



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 Service Design
Award:	Masters
Qualification framework level:	Level 7
School/Department or equivalent:	School of Design
Programme duration:	2-years
Total UK credits:	240 credits
Mode of study:	Full time
Date valid from/to:	2020-21

2. Programme Philosophy

MA Service Design involves an integrated approach to the design of experiences and systems and requires the application of design practices and methodologies in a systems-based solution. The programme reflects upon and provides a deep understanding of the technological, commercial and organisational context in the conception and execution of innovative services as well as the tools, techniques and methods required in the practice of service design. Its overarching goal is to enable graduating students to engage at a strategic, as well as an operational, level in the design of services, potentially leading interdisciplinary design teams in the design and deployment of innovative services in the business, consumer and public sector.

The core design-based programmes at the RCA are complemented by partnerships across the School of Design and leading London business schools, industry leaders in technology and public sector organisations, to enhance skills across business; skills such as strategy, policy, organisational behaviour, entrepreneurship, delivery and innovation management.

In 2020 the programme developed a four-point strategy, increased the depth of learning transformation and enhanced the focus on delivery through cultures, operations, systems and technology. The programme continues to map effective social and cultural issues as set out in the UN Sustainable Development Goals focusing on age, health, work and sustainability. Public Service and Policy Innovation reflects the growing application of service design to transforming public services delivered by government, central, local and third sector organisations and social enterprises, but also the use of service design to develop policy.

The strong connection between service design and financial services is focused on developments in open banking and banking for the vulnerable. We have added additional emphasis on the developments of the 4th Industrial Revolution of Artificial Intelligence, machine learning and data analysis that are enabling a new generation of innovative personalised services and are at the heart of UK Industrial Strategy.

The programme is expanding the tools and methodologies of service designers with the use of speculative design approaches to explore the design of future services bringing together future forecasting methodologies, emerging technology platforms and service design techniques to envision radical new service experiences in areas such as health, education, transportation, financial services, and retail.

3. Educational Aims and Outcomes of the Programme

Programme Aims

The MA Service Design Programme aims to:

- Advance the discipline of service, its methods, tools and techniques through project assignments, intellectual inquiry, and enable its students to gain mastery of these tools and techniques in the consumer, business and public service sectors
- Give its students a deep understanding of the importance of the societal, environmental and business context for experience design and service innovation, and the broader systems context
- Demonstrate how design creates user and business value in services and the importance of an architecture for service provision that ensures consistent delivery of user experience
- Examine critically the opportunities and threats posed by both technological as well as business model innovation in services, and the impact on society and business
- Apply those techniques to the experience design and systems and service innovation in the context of tackling challenges of sustainability, societal issues, and governance.
- Engage at a strategic, as well as operational, level in the design of services, potentially leading interdisciplinary design teams in the design and deployment of innovative services.
- Envision the future of not only service experiences, enabled by new and emerging digital technologies but also the development of the service design discipline itself
- Demonstrate the role of service design in the innovation of public services that deliver more effective service experiences for citizens and for the public sector, as well as develop the service design discipline to improve the design of policy

What will I be expected to achieve?

At the end of your study you will be equipped with the tools, methodologies and skills to identify and deliver opportunities for complex system change and organisation transformation. You will be able to uncover and critically analyse issues, create new concepts and prototypes and facilitate and lead change. In developing your own service design practice you will be able apply your skills to a wide range of business and public contexts and create real impact in your chosen profession.

Programme-Specific Learning Outcomes

Able to:	A. Intellectual Engagement
A1.	Develop innovative ideas that challenge the understanding of the current practice and shape the emerging discipline of service design.
A2.	Demonstrate an advanced understanding of historical and contemporary debate with regard to the design of artefacts, infrastructure, organisation and services and how these relate one to another and to their own practice.

A3.	Demonstrate an advanced understanding of the principles and methods of service design and apply them effectively to your own practice and the emergent discipline of service design.
A4.	Understand the underlying nature of services and systems and their influence on user experience, and the spaces for service innovation and design.
A5.	Translate abstract service proposition and user experience related issues into tangible design proposals.
A6.	Undertake intellectual and creative research to understand and contribute to the resolution of issues associated with the emergence of this new discipline and its interaction with other disciplines beyond that of design.

Able to:	B. Technical Skills
B1.	Demonstrate the application of service design techniques to public service provision, consumer and business service with a special focus on the fields of health and wellbeing, energy and the environment.
B2.	Apply the concept of value creation in services, and understand how to design quality into services, and the measurement and management of service experience.
B3.	Understand the role and importance of service architecture, and how this relates to the value of services to customers, and to the service provider.
B4.	Understand how factors such as organisational culture, skills, technological enablement, infrastructure and commercial constraints enable or inhibit service innovation, and know how to take these into account in the design and deployment of service propositions.
B5.	Understand the concepts and characteristics of business model innovation in the provision of services including the role of social enterprise, and develop appropriate and viable business models for the service propositions you create.

Able to:	C. Professional Development
C1.	Develop independence by taking responsibility for directing your own studies through setting goals and managing time and resources effectively.
C2.	Define your professional identity through self-reflection and an understanding of how service design practice and the profession create value for industry, the public sector, and the users and communities they serve
C3.	Develop collaborative skills by participating as an active, thoughtful and responsible member of a community of different disciplines, academic and business cultures.
C4.	Develop your commercial skills so that you can engage professionally with potential clients, are able to articulate the value of your services to their business needs in terms of your business proposals, and deliver effectively against them.
C5.	Understand the societal, ethical, environmental and business context for any service innovation and take these into account in your overall professional practice.

4. What will I learn?

Structure and Curriculum

The programme is a two-year full time programme leading to the award of MA Service Design.

The programme combines an experiential component, involving group and individual projects with a structured learning programme and short related project assignments, that reinforce the learning. The lectures, master-classes and workshops develop the knowledge, skills and practices that students will apply in your final year projects. In addition to academics from the RCA, we invite prominent designers as well as our industry partners to present on professional practice of service design, exemplar projects and challenges associated with the practice of service design.

The structured learning programme is spread throughout Terms 1 – 5 and all modules are delivered as half or full day sessions, the first year being more intensive. Classroom modules are made available electronically for student self-study. The structured learning programme comprises of between 200 and 250 hours of lectures and seminar activity.

Programme Units

- Unit 1: Service Design Foundation – Term 1 (20 Credits)
- Unit 2: Advanced Service Design Methods & Materials - Term 2 and Term 3 (20 Credits)
- Unit 3: Designing Businesses– Term 3 (20 Credits)
- Unit 4: Managing design and operational strategy - Term 4 and Term 5 (20 Credits)
- Unit 5: Social Innovation and Future Services – Term 4 and Term 5 (20 Credits)
- Unit 6: Implementing and deploying services at scale – Term 4 (20 Credits)

Seminar Programme (Not credit-bearing, and subject to change):

- Service Design Seminar 1– Service Design: Invisible Impact
- Service Design Seminar 2– Services in context: Digital, Physical, Visual & Organisational. From AI to digital interactions in the built environment.
- Service Design Seminar 3 – Design for the Platform Economy
- Service Design Seminar 4 – Strategy and Operations
- Service Design Seminar 5 – Future Social Innovations
- Service Design Seminar 6 – Service Design at scale

The seminar programme is led by the students, under the supervision of a Senior Tutor. It is research-led and involves visiting academics from related disciplines as well as service design. There are 2 seminars each term. The topics are considered on an annual basis in collaboration with our students and researchers.

During the first year there are a series of short project activities to support the structured teaching programme

In the second year students undertake a group project followed by an individual project, or students may pair up to work together to enhance the mutual learning experience. The final project assignment can be selected by the student, which may relate to issues such as health and wellbeing, energy and environment, society and social enterprise, and address this from the standpoint of one or more of the programme's main themes;

- The creation of new consumer services, with a focus on identifying human needs, transformational services and delivery in complex organisations, for example in retail, banking and hospitality;
- The development of public service and policy innovation on topics such as transportation,

health and education;

- Future scenarios that envision radically new services and user experiences driven by technological, environmental and social challenges. or a combination of these, for instance envisioning a public service innovation for 2025.

The individual assignments are exhibited in the RCA Degree Show exploiting video, storyboarding, performance/simulation and related artefact design and demonstrating not only the capacity of a student to prototype a service but to operationalize elements of the service in a pilot

Year One

At the outset of the programme, students are introduced to the scope of the overall programme and encouraged to co-design a personalised academic pathway reflecting their background, context for the learning and personal goals for undertaking the course.

Students are introduced to the resources and support available to help them achieve these goals both within the Programme as well as to the other resources elsewhere within the RCA.

Structured learning programme and workshops include:

Term 1: In addition to the Service Design Foundation, students take part in a common platform, The Grand Challenge, for the School of Design complemented by a weekly seminar each week delivered by faculty from across the entire school of design.

The School of Design, of which Service Design is part, offers a unique environment for interdisciplinary design-led innovation. It attracts students from a highly diverse set of disciplines and work experience to give them the opportunity to not only reshape their own design practice, but to reshape the discipline of design itself.

Students from many different design disciplines are joined by students with backgrounds as diverse as science and engineering, medicine, social sciences, business and the fine arts. Together, over the next two years they will achieve extraordinary levels of creativity and innovation that have made the Royal College of Art the number one institution for Art and Design in the world. In the first term students from Design Products, Service Design, Vehicle Design and Global Innovation Design, Fashion and Textiles participate together in a common platform of seminars and workshops and a joint project. The goal of the common programme is to provide a vibrant interdisciplinary environment to accelerate new ways of thinking, design practice and new skills. It is designed to reinforce existing best practice in design as well as introduce those who are new to design to some of the key principles and practices for design-led innovation.

This common platform introduces students to the principles, tools and techniques and practice of design in each of the disciplines, introduces them to design research methods, systems thinking, advanced ideation techniques, visualisation and prototyping in physical and digital environments and issues of design for sustainability, the circular economy and commercial viability. It is delivered through a combination of seminars, workshops and studio projects linked to each of these topics, and culminates with a group project where students from different programmes work together to deliver an exhibition of their work. Each of the individual programmes builds upon this platform, both during the first term and in subsequent terms, enabling students to develop their specialism in their respective disciplines.

Term 2: In this term we explore the fundamental principles of Service Design in more depth and the key tools and techniques starting with an introduction to the design research tools and methods used in both academia and professional practice. Workshops provide an opportunity for students to carry out specific skill drills applied to stand-alone briefs which can then be applied to

the group project that runs alongside the formal sessions. A series of 2 further Service Design Seminars also provides a thread of critical thinking and discourse, focusing on the design industry, social and public innovation as well as service, digital and the experience economy.

The second half of the term focuses on value creation through the development of ideas in a specific domain. Lectures, master-classes and workshops include themes of sustainability, social innovation, data driven innovation, The digital and physical environment within the service landscape.

Students will also have the opportunity to join optional electives at Imperial College Business School.

Term 3: This term focuses on two further aspects of service design: the materials of service design that includes the digital, physical, policy as well as cultural change in organisations; and the principles of management science, value proposition development and business planning to apply to the Project 2 project assignment. Whether your project is likely to result in the creation of a social enterprise, innovation within the public sector or a commercial venture, you will need to know how to create a proposition that is economically viable.

Individual Progress Reviews will take place towards the end of Term 3 to help them reflect on their learning and ongoing direction in Year 2. Students will also be invited to help 2nd year students in the planning of ShowRCA as well as take part in organising a range of events to create an engaging platform for future employers, academics and practitioners.

Project Assignments Tutorials and Peer Reviews

During the first year students undertake project assignments that relate to the different areas of service design: business to consumer services, business to business and the public and 3rd Sector services and future services.

Students receive a briefing on the service challenge for that cycle accompanied by lectures, readings or visits organised usually at the beginning of the term, if national and local restrictions allow. For example, in Term 1, students engage in a group project that will last until the end of the term. A further combination of group projects take place in Terms 2 & 3. Weekly project tutorials take place with our Visiting Tutors in order to help students assess their progress, their overall direction and enable them to take their own creative decisions based on the evidence that's been gathered. Feedback is verbal so students are advised to take responsibility of recording next steps.

A final project review takes place at the end of the assignment when the project is formally assessed, and presented to the rest of the class, visiting Tutors and the Service Design team. Students are required to share how they have developed the brief, the research and design methods applied to address that brief and the outputs of their individual or group work for discussion and analysis by the entire student group. They are expected to demonstrate that they have met the learning outcomes from each of the relevant units, through the presentation and digital or documentary outputs as specified in the brief.

Feedback is recorded and includes the elements of the project that worked well and other areas that require further development. As well as the project presentation, a digital output is also required which can also be used by students to reflect their evolving practice on personal websites and part of their increasing portfolio of work.

Students also work on a 4-week group project, the Grand Challenge, as part of the School of Design Platform which takes place at the end of Term 1.

Year Two

The remaining structured learning programme and workshops include:

Term 4

This term covers the complexity of service design and hence examines Systems Design by addressing the deployment of services, understanding business and understanding organisations. We also explore social innovation and future services and deploying services at scale.

Collaborative and Final Projects

Students will be asked to start exploring their final self-directed project over the summer before sharing their intended area of interest at the beginning of Term 4. Students will also take part in a group project that's undertaken in Term 4.

Among the skills which the course seeks to develop in its students, are the abilities to manage large, long-term projects and to collaborate with others, including other professionals from different design disciplines, as well as those from different professional or industry backgrounds.

Collaborative Project – Term 4

During the Autumn term of the second year, students will undertake a collaborative service design project, culminating in the demonstration of a service prototype including the design of relevant physical artefacts and the environmental context in which the service takes place. This collaborative project can be in the field of public, consumer or business to business services as selected by the student or collaborating group. The projects may be sponsored by the programme's industry or public sector partners who in turn, will provide input to the examiners.

The project will be judged as evidence of the students learning from the first 4 terms of the programme. Students will need to manage not only the design and prototyping of the service but demonstrate a potentially feasible business model and viable deployment strategy.

The Final Project (an independent project) – Term 5 and 6

Students are required to demonstrate their personal capability and creativity by producing a major piece of individual work as the climax to their second year. This is a 5-month project that is executed from January through to the end of May and the final examination. Students may initiate the project earlier in the second year by researching the domain they are interested in, developing an outline brief, building networks and engaging project sponsors, even developing initial concepts. This may commence over the summer following their first year, and in parallel with the Term 4 Group project assignments.

Students are asked to consider an area of focus for the final project over the summer and then give a short presentation in week 1 of Term 4. They then have regular tutorials in Term 4, to examine the research they've started, the networks they've reached out to, in order to create a clearer pathway and specific design brief by the end of the term. After the Work in Progress show, regular tutorials will continue and students carry out an interim presentation to their peers before Easter (during Year 1 CHS reading week).

This project should demonstrate the students' ability to work not only to a 'brief', but also demonstrate their capacity to become the author(s) of their own 'brief.' Working with the careful guidance of a tutor, students should establish the parameters and challenges of this project, and its potential contribution in economic, social or environmental terms.

Students can also choose to work with students from other programmes to realise their final project. For instance, you might choose to work with designers from Communications, Architecture, Interiors, Innovation Design Engineering or Intelligent Mobility to develop an integrated service experience which combines different design disciplines. However, students are

assessed on the service design and service system they have created and their integrative capability, not as a group or collaborative project. In such cases, the role and work undertaken by the MA Service Design student must be clear for the purposes of assessment.

The final review will be the examination of the work as part of the overall MA assessment. In this way, each student's independence, personal learning achievement, and creativity are tested.

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

Term 1		Term 2		Term 3		Term 4			Term 5		Term 6			
Unit 1		Unit 2				Unit 3		Unit 4	Unit 5	Unit 6	Final Project			
Project 1	Grand Challenge	Project 2 (Part 1)		Project 2 (Part 2)				Project 3						
O&S														

5. How will I learn?

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

Learning and Teaching Methods

The course makes use of many of the best teaching practices from schools of art and design, science and technology, and social sciences. As outlined in the curriculum section, the course is based on:

- Structured learning programme: comprising of lectures and master-classes by practitioners and senior academics
- Workshops – a class based around a design task (a 'brief') as outlined in section covering year one and two;
- Seminars and Masterclasses – tutor-led classes or classes by leading practitioners where students will be asked to reflect on material that you have read or studied in advance;
- Peer Reviews– group discussion of student work at the end of each phase of the workshop programmes;
- Tutorials – one-to-one meetings with tutors to discuss their work.
- Internships – opportunities for students to work with our industry partners

The timetable of structured learning and formal workshops, seminars, peer reviews and tutorials will be organised on 2-3 days per week. These dates will be announced in advance and, when possible, will be consistent throughout the year. Attendance at classes is mandatory. You will also need to set aside sufficient time to undertake the independent study required to complete each assessed piece of work. It is possible that teaching will take place online, or as part of a blended delivery mode, according to local and national restrictions.

Tutorials

Students are allocated a personal tutor from among the staff team at the commencement of each year. The personal tutor is available to discuss any academic concerns that students might have issues.

The personal tutor is also responsible for supporting students to write up a termly progress report that helps students reflect on their overall progress. Progress reports will be written for terms 1 & 2.

In term 3, students will share their progress and any issues that have emerged in Individual Progress Reviews when they can present the work from their year, their reflections and ongoing learning plan. The Head of Programme will run these reviews with another Tutor from the Service Design team.

In terms 4-6, personal tutors will provide regular oral feedback in preparation for the final exam, students being encouraged to take their own notes and reflect on the guidance. In addition to these regular tutorials, there will be regular reviews with a wider group of tutors who will share their views on the students' performance and progress. Students are again encouraged to take responsibility for taking notes to help them reflect on their progress and direction.

Masterclasses and external seminars

We invite prominent designers as well as our industry partners to present on professional practice of service design, exemplar projects, and challenges associated with the emergent practice of service design.

This experience is designed to raise the level of academic challenge by bringing into the course a professional designer and/or service design commissioner from a potential client. Full details of the first masterclass will be issued at the start of the first year.

Internships

We strongly recommend that students take an internship in the summer vacation, if they are in a position to do so, and it is in line with local and national restrictions.

Whilst the programme will work with established partners and alumni to identify appropriate, and available, internship opportunities. These will then be communicated to students. However, students are also encouraged to explore other options using alternative networks such as social media.

You may get the opportunity to participate in an exhibition of your student work, either during or at the conclusion of your studies. Your Programme Handbook should provide more information on the nature of this participation.

6. Assessment and feedback

Unit assessment

Students will be assessed at the conclusion of each unit against the learning outcomes.

Final Examination

The Final Examination is the culmination of your studies towards an MA degree. Students work is assessed by academics, and a sample of your cohorts' work is reviewed by an External Examiner.

The Final Examination is in two parts:

- a) Viva-Voce, which takes place in the final term of your programme.
- b) A School Examination Board, usually chaired by the Dean of School, will be held to recommend results to the Academic Board for Concessions & Discipline for ratification.

The External Examiner will be an expert in the field of Service Design, with experience of academic work. They will be presented with copies of the students' work, and assessment reports written by staff. In the case of work which has been produced collaboratively, the students will be required to make a statement which outlines the nature and extent of their unique authorship

For more information, please see the RCA Regulations, available on the intranet.

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-design/service-design/ma_entrance/