	PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION	Newcastle University

1	**Awarding Institution**	Newcastle University
2	**Teaching Institution**	Newcastle University
3	**Final Award**	MA
4	**Programme Title**	Education Research
5	**UCAS/Programme Code**	4018
6	**Programme Accreditation**	ESRC
7	**QAA Subject Benchmark(s)**	N/A
8	**FHEQ Level**	Level 7
9	**Date written/revised**	May 2010

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10   Programme Aims

- To offer a research-informed environment in which you can learn about in detail the discipline of education from research active staff, your own study and from interaction with your fellow students.
- To enable you to acquire an advanced knowledge of the constituent areas of educational studies.
- 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.
- To relate debates and methodological principles in education research to broader issues in social science research and educational policy and practice.
- 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.
- To meet the aims of the Economic and Social Research Council's (ESRC) postgraduate training guidelines by providing high quality research training at Master's levels in educational research in particular and the social sciences in general.
- 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.
- To produce graduates who can successfully proceed to careers in research in Universities, the public sector, or the private sector.

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11   Learning Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas. The programme outcomes have references to the benchmark statements for education research.

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should:

A1   Demonstrate a developing understanding and knowledge of the theory, principles, conceptual framework and methodology in the field of education and education research.
A2   A knowledge and understanding of the main theoretical frameworks and methodological structures used in research in education, including subject-specific research strategies including life histories, action research

A3   An overview of the way in which theoretical frameworks and methodological structures used in education research fits into the wider field of social research, the similarities and differences

A4   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

Teaching and Learning Methods

The MA in Education Research is taught including core modules from both the Faculty and School. This gives students an insight into the juxtaposition between the wider discipline of social science research and education research (A3). Students on the course are able to choose a 20 credit module from the education-based modules and this enables an in-depth development of knowledge and understanding in an area of education which interests them (A1), these outcomes are further enhanced through the core module of Investigating Learning in the Classroom which gives the students a practical and subject specific knowledge of theory, research and policy (A1-3). The primary means of imparting knowledge is through lectures and seminars, although many of the modules include practical elements including ICT based sessions and also mini-investigations of practice. In addition, supported self-study and tutor support is provided via website and email.

Assessment Strategy

Knowledge and understanding (A1-4) is primarily assessed through module assignments as well as the dissertation which focuses on putting much of the theory into practice. Practical elements are assessed where appropriate as part of module assessments through use of ICTs and through mini-investigation write ups. In addition, this element is paramount to the dissertation where assessment is completed through a formative feedback relationship with the supervisor.

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

B1   Use an evidence-based critical standpoint to approach all aspects of theory, policy, research and practice

B2   Design, conduct and manage the research life-cycle, including writing proposals, planning a research project and implementation

B3   Produce reasoned and logical arguments which convey understanding of a particular topic, using reference to research, theory, policy and practice and which disseminate own research clearly

B4   Evaluate designs, processes and products and make improvements relating to own research and others'

Teaching and Learning Methods

Students critique research in seminars and work on designing research projects in workshops and tutorials (B1/B3/B4). In addition, research methods training is provided in lectures (B2). They conduct field-work in their own teaching and learning context and evaluate the findings with their peers and tutors (B1-4).

Assessment Strategy

Intellectual skills are assessed through the module assessments (B1-4), although in addition there will be informal assessment through seminars and tutorials. Practical elements of these skill will also be an important element of the dissertation process and assessment.

Practical Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

C1   Design a study which abides by the ethical guidelines produced by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) or similar professional body.
C2   Define and formulate research problems and questions and be able to select appropriate strategies to answer them
C3   Understand the relationships between, and the rationale for, qualitative and quantitative research methods and apply related terms
C4   Understand and apply the concepts of sampling, generalisability, validity, reliability and replicability
C5   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

Teaching and Learning Methods

As part of all modules with a practical research element, including the dissertation, the BERA guidelines for ethical research will be considered (C1). C2 and C4 are taught and developed as part of lectures, seminars and the supervision process. C3 underlies much of the theoretical underpinnings of modules and will be taught through lectures, seminars and the dissertation process, in addition students will be encouraged to consider themselves as an education researcher and how they best fit into this debate. Literature based skills are developed through modules run by the Robinson library team as part of two core modules (C5).

Assessment Strategy

Practical skills are assessed across module assignments (C1-5). Students conduct research projects to explore questions arising from their reading of literature and reflections on professional practice within a number of the modules. In addition elements of the social science modules include practical skills assessments for example, quantitative analysis and library skills

Transferable/Key Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

D1   Take responsibility for his/her own learning and personal and professional development
D2   Communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences
D3   Be critical and reflective of research methods covering theoretical principles; research design; data collection; analysis and evaluation
D4   The skills to work effectively as a member of a team, both subject-specific and inter-disciplinary.

Teaching and Learning Methods

In that this degree is about education theory and explicit in that is learning, students will be asked as part of the education modules to think about learning and teaching theory and practice and apply it to their own experiences and to developing their own understanding of how they and others learn (D1). Communication skills and skills that develop students' ability to work as a team are developed as integral to lectures and seminars (D2 and D4). Expertise and making informed judgements is modelled in the lectures and seminars (D3). Supported self-study and tutor support is provided via website and email.

Assessment Strategy
D2 to 4 are assessed through module assignments as well as, in the case of D2-3) the dissertation. D1 is informally assessed across the course in tutorials and supervisions.

12   Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features
Basic structure of the programme
The course can be studied either full or part time 1.   The duration of the course is 1 year (2 years part time) 2.   There are 2 stages: taught modules and the dissertation 3.   Students need to complete a total of 180 credits 4.   1x30, 3x20 plus 3x10 credit taught modules (each consisting of lectures/seminars/tutorials/ private study and with 70 of these credits taught at Faculty level) + dissertation of 60 credits 5.   Students must accumulate 120 credits from taught modules before proceeding to the dissertation stage. 6.   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. 7.   The course is recognised by the ESRC and therefore it can be used as part of the 1+3 route; scholarships are also available as part of the ESRC open competition In the first two semesters, students follow a programme of study involving generic modules in *Nature of Enquiry and Explanation in the Social Sciences* (10)*, Introduction to Information Skills* (10)*, Dissertation Preparation* (10)*, Quantitative Methodology in the Social Sciences*(20) and *Introduction to Quantitative Methods* (20) and *Investigating Learning in the Classroom* (30)*.* In addition, students chose from a range of optional modules to the value of 20 credits based within the education section. 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.

Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)
This course is ESRC recognised and as such it means that students can apply for scholarships as part of the open competition. It provides a sound theoretical grounding in practical education research which is ideal for students that want to proceed to a PhD. The course combines taught modules which are based within the Faculty of Social Sciences as well as modules run by the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences, this means that not only is there a good grounding in the knowledge, understanding and practice of education research, but students also benefit from a wider generic understanding of research in the social sciences.

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme

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13   Criteria for admission

Entry qualifications
A minimum of a good first degree (e.g. an upper-second-class Honours degree or higher) in a relevant subject (e.g. Education, Social Sciences) (or an international equivalent) and qualified teacher status or equivalent or validated teaching experience.

Admissions policy/selection tools
Admissions for this course are regulated through the E2R system which provides a process of selection by the Graduate School and the DPD in extenuating circumstances

Level of English Language capability
For students for whom English is not their first language, 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.

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14   Support for Student Learning

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

Induction
During the first week of the first semester students attend an induction programme. New students will be given a general introduction to University life and the University's principle support services and general information about the School and their programme, as described in the Degree Programme Handbook. New and continuing students will be given detailed programme information and the timetable of lectures/practicals/labs/ tutorials/etc. The International Office offers an additional induction programme for overseas students.

Study skills support
Students will learn a range of Personal Transferable Skills, including Study Skills, as outlined in the Programme Specification. Some of this material, e.g. time management is covered in the appropriate Induction Programme. Students are explicitly tutored on their approach to both group and individual projects.

Academic support
The initial point of contact for a student is with a lecturer or module leader, or their tutor (see below) for more generic issues. Thereafter the Degree Programme Director or Head of School may be consulted. Issues relating to the programme may be raised at the Staff-Student Committee, and/or at the Board of Studies.

Pastoral support
All students are assigned a personal tutor whose responsibility is to monitor the academic performance and overall well-being of their tutees.
In addition the University offers a range of support services, including the Student Advice Centre, the Counselling and Wellbeing team, the Mature Student Support Officer, and a Childcare Support Officer.

Support for students with disabilities
The University's Disability Support Service provides help and advice for disabled students at the University - and those thinking of coming to Newcastle. It provides individuals with: advice about the University's facilities, services and the accessibility of campus; details about the technical support available; guidance in study skills and advice on financial support arrangements; a resources room with equipment and software to assist students in their studies.

Learning resources
The University's main learning resources are provided by the Robinson and Walton Libraries (for books, journals, online resources), and Information Systems and Services, which supports campus-wide computing facilities.

All new students whose first language is not English are required to take an English Language Proficiency Test. This is administered by INTO Newcastle University Centre on behalf of Newcastle University. Where appropriate, in-sessional language training can be provided. The INTO Newcastle University Centre houses a range of resources which may be particularly appropriate for those interested in an Erasmus exchange.

15	**Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning**

Module reviews
All modules are subject to review by questionnaires which are considered by the Board of Studies. Changes to, or the introduction of new, modules are considered at the School Teaching and Learning Committee and at the Board of Studies. Student opinion is sought at the Staff-Student Committee and/or the Board of Studies. New modules and major changes to existing modules are subject to approval by the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee.

Programme reviews
The Board of Studies conducts an Annual Monitoring and Review of the degree programme and reports to Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee.

External Examiner reports
External Examiner reports are considered by the Board of Studies. The Board responds to these reports through Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee. External Examiner reports are shared with institutional student representatives, through the Staff-Student Committee.

Student evaluations
All modules, and the degree programme, are subject to review by student questionnaires. Informal student evaluation is also obtained at the Staff-Student Committee, and the Board of Studies.

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.

Accreditation reports

Additional mechanisms

16   Regulation of assessment

Pass mark
The pass mark is 50 (Postgraduate programmes)

Course requirements

Progression is subject to the University's Masters Degree Progress Regulations, Taught and Research and Examination Conventions for Taught Masters Degrees. Limited compensation up to 40 credits of the taught element and down to a mark of 40 is possible and there are reassessment opportunities, with certain restrictions.

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

Summary description applicable to postgraduate Masters programmes		Summary description applicable to 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. The External Examiner is expected to:
    See and approve examination papers
    Moderate examination and coursework marking
    Attend the Board of Examiners
    Report to the University on the standards of the programme

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

The University Prospectus (see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/requests)

The School brochure (contact enquiries@ncl.ac.uk)

The University Regulations (see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs)

The Degree Programme Handbook

Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. The accuracy of the information contained is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

Mapping of Intended Learning Outcomes onto Curriculum/Modules

Intended Learning Outcome	Module codes (Comp/Core in Bold)
A1 Demonstrate a developing understanding and knowledge of the theory, principles, conceptual framework and methodology in the field of education and education research	**HSS8004, HSS8005, HSS8007, EDU8019**
A2 A knowledge and understanding of the main theoretical frameworks and methodological structures used in research in education, including subject-specific research strategies including life histories, action research	**HSS8004, HSS8005, HSS8007, EDU8019**
A3 An overview of the way in which theoretical frameworks and methodological structures used in education research fits into the wider field of social research, the similarities and differences	**HSS8004, HSS8005, HSS8007, EDU8019**
A4 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	**HSS8004, HSS8005, HSS8007, EDU8019**
B1 Use an evidence-based critical standpoint to approach all aspects of theory, policy, research and practice	**EDU8019**
B2 Design, conduct and manage the research life-cycle, including writing proposals, planning a research project and implementation	**HSS8004, HSS8005, HSS8007, EDU8019, EDU8019**
B3 Produce reasoned and logical arguments which convey understanding of a particular topic, using reference to research, theory, policy and practice and which disseminate own research clearly	**HSS8004, HSS8005, HSS8007, EDU8019, EDU8202**
B4 Evaluate designs, processes and products and make improvements relating to own research and others'	**HSS8004, HSS8005, HSS8007, EDU8202, EDU8019**
C1 Design a study which abides by the ethical guidelines produced by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) or similar professional body.	**HSS8004, HSS8005, HSS8007, EDU8202, EDU8019**
C2 Define and formulate research problems and questions and be able to select appropriate strategies to answer them	**HSS8004, HSS8005, HSS8007, EDU8202 EDU8019**
C3 Understand the relationships between, and the rationale for, qualitative and quantitative research methods and apply related terms	**HSS8004, HSS8005, HSS8007, EDU8202, EDU8019**
C4 Understand and apply the concepts of sampling, generalisability, validity, reliability and replicability	**HSS8004, HSS8005, HSS8007, EDU8201, EDU8019**
C5 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	**HSS8004, HSS8005, HSS8007, EDU8202, EDU8019**
D1 Take responsibility for his/her own learning and personal and professional development	**HSS8004, HSS8005, HSS8007, EDU8202, EDU8019**
D2 Communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences	**HSS8004, HSS8005, HSS8007, EDU8202, EDU8019**
D3 Be critical and reflective of research methods covering theoretical principles; research design; data collection; analysis and evaluation	**HSS8004, HSS8005, HSS8007, EDU8202, EDU8019**
D4 The skills to work effectively as a member of a team, both subject-specific and inter-disciplinary.	**HSS8004, HSS8005, HSS8007, EDU8202, EDU8019**