



Programme Specification

Please note that this specification is subject to change, in line with the national guidance on the response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

1. General information

Awarding institution:	Royal College of Art
Programme title:	MA Painting
Award:	Masters
Qualification framework level:	Level 7
School/Department or equivalent:	School of Arts and Humanities
Programme duration:	2-years
Total UK credits:	240 credits
Mode of study:	Full time
Date valid from/to:	2020-21

2. Programme Philosophy

The Painting programme approaches the practice of painting as a self-reflexive, critical activity that draws on a wealth of varied historical, material and conceptual accomplishments. These are explored and exploited to provide an expansive and inclusive platform on which to engage with current issues and debates surrounding painting as a contemporary art practice.

Our curriculum and its forms of delivery are designed to develop a student's professional practice, orientation toward research and critical reflection on their studio work and how they present that work and their practice professionally to others. The curriculum aims to ensure, to the greatest degree possible, that this is a sustainable practice, which can find an audience beyond an institutional framework. The delivery of curricular content takes the form of both individual and group sessions at the level of tutee, tutee group and year group. All seminars involve MA students from both year groups.

The Painting programme is a world leader in research and practice and is committed to broadening the understanding of our discipline in all its forms. Through the many learning and teaching experiences we offer, students and staff rigorously, critically and supportively engage with the discourse of painting through personal tutorials, group seminars and crits, lectures and presentations.

Our students are here to reflect upon and develop what kind of artists they want to be with the ultimate aim of enabling a sustainable professional practice as engaged practitioners.

Our approach to teaching is premised on an understanding that artists, makers, writers, curators, critics and historians today are neither constrained by their discipline, the medium they use nor by a sense of what content their work should address. Practitioners in the Arts & Humanities are valued for their contribution to culture and the broader economy because they test and reflect upon the way in which we try to engage with our rapidly changing world; exploit the possibilities of

new technologies while also engaging with the value of traditional approaches; they enact new philosophical positions as well as reflecting upon how our thinking has led us to where we are. And they often adopt stances informed significantly by the past to antagonise our assumptions about society.

We also conceive of the Arts & Humanities as a range of subjects that are accessible to collaboration with other fields and disciplines; subjects that celebrate the deployment of diverse methods of research and production that are invented, borrowed and even stolen. At the Royal College of Art, we enjoy an environment that is supportive of the varied research enquiries that the Arts & Humanities can enable. We support customary methods and processes whilst enabling others that we cannot even anticipate. We are committed to examining and researching both the means by which enquiries in the Arts & Humanities emerge – the rich array of positions, techniques, methods and materials used by practitioners to develop their research – as well as the subjects, ideas and issues that are successfully articulated, with a view to understanding a broader cultural, societal and economic impact.

Teaching in the school is organised around programmes that provide specific material and historical coordinates as points of reference from which students are encouraged to consider the development of their own work. Regardless of their programme of study, students interact across the broad area of the Arts & Humanities and are also encouraged to engage with other areas of the College.

Research in the School of Arts & Humanities often leads staff and students to less immediately cognate fields of the Arts & Humanities as well as the sciences, and the school works with a range of significant partners such as the V&A and Imperial College to further its ambitions in this regard.

We therefore view all our programmes in the School of Arts & Humanities as useful pedagogical structures, in that they focus specific areas of activity within an ever expanding field. The programmes enable directed study within an environment that is ambitious not to proliferate and perpetuate what we know but to generate new practices and insights.

3. Educational Aims and Outcomes of the Programme

Programme aims

The programme aims:

- To provide a learning environment which privileges research, experimentation and self-reflexivity in order to advance contemporary practices of painting.
- To teach how to plan and produce works of high quality and ambition that are both technically and conceptually well formed.
- To develop advanced approaches to painting within the context of contemporary theory and art practices.
- To establish a dialogue between theory and practice and to foster approaches that interrogate and recast received ideas and positions regarding what painting might be in the 21st century.
- To enrich the student experience by facilitating an involvement with the postgraduate culture of the School of Arts and Humanities and across the college, in order to evolve an expansive notion of painting.

What will I be expected to achieve?

The Painting programme empowers students to explore the conditions and possibilities of painting and its contemporary discourses in a context that embraces speculative approaches and experimentation to both challenge and enliven a traditional medium. Students can expect to create

physical and speculative works which will aid them in developing a final collection of work which will help define their future career paths as artists. As tutors and practitioners, we are committed to foster and support critically engaged and independent artists able to sustain self-reflective and vibrant professional practices beyond an institutional frame.

Programme-Specific Learning Outcomes

Able to:	A. Intellectual Engagement
A1.	INNOVATION: Develop innovative ideas that challenge the understanding of their practice and discipline.
A2.	CONTEXT: Critically articulate and debate the intellectual and technical processes involved in the production of their work and that of others.
A3.	RESEARCH: Demonstrate an advanced understanding of the principles and methods of research and apply them effectively to their own practice.
A4.	COMMUNICATION: Demonstrate an advanced understanding of the historical and theoretical context of painting and how it relates to their work.

Able to:	B. Technical Skills
B1.	PRODUCTION: Produce work at an advanced level that integrates thought, creativity and technique.
B2.	EXPERIMENTATION: Experiment in their use of materials, techniques and environments in order to translate ideas into practice.
B3.	SKILLS: Display a mastery of the technical skills required in the creation, display and documentation of their work.

Able to:	C. Professional Development
C1.	INDEPENDENCE: Display a mastery of the execution, exhibition and promotion of their work.
C2.	COLLABORATION: Demonstrate the self-motivation, self-criticism and self-discipline required to sustain their development beyond graduation.
C3.	IDENTITY: Confidently and effectively deliver artists talks to specialist and non-specialist audiences alike.

4. What will I learn?

Year One

During the first year of the programme students undertake three units of study: Unit 1a, Unit 1b and CHS. These Units are each worth 40 credits and assessed through a combination of continuous and summative assessment methods.

To support their progress in Units 1a and 1b students are assigned a personal tutor with whom they discuss their work in tutorials five times per academic year. Students will also be offered the

opportunity for tutorials with other members of the programme team each term, and will have the opportunity to request tutorials from other staff on the school and a broader range of visiting tutors.

Although working primarily on their own practice, there are also throughout the year, group critiques, seminars, lectures, workshops and tutorials with other members of the Programme team and more widely with staff and students from throughout the broader school. Students will produce work for studio critiques that take place in term one and two.

At the beginning of the spring term, first year students contribute to the Work in Progress Show. The work is not expected to be resolved at this stage. It is an opportunity to take risks, trying new materials and ideas. As this is in a public context, it includes the question of spectatorship and professional practice. This enables the student to reflect upon the efficacy of the visual forms and concepts with which they have been working.

Each unit is assessed in full at its conclusion as per the following:

<p>Unit 1A: 40 Credits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self assessment then progress feedback from programme unit assessment meeting (staff double marking meeting) (continuous assessment) • Assessment: December • Learning Outcomes: A1. A2. A4. B2. B3. C1. C2. 	<p>Unit 1B: 40 Credits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self assessment (Continuous assessment) and Exam feedback (Final Examination) from 1B exam panel. • Assessment: May. • Learning Outcomes: A1. A2. A4. B2. B3. C1. C2. 	<p>CHS: 40 Credits</p>
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Year Two

During the second year of the programme students undertake three units of study: Unit 2A (40 credits), Unit 2B (60 Credits) and SoAH School Unit (20 Credits). These Units are assessed through a combination of continuous and summative assessment methods.

In their second year a relevant Personal Tutor (a tutor assigned and other than that in the first year) to support the development of their practice. Students produce a self-initiated body of work, which is evaluated and discussed in group critiques and tutorials throughout the year.

In the third term the work students exhibit in the graduating show is part of the examination of their final unit 2B - the Independent Research Project. It consists of a major presentation undertaken in the second year of the programme. Their art practice should now demonstrate that they are able to make, develop and realise work at an advanced level. Student's work should now have a clear direction and resolution, demonstrating a level of conceptual and technical competence appropriate to their own aims and objectives for the work. Student's practice is expected to be self-initiated and thoroughly researched. The student will be asked to articulate this process of producing work in the *viva voce examination*.

Alongside their participation in programme-based units, students will also participate in the SoAH

School unit, which, through study groups, lectures, symposia, crits and tutorials will support students in discussing and evolving their work against a broader frame of reference.

Each unit is assessed in full at its conclusion as per the following table:

<p>Unit 2A: 40 Credits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self assessment then progress feedback from programme unit assessment meeting (staff double marking meeting) (continuous assessment) • Assessment: December • Learning Outcomes: A1. A2. A4. B1. B2. B3. C1. C2. 	<p>Unit 2B: 60 Credits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self assessment (continuous assessment) and Exam feedback (Final Examination) from 2B/School Unit Joint Panel. • Assessment: June. • Learning Outcomes: A2. A3. A4. B1. B2. B3. C1. C2. C3. 	<p>SoAH School Unit: 20 Credits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessed Portfolio at 2B/School Unit Joint Panel. (Final Examination). • Assessment: May • School Exam Board then reviews marks from all units and recommends pass or fail. • Learning Outcomes: B2. C2. C3.
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Critical and Historical Studies

Critical & Historical Studies is the cross-College platform that delivers teaching and activities aimed at enabling critical engagement to take place within, and between, the different disciplines at the RCA.

All studio-based first year MA students have a CHS unit as a core part of their programme of study, designed to enable this critical dialogue and enhance each student's development. Led by a team of dedicated, highly skilled and deeply engaged staff, CHS delivers a programme of lectures, seminars, workshops and tutorials (both small group and one-to-one). Students will be encouraged to engage with vital and challenging ideas that relate to their practices. This both enriches and provides a broader intellectual framework within which to establish a coherent inter-relationship between theoretical and practice-based approaches to art and design.

As a team, our disciplinary interests span the fine and applied arts, architecture, design (including fashion, graphics, interior and product design), craft, communication, film, humanities, photography, digital media, science and technology.

CHS provides:

- contemporary, thought-provoking lectures by CHS staff and visiting tutors
- the opportunity for students to explore the theoretical background of their chosen discipline through a taught dissertation process
- individual and group tutorial support from our Programme's team of expert tutors

The CHS Handbook sets out the broad principles of CHS at the RCA. It outlines what you can expect of us and what we require of you to engage and produce work to your best ability. On the Moodle pages you will find details of the scheduled programme and the broad areas to be covered in each term, details about the tuition and assessment of your CHS dissertation, and information on resources that will help you during your studies.

Your main points of contact for CHS will be your group tutor and your School Liaison Tutor for your School. You will be assigned your group tutor at start of the Autumn Term.

We hope that you will enjoy working with the CHS team and use all the opportunities offered to you as a student at the Royal College of Art.

Curriculum Map

Painting – Year One

Term One	Term Two	Term Three
Unit 1A Studio (40 Credits)	Unit 1B Studio (40 Credits)	
Critical Historical Studies (CHS) – (40 credits)		

Painting – Year Two

Term One	Term Two	Term Three
Studio Unit 2A Studio (40 Credits)	Studio Unit 2B Independent Research Project (60 Credits)	
Portfolio (20 credits)		

5. How will I learn?

Please note that these are subject to change, in line with the national guidance on the Covid-19 response.

Individual Tutorials

Students are allocated a personal tutor and will meet five times per academic year. There are opportunities to arrange tutorials with other members of the school wider college academic staff. Tutorials may also include a small group of students discussing work in progress with a tutor or visiting artist.

Students will also have a tutorial in the second year as part of your integrated school-wide group.

At the end of each unit, students will write a self-assessment form, which is a critical account of

their practice, its development and reception in tutorials and critiques. This enables the student to articulate and clarify in writing what their work attempts to achieve and the direction it takes. At the end of each unit of study the Student's personal Tutor writes an evaluative feedback report in response both to the students' self-assessment and to the considered and moderated assessment of their work.

Seminars

Group seminars take place throughout the first and second terms of the programme. The group seminar collectively appraises and evaluates the reception and processes of student work.

Questions of Painting Seminars - These seminars are delivered by a visiting artist, theorist or critic and based on issues raised by their research, production or position in relation to the contemporary discourses of painting.

Professional Practice - Building on an Artist's Statement developed across year one, second-year students give a presentation of their work in the form of an Artist's Talk. These serve as preparation for taking up optional teaching placements, which comprises a non-paid teaching visit to an educational institution, and are subject to availability.

Workshops

Our students come from a wide range of backgrounds, with very different expertise. In the autumn and spring terms students are encouraged to attend workshops primarily for first year students. These address technical aspects of the resources available within the Royal College of Art.

Artist's Statement, Artist's Talk, Teaching Placements

Students are supported to produce an artist's statement during your first year. This will help inform the structure and content of their artist's talk delivered in the second year. These activities lead to the students optional teaching placement. These may comprise one or two-day, optional, non-paid teaching visits to an undergraduate course where the student usually delivers an artist's talk and gives individual tutorials to undergraduate students. Other opportunities include placements in schools and education programmes within public art institutions and galleries, subject to availability.

6. Assessment and feedback

Assessment

Continuous assessment enables the student's performance and progress to be understood and accounted for through a wide variety of academic contact points, recognising that students are able to perform in different ways and through different means and aspects of the curriculum while still achieving the requisite performance standards.

All Studio based Units (1A, 1B, 2A & 2B) are assessed wholly or in part through a process of continuous assessment. This relies on staff who have had experience of the student coming together at the end of the unit in a Unit Assessment Meeting, chaired by the Head of Programme or a Senior Tutor, to review the student's self-evaluation and to share their experience of the student in relation to the relevant learning outcomes.

Final Examination

Final Examination examines the students' ability to synthesise their learning and to express it in a formal exam context, either through their performance in a live event, such as the viva voce examinations (previously interim and final exams) at the conclusion of Units 1B and 2B, or through the submission of a formal assessed element such as a dissertation or portfolio at the conclusion of the SoAH School Unit and CHS.

Unit 1B

The Final Examination for Unit 1B is held at the beginning of the third term as a Viva Voce. A Unit Assessment Meeting chaired by the Head of Programme or a Senior Tutor reviews the work produced by the student on the Unit. Students will be asked to demonstrate that their practice is evolving and that they are able to position your work within the context of contemporary art practice and theory, as per the relevant Learning Outcomes.

Unit 2B

The Final Examination for Unit 2B is held at the beginning of the third term as a Viva Voce. A Unit Assessment Meeting chaired by the Head of Programme or a Senior Tutor reviews the work produced by the student on the Unit. Students will be asked to demonstrate that their practice is evolving and that they are able to position their work within the context of contemporary art practice and theory, as per the relevant Learning Outcomes.

SoAH School Unit

Assessment: Critical Reflection

Students will be required to produce a 1000-2000 word critical reflection on their learning from the School Unit. This written response offers the opportunity to consider the question of The Urgency of the Arts in relation to your own thinking and practice. The critical reflection should contextualise your work in relation to contemporary debates and needs to include:

- A reference to at least one speaker from the SoAH School Unit Lecture Series
- A reference to a text / concept / theme that was covered during the MA School Group that you attended
- Up to 3 images (max. 5mb each) relating to your participation in the School Crit with some evaluative commentary

This will be submitted to the joint assessment panel for the Joint Unit 2B / School Unit Exam, taking place toward the end of academic year.

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 240 credits at level 7 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). This will involve successfully completing all units.

If you fail a unit at the first attempt, you will be offered an opportunity to resit the unit. If you are successful 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.

8. Admissions

Cross-College requirements

Academic Entry Requirements

Candidates must normally have obtained a good relevant undergraduate degree or an equivalent qualification. The College recognises as an equivalent qualification any degree, diploma, certificate or other evidence of formal qualification awarded by a university or other higher education establishment where the award is made following the successful completion of a course of at least three years' study, the programme of study being open, as a general rule, only to persons holding a certificate awarded on the successful completion of a full course of upper secondary education.

Other qualifications may be approved, providing that the College's Academic Board for Concessions and Discipline (ABCD) is satisfied that the applicant has the ability to pursue the programme of study successfully. The ABCD is empowered to make judgements about the extent to which qualifications or experience gained elsewhere may be accepted in partial fulfilment of its requirements.

Portfolio

All applicants are required to submit a portfolio as part of the application process. A portfolio is a showcase of an applicant's work as an artist or designer and can be made up of images, videos or writing examples. The portfolio helps us to better understand the applicant and allows them to show evidence of their ability and motivation to undertake a given programme.

Each programme is looking for different things in a portfolio; each Head of Programme provides specific advice on portfolio requirements in the online application system. We advise prospective students to consider these requirements carefully before submitting their application.

Applicant Qualities

Generally, we are looking for applicants to demonstrate their:

- creativity, imagination and innovation;
- ability to articulate the intentions of the work;
- intellectual engagement in areas relevant to the work;
- technical skills appropriate to the work;
- potential to benefit from the programme and achieve MA standards overall.

English Language

Applicants who are not a national of a majority English-speaking country will need to demonstrate their English language proficiency. The College accepts a range of English language qualifications. The full list can be seen at <https://www.rca.ac.uk/studying-at-the-rca/apply/entrance-requirements/english-language-requirements/>

Applicants are exempt from this requirement if they have received a 2.1 degree or above from a university in a majority English-speaking nation within the last two years.

If a student would need a Tier 4 visa to study at the RCA, they will also need to meet the Home Office's minimum requirements for entry clearance.

Admission Process

Applications must be made directly to the College through our online application portal:

<https://www.rca.ac.uk/studying-at-the-rca/apply/application-process/ma-application-process/>

Upon completion of that first stage of the application process, candidates will be invited to submit a portfolio of their work, a 300-word statement of intent and a video communicating clearly their motivations, personal interests and why they are pursuing a Masters degree at the Royal College of Art. These materials are reviewed by members of the programme team who will communicate an academic decision to the College Registry, who manage the process of offer-making in line with the College's recruitment targets. In some cases, where the programme team is not able to make an admission decision based solely upon the work submitted by the applicant, we may invite the candidate to undertake an interview with us.

Applications are considered chronologically by date and time of final portfolio submission. Whilst a programme still has vacancies, successful candidates will be made an offer of a place. Once a programme becomes full, subsequent successful applicants will be placed on a waiting list, and may be made a firm offer should a place become available for them.

Programme-Specific Requirements

Specific advice on programme portfolio requirements is provided by the Head of Programme in the online application system. Please consult the College website for further information on programme-specific admission and portfolio requirements:

<https://www.rca.ac.uk/study/schools/school-of-arts-humanities/painting/ma-entrance/>