

Programme Specification

Award and title: MA Virtual and Augmented Reality

<i>School:</i>	School of the Arts
<i>Subject area:</i>	Design
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	September
<i>in the month(s) of</i>	2025-26
<i>Awarding institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Teaching institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Delivery location:</i>	York St John University
<i>Programme/s accredited by:</i>	Not applicable
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Postgraduate Certificate Design Postgraduate Diploma: MA Virtual and Augmented Reality
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	Not applicable
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	Not applicable
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	Art and Design February 2017 Master's degree characteristics September 2020
<i>Mode/s of study:</i>	Postgraduate periods of study ¹ for full time
<i>Language of study:</i>	English
<i>Paired with Foundation Year</i>	No
<i>Study abroad opportunities:</i>	No
<i>Opt-in YSJU Placement Year opportunity:</i>	No

Introduction and special features

Virtual and augmented reality have not only penetrated the gaming and entertainment industries, but these technologies provide a wider application and value within society. Wearable technologies are a growing trend, and the actions of augmenting virtual objects over reality brings unlimited possibilities for the future of digital communication. The programme helps prepare you to develop a unique perspective and personal voice through investigating a range of design methodologies, approaches, and strategies to inform your own practice. You will study the latest developments in design thinking to establish a core design approach and acknowledge a greater appreciation for how virtual and augmented realities are transforming the way we learn and communicate. It offers you the opportunity to embrace immersive technologies and enhance your own creativity.

MA Virtual and Augmented Reality differentiates itself through the specific characteristics of undertaking an overarching of design modules that interconnect through design thinking, entrepreneurship, circular economy and fourth revolution. enabling you to make well-informed decisions and apply these to your own design outcome. Furthermore, our programme engagement with industry partners will offer you networking opportunities to collaborate with our industry partners, visit relevant exhibitions and be inspired by keynote visiting speakers. There is also the potential for you to establish your own business venture through a Grad2Director scheme at York St John University.

This programme aims to recruit applicants from a variety of background areas such as graphics, fine art, television, product, games, animation, who would like to hone and refine their skills, knowledge, and competencies in this specialist field. Furthermore, we do encourage applicants from other disciplines who

are creative thinkers to apply, as we do promote collaborative and interdisciplinary practices for innovative outcomes.

Work-based learning opportunities throughout the programme have been developed in partnership with our industry contacts. They are structured opportunities which reflect authentic professional activities. There are opportunities throughout the programme to undertake work-related learning in the form of placements and live briefs. This is working in conjunction with our industry partners and networks from across both regional and national design agencies and organisations. Throughout the programme, you will engage with work-based learning by reflecting upon industry practices such as following design methodologies to conduct research and new insights. This information forms a thread between undertaking a body of developmental work during the 'Innovation Project' where you can explore and experiment in response to the data collected. At this stage, you may wish to partner with an industry partner of your own choice where you can work on a specific-related project. Lastly, within the Major Project module, you will be able to follow either a theoretical or practical route, depending on your own choice and the programme will support you either way. There will be ongoing professional feedback and will take place in the form of critique and portfolio reviews.

When possible, regional, national and international field trips are offered within the programme including visits to, galleries, exhibitions, conferences, and industry visits. As part of the student experience, the programme has organised international trips to Lisbon and New York and continues to offer new destinations wherever possible. These trips are generally subsidised by the Design department to help support student studies and on occasions, we ask students to make small financial contributions. Other trips have been to the London Design Museum and to research organisations such as STBY. These opportunities aim to enhance the curriculum content enabling you to examine your professional from a range of cultural and professional contexts.

Admissions criteria

You must meet the University's general entry criteria for [postgraduate](#) study. In addition, you must:

- Demonstrate examples of your own practice.
- Be interviewed, either in person or online.

To demonstrate you have adequate practical skills for this programme, you will be interviewed to show examples of your own practice. Non-traditional entrants, who may have a successful professional career but may not have UG qualifications, will also be interviewed

If your first language is not English, you need to take an IELTS test or an equivalent qualification accepted by the University (see <https://www.yorks.ac.uk/international/how-to-apply/english-language-requirements/>).

If you do not have traditional qualifications, you may be eligible for entry on the basis of [Recognition of prior learning \(RPL\)](#). We also consider applications for entry with advanced standing.

Programme aim(s)

The MA Virtual and Augmented Reality programme aims to:

1. Develop the necessary design and technical skills to understand, interpret and design digital and real-life experiences.
2. Provide multiple opportunities to develop methodologies and techniques for diverse audiences.
3. Provide industry-focused experiences in multi-disciplinary and practice-based talks/lectures and workshops.
4. Create a framework for academic discussion, personal practice and development, allowing you to engage with problems and insights at the forefront of interaction design.
5. Develop a comprehensive understanding of immersive environments and to study the theoretical, ethical, and professional contexts in which your practice is situated.

6. Equip you with critical knowledge, abilities, and methods to become an autonomous and self-directed practitioner.

Programme learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of the programme students will be able to:

Level 7

7.1 Demonstrate a critical understanding of the ethical considerations and the social impact of emerging technologies.

7.2 Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding and application of the principles and methods of research associated with Virtual and Augmented Reality

7.3 Critically appraise design work to make modifications and propose improvements.

7.4 Investigate; critically evaluate virtual and augmented reality experiences in commercial, applied and creative contexts

7.5 Identify, experiment and analyse materials and processes in order to translate ideas into outcomes

7.6 Demonstrate originality and self-direction in problem solving, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks in a professional/industry context.

These aims and outcomes have been developed by mapping onto the QAA master's characteristics, the FHEQ level 7 guidelines and York St John graduate attributes.

Programme structure

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
					Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensatable (NC) or compensatable (X)
DES7025M	7	1	Design Thinking	30	C	x
DES7026M	7	1	Creative Entrepreneur	15	C	x
DES7027M	7	1	Future Design Trends	15	C	x
DES7037M	7	2	Immersive Design	30	C	x
DES7038M	7	2	Innovation Project: Virtual and Augmented Reality	30	C	x
DES7039M	7	3	Major Project: Virtual and Augmented Reality	60	C	NC

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the table above as non-compensatable. A non-compensatable module is one that must be passed at the relevant level with a mark of 50 to progress.

In semester one, you will undertake a taught 30-credit module in *Design Thinking* over an intensive first week period of scheduled contact time. Design Thinking encourages you to consider human needs and problem solving; it establishes a position that you work for and through other people. Across a further eleven-week period, you will be expected to pursue a range of design methodologies and research investigations. It is worth noting, this is an opportune period for all Design postgraduate disciplines to cohesively interact, share experiences and primarily build a community for knowledge exchange. Running in parallel, are the two 15-credit modules, *Creative Entrepreneur* and *Future Design Trends* that promote business design led attributes within the creative industries and foresights into how design is shaping our future. This combination of modules in term one, enable you to reflect upon well-informed user centred design choices to help establish your own personal direction.

In semester two, you will undertake a taught 30-credit module, *Immersive Design* exploring a range of immersive platforms within the interdisciplinary field of virtual and augmented reality. The purpose is to understand how new technologies are effecting change within commercial key sectors such as education, healthcare, film, television, retail, and construction; this will help underpin your own creative practice. You will be introduced to industry speakers and participate in field trips, all to enhance your own professional experience. These types of activities will be subsidised, but you may need to make a financial contribution, especially when trips are residential. Ultimately, by the end of this module you will have reflected upon your overall research findings to construct a comprehensive design proposal to take forward.

Furthermore, you will complete a supervised 30-credit module *Innovation Project* that encourages you to adopt your proposal and research findings, forming a blueprint to explore conceptual ideas around a practical or virtual prototype. The module may form a foundation for your Major Project, or you may wish to choose a different line of enquiry. This is an opportunity to explore collaborations with industry professionals and, in some cases, to pursue work related learning to help benefit your own studies.

In your final semester, you will undertake a supervised 60-credit module *Major Project*. The module offers you the opportunity to build upon your previous development work or pursue a different route of investigation through a theoretical or practical outcome. You will be encouraged to engage with industry professionals, wherever necessary, and produce a rigorous and meaningful body of work that expresses your own personal voice.

Learning, teaching and assessment

The teaching methodology is informed by an in-depth knowledge of design pedagogy, and it incorporates a broad range of practices. We understand design as a practice-based discipline that also reflects upon itself, and we believe that this is true regardless of whether students of Design have a visual practice. We want you to understand the interactive relationship between media and processes, between ideas and issues, and between designer and consumer with attention to critical and contextual discourse.

The programme has been designed to meet the needs of both students who have just finished undergraduate programmes in the UK/EU and internationally, and returners to learning. It is concerned with ensuring that you can experience a variety of teaching and learning strategies across the modules offered. The modules are structured to facilitate successful achievement of the programme learning outcomes.

You will be provided with a range of teaching and learning strategies across the modules, which include reflective, independent, collaborative and facilitated learning. This process will be achieved through workshops, visiting speakers, field visits; work related learning, seminar discussions, supervised projects and supported VLE learning. You will receive technical supervision through a variety of different workshops to help support your academic project work.

Module feedback will be undertaken at timely points to enable effective progression into the next project, usually at the same time as a portfolio review to enable ongoing holistic assessment. Formative assessment will be employed throughout the programme through a range of tasks, projects, and presentations. Summative assessment will take a variety of forms including portfolio work, creating artefacts, presentation of visual works, research reports and case studies.

Progression and graduation requirements

The University's [general regulations for](#) postgraduate awards apply to this programme.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the Programme Structure section as non-compensatable.

Internal and external reference points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

- [University mission and values](#)
- [University 2026 Strategy](#)
- [QAA subject benchmark statements](#)
- [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#)

Date written / revised:

Programme originally approved: