

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION



1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	MA or Diploma
4	Programme Title	Modern and Contemporary Studies
5	UCAS/Programme Code	4019
6	Programme Accreditation	N/A
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	English
8	FHEQ Level	7
9	Date written/revised	14/4/09

10 Programme Aims

- (a) To produce postgraduates holding the Master's degree with:
 - (i) research skills and ability to undertake independent study at a level appropriate to those holding a higher degree
 - (ii) the ability to undertake a research programme leading to the PhD
 - (iii) an advanced knowledge of a range of modern and contemporary texts and films
 - (iv) a critical ability to address and reflect on the cultural and political contexts in which modern and contemporary texts and films are produced, read and viewed
 - (v) an ability to undertake independent scholarly research
- (b) To provide a programme:
 - (i) in which teaching is informed by research
 - (ii) which consistently attracts highly qualified applicants, including mature and overseas applicants
 - (iii) which enables students to conduct arguments effectively indiscrete high level essays (the submitted essays)
 - (iv) which enables a student to work independently and undertake the writing of a long piece of work (the dissertation) based on independent research
 - (v) which fully meets the requirements of the QAA's Framework for Higher Degree Qualifications at Masters Level

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 benchmark statements for (subject) (X).

Knowledge and Understanding

- A Knowledge and understanding
- A1 Advanced understanding and specialised knowledge of selected areas of study within the field of modern and contemporary studies.
- A2 Detailed and comprehensive knowledge of the cultural and political contexts in which texts and films have been produced and read in the English speaking during this period.
- A3 Critical understanding of scholarship and research in these areas.

Teaching and Learning Methods

<p>A Knowledge and understanding</p> <p>In the taught modules (as indicated in section 11) knowledge and understanding are acquired through participation in and preparation for seminars and through the writing of essays (2,500 or 4,000 words). More advanced knowledge and understanding are developed in writing the 15,000 word dissertation. Students are required to select an appropriate subject for this dissertation and to undertake independent scholarship and research in completing it. Guidance is provided by each module director and by the dissertation supervisor.</p>
<p>Assessment Strategy</p>
<p>A Knowledge and understanding</p> <p>Assessment of knowledge and understanding is made through submitted essays (2,500 or 4,000 words in length), a short project demonstrating knowledge of research skills, and a dissertation (15,000 words).</p>
<p>Intellectual Skills</p>
<p>B Subject-specific/intellectual skills</p> <p>B1 Conceptual awareness of theoretical debates at the forefront of academic work in modern and contemporary studies.</p> <p>B2 Practical understanding of the techniques and methodologies applicable to advanced scholarship and research in this period.</p>
<p>Teaching and Learning Methods</p>
<p>B Subject-specific/intellectual skills</p> <p>Subject –specific skills are also acquired through participation in and reading for the seminars and in the production of the essays and dissertation. The Degree Programme Director assists students in the selection of an appropriate topic for the dissertation, isolating key issues within specific areas of study.</p>
<p>Assessment Strategy</p>
<p>B Subject-specific/intellectual skills</p> <p>Assessment of subject-specific skills is also made through the marking of these essays, projects and dissertation. Submitted work enables students to develop to demonstrate their knowledge of the theoretical bases of the discipline; the dissertation enables students to give evidence of original research and to demonstrate a practical understanding of research skills and scholarly good practice.</p>
<p>Practical Skills</p>
<p>C Practical skills – Able to:</p> <p>C1 Exercise advanced critical skills in the analysis of modern and contemporary texts and film</p> <p>C2 Understand in depth and at an advanced level the ways in which the works studied produce and reflect cultural change</p> <p>C3 Participate at a high level in the critical and theoretical debates surrounding these works.</p>
<p>Teaching and Learning Methods</p>
<p>C Practical skills</p> <p>Practical skills are acquired in seminars for which students are required to present papers. They then submit essays (2,500 or 4,000 words) which present the findings of their reading and research. More advanced cognitive skills are developed in the course of research for and writing the 15,000 word dissertation.</p>
<p>Assessment Strategy</p>
<p>C Practical skills</p>

Assessment of practical skills is also made through the submitted essays, the research project and dissertation referred to above.	
Transferable/Key Skills	
D	Key (transferable) skills – Able to:
1	Analyse and evaluate complex evidence critically and imaginatively
2	Demonstrate self-direction and originality in planning and completing tasks
3	Deploy information technology (word processing; the internet) appropriately
4	Present research findings in a clear and accessible way
Teaching and Learning Methods	
D	Key (transferable) skills
Key skills are promoted through seminars and in individual sessions with the dissertation supervisor. The research training modules (Faculty and School) address time-management, note-taking, IT, the layout of a dissertation and the management of references, footnotes and bibliography.	
Assessment Strategy	
D	Key (transferable) skills
Assessment of key skills is implicit in both the submitted essays and the dissertation.	

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features	
Basic structure of the programme	
<p>The programme is studied over one year full-time or over two years part-time. It is divided into modules which have a value of either 20 or 10 credits, or, in the case of the Dissertation, 60 credits. Both full-time and part-time students are required to take and be assessed in modules to the value of 180 credits. Students take 140 credits of compulsory modules and 40 credits of optional modules. Students will normally take four modules from the list of 10-credit optional modules offered. They will, in addition, attach their 10-credit extended study to one of these optional modules.</p>	
Compulsory modules (for all students):	Credits
SEL8196: Modern and Contemporary Cultures I	20
SEL8197: Modern and Contemporary Cultures II	20
SEL8400: Research Training in Literary Studies	20
SEL8146: Dissertation Preparation	10
SEL8185: Extended Study	10
SEL8147: Dissertation	60
Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)	
Programme regulations (link to on-line version)	
http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme/2009-2010/documents/ModernandContemporaryStudiesMA_003.pdf	

13 Criteria for admission

Entry qualifications for 2009-10

UK students: We normally require a II:I in English, Combined Studies (Arts), Film or Media Studies or other related disciplines, but exceptionally we have admitted students with undergraduate degrees from more remote disciplines (e.g. Law).

Overseas students: We normally require the equivalent of a British II:I in English, Combined Studies (Arts), Film or Media Studies (e.g. A or B grades from a North American institution, high numerical scores from Far Eastern universities). Overseas students whose first language is not English are also asked to take an English language test on registration.

Admissions policy/selection tools

Non-standard Entry Requirements

Applicants without the standard qualifications would be asked to submit work and to come for interview.

Additional Requirements

None

Level of English Language capability

See prospectus

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.

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.

Help with academic writing is available from the Writing Centre.

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. 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 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. The National Student Survey is sent out every year to final-year undergraduate students, and consists of a set of questions seeking the students' views on the quality of the learning and teaching in their HEIs. With reference to the outcomes of the NSS and institutional student satisfaction surveys actions are taken at all appropriate levels by the institution.

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. Every five years degree programmes in each subject area are subject to periodic 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.

Accreditation reports

Additional mechanisms

16 Regulation of assessment

Pass mark

The pass mark is 40 (Undergraduate programmes)

The pass mark is 50 (Postgraduate programmes)

Course requirements

Progression is subject to the University's Undergraduate Progress Regulations and Undergraduate Examination Conventions. In summary, students must pass, or be deemed to have passed, 120 credits at each Stage. Limited compensation up to 40 credits and down to a mark of 35 is possible at each Stage and there are resit opportunities, with certain restrictions.

Progression is subject to the University's Masters Degree Progress Regulations, Taught and Research and Examination Conventions for Taught Masters Degrees. 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.

Weighting of stages

The marks from Stages ??? will contribute to the final classification of the degree

The weighting of marks contributing to the degree for Stages ??? is ??:?

Common Marking Scheme

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

	Modules used for degree classification (DC)	Modules not used for degree classification
<40	Fail	Failing
40-49	Third Class	Basic
50-59	Second Class, Second Division	Good
60-69	Second Class, First Division	Very Good
70+	First Class	Excellent

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

Summary description applicable to postgraduate Masters programmes

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

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/undergraduate/> or <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.

