

## Course record information

<b>Name and level of final award</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Master of Arts - Social Media and Digital Communication</li> </ul> <p>The award is Bologna FQ-EHEA second cycle degree or diploma compatible</p>
<b>Name and level of intermediate awards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Postgraduate Diploma (Pg Dip) - Social Media and Digital Communication</li> <li>• Postgraduate Certificate (Pg Cert) - Social Media and Digital Communication</li> </ul>
<b>Awarding body/institution</b>	University of Westminster
<b>Teaching institution</b>	University of Westminster
<b>Status of awarding body/institution</b>	Recognised Body
<b>Location of delivery</b>	Primary: Harrow
<b>Language of delivery and assessment</b>	English
<b>QAA subject benchmarking group(s)</b>	<p>The following documents have been consulted:</p> <p>QAA Subject Benchmark Statement: '<a href="#">Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies</a>' (April 2024)</p> <p>QAA Supporting Resources: '<a href="#">Characteristics Statement: Master's Degrees</a>' (February 2020)</p>
<b>Professional statutory or regulatory body</b>	N/A
<b>Westminster course title, mode of attendance and standard length</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MA Social Media and Digital Communication FT, Full-time, September start - 1 year standard length</li> <li>• MA Social Media and Digital Communication PT, Part-time day/evening, September start - 2 years standard length</li> </ul>
<b>Valid for cohorts</b>	From 2026/7

## 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:

<https://www.westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/how-to-apply>.

## Aims of the programme

The MA Social Media and Digital Communication aims to develop a critical and creative understanding of contemporary social media in both theory and practice. Social media have challenged how we understand communication, entertainment, relationships, democracy, news, advertising, privacy and creativity. They have captured the attention and imagination of billions of people, and enabled them to experience new forms of creativity and community. Social media offer new possibilities for connection, for learning and for professional careers.

To explore this fascinating terrain, this postgraduate degree offers the Social Science and Humanities teaching expertise of Westminster's world-leading Communication and Media Research Institute (CAMRI). The MA Social Media and Digital Communication is very well established, having run every year since it launched in 2013. The course is suitable both for learners who have studied in the area of Media and Communication at undergraduate level, and also for those who have completed an undergraduate degree in a different subject-area.

All learners complete four core modules and choose two options, before then completing a major independent project.

In core modules, learners engage with central concepts for understanding and researching social media, and develop industry-facing skills in creating content for digital platforms. They also develop an advanced understanding of issues in the wider contemporary media environment, and build marketable skills in research methods and media analysis.

Learners can then focus on option modules that further develop their conceptual knowledge and understanding, or on modules that develop hands-on media skills, or can choose one of each. Option modules offer opportunities for in-depth study of topic areas such as the social impacts of Artificial Intelligence, or media audiences in the digital age. Option modules also offer opportunities to develop creative, hands-on skills in areas such as digital data research methods, the creation of promotional content, or podcast production.

To complete the degree of MA, each learner produces a substantial independent research project. This may take the form of a written dissertation, or of a professional or creative project, underpinned by original research. Learners develop high-level, marketable skills in independent research, in critical thinking and analysis, in problem-solving and project management, and in clear, persuasive and effective communication.

## Employment and further study opportunities

Today's organisations need graduates with both good degrees and skills relevant to the workplace, i.e. career/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 are provided with up-to-date data on labour market trends and employers' requirements, which will inform the service delivered to students.

Graduates of the MA Social Media and Digital Communication are informed, critical, adaptable, resourceful and creative. They find employment in a wide range of sectors and industries. They are able to work both independently and collaboratively in roles that require advanced skills in finding, generating, analysing and communicating ideas and information, such as in research, consultancy, administration, management and education. Many graduates have used this degree to further develop and enhance their existing careers, as well as to enter new ones. This degree will be of particular interest to those who plan to work in the creative industries, as well as those already working in this field. The MA Social Media and Digital Communication will also be of interest to learners working in non-profit sectors. It also provides an excellent preparation for those planning to continue their studies to PhD level.

The MA Social Media and Digital Communication places particular emphasis on those transferable skills that have always been central to an education in the Humanities and Social Sciences: these are core skills in research and analysis, in critical and creative thinking, and in communication; our graduates develop these to advanced levels, giving them a competitive edge, along with their knowledge and understanding of networked digital media and their skills in producing content. Many graduate jobs of the future have not yet been invented, so this course equips its graduates to respond and adapt to changes and opportunities as they arise.

## What will you be expected to achieve?

## Course learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements of what successful students have achieved as a result of learning.

These are threshold statements of achievement the learning outcomes broadly fall into four categories:

The overall knowledge and understanding you will gain from your course (KU)

Graduate attributes are characteristics that you will have developed during the duration of your course (GA)

Professional and personal practice learning outcomes are specific skills that you will be expected to have gained on successful completion of the course (PPP)

Cognitive Skills, are learning outcomes that help build conceptual understanding that is necessary to devise and sustain arguments, and/or to solve problems and comment on research.

Key transferable skills that you will be expected to have gained on successful completion of the course. (KTS)

**Level 7 course learning outcomes:** upon completion of Level 7 you will be able to:

- 001 Demonstrate an advanced critical and reflective understanding of cultural, social, economic, political and technological dimensions of social media. ( KU CS )
- 002 Discuss, explain and evaluate key conceptual approaches to media and communication, and apply these to contemporary issues and debates. ( KU CS )
- 003 Demonstrate expertise in retrieving, appraising, evaluating and synthesising diverse research resources. ( PPP KTS CS )
- 004 Develop advanced skills in critical and creative thinking, through constructing, defending and evaluating arguments and evidence. ( KTS CS )
- 005 Communicate to an advanced professional standard in a range of genres and modes. ( PPP KTS )
- 006 Develop and refine industry-facing skills in creating content for social media. ( PPP KTS SS )
- 007 Enhance and apply skills in preparing and delivering presentations, including providing and responding to questions and peer feedback, and engaging different kinds of audience. ( PPP KTS SS CS )
- 008 Work independently, taking responsibility for your own learning, problem solving, and time management. ( PPP KTS )
- 009 Collaborate and participate effectively in debate and discussion, and in group projects and creative practice. ( PPP KTS SS )
- 010 Evaluate and apply primary research methods through devising, designing and conducting an original independent media research project. ( KU PPP KTS SS CS )

# How will you learn?

## Learning methods

Core and option modules engage learners with different approaches, in order to help support a variety of learning styles. *In-class* contact time represents only a proportion of study for each module, and is part of a wider process of preparatory and follow-up reading and critical reflection by learners. The *out-of-class* independent study time is self-managed by learners, with guidance from academic staff, and offers scope for creative experimentation, exploration and the development of the autonomy required in professional life. This culminates in the capstone research project: each learner identifies their own area of research interest, and then designs, conducts and communicates the results of an independent critical enquiry into a question relevant to the themes and concerns of the degree.

*Sustainable development* has become central to learning and teaching in higher education, reflecting the increasing wider social awareness and recognition of sustainability agendas. The University of Westminster is committed to the [United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs). Sustainability is not only about climate change and other environmental questions, but also encompasses a broader range of goals and aspirations to improve social justice, poverty, health, and education at local and global levels. Sustainability agendas offer new lenses through which to view the relationships between social, cultural, economic, and environmental challenges, which makes them **highly relevant to the study of media and communication**. [UNESCO has published resources for educators](#) developing learning objectives around sustainable development. These outline eight core competencies that higher education should enable learners to develop, in order to progress sustainability objectives. These competencies can be understood as [ways of thinking, ways of practicing, and ways of being](#). **This course develops learners' knowledge and skills in these competencies, including:**

**Critical thinking** involves enabling and challenging learners to ask difficult questions, to reflect on their own values and actions, and to take positions in debates. These skills are developed in this degree through engagement with current debates in the field, and through engagement with a broad range of academic literature and with media texts of all kinds.

**Collaborative skills** are built in this course through academic and practical learning and through assessments that develop problem-solving, creativity, and interpersonal awareness and understanding.

**Normative awareness** is developed in this degree through reflective analysis of individual and social communication, and through both recognition of the nature of social, cultural, and political structures and of the capacity to challenge them. Learners are challenged to understand not just how social media work, but also how they might also work in alternative ways.

## Teaching methods

Teaching methods on the course include:

**Lectures:** These are designed to give learners a general overview of each week's topic. Lectures identify the most important relevant ideas, and invite learners to explore these further through their reading, and later through assignments. Some modules use a 'Flipped Classroom' approach, through which lecture content is made available in different ways in advance of each week's class, allowing more time for learners to engage with and reflect upon the material before discussing it in seminars or workshops.

**Seminars:** These are designed to encourage learners to discuss a topic, based on the lecture material and on their reading. Seminars involve a wide range of discussion activities. Sometimes individual learners may be asked to introduce a specific topic in a seminar; sometimes learners may be asked to collaborate in group tasks or presentations.

**Workshops:** Some modules involve creative or practical sessions in which learners work both individually and in groups, under the supervision of teaching staff, to develop work-in-progress.

**Individual reading:** Guided reading is an essential element of this degree. A list of recommended reading for each topic will be provided for each module, and learners are expected to demonstrate engagement with this reading both in class and in their assignments.

**Presentations:** These offer learners experience in presenting ideas and arguments clearly, concisely and persuasively. Such assignments develop essential skills for communicating in a range of professional environments, including debate and discussion, asking and responding to questions, creating meaningful visual aids, and engaging different kinds of audience.

**Social media as learning spaces:** Some core modules make extensive use of social media platforms as learning and teaching spaces, with learners encouraged to create content that reflects on ideas from their readings and lecture materials.

## Assessment methods

All assignments should be understood as learning opportunities and learning experiences, rather than as tests. There are no exams. Learners produce a diverse range of coursework for assessment, which may vary depending on the option modules selected and on the learner's chosen approach to the final major project. Assessment types on the degree include the creation of social media content, learning journals, presentations, essays, branding and content campaign materials, reports, and group and individual creative projects such as podcasts.

Modules may include a piece of formative assessment. Learners receive feedback on this, but the assessment does not count towards their overall marks for the module. Rather, the purpose is to help them to learn and prepare for those assignments whose marks do count. Formative assessment is assessment *for* learning. Each module will also include between one and three pieces of summative assessment. Learners will receive feedback on this and the assessment will count towards their overall marks for the module. This is assessment *of* learning.

Graduate Attribute	Evident in Course Outcomes
Critical and creative thinker	001, 002, 003, 004, 005, 006, 007, 010
Literate and effective communicator	002, 004, 005, 006, 007, 009, 010
Entrepreneurial	008, 010
Global in outlook and engaged in communities	001, 002, 009, 010
Socially, ethically and environmentally aware	001, 002, 010

## Course Structure

This section shows the core and option modules available as part of the course and their credit value. Full-time Postgraduate students study 180 credits per year. Additional free text information on the choices may also be included, for example where students must choose one of two modules.. Course structures can be subject to change each academic year following feedback from a variety of sources.

## Modules

### Level 7

Full-time students for the degree of MA Social Media and Digital Communication will complete 180 credits in one year.

Part-time students will complete 80 credits in their first year, and 100 in their second:

Year 1: *Social Media* and *Understanding Media* and *Content Creation and Campaigns* and one optional 20-credit module.

Year 2: *Doing Media Research* and one optional 20-credit module, and the *Advanced Independent Study (Dissertation or Professional Project)* module.

For the award of the Postgraduate Diploma in Social Media and Digital Communication, students will complete 120 credits, including a minimum of 80 credits from core modules.

For the award of the Postgraduate Certificate in Social Media and Digital Communication, students will complete 60 credits, including a minimum of 40 credits from core modules.

Module Code	Module Title	Status	PT Year (where applicable)	UK credit	ECTS
7MEDS020W	Content Creation and Campaigns	Core	1	20	10
7MEDS010W	Social Media	Core	1	20	10
7MEDS027W	Understanding Media: Questions, Theory, Practice	Core	1	20	10
7MEDS019W	Advanced Independent Study (Dissertation or Professional Project)	Core	2	60	30
7MEDS022W	Doing Media Research: Methods, Evidence, Ethics	Core	2	20	10
7BUIS031W	Artificial Intelligence and Society	Option		20	10
7JRN029W	Digital Audiences and Influencer Strategy	Option		20	10
7JRN003W	Documentary Journalism	Option		20	10
7COMM006W	Media Audiences in the Digital Age	Option		20	10
7MEDS015W	Media, Activism and Politics	Option		20	10
7INME008W	Podcast Production	Option		20	10
7MEDS005W	Political Economy of Communication	Option		20	10

Please note: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year. In addition, timetabling and limited spaces may mean you cannot register for your first choice of option modules.

### Professional body accreditation or other external references

N/A

## Course management

The MA Social Media and Digital Communication is taught in the College of Design, Creative and Digital Industries. It is based in the Westminster School of Media and Communication. The management structure supporting the course is as follows:

**Head of College:** holds overall responsibility for the course and for the other courses run in the College.

**Head of School:** holds academic responsibility for the course and for other courses run within the School.

The **Course Leader** is responsible for the day to day running and overall management of the course and development of the curriculum, and for:

- Admissions
- Approving students' programme of study
- Organisation of tutorial and supervisory support and pastoral care
- Co-ordination of marks for assessment boards
- General management of the course

The **Course Team** reviews and develops the course and sets the framework for the above procedures, in which all members of course team participate.

**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.

## Academic regulations

The current Handbook of Academic Regulations is available at [westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations](http://westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations).

Course specific regulations apply to some courses.

## 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 and additional support available. You will be provided with a Course Handbook, which provides detailed information about the course. Each course has a course leader or equivalent. 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 utilises 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 <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/studies/your-student-journey/when-you-arrive/blackboard>

The Academic Learning Development Centre supports students in developing the skills required for higher education. In addition to online resources in Blackboard, students can also attend Study Skills workshops and schedule one-to-one appointments. Further information on the Academic Learning Development Centre can be found at [westminster.ac.uk/academic-learning-development](http://westminster.ac.uk/academic-learning-development).

Learning support includes our libraries, each of which holds a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at that site. Students 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.

## Support Services

The University of Westminster's Student and Academic Services department provides a range of advice and guidance. Further information on the advice available to students can be found at <https://www.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 <https://www.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. University Panels normally include internal peers from

the University, academic(s) from another university, a representative from industry and a Student Advisor.

The course is also monitored annually by the College to ensure it is running effectively and that any issues that might affect the student experience have been appropriately addressed. Staff will consider evidence from various sources, including student surveys, student progression and achievement, and reports from external examiners, to evaluate the effectiveness of the course and make necessary changes.

Periodic reviews are also conducted to ensure that the curriculum remains up-to-date and that the skills acquired on the course continue to be relevant to employers. Representative students meet with a panel to provide feedback on their experiences. Student feedback from previous years is also part of the evidence used to assess the course's performance.

## **How do we act on student feedback?**

Student feedback is important to the University, and student views are taken seriously. Student feedback is collected in various ways.

- Through student engagement activities at the course and 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 for each module. The feedback from this will inform the module leader on the effectiveness of the module and highlight areas that could be improved.
- Final-year undergraduate students will be asked to complete the National Student Survey, which helps inform the national university league tables. Postgraduate students will be asked to complete the Postgraduate Taught Survey (PTES).

This programme specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a student may reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if they take full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. This specification is supplemented by the Course Handbook, Module proforma and Module Handbooks provided to students. Copyright in this document belongs to the University of Westminster. All rights are reserved. This document is for personal use only and may not be reproduced or used for any other purpose, either in whole or in part, without the prior written consent of the University of Westminster. All copies of this document must incorporate this Copyright Notice – 2025©