

Programme Specification

Every taught course of study leading to a UAL award is required to have a Programme Specification. This summarises the course aims, learning outcomes, teaching, learning and assessment methods, and course structure. Programme Specifications are developed through course validation and are formally approved by UAL Validation Sub Committee (VSC). They are available to prospective students through the course web page, and must be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure currency of information (for example, following any modifications or local developments).

Awarding Body	University of the Arts London (UAL)
Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB)	N/A
Teaching Institution	London College of Communication
Final Award	MA Interaction Design Communication
Length of Course	15 Months
Date of production/revision	August 2017

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 led 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

The aims of the course identify the rationale underlying the student's educational experience and own personal achievement from studying on the course and its affect upon the student's long term achievement and career.

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 course enables the student to demonstrate the following subject knowledge and understanding, intellectual and academic skills, practical subject skills, key attributes and transferable skills. Each outcome should be detailed below.

- 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:

Provide a summary of the relevant learning and teaching methods for the course (i.e. lectures, seminars, independent learning).

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.

Scheduled Learning and Teaching

This is the percentage of your time spent in timetabled learning and teaching. You are expected to study for 1800 hours over the duration of the course; below is the amount of time which is timetabled activity. The rest of your learning time will be self-directed, independent study.

30%

Assessment Methods:

Provide a summary of the relevant assessment methods for the course.

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

List any policies, descriptors, initiatives or benchmark statements used in the development of the course.

The following reference points were used in designing the course:

- 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:

Identify and list those characteristics that distinguish your course from other, similar courses. Refer to both the student experience on the course and future possible career opportunities.

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.

Selection Criteria

Sufficient prior knowledge and experience of and/or potential in a specialist subject area to be able to successfully complete the programme of study and have an academic or professional background in a relevant subject.

Also to show a willingness to work as a team player, good language skills in reading, writing and speaking, the ability to work independently and be self-motivated.

Critical knowledge of and enthusiasm for the subject area and capacity for research-led design, intellectual inquiry and reflective thought through: contextual awareness (professional, cultural, social, historical); evidence of research, analysis, development and evaluation (from previous academic study and employment) and a grounded understanding of the world of sonic, visual and networked culture and be able to engage in and contribute to critical discussion.

In the project proposal a description of the area of interest, 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 and the methodology.

Portfolio should be conceptual and research based, you must show your thinking and making process and a curious nature to explore, test and experiment.

A willingness to work in the physical realm with networked digital systems and in areas of design research and practice that challenges preconceptions

Entry Requirements

MA Interaction Design Communication has a particular aim to appeal to communication designers who are interested in exploring these new and emerging areas of design practice.

The course seeks students who have a critical understand of how technologies and digital culture are affecting design practices, and who are keen to work with network digital systems, and in areas of design research and practice that

challenge preconceptions.

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 introduce you to various coding languages and design prototyping platforms during the course, but expect that individuals will develop their skills base within specific project work.

Recruitment and admissions

Applicants are expected to have an honours degree, preferably in a related subject. However, we do not exclude candidates who have graduated from other less strongly aligned disciplines.

- Additionally, we welcome applications from non-traditional backgrounds and in particular mature students. We can also assess prior experience as part of our selection criteria.
- If you do not have the required qualifications, but do have professional experience, you may be eligible to gain credit for previous learning and experience through the AP(E)L system. Your experience is assessed as a learning process and tutors will evaluate that experience for currency, validity, quality and sufficiency.

Language requirements (International/EU)

- All classes are conducted in English. If English is not your first language, we strongly recommend you let us know your English language test score in your application. If you have booked a test or are awaiting your results, please clearly indicate this in your application. When asked to upload a CV as part of your application, please include any information about your English test score.
- IELTS 6.5 (or equivalent) is required, with a minimum of 5.5 in each category.

You can check you have achieved the correct IELTS level in English on the Language Requirements page. <http://www.arts.ac.uk/lcc/courses/support-for-international-students/>

Deferring an offer:

Applicants holding an offer for the coming academic year are permitted to defer their place to the following academic year, e.g. 2018/19 place deferred to 2019/20. International applicants should first meet any offer conditions and pay the deposit in order to defer. In all cases, deferred places will be held for one year.

Making a deferred application:

Home/EU applicants are permitted to make a deferred application, for example to the following academic year instead of the next, e.g. to 2019/20 instead of to

2018/19. Immigration regulations prevent International applicants from making a deferred application.

