

MA Interaction Design AD439

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATIONS

Programme title	Interaction Design	School	School of Design
Resulting awards	MA Interaction Design	Head of School	Professor Alex Milton
Level	9	ECTS credits ¹	90
University award	Master's Degree (taught)	Programme type	Postgraduate degree delivered full time over 12 months
Programme Co- ordinator	Dr Emma Creighton	External Examiner	Professor Jon Rogers, Northumbria University
Programme team	Emma Creighton, Marcus Hanratty, Tara Whelan, Saoirse Higgins, Brian Gough, Nicholas Russell		

1. Programme Aims and Objectives: Purpose, Vision and Values

The broad aim of this programme is to advance graduates in the discipline of interaction design, both in relation to emerging technologies and updating 'user-first' methodologies for understanding the role of people in complex networks. The proposed programme aims to develop graduates who have a broad foundation of interaction design knowledge and a specific skillset that can be applied in industry or academia. With the skills necessary to develop interaction design solutions related to web sites, mobile phones, software, physical products, systems and services, graduates will have a wide range of local and global opportunities open to them.

The programme aims to prepare students for working in industry, independent design consultancy and academic research. In addition to this, graduates from the course will also be equipped with skills to establish their own design consultancies. They will have developed key competencies of collaboration, creative and critical thinking and problem solving. Graduates are equipped for roles including interaction design, user experience (UX) design, product design, service design, user interface (UI) design, usability engineering, R&D, information architecture, as well as for design-led research roles. The MA will also support graduates to progress to further postgraduate study in order to refine their creative abilities and theoretical understanding, supporting them in developing a career in academia.

The aims of the programme are to:

- Meet local and international industry demands by developing industry ready graduates
- Support the research agenda of the college by supporting students to progress to PhD level

¹ European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, where 60 ECTS credits equate to the workload of a fulltime academic year (two trimesters)



• Support the commercialisation and innovation agenda of the college by developing and supporting entrepreneurial graduates

The objectives of the programme are to:

- Allow the student to demonstrate the ability to learn and perform at master's level
- Develop the student's knowledge and understanding of the history, principles and practice of interaction design
- Equip the student with the capability to critically evaluate and engage with contemporary debates regarding the social, cultural, economic and political affordances and impacts of existing, new and emerging technologies
- Develop the students' knowledge and understanding of the design process
- Develop the students' understanding of the user and to equip them with the practical skills for identifying user needs, behaviours and values
- Develop the student's skills in primary and secondary research and the translation of findings into their practical work
- Support the student in the development of a range of practical design skills at a postgraduate level
- Provide students with methodologies and techniques that can be applied to the design, development, prototyping and evaluation of interactive products, interfaces, systems and services
- Develop the student's theoretical knowledge and design skills to prepare them for further study
- Provide students with industry connections through sponsored projects and visiting faculty

2. Programme Outcomes

On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to:

- 1. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the history, principles and practice of interaction design (*Knowledge and understanding*)
- 2. Demonstrate awareness of new application areas and advanced technologies in order to better understand the potential of new and emerging technologies and techniques in the design of future interactive products, systems and applications (*Knowledge and understanding*, *Applying knowledge and understanding*)
- 3. Demonstrate extensive knowledge of user-centred design and the ability to involve the user in the design process; from ethnographic user studies to evaluation of prototypes and final products (*Knowledge and understanding, Applying knowledge and understanding*)
- 4. Critically evaluate and engage with contemporary debates regarding the social, cultural, economic and political affordances and impacts of existing, new and emerging technologies (*Knowledge and understanding, Applying knowledge and understanding, Making Judgements, Communications and working skills*)



- 5. Conduct, analyse and synthesise both primary and secondary research and incorporate findings in their practical work, producing designs and prototypes based on user and needs assessments (*Applying knowledge and understanding, Making Judgements*)
- 6. Apply methodologies and techniques in the design, development, prototyping and evaluation of interactive products, interfaces, systems and services (*Applying knowledge and understanding, Making Judgements*)
- 7. Work in a self-directed manner and within a team in a problem-oriented, project-oriented and interdisciplinary way (*Communications and working skills, Learning skills*)
- 8. Demonstrate a comprehensive process for solving complicated, multi-faceted problems of design (*Applying knowledge and understanding, Making judgements*)
- 9. Independently learn and apply new knowledge and skills responding to ever-changing trends and needs (*Learning skills, Applying knowledge and understanding*)

3. Stage Outcomes

As the programme is delivered over a 12-month period, all programme outcomes will be achieved by the end of Trimester 3.

4. Admission Requirements

The programme is open to graduates with an Honours degree award of 2.2 or higher, or an equivalent academic or professional qualification across various disciplines including design, art, the humanities, social science, computer science, engineering and business. The college also takes into consideration prior learning and experience. Students can apply with evidence of previous successful qualifications, statements of work-related achievement and portfolio.

Students must submit a portfolio of work which may not necessarily be design work but must demonstrate experience in a relevant field. Shortlisted candidates will be required to attend for interview. Students who have not been educated through English must show proof of achieving IELTS 6.5 (with a minimum of 6 in the writing section on the Academic Version) or an equivalent score in another accepted test.

All students on the MA Interaction Design require Garda vetting as they will be engaging in projects in a healthcare setting. Students should complete and submit a Garda vetting form during registration for the programme.

5. Further Educational Opportunities

It is intended that some graduates will choose to remain in the college progressing to PhD level. The programme aims to contribute to the development of the research culture of the college by expanding the scope of expertise in design and by providing a pathway into further research specialisation in the field of interaction design. By supporting the academic development of students there is scope for the development of a research cluster, which will explore a wide range of topics in the field through both theoretical and practice-based research.



The MA prepares graduates for careers in industry, independent design consultancy, start-up venture, creative practice and academic research. With the skills to develop design solutions related to web technologies, software, physical products, systems, services, environments and installations, graduates have a wide range of local and global opportunities available to them. Roles open to graduates include interaction design, user experience (UX) design, product design, web design, usability engineering, user interface design, information architect, and design-led research.

6. Teaching and Learning

The teaching and learning strategy is based on a constructivist model, with a focus on project-based learning, fostering critical thinkers and independent learners. Teaching and learning on the programme is embedded primarily in a studio-based learning context. Emphasis is placed on collaboration and peer-learning with a focus on developing a positive class dynamic and strong community of practice, enriched by the variety of backgrounds of the cohort. Taught components are delivered through lecture-based and seminar sessions with a focus on group discussion and lively, informed debate. Students learn technical and practical skills through demonstration and workshop sessions and they are expected to engage in self-directed and independent study throughout the programme.

Design projects form a key element of the programme, offering students the opportunity to design from both a pragmatic and speculative perspective, where they are concerned with solving current problems and exploring future possibilities. Students, working individually and in teams, have the advantage of industry involvement through lectures and studio talks, and they are tutored on occasions by practitioners who are expert in their field. Students are supported in their project work through tutorials and they receive ongoing feedback through one on one and group crits. Further learning through fieldtrips, conference, symposium and event attendance and participation is encouraged.

Off-campus learning and tutor-student communication is facilitated through the use of Google Classroom, Google Meet, Zoom and Miro.

7. Methods of Assessment

Assessment is based on a formative model. Throughout the programme learning outcomes are assessed on a continuous basis. Student project work is assessed through oral and visual presentations and through group crits. At the end of each completed project students are given indicative feedback. Students are also assessed on practical and written work. Students will engage in self and peer evaluation at key points throughout the programme. Formal assessment results will be issued at the end of the year.

8. Programme Review and Evaluation

It is important to NCAD that students inform the development of teaching and learning at NCAD. We encourage all students to communicate their concerns and their observations about their study to members of staff so that any changes can be made in a timely manner.



About two-thirds of the way through Trimester 1 and 2, a student forum will be convened to gather students' comments about their study and the delivery of the programme. In addition, at the end of Trimester 2, students have the opportunity to complete an online evaluation of their study and experience at NCAD. These evaluation events are important to current and future students, to ensure we can enhance the delivery of programmes at NCAD.

NCAD students also participate in the Irish Survey of Student Engagement, which takes place in the middle of Trimester 2. This international project measures students' engagement with their studies.

In addition, students are invited to discuss their experience of the programme with their lecturers at any point during the year. They can also relay concerns, queries and comments to the class student representative who will communicate these to the staff at department meetings, via email and inperson.

The programme is subject to NCAD internal reviews and rigorous external review through external examiners, industry liaison and external programme and institutional review. A major review of this programme will be carried out as part of the ongoing NCAD cycle of programme reviews.



9. Modular Provision

Code & module title	Credits	Core, Option or Elective	Trimester
PGDES1011 Exploring Interaction Design	5	Core	1
PGVC1001 Introduction to Research Methods	5	Core	1
PGDES1014 Designing User Experiences	10	Core	1
PGDES1015 Programming Interactions	10	Core	1
DESPG1-2 Design Studio – Minor Project	10	Core	2
PGDES1016 Crafting Creative Technologies	10	Core	2
PGDES1017 Position and Proposition	10	Core	2
DESPG1-1 Design Studio – Thematic Project	30	Core	3

10. Programme Structure

Year 1: Autumn Trimester				
PGDES1011 Exploring Interaction Design 5 Credits	PGVC1001 Introduction to Research Methods 5 Credits	PGDES1014 Designing User Experiences 10 credits	PGDES1015 Programming Interactions 10 Credits	
Year 1: Spring Trimester				
DESPG1-2 Design Studio – Minor Project 10 Credits		PGDES1016 Crafting Creative Technologies 10 credits	PGDES1017 Position and Proposition 10 credits	
Year 1: Summer Trimester				
DESPG1-1 Design Studio – Thematic Project 30 Credits				

11. Exit Points and Credit Requirements

There will be an exit point provided at the conclusion of Trimester 2 (60 credits) whereby students may submit for a Graduate Diploma in Interaction Design.

Final Award Calculation

The final award calculation is based on the full 90 credits.

12. Resources

Staffing

Role	Name	Description
Teaching Staff	Dr Emma Creighton	Programme Co-ordinator
	Dr Marcus Hanratty	Assistant Lecturer
	Dr Saoirse Higgins	Assistant Lecturer



	Tara Whelan	Assistant Lecturer
	Brian Gough	Assistant Lecturer
Administrative Staff	David Bramley	Administrative support
Technical Support Staff	Nicholas Russell	Technical support (workshop and physical computing)
	Mark Jones	Technical support (digital technologies and equipment)

Space

The programme is delivered in a dedicated studio space in room 2.09 on the second floor in the School of Design. In addition to this the students have access to the Product Design department workshop.

Facilities

The programme is based in a dedicated Interaction Design Studio on campus. The studio space is custom designed to support the project-based learning approach and is equipped with open-source and DIY hardware, tools and electrical components to support prototyping. Students have access to the department workshop which offers a range of prototyping facilities including 3D printing, laser cutting and CNC. Students also have access to other college facilities including the Edward Murphy Library and the National Irish Visual Arts Library (NIVAL).

For further information on this programme contact Emma Creighton <u>creightone@staff.ncad.ie</u>