University of Plymouth

Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Business

School of Art, Design and Architecture

Programme Specification

MRes Digital Art & Technology

Amended by Minor Change: 16/05/16

Brief description of Programme

MRes Digital Art & Technology is an interdisciplinary postgraduate programme. The programme reflects the AZTEC subject group's teaching and research activities as a creative environment for trans-disciplinary practice in digital art and technology. It aims to define and establish new fields of practice and critical discourse through the creative and innovative application of digital technologies.

The programme aims to reflect upon, and actively engage with, contemporary arts and technology practices. The programme is constantly upgraded to respond to changing cultural and technological developments, and is delivered through a combination of online and offline activities (using streaming media, an interactive web site and online community tools as well as more traditional methods). It is offered in either full or part-time modes, and so offers great flexibility and reflects the changing contexts in which practices in art and technology operate.

The programme offers a taught MRes (Master of Research) award in which students undertake a major research project underpinned by modules that deliver research skills and critical practices.

Distinctive features

The Digital Art & Technology programme is unusual in offering a creative and practical course that builds upon an arts tradition in a technology context and suitably offers both arts and science awards. It has been organised into credit-rated modules, which are delivered in concentrated teaching and learning blocks, supported by on-line teaching and learning components which incorporate a range of distance learning technologies. Often, the face-to-face sessions (what we call 'symposium' sessions) take place off campus at a range of cultural venues, and at other times in the labs of the University.

Designed for part-time or full-time study, and by utilising on-line teaching elements, the programme provides considerable flexibility for participants to manage a programme that suits their creative and professional needs.

Entry requirements

University of Plymouth regulations for admission to taught Masters, PgDip and PgCert programmes apply (University Regulations, Notes for Guidance and Procedures for Taught Programmes current edition). The programme adheres to the University regulations and guidelines for Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) and Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning

(APCL) for Masters programmes.

Successful applicants would normally be expected to have at least an Upper Second Honours degree in an appropriate subject area. A lower degree classification or professional experience may be considered if the applicant can demonstrate a significant level of achievement and potential.

The Admissions Tutor will co-ordinate the interviewing of applicants, if required. Due to the practical nature of the programme, candidates will be required to submit a portfolio of material that adequately demonstrates their digital production skills. Candidates for entry will be invited to visit the University, and may be called for formal interview in order to assess their ability to benefit from the programme. Candidates must be able to:

• demonstrate their relevant experience
• contextualise their production experience within a critical framework
• articulate their reasons for wanting to enter the postgraduate programme
• indicate their ability to accommodate the demands of the programme

Candidates will be expected to be capable of fulfilling the objectives of the programme and achieve the standard required for the award of the MRes. The programme seeks applications in keeping with its interdisciplinary nature, from a broad range of disciplines and backgrounds.

Progression routes

N/A

Programme aims

The School of Computing, Communications and Electronics shares the values of the University of Plymouth and supports its mission through the provision of a range of courses relevant to the theory and practice of Information and Communication Technology.

1. To be informative and challenging, and to establish a knowledge base suitable for a career in Information and Communication Technology.
2. To give students with a variety of qualifications an opportunity to realise their potential.
3. To enrich curriculum content and teaching quality through the professional and/or research expertise of staff and through links with external organisations.
4. To encourage and support students whilst they develop and apply subject-specific and generic skills that will facilitate life long learning and continuing professional development.
5. To produce graduates and postgraduates who can make a significant contribution to their chosen profession.

More specifically, the Digital Art & Technology programme will provide the opportunity for postgraduates students to:

• acquire in-depth knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to solve complex problems using the transformative qualities and processes of digital technologies and creative practices.

• recognise, analyse and articulate the complex cultural and practical processes which arise through the creative practice and technical exploration of digital production.

• generate, through a synthesis of critical analysis and innovative production, new perspectives on digital technologies and creative practices that expand or redefine existing knowledge and relations of production.

• communicate clearly, effectively and persuasively.

• be capable of self-development, self-learning and self-management.

• work effectively as individuals, team members or team leaders.

These aims are common to MA, MSc and MRes awards. However the awards indicate tendencies towards an emphasis on cultural, technical or research contexts respectively (see Learning Outcomes and DMRs for further details).

Specific aims and objectives for individual modules are shown in the Definitive Module Records.

Intended programme learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding

On completion graduates should have developed:

- knowledge and understanding of essential facts, concepts, principles and theories relating to computing and computer applications as appropriate to the programme of study.

- knowledge and understanding in the modelling and design of computer- based systems for the purposes of comprehension, communication, prediction and the understanding of tradeoffs.

- awareness of the economic forces which frame the media, cultural and creative industries, and the role of such industries in specific areas of contemporary political and cultural life.

- an understanding of key production processes and professional practices relevant to media, cultural and communicative industries, and of ways of conceptualising creativity and authorship.

Teaching and learning methods and strategies:

Module delivery is based around combinations of:
1. 'Focus' sessions, where students are introduced to materials, make presentations and are assessed through face-to-face contact.
2. The use of 'On-line' materials, where students access teaching and learning materials as well as use communications tools.
3. 'Symposium' sessions, where intensive face-to-face contact is made, sometimes in off-site locations to discuss work in progress.
4. The programme encourages student-centred practice through independent production and research activity.

(These delivery modes are described in more detail at the end of this section).

Assessment strategies:

Students are assessed on the production of diverse objects and outcomes (individual and collaborative), such as the production of artifacts or installations, web sites, other online materials, software or hardware, written texts and seminar presentations.

Cognitive and intellectual skills

On completion graduates should have developed:

Teaching and learning methods and strategies:

Module delivery is based around

- ability to evaluate and analyse the extent to which a computer-based system meets the criteria defined for its current use and future development.

-ability to deploy appropriate theory, practices and tools for the specification, design, implementation and evaluation of computer-based systems.

- ability to engage critically with major thinkers, debates and intellectual paradigms within the field and put them to productive use.

- ability to evaluate systems in terms of general quality attributes and possible trade-offs presented within the given problem.

The **MRes** route includes the following outcome:
- ability to engage with the conception, production and consumption of digital art and technology positioned within a 'research' context.

combinations of:
1. 'Focus' sessions, where students are introduced to materials, make presentations and are assessed through face-to-face contact.
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Assessment strategies:

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Key and transferable skills

On completion graduates should have developed:

- ability to present succinctly to a range of audiences (orally, electronically or in writing) rational and reasoned arguments that address a given information handling problem or opportunity. This should include assessment of the impact of new technologies.

- ability to deploy effectively the tools used for the construction and documentation of computer applications, with particular emphasis on understanding the whole process involved in the effective deployment of computers to solve practical problems.

- ability to initiate, develop and realise distinctive and creative work within various forms of writing or of aural, visual, audio-visual, sound or other electronic media;

- ability to experiment, as appropriate, with forms, conventions, languages, techniques and practices.

* Additional transferable skills are listed in the IDAT Module Assessment document, p.10.

Teaching and learning methods and strategies:

Module delivery is based around combinations of:
1. 'Focus' sessions, where students are introduced to materials, make presentations and are assessed through face-to-face contact.
2. The use of 'On-line' materials, where students access teaching and learning materials as well as use communications tools.
3. 'Symposium' sessions, where intensive face-to-face contact is made, sometimes in off-site locations to discuss work in progress.
4. The programme encourages student-centred practice through independent production and research activity.

(These delivery modes are described in more detail at the end of this section).

Additionally the Personal Development Portfolio (PDP) is encouraged through the use of online blogs.

Assessment strategies:

Students are assessed on the production of diverse objects and outcomes (individual and collaborative), such as the production of artifacts or installations, web sites, other online materials, software or hardware, written texts and seminar presentations.

Employment related skills

On completion graduates should have developed:

- recognition of the professional, moral and ethical issues involved in the exploitation of computer technology and be guided by the adoption of appropriate professional, ethical and legal practices.

- ability to work as a member of a development team, recognising the different roles within a team and different ways of organising teams.

Teaching and learning methods and strategies:

The 'Symposium' sessions, where intensive face-to-face contact is made, sometimes in off-site locations to discuss work in progress are also points where contacts are made with (creative) industry partners.

Assessment strategies:

Students are assessed on the production of diverse objects and outcomes (individual and collaborative), such as the production of artifacts or installations, web sites, other online materials, software or hardware, written texts and seminar presentations.

Practical skills

On completion graduates should have developed:

- ability to recognise practical constraints and computer-based systems (and this includes computer systems, information systems, embedded systems and distributed systems) in their context: recognise and analyse criteria and specifications appropriate to specific problems, and plan strategies for their solution.

- ability to recognise any risks or safety aspects that may be involved in the operation of computing equipment within a given context.

Teaching and learning methods and strategies:

Module delivery is based around combinations of:
1. 'Focus' sessions, where students are introduced to materials, make presentations and are assessed through face-to-face contact.
2. The use of 'On-line' materials, where students access teaching and learning materials as well as use communications tools.
3. 'Symposium' sessions, where intensive face-to-face contact is made, sometimes in off-site locations to discuss work in progress.
4. The programme encourages student-centred practice through independent production and research activity.

- ability to operate computing equipment effectively, taking into account its logical and physical properties. - ability to produce work showing competence in operational aspects of media production technologies, systems, techniques and professional practices.	(These delivery modes are described in more detail at the end of this section). Assessment strategies: Students are assessed on the production of diverse objects and outcomes (individual and collaborative), such as the production of artifacts or installations, web sites, other online materials, software or hardware, written texts and seminar presentations.

The above statements are adapted from the QAA benchmark statements for Computing, and in addition Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies, and Art and Design. Please also refer to the 'IDAT module assessment tool' for further details on assessment and subject benchmark issues, pp. 8-11.

More detail on teaching and learning methods and strategies used on the programme:

1. 'Focus' sessions, consist of intensive residential period at the University, where most of the formal lecture and face-to-face contact takes place. Focus sessions normally take place when modules are introduced or assessed. The flexible nature of this system will allow the programme to respond to outside demands for a non-standard delivery when and if appropriate.
2. 'On-line' materials, are used so that students can access teaching and learning materials; multi-user community; production facilities; tutorial support.
3. 'Symposium' sessions, are where students and staff meet on site or at remote locations for tutorial support and case studies, etc. These will normally take place on several occasions throughout the year.
4. Alongside the above, student-centred practice is where the student is involved in specific activities associated with the module, such as practical production and background practical and critical/theoretical research.

Teaching, learning and assessment strategies adhere to the QAA guidelines for e-learning (http://www.qaa.ac.uk/public/COP/cprovis/contents.htm#elearn). Although it is recognised that the online component is quite different from the offline mode in terms of practical and technical aspects, the delivery, support and assessment follows the general precepts of DAT programmes in taking context (online or offline) as part of the educational experience. The web site resources are supplemented at all times by communication using other means such as telephone contact and email, but most crucially by the regularity of the face-to-face meetings.

As far as possible, the needs of students with disabilities will be accommodated in terms of assessment in line with University procedures, guidelines and equal opportunities practices. It is not predicted that teaching assessment methods employed would exclude a student with a disability

Programme structure and pathways

Postgraduate Certificate in Digital Art & Technology
Postgraduate Diploma in Digital Art & Technology
MRes in Digital Art & Technology

Part-time Mode

First Year	Second Year
Phase 1: Postgraduate Certificate in Digital Art & Technology	**Phase 2: Postgraduate Diploma in Digital Art & Technology**
DAT701 Invisible Architecture; Credits 30; C/W 100%	DAT703 Project/Dissertation; Credits 120; C/W 100%
DAT702 Synthesis; Credits 30; C/W 100%	

Full-time Mode

First Semester	Second Semester
Phase 1: Postgraduate Certificate in Digital Art & Technology	**Phase 2: Postgraduate Diploma in Digital Art & Technology**
DAT701 Invisible Architecture; Credits 30; C/W 100%	DAT703 Project/Dissertation; Credits 120; C/W 100%
DAT702 Synthesis; Credits 30; C/W 100%	
Both phases 1 is taken during First Semester and Phase 2 is taken during Second Semester extending over the summer.	

Phase 1 modules lay the foundations for the themes encountered in the programme as a whole and equip students with critical and practical skills and strategies for producing innovative work. Modules in **Phase 2** provide students with the opportunity to extend their knowledge, understanding and production skills in order that they may better explore the transformative nature of digital media.

For the MRes award, part-time students will take 60 credits in the first year and 120 in the second and over the summer periods. If a student is taking the full-time mode, phases 1 and Phase 2 run concurrently. All modules are 30 credits. The **MRes Project** is worth 120 credits.

This results in three options for the final award:

MRes Digital Art & Technology

| DAT701 Invisible Architecture; Credits 30; C/W 100% |
| DAT702 Synthesis; Credits 30; C/W 100% |
| DAT703 Project/Dissertation; 120 Credits; C/W 100% |

Project/Dissertation:
At the Project stage, students can choose different proportions of practical and written work making a total of 100%:
25% written report or dissertation with 75% production project
50% written report or dissertation with 50% production project
75% written report or dissertation with 25% production project

These proportions are offered in recognition that production work as well as written forms can constitute research activity. The MRes in particular recognises the likelihood of students wishing to engage in practice-based research at a higher level.

Award Routes:

Students apply to the programme with a **MRes** project in mind and are accepted on this basis.

See Project Module Descriptors for more detail on these award differentiations.

A student can be awarded a **PgCert** on the successful completion of 60 credits and a **PgDip** on the successful completion of 120 credits.

Mandatory modules:
On all award modes – MRes – DAT701 Invisible Architecture and DAT702 Synthesis are mandatory co-requisite modules.

Industrial Placement:
It is possible to undertake a 2-year full-time masters award with placement. The award with placement requires 180 credits as follows:
Year 1: full time masters programme as above (180 credits)
Year 2: BPIE328 Industrial Placement (min. 48 weeks)

Exceptions/ special academic regulations

In exceptional circumstances, up to 30 taught credits can be substituted by any other relevant existing M level modules, with agreement of the Programme Manager, provided the learning objectives of the programme are met. Any such changes must be reported to the Faculty Learning & Teaching Committee (recently approved at Faculty Board and Programme Summary Change meeting).

Final award title	Master of Research in Digital Art & Technology
Level	M level
Intermediate award title(s)	Postgraduate Certificate in Digital Art & Technology Postgraduate Diploma in Digital Art & Technology
Level	PG Certificate PG Diploma
Awarding institution	University of Plymouth
Teaching institution	UoP
Accrediting body	N/A
Appropriate benchmark(s)	Computing
UCAS code	N/A
HECoS code	100636 / interactive and electronic design

Appendix:

Mapping of intended programme learning outcomes

Mapping document showing intended programme outcomes at each level of the award linked to FHEQ, subject benchmark and the core modules where these are primarily demonstrated. The mapping proforma is available from the EDaLT community under 'Designing your Programmes and Modules'. (http://staff.plymouth.ac.uk/edalt/learning/intranet.htm)

This is needed for approval and programme modifications, but is not normally included in the programme specification itself.

Note: The masters programme is one M level. Please refer to the 'IDAT module assessment tool' for programme aims and learning outcomes in relation to subject benchmarks.