

## Programme Specification (PG)

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| Awarding body / institution:                | Queen Mary University of London             |
| Teaching institution:                       | Queen Mary University of London             |
| Name of final award and programme title:    | Master of Arts (MA) Theatre and Performance |
| Name of interim award(s):                   |   |
| Duration of study / period of registration: | 1 year (FT)                                 |
| Queen Mary programme code(s):               | Q3T1  |
| QAA Benchmark Group:                        | N/A   |
| FHEQ Level of Award:                        | Level 7                                     |
| Programme accredited by:                    | N/A   |
| Date Programme Specification approved:      |   |
| Responsible School / Institute:             | School of English & Drama                   |

Schools / Institutes which will also be involved in teaching part of the programme:

Collaborative institution(s) / organisation(s) involved in delivering the programme:

### Programme outline

MA Theatre and Performance is a specialised programme of taught postgraduate study led by research leaders, industry professionals, and high-profile artists. Graduates will gain theoretical and practical grounding in theories, practices, and histories of theatre and performance, while developing professional capacities and networks. The programme is convened by the Drama Department at QMUL with contributions from nationally leading partners in theatre production, advocacy, and programming. Graduates from the programme will gain professionalisation and increased employability, as well as academic preparation for doctoral study.

MA Theatre and Performance supports postgraduate research and practice in experimental theatre, socially engaged performance, live art, relational and participatory arts, and activism. Students will be enabled to understand, challenge and make theatre and performance as technologies for intervening in the most pressing issues of our time: of gender, sexual, racial or class identity; protest, activism and direct action; and change towards climate and social justice.

Students will learn through studio-based and discussion-led methods, through workshops, lectures, master classes, seminars, fieldwork, and professional placements. The taught component of the programme includes a mix of seminars and practical workshops.

The programme of study can be taken either full time (1 year) or part time (2 years).

### Aims of the programme

The programme aims:

- To develop a reflective pedagogy for experimental theatre and performance, (including activist practices) in order to develop critically, politically, and socially active artists, scholars, and cultural industries professionals
- To enable students to investigate how theatre and performance can reflect, critique or actively intervene in the pressing issues of our time, including social justice, climate justice, and diversity and inclusion.
- To create new knowledge and support experimentation in the practice, theory and advocacy of theatre and performance, with a view to developing expertise in the politics, forms, mediality, disciplines, genealogies, and histories of practice and thinking in experimental theatre and performance
- To sustain interdisciplinary research across performance studies, theatre studies, critical theory, visual studies, cultural studies, and areas engaged with social justice (such as critical race theory, disability studies, queer theories, ecological criticism)
- To enable professionalisation, career advancement, and increased employability for a range of practitioners in theatre and performance; and to enable graduates to work with and develop new and diverse audiences and publics
- To encourage and enable the pursuit of independent study and practice in the fields of experimental theatre and performance.

### What will you be expected to achieve?

Students who successful complete the programme will be able to:

- Think in critically, socially and politically engaged ways about histories and practices of theatre and performance,
- Make, develop, present, document, write about, and/or advocate for theatre and performance with an understanding of its professional and critical contexts of presentation and reception
- Understand and contribute to the interdisciplinary relationships between theatre studies, performance studies, visual studies, and critical theories (especially those linked to social justice)
- Situate your own practice – as an artist, scholar, or arts professional – within broad critical histories of making, writing and thinking, including international histories and contexts, with an understanding of diversity, equality and inclusion
- Undertake independent, rigorous, and intellectually searching research – including as an artist, thinker or producer – led by your own interests, imperatives and ambitions.

#### Academic Content:

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|-----|---|
| A 1 | research and examine information, materials and experiences, formulate independent judgements, and articulate reasoned arguments through reflection, review and evaluation  |
| A 2 | develop practical and theoretical approaches, in both collaborative and individual settings, to the creation, study and interpretation of theatre and performance   |
| A 3 | acquire methodological tools and bibliographic skills appropriate for theatre and performance research, including practice-based research   |
| A 4 | examine and evaluate current debates in theatre and performance studies and performance practice; and benefit from London’s scholarly and artistic resources in the creation, reception, and documentation of theatre and performance |

#### Disciplinary Skills - able to:

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| B 1 | engage in performance and production, based on acquisition and understanding of appropriate performance vocabularies, skills, forms, working methods and research paradigms |
| B 2 | develop techniques informed or critically influenced by cultural forms, histories, contexts and/or artists and thinkers   |

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| B 3 | describe, theorise, interpret and evaluate performance scores, documentation and live events from a range of critical and theoretical perspectives   |
| B 4 | develop a repertoire of interpretative skills, practices and techniques and apply them effectively to engage with an audience  |
| B 5 | understand, challenge and make theatre/performance as a technology for intervening in the most pressing issues of our time, including gender, sexual, racial or class identity, and environmental and social justice |

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| Attributes: |  |
| C 1         | work independently, set goals and manage workloads; and acquire new learning in a range of ways, both individually and collaboratively   |
| C 2         | work in both planned and improvisatory ways, with curiosity and an openness to change; able to anticipate and accommodate change, ambiguity, creative risk-taking, uncertainty, difficulty and unfamiliarity |
| C 3         | identify personal strengths and needs, and reflect on personal development and opportunities for life-long learning  |
| C 4         | articulate ideas and communicate information comprehensibly in visual, practical, oral and textual forms   |
| C 5         | use and strengthen project management skills, involving the ability to investigate, organise, curate and realise events and creative activities  |

### How will you learn?

Teaching, learning and assessment are predicated upon the Department of Drama's belief that theory and practice are mutually enriching forms of enquiry. In accordance with our aim of creating a 'scholar-artist' postgraduate programme, MA Theatre and Performance combines seminar-based and studio-based teaching and learning. Moreover, the final dissertation may be undertaken solely through a written submission; or by a combination of practice-based research and a written element.

Students will learn through practical and discussion-led methods, through workshops, lectures, master classes, seminars, fieldwork and professional placements. The taught component of the programme includes a mix of seminar and practice modules. All members of the Drama Department have responsibility for advising MA students, and supervising MA dissertations. This breadth of commitment ensures that students are taught to create and investigate performances from a broad range of theoretical, historical, critical, and aesthetic perspectives (with an emphasis on the contemporary and experimental). Moreover, all members of the Drama Department are active researchers and the Drama Department is strong in both written and practice-based research. Accordingly, the Drama Department delivers a research-driven programme that engages with the latest developments and debates in the study and creation of theatre and performance. To capitalise on London's vibrant theatre and performance culture, visiting artists, producers, critics and scholars are brought in, where possible, to offer master classes and lead special seminars, and students will attend London performance, galleries, and other relevant events.

Students' learning experience will draw on QMUL Drama's significant roster of industry partnerships with advocacy and programming organisations, and theatre and performance venues and festivals, including: People's Palace Projects, Project Phakama, Live Art Development Agency, London International Festival of Theatre, the Yard Theatre, Graeae Theatre Company, Fuel Theatre, and Battersea Arts Centre.

Practical options and events are held in the department's well-equipped performance and rehearsal spaces. Students can also book independent rehearsal time in one of the Department's five performance spaces. In undertaking practical work, students have access to a range of technical and audio-visual resources.

Students are also provided with budget for each performance. All practical work is supported by Drama Department technical staff, who will also introduce students to the department's technical resources.

## How will you be assessed?

Depending on the modules you choose, your work will be assessed through:

- essays
- presentations
- project plans
- project reports
- performance projects
- portfolios of documentation
- either a 12,000-15,000-word final dissertation OR a practice-based dissertation.

Each element of assessment is graded as Fail, Pass, Merit or Distinction. The taught modules count for 67% (120 credits) and the Dissertation for 33% (60 credits) of the overall assessment.

General assessment criteria are set out in the QM Assessment Handbook and QM Academic Regulations.

Assessed coursework is supplemented by non-assessed opportunities -- certified as Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) activities -- in semester 2. "Advanced Research Methods" is a short series of 3-4 seminars with visiting and departmental researchers in which students are introduced to a range of research strategies relevant to theatre and performance studies and are supported to develop their dissertation proposals. In "Networking Placement", students have the opportunity to work with a London-based QMUL Drama partner organisation in the theatre and performance industries. Student placements will be project-focused and time-limited (at approximately three hours per week for four weeks) and will allow them to network with colleagues in the organisation and learn from the inside about how the organisation works. Students' completion of both or either of these non-assessed opportunities will be recorded in their HEAR transcript.

## How is the programme structured?

Please specify the structure of the programme diets for all variants of the programme (e.g. full-time, part-time - if applicable). The description should be sufficiently detailed to fully define the structure of the diet.

Students follow a prescribed sequence of four assessed modules and two non-assessed module (120 credits at Level 7), followed by a dissertation (60 credits). The assessed modules include a mix of seminars and practice-based modules. The FT programme diet is as follows:

### Semester A

"Culture, Ethics, Politics" (30 credits) Module code: DRA7011

This module explores urgent socio-political and aesthetic issues in contemporary theatre and performance through a focus on material and cultural conditions of production and reception. Drawing on London's rich performance resources but also looking globally, it examines what is urgent in contemporary theatre and performance and how theatre and performance scholarship can help us understand contemporary cultures and cultural debates. In weekly seminars informed by critical reading and preparation, you will explore a range of issues related to, for example, decolonisation, ethics, bodies, gender, sexuality, finance, spaces, institutions, labour, feelings, and spectatorship. You will consider issues of social power, representation, and social change. The module will respond to emerging issues and scholarship as it happens.

AND

"Body, Action, Documentation" (30 credits) Module code: DRA7012

This module explores approaches to making performance which centre on the politics of the body in performance. Through weekly workshops, the group will be introduced to a range of performance-making techniques, and will be encouraged to devise their own methodologies for creating performance languages. The module will draw on methodologies from live art and experimental performance, using improvisation, action and task-based performance, autobiographical approaches, and score making to develop creative and critical strategies for exploring bodies, identity, and politics. In tandem with these practical activities, students will formulate creative strategies for documenting and disseminating process. Each student will develop their own research questions that are explored through practical group experiments, critical analysis, evaluative writing and collaborative dialogue sessions. The module will ask what our bodies in performance are capable of saying and doing, and how we might use them to intervene in discourses on identity and politics.

Semester B:

**"Performance, Activism, Social Justice" (30 credits) Module code: DRA7013**

This module explores how performance contributes to social justice, especially through activism. It examines: activist movements, such as Black Lives Matter, Extinction Rebellion, and activism for indigenous rights; activist practices and actions, spanning pacifism and violence, and including occupations, events like carnivals, and performances such as verbatim theatre; and intersecting theories of activism, social justice, and performance, such as Boal's Poetics of the Oppressed, Judith Butler's theory of assembly, and Christina Sharpe's theory of the wake, drawing on wider literatures in, for example, critical race theory, environmental humanities, queer theory, law, and disability rights. The module focuses on the present but explores historical roots, such as the Diggers and Levellers of the English Civil War, South African Township Theatre, women's suffrage movements, struggles for abolition and decolonisation, and activism in relation to disability, AIDS, and more. It explores arguments for activism's benefits but also explorations of its limits. It considers how performance studies can help us better understand – and potentially practice – activism for social justice, and how performance might particularly contribute to action for social change.

AND  
Choose from one 30 credit module:  
1. "Text, Self, Performance" (30 credits) Module code: DRA7014  
This module explores through practice the relation between text, self, and performance, in order to investigate critically the way performance may articulate individual experience, to invoke or confirm aspects of collective identity, and to complicate the assumed relations between performances and texts. Through weekly practical workshops and contextual research, you will explore forms, methodologies and topics including (for example): writing for solo performance, live art, verbatim and documentary theatre, improvisation, protest performance, and oral histories. Your practical investigations will be embedded in critical readings in identity politics and social justice, in relation to identity formations including gender, sexuality, race, class and ability. In your engagement with found or created texts, you will consider truth and dissemblance, authenticity and representation, auto/biography and disclosure, particularity and community, the politics of representation, and the ethics of performance. Throughout, an emphasis is placed on testing the limits of familiar approaches to creating and performing texts.

OR  
2. "Theatre and Performance: Specialist Topic" (30 credits) Module code: DRA7015  
Each time it is taught, this module is led by the specialist research of the faculty member who teaches it. The module therefore responds to emerging ideas in theatre and performance studies and benefits from the wide-ranging expertise of Drama faculty. For example, the module might focus in any given year on theatre, performance, and: ecology; political economy; postcolonial urbanisms; costume; criminal justice; young people; sexual cultures; possession and automation; emotions; the senses.

Semester C/Summer:  
DRA7711 "Practice-Based Dissertation" (60 credits)  
This independent research project culminates in a practice-based research dissertation consisting of a 5,000 word reflection and appropriate documentation of practice (form and length agreed upon by the supervisor; taken together the reflection and documentation should be comparable in scope and achievement to a 12,000-15,000-word written dissertation). Working with the support of a supervisor, students pursue their own independent investigation of the theory and practice of theatre and performance. Research development is also encouraged by a dissertation colloquium in late May/early June, in which students present their research in progress and receive feedback from academic staff and other graduate students.

OR  
DRA7000 "Dissertation" (60 credits)  
This independent research project culminates in a written dissertation of 12,000-15,000 words. Working with the support of a supervisor, students pursue their own independent investigation of the theory and practice of theatre and performance. Research development is also encouraged by a dissertation colloquium in late May/early June, in which students present their research in progress and receive feedback from academic staff and other graduate students.

**Academic Year of Study**

| Module Title              | Module Code | Credits | Level | Module Selection Status | Academic Year of Study | Semester   |
|---------------------------|-------------|---------|-------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------|
| Culture, Ethics, Politics | DRA7011     | 30      | 7     | Compulsory              | 1                      | Semester 1 |



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| Module Title                              | Module Code | Credits | Level | Module Selection Status | Academic Year of Study | Semester   |
|---|-------------|---------|-------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------|
| Body, Action, Documentation               | DRA7012     | 30      | 7     | Compulsory              | 1                      | Semester 1 |
| Performance, Activism, Social Justice     | DRA7013     | 30      | 7     | Compulsory              | 1                      | Semester 2 |
| Text, Self, Performance                   | DRA7014     | 30      | 7     | Elective                | 1                      | Semester 2 |
| Theatre and Performance: Specialist Topic | DRA7015     | 30      | 7     | Elective                | 1                      | Semester 2 |
| Practice-Based Dissertation               | DRA7711     | 60      | 7     | Compulsory              | 1                      | Semester 3 |
| Dissertation                              | DRA7000     | 60      | 7     | Compulsory              | 1                      | Semester 3 |

### What are the entry requirements?

Applicants for MA Theatre and Performance should have a degree in a related subject, with a typical entry requirement of a strong 2.1. Applicants with other qualifications who demonstrate an aptitude to meet the demands of such a course can be admitted.

Normally, a first degree with at least an Upper Second class honours, or equivalent, in Drama, English, or a related field.

Professional artistic experience is desirable, though not essential. Mature or non-traditional applicants who do not meet the formal academic criteria but who possess relevant credentials (e.g., professional experience) will be considered. In certain cases, we may call for examples of written and artistic work and/or interview candidates. For non-native English speakers, university IELTS or equivalent evidence of proficiency in English is required.

### How will the quality of the programme be managed and enhanced? How do we listen to and act on your feedback?

The Student-Staff Liaison Committee provides a formal means of communication and discussion between the Schools and its students. The committee consists of student representatives from each year in the School together with appropriate representation from staff within the School. It is designed to respond to the needs of students, as well as act as a forum for discussing programme and module developments. Student-Staff Liaison Committees meet regularly throughout the year.

Each School operates an Education Committee, or equivalent, which advises the School Director of Taught Programmes on all matters relating to the delivery of taught programmes at School level including monitoring the application of relevant QM policies and reviewing all proposals for module and programme approval and amendment before submission to Taught Programmes Board. Student views are incorporated in this Committee's work in a number of ways, such as through student membership, or consideration of student surveys.

All Schools operate an Annual Programme Review of their taught undergraduate and postgraduate provision. The process is normally organised at a School-level basis with the Head of School, or equivalent, responsible for the completion of the School's Annual Programme Reviews. Schools/institutes are required to produce a separate Annual Programme Review for undergraduate programmes and for postgraduate taught programmes using the relevant Undergraduate or Postgraduate Annual Programme Review pro-forma. Students' views are considered in this process through analysis of the NSS and module evaluations.

### What academic support is available?

All students beginning study on the programme participate in a series of Welcome Week activities, which involve introductions to the programme, and specific inductions in the use of the online learning environment and the use of Drama practical spaces and facilities. These events also include opportunities for social interaction and scheduled small group and individual meetings with personal advisers.

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Each student's academic progress and personal welfare is monitored by an advisor, with whom regular meetings are scheduled. All teaching staff hold regular drop-in hours in which students are actively encouraged to discuss their work and their progress.

The Director of Student Support is the designated member of staff with whom students can also raise issues and problems, and from whom they can seek advice and guidance.

Both the Director of Student Support and all advisors are able to refer students, where appropriate, to relevant professional service departments in the College, including Disability and Dyslexia, Welfare, and Counselling.

A dedicated post of E-Strategy Manager support students in their use of the online learning environments used on all modules.

"Advanced Research Design" is a non-assessed opportunity to focus on research methods at postgraduate level. Meeting several times in Semester 2, it introduces students to research methods practised by experts in the field and supports students to be self-reflexive about their own research methods and to develop their Dissertation/Practice-based Dissertation proposal. Participation in "Advanced Research Design" will be recorded on students' Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR).

After submitting a dissertation proposal each student is assigned a supervisor, with whom they have four meetings in May, June and July to review the scope, research plans, and early drafts or, in the case of practice-based research, demonstrations of their research. Supervisors also give feedback on presentations delivered at the Postgraduate Dissertation Colloquium. Technical staff will advise students completing the practice-based dissertation on how to document their research.

The quality of pedagogical practice is ensured through team and individual teaching, advising sessions, meetings between students and the MA Director, staff attendance at performance and research events, and student evaluations. Such quality is further enhanced by a robust system of external examining, in which the examiner is invited to attend all performance events and reads a representative sample of the written work produced by students.

Students' engagement with industry is actively supported through the non-assessed "Networking Placement" opportunity, in which students work with a London-based QMUL Drama partner organisation in the theatre and performance industries. Students' work will be project-focused and time-limited (at approximately three hours per week for four weeks) and will allow them to network with colleagues in the organisation and learn from the inside about how the organisation works. Students' completion of this non-assessed opportunities will be recorded in their Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR).

## Programme-specific rules and facts

## How inclusive is the programme for all students, including those with disabilities?

The programme aims to be the most inclusive of its kind -- a taught postgraduate degree in theatre and performance -- anywhere. Practical teaching takes place in Drama's own performance spaces; ArtsOne is currently being remodelled to offer fully accessible spaces for disabled students, including wheelchair users; and it also will offer gender-neutral toilets.

Queen Mary has a central Disability and Dyslexia Service (DDS) that offers support for all students with disabilities, specific learning difficulties, and mental health issues. The DDS supports all Queen Mary students: full-time, part-time, undergraduate, postgraduate, UK, and international at all campuses and all sites.

Students can access advice, guidance and support in the following areas:

- Finding out if you have a specific learning difficulty like dyslexia

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- Applying for funding through the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)
- Arranging DSA assessments of need
- Special arrangements in examinations
- Accessing loaned equipment (e.g. digital recorders)
- Specialist one-to-one "study skills" tuition
- Ensuring access to course materials in alternative formats (e.g. Braille)
- Providing educational support workers (e.g. note-takers, readers, library assistants)
- Mentoring support for students with mental health issues and conditions on the autistic spectrum.

### Links with employers, placement opportunities and transferable skills

The programme capitalises on London's outstanding art and performance resources and, particularly, the Department's formal links with a variety of organisations including Artangel, Artsadmin, Barbican, Live Art Development Agency, London International Festival of Theatre, People's Palace Projects, Project Phakama, Spill Festival of Performance, Graeae, and more. For students interested in developing their experience in the cultural industries, the programme offers a non-assessed placement opportunity, "Networking Placement". Students are also encouraged to participate actively in the numerous research and performance events that are a central feature of academic life in Drama at Queen Mary.

The programme aims to provide a range of career prospects for its graduates. The MA programme prepares students for research degrees in theatre and performance; enables sustained reflection and practical development for practicing artists; and enhances professional development in teaching, arts administration and a wide range of other creative careers.

## Programme Specification Approval

Person completing Programme Specification:

Professor Jen Harvie

Person responsible for management of programme:

Professor Jen Harvie

Date Programme Specification produced / amended by School / Institute Learning and Teaching Committee:

11 December 2023

Date Programme Specification approved by Taught Programmes Board:

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