

## Professional Diploma in Art and Design Research AD482PD

### PROGRAMME SPECIFICATIONS

<b>Programme title</b>	Professional Diploma in Art & Design Research	<b>School</b>	School of Visual Culture
<b>Resulting awards</b>	Professional Diploma in Art & Design Research Professional Certificate in Art & Design Research (exit qualification)	<b>Head of School</b>	David Crowley
<b>Level</b>	Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications	<b>ECTS credits<sup>1</sup></b>	20 credits
<b>University award</b>	Professional Diploma Special Purpose award Professional Certificate Special Purpose award (exit qualification)	<b>Programme type</b>	Postgraduate professional diploma programme delivered flexibly
<b>Programme Co-ordinator</b>	Dr Declan Long	<b>External Examiner</b>	TBC
<b>Programme team</b>	NCAD staff team (co-ordinators, lecturers)		

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

##### Background

NCAD is the lead partner in the Creative Futures Academy, a major new government funded initiative. In partnership with IADT, UCD and industry partners from across the creative sector, we are developing a range of courses that will empower creative practitioners from a range of disciplines, and at different stages of their learning, with the sustainable and adaptable skills and attributes that they will require to shape the future of Ireland's creative sector.

The Creative Futures Academy will prepare graduates for work in a major sector of the national economy; and support the early and mid-career needs of creative professionals in our fast-changing social, economic and technological contexts.

##### Purpose

This award provides opportunities for creative practitioners, curators and other arts professionals to engage with innovative critical thinking, and key communication and research methods required for successful practice in their field. It seeks to enable learners to:

- Enhance their expertise in an existing practice, to upskill, reskill or refocus their professional direction.

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<sup>1</sup> European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, where 60 ECTS credits equate to the workload of a full-time academic year (two trimesters)

- Immerse themselves in contemporary critical thinking, and to be at the forefront of practice
- Form a diverse and vibrant peer network of fellow Creative Futures Academy learners and connect to networks and communities of practice through sectoral and industry partnerships and collaborations.
- Shape their learning to suit their availability, needs and ambitions by selecting from a range of in-person, online and blended (a mix of online and in-person) learning options.

As one in a suite of programmes that make up the Visual Culture / CFA offer at NCAD, the Professional Diploma in Art & Design Research will provide a framework for students who wish to engage with the latest critical thinking and practice in this field. Many aspects of the suite of programmes will be delivered in collaboration with partners from arts organisation, allowing us to invite other interested parties from the fields of contemporary art and design practice and scholarship to join our conversations and creative activities.

The CFA will build extended networks for programme participants beyond the immediate peer community, helping forge a community of practice within and beyond the Creative Futures Academy.

## Vision

The core remit of NCAD is the education of practitioners across design, contemporary art practice, cultural production and creative education. This commitment to actual practice and its critical contexts is central to the research ethos of the College. This programme and its constituent awards have been designed to link to our areas of professional expertise and research specialism within the College, to our current and future research priorities. The programme has been informed by detailed consultation with members of the Industry Council, the CFA body of creative industry representatives whose detailed understanding of the current and future needs of the sector are an invaluable resource for the development of the CFA programmes.

The suite of Visual Culture programmes complements and point toward our existing specialist masters provision in the School of Visual Culture. Our Professional Diploma awards are designed to provide flexible and adaptable learning experiences which appeal to life-wide and life-long learners. They are designed, structured and delivered to enable learners to undertake study while maintaining their professional career or practice.

## Opportunity Creation

From their entry-point on their Creative Futures Academy journey, learners are encouraged to consider their own 'practice' needs and relate this to the range of programmes and scales of learning available. As the suite of Visual Culture CFA programmes develops, elective modules will be available to students from CFA partners, IADT and UCD, providing a unique agile and evolving range of disciplinary and thematic awards within creative arts education in Ireland.

## Values

The Creative Futures Academy (CFA) is a space for creative practitioners to learn, to network and to allow new ideas to influence and to shape our future.

The CFA values focus on:

- Creativity and imagination as agents of positive change.
- Providing access to relevant learning to creative practitioners throughout their careers.
- Connecting communities of practice.
- Instilling confidence and leadership.
- Sharing knowledge and expertise for the enhancement of practitioners, educators and the cultural & creative sector as a whole.
- Encouraging divergence and risk-taking.
- Embedding sustainability in creative practice.

### Professional Diploma in Art & Design Research

Professional Diploma in Art & Design Research is a 20-credit award offered to artists, designers, curators and other cultural workers to develop high level skills, expert and critical insights in relation to research in their fields of practice. The combination of taught modules with a capstone project allow for deep and critical reflection on ‘practical’ aspects of undertaking research as well the critical thinking which is required. It is expected that the participants will either be engaged in high level research or be about to commence such an undertaking. The combination of classes, workshops and assignments will provide opportunities to shape and focus existing research plans and thereby conduct sophisticated research and communication of that research in the future. In this way, the modules which make up the Professional Diploma in Art & Design Research have been designed to support research rather than be a means of conducting it.

The modules outlined in this Programme Specification will be available to postgraduate researchers at NCAD (PhD, MRes, MLitt). They will also be available to researchers registered on research degrees at other institutions.

### Programme Aims

This professional diploma seeks to prepare students with the practical and theoretical means to undertake sophisticated research into art and design

The programme aims to:

- support critical and informed understanding of issues of current concern in art and design research
- support students to make expert and critical judgements about appropriate and productive research methods
- provide participants with appropriate skills and knowledge that can be applied in their professional development as a researcher

## 2. Programme Outcomes

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

- **Understand** what is meant by art and design research.

- **Identify and employ** key resources and practices to undertake art and design research.
- **Engage** with existing researchers and research practices.
- **Apply** knowledge and understanding through written, spoken and visual communication of research.
- **Demonstrate** an ability to undertake high level art and design research.

### Graduate Attributes and Characteristics

The programme has been informed by the development of a creative attributes framework in collaboration with representatives from across Ireland's creative industry and sector.

The collaborative research identified the need to incubate and support CHANGE MAKERS who hold the vision to imagine futures that have not yet been created, and the agency to give expression and shape to new kinds of solutions.

Creative Futures graduates actively address identified CFA attributes and characteristics which can be outlined as:

**Thinking** - Seeking to know more, to understand; to be clear on the options we have, the choices we make, and the decisions we take. Graduates will be responsible, reflexive and curious.

**Exploring** - Investing in imagining, the appetite to discover, the openness to learn, the self-belief to go further. Graduates will be playful, agile and resilient.

**Connecting** - Confidence and readiness to show and share, to create networks and sustain connections with people, practice and with the world around us. Graduates will be empathetic, collaborative and make their practice, research and thinking public.

**Doing** - Working hard to make things happen for ourselves and for others. Graduates will be skilful, rigorous, and persistent.

## 3. Stage outcomes

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### Stage 1: Professional Certificate in Art & Design Research

On successful completion of PGCFV1005 Introduction to Research Methods for Art & Design (5 credits) students will have:

- Acquired UNDERSTANDING of different current approaches to art and design research
- Made a CRITICAL ASSESSMENT of different methods of research in relation to their own needs and interests
- Undertaken COMMUNICATION of actual or proposed research method.

## 4. Admission Requirements

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To be accepted into the programme, applicants must have completed an honours level 8 undergrad degree (achieving at least a 2:2) in a relevant and cognate discipline, or have an appropriate level of professional practice in the subject field or a related field.

Students can be accepted onto the programme without the academic entry requirements outlined above. In such cases, applicants will need to demonstrate equivalent and relevant experience and/or formal learning.

Students should apply to the programme with evidence of previous successful qualifications, statements of work-related achievement etc.

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.

## 5. Further Educational Opportunities

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### Careers and skills

This programme provides a sound and strong basis for further education at postgraduate level, not least the undertaking of a research degree.

The programme welcomes the fact that learners may have already commenced careers as artists, curators and other creative industry professionals. Their prior experience and future ambitions will form a valuable programme 'resource' and encourage peer exchange and learning.

The programme has been designed to meet the needs of artists, designers, curators, educators and others within and beyond Ireland. It addresses key requirements identified in discussions and research undertaken with industry partners and representative bodies such as the Arts Council and findings from government and sectoral reports.

The programme seeks to provide critical and practical skills to equip artists, designers, curators, educators and creative practitioners to face future challenges.

## 6. Teaching and Learning

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### Delivery

Delivered by academic staff and visiting faculty who are leading practitioners and researchers in their specialist fields, the curriculum is centred on contemporary exhibition-making.

The programme aims to enable students to develop a personal approach to their own creative development and is founded on critical appraisal and research. It recognizes their prior experience and practice.

### Learning

The programme supports activity across a range of creative disciplines concerned with art and design research and encourages peer exchange.

The full-time academic staff team supplemented by specialist part-time lecturers and researchers support a rich learning and research environment, and supply the critical, disciplinary and technical expertise to support students to develop their practice and professional competencies as researchers. External experts will contribute to the programme as 'guest' lecturers and workshop leaders.

The suite of modules which forms this professional diploma are taught using a variety of methods:

- Lectures
- Seminars
- Workshops
- Student Projects
- Self-Directed Study - Research and practice
- Fieldwork
- Practice-Related Learning Experience

## 7. Methods of Assessment

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### Aligned Assessment

Students will be given clear guidance about the appropriate format of the assignment. Aligning the assessment to the learning outcomes, delivered through teaching and learning activities, students and staff can clearly identify what has been achieved as well as how and where improvement can be made. The transparency of the Aligned Assessment strategy demonstrates to a student where improvement may be made, what has been achieved and for staff, the role of feedback and evaluation processes.

### Assessment Procedure

A transparent assessment procedure empowers the student to understand the assessment process and enables them to evaluate their own levels of achievement against explicit grades, goals and learning outcomes whilst appreciating how and where they might improve.

Individual components of the programme are assessed on a grade-allocation basis to provide students with clear feedback to promote self-evaluation and self-reflection in their own learning processes. Staff are experienced in delivering a range of assessment and evaluation in line with student construction of knowledge and demonstration of understanding.

The aim of the assessment procedure is to achieve the following objectives:

- Measure: Grade or recognise the level of the student's achievement in relation to the learning outcomes.
- Communicate: Assessments provide students with clear feedback to promote self-evaluation and self-reflection in their own learning processes.
- Illustrate: Learning outcomes and competencies that are required have been achieved, which allows for progression to the next level/course/step in the learning journey.

## Assessment Methods

- **Formative Assessment:** typically involves feedback (oral or written) to students on their progress in relation to specific tasks undertaken in a workshop, and does not involve a mark. It is used to provide constructive feedback to improve learning and understanding. Formative assessment does not form part of the student's final grade or mark.
- **Summative Assessment:** on completion of the programme assignment, an assessment is made whether students have fulfilled the specified learning outcomes and have met the standard required to achieve a passing grade, and so can be granted the credits for successfully completing the module.

## 8. Programme Review and Evaluation

All programmes are subject to College-wide evaluation tools and events. The annual online student evaluation takes place in May or June, asking all College students to provide feedback. Results are sent to each School to respond to and report to Programmes Board on what changes or developments will be implemented in response to the evaluations.

In addition, learners are invited to discuss their experience on the module with their lecturers at any point during the module.

This programme is delivered under the support of the Creative Futures Academy HCI pillar 1 funded project, which is subject to an annual evaluation. A major review of this programme will be carried out in 2026/27.

## 9. Modular Provision

Students undertake four modules. Typically, these modules will be completed within a year, but students may elect to study these modules over a longer period. In all cases, the Stage 1 module must be completed prior to undertaking Stage 2 modules.

Module	Credits	Core or Option	Trimester
<b>Stage 1</b>			
PGCFAV1005 Introduction to Research Methods for Art & Design	5	Core	1
<b>Stage 2</b>			
PGCFAV1006 Art & Design Research Ethics	5	Option	1 or 2
PGCFAV1007 Writing for and As Research	5	Option	1 or 2
PGCFAV1008 Creative Approaches to Archives	5	Option	1 or 2
PGCFAV1009 Making Research Public: Preparing Materials for Peer Review	5	Core	2 or 3

## 10. Programme Structure

### Professional Diploma in Art & Design Research

Stage 1: Trimester 1								
PGCFAV1005 Introduction to Research Methods for Art & Design 5 credits								
Stage 2: Trimester 1 or 2								
PGCFAV1006 Art & Design Research Ethics 5 credits		OR	PGCFAV1007 Writing for and as Research 5 credits		OR	PGCFAV1008 Creative Approaches to Archives 5 credits		
Stage 2: Trimester 2 or 3								
PGCFAV1009 Making Research Public: Preparing Materials for Peer Review 5 credits								

## 11. Exit Points and Credit Requirements

The programme is made up of completion of four 5-credit modules, equivalent to approximately 400 hours of student effort.

### Professional Diploma in Art & Design Research

On successful completion of the 20-credit programme, students will be eligible for the Professional Diploma in Art & Design Research.

### Final Award Calculation

The final award is calculated on the basis of successful completion of the four 5-credit modules prescribed in the programme.

### Professional Certificate in Art & Design Research (exit only)

Students on the Professional Diploma programme who exit the programme on completion of PGCFAV1005 Introduction to Research Methods for Art & Design, (5 credits, approx. 100 hours of student effort) can apply for the Professional Certificate in Art & Design Research.

The award of the Professional Certificate is calculated on the basis of successful completion of the 5-credit module PGCFAV1005 Introduction to Research Methods for Art & Design.



## 12. Resources

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### Staffing

Name	Title/Role
<b>Teaching Staff</b>	
Dr Declan Long: Head of Doctoral Studies	Programme Co-ordinator
School of Visual Culture Staff and other NCAD staff	Teaching

### Space

The programme will be located within existing College learning environments, while also availing of external spaces where appropriate for on location or work-based learning.

### Facilities

The programme will utilise existing college facilities such as the Library. Access to facilities across the CFA partners will be available subject to nature and availability.

**For further information on this programme contact** Dr Joanna Crawley: [crawleyj@staff.ncad.ie](mailto:crawleyj@staff.ncad.ie)