

# PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

## PG Certificate in Research Methods

1	<b>Awarding institution/body:</b> University of Worcester
2	<b>Teaching institution:</b> University of Worcester
3	<b>Programme accredited by:</b> n/a
4	<b>Final award:</b> PG Certificate
5	<b>Programme title:</b> PG Certificate in Research Methods
6	<b>Pathways available:</b> n/a
7	<b>Mode and/or site of delivery:</b> taught programme
8	<b>Mode of attendance:</b> FT and PT, block or weekend
9	<b>UCAS Code:</b> n/a
10	<b>Subject /Professional Benchmark statements:</b> the programme is mapped on to the Research Councils <i>Joint Skills Statement</i> and on to the QAA's <i>Code of Practice</i> , section 1, specifically precepts 18, 19 & 20; the programme has also been approved by the <i>Arts and Humanities Research Council</i> .
11	<b>Date of Programme Specification preparation/revision:</b> April 2009/updated Jan 2011

### 12 Educational aims of the programme

All students enrolled on a research degree programme must undertake the Research Training Programme in order to progress. They may also undertake (and are strongly encouraged to do so) the optional elements of the programme in order to be eligible for the PG Certificate in Research Methods. The PG Certificate is only available to those undertaking a research degree at Worcester.

The rationale of the programme is to develop and enhance the skills, both generic and specific, that a research student needs to complete their research degree and to become an effective researcher. Furthermore, the programme also seeks to highlight and then to enhance skills that a research student develops in the course of their research degree which are transferable to their future career.

The aims of the programme are:

1. To prepare the student for the key stages of the research degree process, i.e. registration, transfer and examination
2. To develop and enhance core research skills, e.g. planning a research project
3. To develop and enhance the skills needed for writing both their thesis and for publication
4. To develop and enhance core IT and library skills, e.g. the use of reference management software
5. To develop and enhance research skills specific to the subject area of the research degree, e.g. specific statistical packages, specific methodological approaches
6. To provide knowledge and understanding of the broader context of research in the UK and internationally
7. To enable the student to disseminate their knowledge and practice effectively to academic and professional communities

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

#### Research Skills

Students will be able to:

1. Recognise and validate research problems
2. Demonstrate original, independent and critical thinking, and the ability to develop

theoretical concepts

3. Demonstrate a knowledge of recent advances within their field and in related areas
4. Demonstrate an understanding of relevant research methodologies and techniques and their appropriate application within their research field
5. Critically analyse and evaluate their findings and those of others
6. Summarise, document, report and reflect on their progress

### **Knowledge and Understanding of Research Environment**

Students will be able to:

1. Show a broad understanding of the context, at the national and international level, in which research takes place
2. Demonstrate awareness of issues relating to the rights of other researchers, of research subjects, and of others who may be affected by the research, e.g. confidentiality, ethical issues, attribution, copyright, malpractice, ownership of data and the requirements of the Data Protection Act
3. Demonstrate appreciation of standards of good research practice in the institution and in their discipline

### **Research Management**

Students will be able to:

1. Apply effective project management through the setting of research goals, intermediate milestones and prioritisation of activities
2. Design and execute systems for the acquisition and collation of information through the effective use of appropriate resources and equipment
3. Identify and access appropriate bibliographical resources, archives, and other sources of relevant information
4. Use information technology appropriately for database management, recording and presenting information

### **Communication Skills**

Students will be able to:

1. Write clearly and in a style appropriate to purpose, e.g. progress reports, published documents, thesis
2. Construct coherent arguments and articulate ideas clearly to a range of audiences, formally and informally through a variety of techniques
3. Constructively defend research outcomes at seminars, conferences, etc

## **14 Assessment Strategy**

A range of formative and summative assessment methods are used within the programme from various forms of written assignments to oral presentations to critical self-reflection.

## 15 Programme structures and requirements

Level 7				
Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Module status	Pre-requisites
RTP401	Research Methods, Skills and Processes	20	Mandatory	None
RTP402	Practice and Dissemination	20	The module is optional for those undertaking the Research Training Programme but is a mandatory element of the PG Certificate	None
Various	Subject-specific research methods	20	Mandatory	None

The programme consists of two 20-credit modules focused on generic research skills and methods delivered by the Graduate Research School and one 20-credit module focused on subject-specific research skills and methods. The subject specific module is drawn from the Masters provision offered by Institutes at Worcester. Where no appropriate module is available within Worcester's Masters provision then an appropriate, Masters-level module at another HEI is identified. Normally the appropriate subject-specific module is identified at interview, i.e. before the student has been accepted on to the research degree. If this is not possible, then an appropriate module is identified through Training Needs Analysis. Where a student has a recent appropriate Masters qualification or can demonstrate appropriate experiential learning they may claim APL/APEL for the subject-specific module.

## 16 QAA Academic Infrastructure

The programme is designed to meet with the QAA Code of Practice for PG Research Programmes (specifically precepts 18-20).  
It also meets with the FHEQ qualification descriptors.  
It has also been designed in accordance with the Research Councils' *Joint Skills Statement* (see appendix 1)

## 17 Support for students

Students are provided with:

- a half-day day induction session for their RDP which incorporates a specific introduction to the Research Training Programme and to library and IT resources
- the *Handbook for Research Students and Supervisors*
- day to day support through the Graduate Research School (GRS)
- an introduction to the process of Personal Development Planning (PDP)
- training opportunities for career planning through the GRS and the Careers Service
- support through the Student Advice Bureau
- support through the Student Information and Guidance Centre
- support through the International office for overseas students
- support through the Language Unit for International Students
- access to the Disability and Dyslexia Service

## 18 Admissions policy, criteria and procedures

Students may only undertake this programme if they have already been admitted to a

research degree programme at the University of Worcester.

### Accreditation of Prior Learning.

Students with relevant previous study at postgraduate level or with 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 are maintained through: annual monitoring report, external examiner reports and student evaluation of modules. In addition, the programme is subject to comment and review through the Graduate Research School Steering Group and through the Research Student Forum and the Research Supervisors' Forum.

## **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.
- 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

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

Award	Requirement
Postgraduate Certificate (PG Cert)	60 credits at Level 7

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

### 21 Indicators of quality and standards

In 2006 the University's management of the quality and standards of its research degree programmes was identified as appropriate and satisfactory by the QAA.

In November 2005, the institution 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.

### 22 Career Opportunities & Links with Employers

The programme is designed to develop core research and transferable skills and to enhance the employability of a research degree student both within an academic and research context but also outside of this context.

**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.