

# Professional Certificate in Digital Art and Contemporary Contexts

## AD481PC

### PROGRAMME SPECIFICATIONS

<b>Programme title</b>	Professional Certificate in Digital Art and Contemporary Contexts	<b>School</b>	School of Fine Art
<b>Resulting awards</b>	Professional Certificate in Digital Art and Contemporary Contexts	<b>Head of School</b>	Prof Philip Napier
<b>Level</b>	Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications	<b>ECTS credits<sup>1</sup></b>	5 credits
<b>University award</b>	Professional Certificate (Special Purpose) Award	<b>Programme type</b>	Postgraduate programme delivered flexibly
<b>Programme Co-ordinator</b>	Prof Philip Napier	<b>External Examiner</b>	TBC
<b>Programme team</b>	NCAD Staff team		

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

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### Background

NCAD is the lead partner in the Creative Futures Academy (CFA), 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.

As part of a suite of programmes that make up the Creative Futures offer at NCAD, the Professional Certificate in Professional Certificate in Digital Art and Contemporary Contexts 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.

### 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 in Digital Art and Contemporary Contexts seeks to enable 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

The Professional Certificate in Digital Art & Contemporary Contexts 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 and MFA level.

### Programme Aims

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 module allows participants to develop their specialist practice, their professional, technical and organisational skills and their knowledge and application of critical contexts to:

- **EXPAND** creative thinking to support digital change of perspective across and beyond the contemporary art landscape.
- **BUILD** sustainable communities of creatives with interests that grow beyond discipline.
- **INCUBATE** agile creative digital art practitioners and organisations that can change the social, cultural and economic worlds.
- **ENGAGE** with emerging digital technology, tools and practices to create continual change in the creative sector.

The programme aims to:

- Support practitioners with requisite knowledge and skills to creatively contextualise their practice and imaginatively demonstrate its wider validity.
- Develop the participant's skills in research and the translation of findings into their creative practice.
- Critically evaluate and engage with contemporary debates regarding practice-based research, practice-led research and cognate creative methodologies.
- Assist participants in developing their own practice in relation to contemporary creative practice and discourse. This may be as an artist, maker, curator, educator, writer or other.

## Professional Certificate in Digital Art and Contemporary Contexts

Our contemporary world of digital and networked cultures raises issues and questions that can be purposefully addressed through Fine Art Media practices. Participants are challenged to engage critically with how meaning is made, and how representations and encounters are produced, circulated, regulated and consumed in contemporary life, and act upon the ways in which value is constructed and understood by individuals and groups – in the contexts of local, national and global discourses. This Professional Certificate seeks to engage components selected from a larger hinterland of possible media practices and concerns.

The programme encourages participants to integrate research, creative practice and contemporary methods, theory and contexts. The forces and themes that underpin our understanding of contexts are supported by an emergent situational awareness that offers a rich and potentially restless matrix.

Learners will be introduced to a range of digital technologies, critical theories of technology, creative approaches to technology, and the principles of socially engaged and site-specific creative practice using lab based, studio based and experiential tools.

## 2. Programme Outcomes

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The programme views its students as active participants in their learning journey.

On successful completion of the Professional Certificate in Digital Art and Contemporary Contexts, students will be able to:

1. **DEFINE:** Demonstrate an outline knowledge and understanding of current media strategies and practices, utilised within contemporary art.
2. **CHARACTERISE:** Demonstrate a working knowledge of digital strategies, processes and practices within a contemporary context.
3. **DISTINGUISH:** Demonstrate the ability to undertake analysis, evaluation and synthesis of associated debates surrounding pre-production requirements and other materials as appropriate to a contemporary practice.
4. **CRITIQUE:** Examine professional practices, synthesise and reflect critically and collectively on the results of one's own work, and that of peers.

## 3. Admission Requirements

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To be accepted into the programme, applicants must have completed an honours level 8 undergraduate 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

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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. The programme seeks to ground a knowledge of 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

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### Delivery

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

In this Professional Certificate participants will engage through activities such as artist presentation, critical discourse, contemporary digital and contextual co-ordinates and exemplars, technical demonstration and ongoing discussion and debate.

The learner's thinking and actions will converge with settings or contexts of a public or private nature, incorporating interests related to economics, social issues, culture, or other aspects in understanding and engaging creatively with digitally-inflected learning meeting a situation.

Understanding situation, implies a fluid set of conditions that are often unfixed requiring a considered criticality, in action.

### Learning

The full-time academic staff team is 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.

Already immersed within a radically expanding digital sphere in the private and public realms, connected, monitored and enmeshed with AI tools. In building collective contemporary awareness, the learning, teaching and assessment techniques include a variety of teaching and learning approaches consistent with known and alternative means of developing and submitting evidence of learning - both familiar and new to Art and Design pedagogy.

Learning, teaching and assessment techniques include:

Studio tuition	Workshop tuition	On line learning	Lectures
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Self-directed study - research and practice	Technical instruction & demonstrations	
Group teaching & learning - studio and IT-related		Practice-related learning experience
General coursework	Assessment as a learning method - feedback on projects and modules	Student self-evaluation

## 6. Methods of Assessment

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### Assessment Methods

The Professional Cert will be 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.

### 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.

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.

Work undertaken by students on the Professional Certificate in Digital Art and Contemporary Contexts will be assessed in the following way:

- Summative Assessment: 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 the programme.

## 7. Programme Review and Evaluation

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All programmes are subject to College-wide evaluation tools and events. Student evaluation and feedback takes place at completion of programme. 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.

External Examiners review and evaluate the assessment process. In addition, informal feedback is gathered from discussions with students, staff and management.

These evaluation events are important to current and future students, to ensure we can enhance the delivery of programmes at NCAD.

In addition, learners are invited to discuss their experience on the module with their lecturers at any point during the year.

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

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### Professional Certificate in Digital Art and Contemporary Contexts

Module	Credits	Core or Option	Trimester
PGCF1018 Creative Principles – Digital Art and Contemporary Contexts	5	Core	Any

The programme fosters an environment that encourages the sharing of creative processes, practices, resources and ideas. Each cohort of creative practitioners will contain disciplinary specialisms supported by diverse personal and professional interests. Drawing upon this richness, the module will create a creative learning pedagogical space to facilitate participants as educators and facilitators to expand on their own extensive experience, knowledge and skills in a creative field.

## 9. Programme Structure

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### Professional Certificate in Digital Art and Contemporary Contexts

Trimester 1, 2 or 3

PGCF1018 Creative Principles –Digital Art and Contemporary Contexts  
5 Credits

## 10.Exit Points and Credit Requirements

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### Final Award Calculation

The final award is calculated on the basis of successful completion of the module: PGCF1018 Creative Principles: Digital Art & Contemporary Contexts.

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

## 11. Resources

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### Staffing

Name	Title/Role
<b>Teaching Staff</b>	
Philip Napier	Programme Co-ordinator
Kerry Guinan	Lecturer
<b>Administrative Staff</b>	
NCAD and CFA Administrative Staff	Programme Administration
<b>Technical Support Staff</b>	
NCAD Technical Officers	Technical Supports

### Space

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

### Facilities

Students will have access to NCAD facilities for the researching and development of work. There will be access to studio space for lecturers and to support student learning where appropriate.

**For further information on this programme contact:**

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