



Programme Specification

1. General Information

Title:	MFA Arts and Humanities
Award:	MFA [Full Time]
Qualification Framework level:	Level 7
School/Department or equivalent:	School of Arts and Humanities
Campus location(s):	Battersea
Total UK credits:	180
Date valid from/to:	2025-26

2. Programme Philosophy

This MFA programme supports you to extend your practice, locate and expand its professional potential and explore your agency in forging the future of arts and humanities. The programme foregrounds the processes by which you learn, the process of forming professional networks, the processes of researching and making work and processes by which you engage audiences and activate your practice.

This professionally engaged, externally-facing programme brings you together with other creative practitioners in a multidisciplinary, collaborative community that promotes a dynamic dialogue to actively examine how the arts and humanities can address current and future challenges.

You will identify and explore the professional realm that you and your work will operate within. You will interrogate that context through live projects that activate and extend your practice. You will explore how you can engage audiences towards building a professionally robust, ethically sound and research-informed approach. The programme will encourage you to develop models and build networks that should help sustain your practice and research after graduating.

The 180 credits that make up the programme are divided into a series of 15, 30 and 60 credit units. Flexibility and choice are at the heart of the offer, with a combination of core and elective units enabling you to create a bespoke programme of studies that best suits your approach, context and interests.

Core units establish the principles and basis of the MFA Arts and Humanities programme. The *Conditions* unit asks you to critically analyse the history, context and philosophies of art through a global perspective, taking current debates into consideration. The *Positions* unit supports you to identify and explore the professional realm you see your work operating within. The 30-credit *Live* unit is an opportunity to work in response to a live context, considering how your work will engage audiences.

These core units run alongside your elective units, which are designed to enable you to align your practice with the School of Arts and Humanities areas of research excellence. Our elective offers vary from year to year, but has included opportunities to consider the role of the arts and

humanities in relation to health and care, art and the urban, material and digital engagement, as well as curatorial approaches.

The multidisciplinary communities of practice and research, formed around your choice of electives, will help you to develop networks that further extend your practice through collective and collaborative practice.

In addition, the programme offers the opportunity to further extend your research and practice through selecting units from a series of College-wide electives. These have included opportunities to engage with areas such as speculative design, global sustainability, creative pedagogies or developing a PhD research proposal. Through this, the MFA Arts and Humanities programme allows you to tailor the curriculum to best suit the direction you intend to develop your research or practice after graduation.

Drawing upon previous units, the MFA Arts and Humanities culminates in the development of your 60-credit Research Project. You will generate a body of work, either independently or collaboratively, and present a reflection on your experience of learning within the programme. The development of this research project will be supported through faculty and an invited programme of professional practitioners and researchers. You will share and present your research project within the RCA Show and the MFA Arts and Humanities symposium.

3. Educational Aims and Outcomes of the Programme

Programme aims

This MFA Arts & Humanities programme of study has the following aims:

- To support you to situate your practice in a professional context. The programme challenges you to activate your practice, engage audiences and explore the live contexts within which your work operates;
- To provide a framework in which you can extend and develop your practice as research. The programme aims to help you align your practice with the expertise of the School's areas of research excellence, contributing to, and developing, the area's advancement of knowledge;
- To support you to explore how your practice, and the arts in general, can address and respond to the changing nature of current and future social, political and environmental challenges;
- To equip you to be able to work collectively and/or collaboratively, considering how your practice might operate in relation to that of others within, and beyond, your discipline;
- To challenge you to extend and advance your work in a way that is critically aware of its ethical impact, acknowledging its effect on others and its potential contribution to positive social change.

What will I be expected to achieve?

Upon successful completion of the programme, you will be expected to meet the requirements of both the College-wide Learning Outcomes and your programme-specific Learning Outcomes.

College-Wide Learning Outcomes

You should be able to:

- Interrogate and articulate the intentions of your work in relation to the critical and conceptual context of your field(s) of study;
- Independently plan and produce work that is informed by developments at the forefront of your field(s) of study;
- Evaluate and critique the principles and methods of research in your field(s) of study, and apply these principles to your creative, professional and/or scholarly practice;
- Demonstrate originality in how you translate knowledge into practice;
- Communicate your creative, professional and/or scholarly practice to a non-specialist audience;
- Critically reflect on the likely public impact of your creative, professional and/or scholarly practice, and on your responsibilities as a practitioner;
- Define your professional ambitions and identify the challenges involved in meeting them.

Programme-Specific Learning Outcomes

You should be able to:

- Apply your creative practice to professional contexts, devising critically-informed strategies for engaging audiences;
- Critically apply an area of research in the development and advancement of your research led practice;
- Critically analyse how your practice can address global and societal challenges through realising creative outcomes that respond to complex issues;
- Analyse your role and contribution to collective or collaborative projects to evaluate your effectiveness in working with other creative practitioners;
- Critically assess the ethical implications of your practice, demonstrating an advanced awareness of the impact of your work and working processes on others.

4. What will I learn?

Curriculum Map

Full-time, 1 Year, 45 Weeks

Term 1

Core Unit 15 credits
Conditions

Core Unit 15 credits
Positions

Elective Unit 15 Credits
SoAH Electives

Elective Unit 15 Credits
**RCA Elective or
AcrossRCA**

Term 2

Core Unit 30 credits
LIVE

Elective Unit 15 Credits
SoAH Electives

Elective Unit 15 Credits
**RCA Elective or
AcrossRCA**

Term 3

Core Unit 60 credits
Research Project

Programme Structure

Unit Title	Term	Credit Value	Core or Elective?
Conditions	1	15	Core
Positions	1	15	Core
School Elective 1	1	15	Elective
College-wide Elective	1	15	Elective
Live	2	30	Core
School Elective 2	2	15	Elective
College-wide Elective	2	15	Elective
Research Project	3	60	Core

Please note, there are three **Independent Study** weeks included in your programme (one per term). During these weeks there will be no scheduled teaching or assessment, and limited access to Technical Services. Self-service will be available for inducted users, and you may independently use computing and technology zones, bench spaces, and the resources store and art shop. These weeks are intended for you to work independently, and technical supervision, fabrication support, or supervision of high-risk activities will not be available.

CONDITIONS (15 Credits) (Term 1)

In the *Conditions* unit you will critically consider the global conditions that inform, challenge and underpin the arts and humanities. You will consider how the arts and humanities can address dominant orthodoxies and the power dynamics and biases inherent within these. Alongside this, *Conditions* will encourage you to critically reflect on the conditions of Higher Education and the functions and behaviours of the academy. The unit will introduce the pedagogy of the MFA Arts and Humanities programme, within which you'll learn through discursive and relational encounters and ne supported to develop an active role within the learning community, you will be

introduces to the School of Arts & Humanities research areas and the resources and services across the RCA, including the Library and Technical Services. Together these will give you access to knowledges and skills that will help you develop and position your practice.

POSITIONS (15 Credits) (Term 1)

The *Positions* unit asks you to explore the professional, academic and cultural position that you see your work operating within. The unit will explore the range of professional possibilities for creative practitioners in the arts and humanities and offer a critical framework through which to reflect on continued professional practice. You will consider the responsibilities that artists and art institutions have in creating fair opportunity and consider how this shapes your own position as a practitioner within the arts and humanities.

LIVE (30 Credit) (Term 2)

The *LIVE* unit is an opportunity to work in response to a live, external context and asks you to consider the politics, relationships and ethics of working in the public sphere. You will work with other students within a *LIVE* project group partnered with an external organisation to propose, devise and realise a public-facing project that responds to the specific conditions of its context. Each *LIVE* project will offer its own distinct opportunity to interrogate the contexts and apparatus of exhibition and dissemination.

SoAH ELECTIVES (15 Credits per unit) (Terms 1 and 2)

A series of elective units within the School of Arts and Humanities will offer you the possibility of aligning your practice with School's areas of research excellence. The SoAH elective units, studied in sequential pairs, challenge you to locate your practice within a territory of research and consider how you might contribute to expanding the knowledge and research in that area.

CROSS-COLLEGE ELECTIVES (15 Credits per unit) (Terms 1 and 2)

You will choose two College-wide Electives. These electives are devised by one of the other four Schools within the RCA, as well as the MRes (Master of Research) and MEd (Master of Education). These units will expand the community you are working alongside and challenge you to consider the potential for cross-disciplinary dialogue and practice to inform your developing research and practice identity.

INDEPENDENT RESEARCH PROJECT (60 Credits) (Term 3)

The 60-credit *Independent Research Project* is an opportunity to build a body of work that addresses the key ambitions of your research and practice. You will propose, develop and realise a project, and engage a public audience via a presentation in the form of a public exhibition, publication or event. The unit culminates in the MFA Arts and Humanities conference where you will share your practice and research with peers and professional guests. You will evidence your critical awareness of how your work is located in the professional realm, describe how your work engages with an area of knowledge, and show how your work addresses key social, political, environmental challenges. Planning for continued practical and professional development after graduation is an important aspect of this unit.

5. How will I learn?

Every aspect of the MFA Arts and Humanities seeks to reconsider established modes and orthodoxies. As such, the MFA provides a space for difference. This is embedded in the approach to the ways you will learn as much as the content you will explore and the work you will make.

The MFA Arts and Humanities programme emphasises group participation and aims to establish a community of practice and research. Much of the teaching and learning activity, will be formed

around group discussion and will draw on experimental modes of teaching to stimulate discussion and nurture participation. Such events include 'long-table' discussions, embodied learning and events-based learning where you are encouraged to develop a 'dialogue through doing'. This means learning through practice alongside your peers. You will meet with peers to discuss and critique work and reflect on your ongoing practical and conceptual enquiry. This occurs alongside, a timetable of tutorials, seminars and lectures and other scheduled teaching led by faculty, and with invited practitioners and researchers.

The MFA Arts and Humanities provides a shared studio space to work within together. This collective space provides a focus for discussion and social interaction, as well as being a space for making and a place to host events. This will be a multidisciplinary workspace that enables practice, discussion, documentation and learning and for sharing and inviting interaction with the extended RCA community.

This MFA Arts and Humanities is an advanced level, programme of study. You will be expected to have already established a practice, as an artist, writer, curator or other creative practitioner working within contemporary art and/ or the wider arts and humanities. You should be able to be confident in developing and realising outputs within your area of practice and be able to do so without an individual studio space or intensive technical support. You will have access to practical consultancies, with RCA technical and the College workshops. The programme emphasis on developing modes of sustainable practice in preparation for continued development after graduation aligns with the professional and externally facing philosophy of the MFA Arts and Humanities programme.

6. Assessment and Feedback

Regulations

Regulations for assessment and progression can be found here. Please note that College regulations are subject to annual updates and amendments.

Unit assessment

The MFA Arts and Humanities assessment is an essential opportunity to take stock, to identify and reflect on what you have learnt and to maintain a momentum of enquiry.

Each unit on the MFA Arts and Humanities is assessed holistically. If there are a number of items presented or submitted for assessment, then no one item is considered to have more weight than any other item. This helps you to demonstrate how you have met the unit learning outcomes in whichever way is most appropriate to your practice and research.

Listed assessment evidence, which appears in each of the unit descriptor documents, are drawn from the following items: verbal presentations; written critical reflections; proposal documents including risk assessments; recorded presentations (video or audio); documentation of artworks; or public exhibition engagement.

Summative assessment takes place at the end of each unit, with feedback in the form of peer feedback, tutor feedback, self-assessment, or a combination of these. In keeping with the programme's emphasis on dialogue and participation, assessment takes place via Dialogic Assessments. These are group discussions led by a tutor or senior tutor. This mode of

assessment means that you directly participate in the assessment and continued reflection on the development of your practice.

In order to encourage creative risk taking and experimentation and to enable collaborative and collective practice, no alphabetical or numerical grades are given.

Information regarding individual assessments will be included in the unit descriptors, and will be available to students at the beginning of the academic year.

7. What award can I get?

To be awarded an RCA MA degree you need to gain 180 credits at level 7 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). This will involve successfully completing all units. If you do not pass a unit at the first attempt, you may be offered an opportunity to resit the unit. If you are successful at resit you will be awarded the credits for that unit. If you are unsuccessful, you cannot progress further in your programme.

Exit awards:

If you have gained at least 120 credits at level 7 of the FHEQ, you may be eligible for the exit award of Postgraduate Diploma. An exit award is a final award from the College and cannot be rescinded.

For more detailed information about the College's assessment, progression and awards policies see the Regulations.