

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION



1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	MA
4	Programme Title	Gender Research
5	UCAS/Programme Code	4063
6	Programme Accreditation	N/A
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	N/A
8	FHEQ Level	Level 7
9	Date written/revised	May 2009

10 Programme Aims

The degree programme aims to:

- i) provide students with the opportunity to address systematically a range of issues concerning the construction of gender and sexuality and questions of difference and equality.
- ii) provide students with a framework in historical and contemporary feminist thought from which to understand structural and cultural gender inequalities.
- iii) develop students' skills in critical analysis, reasoning, synthesis, logical thought, evaluation, debate, and inter-disciplinary approaches to understanding gender.
- iv) provide a foundation from which to pursue advanced Postgraduate study in Gender Research
- iv) provide learning opportunities to enable graduates to acquire the knowledge and understanding, skills and aptitudes necessary to undertake advanced research in the social sciences in general and in gender research in particular.
- v) provide the theoretical policy and practical skills to enable the students to produce an MA dissertation and, where appropriate, successfully to pursue further postgraduate study for a PhD or enhance their CPD activity.
- vi) provide a programme that complies with University and QAA Codes of Practice
- vii) to provide a programme that will conform to the Higher Education Qualifications Framework.
- viii) provide high quality research training at Masters level in line with the ESRC's postgraduate training guidelines

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 Sociology.

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should have:

- A1. Advanced knowledge and understanding of historical and contemporary feminist theory and key theoretical debates within gender research.
- A2. Advanced knowledge and understanding of gender inequalities and the social and cultural constructions of gender and sexuality.
- A3. Advanced knowledge and understanding of social scientific research methods and appropriate research methods for investigating gender.
- A4. Advanced knowledge and understanding of inter-disciplinary approaches to understanding gender.
- A5. Advanced knowledge and understanding of topics within gender research, selected by students as part of the *Specialist Study* module.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Teaching Strategy

The aim is to impart Advanced knowledge and understanding (A1-5) via lectures and seminar classes where group discussion and debate are promoted.

Learning Strategy

Students are expected to read and study independently throughout the degree. They are provided with separate reading lists for each module, which are extensive but prioritised. We aim to encourage active participation in seminar discussions and student presentations to aid their developing understanding.

Assessment Strategy

Knowledge and understanding (A1-5) are assessed by essays for each module (two modules may be combined and assessed by one extended essay up to two times on the course). Advanced knowledge and understanding of a specialist topic and research skills (A3) are assessed by dissertation.

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to show:

B1. Understanding and analysis of the theory of gender and feminist theory.

B2. Understanding and analysis of specialist topics..

B3. Understanding and practical experience of methods for investigating topics within gender research.

B4. Skills in analysis, debate, logical thought, and interdisciplinary approaches to gender research.

B5 Principles

(i) an ability to define and formulate research problems, questions and hypotheses.

(ii) an understanding of the rationale for research methods, to evaluate and select them.

(iii) an understanding of sampling, sampling error, and biases in results.

(iv) an understanding of, and ability to apply, concepts of generalisability, validity, reliability and replicability.

B6 Data collection and analysis

(i) a knowledge and understanding of the application of selected methods of data collection.

(ii) an understanding of strengths and weaknesses of different types of data and the development of a critical use of sources.

(iii) an understanding of the use of methods and tools to analyse data.

(iv) proficiency in a range of both qualitative and quantitative data analysis.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Teaching Strategy

B1-B4 are provided by lectures and seminar groups. B1 is provided throughout the modules and especially in Theories of Gender and Sexuality, Gender and Culture. B3 is provided especially in the methods modules (Introduction to Qualitative Methodology in the Social Sciences HSS8004, Introduction to Quantitative Methodology in the Social Sciences HSS8005, Researching Gender Perspectives SOC8041) as well as in students' work on their individual dissertations.

B5 (i) and (ii) will be delivered through the modules Thinking About Research (HSS8001), Dissertation Preparation (HSS8003) and Researching Gender Perspectives (SOC8041). B5 (iii) and (iv) are delivered through the Quantitative and Qualitative Methods modules.

Teaching for B6 (i - iv) are delivered principally through the Quantitative Methods and Qualitative Methods modules. The teaching strategy for B5 (i-iv) is a combination of lectures, workshops, research seminars and both discipline specific and multi-disciplinary teamwork. The teaching strategy for B6 (i - iv) is a combination of lectures, workshops, teaching and research seminars and data analysis practicals.

Learning Strategy

<p>Students have the opportunity to grasp these subject specific skills in lectures and seminars throughout the programme as well as in their own independent study – reading, essay-writing and dissertation research.</p> <p>For B5 (i - ii) students are encouraged to learn through team-based problem solving exercises, the individual preparation of a research proposal and attendance at research seminars. B5 (iii-iv) is learnt through research seminars, workshops and data practicals. For B6 (i - iv) students learn principally through attendance at data practicals and attendance at research seminars. Overall, all B5 and B6 are undertaken in completion of the Research Dissertation.</p>
<p>Assessment Strategy</p> <p>B1-B4 are assessed by essays. B3 is assessed by exercises in the methods modules (listed above) and by completion of the dissertation.</p> <p>B5 and B6 are assessed through production and presentation of a Research Proposal, the completion of a series of data practicals, the production of a Critical Methodological Review, a group report and presentation in Thinking About Research and the Research Dissertation.</p>
<p>Practical Skills</p> <p>On completing the programme students should be able to show:</p> <p>C1 The ability to critically assess theories and arguments relevant to gender research.</p> <p>C2. The ability to critically assess, present and summarise data and material relevant to gender research.</p>
<p>Teaching and Learning Methods</p> <p><i>Teaching Strategy</i></p> <p>C1 is provided throughout the modules, but especially in <i>Theories of Gender and Sexuality, Gender and Culture</i>. C2 is provided in seminar groups, essay-writing and students' own supervised study for their dissertations.</p> <p><i>Learning Strategy</i></p> <p>Students are introduced to key themes in lectures and seminar classes where active participation provides the chance to develop C1 and C2. They are expected to supplement this with independent reading and study.</p>
<p>Assessment Strategy</p> <p>Cognitive skills are assessed by coursework – essays and dissertation.</p>
<p>Transferable/Key Skills</p> <p>On completing the programme students should be able to show:</p> <p>D1. The ability to communicate verbally and in writing.</p> <p>D2. The ability to use library and other information sources skilfully and appropriately.</p> <p>D3. The ability to use IT resources skilfully and resourcefully.</p> <p>D4. The ability to plan, organise and prioritise work activities in order to meet deadlines.</p> <p>D5. The ability to work independently, using initiative and with individual guidance from staff.</p>
<p>Teaching and Learning Methods</p>

<p>Teaching Strategy</p> <p>All key skills are integrated into lectures and seminars and some (especially D1, D2, D5) are promoted particularly in group discussions and debates. D2 is formally taught in a workshop on library and IT skills. D5 is provided particularly in students' study for dissertation.</p> <p>Learning Strategy</p> <p>Students are encouraged to acquire key skills through active participation in the formal workshop for D2 and in lectures and seminars. The dissertation provides many opportunities to develop all the key skills identified, with dissertation supervisors providing appropriate advice and guidance, through the development of a dissertation proposal (D3, D4, D5), the literature search (D3, D5), through the empirical data collection and analysis (where appropriate) (D2, D3, D5), through supervision meetings (D4, D5) and through writing the dissertation itself (D1).</p>
<p>Assessment Strategy</p> <p>Key skills are not independently assessed, but are integral elements of successful completion of most aspects of the programme, such as essay writing (D1-5), participation in lectures and seminars (D1), preparation for (D2, D3, D4, D5) and writing of (D1) the dissertation.</p>

<p>12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features</p>
<p>Basic structure of the programme</p>
<p>i) Programme Features</p> <p>This programme may be taken full-time for one year or part-time for two years. The start date is in September. Taught elements are during semesters and dissertation work is conducted mostly in the summer with the dissertation being submitted in late August. The programme has three key elements: compulsory modules in theories of gender research and substantive topics related to the sociology of gender; compulsory modules in methods of gender research; dissertation. It is run under the umbrella of the Centre for Gender and Women's Studies, and 'housed' in a 'home' department (currently Sociology in the School of Geography, Politics and Sociology).</p>
<p>ii) Curriculum and Structure</p> <p>The programme is modular and comprised of 180 credits. Students take 120 credits of compulsory modules which provide the theoretical (Theories of Gender, or Sexuality, Gender and Culture), methodological (Introduction to Information Skills; Thinking About Research; Researching Gender Perspectives; Dissertation Preparation; Introduction to Qualitative Methodology in the Social Sciences and Introduction to Quantitative Methodology in the Social Sciences) and substantive (Social Divisions and Inequalities and Specialist Study) frameworks of the programme.</p> <p>Skills in these three areas are then further developed through students' construction and completion of a unique dissertation project (SOC8043, 60 credits). During this, they are able to apply and develop the subject specific skills, knowledge and understanding (A1-5), intellectual skills (B1-6), practical skills (C1-2) and key transferable skills (D1-5) gained during the taught components to a project. Dissertations may be empirical or library-based; all involve a substantial amount of library study and familiarity with the literature and key debates in the selected subject area. Students are guided through their projects by an expert in that area from the wide range of staff who contribute to the programme. Former students who have progressed to PhD study have used their MA theses as a springboard into the advanced study required for their thesis.</p>
<p>Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)</p> <p>This programme will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide students with the opportunity to address systematically a range of issues concerning the construction of gender and sexuality and questions of difference and

- equality;
- provide students with a framework in historical and contemporary feminist thought from which to understand structural and cultural gender inequalities;
- develop students' skills in critical analysis, reasoning, synthesis, logical thought, evaluation, debate, and inter-disciplinary approaches to understanding gender;
- provide a foundation from which to pursue advanced postgraduate study in Gender Research.

The degree is linked to the Centre of Gender and Women's Studies. Students taking this degree will have access to, and will benefit from networking (through seminar series, reading groups, for example) with gender specialists working within the Centre. The current Director of CGWS is also Chair in Sociology, the degree programme's owning subject area.

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme/2009-2010/documents/GenderResearchMAPGD.pdf>

13 Criteria for admission

Entry qualifications

A 2nd class degree from a UK University or its overseas equivalent is the normal minimum qualification for entry. Due to the inter-disciplinary nature of the degree, we do not specify any degree subjects; rather, we wish to see evidence of applicants' ability to tackle subjects from a range of disciplines.

Admissions policy/selection tools

Upon receipt of a completed application-form, UK-based applicants may be invited to visit the University and attend an interview. Offers are made to suitably qualified candidates and are usually conditional upon the candidate achieving a minimum of a 2nd class degree (if they do not already hold such a degree) and upon a satisfactory reference.

Applicants not based in the UK are not required to attend an interview.

Non-standard Entry Requirements

Applicants who hold non-standard qualifications and /or have relevant experience, will be considered on an individual basis. This is seen to be an important aspect of our admissions criteria because gendered inequalities are often the cause of women's under-representation in further education and we do not, of course, wish to continue these inequalities in our admissions policy.

Additional Requirements

None

Level of English Language capability

Applicants for whom English is not a first language or whose first degrees were not taught in English are required to demonstrate proficiency in English, usually by means of an IELTS score of 6.5 or greater.

14 Support for Student Learning

The Student Services portal provides links to key services and other information and is available at: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/>

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 and help with academic writing is available from the Writing Centre (further information is available from the Robinson Library).

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 e.g. 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.

The CGWS provides an expert and enthusiastic group of teaching staff, from several disciplines throughout the University. This multi-disciplinary structure enables students to access resources, academic and social, in several departments.

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. 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.

16 Regulation of assessment

Pass mark

The pass mark is 50 (Postgraduate programmes)
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.

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: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/>

The School Brochure

Degree Programme and University Regulations: <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.

Mapping of Intended Learning Outcomes onto Curriculum/Modules

MA Gender Research

Module	Type	Intended Learning Outcomes			
		A	B	C	D
HSS8001	C	3	5 6	1 2	1 2
HSS8002	C				2 3
HSS8003	C	3	5 6	1 2	1 2 3 4 5
HSS8004	C	3	3 5 6		1 2 3 4 5
HSS8005	C	3	3 5 6		1 2 3 4 5
SOC8027	C	1 2 3 4	1	1 2	1 2 3 4 5
SOC8033	C	3 4 5	2	1 2	1 2 3 4 5
SOC8034	C	3 4	2	1 2	1 2 3 4 5
SOC8040	C	1 2 3 4	1	1 2	1 2 3 4 5
SOC8041	C	1 3 4	1 3 4 5	1 2	1 2 3 4 5
SOC8043	C	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2	1 2 3 4 5
SOC8047		1 2 4		3	1 2 4