

Professional Certificate in Digital Making

AD489PC

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATIONS

Programme title	Professional Certificate in Digital Making	School	School of Design
Resulting awards	Professional Certificate in Digital Making	Head of School	Prof. Alex Milton
Level	Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications	ECTS credits¹	5 credits
University award	Professional Certificate	Programme type	Postgraduate programme delivered flexibly
Programme Co-ordinator	Bernie McCoy	External Examiner	TBC
Programme team	NCAD staff team within the School of Design (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 (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 makes up the Creative Futures offer at NCAD, the Professional Certificate in Digital Making 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 Diploma in Digital Making 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.
- Enhance their expertise in an existing practice, to upskill, reskill or further focus their professional knowledge and direction.

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

- 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.

Aspects of the programme will be delivered in collaboration with partners from the creative sector such as semi-state and state-funded regulated centres with public access to support digital making hubs, Fab Labs and facilities, extending the reach of the offering opening learner accessibility.

The Professional Certificate in Digital Making is a stand-alone award but has the potential to become a formational part of a 20-credit Professional Diploma part of expanded postgraduate study. NCAD offers other programmes to MA and MFA level.

Programme Aims

The programme 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 fabrication and making landscape.
- **ENGAGE** with emerging digital-making fabrication and technology, tools and practices to create continual change in the creative sector.
- **ALIGN** learning and teaching to a change-led view of the world, society, economies and sectors in and beyond Ireland.

The programme aims to:

- Improve the exploration, curiosity, ambition, depth and breadth of participants creative practice in a systematic and insightful manner
- Provide participants with appropriate skills and knowledge that can be applied to their professional development as creative practitioner;
- Provide participants with appropriate creative industry and cultural connections through external partnership projects and specialist facilities.

Professional Certificate in Digital Making

This programme shapes learning that is rooted in harnessing the opportunism opened up by digital, technological and ecological fabrication across creative practice.

As modern fabrication technologies continue to advance, the worlds of making, design and manufacturing are changing and merging into something much more seamless. Through an approach that blurs traditional boundaries between art, design, engineering, fabrication and manufacturing, this pathway positions learners to grow a practical understanding of future-facing techniques that enable new, bespoke, on-demand, flexible and sustainable forms of making, production, manufacture and creation.

2. Programme Outcomes

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

- Develop an appropriate professional knowledge of the context, defining features and methods of digital fabrication within their creative specialism.

3. Admission Requirements

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

This programme forms part of the Professional Diploma in Digital Making, students successfully completing the Professional Certificate in Digital Making have the opportunity to progress and are eligible to apply to transfer to the Professional Diploma in Digital Making.

This Professional Certificate provides a sound and strong basis for further education at the postgraduate level 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 imagining 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 Professional Certificate is centred on contemporary creative practice and discourse.

This programme embraces a pedagogy rooted in self-directed and life-long learning, echoing the ethos that has fuelled the growth of Fab Labs globally and resonating with the spirit of "How to

Make Almost Anything." Over the programme students will be guided through a blend of one-on-one and group crits, virtual lectures and discussions.

The programme seeks to instil an attitude of proactive engagement and curiosity, equipping participants with the mindset needed for innovative digital making. Through collaborative work within local Fab Labs and Digital Hubs, participants will delve into research, discussion, and hands-on making, aiming to foster a holistic understanding of the key theories and approaches that emphasize the interconnectedness of technology, ecology, and society.

Learning, teaching and assessment techniques include:

- Structured online learning activities
- Seminars
- Tutorials
- Lectures
- Self and peer-assessment tasks
- Group work
- Independent study

6. Methods of Assessment

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 programme. 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 assessments and evaluations 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 online, and will be timetabled well in advance.

Work undertaken by students on the Professional Certificate in Digital Making 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

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

Module	Credits	Core or Option	Trimester
Professional Certificate in Digital Making			
PGCFAD1037 Creative Principles – Digital Making	5	Core	1

PGCFAD1037 Creative Principles – Digital Making

This module introduces learners to fundamental principles, working methods, skills and theories that underpin digital making in art and design. This module will focus on the practical underpinnings, technological advances, innovations and concepts relating to Digital Making. Introducing learners to the fundamental principles and processes underpinning digital technologies, programming, and communication within art and design practices enables them to approach creative work by applying advanced digital-making techniques whilst understanding the digital theory and context.

9. Programme Structure

Professional Certificate in Digital Making	
PGCFAD1037 Creative Principles - Digital Making 5 Credits	

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.

10. Exit Points and Credit Requirements

Final Award Calculation

Successful completion of the 5-credit module that makes up this programme (equivalent to about 100 hours of student effort) will entitle students to apply for the award of Professional Certificate in Digital Making.

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

11. Resources

Staffing

Name	Title/Role
Teaching Staff	
Bernie McCoy	Programme Co-ordinator
Adam Gibney	Lecturer
Administrative Staff	
NCAD and CFA Administrative Staff	Programme Administration
Technical Support Staff	
NCAD Technical Officers	Technical Supports

Space

The programme will be based within existing College studios, workshops and other spaces.

Facilities

The programme will utilise new facilities such as the William Walsh NCAD and VLE provided through CFA funding. Access is subject to availability to external equivalent FabLab and Digital Hub facilities where appropriate, for on-location or work-based learning.

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