MA User Experience Design

Programme Specification 2019/20
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Awarding Body</strong></th>
<th>University of the Arts London</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>College</strong></td>
<td>London College of Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School</strong></td>
<td>University of the Arts London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Programme</strong></td>
<td>Interaction and Visual Communications (L039)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FHEQ Level</strong></td>
<td>Level 7 Masters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course Credits</strong></td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mode</strong></td>
<td>Full Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration of Course</strong></td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Valid From</strong></td>
<td>September 1st 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>QAA Subject Benchmark</strong></td>
<td>Art and Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UAL Subject Classification</strong></td>
<td>Communication and graphic design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>JACS Code</strong></td>
<td>W280 - Interactive &amp; electronic design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UCAS Code</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PSRB</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work placement offered</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course Entry Requirements</strong></td>
<td>The course team welcomes applications from open and inquiring minds of all kinds. Applicants interested in deepening their practice to include user research and in pursuing further study as a way of developing a valuable professional qualification. Students open to learning in a new collaborative and critical way, eager to ground their work in real-world research and be willing to take creative risks and make mistakes along the way.&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Applicants will have a portfolio of digital design work that demonstrates awareness of the creative and critical aspects of UX design and may also be returning from adjacent careers in the design industry such as graphic design, information design or interaction design.&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;The course attracts applicants from a broad range of backgrounds, from all over the world, from an Honours degree course in a subject such as:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Graphic Design
• Interaction Design
• Interactive Media Design
• Web Design
• Communication Design
• Computer Science
• Digital Design
• Product Design
• Anthropology
• Sociology
• Or those with other, equivalent qualifications.

The course team also welcomes students with relevant experience or those who may have previously worked in the industry, or non-traditional backgrounds, as well as those already within employment. The course has been designed to accommodate flexibility in educational engagement. Your experience is assessed as a learning process and tutors will evaluate that experience for currency, validity, quality and sufficiency.

The educational level may be demonstrated by:

• Honours degree (named above);
• Possession of equivalent qualifications;
• Prior experiential learning, the outcome of which can be demonstrated to be equivalent to formal qualifications otherwise required.

APEL (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning)

Applicants who do not meet these course entry requirements may still be considered in exceptional cases. The course team will consider each application that demonstrates additional strengths and alternative evidence. This might, for example, be demonstrated by:

• Related academic or work experience
• The quality of the personal statement
• A strong academic or other professional reference
• OR a combination of these factors
Each application will be considered on its own merit but we cannot guarantee an offer in each case.

**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 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), with 5.5 in each of the four skills.
- If your first language is not English, you can check you have achieved the correct IELTS level in English on the Language Requirements page.
- For further details regarding international admissions and advice please visit the International Applications page.

**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.
- 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.
- The 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.
- A willingness to work with networked digital systems and an awareness of how they shape the varied contexts of human behaviour.
- 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.
# Awards and Percentage of Scheduled Learning

## Year 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Scheduled Learning</th>
<th>21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Awards</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate Certificate (Exit Only)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate Diploma (Exit Only)</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Course Aims and Outcomes

The Aims and Outcomes of this Course are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aim/Outcome</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aim</td>
<td>Frame user experience design as an integrative discipline incorporating graphic, interaction and spatial design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aim</td>
<td>Develop your critical voice with reference to foundational ideas and theories of user experience design and contribute to the development of the field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aim</td>
<td>Position ethical and responsible user experience design as a basis for advanced practice as the discipline develops.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aim</td>
<td>Enable advanced experimental design explorations that prioritise awareness of human contexts and situations in a rapidly changing technological and social environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aim</td>
<td>Foster collegiate and collaborative working at all stages of the user experience design journey with a view to lasting interdisciplinary understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aim</td>
<td>Prepare you for an interdisciplinary creative career in the user experience design industry and/or further study at PhD level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Produce innovative user experience design projects within the integrative discipline of user experience design (Enquiry, Knowledge, Realisation, Communication, Process).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Develop research-oriented design projects that synthesise research methods and creative processes into advanced design projects (Enquiry, Knowledge, Process, Realisation, Communication).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical responsibilities of user experience designers in the context of digital technologies and the wider social and political consequences of design. (Enquiry, Knowledge, Process and Realisation).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Make use of relevant tools, techniques, media and processes to communicate complex user experience design ideas. (Enquiry, Process, Realisation).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Work collaboratively towards common aims along the user experience design journey (Process and Realisation).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinctive Features</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong> Industry Engaged: This MA is highly engaged with UX industry practice and the future of the UX industries. The unit structure develops both a professional understanding of the research and prototyping workflows that deliver UX design in a professional context and develops a critical framework required to understand and craft digital experiences for users. You will benefit from UX briefs, studio visits and partnerships with leading London UX industry professionals and studios. You will be encouraged to produce outcomes that step outside the walls of the college, situating UX design work in the 'real world' and accounting for the complexity and integration of interactive systems used by a wide range of people. This facilitates the construction of networks and creative partnerships beyond LCC and develops student abilities to build their creative practices, projects and design studios after graduation. A key aspect of this is the emphasis on collaborative working throughout the course which enables the development of a core professional skill.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong> Digital Prototyping Tools and Critical Context: Key to building the competency of a UX designer is a working understanding of industry standard UX prototyping tools such as Sketch and Adobe XD alongside user research tools that make use of video analytics, heat maps and A/B testing for example. The course is committed to providing both a robust introduction to these tools but also a critical understanding of how they are limited by the user research processes they are embedded within.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong> Design Led UX: Building on LCC’s history in graphic and communication design, MA UX Design offers a digitally oriented pedagogy that respects the foundational principles of information design and typography alongside the specialist digital skills of UX design. MA UX is a distinctive offer in prioritising design as process, cultural form, professional discipline, and critical tool.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong> UX Design Studio: In the second term of MA UX Design is where you start to apply your thinking across a choice of broad conceptual areas. These include; UX for data visualisation, UX for social transformation, and UX for human-robot relationships. UX Design Studio also offers the chance to position UX design as a cultural force and a creatively dynamic discipline. Collaborative practices are fundamental to UX Design and you are encouraged to use UX Studio to explore how they wish to work with others both inside and outside the student cohort.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong> Research: You will be encouraged to contribute to the growing body of research in UX. This includes practice-based design research in the sub-fields of; tangible and embodied interactions, HCI, the ethics and politics of interaction design, ubiquitous computing and designing for agency. Attendance and participation in key conferences such as CHI, IEEEVIS, DIS, alongside more discursive events such</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
as UXLondon and MobileUX will allow you to gain knowledge and experience of research events and to expand your own professional and intellectual networks.

Critical positioning: UX Design is uniquely placed to develop and deploy ideas that address the interplay between automated digital systems and human behaviour. This involves imagining the near and far futures of how, where and when people interact with complex digital technologies, and interfaces. Positioning UX Design as a critical tool opens up opportunities to bring UX Design to bear on the pressing issues of artificial intelligence, machine learning, augmented bodies, post national statehood, and ethical interfaces. Critical UX, framing the discipline as a culturally dynamic expressive form, would constitute a unique offer at PG level.

Data as Medium: The course considers data to be a pivotal design medium with which you are expected to build working digital prototypes, and about which you are encouraged to cultivate critical awareness. The course thus approaches data from two perspectives; the material and the political. This attitude ensures you will be well placed to produce influential and persuasive designs, but also to account for the ethical and political dimensions of their work. You will thus be design innovators at the forefront of advanced design studies and practices in the field.

Programme Community: The course sits within the Interaction & Visual Communication programme alongside relevant yet distinct courses like the MA Interaction Design Communication and the MA Service Experience Design & Innovation. This means that as well as access to the production resources in these areas, you will have access to a broad range of industry speakers from these disciplines and can develop peer group relationships that will enable collaboration across courses and disciplines.

Interdisciplinarity: In the professional design world UX designers perform many different tasks and are expected to have skills in research, interaction design, product prototyping, concept development and evaluation. This constellation of skills means the course delivers technical and critical training at an advanced level, in a highly interdisciplinary context. Designing for existing technological settings means that anthropology and psychology are as useful as graphic design or photography and you are encouraged to think of yourselves as operating in a post-disciplinary environment. The interdisciplinary nature of user experience design means collaboration is central to its practice, the course emphasises this aspect by encouraging collaboration between students across all units.

Professional Links: Building on LCC's enviable connections to the design industries and the course team's networks, the course has links to: Ben Terret, Tim Malbon, Iain Tait, Hem Patel, Max Gadney, RgA, Sennep, Ustwo. This represents a
compelling opportunity to work in partnership with some of London's best UX Design Agencies and establish industry connections for postgraduation progression. The course also invites professional contacts to set project briefs and mentor you during your final major project. This mentorship will be in the form of portfolio reviews and visiting critics. These will be arranged by the course team. It is also expected that your external partnerships will generate mentorship possibilities through the LCC mentoring scheme. Collaboration with external partners is thus a key aspect of the course.
The MA User Experience Design equips digital, visual, and communication designers with the specialist skills to conceive, prototype, and produce human centred experience in an interactive digital context. Designers who have a functional and aesthetic appreciation of how to design for varied contexts and diverse behaviours are in high demand. This professionally focused and design-led Masters program ensures you will understand how good user experiences are designed, tested, and evaluated. You will gain knowledge of the relevant tools, materials and practices that make up user experience design in the context of the community of practice represented by LCC. With a focus on design for complex systems, emerging technologies, and integrated experiences, you will benefit from a design-first approach, which builds on a foundation of graphic, communication, and interface design and values open inquiry and creative risk-taking. The methods and tools of user research are emphasised throughout and you will gain experience of working with users in different contexts. You will be expected to collaborate on live industry briefs covering varied topics such as; UX for wearable technologies, UX for smart cities, UX for data visualisation, and UX for digital services. Graduates will have mastered the requisite skills of a UX designer, you will be leaders of a new wave of UX professionals able to respond creatively and critically to the demands of a uniquely integrated and interdisciplinary design field.

The course resides geographically and philosophically within the Interaction Design & Visual Communication programme alongside relevant yet distinct courses like the MA Illustration and Visual Media, MA Interaction Design Arts, BA (Hons) Interaction Design Arts and BA (Hons) Information and Interface Design.

Course Units

The MA User Experience Design is a 15 month long (4 terms), 180 credit bearing course at level 7, comprising of the following units:

**Unit 1: UX Studio Practices, 40 credits**

This unit aims to provide you with a critical understanding of user experience design in the context of contemporary studio practice. It will help you position your approach to the subject relative to the current theoretical ideas and working practices of user experience design. You will be able to articulate the nature of UX design as an integrative discipline, and you will be aware of the intersection of technical, experiential, and imaginative skills that UX design involves. You will also develop a critical awareness of how physical, personal and social contexts shape design processes.

**Assessment Requirements**

This unit is assessed holistically (100% of the unit).
Portfolio of evidence: documenting the outcomes for the set project work and the workshop programmes. This includes a research weblog documenting your research and development process and a 1500 word critical report describing your engagement with theoretical foundations of experience design. Holistic assessment also includes evaluation of your design artefact produced in response to the unit brief.

**Teaching & Learning Methods**

Teaching and learning methods will include lectures, seminars, workshops, individual exercises, group work, self-directed study, peer learning and presentations.

**Unit 2.1: Macro UX, 20 credits**

This unit involves working with an external partner. You can choose to work with industry or third sector organisations around a set of broad themes including: UX for smart city technologies, UX for cultural placemaking, UX for the future of publishing and UX for archives and collections. These will enable you to align your research and studio practice interests while working on live briefs. You will be working in a professional environment to devise a personal design process, to position your design work in your chosen field, and to develop a critical reflective stance in response to the different contexts you are working in.

**Assessment Requirements**

This unit is assessed holistically (100% of the unit).

Portfolio of evidence documenting the journey and the outcomes for the set project work and the workshop programmes. This includes a reflective project diary (blog) documenting your research and development process and a 1500 word critical report describing your engagement with theoretical foundations of experience and narrative. Holistic assessment also includes evaluation of your design artefact produced in response to the unit brief.

**Teaching and Learning Methods**

Teaching and learning methods will include lectures, seminars, workshops, individual exercises, group work, self-directed study, peer learning and presentations.

**Unit 2.2: Collaborative Unit 20 credits**

This unit is designed to enable you to identify, form and develop collaborative working relationships with a range of potential partners. These could be: postgraduate student colleagues at the college or university level; postgraduate students at other Higher
Education Institutions; external parties (e.g. companies, cultural organisations, community-based groups, NGOs, charities etc.)

The nature of the collaboration will involve working on a project whose outcomes are agreed by your tutors and will take the form of group work that can happen within the college or digitally / remotely. The focus of the unit is student-driven collaboration with projects being developed to meet the specific requirements of student groups within and across disciplinary boundaries.

**Assessment Requirements**

This unit is assessed holistically (100% of the unit).

The assessment for this unit is through a portfolio of work that will include research, project work, critical analysis and an individual critical self-reflection on the nature of collaborative working and learning.

**Teaching and Learning Methods**

There will be briefing sessions, workshops and tutorials offered to support the unit. However, this is a student-driven unit where the emphasis is placed on student’s using their initiative, demonstrating independence and a professional approach to self-directed group work, collaborative research and project management.

**Unit 3: Micro UX, 40 credits**

This second unit is intended to allow you to work with a different external organisation, exposing your evolving practice to different views and alternative methods. Collaborations are organised around broad themes including; UX for health and wellbeing, UX for data visualisation, UX for human-robot relations, and UX for performance and public participation. You will be expected to initiate and implement a UX design project around two of these themes, drawing on the research journey you devised and the design process you established in Macro UX.

**Assessment Requirements**

This unit is assessed holistically (100% of the unit).

**Portfolio of evidence:** documenting the journey and the outcomes for the set project work and the workshop programmes. This includes a reflective project diary (blog) documenting your research and development process. A 1500 word critical report describing your engagement with visions of the future of UX design based on theoretical foundations of experience and narrative. A 1000 word final major project
proposal. Holistic assessment also includes evaluation of your design artefact produced in response to the unit brief.

**Teaching and Learning Methods**

Teaching and learning methods will include lectures, seminars, workshops, individual exercises, group work, self-directed study, peer learning and presentations.

**Unit 4: Final Major Project + Portfolio of Writing, 60 credits**

The aims of the Final Major Project and Critical Context Report are to offer you the opportunity to engage in a major research-led project in which the emphasis will be on defining, analysing and developing an individual and focused approach to user experience design.

**Assessment Requirements**

This unit is assessed holistically (100% of the unit).

**Portfolio of Evidence** documenting the journey and the work produced during your final project. This includes a reflective project diary (blog) documenting your research and development process through the unit. And a critical and contextual report of 5000 words (excluding appendices & bibliography) in the form of a bound volume. Holistic assessment in the final major project places greater emphasis on the design artefact you produce in response to the unit brief.

This is a studio based course and the majority of the teaching will take place in a dedicated studio space.

**Learning and Teaching Methods**

This strategy is based on three core principles:

- Practice-led focused engagement;
- High-quality research informed teaching;
- Innovative curricula that respond to cultural, economic and technological change.

Learning and teaching strategies will enable you to:
• Integrate new knowledge with previous academic and/or professional experiences;

• Integrate learning from a wide range of disciplines;

• Develop problem solving skills in a range of diverse cultural and global contexts;

• Analyse and synthesise data and information to support decision making;

• Become self-directed and independent learners;

• Develop reflective learning practice to inform career planning and enhance personal and professional development.

A combination of lectures, seminars, workshops, guest speakers and group and individual tutorials will be employed in the delivery of the course.

Lectures will provide you with a critical overview of the relevant theoretical underpinnings and how these can be applied to a range of creative scenarios. Guest Speakers will be in the main from industry and show the application of such framework in an industry context.

During seminar sessions, you will have the opportunity to explore a range of creative and cultural issues, to critically evaluate strategic responses and approaches, and to formulate systematic and creative solutions.

The case study approach will be used to facilitate the discussion during seminar sessions.

You will bring a diverse range of prior work experience in a range of international contexts to enrich peer learning through inclusive discussion.

You will also attend a series of technical workshops designed to enhance their research and analysis skills.

Professional development workshops will focus on soft skills and be facilitated by staff and guest speakers where appropriate.
You will work both individually and in teams and through peer learning opportunities.

More particular to this course are the following teaching & learning strategies:

**Prototyping**

A key strategy for MA UX Design is learning through prototyping, which entails using industry standard software tools and practices to create designs at developing fidelity over the course of a project. Prototypes are an important deliverable for UX designers working in industry and the skills to discern at what level they should be produced and communicated, is an indispensable competence for UX designers.

**Collaboration**

UX design is done in teams of designers working on differing aspects of a product or service such as information architecture, visual interface, user flow, or user research. You will work together to explore these various dimensions of UX design in interaction patterns including pair work and larger groups.

**Participative design**

Finding out about people and how they act in the world informs design of all kinds but is seen as being of particular value to UX designers who work holistically to shape all aspects of a product or service with which people interact. User research thus involves working with people - observing, interviewing and accompanying them - and above all involving them in the design process. Engaging in participative design work also means paying careful attention to the ethical and moral dimensions of UX design.

**Interdisciplinarity**

UX design incorporates visual layout, storytelling, coding, research, structural hierarchy, evaluation and data analysis, and thus represents a synthesis of disciplines. Learning how to handle this synthesis and produce meaningful, beautiful, and useful designs is a crucial skill for UX designers.

**Critical thinking**

MA UX Design will provide a solid grounding in critical studies, positioning UX design in a field of rapidly evolving technologies, and framing it as a discipline within a cultural and historical context. Exploring the dimensions of UX Design from a critical perspective means accounting for accessibility, the ethics and politics of designers, and their responsibilities to the wider society in which they practice.
### UX Studios

The strategies deployed in UX studios in Terms 2 and 3 of MA UX Design when you choose two themes to explore include: mentoring by external partners, theoretical engagement through seminars, a student-run lecture series and practical workshops. This mix of learning styles allows for a deep investigation into chosen themes in preparation for final major project work.

### Assessment Methods

The assessment strategy will comprise a wide range of methods, including:

- Practical Projects
- Critical Reports
- Presentations through a range of media
- Developmental Blogs for reflective practice
- Research Proposals Portfolio of Evidence

### Reference Points

The following reference points were used in designing the course:

- QAA Benchmark Statements
- Learning and Teaching and Enhancement strategy (UAL)
- University of the Arts Level Descriptors
- Responsible Design Framework (Design School)
- Creative Attributes Framework
- Design School Attainment Workshop
- Consultation with leading practitioners and theorists
- Consultation with students
### Course Diagram | MA User Experience Design

| Week | Autumn Term (Term 1 | 11 Weeks) | Spring Term (Term 2 | 10 weeks) | Summer Term (Term 3 | 15 weeks) | Undergraduate Summer Period (14 weeks) | Autumn Term (Term 4 | 10 weeks) |
|------|---------------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 0    | Week 1              | Week 12     | Week 22      | Week 32       | Week 36           | Week 37 |
| 1    | Week 2              | Week 13     | Week 23      | Week 33       | Week 37           | Week 37 |
| 2    | Week 3              | Week 14     | Week 24      | Week 34       | Week 37           | Week 37 |
| 3    | Week 4              | Week 15     | Week 25      | Week 35       | Week 37           | Week 37 |
| 4    | Week 5              | Week 16     | Week 26      | Week 36       | Week 37           | Week 37 |
| 5    | Week 6              | Week 17     | Week 27      | Week 37       | Week 37           | Week 37 |
| 6    | Week 7              | Week 18     | Week 28      | Week 37       | Week 37           | Week 37 |
| 7    | Week 8              | Week 19     | Week 29      | Week 37       | Week 37           | Week 37 |
| 8    | Week 9              | Week 20     | Week 30      | Week 37       | Week 37           | Week 37 |
| 9    | Week 10             | Week 21     | Week 31      | Week 37       | Week 37           | Week 37 |
| 10   | Christmas Break     | Easter Break| Final Major Project Print & Portfolio of writing (60 Credits) | Final Major Project Print & Portfolio of writing (60 Credits) | PG Summer Break Independent Study / Writing Up Period |

- **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.
The University will use all reasonable endeavours to provide the Course and the services described in this Output. There may be occasions whereby the University needs to add, remove or alter content in relation to your Course as may be appropriate for example the latest requirements of a commissioning or accrediting body, or in response to student feedback, or to comply with applicable law or due to circumstances beyond its control. The University aim to inform you of any changes as soon as is reasonably practicable.