

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION: MA Outdoor Education

1.	Awarding institution/body	University of Worcester
2.	Teaching institution	University of Worcester
3.	Programme accredited by	N/A
4.	Final award	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 with some required attendance at weekends.
8.	Mode of attendance	Part time with distance learning support
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 Masters Degree Characteristics - QAA guidance on writing Masters courses and QAA Code of practice Section 9 Work-based and placement learning
11.	Date of Programme Specification preparation/ revision	July 2012 / September 2013 / August 2014 and October 2014 (regulations amended) July 2016 regulations amended (Section 20), Section 21 updated.

12. Educational aims of the programme

The programme is designed to provide a postgraduate qualification for managers, leaders and 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 designed to meet 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 a taught module, delivered over 3 weekends and includes a range of practical work, lectures, seminars 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: Masters degree ([Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, 2008](#)) and adapted according to the needs of this particular course.

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

<p>Knowledge and understanding: Students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. identify, analyse and critically reflect upon appropriate theory and contemporary issues in outdoor education; 2. appreciate and critically reflect upon current problems or contemporary insights in outdoor education; 3. identify, analyse and critically 	<p>Examples of learning, teaching and assessment methods used:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use of case study approach / work based projects / action research projects in MAOE 4003, MAOE 4004, MAOE 4005 to develop understanding of theory and contemporary issues, contextualise theory and practice and encourage a multi/interdisciplinary approach 2. Structured reflection in MAOE4001 and MAOE 4006. Use of work based projects, problem based
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<p>reflect upon a wide range of quantitative and/or qualitative methods applicable for applied research or advanced scholarship in outdoor education.</p>	<p>learning, seminars and action learning sets and the use of Blackboard to support learning and encourage critical analysis and a multi/interdisciplinary perspective on current problems and contemporary insights. 3. Analysis of techniques for research or advanced scholarship in core modules (MSPO 4001, MAOE 4010) and other modules (MAOE 4003, MAOE 4004 and MAOE 4005)</p> <p>Use of online discussions forums for all project modules. Variety of assignments methods (refer to Course Handbook for details regarding these).</p>
<p>Cognitive and intellectual skills: Students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. demonstrate an in-depth understanding and application of appropriate research methods; 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; 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; 7. demonstrate self-direction and originality in identifying needs, analyzing needs, formulating solutions and evaluating strategies within the context of outdoor education. 	<p>Examples of learning, teaching and assessment methods used:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Structured lectures, seminars, computer based sessions (SPSS), independent research work, literature searching and reviewing and the use of Blackboard to support learning. 5. Development of Research Proposal in core module (MSPO 4001), Completion of own research project in the Dissertation (MAOE 4010) Use of online discussions forums for modules MAOE 4003, MAOE 4004 and MAOE 4005 to discuss and analyse research and professional practice. Problem based learning, case study scenarios and seminars encourage students to think systematically and creatively to resolve problems. 6. Analysis of the perspectives, values or strategies of outdoor practitioners together with theory to deal with complex issues and solve problems in addressing research questions (MAOE 4003, MAOE 4004 and MAOE 4005, MAOE 4010) 7. As students' progress through their work based projects, their research proposal and Dissertation development, they will be required to deal with complex issues relating to research design, methods and data collection systematically, creatively and with self-direction and originality.
<p>Practical skills relevant to employment:</p> <p>Same as for Transferrable skills – they are both overlapped to cover similar areas i.e. key skills which are embedded in the workplace</p>	<p>Examples of learning, teaching and assessment methods used:</p> <p>Refer to information for Transferrable skills. In addition, the Professional development profiling module MAOE 4001 focuses on the students analysing their own skills and competencies for their targeted profession. Through workplace activity, students monitor and develop skills necessary for employment and utilise academic research to help develop the knowledge and skills required for that employment. They also consider in MAOE 4006 how the projects have helped in developing knowledge and practice in the areas of reflection to support a lifelong learning approach and on their ability to become a reflective practitioner and be able to maximise CPD opportunities during their career.</p>

<p>Transferable/key skills:</p> <p>8. demonstrate initiative and personal responsibility when working alone or with others on applied problems or tasks;</p> <p>9. make decisions in complex applied situations using systematic and creative methods and communicate their conclusions clearly;</p> <p>10. develop critical self-reflection and an independent autonomous approach to learning required for continuing professional and personal development as a reflective practitioner;</p> <p>11. demonstrate critical self-assessment of key and vocational skills in outdoor education</p>	<p>Examples of learning, teaching and assessment methods used:</p> <p>8. Throughout all modules the focus on independent work based research means that students will go through an intensive reflective process requiring an in depth assessment of key and vocational skills followed by target setting and monitoring of skill development in (MAOE 4006).</p> <p>9. Work based research provides many opportunities for students to develop communication and decision-making skills in applied situations</p> <p>10. Throughout the course students will have opportunities to develop their self-reflection, personal responsibility and independent autonomous approach to learning through seminars, action sets and tutorials with staff, as well as in the planning, prioritising and undertaking of assessments.</p> <p>11. The students' completion of the Reflective report in MAOE 4006 forms a key learning and assessment method in the development of ILO's 8, 9, 10 and 11.</p>

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 and further, given the wide variety of modes of presentation of information 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 where there is a single piece of assessment. These include interim reports for project modules and drafts for reflective modules.

The course is in line with the Institute 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. 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 20 credit points (10 ECTS), with the exception of the Dissertation module (MAOE 4010) 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 (MSPO 4001). MAOE4003, MAOE 4004 and MAOE4005 work based project modules can be based on projects in separate study areas or one module can be used to extend an existing study.

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 MAOE 4001, and may choose to identify projects and approaches that support achievement of those awards.

Delivery

Personal development modules are mainly supported by tutorials and distance learning. Research Methods are held over three intensive weekends throughout the autumn semester which are held approximately 4-5 weeks apart. The Project modules and Dissertation do not normally have programme sessions and are supported by tutorials, distance learning and action learning sets.

Award Map for MA in Outdoor Education

Level 7					
Module Code	Module Title	Credits (Number)	Status Mandatory (M) or Optional (O)		
			PG Cert	PG Dip	MA
MAOE 4001	Professional Development Profiling	20	M	M	M
MSPO 4001	Research Methods	20	X	O	O
MAED 4001	Approaches to educational research: research methods for professional enquiry in education	20	X	O	O
MAOE 4003	Work Based Project A	20	M	M	M
MAOE 4004	Work Based Project B	20	M	M	M
MAOE 4005	Work Based Project C	20	X	M	M
MAOE 4006	Reflecting on Practice and Research	20	X	M	M
MAOE 4010	Dissertation	60	X	X	M
Total Credits		180			

All modules marked above as M are mandatory. MSPO4001 and MAED4001 are an excluded combination – meaning that you may only select one of these modules. They both provide an important area of learning for the Dissertation (MAOE 4010) and for the work based project modules. MAED4001 is available as a distance learning module and has specific relevance to more formal education settings. MSPO4001 is studied in evening sessions and is more appropriate to students with an interest in coaching and management. Throughout the programme, many opportunities exist for students to tailor their study towards a specific area

within their specialty. Your personal tutor or members of the course team will advise you on these choices.

Students may claim APL / APEL up to 120 credits

16. QAA Academic Infrastructure

Benchmark Statements

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

The Framework for HE Qualifications

The course is based on the descriptors for M level published in the [QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) ensuring that the qualification represents appropriately the level of achievement required for Masters courses. In addition it reflects the guidance of the [Masters Degree Characteristics - QAA guidance on writing Masters courses](#)

The course has responded to the [QAA 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, which incorporates the indicators of sound practice for Work-based and placement learning in UK higher education providers from the [QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, section B3 Learning and Teaching, section 2: Work-based and placement learning](#) and takes account of the [UCEA/USHA Health and Safety Guidance for the placement of HE students](#) (2009). The management of work-based learning is also informed by UW guidance on [Work based and Placement learning - Policy on management](#).

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 institute. 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 4001 and students will need to address this in the work based proposals for each project 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. All placement providers will be required to complete a placement providers' health and safety audit and provide evidence of appropriate insurance. Records of all work-based learning will be kept up to date and an annual audit record will be completed.

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,
- 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 an 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 [Careers Advisory Service](#) provides training opportunities for career planning.
- The [Language Centre](#) provides English Language courses for International Students.

18. Admissions Policy

The University aims to be accessible. It is committed to widening participation and encouraging diversity in the student population. The Institute 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.

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. 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 Institute 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 Institute 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.
- Institute 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.
- Institute of Sport & Exercise Science Learning Advisory Group.
- New Staff mentoring system.
- New staff observed by Head of Institute.
- 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.
- 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 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, 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); 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.

Requirements for Awards

Award	Requirement
PG Cert	Passed a minimum of 60 credits at level 7, as specified on the award map
PG Dip	Passed a minimum of 120 credits at level 7, as specified on the award map
Masters (MA)	Passed a minimum of 180 credits at level 7, as specified on the award map

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 Institute of Sport and Exercise Science runs a wide range of courses at Masters level and has a well-developed and inclusive culture of post-graduate study. The Institute 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 Institute'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

- FHEQ
- Sports Employers Advice Panel (outdoor education)
- HEFCE performance indicators, especially with respect to completion and achievement
- Staff research in work based learning, sports coaching, sports management and outdoor learning

22. Employability and graduate destinations

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 outdoor sector is worth about £1.4 billion to the UK economy and employs over 50,000 people within 5 component areas: recreation; education; exploration & expeditioning, development training and sports development (SkillsActive 2005). The Institute for Outdoor Learning provides representation for the sector at Governmental level as well as a forum for developing good practice and encouraging collaboration between academics and practitioners.

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. Through involvement of the Institute of Sport & Exercise Science Sports Employers Advisory Panel (SEAP), 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.

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. 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](#).