

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION – POSTGRADUATE COURSES

1	Awarding institution/body University of Worcester				
2	Teaching institution University of Worcester				
3	Programme accredited by n/a				
4	Final award PG Cert				
5	Programme title PG Cert Medical Communications				
6	Pathways available n/a				
7	<p>Mode and/or site of delivery</p> <p>This course will be delivered at the University of Worcester, via a standard taught programme supported by some on-line support and discussion.</p>				
8	<p>Mode of attendance</p> <p>Part-time; 1 year. To be scheduled on Saturdays and/or Sundays over a maximum of 4 weekends for each module.</p>				
9	UCAS Code n/a				
10	Subject /Professional Benchmark statements n/a				
11	Date of Programme Specification preparation/revision January 2010/updated Nov 2010				
12	<p>Educational aims of the programme</p> <p>The field of Medical Communications has expanded alongside the explosion of novel pharmacotherapies being profiled and marketed by pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies. As a result, Medical Writers are currently in high demand in the UK and internationally within the pharmaceutical industry, at Clinical Research Organisations and with Medical Communications companies. However, specific vocational training for Medical Writers is currently not available and as a result graduates of Biosciences struggle to gain the editorial experience needed to make them attractive to employers in the field. The aim of the PgCert in Medical Communications is to prepare bioscience graduates for a career as a Medical Writer by covering areas where candidates currently lack training.</p> <p>The specific aims of the PgCert in Medical Communications are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop awareness of the role of a Medical Writer • To enable students to identify specific healthcare audiences and to raise awareness via different modes of effective communications • To develop data interpretation techniques • To provide an understanding of legislation involved with medical communications • To train students in client relations • To introduce students to clinical trial documentation and processes • To enable students to apply publication planning processes 				
13	<p>Intended learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment methods</p> <p>On successful completion of the course, students should be able to:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>1. Reflect on the professional role of a Medical Writer in practice and contribute effectively to a team-based problem solving exercise</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Demonstrate originality and professionalism in the generation of effective communication strategies targeted to specialist and non-specialist audiences</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Display an ability to systematically and creatively deal with client and strategic issues</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4. Demonstrate an advanced knowledge of the importance of concise and accurate</td> </tr> </table>	1. Reflect on the professional role of a Medical Writer in practice and contribute effectively to a team-based problem solving exercise	2. Demonstrate originality and professionalism in the generation of effective communication strategies targeted to specialist and non-specialist audiences	3. Display an ability to systematically and creatively deal with client and strategic issues	4. Demonstrate an advanced knowledge of the importance of concise and accurate
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4. Demonstrate an advanced knowledge of the importance of concise and accurate					

presentation and data interpretation

5. Demonstrate an understanding of, and an ability to, critically evaluate clinical trial protocols, reports, outcome measures and variables

6. Appraise statistical analysis techniques applicable to clinical trial data.

7. Apply scientific knowledge to Medical Communications scenarios

8. Show sound judgement in designing, constructing and executing a publication plan

9. Demonstrate an ability to implement good publication practice (GPP) guidelines

10. Reflect upon compliance issues via Good Clinical Practice, FDA Regulations, EU Directives and ICH Guidelines.

The learning content and assessment criteria for each of the modules are aligned to specific learning outcomes (reflecting the Level 7 requirements of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications [QAA 2008]).

These learning outcomes are mapped to specific modules in the curriculum map (section 15 of the programme specification)

Learning is facilitated via taught sessions (maximum of four weekend sessions per module) and distance learning, utilising analysis of theory, case studies and software specific to the role of a Medical Writer. Teaching input is provided by the course leader and professionals, acting as visiting lecturers, from the industry. Assessment methods incorporate a wide range of strategies to provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities across several techniques employed by Medical Writers.

14 Assessment Strategy

The course operates under the [Postgraduate Regulatory Framework \(.pdf\)](#) which sets out the full regulations for passing modules, grading of modules, retrieving failed modules, requirements for awards, and how the award is classified.

The course is fully compliant with University of Worcester regulations for assessment, mitigation, appeals and complaints. For further details on any of these areas please follow this link to the [Registry website](#).

Each assessment item has published specific marking criteria contained in the module outline given to students at the beginning of the module. These are based on the generic assessment criteria contained within the [University of Worcester Student Handbook](#) and [University of Worcester grade descriptors](#).

The assessment strategy is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills that are required to work as a Medical Writer in a professional environment in a Medical Communications company. This will be achieved by formative and summative assessment.

The course will incorporate a full range of assessment items - the mapping of assessment strategies to individual module is included in section 4 of the course handbook.

14 Programme structures and requirements

Award map – Mandatory modules

Module code	Module title	Credit value	Anticipated scheduling of modules*
Level 7			
MEDC4001	Fundamentals of Medical Writing	20	Sept – Dec
MEDC4002	Clinical development of Medicines	20	Jan – April
MEDC4003	Medical publication and promotion processes	20	May – August

*Inclusive months (four taught weekends per module)

15. Curriculum Map

Table 1. Mapping of Course Learning Outcomes to modules in PgCert Medical Communications	MEDC4001 Fundamentals of Medical Writing	MEDC4002 Clinical development of Medicines	MEDC4003 Medical publication and promotion processes
1. Reflect on the professional role of a Medical Writer in practice and contribute effectively to a team-based problem solving exercise	●		
2. Demonstrate originality and professionalism in the generation of effective communication strategies targeted to specialist and non-specialist audiences	●	●	
3. Display an ability to systematically and creatively deal with client and strategic issues	●		●
4. Demonstrate an advanced knowledge of the importance of concise and accurate presentation and data interpretation	●	●	
5. Demonstrate an understanding of, and an ability to, critically evaluate clinical trial protocols, reports, outcome measures and variables		●	●
6. Appraise statistical analysis techniques applicable to clinical trial data.		●	
7. Apply scientific knowledge to Medical Communications scenarios	●	●	
8. Show sound judgement in designing, constructing and executing a publication plan			●
9. Demonstrate an ability to implement good publication practice (GPP) guidelines			●
10. Reflect upon compliance issues via Good Clinical Practice, FDA Regulations, EU Directives and ICH Guidelines.			●

Student requirements

Students will need access to a home PC/internet system for this course, due to the element of distance learning involved.

16 QAA Academic Infrastructure

The PgCert in Medical Communications reflects the Level 7 requirements of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (QAA 2008). The learning outcomes and assessment criteria have been constructed upon Level 7 guidance. The programme provides opportunities for students to access postgraduate credits at postgraduate certificate (60 M level credits).

17 Support for students

Induction and Tutorial Support

At the commencement of the programme students will participate in an induction to the University of Worcester and to the PgCert. The course leader will ensure that students are aware of the expectations for the course, will provide general course information and organise specific inductions to relevant support departments (e.g. ILS).

Handbooks and Supporting Information

All students on the course will receive a course handbook.

Information and Learning Services

Information and Learning Services are based in the Pierson Library and provides library, media and IT support.

Library

The Library has a good range of appropriately focussed learning resources, including traditional library resources books and journals as well as a range of electronic resource materials. The University has subject specific librarians in both Health, and Biological Science who will provide specific resource support for students on this programme.

Media Services

Reprographic, laminating, binding and video editing services are available for use by students. There is a wide range of equipment available for student use including DVD and video players, video and digital cameras and data projectors.

Information Technology

Each student is allocated an email account to facilitate communication between peers and with tutors. In addition, students are registered on Blackboard, which allows access to a range of learning resources and information both on and off campus. There are networked computers available to students in both Hines Building and the Pierson Library, along with numerous drop-in computer rooms.

Registry Services

Are responsible for ensuring that students are registered on programmes and maintain a central record of student progress, and administer claims for mitigating circumstances and appeals and award ceremonies.

Student Services

The University is committed to supporting the student experience and to this end has a range of student services; counselling service, financial advice, childcare provision, careers advice.

18 Admissions policy, criteria and procedures

Entry requirements

- A minimum 2nd class BSc (Hons) in a Bioscience, Life Science or Biomedical Science related subject area.
- Evidence of publications and/or relevant professional experience working is desirable.
- If English is not your first language, you will be expected to have reached a sufficient standard on admission to the course (minimum IELTS 7.5)
- Shortlisted applicants will normally be invited for an interview.
- For further advice, please contact the Admissions team on 01905 855111; email admissions@worc.ac.uk , or contact the Course Leader Dr Shelley Davies directly on 01905 542372 or s.davies@worc.ac.uk.

Accreditation of Prior Learning

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

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

Quality and standards of the course will be monitored using a variety of methods:

- Student Evaluations of Modules
- Annual External Examiner Report
- Annual Course Evaluation Report
- Course Committees
- Peer Review

20 Regulation of assessment

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 50% 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 50% 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.
- 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, which will incur payment of the module fee.

- For full details of submission regulations see PRF.

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 takes place during the following semester or during the summer reassessment period at the end of the academic year.
- If following reassessment the module has been passed, the module grade will be capped at 50%.
- If a student is unsuccessful in the reassessment, they will have one further and final reassessment opportunity.
- A student who fails 40 credits or more after exhausting all reassessment opportunities may be required to withdraw from the University.

Requirements for Awards

Award	Requirement
PG Cert	Passed a minimum of 60 credits at level 7

The awards of PG Cert, PG Dip or Masters may be made with Merit or Distinction.

21 Indicators of quality and standards

Indicators of the quality and standards of the course will be:

- Medical Communications employer input
- Employability analysis of students
- External Examiner Report

In November 2005, the University was audited by the Quality Assurance Agency. The audit confirmed confidence in the University's management of the quality of its academic programmes and the standards of its awards. The QAA particularly commended the University's supportive ethos and range of departmental and central services provided to students and staff in support of its mission to deliver an excellent inclusive higher education. The University will be audited next in 2011.

22 Career Opportunities & Links with Employers

The aim of this PgCert is to prepare Bioscience graduates for a career as a Medical Writer/Editor in Medical Communication agencies, Pharmaceutical companies and Clinical Research Organisations (CROs).

Course development will draw upon the experience of professionals working and recruiting within Medical Communications. These representatives have reacted very positively to the development of this PgCert and have expressed a desire to advise on course development.

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 the module study guide and course handbook. The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.