National College of Art and Design
A Recognised College of University College Dublin

MA in Interaction Design
AD439

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATIONS

Programme title	Master of Arts in Interaction Design	**School**	School of Design
Level	9 on the National Framework of Qualifications	**ECTS credits**[1]	90
University award	Masters Degree (taught)	**Programme type**	Postgraduate degree delivered fulltime over a calendar year, three semesters
Head of School	Prof Alex Milton	**External Examiner**	Prof Marc Hassenzahl, University of Siegen, Essen
Programme Co-ordinator	Emma Creighton, Marcus Hanratty	**Internal Examiner**	Emma Creighton, Marcus Hanratty
Programme team			

1. Programme Aims and Objectives

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 will produce graduates capable of working in a number of roles including: interaction designers, user experience (UX) designers, product designers, usability experts, user interface (UI) designers, R&D specialists, information architects, as well as for design-focused research roles. The course 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. 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 MA in Interaction Design programme aims to support the overall strategy of the college by:

- Meeting local and international industry demands by developing industry ready graduates
- Supporting 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 full-time academic year

- Strengthening the strategic alliance between NCAD and UCD by further developing synergy in the area of design with this programme acting as the pathfinder in this burgeoning area
- Supporting 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 masters level
- To develop the student's knowledge and understanding of the history, principles and practice of interaction design
- To 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
- To develop the students' knowledge and understanding of the design process
- To develop the students understanding of the user and to equip them with the practical skills for identifying user needs, behaviours and values
- To develop the student's skills in primary and secondary research and the translation of findings into their practical work
- To support the student in the development of a range of practical design skills at a postgraduate level
- To provide students with methodologies and techniques that can be applied to the design, development, prototyping and evaluation of interactive products, interfaces, systems and services
- To develop the student's theoretical knowledge and design skills to prepare them for further study
- To provide students with industry connections through sponsored projects and visiting faculty

2. Programme Outcomes

On successful completion of the MA in Interaction Design, graduates will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the history, principles and practice of interaction design (Knowledge and understanding).
- 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).
- 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).
- 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).
- 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).

- Apply methodologies and techniques in the design, development, prototyping and evaluation of interactive products, interfaces, systems and services (Applying knowledge and understanding; Making Judgements).
- 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).
- Demonstrate a comprehensive process for solving complicated, multi-faceted problems of design (Applying knowledge and understanding, making judgements).
- Independently learn and apply new knowledge and skills responding to ever-changing trends and needs (Learning skills, Applying knowledge and understanding).

3. Admission Requirements

To be admitted to the MA Interaction Design programme, applicants must have:

a) An Honours degree award of 2.2 or higher, or an equivalent academic or professional qualification in art, design or a related discipline (prior learning and experience will also be considered).

b) A portfolio of work (this may not necessarily be design work but must demonstrate experience in a relevant field).

c) Two references/letters of recommendation (academic or professional).

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.

4. Further Educational Opportunities that may arise during or upon completion of the programme

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.

5. Teaching and Learning Methodologies

The teaching and learning strategy proposed 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 will be embedded primarily in a studio-based learning context. Emphasis will be 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 will be delivered through lecture-based and seminar sessions with a focus on group discussion and lively, informed debate. Students will 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.

Students, who will be based mainly at NCAD, will undertake selected modules currently offered across various schools in UCD. Attendance at lectures and undertaking studio projects with students from a range of disciplines in UCD will add to the depth of learning. Design projects form a key element of this programme and will offer students the opportunity to design from both a pragmatic and a speculative perspective, where they will be concerned with solving current problems and exploring future possibilities. Students, working individually and in teams, will have the advantage of industry involvement and will be tutored on occasions by practitioners who are expert in their field. Students will be supported in their project work through tutorials and will receive ongoing feedback through one on one and group crits. Further learning through fieldtrips, conference, symposium and event attendance and participation will be encouraged. Off-campus learning and tutor-student communication will be facilitated through the use of Google Drive, blogs and social media.

6. Methods of Assessment

Assessment will be based on a formative model. Throughout the programme learning outcomes will be assessed on a continuous basis. At the end of each completed module or project students will be given indicative feedback. Student project work is assessed through oral and visual presentations and through group crits. Students will also be 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.

7. Programme Review and Evaluation

a) Programme and modular review processes

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 the semester, 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 Semester 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.

In addition, you are invited to discuss your experience on the module with your lecturers at any point during the year. You can also relay your comments to the class student representative who will communicate your comments to the staff.

b) College-wide quality review processes

The next major review of the MA in Interaction Design will be in June 2018.

8. Modular Provision

Semester, Module	Core, Optional or Elective	Credits
Semester 1		
Interaction Design Fundamentals	Core	5
Foundation Skills in Interaction Design	Core	10
Web Design	Core	5
Research Methods for Creative and Critical Practice	Core	10
Semester 2		
Designing for Interaction	Core	5
Advanced Skills in Interaction Design	Core	10
Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation	Core	5
Design Studio	Core	10
Semester 3		
Design Studio: Major Project	Core	30

9. Programme Structure

Semester 1	Interaction Design Fundamentals DESPG1-3 5 credits	Foundation Skills in Interaction Design DESPG1-4 10 credits	Web Design DESPG1-5 5 credits	Research Methods for Creative and Critical Practice DESPG1-6 10 credits
Semester 2	Design for Interaction DESPG1-7 5 credits	Advanced Skills in Interaction Design DESPG1-8 10 credits	Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation DESPG1-9 5 credits	Design Studio: Minor Project DESPG1-2 10 credits
Semester 3	Design Studio: Major Project DESPG1-1 30 credits			

10. Exit Points and Credit Requirements

There will be an exit point provided at the conclusion of Semester 2 (60 credits) whereby students may submit for a Postgraduate Diploma.

11. Final Award Calculation

All credits from three semesters will contribute to the award calculation.

For further information on this programme contact School of Design, NCAD