

## Part one : Programme Specification

### Course record information

Name and level of final award:	MA Higher Education The MA in Higher Education degree is a postgraduate award that is Bologna FQ-EHEA first cycle degree or diploma compatible.
Name and level of intermediate awards:	Postgraduate Diploma Higher Education Postgraduate Certificate Higher Education (can also be taken as an exit award) Postgraduate Certificate of Special Study in Supporting Learning (can also be taken as an exit award)
Awarding body/institution:	University of Westminster
Status of awarding body/institution:	Recognised Body
Location of delivery:	Distance learning
Language of delivery and assessment:	English
Course/programme leader:	Dr Steven Cranfield
Course URL:	<a href="http://www.westminster.ac.uk/courses/subjects/education/postgraduate-courses">http://www.westminster.ac.uk/courses/subjects/education/postgraduate-courses</a>
Mode and length of study:	Part-time (length depends on exit award and pace of study).
University of Westminster course code:	PPGHEDU
JACS code:	X412
UK PASS code:	P052199(A)(DL) – internal, P052200(I)(DL) – external
QAA subject benchmarking group:	No benchmark for postgraduate education
Professional body accreditation:	Higher Education Academy
Date of course validation/review:	1999/2011
Date of programme specification:	2014/15

## **Admissions Requirements**

Applicants to the course will be either University of Westminster (UoW) staff with responsibility for teaching and/or supporting students learning, or external applicants who can demonstrate that they hold the necessary entry qualifications. This is a work-based course and applicants for the MA/Dip/Pg Cert HE or its modules must be engaged in teaching on HE level courses. Learning support applicants aiming to exit with a Pg Cert Special Study in Supporting Learning will normally be required to have a minimum of 15 hours contact/supporting learning. The Course Leader or nominee will make the decision regarding the suitability of the applicant's teaching practice in relation to appropriate routes through the course.

Applicants will normally hold an honours degree from a UK university or an international equivalent. Newly appointed teaching staff at UoW on a 0.5 or above post will be required to take the PgCert HE stage of the course if they have less than two years' experience of teaching in HE.

Experienced staff will be able to apply to join the course with accredited prior learning (APL). Applicants seeking assessment of prior experiential learning (APEL) will be guided through the portfolio assessment process by the Course Leader or nominee. APEL is a formal assessment process and credits are approved through the University's APEL Board. There is a fee for the process of APEL guidance and assessment. Applications for credit transfer from relevant prior study is undertaken via a standard form available from the University website and approved by the Course Leader in consultation with the relevant module leader(s). There is no fee for credit transfer on basis of prior study. Applicants may normally be awarded prior learning credits for up to 50% of the total credits for an award. There is an exception for the PgCert HE where prior learning credit can be awarded for 2/3rds of the award. Credit cannot be awarded for partial modules.

## **Aims of the Course**

The MA in HE provides a variety of accredited professional development awards. If you are:

- a new or experienced academic, or in a learning and teaching support role such as a librarian, technician or graduate teaching assistant you can take individual modules either as short courses or take a Pg Cert Special Study Supporting Learning. With appropriate teaching experience you can continue to accrue module credits towards a Pg Cert HE, Pg Dip HE or MA HE award.
- a senior professional seeking a Doctorate in Professional Studies. The MA HE forms the taught level 7 stage of our DProf programme and a route to the doctoral level 8 award.<sup>1</sup>
- an experienced professional, you can plan a route through the course using your relevant prior experience and study for prior learning accreditation thus reducing the time spent on your studies and accelerating your progression to your chosen award.

<sup>1</sup> The Doctorate in Professional Studies programme is not accepting new applications 2014-15.

The course is designed to provide multiple, flexible opportunities for accredited Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and makes use of the Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) in order to recognise and accredit relevant prior professional practice. As such it provides a range of opportunities to explore the wider HE context and access to a variety of analytical frameworks; the learning and teaching research evidence base; current developments in learning and teaching practice and opportunities to develop responses that are appropriate to your own context. Below are two examples of opportunities.

- The module, WEXE 701 Supporting Learning is designed both for staff for whom teaching is their main role and who will take this module as part of a PgCert HE/MA HE programme but also as a stand-alone course for staff who are proactively supporting learning (e.g. part-time visiting lecturers, librarians, technical support staff, PhD students and work placement staff). Taken in this stand-alone CPD mode, this module would carry the award of Pg Cert Special Study in Supporting Learning with Higher Education Academy (standard 1; Associate) accreditation.
- The module WEXE 706 Supervising Student Research provides a specific CPD focus for staff supporting student research and it is UoW policy that members of academic staff who pass this module are deemed to have completed one successful supervision at doctoral level (for the purposes of assembling doctoral supervision teams, there must be at least one 'actual' completion represented on the team).

Thus the MA HE provides a ladder of progression from the Pg Cert Special Study to a professional doctorate. Candidates successfully completing the 180 credits of the MA HE level study will be able to apply to progress directly on to the level 8 stage of the Doctorate in Professional Studies (negotiated education related title).

### **Aims of the PgCert HE Stage**

The aim of the PgCert HE stage of the course is to provide appropriate forms of professional development to support staff engaged in teaching/supporting learning. This includes support for immediate teaching practice and related concerns, exchanging advice and guidance and the opportunity to share experiences with peers. The Pg Certificate stage will provide the opportunity to reflect on different models of practice in teaching and assessment and to:

- engage participants with the educational literature and encourage a scholarly approach to their practice;
- provide means by which professional approaches to supporting learning in the subject can be fostered through creativity, innovation and continuous development;
- enhance the quality of the participants' students learning experience through sharing good practice principles and expertise;
- promote e-learning technologies and an experience of flexible delivery;
- locate the course within wider networking communities of practice;
- enable participants to demonstrate their professionalism; and
- facilitate a variety of professional development opportunities.

### **Aims of the MA HE Stage**

The aim of the MA HE stage of the course is to progress from a critical and reflexive practitioner to an advanced scholarly practitioner with a deeper and broader view of the HE learning and teaching process. Participants will engage in educational research through the dissertation and have opportunities to specialise in aspects of practice through the optional modules. As such the MA HE stage of the course will:

- support engagement with pedagogic issues in specific disciplines through curriculum design and assessment;
- prepare participants for the effective and responsible conduct of research into educational issues and practices;
- enable participants to undertake a significant piece of educational research;
- provide opportunities to engage in further CPD opportunities;
- enable a direct progression route to Doctoral level study with credit; and
- promote external recognition of scholarship and research.

### **Employment and Further Study Opportunities**

The MA HE provides a variety of accredited professional development opportunities for a rapidly changing HE environment with different levels of accreditation to support on-going employment and study opportunities. Higher Education Academy professional recognition along with a Pg Cert HE is increasingly a requirement of employment for HE practitioners and the requisite HEA standards for Fellowship of the Academy are embedded within the award in specific modules that form part of a Pg Cert HE.

The Pg Cert. Special Study in Supporting Learning (Pg Cert SSSL) is designed to be appropriate for both full-time academics and staff for whom teaching is not their substantive role but who are proactively supporting learning (e.g. part-time visiting lecturers, librarians, technical support staff, PhD students, work placement staff). The Pg Cert Special Study in Supporting Learning is accredited at standard 1 by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) for Associate Fellowship status. Participants with a Pg Cert SSSL and appropriate teaching practice can progress to a full Pg Cert/Master's by taking further modules.

For HE practitioners seeking to take a lead in teaching and learning/educational development activities, the progression to the MA provides an opportunity for a more sustained inquiry into practice and/or research. Progression to the Professional Doctorate (negotiated education related title) recognises and develops individual educational professionalism at the highest academic level thus enhancing and opening up new career development opportunities.

The MA HE option modules enable participants to focus on specialist aspects of practice such as supervising student research, managing online learning, using e-learning technologies and developing HE curricula. The CPD (negotiated study) option module provides opportunities to accredit an individual's unique professional expertise and/or practice-based projects.

HEA accreditation is currently being sought for successful completion of the module Learning in an Academic Context as a means of conferring recognition of Senior Fellowship of the HEA (SFHEA).

The course provides opportunities to showcase participants work through presentations at the UoW Annual Learning and Teaching Symposium and the events of the Higher Education Research Centre (HERC).

## Course Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements on what successful students have achieved as the result of learning. The following are threshold statements of achievement—linked to knowledge and understanding, specific skills, and key transferable skills—that a student will have gained on successfully completing a course.

### ◆ Knowledge and Understanding

#### Pg Cert HE

*On completion of the course you will be able to ...*

- Provide an underpinning rationale for your approach to teaching/ supporting learning informed by educational literature and current best practice.
- Demonstrate an awareness of the impact of the broader external and institutional context on the student experience and curriculum development.
- Critically evaluate your own professional practice in learning and teaching.
- Articulate learning and teaching practice within your discipline in a scholarly manner.
- Appraise the implications of quality assurance and enhancement for professional practice.

*Dip/MA HE participants additionally will be able to...*

- Demonstrate a critical awareness of contemporary theories in learning and teaching.
- Develop a critical understanding of learning and teaching and improving professional practice.

### ◆ Specific Skills

#### Pg Cert HE

*On completion of the course you will be able to ...*

- Design and develop teaching and assessment strategies (on the basis of critical review and evaluation).
- Promote student learning through assessment and feedback.
- Critically reflect on your own professional practice in supporting learning.

- Evaluate learning materials and processes with reference to current research and developments in the subject/field.
- Support student learning in a variety of contexts using e-learning tools.

**Dip/MA HE** *participants additionally will be able to ...*

- Plan and execute a significant research project related to your own professional practice
- Exhibit a high degree of critical reflection on the interrelationship between theory, subject discipline and professional practice.

#### ◆ **Key Transferable Skills**

##### **Pg Cert HE**

*On completion of the course you will be able to ...*

- Communicate appropriately in the professional context.
- Manage and organise projects and activities.
- Work as part of a team.
- Plan on-going professional development.
- Utilise e-technologies to support learning and teaching.

**Dip/MA HE** *participants additionally will be able to ...*

- Act as a catalyst for learning, teaching and quality enhancement in your own professional area.

#### **Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods**

##### **Learning**

All modules build on participants' current practice and use the resources of the peer group to maximise personal development and to share learning across diverse domains. The course draws extensively on models of critical reflection as a means of interrogating and theorising professional practice. This may take the form of learning through inquiry into individual practice, research, reflection, collaborative learning, and the modelling of the student experience as a vehicle for reflection.

##### **Teaching**

Teaching will be in the form of online learning approaches, mentoring, coaching and facilitation through reflective practice and research projects with structured independent learning. The course will have a fully online delivery mode that will be 'flexible' to accommodate participants' varying professional commitments. Teaching strategies are underpinned by three guiding principles—a collegial relationship between the teaching team and participants, a recognition of the range of participants' experience in HE and a conceptualisation of the course as a vehicle for modelling principles of best practice teaching and facilitating learning in HE.

##### **Assessment**

Assessments take a variety of formats and include practice based project work, written coursework, e-assessments and reflective tasks aimed at enhancing

professional competence and confidence. The course has adopted principles of good practice in assessment<sup>†</sup> that designs assessment that:

- is rich in informal feedback (e.g. peer review of draft writing, collaborative project work);
- emphasises authentic and complex assessment tasks;
- offers extensive 'low stakes' confidence building opportunities and practice;
- develops participants' abilities to evaluate their own progress and direct their own learning;
- uses high stakes summative assessment rigorously but sparingly; and
- is rich in formal feedback (e.g. tutor comment, self-review blogs).

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<sup>†</sup> See Northumbria Centre for Excellence in Teaching & Learning in Assessment

## Course structure

This section shows the core and option modules available as part of the course and their credit value. Full-time Postgraduate students study 180 credits per year.

Credit Level 7				
Module code	Module title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
WEXE 701	Supporting Learning	Core HEA accredited	20	10
WEXE 702	Curriculum Development, Assessment and Feedback	HEA accredited	20	10
	<i>One from option list below:</i>			
WEXE 704	Blended Learning: Engaging Students and Transforming Curricula	Option	20	10
WEXE 705	Digital and Mobile Learning	Option	20	10
WEXE 706	Supervising Student Research	Option	20	10
WAPP 707	Negotiated Learning	Option	20	10
WEXE 715	Leadership in an Academic Context	Option	20	10
Award of Postgraduate Certificate available				
Module code	Module title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
WEXE 723	Developing Educational Research Practices	Core for MAHE	40	20
	<i>One module from option list below:</i>			
WEXE 704	Blended Learning: Engaging Students and Transforming Curricula	Option	20	10
WEXE 705	Using Technology to Enhance Learning	Option	20	10
WEXE 706	Supervising Student Research	Option	20	10
WAPP 707	Negotiated Learning	Option	20	10
WEXE 715	Leadership in an Academic Context	Option <sup>2</sup>	20	10
Award of Postgraduate Diploma available				
Module code	Module title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
WEXE 751	Dissertation	Core for MAHE	60	30
Award of MA available				

Please note: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year.

<sup>2</sup> Seeking HEA accreditation



## Academic regulations

The MA Higher Education and its intermediate awards operate in accordance with the University's Academic Regulations and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland published by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) in 2008.

All students should make sure that they access a copy of the current edition of the general University handbook called Essential Westminster, which is available at [www.westminster.ac.uk/essential-westminster](http://www.westminster.ac.uk/essential-westminster). The following regulations should be read in conjunction with Section 18: Modular Framework for Postgraduate Courses and relevant sections of the current Handbook of Academic Regulations, which is available at [www.westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations](http://www.westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations).

### MA in Higher Education

To be eligible for the award of Master's degree, a student must have:

- a) passed modules worth at least 180 credits at Level 7
- b) attempted (see definitions in Appendix 2) modules worth no more than 240 credits (under this regulation a first attempt of any module will count as an attempt, and a reattempt of any module that a student has failed will count as a further, separate attempt. Reassessment (referral) following failure at the first attempt will not count as a further separate attempt; and passed:
- c) WEXE 701 Supporting Learning  
WEXE 723 Developing Educational Research Practices  
WEXE 751 Dissertation

The University may award a Master's degree with Merit to a student where an average of at least 60% has been achieved in modules at Level 7.

The University may award a Master's degree with Distinction to a student where an average of at least 70% has been achieved in modules at Level 7.

### Intermediate Awards

Students who are unable or do not wish to complete the MA Higher Education may be eligible to claim an intermediate award as described below. If a student plans (for whatever reason) to leave the course they are registered for and so wants to claim an intermediate award, they must notify the WBS Faculty Registry Office in writing. The University will then confer any intermediate award for which they are eligible at the next available opportunity. A student shall not normally be allowed to claim more than one award within the same postgraduate route/course.

### Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education

To be eligible for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma, a student must have:

- passed a minimum of 120 credits at Level 7; and
- passed WEXE 701 Supporting Learning.

The University may award:

- a) a **Postgraduate Diploma with Merit** to a student whose marks average at least 60% across the modules contributing to the award, where the Diploma is the **target award** rather than an