

Programme Specification for MRes in Socio-Cultural Studies of Sport and Exercise

This document applies to academic year 2020/21 onwards

1.	Awarding institution/body	University of Worcester
2.	Teaching institution	University of Worcester
3.	Programme accredited by	N/A
4.	Final award or awards	MRes.
5.	Programme title	MRes in Socio-Cultural Studies of Sport and Exercise
6.	Pathways available	NA
7.	Mode and/or site of delivery	Taught and Research at the University of Worcester
8.	Mode of attendance and duration	Full time 1 year/ Part time 2 years
9.	UCAS Code	N/A
10.	Subject Benchmark statement and/or professional body statement	The programme is informed by Vitae's Research Development Framework and the QAA Masters Degree Characteristics Statement 2020
11.	Date of Programme Specification preparation/ revision	April 2018 re-approval August 2018 – AQU amendments February 2019 – AQU amendments August 2019, AQU amendments to Section 19 August 2020 Updated Benchmark information and AQU amendments

12. Educational aims of the programme

MRes programmes provide an opportunity for students to gain a qualification involving intensive research without the commitment of spending 3-4 years as in a PhD programme. The gaining of a Master qualification is increasingly regarded as way of distinguishing a graduate from others who may hold a BA or BSc.

The Institute of Sport and Exercise Science's (ISES) educational and research expertise are well established within the socio-cultural studies of sport and exercise.

The impact of social sciences, along with sport and exercise on society, are important issues demanding increasing research activity.

The specific educational aims of the course are to enable postgraduate students to:

- Prepare for doctoral level study;
- Engage in a career in sport and exercise related research in a HE or industrial context;
- Meet the global need for highly trained individuals who can make informed decisions on future research directions;
- Develop their ability to think and write critically in a relatively independent/autonomous manner;
- Think for themselves in the development of a critical approach to the analysis of data and interpretation of published research.

13. Intended learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment methods

Knowledge and Understanding

LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code/s	Award <i>State if PG Cert or MRes</i>
1.	Employ social science research techniques, including information retrieval, primary/secondary data collection, analysis, interpretation and presentation of results	MSPO4067 MSPO4045 RTP405	PGCert/ MRes
2.	Formulate research questions, collect appropriate (primary and/or secondary) data to analyse and appropriately interpret	MSPO4067 MSPO4045	PGCert/ MRes
3.	Develop and acquire knowledge at the cutting edge of social science, including specialist areas that are dependent on the topic of the thesis (e.g., sociology of sport and exercise, sociology of coaching and social-history of sport and exercise).	MSPO4141 MSPO4045	PGCert/ MRes

MSPO4067, Research Methods and the thesis preparation module MSPO4141. They are then utilised in MSPO4045

Cognitive and Intellectual skills

4.	Integrate and evaluate information and data from a variety of sources	All modules	PGCert/ MRes
5.	Creatively seek solutions to socio-cultural issues in sport and/or exercise	All modules	PGCert/ MRes
6.	Plan, conduct and report on a programme of original research	MSPO4045	MRes
7.	Extrapolate relevant theories from data collected	MSPO4045	MRes

Skills and capabilities related to employability

8.	Apply a social scientific approach to a wide range of socio-cultural problems in sport and exercise	MSPO4141 MSPO4045	PGCert/ MRes
9.	Use and critically evaluate cutting edge social science theories relevant to the sub-discipline	MSPO4141 MSPO4045	PGCert/ MRes
10.	Thinking and write critically in ways that are appropriate to the context of industry	MSPO4045	MRes
11.	Use presentational skills (oral and visual) that commensurate with the needs of relevant employment sectors	MSPO4141 MSPO4045 RTP405	PGCert/ MRes
12.	Critically evaluate and interpret primary and secondary data	MSPO4045	MRes

Students will be exposed to and undertake data handling, research proposal writing in MSPO4067 and interpretation of social issues in the areas of sport and exercise in MSPO4141 and MSPO4045.

Transferable/key skills

13.	Communicate effectively using appropriate communication methods such as oral presentations and written reports to deliver scientific results/interpretations to specialist and non-specialist audiences	All modules	PGCert/ MRes
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14.	Apply information technology literacy skills to identify and search online sport and exercise and relevant social science databases and analysis and integration of methods at the cutting edge of social science	All modules	PGCert/ MRes
15.	Exercise initiative, take personal responsibility and practice self direction	All modules	PGCert/ MRes
16.	Learn effectively for the purpose of continuing professional development	All modules	PGCert/ MRes
17.	Comply with existing ethical and research procedures	All modules	PGCert/ MRes
18.	Time management	All modules	PGCert/ MRes

Learning, teaching and assessment

Intellectual skills are developed through the teaching and learning programme outlined in the award map.

Analysis and problem solving skills are further developed through individual tutorials, seminars and involvement in ISES research programme. This may involve activities with The Socio-Cultural Studies of Sport, Exercise and the Body Research Interest Group.

Research skills are further developed through coursework activities and later on through the research thesis. Assessments will provide an important feedback on students' progress.

Assessment of critical and creative thinking skills is achieved through coursework and the individual research project.

Modules will provide opportunity to develop these key skills through presentations, written assessments and individual tutorials. Presentations may be given as a part of the ISES research seminar series.

Teaching and Learning

You are taught through a combination of formal lectures, seminars and individual tutorials with your supervisory team.

The MRes in Socio-Cultural Studies of Sport and Exercise offers you:

- Academic rigor: Gain a deeper understanding of your chosen research area with a challenging combination of taught modules, research training and supervised research;
- Wide variety of research interests: We have a strong contingent of academics with a high degree of professional and personal experience enabling you to get the most out of both the taught and research elements of your programme;
- Excellent supervision: Drawn from experienced and highly motivated academics who work at the forefront of their disciplines, you will benefit from a professional and challenging relationship with your supervisor;
- Resources: Access to the University of Worcester's virtual resources and to the state-of-the-art library facilities

Contact time

In a typical week you will have around students will have 6 hours of contact per week (if full time) or 3 hours per week (if part time) during the completion of your taught modules. During the final module (Thesis), you will normally have slightly less contact with your supervisory team as you would be expecting to carry out you own research, but it is dependent on your research area. In total, completion of the course is expected to require 1800 hours of total learning time, including both direct contact time and independent study.

Independent self-study

In addition to the contact time offered in modules and by your supervisory team, you are expected to undertake independent study, with a specific focus on your own research area. It is expected that you will:

- be research active; agree research activity with their DOS.
- study flexibly and efficiently. This pattern of study may be varied with the prior agreement of the DoS.
- submit work to their DoS for evaluative comment as the research proceeds.
- respond to any suggestions regarding the development of work submitted.
- maintain regular contact with all supervisors who will ensure that the fullest advice on the research project is maintained.

Independent learning is supported by a range of excellent learning facilities, including the Hive and library resources, the Research School, the virtual learning environment, and extensive electronic learning resources.

Teaching staff

Teaching is informed by current research and all lecturers included in the delivery of MRes modules have a higher level research qualification and are active researchers. You can learn more about the staff by visiting our [staff profiles](#).

Assessment

Each module has one or more formal or 'summative' assessments which are graded and count towards the overall module grade.

Assessment methods include research proposals, research presentation, methodological critique and writing of an MRes thesis.

Feedback

You will receive feedback on formal assessments undertaken by coursework. Feedback is intended to support learning and you are encouraged to discuss your feedback with module tutors and your supervisors.

We aim to provide you with feedback on formal course work assessments within 20 working days of hand-in.

14. Assessment strategy

The Assessment strategy has been designed to provide students with a variety of challenges appropriate for Master level modules. The range of assessments specified in the module outlines have been developed in order to support the pedagogical and research approaches employed and which are appropriate for the nature of the subject disciplines covered.

In line with the University of Worcester Assessment Policy, assessments for the individual modules have been designed to enable students to demonstrate that they have successfully met the learning outcomes. These are specified in each assignment brief along with any assessment criteria. Students are also supported through the use of the University of Worcester grade descriptors.

The assessment strategy is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills that are required in Social Sciences in the areas of sport and exercise.

Taught Modules

The course will incorporate a range of assessment items - the mapping of assessment strategies to individual modules is included in the course handbook. Broadly speaking, the course structure of 3 15-credit modules plus a 120-credit thesis provides a sound background in social science. Research skills will be developed through the taught modules from generic research skills in RTP405, to more specific social science

research skills in MSPO4067 to very specific preparation for the MRes thesis in MSPO4141.

During module RTP405 the student will prepare their research proposal for the thesis. This proposal will form the assessment for the module, along with a short presentation on research. MSPO 4067 is assessed by two pieces of coursework that revolve around primary data handling and refinement of a suitable and feasible research proposal. MSPO4141 Research Thesis Preparation is assessed by means of an initial PDP assessment and action plan to address any specific issues required before moving onto the thesis, a completed action plan giving evidence how specific issues have been addressed and a 30-minute presentation on the intended project which will include scheduling and information on intended methods.

MRes Thesis

The MRes has a substantial research component (120 credits). The thesis is assessed by means of a significant piece of writing in the form of a thesis, which enables the student to demonstrate initiative and creativity in formulating and carrying out a research project. In order to progress from the taught element of the programme to the thesis stage the student must pass all three taught modules (see below). The thesis is designed to give practical experience of social science research and provide the opportunity to develop a wide range of skills.

The thesis will be submitted to an examination team comprising one internal and one external examiner and the research thesis and student knowledge will be assessed by means of a *viva voce* examination.

15. Programme structures and requirements

Award Map

The Programme consists of:

- 60 credits at Level 7
- 120 credit thesis at Level 7

Module Code	Module Title	Credits (Number)	PG Cert	MRes
RTP405	Developing and Managing your Research	15	M	M
MSPO4067	Research Methods	15	M	M
MSPO4141	Research Thesis Preparation	30	M	M
MSPO4045	MRes Thesis	120	X	M
Total Credits		180		

A student will not be permitted to progress to the thesis module stage of their programme until they have passed all of the taught modules.

16. QAA and professional academic standards and quality

The programme has been designed with reference to the [QAA Masters Degree Characteristics Statement 2020](#) and FHEQ (2008) Qualification Descriptors for Level 7 as well as the [Vitae Researcher Development Framework](#).

This award is located at level 7 of the FHEQ.

17. Support for students

Students are provided with:

- an induction programme
- the Handbook for MRes Students and Supervisors
- day to day support through the Research School
- an introduction to the process of Personal Development Planning (PDP)

- training opportunities for career planning through the Research School and the Careers Service
- support through Student Services
- access to the Disability and Dyslexia Service
- access to IT services

In addition to the above, on acceptance, students are assigned a supervisor (Director of Studies) (and in some instances a second supervisor) for the thesis stage of the programme, who has expertise in their specialist area of social science. The supervisor provides advice and undertakes regular progress reviews during the thesis stage of the programme. Written records are normally kept for all meetings.

<https://www.worc.ac.uk/life/help-and-support/services-for-students/home.aspx>
<https://www2.worc.ac.uk/disabilityanddyslexia/>

18. Admissions

Admissions policy

The University aims to be accessible; it is committed to widening participation and encouraging diversity in the student population. The Institute of Sport and Exercise Science works closely with central student support services, including the Research School and Student Services, to support students from a variety of backgrounds. We actively encourage and welcome people from the widest range of economic and cultural backgrounds, and value the contribution of mature learners.

Entry requirements

Applicants are normally expected to:

- (a) Have a First or Second Class Honours Degree or equivalent award in an appropriate discipline (e.g., Sociology of Sport, Sport Studies)
- or
- (b) Have appropriate research or professional experience which has resulted in appropriate evidence of achievement (e.g., extensive involvement in sport industry-related research).

International applicants will also be required to demonstrate that they have the appropriate level of written and spoken English (normally IELTS score of 6.5 with a minimum score of 7 in written English). Entry qualifications for international students are guided by the National Academic Recognition Information Centre's (NARIC) advice on international qualifications.

In keeping with University policy on widening participation and diversity the Programme encourages and welcomes the contribution of mature learners and people from the widest range of social, economic and cultural backgrounds.

See [Admissions Policy](#) for other acceptable qualifications.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) requirements

DBS is not required for the MRes modules unless the student's research focuses on a vulnerable population. This would need to be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Students with relevant previous study at postgraduate level or with extensive experience may be considered eligible for recognition of prior learning. Please contact the Registry Admissions Office for further information or guidance on 01905 855111.

Further information on Recognition of Prior Learning can be found at <http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/941.htm>

Admissions procedures

All applications are submitted to the Research School and passed to the relevant Programme Leader for consideration. In the application form applicants are required to outline a research proposal for their intended thesis. If the application has potential, an interview is scheduled by a panel comprising at least two members of academic staff. Completion of an interview checklist allows for a thorough rigorous evaluation of the candidate's strengths at interview. It also means that details about the offer conditions are passed back to the Research School, enabling a comprehensive offer letter and contract to be produced.

Applications from those with international qualifications are checked by the Research School Manager against NARIC and copies of all certificates are required before an unconditional offer is made to the student. All international applicants are checked for their competency in English language by the Language Centre. When it is felt that the applicant does not possess the appropriate level of English language, an in house English language course may be recommended before the student embarks on their RDP. Information about all offers made to international students is passed back to the relevant personnel in Student Services who can provide the student with additional support and guidance (for example, to obtain a visa, accommodation etc).

The selection and admission procedures outlined above ensure that only appropriately qualified students are admitted to an MRes and that the student can be satisfactorily supported in their research.

Admissions/selection criteria

An offer of a place on an MRes in the Socio-Cultural Studies of Sport and Exercise will be made when the following conditions are satisfied:

- Applicant meets the specified entry requirements.
- The Institute has the supervisory capacity and expertise to support the research project outlined in the application form
- The proposal outlined has the potential to become a viable research project at Master's level.

19. Regulation of assessment

The course operates under the University's [Taught Courses Regulatory Framework](#)

Requirements to pass modules

- Modules are assessed using a variety of assessment activities which are detailed in the 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.
- Full details of the assessment requirements for a module, including the assessment criteria, are published in the module outline.
- Students are required to pass the three taught modules (RTP405, MSPO4067 and MSPO4141) in order to progress to the thesis stage of the programme (MSPO 4045).

Submission of assessment items

- Students who submit course work late but within 7 days (one week) 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 submit work later than 7 days (one week) 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 please see the Taught Courses Regulatory Framework.

Retrieval of failure

- Students are entitled to resit failed assessment items for any module that is awarded a fail grade.
- Reassessment items that are passed are capped 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); the module grade for a re-taken module is capped at D-.
- A student who fails 60 credits or more after exhausting all reassessment opportunities may be required to withdraw from the University.
- A student will be notified of the reassessment opportunities in the results notification issued via the secure student portal (SOLE). It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and comply with any reassessments.

Requirements for Awards

Award	Requirement
PG Cert Research Methods in Socio- Cultural Studies of Sport and Exercise	Passed a minimum of 60 credits at level 7, as specified on the award map
Masters (MRes) Socio- Cultural Studies of Sport and Exercise	Passed a minimum of 180 credits at level 7 including 120 credits for the Research Project module, as specified on the award map

The PG Cert award is unclassified. The awards of MRes may be made with Pass, Merit or Distinction.

20. Graduate destinations, employability and links with employers

Graduate destinations

Generally, MRes graduates will pursue a career either in academia or in industry. The knowledge, training and skills students receive will provide a springboard for vocational careers in the sport and exercise industry and education as well as by going on to PhD study in academia. Emphasis on high level academic attainment and the development of transferable skills will generate job opportunities in aspects of social sciences and other areas of employment.

Student employability

As well as being a qualification in its own right, an MRes qualification in Socio-Cultural Studies of Sport and Exercise is an important pathway into doctoral study in the Social Sciences. Students with this qualification will be better placed to progress to successful doctoral study at the University of Worcester or elsewhere.

Links with employers

The MRes degree incorporates specific transferable skills which are sought after by employers in the sport industry and beyond. Those skills include, but not limited to: literature search, report writing, report presenting, problem identification and problem solving.

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in associated course documentation e.g. course handbooks, module outlines and module specifications.