

Programme Specification

1	Awarding institution/body	University of Worcester
2	Teaching institution	ChildVision, National Education Centre for Blind Children, Dublin & Royal National College for the Blind, Hereford
3	Programme accredited by	n/a
4	Final award	Certificate in Higher Education University of Worcester Certificates (L4): “Orientation and Mobility” “Assistive Technology” “Alternative Formats”. “Multiple Disability / Visual Impairment (MDVI)”
5	Programme title	Certificate in Higher Education: Working with People with a Visual Impairment
6	Pathways available	n/a
7	Mode and/or site of delivery	ChildVision, Dublin & Royal National College, Hereford
8	Mode of attendance	Part Time using a range of attendance modes
9	UCAS Code	n/a
10	Subject Benchmark statement and/or professional body statement	Education Studies QAA Code of Practice. Reference is made in particular to Section 2 (collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning).
11	Date of Programme Specification preparation/revision	February 2011; Updated to latest template January 2014; August and October 2014 – amendment to regulations.

12 Educational aims of the programme

The course is designed to enhance the skills, knowledge and insights of students who either work with people with a visual impairment or have a general interest in the field. It is an introductory award and as such makes no assumptions about prior knowledge or experience of visual impairment.

The award is taught in tandem on two partner institution sites, namely, ChildVision, Dublin and Royal National College, Hereford. Planning the award was a collaborative enterprise involving meetings at both Centres, culminating with a training day held at Birmingham airport where tutors from both settings were able to meet and work on issues such as marking and moderation.

Subsequently, regular joint staff development sessions have been held at Hereford and Dublin involving tutors from both locations. These have focused on moderation and the implementation of new University procedures. Members of staff from the University of Worcester have provided inputs for specific issues such as ‘Blackboard’.

A distinctive feature of the award is that two of the modules will be taught to both groups on the same location/date: ‘MDVI’ at Dublin and ‘Assistive Technology’ in

Hereford. The course provides the opportunity for students to view different facilities and practice. Both modules are taught on block periods during extended weekends.

Aims:

- to provide an innovative and professionally relevant series of learning opportunities relating to different aspects associated with working with people with a visual impairment;
- to develop a range of academic writing and study skills;
- through a range of different and creative assessment strategies, to enable students to articulate their knowledge and insights and demonstrate skill derived from the different modules;
- to offer a programme of study that is accessible to all and takes account of different learning styles;
- to highlight the importance of working in a ethically sensitive manner with people with a visual impairment;
- to provide opportunities for wider learning which builds on best practice in the specific fields of orientation and mobility, independent living, assistive technology, alternative formats and MDVI that can, where relevant, be translated into practice in different contexts;
- to enable students to have access to an inclusive learning opportunity which will facilitate the needs of a diversity of students, including those with a visual impairment.

13 Intended learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment methods

<p>Knowledge and understanding: <i>'On successful completion of the course, students will be able to':</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate an ability to apply a rigorous approach to the acquisition of new knowledge that will benefit a range of visually impaired people including those with additional disabilities in respect of support and intervention strategies; • effectively communicate the benefits of using assistive technology and alternative formats for people with a visual impairment and demonstrate an introductory level of competence in using some of these mediums. 	<p>Examples of learning, teaching and assessment methods used:</p> <p>Undertaken relevant reading; making individual and group presentations; listening and reflecting upon the experiences of visiting speakers with a range of visual impairments; undertaking simulated practical tasks as a strategy to experience blindness.</p> <p>Where students are 'practitioners', to make links between theory and their practice and reflect upon these episodes.</p>
<p>Cognitive and intellectual skills: <i>'On successful completion of the course, students will be able to':</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate an understanding of ethical principles as they apply to working with 	<p>Examples of learning, teaching and assessment methods used:</p> <p>Read relevant ethical guidelines (e.g. BERA) and through discussion, apply them</p>

<p>vulnerable people;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> plan and undertake research which might involve the interpretation of qualitative and quantitative data, make recommendations and sound judgements as to how, where relevant, such outcomes can be applied to practice 	<p>to work with visually impaired people in different contexts (e.g. ethical implications of guiding a blind person).</p> <p>Collect data to illuminate some aspect of a visually impaired person(s), analyse and interpret the data in respect of its significance to that person's functioning within wider society. OR Undertake an extensive and critical literature review on some aspect of visual impairment.</p>
<p>Practical skills relevant to employment: 'On successful completion of the course, students will be able to':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reflect upon a range of specialised personal and practical skills associated with orientation and mobility and independent living and evaluate different approaches used within these fields. 	<p>Examples of learning, teaching and assessment methods used:</p> <p>Using visiting experts such as low vision technician or speakers with a visual impairment to talk about their experiences; watching video footage and discussing different practice; taking part in simulated tasks to experience the sensations of sight loss; undertaking site audits to ascertain mobility hazards.</p>
<p>Transferable/key skills: 'On successful completion of the course, students will be able to':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop qualities and transferable skills that can be applied across the Certificate programme and in wider fields of work; communicate the outcomes of academic enquiry using a range of media; demonstrate a range of academic writing and study skills that are consistent with first year undergraduate study. 	<p>Examples of learning, teaching and assessment methods used:</p> <p>Undertaking structured tasks relating to academic writing with emphasis on analysis, evaluation and reflection and demonstrating a critical appreciation of literature derived from multiple sources (books, journals, internet). Applying UW writing conventions to all assessment items.</p> <p>The use of individual and group oral presentations on study skills (e.g. making a power point) and module-specific issues (e.g. self-advocacy).</p> <p>The use of library searches and the exploration of on-line data bases to support assignments using the Centres' library resources.</p> <p>Assessments have different formats (e.g. essays, reflective journals, research project).</p>

14 Assessment Strategy

The assessment strategies are designed to enable students to demonstrate their achievement of the course aims and learning outcomes. A variety of methods of assessment, both formative and summative, are used to enable students to demonstrate a range of skills required in higher education. These include:

- Essay
- Assignment plan (formative)
- Developing an information pamphlet
- Critique of literature (formative)
- Individual and group seminars/presentations
- Reflective journal (pass/fail)
- Audit of a learning environment
- Constructing a tactile diagram (pass/fail)
- Practitioner research project

All assessment items are marked using Subject Assessment Criteria at Level 4 and Generic Undergraduate Grade Descriptors.

15 Programme structures and requirements

Certificate in HE: Working with People with a Visual Impairment
Level FHEQ C [4]: NFQ [6] Ireland

Table 1 Modules/codes/credit

Module Code	Module Title	Module Credit
UCPD1002	Introduction to Study Skills	15
UCVI1001	Nature and Causes of Visual Impairment	15
UCVI1002	Orientation and Mobility	15
UCVI1003	Multiple Disability/Visual Impairment	15
UCVI1004	Alternative Formats	15
UCVI1005	Independent Living	15
UCVI1006	Assistive Technology	15
UCPD1005	Independent Study	15

Indicative structure of the Certificate in HE

The certificate will be taught during six teaching blocks over six terms.

One module will be taught in five 'teaching blocks'. These could be one module per term over two years (table 2.1) or the use of two extended weekends coinciding with vacation periods, meaning that the certificate could be completed in four terms (table 2.2). Indicative pathways are shown below.

Table 2.1

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5
UCPD1002	UCVI1002	UCVI1004	UCVI1006	UCPD1005
UCVI1001	UCVI1003	UCVI1005	UCVI1007	

OR

Table 2.2

Autumn Term	Spring Term	Easter Extended Weekend	Summer Term	Summer Extended Weekend	Autumn Term
UCPD1002 UCVI1001	UCVI1002	UCVI1003	UCVI1004	UCVI1006	UCVI1006 UCPD1005

The arrangement of modules when using the extended weekend is planned to coincide with the availability of overnight accommodation facilities at RNC and ChildVision.

Within the structure of the Certificate in HE, students are able to complete a 30 credit University of Worcester Certificate (L4) by successfully completing two of the validated modules, one of which must be a VI-specific module from the following list:

Nature and Cause of Visual Impairment UCVI1001
Orientation and Mobility UCVI1002
Multiple Disability/Visual Impairment (MDVI) UCVI1003
Alternative Formats UCVI1004
Assistive Technology UCVI1006

16 QAA and Professional Academic Standards and Quality

This award sits within the URF and within the benchmarks provided by the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (QAA, 2001). Due consideration will be accorded to Section 2 (collaborative provision and flexible distributed learning). The Certificate in HE and associated University of Worcester Certificates are also informed by the Education Studies benchmark statements.

17 Support for students

Induction

Induction will occur both at a general course level (course induction) with the Course Leader and Assistant Course Leader, with individual modules (module induction) and before commencement of the independent study.

Course Induction will cover the following elements:

- meetings with key staff;
- libraries, including membership and a tour of facilities;
- internet induction;
- identification of special needs support requirements;
- course handbooks, UW regulations and expectations;
- assignment schedules, common skills and assessment procedures;
- individual timetables; and
- role and purpose of the Course Management Committee.

Tutorial

All tutors on the Certificate programme will provide group and individual student support. Meetings for the identification and resolution of general issues may be held on a small group basis, while students are encouraged to discuss matters of individual difficulty with their module tutor in the first instance. Tutorials may be on a personal basis or via e-mail where distance may militate against travelling to the teaching centre.

Support for students and their learning

- Students following the Certificate programme will experience a wide variety of learning and teaching activities designed to meet different learner styles and to facilitate development of both subject specific knowledge and skills, and transferable knowledge and key skills.
- Learning is enhanced by the use of a range of assessment strategies that enable students to develop academic and practice knowledge and skills and facilitate the application of this knowledge to practice.
- Students will receive a comprehensive Course Handbook.
- Students will be supported by the individual module tutors who have had a wide range of experience of special education environments. This support will be through the teaching and associated tutorials.
- Students will have access to both 'Blackboard' and/or 'Moodle' (at RNC) and a dedicated space within the CPD pages of both the ChildVision and RNC Websites. Training in the use of 'blackboard' is included in the module, "Introduction to Study Skills" and will be on-going.
- E-mail contact with tutors and between students in peer support groups will be encouraged
- The use of the Peer Support Group (PSG) has a lengthy history within undergraduate CPD programmes. This comprises a small group of learners who are encouraged to work together to complete specific directed study activities during the module. Over time, different groups have been formulated using different criteria but in all instances, students are firmly in control of the way the PSG is created.

The role of the PSG

- collaborative study to complete directed tasks;
- planning and presentation of student seminars;
- sharing of learning resources;
- assistance with travel arrangements if appropriate; and
- emotional support.

18 Admissions

Admissions Policy

The admissions policy for the Certificate is to encourage access to higher education through a policy of equal opportunity regardless of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religious belief or age. Admission will be in accordance with the University's policy on admissions detailed in Section 2 of the Undergraduate Regulatory Framework (2007). Whereas due regard will be given to conventional entry criteria laid down by the University (see below), it is hoped that having flexible entry will allow a broader range of students to be attracted.

Entry requirements

The University's standard minimum entry requirements apply: 4 GCSEs (Grade C or above) plus 120 Tariff points from minimum of 2 and maximum of 3½ A Levels or equivalent Level 3 qualifications. See [UW Admissions Policy](#) for other acceptable qualifications.

The current UCAS Tariff requirements for entry to this course are published in the prospectus.

Students with lower qualifications will be considered and in these instances, access to a work environment which educates/cares for people with a visual impairment would be beneficial.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Details of acceptable level 3 qualifications, policy in relation to mature students or applicants with few or no formal qualifications can be found in the prospectus or on the University webpages. Information on eligibility for recognition of prior learning for the purposes of entry or advanced standing is also available from the University [webpages](#) or from the Registry Admissions Office (01905 855111).

Admissions procedures

Recruitment procedures will be carried out by each centre using existing databases, local contacts and networks. Liaison between the two centres will be available to traditional UMS students who may see the individual modules as options within their degree programme.

Prospective students are invited for an informal interview before the course commences or they can contact the Course Leader to elicit more information.

Part-time applicants apply directly to University of Worcester (UW)

Admissions/selection criteria

Candidates entering the programme or students transferring from another similar programme are welcomed in accordance with UW Admissions Policy and AP(E)L policy.

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

The courses will be subject to the UW Quality Assurance Processes and follow [UW Regulations](#).

Quality mechanisms will be:

- Annual evaluation
- Appointment of Course Leader/Assistant Course Leader
- Appointment of Link Tutor
- Annual Link Tutor Monitoring Report
- Written student end of module evaluation
- Course Management Committee with student representation

- Joint Management Forum (between the two centres)

20 Regulation of assessment

The course operates under the University's Undergraduate 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.
- 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 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 see [Undergraduate Regulatory Framework](#).

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.
- Reassessment items that are passed are graded 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).

Requirements for progression

- Students at Level 4 may be permitted to progress to Level 5 when they have passed at least 90 credits at Level 4.
- Students at Level 5 may be permitted to progress to Level 6 when they have passed at least 90 credits at Level 5.
- A student who fails 90 credits or more due to non-submission will be required to withdraw from the University.
- Students who pass less than 90 credits but have submitted all items of assessment will be required to retake modules.

Requirements for awards

Award	Requirement
University of Worcester Certificate	Passed 30 credits at Level 4

Institute-level Assessment Boards review and confirm results for modules, and the Board of Examiners considers students' mark profiles to make decisions about progression, awards and degree classifications as appropriate.

21 Indicators of quality and standards

The Certificate programme is situated within the URF at the University of Worcester and within the benchmark statements for Education Studies. The Certificate programme is located within the Certificate level of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) for England, Wales and Northern Ireland and is recognised as an award that is equivalent to Level C [4] within the National Qualification Framework (September, 2004 version) and Level 6 National Framework of Qualifications: Ireland.

Additionally, a number of key documents have informed the development of this programme:

- Disability Discrimination Act (DofH, 2005)
- Special Educational Needs Disability Act (SENDA) (DfES, 2001)
- Removing Barriers to Achievement: The Government's Strategy for SEN (DfES, 2004)
- Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) (DES, 2004)
- Disability Act (2005) [Ireland]
- QAA Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education (2001 and 2004)
- Leitch Review of Skills: Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills, (December 2006);
- Learning for Living and Work: Improving Education and Training Opportunities for People with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities, LSC (October 2006);
- Through Inclusion to Excellence, LSC (November 2005);
- LSC Statement of Priorities (2007).

The University underwent a QAA Institutional Audit in March 2011. The audit confirmed that confidence can be placed in the soundness of the institution's current and likely future management of the academic standards of its awards and the quality of the learning opportunities available to students. The audit team highlighted several aspects of good practice, including the student academic representative (StARs) initiative, the proactive approach which supports the student experience for disabled students, the comprehensiveness of the student online environment (SOLE), the wide range of opportunities afforded to students to enhance their employability, the institution's commitment to enhancement, and the inclusive approach to working with its collaborative partners.

22 Graduate destinations, employability and links with employers

Graduate destinations

There are possibilities for progression to a Foundation Degree (in England) or a Level 7/8 award within the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

- One student in Dublin has progressed to complete the All Hallows College BA (Hons) (ALBA)
- Three students in Dublin have undertaken a specialist complementary course in Braille taught at ChildVision (Level 5: NFQ)
- One student from ChildVision has completed an Graduate Diploma in Habilitation and Disabilities of Sight (Children and Young People) at London University
- One student from RNC has progressed to a MPhil at Bristol focusing on VI-related issues.

Student employability

It is envisaged that the majority of the students will normally be working with people with a visual impairment and/or additional special educational needs and as such this award will enhance their own knowledge and understanding of the wider field of VI and improve their employability within the SEN sector. For those who are not in a work setting, the award will provide evidence of their knowledge in the VI field and boost their future employment options.

The Certificate programme could support a range of career pathways within a variety of education/care settings. For example:

- Possible access to a relevant Diploma HE.
- Work as a teaching assistant (TA) or special needs assistant (SNA) (Ireland) to support children in a school context or learners in an FE training context.
- Work in the Learning Support department of a further education college.
- Working with the residential team on community-based living projects.
- Professional advancement as a member of a care team (e.g.at ChildVision).

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 outlines and the course handbook provided to all students at the start of the course. 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](#).