

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION



1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	MFA
4	Programme Title	Fine Art
5	UCAS/Programme Code	5808F/P
6	Programme Accreditation	N/A
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	n/a
8	FHEQ Level	Masters
9	Date written/revised	20 June 2007

10 Programme Aims

The aims of the programme are:

1. To provide a supportive and responsive learning environment in which students can acquire such advanced practical and theoretical skills as will enable them to establish themselves as practitioners in fine art or in other careers in the visual arts field.
2. To provide a varied learning experience which encourages the development of individual potential and abilities.
3. To provide a framework within which students can acquire a sound knowledge of a range of intellectual and practical approaches to their subject such that they are prepared for further academic research.
4. To improve graduate's understanding of appropriate key skills. These key skills include the ability to manage projects with regard to time and resources, the ability to work as part of a group and independently, the ability to solve problems creatively, the ability to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing and the ability to use library resources and IT efficiently and appropriately.
5. To provide a programme which meets the requirements of an M level programme according to the HEQF
6. To comply with University policies and procedures

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. The programme outcomes have references to the benchmark statements for (Fine Art).

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students will have developed:

- A1. An advanced knowledge and understanding through intensive studio practice of the techniques and methods both physical and intellectual necessary for the resolved statement of visual ideas in appropriate media.
- A2. A critical understanding of the range of historical and contemporary critical debates surrounding visual arts practice and their implications for practice in different media.
- A3. A critical understanding of historical, practical and critical issues surrounding exhibition practices.
- A4. A critical understanding of the institutional and professional structures within which contemporary visual arts practice exists.

A5. A critical understanding of the roles of artists, curators, critics and audiences in shaping contemporary visual culture.

A6 A critical understanding of the relationship between text and visual image in their own practice and that of others.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Teaching strategy

Tutorials, seminars and group criticisms are the primary means by which specialist knowledge and understanding are imparted. This is supplemented by lectures given by Fine Art staff and a range of professional visitors (A1-5). In the specific area of exhibition management, knowledge and understanding are developed in practical workshops (A3). Exchange trips to overseas institutions are available to students where the strategy for teaching is consistent with the achievement of all of the principal learning outcomes (A1-5)

Learning strategy

Students are expected to develop their understanding throughout the programme through the production of independently achieved bodies of studio work (A1-5). In addition, understanding of the implications of public exhibition is encouraged through students working as a team to realise all aspects of an interim public exhibition of work at the end of Stage One of the programme (A3 & A5). Students are encouraged to seek opportunities to exhibit independently outwith the institution (A3 & A5).

Assessment Strategy

Assessment strategy

Knowledge and understanding (A1-5) are assessed by means of an exhibition presentation and a dissertation (A1-5 dependent on topic) on a topic related to the student's practice and/or theoretical concerns. All or some of A1-5 are assessed through viva voce examination by an External Examiner. An exhibition proposal and dissertation outline together with a body of studio work are assessed at the end of Stage One.

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should have:

B1. The ability to assess critically different models of theory and practice in the visual arts field.

B2. The ability to test such critical judgements in relation to their own practices.

B3. The ability to evaluate and coherently structure material towards practical and/or intellectual ends.

B4. The ability to assess and evaluate new ideas in relation to previously held information and establish their possible role in opening avenues for further research.

B5. The ability to test arguments and apply them coherently and consistently in dealing with their own ideas and those of others.

B6. The ability to solve problems.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Teaching strategy

The development of skills B1, B2, B4 & B5 is encouraged through lecture and seminar programmes including the lecture series based on the contribution of visiting professionals (artists, curators, critics, publishers etc). These skills are also encouraged through regular group criticisms in the studios. Cognitive skills B3 and B6 are promoted in the production of bodies of studio work and in the dissertation, exhibition proposal and dissertation outline. To varying degrees all six cognitive skills are encouraged by the preparation and presentation of material for public exhibition/publication.

Learning strategy

Independent learning of cognitive skills B1-B6 takes place in the development of all studio based projects and in the research for and production of the dissertation. Opportunities to develop B1-B5 are present in the contributions made by students to seminars and group criticisms. B6 is encouraged in the exhibition projects organised collectively in Stages One and Two.

Assessment Strategy
Cognitive skills B1-B6 are assessed through the final presentation of studio work and the dissertation. These skills are assessed through viva voce examination by an External Examiner and an internal panel.
Practical Skills
On completing the programme students should be able to: C1. Use the physical techniques appropriate for the realisation of projects in visual arts media at an advanced level. C2. Negotiate with support organisations, professional and funding bodies necessary for the realisation of exhibition projects. C3. Deal with sponsors, art administrators, patrons and suppliers.
Teaching and Learning Methods
<p><i>Teaching strategy</i></p> <p>Understanding of advanced studio practice is gained through tutorials, group criticisms and seminars (C1 & C2) throughout the two year programme. Understanding (C3 & C4) and practical experience (C3-5) of exhibition management are provided by seminars and workshops in Stage One of the programme. Individual studio projects may be supported where appropriate by technical staff. An understanding of the various roles of textual material in relation to visual images is developed through seminars and tutorials particularly in the Dissertation Development module in Stage One (C2).</p> <p><i>Learning strategy</i></p> <p>The development of practical skills is a constant element in the self directed studio projects undertaken by all students (C1 & C2). The skills necessary for managing the public exhibition of these projects are developed through the preparation of exhibitions of work at the end of Stages One and Two and the writing of an exhibition proposal in Stage One (C2-C5).</p>
Assessment Strategy
Subject specific and practical skills are assessed by the Exhibition of Work in Stage Two (C1 & C3-5) and by the Dissertation (C2). These elements are assessed by viva voce examination by an External Examiner and an internal panel.
Transferable/Key Skills
On completing the programme students should be able to: D1. The ability to communicate by means of clearly articulated, well supported and confident verbal presentations and well argued and coherently structured written documents. D2. The ability to use library and other sources of information efficiently and appropriately. D3. The ability to use IT resources efficiently and appropriately. D4. The ability to plan and manage projects efficiently and appropriately. D5. The ability to work independently with initiative and also in groups. D6. The ability to solve problems.
Teaching and Learning Methods
<p><i>Teaching strategy</i></p> <p>Key skills are taught in relation to most elements of the programme. D1 is taught in seminars dealing with the style and structure of critical writing and in other seminars and group criticisms. D2 and D3 are taught in the context of the Research Training module of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences as well as in tutorial teaching in the period of dissertation development in Stage One. Skills D4, D5 and D6 are promoted through commentaries on specific student projects in tutorials, group criticisms and reviews. Planning and management D4 and its related skills D5 and D6 are developed throughout all self initiated projects and through group work in the two student exhibitions. The dissertation</p>

provides opportunities for the development of skills D1-D6.

Learning strategy

Students are encouraged to acquire key skills D1 and D5 through participation in seminars and group criticisms throughout the programme. D1 is also promoted through tutorial contact. D1-D6 are developed in the writing of a dissertation and the preparation of the interim exhibition and the final presentation of studio work.

Assessment Strategy

Key skills are not independently assessed. All key skills are examined by means of a presentation of studio work and a dissertation. These are assessed by viva voce examination by an External Examiner and an internal panel.

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features

Basic structure of the programme

The Master of Fine Art Programme, which is modular, runs for six semesters within two calendar years. It is assumed that most students will undertake the full programme of study, however, those students unable to complete it in its entirety, or who fail to reach the standard required to progress to Stage 2 may be awarded a Diploma after fulfilling the commitments for Stage 1.

The components of the course are significantly different modular values. The majority of a student's time will be spent in developing self-directed studio projects in consultation with an academic tutor. The dissertation, which is prepared in Stage 2, is intended to function as a support for the student's development as a practitioner. It may develop accordingly in a number of possible ways and be formed by one or more from a number of critical or methodological approaches.

The Fine Art Training Module focuses on the management of Exhibition Projects. This involves the development of a variety of practical and theoretical skills.

The Research Training Module of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences provides general skills and an awareness of methodologies for general research. It is concerned with a number of distinct elements such as Information Technology, Information Retrieval and Critical Strategies.

There is encouragement at all stages of the programme for students to undertake independent exhibition projects in public venues.

Stage 1 begins with introductory seminars in which new students and Stage 2 students give brief presentations to introduce their work to each other.

Following these seminars, students are involved at Stage 1 in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Research Training Module which develops many of the skills necessary for the realisation of the Dissertation and in the Fine Art Training Module. The seminar and workshop training for this module extends over the First Semester and covers The History of Exhibitions, case studies of contemporary exhibitions, Exhibition Publications, Funding, exhibiting in non-gallery venues and Curating exhibitions abroad. This leads in Semesters Two and Three to the preparation and realisation of the Interim Exhibition which is mounted in the Fine Art studios and/or in external venues. The exhibition provides opportunities to explore the roles of exhibiting artist, curator, exhibition designer and gallery technician. It is also an occasion on which MFA students may work with research students to create a joint exhibition.

Students write an exhibition proposal, submitted at the end of Semester Three which encourages the development of those skills necessary for negotiating with gallery administrators and funding bodies in the development of exhibition projects. In Stage 1 students begin preparation of a dissertation outline which is supported by two workshops on forms of writing on visual arts subjects.

A seminar series, presented by students, is common to both years of the programme. Subjects are selected by the student in relation to their studio practice and research interests and cover areas of theoretical and critical issues relevant to contemporary arts practice.

The student's individual practice is the main focus for tutorial teaching and for group teaching in the form of group criticisms which begin in Semester Two and involve students from both

years of the programme. Tutorial teaching is supplied by the student's academic tutor, by other departmental staff in rotation, and by visiting professionals, i.e. artists, curators and critics. The capacity to explore ideas articulately is at the centre of this element in the programme.

The final exhibition is seen as demonstrating the student's acquisition of knowledge of the curriculum and his/her capacity to employ key skills in problem solving and project management.

The Dissertation which is submitted at the end of the second term in Stage 2 is the principal instrument in developing the abilities necessary for the successful articulation of ideas about visual arts practice in a variety of textual forms.

All modules are core and compulsory

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

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme/>

13 Criteria for admission

Entry qualifications

Candidates should normally hold a first degree with honours in Fine Art. They should have previous experience in fine art practice or in a related area. Candidates should provide examples of studio work of a standard appropriate for entry to a Fine Art Master's programme.

Applicants not based in the UK are not required to attend an interview.

Admissions policy/selection tools

Applicants are asked to submit up to twenty slides or photographs of studio work along with a completed application form. Images can be submitted on CD or DVD and applications are made online via the admissions portal. Candidates who are deemed, on the basis of this submission, to be capable of benefiting from the programme are invited for interview and to visit the department. Following the interview, offers of places are made to suitably qualified candidates. Those who have yet to complete a first degree must do so before a final offer can be made and all candidates must provide a satisfactory reference.

Non-standard Entry Requirements

Applicants with Non-Standard qualifications. Applicants who hold non-standard qualifications and/or have relevant experience will be considered on an individual basis.

Additional Requirements

n/a

Level of English Language capability

Applicants for whom English is not a first language must provide evidence of a satisfactory command of English, preferably with an IELTS score of 6.5 or greater

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.

The International Office offers an additional induction programme for overseas students (see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/international/coming_to_newcastle/orientation.phtml)

Meetings in the School of Arts and Cultures during the first week will include:

- A social gathering with Fine Art Staff and studio-based research students.
- A meeting with the Programme Director in which the forms of the course and the ways in which it is taught are described. A meeting with the student's academic tutor.
- A social gathering organised through the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences which also serves as an introduction to the Faculty Research Training Module.
- Following these meetings there are group sessions in which Stage 1 and Stage 2 students introduce their work through a brief presentation

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.

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. The tutor also supervises work on the dissertation, both during its preparation in Stage 1 and during writing up in Stage 2. Tutorials will normally take place every two weeks. Students have access to their tutor through email and can request extra meetings in the event of problems arising with any aspect of course work.

Thereafter the Degree Programme Director or Head of School may be consulted. The Programme Director is responsible for all aspects of the management of the course. All students have access to the Director with whom they may discuss any academic or personal issues which may arise. 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. Details of the personal tutor system can be found at <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support/tutor.phtml>

In addition the University offers a range of support services, including the Student Advice Centre, the Counselling and Wellbeing team, the Mature Student Support Officer, and a Childcare Support Officer, see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support/welfare.phtml>

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. For further details see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/disability-support/>

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, see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support/acfacilities.phtml>

Fine Art provides well designed studios which are occupied by small groups of MFA students. A lecture theatre and a seminar room, used for group teaching. Workshops and workshop areas are provided for specialist work and fabrication in most major media. The woodwork shop is equipped with table and jig saws, lathes and power hand tools. The metalwork shop is equipped with saws, lathes, a milling machine, power guillotine, welding equipment etc. Printmaking workshops contain equipment for the realisation of work in etching, stone lithography, silkscreen printing and various photographic techniques. Networked IT facilities are available in clusters throughout the University and the IT suite in the Fine Art building is available for the digital manipulation of images and for video editing. There is a small darkroom for black and white photographic processing.

The Robinson Library holds an extensive book and magazine stock on all aspects of art history and art theory. Alongside access to electronic journals and other extend the range of book and magazine material.

Fine Art provides two temporary exhibition spaces, one of which can be blacked out for the development of students' exhibition design and management skills.

All new students whose first language is not English are required to take an English Language test in the Language Centre. Where appropriate, in-session language training can be provided. The Language Centre houses a range of resources for learning other languages which may be particularly appropriate for those interested in an Erasmus exchange. See <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support/facilities/langcen.phtml>

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. The National Student Survey is sent out every year to final-year undergraduate students, and consists of a set of questions seeking the students' views on the quality of the learning and teaching in their HEIs. Further information is at www.thestudentsurvey.com/ With reference to the outcomes of the NSS and institutional student satisfaction surveys actions are taken at all appropriate levels by the institution.

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, see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/aqss/qsh/internal_subject_review/index.php

Accreditation reports

n/a

Additional mechanisms

Feedback from arts organisations employing graduates and from individual graduates working independently

- Feedback from the external examiner
- Feedback from independent external reviews (QAA, HEFCE)
- Relevance of the programme in relation to the general employability of graduates
- Relevance of the programme in relation to funding sources (AHRC etc)

16 Regulation of assessment

Pass mark

The pass mark is 50 (Postgraduate programmes)

There are two assessed elements:

- A submission of studio work in the form of an exhibition which is presented at the end of August/ beginning of September in Stage 2 of the programme
- A dissertation which is submitted at the end of February in Stage 2

Course requirements

Progression is subject to the University's Masters Degree Progress Regulations, Taught and Research (<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/calendar/university.regs/tpmdepr.pdf>) and Examination Conventions for Taught Masters Degrees (<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/calendar/university.regs/tpmdeprexamconv.pdf>). Limited compensation up to 40 credits of the taught element and down to a mark of 40 is possible and there are reassessment opportunities, with certain restrictions.

Common Marking Scheme

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

Summary description applicable to postgraduate Masters programmes

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

Summary description applicable to postgraduate Certificate and Diploma programmes

<50	Fail
50 or above	Pass

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/postgraduate/>)

The School Brochure

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.

Annex

Mapping of Intended Learning Outcomes onto Curriculum/Modules

Intended Learning Outcome	Module codes (Comp/Core in Bold)
A1	FIN801, FIN802, FIN803, FIN899
A2	FIN800, FIN801, FIN802, FIN803, FIN899
A3	FIN800, FIN801, FIN802, FIN803, FIN899
A4	FIN800, FIN801, FIN802, FIN803, FIN899
A5	FIN800, FIN801, FIN802, FIN803, FIN899
A6	FIN800, FIN801, FIN802, FIN803, FIN899
B1	FIN800, FIN801, FIN802, FIN803, FIN899, HSS8000
B2	FIN800, FIN801, FIN802, FIN803, FIN899, HSS8000
B3	FIN800, FIN801, FIN802, FIN803, FIN899, HSS8000
B4	FIN800, FIN801, FIN802, FIN803, FIN899, HSS8000
B5	FIN800, FIN801, FIN802, FIN803, FIN899, HSS8000
B6	FIN800, FIN801, FIN802, FIN803, FIN899, HSS8000
C1	FIN800, FIN802, FIN803
C2	FIN800, FIN802, FIN803,
C3	FIN800, FIN802, FIN803
D1	FIN800, FIN801, FIN802, FIN803, FIN899, HSS8000
D2	FIN800, FIN801, FIN802, FIN803, FIN899, HSS8000
D3	FIN800, FIN801, FIN802, FIN803, FIN899, HSS8000
D4	FIN800, FIN801, FIN802, FIN803, FIN899, HSS8000
D5	FIN800, FIN801, FIN802, FIN803, FIN899
D6	FIN800, FIN801, FIN802, FIN803, FIN899, HSS8000