

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	Postgraduate Diploma/MA
4	Programme Title	Museum Studies
5	UCAS/Programme Code	MA 4007, Diploma 3371
6	Programme Accreditation	Cultural Heritage National Training Organization, Museums Association
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	N/A
8	FHEQ Level	Masters
9	Date written/revised	December 2007

10 Programme Aims

- 1 To provide students with a range of learning opportunities (in relation to analytical, key, research and subject-specific skills) within the field of museology/galleries/heritage
- 2 To provide a curriculum that is responsive to the professional requirements and skills needs of the museums/galleries/heritage sectors nationally and internationally, and that meets the requirements of the Creative and Cultural Skills Sector Skills Council and the Museums Association
- 3 To enable students to develop their capacity to learn in preparation for, or as part, of continuing professional development (CPD) and lifelong learning
- 4 To provide access to Higher Education and appropriate professional qualifications to students from diverse backgrounds including those with disabilities
- 5 To provide students with the opportunity to gain the skills and knowledge required to work in the museums/heritage/art museum and gallery sector on graduation
- 6 To enable students to undertake discreet pieces of independent research at postgraduate level through various activities and assignments.
- 7 To enable students to undertake a sustained piece of independent and original research at postgraduate level through the production of a dissertation
- 8 To ensure that the programme meets the requirements of an M level qualification as defined by the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
- 9 To ensure that the programme conforms to University policies and to QAA codes of practice
- 10 To ensure that the programme conforms to the University's policy and to the QAA code of practice on placements

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.

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should have acquired a knowledge and understanding of:

- A1 Museology/galleries/heritage
- A2 Theoretical and practical constructs
- A3 Boundaries of subject
- A4 Relationship with other subjects

Teaching and Learning Methods

The primary method of imparting knowledge and understanding (**A1-A4**) is lectures, supplemented by group seminars and self-directed learning.

All modules include one or more study visits that encourage students to relate theoretical knowledge to specific practical examples. Throughout the programmes students are encouraged to read widely and extensive bibliographies are supplied.

The work placement provides students with the opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding of their chosen element of the heritage sector.

The dissertation provides students with the opportunity to develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of a particular aspect of the museums/galleries/heritage sector and its relationship to theoretical aspects of the professions and disciplines.

Assessment Strategy

Knowledge and understanding are assessed through a wide range of professionally related assignments designed to reflect work that students will have to do in the workplace (eg. research essays, oral presentations, writing reports, policy documents, management briefings, etc). Assignments are designed to provide students with the opportunity to relate theoretical and practical constructs to real life situations.

The work placement provides students with the opportunity to explain their understanding of a particular organization and to reflect on the deepening of their own knowledge and understanding of the sector.

The dissertation provides an extended opportunity for students to reveal their in-depth knowledge and understanding of one particular facet of the programme.

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should have acquired and/or developed skills in:

- B1 Critical reasoning
- B2 Gathering and using information
- B3 Applying concepts
- B4 Evaluation, analyse, and interpretation

Teaching and Learning Methods

Students are encouraged to develop and practice their intellectual skills through a wide range of types of written work (essays, reports, policy and strategy documents, etc).

All modules include group work sessions where students develop their cognitive skills in relation to real and topical issues in the museums/galleries/heritage sector. These sessions require students to search for (usually) book- or web-based information and for them to discuss such new information in the light of lectures and for them to come to a critical standpoint on any given topic.

Feedback on individual and group presentations allows staff to supplement and illustrate their teaching and provides students with further opportunities to learn.

Assessment Strategy

All written assignments require students to gather, evaluate, analyse, and interpret evidence set within the wider academic framework of the programme. (Thus students are required to fully reference their work academically while understanding that, for example, a 'real' report may well not include such references.) Some assignments are split into a piece of professionally related work (eg. writing a museum label or curating an exhibition) and a critically reflective commentary on the work that requires students to explain the reasoning behind their work and to link it to the theory relating to any given practice (eg. Construction of texts relating to reading age).

Practical Skills

On completing the programme students should have:

- C1 Acquired subject-specific skills through practical and professional experience
- C2 Developed an ability to evaluate, analyse and interpret different sources of evidence relating to museums, galleries and heritage
- C3 Developed the ability to undertake both work-based and higher degree research through completion of a dissertation

Teaching and Learning Methods

All modules include lectures from a number of professional colleagues involved on a day-to-day basis with the area about which they lecture. All contributors use a wide range of examples linking professional experience to the more theoretical knowledge and understanding delivered through **A1-A4**. Group work related to lectures provides students with the opportunity to develop and practice their subject specific and professional skills through, for example, role play and oral presentations. The 8 week work placement provides an intensive work-place based opportunity for all students to further develop and practice these skills.

Research training lectures, tutorials, guided reading, feedback on outline proposals, and continuous supervision provide the basis for students to complete their dissertations.

Assessment Strategy

All assignments include an element of assessment related to the understanding of subject-specific/professional skills. Students are encouraged to reflect on their own (voluntary or otherwise) experience in the sector and on case studies provided by lecturers when answering assignments.

The work placement provides a major opportunity for students to acquire subject-specific/professional skills and is assessed through a specially designed workbook.

B2 is specifically assessed through the presentation of the dissertation.

Transferable/Key Skills

On completing the programme students should have acquired and/or developed skills in:

- D1 Written communication
- D2 Interpersonal and oral communication
- D3 Teamwork
- D4 Planning and organisation
- D5 Computer literacy

Teaching and Learning Methods

During induction week and/or skills week and in specific modules students are introduced in lectures and seminars to:

[a] A variety of ways of writing required for their professional careers (eg. news releases, management briefings, policy documents, general reports). These are then subsequently practiced throughout the rest of the module/programme.

[b] Good interpersonal/oral communication techniques. Students then practice and develop this skill by presenting their findings from group work orally to the whole cohort either as groups or individually in each module.

[c] Teamworking. This is practiced through the rest of the programme through group work.

[d] Planning and organization. Students practice and develop these crucial skills through keeping to programme deadlines and by planning and organizing their written work.

[e] Computer literacy. This is practiced and developed throughout the programme through submission of coursework and then the dissertation.

Assessment Strategy

Written communication is assessed in almost all assignments (see below*). Assignments cover a wide range of types of writing required in the profession – for example, news releases, reports and policy documents.

Interpersonal/oral communication is assessed formatively throughout the programme during individual and group feedback sessions. All students deliver a summatively assessed presentation related to the Communication and Interpretation compulsory module. Teamworking is assessed formatively through group work throughout the programme. At present there is no summative assessment of teamworking.

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features

Basic structure of the programme

All ICCHS MA programmes consist of ten taught units, a two-unit work placement, and six research units, the latter forming the dissertation. Each single unit is worth 10 credits - with the full degree programme comprising 180 credits. Successful completion of the first twelve non-research units provides the necessary credits for a Diploma. The majority of the taught modules are 20 credits (two 10-credit units).

With the exception of most of the specialist option modules in Museum Studies, the taught modules are delivered intensively over two teaching weeks, making access to the programme easier for part-time students or museum/art museum and gallery/heritage professionals wishing to attend for a single module. As a result, full-time students will meet part-timers throughout the year and museum/art museum and gallery /heritage professionals who may be attending for single modules. For full-time students, the gaps between teaching weeks are filled by self directed learning or by completing assessed work, carrying out practical projects, attending guest lectures or seminars, occasional extra visits, and reading materials supplied in advance of the next teaching week. The specialist option modules in Museum Studies tend to be taught less intensively over a four week period, reflecting the high input from museum professionals who have other commitments over the period of teaching.

All students receive a module handbook before the start of each module, which contain full details of lectures, lecturers, practical work, visits, and assessed work, including assignment information. These handbooks also contain a list of aims and learning outcomes for the module, and a bibliography. Extra support material is provided through the computer-based 'managed learning environment' *Blackboard*.

In the first Semester all students, regardless of their specialist MA programme take three, 20 credit, compulsory modules:

- [a] issues and ideas
- [b] management
- [c] communication and interpretation

These modules draw on theoretical and practical examples from across the whole of the museum/art museum and gallery/heritage sector and ensure that all students are provided with a broad understanding of the sector at the beginning of the Third Millennium. Examples are drawn from local, national and international case studies and discussion is frequently enhanced by the previous experience of students.

The Dissertation Students complete their dissertation after the taught and work placement modules have been completed. Dissertations are presented in the form of a 15,000-18,000 - word piece of work, including footnotes and appendices but excluding bibliography. Dissertations frequently require close liaison with a heritage organisation, site, art museum, gallery, or museum and should address a genuine need or problem. Students are encouraged to think about potential topics as early as possible and discuss topics in detail with staff at the beginning of Semester 2.

Once a topic has been agreed students produce a research proposal of no more than 300 words. This short paper details their aims and objectives and the methods that they will

employ to achieve them. Once agreed, a second, more detailed proposal that explains their aims and research methodologies, is required. Full guidance on the dissertation and research techniques is given during the Research and Professional Development Week.

The Masters Degree dissertation must be an original piece of work and not simply a synthesis of existing knowledge. It requires the gathering and analysis of new data, the development of original arguments and the presentation of conclusions and recommendations. To be successful the dissertation requires careful planning and preparation.

Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)

Study Visits These provide students with an insight into the workings of many different types of sites, galleries, and museums and different management structures. They provide students with the opportunity to be right up-to-date with developments that are taking place in the museum/art museum and gallery/heritage sector. The visits are viewed as one of the most important parts of the programme. Students are encouraged to make use of the visit check list (provided separately) and to make notes. All visits are followed-up with a de-briefing session. Visits relate to the learning outcomes of a particular module while also supporting the overall aims of the MA programmes. Students are also encouraged to visit as many other museums, galleries, and heritage sites as possible so that they can begin to relate information and ideas presented in lectures and seminars to the real world.

The Work Placement In order to make sure students make the most of their work placement all placements are arranged through the ICCHS placement co-ordinator. Students discuss the type of placement most suited to them with the co-ordinator before the end of Semester 1 in order to make sure that they can be matched with an appropriate organisation. Work placements usually commence in late April and last for eight weeks. Some students link their work placement with a dissertation topic. Most students chose to follow their work placements in their home country, but some have a particular preference to work elsewhere and ICCHS staff then use their considerable overseas contacts to facilitate such work placements.

The work placement is assessed by completion of a work placement booklet. This serves three main functions. First, it helps students to make the most of their work placement by identifying issues and possible shortcomings as they arise. Second, it can be used to explain to potential employers what they did during, and what they got out of, their work placement. Third, it is important to have a record of the tasks that students carried out and what they achieved in order to take advantage of the National Vocational Qualifications structure.

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme/2007-2008/programme/ma_4007_diploma_3371.php

13 Criteria for admission

Entry qualifications

[a] Candidates should hold an undergraduate degree (preferably with a 2:1) in any relevant subject

[b] Candidates should preferably have some experience of working in the heritage/museum/gallery sector. This includes any voluntary work undertaken.

[c] Candidates without a first degree in a relevant subject may have some other suitable qualification (for example, a teaching qualification and/or Certificate in HEI, validated by a reputable higher education institution) and proven competence in the field of museums, galleries or heritage education and/or interpretation.

Admissions policy/selection tools

We actively encourage applications from overseas and from those employed in the sector who require CPD support. All overseas students have to satisfy the University's language requirements.

All applications are seen by the Admissions Tutor and where deemed appropriate another member of staff. All borderline or unusual applicants are contacted by letter, email, or phone and further information solicited. Where appropriate and possible borderline applicants are invited for interview. All applicants are offered the chance to meet with staff. All applicants are encouraged to obtain as much experience in the sector as possible prior to their arrival. On occasion applicants are encouraged to defer for a year to gain such experience. Open Days have been introduced to provide applicants with the chance to see ICCHS facilities and staff, and for ICCHS staff to meet prospective students.

In the past all applicants were interviewed. This has become impossible due to the number of applications (and, in particular, the number of overseas applications). We have monitored this situation carefully and have found no concerns regarding student progress: students accepted through the (robust) 'distance method' have proved just as successful in their completion of the programmes and in their obtaining jobs as when all students were interviewed. Interviews are presently reserved for unusual or borderline applications. We will continue to monitor the progress of those students not called for interview and modify the process if necessary.

Non-standard Entry Requirements

Following university policy on this, ICCHS would welcome applications from people who may not have an undergraduate degree, but who can demonstrate considerable work experience in art museums or galleries. Where this occurs concessions for the recognition of prior experience are sought through the Dean of Post-Graduate Studies.

Additional Requirements

There are no additional requirements however applicants who have no relevant work experience will be encouraged to obtain some before registering on the programme.

Level of English Language capability

If English is not an applicant's first language then the applicant needs to provide evidence of his/her proficiency in written and spoken English. The normal minimum requirement for admission to one of the programmes is an overall band score of 6.5 (with a minimum of 6 in each sub-section) on the British Council IELTS test, or 5.75 on the TOEFL test.

14 Support for Student Learning

Welcome Week

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. Students will be introduced to key regional colleagues who will provide significant inputs into the programmes (e.g. staff from Tyne and Wear Museums). New and continuing students will also 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 (see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/international/coming_to_newcastle/orientation.phtml).

Study skills support

As all students are graduates (or professionals with considerable experience) most come armed with a good range of study skills. The induction week includes familiarization sessions on, for example, the libraries and computing facilities, and staff are always ready to help students where particular needs are expressed or identified.

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.

Staff operate an essentially 'open door' policy throughout the year and all students are encouraged to discuss any academic issues or concerns as soon as they arise – usually with the relevant module leader in the first instance. Where a student's assessed work is in need of support, staff (usually the first marker) set up individual tutorial sessions to address the issue as quickly as possible.

Pastoral support

All students are assigned a personal tutor whose responsibility is to monitor the academic performance and overall well-being of their tutees. Part-time and overseas students are allocated to specialized tutors. Details of the personal tutor system can be found at

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/teachingexcellence/support/pgtutor.htm>

In addition the University offers a range of support services, including the Student Advice Centre, the Counselling and Wellbeing team, the Mature Student Support Officer, and a Childcare Support Officer, see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/support/>

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. For further details see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/disability-support/>

Learning resources

The region Newcastle has ready access to first-class gallery and art museum resources, both in the city itself and within the wider region. These include the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, the Hatton Gallery, Laing Art Gallery, Shipley Art Gallery, the Biscuit Factory, Cornucopia Gallery, Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, Sunderland Museum and Winter Gardens, The Sunderland University Gallery, Reg Vardy Art Gallery, The Glass Centre, Durham Cathedral and Castle (both inscribed by UNESCO and on its World Heritage List), Durham Art Gallery, Darlington Arts Centre and the Bowes Museum. It is also home to the several artist-run organizations such as Vane, Isis, Waygood and Side Photographic Gallery. Newcastle and environs has a thriving, lively and eclectic arts scene with diverse educational and festival activities organized regularly and annually. Many of these sites are open as visitor attractions and all are used as examples in the programme

New developments such as the expansion of Newcastle's Globe and Waygood Galleries, and the construction of Middlesborough Institute for Modern Art also offer possibilities for the development of learning resources. Further a field, yet within easy traveling time, is Edinburgh, another World Heritage site with a wide range of art museums and galleries. In short, the region is an ideal laboratory for the programmes and extensive use throughout the year is made of these art museums, galleries and artist-led initiatives.

Libraries The Robinson Library holds art museum and gallery studies and education literature within the University and students have access to the library held by Museums, Libraries, and Archives – North East (MLA NE). In many cases books will be duplicated to give a greater degree of access.

INTO All new students whose first language is not English are required to take an English Language test in the Language Centre. Where appropriate, in-session language training can be provided. The Language Centre houses a range of resources for learning other languages which may be particularly appropriate for those interested in an Erasmus exchange. See <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/langcen/index.htm>

The Writing Development Centre This is a new student support service based in the Learning Zone, King's Road Centre. The Centre offers advice, guidance and tuition for students who wish to improve their writing skills for study or employment purposes. If you

have problems planning and structuring assignments, using reading sources in your writing without plagiarism, writing CVs and cover letters or simply using grammar and punctuation accurately, please visit the Centre to book an appointment. A drop-in service is also available. A timetable will be displayed outside the Centre in the Learning Zone.

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. Further information is at www.thestudentsurvey.com/ 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, see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/aqss/qsh/internal_subject_review/index.php

Accreditation reports

Accreditation by the Creative & Cultural Industries Sector Skills Council will be applied for in due course.

Additional mechanisms

16 Regulation of assessment

Course requirements

To qualify for the Masters degree and Postgraduate Diploma students must complete all course requirements and must overall obtain 50% or more for all assessed work. All taught modules must be completed successfully for the Postgraduate Diploma. All taught modules, plus the research dissertation module should be completed successfully for the MA.

Progression is subject to the University's Masters Degree Progress Regulations, Taught and Research (<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/calendar/university.regs/tpmdepr.pdf>) and Examination

Conventions for Taught Masters Degrees

(<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/calendar/university.regs/tpmdeprexamconv.pdf>). 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

Final marks are calculated by taking an average of all module marks which are weighted according to the credit value of each of the modules. This means that two thirds of the overall mark will come from the taught modules (including ICS 8015 – Work Placement) and a third comes from the dissertation mark (ICS 8099).

Common Level Descriptors

A distinction level mark (70%-100%) will be given to work that displays depth of knowledge and mastery of skills appropriate to that module (or modules). The work will be clearly presented with well-structured, sharply focused arguments and will explore the limits of knowledge in the area under investigation. It will demonstrate critical analysis, independence of mind, initiative and intellectual rigour. In terms of the MA dissertation, work may also demonstrate originality and an ability to extend the research further through doctoral study, or convey ideas that might be publishable. Examiners will use the mark range 70-79% for a good distinction level and 80-100% for publishable work.

A merit level mark (60%-69%) will be awarded for well written and informed work that indicates awareness of recent developments in the area under investigation. The work will be well organised, showing a thorough understanding of the subject, and evidence of additional self-study. There should be no significant deficiencies, although some points may be discussed without being argued through fully.

A pass level mark (50%-59%) will be awarded for work that displays competence and general understanding of the subject. It contains relevant information but lacks the sophistication and incisiveness of work at higher grades, and shows limited evidence of additional, independent study. There may be insufficient discussion and conclusions.

NB. The Diploma level pass mark is 50%+; the Diploma cannot be awarded with merit or with distinction.

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

Masters programmes

Postgraduate Certificate and Diploma programmes

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

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.

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

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

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.

Mapping of Intended Learning Outcomes onto Curriculum/Modules

Module	Type	Intended Learning Outcomes			
		A	B	C	D
ICS8001	Comp	1-4	1-4	1-3	1-5
ICS8002	Comp	1-4	1-4	1-3	1-5
ICS8003	Comp	1-4	1-4	1-3	1-5
ICS8004	Comp	1-4	1-4	1-3	1-5
ICS8009	Opt	1-4	1-4	1-3	1-5
ICS8010	Opt	1-4	1-4	1-3	1-5
ICS8012	Opt	1-4	1-4	1-3	1-5
ICS8013	Opt	1-4	1-4	1-3	1-5
ICS8014	Opt	1-4	1-4	1-3	1-5
ICS8015	Comp	1-4	1-4	1-3	1-5
ICS8099	Opt	1-4	1-4	1-3	1-5