

**UNIVERSITY FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS**

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION FOR:**

**MA PHOTOGRAPHY**

*This document is a hybrid version for 2016/17<sup>1</sup>*

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION [ACADEMIC YEAR 2016/17]**

*This Programme Specification is designed for prospective students, current students, academic staff and potential employers. It provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the intended learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the teaching, learning and assessment methods, learning outcomes and content of each unit can be found in the Unit Descriptors.*

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<sup>1</sup>This version combines Section A of the new 2016/17 Programme Specification template (which combines the following sections of the Programme Specification 2015/16: A, B, C, F and table of units) and the following sections of the 2015/16 Programme Specification for the course: Course Aims; Course Outcomes; Summary of Distinctive Features of the Course; Learning, Teaching & Assessment; Enhancing the Quality of Learning & Teaching.

## Section A – Material Course Information

Validating Body	University for the Creative Arts <sup>2</sup>		
Final Award Title and Type	Master of Arts		
Course Title	Photography		
Course Location and Length	Campus: Rochester	Length: Full-time: 1 year Part-time: 2 years	
Period of Validation	2012/13 to 2016/17		
Name of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body	Not Applicable		
Type of Accreditation	Not Applicable		
Entry criteria and requirements <sup>3</sup>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Normally a First or Upper Second class Honours degree or international equivalents in a relevant subject area. Consideration will be given to other applicants who present a degree with a lower classification but can make a strong case for admission in relation to a particular project or area of interest.</li> <li>• Other relevant and equivalent UK, European and International qualifications will be considered.</li> </ul> <p>Applicants who have non-standard qualifications (or who wish work experience to be taken into account as part of their application) will be considered on an individual basis, in line with the general aims and principles of the Admissions Policy and within the terms of the Accreditation of Prior Learning policy (APEL).</p>			
Overall methods of assessment <sup>4</sup>	Written exams:	Practical exams:	Coursework:
Course	0%	0%	100%
Overall Learning & Teaching hours <sup>5</sup>	Scheduled:	Independent:	Placement:
Course	13.9%	86.1%	0%
General level of staff delivering the course <sup>6</sup>	The University's current recruitment policy for Lecturers and Senior Lecturers states		

<sup>2</sup> Regulated by the Higher Education Funding Council for England

<sup>3</sup> This should be the standard University Criteria unless otherwise approved by the Academic Board and include UCAS entry profile for undergraduate courses.

<sup>4</sup> As confirmed for the KIS course stage data: the overall percentage in terms of Written exams; Practical exams and Coursework

<sup>5</sup> As confirmed for the KIS course stage data: the overall percentage by stage

	that they must have either an MA or equivalent professional practice in a relevant discipline or field. All lecturing staff are encouraged to work towards a teaching qualification or professional Recognition by the Higher Education Academy and this is a requirement for Senior Lecturers. Senior Lecturers are required to be professionally active or engaged in research in their discipline. All Lecturers and Senior Lecturers undertake scholarship in their disciplines. There are also Sessional Staff to link courses with professional practice and Technicians to provide technical support.			
Mode of Study	Full-time	✓	Part-time	✓
Language of Study	English			
Subject/Qualification Benchmark Statement: QAA Master's Degree Characteristics				
Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)				

<b>The course structure</b>				
The structure of all of the University's awards complies with the University's Common Credit Framework. All students are registered for a particular award. Exit awards are available to students in line with 6.7 of the Common Credit Framework.				
<b>Unit codes and titles</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Credit value</b>	<b>Elective/ Core</b>	<b>If elective is this the most popular student choice?</b>
RMPH7001 1.1 Context and Method	7	30	Core	
RMPH7002 1.2 Exploratory Practice	7	30	Core	
RMPH7003 2.1 Project Development	7	60	Core	
RMPH7005 3.1 Final Project	7	60	Core	

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<sup>6</sup> Include general information about the experience or status of the staff involved in delivering the course, for example Professor, Course Leader, Senior Lecturer

## COURSE AIMS

- A1 Provide a flexible but structured interdisciplinary context in which students can rigorously pursue a self directed research project whose outcomes are embodied within the systematic production of a specific and original body of work within the field of photography.
- A2 To encourage the development of each student's own critical reflection as the basis for developing as independent learners capable of advancing their own skills, knowledge and professional and research practice.
- A3 Provide students with the means for establishing and understanding the place of their own work within the context of relevant and contemporary academic and professional situations and debates.
- A4 To encourage the development of research strategies that reflect the contemporary context in theoretical discourse and creative practice and form the basis for informed speculation about future directions.
- A5 Provide a balance, appropriate to the demands of individual projects, of taught elements, individual research and collective debate.
- A6 To support the development of methodological practices which combine critical approaches to research, production, visual communication and reception in contemporary photography.
- A7 To provide a specific interdisciplinary context in order to understand and build upon relationships between art, design, architecture and fashion and to use this broader perspective to provide an integrated, innovative approach to the field of photography, moving across key areas in visual and material culture.

## COURSE OUTCOMES

### *Knowledge & Understanding*

- Initiate and implement an individual self-directed research project using research methods, materials, techniques and processes appropriate to contemporary photographic practice.
- Demonstrate a thorough understanding of, and critical engagement with relevant practical, theoretical and professional contexts and be able to situate and interpret work within this context.
- Understand and build upon relationships between art, design, craft and fashion and to use this broader perspective to provide an integrated, innovative approach to photography
- Demonstrate an ability to employ analysis, synthesis and evaluation to a range of external sources in order to inspire and inform the generation, development and application of original ideas.
- Demonstrate an ability to communicate complex and speculative concepts, methods and proposals effectively in spoken, written and visual forms. This includes the development of experimental and innovative technical skills appropriate to the production of contemporary photography.
- Identify the potential for work to be situated within specific professional contexts and

develop appropriate communication skills for engagement with this audience

- Demonstrate a reflective and evaluative approach to work, to act independently and decisively in identifying, implementing and sustaining individual research and practice at a professional level.

#### *Application*

- Exercise initiative and personal responsibility.
  - Decision making in complex and unpredictable situations.
- Independent learning ability required for continued professional development.

### **SUMMARY OF DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE COURSE**

- This MA course approaches photography as an expanded visual discipline. It encourages students to produce professional work as well as engage with experimental and speculative approaches to making. The facilities and course ethos helps students develop flexible modes of practice that respond to the diverse and varied field of contemporary photography; from its role in political social communication to emerging aesthetic modes.
- The course addresses the creative process of developing and realising a major body of work paying attention to research, exhibition and publication. Experimenting with different approaches and developing your major project to a professional level supported by discussion, lectures, seminars, workshops and tutorials. This balance enables students to establish themselves as rounded professionals who can formulate ideas in a sophisticated framework whilst also being able to communicate to others, both visually and verbally. Strong emphasis is placed on publication, enabling students to find creative ways to disseminate their work beyond the academic context and into the public arena. The final project may be realised in the form of developed photographic work or a dissertation.
- This MA course covers a range of practical and theoretical territory including: contemporary photography, photography as technology defined by social practice, the status of the photographic image in new media, the time of the photograph, the archive, documentary, story-telling, the portrait as a social scene, landscape as place and space, different modes of image making, relation of text to image, appropriation, montage, series, and tableau.
- The course offers access to a range of professional level equipment, including digital cameras (Hasselblad and Canon), large and medium format film-based cameras (including Wista, Mamiya, Horseman and Bronica) and extensive studio and location lighting. There are three fully equipped studios, darkroom facilities for colour and black and white film-based photography and an industry standard Digital Imaging Centre (which includes flexitight scanners, digital printers and full range of software).
- The course offers a full time or part-time mode of study and can be completed over 1 or 2 years enabling those in work to realistically undertake postgraduate study. The

University offers MA students their own dedicated facilities including fully equipped digital workstations, seminar and tutorial space together with a full range of specialist workshops for making and production.

- Applications are drawn from practicing photographers, well qualified graduates and media professionals who want the freedom to pursue their own work in a focused and intelligent way. The course is conceived as a breeding ground for experiment, collaboration and innovation. Interdisciplinary approaches to projects are encouraged. The positioning of the course within the Rochester MA programme will allow for a significant amount of intellectual exchange between the disciplines of design, fashion and photography – where issues of material and visual culture will fruitfully impact upon the conception, critical interrogation and possible contexts for photography.
- The increasing number of PhD registrations at UCA provides for an effective transition from MA to PhD study.

## **LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT<sup>7</sup>**

### **Learning and Teaching**

- The MA Photography is project-based, but is supported by seminars, tutorials, workshops, work in progress sessions and critiques. At postgraduate level, the student is expected to identify, develop and manage their own MA project and further develop the skills needed for autonomy of research. Through a proactive relationship with their tutors, students will lead their project work and be supported by staff through consultative and advisory tutorial guidance.
- The ability of students to carry out independent research and to manage and appraise the development of their project is a defining attribute of the course. The progressive move from staff-directed to autonomous learning is an integral part of the structure of this course, and teaching and learning practices encourage students to develop the abilities of student-led or independent learning as thoroughly as possible.
- On-line teaching and learning support is provided principally through myUCA and e-mail. All MA students receive an induction into the use of myUCA as part of their introduction to the course. It is the main means of communication between course staff and students providing timetable information, tutorial times and announcements. It also provides a data-base for MA students containing course documentation, and links to web-based resources. In addition, e-mail is used as a means of communication and tutorial support, particularly for students following the part-time mode and those who may be working off-site for any period of time.
- PDP (personal development planning) is an intrinsic element of the approach to student learning on this course. Through each of three phases of the MA course students have the opportunity to engage in activities that will assist them in

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<sup>7</sup> Include reference to the following, where appropriate: PDP, online learning, independent learning, exchange, placement, employability & employer engagement

identifying their skills and knowledge, reflecting on their achievement and relating this to their career aspirations. Key elements of this are the development of the MA Project Proposal in terms of goal setting, the ongoing use of the Research Journal as a vehicle for critical reflection and the final stage concern with publication and dissemination of the final project.

- It is our aim to develop in MA students a high level of competence in practical, visual, oral and written expression.
- Students gain credits through successful completion of units within the University's Common Credit Framework. Master of Arts degrees will be awarded on the basis of meeting the credit requirements.

### **Assessment Strategies**

- Assessment has a key role to play as part of a series of strategies that support critical and reflective practice. Assessment points provide clear stages of major review and reference for students and opportunities for guidance on both the quality of work in relation to masters level benchmarks and specific insights into the specific considerations of individual research projects. It therefore provides an invaluable learning tool that enables students to evaluate their performance and progress in both general and specific terms.
- Final unit assessments also ensure that those passing the individual units and achieving the final masters award have achieved standards commensurate with the nationally defined expectations for academic awards at this level.
- The assessment strategy for the MA course is concerned with your development in 2 areas; your understanding of bodies of knowledge and the application of a range of advanced skills in the deployment of this knowledge. The bodies of knowledge can be categorised briefly as follows; contexts and concepts (critical, historical, cultural and professional), methodological (research methods and processes), and technical. The applied skills that need to be demonstrated by a masters student are analysis and interpretation, creativity and innovation, technique, communication, independence.
- The development of applied skills is progressive throughout the course structure and so these are evident in all units to a greater or lesser degree. In both cases, knowledge and applied skills, the specific requirements for assessment are articulated in the unit assessment criteria.
- The relationship between learning outcomes, assessment criteria and marking descriptors at each phase of the course ensures a focus on method and process as appropriate to the overall course learning outcomes. Each unit has stated integrated outcomes combining both knowledge and the deployment of skills. The assessment criteria for each unit are always set out in accordance with the structure outlined above, as such they breakdown your demonstration of learning into a series of separate elements. In order to make clear this relationship learning outcomes are mapped against assessment criteria in each unit descriptor.

All courses use feedback indicator sheets to clarify and guide the deliberations of assessors and to enable this evaluation process to be accessible to students and also capable of providing essential feedback. Assessment is seen as being

constructive and the emphasis is always on personal development.

Short periods of exchange are possible with partner institutions in the EU and further afield. These are arranged through UCA's study abroad office. Due to the short length of the MA course, we normally recommend that exchanges are no longer than 6 or 7 weeks duration.

Live projects, shorter exchanges and internships are encouraged whenever possible in order for students to gain additional experience of working outside the university and to help make contacts.

### **ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING**

The course is subject to the University's rigorous quality assurance procedures which involve subject specialist and internal peer review of the course at periodic intervals, normally of 5 years. This process ensures that the course engages with the national Subject Benchmarks in Art & Design and references the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

All courses are monitored on an annual basis where consideration is given to:

- External Examiner's Reports
- Key statistics including data on retention and achievement
- Results of the Student Satisfaction Surveys
- Feedback from Student Course Representatives