

Professional Certificate in Art & Ecology

AD472PC

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATIONS

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|---|
| Programme title | Professional Certificate in Art & Ecology | School | School of Fine Art |
| Resulting awards | Professional Certificate in Art & Ecology | Head of School | Prof Philip Napier |
| Level | Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications | ECTS credits¹ | 5 credits |
| University award | Professional Certificate (Special Purpose) Award | Programme type | Postgraduate programme delivered flexibly |
| Programme Co-ordinator | Bernie McCoy | External Examiner | TBC |
| Programme team | NCAD staff team (Co-ordinators, Lecturers and Technical Officers) | | |

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

Background

NCAD is the lead partner in the Creative Futures Academy, a major new government funded initiative. In partnership with IADT, UCD and industry partners from across the creative sector, we are developing a range of courses that will empower creative practitioners from a range of disciplines, and at different stages of their learning, with the sustainable and adaptable skills and attributes that they will require to shape the future of Ireland's creative sector.

The Creative Futures Academy will prepare graduates for participation in a major sector of the national economy. It will support the early and mid-career trajectories of creative professionals in our fast-changing social, economic and technological contexts. The suite of programmes being developed to form NCAD's Creative Futures offering is a key delivery model for NCAD to meet this challenge.

Purpose

The world needs empowered and enabled creative thinkers. From upskilling to cross-skilling to reskilling, finding creative solutions and making new networks, the Professional Certificate and Professional Diploma in Art & Ecology seeks to enable to creative professionals to:

- Create their own learning routes from our multi-layered range of pathways, working within, across and beyond established as well as emergent creative disciplines, themes and agendas.

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

- Enhance their expertise in an existing practice, to upskill, reskill or further focus their professional knowledge and direction.
- Immerse themselves in contemporary critical thinking, and to be part of the vanguard, shaping our new futures.
- Form a diverse and vibrant peer network of fellow Creative Futures Academy learners and connect to networks and communities of practice through sectoral and industry partnerships and collaborations.
- Shape their learning to suit their availability, needs and ambitions by aligning with a range of in-person, online and blended (a mix of online and in-person) learning options.

This Professional Diploma in Art and Ecology programme introduces learners to the contemporary and historical field of art and expanded ecologies through situated environmental learning. Using and responding to NCAD's physical inner city location learners will connect with inspiring ecological practices, environmental justice community projects and artists spearheading this emerging field.

With our current Earth crises, we need to urgently develop new and necessary Nature/ Culture futures. The historical, cultural and professional contexts of how artists operate and work with ecological themes and the current earth crisis will be explored in rich and varied ways. Using Eco creative principles students will explore a diversity of practices and approaches and become attuned to ways to practise in this territory.

The programme works directly with an urban embedded novel ecology of the NCAD FIELD site. This taskscape acts as an outdoor classroom, a site for nature connection, commoning and a testing site for multi-species futures. Connecting to the site and its seasonal activity, nature/culture connections are explored and enacted allowing learners to expand their research, creative making and critical thinking skills in meaningful and liveable ways. A grounding in the social, political, economic and historical issues that frame ecologies of the surroundings site are explored. Through the Diploma Programme practitioners will expand, develop and question their practices using the NCAD FIELD as a testing site and shared learning space.

The programme supports a range of creative approaches and interdisciplinary art and design practitioners that wish to connect and work in the space of critical ecologies and expanded environments. Learners aiming to evolve as artists, curators, activists, designers and cultural producers will be supported, giving them the tools, networks and knowledge to confidently work in this interdisciplinary field.

As part of a suite of programmes that make up the Creative Futures offer at NCAD, the Professional Certificate in Art and Ecology seeks to provide a scholarly framework for students who wish to study specific, connected aspects of creative disciplines and themes within a leading art and design college setting. Many aspects of the suite of programmes will be delivered in collaboration with partners from the Creative Sector and in addition, a number of programme sessions will have a public dimension, allowing us to invite other interested parties from the fields of contemporary creative practice and scholarship to join our conversations and creative activities.

The CFA will build extended networks for programme participants beyond the immediate peer community, helping forge a community of practice within and beyond the Creative Futures Academy.

Vision

The core remit of NCAD is the education of practitioners across design, contemporary art practice, cultural production and creative education. This commitment to actual practice and its critical contexts is central to the research ethos of the College. This programme and its constituent awards have been designed to link to our areas of professional expertise and research specialism within the College, to our current and future research priorities. The programme has been informed by detailed consultation with members of the CFA body of creative industry representatives whose detailed understanding of the current and future needs of the sector are an invaluable resource for the development of the CFA programme.

Like other CFA Creative Futures programmes, the Professional Certificate in Art and Ecology seeks to create 'T' shaped practitioners capable of making a significant contribution to contemporary creative practice and discourse, with the vertical bar on the 'T' representing the depth of related skills and expertise in a single field, and the horizontal bar, the ability to collaborate across disciplines with experts in other areas and to apply knowledge in areas of expertise other than one's own.

As part of the Creative Futures suite of programmes, the Professional Diploma in Art and Health has been created to address the following CFA delivery pillars:

- FUTURE PRACTICE - Equip learners with the concrete and transversal skills needed to maintain practices.
- FUTURE THINKING - Produce inquisitive creative sector professionals capable of approaching complex problems imaginatively and employing current processes and technologies.
- FUTURE BUSINESS - Provide learners with the tools and skills to identify and take opportunities or to go out and build their own. Key values will include collaboration, agility and resilience.
- FUTURE SOCIETY - Equip learners with the skills, methods and tools to be able to harness the potential of creative practice to address the social and cultural challenges of the future.
- FUTURE COMMUNITIES - Create a vibrant transdisciplinary community of practice as a setting where new practices can be imagined and tested.
- FUTURE CONTENT - Prepare learners to work with emerging media and modes of dissemination.
- FUTURE LEARNING - Develop and apply contemporary, best practice approaches to teaching and learning specifically tailored for the applied, distinctive needs of the creative and cultural sectors.

The suite of Creative Futures programmes, complement and advance our emergent specialist postgraduate provision. They are designed to provide flexible and adaptable learning experiences which appeal to life-wide and life-long learners. The programmes are designed, structured and delivered to enable creative practitioners to undertake learning alongside maintaining their professional career or practice. Learners can complete part-time programmes, to suit their pace and needs - accelerating or slowing down their accumulation of modules and credits to meet evolving professional and personal circumstance. The Professional Certificate is a stand-alone award but has

the potential to become a formational part of a 20 credit Diploma as part of expanded postgraduate study. NCAD offers other Programmes to MA / MFA Level.

The suite of Creative Futures programmes shares a common modular structure which facilitates a diverse range of professional development needs across contemporary creative practice and discourse. The Creative Futures programmes at NCAD act as a valuable incubation and development platform for learners to design, enhance, immerse, connect and shape their professional and creative practice.

Opportunity Creation

From their entry-point on their Creative Futures Academy journey, learners are encouraged to consider their own 'practice' needs and relate this to the range of programmes and scales of learning available. The suite of Creative Futures programmes provides a professional scaffold that supports the development of specialist and transversal skills enabling participants to extend or change their creative practice.

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

Values

The Creative Futures Academy (CFA) is a space for creative practitioners to learn, to network and to allow new ideas to influence and to shape our future.

The CFA values focus on:

- Creativity and imagination as agents of positive change.
- Providing access to relevant learning to creative practitioners throughout their careers.
- Connecting communities of practice.
- Instilling confidence and leadership.
- Sharing knowledge and expertise for the enhancement of practitioners, educators and the cultural & creative sector as a whole.
- Encouraging divergence and risk-taking.
- Embedding sustainability in creative practice.

Programme Pathway

Art and Design have far-reaching capacities for generating shared language and connecting people communities and environments. The creative arts and industries offer powerful means for conveying ideas and shaping experiences across habituated boundaries.

Interrogating the relationships between art and ecology, this pathway promotes modes of meaningful engagement with debates linked to climate change, biodiversity, climate justice and pollution in the Anthropocene. Through practices and critiques situated within contemporary contexts, vocabularies and processes, it produces new and transformative engagements with pressing ecological issues – in local and expanded contexts. Modes of learning will include field work, lectures, seminars and workshops along with cross-disciplinary conversations and

collaborations. A key focus is on the productive intersection points where creative practices meet scientific, legal and social policy debates, to manifest outcomes that catalyse progress.

The four 5-credit modules that comprise the Professional Diploma in Art & Ecology (total 20 Credits) are offered sequentially. They conform to the order below and one module in sequence must be completed and passed before another is embarked upon. Within The Professional Diploma suite of modules Creative Principles is always the first Module and the Creative Capstone is the last. The centre modules have been selected to embody the type of educational vehicle most appropriate to the subject matter. The order of these modules must be followed by learners.

Professional Certificate in Art and Ecology - Module

Creative Principles - Art and Ecology

This module works directly with an urban-embedded novel ecology of the NCAD FIELD site. This taskscape acts as an outdoor classroom, a site for nature connection, commoning and a testing site for multi-species futures. Connecting to the site and its seasonal activity, nature/culture connections are explored and enacted allowing learners to expand their research, creative making and critical thinking skills in meaningful and liveable ways. A grounding in the social, political, economic and historical issues that frame ecologies of the surroundings site are explored.

Programme Aims

The programme encourages participants to integrate research, creative practice and contemporary methods, theory and contexts.

The programme seeks to prepare students with the practical and theoretical means to develop contemporary creative practice and theory within a specialist award, while benefitting from a broader interdisciplinary creative discourse and community of practice.

The programme aims to allow participants to develop their specialist practice and their knowledge and application of critical contexts to:

- EXPAND creative thinking to support a change of perspective across and beyond the sector.
- CONNECT with social and cultural change to create impact.
- BUILD sustainable communities of interest that grow without discipline.
- INCUBATE agile creative practitioners and organisations that can respond to the social, cultural and economic worlds.
- POSITION change from a communication and content led place.
- ALIGN learning and teaching to a contemporary and more expanded perspective of Health matters and our ability to act.
- ENGAGE with emerging technology / environments / tools and practices to create advanced co-ordinates in creative sector.

The aims of this module are to:

- Improve the exploration, curiosity, ambition, depth, and breadth of participant's creative practice in a systematic and insightful manner, introducing learners to contemporary artists

who work in the interstitial space of wasteland/ urban garden/ entropy/ brownfield site and urban ecology.

- develop the participant's skills in research and decision making in the translation of findings into their creative practice by mapping plant species within a novel ecology.

2. Programme Outcomes

The programme views its students as active participants in their learning journey. On successful completion of the programme students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of contemporary creative practice within their chosen specialism.
2. Apply knowledge and understanding through written, spoken and visual communication enabling the application of emerging knowledge of their creative specialism to new aspects of contemporary creative practice.
3. Demonstrate an ability to establish solutions for the imaginative delivery of creative practice today to an audience.

Graduate Attributes and Characteristics

The programme has been informed by the development of a creative attributes framework in collaboration with representatives from across Ireland's creative industry and sector.

The collaborative research identified the need to incubate and support CHANGE MAKERS who hold the vision to imagine futures that have not yet been created, and the agency to give expression and shape to new kinds of solutions.

Creative Futures graduates actively address identified CFA attributes and characteristics which can be outlined as:

- Thinking - Seeking to know more, to understand; to be clear on the options we have, the choices we make, and the decisions we take. Graduates will be responsible, reflexive and curious.
- Exploring - Investing in imagining, the appetite to discover, the openness to learn, the self-belief to go further. Graduates will be playful, agile and resilient.
- Connecting - Confidence and readiness to show and share, to create networks and sustain connections with people, practice and with the world around us. Graduates will be empathetic, collaborative and make their practice, research and thinking public.
- Doing - Working hard to make things happen for ourselves and for others. Graduates will be skilful, rigorous, and persistent.

Programme Outcomes

Professional Certificate in Art and Ecology

On successful completion of the Professional Certificate in Art & Ecology, students will be able to:

1. DEFINE: Demonstrate an outline knowledge and understanding of select core principles, processes and concepts associated with “Novel”, Art and Critical Ecology.
2. CHARACTERISE: Demonstrate a working knowledge of the differing characteristics and practices associated with contemporary Creative Ecological Practices.
3. DISTINGUISH: Demonstrate the ability to undertake analysis, evaluation and synthesis of associated debates surrounding and centred in the Art and Ecology pathway.
4. CRITIQUE: Examine the professional practices associated with Art and Ecology including ethical and professional issues raised by Creative Ecological Practices.

3. Admission Requirements

To be accepted into the programme, applicants must have completed an honours level 8 undergrad degree (achieving at least a 2:2) in a relevant and cognate discipline, or have an appropriate level of professional practice in the subject field or a related field.

Students can be accepted onto the programme without the academic entry requirements outlined above. In such cases, applicants will need to demonstrate equivalent and relevant experience and/or formal learning.

Students should apply to the programme with evidence of previous successful qualifications, statements of work-related achievement etc.

Students 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.

4. Further Educational Opportunities

This programme provides a sound and strong basis for further education at postgraduate level, most directly in relation to advancing to a Professional Diploma and developing contemporary creative practice and theory, contributing to wider fields of our expanding culture, society and economy.

Careers and skills

The programme is designed to meet the needs of the creative sector within and beyond Ireland. As such, the constituent awards explicitly address key requirements identified in extensive discussions and research undertaken with sectoral partners

The programme seeks to provide the transversal and specialist skills to equip creative practitioners to work within existing career paths, while also imagine new career and creative pathways and learning.

5. Teaching and Learning

Delivery

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

The programme aims to enable students to develop a personal vocabulary for creative development and presentation founded on critical appraisal and research. Students' work is focused through tutorials and expert advice; reinforced by strong links with industry, cultural institutions and leading creative practitioners who help students to develop their professional skills to position themselves successfully within the creative arts and industries.

Learning

The full-time academic staff team supplemented by specialist part-time lecturers and researchers that support a rich learning and research environment, and supply the critical, disciplinary and technical expertise to support students to develop their practice and professional competencies.

The programme adopts a range of new delivery models that enhance the traditional studio, workshop, lecture, seminar and situated learning pedagogies. The curriculum has been informed by Professional field, industry and sectoral needs, and subject to a co-creation model of development where possible.

Learning, teaching and assessment techniques include a variety of approaches that are consistent with known and alternative means of developing and submitting evidence of learning, familiar to Art and Design pedagogy.

6. Methods of Assessment

Aligned Assessment

Aligning the assessment to the learning outcomes - delivered through teaching and learning activities - students and staff can clearly identify what has been achieved as well as how and where improvement can be made.

To be relevant to the range of modules offered within this programme, delivered as long & skinny, short & fat, micro experiences, intensive experiences, intervals, on-demand etc.- assessment will align to suit the needs of both the learner and the course. An adaptive assessment approach will create a structured, fluidity of assessment and evaluation methods for each, that offers the learner what they are looking for whilst ensuring pedagogical rigour.

The transparency of the Aligned Assessment strategy demonstrates to a student where improvement may be made, what has been achieved and for staff, the role of feedback and evaluation processes.

Assessment Procedure

A transparent assessment procedure empowers the student to understand the assessment process and enables them to evaluate their own levels of achievement against explicit grades, goals and learning outcomes whilst appreciating how and where they might improve.

Individual components of the programme are assessed on a mark-allocation basis to provide students with clear feedback to promote self-evaluation and self-reflection in their own learning processes. Staff are experienced in delivering a range of assessment and evaluation in line with student construction of knowledge and demonstration of understanding.

The aim of the assessment procedure is to achieve the following objectives:

- Measure: Grade or recognise the level of the student's achievement in relation to the learning outcomes.
- Communicate: Assessments provide students with clear feedback to promote self-evaluation and self-reflection in their own learning processes.
- Illustrate: Learning outcomes and competencies that are required have been achieved, which allows for progression to the next level/course/step in the learning journey.

Assessment Methods

Formative Assessment: typically involves feedback (oral or written) to students on their progress, and does not usually involve a mark. It is used to provide constructive feedback to improve learning and understanding. Formative assessment does not form part of the student's final grade or mark.

Summative Assessment: these assessment results are aggregated and used to determine whether students have fulfilled the specified learning outcomes and have met the standard required to achieve a passing grade, and so can be granted the credits for successfully completing each module.

Learners will also undertake on-going self and peer evaluation, helping foster a culture reflective practice that empowers creative professionals on the programme.

Assessments are undertaken by a team of staff who are examining how students have met the learning outcomes. Assessment may occur or be required on or off campus or on line, and will be timetabled well in advance.

7. Programme Review and Evaluation

All programmes are subject to College-wide evaluation tools and events. The annual online student evaluation takes place in May or June, asking all College students to provide feedback. Results are sent to each School to respond to and report to Programmes Board on what changes or developments will be implemented in response to the evaluations.

Additionally, a student forum for each programme takes place each year. This is an opportunity to discuss any issues with students, staff and an external neutral person.

External Examiners contribute considerably to the quality review processes, assisting evaluation as well as assessment. In addition, informal feedback is gathered from discussions with students, staff and management.

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, learners are invited to discuss their experience on the module with their lecturers at any point during the year. They can also relay their comments to the class student representative who will communicate their comments to the staff team.

This programme is delivered under the support of the Creative Futures Academy HCI pillar 1 funded project, which is subject to an annual evaluation. A major review of this programme will be carried out in 2026/27.

8. Modular Provision

Professional Certificate in Art & Ecology

| Module | Credits | Core or Option | Trimester |
|--|---------|----------------|-----------|
| PGCF1001 Creative Principles - Art and Ecology | 5 | Core | Any |

Note: the trimesters above refer to the order of delivery of the modules within the programme, and not the academic trimesters of Autumn Trimester, Spring Trimester and Summer/Research Trimester. Where Creative Principles is delivered in the Spring Trimester, it would follow that Creative Experiences will then be delivered in the Spring or Summer Trimester, Creative Immersions would be delivered in the Summer Trimester, and Creative Capstone would be delivered in the Autumn Trimester.

Creative Principles – Art & Ecology

This module introduces learners to fundamental principles, working methods, skills and theories relating to Intersections of contemporary art with ecology and other epistemic disciplines for ‘knowing our environment’. NCAD FIELD and the broader Liberties area will be the location for this work. Together with more formal modes of presentation which will offer a broad contextual understanding, special emphasis will be placed on ‘learning through doing’ in a series of workshops and situated environmental learning.

9. Programme Structure

Professional Certificate in Art & Ecology

| Any trimester | |
|--|--|
| PGCF1001 Creative Principles – Art & Ecology 5 Credits | |

10. Exit Points and Credit Requirements

On successful completion of the module Creative Principles - Art and Ecology (5 credits), students who exit the programme will be eligible to apply for the Professional Certificate in Art & Ecology (5 credits, level 9).

Final Award Calculation

Grading is in accordance with the NCAD Grade Descriptors [NCAD Grade Descriptors](#)

11.Resources

Staffing

| Name | Title/Role |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Teaching Staff | |
| Bernie McCoy | Programme Co-ordinator |
| Seoidin O’Sullivan | Lecturer: teaching assessment, programme development |
| Gareth Kennedy | Lecturer: teaching assessment, programme development |
| Mark Clare | Lecturer: teaching assessment, programme development |
| Administrative Staff | |
| NCAD and CFA Administrative Staff | Programme Administration |
| Technical Support Staff | |
| NCAD Technical support staff | Technical Officers: technical support |

Space

The programme will be based within existing College studios, workshops and other spaces across the calendar year, while also availing of external environments where appropriate, for on location or work-based learning.

Facilities

Students will have access to the NCAD Field as a specialist facility for the researching and development of work. There will be access to indoor studio space for lecturers and to support student learning where appropriate.

For further information on this programme contact Joanna Crawley crawleyj@staff.ncad.ie