

## PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

1	<b>Awarding institution/body</b>	University of Worcester
2	<b>Teaching institution</b>	University of Worcester
3	<b>Programme accredited by</b>	N/A
4	<b>Final award</b>	PG Cert, PG Dip, MA
5	<b>Programme title</b>	MA Creative Digital Media
6	<b>Pathways available</b>	N/A
7	<b>Mode and/or site of delivery</b>	Taught programme on the University of Worcester site, as daytime or evening sessions.
8	<b>Mode of attendance</b>	Full-time and part-time
9	<b>UCAS Code</b>	N/A
10	<b>Subject /Professional Benchmark statements</b>	N/A
11	<b>Date of Programme Specification preparation/revision</b>	August 2010, September 2011 updated to latest template.

### 12 Educational aims of the programme

The Programme has been designed to expose students to a challenging learning experience that will interrogate preconceived concepts and acquired practice. This experience will equip graduates of the course with the ability to investigate ideas at an increasingly deeper level for assimilation into their creative and professional practice. To achieve this aspiration, the course has three strands. The prime strand is professional practice.

Supporting and broadening this professional practice strand are two further strands that reinforce the higher learning experience. The first is experimental practice. This component aims to develop investigations in creative strategies and to foster an imaginative and experimental approach to creating work in the digital domain at an advanced level. The student's investigation will form final works – or series of projects – that are experimental, challenging and original in nature.

Alongside is the ethical practice strand of the course. As the profit motive increasingly drives the creative process in the digital media arena, contemporary codes of ethics may hinge more on marketable sensationalism and fashionable codes than on verifiable fact: the consequence is that corporations and money markets control major cultural influences within different media. This is an arguably erosive process that exploits individuals and communities on a local and international scale.

The ethical practice strand demands that students reflect upon their role in the corporate process, interrogating the intersection between their responsibilities to their audiences, their roles in fulfilling a profit-driven brief and their right to freedom of expression in a world of rapidly shifting cultural norms and codes.

The course will:

- equip the student with conceptual understanding that enables them to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the field of digital media, and, consequently, to evaluate methodologies in order to develop critiques. In addition, and where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses within their field of practice.
- enable students to acquire a professional, experimental and ethical awareness in their practices and the creative skills necessary to make, record, disseminate and market their work;
- develop further students' creative and thinking abilities, their ability to experiment, imagine and invent, and to apply these to their creative and professional activity;
- deal with complex issues, both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to both specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- encourage students' independent judgement, self-reliance and ability to work co-operatively with others in the professional field;
- offer students the experience of working in a creative environment in which they can broaden and contextualise their creative and professional practice at an advanced level.

### 13 Intended learning Outcomes and learning teaching and assessment methods

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge, understanding, skills, qualities and other relevant attributes. The following learning outcomes have been informed by the Descriptors for a qualification at Masters (M) Level: Masters degree (Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, August 2008 (see Section 16) and adapted according to the needs of this particular course.

The learning outcomes for the Creative Digital Media Masters programme are as follows:

On completion of the programme students should be able to:

#### ***Knowledge and understanding:***

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. identify, analyse and critically reflect upon appropriate theory and contemporary issues in digital media;</li> <li>2. appreciate and critically reflect upon current problems or contemporary insights in digital media;</li> <li>3. identify, analyse and critically reflect upon a wide range of quantitative and/or qualitative methods applicable for applied research or advanced scholarship in digital media.</li> </ol>	<p>Learning and teaching methods used to achieve these learning outcomes will include:</p> <p>Lectures, seminars, on-line directed reading and study tasks, group discussions and problem based learning activities.</p>
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#### ***Cognitive and intellectual skills:***

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. demonstrate an in depth understanding and application of appropriate research methods;</li> <li>5. design, implement and evaluate a personal research project in a contemporary area of digital media, demonstrating critical analysis of the research process, appropriate research</li> </ol>	<p>Learning and teaching methods used to achieve these learning outcomes will include:</p> <p>Lectures, seminars, on-line directed reading and study tasks, group discussions, problem based learning activities, independent research, practical</p>
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<p>methods and the analysis, interpretation and dissemination of data;</p> <p>6. critically analyse and appreciate different perspectives, values and strategies of practitioners in the field and synthesise these with theory to deal with complex issues systematically and creatively and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences;</p> <p>7. demonstrate self direction and originality in identifying needs, analyzing needs, formulating solutions and evaluating strategies within the context of digital media.</p>	<p>laboratory and studio based activities, and work based learning.</p>
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***Practical skills relevant to employment***

<p>8. develop critical self-reflection and an independent autonomous approach to learning required for continuing professional and personal development as a reflective digital media practitioner;</p> <p>9. demonstrate critical self-assessment of key and vocational skills in the field of digital media;</p> <p>10. demonstrate competency in key digital media assessment techniques</p>	<p>Learning and teaching methods used to achieve these learning outcomes will include:</p> <p>Practical laboratory and field based activities, work based learning, student presentations and self-assessment of practical competencies.</p>
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***Transferable/key skills:***

<p>11. demonstrate initiative and personal responsibility when working alone or with others on applied problems or tasks;</p> <p>12. make decisions in complex applied situations using systematic and creative methods and communicate their conclusions clearly;</p> <p>13. have the opportunity to appreciate and critically reflect upon foreign cultures and philosophies through study and/or employment abroad.</p>	<p>Learning and teaching methods used to achieve these learning outcomes will include:</p> <p>Group work, problem based learning activities, work based learning.</p>
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The MA programme aims to further develop students' independent learning ability and enable them to become effective, reflective practitioners. Consequently, the learning, teaching and assessment methods are designed to provide opportunities for the students to develop these qualities. The learning environment will include a full range of practical work, lectures, seminars, workshops, problem-based learning, online learning, project work and independent and group study tasks, with students gradually being required to take control of their learning in an independent manner throughout the course. All online learning will be delivered through extensive use of the University's Virtual Learning Environment (Blackboard). Student research skills will culminate with a Masters level, independent research project as their final assessment.

On completion of the MA programme students should have demonstrated competency in a range of skills relating to knowledge and understanding, cognitive and intellectual skills and key skills and further, given the wide variety of modes of presentation of information required by employers today, the course aims to assess students' abilities and skills in as wide a range of these modes as possible whilst ensuring coherence with the module intended learning outcomes. As such, students are required to submit assessments including oral presentations, portfolios, research proposals, written reports, case studies, data handling assignments and research findings through the Dissertation to their work and ensure a holistic analysis of the subject area being studied.

#### **14 Assessment strategy**

Students will have a range of assessment experiences. Assignments will be in the form of practical projects that demonstrate engagement with the theoretical and professional concerns of the assessment criteria, critical and reflective learning reports, essays and presentations. Formative assignments will be set during module sessions and these can be individual or group based. Summative assignments will usually be in the form of individual submissions but collaborative work will be permitted, provided that the examiners are provided with clear guidelines as to the contribution of each student.

All modules contain some form of written assessment, as well as practical outcomes - for example, essays, reports or reflective summaries. Students will be required to read and research widely, reflect upon the material gathered and structure synthesised ideas into a critical, coherent argument, culminating in a practical conclusion.

Submitted coursework, in whatever format, will show a sophisticated grasp of knowledge and reflect critically at a conceptually advanced level, in line with the QAA descriptor for Masters work.

#### **15 Programme structure and requirements**

Based on the rationale and structure of the very successful Creative Digital Media undergraduate course, the main emphasis of the Masters programme will be for designers, animators, filmmakers, illustrators and photographers to apply skills developed in new media practice within a professional arena and to interrogate their own methods within this context.

Students will be able to study for either a:

- Post-Graduate Certificate (PGCert) – a minimum of 60 credits at level 7 OR
- Post-Graduate Diploma (PGDip) – a minimum of 120 credits at level 7 OR
- Master of Arts – a minimum of 180 credits at Level 7, including a minimum of 60 credits from the Advanced Independent Study (Dissertation).

The course will be suitable for both full-time and part-time study.

Applicants to the course should understand that software teaching is not a component of the programme and that students should already have acquired software skills, and the use of resources peculiar to their practice, as part of their undergraduate study, or professional practice. However, technical advice will be available to acquaint students with the video and sound studio.

This table shows the modules that students would take, irrespective of whether they were pursuing full-time or part-time study. Note that the Dissertation represents three 20-credit modules.

## Level 7

Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Prerequisites
CDME4001	Practice as Research	20	CDME4002, CDME4004
CDME4002	Professional Practice 1	20	None
CDME4004	Digital Media Practice 1	20	None
CDME4005	Digital Media Practice 2	20	None
CDME4006	Experimental Practice	20	None
CDME4007	Dissertation	60	CDME4001, CDME4002, CDME4004, CDME4006, CDME4008
CDME4008	Ethical Practice	20	None

### Full-time over one year

*Semester 1:* CDME4004, Digital Media Practice 1; CDME4002, Professional Practice 1; CDME4008, Ethical Practice.

*Semester 2:* CDME4001, Practice as Research; CDME4005, Digital Media Practice 2; CDME4006, Experimental Practice.

*Semester 3:* CDME4007, Dissertation

### Part-time over two years

*Year 1:*

*Semester 1:* CDME4004, Digital Media Practice 1; CDME4002, Professional Practice 1

*Semester 2:* CDME4001, Practice as Research

*Year 2:*

*Semester 1:* CDME4008, Ethical Practice

*Semester 2:* CDME4006, Experimental Practice; Digital Media Practice 2

*Semester 3:* CDME4007, Dissertation

### Part-time over three years

*Year 1:*

*Semester 1:* CDME4004, Digital Media Practice 1

*Semester 2:* CDME4006, Experimental Practice

*Year 2:*

*Semester 1:* CDME4002, Professional Practice 1

*Semester 2:* CDME4005, Digital Media Practice 2

*Year 3:*

*Semester 1:* CDME4008, Ethical Practice

Semester 2: CDME4001, Practice as Research  
Semester 3: CDME4007, Dissertation

## **16 QAA Academic Infrastructure**

### *Benchmark Statements*

There are currently no benchmark statements for Masters courses in digital media.

### *The Framework for HE Qualifications*

The course is compliant with the framework for HE qualifications. It has been developed following the Descriptor for a qualification at Masters (M) level: Masters degree (Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, August 2008) ensuring that the qualification represents appropriately the level of achievement required for Masters courses. The programme aims are mapped onto the NQFHE descriptors to ensure alignment with the descriptors which can be viewed within the Course Handbook. A full copy of the above document can be found by visiting the QAA website:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/>

The course takes into account the recent Master's Degree Characteristics document that specifies the key characteristics in relation to purpose, content, structure and delivery, teaching, learning and assessment methods and relationship to further study or employment for Master's Degree programmes. It is further acknowledged that most taught Master programmes will include some learning undertaken in a structured environment. Master programmes, considered to be of the 'professional/practice' type, often combine structured and independent learning methods alongside time spent in practice. As such, the MA in Creative Digital Media uses blended learning with mandatory intensive teaching blocks to comply with these characteristics.

### *QAA Code of Practice for Placement Learning*

The Institute has responded to the QAA Code of Practice by the development of two separate Placement Guides: one for students and one for employers, which respond to each of the precepts in the code. This will be applied, if necessary, in CDME4002, Professional Practice.

### *Other QAA Codes of Practice*

This course proposal is developed in full congruence with the UW response to QAA Codes of Assessment, Careers Guidance, Collaboration and Student Disabilities. Full copies of the above documents can be found by visiting the AQU website: <http://www2.worc.ac.uk/aqu/>

## **17 Support for students**

The University has Diversity and Equality Policy, together with equality schemes and action plans promoting equality in relation to race, disability, gender, age and sexual orientation. The Diversity and Equality Committee monitors progress in implementation.

All students joining the course will be invited to join an induction programme run by the Subject. This event – usually held immediately before the commencement of the course – offers information about the programme, module choice, study support, Information and Learning Services, an opportunity for students to meet their peers and the Digital Arts Centre staff.

Students may seek non-academic support from Student Services, and the Disability & Dyslexia Service provides advice and support for students who have mental health difficulties, dyslexia, sensory or physical impairments and other difficulties.

The University's Information and Learning Services support UW students and staff in library, information technology and media and print services. There is a dedicated Subject librarian.

The Personal Tutor will also respond to students' requests for support and help with problems that affect academic work, either at subject level or by referral to other University facilities. The Personal Tutor is a student's regular point of contact within the University.

The University offers undergraduate and postgraduate exchange programmes with students based outside the UK.

## **18 Admissions policy, criteria and procedures**

For the MA Creative Digital Media, registration will normally take place at the beginning of the autumn semester, as is currently the case for other Masters level courses.

### ***Admissions procedures***

Potential students should apply directly via the Registry at the University of Worcester. Given the potentially diverse backgrounds of applicants with a digital media related degree qualifications, all will be interviewed in order to ascertain their suitability for the course. For overseas applicants a telephone interview will be required if they are unable to travel to the University of Worcester.

The Course Leader (or his/her nominee) will interview applicants prior to admission. Interviewees will be asked to present a portfolio (or material on a remote drive or disk) of practical work and be asked to provide evidence of their ability to write coherently and critically.

### ***Entry requirements***

Candidates will be expected to have gained a 2.1 (or equivalent) at degree level in a cognate subject, but admission is ultimately at the discretion of the Course Leader.

### ***Accreditation of Prior Learning & Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning***

You may feel that you have prior experience, either academic or professional, which eliminates your need to undertake one or more modules in the Programme. Students may be admitted with advanced standing through the recognition of credit, or the accreditation of experiential or certificated learning according to the University's Accreditation of Prior Learning policy

Accreditation for Prior Learning (APL) is normally given to someone who can demonstrate that they have successfully completed an appropriate Masters level module in a subject related to the course in the last 7 years.

Accreditation for Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) is normally given to someone who can demonstrate that they have appropriate and relevant professional experience related to the subject area of the course. Enquiries regarding application for APL or APEL should be directed to the Course Leader in the first instance.

The interview is particularly important when applicants possess an honours degree in cognate disciplines, possess lower level qualifications, are studying abroad and not using their first language, or have experience which demonstrates the possession of appropriate knowledge or skills.

Up to 50% of the taught elements of any award (Pg. Cert., Pg. Dip. or Masters) for which the student is registered may be achieved through Accredited Prior Learning (APL). APL may not be used in lieu of the Advanced Independent Study.

International Students applying for the MA must have an IELTS score of 6.5.

## 19 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

The Institute of Humanities and Creative Arts operates a robust, on-going system of quality management and enhancement that involves the following elements:

- The course leader will be appointed from within the Institute of Humanities and Creative Arts.
- Annual Evaluation of the quality of the subject.
- External Examiner reports.
- Each module provides opportunities for student evaluation.
- Institute Quality Committee considers formal student feedback.
- Institute staff and student consultative committee considers generic student issues.
- University Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee and the Academic Development and Practice Unit promote learning and teaching across the institution.
- Post Exam Board module investigation (selected modules)
- Peer review of teaching by staff.
- Regular meetings of the staff/student consultative committee.
- A teacher accreditation course (Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education) for new staff, and Institute of Learning and Teaching membership.
- New Staff mentoring system.
- New staff monitored by Head of Institute.
- Personal tutor system
- National Student Survey
- Student Induction Survey

## 20 Regulation of assessment

### Requirements to pass modules

- Modules are assessed using a variety of assessment activities which are detailed in the module specifications.
- The minimum pass mark is 50% for each module.
- Students are required to submit all items of assessment in order to pass a module, and in some modules, a pass mark in each item of assessment may be required.
- Full details of the assessment requirements for a module, including the assessment criteria, are published in the module outline.

### Submission of assessment items

- Students who submit course work late but within 5 days of the due date will have work marked, but the grade will be capped at 50% unless an application for mitigating circumstances is accepted.
- Students who submit work later than 5 days but within 14 days of the due date will not have work marked unless they have submitted a valid claim of mitigating circumstances.
- Students who fail to submit an item of assessment lose their right to reassessment in that module, and will be required to retake the module, which will incur payment of the module fee.
- For full details of submission regulations see [Postgraduate Regulatory Framework](#)

### Retrieval of failure

- Students are entitled to resit failed assessment items for any module that is awarded a fail grade, unless the failure was due to non-attendance or non-submission.
- Reassessment takes place during the following semester or during the summer reassessment period at the end of the academic year.
- If following reassessment the module has been passed, the module grade will be capped at 50%.

- If a student is unsuccessful in the reassessment, they will have one further and final reassessment opportunity.
- A student who fails 40 credits or more after exhausting all reassessment opportunities may be required to withdraw from the University.

### Requirements for Awards

Award	Requirement
PG Cert	Passed a minimum of 60 credits at level 7
PG Dip	Passed a minimum of 120 credits at level 7
Masters (MA/MSc/MBA/MTL)	Passed a minimum of 180 credits at level 7 including a minimum of 40 credits from the Dissertation

The awards of PG Cert, PG Dip or Masters may be made with Merit or Distinction.

### 21 Indicators of quality and standards

The University underwent a QAA Institutional Audit in March 2011. The audit confirmed that confidence can be placed in the soundness of the institution's current and likely future management of the academic standards of its awards and the quality of the learning opportunities available to students. The audit team highlighted several aspects of good practice, including the student academic representative (StARs) initiative, the proactive approach which supports the student experience for disabled students, the comprehensiveness of the student online environment (SOLE), the wide range of opportunities afforded to students to enhance their employability, the institution's commitment to enhancement, and the inclusive approach to working with its collaborative partners

The Institute of Humanities & Creative Arts financially supports staff who are working towards further qualifications and, through the Head of Institute, endeavours to allow for this commitment in the workload of those staff. Attendance at both national and international conferences is supported and encouraged.

Research activity is also firmly encouraged. Results from this scholarly activity feed back into the learning and teaching process. Students in the Subject are encouraged to engage with the research interests of their tutors. Details of lecturers' research interests and professional experience are to be found on the staff pages that are linked from the Digital Arts Centre web page:

<http://www.worc.ac.uk/departments/144.html>

### 22 Employability and graduate destinations

Many postgraduate students are already in a career and may want to use this course to update their knowledge. Others use the opportunity to acquire a further advanced qualification as a means of enhancing their professional development and employability, as well as of opening up opportunities for networking and alternative employment, should they wish to change direction. Input is given from tutors who are professional practitioners, as well as from visiting lecturers, new media practitioners, studio managers, media marketers and creative industries consultants.

Through self-directed teamwork, students will gain work experience that reflects the nature of work in the UK media industry. The course also enables students to undertake intense development of their own practice, whilst developing their critical and conceptual abilities. Students will develop skills as

professional practitioners while participating in a professional digital arts community in the Digital Arts Centre. The MA in Creative Digital Media will help students to develop their engagement with professional practice for the next stage of their careers, whether they are self-employed or employed in a larger practice. Whilst on the MA programme, students will be expected to seek out, and actively pursue, employment opportunities that contribute to the success of their future career and to take advantage of the many opportunities on offer during the course.

**Please note:** This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the module outlines and Section 3 of the course handbook. The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the [Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education](#).