

Research Methods for Creative and Critical Practice

DESPG1-6

MODULE DESCRIPTOR

ECTS credits¹	10	Programme	MFA Design MSc Medical Device Design MA Interaction Design
NQF level	9	School	School of Design
Stage	1	Module Co-ordinator	Sam Russell
Semester	1	Module Team	School of Design staff members
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Introduction

This module provides in its first part (Weeks 1-6) a generic introduction to a range of core research methods in the creative and visual arts for all masters' students in NCAD and for PhD entrants. It aims to assist you in the conception, development, documentation, delivery and reporting of both your major creative projects and your dissertation activity. While the emphasis is on providing a useful toolkit of research methods and set of exemplars with application to both your practice and critical work, the module also addresses a broader set of concerns with the distinctive character of research in the visual arts. We explore how critical theory and studio and field practice might best interact within the visual arts, and how scholarship aligns with professional reflective analysis and creative impulse. We seek to enable you to more effectively plan, contextualise and report upon your individual studio- or library-based projects. The approach taken is an interdisciplinary one with students exposed to a range of different research approaches adopted within the visual arts and indeed across the broader field of the arts, humanities, social and natural sciences.

The second part of the module commences in week 3 alongside the core research methods module and continues until week 12. Addressing specific research methods given priority within Design, the objective of the module is to introduce students to a range of design-led research approaches and methods. Through a series of lectures and workshops students on the MFA Design, MSc Medical Device Design and MA Interaction Design will explore, adopt and use a range of research methods appropriate for their studio practice. Over the course of the semester students will learn a variety of methods for data collection, interpretation and presentation. With an emphasis on applied research, students will learn to translate research findings into actionable design propositions and solutions.

This is also a core module for students enrolled in the structured PhD who follow the core programme weeks 1-6 then dedicated PhD methods provision weeks 7-11.

¹ European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, where 60 ECTS credits equate to the workload of a full-time academic year

What will I learn?

On successful completion of this module students will be able to:

- Have a basic understanding of the challenges involved in developing a distinctive set of research methodologies for the visual arts and design, including practice based approaches.
- Be aware of some of the major approaches adopted in the development of a research tradition within the visual arts and design and how these relate to broader currents of research practice in other knowledge fields.
- Have engaged with a series of examples of research practice where advanced students have sought to provide a critical context for their studio or field practice.
- Be aware of the forms of documentation and reflective analysis employed to assist in the task of reporting and evaluating work undertaken.
- Be able to plan their master's dissertation and/or major studio project to meet the requirements of university level graduate work.
- Collect data from primary sources using design-led approaches.
- Analyse and synthesise research data leading to actionable insights.
- Present and describe research findings both verbally and visually using a variety of media.

How will I learn?

Learning tool	Hours
Lectures	24
Specified Learning Activities	76
Autonomous Student Learning	100
Total Workload	200

How will I be assessed?

Assessment tool	% of final grade	Timing
Contextual Review	25%	End November
Applied Methodology	50%	End November
Critical Review	25%	End November
Total	100%	

1. Contextual Review

In agreement with your tutor, define your field within design. Provide a 1500-word review of the relevant literature and creative work in this field, identifying and assessing of a number of key works which have influenced your thinking on the topic. Compare and contrast these works and provide a clear outline of their main approaches and contribution to the field.

2. Applied Methodology

In agreement with your tutor use design led research approaches outlined in the lectures and workshops and apply these in practice. Document and record this process.

3. Critical Review

Provide a review of the research approaches employed above. Reflect on the advantages, disadvantages and challenges associated the methods.

What happens if I fail?

Resit Opportunities

If a student fails to complete the assessment tasks in this module, an exam will be provided at the end of the semester. If the resit exam does not result in a Pass, students will need to re-register for the module in the next offering.

Am I eligible to take this module?	
Module Requisites and Incompatibles	
Pre-requisites	None
Co-requisites	None
Incompatibles	None
Prior learning	Where a student can demonstrate that they have achieved at least 80% of the learning outcomes of this module, by academic certified achievement, or through quantifiable and documented experience, they can apply to the School for that prior learning to be recognised. Applications must be received prior to the commencement of delivery of the module.
Recommended	None

When and where is this module offered?

Timetabling information is displayed only for guidance purposes, relates only to 2017-18 and is subject to change.

Week 1-7, Semester 1	Harry Clarke Lecture Theatre, 9.30am-10.30am, each Monday (excepting bank holidays)
Week 3-12, Semester 1	Rupert Guinness Lecture Hall, 11.30am-12.30pm

How will I have the chance to evaluate the module?

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.

Researcher's tool kit

- Concise Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford: Oxford UP
- Roget's Thesaurus
- Raymond Williams; Key Words: a dictionary of culture and society. This is not a neutral review of meanings. It is an exploration of the vocabulary of a crucial area of social and cultural discussion, which has been inherited within precise historical and social conditions

and which has to be made at once conscious and critical – subject to change as well as to continuity. (Raymond Williams, 1976)

- NCAD Postgraduate Student Handbook (including Style Sheet for Written Work);
(http://46.22.133.24/files/download/Postgraduate_Student_Handbook_2014-2015.pdf)

For further details on the content of your module and teaching arrangements consult your Programme or Module Handbook