

## PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

This document describes the **Master of Arts, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate in Contemporary Performance Practices**. This specification is valid for new entrants from **September 2013**.

The aims of the programme are:

- to encourage students to develop their own performance practice;
- to encourage students to embed documentation as both an element within practice and as an asset for promotional/marketing purposes in professional contexts;
- to explore a range of performance conventions and to allow students to draw critically upon their experiences of performance-going;
- to explore a range of theoretical approaches to performance, and the ways in which they may be applied to the study of performance as text and/or live event;
- to allow students to shape what is a relatively flexible syllabus to realise a variety of personal objectives;
- to enable students to appreciate and develop their specialist professional practice through collaborative and interdisciplinary experiences;
- to provide training in research techniques in the field of study, with a particular emphasis on practice-based research;
- to foster abilities in independent learning, as required for continuing professional development;
- to develop key communications, IT and management skills relevant for postgraduate work and the initiation and management of their own projects.

The programme is delivered over one year of full-time study (52 weeks) or two years of part-time study (104 weeks). On successful completion of the programme a student should have an understanding of the area of the MA at a level appropriate for a postgraduate qualification. Whilst being a self-contained degree in its own right, the programme provides suitable and recognised qualifications for entry to PhD study in the same or a closely related field.

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This document provides a summary of the main features of the programme(s), and of the outcomes which a student might reasonably be expected to achieve if full advantage is taken of the learning opportunities provided. Further information is contained in the College prospectus, the College Regulations and in various handbooks issued to students upon arrival. Whilst Royal Holloway keeps all its information for prospective applicants and students under review, programmes and the availability of individual courses are necessarily subject to change at any time, and prospective applicants are therefore advised to seek confirmation of any factors which might affect their decision to follow a specific programme. In turn, Royal Holloway will inform applicants and students as soon as is practicable of any substantial changes which might affect their studies.

### **Learning outcomes**

Teaching and learning in the programme are closely informed by the active research of staff. In general terms, the programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

### *Knowledge and understanding*

- an advanced knowledge of a range of performance conventions and practices;
- an ability to apply a range of practical, contextual and theoretical modes of inquiry;
- a familiarity with a wide range of compositional forms and strategies used in contemporary performance;
- an awareness of the scope of performance studies and its methodologies of research;
- a perception of the complex nature of the performing arts and the strengths and limitations of various approaches to its documentation and dissemination;
- gain insight, both theoretical and practical, into the roles of the director, choreographer, dramaturg and collaborative devising performer in contemporary performance practices;
- gain insight into performer training methods drawn from a range of international professional practices, and into the cultural contexts that inform them;
- understanding of the value and professional impact for the performance maker of documentation of personal practice;
- an understanding of a variety of critical and technological approaches/skills both required by and applicable to the specific field;
- the acquisition of knowledge of advanced scholarship in the chosen area of the discipline to a level appropriate for the MA degree.

### *Skills and other attributes*

- the ability to develop their own performance or performance-related practice;
- the ability to evaluate relevant critical, theoretical and contextual research at the forefront of the field;\*
- the ability to analyse and critically interpret texts, performances and recordings or other documentation of performance processes and practices;\*
- the ability to conduct performance research independently at an advanced level using traditional and electronic resources;\*
- the ability to articulate knowledge and the understanding of performance, concepts and theories at an advanced level, demonstrating self-direction and originality;\*
- the ability to present logical and coherent written and oral arguments of varying lengths;\*
- the ability to comprehend and develop sophisticated concepts and original critical ideas;\*
- enhanced interpersonal skills, involving recognising and respecting the viewpoints, and interacting constructively with other people;\*
- enhanced time management and organisational skills including working to deadlines, prioritising tasks, organising work-time;\*
- in addition, the programme fosters the development of a range of personal attributes that are important in the world of work, and that strengthens our postgraduates' abilities to engage in lifelong learning and contribute to the wider community. These include personal motivation; the ability to work autonomously and with others; self-awareness and self-management; empathy and insight; intellectual integrity; awareness of responsibility as a local, national and international citizen; interest in lifelong learning; flexibility and adaptability; creativity;
- use space creatively, with an enhanced understanding of how space conditions meaning, and of the possibilities available to a performance maker;\*
- apply and demonstrate their skills and insights through devising an independent project for public presentation;\*
- extend skills as reflective performance practitioners through documentation of processes and performance;\*
- undertake and critique bibliographic inquiry, including evaluation of the usefulness of a range of research resources;\*
- work collaboratively within a group, including working across arts disciplines;\*
- write an extended dissertation (or equivalent, within the formats offered) on a specialist topic (either historical, practical or theoretical), treating it critically and analytically.\*

\* transferable skills

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### **Teaching, learning and assessment**

Teaching and learning are mainly by means of sessions lasting anywhere between one and a half and four hours. These would typically combine periods of seminar discussion and practical exploration or

workshops. Where possible, these are student-led, with participants being encouraged to devise exercises engaging with the relevant issues and to direct their fellow-students in these experiments. The DT5210 Dissertation and DT5009 Contexts, Histories, Practices courses are both taught with students taking other Masters degrees in Drama allowing interactions with other ideas and disciplines. Opportunities to visit performances, galleries and theatres are also an important part of the programme and will involve occasional field trips to explore resources in London. Wherever possible the department will help support these trips through special deals on tickets, subsidy for transport etc. However students should expect to pay for at least one field trip per term (maximum £20). Students are encouraged to use these as a basis for discussion and to deconstruct the performances they have seen from a variety of critical positions. This programme will include visits by internationally renowned performance practitioners and will build on informal established collaborative interactions with PG students from other arts departments.

Assessment is by a variety of means including essays (both theoretical and critical) and performance analyses, practical projects as well as a final dissertation which may combine practical and written elements. Practical projects are sometimes carried out in a group and may include an element of assessment for an individual's contribution to group working and direction. All students undertake a summer term practical project that can take a variety of forms including, but not restricted to, a performance. Full details of the assessments for individual courses can be obtained from the Programme Handbook or from the [Department](#).

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### **Details of the programme structure(s)**

The brief outline of the programme is shown below; however students can obtain further details from the Programme Handbook. Where credits are indicated in brackets, these refer to credits within the MA. The programme structure for the PgDip is as below, with the exception that students will not undertake the dissertation. Credits for courses within the PgDip are proportionate, but exclude the dissertation.

In the **Autumn and Spring** term, students take:

DT5009 Theatre Contexts, Histories, Practices (40 credits) taught with whole MA cohort.

DT5211 Contemporary Performance Practices: Workshop (40 credits)

In the **Autumn, Spring and Summer** terms, students take:

DT5210 Dissertation - in an area of their specialist focus and including taught seminars weekly throughout the autumn term for whole MA cohort. This is followed by individual supervision. (60 credits)

In the **Summer** term, students take:

DT5212 Contemporary Performance Practices: Independent Practical Project (40 credits).

#### Part-time programme structure

The part-time programme lasts 104 weeks, beginning in September of year one. Part-time students will normally take DT5212 Contemporary Performance Practices: Independent Practical Project and DT5211 Contemporary Performance Practices: Workshop module in the first year of the programme, and DT5009 Theatre Contexts, Histories, Practices and DT5210 Dissertation in their second year. Tutorials in respect of the dissertation begin in the summer term of the first year.

The full-time programme lasts 52 weeks, beginning in September. It has four elements and students are examined in all four.

Please note that not all courses run each year. A full list of courses including optional courses for the current academic year can be obtained from the drama department.

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### **Progression and award requirements**

Progression throughout the year/s is monitored through performance in oral presentations, contributions to seminar discussion and coursework. To pass the programme a student must achieve an overall weighted average of at least 50.00%, with no mark in any element which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. Failure marks between 40-49% can be condoned in courses which do not constitute more than 25% of the final assessment,

provided that the overall weighted average is at least 50.00%, but a failure mark (i.e. below 50%) in the dissertation cannot be condoned.

The **Masters** degree with Merit may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 60.00% or above, with no mark in any element which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%.

The **Masters** degree with Distinction may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 70.00% or above, with no mark in any element which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. A Distinction will not normally be awarded if a student re-sits or re-takes any element of the programme. In exceptional circumstances a viva may be held for a student at the request of the Examiners.

The **Postgraduate Diploma** may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of at least 50.00%, with no mark in any taught element which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50% and has either chosen not to proceed to the dissertation, or has failed the dissertation on either the first or second attempt. Failure marks in the region 40-49% are not usually condoned for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma, but if they are, such condoned fails would be in courses which do not constitute more than 25% of the final assessment.

The **Postgraduate Diploma** with Merit may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 60.00% or above, with no mark in any element which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%.

The **Postgraduate Diploma** with Distinction may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 70.00% or above, with no mark in any element which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. A Distinction will not normally be awarded if a student re-sits or re-takes any element of the programme. In exceptional circumstances a viva may be held for a student at the request of the Examiners.

The **Postgraduate Certificate** may be awarded if a student achieves a mark of at least 50% in at least 80 credits and has either chose not to continue with the programme, or has failed the remaining credits.

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### **Student support and guidance**

- Personal Tutors: The convenors of this programme serve as the personal tutors. The tutor's role is to advise on academic, pastoral and welfare issues. Advisers are available for consultations within office hours. The MA Co-ordinator is also available for pastoral support.
- All staff are available via their e-mail addresses, which are published in the programme handbook.
- Detailed student handbook and course resources.
- The department's postgraduate Induction sessions for incoming students (including a compulsory weekend of practical workshop activity to meet all new MA students within the department) in the first week of the autumn term, aligned with the College's induction procedures.
- Extensive supporting materials and learning resources in College libraries and computer centre.
- College Careers Service and Departmental Careers Service Liaison Officer. The department also arranges careers evenings, usually once a term, bringing in external speakers to advise on careers of particular interest to Drama graduates. A document directing students to members of staff with particular career advice expertise is available in the departmental office.
- Access to all College and University support services, including Student Counselling Service, Royal Holloway International, Students' Union, Health Centre and the Educational Support Office for students with special needs.
- A Staff-Student Committee is held each term with representatives from each degree pathway. Minutes of these meetings are posted in the Department.
- Use of performance spaces (including the new Caryl Churchill Theatre, the Noh Theatre and the Boilerhouse).

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## **Admission requirements**

Admission to the programme normally requires a First or Upper Second Class Honours Degree in Drama/ Drama and Theatre, Theatre Studies, English Literature, Dance Studies, Media Arts or a related discipline or an equivalent overseas qualification. However, the Department also has considerable flexibility in its admissions and offers policy and strongly encourages applications from non-standard applicants (such as those with considerable professional experience within the discipline, but without the standard qualifications). Students whose first language is not English may also be asked for a qualification in English Language at an appropriate level. For further details please refer to the [Prospective Students](#) web page. It may also be helpful to contact the [Admissions Office](#) for specific guidance on the entrance requirements for particular programmes.

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## **Further learning and career opportunities**

Drama graduates do not follow any kind of typical pattern, but embark on a wide variety of careers and postgraduate training programmes (for example, teacher training, arts management, PhDs and other research). This programme is designed to enhance students' ability to develop as performance practitioners and includes methods of reflection and documentation useful within the profession. Some students start their own theatre companies, or serve as educational officers at institutions like Shakespeare's Globe, while others leave the theatre behind to become chartered accountants, librarians, or web-page designers: the options are limitless. The usefulness of a drama degree is not at all surprising, as students obtain the sort of transferable skills that graduate employers most demand, according to the Employment Satisfaction Survey. For more details on further learning and career opportunities please refer to the [Careers Service](#).

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Royal Holloway's position as one of the UK's leading research-intensive institutions was confirmed by the results of the most recent Research Assessment Exercise (RAE 2008) conducted by the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE). The scoring system for RAE 2008 measured research quality in four categories, with the top score of 4\* indicating quality that is world-leading and of the highest standards in terms of originality, significance and rigour. 60% of the College's research profile is rated as world-leading or internationally excellent outperforming the national average of 50%. The College is ranked 16th in the UK for research of 4\* standard and 18th for 3\* and 4\* research. The Department of Drama and Theatre was ranked joint 9th in the top 10 universities in the country in terms of proportion of 3\* and 4\* research.

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## **List of programmes with details of awards, teaching arrangements and accreditation**

All the programmes are taught entirely by staff at Royal Holloway, University of London, and the Masters lead to awards of the University of London. The Postgraduate Diplomas lead to an award of Royal Holloway and Bedford New College. Programmes in Theatre Studies are not subject to accreditation by a professional body. The Banner programme codes are given in parentheses.

### **Master of Arts Programme in Contemporary Performance Practices**

MA in Contemporary Performance Practices (2584)

### **Postgraduate Diploma in Contemporary Performance Practices**

PG Diploma in Contemporary Performance Practices (2594)

### **Postgraduate Certificate in Contemporary Performance Practices**

PG Certificate in Contemporary Performance Practices (2646)

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