

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	PG Certificate
4	Programme Title	Research Training in the Social Sciences/Arts and Humanities
5	UCAS/Programme Code	3044
6	Programme Accreditation	Not appropriate
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	ESRC and AHRC Postgraduate Research Training Guidelines
8	FHEQ Level	Masters (M)
9	Date written/revised	February 2008

10 Programme Aims

1. To provide students with the research preparation necessary to conduct PhD research.
2. To provide the knowledge, understanding, skills and aptitudes necessary to undertake advanced research in the social sciences and the arts and humanities.
3. To provide the quantitative and qualitative research methods and techniques necessary to conduct Arts, Humanities and Social Science research.
4. To provide the information skills required to conduct research in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.
5. To produce graduates who are capable of successfully undertaking and completing advanced research in the public sector, or the private sector.
6. To provide a qualification which fully meets the learning outcomes at Masters level in the national HE qualifications framework.
7. To provide a programme which complies with University policies and procedures.

11 Learning Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas. The programme outcomes have references to the postgraduate research training guidelines for the ESRC and for the AHRC.

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should:

- A1 appreciation of the theoretical traditions and concepts that influence and shape disciplines and the implications (both practical and methodological) of such theories for research within the social sciences and the arts and humanities.
- A2 awareness and understanding of the variety of philosophical principles and epistemological frameworks that underpin approaches to enquiry in the social sciences and the arts and humanities.

Teaching and Learning Methods

The theoretical traditions and concepts that influence and shape disciplines (A1), and the philosophical principles and epistemological frameworks that underpin enquiry (A2) are explored through lectures and group work in *The Nature of Explanation and Enquiry*. The module opens with a series of lectures on the philosophical foundations of knowledge, delivered by the module leader, and then a range of contemporary epistemological debates at the forefront of various disciplines are introduced by expert colleagues from around the Faculty.

Assessment Strategy

The knowledge and understanding outlined in A1 and A2 will be assessed via written answers to a variety of questions in one assessment for the above module. The assessment includes multiple choice questions on specific core aspects and four 500 word essays to assess broad, but thorough, knowledge and understanding of the range of philosophical topics covered, and critical awareness of the contemporary debates.

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

B Training in Research Methods

The programme provides the opportunity for students to develop and demonstrate:

B1 Principles

- (i) An understanding of the rationale for research methods and approaches, an appreciation of the value of a range of methods, approaches and sources available, be able to evaluate and select appropriate methods and approaches and be properly critical and reflexive about these choices.
- (ii) An advanced understanding of qualitative research in the social sciences, including an examination of the range of available methods such as participant observation, ethnographic fieldwork and interviewing and an exploration of the ethical principles, implications and dilemmas of qualitative research.
- (iii) An advanced understanding of critical analysis in the arts and humanities, including an examination of a range of available approaches to analysing texts, images and sounds and to researching Museums, Galleries, Places of Heritage and Archives.
- (iv) An understanding of sampling, sampling error and biases in results.
- (v) An understanding of and the ability to apply concepts of generalisability, validity, reliability and replicability.

B2 Data collection and analysis

- (i) Knowledge and understanding of the application of selected methods of data collection.
- (ii) Knowledge and understanding of the application of selected methods of data collection.
- (iii) An understanding of strengths and weaknesses of different types of data and the development of a critical use of sources.
- (iv) An understanding of the use of methods and tools to analyse data, including techniques for analysing qualitative data (as an example discourse analysis or event analysis) and multivariate analysis (such as multiple regression and log linear models).
- (v) Proficiency in both qualitative and quantitative data analysis for social scientists and critical analysis for the arts and humanities.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Teaching Strategy

The teaching strategy for B1 (i-iv) and B2 (i-v) will be delivered through the Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods modules. The teaching strategy for B1 (i-iv) is a combination of lectures, small group work, workshops and interactive plenaries. The teaching strategy for B2 (i-v) is a combination of lectures, workshops, which introduce the principles of statistical analysis, and data analysis practicals where the principles are put into practice via use of relevant software such as SPSS, STATA and ArcView.

Learning Strategy

For B1 (i-v) and B2 (i-v) students will learn by completing assignments and practical exercises.
Assessment Strategy
The Assessment strategy for B1 (i-iv) will be a series of 3,000 word reports which will assess the capacity of students to develop a comprehensive understanding of research methods and approaches and their ability to choose methodologies and techniques of research and enquiry applicable to their own research topics. B2 (i-iv) will be a combination of 3,000 word reports and data practical assessments, which test the practical skills of employing statistical software competently and the statistical comprehension for choosing the appropriate statistical techniques, to answer particular research questions, and for the correct interpretation of the results.
Practical Skills
On completing the programme students should be able to: C General Research skills C1 Bibliographic and computing skills: (i) the skills to identify and obtain relevant materials relating to research, including annals, books, journals, theses, conference proceedings and resources available electronically and on the WWW. (ii) The skills to maintain a personal research bibliography and use EndNote (iii) IT skills, including word processing and other basic computing skills including spreadsheets and database management and SPSS.
Teaching and Learning Methods
Teaching strategy Bibliographic and computer skills and taught through workshops and practical classes. Ethical issues are taught by lectures and workshops. Learning strategy Students learn bibliographical skills (C1 (i-ii) by developing an initial bibliography for their thesis and by writing a critical review of the search strategy.
Assessment Strategy
General research skills will be assessed by means of coursework which employ a range of approaches in order to accurately assess student abilities. The assessment for the information skills module will be constructing a bibliography, incorporating bibliographic search strategies and professional design and layout, and through reflecting on this process through a 1,500 word critical review of their search strategies. IT skills will be assessed by the bibliographic exercise and data practical assessment.
Transferable/Key Skills
On completing the programme students should be able to: D Key Skills The programme provides the opportunity for students to 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 communication and presentation. D3 the ability to work independently, with initiative and to work effectively as a member of both subject-specific and multi-disciplinary teams.
Teaching and Learning Methods
D1 and D3 are taught through teamwork and individual presentation which provide opportunities to co-operate , develop ideas, improve problem-solving capacity and work to deadlines. D2 is taught through a range of iterative written assessments. Learning Strategy

Students acquire the key skills through active participation in large and small multidisciplinary and discipline-specific groups.
Assessment Strategy
Key skills are not independently assessed. However, effective written communication (D) is indirectly assessed by coursework in the form of written essays. D3 is indirectly evaluated through fulfilment of module requirements in a timely manner.

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features
Basic structure of the programme
<p>This programme has been designed to offer first stage PhD students a Certificate for the research training modules they take during the first stage of their degree. All students will take <i>The Nature of Explanation and Enquiry</i> (10 credits) and <i>Information Skills</i> (10 credits). Social Science students would then take <i>Qualitative Methodology in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences</i> (20 credits) and <i>Introduction to Quantitative Methods</i> (20 credits). Students from the arts and humanities would take the extended version of <i>Qualitative Methodology in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences</i> (40 credits), which would require a 6,000, rather than a 3,000, word assessment (although it would be possible for them to choose to take the two 20 credit methods modules). The difference between these two routes stem from the different requirements of the respective research councils (ESRC and AHRC) as regards research postgraduate training. This is a one year full time or two year part time programme. It consists of the philosophy of knowledge, research methods and skill development. All 60 credits are taught at Faculty level.</p> <p>These 60 credits focus on generic research skills and competencies across the social sciences and arts and humanities. The general research skills component of the programme, such as Bibliographical skills and IT skills (A1), are taught in the <i>Information Skills</i> module (10 credits). Training in research methods in both quantitative and qualitative and critical analysis, (B1, B2) is dealt with in two double modules, <i>Introduction to Quantitative Methods</i> (20 credits) and <i>Qualitative Methodology in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences</i> (20 credits).</p>
Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)
This would be the only award for research preparation laying the foundation for the PhD programme.
Programme regulations (link to on-line version)
http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme

13 Criteria for admission
The only criteria for admission will be registration for an MPhil or PhD in the University, usually in HaSS.

14 Support for Student Learning
<p><i>Induction</i></p> <p>During the first week of the first semester students will attend a specific induction programme for this Certificate, and will receive appropriate documentation. Students will be given general information about their programme, as described in the Degree Programme Handbook. Students will be given detailed programme information and the timetable of lectures and practicals. The International Office offers an additional induction programme for overseas students.</p> <p><i>Study skills support</i></p> <p>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.</p> <p>Numeracy support is available through Maths Aid.</p> <p>Help with academic writing is available from the Writing Centre and through specific sessions</p>

on the Postgraduate Research Training Programme.

Academic support

The initial point of contact for a student on the programme will be the Director of Postgraduate Research Training, although the student will be able to contact the lecturer or module leader, or their supervisor (see below) for more generic issues. 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 PhD supervisor whose responsibility it is to monitor the academic performance and overall well-being of their tutees. In addition the University offers a range of support services, including one-to-one counselling and guidance or group sessions/workshops on a range of topics, such as emotional issues eg. Stress and anxiety, student finance and budgeting, disability matters etc. There is specialist support available for students with dyslexia and mental health issues. Furthermore, the Union Society operates a Student Advice Centre, which can provide advocacy and support to students on a range of topics including housing, debt, legal issues etc.

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.

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.

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-session 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.

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

Module reviews

All modules are subject to review by module report forms, which are considered by the Board of Studies. Changes to, or the introduction of new, modules are considered at the Faculty level Board of Studies and School Teaching and Learning Committees where relevant. 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 which are placed on Blackboard. 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 will be subject to the University's Internal Subject Review process. Every five years degree programmes in each subject area are subject to review. This involves both the detailed consideration of a range of documentation, and a two-day review visit by a review team which includes an external subject specialist in addition to University and Faculty representatives. Following the review a report is produced, which forms the basis for a decision by University Teaching and Learning Committee on whether the programmes reviewed should be re-approved for a further five year period.

16 Regulation of assessment

Pass mark

The pass mark is 50 (Postgraduate programmes)

Course requirements All students are subject to the University's Masters Degree Progress Regulations, Taught and Research and Examination Conventions for Taught Masters Degrees See: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/>

Limited compensation up to 20 credits (i.e. 1/3 of the certificate) and down to a mark of 40 is possible and students have the right to one reassessment, up to 20 credits.

This programme is not eligible for Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)

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 Certificate and Diploma programmes

<50	Fail
50 or above	Pass

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

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

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

The University Regulations (see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/>)

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.

Annex

Mapping of Intended Learning Outcomes on to Curriculum/Modules

Module	Type	Intended Learning Outcomes			
		A	B	C	D
HSS8002	C			1	1, 2, 3
HSS8004	C	2	1, 2	1	1, 2, 3
HSS8005	C (SS) O (A&H)	2	1, 2		1, 2, 3
HSS8007	C	1, 2			1, 2, 3
HSS8104	C	2	1, 2	1	1, 2, 3