



Programme Specification

1. General Information

Programme title:	Communication
Award:	MFA
Qualification Framework level:	Level 7
School/Department or equivalent:	School of Communication & Design
Campus location(s):	White City
Date valid from/to:	2026-27

2. Programme Philosophy

The MFA Communication programme interrogates the fundamental ways in which communication shapes our lives and uses this knowledge to develop new ways of experiencing, interacting and communicating with the world. The programme makes space for conversation, inter-cultural exchange, new ideas and diverse voices. You will explore social, political, environmental and philosophical implications of communication practices and how these may be manifested within your chosen field of practice. The program stresses the need explore key themes of technology, ethics, environmental sustainability and social justice, in order to meaningfully locate your professional practice in an evolving future.

You will be part of a community of peers across the Royal College of Art. Opportunities for networking and collaboration with peers in other schools and disciplines will take place throughout the programme, including electives and cross-college networking events.

When you enter the programme you may have an existing practice in creative disciplines such as Visual Communication, Illustration, Animation, Film and Television, Digital Direction, Extended Reality, User Interface Design, Games Design, Interactive art and Design, Immersive Art, Fine art, Journalism, Creative Writing, Education, or Sound Design. You will be encouraged to take a critical approach to your notions of discipline, as the programme invites you to locate your existing practice in multidisciplinary contexts, and to innovate in ways that challenge disciplinary boundaries, through interdisciplinary collaboration and elective units available from across the Royal College of Art. Through these explorations you will be prepared to operate at the forefront of professional practice in your field.

You will explore ways that experimental communication systems and interfaces can be employed to communicate narratives and information with a view to provoking social, cultural, and political change. You will explore varied practices across the broad spectrum of disciplines in the wider field of communication, and the cultural, social, and technological conditions that have shaped these disciplines. Through these explorations, you will interpret and critique your chosen field of practice through the lens of other disciplines and contexts.

The programme views research and professional skills as fundamental to your creative practice. In your creative practice you will need to apply critical research skills in the investigation and interpretation of materials and sources to inform your creative practice. Other skills required will be collaborative, discipline-based and an understanding of your professional context. You will undertake practice-led and practice-based research, as well as academic research that informs your practice. You will be required to reflect upon the ways that these skills can be deployed in the professional environment, including your approaches to research and practice, and the ways that you collaborate and network with peers on the programme.

Terms 1 and 2 will include core units within the MFA Communication, alongside electives that may be chosen from any of the College's Schools. In the core units you will come together with other Communication students to reflect on your position within the broad and evolving field of Communication. Alongside the core units, your choice of electives will provide opportunities to personalise your journey and broaden your horizons by exploring subjects beyond the School.

The electives allow you to adapt your journey through the programme. You will graduate with a unique set of experiences and expertise, enabling you to locate yourself at the forefront of new and emerging industries, and to contribute to leading and shaping new industries as they emerge. You will be given the tools to become a pioneer in emerging sectors, applying your skills at the intersection of disciplines and with multi-disciplinary teams. You will also be supported to identify and pursue opportunities for public output during and beyond your programme of study.

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Through the core units the program takes you through the key stages of challenging, testing and redefining your practice. In the first term the core units introduce you to the interdisciplinary nature of the program, and help you to identify your position in relation to the cultures and contexts your work operates in. In term two you will be asked to develop and define the methods and methodologies that drive your practice and then use these to develop a robust research project proposal. In term three, you will apply what you have learnt in a substantial research project, where you will also be supported to disseminate and position your work in public contexts.

3. Educational Aims and Learning Outcomes of the Programme

Programme aims

- Challenge you to innovate and advance common understanding of their discipline, taking a variety of critical approaches to locating practice in relation to discipline;
- Provide opportunities for engagement with a variety of disciplines and peers across the RCA and in external professional contexts;
- Prepare you to locate communication practice in urgent and emerging social, cultural, political and technological contexts;
- Enable you to understand the social, ethical, cultural and practical impact of communication practice, and empower them to operate with integrity in multi-disciplinary networks;
- Support you to independently plan and produce a provocative and original work.

Learning Outcomes

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:

- Articulate your understanding of communication disciplines in relation to emerging technological and professional contexts;
- Independently produce innovative work that is located in relation to emerging communication sectors and at the forefront of emerging professional and technological contexts;
- Demonstrate an advanced understanding of the impact of your practice and present narrative information in ways that are appropriate for your audience(s);
- Demonstrate integrity and ethical awareness in the production of communications for appropriate audiences.

4. What Will I Learn?

Curriculum Map

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
Interdisciplinary Communication (15 credits)	Methods & Methodologies (15 credits)	Independent Research Project (60 credits)
Cultures and Contexts (15 credits)	Consolidating Your Practice (15 credits)	
Electives (15 credits)	Electives (15 credits)	
Electives (15 credits)	Electives (15 credits)	

Programme Structure

Unit Title	Term	Credit Value
Interdisciplinary Communication	1	15
Cultures & Contexts	1	15
Elective	1	15
Elective	1	15
Methods & Methodologies	2	15
Consolidating Your Practice	2	15
Elective	2	15
Elective	2	15
Independent Research Project	3	60

Interdisciplinary Communication

This unit is structured around a series of activities designed to orient students on the programme and within the broad discipline of communication, with a particular focus on methods and approaches to interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary working. Recognising that students come from very different backgrounds, this unit will establish students' position within a multidisciplinary community that will benefit their practice.

Cultures & Contexts

This unit challenges you to consider how skills and approaches in your own discipline may be applied in new contexts. You will be asked to reflect upon how your own skills are transferable, how your work can be informed by ideas and approaches in other disciplines, and what new professional opportunities exist for your practice within the expanding field of Communication.

Methods & Methodologies

During term one you were introduced to the expanded interdisciplinary approach to communication practice that the MFA explores. You were then asked to consider how your existing practice could be considered in relation to these new contexts and cultures. Now as we begin term two we ask you to test and develop these emergent practices and contexts in order to develop and test your practice so that you can articulate it in terms of a clear and focused methods and methodologies.

Consolidating Your Practice

This unit supports you to consolidate your learning across the programme, including the core and elective units, in preparation for the Independent Research Project. This unit is a period of planning, and pre-production in which you formulate your studies into a coherent proposal for your final major research project. You will conclude this unit with a coherent, tested and practical plan of action with which to undertake your research project.

Industry Embedded Project

Supported by tutors, students undertake an industry-based project, identified by the student as of sufficient size to be equivalent to 30-credits and meeting unit Learning Outcomes. In terms 2, 3 and 4 you will take electives from any School. These may be delivered at another campus location or online. The elective handbook contains more information about the electives available and the process of selection.

Independent Research Project

The 60-Credit Independent Research Project is an opportunity for you to develop and realise a body of work that addresses the key ambitions of your research and practice. You will draw on what you have learnt on the programme to devise a project which might be individual or collaborative. You will also be prepared to identify opportunities for the professional or public dissemination of your work, and to exploit your project for career progression in the communication sector. The nature of these opportunities will be specific to the individual and the nature of the practice that you choose to undertake during the unit. Your project will be supported by an allocated tutor.

During the unit you will be required to consider how your work will reach your audience. Towards the end of the programme, you will have the opportunity to participate in a collectively curated and produced public facing activity. This could include developing a group exhibition, publication or curated events. You may choose to take part in this event or may, alternatively, choose to explore other ways to exhibit or disseminate your work.

You will be provided with a full list of electives units and must select two for each of Terms 1 and 2. These may be delivered at another location or online. You are encouraged to choose electives from across the Schools.

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.

5. How Will I Learn?

Units are delivered through a combination of lectures, seminars, individual and group tutorials, including in-person and online delivery. Depending on your selection of electives, you may experience a different range of teaching activities to your peers. Unit specifications list the kinds of teaching that takes place on each unit.

You will be encouraged to engage with your network of peers and to collectively contribute to common learning resources, student-led seminars, and peer critique. You will also be encouraged to treat your peers as critical friends, and to engage in critique in ways that are informed by their existing experiences of industry and practice. By participating in peer critiques, you will receive constructive feedback and learn to critique their own work more effectively. Alongside your taught units, scheduled community events will provide opportunities for you to network with your peers across other programmes and schools.

The physical location for the MFA are the MFA base rooms. These rooms are the focus for discussion,

social interaction and tutorial contact as well as being a space for making and a place to host events. The MFA base rooms are a networked workspace that enable practice, discussion, documentation, learning and broadcast. The MFA base rooms act as a focus for engaging audiences and inviting interaction with the extended RCA community. Field trips, site visits and day trips may be included in the units but are extra-curricular/optional and will be at your own expense.

Opportunities for formative feedback are used to support and structure your learning. Peer and tutor critiques form an important part of the teaching and occur in every unit.

Unit specifications identify the number and type of contact hours you will have in each unit.

The majority of programme delivery is academic, taking place in seminar rooms and lecture rooms, and delivered by academic staff. In this programme, some units have a number of technical contact hours included, such as technical and library orientations & inductions into the use of equipment, spaces and processes required during the unit. Note that this programme does not include technical workshops for skills acquisition. If you wish to access other specialist technical equipment spaces or processes or acquire additional technical or library skills outside of your timetabled unit contact time, you will be required to make independent bookings, which are available on a first-come-first-serve basis from Technical Services and the Library.

You are expected to begin the programme with existing technical expertise in the field in which you intend to practice. Students will join the programme with different existing technical expertise, and so the programme provides opportunities for you to identify individual gaps in your technical knowledge and individually sign-up to technical inductions and workshops. You will be required to undertake inductions or orientations where you wish to make use of on-campus technical facilities. Any new technical expertise that you wish to acquire in order to realise your proposed projects will be mostly gained through independent access to Technical Services that take place outside of the unit structure on a first-come-first-served basis, and subject to availability. Some electives may offer specific access to technical activities.

You are expected to take a professional and independent approach to the programme, including determining your journey through choice of units, managing the demands of multiple concurrent units, and working towards deadlines. Unit leaders will support you through structured journeys within individual units, but your overall journey through the programme will be unique to you, depending on the specialisms and electives that you have chosen.

Your studies are divided into three terms and comprise scheduled staff-led time such as lectures, seminars and tutorials, as well as independent learning. Each term consists of 60 credits which equates to 600 study hours. During each week you should, as a full-time student, expect about 40 study hours. This is made up of two components:

- contact hours (approximately 5-10 per week) which involve timetabled interaction with tutors (for example, in seminars, critiques and tutorials), fostering intellectual exchange by way of clarifying concepts, addressing key questions and cultivating critical thinking;
- the time you dedicate to developing your work independently (in addition to the contact hours) by way of self-directed study which can include activities such as making in the workshops, working in the studio, conducting research or preparing for assessment.

The amount of time you spend in self-directed, independent study will normally increase as you progress to the final term, particularly as you focus on the public exhibition or completion of your work. The precise pattern of contact hours will vary by unit, term and mode of study.

6. Assessment and Feedback

Regulations

The programme is subject to the [Academic Regulations](#) of the Royal College of Art (*the regulations are subject to annual updates and amendments*).

Unit Assessment

Assessments are designed to encourage you to critically reflect on your own discipline and its boundaries, locating their practice in wider social, cultural, political, and technological contexts.

The programme consists of small units that scaffold your learning journey, and this is reflected in the assessments. Assessments will take a variety of forms, including presentations, reports, proposals, and portfolios representing a body of work. You will normally be required to contextualise your work, considering professional, ethical, social and cultural contexts. There is one summative assessment point for each unit, worth 100% of the unit and testing all unit learning outcomes. Where multiple activities have taken place within a unit, these form part of a portfolio of work representing your activity on that unit, assessed holistically at 100% of the unit. Summative assessment normally takes place at the end of each unit.

During most units, assessed activities will be small, reflecting the 15-credit size of the units. While these assessments may be small, they are significant to your overall journey, and you should continually reflect upon how they might inform the larger Independent Research Project. The assessment for the Independent Research Project will take the form of a larger, self-initiated project that should be informed by the themes and ideas that you have explored during your studies.

Formative assessment takes place in the form of peer and tutor critique of proposals and work-in-progress.

Written feedback will be provided for all summative assessment within 3 working weeks of the date of assessment.

Information regarding individual assessments will be included in the unit descriptors, shared at the beginning of the academic year.

7. What Award Can I Get?

To be awarded an RCA MFA 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.

Exit awards: If you have gained at least 60 credits at Level 7, you may be eligible for the exit award of Postgraduate Certificate. 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.