

## FD Local Government Administration: Programme Specification

<b>1. Awarding Institution/Body</b>	University of Worcester
<b>2. Teaching Institution</b>	Worcester College of Technology
<b>3. Programme Accredited By</b>	Not Applicable
<b>4. Final Award</b>	FdA Local Government Administration; CertHE
<b>5. Programme Title</b>	Local Government Administration
<b>6. Pathways Available</b>	Not Applicable
<b>7. Mode and/or site of delivery</b>	Worcester College of Technology (or at client organisation)
<b>8. Mode of Attendance</b>	Part-time
<b>9. UCAS Code</b>	N/A
<b>10. Subject Benchmark Statement</b>	Business and Management
<b>11. Date of Programme Specification Preparation/ Revision</b>	April 2007 <u>Revised September 2010</u>

### **12. Educational Aims of the Programme**

The FD Local Government Administration is a programme designed around the needs of first line managers in Local Authorities

The programme is designed for all Local Authority administrators, irrespective of functional background who:

1. Are currently employed by a Local Authority.
2. Wish to develop or consolidate their professional skills
3. Aspire to increase knowledge of change in the sector and so improve their career development prospects
4. Have, or aspire to have, some management responsibilities

Students attend for one day per week. The 16 modules that make up the Foundation Degree are completed in 30 month period, the Course Handbook contains a full calendar for the programme. Within this, the programme focuses on applied learning, encouraging students to relate new knowledge and skills to their own workplace situations and to develop a wider understanding of how organisations function. In particular, the purposes of the programme are to provide students with:

- The knowledge, understanding and skills to become more effective in their professional roles;
- The capacity to develop and apply administrative and general management skills
- A stimulating academic environment which is based upon the values of academic openness and critical appraisal;
- A critical understanding of and a proactive approach to the management of change in a Local Authority
- The basis for further professional development, and encouragement to take responsibility for their own CPD and those for whom they are responsible;
- The ability to explore their potential, and increase their awareness and self confidence;
- Progression opportunities to other programmes such as the proposed University of Worcester, BA (Hons.) Leadership and Management programme



### 13. Intended Learning Outcomes and Learning, Teaching and Assessment Methods

#### Knowledge and understanding

<p><b>Knowledge and understanding of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The knowledge, skills and competencies (where appropriate) required by administrators in local authorities</li> <li>• The application of critical thinking to successful Local Authority administration</li> <li>• The basis of operational decision making, and how the drivers of change can influence strategic management in organisations</li> </ul>	<p><b>Examples of teaching, learning and assessment methods used:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inter-active materials available on VLE (Moodle).</li> <li>• A programme of one-day per week attendance made up of lectures interactive workshops, comprising group work sessions and individual tutorials.</li> <li>• Action Learning Sets operating within the context of the authority at WCT and in the workplace which are intended to develop critical thinking</li> <li>• The negotiation, researching and writing of work-based assignments and subsequent oral and written feedback</li> <li>• Assessment by a variety of means including reports, oral presentations, group activity, and research-driven tasks. (Appendix 2)</li> </ul>
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#### Skills and other attributes

<p><b>Intellectual/cognitive skills:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical appraisal applied to current areas of the curriculum, and to the context of their work.</li> <li>• The development and application of a range of management techniques and tools appropriate to the client group in the areas of administration and general management.</li> <li>• Interpretation of a variety of work-related data.</li> <li>• Exercising judgement and understanding in relation to ethical issues.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Examples of teaching, learning and assessment methods used:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All modules require learners to engage in discussion of key issues and the application of key concepts to workplace issues (in particular. FDLG 1005; FDLG 1008)</li> <li>• Case study analysis and group discussions in the context of Action Learning Sets, offer students the opportunity to engage in problem solving and complex issues (see FHEQ statements)</li> <li>• Modules requiring analytical skills to be applied to a variety of data (e.g. FDLG 1007; FDLG 1008)</li> <li>• Modules in Human Resource Management and LA Service Delivery raise issues in which judgement needs to be exercised and decisions made in complex and unpredictable areas (see FHEQ statements)</li> <li>• Intellectual and cognitive skills are assessed by means of a range of written (and other) assignments. Key skills are formally identified on each piece of assessment</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Professional practical skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appreciate their own role within the organisation and be sensitive to the differing perspectives of others.</li> <li>• Identify their personal development needs and devise and then implement strategies for meeting these needs.</li> <li>• Develop the necessary skills to work effectively with and to lead others within their authority.</li> <li>• Plan, manage and make sound judgements in accordance with the core values of the organisation</li> <li>• Presentation skills.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Examples of teaching, learning and assessment methods used:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Module FDLG 1003 requires preparation of a personal development portfolio and action planning and forms part of course assessment. This module has been developed in the context of QAA guidance on frameworks for personal and professional development</li> <li>• Group and individual tasks involving library and internet-based information retrieval feature in various modules.</li> <li>• Discussion / forum facilities enabled through a VLE (Moodle) and Action Learning Sets</li> <li>• Project-based tasks involving group activities in the context of Action Learning Sets</li> <li>• Assessment of information dissemination skills through group oral presentations to peers in the context of Action Learning Sets</li> <li>• Written assignments used to assess analytical skills.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Transferable/key skills:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numeracy and quantitative skills</li> <li>• Two-way communication skills, e.g. negotiation and persuasion</li> <li>• Self management skills and personal effectiveness, e.g. time management</li> <li>• Professional development</li> <li>• Effective use of ICT.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Examples of teaching, learning and assessment methods used:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quantitative skills / ICT skills are acquired through the use of worked examples, (e.g. in Information Management Module FDLG 2004)</li> <li>• Group exercises involving role-play are used to develop two-way communication skills. The Action Learning Set provides a forum for the development of communication skills.</li> <li>• Time management skills are conveyed as an integral element of successfully completing the double work-based project (FDLG 2007 / 2008)</li> <li>• Certain quantitative skills are assessed through appropriate formative and summative assignments.</li> </ul>
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The modules that comprise the FD Local Government Administration contain a range of assessment methods appropriate to this work-focused programme. In developing the programme, consideration has been given to the following strategies: -

**Action Learning Sets:** These may take place on the premises of the client organisation, although usually meet in college. ALS's are run by the students themselves (with ongoing guidance from WCT facilitators), giving them an opportunity to;

- discuss, question and reflect upon key issues
- apply the learning achieved to the work place
- learn from each other and provide mutual assistance
- use feedback from others to support own learning and development
- develop critical reflection skills

**Designated personal / academic tutor,:** who guides completion of Personal Development Plan and offers general support & guidance (to include differentiated IT support if

necessary). (N.B. the above guidance and support is formally timetabled. Preparation of a Personal Development Plan is a feature in FDLG 1003 in Semester 1 and that the progress file generated in that module provides the framework for subsequent tutorial discussion and action. Throughout the programme the designated tutor will offer students individual and plenary sessions, covering both academic and pastoral areas. In this way the team seek to avoid a 'problem-driven' approach to personal tutorship in which support is triggered only by a student identifying and communicating a 'problem' to the tutor. The team therefore recognise that the nature of this FD requires close, personalised and continuous monitoring and exchange. Remote web-based tutorial support will be a key element for all students.

### **Work-based Support:**

A full statement on the nature of work-based support is contained in the Course Handbook.

### **Teaching and Learning Strategies:**

The teaching and learning strategies for individual modules outlined in this document have been undertaken in accordance with the University's strategic plan, in particular:

- '[The University will] ensure that e-learning is educationally integrated and dynamic'. Moreover, 'learning and teaching methods will ensure effective learning, irrespective of location, mode of attendance or mode of delivery'.
- '[The University aims to] build on existing academic strengths through innovative and flexible course development'.
- 'The University has a central role to play in creating and developing the workforce... and help the region to use to the fullest extent, the talents and abilities of all its people'.
- '[The University will] introduce structured opportunities for greater employer involvement in course development, validation and review and to greatly improve work-based learning opportunities'.
- '[It will] work effectively with others in existing and new partnerships focusing on enhancing regional education, employment and culture'. In addition, the University's key aim of 'encouraging lifelong learning opportunities' is well served by the current proposal.

## **14. Assessment strategy**

85% of assessments on the programme are work-based. Work-based learning is therefore a continuous thread throughout the programme and is integrated with the assessment strategy where possible. The remaining assessment activities, by their nature, cannot be undertaken by candidates in the work place. In these circumstances a case study/simulation/challenge test approach is used.

Therefore, as with the Learning and Teaching strategy, outlined above, the assessment strategy has been designed to provide students with a variety of challenges appropriate for undergraduate level work and appropriate to the Local Government context of the qualification. Assessment is constructed in such a way that a student's knowledge and understanding of each module studied during the course is assessed. To achieve a pass grade in each module all Learning Outcomes must be achieved.

Students are required to complete assessed work on an individual basis. However, at this level, students are also actively encouraged to discuss their understanding of models, concepts and theories, and more importantly their application to a given scenario, with other members of their Action Learning Set. This allows students to share ideas and experiences,

test their understanding, and more critically evaluate the models under discussion. In this way students learn from each other, develop relationships from the workplace that will help them through the rest of their studies and engage in the 'lived experience' of managing peers.

Assessment items are scheduled so that they can be completed on an ongoing basis throughout the academic year. Detailed assessment briefs are given to students at the start of a module and are published to the VLE (Moodle). Students are encouraged to access all assessments electronically. Where a module comprises two assessments, the first is normally submitted half way through the module, enabling a student to receive detailed feedback, before submission of the second piece of assessment. The second piece of assessment is normally submitted at the end of the module. Both may be submitted electronically where appropriate.

Normally full attendance and participation are required in order to fulfil learning outcomes. For those reasons students are expected to attend 80% of all timetabled sessions and to submit all work on time. It is the nature of the programme however that work commitments may over-ride attendance on occasions. If students cannot attend a class for unavoidable reasons, they should inform the module leader and the members of their ALS of their non-attendance in advance so that alternative arrangements for the delivery of material, or additional support tutorials can be organised. In every circumstance students are expected to meet submission deadlines and will be expected to make full use of the VLE to assure timely submission of work. In cases of non / late submission UW procedures will apply.

In marking assessed work, Internal Verification and Moderation form part of the quality assurance procedure. Assessed work will be subject to University of Worcester Business School procedures. The University of Worcester designated Link Tutor is also given full access to these materials and asked to comment formally through UW channels and also informally on an ongoing basis. Where there is some doubt as to the authorship of an assessment, the programme will follow the University of Worcester published policy for investigating plagiarism.

In testing student understanding, great use is made of relevant and up to date case studies that encourage students to synthesise, distil and apply theories, models and concepts to the Local Authority. Assessment is linked to the student's own workplace and in each module, students are asked to relate their learning to the Local Authority or the sector as a whole. In this way students are encouraged to 'contextualise' their learning by critically evaluating, and reflecting upon their own authorities. As noted above, this process is the beginning of continuing personal and professional development and is linked to developing individual students' experiences as participants on the programme. For this reason formative assessment is an important feature of the programme. In this, the team are guided by the rationale and approaches offered in the QAA Code of Practice; Section 6: Assessment of Students. September 2006 (P35)

'Formative Assessment has a developmental purpose and is designed to help learners learn more effectively by giving them feedback on their performance and how it can be improved and / or maintained. Reflective practice by students contributes to formative assessment.'

Formative assessment on the programme works in three ways. Firstly because undertaking any assessment is in itself a learning experience, feedback on any item of assessment is therefore diagnostic, positive and formative for future work and is intended to guide and motivate the student towards higher levels of achievement. Assessment has therefore been devised to ensure that feedback on performance is given at a time and in a way that is useful to the student as he/she prepares for the next assessment. Individual feedback is

supplemented by group debriefings. Exemplar materials are also provided on the VLE and students are encouraged to evaluate these materials (These processes are supported by Module FDLG 1003 whose outcomes are concerned with self-diagnosis, self-assessment and critical self-reflection). Secondly, learning outcomes are achieved through assessments that recognise the benefits to the student of formative assessment – students submit draft work for consideration; receive feedback on presentation rehearsals; undertake reflective accounts of their learning. Thirdly the teaching and learning strategy recognises the need to develop transferable skills. In-class case studies are used to develop skills in analysis and synthesis by transferring learning from one context and applying it to another.

The overall purpose of this assessment is to enable students to:

- Demonstrate that they have the intellectual rigour commensurate with a course of this nature and have developed the analytical skills expected of study at this level.
- Demonstrate the ability to synthesise appropriate theories, models and concepts from a range of modules studied on the course and apply them so as to critically evaluate their own authority
- Gain experience in working individually and as part of a team
- Maximise the opportunity to utilise and share their own experience(s) and studies to produce concise documents of the kind used in the authority
- Receive continuous, regular and appropriate feedback throughout the course
- Develop the intellectual and practical abilities required of professional administrators in Local Authorities
- Work towards critical reflection and self development

The range of assessments specified in the module outlines (Appendix 2 contains a mapping of assessment methods) have been developed in order to support the pedagogical approaches employed and which are appropriate for the nature of the specific workplace context. It has also been the course team's intention to set the students assignments that are relevant to their authority and role. Appendix 2 confirms that assessment styles include individual and group-based work in preparation for final summative assessment and a range of methods suitable for the Local Authority context. As noted above where work-based assessment is not possible other assessment methods are employed – case studies, simulations and challenge tests. A challenge test is a time constrained open book exercise in which students are required to transfer their learning into a specified context.

In line with the University of Worcester Assessment Policy (Academic Regulations and Procedures: Section U) assessments for the individual modules have been designed to enable students to demonstrate that they have successfully met the learning outcomes. Each module outline thus specifies an assessment strategy outlining the nature of the summative assessment exercises it employs and the respective weighting of each assessment item in its overall assessment loading. If students fail to achieve a learning outcome University of Worcester procedures as to resits apply. The course complies with the University's anonymous marking requirements as articulated in the UW Assessment Policy.

## **15. Programme structures and requirements**

The FD Local Government Administration comprises the following 16 modules (FDLG 1001-1008 at Level 4 and FDLG 2001-2008 at Level 5) [all modules are mandatory](#):

<b>Code</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>I-Level Credit Value</b>
FDLG 1001	Local Government in the Community	15
FDLG 1002	Investigative Techniques	15
FDLG 1003	Personal & Professional Development	15
FDLG 1004	The Business Environment	15
FDLG 1005	Inside Local Government	15
FDLG 1006	Local Government Finance	15
FDLG 1007	Corporate Legal Issues	15
FDLG 1008	Administrative Techniques	15
FDLG 2001	Delivering Modern Services	15
FDLG 2002	Human Resource Administration	15
FDLG 2003	Local Government Law	15
FDLG 2004	Information Systems & e-Government	15
FDLG 2005	Quality & Performance Management	15
FDLG 2006	Service Management Issues	15
FDLG 2007/8	Work-based Project	30

- Students who complete the 16 15-credit point modules (and thus accumulate 240 points) are eligible for the award of FD Local Government Administration. Students may progress to the final year of the proposed University of Worcester, BA (Hons.) Leadership and Management programme
- Students who exit, having completed 120 credit points, qualify for a Certificate in Higher Education.

The programme is designed to allow students, in the first instance to complete the FD Local Government Administration award in part time mode over a period of up to 30 months. Appendix 3 below sets out the intended module sequence.

## **16. QAA Academic Infrastructure**

The Benchmark statements used for this programme are those of general business and management. The rationale for this choice is set out above in the Contextual Statement. QAA benchmarking of undergraduate programmes in business & management within the UK, recognises that there is a wide diversity of courses available and that these different orientations need to be explicitly addressed when designing the Learning, Teaching and Assessment requirements, as well as the specific Knowledge, Understanding and Skills that underpin each course.

The QAA subject benchmarks specify key areas of knowledge and understanding, and these have been used to inform the assessment strategy for this undergraduate programme. The mapping exercise shown in Appendix 1 demonstrates the way in which the modules support the key areas of knowledge and understanding.

The programme conforms to the requirements set out for undergraduate qualifications by 'The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England Wales and Northern Ireland – January 2001'. The FD LGA is located at Intermediate (I level). Assessments have been

selected to meet the requirement of that level at which the holder of the qualification is expected to:

- ❑ Have developed a sound understanding of the principles in their field of study, and will have learned to apply those principles more widely. Through this, they will have learned to evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems. Their studies may well have had a vocational orientation, enabling them to perform effectively in their chosen field
- ❑ Have the qualities necessary for employment in situations requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making

(The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England Wales and Northern Ireland – January 2001, P1)

The programme has also been designed to meet QAA Guidelines on HE progress files. Module FDLG 1003 has been devised to meet the criteria for good practice set out in QAA 'Guidelines for HE Progress Files'. The learning model is based on principles of Action Learning which encourage the student to critically reflect and question. This model complements the QAA aim in the above document to:

'improve the capacity of individuals to understand what and how they are learning and to review, plan, and take responsibility for their own learning, (...) QAA 'Guidelines for HE Progress Files', (P2)

## **17. Support for students**

The following support services are in place at WCT to provide support for students on the programme:

- Induction programme including inputs from WCT Student Services as well as course staff
- Course handbook and module outlines
- Support from WCT Study Centre staff during induction and subsequently at St Wulstan's Study Centre Study
- Representation on Programme Committee to address course-wide issues
- Personal tutor to provide academic and pastoral support
- Work-place manager / 'Client' to provide work-based framework for research
- Moodle (WCT VLE).
- Range of support services through Student Services
- Equal opportunities unit implements codes of practice in relation to disability, racial and other forms of discrimination

## **18. Admissions policy, criteria and procedures**

Entry to the Programme shall require all applicants to complete a WCT application form which gives a variety of information about current work experience, qualifications and motivation. These will be checked by the Programme Manager who must be satisfied that the applicants are at the appropriate stage in their development to benefit from the Programme, and capable of undertaking a programme of academic work; offer evidence of academic ability and motivation.

The University's standard entry requirements apply: 4 GCSEs at Grade C or above plus a minimum of 1 and maximum of 3½ A Levels or equivalent Level 3 qualifications.

The general admissions requirement of this programme is:

- 80 UCAS points or submission of work-based evidence which confirms that the applicant can operate successfully at this level.

It is a further requirement for admission that the applicant be working in an administrative capacity in a local authority.

Accreditation of Prior Learning / Prior Experiential learning:

In many cases it is possible to gain credit for previous study or experience. Previous study at the same level in other institutions is recognised as transferred academic credit, and professional learning can be analysed through the completion of an Independent Study.

Up to 50% of taught elements of the award may be achieved through Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) or Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL).

## **19. Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning**

Mechanisms for review and evaluation of teaching, learning, assessment, the curriculum and outcome standards, include:

- Module feedback – mid module and end of module
- Annual Course Monitoring Report completed by course manager
- Subject review including external scrutiny
- Quinquennial course review including external scrutiny
- Peer teaching observation (WCT model)
- External examiners' reports
- Academic staff annual appraisal (based on peer teaching observation)
- Feedback from workplace managers
- Link-tutor reports

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback on the quality of teaching and their learning experience

- Module feedback questionnaires mid module and end of module
- Programme committee 'students issues' item
- Meetings with personal tutor
- Meetings with managers/ training managers (at sponsoring authorities)
- On-line tutorial support systems

WCT provides a range of staff development activities designed to improve teaching & learning. WCT staff attend similar University of Worcester- sponsored events and acknowledge the role of the HEI in cascading good practice and research to the college

## **20. Regulation of Assessment**

### **Requirements to pass modules**

- Modules are assessed using a variety of assessment activities which are detailed in module specifications.
- The minimum pass mark is D- for each module.
- Students are required to submit all items of assessment in order to pass a module, and in some modules, a pass mark in each item of assessment may be required.
- Some modules have attendance requirements (delete if this does not apply).
- Full details of the assessment requirements for a module, including the assessment criteria, are published in the module outline.

### **Submission of assessment items**

- Students who submit course work late but within 5 days of the due date will have work marked, but the grade will be capped at D- unless an application for mitigating circumstances is accepted.
- Students who fail to submit an item of assessment lose their right to reassessment in that module, and will be required to retake the module.
- Students who submit work later than 5 days but within 14 days of the due date will not have work marked unless they have submitted a valid claim of mitigating circumstances.
- For full details of submission regulations see URF.

### **Retrieval of failure**

- Students are entitled to resit failed assessment items for any module that is awarded a fail grade, unless the failure was due to non-attendance or non-submission.
- Reassessment items that are passed are graded at D-.
- If a student is unsuccessful in the reassessment, they have the right to retake the module (or, in some circumstances, take an alternative module).

### **Requirements for Progression**

- Students at Level 4 may be permitted to progress to Level 5 when they have passed at least 90 credits at Level 4.
- Students at Level 5 may be permitted to progress to Level 6 when they have passed at least 90 credits at Level 5.
- A student who fails 90 credits or more due to non-submission will be required to withdraw from the University.
- Students who pass less than 90 credits but have submitted all items of assessment will be required to retake modules.

A full list of key skills can be found on Moodle together with a pro forma which needs to accompany each assignment for which Key Skills are claimed.

Students also have access to a matrix which demonstrates the key skills that can be claimed in each assignment. (This information is also presented on each assignment in the module contract) Students who have evidence of Key Skills, and wish to have them verified, must accompany the claim by supporting evidence and form UW KS1.

The following award will be available to students who meet the following requirements:

<i>Award</i>	<i>Requirement</i>
Foundation Degree in Local Government Administration (FdA)	240 credits
Certificate of Higher Education	120 credits

These awards are not classified.

Institute-level Assessment Boards review and confirm results for modules, and the Board of Examiners considers students' mark profiles to make decisions about progression, awards and degree classifications as appropriate.

The team confirm the adoption of the Worcester Business School procedures on internal and external verification and moderation of marking thus meeting the requirements of the University of Worcester. External verification and Exam Board arrangements (including University of Worcester scheme boards and resit boards) are carried out through University of Worcester systems.

## **21. Indicators of Quality**

- Edexcel External Verifiers of the HNC Local Government Administration programme (from which the FD LGA was developed) have given highly positive feedback on the structure and management of that programme.
- The proposal contains documents which confirm continuing, close collaboration with employers in the development of the FD
- Annual External Examiners reports for the current FD programme run in the Department of Management Business & Professional Studies as well as Link Tutor reports have been extremely supportive and complimentary
- Worcester College of Technology holds the Investors in People kitemark

## **22. Career opportunities and links with employers**

- The team view this aspect as a key strength. The proposed FD Local Government Administration is a development out of the Edexcel Higher National Certificate in Local Government Administration which has run at Worcester College of Technology since 2000. That programme was commissioned by and founded on close collaboration between the course team and Worcestershire County Council and was subsequently developed in close consultation with that authority. The proposed FD LGA was informed by the experience of that collaboration. Discussions with the authority are continuing in the development of this proposal and will continue into the future.
- Students engage in career planning as part of the assessment for the programme. FDLG Module 1003 'Personal & Professional Development' has been developed in the context of QAA guidelines on HE progress files. As such it allows students to 'reflect upon their own learning, performance and / or achievement and to plan for their personal, educational and career development' (Guidelines for HE Progress Files, P2).
- The programme aims both to make holders of the FD LGA more effective in their workplace in local government and alert them to other career development possibilities.

