

**UNIVERSITY FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS**

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION FOR:**

**MA PHOTOGRAPHY**

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION [ACADEMIC YEAR 2021/22]**

*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.*

## Section A – Material Course Information

Validating Body	University for the Creative Arts <sup>1</sup>		
Teaching Body	University for the Creative Arts		
Final Award Title and Type	Master of Arts		
Course Title	Photography		
Course Location and Length	Campus: Rochester	Length: 1 year Full-time or 2 years Part-time <sup>2</sup>	
Mode of Study	Full-time	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Part-time
Period of Validation	2017/18 – 2021/22		
Name of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body	Not Applicable		
Type of Accreditation	Not Applicable		
Accreditation due for renewal	Not Applicable		
<p>Entry criteria and requirements<sup>3</sup></p> <p>A good Honours degree or equivalent qualification in the subject or a related discipline and/or relevant work experience, demonstrating an ability to study at postgraduate level.</p> <p>Consideration will also be given to applicants who can make a strong case for admission in relation to a particular project and can demonstrate their potential to satisfactorily complete the course.</p> <p>Other relevant and equivalent UK, European and International qualifications will be considered.</p> <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 if they can demonstrate their ability to study at postgraduate level. Such applicants 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> <p>Applications from mature students are welcomed. Mature students may apply on the strength of a portfolio and previous experience (or APEL).</p> <p>Applications from students with disabilities are considered on the same criteria and principles as all other applicants. All students with a disability are encouraged to</p>			

<sup>1</sup> Regulated by the Office for Students

<sup>2</sup> PT mode suspended 2020/21 & 2021/22 and withdrawn from 2021/22.

<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.

indicate this on their application form in order that advice can be offered on the facilities and services available. Prospective students with a disability will be encouraged to visit and discuss their requirements with the Disability Support Manager.

Minimum English language requirements:

- For applicants whose first language is not English: Average IELTS score of 6.5 (or [equivalent](#)) with a minimum achievement of 5.5 for all components.

Overall methods of assessment <sup>4</sup>	Written exams:	Practical exams:	Coursework:
Course	0.0%	0.0%	100%
Overall Learning & Teaching hours <sup>5</sup>	Scheduled:	Independent:	Placement:
Course	16.7%	83.3%	0.0%
	300 hours	1500 hours	0 hours
General level of staff delivering the course <sup>6</sup>	The University's current recruitment policy for Lecturers and Senior Lecturers states 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.		
Language of Study	English		
Subject/Qualification Benchmark Statement: QAA Master's Degree Characteristics Statement			
Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)			

**The course structure**

The structure of all of the University's awards complies with the University's [Common Credit Framework](#). The Common Credit Framework includes information about the:

- Rules for progression between the stages of a course;
- Consequences of failure for reassessment, compensation and exit awards;

<sup>4</sup> As generated by the most popular unit descriptors and calculated for the overall course stage data.

<sup>5</sup> As generated by the most popular unit descriptors and calculated for the overall course stage data.

<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

- Calculation and classification of awards;

Unit codes and titles	Level	Credit value	Elective/ Core	Most popular student choice of optional elective units or elective options in core units?
<b>Course</b>				
RMPH7006 Contemporary Debates and Creative Enquiry	7	30	Core	N/A
RMPH7002 Exploratory Practice	7	30	Core	N/A
RMPH7007 Innovation and Development	7	60	Core	N/A
RMPH7008 Resolution and Presentation	7	60	Core	N/A

## Section B - Course Overview

This MA Photography course approaches photography as an expanded visual discipline. It encourages students to confidently produce complex and extended photographic projects and engage with experimental and speculative approaches to making. Concerned with the production, transmission and reception of photographs, students' produce innovative work that re-examines and redefines the creative and diverse field of photography within contemporary culture. Students approach the medium from an interdisciplinary point of view, exploring practices of representation that engage with the still and the moving image, as well as performance, installation and digital media. The course creates a challenging platform that engages its students in debates surrounding technology and medium-specificity as well as engaging them with practices of reading, writing and speaking about the image.

The positioning of the course within the Rochester Postgraduate Program and the School of Fine Art and Photography will allow for a significant amount of intellectual exchange between the disciplines of design, fashion, fine-art, curation and photography – where issues of material and visual culture will fruitfully impact upon the conception, critical interrogation and possible contexts for photography.

This MA Photography course not only teaches its students to make photographic frames driven by content and its relations but to also create frameworks that critically connect with and engage audiences. The course places a strong emphasis on the publication of students' photographic work, empowering them to find the relevant distribution mechanism to build audiences and disseminate their work beyond the academic context and into the public arena.

The course offers access to a range of professional level equipment, including digital cameras, large and medium format film-based cameras and extensive studio and location lighting. There are two fully equipped studios, darkroom

facilities for colour and black and white film-based photography and an industry standard Digital Imaging Centre which includes high-end scanners, digital printers, colour-managed professional workstation with 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 progression from MA to PhD study at UCA is actively supported.

### Section C - 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, individual paths of research and professional 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 conceptually driven, research-led practices, which combine critical approaches to research, visual production and presentation in contemporary photography.
- A7 To provide a specific interdisciplinary context in order to understand and build upon relationships between art, design, new media, 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 contemporary visual and material culture.

### Section D - Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course students are able to:

#### Knowledge

Initiate and implement an individual self-directed research project using research methods, materials, techniques and processes appropriate to contemporary photographic practice.

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 and its ever-expanding boundaries

Identify the potential for work to be situated within specific professional contexts and develop appropriate communication skills for engagement with this audience.

### Understanding

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 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.

Demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional level

Demonstrate the ability to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements

Independent learning ability required for continued professional development.

## **Section E - Learning, Teaching and Assessment**

### Learning and Teaching Strategy

The MA Photography Course is project-based and is supported by the Interdisciplinary Lecture & Seminar Program, which includes the teaching of Postgraduate Research Methods. In addition it features Photography-Specific seminars, tutorials, study-visits, critical reviews, work in progress presentations and specialist practical workshops and technical support sessions.

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 and the visiting artists and guest-lecturers 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 (VLE). It is the main online 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, the online tutorial log is used between staff and students to support students in their development and this is particularly useful for students following the part-time mode, as well as 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 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 Research Presentation (Contemporary Debates and Creative Enquiry) in terms of goal setting, the ongoing use of the Research Journal (Contemporary Debates and Creative Enquiry, Innovation and Development and Resolution and Presentation) as a vehicle for critical reflection and the final stage concern with publication and dissemination of the final project.

### Assessment Strategy

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 projects. In each unit, students undertake a formative assessment that could take the form of an oral presentation, a group-critique or a form of peer-assessment to both familiarise them with the assessment criteria and to evaluate their individual performance and progress in both general and specific terms.

Final unit assessments 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 this MA Photography course is concerned with the student's development in two areas: 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 the student are analysis and interpretation, creativity and innovation, technique, communication, independence and self-direction.

The relationship between learning outcomes and assessment criteria 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 in the unit descriptors.

The course use feedback indicator sheets to clarify and guide the deliberations of assessors and to enable this evaluation process to be accessible to students. The course provides individual feedback sessions for the students as an additional learning tool to make the assessment process inclusive, constructive, emphasising strategies for further personal development.

The assessment strategy for group projects is as a collective piece of work, wherever appropriate and possible..

## **Section F - 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 applicable national Subject Benchmarks 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 Representative