



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 Textiles
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

Textiles at the RCA operates at the intersection of design, craft and fine art and we embrace this mix of thinking to collectively challenge the role of the 21st century Textiles Practitioner.

Our diverse practice across the programme, which includes commercial designers across many sectors, individual craft practitioners, gallery based practitioners and smart textiles innovation fosters a vibrant community culture where debate across our range of practice stimulates critical questioning of the discipline and of the industry.

Our two-year MA Programme fosters the development of a personal creative identity through a combination of individual, personally driven initiatives, collaborative work, industry-orientated and interdisciplinary projects.

The Textiles programme offers five specialisms: Printed, Knitted, Woven, Mixed Media Textiles and Soft Systems. Students base their study within one of the specialisms.

The programme endeavours to extend the students' knowledge and experience of the breadth of Textiles through the specialisms, and supports them in developing specialist skills.

We support and encourage our students to hone their skills, both hand and digital, and to use these as a point of departure with freedom to explore new expressions without boundaries. We encourage our students to develop an agility in their thinking and creative capability in order to be equipped to respond innovatively to the unknown. Our graduates are fluent in the language of materials and go on to influence the tangible and intangible materiality of our lives across a range of sectors.

At Textiles RCA, as a community of practitioners, we critically engage with all aspects of the discipline to demonstrate our creative capability and challenge the accepted boundaries of Textiles practice. We share a common approach of thinking through making, frequently uncovering new

insights through material exploration.

Working through a Textiles lens we collectively question and challenge our material exploration with a strong commitment to increased responsibility and ethical practice.

3. Educational Aims and Outcomes of the Programme

Programme aims

The MA Textiles Programme aims to:

- provide a stimulating postgraduate learning environment, which encourages creativity, diversity, and independent study;
- encourage new perceptions and innovative work;
- direct and encourage the understanding of research and its applications to design at postgraduate level;
- equip designers and artists with an advanced technical knowledge of specialist skills and techniques and encourage an awareness of new technology;
- foster an awareness of the creative, sociological, cultural, commercial and sustainable context of textiles;
- encourage students to commit to a context/s for their work;
- encourage students to enter into an advanced level of critical appraisal;
- develop students' ability to communicate their ideas coherently and intelligently;
- encourage involvement with the postgraduate culture of the College as a whole.

What will I be expected to achieve?

- The production of a body of work that demonstrates creative approaches and engagement with the current debates within the discipline.
- The ability to research and develop innovative concepts that are applicable to given or self-set briefs.
- A fluency in the language of materials, both physical and digital, and their application.
- To be able to work independently, as an individual and/or as part of a group.
- A critical understanding of the discipline, both through your own work and that of others.
- To be able to articulate and disseminate your personal creative philosophy and rationale.

Programme-Specific Learning Outcomes

Able to:	A. Intellectual Engagement
A1.	Develop innovative ideas that challenge your understanding of your practice and the discipline of textiles.
A2.	Demonstrate an awareness of the creative, sociological, cultural, commercial or sustainable context of textiles and how it relates to your practice.
A3.	Demonstrate an understanding of research and its applications to your work at postgraduate level.
A4.	Develop the ability to engage in written and verbal analysis of your own work and that of others.
A5.	Demonstrate critical analysis with regard to the development of your own work.

Able to:	B. Technical Skills
B1.	Produce work at an advanced level that integrates thought, creativity and technique.
B2.	Develop textile skills through experimentation and research into traditional and/or emerging materials and processes.
B3.	Demonstrate an advanced knowledge of the specialist skills and techniques required to create, exhibit and document your work.
B4.	Demonstrate an advanced capability for the creative use of colour and materials
Able to:	C. Professional Development
C1.	Develop a high level of professionalism in the production and the communication of your work.
C2.	Define a personal creative identity and position yourself in, or in relation to the textile field.
C3.	Take responsibility for directing your studies through setting goals and managing time and resources effectively.
C4.	Participate as an active, thoughtful and responsible member of a community.
C5.	Develop your ability to work independently and/or as part of a team.

4. What will I learn?

The Textiles programme offers 5 specialisms of Printed, Knitted, Woven, Mixed Media Textiles and Soft Systems. You will base your study within one of the specialisms.

Across the specialisms, the programme endeavours to extend your knowledge and experience of the breadth of Textiles throughout the first year using both individual and team project activities. These can be delivered in conjunction with external industry partners to offer opportunities for professional engagement and practice. Collaborative work is strongly encouraged in the School and across the College.

All first year students participate in the School of Design Grand Challenge.

The second year is devoted to independent study and the self-driven creation of work which challenges the boundaries of the discipline and builds on your individual creative identity.

Collaborative work across the programme, School and College is encouraged and supported.

The programme is comprised of 6 x Studio units over the two years, as follows:

Studio Unit 1 (20 Credits)

Thinking through making: Materials, Tools + Narratives

This unit of study asks you to critically engage with the processes and methods of making. This

includes aspects of materials, tools and models of practice. You will undertake a series of making challenges associated with the craft foundation of your Textiles specialism.

You are expected to demonstrate understanding and competency with regard to these specialist skills in the production of the body of work for assessment.

As the unit progresses you are required to develop a unique and individual response to the project brief that goes beyond technical competency and demonstrates your creative capability to challenge the accepted boundaries of Textiles practice. You will develop your own conceptual frameworks for the development of their individual work. This is evidenced in a body of work that has an individual and unique expression in the use of colour and materials and demonstrates practical competency. The body of work will be accumulated throughout the first year and presented at two progress reviews in terms 1 and 2, and assessed in term 3.

Studio Unit 2 (30 Credits)

Contextual Application + Location.

This unit of study mixes all the students across the Textiles specialisms (Knit, Weave, Print, Mixed Media, Soft Systems) and asks you to elect a contextual platform to explore and challenge the location of your practice.

Elective platforms are offered that broadly reflect significant areas of Textile practice (Currently they are Colour, Materials and Finish or CMF, Body, Space, Gallery & Futures). There are both common and distinct approaches across the different platforms.

Elective project briefs are set for the contextual platforms that may be delivered in conjunction with another programme, industry or external partner. You are expected to demonstrate appropriate understanding and competency with regard to your elected area of practice in the appropriate development of ideas and production of a body of work for assessment that responds to the given brief.

The context project work will be presented at one progress review in term 2 and assessed in term 3.

Studio Unit 3 (10 credits)

Individual Creative Identity

This unit of study builds on the knowledge, skills and experiences learnt through Studio Units 1 & 2 and asks you to develop your individual creative identity through a period of independent study. This will include the development of new research, proposals for the innovative development of the ideas and the ability to critically analyse your own work and that of others.

All students are asked to present their work at group critiques in Term 3. During these crits your work will be assessed as you will be asked to comment on your overall progression during year 1.

Studio Unit 4 (40 Credits)

Evolution and Resolution

Studio Unit 4 asks you to design your own creative brief and define a set of outcomes for presentation at the end of the term 4. This can be an individual or collaborative programme of work.

The parameters of the brief are set by you, with the support of your personal tutor, but must

include the following:

- Original visual research.
- Contemporary and relevant conceptual, contextual and cultural questions pertinent to the discipline of Textiles.
- A strategy for creative risk taking.
- A methodology for the development of the work.
- Bibliography.
- The location of your work in relation to Textiles practice.

The work will be assessed at the Individual Progress Review at the end of the Term 4.

Studio Unit 5 (20 Credits)

Breaking Boundaries Part 1: Challenge + Innovate

Studio Unit 5 is a project that asks you to identify your potential point of difference and/or potential area for innovation that challenges both yourself and the discipline. It is a period for risk taking before consolidation of your work in Studio Unit 6.

You are responsible for setting your own scope of work, managing your time and resources effectively.

You must be able to articulate your point of difference and/or innovation at the end of the Studio Unit. The work will be presented at a progress review in term 5 and assessed with Studio Unit 6 in term 6.

Studio Unit 6 (60 Credits)

Breaking Boundaries Part 2: Create, Critique + Consolidate

Studio Unit 6 and asks you to identify, develop and present a cohesive body of work that encapsulates and demonstrates your Masters-level expertise.

As an independent research project, you are responsible for setting your own scope of work, managing your time and resources effectively. The body of work can be an individual or collaborative project, or series of mini-projects within a defined, overarching theme. You must be able to demonstrate a sustained trajectory of progression through the unit, that encompasses creativity, critical analysis, consolidation and resolution of your ideas.

The parameters of the final major project are set by you, with the support of your personal tutor, but must include the following:

- A formative personal statement.
- Original visual research.
- Contemporary and relevant conceptual, contextual and cultural questions pertinent to the discipline of Textiles.
- A strategy for creative risk taking.
- A methodology for the development of the work.
- A defined outcome or deliverable demonstrating an individual creative identity.
- A summative, reflective, self-evaluation statement.

The work will be assessed in Term 6.

Each of the specialisms have unique and specific curricula content in Studio Unit 1 and are described below:

Knitted Textiles Specialism:

Knitted Textiles is the exploration of textiles through an engagement with the structural, conceptual and technical possibilities offered by knitting and the use of soft, linked structures. Knitting is a process laden with cultural preconceptions and industrial expectations, you are expected to challenge these perceived boundaries alongside challenging yourself, your current knowledge, creativity and skills. You are encouraged to take creative risks and are expected to be innovators in your field. You are free to determine the context of your work; there are no limitations and no boundaries.

Woven Textiles Specialism:

Woven textiles is one of the largest and most vibrant textile industries globally, spanning the handmade to the cutting edge of new materials and manufacturing techniques and systems.

Within the Textiles Programme, the woven textiles specialism explores dynamic and varied methods of woven technique from handloom to industrial jacquard. During the 1st year students explore and research yarn, materials, dyeing techniques and finishing processes. You are encouraged to explore the opportunities offered by collaborative practice and expected to make links with the appropriate audiences and industries for your work.

Mixed Media Specialism:

Mixed Media represents an experimental and interdisciplinary approach to Textiles that links a broad range of practices, techniques, materials and methods of working. The history of the specialism lies with embroidery and stitched textiles and core technical skills in these areas continue to provide a valuable foundation in the first year of your studies. You are introduced to hand and digital processes.

As a specialism we focus on radical experimentation, material testing and transformation. We encourage an exploratory, non-linear approach that embraces the conceptual *and* the magical, allowing a space for the incidental and accidental processes of discovery that foster a culture of research through making. You are encouraged to explore the opportunities offered by collaborative practice and expected to make links with the appropriate audiences and industries for their work.

Printed Textiles Specialism:

Printed textiles at the RCA captures a vast and varied cross-section of creativity within the creative industries. It is a method of thinking, making and manufacture that questions the notion of surface; its identity and purpose. This constant negotiation of the surface nurtures the breadth and exploration of both process and materials and you are encouraged to question and challenge the possibilities and pre-conceptions of print and textiles and redefine these by pushing these boundaries through experimentation.

The first year includes building the skills and knowledge associated with the discipline including theories around colour, perception and line, alongside industry and professional linked collaborations and continued development of personal lines of enquiry. You are encouraged to explore the opportunities offered by collaborative practice and expected to make links with the appropriate audiences and industries for your work.

Soft Systems Specialism:

Soft systems focuses on smart textiles and the developments in soft materials (fibres, filaments, yarns, gels, liquids, coatings, mouldable materials and flexible films, virtual materials). The specialism places creative practice at the forefront of the innovation ecosystem, questioning the materiality of our lives and pioneering new ways of thinking and new ways of making that

transcend digital and physical boundaries. You will use a creative experimental approach to propose and prototype new architectures for responsive and adaptive textiles.

During the first year, you will develop your knowledge of the classes and characterisation of materials through technical projects.

Digital fabrication of - and new technologies for processing - materials are explored both theoretically and practically, alongside traditional textile processing platforms. Material experimentation focuses on aspects of e-textiles, physical computing, responsive properties and self-assembly with biomaterials.

You are encouraged to explore the opportunities offered by collaborative practice and are expected to make links with the appropriate audiences and industries for your work.

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.

5. How will I learn?

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

Year one is based upon a taught programme that includes building the skills and knowledge associated with the discipline, alongside industrially and professionally orientated projects and the continued development of personal lines of enquiry. You are required to participate in a School wide 'Grand Challenge' in Term 1 and are encouraged to explore the opportunities offered by collaborative practice, making links with the appropriate audiences and industries for your work.

The following learning and teaching methods are used in Textiles to monitor student progress:

- Individual and group Tutorials
- Lectures
- Technical Workshops
- Masterclasses
- Group Seminars
- Project Critiques and Presentations
- Progress reviews
- Work Experience (optional)

Progress Reviews

In order to assess your progress, depth of learning and development, you are asked to make a formal presentation of your Studio Unit work to a review panel of staff in terms 1, 2, 4 & 5. This is also to identify areas requiring further work and to give clear guidance for future direction. Written feedback will be given and you are responsible for following up the guidance given.

In advance of your Progress Review, you are required to complete a Self-Analysis Assessment Form. This form is intended to allow you to assess yourself and consider your progress in preparation for your presentation in the review. This is part of the reflective process of self-development actively encouraged by both the Programme and College.

Tutorials

This is the main teaching method used during your study, and through investigation and debate we aim to guide you in the development of your work. You may request tutorials from other staff in the School.

Group tutorials occur at key moments to generate open debate and peer group learning. The groups may include staff and students from other disciplines.

Group Seminars

Seminars focus on contextual practice. Your contribution must demonstrate the development of ideas, contextual practice and related current work.

Project Critique and Presentation

Group or individual critiques with staff and external visitors from industry are, where possible, arranged to encourage your participation in critical analysis and to enhance your professional presentation and communications skills. They may vary in format from portfolio presentation to displays of work, and may take place in person or online, in line with local and national restrictions.

Work Experience

A period of work experience may be arranged as appropriate, to provide further knowledge of industry. You are expected to be pro-active in organising any placement and we cannot guarantee to place you. The placement should be relevant to your study and your development needs.

The work experience may take place in the summer vacation between first and second year, and should be arranged in agreement with your Personal Tutor and Head of Programme.

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

The College-wide assessment criteria for the evaluation of student achievement can be applied across all studio-based MA programmes to ensure consistency in assessment across the College and from year to year. It is very important that you read these so that you understand the basis on which you will be assessed.

Your work will be assessed at 2 points in the first year. The combined assessments inform the Interim Examination Board at the end of year 1. You must pass the first year to enable you to progress to the final year of your Masters.

Your work will be assessed at 2 points in the second year.

Assessment

You will be assessed after each unit against the learning outcomes, leading to summative assessments and ensuring that you have the opportunity for feedback progressing from one project to the next.

At the end of the first year, a formal panel will review your work to evaluate your progress and determine progression to the second year. The interim assessment review is conducted with a board consisting of relevant staff, where you are not present, reviewing your summative assessment of the year.

In the second year, your work is assessed by a panel of academics, and a sample of the cohort's work is reviewed by an External Examiner.

At the end of the second year, the assessment results are submitted to the School Exam Board for review. The outcomes of this review are submitted to the Academic Board for Concessions and Discipline for ratification.

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/programme-finder/textiles-ma/#requirements>