can develop a boarder understanding of the practice of the group and so you take responsibility for your ideas in the social context of digital culture.
- **Course Staff:** You will work with highly qualified and experienced educators and practitioners in design who deliver the course and who retain close involvement with the industry, continuing their professional practice and, engaging in scholarly research at an international level. In addition, there will be a programme of visiting experts from industry and academia.
- **Self-direction:** One of the differences you will experience between working at postgraduate level and working at undergraduate level is that you are expected to timetable and manage your own learning to a much greater extent at postgraduate level. Your success or failure on the course will depend to a great extent on how rigorously and responsibly you take this self-direction and how well you respond to tutorial advice. The level of self-management required of you will increase throughout the course.
- **Studio Culture:** You will benefit from allocated studio space equipped with both creative IT and a physical computing lab. This facilitates a studio environment highly aligned with professional practice within the discipline. This studio is co-located within the Interactive and Visual Communication Programme ensuring you have access to a community of practice and broad resource base with aligned courses in games design, animation and visual communication.
- **UAL & LCC:** The University of the Arts London and the London College of Communication maintains strong industry links and delivers a world-class environment within which to study Interaction Design Communication. You can access resources ranging from our Stanley Kubrick archive or our industry standard production resources in addition to the largest specialist library within the university. The School of Design currently has links with the BBC, Sennep, All of Us, IDEO the V&A, Creative Review, Gamesys, Channel 4, Eye Magazine, Imperial War Museum, Tate, Bloomberg, Pentagram, Samsung and is the host of London's first Maker Faire. It is this environment within the School of Design at LCC that distinguishes the course and ensures that you will benefit from this long established network and move with confidence into your chosen field.

Recruitment and Admissions

Admission Policy/Selection Criteria:

Applicants are expected to have an honours degree, preferably in a related subject. However we do not preclude candidates who have graduated from other less strongly aligned disciplines. This said the course has a particular aim to appeal to communication designers that are interested in augmenting their experience (both educational and professional) by exploring these new and emerging areas of design practice. This group of students is well placed to take advantage of these areas due to their ability to produce convincing mass communication in speculative areas.

The course is particularly interested in students who have a critical understanding of how technologies and digital culture are affecting design practice and students who are keen to work in the physical realm with network digital systems and in areas of design research and practice that challenges preconceptions. Applicants should be keen to develop new arenas for design practice and insight through experimental and critical practice.

Although not an entry requirement, you should be comfortable with some basic coding (some i.e. HTML CSS) in order to communicate ideas with colleagues, although strong creative experience in this area is an advantage. We will however introduce you to various coding languages and design prototyping platforms during the course but expect that individuals will develop their individual skills base within specific project work.

Entry Requirements:

An Applicant will normally be considered for admission if they:

- have an honours degree, preferably in a related subject. This educational level may be demonstrated by:
- possession of the qualification named above;
- possession of equivalent qualifications;
- prior experiential learning, the outcome of which can be demonstrated to be equivalent to formal qualifications otherwise required or;
- a combination of formal qualifications and experiential learning which, taken together, can be demonstrated to be equivalent to formal qualifications otherwise required

Language Requirements (International/EU)

- Applicants whose first language is not English must demonstrate their competence in English to a minimum IELTS Level 6.5, achieving no less than 5.5 in each of the four skills, for entry on to an MA course by the production of an IELTS Certificate or evidence of an equivalent level of achievement.
- If your first language is not English you should check you have achieved the correct IELTS level in English. Further information is available on the Language Requirements page: <http://www.arts.ac.uk/study-at-ual/language-centre/language-requirements/>

- International Applicants – visit the Support for International Students page <http://www.arts.ac.uk/lcc/courses/support-for-international-students/> for contact details for International Admissions

Other entry routes

We also welcome applicants such as mature students who do not have formal qualifications but may have relevant experience. Students applying to this course will be expected to demonstrate a specific interest in this area of study and should have a commitment to engaging with interaction design practice. In such cases students applying on the basis of their previous experience or who wish to enter the course with through Accreditation of Experiential Learning (AEL) or Accreditation of Certificated Learning (ACL) processes and will be guided by the admissions staff on the AP(E)L processes.

Deferred entry

For Home/EU applicants, the Course Leader will determine whether deferred places are available for the course. If you wish to defer your place, it is advisable to indicate this on your application form and/or discuss this with the admissions team and course leader before/after applying at the earliest opportunity. In all cases, deferred places will only be held for one year.

International applicants are normally permitted to defer entry to any programme of study for one year only, after which they will be asked to re-apply.

Admission Procedures

The selection procedures for the course adhere to the Equal Opportunities policy of the University of the Arts London.

All applications will be considered by the course team and offers will be made based upon the following selection criteria:

- Application forms are available on request with supporting information about the course.
- Completed applications to be accompanied by appropriate certificates and evidence of all professional activity paid or unpaid.
- All potential candidates are interviewed. In the Interview, Candidates are expected to present a portfolio of design and media related work, or relevant visual, written or published work. Candidates also need to demonstrate knowledge of the worlds of design and media (including familiarity with key current software packages) and engage in critical discussion.

Portfolio advice

All applicants must submit a Portfolio of work together with the Application Form whether they are in the UK or resident overseas. Applications will be shortlisted and those candidates will be invited for interview (telephone interviews can also be arranged if you live outside the UK).

All applicants will be expected to submit an electronic portfolio on CD or via a website with their application form. The portfolio should contain some examples of

design/media work either time-based or interactive and visual work that has been made in response to a design brief from either education or professional practice. The portfolio can be supplied as a PDF with links to web projects and media assets. It should contain a minimum of 5 projects and self-initiated projects are also encouraged.

Important: Project proposal (400-800 words)

All candidates will be expected to outline an idea for their major project in the application. This should describe the area of interest - the field of study and the particular focus of their intended project. This should include an overview of how you intend to go about producing the project - the methodology. It is important to recognise that these ideas will inevitably develop and change across the year of study on the course and only serve to inform your application at this stage.

Minimum UAL Entry Requirements

To see the University's Regulations on Admissions, please go to the following link: <http://www.arts.ac.uk/study-at-ual/academic-regulations/course-regulations/1-admissions/>

Course Diagram

Course Diagram MA Interaction Design Communication																																																														
Autumn Term (Term 1 11 Weeks)											Spring Term (Term 2 10 weeks)										Summer Term (Term 3 10 weeks)										Undergraduate Summer Period (14 weeks)						Autumn Term (Term 4 11 weeks)																									
week 1	week 2	week 3	week 4	week 5	week 6	week 7	week 8	week 9	week 10	week 11	week 12	week 13	week 14	week 15	week 16	week 17	week 18	week 19	week 20	week 21	week 22	week 23	week 24	week 25	week 26	week 27	week 28	week 29	week 30	week 31	week 32	week 33	week 34	week 35	week 36							week 37	week 38	week 39	week 40	week 41	week 42	week 43	week 44	week 45	week 46	week 47										
Freshers Week	1.1 Theories and Technologies of Interaction Design (40 credits)										Christmas Break											Easter Break											Undergraduate Summer Period																													
	1.2 Research Practice and Human Centered Design (20 credits)																																																													
												2.1 Interaction Futures and Speculative Design (20 credits)											2.1 Interaction Futures and Speculative Design (20) cont'd																	Induction Week																						
												2.2 Physical Computing and Design Prototyping (20 credits)											2.2 Physical Computing and Design Prototyping (20) cont'd																																							
										2.3 Collaborative Unit (20 credits)																										PG Summer Break Independent Study / Writing Up Period										PG Overlap Period with new year intake Sept 2016																
																																				4.1 Final Major Project & Thesis (60 credits)																4.1 FMP & Thesis (60) cont'd										PG Shows

S = Summative Assessment Point (Your Assignment Brief will give you details on the deadline date, time and how to hand in your assignment)
Formative assessment points will be indicated by your tutor in your unit handbooks or assignment brief