



Queen Margaret University

EDINBURGH

Programme Specification

Where appropriate outcome statements have been referenced to the appropriate Benchmarking Statement (BS)

1	Awarding Institution	Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh.
2	Teaching Institution	Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh.
3	Professional body accreditation	N/A
4	Final Award	Honours Degree 480 credit points
	Subsidiary exit awards	Cert HE 120 credit points Dip HE 240 credit points Ordinary Degree 360 credit points
5	Programme Title	BA (Hons) Media & Communications
6	UCAS code (or other coding system if relevant)	P300
7	SCQF Level 7 – 10	P300
8	Mode of delivery and duration	Full-time and part-time, maximum 6 years
9	Date of validation/review	9/5/19

10. Educational Aims of the programme

The programme aims to develop students' knowledge of the social role and influence of media and communications and its creative cultures, as well as the historical development of contemporary media and communications industries, while equipping them with the practical skills that are essential for developing a career in this sector. The course aims to furnish students with key academic knowledge, and allied research, analysis and writing skills in balance with a range of creative and technical skills in using visual, audio and internet media.

This award is aimed at students who wish to study media industries and cultures while developing knowledge and intellectual skills as well as practice and creative skills. The award is suitable for both school-leavers with Higher or A-level qualifications (and international equivalents) and students who want to enter HE via an HNC or HND route. It is particularly likely to be of interest to students who want to study a broad range of visual, audio and Internet media rather than a single creative medium or technical field. Teaching is comprised of a combination of lectures, seminars, tutorials, case studies, simulation exercises and projects. The methods used vary from module to module. Students' performance is assessed through a variety of methods including essays, reports, reflective portfolios, group work, exams and a dissertation or project.

BA (Hons) Media & Communications is designed to contain the following key elements across its modules:

A study of media and communications strand that encompasses:

- Knowledge and critical understanding of the influences of media on society and individuals, and on the frameworks of ideas within which media and communications are analysed and interpreted.
- Knowledge and critical understanding of the development and historical disruptions of the global media industries.
- Knowledge and critical understanding of campaigning, public and persuasive communications.

A media production strand that encompasses:

- Technical production of video, audio and photographic image content.
- Management of content on online platforms.
- Media Content creation for online platforms including visual, audio and text content.

Some content production will be purpose-focused but some will emphasise creativity, as the artistic potential of the different media is an aspect that we are keen to encourage students in exploring.

As part of the suite of new programmes we will be introducing two key production tools for students to use. The first of these will be training in digital storytelling using specialised digital storytelling platforms that allow students to combine multimedia content into browser-based presentations. The second tool will be the development of a custom CMS (content management system) hosted on the university intranet which will provide students with an opportunity to learn using a simulation of a real-world web operation and to present their formative and summative assessments in a professional manner.

It is also important to the programme that we give students the option to use multiple media forms themselves as analytical tools, rather than primarily written analysis, and the production strand helps to facilitate this.

An Industry-based learning strand that encompasses:

- Core employability skills such as team co-operation, leadership, discipline in work and time organisation and creating portfolios of work for future CVs.
- Opportunities to produce media work to specific briefs for external clients, in groups and individually, and to pitch work to potential clients, and to reflect on the experience.
- Understanding the organisations and working practices of specific media industries.
- Creating business plans for entrepreneurial projects in the media sector and gaining knowledge and skills in the area of media freelancing projects.
- Opportunities to be credited for independently undertaking and reflecting on external media work projects.
- Modules which focus on industry-based learning are: Client Project (level 2), Creative Entrepreneurship: Media

Our careers learning strategy focuses on: skills, roles and industries. This expresses our emphasis on the Media & Communications programme in furnishing students with a range of skills that are key to working in the media and communications sectors but which are also transferable across sectors to others industries. We also emphasise learning about the media and communications industries themselves and the distinct roles which are found in the media and communications sector but which are also found across a number of other sectors in which our graduates may choose to work.

11. Benchmark statements/professional and statutory body requirements covered by the programme

QAA benchmark statement for Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies, October 2016.

12. Learning Outcomes of the Programme

Knowledge and Understanding

On completion of the programme, the students will have gained knowledge and understanding of:

- A1 The roles of communication systems, modes of representations and systems of meaning in the ordering of societies
- A2 The economic forces that influence and frame the media and cultural industries, and the role of such industries in contemporary political and cultural life
- A3 The roles that media and cultural institutions play in different societies
- A4 Particular media forms and genres, and the way in which they organise understandings, meanings and affects
- A5 The role of changing technology in media production and measurement, content manipulation, distribution, access and participation
- A6 The diverse modes of reception and use of media technologies and contents
- A7 The role of public and private regulation of the practices and products of media
- A8 The contribution of media organisations to the shaping of modernity
- A9 The development of media and cultural forms in a local, regional, national, international or global context
- A10 The history of communication, marketing and media technologies, and a recognition of the different ways in which the history of, and current developments in media and communications can be understood in relation to technological change
- A11 The ways in which theories, debates and concepts have evolved in particular historical contexts.
- A12 The processes linking pre-production, production, distribution, circulation, reception and use
- A13 Key production processes and professional practices relevant to media, cultural and communicative industries, and ways of conceptualising creativity and authorship
- A14 The legal, ethical and other regulatory frameworks that are relevant to media and communications production, manipulation, distribution, circulation, and reception
- A15 The material conditions of media and cultural consumption, and of the cultural contexts in which people appropriate, use and makes sense of media and cultural products
- A16 Creative processes and practice through engagement in one or more production practices
- A17 The narrative processes, generic forms and modes of representation at work in media and cultural texts
- A18 The ways in which specific media and their attendant technologies make possible different kinds of aesthetic effects and forms
- A19 The audio, visual and verbal conventions through which sounds, images and words make meaning
- A20 The ways in which people engage with cultural texts and practices.
- A21 The ways in which forms of media and cultural consumption are embedded in everyday life, and serve as ways of claiming and understanding identities.

Intellectual Skills

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

- B1 Engage critically with major thinkers, debates, intellectual paradigms, theories and principles applicable to the Media and Communications field
- B2 Carry out various forms of research for essays, projects, creative productions or dissertations involving sustained independent enquiry
- B3 Formulate appropriate research questions and employ appropriate qualitative and quantitative methods for exploring those questions
- B4 Locate, retrieve, evaluate and draw upon the range of data, sources and the conceptual frameworks appropriate to research in the area of media and communications
- B5 Draw on the strengths and understand the limits of the major quantitative and/or qualitative research methods, and be able to apply this knowledge critically in their own work
- B6 Draw on and evaluate and apply research enabled by established and emergent technologies

- B7 Consider and evaluate their own work in a reflective manner, with reference to academic and/or professional issues, debates and conventions.
- B8 Locate, understand, and apply the research ethical codes produced by relevant subject associations, and understand and comply with the ethical standards appropriate to research in the field of media and communications

Practical Skills

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

- C1 Initiate, develop and produce distinctive and creative work within various forms of writing, audio, visual, audio-visual or other electronic and digital media to a standard appropriate for the Media and Communications industries
- C2 Employ production skills and practices to challenge or advance existing forms and conventions and to innovate
- C3 Draw upon and bring together ideas from different sources of knowledge and the different academic disciplines of Media, communications and cultural studies
- C4 Be adaptable, creative and reflexive in producing output for a variety of audiences and in a variety of multi-platform media
- C5 Work to client briefs to design, organise and implement creative content that will appeal to a variety of audiences.
- C6 Undertake fieldwork with appropriate consideration for ethics, safety and risk assessment
- C7 Demonstrate professional competencies when undertaking work experience

Transferable Skills

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

- D1 Work in flexible, creative and independent ways, showing self-discipline awareness of relevant ethical considerations, self-direction and reflexivity
- D2 Collate, organise and deploy ideas and information in order to formulate arguments cogently, and express them effectively in written, oral or other forms
- D3 Retrieve and generate information, and evaluate sources, in carrying out independent research
- D4 Organise and manage supervised, self-directed projects
- D5 Communicate effectively in interpersonal settings, in writing and in a variety of media
- D6 Work productively in a group or team, showing abilities at different times to listen, contribute and also to lead effectively
- D7 Deliver work to a given length, format, brief and deadline, properly referencing sources and ideas and making use, as appropriate, of a problem-solving approach
- D8 Use a variety of computer-based skills ranging from basic competences such as data analysis to web-based technology and digital multimedia
- D9 Develop, as appropriate, specific proficiencies in using a range of current and emergent media technologies and being able to use metrics to gain insights from
- D10 Research and identify possible employment destinations

13. Teaching and learning methods and strategies

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Methods

In line with the Student Experience Strategy, the programme consistently aims to place the student at the centre of the learning process. The teaching and the learning strategies utilised are designed to enable independent progress within a supportive framework. The structure and content of the programme modules are designed to facilitate flexibility and, at times, allow students to follow their own specific interests. They are also designed to balance the needs of academic scholarship with the

practical skills and knowledge required to support graduate employability. To implement this strategy, a varied menu of learning and teaching methods have been used that allow all students to engage with, practice, and demonstrate mastery of new skills and achievements in as wide a variety of contexts as possible. Methods used include lectures, tutorials, discussions, field trips, reflective opportunities, case studies, problem-based learning and master-classes. This variety of approach, coupled with an emphasis on self-directed learning, supports the effectiveness of the learning process and fosters reflective student practice, allowing students to tailor their learning to their specific needs and aspirations. The diversity of these approaches ensures that the programme contains numerous opportunities for students to use their new knowledge and apply it critically to real-life examples.

Flexibility in the Curriculum

The programme team has sought to develop a curriculum that offers students the flexibility to select options enabling students to pursue specialist interests. In the case of the Media & Communications programme, students are able to choose modules from a range of media, communications and cultural modules (including film-oriented) to suit their developing interests. They are also able to choose research projects topics that interest them, including a variety of different dissertation alternatives, including creative practice dissertations. Additionally, in the fourth level students choose a relevant area within which to complete an industry-based project. The elective Student Initiated Module also offers independent learning flexibility in 1) the delivery method of briefings and supervision, 2) the choice of topic or project proposed and 3) the development of an appropriate assessment and agreed marking criteria through consultation with the student.

Responding to student needs

A variety of mechanisms are in place to ensure that the programme responds to student needs. These mechanisms are in line with QMU policies and procedures. Each student on the programme will be allocated a Personal Academic Tutor whom they can contact throughout their studies for advice and guidance. Additionally, student feedback in relation to the various modules will be elicited on a regular basis through poll everywhere and students on the programme also have the opportunity to act as a representative on behalf of their peers on the Student Staff Consultative Committee and MCPA Undergraduate Programme Committee.

14. Assessment strategies

Assessment

The programme team has sought to ensure that module assessments link clearly to the aims and outcomes of the module as set out in the module descriptors. A key aspect of integrative assessment has also been to look across the assessments contained within these levels of the programmes to ensure that there is a good balance of assessment that exposes the student to various experiences, that they are fair, relevant and reliable and that the assessment responds well to the needs of the students at that point in their studies.

Following the principle of constructive alignment, assessment on the programme is designed to evaluate how well students have achieved the learning outcomes of the programme. Assessment is located within individual modules, but the learning outcome of each module, clearly identified in the descriptor, is clearly aligned with particular programme learning outcomes.

The assessment strategy has also been informed by QMU's Graduate Attributes and aligns with guidance provided by the ASSAM School Academic Board (SAB) in regards to assessment load for taught modules. Specifically this guidance indicates that standard assessment load for taught modules should adhere to:

- SCQF L7 – 1 or 2 assessments totalling the equivalent of 2000 words
- SCQF L8 – 1 or 2 assessments totalling the equivalent of 3000 words
- SCQF L9 – 1 or 2 assessments totalling the equivalent of between 3000 and 4000 words
- SCQF L10 – 1 or 2 assessments totalling the equivalent of between 3000 and 4000 words
- No module should normally have more than two components of assessment.

While it is expected that the majority of modules would be able to fit into such a framework, where there is a strong case for why a module might need a more bespoke assessment pattern, the module co-ordinator has been able to make that argument.

The programme uses a mixture of formative and summative assessments on modules. These include some examinations but are largely assessed through a variety of forms of coursework, including:

- Academic Essay
- Presentation
- Research Report
- Electronic Posting
- Case Study
- Practical or creative product (in appropriate medium)
- Reflective report
- Web-Portfolio
- Dissertation

These forms of assessment have been chosen to maximise students' high cognitive level activity. Most are the result of individual effort, but some take the form of group work.

When exams are used, care is taken to ensure they are designed in such a way as to minimise the possibility of students' merely reproducing their knowledge base of factual content, instead producing work that is, like the coursework, reflective, relational and analytic.

All assignment specifications are peer reviewed by the programme team and all level 3 and 4 assessment specifications and exam papers are forwarded to the external examiner for information and comment before distribution to students.

To support the student in managing their time across the semester, the submission dates of assignments are staggered to avoid them being overloaded with coursework at any particular point in the year. Prior to the semester starting staff submit proposed submission dates for modules via school office, to an assessment tracker. Programme Leaders review this and can work with module coordinators to amend dates if there felt to be excessive bunching.

15. Programme structures and features, curriculum units (modules), credits and award requirements (including any periods of placement)

Programme structure: standard Route

Code	Title	Credits	Co-ordinator	Sem
Year One				
I1171	Studying Media & Communication	20 credits	Jill Marshall	Sem 1
I1172	Media Production: Skills and Techniques	20 credits	Mark Gillham	Sem 1
I1170	Media Analysis	20 credits	Lesley-Ann Dickson	Sem 1
I1173	Media and Communications Industries	20 credits	Robert Munro	Sem 2
I1175	Digital Content Creation	20 credits	Dominic Hinde	Sem 2
I1174	Media Production: Video Project	20 credits	Walid Salhab	Sem 2
Year Two				
I2147	Media Campaigning	20 credits	Emma Wood	Sem 1
I2174	Media Production: Storytelling	20 credits	Graham Drysdale	Sem 1
I2175	Popular Media Cultures	20 credits	Mark Percival	Sem 1
I2178	Disruption in Media and Cultural Industries	20 credits	Mark Percival	Sem 2
I2177	Client Project	20 credits	Denny Collie	Sem 2

I2179	Media Production: Online Journalism	20 credits	Dominic Hinde	Sem 2
Year Three				
I3195	Entrepreneurship in the Film, Media and Communications Sectors	20 credits	Denny Collie	Sem 1
I3198	Media, Politics and Culture	20 credits	Marty Zeller-Jacques	Sem1
	Elective	20 credits		Sem 1
I3170	Persuasive Communication	20 credits	Ann Turner	Sem 2
I3196	Designing Research Projects	20 credits	Lesley-Ann Dickson	Sem 2
	Elective	20 credits		Sem 2
Year Four				
	Dissertation – to pick from I4187 – Written I4188 – Photography I4190 – Screenwriting I4191 – Video I4192 – Group Video	40 credits	Mark Percival Mark Gillham Graham Drysdale Walid Salhab Walid Salhab	Year Long
I4171	Modernity on Screen	20 credits	Jill Marshall	Sem1
	Elective	20 credits		Sem 1
I4186	Media Freelancing Project	20 credits	Jill Marshall	Sem 2

HND Articulation Route

Code	Title	Credits	Co-ordinator	Sem
Year Three				
I3195	Entrepreneurship in the Film, Media and Communications Sectors	20 credits	Denny Collie	Sem 1
I3198	Media, Politics and Culture	20 credits	Marty Zeller-Jacques	Sem1
	Elective	20 credits		Sem 1
I3170	Persuasive Communication	20 credits	Ann Turner	Sem 2
I3196	Designing Research Projects	20 credits	Lesley-Ann Dickson	Sem 2
I2178	Disruption in Media and Cultural Industries	20 credits	Mark Percival	Sem 2
Year Four				
	Dissertation – to pick from I4187 – Written I4188 – Photography I4190 – Screenwriting I4191 – Video I4192 – Group Video	40 credits	Mark Percival Mark Gillham Graham Drysdale Walid Salhab Walid Salhab	Year Long
I4171	Modernity on Screen	20 credits	Jill Marshall	Sem1
	Elective	20 credits		Sem 1
I4186	Media Freelancing Project	20 credits	Jill Marshall	Sem 2

Modular Structure

The named award follows a modular structure that operates across the institution and delivery of all modules follows the University's semester system. There are two semesters in an academic session, totalling 30 weeks. Teaching is delivered across 12 weeks and there are a number of weeks at the end of each semester without class contact. This time is set aside for independent study, examinations, for completion and marking of assignments.

The programme adheres to the SCQF guidelines that "one credit point represents the amount of learning achieved through a notional 10 hours of learning time which includes everything a learner has to do to achieve the outcomes in a qualification including the assessment procedures" (<https://scqf.org.uk/the-framework/about-the-framework/>).

A 20-credit module, the credit norm for modules on this programme, is therefore expected to require a notional 200 hours of student effort. The exception is the *Dissertation*, which is worth 40 credits and so requires a notional 400 hours of student effort.

The named programme has been designed to combine a good knowledge and understanding of media and communications industries and blends theory and practice throughout. In years one and two students are required to complete a number of shared modules with other programmes in the division introducing students to the relevant concepts, theories, industries and production skills underpinning communications. In level 3 and 4 students can tailor their programme depending on elective choices, industry based learning and dissertation topic.

The programme is delivered as a full time course over four years, although it is possible to study it part-time across six years where individual circumstances necessitates such an approach.

HNC/HND Articulation

We have recently renewed our articulation agreements with Edinburgh College, West Lothian College, Fife College and Forth Valley College and are liaising with relevant course leaders to ensure that our new Media & Communications programme provides a good articulation route for students from those institutions, with a particular emphasis on the Creative Industries: Media and Communications HNC / HND. We are providing course leaders with learning materials in advance of the rollout of the new programme, including samples of subjects and assessments. Additionally, we are validating a specific HND articulation route on to BA (Hons) Media & Communications for college students and will support HNC and HND students as a specific Direct Entry group during the induction process.

While numbers vary from year to year Media subject programmes can have anywhere between 10 and 30 direct entry students joining in levels 2 and 3 and occasionally 1-2 students with a BA degree in Communication from Forth Valley College joining in level 4 for the honours year. The university supports these students in a number of ways including:

- **QMAvance**, a three day programme which supports students coming back to study after a break
- **QMConnect** a mentoring programme available to direct entry students matching students with trained student mentors
- **Direct Entry induction week** to help students transition from college to QMU. The programme of activities aims to help students orient themselves with introductions from LRC, Effective Learning Service and School Office. There is a student helper who buddies the students all week. For our subject area we employ one of our third or fourth year students who themselves joined as a direct entry student. The PL leads a number of sessions firstly explaining the structure and content of the programme, helping students matriculate and select electives where appropriate. There are then more generic sessions on study skills,

referencing, presentations, LRC, using Hub and the timetable. Feedback from mature, direct entry students and students transferring from other institutions with advanced standing are very positive about the usefulness of these institutional and subject specific activities in helping their transition.

- **Personal Academic Tutor system** - all DE students have their Programme Leader as a Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) providing a single point of contact which is especially useful when these students are getting used to QMU's way of doing things.
- **Longitudinal Induction** – Based on the principles of just-in-time the teaching team, the LRC staff, the Effective Learning Service, and the Employability team in student services provide workshops and support to students at various points across the academic year. Examples include workshops on searching for literature, academic essay writing and referencing in mid semester 1 before first assessments are due, using pebblepad to create e-portfolios, exam preparation, reflective writing, preparing CVs and covering letters in advance of sourcing a placement.

Choice and Optionality

Below is the full list of modules that may be taken as an elective option on this programme. Availability will vary from year to year based on staff availability, workload, and timetabling constraints. Although opportunities for elective choice exist in both year three and year four, other than where an elective is a core module on another degree programme, all of the elective modules have been written at SCQF Level 10. This means that, over the course of two years, students will have the greatest flexibility and opportunity to take those electives that are of greatest interest to them while ensuring they have enough credits at SCQF Level 9 and above.

In the second semester of each year the Programme Leader holds a series of progression briefings with students. These meetings cover the structure and content of the next year, course regulations around progression to the next level, reassessment and key dates for the Board of Examiners meeting to confirm grades, results being released, electives selection window opening and online matriculation. Information about the content of electives is uploaded to the student portal and made available to students in advance of them selecting an elective.

Code	Title	Credits	Co-ordinator	Semester
I3171	Video Production	20 credits	Walid Salhab	1 or 2
I4193	Political Communication	20 credits	Magda Pieczka	1 or 2
I4199	Reputation, Issues and Crisis Management	20 credits	Ann Turner	1 or 2
I4205	Communication in Organisational Settings	20 credits	Ann Turner	1 or 2
I4162	Photography and Visual Culture	20 credits	Mark Gillham	1 or 2
I4166	Screenwriting	20 credits	Graham Drysdale	1 or 2
I4164	International PR	20 credits	Paolo Casteltrione	1 or 2
I4204	The Video Essay	20 credits	Robert Munro	1 or 2
I4170	Student Initiated Module	20 credits	Dominic Hinde	1 or 2
I4194	Communication, Arts and Activism	20 credits	Magda Pieczka	1 or 2
I4197	Experiential Learning Placement	20 credits	Denny Collie	1 or 2
I4203	Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror	20 credits	Jill Marshall	1 or 2
I4200	Scotland on Screen	20 credits	Robert Munro	1 or 2
I4195	Global Journalism	20 credits	Dominic Hinde	1 or 2
I4106	Popular Music	20 credits	Mark Percival	1 or 2
I4152	Film and the Family	20 credits	Michael Stewart	1 or 2
I4198	Radio and Audio Media	20 credits	Mark Percival	1 or 2
I4172	Photography Practice	20 credits	Mark Gillham	1 or 2
I4173	Storytelling in Convergent Media	20 credits	Marty Zeller-Jacques	1 or 2
I4174	Television Drama	20 credits	Jill Marshall	1 or 2

I4201	The American West in Popular Culture	20 credits	Robert Munro	1 or 2
I4184	Film Festivals	20 credits	Lesley-Ann Dickson	1 or 2
I4196	Food in Film and Media	20 credits	Marty Zeller-Jacques	1 or 2
I4202	Problematic; Criticism, Culture and Social Justice	20 credits	Marty Zeller-Jacques	1 or 2

16. Criteria for admission

Standard entry requirements for BA (Hons) Media & Communications is as follows:

- Scottish Higher: Standard: BBBB
- Minimum: BBCC
- A Level: BCC
- Irish Leaving Certificate: H2 H2 H3 H3
- International Baccalaureate: 28 points
- International: IELTS of 6.0 with no element lower than 5.5.
- Required subjects: English or Media Studies preferred at Higher/ A Level. English required and Maths preferred at Nat 5/GCSE.
- Mature/Access: Related Access course – see www.qmu.ac.uk/college-qualifications

Where UCAS points are gained solely from either Advanced Highers or A-levels, direct entry into level 2 may be offered.

Direct Entry for BA (Hons) Media & Communications is as follows:

- **Year Two**
 - HNC/ HND: HNC/ HND in a related subject with B/CB in the graded unit
 - Scottish Higher: BC at Advanced Higher in relevant subjects plus BB at Higher
 - A Level: BBB in relevant subjects
- **Year Three**
 - HND in a related subject with CB in the graded units
 - For details of related HNC and HND courses, see www.qmu.ac.uk/college-qualifications

Non-standard Entry

While the centralised admissions team will manage applications for standard entry, applications for non-standard entry will be assessed by the Programme Leader to ensure consistency of decision-making in such cases. An interview with the applicant may be arranged in order to gather evidence. Entry would normally be based on the following criteria:

- Recent study at FE or HE in a cognate subject area

Applications for entry with general advanced standing (i.e. credit for previous study) are referred to the University's Recognition of Prior Learning Panel. Credit may also be given for prior experiential learning. Normally, credit given will be specific rather than general, i.e. on a subject for subject basis.

17. Support for students and their learning

QMU programmes normally provide the following student support:

- Personal Academic Tutors

- Personal Development Portfolios
- Student handbooks
- Access to Student Learning Services, Library and IT support
- Access to Student Services: careers, counselling, disability advice
- Representation through Student-Staff Committees

Delete any which are not applicable and add others as appropriate.

18. Quality Assurance arrangements

This programme is governed by QMU's quality assurance procedures. See the QMU website for more detail: <http://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university-quality/>