

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION



1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	MRes
4	Programme Title	Digital Media
5	Programme Code	4821 P/F
6	Programme Accreditation	N/A
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	N/A
8	FHEQ Level	7
9	Date written/revised	06 February 2008

10 Programme Aims

- 1 To enable students to pursue the study of theory and creative practice in Digital Media
- 2 To encourage the development of creative imagination and critical rigour through intellectual engagement
- 3 To enable students to develop their capacity to learn in preparation for, or as part of continuing professional development (CPD) and lifelong learning
- 4 To prepare students with the interdisciplinary skills and knowledge required to continue with academic research at PhD level, or to enter the workplace in the creative sector
- 5 To meet the requirements of a Master's level qualification as defined by the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
- 6 To conform to University policies and to QAA codes of practice

11 Learning Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas.

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should have developed:

- A1 The range of practices that comprise Digital Media as a field of creative practice
- A2 Theoretical foundations that form the conceptual and critical discourse on the place of digital media and technology in contemporary society
- A3 General and specialist knowledge to be conversant in the development of cultural programming, and presentation of digital content in the creative sector
- A4 The detailed mastery of a specific part of the field which comes from undertaking a sustained original Project

Teaching and Learning Methods

The primary methods of imparting knowledge and understanding [A1-4] are lectures, group seminars, individual tutorials, and self-directed learning. The structure of the MRes is such that students take two Compulsory Modules (Theoretical Foundations of Digital Media, and Basic Techniques of Interactive Media), introducing key theoretical and analytical frameworks [A2 and A3] and develops hands-on experience in practice current techniques in the field [A1-3]. Optional modules from within Digital Media, or selected options in related Schools/Subject Areas allow the student to select a specific thematic strand where digital media is relevant [A3] Students work with individual supervisors in creating a final project [A4]. Students are expected to read based on bibliographies supplied. A wide range of learning resources are made available, including journal articles, the Web and art collections [A3]. Students are encouraged to engage in discussion and peer-learning. The final project provides students with the opportunity to create an artefact which highlights their specific area of interest within the broad spectrum of contemporary digital media [A4].

Assessment Strategy

Knowledge and understanding [A1-A2] are assessed through the final essay for the Compulsory Module, Theoretical Foundations of Digital Media [A2], and a module final project for the Compulsory Module, Basic Techniques of Interactive Media [A1]. Marks will be awarded for evidence of knowledge of contemporary methodologies in the field [A3], and for the ability to present and analyse one's own work [A2]. The final project is the means by which students defend their selection of a specific topic within digital media and demonstrate their understanding of that topic through practice and productive output [A4].

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should have

- B1 The ability to assess critically different models of theory in Digital Media
- B2 The ability to evaluate and leverage the potential of technology creatively
- B3 The ability to seek out and gather new ideas in relation to previously established information
- B4 The ability to confront new techniques, understand their pertinence, and devise a strategy to apply theoretical concepts in practical output
- B5 The ability to interpret and evaluate information to transmit knowledge across a broad range of listeners/customers

Teaching and Learning Methods

Theoretical readings provide critical foundations [B1]. Seminars presenting seminal work in the field provide examples of creative use of digital media [B2]. Writing up project proposals serve as a way to develop project ideas [B3]. Students gain expertise in their field of digital media through the creation of a project, under the guidance of a supervisor [B2, B4]. Through presentation of their main project, students gain knowledge of presenting and defending their own work [B5].

Assessment Strategy

Assessment for the compulsory "Theoretical Foundations of Digital Media" consists of an essay, drawing on theoretical readings on digital media [B1, B3]. Assessment for the compulsory "Basic Techniques of Interactive Media" consists of a small project, applying contemporary techniques of digital media production [B2, B4]. Assessment of the final project will be based on realization and public presentation of the project accompanied by an oral presentation [B5].

Practical Skills

On completing the programme students should have:

- C1 Acquired practical skills through research experience to evaluate, analyse and interpret the diverse contexts of digital media in contemporary society
- C2 Technical skills appropriate to specific fields of creative work in Digital Media, and the ability to create new work using such skills, as demonstrated in particular in the final project
- C3 Developed a range of presentation skills including written argument, exhibition, and project management
- C4 Skills to follow and continually adapt to an evolving state of the art

Teaching and Learning Methods

The compulsory "Theoretical Foundations of Digital Media" will include lectures from a number of digital theorists and practitioners active in the field [C1]. Group work in seminars provides students with the opportunity to develop and practice their subject specific and generic skills in collaborative situations [C3]. Tutorials on hardware and software platforms for digital media production allow hands-on acquisition of skills to create and produce elements ultimately for final project [C2]. Seminars and use of online resources demonstrate to students the continuing nature of development in the field and strategies for continued self-learning [C4].

Assessment Strategy

Practical skills will be assessed through end-of-module project assignments in the compulsory Basic Techniques of Interactive Media module and DM optional modules. The ability to create a new work to defend it verbally, and exhibit it, will be assessed in the Final Project. Written argument is assessed in the Theoretical Foundations of Digital Media compulsory module.

Transferable/Key Skills

On completing the programme students should have:

D1	Competence in written and oral communication, presentation and computer literacy
D2	The ability to communicate and present effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences
D3	The ability to work independently, through self-management of time and learning methods
D4	The ability to organize and lead teams efficiently where stakeholders come from different backgrounds
D5	The ability to solve problems

Teaching and Learning Methods

Students will be introduced through lectures and seminars to read, interpret, and present critical commentary on existing creative digital media works [D1]. This will take place using online and Web based resources [D1]. The compulsory “Basic Techniques of Interactive Media” will step the student through the process of learning a technique, and applying it to achieve an intended design [D5]. The final project will call upon the initiative of the student to realize a large scale work [D3] and to present it in a group exhibition setting [D4].

Assessment Strategy

Written communication [D1] is assessed in the compulsory “Theoretical Foundations of Digital Media” module. The practice based compulsory techniques module will pose a creative problem to be solved through technology mediated means, the output of which is a module project for assessment [D5]. Group efforts such as final project exhibition will be assessed in peer discussion [D4]. Conceiving, planning, and developing the final project will be assessed through milestones including a project proposal to be submitted, then subsequently updated and revised based on new knowledge acquired during the course of the programme [D3].

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features

Basic structure of the programme

The programme may be taken on a full time (1 year) or part time (2 year) basis. A part-time route through the programme will be decided on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the Degree Programme Director. It consists of 40 credits of compulsory modules, between 20 and 50 credits of options, and a final project, to total 180 credits.

Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)

As an MRes, the programme is research intensive, and the student will have a supervisor and external supervisor to follow the final project.

Several pathways through the course exist, identified as thematic strands. These strands are Interactive Media, Film, Sound, Architecture, and Visual Art. Each strand consists of optional modules in related schools and subject areas including Music, Fine Arts (SACS), Architecture, English. Digital Media with a subject specific strand is distinguished from traditional study in that subject area by the focus on the new avenues of intellectual pursuit that digital media offer these foundational subjects.

The programme is innovative in that it implements the vision of practice-led interdisciplinary research.

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme/2009-2010/documents/DigitalMediaMRes.pdf>

13 Criteria for admission

Entry qualifications

Candidates should normally hold a first degree in a related subject (English, Film, Music, Art History, Fine Art, Multimedia, Computing) and shall normally hold at least a 2:1 (Upper Second Class) degree. Other degree qualifications may be considered where appropriate, especially where project-based work formed a component of the undergraduate programme.

Candidates who have followed a non-traditional route into Higher Education will also be

considered eligible, according to the Faculty Admission Policy. We encourage individuals without undergraduate degrees but with the equivalent experience (e.g. industry or the creation of a substantial portfolio of work).

Admissions policy/selection tools

We actively encourage applications from overseas and domestic students.

Non-standard Entry Requirements

All applications are seen by the DPD. All applicants must submit a portfolio of work for consideration. All suitable applicants will be invited for interview, and will be offered the chance to meet staff and view facilities

Level of English Language capability

All overseas students have to satisfy the University's language requirements and obtain a minimum of 6.5 IELTS or equivalent

14 Support for Student Learning

Induction

During the first week of the first semester students attend an induction programme. New students will be given a general introduction to University life and the University's principle support services and general information about the School and their programme, as described in the Degree Programme Handbook. New and continuing students will be given detailed programme information and the timetable of lectures/practicals/labs/ tutorials/etc. The International Office offers an additional induction programme for overseas students.

Study skills support

Students will learn a range of Personal Transferable Skills, including Study Skills, as outlined in the Programme Specification. Some of this material, e.g. time management is covered in the appropriate Induction Programme. Students are explicitly tutored on their approach to both group and individual projects.

Numeracy support is available through Maths Aid.

Help with academic writing is available from the Writing Centre.

Academic support

The initial point of contact for a student is with a lecturer or module leader, or their tutor (see below) for more generic issues. Thereafter the Degree Programme Director or Head of School may be consulted. Issues relating to the programme may be raised at the Staff-Student Committee, and/or at the Board of Studies.

Pastoral support

All students are assigned a personal tutor whose responsibility is to monitor the academic performance and overall well-being of their tutees. In addition the University offers a range of support services, including one-to-one counselling and guidance or group sessions/workshops on a range of topics, such as emotional issues eg. Stress and anxiety, student finance and budgeting, disability matters etc. There is specialist support available for students with dyslexia and mental health issues. Furthermore, the Union Society operates a Student Advice Centre, which can provide advocacy and support to students on a range of topics including housing, debt, legal issues etc.

Support for students with disabilities

The University's Disability Support Service provides help and advice for disabled students at the University - and those thinking of coming to Newcastle. It provides individuals with: advice about the University's facilities, services and the accessibility of campus; details about the technical support available; guidance in study skills and advice on financial support arrangements; a resources room with equipment and software to assist students in their studies.

Learning resources

The University's main learning resources are provided by the Robinson and Walton Libraries (for books, journals, online resources), and Information Systems and Services, which supports campus-wide computing facilities.

All new students whose first language is not English are required to take an English Language Proficiency Test. This is administered by INTO Newcastle University Centre on behalf of Newcastle University. Where appropriate, in-session language training can be provided. The INTO Newcastle University Centre houses a range of resources which may be particularly appropriate for those interested in an Erasmus exchange.

15 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

Module reviews

All modules are subject to review by questionnaires which are considered by the Board of Studies. Changes to, or the introduction of new, modules are considered at the School Teaching and Learning Committee and at the Board of Studies. Student opinion is sought at the Staff-Student Committee and/or the Board of Studies. New modules and major changes to existing modules are subject to approval by the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee.

Programme reviews

The Board of Studies conducts an Annual Monitoring and Review of the degree programme and reports to Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee.

External Examiner reports

External Examiner reports are considered by the Board of Studies. The Board responds to these reports through Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee. External Examiner reports are shared with institutional student representatives, through the Staff-Student Committee.

Student evaluations

All modules, and the degree programme, are subject to review by student questionnaires. Informal student evaluation is also obtained at the Staff-Student Committee, and the Board of Studies.

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback

Feedback is channelled via the Staff-Student Committee and the Board of Studies.

Faculty and University Review Mechanisms

The programme is subject to the University's Internal Subject Review process. Every five years degree programmes in each subject area are subject to periodic review. This involves both the detailed consideration of a range of documentation, and a two-day review visit by a review team which includes an external subject specialist in addition to University and Faculty representatives. Following the review a report is produced, which forms the basis for a decision by University Teaching and Learning Committee on whether the programmes reviewed should be re-approved for a further five year period.

Accreditation reports

Additional mechanisms

16 Regulation of assessment

Pass mark

The pass mark is 50 (Postgraduate programmes)

The University employs a common marking scheme, which is specified in the Taught Postgraduate Examination Conventions, namely:

Summary description applicable to postgraduate Masters programmes

Summary description applicable to postgraduate Certificate and Diploma programmes

<50	Fail	<50	Fail
50-59	Pass	50 or above	Pass
60-69	Pass with Merit		
70 or above	Pass with Distinction		

Role of the External Examiner

An External Examiner, a distinguished member of the subject community, is appointed by Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee, after recommendation from the Board of Studies.

The External Examiner is expected to:

- See and approve examination papers
- Moderate examination and coursework marking
- Attend the Board of Examiners
- Report to the University on the standards of the programme

In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

The University Prospectus (see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/> or <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/>)

The School Brochure (contact enquiries@ncl.ac.uk)

The University Regulations (see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/>)

The Degree Programme Handbook

Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. The accuracy of the information contained is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

Mapping of Intended Learning Outcomes onto Curriculum/Modules

Either

Intended Learning Outcome	Module codes (Compulsory in Bold)
A1	DMS8002
A2	DMS8001
A3	DMS8003 , DMS8006
A4	DMS8003 , DMS8004, DMS8005, DMS8006, ARC8016, ARC8027, FIN8000, MUS8110, SEL8084, SEL8059
B1	DMS8001
B2	DMS8003
B3	DMS8003 , DMS8004, DMS8005, DMS8006, ARC8016, ARC8027, FIN8000, MUS8110, SEL8084, SEL8059
B4	DMS8003 , DMS8004, DMS8005, DMS8006, ARC8016, ARC8027, FIN8000, MUS8110, SEL8084, SEL8059
C1	DMS8002
C2	DMS8003
C3	DMS8003 , DMS8006
C4	DMS8001 , DMS8002
D1	DMS8001
D2	DMS8001 , DMS8003
D3	DMS8003 , DMS8004, DMS8005, DMS8006
D4	DMS8006
D5	DMS8002