MA in Service Design
AD431

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATIONS

Programme title	MA in Service Design	**School**	School of Design
Resulting awards	MA in Service Design Graduate Certificate in Service Design (exit award only) Graduate Diploma in Service Design (exit award only)	**Head of School**	Prof Alex Milton
Level	9	**ECTS credits[1]**	90 credits
University award	Taught Master's degree	**Programme type**	Part-time postgraduate taught master's degree (2-year duration)
Programme Co-ordinator	Dr Caoimhe McMahon	**External Examiner**	Tash Willcocks, Head of Learning Design, TPX Impact
Programme team	School of Design and School of Visual Culture staff		

1.   Programme Aims and Objectives: Purpose, Vision and Values

Service Design applies design practice, methods and thinking to the service sector, from retail, technology and banking to transportation, health and education. Services represent around 80% of the economy and offer a new opportunity for designers seeking to make a difference. Students on the part-time MA will examine the complex systemic issues facing business and governments and create new services to transform customer and citizen experiences.

Building on concepts and methods from design and innovation management, Service Design is increasingly recognised as a vital skillset to help address the challenges of the new experience economy, and the programme seeks to meet the new demands of industry and wider society. Students will undertake a series of projects, activities and workshops that will equip them to develop and deliver new consumer and public services, and envision radically new services and user experiences.

The MA in Service Design operates across a range of sectors and methodological approaches and contexts. It combines core taught elements in service design research and critical studies, with advanced studio practice. The aim of the MA is to create a design culture that thrives on new ideas, new ways of doing things and new areas of exploration.

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[1] European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, where 60 ECTS credits equate to the workload of a full-time academic year

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We encourage our students to experiment and take risks in order to carve new understandings of design and make technical innovations within, and across Service Design.

In challenging the purpose, methods and ambitions of contemporary service design practice and research, students will identify opportunities and develop their own creative careers.

The part-time MA provides the opportunity for students to engage in an inter-disciplinary educational experience, working alongside postgraduate students from across the School of Design. We encourage our students to explore contemporary themes that connect all the design disciplines. Building on the knowledge and skills developed at undergraduate level and professional practice, students encounter new contexts in which to develop their skillsets and deepen their knowledge of design through a range of interdisciplinary projects, before undertaking a major project within their chosen design discipline.

The part-time programme is delivered at a rate of 15 credits per trimester, enabling learners to maintain their own creative practice or employment. This equates to a commitment of 20 hours per week over a 2-year period.

Programme Aims

The MA in Service Design provides a scholarly framework for students who wish to develop their expertise as a Service Designer.

The modules seek to prepare students, from the broadest range of undergraduate backgrounds, with the practical and theoretical means to develop contemporary service design practice and theory, while also benefitting from a broader design discourse and student cohort through interdisciplinary projects.

Successive modules allow students to develop their specialist practice, their professional, technical and organisational skills and their knowledge and application of critical contexts.

The programme seeks to:

- Improve the exploration, curiosity, ambition, depth and breadth of service design practice in a systematic and insightful manner.

- Continually meet the rapidly changing needs, expectations, aspirations and experiences of today's graduate students by improving their professional application as service designers.

- Allow the student to demonstrate the ability to learn and perform at master's level.

- Develop the student's knowledge and understanding of the history, principles and practice of service design.

- Develop the students' knowledge and understanding of the service design process.

- Develop the students understanding of the user and to equip them with the practical skills for identifying user needs, behaviours and values.

- Develop the student's skills in primary and secondary research and the translation of findings into their practical work.

- Support the student in the development of a range of practical design skills at a postgraduate level.

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- Provide students with methodologies and techniques that can be applied to the design, development, prototyping and evaluation of services.

- Enable students to conceptualise and review their creative process and take incisive control over the direction of their practice as service designers.

- Critically evaluate and employ contemporary debates regarding practice-based research, practice-led research and cognate creative methodologies.

- Provide students with requisite knowledge and research skills to creatively contextualise their design practice and imaginatively demonstrate its wider validity.

- Equip the student with the capability to critically evaluate and engage with contemporary debates regarding the social, cultural, economic and political affordances and impacts of design.

- Develop the student's theoretical knowledge and design skills to prepare them for further study.

- Provide students with industry connections through sponsored projects and visiting faculty.

2.   Programme Outcomes

On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of Service Design.

- Apply knowledge and understanding through written, spoken and visual communication enabling the application of theoretical knowledge of Service Design to new aspects of contemporary practice.

- Make judgements through traditional academic practice, display a mastery of a broad range of theoretical positions, their histories, strengths and weaknesses.

- Demonstrate an ability to work in both a self-directed manner and within a team approach in order to establish complex solutions for the imaginative delivery of Service Design today to various audiences (communications and working skills).

- Demonstrate the successful acquisition of a range of independent learning competencies including a range of research-based and professional skills which might assist the student in their transition to doctoral studies or the world of work (learning skills).

3.   Stage Outcomes

Stage 1

On successful completion of Stage 1 of the programme (30 credits over two trimesters), students will be able to:

- Develop a mature knowledge of the context, defining features and methods of Service Design.

- Extend their ability to critically analyse, evaluate and develop concepts applicable to complex service design projects, in specific contexts.

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- Present their design process and project work in an appropriate professional manner using a variety of methods.
- Critically reflect on their practice within a wider context and understand a range of research methods and communication styles.

Exit qualification: Graduate Certificate in Service Design

Students successfully completing Stage 1 of the programme, and accumulating 30 credits, and who are leaving the programme at that stage, can apply to graduate with a Graduate Certificate in Service Design (30 credits, level 9).

Stage 2

On successful completion of Stages 1 and 2 of the programme (60 credits over four trimesters), students will be able to:

- Evidence their personal methodologies drawn from their prior learning to create mature service design proposals.
- Demonstrate their entrepreneurial, interpersonal and professional skills in service design.
- Identify and research, interpret and critically evaluate recent movements in service design.

Exit qualification: Graduate Diploma in Service Design

Students successfully completing Stages 1 and 2 of the programme, and accumulating 60 credits, and who are leaving the programme at that stage, can apply to graduate with a Graduate Diploma in Service Design (60 credits, level 9).

Stage 3

On successful completion of the MA students will be able to:

- Complete a body of service design to professional standards.
- Design and install an advanced-level display of their work featuring aspects of their creative practice.
- Present a postgraduate level portfolio of their creative practice.
- Complete written Major Project and Design Rationale reports that creatively contextualise a body of practice and its genesis.
- Demonstrate that they have significantly developed their professional practice as designers to postgraduate level.

Qualification: MA in Service Design

Students successfully completing Stages 1, 2 and 3 of the programme, and accumulating 90 credits, can apply to graduate with a Master of Arts in Service Design (90 credits, level 9).

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4.   Admission Requirements

To be accepted onto the programme, applicants must demonstrate the following:

- Honours undergraduate degree award of 2.2 or higher, or an equivalent academic or professional qualification in design or a related discipline (prior learning and experience will also be considered).

- A portfolio of work (this may not necessarily be design work but must demonstrate experience in a relevant field).

- Applicants who have not been educated through English must show proof of achieving IELTS 6.5 (with a minimum of 6 in the writing section on the Academic Version) or an equivalent score in another accepted test.

Graduates from the Professional Diploma in Service Design will be accepted onto the programme, and receive dispensation for the four modules (20 credits in total) they will have already successfully completed.

5.   Further Educational Opportunities

It is intended that some graduates will choose to remain at NCAD progressing to PhD level. The programme aims to contribute to the development of the research culture of the College by expanding the scope of expertise in design and by providing a pathway into further research specialisation in the field of design. By supporting the academic development of students there is scope for the development of a research cluster, which will explore a wide range of topics in the field through both theoretical and practice-based research.

6.   Teaching and Learning

Delivered by academic staff who are leading practitioners and researchers in their specialist fields, the curriculum is centred on contemporary service design discourse and practice.

The studio and workshop, supported by technological provision, is the focus of learning and teaching within the MA programme. The application of service design processes and the development of ideas through design iteration, defines the programmes vision. The postgraduate programme aims to enable students to develop a personal vocabulary for creative development and presentation founded on critical appraisal and research. Students' design work is focused through tutorials and expert advice; reinforced by strong links with industry and leading practitioners who help students to develop their entrepreneurial, interpersonal and professional skills to position themselves successfully within the creative industries.

Design studio activities are supported by Visual Culture staff delivering theoretical input, interacting to promote masters level learning and teaching. The MA encourages interdisciplinary activity between a range of design disciplines and shares elements of learning through collaborative projects and skill acquisition, while enabling students to develop a strong specific service design philosophy, research-led agenda and vocational focus. The full-time academic staff team supplemented by specialist part-time lecturers and researchers support a rich learning and research environment, and

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supply the critical, disciplinary and technical expertise to support students to develop their practice and professional competencies.

7.   Methods of Assessment

Learning, teaching and assessment strategies include:

Studio tuition		Lectures		Seminars	
Tutorials	Team Teaching - Group Crits and Project Spaces			Student Projects	
Technical Instruction and Demonstrations			Group Teaching and Learning - Studio and IT related		
Self-Directed Study - Research and practice			Interdisciplinary Activities - Research Methods		
Study Trips	Practice-Related Learning Experience			Placement/Internship Opportunities	
General Coursework			Crit - One to one or group		
Student Self-evaluation	Assessment as a Learning Method - Feedback on projects and modules				

8.   Programme Review and Evaluation

It is important to NCAD that students inform the development of teaching and learning at NCAD. We encourage all students to communicate their concerns and their observations about their study to members of staff so that any changes can be made in a timely manner.

About two-thirds of the way through the year, a student forum will be convened to gather students' comments about their study and the delivery of the programme. In addition, at the end of Trimester 2, students have the opportunity to complete an online evaluation of their study and experience at NCAD. These evaluation events are important to current and future students, to ensure we can enhance the delivery of programmes at NCAD.

NCAD students also participate in the Irish Survey of Student Engagement, which takes place in the middle of Trimester 2. This international project measures students' engagement with their studies.

In addition, students are invited to discuss their experience on the programme with their lecturers at any point during the year. Students can also relay their comments to the class student representative who will communicate their comments to the staff.

A major review of this programme will be carried out in accordance with the College Quality Assurance review cycle schedule.

9.   Modular Provision

Students undertake a number of core modules, and have the opportunity to undertake a 5 credit module from a suite of elective options from across the College and partner institutions.

Module	Credits	Core or Elective	Trimester
Stage 1			
PGCFAD1005 - Design Principles - Service Design	5	Core	1
PGDES1002 - Service Design Fundamentals	10	Core	1
PGCFAD1007 - Design Practices 1 - Service Design	5	Core	2
PGDES1029 - Service Design Studio	10	Core	2
Option to exit with Graduate Certificate in Service Design (30 credits)			
Stage 2			
PGCFAD1009 - Creative Elective - Service Design	5	Elective	3
PGCFAD1010 - Major Project Proposal - Service Design	10	Core	3
PGCFAD1006 - Design Collaborations 1 - Service Design	5	Core	4
PGCFAD1011 - Strategic Design for Change - Service Design	10	Core	4
Option to exit with Graduate Diploma in Service Design (60 credits)			
Stage 3			
PGCFAD1012 - Collaborative Design Studio - Service Design	10	C	5
PGCFAD1008 - Design Capstone 1 - Service Design	5	C	5
PGCFAD1013 - Design Studio - Major Project - Service Design	15	C	6
Exit with MA in Service Design (90 credits)			

Stage 1
Trimester 1

PGCFAD1005 - Design Principles - Service Design - 5 credits

This module introduces learners to fundamental principles, working methods, skills and theories within their specific programme of study that underpin contemporary creative practice. This module will focus on the theoretical underpinnings, contemporary issues, topics and concepts relating to Service Design. Introducing learners to the fundamental principles and processes of the discipline, and enabling them to approach studio work from a theoretically informed perspective. The module aims to improve their awareness of the issues that determine the usability of a designed service through the lenses of People, Data and Systems.

PGDES1002 - Service Design Fundamentals - 10 credits

This module focuses on the interdisciplinary nature of Service Design, covering topics ranging from participatory design to human factors. Learners are introduced to various theories, factors, methods, and tools of Service Design. They will engage with the key hard and soft skills involved in the service design process, from user research and facilitation to prototyping, testing and implementation.

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Trimester 2

PGCFAD1007 - Design Practices 1 - Service Design - 5 credits

This module enables learners to undertake a body of work within their chosen creative specialism, supporting their personal and professional development as a designer.

During this project learners will operate in teams and will be tasked with measuring the impact of implementing a service. The response to this brief must be grounded in both human-centred and quantitative research and insights. Learners will benchmark an existing customer experience using a mixed methods approach, and develop concepts to improve, or fix service delivery. Learners will then measure the effectiveness of their solution and present findings supported by evidence.

PGDES1029 - Service Design Studio – 10 credits

The aim of the module is to give you experience of a range of service design projects relating to the design of services and their constituent touchpoints with a focus on users, experience and context of use. By engaging in a range of project briefs students will learn fundamental service design approaches, methods and tools. Projects will incorporate lectures, seminars, workshops, fieldwork and studio work. Students will work independently and in groups, giving them the opportunity to work in a self-directed and collaborative manner.

Stage 2
Trimester 3

PGCFAD1009 - Creative Elective - Service Design – 5 credits

The programme facilitates inter and intra institutional mobility through the Creative Futures Academy (CFA) partnership, enabling MA Service Design students to undertake a 5 credit CFA elective module offered by another NCAD programme, or from our CFA partners at IADT and UCD.

PGCFAD1010 - Major Project Proposal - Service Design – 10 credits

Learners will initiate and state a design project of their choice (by negotiation with their tutor/s) which will encompass: information retrieval, collation and interpretation. The module will develop the learner's ability to understand how to find scholarly and professional literature on the topic that interests them, and relate that literature to their research question. Their goal is to describe what is already known about their topic, how it has been researched by others, and how their question and the research methods they seek to employ different methods from that of previous design researchers. This will then enable learners to develop a feasibility study where through a process of analysis and evaluation of a proposed project they will determine if it is required, appropriate and feasible.

Trimester 4

PGCFAD1006 - Design Collaborations 1 - Service Design - 5 credits

This module introduces learners to methods and techniques that will help you to navigate the evolving creative landscape, identify opportunities and collaborate to address creative challenges. Learners will undertake a thematic project with colleagues and creative peers, and develop work through teamwork, negotiation and collaboration.

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During this project learners will operate in teams and will be tasked with a live project brief from a client. The response to the allocated brief must be grounded in human-centred research and insights. Learners will move through the process of understanding the challenges faced by the client, identifying key insights, generating and exploring ideas and evaluating these with project stakeholders. Teams will deliver and present ideas that demonstrate a comprehensive process for solving complicated, multi-faceted problems of design.

PGCFAD1011 - Strategic Design for Change - Service Design – 10 credits

This module will enable learners to explore the capacity of design as a critical and collaborative agent of social, cultural and economic change. It also seeks to position design as a creative forum for exploring a dynamic, changing world full of critical, contradictory and provocative ideas. The module considers the potential impact of design on a range of specific topics including human behaviour, societal change and international development. Through a series of lectures and group tutorials students will examine the role of the designer in the 21st century in relation to these broad issues. Learners will develop and present their own 'Strategic Design for Change' concepts and engage with a combination of faculty, industry and external stakeholders in the development and delivery of their project.

Stage 3
Trimester 5

PGCFAD1008 - Design Capstone 1 - Service Design - 5 credits

This capstone module enables learners to undertake a project that demonstrates their fundamental knowledge of specific creative practices and theories. Learners will reflect upon, document and disseminate their creative practice.

Learners will undertake a team project with an external partner. Learners will generate a bespoke methodological approach for the specific design context and execute this approach. This approach will span all stages of the design process from interpretation of the brief, research, ideation, evaluation and delivery. An individual reflection piece on the learning acquired through this process will be required.

PGCFAD1012 - Collaborative Design Studio - Service Design - 10 credits

This module will see learners undertake a live industry project working with stakeholders to devise, prototype and text service design concepts and solutions in 'the wild'. Learner's will build on their ability to work within a team, alongside a client in a problem-oriented, project-oriented and collaborative way. This will give students the opportunity to further develop and apply primary research methods, incorporating research findings and insights in a collaborative design project. Learners will also employ a variety of techniques to evaluate their solution with relevant stakeholders from across a range of disciplines. Outcomes will be disseminated and communicated visually and verbally at an appropriate professional standard.

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Trimester 6

PGCFAD1013 - Design Studio - Major Project - Service Design - 15 credits

During this module learners will work on a self-selected and generated major project, which offer the opportunity to undertake a wide-ranging and in-depth practical and theoretical investigation into their chosen field of practice. Students will be supported to execute projects from both a pragmatic and speculative perspective, demonstrating their ability to prepare and present their work in a variety of contexts and formats both for the purposes of assessment and for the wider dissemination and promotion of their practice to peers, public and a professional audience.

10. Programme Structure

Stage 1: Graduate Certificate in Service Design		
Year 1 - Trimester 1		
PGCFAD1005 - Design Principles - Service Design 5 credits	PGDES1002 - Service Design Fundamentals 10 credits	
Year 1 - Trimester 2		
PGCFAD1007 - Design Practices 1 - Service Design 5 credits	PGDES1029 - Service Design Studio 10 credits	
Stage 2: Graduate Diploma in Service Design		
Year 1 - Trimester 3		
PGCFAD1009 - Creative Elective - Service Design 5 credits	PGCFAD1010 - Major Project Proposal - Service Design 10 credits	
Year 2 – Trimester 1		
PGCFAD1006 - Design Collaborations 1 - Service Design 5 credits	PGCFAD1011 - Strategic Design for Change - Service Design 10 credits	
Stage 3: Master of Arts in Service Design		
Year 2 - Trimester 2		
PGCFAD1008 - Design Capstone 1 - Service Design 5 credits	PGCFAD1012 - Collaborative Design Studio - Service Design 10 credits	
Year 2 - Trimester 3		
PGCFAD1013 - Design Studio - Major Project - Service Design 15 credits		

11. Exit Points and Credit Requirements

Graduate Certificate in Service Design (30 credits)

Students who successfully complete the first stage of the programme (two trimesters), but leave the programme, may qualify for a Graduate Certificate in Service Design (30 credits). All modules must be completed at the first attempt (no resits). To qualify, the Head of School must recommend to the Exam Board that the qualification be awarded to a student.

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Graduate Diploma in Service Design (60 credits)

Students who successfully complete the first two stages of the programme (four trimesters), but leave the programme, may qualify for a Graduate Diploma in Service Design (60 credits). All modules must be completed at the first attempt (no resits). To qualify, the Head of School must recommend to the Exam Board that the qualification be awarded to a student.

Master of Arts in Service Design (90 credits)

On completion of all modules in the first three stages (six trimesters), a student may complete the programme and graduate with a Master of Arts in Service Design (90 credits).

Final Award Calculation

The final award is calculated using the credits and grades from all modules in the corresponding programme.

12.   Resources

Staffing

Role	Name	Description
Teaching Staff	Caoimhe McMahon School of Design Staff School of Visual Culture Staff	Programme Co-ordinator Teaching Teaching
Administrative Staff	David Bramley	School Administrator
Technical Support Staff	School of Design Staff	Technical support

Space

Service Design Studio and School of Design studios and workshops

Facilities

Existing School of Design Facilities

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For further information on this programme,
contact Caoimhe McMahon mcmahonc@staff.ncad.ie