

Programme Specification for MA Outdoor Education

This document applies to Academic Year 2018/19 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	PG Cert, PG Dip, MA
5.	Programme title	Outdoor Education
6.	Pathways available	N/A
7.	Mode and/or site of delivery	Work based learning.
8.	Mode of attendance and duration	Part time with distance learning support normally completed in 3 or 4 years
9.	UCAS Code	N/A
10.	Subject Benchmark statement and/or professional body statement	There is no QAA subject benchmark statement for outdoor education. The course is aligned with the QAA Master's degree characteristics statement 2015 and placement aspects are informed by UK Quality Code for Higher Education - Chapter B10: Managing higher education provision with others
11.	Date of Programme Specification preparation/ revision	June 2018 August 2018 – AQU amendments

12. Educational aims of the programme

The programme is designed to provide a postgraduate qualification for managers, leaders, teachers and other professionals in Outdoor Education who want to demonstrate excellence in their chosen field by achieving a recognised benchmark at postgraduate level whilst being free to choose a learning route that suits their individual needs and those of the organizations in which they operate. The programme enables students to explore areas of professional practice and academic research and develop new knowledge and skill within areas of professional practice that might include: organisational and strategic management; teaching and learning in the outdoors; personal development and experiential learning; environmental and aesthetic aspects of practice, international approaches to outdoor education; safety and risk management, as well as topics related to specific outdoor activities. In accommodating these students, in particular those in current employment, the modules have an innovative delivery pattern which supports the University's strategic plan to develop courses and curricula that 'allow our students to develop intellectually and personally'; and which 'meet the diverse needs of students, employers and society in the 21st century'.

This programme aims to facilitate the development of knowledge, understanding and professional skills through the recognition of learning in, for and through the work place, but supported by academic input, access to research texts and specialist resources. The programme will enable students to:

- A. Develop a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of outdoor education study or professional practice
- B. Develop a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research to their area of professional practice.

- C. Demonstrate self-direction and originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of established techniques of research and enquiry, in tackling and solving problems and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional level.
- D. Develop a conceptual understanding that enables the student to evaluate critically current research, professional practice and advanced scholarship in outdoor education, consider the methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses and practices
- E. Deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgments in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- F. Develop enhanced professional practice, within a clear framework of the learners' own professional values, and which represents a significant contribution to professional knowledge

It should be noted that because these aims are the guiding statements structuring the course they can be both *explicitly* dealt with in modules whilst in other instances they are more *implicitly* referred to.

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

The MA in Outdoor Education programme aims to further develop the students' independent learning ability and enable them to become effective, reflective practitioners. Consequently, the learning, teaching and assessment methods are designed to provide opportunities for the students to develop these qualities within the workplace. The learning environment is strongly weighted towards work based learning and project learning, with three work based projects and an independent study. These enable the learner to explore areas of their professional practice and develop new knowledge and skill within a specific context. Students are encouraged to explore a range of learning areas in their work based projects and Dissertation modules, these might include: organisational and strategic management; teaching and learning in the outdoors; personal development and experiential learning; environmental and aesthetic aspects of practice, international approaches to outdoor education; safety and risk management, as well as topics related to specific outdoor activities. Lecturer support for work based project modules is negotiated with the student and may include tutorials, workshops and distance support. Each module is supported with VLE and discussion forum. In addition there are two reflective modules that encourage the learner to evaluate their personal and professional development and link practice to theory. The reflective modules are delivered through tutorial and seminars and students can engage with interactive materials on the VLE. Research methods is studied as a distance learning module and includes a range of practical work, on-line lectures, webinars and workshops. Throughout all modules, there are opportunities for group study and peer group working and students are required to engage with action sets. Student research skills will culminate with a Masters level, independent research project as their final assessment.

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge, understanding, skills, qualities and other relevant attributes. The following learning outcomes have been informed by the Descriptors for a qualification at Masters (M) Level: [QAA Masters degree characteristics statement 2015](#) and adapted according to the needs of this particular course.

The learning outcomes for the Masters in Outdoor Education are as follows:

Knowledge and Understanding			
LO no.		Module Code/s	Award
	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to demonstrate:		

1.	identify, analyse and critically reflect upon appropriate theory and contemporary issues in outdoor education	MAOE 4101, MAOE 4102	PG Cert, PG Dip and MA
2.	appreciate and critically reflect upon current problems or contemporary insights in outdoor education;	MAOE 4102	PG Cert, PG Dip and MA
3.	identify, analyse and critically reflect upon a wide range of quantitative and/or qualitative methods applicable for applied research or advanced scholarship in outdoor education	MSPO4067	PG Cert, PG Dip and MA

Cognitive and Intellectual skills

LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code/s	Award
4.	demonstrate an in-depth understanding and application of appropriate research methods	MSPO4067	PG Cert, PG Dip and MA
5.	design, implement and evaluate a personal research project in a contemporary area of outdoor education, demonstrating critical analysis of the research process, appropriate research methods and the analysis, interpretation and dissemination of data	MAOE4103, MAOE4104, MAOE4105	PG Cert, PG Dip and MA
6.	critically analyse and appreciate different perspectives, values and strategies of practitioners in the field outdoor education and synthesise these with theory to deal with complex issues systematically and creatively and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences	MAOE4103, MAOE4104, MAOE4105	PG Cert, PG Dip and MA
7.	develop advanced knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level.	MAOE4110	MA

Skills and capabilities related to employability

	As this is a work based degree, all elements are directly linked to employability and include all the Transferable skills i.e. key skills which are embedded in the workplace	All Modules	PG Cert, PG Dip and MA
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Transferable/key skills

LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will have the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment, namely:	Module Code/s	Award
8.	demonstrate initiative and personal responsibility when working alone or with others on applied problems or tasks	MAOE 4103, MAOE 4104, MAOE 4105	PG Cert, PG Dip and MA
9.	make decisions in complex applied situations using systematic and creative methods and communicate their conclusions clearly	MAOE 4103, MAOE 4104, MAOE 4105	PG Cert, PG Dip and MA

10.	develop critical self-reflection and an independent autonomous approach to learning required for continuing professional and personal development as a reflective practitioner	MAOE 4106 MAOE 4110	PG Dip and MA
11.	demonstrate critical self-assessment of key and vocational skills in outdoor education	MAOE 4106	PG Dip and MA

Learning, teaching and assessment

The course emphasises a learning experience that interacts with the student's professional practice and is meaningful, active, reflective, collaborative and creative. These principles are reflected in the teaching approach as well as in the range of assessments and subject matter requiring critical analysis and reflective activities.

The teaching and learning approach of the course is based around bespoke support for individual student needs. These needs are identified by the student through the completion of a learning contract (MAOE 4101) and later through work based project proposals. In addition to bespoke support, the student has on-line access to a wide range of on-line lectures and resources that cover most aspects of the subject area, as well as study skills. These methods are supplemented by action learning sets, on-line seminars, and teaching and tutorials in small groups of between 2 and 5.

Learners will acquire the diverse and complex skills and knowledge necessary for their development as a high level professional in outdoor education or a related field. Although lectures, seminars and tutorials will be used throughout the course, a great deal of participants' time will be spent in conducting work based projects that explore areas of professional or academic interest. As such, it is clear that the private study demands on this type of course are considerable.

The teaching strategy enables students' active exploration, reflection and critical evaluation of their own professional experience, perceptions and knowledge. This approach develops the ability to become an autonomous and self-directed learner. This means the learner will be confident of their capabilities as an independent learner and researcher and able to manage their own learning in line with a busy work schedule. This skill-set will be used to develop a depth and breadth of subject-matter knowledge, reflecting and analysing the implications of this towards understanding of innovation and the changing global sport context, and applying this new understanding in practical situations accordingly.

Throughout the course, the teaching approach combines the use of learning technology i.e. webinars, action learning, and independent learning, with supported reflection and project work. Student-centered action learning sets, mainly via virtual contact, will be used throughout the course. There are thus a variety of pedagogic approaches but the main focus of the learning is in developing knowledge and understanding through projects and through reflective learning.

Teaching

You are taught through a combination of on-line lectures, webinars, tutorials, on-line tasks and work-based projects. Whilst most of the teaching resources allow students to progress at their own pace there are 3 days throughout the year that are set aside for shared working. Typically these Masters Days include:

- Webinar Presentation and discussion 10:15-12:15
- Skype tutorials and small group work 13:15 – 15:15

In addition, meetings (either in person or at distance) with personal academic tutors are scheduled on at least 4 occasions each year.

You have an opportunity to engage with other students through on-line fora and web discussion groups and have access to extensive VLE resources.

Contact time

Contact time is the time that the course team spends in 1:1 communication with you. This might be skype, phone, email or in person. As this is a part-time Masters programme where many students are studying at a considerable distance from the University, there is no specific time period for contacting staff, however contact with staff should be within UK working hours. For live skype, phone and in person tutorials, the student should arrange a time by email. In general, students should not expect more than 30 minutes contact time per module per week.

Students are expected to plan their own study and arrange their communication with University staff around their work commitments, but to remember that the weeks immediately prior to assessment can be very busy.

Independent self-study

In addition to teaching time and 1:1 contact time, you are expected to undertake around 5 hours of personal self-study per week. Typically, this will involve accessing resources on VLE, undertaking the self-study tasks, structured reading, undertaking work-based projects, and engaging in reflective learning. As a guide, completion of the entire course should require 1800 hours of total student learning time.

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

Teaching staff

You will be taught by a teaching team whose expertise and knowledge are closely matched to the content of the modules on the course. The team includes staff with a depth of professional and academic experience of Outdoor Education in schools and in the outdoor sector.

Teaching is informed by the teaching team's research and consultancy, and 50 percent of course lecturers have a higher education teaching qualification or are Fellows of the Higher Education Academy. You can learn more about the staff by visiting our [staff profiles](#).

Assessment

The MA in Outdoor Education provides opportunities to test your understanding and learning informally through the completion of practice or 'formative' assignments, as well as through formal or 'summative' assignments. Summative assignments are graded and count towards your overall module grade. There are 2 summative assignments per module, typically for submission in February and May. Each module has one or more formative assignments that can be submitted at various points through the year.

Assessment methods include: Career profile, Negotiated learning contract, Work-based project reports, Reflective reports, Poster design, Research proposal, Dissertation

Students can select between 1 and 4 modules per year. Thus, the precise assessment requirements for an individual student in an academic year will vary according to the number of modules taken. A typical summative assessment pattern for each year of the course is: 2 summative assignments per module, typically for submission in February and May. In the final year, the dissertation submission (MAOE4110) is typically in September.

Feedback

You will receive feedback on practice assessments and on formal assessments undertaken by coursework. Feedback on examination performance is available upon request from the module leader. Feedback is intended to support learning and you are encouraged to discuss it with personal academic tutors and module tutors as appropriate.

We aim to provide you with feedback on formal course work assessments within 20 working days of the submission deadline.

14. **Assessment strategy**

On completion of the MA in Outdoor Education, students will have demonstrated competency in a range of skills relating to knowledge and understanding, cognitive and intellectual skills and key skills. Given the wide variety of modes of presentation required by employers today, the course aims to assess student abilities and skills in as wide a range of these modes as possible whilst ensuring coherence with the module intended learning outcomes. As such, students are required to submit assessments including projects, reflections, research proposals, case studies, data handling assignments and research findings through to the Dissertation. In addition, opportunities exist for students to undertake an interdisciplinary approach to their work and ensure a holistic analysis of the subject area being studied

As many students will have been outside of formal education for a period of time, the course has structured opportunities for assessment that does not contribute to the overall grade. Formal opportunities for formative assessment are provided in all modules. These include interim reports for project modules and drafts for reflective modules.

The course is in line with the School Strategy for Assessment where all learning outcomes are assessed through a maximum of two assessment items for any module. A range of assessment modes is ensured through the course team meetings together with External Examiner input. The appropriateness of assessment design and the alignment of assessment to learning outcomes are ensured through validation, external examiner monitoring and minor modifications at the IQC. Each assessment task has published specific marking criteria contained in the module outline given to students at the beginning of the module, these are adapted from the [Masters Level Generic Grading Criteria](#)

15. **Programme structures and requirements**

The course is only available in part-time mode, meaning completion is normally achieved within 2-3 years. The programme requires students to complete 180 credits (90 ECTS) at Level 7 for the MA, 120 credits (60 ECTS) at Level 7 for the PG Diploma and 60 credits (30 ECTS) at Level 7 for the PG Certificate. Each module is worth 15 credit points (7.5 ECTS), apart from Extended Work based Project C (MAOE4105) which is worth 30 credits (15 ELTS) and the Dissertation module (MAOE4110) which is worth 60 credits (30 ELTS). The Dissertation module is the final module to be completed by students on the full MA programme and draws on skills developed in Research Methods (MAOE4167). MAOE4103, MAOE4104 and MAOE4105 are work based project modules that can be based on projects in separate study areas or one module can be used to extend an existing study. It is recommended that students discuss their options with the course leader when deciding on the combination of modules studied in each year.

Students wishing to submit a claim for Leading Practitioner of Institute for Outdoor Learning (LPIOL) or other professional awards can map the requirements of those awards in MAOE4101, and may choose to identify projects and approaches that support achievement of those awards.

Delivery

Personal development modules (MAOE4101 and MAOE4106) are mainly supported by tutorials and distance learning. Theoretical Approaches to Outdoor Education (MAOE4102) is studied as a structured sequence of teaching resources and tasks. Research Methods (MAOE4167) is either studied at distance or by evening classes throughout the autumn semester. The Project modules (MAOE4103, MAOE4104 and MAOE4015) and Dissertation module (MAOE4110) do not normally have programmed sessions and are supported by tutorials, distance learning and action learning sets.

Module Code	Module Title	Status Mandatory (M) or Optional (O)			
		Credits (Number)	PG Cert	PG Dip	MA
MAOE4101	Professional Development Profiling	15	M	M	M
MAOE4167	Research Methods	15	O	M	M
MAOE4102	Theoretical approaches to Outdoor Education	15	O	M	M
MAOE4103	Work Based Project A	15	O	M	M
MAOE4104	Work Based Project B	15	O	M	M
MAOE4105	Extended Work Based Project C	30	O	M	M
MAOE4106	Reflecting on Practice and Research	15	X	M	M
MAOE4110	Dissertation	60	X	X	M
Total Credits		180			
PG Certificate To be awarded the PG Cert in Outdoor Education students must successfully complete 60 credits at Level 7 which must include: MAOE4101.					
PG Diploma To be awarded the PG Dip in Outdoor Education students must successfully complete the PG Certificate and gain a total of 120 credits at Level 7.					
Masters (MA/MSc/MBA) To be awarded the Masters, students must complete a total of 180 credits at Level 7 including 60 credits from the dissertation.					

All modules marked above as M are mandatory.

16. QAA and professional academic standards and quality

Benchmark Statements

There are currently no benchmark statements for outdoor education related Masters courses.

The Framework for HE Qualifications

The Framework for HE Qualifications

The course has been developed with reference to the QAA FHEQ (Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, August 2008) **ensuring that the qualification represents appropriately the level of achievement required for Masters courses.** A full copy of the above document can be found by visiting the QAA website: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/>

This award is located at level 7 of the FHEQ

The course takes into account the [QAA Master's Degree Characteristics Statement](#) that specifies the key characteristics in relation to purpose, content, structure and delivery, teaching, learning and assessment methods and relationship to further study or employment for Master's Degree programmes.

The course has responded to the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) by the setting and maintaining threshold academic standards through national benchmarking, rigorous approval and review processes, through externality of assessment and through the assessment of achievement of learning outcomes. The assurance and enhancement of academic quality within the course is ensured through clear programme design in line with the UW professional practice framework, clearly articulated criteria for admission, appropriate approaches to learning, teaching and the assessment of learning, appropriate student support and learning resources, and the incorporation of claims for APEL / APL within the course documentation. Information about the course is provided by the development of a student handbook which responds to each of the precepts in the code. Information is also provided on the course page of the [UW website](#) and is available to students through SOLE.

Management of Work-based Learning

The management of work-based learning is based on the [UW Policy](#) on the Management of Work-based and Placement Learning.

All project modules are considered as work-based modules. The responsibility for assuring the management, approval and monitoring of the work-based learning lies with a named individual within the School. The work-based learning handbook contains information for students and significant stakeholders on all aspects of placement processes and procedures in line with the UW policy.

Whilst work-based learning is usually located within the student's existing workplace, the quality of the workplace for work-based learning will be assured at interview, in MAOE 4101 and students will need to address this in the work based proposals for each project module and Dissertation module. The standards of student achievement will be assured by appropriately qualified external examiners.

Risk-management principles form an important part of the approval and supervision of work-based projects and include: clarification of roles, risk assessment, contingency planning and evaluation and monitoring.

17. Support for students

The following guidance and support structure is in place for students participating in this course:

- **Outdoor Education** students experience a wide variety of support for their learning e.g. seminar group work, tutorials, pre-module learning activities,
- Personal Academic Tutor support and the use of e-learning and access to computer and internet facilities e.g. Blackboard.
- One day induction course.
- Course Handbook (published on an annual basis).
- All students have a personal academic tutor who guides the process of Personal Development Planning (PDP) and offers general support.
- Library induction and information skills packages.
- The Information Learning Service also provides training.
- Study skills provided within the subject and separately by the [Disability & Dyslexia Service](#)
- Students supported by Information learning Services (Library, IT, Media and Print) and subject specific support from Sports Academic Liaison Librarian
- The University's [Student services](#) provides training opportunities for career planning.
- The Language Centre provides English Language courses for International

Personal Academic Tutor System

Each student will be allocated a Personal Academic Tutor (from within the Course Team wherever possible). Students will be given an opportunity to meet with their Personal Academic Tutor during the induction sessions. The intention behind the system is that the student and tutor will develop a close working relationship, so a clear picture of the student's progress is developed throughout the course. The Personal Academic Tutor will be able to offer both academic and pastoral advice and should be the main contact throughout the course.

The Personal Academic Tutor will encourage the student to take responsibility for their own personal and professional development planning. Structured face-to-face and on-line support typically covers the following:

- Awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses;
- A clear vision of what the student wants to achieve through HE study;
- Greater understanding of how study in the discipline area at the University can help towards student goals;
- Responsibility for personal choices in modules, work and social life;
- A reflective approach to all the feedback received on work;
- A sense and a record of progression and achievement in the development of subject and generic skills and attributes (qualities);
- An ability to use this greater awareness to articulate the benefits of the HE experience to others including employers.

The Personal Academic Tutor will also:

- Respond to the student's requests for support and help with problems which affect academic work either at subject level or by referral to other University support services;
- Provide information for and assist in the drafting of the University reference.

18. Admissions

Admissions policy

The University aims to be accessible. It is committed to widening participation and encouraging diversity in the student population. The School of Sport and Exercise Science works closely with central student support services including the Admissions Office and the [Disability & Dyslexia Service](#) to support students from a variety of different backgrounds. We actively encourage and welcome people from the widest range of economic and cultural backgrounds and value the contribution of mature learners.

Please contact the Registry Admissions Office for further information or guidance 01905 855111

Our policy is to offer a place to any student that we deem to be capable of success and who is likely to substantially benefit from the programme. We support the University's mission statement of *increasing access, widening participation and assisting students to achieve their potential*.

Entry requirements

This course is based around professional practice in outdoor education and is only open to applicants who are engaged in outdoor education and have the opportunity and relevant permission to conduct research in the work place.

Students must normally have a 2:1 classification in a related degree. Students who hold a related degree with a classification of either 2:2 (or below), or an unrelated degree will be considered on a case by case basis and may be required to submit a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate outdoor education experience.

Students for whom English is not their first language are required to provide evidence of

competency in English. They should be able to show evidence of a IELTS score of 6.5 or higher, or equivalent.

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

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) requirements

Enhanced disclosure is not required for the course. However it is possible that work based projects (MAOE4103, MAOE4104, MAOE4105 and MAOE4110) may require an enhanced disclosure if the project requires this. In these cases, the tutor will make the provision of an acceptable DBS a condition of the approval of a project proposal and ethics form.

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

Applicants must contact the Registry Admissions Office (01905 855111) and complete an application form. Students who meet the entry requirements for the course will then be invited for interview either in person or by Skype. Applicants who do not meet the entry requirements should contact the Registry Admissions Office (01905 855111) or the Course Leader for advice and may be asked to support their application with details of their age, any work undertaken, including caring or organised voluntary work, and any other relevant experience.

Details of post-graduate information events are available on the university website www.worcester.ac.uk.

Admissions/selection criteria

All applicants for this course will be interviewed, and admission to the course will be based on the selection criteria. As student numbers are limited on this course, entry may be delayed until there is space on the course. Applicants who fulfil the entry requirements will be selected on their ability to demonstrate through their application and at interview knowledge, skills and experience in the following areas:

- active and current professional involvement in outdoor education;
- academic interest in the theory and practice of outdoor education;
- study skills including independent and team working

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

The School operates a robust, organic and on-going system of quality management and enhancement that involves the following elements:

- The course leader will be appointed from within the School of Sport & Exercise Science
- Annual Evaluation Report
- External Examiner reports.
- Each module provides opportunities for student evaluation (mid module and end of module)
- Course Management Committee considers student feedback.
- School staff and student consultative committee considers generic student issues.

- University Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee and the Academic Development and Practice Unit promote learning and teaching across the institution.
- Board of Examiners Moderation Group – Post module investigation (selected modules).
- Peer review of teaching by staff.
- A teacher accreditation course (Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education) for new staff accredited by HEA and SEDA.
- School of Sport & Exercise Science Learning Advisory Group.
- New Staff mentoring system.
- New staff observed by Head of School.
- Peer observation
- Academic Tutor Feedback

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.

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.
- 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 Outdoor Education	Passed a minimum of 60 credits at level 7, as specified on the award map
PG Dip Outdoor Education	Passed a minimum of 120 credits at level 7, as specified on the award map

Masters (MA) Outdoor Education	Passed a minimum of 180 credits at level 7, as specified on the award map
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PG Cert and PG Dip awards are unclassified. The awards of Masters may be made with Pass, Merit or Distinction.

21. Indicators of quality and standards

The School of Sport and Exercise Science runs a range of courses at Masters level and has a well-developed and inclusive culture of post-graduate study. The School also has significant engagement with the needs of employers through its Sports Employers Advice Panel (outdoor education) and through links to the professional body (IOL), national governing bodies (BCU, BMC) and industry groups.

The following quality management and enhancement mechanisms are indicative of the School's commitment to the maintenance of high standards:

- Internal Annual Course Evaluation reports
- Annual External Examiners reports
- Annual Placement Audit
- Periodic Review
- QAA Code of Practice
- HEFCE performance indicators, especially with respect to completion and achievement
- Staff research in work based learning and outdoor learning

In recent years the course receives feedback on each modules as well as course level feedback from students on completion. This has shown that students have particularly enjoyed the work based projects and the chance to develop new skills and knowledge that are closely related to their academic and professional interests. Projects and independent studies have been accepted for publication in journals or presented at practitioner and academic conferences.

Although most students study at distance, they are supported by a high quality teaching team, with all staff having significant applied and academic experience. The standards of support is evidenced in highly positive reports from our external examiner on both the quality of student work and rigour and depth of feedback received from staff. The course is well supported by electronic resources and multimedia resources and this support the research interests of student-practitioners, particularly those with extensive industry experience.

Completion of the course puts students in an excellent position to further their careers in schools or the outdoor sector, or to transition into new areas including college / university teaching.

22. Graduate destinations, employability and links with employers

Upon successful completion of the Masters Programme, there may be opportunities for students to gain further employment, promotion within their own organisation, gain international employment or move to a senior management position in other organisations. The Masters also provides a platform to other research/higher degrees and promotion in other professional organisations. The completion of the Masters may also provide students with the ability to enhance their current working practices. Completion of this Masters degree also enables interested students to pursue higher level research qualifications.

The MA provides professional development for existing practitioners as well as a career bridge for those wishing to move into Outdoor Education. Posts currently requiring MA include: lecturers, research posts, some management posts and high-end facilitators.

Posts for which an MA is a significant asset include: all management and senior posts; outdoor facility managers, teachers and youth workers, expedition leaders, facilitators, field study tutors, outdoor therapists, development officers and offsite advisers.

In addition the MA provides professional development for practitioners who wish to develop a greater understanding of the sector in order to develop their own professional practice. This addresses a significant issue within many outdoor companies where senior staff are promoted because of their abilities, but may lack the underpinning theory or experience of a range of providers. With the continued professionalization of the outdoor sector it seems likely that effective managers will need the knowledge base and higher level skills necessary for strategic decision making.

Modules within the Masters Programme have been written by academics currently members of and engaged with an array of professional bodies and employers within their pathway disciplines including the Institute for Outdoor Learning and the British Association of Sport & Exercise Sciences. A wide range of employers were consulted with and provided support and advice for the structure and content of the course, and its relationship to existing professional practice and employability.

Graduate destinations

Students undertake this course for a variety of reasons and these are reflected in their career trajectories during the course and after the graduation. Current students use their engagement in the MA in Outdoor Education to support applications for promotion or for moves between employers. Recent graduates have used their MA in Outdoor Education to seek higher education teaching posts and to support the development of new areas of work.

Student employability

The reflective elements of the course encourage learners to evaluate their own experience, skills, knowledge and employability. In addition the work based projects and independent study allows students to develop enhanced skills and knowledge in specialist area, and to challenge current practice. Enhanced skills and knowledge should support increased professionalism.

Links with employers

The course structure and content is reviewed annually by an outdoor education employer panel that provides advice to the course team. In addition many of the students on this programme are employers or high level practitioners and the course benefits from their feedback and advice. The University of Worcester is an institutional member of the Institute for Outdoor Learning.

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.