

Programme Specification

Postgraduate Programmes

Awarding Body/Institution	University of London
Teaching Institution	Goldsmiths, University of London
Name of Final Award and Programme Title	MRes Media and Communications
Name of Interim Award(s)	N/A
Duration of Study/Period of Registration	1 year full time or 2 years part-time
UCAS Code(s)	N/A
HECos Code(s)	(100444) Media and Communication Studies
QAA Benchmark Group	N/A
FHEQ Level of Award	Level 7
Programme Accredited by	N/A
Date Programme Specification last updated/approved	August 2017
Primary Department/Institute	Media, Communications & Cultural Studies

Departments which will also be involved in teaching part of the programme
N/A

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 organize 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		Taught by the following modules
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	Theory/Methods module and individual supervision
A2	Grasp and apply the broad methodological issues which are necessary for conducting research in the field	Theory/Methods module and individual supervision
A3	Understand at the highest level the intellectual issues arising from your own research specialism.	Theory/Methods module and individual supervision

Cognitive and Thinking Skills		Taught by the following modules
B1	The ability to prepare and deliver coherent, persuasive and well constructed academic argument in your tutorials, essays and research dissertation.	Theory/Methods module and individual supervision
B2	The ability to think critically throughout your exploration of the field.	Theory/Methods module and individual supervision

Subject Specific Skills and Professional Behaviours and Attitudes		Taught by the following modules
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		Taught by the following modules
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,	Dissertation supervision

	managing a complex array of competing demands.	
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.
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.

Progression:

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. Academic Year of Study 1

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term
Methods of Cultural Analysis	MC71066A	30	7	Core	1
Research Methods Essay	MC71043A	30	7	Core	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	Core	1,2 &3

Academic support

Support for learning and wellbeing is provided in 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.

Students are allocated a personal tutor and a Senior Tutor in each department who has overall responsibility progress and welfare. Departments arrange regular communication to students in the form of mailings and meetings as well as regular progress reports and feedback on coursework and assignments. This is in addition to scheduled seminars, tutorials and lectures/workshops.

Every student is assigned a personal tutor who will meet with their student twice a year either face-to-face, as part of a group and/or electronically, the first of which normally takes place within the first few weeks of the first 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 way progress, attendance, essay/coursework/assessment marks can be reviewed, and an informed discussion can be about how to strengthen learning and success.

Students are sent information about learning resources in the Library and on the VLE so that they have access to programme handbooks, programme information and support related information and guidance. Timetables are sent in advance of the start of term so that students can begin to manage their preparation and planning.

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

In depth feedback is provided for written assignments and essays via written feedback forms and formative feedback with module tutors/leads is provided to ensure that students' work is on the right track. Feedback comes in many forms and not only as a result of written comments on a marked essay. Students are given feedback on developing projects and practice as they attend workshops and placements.

Students may be referred to specialist student services by department staff or they may access support

services independently. Information about support services is clearly provided on the College 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 Inclusion and Learning Support and Wellbeing Teams maintain case loads 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 throughout the year, which students can access directly at [gold.ac.uk/asc/](https://www.gold.ac.uk/asc/).

Links with employers, placement opportunities and career prospects

Programme costs

General Costs

In addition to your tuition fees, you will be responsible for meeting standard costs associated with your study. Find out more information here: <https://www.gold.ac.uk/programme-costs>

The requirements of a Goldsmiths degree

Master's Degrees

All Master's degrees at Goldsmiths have a minimum value of 180 credits. Programmes are comprised of modules which have individual credit values. In order to be eligible for the award of a Master's degree students must have passed all modules on the programme.

Intermediate Exit Points

Some programmes incorporate intermediate exit points of Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma, which may be awarded on the successful completion of modules to the value of 60 credits or 120 credits respectively. Individual programmes may specify which, if any, combination of modules are required in order to be eligible for the award of these qualifications. The awards are made without classification.

Final Classification

There are four possible categories of final classification for Master's degrees: Distinction, Merit, Pass and Fail.

For further information, please refer to the Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Students, which may be found here: www.gold.ac.uk/governance/studentregulations/

Programme-specific rules and facts

N/A

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 must be formally approved against national standards and are monitored throughout the year in departmental staff / student forums and through the completion of module evaluation questionnaires. Every programme also has at least one External Examiner who produces an annual report which comments on the standards of awards and student achievement.

This output is considered with other relevant data in the process of Annual Programme Review, to which all programmes are subject, and which aims to identify both good practice and issues which require resolution.

Every six years all programmes within a department are also subject to a broader periodic review. This aims to ensure that they remain 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 of these procedures are published on the webpages of the Quality Office (<http://www.gold.ac.uk/quality/>).