UNIVERSITY OF LEADING THE WAY WESTMINSTER

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Course record information

Name and level of the final award	**MA Interactive Media Practice** The Interactive Media Practice is a Masters degree that is Bologna FQ-EHEA second cycle degree or diploma compatible.
Name and level of intermediate awards	Postgraduate Diploma (PG Dip) Interactive Media Practice Postgraduate Certificate (PG Cert) Interactive Media Practice
Awarding body/institution	University of Westminster
Teaching Institution	University of Westminster
Status of awarding body/institution	Recognised Body
Location of delivery	Harrow Campus
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode, length of study and normal starting month	1 yr full-time 2 yrs part-time. September start.
QAA subject benchmarking group(s)	There are no subject benchmark statements for Master's degrees in Interactive Media Practice.
The professional statutory or regulatory body	NA
Date of course validation/Revalidation	2013
Date of programme specification approval	2019
Valid for cohorts	2020/ 21
Course Leader	Savraj Matharu
Course URL	https://www.westminster.ac.uk/art-and-design-digital-media-and-games-computing-courses/2019-20/september/full-time/interactive-media-practice-ma
Westminster course code	PMMUS01F (FT) PMMUS01P (PT)
HECoS code	100443 and 100375

UKPASS code	P051237

Admissions requirements

There are standard minimum entry requirements for all postgraduate courses. Students are advised to check the standard requirements for the most up-to-date information.

For most courses, a decision will be made on the basis of your application form alone. However, for some courses, the selection process may include an interview to demonstrate your strengths in addition to any formal entry requirements.

More information can be found here: westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/how-to-apply

Aims of the course

The Interactive Media Practice Masters programme sets out to address the needs of the creative media industries as they respond to the radical changes ushered in by the spread of new digital technologies – the process that has become known as the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The course explores the different and changing relationships between technology, design and interaction and focuses in particular on creative interactive media and interdisciplinary practice.

The creative industries have always been interdisciplinary in nature; but in the new digital world, the need to collaborate has become even more fundamental. A course that focused simply on the acquisition of knowledge and skills in one area of media or technology would not be sufficient. As a result, the Interactive Media Practice Masters programme stresses complex problem solving and the application of collaborative, creative and critical thinking across a range of digital media technologies.

The course will appeal to learners with a ‘maker’s mind set' and an interest in creative digital media. Practice-led, research-informed and industry facing, it has been designed to educate graduates who can then go on to secure high level positions within the creative digital sector. It is particularly suitable for experienced professionals from the design, media, technology, and marketing/communications sectors interested in career development or further study and research.

The Masters in Interactive Media Practice covers a range of current technologies:

- Interactive design and innovation, via Human-Centred Design (HCD).
- Interactive media and digital media production via User-Centred Design (UCD) approach.
- The Internet of Things (IOT) and its applications via User-Driven Development (UDD).
- Conversational design, Human Computer Interaction (HCI), User Experience (UX).
- Interactive agents, Rich Communication Services (RCS) and mobile communications.

But it also has a flexible design that will allow it to incorporate future media technologies as they emerge and are developed and deployed within the creative industries.

The programme also provides students with the space to develop a variety of hard and soft skills – from software and programming to communication and management.

These include the ability to:

- Articulate creative ideas using relevant production processes and related interactive technologies.

- Develop specialist knowledge within interactive production as a foundation for future professional practice.

- Use design thinking and user research to develop innovative digital solutions for both the public sector and private industry, from NGOs to FinTech.

- Explore converging technologies and the changing function and meaning of interactive media within the creative industries.

- Develop an entrepreneurial understanding of the creative digital media industries and of the challenges of operating in this area, both independently or as part of larger and smaller business structures.

- Research and evaluate a specialist area within interactive media production through a large-scale independent and original creative project, informed by current professional standards.

- Prepare for appropriate study at a postgraduate research level.

Employment and further study opportunities

Today's organisations need graduates with both good degrees and skills relevant to the workplace, i.e. employability skills. The University of Westminster is committed to developing employable graduates by ensuring that:

- Career development skills are embedded in all courses
- Opportunities for part-time work, placements and work-related learning activities are widely available to students
- Staff continue to widen and strengthen the University's links with employers in all sectors, involving them in curriculum design and encouraging their participation in other aspects of the University's career education and guidance provision
- Staff members are provided with up-to-date data on labour market trends and employers' requirements, which will inform the service delivered to students.

The Interactive Media Practice Masters programme has been designed to help its students attain a high level of employability. On completing the course, previous graduates have gained jobs in leading digital agencies. Some have progressed in their existing careers to management positions or have founded their own start-ups. Others have developed solutions for NGOs, and worked on governmental projects in China. Some have gone on to further study and practice-based PhDs.

More specifically, our recent alumni have been employed by; Deloitte Digital, Zurich Innovation Lab, Orange XRLab, Inmarsat, Alibaba China, Apple Paris (retail), The Big Group, Pearson Education, KPMG Digital, and Accenture.

Course learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements on what successful students have achieved as a result of learning. The threshold statements of achievement are linked to the knowledge, understanding and skills that a student will have gained on successfully completing a course.

Knowledge and Understanding

Upon completion of the MA in Interactive Media Practice successful students will be able to:

LO1: Demonstrate an advanced systematic understanding of key theories and practices in interactive media development.

LO2: Apply a comprehensive understanding of the key theories to explore the role of the interactive media and its core processes.

LO3: Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the key research methodologies and approaches relevant to the field of interactive media practice.

LO4: Critically analyse current debates, trends and problems relevant to the interdisciplinary field of interactive media and development.

LO5: Demonstrate and apply relevant practice-led research-informed skills to a range of development tasks and contexts in the digital environment, using a variety of methods and approaches.

LO6: Use a range of digital tools to develop and produce original interactive media artefacts.

LO7: Produce a minimum viable product (MVP), which meets a defined user need, through a series of iterative prototype cycles.

The core modules that address these Course learning outcomes are as follows:

7MUPR011W Innovation and Interactive Design LO1, LO3, LO4
7MUPR010W Mobile Apps and Wearables LO6, LO7, LO4
7MUPR002W UX Design and Development LO2, LO3, LO5
7MUPR007W Hack Lab and Creative Technology LO2, LO6, LO7
7MUPR005W Major Project LO7, LO4, LO2

In all modules, students become familiar with the key ideas, techniques, and abilities of the subject specialism under examination. They become able to relate their studies to personal values; to collect and analyse ideas and information from a range of sources and relate those to recognized categories; to contribute effectively to group work tasks such as production, or research teams; to take responsibility, with staff support, for their own learning.

During semester two or, in the case of part-time students, the second year of study, students are able to control these ideas, techniques and abilities in an increasingly independent fashion, and with an awareness of contradictory methods of work and theories. They have a detailed and diverse knowledge of their subject; can use and evaluate different methods of obtaining and using information; can select appropriate data from varied sources and develop their own criteria and judgements; are able to develop working relationships of a professional nature within the disciplines of the interactive and media related industries.

During the second semester, or year two, students also identify a personal approach to the ideas and techniques of their subject and use this as the basis for the large-scale individual projects based on independent activity and research in the major project.

Students begin this mode of study with a comprehensive knowledge of the interactive media industry, and its various sectors, professional standards of production skills and an in-depth knowledge in specialist areas; they are able to apply abstract knowledge and concepts to specific purposes and find innovative solutions to complex problems; they can demonstrate leadership and team management skills; they can apply critical approaches to information and to their own work; they are able to negotiate the scale and scope of the self-directed period of study in a preferred area of specialism.

Specific skills

Drawing on the culture and practice of modern start-ups and digital agencies, students are encouraged to develop a range of skills via a hands-on hacker approach. The focus is on learning skills by doing and making together.

Specific skills developed on the programme include the ability to:

- Produce an original interactive media project, professionally managing the process from concept to completion. This project should be the summation of all their learning on the course, encapsulating production, business and sociological elements.

- Articulate complex relationships between concept, technology and users and critically evaluate their own creative productions and their social contexts.

- Produce powerful digital applications, moving from concept development to successful implementation and completion.

- Develop a professional level of specialist skills and knowledge in one or more areas of interactive media.

- Apply industry best practices and research-informed production techniques to a range of interactive media projects.

- Apply advanced programming skills within the realm of interactive media, integrating these techniques with various digital output channels/platforms.

- Work independently and in groups in a way that demonstrates an understanding of agile production methodologies, fast turnaround methods and sprints and other current digital media working practices.

Key transferable skills (KTS)

In addition to the highly specialised learning outcomes achieved by the end of the course, students will have gained a wider set of experiences that will prove of equal value in the workplace and beyond.

Graduates should consequently be able to:

- Demonstrate strong leadership skills through the ability to manage teams and projects.

- Evidence a clear ability to work as part of a team, under separate leadership.

- Operate and work towards stringent deadlines and manage multiple projects in a given time.

- Demonstrate the ability to work towards a given industry brief.
- Communicate effectively, to clients, users and work colleagues/team members.
- Assemble, research and process data from a variety of sources.
- Effectively transfer critical theory into industry practice to drive innovation.
- Manage time effectively through coursework demands and delivery.
- Demonstrate self-evaluation through reflective practice.
- Use design thinking to solve problems in innovative and creative ways.

Learning, teaching and assessment methods

Our learning and teaching methods are culturally inclusive, encouraging home and international students to engage positively with all students on the cohort and to value diversity.

We aim to provide a range of modes of learning, including, for example, individual work, group work and opportunities for off-campus learning through attending conferences and participating in industry collaborative arrangements such as hackathons.

Learning:

Students on the Interactive Media Practice Masters programme learn through a variety of methods. These include:

- Problem based Learning
  - Active Learning
  - Work Based Learning
  - Blended Learning
  - Student-led Learning
  - Flipped Classroom
  - Demonstrating in Practice
  - Self-Organised Learning

In **Problem-Based Learning** students develop their skills and their critical understanding of creative technologies by tackling a specific problem. With support from the tutor, this offers a more engaging way of exploring the subject material and is a key way the course aims to help students develop the core competencies they need.

Building on this, **Active Learning** allows students control of their own learning through lab-based work, where they can explore ideas from lectures, at their own pace, again within a supportive context developed by the tutors.

Students also have the opportunity to learn through **Work-Based Learning**, usually in the form of industry projects. This is implemented directly within modules via live briefs from industry partners or developed as an extracurricular activity on the programme. For example, students can embark on external hackathon style projects during the course in addition to mandatory study.

Blended Learning, in which online technologies and virtual learning environments (VLEs) support learning in the classroom, is also a key part of the programme. This can involve both supporting independent study via access to relevant textual and video materials and using collaboration and communication tools to support group work and projects.

Using these technologies, students are expected to use their own areas of expertise to support each other's learning (aka **Student-Led Learning**).

The programme also uses a **Flipped Classroom** approach on many of its modules. Students are encouraged to read and watch lecture based material before exploring concepts via a creative task or problem in a workshop or lab. Students are encouraged to read widely and consume a broad range of material, and to use knowledge from readings and specialisms via research-informed, critical theory in their practical hands on workshops.

Demonstrating in Practice refers to the expectation of students to demonstrate practice-based work usually in the form of a presentation of a partly functioning prototype or a feasibility analysis.

Self-Organised Learning is implemented on the programme by drawing on the knowledge and understanding brought by students from different backgrounds; they are encouraged to share and discuss personal knowledge and experience of an issue in tutorial/seminar groups.

Teaching:

Teaching approaches on the course are varied according to the needs of each module, and strategies for teaching and learning are published in every module handbook.

The main teaching and learning methods on the course include the following:

Lectures: these are used to present information and act as a springboard for students' research and discussion on a given subject; to build on the assigned readings and explore and examine contextual issues, and to present an opportunity to engage with the key themes of the module.

Seminars: these are used to support students' learning on the module through small group discussions of detailed theoretical content, techniques and ideas.

Workshops: small and medium-size groups of students develop work in progress tutored by specialist staff.

Practical demonstrations: small and medium-size groups of students attend demonstrations of techniques and technologies with active student participation.

Tutorials: one to one contact between a specialist member of academic staff and a student conducting independent research or a creative project; tutorials aim to support individual research and practice.

Learning contracts: negotiated plans of learning agreed by the module leader to tailor the student's experience of a module or of specified learning outcomes and help them structure their individual project work and research.

Assessment:

There are no formal examinations on the course. Students are assessed by a variety of methods including producing a range of artefacts, essays, research reports, prototypes, presentations, group and individual creative projects.

Students on the course will be assessed by formative and summative assessments.

Formative assessments are designed to give students early feedback (non-marked constructive feedback, for example after class presentations). It is part of the programme's culture of continuous feedback/'feed forward', which has been designed to encourage a progressive learning system in which students are supported as they move to completing their summative assessments.

Peer Review: as part of the collective and open ethos of the course, students can be part of the formative assessment process, offering peer feedback on work in progress. Peer review is a particularly important part of the assessment process with students formally presenting their work to their peer group with feedback being presented by the tutor and group. This presents the student with an opportunity to defend the work under scrutiny, and assess the level of personal input and understanding.

Summative assessments usually happen at the mid-point of a module and at the end. In some modules the two summative assessments are linked – the first might focus on researching an idea for an interactive media application, the second on creating a working prototype of the idea. Summative assessments are marked in accordance with the Assessment Criteria detailed in the module proforma – these assess the extent to which students have attained the module's Learning Outcomes.

Assessment Procedures: details of the assessment methods and criteria for each part of the coursework and the schedule of coursework assignments, including methods and dates of submission, coursework return and tutor feedback deadlines are provided in the module handbook.

Assessment Events: summative assessment often focuses on the creation of a project, which is handed in. But practical work is also assessed through a process of peer group presentations. This involves students individually, and /or in teams presenting work to tutors and peers. This supports the students' ability to present their work in public, and to develop critical judgement in relation to their own and others' work. In addition, it promotes a culture on the course with regards to the completion and practical realisation of work within stringent deadlines, and acts to improve overall work standards.

Course structure

This section shows the core and option modules available as part of the MA Interactive Media Practice MA course and their credit value. The options allow students to explore preferences that suit their career plans eg to focus more on entrepreneurship and employment or more on academic concepts and further study.

Full-time Postgraduate students will study for 1 year obtaining 180 credits. Part-time students will normally complete the 180 credits over two academic years.

Course Diagram

Credit Level 7				
Module code	**Module title**	**Status**	**UK credit**	**ECTS**
7MUPR011W	Innovation and Interactive Design	Core	20	10
7MUPR010W	Mobile Apps and Wearables	Core	20	10
Optional Modules	**Semester One (one module from those listed below)**			
7MEST005W	Social Media and eMarketing	Option	20	10
7COMM013W	Theories of Communication	Option	20	10
7MEDS005W	Political Economy of Communication	Option	20	10
7COMM012W	Technology and Communication Policy	Option	20	10
Core Modules	**Semester Two modules**			
7MUPR002W	UX Design and Development	Core	20	10
7MUPR007W	Hack Lab and Creative Technology	Core	20	10
Optional Modules	**Semester Two (one module from those listed below)**			
7MUMN010W	Start-Up Incubator and Digital Entrepreneurship SIDE	Option	20	10
7COMM002W	Researching Media and Communication	Option	20	10
Core Modules	**Semester Three modules**			
7MUPR005W	Major Project	Core	60	30

Academic regulations

The current Handbook of Academic Regulations is available at westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations. In some cases course, specific regulations may be applicable.

How will you be supported in your studies?

Course Management

The course is taught by the University of Westminster and hosted by the School of Media and Communication, which is part of the College of Design, Creative and Digital Industries. Jonathan Stockdale, Head of College, holds overall responsibility for the course, and for all courses run by the College of Design, Creative and Digital Industries. Head of School of Media and Communication Michaela O'Brien and Assistant Head of School Jim McClellan also provide support and management, enhancing the specific role of the course leader.

The course leader Savraj Matharu s.matharu@westminster.ac.uk is responsible for the day to day and general management of the course:

- Admissions
- Approving student study programmes
- Organisation of tutorial, supervisory support and pastoral care
- Co-ordination of marks for assessment boards
- General management of the course.

The course leader can be contacted in his offices during consultation hours (tba), by appointment or by email.

Module leaders oversee the delivery of all aspects of the module(s) they are responsible for. They consult students on matters relevant to their module.

The course team, comprising the course leader and module leaders, reviews and develops the course and sets the framework in which all members of the course team participate.

The course team meet with the course student representatives at least once each semester, and all modules are monitored and reviewed regularly.

Each student is allocated a personal tutor, who will meet with them throughout their course to discuss progress and provide guidance.

Academic Support

Upon arrival, an induction programme will introduce you to the staff responsible for the course, the campus on which you will be studying, the Library and IT facilities, additional support available and to your Campus Registry. You will be provided with the Course Handbook, which provides detailed information about the course. Each course has a course leader or Director of Studies. All students enrolled on a full-time course and part-time students registered for more than 60 credits a year have a personal tutor, who provides advice and guidance on academic matters. The University uses a Virtual Learning Environment called Blackboard where students access their course materials and can communicate and collaborate with staff and other students. Further information on Blackboard can be found at westminster.ac.uk/blackboard.

Learning Support

The Academic Learning Development Centre supports students in developing the skills required for higher education. As well as online resources in Blackboard, students have the opportunity to attend Study Skills workshops and one to one appointments. Further information on the Academic Learning Development Centre can be found at westminster.ac.uk/academic-learning-development.

Learning support includes four libraries, each holding a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at that site. Students[1] can search the entire library collection online through the Library Search service to find and reserve printed books, and access electronic resources (databases, e-journals, e-books). Students can choose to study in the libraries, which have areas for silent and group study, desktop computers, laptops for loan, photocopying and printing services. They can also choose from several computer rooms at each campus where desktop computers are available with the general and specialist software that supports the

[1] Students enrolled at Collaborative partners may have differing access due to licence agreements.

courses taught at their College. Students can also securely connect their own laptops and mobile devices to the University wireless network.

Support Services

The University of Westminster Student and Academic Services department provides advice and guidance on accommodation, financial and legal matters, personal counselling, health and disability issues, careers, specialist advice for international students and the chaplaincy providing multi-faith guidance. Further information on the advice available to students can be found at westminster.ac.uk/student-advice. The University of Westminster Students' Union also provides a range of facilities to support students during their time at the University. Further information on UWSU can be found at westminster.ac.uk/students-union.

How do we ensure the quality of our courses and continuous improvement?

The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel in 2013. The panel included internal peers from the University, academic(s) from another university and a representative from industry. This helps to ensure the comparability of the course to those offered in other universities and the relevance to employers.

The course is also monitored each year by the College to ensure it is running effectively and that issues which might affect the student experience have been appropriately addressed. Staff will consider evidence about the course, including evidence of student achievement, reports from external examiners in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the course.

A Course revalidation takes place periodically to ensure that the curriculum is up-to-date and that the skills gained on the course continue to be relevant to employers (this course underwent revalidation in 2019). As part of this process, students meet with Revalidation panels to provide feedback on their experiences. Student feedback from previous years is also part of the evidence used to assess how the course has been running.

How do we act on student feedback?

Student feedback is important to the University and student views are taken seriously. Student feedback is gathered in a variety of ways.

- Through student engagement activities at Course/Module level, students have the opportunity to express their voice in the running of their course. Course representatives are elected to expressly represent the views of their peers. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the course representatives.

- There are also School Representatives appointed jointly by the University and the Students' Union who meet with senior School staff to discuss wider issues affecting student experience across the School. Student representatives are also represented on key College and University committees.

- All students are invited to complete a questionnaire before the end of each module. The feedback from this will inform the module leader on the effectiveness of the module and highlight areas that could be enhanced.

- The University also has an annual Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey or PTES which helps us compare how we are doing with other institutions, to make changes that will improve what we do in future and to keep doing the things that you value.

For more information about this course:

https://www.westminster.ac.uk/art-and-design-digital-media-and-games-computing-courses/2019-20/september/full-time/interactive-media-practice-ma

Course contact:

Savraj Matharu, Course Leader s.matharu@westminster.ac.uk