

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

This document applies to students who commence the programme in or after September 2017

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	N/A
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 Researcher Development Framework and the QAA's Master's Degree Characteristics
11.	Date of Programme Specification preparation/ revision	January 2013. Amended June 2013, regulations and admissions section amended August 2014 and October 2014. July 2016, regulations amended (Section 20), Section 21 updated / July 2017 updates / August 2017 – 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			
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LO no.		Module Code/s	Award <i>State if PG Cert or MRes</i>
1.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:		
1.	Employ social science research techniques, including information retrieval, primary/secondary data collection, analysis, interpretation and presentation of results	MSPO 4001/4045 , RTP401	PGCert/ MRes
2.	Formulate research questions, collect appropriate (primary and/or secondary) data to analyse and appropriately interpret	MSPO 4001/ 4045	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).	MSPO 4041/4045	PGCert/ MRes

MSPO 4001, Research Methods and the thesis preparation module MSPO 4041. They are then utilised in MSPO 4045

Cognitive and Intellectual skills			
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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	MSPO 4045	MRes
7.	Extrapolate relevant theories from data collected.	MSPO 4045	MRes

Skills and capabilities related to employability			
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8.	Apply a social scientific approach to a wide range of socio-cultural problems in sport and exercise	MSPO 4041/4045	PGCert/ MRes
9.	Use and critically evaluate cutting edge social science theories relevant to the sub-discipline	MSPO 4041/4045	PGCert/ MRes
10.	Thinking and write critically in ways that are appropriate to the context of industry	MSPO 4045	MRes
11.	Use presentational skills (oral and visual) that commensurate with the needs of relevant employment sectors	MSPO 4041/4045 , RTP 401	PGCert/ MRes
12.	Critically evaluate and interpret primary and secondary data	MSPO 4045	MRes

Students will be exposed to and undertake data handling, research proposal writing in MSPO 4001 and interpretation of social issues in the areas of sport and exercise in MSPO 4041 and MSPO 4045.

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
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 above.

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.

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 20-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 RTP 401, to more specific social science research skills in MSPO 4001 to very specific preparation for the MRes thesis in MSPO 4045.

During module RTP401 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 4001 is assessed by two pieces of coursework that revolve around primary data handling and refinement of a suitable and feasible research proposal. MSPO 4045 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) assessed by means of a significant piece of writing in the form of a Thesis. This 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 laboratory-based research and provide the opportunity to develop a wide range of skills.

The thesis will be submitted to an examination team comprising two internal examiners.

15. Programme structures and requirements

Award Map

The Programme consists of:

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

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.

Taught modules at Level 7

Module code	Module title	Credit value
RTP 401	Processes and Skills, Management and Methods	20
MSPO 4001	Research Methods	20
MSPO 4041	Research Thesis Preparation	20
MSPO 4045	MRes Thesis	120

The module "MSPO 4001 Research Methods" will mainly be classroom based seminars, group discussions and tutorials with the view to preparing the student for study in social sciences.

MSPO 4045 MRes Thesis

The text of an MRes thesis in the humanities or social sciences (including business and management studies), excluding ancillary data, must not exceed 30,000 words. It must fulfil the requirements for format, content and appearance as set out in the Course Handbook

16. QAA and professional academic standards and quality

The programme has been designed with reference to the [QAA Master Degrees Characteristics \(2010\)](#) 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.

<http://www.worcester.ac.uk/student-services/index.htm>

<http://www.worcester.ac.uk/student-services/disability-and-dyslexia.htm>

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

The external examiner system and Boards of Examiners are central to the process by which the University monitors quality of its assessment procedures and academic standards. Boards of Examiners comment on the assessment procedures within the Institute of Sport and Exercise Science (ISES) and may suggest improvements for action by relevant Institute Teaching Committees.

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

Quality and standards are maintained through: examiner reports, student evaluation of modules and course committees and the course management committee which will meet once a semester. In addition, the programme is subject to comment and review through the Research Degrees Board, the Research School Steering Group and through the Research Student Forum and the Research Supervisors' Forum.

20. 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 (RTP401, MSPO4001 and MSPO 4041) 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 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 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 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.

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.

21. Indicators of quality and standards

Publications from members of staff in the University are made available via a research repository called WRAP (Worcester Research and Publications). The members of the Socio-Cultural Studies of Sport, Exercise and the Body Research Interest Groups (SEB RIG) have contributed significantly to these publications with peer reviewed articles in leading journals

22. 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.

Course Title: PG Certificate and MRes Socio-Cultural Studies of Sport and Exercise

PG CERTIFICATE

Module Code	Module Title	Credits (Number)	Status Mandatory (M) or Optional (O)
RTP 401	Processes and Skills, Management and Methods	20	M
MSPO 4001	Research Methods	20	M
MSPO 4041	Research Thesis Preparation	20	M

Students registered on to the PG Cert Research Methods must successfully complete 60 credits at Level 7 (specify modules).

MASTERS (MRes)

Module Code	Module Title	Credits (Number)	Status Mandatory (M) or Optional (O)
RTP 401	Processes and Skills, Management and Methods	20	M
MSPO 4001	Research Methods	20	M
MSPO 4041	Research Thesis Preparation	20	M
MSPO 4045	MRes Thesis	120	M

*To be awarded the MRes, students must complete a total of 180 credits at Level 7 including a minimum of 120 credits from the dissertation.
(See Section 14.5 in the [TCRF](#) for details).*

**A student can only progress to the MRes Thesis if the taught modules for the PG Cert have been passed.*