

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION for MRes in Education

1.	Awarding institution/body	University of Worcester
2.	Teaching institution	University of Worcester
3.	Programme accredited by	N/A
4.	Final award	MRes
5.	Programme title	MRes in Education
6.	Pathways available	N/A
7.	Mode and/or site of delivery	Taught and Research at the University of Worcester
8.	Mode of attendance	Full time and part time
9.	UCAS Code	N/A
10.	Subject Benchmark statement and/or professional body statement	N/A
11.	Date of Programme Specification preparation/ revision	July 2015 - Approved Audit and Review Committee August 2016 - Regulations/Section 20 amended

12. Educational aims of the programme

Masters by Research programmes provide an opportunity for students to gain a qualification involving intensive research without the commitment of spending 3-4 years as in a PhD programme. The gaining of a Masters in Research qualification is increasingly regarded as way of distinguishing a graduate from others who may hold a BA, BSc or MA/MEd and provides an excellent grounding in research techniques that will support practitioners who want to advance their participation in practitioner research to provide evidence-based teaching in their own context, as well as the transition to doctoral study.

The Institute of Education's research expertise extends across all phases of the education system and a number of theoretical and methodological approaches. In addition, this expertise extends across specialist themes including (but not limited to) school and teacher effectiveness, culture and religion, history of education, special educational needs and disability (SEND), professional identity, classroom relationships, and social disadvantage.

The specific educational aims of the course are to enable postgraduate students to:

- Prepare for doctoral level study
- Engage in a career in educational research in a range of educational contexts
- Meet the global need for highly trained individuals who can make informed decisions on future research directions
- Think for themselves in the development of a critical approach to the analysis of data and interpretation of published research.

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

<p>Knowledge and understanding: On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Employ educational research techniques and procedures, including the collection, processing, analysis and interpretation of education data. 2. Reflect critically on the nature of educational research. 3. Develop and acquire knowledge of current research in education. 	<p>Examples of learning, teaching and assessment methods used:</p> <p>These skills are developed through MAED4001 (Research Methods), and the MRes Education Thesis Preparation module MAED4500. They are then utilised in MAED4505, the MRes Education Thesis.</p>
<p>Cognitive and intellectual skills: On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Reflect on the development of, and current concepts and theories in, education. 	<p>Examples of learning, teaching and assessment methods used:</p> <p>Intellectual skills are developed through the teaching and learning programme outlined above. Assessment of thinking skills is achieved through coursework, the individual research project, and practical assignments.</p>
<p>Practical skills relevant to employment: On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Develop further skills and critical knowledge of data recording techniques relevant for education investigation. 6. Use and critically evaluate education data collection and analysis techniques such as repertory grid interviewing, classroom observational techniques, grounded analysis. 7. Develop skills in preparing and presenting education data. 	<p>Examples of learning, teaching and assessment methods used:</p> <p>These skills will be developed during the MAED4001 Research Methods module, assessed through a poster presentation and assignment.</p> <p>Further specific skills will be developed during the MAED4500 Thesis Preparation module as appropriate. Final assessment of these skills will be achieved during the MAED4505 Thesis.</p>
<p>Transferable/key skills: On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Develop further skills in problem based learning in research design and project management of educational research. 9. Apply experience in research design and project management to proposing conducting and writing up educational research in a variety of forms, including oral presentation and a Thesis. 	<p>Examples of learning, teaching and assessment methods used:</p> <p>These skills will be developed during the generic research methods module RTP401 Processes and Skills, Management and Methods, and in the more subject specific MAED4001 Research Methods module and MAED4500 MRes Education Research Thesis Preparation Module, in particular, during the completion of the pilot study (MAED4001) and critique of the data collection (MAED4500).</p>

14. Assessment Strategy

The Assessment strategy has been designed to provide students with a variety of challenges appropriate for Master's level modules. The range of assessments specified in the module outlines have been developed in order to support the pedagogical and research approaches employed and which are appropriate for the nature of the subject disciplines covered.

In line with the University of Worcester Assessment Policy, assessments for the individual modules have been designed to enable students to demonstrate that they have successfully met the learning outcomes. These are specified in each assignment brief along with any assessment criteria. Students are also supported through the use of the [University of Worcester grade descriptors](#). These are customised in each of your modules and provided in the module outlines.

The assessment strategy is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills that are required to work in Educational roles.

Taught Modules

The course will incorporate a range of assessment items - the mapping of assessment strategies to individual modules is included in the course handbook. Broadly speaking, the course structure of 3 20-credit modules plus a 120-credit Thesis provides a sound background in Education. Research skills will be developed through the taught modules from generic research skills in RTP 401, to more specific educational research skills in MAED4001 (Research Methods) to very specific preparation for the MRes Education Thesis in MAED4500.

During module RTP401 (Processes and Skills, Management and Methods), the student will prepare their research proposal for the thesis. This proposal will form the assessment for the module along with a short presentation on research. MAED4001 (Research Methods) is assessed by the presentation of a research poster and an assignment based on the development of the pilot research design, which prepares the student for recording work effectively during the thesis. MAED4500 MRes Education Research Thesis Preparation is assessed by means of an initial PDP assessment and action plan to address any specific issues required before moving onto the thesis, a completed action plan giving evidence how specific issues have been addressed and a 30 minute presentation on the intended project which will include scheduling and information on intended methods.

MAED4505 Thesis

The MAED4505 MRes Education Thesis module has a substantial research component (120 credits) assessed by means of a significant piece of writing in the form of a Thesis and an oral examination (the viva). This enables the student to demonstrate initiative and creativity in formulating and carrying out a research project. In order to progress from the taught element of the programme to the thesis stage the student must pass all three taught modules (see below). The thesis is designed to give practical experience of research and provide the opportunity to develop a wide range of skills.

The thesis will be submitted to an examination team comprising one internal and one external examiner and the research thesis and student knowledge will be assessed by means of a *viva voce* examination.

15. Programme structures and requirements

Structure

The programme consists of:

- 60 credits at Level 7 (PG Cert Research Methods in Education) plus
- 120 credit thesis at Level 7 (MRes Education)

RTP401 and MAED4001 can be taken simultaneously. However, both of these modules must be passed before progressing to the MRes Education Research Thesis Preparation module (MAED 4500). A student can only progress to the MRes Thesis if all of the taught modules for the PG Cert have been passed.

Taught modules at Level 7

Module code	Module title	Credit value
RTP401	Processes and Skills, Management and Methods	20
MAED4001	Research Methods in Education	20
MAED4500	MRes Education Research Thesis Preparation	20
MAED4505	MRes Education Thesis	120

16. Quality Assurance Agency

In absence of a QAA benchmarking statement for taught masters provision in Education, qualifications are based on the generic descriptors published in *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) Masters (level 7) provision*, as well as in the Section A of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and the QAA Guidance on Masters Degree Courses. In addition, reference has been made to the guidelines for professional development and best practice published by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). This award is located at level 7 of the FHEQ.

17. Support for students

The following activities and documents have been put in place to provide support for Masters students at the Institute of Education:

- The University's [Information and Learning Services](#) department provides a range of resources for students.
- [Registry Services](#) is the central academic and administrative support department of the University for staff and students.
- [Student Services](#) is the central department that provides non-academic support of students ranging from accommodation, through to welfare, disability and careers services.

- [Firstpoint](#) is the first point of contact for all student enquiries, e.g. accommodation, fees and finance, registration, ID cards, disability support, study abroad, module choice, in fact anything concerning student life at Worcester. This service is based in the Peirson Study and Guidance Centre on the St John's Campus.

In addition to the above, on acceptance, students are assigned a supervisor (Director of Studies) for the thesis stage of the programme, who has expertise in their specialist area of Education. The supervisor provides advice and undertakes regular progress reviews during the thesis stage of the programme. Written records are normally kept for all meetings.

18. Admissions

Admissions policy

The University aims to be accessible; it is committed to widening participation and encouraging diversity in the student population. The Institute of Education works closely with central student support services, including the [Graduate Research School](#), the [Disability and Dyslexia Service](#) and the [International Office](#) to support students from a variety of backgrounds. We actively encourage and welcome people from the widest range of economic and cultural backgrounds.

Admission to the course is in Semester 1 only of the academic year.

Entry requirements

Applicants are normally expected to:

- Have a First or Second Class Honours (2:1) Degree or equivalent award in an appropriate discipline (e.g. Education, Sociology, Psychology)
or
- Have appropriate research or professional experience which has resulted in appropriate evidence of achievement. For example experience in a research environment such as private consultancy firm, government organisation or charitable trust.

International applicants will also be required to demonstrate that they have the appropriate level of written and spoken English (normally IELTS score of 6.5 with a minimum score of 6 in written English). Entry qualifications for international students are guided by the [National Academic Recognition Information Centre's](#) (NARIC) advice on international qualifications.

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

All applications are submitted to the Graduate Research School and passed to the relevant Course Leader for consideration. In the application form applicants are required to outline a research proposal for their intended thesis. If the application has

potential, an interview is scheduled by a panel comprising at least two members of academic staff. Completion of an interview checklist allows for a thorough rigorous evaluation of the candidate's strengths at interview. It also means that details about the offer conditions are passed back to the Graduate Research School, enabling a comprehensive offer letter and contract to be produced.

Applications from those with international qualifications are checked by the Graduate Research School Manager against NARIC and copies of all certificates are required before an unconditional offer is made to the student. All international applicants are checked for their competency in English language by the Language Unit. When it is felt that the applicant does not possess the appropriate level of English language, an in house English language course may be recommended before the student embarks on their RDP. Information about all offers made to international students is passed back to the relevant personnel in Student Services who can provide the student with additional support and guidance (for example, to obtain a visa, accommodation etc).

The selection and admission processes outlined above ensure that only appropriately qualified students are admitted to an MRes and that the student can be satisfactorily supported in their research.

Admissions/selection criteria

An offer of a place on an MRes in Education will be made when the following conditions are satisfied:

- Applicant meets the specified entry requirements.
- The Institute has the supervisory capacity and expertise to support the research project outlined in the application form.
- The proposal outlined has the potential to become a viable research project at Masters level.

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

Mechanisms for review and evaluation of teaching, learning, assessment, the curriculum and outcome standards, include:

- Module feedback
- Annual Course Evaluation Report completed by course leader
- Periodic review including external scrutiny
- External examiners reports
- Academic staff annual appraisal.

Committees with responsibility for monitoring and evaluating quality and standards:

- Institute of Education Quality Committee
- Education Course Team
- Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee (ASQEC)
- Ethics Committee
- Learning and Teaching Committee

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback on the quality of teaching and their learning experience:

- Module feedback questionnaires
- Student representative participation in Education Course Management Committees
- Meetings with Personal Academic Tutor
- Meetings with work placement mentors, if necessary.

20. Regulation of assessment

The course operates under the University's [Taught Courses Regulatory Framework](#).

Requirements to pass modules (including the thesis module)

- 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 outlines.
- Students are required to pass the three taught modules (RTP401, MAED4001 and MAED4500) in order to progress to the thesis stage of the programme (MAED4505).

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.

The MRes has a substantial research component, assessed by means of a significant piece of writing in the form of a Thesis and an oral examination (the viva). This enables

the student to demonstrate initiative and creativity in formulating and carrying out a research project. Detailed guidance on the viva can be found in the MRes handbook.

Boards of Examiners and external examiners

The arrangements for the Boards of Examiners for the MRes are laid out in detail in the University's [Taught Courses Regulatory Framework](#).

The Subject Assessment Board will be based within the Academic Institute. Research Degrees Board will carry out the role of the Board of Examiners and will confirm the final award.

Each MRes programme will have an external examiner appointed for a three year term as laid out in the regulations for the 'Nomination and Appointment of External Examiners'. In addition an external examiner will be appointed as part of the examination team to examine the MRes thesis. As the MRes is classified as a research degree programme and as the thesis module forms 2/3 of the assessment and is a specialist piece of research, the supervisory team (in consultation with the MRes programme External Examiner) will be required to put together an examination team for the thesis. The external examiner for the thesis will be expected to have expertise in the area of research being examined and the collective experience of the examining team for an MRes should include a minimum of three Masters level theses examined in the UK. The examination team for the thesis will be approved by the Research Degrees Board.

The grade for the thesis will be agreed by the thesis examination team and this, along with the examiners' report will be considered alongside the marks for the taught modules by the Subject Assessment Board and then when the final awards are being presented to the Board of Examiners (RDB).

Requirements for Awards

Award	Requirement
PG Cert Research Methods in Education	Passed a minimum of 60 credits at level 7, as specified on the award map
MRes in Education	Passed a minimum of 180 credits at level 7 including 120 credits for the Research Project module, as specified on the award map

The PG Cert award is unclassified. The awards of MRes may be made with Pass, Merit or Distinction.

21. Indicators of quality and standards

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.

Postgraduate research in Education is highly important in IoE, there are currently 16 MPhil/PhD students in the Education subject area, with 16 recent PhD completions (and 1 further MPhil completion) in the last five years and 3 PhD awaiting examination. There are 10 staff with supervisory experience of research degrees in IoE.

Members of staff in the Institute of Education were returned in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014. Publications written by members of staff in the University are made available via a research repository called WRAP (Worcester Research and Publications; <http://eprints.worc.ac.uk/>). IoE has a significant proportion of these publications which include international as well as national level, peer reviewed submissions.

22. Graduate destinations, employability and links with employers

Graduate destinations

- The MRes in Education will provide training and competitive edge within the education, charitable organisations and private consultancy sectors.
- The MRes in Education will also provide a stepping stone to further post-graduate training e.g. doctoral study.

Student employability

- The Education programme at the University of Worcester combines a strong theoretical focus with a core of technical competencies, providing students with the opportunity to develop as effective, reflective professionals.
- Successful students of the MRes in Education should be able to not only conduct competent research, but will also have developed skills in project management commensurate with independent research and in managing large research projects.

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.