



**RICHMOND**  
THE AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL  
**UNIVERSITY**  
IN LONDON

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATIONS, ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES

## **Master of Arts in Public Relations and Journalism**

### **Programme Specification**

**2015-2016**

## Introduction

This document describes the Masters Degree in Public Relations and Journalism awarded at Richmond, the American University in London, using the protocols required by *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland* (QAA, 2014). Also key to the background for this description are the following documents:

QAA (2013). *UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards and B1: Programme Design and Approval.* ([www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk))

QAA (2008). *Higher Education Credit Framework for England: guidance on academic credit arrangements in Higher Education in England.*

SEEC (2010). *Credit Level Descriptors for Higher Education.* Southern England Consortium for Credit Accumulation and Transfer ([www.seec.org.uk](http://www.seec.org.uk)).

Middle States Commission on Higher Education. *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education: Requirements of Affiliation and Standards for Accreditation.* 2006, Rev. Ed. 2011. (<http://www.msche.org/publications.asp>)

The programme's mission and goals interface with the curriculum design, content and organisation which in turn engage with the requirements of

- the Middle States Commission for Higher Education;
- the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), Subject benchmark statement: Communication, media, film and cultural studies (2008): <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements/honours-degree-subjects> and Subject benchmark statement: Master's degrees in business and management (2007) <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements/masters-degree-subjects>

The degree is delivered at a US Liberal Arts university with a degree structure in line with comparable MA degrees in the UK. Successful students complete 8 courses amounting to 36 Richmond / 180 UK credits, comprised of coursework (24 / 120 credits), an internship (4 / 20 credits) and professional research project and reflective statement (8 / 40 credits) component submitted at the start of the following Fall semester. Normally, each course carries 4 Richmond / 20 credits. On this basis students are required to earn 36 Richmond / 180 credits including successful completion of the internship and professional research project, in order to complete their degree.

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## 1. Overview/Factual Information

<b>Programme/award title(s)</b>	Master of Arts in Public Relations and Journalism
<b>Teaching Institution</b>	Richmond, the American International University in London
<b>Awarding Institution</b>	Richmond, the American International University in London
<b>Date of latest validation</b>	1 Sept 2015
<b>Next formal Programme Review</b>	2019-2020
<b>Credit points for the award</b>	36 US credits 180 UK credits (FHEQ Level 7)
<b>Programme start date</b>	September 2016
<b>Underpinning QAA subject benchmark(s)</b>	<p>QAA Masters Degree Characteristics (March 2010):  <a href="http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/Documents/Masters-Degree-Characteristics-2010.pdf">http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/Documents/Masters-Degree-Characteristics-2010.pdf</a> and            Subject benchmark statement: Master's degrees in business and management (2007) <a href="http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements/masters-degree-subjects">http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements/masters-degree-subjects</a></p> <p>For contextualization, Honours degree level subject benchmark statement for Communication, media, film and cultural studies (2008): <a href="http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements/honours-degree-subjects">http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements/honours-degree-subjects</a></p>
<b>Other external and internal reference points used to inform programme outcomes</b>	See sections 2.2 – 2.4 below.
<b>Professional/statutory recognition</b>	Partnership with Public Relations Consultants Association – <a href="http://www.prca.org.uk">www.prca.org.uk</a> tbc
<b>Language of Study</b>	English
<b>Duration of the programme for each mode of study (P/T, FT,DL)</b>	FT (one year), PT (two years)
<b>Dual accreditation (if applicable)</b>	<p>Middle States Commission on Higher Education (First accredited 1981; renewed 1996 and 2006. Institutional Review scheduled for 2016.)</p> <p>QAA – IRENI May 2013</p>
<b>Date of production/revision of this specification</b>	June 2015

**Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided.**

**More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content, and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each course can be found in course specification documents, syllabi, and the student handbook.**

**The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be verified by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.**

#### **Programme Specification Publication Dates**

<b>First Edition</b>	October 2014
<b>Revision 1</b>	
<b>Revision 2</b>	
<b>Revision 3</b>	
<b>Revision 4</b>	
<b>Revision 5</b>	

## 2. Programme aims and objectives

### 2.1. Educational aims and mission of the programme

The **Master of Arts Degree in Public Relations and Journalism (PR)** at Richmond provides a combination of practical and theoretical education equipping students with the intellectual and personal skills they need to succeed in what are rapidly evolving and increasingly competitive global industries.

In terms of theoretical skills and understanding the degree provides an in-depth academic examination of the PR and media industries, their histories, how they function in the contemporary world and the role they play in international society and economic life - especially in relation to advertising and the full panoply of marketing disciplines. It will examine the issues these industries face and explore a range of different views of both PR and journalism.

Students will also benefit from a range of optional courses in the second semester of the programme, which will enable them to develop knowledge and skills in specific areas of interest.

Practical skills in both PR and journalism will be developed from the outset, with students developing and presenting their own bodies of professional work. The practical aspect of the course will culminate in a professional research project, including live PR work and journalism and, at its end, a critical reflection which will require students to relate their work to wider thinking about these industries. Students will also be required to complete an internship or, failing that, additional assignments.

A broad education of this kind equips graduates for a wide range of careers internationally while enabling them to develop specialist expertise in areas of particular interest. By ensuring that they are critical and reflective practitioners it prepares them for challenging leadership roles in a world of diversity and rapidly changing opportunities, in keeping with the university's wider mission.

### Programme Goals

- To produce Masters level graduates in PR and journalism whose subject specific knowledge, performance, understanding, skills and attributes, critical thinking and cognitive abilities, and personal and enabling skills and attributes, prepare them for their careers and for further study and advanced training in these disciplines or related fields.
- To provide students with a theoretically, conceptually and historically informed analytical framework in the field of PR and journalism, reflecting a range of different perspectives.
- To provide students with the practical skills required to develop their careers in PR and journalism, and to be able to respond to change.
- To maintain academic standards equal to or better than comparable MA degrees offered by other universities internationally.

## 2.2. Subject benchmarks

QAA Masters Degree Characteristics (March 2010):

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/Documents/Masters-Degree-Characteristics-2010.pdf>

Subject benchmark statement: Communication, media, film and cultural studies (2008):

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements/honours-degree-subjects>

and;

Subject benchmark statement: Master's degrees in business and management

(2007) <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements/masters-degree-subjects>

## 2.3. Internal contexts

**The Master of Arts Degree in Public Relations and Journalism** features:

(a) Detailed published educational objectives that are consistent with the mission of the institution. All course outlines contain course specific objectives that are regularly monitored by the individual instructors and by the School as a group.

(b) Processes based on the needs of the programme's various constituencies in which the objectives are determined and periodically evaluated.

Each degree's Annual Programme Evaluation (APE) is a central element of Richmond's internal quality assurance and enhancement processes. APEs measure the academic quality and standards of the programme, identify good practice, record any issues to be addressed, and, from year to year, track the ways in which those issues have been addressed. During the APE process, the academic schools:

- consider student input via course evaluations;
- consider any formalized faculty course evaluations conducted;
- consider all External Examiner reports;
- examine the Programme Specification, and note any changes required;
  - any major changes ("those which change the basic nature of the programme or student experience") to existing programmes are first approved by Academic Board;

(c) A curriculum development process that assures the achievement of the programme's objectives.

Ongoing evaluation is carried out for both the US (*Middle States*) and UK (QAA) institutional reviews, and independently by departmental members (when updating courses) and by students (during regular faculty-student meetings). The Academic Board closely analyses the APEs of all degree programmes, and The University's response to the AMR is considered at the Schools and at Academic Board. A comprehensive additional formal and substantive review takes place every five years.

## 2.4 External contexts

**The Master of Arts in Public Relations and Journalism** is provided through a system of ongoing evaluations that demonstrate achievement of the programme's objectives, and uses the results to improve the effectiveness of the programme. Ongoing evaluation is carried out for both US (the Middle States Commission on Higher Education) and UK (QAA) reviews. Richmond is a voluntary subscriber member of the QAA, and the QAA conducted its first Institutional Review at Richmond in April 2013 (<http://www.richmond.ac.uk/content/admissions/about-richmond/american-british-accreditation.aspx>).

The faculty belongs to professional bodies such as the Public Relations Consultants Association (PRCA). Students are encouraged to attend meetings, lectures – including visits to some of the enormous number of firms and media organisations that are based in London, and events at other London universities. As a partner university of the PRCA (tbc) students will enjoy access to a wide range of free or discounted activities.

In addition the University provides a budget that enables schools, discipline-specific student societies and individual lecturers to invite a wide range of external guest speakers to address students – indeed experience suggests that many leading practitioners in the fields of PR and the media generally are happy to do this for free. The university plans to bring together these activities within a specific Centre for the Study of PR and Advertising, the activities of which will enrich the programme and foster high-level links with both industries.

Much of the external context defining the degree is articulated within the programme's Mission and Goals as set out above. Additionally, the US Middle States Commission accrediting body, together with the University's core mission of interculturalism, provides the overarching structure through which the degree derives its characteristic focus on intercultural issues. Close observation of benchmarking guidelines, as laid down by the QAA, as well as specific recommendations for developing programme specifications at Masters level, forms an important component of how academic staff respond to the external context.



### 3. Programme Outcomes

Programme-level learning outcomes are identified below, based on *SEEC* categories linked to level 7 of the *FHEQ*, <http://www.seec.org.uk/seec-credit-level-descriptors-2010-revised-2004/>.

Refer to Appendix II – Curriculum Map for details of how outcomes are deployed across the programme of study.

Upon successful completion of the **MA in Public Relations and Journalism** successful students will be able to:

#### LEVEL 7

- A. Demonstrate a deep and systematic understanding of key issues, themes and debates in journalism and/or PR, while reflecting on their relationship to empirical evidence and to other relevant disciplines.
- B. Show critical and innovative responses to theories, methodologies and practices in journalism and/or PR and their impact on the way the knowledge base is interpreted.
- C. Demonstrate a deep, systematic and innovative ability to adapt and apply the practice of journalism and/or PR to multiple contexts
- D. Design and undertake substantial investigations addressing significant areas of practice in journalism and/or PR, using selected and appropriate advanced approaches.
- E. Engage with and evaluate complex, incomplete or contradictory evidence while critically reflecting on the different theoretical and methodological tools used
- F. Evidence the ability to exercise initiative in organising, pursuing and reflecting upon both supervised and self-directed individual and/or team projects, while accepting full accountability for outcomes
- G. Show the ability to gather, organise and deploy complex and abstract ideas and diverse information in complex and specialised contexts, while reflecting upon and improving the skills required for effective written and oral communication
- H. Demonstrate the ability for innovative and autonomous learning, normative and ethical reflection, self-evaluation and engagement with disciplinary benchmarks

## 4. Teaching, learning and assessment strategies

### 4.1 Teaching and learning strategy

The teaching and learning strategy for the MA in Public Relations and Journalism is based on the understanding that all students are active learners and researchers and are embarking on advanced professional practice with a view to their future career development. This is designed to maximise student engagement in the programme and ensure full participation throughout. The precise approach will vary from course to course, but the learning outcomes relating to each class are designed to ensure that students immerse themselves fully in the subject and take full responsibility for their progress through the programme. The concept of progression through the distinct aspects of the degree (class-based learning focusing on theory and practice, guided independent study and practical work, internship and professional research project including a critical reflection) is integral to the intellectual journey that the students will make during their time on the programme.

A variety of approaches will be used in teaching, including:

- Formal seminars and debates
- Formal lectures, supplemented with audio-visual materials
- Informal lectures and discussions with guest speakers or on visits
- Individual and group projects, culminating in oral presentations and written work
- Group and individual tutorials
- Self-directed and directed reading

Student knowledge will be acquired through:

- Structured seminars and debates (including the sharing of other students' learning and experience), lectures, guest lectures, visits to agencies – including supporting materials
- Directed reading and use of electronic sources
- Independent research and work experience

Student thinking skills are developed through:

- Undertaking practical exercises and making presentations
- Learning alongside others, including group work, seminars, debates and discussions
- Conducting research
- Preparing assessed work

Student practical skills are developed through:

- Applying theory to practice in practical exercises and assessed work
- Specific training related to PR and journalism and related fields, including the use of different media
- Team and individual project work and reflection thereon
- Vocational experience gained through internships

The University welcomes applications from students with disabilities. These disabilities might include a physical or sensory impairment, a medical or psychiatric condition or a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, and may require additional support or adaptations to our facilities. Richmond endeavours to make all practical and reasonable adjustments to ensure students are able to fully participate in the University community.

#### 4.2 Assessment strategy

Assessment is by examination, essays, dissertations, and other forms of written work; oral presentations and group work; as well as projects and this assessment strategy usually meets the University Assessment Norms at level 7. Courses which do not meet these norms are deemed *atypical*. Atypical courses are assessed according to special rules approved by the Learning and Teaching Committee, and provided in the CSD for that particular course.

**RICHMOND UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT NORMS TABLE**

Standard Assessment Norms			
FHEQ level	Richmond/UK Level	Normal number of items (including final exam)*	Total assessment
Level 7	R7000/UK MA	2-3	5000-7000 words

**\* Reasonable adjustments should be made for assessment activities such as midterm exams, in- class presentations, group assignments, tests etc. Any summative assessment activities must be reflected in the final overall assessment count.**

Excluding all atypical courses, the following should apply to all courses:

- Final exams should normally be no less than 25% and no more than 50% of the overall final grade.
- Instructors may not fail a student solely for failing the final exam if all graded activities result in a passing grade for the course.
- Midterm and final exams are not obligatory.
- At Level 7, word count will need to take into account the inclusion of a final exam.
- Attendance and participation cannot be assessment activities.
- Formative assessments are at the discretion of the instructor and do not count toward the number of items or toward the total word count.

For courses that have atypical assessment norms and do not follow one of the above tables, assessment will first be approved by the Learning and Teaching Policy Committee.

As seen above, the University places considerable emphasis on developing its students' learning and skills. Creating independent thinkers is a part of the University's mission statement and MA academic staff deliver on this promise in a number of different

ways at the postgraduate level. A key aspect of their work involves devising methodologies, consistent with best-practice approaches within the field, with which to adequately assess students' performance. These approaches include the setting of learning outcomes encompassing each course as well as regular discussion and interaction amongst academic staff in order to set common goals for the entire degree and each of its courses.

In terms of following up with the assessment of student learning and consistent with US Liberal Arts traditions, MA classes rely on the system of continuous assessment on a course by course basis and throughout any given semester. This approach often involves the use of short essays, research papers, learning journals, annotated bibliographies, book reviews, student presentations, research proposals and general class discussion. Not every component applies to every course, but most do relate to many of the classes that are offered. There is an emphasis on writing essays, particularly research papers, at postgraduate level, and reflective work including learning journals.

The variety of instruments used permits academic staff to assess each student's developing and evolving knowledge and skills base as outlined in the previous section. For example, the research paper tests for, amongst other things, a student's ability to engage with primary and/or secondary sources of information and his or her ability to evaluate and analyze this. Site visits encourage students to engage with objects, applying theory and method taught in classes. In addition to this, the University sets specific guidelines on the weighting of coursework in order to effect balance in the process of assessment. As the coursework load for each course set out in the course descriptor shows, a variety of assessment strategies with weighting spread facilitates this across the courses, with the typical course settling for around 50% for the final research paper.

A component part of the programme's efforts to ascertain an appropriate approach to the assessment of student learning involves the use of grade descriptors (made available in the Student Handbook). This information allows the student to see the expected level of performance that co-relates with a particular letter grade summarizing his or her overall achievement level. The programme also has a formalised system of exit questionnaires and feedback meetings punctuated at key moments throughout the year (mid-semester break, end of semester and end of year) for its students as a framework through which the views and opinions of those who have experienced the programme, as students, can be captured and responded to. Evidence of this approach in action is demonstrated in minutes of meetings with students and academic staff and response to comments from the External Examiner.

The academic staff are confident that the assessment processes are sound. Much of this confidence emanates from the comments MA academic staff have received from External Examiners. But an equally important measure is the success that so many students on the Master of Arts programmes enjoy beyond their post-Richmond experiences. Those students judged as the strongest generally move on to take on challenging opportunities on postgraduate programmes and as professionals in the arts and creative cultural industries. This is testimony to their level of preparedness for the real world of careers in the visual arts, and are an indication of the academic staff's and University's ability to fulfil its mission.

### **4.3 Assessment Tariff**

#### **Academic Standing**

A graduate student is in good academic standing if maintaining a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 (B).

Graduate students with a cumulative (GPA) of less than 3.0 (B) risk dismissal from the university (see below under “Grade Point Average” and “Academic Probation”).

#### **Grades**

A 4.0 Excellent

A- 3.7 Very good

B+ 3.3 Good

B 3.0 Satisfactory

B- 2.7 Poor (redeemable fail)

F 0.0 Fail

#### **Grade Point Average**

A grade point average (GPA) is calculated each semester and summer session and is recorded on the student’s transcript. A cumulative GPA, including all graduate courses taken at Richmond, is also calculated. The numerical equivalent for the grade (see above) of each course is multiplied by the number of credits for that course to give the number of quality points for the course.

The GPA is then the sum of quality points for all courses divided by the total number of credits of all courses attempted.

- Students achieving a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.7 and above will be awarded the degree with Distinction.
- Students achieving a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.30 to 3.699 will be awarded the degree with Merit.
- Students achieving a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 to 3.299 will be awarded a Pass.
- Students achieving a cumulative GPA of less than 3.0 will fail the degree.

Students who choose not to submit the professional project, or who do not obtain a minimum grade of B (3.0) on the thesis/dissertation/project, may transfer programs and apply to receive a (US) Postgraduate Certificate as an exit award in recognition of their achievement in this area. A minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 on all coursework is required for the award of the Postgraduate Certificate.

## 5. Programme Structure

### 5.1 Master of Arts Degree in Public Relations and Journalism

The programme is a discrete and self-contained programme of 36 US/180 UK credits. As such, the structure does not follow the progressive PG Cert ► PG Dip ► MA structure of some other programmes although a PGC is awarded as an exit award in recognition of students who complete the required 24 US / 120 UK credits of fall and spring course work. It is not possible for students to register for the PGC.

The programme is delivered over one academic year full-time or two-years part-time from the start of September to the end of August. Full-time students take six mandatory courses of 4 US/20 UK credits each, spread equally over the autumn and spring semesters. In the summer semester students take the internship course of 4 US/20 UK credits and write the research project which is submitted at the end of the summer and is weighted at 8 US/40 UK credits. Part-time students take one or two courses in the autumn and spring semesters, completing the required course work over two years and complete the internship in the summer of year one and the research project in the summer of year two. Students unable to take the internship complete an extended professional research project of 15,000-20,000 words for 12 US/60 UK credits instead of the normal project of 10-12,000 words.

Details of all Richmond University's degree program, including approved Program Specifications for each program, Course Specification Descriptions (CSDs) and detailed degree planners are held in an official archive by academic year, available at <http://www.richmond.ac.uk/admitted-students/programme-and-course-specifications/>.

US credit is equivalent to one contact teaching hour per week and each course typically involves three to four contact hours per week over a 15 week semester, except the professional research project which requires self-directed learning with academic supervision, and the internship which requires part-time work placement for 2-3 months (minimum of 9 weeks). There is a ratio of 1 US to 5 UK credits at *FHEQ* Level 7 ((see under US and UK credits in the *University Catalogue* at: <http://www.richmond.ac.uk/admitted-students/catalogues/>, and Appendix I below).

## Degree Requirements

Successful students complete 36 US /180 credits at *FHEQ* Level 7

		<b>US Credits    UK Credits</b>	
<b><i>FHEQ Level 7 (Total)</i></b>		<b>36</b>	<b>180</b>
PRJ 7101	Journalism Practice	4	20
PRJ 7102	PR, Journalism and the Media	4	20
PRJ 7104	Professional Digital Media Skills	4	20
APR 7101	Public Relations Practice	4	20
APR 7105	Advertising, Public Relations and Journalism in Context	4	20
<b><i>Plus one elective</i></b>		<b>4</b>	<b>20</b>
APR 7125	Fashion and Luxury Brands and the Media		
APR 7110	Political Communications		
APR 7120	Celebrities, Marketing and the Media		
AVC 7106	Professional Practices in the Visual Arts		
ENT 7110	Entrepreneurship & Innovation Management		
INR 7121	International Relations and the Media		
MGT 7110	Managing Organisations and People		
MGT 7120	Corporate Governance		
MGT 7130	Strategic Management		
MKT 7110	Marketing in a Digital World		
VAM 7106	International Art Market		
<b><i>Plus EITHER both of the following</i></b>		<b>12</b>	<b>60</b>
PRJ 7902	Internship	4	20
PRJ 7500	Professional Research Project	8	40
<b><i>Or</i></b>		<b>12</b>	<b>60</b>
PRJ 7550	Extended Professional Research Project		

### 5.2 Postgraduate Certificate (PGC) in Public Relations and Journalism

The Middle States Postgraduate Certificate (PGC) in Public Relations and Journalism is awarded to students registered on the MA who have successfully completed in good academic standing (with a 3.0 GPA/B average) for all courses but: 1) fail to submit the final professional research project (without extenuating circumstances eligible for resubmission), or 2) fail to pass the professional research project. The PGC is therefore conferrable as an exit award in recognition of successful completion of postgraduate coursework, but it is not possible for students to register on the PGC.

### **Certificate/Diploma Requirements**

**Successful students complete 24 Richmond / 120 UK credits at FHEQ Level 7**

		<b>US Credits</b>	<b>UK Credits</b>
<b><i>FHEQ Level 7 (Total)</i></b>		<b>24</b>	<b>120</b>
PRJ 7101	Journalism Practice	4	20
PRJ 7102	PR, Journalism and the Media	4	20
PRJ 7104	Professional Digital Media Skills	4	20
APR 7101	Public Relations Practice	4	20
APR 7105	Advertising, Public Relations and Journalism in Context	4	20
<b><i>Plus one elective</i></b>		<b>4</b>	<b>20</b>
APR 7125	Fashion and Luxury Brands and the Media		
APR 7110	Political Communication		
APR 7120	Celebrities, Marketing and the Media		
AVC 7106	Professional Practices in the Visual Arts		
ENT 7110	Entrepreneurship & Innovation Management		
INR 7121	International Relations and the Media		
MGT 7110	Managing Organisations and People		
MGT 7120	Corporate Governance		
MGT 7130	Strategic Management		
MKT 7110	Marketing in a Digital World		
VAM 7106	International Art Market		

Successful students awarded the PGC are able to demonstrate all learning outcomes for the MA except the professional research project component – see ‘H’ in Section 3 “Programme Outcomes” above, and in the Curriculum Map (Appendix II below).



## 6. Regulatory framework

The **MA Public Relations and Journalism** is operated under the policy and regulatory frameworks of Richmond, the American International University in London, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, the *Framework of Higher Education Qualifications*, and *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*.

The following sub-sections include the relevant university or institutional policy documents, where applicable.

### 6.1. Admissions

To be considered for admission, prospective students should:

By the start of the programme, be at least 17 years of age and have been awarded a first degree in a discipline recognised by the University as being relevant to the programme and which is either:

- from an accredited US institution with a minimum GPA of 2.5; or
- from a UK HEI with first or second class honours; or
- from an institution which is recognised by the University as awarding qualification of equivalent to such US or UK degrees;

Prospective students should have completed a timely direct application to the University, including a Curriculum Vitae, personal/professional statement and academic reference, supplying verification of existing academic and English language attainments as required by the University.

Exceptionally, the University may consider substantial professional experience, of direct relevance to the programme, in lieu of a first degree. In such cases the prospective student may be required to submit a satisfactory extended essay and /or complete certain University undergraduate courses before being admitted to the programme. Whilst not routinely required, prospective students may be invited to interview where this is considered necessary in order to fully consider their application.

Students who are neither nationals of a majority English speaking country, nor have completed a full programme equivalent to a UK first degree taught within such a country, should normally have achieved at least CEFR level B2 in a secure English Language test ("SELT") acceptable to the University prior to entry to the programme. At the University's discretion, students in this category who are EEA nationals may be excused this requirement where they have recently undertaken a full time programme of study of at least 2 years duration with English as the medium of instruction.

Further details of all of the above, including the specific minimum SELT grades currently required within level B2, may be found at the appropriate page of the University website, where a comprehensive Admissions Policy and Summary of Practice document is also published.

## **6.2. Assessment**

A proper assessment of student learning and progression of skills gained is fundamental to the work of the university. Much of what shapes the university's perspective on this has been mentioned within section 4.2, above, under Assessment Strategy, which has been shaped in accordance with the expectations outlined in Section B6 of the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*. The University is also in compliance with Standard 14 on Assessment of Student Learning, as laid out by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. Standard 14 includes the following passages:

"The systematic assessment of student learning is essential to monitoring quality and providing the information that leads to improvement. Implemented effectively, the assessment of student learning will involve the shared commitments of students, administrators and academic professionals. Assessment is not an event but a process and should be an integral part of the life of the institution."

<http://www.msche.org/publications.asp>.

## **6.3. Progression**

Progression is built into the Programme Outcomes (Section 3 above), as they are derived from the *SEEC* categories associated with specific levels of the *FHEQ*. Learning outcomes in each individual course are therefore level-specific, ensuring an appropriate structure of progression through the degree, with students at graduation meeting the requirements of the QAA subject benchmarks.

## **6.4. Repeat of a Course**

Any repeats of courses in the taught elements of Masters programmes are subject to availability (course scheduling and course cycling).

Any graduate student who receives a grade of F (0.0) on a course may repeat it in any subsequent semester (subject to availability and within the "time for completion" restrictions outlined below).

Any graduate student who receives a grade lower than B (3.0) on a course may petition the Postgraduate Associate Dean of the relevant School for permission to retake the course. The Associate Dean may consult with the Academic Progress Committee in coming to a decision. All petitions are considered on a case-by-case basis, and in the larger context of the student's overall academic record.

## **6.5. Incomplete Courses and Re-sits**

Where graduate students believe that they have a legitimate reason for missing a final examination or failing to complete coursework, they may appeal to the relevant School's Postgraduate Associate Dean for a re-sit examination or an extension to coursework

deadlines. The Associate Dean may consult with the Academic Progress Committee in coming to a decision. If the appeal is approved an interim grade of I (incomplete) is assigned. Incomplete grades have no quality points and are not factored into a graduate student's semester or overall GPA.

Re-sit examinations are completed in the official re-sit period, which is the fourth weekend of the semester following the original exam date. Re-sits are not normally permitted at any other time.

Graduate students given an extension to their coursework submission deadlines are normally required to submit the coursework in the same timeframes as students permitted a resit opportunity (ie week 4 of the following Fall or Spring semester).

The final grade for the course is revised by the instructor on completion of the course requirements. Failure to meet the deadlines will result in the 'I' grade reverting to the original grade submitted by the instructor, or to an F grade if no work was submitted.

### **6.6. Leave of Absence**

Graduate students wishing to withdraw from the University may apply to the Postgraduate Associate Dean of the School for a leave of absence for one semester (which may be extended up to a maximum of two semesters). The Associate Dean will consult with the Academic Registrar in all leave of absence requests. Normally, students applying for a leave of absence must be in good academic, social, and financial standing. Approved leaves of absence provide students with the right to return to the University under the same graduation requirements that were in place when they began their leave, and to register for a future semester or summer session without applying for readmission. Graduate students must be particularly aware of the practical restrictions placed upon their return to studies posed by cycling and scheduling of courses in a Masters programme.

Leave of absence must be applied for and approved in advance of the semester in which it is to be taken. Students registered for and attending classes will not be permitted to apply for a leave of absence retrospectively. They must withdraw from any courses in which they are enrolled in the usual manner.

Any graduate student granted a leave of absence for medical reasons may be required to provide confirmation from their health-care provider that they are medically fit to resume their studies. Students failing to return from a leave of absence within one calendar year must apply for readmission. If readmitted, they will be governed by the graduation requirements in effect at the time of their readmission.

**Note:** *The University is obliged to report to the UK Border Agency any student who is in the UK on a Tier 4 visa but who is not attending classes. This also applies to students who are taking a Leave of Absence. The University's granting of a LoA should not be interpreted as granting permission for a student on a Tier 4 visa to remain in the country.*

### **6.7. Time for Completion**

Graduate students are normally expected to complete all requirements in one academic year (Fall, Spring and Summer semesters). Students must complete all requirements for the award of the degree within three years of the date of their first registration.

### **6.8. Placements**

The Internship Office of the University offers a formal mechanism through which students may receive work-placement opportunities. These placements are supervised, career-related work experiences combined with reflective, academic study that help students apply theoretical knowledge in the workplace. Participation in the internship programme is optional but highly encouraged because the **MA in Public Relations and Journalism** programme has been designed to ensure that students graduate with both a qualification as well as experience of the workplace. The internship has been established to act as a conduit between the classroom and a career, enabling students to meet and work with potential future employers. The internship programme demands that students interact with professionals in their field, allowing them to learn by seeing as well as by doing. Key to the success of this initiative is the relationship that has been developed with organisations and governmental agencies. Internship positions have previously been secured at the United States" Institute for Peace and Congressional Offices, Washington DC; the House of Commons, Israeli Embassy and United Nations, London; US Department of Commerce, Sydney; and through CRCC Asia, Beijing. For full details of the internship programme, please see: <http://www.richmond.ac.uk/internships/graduate-internships/>.

Expectations with regard to careers education, information, advice and guidance (as outlined in Section B4 of *The UK Quality Cole for Higher Education*) are handled by the university's Student Affairs department. This department conducts a variety of career services for students, ranging from resource provision to a CV service, and in particular through the LEAD (Leadership, Education and Development) seminar series. For full details of career services offered to students at Richmond, please see: <http://www.richmond.ac.uk/career-services/>.

In addition to these services, the alumni office offers networking opportunities where students may contact alumni working in a variety of fields. The alumni office also offers these services via social media such as LinkedIn and Facebook. Please see: <http://alumni.richmond.ac.uk/>

Graduating students from the programme progress to further studies, or to work within a variety of sectors including the media, public affairs, finance, private, governmental, non-profit and international non-governmental organisations.

### **6.9. Student support and guidance**

Every student is advised academically by the Associate Dean for Graduate Programmes who takes a close interest in the students' academic progress. Students who need a particular form of academic help can approach the convenor who can then provide the necessary liaison with the Registrar, Student Affairs and other offices forming the key parts of the academic and pastoral support infrastructure.

In accordance with the 2010 *Equality Act*, and with Chapter B4 of the *Quality Code*, Richmond endeavours to make all practical and reasonable adjustments to ensure students are able to fully participate in the University community. Students who declare a physical disability or a special educational need are accommodated to ensure the quality of their educational experience meets their individual requirements – the university disability officer works with individual students to determine accommodations, and works with colleagues in the Academic Registry and the Schools to see that their needs are addressed. SEN students, for instance, receive extra time in examinations, and have the option of writing exams on university-provided computers, and/or of taking exams in a separate room. Please see: <http://www.richmond.ac.uk/content/student-affairs/students-with-disabilities.aspx>

The University operates a well-staffed Student Affairs department headed by the Vice-President for Students that provides services intended to support and encourage student welfare, safety and development. This department oversees medical registration of students and provides counseling services. It also organizes a range of extracurricular activities and travel designed to further enhance students' educational experiences. The university [Student Charter](#) outlines responsibilities and expectations of both the students and the university, and the [Conduct Code](#) addresses expectations as to social conduct. Non-academic appeals and complaints and disciplinary incidents are overseen by the Student Affairs Department.

In its 2013 [IRENI review](#), Richmond was commended for “The care and attention paid to academic and pastoral support for international students throughout their association with the University”.

The University recognises that different demands are placed on full-time and part-time students and its guidance, support and advice systems are in place for all students.

## Appendix I: Credit Articulation

### Credit Equivalence

In this document and other University literature, US credit is articulated in terms of US and UK credit frameworks.

At the Masters degree level (see below for discussion of Levels on the *FHEQ*), UK MA students obtain a minimum total of 180 UK credits, which equates to 90 ECTS credits or 36 US credits.

American Masters degrees typically award 30-36 credits. Richmond's degree awards 36. The ratio for credit translation at the Masters level (Level 7) is therefore as follows:

	US credit	ECTS credit	UK credit
UK Level 7	1	2.5	5
Required minimum number of credits for MA	36	90	180 (120 of which must be at Level 7)
Richmond MA in Public Relations and Journalism	36	90	180 (at Level 7)

### Levels

The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in the UK defines the MA degree in higher education in terms of a series of numbered levels, as follows:

Level 4-6 (previously HE1-3) – years 1 to 3 of a UK undergraduate degree

Level 7 (previously M) – UK Masters degrees and postgraduate diplomas and certificates

Level 8 (previously D) – UK Doctoral degrees

Each level is illustrated by, and each award determined by, reference to a qualification descriptor. The level 7 descriptors can be found in the *FHEQ* (QAA, August 2008).

### References

QAA. *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland*. November 2014.

QAA. *The Higher Education Credit Framework for England: guidance on academic credit arrangements in higher education*. August 2008.

QAA. *Academic Credit in Higher Education in England – an introduction*. 2009

European Communities. *ECTS Users' Guide*. February 2009; *ECTS Users' Guide—Draft Revision* January 2015.

## Appendix II: Curriculum Map

The table below table indicates which core courses assume responsibility for delivering and assessing (x) particular programme learning outcomes.

### FHEQ Level 7 -- MA in Public Relations and Journalism

Course ID	Course Title	Learning Outcomes							
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
PRJ 7101	Journalism Practice			x	x		x	x	
PRJ 7102	PR, Journalism and the Media	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
PRJ 7104	Professional Digital Media Skills		x	x	x				
APR 7101	Public Relations Practice			x	x		x	x	
APR 7105	Advertising, PR, and Journalism in Context	x	x			x		x	
Plus Either									
PRJ 7902	Internship			x			x		x
PRJ 7500	Professional Research Project	x	x		x		x	x	x
Or									
PRJ 7550	Extended Professional Research Project	x	x		x		x	x	x