1	**Awarding Institution**	University of Newcastle upon Tyne

2	**Teaching Institution**	University of Newcastle upon Tyne

3	**Final Award**	MSc

4	**Programme title**	MSc in Educational Psychology

5	**Programme Accredited by**: British Psychological Society

6	**UCAS Code**	N/A

7	**QAA Subject Benchmarking Group(s)**	N/A

8	**Date of production/revision**	May 2002

9   Programme Aims:

The course team believes that educational psychology, both as a profession and a discipline, has a key role to play in enhancing the learning opportunities and learning environment for all children and young people.

The course emphasises:

- the social nature of learning and development
- the systematic nature of a child's situation
- the importance of context for learning and regard to a young person's achievement
- that assessment should be seen in a wider context of teaching and learning
- that the socio-cultural contest frames our understanding of the nature of development
- that the social context in which the educational psychologist works influences their professional practice

The course is committed to seeing all children as valued members of the community and would seek to involved children and young people as fully as possible in decisions about their own education and learning. It is sensitive to the adverse effects of labelling and prejudice and seeks to promote and inclusive approach to professional practice. It encourages course members to identify and build on the strengths children and young people bring to their educational settings, and to enable educators to provide the most effective learning environments for all children and young people. Course members are encouraged to celebrate and disseminate good practice.

A professional practice which is based on drawing on a sound knowledge of psychological and research evidence, and educational theory in everyday work is emphasised throughout the course. Course members are encouraged to establish a research based model of practice which uses a hypothesis testing approach to bring about problem resolution and change.

The course aims to develop educational psychologists who are confident and competent practitioners, who are familiar with and work within established codes of professional practice. Listening, reflecting and questioning would be seen as key components of quality professional practice alongside a commitment to continuing professional development.

The course aims to develop course members who are effective and skilled communicators. They would see their work as contributing to a team of educational psychologists, but as importantly the broader team of parents, carers and other professionals.

SPECIFIC COURSE AIMS

The course aims to develop in the course participants

- a critical understanding of a range of psychological paradigms and knowledge of the links between theory and practice in all professional work
- coherent theoretical models of learning and teaching
- a critical understanding of research and evaluation methods which make use of both qualitative research methods
- a sound knowledge base of evidence concerning the effectiveness of educational and psychological interventions to inform recommendations and practice
- an awareness of the importance of viewing problems and concerns in contest and from an interactionist perspective
- a commitment to listening to the views and feelings of children and young people
- a commitment to valuing and working with parents/carers and developing dialogue with them as well as other professionals
- knowledge of practices and strategies to promote inclusion
- a sound knowledge and practical experience of a range of assessment methods used by educational and applied psychologists
- problems solving skills in planning advising, supervising and managing individual and group intervention programmes and projects
- an understanding of administrative, legislative, professional legal and ethical frameworks that apply in the fields of education and appropriate areas of health and social services
- well developed interpersonal skills which enable communication with the respect for all those with whom they work
- highly developed oral and written communication skills
- an experience of working in and facilitating and organising groups in a variety of settings
- consultative approaches of working
- an ability to work as part of a team, influencing and being influenced by other members
- reflective and proactive attitudes towards continuing professional development

10(a) Programme Intended Learning Outcomes:

A   **Knowledge and understanding**

1   Demonstrate an awareness of the effects of labelling and prejudice and a commitment to equal opportunities and the promotion of inclusion
2   Have a sound knowledge of all legislation and other local government documentation relevant to practising as an educational psychologist
3   critique research reports and communicate findings
4   Design and carry out research projects relevant to educational psychology theory and practice

B   **Subject-specific/professional skills**

1   Join an EPS and work as a member of a team
2   Apply psychological knowledge, understanding and research to effective professional practice
3   Work with schools, offering a service of consultation, training, development, work with children, carers, teachers and other professionals
4   Undertake assessment and observation of children and their learning environment and offer appropriate advice on interventions to promote inclusive practice
5   Show a commitment and ability to listen to the views of children and young people to enable them to take greater control of their own learning
6   Work sensitively and supportively with parents and carers
7   Demonstrate personal and professional effectiveness in the use of interpersonal and communication skills
8   Demonstrate an awareness of professional codes of conduct, ethical issues and personal and professional safety
9   Work effectively with professionals from other discipline
10   Plan and deliver appropriate training and development to teachers and other professionals
11   Demonstrate a recognition of the limits of their professional knowledge and show a willingness to update and develop their skills and understanding
12   Use and apply a research base to support professional practice

Intended Learning Outcomes

At the time of the end of placement meeting for the final practice placement it is expected that trainees will have demonstrated that they have achieved the objectives listed below. Trainees will be able to show they have acquired a range of skills, which they can apply with fluency to common areas of generic practice. However, trainees are at the beginning of their professional careers as educational psychologists and the achievement of the objectives should be seen in the context of undertaking professional practice where there is access to regular supervision and opportunity for consultation with peers.

The first LEA practice is seen as developmental and trainees would be expected to show awareness of the objectives and be beginning to practice the range of skills outlined in the objectives. In the special practice placement trainees should demonstrate an increasing use and competence in meeting the objectives, whilst the final placement provides increasing opportunity for trainees to become more practised and independent in undertaking their professional practice.

The objectives are related to the taught modules of the course which are then supported and implemented through the professional practice placements.

At the end of the 2nd LEA placement, trainees should

- be able to critically apply psychological knowledge and understanding to undertake effective professional practice
- use and apply a research base to support professional practice
- be able to apply systematic problem solving approaches
- be able to discuss possible hypotheses relating to a particular situation
- advise, plan, implement and evaluate appropriate interventions
- use effective consultation skills
- be able to undertake assessment of children (0-19) and their context, using a range of procedures and techniques
- be aware of the effects of labelling and prejudice
- demonstrate a commitment to equal opportunities
- demonstrate professional effectiveness in interpersonal skills
- work sensitively and supportively with children and young people
- work sensitively and supportively with parents and carers
- work effectively with professionals from other disciplines
- plan and deliver appropriate training and development to teachers and other professionals
- work as a member of a team
- have a sound knowledge of all legislation and other local and government documentation relevant to practising as an educational psychologist
- practice in accordance with professional codes of conduct
- reflect on aspects of personal and professional development

C   Cognitive skills

1   Apply psychological knowledge, understanding and research to effective professional practice
2   Demonstrate an awareness of the effects of labelling and prejudice and a commitment to equal opportunities and the promotion of inclusion
3   Use and apply a research base to support professional practice

D   Key (transferable) skills

1	Undertake assessment and observation of children and their learning environment and offer appropriate advice on interventions to promote inclusive practice
2	Show a commitment and ability to listen to the views of children and young people to enable them to take greater control of their own learning
3	Work sensitively and supportively with parents and carers
4	Demonstrate personal and professional effectiveness in the use of interpersonal and communication skills
5	Plan and deliver appropriate training and development to teachers and other professionals
6	Critique research reports and communicate findings
7	Design and carry out research projects relevant to educational psychology theory and practice

10(b)   Programme Intended   Teaching and Learning
Learning Outcomes: Methods and Strategies

The course recognises that individuals join the training course with a wealth of experience and expertise. Teaching and learning approaches used throughout the course are designed to draw on and extend this knowledge base, encouraging a model of active and self directed learning. The course structure offers a range of approaches to teaching and learning, however all emphasise the need for interaction and collaboration with colleagues.

Rationale

As educational psychologists we need to continually reflect on our own and others' professional practice. We need to recognise the diversity of teaching and learning styles and seek to maximise learning outcomes for all. The course then tries to provide a diversity of approaches to learning in order to meet individual needs, enable group interaction and discussion, and introduce appropriate psychological and educational theory and knowledge.

Organisation

The course is structured to provide direct teaching; planned opportunities for learning and self directed approaches.

Direct teaching takes place throughout the year, but decreases from a full week to 1 day per week in the final term. Within the direct teaching sessions, teaching styles will vary considerably and will, for example, include both a more didactic lecture style and small group discussion. On occasion trainees will be asked to undertake preparation prior to a teaching session. Direct teaching sessions are seen as part of a critical learning process, rather than simply a medium for the transmission of information.

Planned opportunities for learning are a key part of the course and are most evident in trainees' seminar presentations in term 2, action research with a colleague in terms 2 and 3 and research for the dissertation throughout the course. Alongside these activities, there will be times when trainees are asked to undertake particular tasks and bring the information back to share with the group.

Much of the course is dependent on a high level of self-directed learning. Trainees will be offered and come across a wide range of tasks, materials and information which they will wish to follow up themselves. This could be through reading, web searches, and discussion with staff at the university, staff in EPSs or other group members. It is hoped that much of this learning will be passed on to the whole group, for example by

- Contributions to teaching sessions
- Offering particular information within a timetabled session

- Bringing resources/materials/books to show others
- Putting a copy of key or interesting material in the teaching base

Trainees are encouraged to comment on the planned curriculum, so that particular areas can be developed, new areas can be covered, areas can be reshaped or processes can be explored.

Individual tutorials are seen as a way of further supporting learning throughout the course,

The course team hope that the approach to teaching and learning promoted on the course will enable trainees to undertake a continued programme of professional development throughout their career in educational psychology.

Teaching Informed By Research

Educational Psychologists taking the MSc. become members of the academic community in the Department of Education. They have access to this community as presenters on the taught element of the course and as potential thesis supervisors. Teaching on the MSc. is informed by the rich research community within the department itself. Students also contribute to this community in the work that is undertaken on the course in the ideas pursued during teaching sessions, and in the knowledge developed from thesis research.

This reciprocal process was demonstrated very tangibly in teaching and assessments last year. The emphasis of many sessions both built upon the research interests and recent publications of the course team in the area of 'consulting with children'. Several trainees contributed to the further development of these ideas in their practice files and dissertations. This area of work was commended by the external examiner.

Section 18 of this handbook on pages 86-90 describe the research strengths of the department in general and of the course team in particular.

Work with other colleagues in training

There is the opportunity to work with clinical psychologists in training during Term 3 and trainees from all the EPiT courses meet together at a trainee EPiT conference in July. This provides an opportunity to meet other colleagues and share experiences via presentations and informal discussion. This year we also hope to provide an opportunity to meet with newly qualified educational psychologists in the region. There may also be an opportunity to meet with PGCE students.

A   Knowledge and understanding

1   PW Psychology at Work for the Educational Psychologist

This unit aims to develop trainee's ability to draw upon their psychological knowledge base and a problem solving framework in their work as educational psychologist. Trainees are encouraged in their practice files to complete separate sections identifying the psychology used in specific areas of work. They are also required to list the hypotheses developed at different stages during casework and link these to psychology. This unit aims to facilitate the development of these skills.

Sessions cover: *Psychological knowledge and approaches, Theories of learning, Origins and validity of intelligence, Personal Construct Psychology, Social Psychology, Identifying Psychology in Practice, Interpersonal Skills.*

2   AI:LS Assessment and Intervention in Practice:
          Assessing Learning Styles and Approaches

This unit introduces standardised, psychometric and dynamic assessment approaches in the context of an overall framework of assessment. There is extensive opportunity for practice. The learners' own understanding of their approach to learning is considered.

Sessions cover: *Dynamic assessment, Psychometric assessment, Standardised tools, Fieldwork practice, The Learner's understanding-metacognitive awareness, Thinking skills.*

3   Ai:CA Assessment and Intervention in Practice:
          Assessing Curriculum Access including
          Language, Literacy and Numeracy

This unit addresses the development and acquisition of language, literacy and numeracy skills, and provided EPiTs with the research information and assessment approaches for effective professional practice. Fieldwork is included.

Sessions cover: *An Overview, Early development of literacy, National context, Professional knowledge and skills, Reading for understanding, Children as writers, Assessment: ways and means, EP involvement in literacy, Specific learning difficulties, Assessment and intervention in numeracy, Using ICT to develop literacy, Fieldwork practice and case discussion, Sensoryl impairments, Language development including bilingualism.*

4   AI:S   Assessment and Intervention in Practice:
               Assessing Social and Emotional Development and Behaviour

This unit considers the social and emotional needs of learners, and the relationship between context and behaviour. A number of psychological approaches are introduced, alongside way to work with learners, carers, schools and other professionals in enhancing psychological well being.

Sessions cover: *A framework of understanding, Whole school approaches, Working with parents, An overview of theoretical and practical approaches and resources.*

5   AI:LE Assessment and Intervention in Practice: Assessing the
               Learning Environment

This unit considers ways to assess the learning environment. It includes a 3 day course on observation offered by an external lecturer, and sessions on gathering information about contexts in which the child or young person learns.

Sessions cover: *The learning environment, Observation including practical experience, Curriculum based assessment, Collecting data from schools.*

6   AI:D   Assessment and Intervention in Practice:
               Assessing Developmental Skills

This unit focuses on the work of the educational psychologist with pre-school children and older learners who have significant developmental difficulties. It introduces trainees to a wide range of assessment approaches, includes a certificated Portage training course, alongside practical work.

Sessions cover: Early childhood development, Early Years provision, Working with carers and other professionals, Approaches to assessment and intervention including Portage Training, Learners deemed to have severe learning difficulties, Neuropsychology, Paediatric assessment.

B   Subject –specific/professional skills

1   PI   Professional Issues in Educational Psychology

This unit provides trainees with an informed understanding of their professional role. It looks at the nature of being a professional, ethics, equal opportunities, legislative framework (and their implications for practice), models of service delivery, professional development, resourcing of SEN and professional and personal safety issues in professional practice.

Sessions cover: *What is a professional? Ethical practice and codes of conduct, Equal opportunities, Introduction to LEA practice, Legislative and statutory information including statutory advice, Professional and personal safety, Written communication in professional practice, Models of Service Delivery, Continuing professional development.*

2   FAI   Framework of Assessment and Intervention in Context:

This unit introduces a framework for considering the learner's needs in context and introduces a problem solving approach as a basis for professional practice.   This framework is revisited throughout the year to take account of EPiTS increasing knowledge base. The unit includes a historical perspective of special education needs to enable to a more thorough consideration of inclusive practices.

Sessions cover: *Core values, A framework of assessment, Problem solving approaches, Evaluating assessment approaches.*

3   C   Consultation

This unit looks at the role of consultation within professional practice, considering theoretical perspectives, process and service delivery.

Sessions cover: *Historical and theoretical perspectives, Consultation in practice, Consultation groups.*

C   Cognitive skills

1   RA   Research in Action for Educational Psychologists

This unit aims to provide a framework for appropriate critical use of research tools in using research in professional tasks and in designing and carrying out research in educational psychology.   Particular sessions aim to prepare trainees for the critical review of literature, the interview assignment, the dissertation, and the action research project.

Sessions cover: *Use of library and library research skills, www use and research skills, designing a dissertation research project, critical review of literature, overview of research approaches, Choosing appropriate methodology, Ethics, Validity and Reliability.*

D   Key (transferable) skills

1   PR   Professional Reflection to Integrate Practice Skills and Knowledge Base

This unit provides sessions throughout the year to help trainees prepare for placements and assessed written work. It also requires them to reflect upon their work in order to help integrate theory, taught sessions at the university and practice on placements.

Sessions cover: *Personal tutor roles and responsibilities, Dissertation and fieldwork supervision, Guidance on assignments.   Reflection on personal and professional development.*

2   FAI   Framework of Assessment and Intervention in Context:

This unit introduces a framework for considering the learner's needs in context and introduces a problem solving approach as a basis for professional practice.   This framework is revisited throughout the year to take account of EPiTS increasing knowledge base. The unit includes a historical perspective of special education needs to enable to a more thorough consideration of inclusive practices.

Sessions cover: *Core values, A framework of assessment, Problem solving approaches, Evaluating assessment approaches.*

3   AI:LE Assessment and Intervention in Practice: Assessing the
                Learning Environment

This unit considers ways to assess the learning environment. It includes a 3 day course on observation offered by an external lecturer, and sessions on gathering information about contexts in which the child or young person learns.

Sessions cover: *The learning environment, Observation including practical experience, Curriculum based assessment, Collecting data from schools.*

**10(c)   Programme Intended   Assessment Strategy
          Learning Outcomes: and Methods**

A   Knowledge and understanding

Knowledge and understanding are formally assessed, as appropriate, by means of written coursework and a dissertation. Written coursework takes the form of assignments which are returned to students with formative feedback.

Tutors provide formative feedback following 'reporting back' sessions, student presentations and on drafted sections of assignments.

B   Subject-specific/professional skills

Subject specific/professional skills are formally assessed through their application in written coursework, as appropriate, and a dissertation. Written coursework takes the form of assignments which are returned to students with formative feedback.

Research related skills are explicitly assessed through the Design of a Research Study (written assignment of 5000 words) and through the dissertation which is based on a piece of practitioner research.

Tutor provide formative feedback following 'reporting back' sessions, student presentations and on drafted sections of assignments.

The Practice File forms an essential part of the course assessment. It provides a significant opportunity for a trainee to demonstrate developing skills and experience as a practitioner.

Aim

• To enable trainees to demonstrate an understanding of the integration of theory with practice with particular reference to all general course aims and the aims of the course modules.

• To make an appropriate use of literature and to set work in its broader context.

• To reflect on how a piece of work has influenced personal learning and development.

To produce a placement file for use as a personal resource.

Practice File: Part 1 – Required Components

1.   Placement Diary
1.   Cumulative Record from first two placements First LEA placement and Special Practice placement.
2.   Two contextualised reports from case or project work from first LEA placement of Special Practice Placement.
4.   All Other Reports from First LEA placement and Special Practice placements.

Practice File: Part 2 – Required Components

1.   Placement Diary from second LEA placement
1.   Cumulative Record from Second LEA placement
2.   Two contextualised reports from case or project work from Second LEA placement
3.   Contextualised account of negotiated work in a small group of schools
4.   All Other Reports from Second LEA Placement
6.   Account of Personal and Professional Development

C   Cognitive skills

Cognitive skills are formally assessed by means of written coursework and a dissertation. Written coursework takes the form of assignments which are returned to students with formative feedback.

Tutors provide formative feedback following 'reporting back' sessions, student presentations and on drafted sections of assignments.

D   Key (transferable) skills

Key skills are not assessed independently but are applied through coursework, presentation, placements and the dissertation.

11   Programme Curriculum, Structure, and Features:

Students study on a full-time basis. The course is non-modular. All students take the same taught sessions, and undertake different placements.

COURSE STRUCTURE

The course begins in the first week of September and lasts for a full calendar year.

The course is delivered through:

> *a number of teaching modules;*
> *supervised research;*

and   *a range of practical placements.*

The Teaching Units cover:

FAI	Framework of Assessment and Intervention in Context Assessment and Intervention;
AI : LE	The Learning Environment;
AI : D	Developmental Skills;
AI : LS	Learning Styles and Approaches;
AI : CA	Curriculum Access including Language: Literacy and Numeracy
AI : L	Language and Communication Skills
AI : S	Social and Emotional Development
PW	Psychology at Work for the Educational Psychologist
C	Consultation
S	Systems in Context: Working in Partnership
RA	Research in Action for Educational Psychologists
PI	Professional Issues in Educational Psychology
PR	Professional Reflection to Integrate Practice Skills and Knowledge Base

These units provide a framework with which to actively reflect on professional practice alongside extending a sound knowledge and skill base. All units are compulsory. Most units are delivered across all three terms, operating a spiral curriculum in order to present different aspects of a unit at an appropriate point in the development of trainees' skills. Detailed outlines of each unit are found in a separate "Handbook".

the course begins with a 9 week introductory teaching programme which is designed:

- to provide course members with the range of psychological, research, practical and interpersonal skills to begin their first practical placement;

- to enable the group to develop a supportive working relationship;

- to enhance their understanding of research skills; and

- to develop their understanding of reflective psychological practice.

Teaching continues on Monday and Tuesday mornings throughout the rest of the course; though Tuesday mornings in the latter half of the spring term and the summer term are dedicated to the collaborative action research project. In the summer term there are 2 Fridays when work is undertaken with clinical psychologists in training colleagues.

Teaching is provided by the course team, university staff, other practising educational psychologists and members of other disciplines, including clinical psychology, education, paediatrics, and psychiatry.

Practice placements are organised into

Term 1:   First LEA Psychological Service placement on Wed and Thurs (November and December)

Term 2:   Special Practice Placement on Wed and Thurs (January and February)

Term 2 and 3: Second LEA Psychological Service placement on Wed and Thurs (March to July)

Opportunity is included within the first introductory 9 weeks for fieldwork practice and an observational attachment to the first LEA Psychological Service placement.

In all placements, but especially the third and final long placement, there are opportunities for trainees to become involved in consultation and staff development, as well as individual casework. Joint work with supervisors, university teachers and with other course members help trainees to gain in confidence and take on new responsibilities. Trainees are allocated to their first placement, but for their second and third it is possible to take trainees' own personal requirements into account as long as these match with the requirements of the placement. Occasionally personal requests cannot be met and the University reserves the right to make the final decision about appropriate placements for each trainee.

Over the whole course more than 75 days of supervised field practice are provided.

Assignments

There are four assignments during the course of the year. These provide course members with the opportunity to demonstrate their increasing ability to draw together their theoretical knowledge developed from teaching input and critical analysis of research literature and apply this to effective professional practice.

Research Work

In the spring and summer term trainees work in pairs on a collaborative action research project. This is often school based and provides opportunities for consultative work and staff development.

One day per week from November until June is allocated to research, the main focus being the dissertation (10,000 to 15,000 words). The dissertation is seen as a vehicle for developing theoretical and research knowledge in educational psychology and its application to professional practice. The dissertation can become the basis for future specialist knowledge and professional development.

Assessment

The course is assessed on the basis of the work submitted for the 4 assignments, the dissertation and evidence of the development of professional skills as outlined in supervisors' reports and the practice file which critically records the work from all three placement experiences. The examination takes place in July and includes an oral examination with the external examiner.

Study

At least half a day a week is set aside for personal study time. The amount of non-timetabled tasks increases as the course progresses, with the expectation that trainees will want to self-direct their own development. This allocated time provides a planned opportunity for trainees to meet with their personal tutor.

12   Criteria for Admission:

- A recognised good honours degree in psychology or its equivalent. The trainee must be eligible for Graduate Basis for Registration (GBR) of the British Psychological Society (BPS).

and have gained GBR status either by the closing date for applications (15th November) or be able to provide confirmation by 31st December 2002 at the latest. Please note that applications for GBR can take some time to process, so early application is recommended;

- A DfEE approved teaching qualification plus at least two years qualified teaching experience. The teaching experience is usually expected to have been with school aged children.

13   Support for Students and their Learning:

Induction

The 9 week full time programme at the start of the year is, in effect, a very carefully structured induction programme. One module is devoted to assisting trainees to reflect on, prepare for and integrate professional practice, taught sessions and assessed written work. Particular sessions are designed to help trainees prepare for assessed written work. For example, in week 3 trainees present, in groups, their critical analysis of one journal article from a particular perspective. This is to prepare for the first assignment. Particular handouts on ideas to assist assignment writing are given to trainees at the appropriate time.

Study skills support, Academic support and Pastoral support

Tutorial Arrangements

Personal Tutor

In the first week of the course each trainee will be linked with one of the course tutors. The tutors will be available on a regular basis to meet with trainees and time is set aside on Tuesday afternoons for this.

The tutor's role will involve listening, facilitating learning, challenging thinking, recommending reading etc. in a supportive and enabling way.

The tutee's role will involve preparation for tutorial and a willingness to plan and work together with the tutor.

Tutorials should enable and facilitate:-

- An overview of the trainee's learning and professional development for the duration of the course.

- Identification and recognition of the trainee's strengths, experience, areas of expertise and specialist knowledge and to build on these.

- Identification and recognition of gaps in the trainee's knowledge and experience and to look at ways to address these in the course.

- Discussion of how written course work links with the course units to ensure assessment of the broadest range within the university requirements of a MSc course.

- Discussion of issues of time management and meeting deadlines for course work.

- Discussion about job applications, references and guidance about interviews.

The tutor may be the trainee's supervisor for course work such as the dissertation, action research project etc., but tutorials should not be given over to this work but rather discussed in a generic way.

The needs of each trainee will differ, so that arrangements for the frequency and length of tutorials should be made between the tutor and each trainee directly. However, it is expected that trainees will ensure their tutors are aware of how they are progressing on the course and tutors will regularly check their trainees are not experiencing any significant difficulties.

Disclosure about personal difficulties that may be impinging on studying should be at the discretion of the trainee.

Any written record of sessions should always be available to the trainee and preferably completed in their presence as an aide memoir for future sessions.

Should problems arise which involve a complaint against the personal supervisor, or a need to change supervisor the trainee should approach the course director, another member of the course team or the head of department.

Supervision for practice placements is provided by an educational psychologist working in the educational psychological service where the trainee is based and supported by a link tutor from the course team. Please see the separate "Practice Placement Handbook" for further information.

Dissertation supervision is provided by the course team and academic members of staff of the Education Department according to the nature and topic of the dissertation study and particular expertise and interests of the staff members.

Mid-Course Review

Just over half way through the course all trainees have a review meeting with two course tutors. This is an opportunity to look briefly at all aspects of the trainees work, professional practice, assignments, dissertation. Work can be celebrated, difficulties discussed, and support needs reviewed.

Attendance

Attendance at all timetabled sessions and all placement days is a course requirement. Course staff must be notified if exceptional circumstances cause lateness or absence. Trainees should in the first instance4 contact the course secretary, Sharon Wilkinson, preferably between 8.30 and 9.00 am, or when possible. If Sharon is unavailable a message should be left with another member of the CPD office. On next return to the university, the trainee should complete an absence form, obtainable from Sharon Wilkinson. Difficulties in attendance may be discussed by the trainee with his or her

personal tutor and/or the course director.   One week's holiday may be taken over Christmas and one week may be taken over Easter. Holiday arrangements during Easter

need to be agreed with placement supervisors and must not in any case conflict with timetabled sessions at the University. A medical note is required if absence for more than five days occurs for health reasons.   Permission is normally given to attend interviews for future employment, but if this happens on a placement day, the trainee is expected to make up the time lost.

Particular Difficulties

It a trainee experiences any difficulties during the course, these will be taken up as speedily as possible. Occasionally difficulties arise which need to be dealt with in a more formal manner. Any serious concerns raised by the course team, other course members visiting lecturers or supervisors about meeting course requirements or expectations in terms of attendance, submission or standard of work or personal or professional conduct will be clearly brought to the attention of the trainee concerned. Initially the concerns will be dealt with directly with the course member by his/her course tutor. The action taken would be to enable the course member to effectively deal with the concerns as quickly as possible. Written notes, with dates, will be made by the tutor. If initial discussions have not remedied the situation, written notes will be sent to the trainee who may wish to add their own. At this stage it is still hoped that the matter can be dealt with by the tutor, but it is important that the matter is discussed with the course director at the earliest opportunity. The course team is made aware of any difficulties and if sully involved in discussions about ways forward. The Course Director takes the final decision on any action at this stage.

If the matter continues to remain unresolved a formal verbal warning, confirmed in writing, will be given to the trainee. This warning will take place with the Course Director and another member of staff, and the trainee will be asked if he/she wishes to bring anyone to act as their witness/representative.

Failure to respond at this stage might put the trainee at risk of failing the course and trainee's employer (if any) should then be so advised. In some cases it will be appropriate at this point to advise the trainee to discontinue his/ her studies. In all cases the possible consequences of failure will be explained in writing to the trainee. Again, written notes of such action will be kept.

In some cases it may also be appropriate to invoke the use of other University procedures. This may involve the Head of Department, the Dean of Faculty, or bodies outside the department such as the Student Office. In such cases, the trainee may wish to refer to the University complaints procedures and policies, as appropriate.

Support for Special Needs

The University has a Disability Unit which is a centre offering advice, guidance and support for students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties. Students will find

more details about this provision and how to find out further information in the Degree Programme Handbook.

Learning resources

The main source of paper based learning resources is the Robinson Library, which provides access to the full range of recommended reading, and a wide range of further reading. The range of texts in stock is regularly updated through the Library Liaison Service.

The library also provides an Inter-Library Loans System, co-operative arrangements for access to other academic libraries, a wide range of audio-visual material, microcomputer work stations for word processing and access to the University's network.

In addition, the Education Resource Centre houses a fully-networked cluster of PCs and a wide range of up to date school focused texts.

Further computer facilities are available through the University Computer Services. The usefulness of handouts and the usefulness of texts are evaluated as an integral part of student evaluations completed at the end of each module.

14   Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning:

Programme reviews

The course team is involved in the continual development of the MSc to maintain the highest standards. Trainee evaluations of all aspects of the course are considered very seriously and are a crucial vehicle to inform course development. The course team have been particularly grateful for the skill with which past trainees have delivered their views, demonstrating the sensitive communication skills the course aims to develop. Changes made to the current course, from student evaluations, have been accommodated and include the following:

- sessions earlier than planned, in term 1, to discuss the critical literature review (Assignment 1);

- further opportunities to learn through group discussion;

- the removal, from practice File 2, of a service evaluation project and number of contexualised reports;

- extra time to take home cognitive psychometric tests;

- time-tabled time to plan the trainee presentation at the annual trainee conference;

- opportunity for group consultation as part of the teaching timetable.

One of the main areas of courses enhancement this year has been in the range of teaching techniques designed to enhance both self educated learning and collaborative learning. Further enhancement depends upon possibilities for developing extended training, over a period of longer than the current year.

The MSc in Educational Psychology team uses a variety of methods to evaluate the course. There are aimed to assess the following:

- teaching quality
- learning quality
- appropriateness of assessments, clarity of assessment specifications
- learning resources
- learning environment

Trainees are encouraged to give immediate feedback to lecturers and to supervisors to encourage and support good practice and to provide suggestions for improvement.

The course team tries hard to respond to trainee requests for changes in course delivery and structure. Indeed, flexibility is already built into placement selection and some term 2 and 3 teaching sessions, to allow for this.

Group Representative

During the Introductory Period, trainees are asked to identify a representative whose task include alerting tutors to issues of concern to trainees, attending meetings of the Board of Studies, and attending the department's staff-student committee. Trainees may wish to share this responsibility.

Opportunities for Verbal and Written Course Evaluation

At the end of the Introductory Period and at the end of term 2 trainees meet on their own to discuss the feedback to be presented. This is followed by a meeting with tutors, for which or after which a written summary is prepared by the trainee representative. This includes comments on and suggestions for improvement of the various teaching components.

During each placement there is a process to enable trainees to have an opportunity to provide oral and written feedback to supervisors and liaison tutors concerning their experience of being on placement.,

Meetings of the Board of Studies in Educational Psychology are held each term, where student feedback is always an agenda item.

In March/April there is a mid-course review of the progress of individual trainees, which takes the form of an appraisal interview. This too, provides an opportunity for trainees to present their views and suggestions to tutors.

Trainees are encouraged to complete written evaluation sheets (available in Room 1.12) after every session from outside lecturers. An evaluation questionnaire on each course unit is provided at the end of term 2. Anonymised collated evaluations, are provided for trainees and for members of the Board of Studies.

In July the trainees are asked to complete a detailed course evaluation questionnaire. They also meet as a group with the External Examiner in order to provide feedback on the year as a whole.

Trainees are given immediate feedback on their evaluation comments to Board of Studies.

The British Psychological Society makes a course validation visit every five years, as part of which they obtain feedback about the course from past and present trainees.

External examiner reports

The programme is monitored externally through external examiners' annual reports. These are discussed at the Board of Studies and relevant points acted upon.

Accreditation reports

Student evaluations

Feedback Mechanisms

Faculty and University Review Mechanisms

Feedback from Taught Programme Review is considered by the Board of Studies.

15   Regulation of Assessment

Pass Marks

PASS

Coherence and Quality of Discussion
- Adequate structured and coherent argument
- Adequate level of critical thinking and reflection on professional practice
- Adequate blend of date and first-hand experience with relevant literature or theory
- Some integration of focus of work into wider contexts or perspectives

Research Processes
- Appropriately designed study with adequate discussion of research procedures used
- Adequate and appropriate data collection
- Adequate and appropriate analysis and interpretation of data
- Discussion of findings adequately related to the relevant research literature

Accessing Literature
- Literature adequate and appropriate but sources may be somewhat dated and/or limited in scope
- Some critical engagement with literature but not fully explored
- Links to wider issues only partially recognised

Presentation
Adequate standard of presentation and technical accuracy
Bibliography/references set out in standard format

FAIL

Coherence and Quality of Discussion
- Poorly structured argument and lacking in a clear focus
- Heavily descriptive with little or no evidence of critical engagement and reflection on professional practice
- No consideration of wider context

Research Processes
- Inappropriate design of study. Little or no discussion of research procedures adopted
- Inadequate and/or inappropriate data collection
- Little or no relevant analysis
- Little or no discussion of findings in relation to the relevant research literature

Accessing Literature
- Narrow and/or inadequate range of literature used
- Purely descriptive summary of literature consulted
- No recognition of links to wider issues

Presentation
- Level of presentation unacceptable in terms of technical accuracy and uncorrected typographical errors
- Bibliography/references not set out in standard format

Common Marking Scheme

All assessed work is marked according to a scheme approved by the Board of Studies for Continuing Professional Development. Four main sets of criteria are used, where appropriate, to assess written coursework for MEd modules and the dissertation.

Candidates may be awarded a Fail, Pass or Merit for a piece of submitted work. To achieve a 'merit' an assignment must demonstrate a high level of achievement in at least three of the four areas, one of which must be Coherence and Quality of Discussion. A 'pass' will be achieved when an adequate level of achievement is demonstrated in three of the four areas, one of which must be Coherence and Quality of Discussion. An assignment will fail when the examiners consider the work does not reach an adequate or acceptable level in relation to the stated criteria. An assignment that fails in the areas of Coherence and Quality of Discussion automatically fails.

A distinction is awarded for a high overall level of performance as defined in "Notes on Distinctions" in the Degree Programme Handbook.

Role of the External Examiner

External examiners are distinguished members of the academic community appointed by the FTC. Their role ie to:
i)   consider a range of work as may be agreed in consultation with internal examiners or the Director of Continuing Professional Development
ii)   conduct such oral examinations as may be required
iii)   attending meetings of the appropriate Final Board of Examiners. External Examiners unable to attend such meetings submit detailed written comments on the work they have seen.
iv)   Submit an annual report at the end of the year of their external examinership.

16   Indicators of Quality and Standards:

Professional Accreditation Reports

BPS Accreditation Report April 1998.

Internal Review Reports

Taught Programme Review.

Previous QAA Reports

QAA Subject Review Report.

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.

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

The University Prospectus

The Departmental Prospectus

The University and Degree Programme Regulations

The Degree Programme Handbook

QAA Subject Review Report