The University Of Sheffield.

Programme Specification

A statement of the knowledge, understanding and skills that underpin a taught programme of study leading to an award from The University of Sheffield

Programme Details

1. Programme title	Digital Culture and Communication
2. Programme code	IPAT11
3. QAA FHEQ level	FHEQ 7
4. Faculty	Arts and Humanities
5. Department	Digital Humanities Institute
6. Other departments providing credit bearing modules for the programme	None
7. Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body	None
8. Date of production/revision	September 2021

Awards	Type of award	Duration
9. Final award	Masters	1 year (full time) or 2 years (part time)
10. Intermediate awards		

Programme Codes

11. JACS code(s) *Select between one and three codes from the HESA website.*	P110	L900	P300
12. HECoS code(s) *Select between one and three codes from the HECoS vocabulary.*	100368	100440	100444

Programme Delivery

13. Mode of study	Full-time and Part-time
14. Mode of delivery	Face-to-face on campus with blended learning

15. Background to the programme and subject area

The MA in Digital Culture and Communication will help students better understand the contexts of digital media developments and the use of cultural data. This humanities-based approach to understanding digital culture draws upon historical and aesthetic perspectives, as well as practical training in digital methods to equip students to take up positions of creative leadership in the digital age.

Digital culture refers to the emergence and use of information technologies (e.g. networked computers, personalised technologies, digital images and sound) and their relationship with the ways culture is created and consumed. This programme focuses in particular on the contexts of cultural data, by which we mean digital data about human culture and society, past and present, including ancient documents, artefacts and environments to present-day social media, digital arts and virtual worlds. Cultural data draws on a diverse range of digital and computational methods for its management, analysis and communication: from data standards, citizen science and web apps, to computational linguistics, machine learning and user-centred design. The MA focuses on the ways digital technologies are transforming human experience and artistic and humanistic practices rather than the sociology or economics of Digital Culture. It therefore focuses on the contexts of the use of cultural data as relevant to the cultural and creative industries of: Advertising and Marketing; Architecture; Crafts; Design; Film, TV, Video and Radio; IT; Publishing; Museums, Galleries, Libraries; Performing and Visual Arts (DCMS 2015).

The programme will enable students to understand the ways digital technologies are transforming human experience and artistic and humanistic practices, in disciplines and organisations, the use and management of digital material and methodologies for culture and heritage, and provide links to museums and cultural organisations. It will provide students with the transferable skills and intellectual training to prepare them for a career in the information, media and communication sectors, the creative industries, and the cultural heritage sector (including galleries, libraries, archives, and museums), as well as providing an important preparation for those wishing to pursue doctoral research. It will advance critical understanding of the emergence and current state of the internet and digital technologies, develop skills in analysing, researching and communicating the cultural and artistic impacts of digital technologies, train students in traditional and digital research methods, advance understanding of digital and computational approaches to cultural data, enhance skills in communication of knowledge in written and other forms, and develop a range of transferable digital skills (big data analysis, web development, blogging, social media use). This combination of practical experience with digital methods with an arts- and humanities-based understanding of digital culture, will equip students with the relevant technological, historical, aesthetic and ethical perspectives to make informed design and implementation decisions regarding use of new technologies in their specific fields.

The programme will give students a solid understanding of digital culture in all its forms. It will provide students with the transferable skills and intellectual training to prepare them for a career in the media and communication sectors, the creative industries, and the cultural heritage sector (including galleries, libraries, archives, and museums), as well as providing an important preparation for those wishing to pursue doctoral research. The programme does not require students to have programming or mathematical competencies.

The programme makes use of the expertise of the world-leading Digital Humanities Institute (DHI) and expertise from across the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. DHI has over 25 years of expertise and an international reputation in the domain of cultural data (digital humanities). The DHI's practice-based

expertise will contribute an important component of the skills, knowledge, and employability related aspects of the programme. Students will have access to the DHI's extensive portfolio of projects, data, clients, and industry partners and benefit from the interdisciplinary learning environment represented by the DHI's work within the Faculty and internationally, as well as cognate cross-faculty initiatives related to digital methods such as the Sheffield Institute for Language Analytics (SILAS). The Faculty of Arts and Humanities has strengths in languages and cultures, philosophy and ethics, linguistic, musical, historical, and archaeological disciplines and methods. The MA in Digital Culture and Communication takes a humanist focus rather than emphasising the purely technological or sociological; cultural artefacts and organisations are the primary focus.

Students on this programme will take 180 credits:

- 60 credits in the form of a dissertation by portfolio - Digital Culture and Cultural Data e-Portfolio.
- 60 credits from two compulsory core modules:
    - Introduction to Digital Culture (30 credits)
    - Managing Digital Projects (30 credits)
- 60 credits from the following:
    - Introduction to Cultural Data (30 credits)
    - Language Analysis, AI and Culturomics (15 credits)
    - Designing Cultural Data Products (15 credits)
    - or 60 credits from F7 unrestricted modules

1 credit equals approximately 10 hours of work. This includes class time such as lectures, seminars and other classes, but most of this will be independent study such as reading and research, preparing coursework, revising for examinations and so on.

16. Programme aims

MA Digital Culture and Communication aims to:	
A1	Advance knowledge and understanding of the history and current state of digital culture and media in relation to human experience and artistic and humanistic practice in order to enable students to critically contextualise digital culture and cultural data projects.
A2	Develop skills in analysing, researching and communicating the cultural and artistic impacts of digital technologies.
A3	Advance knowledge and understanding of key production processes and professional practices relevant to digital culture including: ways of conceptualising creativity and authorship; how digital culture can be understood within broader concepts of culture; legal, ethical and intellectual property regulatory frameworks, relevant to digital culture; ways in which data are stored, organised and used.
A4	Advance knowledge and understanding of digital forms and aesthetics, including: aesthetic and formal characteristics of particular cultural forms; how aesthetic judgements and processes are constructed and experienced; digital creative processes and practices.
A5	Advance knowledge and understanding of the management of digital culture projects, in terms of methodologies, and professional practice.
A6	Advance knowledge and understanding of how culture (past and present) can be represented digitally, and how cultural data can be created, analysed and communicated to audiences.

A7	Develop skills in a range of technical, research, and design methodologies for creating, analysing and communicating cultural data and/or other kinds of digital objects.
A8	Provide students with the knowledge, skills and expertise necessary to make them employable in the information, media and communication sectors, the creative industries, and/or the cultural heritage sector, including 'traditional' skills (communication of data, knowledge and critical understanding), and digital skills (big data analysis, web development, bloggining, social media).

17. Programme learning outcomes

K1	What digital culture is, and how it emerged historically, with reference to social, cultural and technological change.	A1, A4, A8
K2	What cultural data is; what the different data types are; how it can be created (digitally); how it can be analysed; and how it can be communicated for different audiences.	A1, A3, A4, A7, A8
K3	Appropriate methodologies for working with different types of cultural data: text, image, audio, video, and 3D; including an understanding of any issues associated with these methodologies.	A3, A4, A6, A7, A8
K4	Product design and project management principles, methods, tools, and issues, specifically in relation to managing the development and delivery of a cultural data project/digital object.	A3, A5, A6, A8
K5	Critical analysis using major thinkers and debates within the field.	A1, A2, A4, A8
K6	Research skills necessary to critical and reflective practice, including: locating, retrieving, evaluating and drawing upon data, sources and conceptual frameworks appropriate to a chosen area; using and evaluating and applying research enabled by established and emergent technologies; critically evaluating and understanding a variety of research material within and beyond academic literature; locating, understanding, and applying the research ethical codes of the relevant professional practice and academic discipline.	A2, A5, A8
K7	The ethical, regulatory and legal considerations relevant to the creation and use of cultural data and expressive forms and to the production of cultural forms and products.	A2, A3, A6, A8
Skills and other attributes On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to:		
S1	Use a variety of computer-based skills ranging from basic competences such as data analysis, blogging, producing infographics, to web-based technology, digital multimedia and acquiring different types of cultural data from primary sources using appropriate methods.	A2, A3, A6, A7, A8
S2	Produce work that uses the effective manipulation of one or more of sound, images, and the written word, including understanding relevant industry standards and how they are defined and achieved.	A7
S3	Retrieve and generate information, and evaluate sources, in carrying out independent research.	A2
S4	Develop, as appropriate, specific proficiencies in using a range of current and emergent media technologies, such as using tools, software, and computer equipment relating to cultural data management, analysis and communication.	A2, A3, A7

S5	Use a variety of technical, research and design methods for creating, analysing and communicating cultural data, and/or creating digital objects.	A2, A3, A7
S6	Plan and make decisions with respect to the design, development and delivery of cultural data products/digital objects.	A5, A8
S7	Organise and manage supervised, self-directed projects, including the ability to evaluate their own work in a reflexive manner, with reference to academic codes of practice and/or professional conventions, issues and debates.	A2, A5, A8
S8	Communicate effectively in interpersonal settings, in writing and in a variety of media.	A5, A8
S9	Work productively in a group or team, showing abilities at different times to listen, contribute and also to lead effectively.	A5, A8
S10	Deliver work to a given length, format, brief and deadline, properly referencing sources and ideas as appropriate as appropriate to demonstrating an understanding of the role of relevant commissioning and funding structures for digital culture industries and the importance of working within the constraints imposed by them and the intended audience.	A3, A5, A7, A8

18. Learning and teaching methods

Learning and teaching methods reflect the specific learning outcomes of the programme: these include lectures, workshops, practical work (solo and group; often using computers), short presentations by groups of students (prepared during or in advance of each workshop), and Q&A sessions intended to encourage debate, demonstrations, screenings, seminars, workshops, tutorials, group and individual project work, supervised independent learning, e-learning, production practice, optional work placements or similar, large and small group learning. This encompasses tutor-led, student-led and independent learning sessions and use of a range of technological systems for accessing data, resources, contacts and literature, and for acquiring production skills. Some teaching is designed to function remotely using a combination of flipped learning methods with materials uploaded to Blackboard and remote learning technologies.

Independent learning is an important aspect of the programme, requiring both solo and group-based work. Workshops and seminars will have assigned individual and/or group tasks as preparatory work. Group tasks will often be presented at each workshop for discussion and feedback. Whereas the core modules ‘Introduction to Digital Culture’ and ‘Introduction to Cultural Data’ will include both solo and group-based work, the core module ‘Managing Digital Projects’ will have more emphasis on group working, as reflected in its assessment. The optional modules, ‘Language Analysis, AI and Culturomics’ and ‘Designing Cultural Data Products’ will involve a mix of solo and group-based work, preparatory reading and tasks, and assessment. The 60-credit dissertation-by-portfolio module ‘Digital Culture and Cultural Data e-Portfolio’ will focus on independent, self-directed learning.

Staff will offer one hour per week per module for individual, private consultation with students who wish to discuss their work, presentations and general progress. Additionally, the DHI teaching team will use Slack (https://slack.com/intl/en-gb/) for group consultation with the students; e.g. a project group might have questions in which the answers are relevant to everyone in the group, or an individual student might have a question which is relevant to the entire cohort. Slack is a cloud-based instant messaging platform used in distributed team-based projects, so it also introduces students to a key type of project management tool.

19. Assessment and feedback methods

Formative and summative feedback is integrated into the programme via the teaching and learning methods of the individual modules. This includes regular opportunities for feedback from peers and teaching staff on written and spoken contributions, tasks requiring critical self-reflection, tasks requiring peer review and responding to peer review, individual assessment and group assessment and feedback. In many cases, this is formalised as modes of continuous assessment which is the programme norm, with final summative-only assessments being the exception. In all cases, we aim to provide feedback on formative assessments within 2 weeks, with end-of-semester formal feedback and marks (provisional on external examiner and exam board approval) within 5 weeks.

Students' knowledge, understanding, and skills are demonstrated through different modes of assessment appropriate to the specific subject, including:

1. Short and long pieces of writing/essays for academic and non-academic audiences - designed to test subject knowledge and skills (K1, K2, K6, S3, S4, S8, S10).
2. Blogs - designed to test subject knowledge, knowledge of blogging as a format, and skills in comprehension, evaluation, critical reflection, using feedback, and providing feedback to others (K1, K2, K6, S1, S3, S4, S7, S8, S9).
3. Analyses of textual and cultural forms and practices including digital objects - designed to test subject knowledge and skills. (K1, K2, K6, S8, S10).
4. Individual and group presentations and project reports (whether oral and/or technology-based) - designed to test subject knowledge, as well as organisational, communicative and interpersonal skills. (K1, K2, S2, S3, S8-S10).
5. Critical/reflective self and peer-evaluation - designed to test critical and interpersonal skills. (K5, S7-9).
6. Group and individually produced digital objects, including cultural data products and productions in sound, audiovisual or other media - designed to test methods knowledge and skills, knowledge of digital developments and ability to produce digital objects appropriate to specific social contexts. (K1-4, K7, S1, S2, S4, S6, S10).
7. Research exercises - designed to test methods knowledge and skills. (K3, S5).
8. Independent research projects - designed to test methods knowledge and skills, and skills in self management. (K4, S5-7, S10).
9. Dissertation by e-portfolio – testing student subject knowledge and skills. (K1-K7, S1-8, S10).

Formative assessment is built into the programme via four main routes:

1. Submission of draft elements of the summative assessment for formative feedback during the module, e.g. assessment of the module **Introduction to Cultural Data** uses continuously formatively assessed blog posts of maximum 500 words with feedback provided by tutors and peers, from which the student selects a number to revise and submit for summative assessment at the end of the programme; **Language Analysis, AI and Culturomics** uses submission of a draft project plan for formative feedback before final submission.
2. Submission of summative assessments during the course of a module which can then inform student performance on later summative assessments, e.g. **Managing Digital Projects** and **Designing Cultural Data Products**.
3. Online discussion forums to which students post and receive tutor and peer comment, e.g. **Language Analysis, AI and Culturomics**.
4. Verbal feedback from tutor and peers on oral presentations, and during flipped learning sessions and workshops, e.g. **Introduction to Digital Culture**.

All students are assigned a personal tutor and offered group personal tutorials at relevant points in the programme: Intro week (introduction and welcome induction), Semester 1 Week 3 (discuss year ahead and any problems), Semester 2 Week 5 (discuss semester 2 results and any problems), Semester 2 Week 10 (part-time students only - discuss year ahead). These sessions include opportunities for tutors to share with students the best ways to make use of formative and summative feedback. In addition, personal tutors and module leads will offer regular 'office hours' for students to consult with them on an *ad hoc* basis.

20. Programme structure and student development

The MA in Digital Culture and Communication comprises 180 credits, made up of taught modules of 30 or 15 credits, and a dissertation by e-portfolio of 60 credits called **Digital Culture and Cultural Data e-Portfolio**. One credit equals approximately 10 hours of work. The programme structure comprises: 60 credits of core modules; 60 credits of unrestricted modules selected from other PGT programmes offered in the Faculties of Arts and Humanities and the School of Education (Social Sciences); and the 60 credit dissertation (Digital Culture and Cultural Data e-Portfolio).

Learning hours include class time such as lectures, seminars and other classes, but most of this will be independent study such as reading and research, preparing coursework, revising for examinations and so on. In general, most postgraduate modules are taught over 12 weeks. The exact number and duration of sessions varies and details can be found on the documentation for individual modules.

To achieve the award of MA in Digital Culture and Communication, students must complete the two core modules, 'Introduction to Digital Cultures' (30 credits, Autumn semester), and 'Managing Digital Projects' (30 credits, Spring semester), and a further 30 credits of unrestricted modules (Spring semester). The unrestricted modules include specialist modules offered by the Digital Humanities Institute: '**Introduction to Cultural Data**' (30 credits, Autumn semester), and two 15-credit modules '**Language Analysis, AI and Culturomics**' and '**Designing Cultural Data Products**' (15 credits each, Spring semester). Students must also complete a **Digital Culture and Cultural Data e-Portfolio** (60 credits).

The MA will run for 12 months for full-time students, with:

-- 60 credits of taught modules in the Autumn semester (**Introduction to Digital Culture**, plus 30 credits of unrestricted modules);

-- 60 credits of taught modules in the Spring semester (Managing Digital Projects, plus 30 credits of unrestricted modules).

The **Digital Culture and Cultural Data e-Portfolio** and run for the full duration of the programme.

Part-time students will take:

-- a core 30 credit taught module in Year 1, Autumn semester (**Introduction to Digital Culture**);

-- a core 30 credit taught module in Year 1, Spring semester (**Managing Digital Projects**);

-- a 30 credit or two 15 credit taught modules in Year 2, Spring semester (unrestricted module(s));

-- a 30 credit or two 15 credit taught modules in Year 2, Autumn semester (unrestricted module(s)).

The **Digital Culture and Cultural Data e-Portfolio** runs for the full 2-years of the programme.

A pass mark of 50 or greater must be achieved in order to gain credits for each module.

A student who has been awarded 120 credits in the taught modules and has successfully completed the dissertation shall be eligible for the award of MA Digital Culture and Communication.

If a student has been awarded 120 credits and/or does not successfully complete the dissertation, they shall be eligible for a Postgraduate Diploma in Digital Culture and Communication.

A student who has been awarded 60 credits in the taught elements (i.e. non-dissertation) shall be eligible for the award of Postgraduate Certificate in Digital Culture and Communication.

Detailed information about the structure of programmes, regulations concerning assessment and progression and descriptions of individual modules are published in the University Calendar available online at http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/calendar/.

21. Criteria for admission to the programme

Detailed information regarding admission to programmes is available from the University's On-Line Prospectus at http://www.shef.ac.uk/courses/.

Standard MA entry criteria in a relevant discipline comprising a 2i equivalent at first degree level.

Relevant disciplines might include History, Music, Archaeology, Languages and Cultures, English, Philosophy, Sociology and Information Studies.

IELTS requirements: Overall IELTS score of 6.5 with a minimum of 6.0 in each component.

22. Reference points

The learning outcomes have been developed to reflect the following points of reference:

Subject Benchmark Statements
https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (2014)
https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf

University Strategic Plan
http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/strategicplan

Learning and Teaching Strategy (2016-21)
https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.661828!/file/FinalStrategy.pdf

23. Additional information

None

This specification represents a concise statement about the main features of the programme and should be considered alongside other sources of information provided by the teaching department(s) and the University. In addition to programme specific information, further information about studying at The University of Sheffield can be accessed via our Student Services web site at http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid.