MRes Media and Communications
Programme Specification

Awarding Institution:

University of London (Interim Exit Awards made by Goldsmiths' College)

Teaching Institution: Goldsmiths, University of London

Name of Final Award and Programme Title: MRes Media and Communications

Name of Interim Exit Award(s): Not applicable

Duration of Programme: 1 year full-time or 2 years part-time

UCAS Code(s): Not applicable

HECoS Code(s): (100444) Media and Communication Studies

QAA Benchmark Group: Not applicable

FHEQ Level of Award: Level 7

Programme accredited by: Not applicable

Date Programme Specification last updated/approved: August 2017

Home Department: Media, Communications and Cultural Studies

Department(s) which will also be involved in teaching part of the programme:

Not applicable

Programme overview

The Master of Research (MRes) degree prepares you for study at MPhil/PhD level – we welcome proposals for research in any area connected with media, communications, and cultural theory and practice.

The programme combines taught modules in research methodology with a 20,000-word dissertation, and offers advanced-level training to appropriately qualified students.

We give priority to those with proposals for research within the areas of interest of our staff.

Programme entry requirements

You will need to demonstrate a commitment to thinking reflexively and critically about the workings of contemporary media forms. There is no requirement for you to have any practical experience of working in the media, though if you do have this it can be to your advantage.

You will normally hold the equivalent of a good upper-second in the humanities or the social sciences and (if a non-native speaker) possess IELTS of 7.0, or equivalent. You will need to provide a very clear outline of your research project. It is up to you to convince the admissions panel that you are prepared for intensive, individual research. We will also look carefully at the quality of any undergraduate research, such as dissertations.

Aims of the programme

This programme is tailor-made for each individual student, and it is based on the student's individual research. It is only appropriate for students who have already -- when they apply -- a fully worked out research project, and who possess from the start a sense of the wider conceptual field in which their chosen topic of research falls.

The programme offers students in this situation the chance to pursue their individual research, in a topic of their choosing, at a postgraduate level. It gives students the opportunity to develop appropriate research skills. The exact conceptual and methodological direction of the research must initially come from the student, though this will be developed and reworked in discussion with the personal supervisor.

Areas of research can be drawn from a very wide remit, including the full range of media and cultural forms of modern societies: they can be contemporary or historical; theoretical or empirical; humanities-based or more social-sciences-based. They do not have to be restricted to particular national forms. So long as they are conceptually coherent, and practicable in their aims and methods, they can be considered - subject only to the in-house expertise of staff.

The programme offers knowledge and skills specific to the study of the media. Its broadly conceived ambit, however, allows you to engage in critical thought in its widest meanings, which is appropriate not only for future employment in the media industries but in many cognate areas of employment as well.

What you will be expected to achieve

The programme's subject-specific learning outcomes require you to think critically about a range of issues concerning the media, understood in the widest sense, and to be able to justify your views intellectually and theoretically. This in turn helps you to make your own the existing intellectual traditions which organise the current field of media studies. In addition, you will also develop transferable skills necessary for employment in a variety of different contexts, described by the Quality Assurance Agency as 'the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility, decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations, and the

independent learning ability required for continuing professional development'. Most of all, you will learn to produce high quality research under pressure, by working independently.

Knowledge and understanding

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A1	Understand the defining intellectual traditions of your field of media and communication studies, in such a way that you can produce your own 'map' of the field.	Methods of Cultural Analysis and individual supervision
A2	Grasp and apply the broad methodological issues which are necessary for conducting research in the field.	Methods of Cultural Analysis and individual supervision
A3	Understand at the highest level the intellectual issues arising from your own research specialism.	Methods of Cultural Analysis and individual supervision

Cognitive and thinking skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
B1	The ability to prepare and deliver coherent, persuasive and well-constructed academic argument in your tutorials, essays and research dissertation.	Methods of Cultural Analysis and individual supervision
B2	The ability to think critically throughout your exploration of the field.	Methods of Cultural Analysis and individual supervision

Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C1	Demonstrate an advanced level of conceptual, methodological and empirical knowledge appropriate for a sustained piece of original research in the field.	Dissertation supervision

Transferable skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D1	The ability to locate, retrieve and critically evaluate appropriate forms of information from a range of electronic, paper-based or other sources.	Dissertation supervision
D2	The ability to work under pressure and to deadline, managing a complex array of competing demands.	Dissertation supervision
D3	The ability to debate issues and viewpoints with insight and understanding.	Dissertation supervision
D4	The ability to work resourcefully and independently.	Dissertation supervision

How you will learn

From the outset, you are guided to work independently and to think through the intellectual issues for yourself. Through tutorials with your supervisor your progress is carefully monitored, to make sure that you are making progress towards the achievement of the outcomes.

Different kinds of theoretical input and different kinds of information-retrieval are required for each part of your programme. In consultation with your supervisor, you are guided to the most appropriate intellectual approaches, and to the most appropriate archives, libraries or electronic sources.

In preparing for the dissertation, you receive intensive one-to-one tutoring over a prolonged period, which allows you to devise your own original contribution to the field. Most, if not all of the learning outcomes – from your capacity to map for yourself the field, to retrieve and evaluate information, to work to deadline – are condensed and applied in the process of preparing and delivering the dissertation with the guidance of your supervisor.

How you will be assessed

Formal assessment is all by writing, though with a mix of different forms. The assessment is demanding. Assessment of this sort tests not only your intellectual knowledge, but your capacity to work under pressure, and to think independently and resourcefully.

You are required to write two 5,000 - 6,000 word essays, which judge not only your broad grasp of the field, but also your ability to construct coherent written arguments. One of these will be linked to the overall Masters module in Methods of Cultural Analysis. The exact theme and title will be decided in discussion between you and your supervisor. The second essay will be methodological, but arising more directly from your own specialist field of research. Again, this will be decided between you and your supervisor.

Your dissertation represents the main part of the programme. It is a long piece of work - 20,000 words, and requires very careful planning, and a huge input of individual research. Your aim is to produce an original piece of intellectual inquiry.

Marking criteria

Mark	Descriptor	Specific Marking Criteria
80-100%	Distinction (Outstanding/ Exceptional)	A mark of 80-100% is awarded when a candidate satisfies the requirements for a distinction, but to an outstanding degree. Such work may be of publishable quality and contribution to debate within the field.
70-79%	Distinction	A mark of 70-79% is awarded when the essay demonstrates the application of appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the learning outcomes of the module to a very effective extent. The work will show evidence of extensive relevant reading and an impressive grasp of current major issues in the field. This knowledge will have been reviewed critically with insight and independence of thought. Arguments and the presentation of evidence will demonstrate sophisticated reasoning, with clear awareness of issues of methodology and evidence, and be particularly clear, well-focused and cogent. A mark of 80% or higher is awarded when a candidate satisfies the requirements for a distinction, but to an outstanding degree. Such work may be of publishable quality, and will be a significant contribution to debate within the field.
60-69%	Merit	A mark of 60-69% is awarded when candidates demonstrate the application of appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the module learning outcomes to an effective extent. The essay will show consistency and fluency in discussing and evaluating evidence and theories drawn from a wide range of sources. They will demonstrate an ability to relate this reading to their topic, and will clearly have understood and assimilated the relevant literature.

Mark	Descriptor	Specific Marking Criteria
50-59%	Pass	A mark of 50-59% is awarded when the essay demonstrates the application of appropriate knowledge, understandings and skills specified in the learning outcomes of the module to a satisfactory extent. There is clear evidence of knowledge and understanding, but where there may be limited development of ideas, critical comment or methodology. Within these limitations there will be indication that the candidate has grasped fundamental concepts and procedures in the field.
30-49%	Fail	A mark of 30-49% is awarded when the candidate demonstrates an unsatisfactory application of appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the Learning Outcomes of the module.
10-29%	Bad fail	A mark of 10-29% is awarded when the assessed work demonstrates a significant overall failure to achieve the Learning Outcomes, and where there is no evidence of recognition of the question nor of how it might be responded to.
1-9%	Very bad fail	A submission that does not even attempt to address the specified learning outcomes.
0%	Non submission or plagiarised	A categorical mark representing either the failure to submit an assessment or a mark assigned for a plagiarised assessment.

How the programme is structured

You are required to meet regularly with your supervisor.

You are required to attend all the lectures and seminars for the Methods of Cultural Analysis. This is taught by a mix of lecture, seminar, student-workshop and tutorial. It does not aim to deliver the technical knowledge of the nuts-and-bolts of research. These practical knowledges are so diverse that we have found it more worthwhile to discuss these individually with students, on a one-to-one basis, tailoring the particular research requirements to each individual dissertation. But the Methods module does, at a slightly higher level of generality, encourage you to think critically and actively about the manner in which theoretical arguments are constructed.

You are advised to attend whatever MA classes are close to your own specialism, though you are not required to be formally assessed on any of these modules.

Full-time students take the programme over one calendar year, part-time students over two years.

There are three possible results for students on the programme – fail, pass or distinction. In order to pass, you are required to achieve 50% or above in all three units of assessment. To achieve a distinction, you must achieve an overall result of 70% or higher.

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term
Methods of Cultural Analysis	MC71066A	30	7	Compulsory	1
Research Methods Essay	MC71043A	30	7	Compulsory	2
You are advised to attend whatever MA classes are close to your own specialism, though you are not required to be formally assessed on any of these modules	N/A	N/A	7	Optional	1-2
Dissertation	MC71046A	120	7	Compulsory	1,2 & 3

Academic support

Support for learning and wellbeing is provided in a number of ways by departments and College support services who work collaboratively to ensure students get the right help to reach their best potential both academically and personally.

All students are allocated a Personal Tutor (one in each department for joint programmes) who has overall responsibility for their individual progress and welfare. Personal Tutors meet with their student at least twice a year either face-to-face, as part of a group and/or electronically. The first meeting normally takes place within the first few weeks of the autumn term. Personal Tutors are also available to students throughout the year of study. These meetings aim to discuss progress on modules, discussion of the academic discipline and reports from previous years if available (for continuing students). This provides an opportunity for progress, attendance and assessment marks to be reviewed and an informed discussion to take place about how to strengthen individual learning and success.

All students are also allocated a Senior Tutor to enable them to speak to an experienced academic member of staff about any issues which are negatively impacting their academic study and which are beyond the normal scope of issues handled by Programme Convenors and Personal Tutors.

Students are provided with information about learning resources, the [Library](#) and information available on [Learn.gold (VLE)](#) so that they have access to department/ programme handbooks, programme information and support related information and guidance.

Taught sessions and lectures provide overviews of themes, which students are encouraged to complement with intensive reading for presentation and discussion with peers at seminars. Assessments build on lectures and seminars so students are expected to attend all taught sessions to build knowledge and their own understanding of their chosen discipline.

All assessed work is accompanied by some form of feedback to ensure that students' work is on the right track. It may come in a variety of forms ranging from written comments on a marked essay to oral and written feedback on developing projects and practice as they attend workshops.

Students may be referred to specialist student services by department staff or they may access support services independently. Information about support services is provided on the [Goldsmiths website](#) and for new students through new starter information and induction/Welcome Week. Any support recommendations that are made are agreed with the student and communicated to the department so that adjustments to learning and teaching are able to be implemented at a department level and students can be reassured that arrangements are in place. Opportunities are provided for students to review their support arrangements should their circumstances change. The [Disability](#) and [Wellbeing](#) Services maintain caseloads of students and provide on-going support.

The [Careers Service](#) provides central support for skills enhancement, running [The Gold Award](#) scheme and other co-curricular activities that are accredited via the Higher Education Achievement Report ([HEAR](#)).

The [Academic Skills Centre](#) works with academic departments offering bespoke academic literacy sessions. It also provides a programme of academic skills workshops and one-to-one provision for students throughout the year.

Links with employers, placement opportunities and career prospects

Not applicable.

The requirements of a Goldsmiths degree

All taught postgraduate degrees have a minimum total value of 180 credits and involve one calendar year of full-time study. Some programmes may extend over more than one calendar year and, when this is the case, they have a higher total credit value. Programmes are composed of individual modules, each of which has its own credit value. Part-time students normally take modules to the value of 90 credits each year. If a programme has a part-time pathway, the structure will be set out in the section "How the programme is structured" above. Normally, all modules are at level 7 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

More detailed information about the structure and requirements of a Goldsmiths degree is provided in the [Goldsmiths Qualifications and Credit Framework](#).

Modules

Modules are defined as:

- "Optional" – which can be chosen from a group of modules
- "Compulsory" – which must be taken as part of the degree

Progression

Some programmes may require students to pass specific modules prior to completion of the dissertation/major project (or equivalent). Additionally, where a programme of study extends beyond one calendar year, students may be required to pass specific modules in their first year of study before progressing to the second year. Where this is the case, these requirements will be set out in this Programme Specification.

Award of the degree

In order to graduate, students must successfully complete all modules specified for the programme, as set out within the section "How the programme is structured" above.

Classification

Final degree classification is calculated on the basis of a student's mean average mark (based on credit value) across all modules on the programme.

Masters degrees are awarded with the following classifications:

Distinction – 70%+
Merit – 60-69%
Pass – 50-59%

More detail on the [calculation of the final classification](#) is on our website.

Interim exit awards

Some programmes incorporate interim exit points of Postgraduate Certificate and/or Postgraduate Diploma, which may be awarded on the successful completion of modules to the minimum value of 60 credits or 120 credits respectively. The awards are made without classification.

When these awards are incorporated within the programme, the relevant learning outcomes and module requirements will be set out within the "What you will be expected to achieve" section above.

The above information is intended as a guide, with more detailed information available in the [Goldsmiths Academic Manual](#).

Programme-specific rules and facts

General programme costs

In addition to your tuition fees, you will be responsible for meeting standard costs associated with your study. Find out more information at [gold.ac.uk/programme-costs](#).

Specific programme costs

Not applicable.

How teaching quality will be monitored

Goldsmiths employs a number of methods to ensure and enhance the quality of learning and teaching on its programmes.

Programmes and modules are formally approved against national standards and are monitored throughout the year, such as in departmental committees, a variety of student feedback mechanisms and through the completion of module evaluation questionnaires.

Every programme has at least one External Examiner who reviews comments annually on the standards of awards and student achievement. External Examiner(s) attend Boards of Examiners meetings and submit an annual written report.

Modules, programmes and/or departments are also subject to annual and periodic review internally, as well as periodic external scrutiny.

Quality assurance processes aim to ensure Goldsmiths' academic provision remains current, that the procedures to maintain the standards of the awards are working effectively and the quality of the learning opportunities and information provided to students and applicants is appropriate.

Detailed information on all these procedures are published on the [Quality Office web pages](#).