	PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION	Newcastle University

1	**Awarding Institution**	Newcastle University
2	**Teaching Institution**	Newcastle University
3	**Final Award**	MA (Master of Arts)
4	**Programme Title**	Media and Public Relations
5	**UCAS/Programme Code**	4076F/4076P
6	**Programme Accreditation**	n/a
7	**QAA Subject Benchmark(s)**	n/a
8	**FHEQ Level**	Masters
9	**Date written/revised**	April 2008

10	**Programme Aims**

1. To provide learning opportunities to students to acquire a sophisticated knowledge and understanding of the theory and practices of public relations in the context of a critical analysis of the media at a national and global level.

2. To advance the academic ability of media practitioners at postgraduate level by providing them with the opportunity to extend and develop their academic knowledge as media practitioners and to a) enhance their understanding of the social, cultural, economic and political contexts in which news production and journalistic processes work, and b) to gain rigorous skills in research methods and conceptual tools in the study of media and cultural theory in order to produce scholarly research of a high standing in the field of Media and Public Relations.

3. To broaden and consolidate students' understanding of the complex, pervasive and increasingly internationalised cultures of the production and consumption of media output.

4. To maximise the recruitment potential of the School and take full advantage of its existing teaching and research strengths and resources. The programme will do this by making use of existing modules on the MA Cross-Cultural Communication and Media Studies and it will build upon the success of the flourishing undergraduate programme, the BA Media, Communication, and Cultural Studies where applications have doubled in the last two years.

5. To draw on the expertise of a highly research-active team in media, communication and cultural studies whose research publications are current and cutting edge, thereby benefiting the students.

6. To draw on the international background and research of the team by providing students learning opportunities to develop a critical awareness of cross-cultural and trans-national issues and contexts in Media and Public Relations through comparative analysis and global contextualisation of the subject matter.

7. To offer international students the opportunity to share modules with home students by offering a controlled number of relevant undergraduate modules at Masters level.

8. To prepare students for further study at PhD level by providing them with methodological rigour and the resources needed for independent study.

9. To provide a programme with learning outcomes that corresponds to those defined by the FHEQ as being at Masters Level.

10. To meet government agendas on links with industries by enhancing the potential for collaboration between the University and media industries nationally and trans-nationally.

11   Learning Outcomes

Intended learning outcomes for the Degree Programme conform to those defined by the HEQF as being at Masters Level. On completion, graduates of this programme will have developed a critical understanding of media, culture and society and of the skills associated with the practices of public relations. The programme therefore provides students with the opportunity to develop and demonstrate:

    a) conceptual, theoretical and methodological rigour in the application of knowledge to Media Studies through the two core modules Media Analysis and Methodologies and the related options;

    b) the skills required to enhance employability in the profession of public relations as provided through the modules Strategies and Management in Public Relations and Public Affairs and Social Responsibility, as well through related options such as Science Communication, Writing for the Media, Media Law, Professional Sub-editing.

Graduates of this Degree programme will be able to demonstrate analytical, critical skills needed to conduct and evaluate current research and advanced scholarship, and the practical skills associated with the profession of Public Relations.

Knowledge and Understanding

Students on this programme will develop and demonstrate:

A1. a critical and sophisticated understanding of media, culture and society

A2. an advanced knowledge and understanding of the key approaches to theorising and analysing media and public relations, which is informed by cutting edge research;

A3. an in-depth knowledge and understanding of media law and advertising regulations in a transnational context as it pertains to the public relations profession and media industry;

A4. an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of different types of data dissemination and analysis in media, communication, journalism and public relations;

A5. an in-depth understanding of key production processes and professional practices relevant to media, cultural and communicative industries.

A6. an advanced understanding and knowledge of the ethical responsibilities that a scholar and investigator has towards the object of research;

A7.an in-depth knowledge and understanding of professional methods and codes of practice as laid down by the Chartered Institute of Public Relations;

A8. an advanced knowledge and understanding of the power relations inherent in research fieldwork;

Teaching and Learning Methods

The teaching strategy is to offer a combination of lectures, interactive seminars, workshops and small group tutorials. Students will develop skills in defining and formulating research issues; skills in methodology, data collection, analysis, bibliographic work, and competence in the critical use of sources in the following ways: seminars, independent reading and hands-on experience through project work and research for the dissertation. Students acquire knowledge of ethical issues through team work, presentations, case studies and independent reading.

Assessment Strategy

A full range of assessment methods - including group and individual oral presentations, case-study projects, written essay assignments, tests, professional plans and profiles, methodological critiques of selected research studies, practice-based reports, individual and group oral presentations, portfolio of media production work and critical evaluation will be employed. These will reflect the aims and objectives of the programme and the postgraduate level of the degree.

Intellectual Skills

Students on this programme will develop and demonstrate:

B1. effective problem solving strategies and high level analytical and planning processes;

B2. the capacity to define and formulate research problems, questions and hypotheses;

B3. the ability to reflect on the relationship between theory and practice;

B4. conceptual, theoretical and methodological rigour in the application of knowledge to Media Studies through the core modules Media Analysis, Strategies and Management in PR, Public Affairs and Social Responsibility and the related options;

B5. the analytical and critical skills needed to assess and conduct current research and engage in advanced analysis;

B6. the ability to critically analyse key theoretical and practical concerns;

B7 the ability to assess the strengths and weaknesses of different types of data and to extract information from relevant data sources.

Teaching and Learning Methods

The teaching strategy consists of a combination of lectures, seminars, tutorials, practical workshops, and fieldwork utilising both discipline-specific and team-based problem solving exercises. Students will be provided with teaching and learning strategies that promote a sophisticated understanding of the relationship between theory and practice and of cross-cultural and trans-national issues and contexts in media and journalism through comparative analysis and global contextualisation of the subject matter. Students will learn through completing assignments, practical exercises, professional project work, and a research dissertation.

Assessment Strategy

Cognitive Skills will be assessed by the dissertation and oral presentations, professional and practical projects

Practical Skills

Students on this programme will develop and demonstrate:

C1. the complex practical skills to plan, deliver and assess a public relations event for the public, private or voluntary sector;

C2. practical skills needed for the production of various materials necessary for a public relations campaign;

C3. bibliographic skills needed to identify and retrieve relevant material, including books, journal articles, conference proceedings, statistical data, government and other public reports including resources available online and on the web;

C4. a sophisticated use of methods of evaluating a range of sources, texts and practices using theoretical frameworks that pertain to media, communication and cultural studies;

C5. skills to set up a campaign network for the optimal delivery of a PR campaign;

C6. skills to deliver PR campaign messages in a wide variety of media and a good understanding of the characteristics of these media;

C7. skills to produce effective press releases in accordance of journalistic practices.

Teaching and Learning Methods

The teaching strategy is to provide subject specific and professional skills through a range of specialist modules. Students will be provided with teaching and learning strategies that promote a sophisticated understanding of cross-cultural and trans-national issues and contexts in media and public relations through comparative analysis and global contextualisation of the subject matter. Students will also be given support and guidance by their module leaders on both Core and Option Modules. Each student will be allocated a personal dissertation supervisor who will discuss all aspects of research in the production of the dissertation, on an individual basis. Students will work in teams and will present their work orally. They will learn through participation in seminars and lectures, and through the preparation of oral presentations, dissertation and professional project work.

Assessment Strategy

These will be assessed through oral presentations, professional and practical reports, written assignments and the dissertation

Transferable/Key Skills

Students on this programme will develop and demonstrate:

D1. the skills to communicate and present research findings effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences;

D2. the skills of effective written and oral communication and presentation;

D3. the capacity to manage research effectively, including planning, implementing and producing reports, assignments, and related projects on time;

D4. the skills to manage workloads and to work to deadlines;

D5. the skills to work effectively, both independently and as member of teams in both an academic and professional context.

Teaching and Learning Methods

The teaching strategy consists of a range of written assessment including essays, reports, written tests, projects, and other practical work and seminars/workshops in which students are required to make team and individual presentations. They provide opportunities for the students to co-operate, develop ideas, improve problem-solving capacity and work to deadlines. The dissertation provides specific opportunities for skills development through the construction of a research plan, through synthesising knowledge and by participating in dissertation workshops on the methodologies module and individual meetings with supervisors.

Assessment Strategy

Key skills will be assessed through oral presentations, practice-based reports, tests, written assignments and the dissertation.

Assessments will test, as appropriate, theoretical, empirical and professional knowledge and understanding, together with their application to the profession of public relations.

The assessments will reflect the postgraduate nature and aims of the course. They permit assessment on an equal footing for students from a wide range of cultural, national and disciplinary backgrounds.

12	Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features
Basic structure of the programme	

The MA Media and Public Relations combines theoretical, research-based and vocational elements to provide students with advanced proficiency in academic research and scholarship combined with professional skills. The programme comprises 120 credits of taught modules and a 60 credit dissertation.

All students will be required to take 3 compulsory 20 credit modules (NB Part-time students will normally be expected to complete these compulsory core modules in their first year of registration.

Core:
COM8057 Media Analysis (20 credits)
COM8058 Methodologies: Researching Media, Culture & Society (20 credits)
COM8060 Strategies and Management in PR (20 credits)
COM8164 Public Affairs and Social Responsibility (20 credits)

All students will be required to take a compulsory research dissertation of 60 credits (NB students will not be allowed to register for this module until they have successfully completed the four compulsory taught modules).

Students may choose 2 of the following optional modules:

Optional:
COM8069 Multimedia Journalism: Principles and Practice (20 credits)
COM8063 Professional Sub-editing and Design (20 credits)
COM8062 Science Communication (20 credits)

COM8163 News and Journalism: Critical Studies(20 credits)
COM8059 Media Law (20 credits)
COM8001 PR in the Digital Age (20 credits)
COM8070 Building a PR Campaign (20 credits)

Students can also choose from modules also available to undergraduate students on the BA Media, Communication and Cultural Studies. Students are therefore not permitted to take more than one module from this group:

COM8073 Communication, Emotion and Psychoanalysis (20 credits)
COM8077 Visual Culture (20 credits)
COM8078 Globalisation and National Culture (20 credits)
COM8067 Television studies (20 credits)
COM8063 Advertising and Consumption (20 credits)
COM8071 Sex, Sexuality & Desire (20 credits)

Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)

The key factor that distinguishes this course from other Masters programmes in Media and Public Relations is the combining of a research-led and critical approach with practical components that allow students to develop professional skills. The range of assessment reflects this diversity. Assessment requires students to:
a) engage with theories and concepts;
b) provide research evidence and engage with relevant literature;
c) demonstrate a critical understanding of research methodology;
d) develop practical skills of direct relevance to the profession of public relations.

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme/

| 13 | **Criteria for admission** |

Entry qualifications

A candidate must either be a graduate of this or another approved University or awarding body with a 2nd class or above degree in the Social Sciences or Humanities; or hold another qualification approved by the Graduate School of the Faculty of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences as equivalent to a degree of a university in the United Kingdom. Preferred subjects include Media Studies, Sociology, Communication Studies, Cultural Studies, Social Psychology, History, English.

Admissions policy/selection tools

Based on application form in most cases.

Non-standard Entry Requirements

Special cases will be considered individually by the DPD, for example an applicant with a relevant professional qualification and experience in public relations or journalism will be considered.

Additional Requirements

None

Level of English Language capability

Overseas candidates whose first language is not English must have IELTS overall 6.5 with at least 6.0 for the written component.

Overseas candidates with IELTS 6.0 or with IELTS 6.5 but writing lower than 6.0 will be offered places conditional on undertaking at least 5 weeks Pre-sessional English Language Training.

14	Support for Student Learning

Induction
During the first week of the first semester students attend an induction programme. New students will be given a general introduction to University life and the University's principle support services and general information about the School and their programme, as described in the Degree Programme Handbook. New and continuing students will be given detailed programme information and the timetable of lectures/practicals/labs/ tutorials/etc. The International Office offers an additional induction programme for overseas students (see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/international/arrival/jan/index.phtml

Study skills support
Students will learn a range of Personal Transferable Skills, including Study Skills, as outlined in the Programme Specification. Some of this material, e.g. time management is covered in the appropriate Induction Programme. Students are explicitly tutored on their approach to both group and individual projects.

Numeracy support is available through Maths Aid. Further details are available at:

http://www.ncl.ac.uk/library/news_details.php?news_id=159 Help with academic writing is available from the Writing Centre. Details can be obtained from Alicia.Cresswell@ncl.ac.uk

Academic support
The initial point of contact for a student is with a lecturer or module leader, or their tutor (see below) for more generic issues. Thereafter the Degree Programme Director or Head of School may be consulted. Issues relating to the programme may be raised at the Staff-Student Committee, and/or at the Board of Studies.

Pastoral support
All students are assigned a personal tutor whose responsibility is to monitor the academic performance and overall well-being of their tutees. Details of the personal tutor system can be found at http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support/tutor.phtml
In addition the University offers a range of support services, including the Student Advice Centre, the Counselling and Wellbeing team, the Mature Student Support Officer, and a Childcare Support Officer, see
http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support/welfare/index.phtml

Support for students with disabilities
The University's Disability Support Service provides help and advice for disabled students at the University - and those thinking of coming to Newcastle. It provides individuals with: advice about the University's facilities, services and the accessibility of campus; details about the technical support available; guidance in study skills and advice on financial support arrangements; a resources room with equipment and software to assist students in their studies. For further details see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/disability-support/

Learning resources
The University's main learning resources are provided by the Robinson and Walton Libraries (for books, journals, online resources), and Information Systems and Services, which supports campus-wide computing facilities, see
http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/degrees/facilities/index.phtml

All new students whose first language is not English are required to take an English Language Proficiency Test. This is administered by INTO Newcastle University Centre on behalf of Newcastle University. Where appropriate, in-sessional language training can be provided. The INTO Newcastle University Centre houses a range of resources which may be particularly appropriate for those interested in an Erasmus exchange. See
http://ncl.ac.uk/langcen/index.htm

15	Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

Module reviews
All modules are subject to review by questionnaires which are considered by the Board of Studies. Changes to, or the introduction of new, modules are considered at the School Teaching and Learning Committee and at the Board of Studies. Student opinion is sought at the Staff-Student Committee and/or the Board of Studies. New modules and major changes to existing modules are subject to approval by the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee.

Programme reviews
The Board of Studies conducts an Annual Monitoring and Review of the degree programme and reports to Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee.

External Examiner reports
External Examiner reports are considered by the Board of Studies. The Board responds to these reports through Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee. External Examiner reports are shared with institutional student representatives, through the Staff-Student Committee.

Student evaluations
All modules, and the degree programme, are subject to review by student questionnaires. Informal student evaluation is also obtained at the Staff-Student Committee, and the Board of Studies.

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback
Feedback is channelled via the Staff-Student Committee and the Board of Studies.

Faculty and University Review Mechanisms
The programme is subject to the University's Internal Subject Review process, see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/aqss/qsh/internal_subject_review/index.php

Accreditation reports
N/A

Additional mechanisms
N/A

16	Regulation of assessment

Pass mark
The pass mark is 50 (Postgraduate programmes)

Course requirements
Progression is subject to the University's Masters Degree Progress Regulations, Taught and Research (http://www.ncl.ac.uk/calendar/university.regs/tpmdepr.pdf) and Examination Conventions for Taught Masters Degrees (http://www.ncl.ac.uk/calendar/university.regs/tpmdeprexamconv.pdf). Limited compensation up to 40 credits of the taught element and down to a mark of 40 is possible and there are reassessment opportunities, with certain restrictions.

Common Marking Scheme

The University employs a common marking scheme, which is specified in the Taught Postgraduate Examination Conventions, namely:

Summary description applicable to postgraduate Masters programmes	Summary description applicable to postgraduate Certificate and Diploma programmes

<50	Fail	<50	Fail
50-59	Pass	50 or above	Pass
60-69	Pass with Merit		
70 or above	Pass with Distinction		

Role of the External Examiner
An External Examiner, a distinguished member of the subject community, is appointed by Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee, after recommendation from the Board of Studies. The External Examiner is expected to:

    See and approve examination papers
    Moderate examination and coursework marking
    Attend the Board of Examiners
    Report to the University on the standards of the programme

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In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

The University Prospectus (see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/)

The School Brochure (contact enquiries@ncl.ac.uk)

The University Regulations (see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/calendar/university.regs/)

The Degree Programme Handbook

Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. The accuracy of the information contained is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

Mapping of Intended Learning Outcomes onto Curriculum/Modules

Module	Type	Intended Learning Outcomes			
		A	**B**	**C**	**D**
COM8001 PR in the Digital Age	Optional	1	1,4,7	1,2,3,4,5,6,7	1,2,3,4,5
COM8057 Media Analysis	Comp	1,2,4,5,8	1,2,3,4,5,6,7	3,4	1,2,3,4,5
COM8058 Methodologies: Researching Media, Society & Culture	Comp	3,4,5,6,7 8	3,7	3,4	1,2,3,4,5
COM8059 Media Law	Comp	2,3,4,5,7 8	3,4,5	2,3,4,7	1,2,3,4,5
COM8060 Strategies and Management in PR	Optional	1	1,4,7	1,2,3,4,5,6,7	1,2,3,4,5
COM8061 Professional sub-editing	Optional	4,5	3,7	2,7	1,2,3,4,5
COM8063 Advertising and Consumption	Optional	1	4,5,6	3,4	1,2,3,4,5
COM8067 Television Studies	Optional	1,2,4	2,4,5,6,7	3,4	1,2,3,4,5
COM8069 Multimedia Journalism	Comp	3,4	3,7	2,3,4,7	1,2,3,4,5
COM8070 Building a PR Campaign	Optional	1	1,4,7	1,2,3,4,5,6,7	1,2,3,4,5
COM8071 Sex, Sexuality & Desire	Optional	1	4,5,6	3,4	1,2,3,4,5
COM8073 Communication, Emotion, and Psychoanalysis	Optional	2	4,5,6	3,4	1,2,3,4,5
COM8077 Visual Culture	Optional	1	4,5,6	3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5
COM8078 Globalisation and National Culture	Optional	1	4,5,6	3,4	1,2,3,4,5
COM8163 News & Journalism: Critical Studies	Optional	1,2,3,4,5 6,7,8	1,2,3,4,6, 7	3,4	1,2,3,4,5
COM8164 Public Affairs and Social Responsibility	Optional	1	1,4,7	1,2,3,4,5,6,7	1,2,3,4,5