

Programme Specification for M.A. (Education Research)

1. Awarding Institution

University of Newcastle upon Tyne

2. Teaching Institution

As above

3. Final Award

Master of Arts

4. Programme Title

Education

5. Accrediting Bodies

N/a

6. UCAS Code

N/a

7. Relevant QAA Benchmarking Groups

???

8. Date of production/revision

29.04.03

9. Programme Aims

The overall aims of the MA programme in education research are as follows:

- i. To provide learning opportunities to enable you to acquire the knowledge, understanding, skills and aptitudes necessary to undertake advanced research in education in particular, and social science in general.
- ii. To meet the aims of the Economic and Social Research Council's postgraduate training guidelines by providing high quality research training at Master's levels in educational research in particular, and the social sciences in general.

- iii. To contribute to the ESRC's and the University of Newcastle's objectives by providing high quality research training to an increasing number of graduates.
- iv. To produce graduates who can successfully proceed to careers in research in Universities, the public sector, or the private sector.
- v. To offer a research-informed environment in which you can learn about in detail the discipline of educational from research active staff, your own study and from interaction with your fellow students.
- vi. To enable you to acquire an advanced knowledge of the constituent areas of educational studies.
- vii. To provide an opportunity for you to gain first-hand research experience by undertaking a major research project for your dissertation at Master's level in education.
- viii. To relate debates and methodological principles in education research to broader issues in social science research and educational policy and practice.

10 (a) programme intended learning outcomes

The Intended Learning Outcomes of the programme are explicitly linked to the expected Learning Outcomes of the ESRC. These are divided into four sections, viz.:

- General Research Skills
- Transferable Skills
- Training in Research Methods, and
- Subject-specific skills.

10.1 General Research Skills

10.1.1 Bibliographic and computing skills

The intended learning outcomes in these areas are as follows, reflecting the major requirements of the ESRC:

- (a) The skills to identify and retrieve material relating to research, including the use of annals, books, theses, journals, conference proceedings and resources available electronically and on the world-wide web;
- (b) the skills to maintain a personal research bibliography and use of EndNote;
- (c) word-processing and other basic computing skills, including spreadsheets and database management, SPSS and NuDist packages.
- (d) The procedures for the evaluation of research, including refereeing and book reviews.

10.1.2 Ethical and legal issues

Specifically, the intended learning outcomes in these areas are as follows, reflecting the major requirements of the ESRC:

- (a) A knowledge and understanding of matters relating to privacy and confidentiality in research;
- (b) A knowledge and understanding of the attribution of ideas and intellectual property rights;
- (c) A knowledge and understanding of the Data Protection Act;
- (d) An awareness of the issues of informed consent, the role of ethical committees and constraints on researchers involved in contract and consultancy work;

- (e) An awareness of the political context of research, including the uses made of published work.
- (f) An awareness of the relevant professional ethical codes of practice
- (g) A knowledge and understanding of the power relations inherent in research fieldwork;
- (h) An awareness of the ethical responsibilities that a researcher has towards the researched.

10.1.3 Exploitation of research and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

Specifically, the following is the intended learning outcome from these activities:

- (a) A knowledge and understanding of matters relating to the possibilities and problems of academic or commercial exploitation of research activities.

10.1.4 Transferable Skills – personal development and employment-related skills

10.2 Communication skills

The Intended Learning Outcomes of the programme are that students should acquire:

- (a) The skills to orally communicate and present findings effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- (b) The skills of effective written communication and presentation, to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- (c) The confidence to attend and make presentations at seminars, workshops and conferences in related areas.

Specifically, the following are the intended learning outcome from these activities:

- (a) The skills to manage the research life-cycle, including writing proposals, planning a research project, and implementation on time.
- (b) The skills to work effectively as a member of a team, both subject-specific and interdisciplinary.

10.3 Training in Research Methods

The programme provides generic and subject-specific opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate abilities to be critical and reflective of research methods covering basic principles; research design; and data collection and analysis.

The following are the Intended Learning Outcomes that these modules aim to address:

- (a) Understand how to formulate researchable problems and appreciate alternative approaches to research;
- (b) Understand and apply a range of research methods and tools;
- (c) Manage their research, including managing data, and conducting and disseminating research in a way that is consistent with both professional practice and the normal principles of research ethics;
- (d) Understand the significance of alternative epistemological positions that provide the context for theory construction, research design, and the selection of appropriate analytical techniques.

10.4 Principles of Research Design

- (a) Define and formulate research problems and questions, including the formulation of testable hypotheses;

- (b) Understand the relationships between, and the rationale for, qualitative and quantitative research methods;
- (c) Understand the relationships between sampling and the ability to generalise;
- (d) Be able to select appropriate strategies for research and/or evaluation;
- (e) Understand sampling, sampling error and potential biases in the interpretation of research results;
- (f) Understand and apply the concepts of generalisability, validity, reliability and replicability.
- (g) Involve users and beneficiaries where relevant in the choice, development, conduct and dissemination of research.

10.5 Data Collection and Analysis

- (a) Show an understanding of questionnaire design and interviewing, including semi-structured and structured questionnaires and large- and small-scale survey design
- (b) Show an understanding of the appropriate interpretation of measurement error and missing data
- (c) Show an understanding of a range of methods of data gathering, including various methods for recording qualitative data.

10.6 Subject-specific skills

Finally, in addition to the generic skills and domains, the programme provides the opportunity for students to develop subject-specific knowledge and skills in education and education research. In line with the ESRC's requirements, the education-specific Intended Learning Outcomes are the following:

Students will be able to develop and demonstrate:

- (a) A knowledge and understanding of the main theoretical frameworks used in research in education;
- (b) A knowledge and understanding of the main methodological structures used in research in education, including subject-specific research strategies including life histories, action research, discourse and other forms of linguistic analysis, experimental methods, evaluations and ethnographies;
- (c) The skills of working to apply different theoretical and methodological approaches to particular cases of research in education;
- (d) The techniques of making oral presentations, both individually and in teams, on issues of research in education;
- (e) Ability to identify key themes and issues in current education policy, with a familiarity with the politics of educational research.
- (f) An awareness of epistemological and ontological issues in the philosophy of social science as these relate to the philosophical underpinning of educational theories, including an understanding of the role of values in educational theory;
- (g) An understanding of the nature of theory and explanation in education
- (h) A knowledge and understanding of the concept of reflexivity in educational research, and an awareness of the relationships of the researcher to the researched and connections between theory and educational practice;
- (i) The ability to write a research proposal in their chosen area of research in education;
- (j) The capacity to undertake a major research project for the dissertation in education;

- (k) An advanced knowledge and understanding of at least one specific area of education;

11. Teaching and Learning Methods and Strategies

	<i>Intended learning outcomes</i>	<i>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</i>
A	Knowledge and Understanding	Lectures, workshops and seminars are designed to contribute to the development of knowledge and understanding. Supported self-study materials also include resources and guided reading.
B	Cognitive skills	Students critique research in seminars and work on designing research projects in workshops and tutorials. In addition, research methods training is provided in lectures. They conduct field-work in their own teaching and learning context and evaluate the findings with their peers and tutors.
C	Subject specific/professional skills	Students conduct research projects to explore questions arising from their reading of literature and reflections on professional practice.
D	Key (transferable) skills	Students work individually and in groups. Presentations to peers in tutor groups will be made. Supported self-study and tutor support is provided via website and email.

12. Assessment Strategy and Methods

	<i>Intended Learning Outcomes</i>	<i>Methods of assessment</i>
<i>A</i>	Knowledge and Understanding	Assignments are set related to the Level M modules which students undertake. The dissertation will be assessed at this level.
<i>B</i>	Cognitive Skills	These skills are assessed through module assignments and through the assessment of the dissertation
<i>C</i>	Subject specific/professional skills	Project design and evaluation. Reflection on professional development. Dissertation
<i>D</i>	Key skills	Key skills are assessed through module assignments and through the assessment of the dissertation

13. Programme Features, Curriculum and Structure

(i) *Programme Features*

- (a) the duration of the course is 1 year
- (b) there are 2 stages: taught modules and the dissertation
- (c) 180 credits
- (d) 5x20 plus 2x10 credit taught modules each consisting of approximately 200 hours of study (lectures/seminars/tutorials/private study) + dissertation of 60 credits
- (e) students must accumulate 120 credits from taught modules before proceeding to the dissertation stage.
- (f) Exit points at 60 credits for a postgraduate certificate (for students who also accrue 20 credits from a Level 3 module) and 120 credits for a postgraduate diploma are available. The balance between the taught and the supported self-study elements is designed to meet the requirements of professionals by offering the opportunity to pursue issues arising from the

generic taught element independently in a manner relevant to their specific context.

(ii) Curriculum and Structure

In the first two semesters, students follow a programme of study involving generic modules in *Nature of Enquiry and Explanation in the Social Sciences*, *Introduction to Information Skills*, *Quantitative Methodology in the Social Sciences* and *Introduction to Quantitative Methods* and *Investigating Learning in the Classroom*. In addition, students chose from a range of optional modules to the value of 20 credits. The programme structure and common assessment format and requirements ensure that students are able to meet the identified learning outcomes in the areas of knowledge and understanding, cognitive skills, practical research skills and key skills.

In Semester 3, students are required to extend and develop their knowledge, understanding and skills of research and evaluation by completing a dissertation on a key area of their practice, which consolidates and builds on the work completed in the taught part of the programme.

14. Criteria for Admission

Entry requirements for the M.A. (Educational Research) are **either** a first degree and qualified teacher status or equivalent or validated teaching experience.

For students for whom English is not their mother tongue, students have to provide evidence of competence in the English Language. Specifically, they have to have achieved an IELTS score of 6.5 or equivalent.

15. Support for Students and their Learning

Students are eligible to attend the induction programme for full time M.Ed students and an evening introduction to the library session is also available. Dates and contact details are provided along with structured induction tasks in the supported self-study pack for each module. The induction programme includes support on electronic access to journals, study skills and academic writing. Tutors are assigned for both personal and academic purposes. When necessary, the personal tutor will refer students to the module leader and/or the Degree Programme Director or to the appropriate University student services.

16. Library

The Robinson Library provides a full range of traditional borrowing facilities, an Inter-Library Loans System, co-operative arrangements for access to other local academic libraries (i.e. Sunderland and Durham Universities), a wide range of audio-visual material, microcomputer workstations for word processing and access to the University's network, and a Liaison Librarian service with linkage to academic departments for book and periodical purchase. The Library increasingly provides guidance for postgraduate students in information retrieval skills, both group instruction and individual support. The Education liaison Librarian is Linda Kelly (Tel: 0191 2227667).

17. Education Resource Centre

The Education Resource Centre is located in Joseph Cowen House and houses a fully-networked cluster of PCs and a wide range of school focused texts.

18. Computing

The University Computing Service provides fully-networked computer services on three types of system – Windows-based PC, Unix and Apple Macintosh – in cluster rooms throughout the University. Cluster rooms are available each weekday; some are open for extended hours and at weekends. A wide range of software is available on each type of system. Printing facilities consists of fast draft printers, draft colour plotters, high-speed, high-quality black and white laser printers, and high-quality colour plotters. The draft facilities are available at every cluster of workstations, and usage is free. The high-quality printers are accessed via the network and printing must be paid for and collected at the main Computing Service building in the centre of the campus. The many and various services of the UCS are described in documents which are widely available in the cluster rooms and on the World Wide Web. Students can use any cluster on the University Campus. One cluster is based in the Joseph Cowen House.

19. Provision for Disabled students:

The University has a Disability Unit which is a centre offering advice, guidance and support for students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties (Dyslexia). The unit is headed by the Disability Officer and has a Dyslexia Adviser, Co-ordinator for deaf students and a Technical Support Adviser. The unit has a technical resources room with specialist equipment for the use of students and for assessment purposes. The Disability Unit also provides advice and guidance to

all university staff to promote effective disability awareness and support for students. The government provides funds for disabled students through the Disabled Students' Allowance to assist students who, because of their disability incur extra costs. Advice and help on all aspects of claiming Disabled Students Allowance can be obtained from the Disability Unit. Further information on provision for students with disabilities can be found in the University's Disability Statement which can be obtained from Sandra Chilton (Disability Officer) Room 202 Robinson Library, Telephone 7610 or e-mail.

20. Methods for Evaluating and Improving the Quality and Standards of Teaching and Learning

Each module is evaluated each time it is taught through student feedback forms which are collated by the DPD, discussed with module leaders and tabled at the relevant Board of Studies and Staff Student Committee. There is an annual internal review of the modules and the programme conducted by the DPD and module leaders.

The programme is reviewed by the Board of Studies, which has student representation, and by the Faculty and the University through the Taught Programme Review and Internal Subject Review. The Board of Examiners and the External Examiner also contribute to the scrutiny and review of the programme on an annual basis. The External examiner completes an Annual Report on the quality of the standards of teaching and learning.

21. Regulation of Assessment

Students must complete Stage 1 successfully before proceeding to Stage 2. All the modules have equal weighting and both stages count towards the final award of the degree of Masters of Arts. However, there are exit points at certificate and diploma level in Stage 1. The degree programme follows the guidelines laid down by regulations for Taught Postgraduate Courses. Specifically, the modules and the dissertation may be assessed as Fail, Pass, Merit or Distinction.

22. Indicators of Quality and Standards

This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably expect 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.

Please note that further information is available via the following sources:

- I The University Prospectus
- I The School Prospectus
- I The University and Degree Programme Regulations
- I The Degree Programme Handbook