	PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION	

1	**Awarding Institution**	Newcastle University
2	**Teaching Institution**	Newcastle University
3	**Final Award**	B.A. (Hons)
4	**Programme Title**	Media, Communication and Cultural Studies
5	**UCAS/Programme Code**	PQL0
6	**Programme Accreditation**	N/A
7	**QAA Subject Benchmark(s)**	Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies
8	**FHEQ Level**	Honours Level
9	**Date written/revised**	May 2013

10   Programme Aims

1. To provide students with a learning environment that cultivates personal and academic development by offering intellectually exciting and challenging experiences.

2. To produce professionals and graduates who can interpret, analyse and exercise critical judgement in the evaluation of theories, concepts, accounts and explanations produced within the fields of media, communications and culture.

3. To equip graduates with a knowledge and understanding of media, communicative and cultural activities across local and global situations and across historical and contemporary contexts.

4. To enable graduates to apply theories and concepts to the field of media, communication and culture and critically reflect on the reliability and validity of the resulting explanations.

5. To enable graduates to investigate problems and generate solutions by selecting and employing the most appropriate research methods, coding strategies and analytical frames.

6. To help form innovative and versatile professionals who are able to effectively create, manage and disseminate information textually, verbally and visually.

7. To provide students with the necessary transferable intellectual, vocational and employability skills appropriate to the contemporary employment market and post-graduate study.

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 Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies.

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should have a:

A1   Knowledge of key thinkers, theories, concepts and perspectives in the fields of media, communication and cultural studies and an understanding of how to critically evaluate this knowledge.

A2   Knowledge of media, communication systems and cultures and understanding of how they organise meanings, experiences and affects.

A3   Knowledge of how verbal, textual and visual representations impact upon relationships between individuals, groups, institutions, cultures, and societies.

A4   Knowledge of how cultural contexts and cultural consumption control, create and challenge individual and collective identities, experiences and emotions.

A5   Knowledge of class, age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and other social formations and how they shape the production, circulation and consumption of social, cultural and economic products, artefacts and commodities.

A6   Knowledge of the audio, visual, verbal and textual conventions through which sounds, images and words make meaning via different mediums and in different social and cultural contexts.

A7   Knowledge of a variety of research methodologies and understanding of how their philosophical traditions and attendant practices are used to produce information about the media, communicative action and culture.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Realising the outcomes for 1 -7 is achieved primarily through lectures with scholars who have national and international reputations in their field of study. These methods and strategies are supported by the use of a range of resources that include newspaper, television, film, radio, internet and music recordings. These are supplemented by seminars (1-7), field-trips (2, 4, 6), practical sessions (3, 6), tutorials (1-7), ICT, on-line communications, new and digital media (1-7) and research supervision (1-7). Furthermore, computer clusters are used for the teaching of ICT elements (3, 6). These methods are facilitated by strategies that involve individual and collective learning (small group, class and Stage).

All students at Stage 1 are given foundational knowledge in media, communication and cultural studies. At Stage 2, students have the chance to specialise in areas of their choice. At Stage 3, students' knowledge and understanding is further advanced by compulsory modules covering theory and concepts alongside their research-based dissertation. Teaching and learning methods are also enhanced by the involvement of professionals and practitioners from various media and culture industries. In addition, all students now pursue career and employability routes in-house. Opportunities are also available with a range of cultural and media industries.

Assessment Strategy

Knowledge and understanding are assessed by means of coursework, presentations and timed assessment. *Coursework:* essays, projects, portfolios, seminar preparation; *Presentations*: individual presentations, group presentations; *Research Led*: research proposals, dissertation; *Exams:* unseen examination.

The aim of the *coursework* enables students to explore their knowledge and understanding. Such methods encourage more sophisticated and critically inflected understanding of knowledge, theory and concepts. *Presentations* enable students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in a different mediums, whilst the *Research led* assessment encourages deeper understanding and sustained engagement with particular knowledges, theories and concepts. *Exams* are primarily used to provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of core knowledges.

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

B1   Collect and select relevant information from a variety of sources including journals, archives, databases, reports, monographs, web pages and research papers.

B2   Manage multiple sources of information containing a variety of perspectives and effectively disseminate ideas in an organised, coherent and logical manner.

B3   Devise research questions in the areas of media, communication and culture and select the most appropriate methods and resources to explicate those questions.

B4   Evaluate the impacts of 'how we get knowledge' (epistemology) on the methods selected and the nature of the evidence that is consequently generated.

B5   Filter research data through coding strategies and provide critical interpretations of the significance of the data to the field of study.

B6   Reflexively recognise how biography, norms and values, ethical standpoints, cultural context and chronology may shape the research process.

B7   Demonstrate creative and journalistic writing skills across a range of media and cultural forms.

B8   Demonstrate professional communication skills in the media and cultural industries.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Students are given the opportunity to develop their subject specific skills in a range of forums. Across the degree students are required to support their knowledge and understanding, subject specific skills and cognitive skills through the collection of supporting evidence. Achievement of all the outcomes in this area is underpinned by lectures (1-6), workshops (1, 3; 7, 8). seminars and tutorials (4, 6, 7, 8), ICT based modules (2) and individual research supervision (1-6). The development of these skills is also enhanced by the use of group led learning sessions (1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8).

The main emphasis in this area is that of research inquiry. Core modules at every stage facilitate students' awareness of a variety of research methods that are appropriate to media, communication and cultural studies. It is important that students' relationship with methodology intensifies as their degree progresses and they develop a methodology of research as part of their research led dissertation module.

Assessment Strategy

Subject specific skills are assessed through coursework, presentations, and timed assessment.

Coursework: essays, projects, group portfolio, seminar preparation, seminar tasks.

Presentations: Individual presentations, group presentations.

Research Led: primary research, research proposals, dissertation.

Exams: Timed assessments, seen and unseen examinations.

The aim of the *coursework* is to measure students' ability to interpret, analyse and recognise how different knowledges and understandings shape the fields of media, communication and cultural studies. *Presentations* enable the demonstration of the application of their subject specific skills. *Research led methods of assessment* allow students to apply perspectives in order to explain phenomena and they also enable students to adapt their skills to the everyday world.

Practical Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

C1   Interpret, analyse and exercise critical judgement in understanding and evaluation of major theoretical perspectives, concepts, and evidence presented in studies of media, communication and culture.

C2   Recognise how different theoretically informed perspectives contribute to different knowledges and understandings of media, communication and culture.

C3   Apply theoretical perspectives to explain how individuals and social groups create, circulate and consume media, communication and culture.

C4   Engage in abstract thinking and concept building and apply knowledge to both empirical situations and practical media.

C5   Adapt existing theories, concepts and explanations to explore new and emerging areas in the field of media, communication and cultural studies.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Developing students' interpreting, analysing and exercising critical judgement in the evaluation of the field of media, communication and cultural studies is accomplished through lectures (1-3). However, seminars and tutorials are predominantly used as means to enable students to discuss, learn to evaluate and demonstrate their skills (1 – 4). Specific teaching strategies such as group and individual problem solving sessions (1-4), computer assisted learning (1- 4), and research supervision (1-4) are also used to facilitate students' critical appreciation and application of theories and concepts in the field of media, communication and cultural studies. Email surgeries are also used where students can have designated one to one contact on a weekly basis.

Such strategies operationalise a range of resources that include academic studies, newspaper, literature, television, film, radio, internet, music recordings, photography, which are used to stimulate discussions that enable the application of theories and concepts to 'real life' examples (3, 4).

Assessment Strategy

Subject specific skills are assessed through coursework, presentations, and timed assessment. These include: *Coursework:* Essays, Projects, Group portfolio, Seminar preparation, Computer based workbook; *Presentations:* Individual presentations, Group presentations; *Research Led:* Primary research, Research proposals, Dissertation; *Exams:* Seen examination. Career planning and employability skills are now assessed through specific career-related modules offered as part of programme. .

These methods of assessment enable students a thorough and systematic application of their cognitive skills. The *coursework* allows students to put into effect their analytic skills and capacities to critically evaluate in an in depth and systematic fashion. Presentations enable students to translate abstract thinking into analyses of practical events, engendering awareness of specific audiences. . *Research led methods of assessment* provide an opportunity to apply cognitive thinking to real life phenomena in the field of media, communication and cultural studies. *Exams* diagnostically ensure that students grasp the basic precedents of cognitive thinking.

Transferable/Key Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

D1   Gather, organise and deploy ideas and information in order to formulate arguments and critical evaluations.

D2   Cogently communicate by means of well-prepared, clear and confident presentations, and coherent, concise written documents.

D3   Apply communication skills when dealing with a range of audiences such as clients, professionals and employers and culture and heritage industries.

D4   Use library and other information resources skilfully and appropriately.

D5   Solve problems.

D6   Use IT resources skilfully and appropriately from basic competencies, such as data analysis and word processing, to more complex skills, such as using web based technology or multi-media.

D7   Plan, organise and prioritise work activities to a given length, format, brief and deadline.

D8   Work productively in a group or team showing abilities at different times to listen, contribute and lead effectively.

D9   Work independently, in self–directed ways and with initiative.

D10   Identify and create action plans on the basis of career/employability modules.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Teaching methods and strategies that are employed to achieve these objectives are both standard lectures (1, 2, 3, 4, 7), ICT based lectures (2-9), workshop sessions (2, 4, 5), library based interactive sessions (4, 5, 6), seminars (1, 2, 5, 8), web based learning (1, 2, 7, 9). Tutorials and research supervision focus on solving problems and working independently (5, 9).

At Stages 1 and 2 students have the opportunity to do modules which allow them to develop skills covering employability in the media and culture industries. These modules involve the direct application of theories, concepts and perspectives to local organisations and companies. This is often undertaken in a consultancy context. Seminars, where appropriate, involve presentations by students providing discussion and analysis of research/case study explorations. Across three stages students undertake a minimum of three projects: two team and one individual investigation of communication processes in institutions, organisations and the workplace.

Assessment Strategy

Key skills are assessed through: *Coursework:* Essays (1-9), Projects, Portfolios (1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9) Seminar preparation (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9); *Presentations*: Individual presentations (1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 9) Group presentations (1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8); *Research Led*:
Research Proposals (1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9) Dissertation; (1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9) *Exams:* Timed assessments, seen and unseen examinations.

The aim of the *coursework* is to enable students to practice and hone their key skills. Such methods encourage more sophisticated and critically inflected understanding of knowledge, theory and concepts. *Presentations* enable students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in a different medium, whilst the *Research led* assessment encourages deeper understanding and sustained engagement with particular knowledges, theories and concepts. *Exams* are primarily used to allow students to demonstrate their understanding of core knowledges and concepts.

12   Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features

Basic structure of the programme

(i) Basic structure of the programme

a.   The programme is studied over three years full-time.

b.   The programme is made up of three stages. Stage 1 modules are Certificate level; Stage 2 modules are Intermediate level; Stage 3 modules are Honours level. Students are required to study 90 credits at the appropriate level.

c.   the overall credit value of the programme is 360.

d.   Each stage requires the study of modules with a credit value of 120. Each stage is made up of a mixture of *compulsory* (modules that must be taken), *core* (modules that are chosen from a set) and *optional* modules. *Compulsory* modules ensure that a baseline of Certificate, Intermediate and Honours level knowledge, skills and understanding are acquired by all students. *Core* modules enable students to focus this knowledge in specialised areas. *Optional* modules enable students to gain broader knowledge and skills in consonant subject areas.

(ii) Key Features of the Programme

The programme contains a number of distinctive features:

- The programme critically integrates theory and practice with respect to media, communication and culture, providing students with opportunities to mobilise academic theories and analytic skills to address practice-based activities, problems and contexts.

- Research and problem solving is a central concern of the programme.

- An innovative feature of the programme is that it is designed to focus on contextualising media, communication and culture in the workplace through core and compulsory modules.

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

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

13	Criteria for admission

Entry Requirements

School/ College Leavers
- Generally 5 A – C grade GCSE's
- Generally three A levels required for entry
- A level grades AAB. No specific subjects required (although social science subjects would be an advantage).
- Scottish Highers: AAABB. Combinations of Highers and Advanced Highers accepted.
- BTEC National Diploma at DDM
- BTEC National Higher Diploma: Applications will be considered on an individual basis.

Post 16 qualifications
- 6 credit Vocational A level accepted as one of three A levels
- Applicants with 12 credit Vocational A levels will be considered on their merits
- Points offers using the new UCAS tariff will generally not be made
- Two AS levels accepted instead of one of the three A2 levels required
- Skills qualifications are useful but will generally not be included in offers

- Applications from mature students are especially welcome and each case is considered on its merits. Evidence of recent study is required.
- EP and Diploma in Media

Overseas students
- Appropriate overseas qualifications will be considered, such as the International Baccalaureate: A minimum of 35 points
- International qualifications equivalent to School / College leavers / post – 16 qualifications will be accepted. The National Recognition Information centre for the United Kingdom is used as a guide for comparison.
- Evidence of adequate English language skills to complete the programme successfully required, in particular that students are expected to achieve an IELTS score of 6.5. Students may be accepted on the condition that they attend the University language summer school.

Admissions policy/selection tools
Students to whom offers are made are invited to attend a post-application Open Day that will take place during the academic year. This enables them to meet staff and current students and provides the opportunity to look round the School and the University. Attendance is not compulsory but is recommended.

Applications from students with socially excluded backgrounds are strongly encouraged to apply through the University Partners Scheme. Mature students, students from Minority Ethnic Groups, and students with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply. We also welcome applications from people with non-conventional backgrounds. Experience in public, private and voluntary sectors will also be considered.

Non-standard Entry Requirements
Applicants with non-standard qualifications may be interviewed by a member of the Admissions team.

Additional Requirements

Level of English Language capability

IELTS 6.5

14   **Support for Student Learning**

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

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

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

Numeracy support is available through Maths Aid and help with academic writing is available from the Writing Development Centre (further information is available from the Robinson Library).

Academic and Pastoral support
Each undergraduate and taught postgraduate student will be assigned a personal tutor.*
A personal tutor is one part of a wider network of advice and guidance available to students to support their personal and general academic development. The module leader acts as the first point of contact for subject-specific academic advice. Thereafter the Degree Programme Director or Head of School may be consulted. Issues relating to the programme may be raised at the Student-Staff Committee, and/or at the Board of Studies. Within the academic unit, students may also receive additional academic and pastoral advice from a range of other student-facing staff including degree programme directors, dissertation/project supervisors, and administrative support staff.
*Arrangements may vary for students taking special types of provision.

The University also offers a wide range of institutional services and support upon which students can call, such as the Writing Development Centre, Careers Service and Student Wellbeing Service. This includes one-to-one counselling and guidance or group sessions / workshops on a range of topics, such as emotional issues e.g. stress and anxiety, student finance and budgeting, disability matters etc. There is specialist support available for students with dyslexia and mental health issues. Furthermore, the Student Union operates a Student Advice Centre, which can provide advocacy and support to students on a range of topics including housing, debt, legal issues etc.

Support for students with disabilities
The University's Disability Support team 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 Board of Studies and/or the School Teaching and Learning Committee. Student opinion is sought at the Student-Staff Committee and/or the Board of Studies. New modules and major changes to existing modules are subject to approval by the Faculty Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee.

Programme reviews
The Board of Studies conducts an Annual Monitoring and Review of the degree programme and reports to Faculty Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee. The FLTSEC takes an overview of all programmes within the Faculty and reports any Faculty or institutional issues to the University Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee.

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

Student evaluations
All modules and stages* are subject to review by student questionnaires. Informal student evaluation is also obtained at the Student-Staff 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 students' views on the quality of the learning and teaching. The results from student surveys are considered as part of the Annual Monitoring and Review of the programme and any arising actions are captured at programme and School / institutional level and reported to the appropriate body.
*With the exception of intercalating years and the final stages of undergraduate programmes.

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback
Feedback is channelled via the Student-Staff Committee and the Board of Studies.

Faculty and University Review Mechanisms
Every six years degree programmes in each subject area undergo periodic review. This involves both the detailed consideration of a range of documentation, and a review visit by a review team (normally one day in duration) which includes an external subject specialist and a student representative. Following the review a report is produced, which forms the basis for a decision by University Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee on whether the programmes reviewed should be re-approved for a further six year period.

Accreditation reports

Additional mechanisms

16	Regulation of assessment

Pass mark
The pass mark is 40 (Undergraduate programmes).

Course requirements
Progression is subject to the University's Undergraduate Progress Regulations and Undergraduat
Examination Conventions. In summary, students must pass, or be deemed to have passed, 120
credits at each Stage. Limited compensation up to 40 credits and down to a mark of 35 is possible
at each Stage and there are re-sit opportunities, with certain restrictions.

Weighting of stages
The marks from Stages 2 & 3 contribute to the final classification of the degree.
The weighting of marks contributing to the degree for Stage 2 is 33%.
The weighting of marks contributing to the degree for Stage 3 s 66%.

Common Marking Scheme
The University employs a common marking scheme, which is specified in the Undergraduate
Examination Conventions, namely

Honours		**Non-honours**
<40	Fail	Failing
40-49	Third Class	Basic
50-59	Second Class, Second Division	Good
60-69	Second Class, First Division	Very Good
70+	First Class	Excellent

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 Externa
Examiner is expected to:
 See and approve examination papers
 Moderate examination and coursework marking
 Attend the Board of Examiners
 Report to the University on the standards of the programme

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

The University Prospectus: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/

The School Brochure: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/marketing/services/print/publications/ordering/)

Degree Programme and University Regulations: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/

The Degree Programme Handbook:

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

Mapping of Intended Learning Outcomes onto Curriculum/Modules

	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	D10
COM1023	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X				X			X	X	X	X		X			X			X		X	
COM1025	X	X					X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X				X			X	X		X		X	
COM1026	X	X	X	X	X			X	X							X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			X	X	X	
COM1028						X		X	X					X	X				X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
COM1030			X			X		X	X	X	X		X								X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
COM1031		X	X			X		X								X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
COM2034		X	X			X		X	X					X	X				X		X	X	X	X				X		
COM2068			X			X		X	X				X	X					X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
COM2069	X	X					X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X				X			X	X		X		X	
COM2071	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X				X			X			X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
COM2075	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X						X	X	X		X	X	X		X			X	X	X	
COM2079	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X						X	X	X		X	X			X			X		X	
COM2080	X	X	X	X	X			X	X							X	X	X		X	X			X			X		X	
COM3001			X	X		X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X				X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
COM3063	X	X	X	X	X			X	X							X	X	X		X	X			X			X		X	
COM3067	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X						X	X	X		X	X			X			X		X	
COM3073				X	X	X	X	X								X	X	X		X	X			X	X		X		X	
COM3074	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X			X	X	X		X	X			X			X		X	
COM3077			X			X		X	X					X	X				X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
COM3078			X			X		X	X					X	X				X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	