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**Programme Specification**

**Title of Course: MA Media & Communication**

**Date Specification Produced: November 2012**

**Date Specification Last Revised: March 2021**

This Programme Specification is designed for prospective students, current students, academic staff and employers. It provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the intended learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if they take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the teaching, learning and assessment methods, learning outcomes and content of each module can be found in the Course Handbook on Canvas and in individual Module Descriptors.

**SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION**

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| **Title:** | MA Media & Communication |
| **Awarding Institution:** | Kingston University |
| **Teaching Institution:** | Kingston University |
| **Location:** | Penrhyn Road |
| **Programme Accredited by:** | N/A |

**SECTION2: THE PROGRAMME**

1. **Programme Introduction**

Media is becoming central to all our communication practices, from the way we understand or respond to one another, to the way we organise and understand our individual and communal experiences, and institutions socially, politically and economically. The postgraduate programme in Media and Communications is designed to examine critically mass and new media technologies, and to explore the ways in which they can facilitate or constrain the way we communicate with each other. In so doing it provides students with the knowledge and skills necessary to develop careers in media professions and the wider cultural industries.

Core modules show how media theory can be used to critically interrogate the impact of media technologies, which are continuously changing. The curriculum is revised each year to reflect emerging trends and debates concerning how we communicate through media locally, nationally and globally. The topicality of the themes studied on the course is examined against the historical background of mass and new media technologies, theories and practices. From here students broaden their formations in areas such as freedom of speech and censorship, political communication, film and video aesthetics, social media, or regulation of various media industries, as well as a variety of special topics modules offered each academic year. The wide range of options and the theoretical grounding through the core modules enable students to acquire critical and up-to-date knowledge of the dynamics and practices of media production and consumption that remains essential to understanding contemporary modern society in local and global contexts. Career workshops embedded in the teaching schedule for core modules, as well as extracurricular talks with industry professionals, also encourage students to arrange and pursue individual placements in media and cultural industries.

The course includes an integrated work placement or placements, which enables students to further develop their professional skills and enhance their employability. From the start of the course, students will begin to work to secure (a) placement(s) suitable for their course and career, supported and advised by the Careers and Employability Services team and the Professional Placement Module Leader. Workshops are provided on CV creation, interview techniques and placement searching, with drop-in sessions to provide additional support. In order to take the Professional Placement module, students need to have arranged a placement, approved by the Course Leader, by the end the preceding teaching block. Students undertake the placement either before the final module, or following the completion of the final module. During the placement students will be supervised (online) by a tutor who, if possible, will visit during the placement. Depending on the location of the placement, meetings might take place face-to-face or via video conferencing platforms. The placement module will make use of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Canvas for communication and dissemination of information between students and staff as well as making online learning materials available. Students will be required to keep a critical diary of the tasks and duties undertaken during their placement, to provide a framework for a reflective essay and work placement report, which is submitted for assessment at the end of the placement. They will also assemble and collate samples of work and evidence of achievement produced during their placement which will also be submitted for assessment. Placement providers will be asked to appraise the students’ work and this feedback will be made available to the student. The placement module will be assessed on a pass/fail basis.

This integrated placement(s) provides students with a valuable opportunity to apply and develop their knowledge and skills in media and communication professions, enabling them to deepen their knowledge of the industry, develop their self-confidence, and strengthen their CV. Students undertaking placement activities are in a stronger position to gain the skills and experience which are valued by employers.

1. **Aims of the Programme**

The main aims of the MA are to:

* Provide students with a broad knowledge and understanding of key theories, concepts and debates regarding media and communication practices
* Develop the critical and analytical skills necessary to examine media forms and their effect on societal, cultural and political spheres
* Enhance students’ ability to relate theories and concepts to media practices
* Enable students to reflect critically, and to an advanced level, on their own engagement with media
* Enable students to identify, locate and critically appraise primary and secondary sources as a basis for independent research
* Enable students to undertake a sustained piece of independent research project (in the form of a traditional dissertation or a practice-based project with a written component) in media and communication at an advanced level
* To equip students with the skills and knowledge to compete successfully for employment in the media and cultural industries
* The 2-year programme with integrated placement(s) also provides students with an opportunity to enhance their professional skills, preparing them for higher levels of employment, further study and lifelong learning
1. **Intended Learning Outcomes**

The programme outcomes are referenced to the QAA Master’s Degree Characteristics (2020). There is no benchmark statement relating specifically to Media and Communication at Masters Level, and the Quality Assurance Agency has no published plans to produce one in the near future. However, the QAA benchmark on Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies has been drawn on in developing the MA Media and Communication. The programme is reference to the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (2014), and relate to the typical student. The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, skills and other attributes in the following areas.

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| **Programme Learning Outcomes** |
|  | **Knowledge and Understanding****On completion of the course students will be able to:** |  | **Intellectual skills** **On completion of the course students will be able to:** |  | **Subject Practical skills** **On completion of the course students will be able to:** |
| A1 | Demonstrate in-depth knowledge and understanding of key theories, concepts and debates regarding mass and new media and communication practices | B1 | Identify, locate and critically appraise secondary and primary sources as a basis for independent research | C1 | Construct a coherent and sophisticated argument and present it in oral, practical, and written form |
| A2 | Deploy critical and analytical skills relating to the examination of the mass and new media and its effect on societal, cultural and political spheres | B2 | Reflect critically on their own engagement with media and communication | C2 | Conduct traditional and practice-based research at an advanced level |
| A3 | Apply theories and concepts to media and communication practices | B3 | Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the research skills necessary to undertake a sustained piece of independent research including the practice-based option in media and communication at an advanced level | C3 | Use appropriate ICT to present effectively text, data and images |
| A4 | Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the research skills necessary to undertake a sustained piece of independent research or a practice-based project in media and communication at an advanced level | B4 | Demonstrate the critical and analytical skills relating to the examination of the media and communication and its effect on societal, cultural and political spheres | C4 | Negotiate and manage group work effectively |
| A5 | Undertake a sustained piece of independent research (standard or practice-based dissertation) in media and communication at an advanced level | B5 | Apply media and communication theory to specific forms, contexts and interactions with old and new media | C5 | Demonstrate professional skills (including self-presentation, communication, interpersonal/teamwork, research and information literacy, numeracy, time-management and project-planning, management and leadership skills, and ethical practice). |

In addition to the programme learning outcomes identified overleaf, the programme of study defined in this programme specification will allow students to develop a range of Key Skills as follows:

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| **Key Skills** |
| **Self-Awareness Skills** | **Communication Skills** | **Interpersonal Skills** | **Research and information Literacy Skills** | **Numeracy Skills** | **Management & Leadership Skills** | **Creativity and Problem Solving Skills** |
| Take responsibility for own learning and plan for and record own personal development | Express ideas clearly and unambiguously in writing and the spoken work | Work well with others in a group or team | Search for and select relevant sources of information | Collect data from primary and secondary sources and use appropriate methods to manipulate and analyse this data | Determine the scope of a task (or project) | Apply scientific and other knowledge to analyse and evaluate information and data and to find solutions to problems |
| Recognise own academic strengths and weaknesses, reflect on performance and progress and respond to feedback | Present, challenge and defend ideas and results effectively orally and in writing | Work flexibly and respond to change | Critically evaluate information and use it appropriately | Present and record data in appropriate formats | Identify resources needed to undertake the task (or project) and to schedule and manage the resources | Work with complex ideas and justify judgements made through effective use of evidence |
| Organise self effectively, agreeing and setting realistic targets, accessing support where appropriate and managing time to achieve targets | Actively listen and respond appropriately to ideas of others | Discuss and debate with others and make concession to reach agreement | Apply the ethical and legal requirements in both the access and use of information | Interpret and evaluate data to inform and justify arguments | Evidence ability to successfully complete and evaluate a task (or project), revising the plan where necessary |  |
| Work effectively with limited supervision in unfamiliar contexts |  | Give, accept and respond to constructive feedback | Accurately cite and reference information sources | Be aware of issues of selection, accuracy and uncertainty in the collection and analysis of data | Motivate and direct others to enable an effective contribution from all participants |  |
|  |  | Show sensitivity and respect for diverse values and beliefs | Use software and IT technology as appropriate |  |  |  |

1. **Entry Requirements**

The minimum entry qualifications for the programme are:

A minimum of a Lower Second Class degree in a Humanities or Social Science subject, or equivalent.

A minimum IELTS score of 6.5, or equivalent is required for those for whom English is not their first language.

1. **Programme Structure**

This programme is offered in full-time, part-time mode and ‘with Professional Placement’ mode, and leads to the award of MA Media and Communication. Intake is normally in September.

**E1. Professional and Statutory Regulatory Bodies**

None.

**E2. Work-based learning**

Work placement is an integral part of the 2-year programme and students will receive support from the award-winning Careers and Employability Services team.

While it is the responsibility of individual students to secure appropriate placements, the Careers and Employability Services team offers each student support at all stages of the application process, including writing CVs, completing application forms, participating in mock interviews, assessment centre activities and psychometric tests. Sourcing and applying for placement(s) gives students the opportunity to experience a competitive job application process.

The experience of the work placement period enables students to apply their learning in the professional work environment, to reflect upon their own personal experience of working in an applied setting, to focus on aspects of this experience that they can clearly relate to their prior learning, and to evaluate the relationships between academic skills and employers’ expectations. Students will be assessed during and at the end of this period, through a portfolio of work, which will be marked as pass/fail.

**E3. Outline Programme Structure**

This course is part of the University’s Postgraduate Regulations. Courses in the PG Regulations are made up of modules that are designated at level 7 (a small amount of level 6 credit may occasionally contribute to a postgraduate course). Single modules in the framework are valued at 30 credits and the course may contain a number of multiple modules. The minimum requirement for a Postgraduate Certificate is 60 credits, for a Postgraduate Diploma 120 credits, and a Masters degree 180 credits. In some instances the Certificate or Diploma may be the final award and Certificates and Diplomas may be offered to students who only complete specified parts of a Masters degree.

Students on the 2-year programme (with integrated placement) must complete all modules except the final ‘capstone project’ module, by the end of TB2, and then work in their placement(s) for a maximum of 12 months. The student should confirm that their placement opportunity is available by the end of May, and the course team will confirm whether this is acceptable within two weeks. Students on placement(s) must complete a portfolio assessment which includes a reflection on how they have applied the skills they have developed during the previous year, within a professional working environment.

A comprehensive list of all possible options is provided here. The option list in any given year will be carefully constructed to ensure that the course curriculum is coherent, enabling students to achieve the programme learning outcomes via their chosen selection of modules.

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| **Level 7** |
| **Compulsory modules** | **Module code** | **Credit****Value** | **Level** | **Teaching Block** |
| From Mass Media to New Media: Theories, Approaches, Applications | MD7001 | 30 | 7 | TB1 & TB2 |
| Media and Globalisation | MD7005 | 30 | 7 | TB1 & TB2 |
| Standard or practice-based Dissertation\* | MD7004 | 60 | 7 | TB2àSept |
| **Option modules** |
| Freedom, Censorship and Subversion | MD7003 | 30 | 7 | TB2 |
| \*Special Study: Multi-Platform Political Communication | MD6015 | 30 | 6 | TB1 & TB2 |
| \* Television Production | MD6017 | 30 | 6 | TB1 & TB2 |
| \*Special Study: Art/ Media Management and Production | MD6016 | 30 | 6 | TB1 & TB2 |
| \*Issues in Media & Culture | MD6001 | 30 | 6 | TB1 & TB2 |
| Professional Placement | HU7100 | 120 | 7 | TB3 (Yr 1) TB1&TB2 (Yr 2) |

Modules marked with an asterisk are Level 6 modules and students may not choose more than ONE of these. Modules may be closed if demand exceeds available spaces or closed if demand is insufficient.

Students exiting the programme with 60 credits are eligible for the award of PgCert. in Media & Communication .

Students exiting the programme with 120 credits are eligible for the award of PgDip. in Media & Communication.

1. **Principles of Teaching Learning and Assessment**

The teaching and learning strategy MA in Media and Communication has been designed to support a curriculum which aims to equip students with an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the main debates, methods and approaches in the field, and to enable students to apply this knowledge to their critical analysis of everyday media and communication.

In general, modules are taught through a combination of lectures/ seminars/ workshops. Lectures will present an overview of a given topic area, highlighting key concepts, issues and debates. They will draw on a range of academic disciplines, applying a variety of methodologies and perspectives to the consideration of critical issues and problems. Particular emphasis is given to the way the seminars are organised, especially in the core modules, to fully encourage students to participate and discuss detailed content. They will be partly initiated by the tutor, but mostly student led. In addition to the discussions, many of the seminars (in particular those in the core theory module) involve group presentations where students will interrogate the usability of theoretical frameworks introduced in the readings and lectures, by applying these to worked examples and topical case studies. These are designed to enable students to further develop their oral communication skills.

Feedback from presentations will form an essential part of the teaching and learning strategy. Students will receive documented feedback for their presentations, which will integrate critical peer review into students’ learning experience. It will also support students’ learning experience by providing formative feedback to prepare students for their written projects.

Workshops are designed to enable students to work in groups intensively, in the company of class tutors, to interact as a group to pool ideas and use their problem solving skills to analyse case studies.

In seminars, presentations and workshops students will be encouraged to draw on their personal or professional experience. Students participating in the course are likely to come from a diversity of cultural, academic, and professional backgrounds and will, therefore, be able to share their insights into different media systems and critically interrogate the applicability of dominant approaches to media studies. The MA Media and Communication teaching team regards the diversity of student experience as a strong teaching resource for other students. Workshops, seminars and group sessions/presentations will provide opportunities for collaborative work, where they can draw on each other's knowledge, understanding and skills.

In addition to the strategies outlined above, the MA will make use of:

* Blended learning methods in modules, including online support and interaction (such as the delivery of course notes and supplementary material, or plenary discussions in on-line discussion fora to facilitate collaborative work)
* Regular research seminars where experts with specialist knowledge or expertise in the field will give focused talks relevant to the taught modules to enhance and contextualise the curriculum (guest lectures, masterclasses, etc.)
* Directed reading and research, including use of on-line data, which the team will want to monitor in each module on a weekly basis. The details of required readings will be set in detailed module guides distributed at the start of each module.
* A strong emphasis on independent learning, not only in terms of expectations about the amount and kind of learning that needs to take place outside the classroom, but also in terms of research.
* Extracurricular activities organised regularly both in the university or outside (such as debates, panels, film viewings or outings) will supplement the learning experience of students. The overall aim is to provide a coherent and integrated student experience with a fruitful and stimulating mix of different learning opportunities.
* LinkedIn Learning – all courses based in the Kingston School of Art offer students free access to the online video tutorial platform LinkedIn Learning. This provides a wide range of subjects to choose from, many with downloadable exercise files, including software tutorials covering photography, graphics, web design, audio and music, CAD and Microsoft Office software, as well as courses on Business and Management skills. Some of these are embedded in the curriculum and offer additional self-paced learning, others may be taken at will by students wishing to broaden their employability skills in other areas.

Modules are assessed through a variety of formats, such as critical essays, oral presentations, case-studies, briefing reports, practical projects, research planning, audio-visual essays, and practical research exercises linked to the learning outcomes of particular modules. In general, the written work will form the summative assessment element for the modules. Oral work (i.e. presentations) will be both summative and formative, through the use of feedback to help them improve their critique, and their ability to synthesise information and present arguments succinctly and convincingly. The assessment strategies used in this course are mapped appropriately against the teaching and learning strategy. They are designed to assess the development of students’ knowledge and understanding and skills in a variety of ways, and also to offer a set of stimulating challenges, some of which reflect demands likely to be experienced in the workplace. A major element of the master’s course is the (standard or practice-based) dissertation, which will demonstrate their ability to produce a sustained piece of writing, reflection on practice, handling empirical material from a variety of sources within a sophisticated conceptual and theoretical framework.

1. **Support for Students and their Learning**

Students are supported by:

* A Module Leader for each module
* A Course Leader to help students understand the programme structure
* Personal Tutors to provide academic and personal support
* A placement tutor to give general advice on placements
* Technical support to advise students on IT and the use of software
* A designated Course Administrator
* An induction week at the beginning of each new academic session
* Staff Student Consultative Committee
* VLE/Canvas – a versatile online interactive intranet and learning environment accessible both on and off-site
* LinkedIn Learning – an online platform offering self-paced software tutorials
* An Academic Success Centre that provides academic skills support for both UG and PG students
* Student support facilities that provide advice on issues such as finance, regulations, legal matters, accommodation, international student support etc.
* A Student Achievement Officer who provides pastoral support
* Support for students with disabilities
* The Union of Kingston Students
* Careers and Employability Service
* Careers and Employability Services Team – will provide support for students prior to undertaking work placement(s).
1. **Ensuring and Enhancing the Quality of the Course**

The University has several methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of its provision. These include:

* External Examiners
* Boards of Study with student representation
* Annual Monitoring and Enhancement
* Periodic review undertaken at subject level
* Student evaluation including MEQs (module evaluation questionnaires), a PG Student Survey
* Moderation policies
* Feedback from employers
1. **Employability Statement**

The MA Media and Communication equips students with the skills for entry into a variety of media professions. Many of our alumni become professionals in the media and cultural industries, working in such sectors as government (e.g. parliamentary communication officer), PR (marketing executive for a legal firm; event manager), publishing, radio and journalism (e.g. online tablet publications editor, radio presenter, journalist).

The programme prepares students for such future careers by providing students with a critical knowledge and understanding of ongoing developments in the area of global communications, media regulation and policy, business of media and media audiences/users. It also equips students with skills that are essential in the workplace, such as presentation skills, teamwork, writing reports, reflection and self-assessment, and problem-solving skills. Oral communication skills is one core area we encourage students to develop, through student led seminar discussions to assessed group presentations using relevant audiovisual technologies (e.g. keynote, PowerPoint, Crits). Presentations are also designed to develop students’ ability to work within teams, and are accompanied by reflection and self-assessment, a further key skill required in the workplace. Finally, the second semester presentation of dissertation projects at the MA conference, helps MA Media and Communication students to enhance their verbal skills by presenting their projects in front of a large audience.

Career workshops embedded in the teaching schedule for core modules, as well as extracurricular talks with industry professionals, also encourage students to arrange and pursue individual placements in media and cultural industries. Students also benefit from a coordinated range of activities organised by the faculty’s employability coordinator and the Careers and Employability team.

The 2-year integrated work placement programme is designed to provide students with enhanced opportunities for securing professional employment at the end of their degree, providing skills and experience that employers are looking for in their work force. These are supported by the Careers and Employability Services team, providing drop-in and scheduled events to support students in the preparation of CVs, applications, and preparation for interviews and assessment centres.

1. **Approved Variants from the Postgraduate Regulations**

None

1. **Other sources of information that you may wish to consult**

Kingston University Website:

<http://www.kingston.ac.uk/postgraduate-course/media-communication-ma/>

**Development of Programme Learning Outcomes in Modules**

This map identifies where the field/course learning outcomes are **summatively** assessed across the modules for this field/course. It provides an aid to academic staff in understanding how individual modules contribute to the field/course aims, a means to help students monitor their own learning, personal and professional development as the field/course progresses and a checklist for quality assurance purposes.

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|  | **Module Code** |  | MD7001 | MD7005 | MD7004 | MD7003 | MD6015 | MD6017 | MD6016 | MD6001 | HU7100 |
| **Programme Learning Outcomes** | **Knowledge & Understanding** | A1 | S | S | S |  | S |  | S | S |  |
| A2 | S | S | S |  | S |  | S | S |  |
| A3 | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| A4 | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| A5 |  |  | S |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Intellectual Skills** | B1 | S | S | S | S | S |  | S | S |  |
| B2 |  |  | S |  | S | S | S | S |  |
| B3 | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| B4 | S | S | S | S | S |  | S | S |  |
| **Practical Skills** | C1 | S | S | S |  | S | S | S | S |  |
| C2 | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| C3 | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| C4 |  | S |  |  | S | S | S | S |  |
| C5 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | S |

**Students will be provided with formative assessment opportunities throughout the course to practise and develop their proficiency in the range of assessment methods utilised.**

**Technical Annex**

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| **Final Award(s):** | MA Media & Communication |
| **Intermediate Award(s):** | PgCert, PgDip |
| **Minimum period of registration:** | 1 year full-time, 2 years full-time (with Professional Placement); 2 years part-time |
| **Maximum period of registration:** | 2 years full-time, 3 years full-time (with Professional Placement); 4 years part-time |
| **FHEQ Level for the Final Award:** | Masters |
| **QAA Subject Benchmark:** | No benchmark statement relating specifically to Media and Communication at Masters Level |
| **Modes of Delivery:** | Full-time, Part-time and ‘with Professional Placement’ |
| **Language of Delivery:** | English |
| **Faculty:** | Kingston School of Art |
| **School:** | Arts, Culture and Communication |
| **Department:** | Journalism, Publishing and Media |
| **Course/Route Code:** | PFMCO1MCO01PFMCO1MCO99PPMCO1MCO01 |