

# PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

## PG Certificate in Research Methods

1	<b>Awarding institution/body:</b> University of Worcester
2	<b>Teaching institution:</b> University of Worcester
3	<b>Programme accredited by:</b> n/a
4	<b>Final award:</b> PG Certificate
5	<b>Programme title:</b> PG Certificate in Research Methods
6	<b>Pathways available:</b> n/a
7	<b>Mode and/or site of delivery:</b> taught programme
8	<b>Mode of attendance:</b> FT and PT, block or weekend
9	<b>UCAS Code:</b> n/a
10	<b>Subject /Professional Benchmark statements:</b> the programme is mapped on to the Research Councils <i>Joint Skills Statement</i> and on to the QAA's <i>Code of Practice</i> , section 1, specifically precepts 18, 19 & 20; the programme has also been approved by the <i>Arts and Humanities Research Council</i> .
11	<b>Date of Programme Specification preparation/revision:</b> April 2009/updated Jan 2011, August and October 2014 (Regulations), <b>August 2016 (Regulations amended - Section 20)</b>

### 12 Educational aims of the programme

All students enrolled on a research degree programme must undertake the Researcher Development Programme in order to progress. They may also undertake (and are strongly encouraged to do so) the core modules of the programme in order to be eligible for the PG Certificate in Research Methods. The PG Certificate is only available to those undertaking a research degree at the University of Worcester.

The rationale of the programme is to develop and enhance the skills, both generic and specific, that a research student needs to complete their research degree and to become an effective researcher. Furthermore, the programme also seeks to highlight and then to enhance skills that a research student develops in the course of their research degree which are transferable to their future career.

The aims of the programme are:

1. To prepare the student for the key stages of the research degree process, i.e. registration, transfer and examination
2. To develop and enhance core research skills, e.g. planning a research project
3. To develop and enhance the skills needed for writing both their thesis and for publication
4. To develop and enhance core IT and library skills, e.g. the use of reference management software
5. To develop and enhance research skills specific to the subject area of the research degree, e.g. specific statistical packages, specific methodological approaches
6. To provide knowledge and understanding of the broader context of research in the UK and internationally
7. To enable the student to disseminate their knowledge and practice effectively to academic and professional communities

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

#### Research Skills

Students will be able to:

1. Recognise and validate research problems
2. Demonstrate original, independent and critical thinking, and the ability to develop theoretical concepts
3. Demonstrate a knowledge of recent advances within their field and in related areas
4. Demonstrate an understanding of relevant research methodologies and techniques and their appropriate application within their research field

5. Critically analyse and evaluate their findings and those of others
6. Summarise, document, report and reflect on their progress

### **Knowledge and Understanding of Research Environment**

Students will be able to:

1. Show a broad understanding of the context, at the national and international level, in which research takes place
2. Demonstrate awareness of issues relating to the rights of other researchers, of research subjects, and of others who may be affected by the research, e.g. confidentiality, ethical issues, attribution, copyright, malpractice, ownership of data and the requirements of the Data Protection Act
3. Demonstrate appreciation of standards of good research practice in the institution and in their discipline

### **Research Management**

Students will be able to:

1. Apply effective project management through the setting of research goals, intermediate milestones and prioritisation of activities
2. Design and execute systems for the acquisition and collation of information through the effective use of appropriate resources and equipment
3. Identify and access appropriate bibliographical resources, archives, and other sources of relevant information
4. Use information technology appropriately for database management, recording and presenting information

### **Communication Skills**

Students will be able to:

1. Write clearly and in a style appropriate to purpose, e.g. progress reports, published documents, thesis
2. Construct coherent arguments and articulate ideas clearly to a range of audiences, formally and informally through a variety of techniques
3. Constructively defend research outcomes at seminars, conferences, etc

## **14 Assessment Strategy**

A range of formative and summative assessment methods are used within the programme from various forms of written assignments to oral presentations to critical self-reflection.

## 15 Programme structures and requirements

Successful completion of 2 of the RDP Core Modules, 'Developing and Managing Your Research' (RTP401), and 'Dissemination, Impact and Engagement (RTP402), plus, either a 20-credit, level-7 subject-specific research methods module, or, other negotiated study (RTP404), leads to the award of PgCert in Research Methods. The table below sets out the structure of the award:

Level 7				
Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Module status	Pre-requisites
RTP401	Developing and Managing Your Research	20	Mandatory for Pathway 1	None
Various	Subject-specific research methods	20	Mandatory for Pathway 1	None
<i>or</i>				
RTP404	Negotiated Study	20		
RTP402	Dissemination, Engagement & Impact	20	Mandatory for Pathway 1	None

## 16 QAA and Professional Academic Standards and Quality

This award is located at level 7 of the FHEQ. The programme is designed to meet with the QAA Code of Practice for PG Research Programmes (specifically precepts 18-20). It also meets with the FHEQ qualification descriptors. It has also been designed in accordance with the Research Councils' *Joint Skills Statement*.

## 17 Support for students

Students are provided with:

- a half-day day induction session for their RDP which incorporates a specific introduction to the Researcher Development Programme and to library and IT resources
- the *Handbook for Research Students and Supervisors*
- day to day support through the Research School
- an introduction to the process of Personal/ Professional Development Planning (PDP)
- training opportunities for career planning through the Research School and the Careers Service
- support through the Student Advice Bureau
- support through the Student Information and Guidance Centre
- support through the International office for overseas students
- support through the Language Unit for International Students
- access to the Disability and Dyslexia Service
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## 18 Admissions policy, criteria and procedures

Students may only undertake this programme if they have already been admitted to a research degree programme at the University of Worcester.

### 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 Research School for further information or guidance on 01905 542196.

Further information on Recognition of Prior Learning can be found at <http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/941.htm>

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

Quality and standards are maintained through: annual monitoring report, external examiner reports and student evaluation of modules. In addition, the programme is subject to comment and review through the Research School Steering Group and through the Research Student Forum and the Research Supervisors' Forum.

## 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 may 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 Cert awards are unclassified.

## 21 Indicators of quality and standards

The QAA Special Review of Research Degree Programmes in 2007 identified that the University's ability to secure and enhance the quality of its research degree programmes was appropriate and satisfactory and highlighted 4 areas of good practice. This was reiterated in the University's successful application for Research Degree Awarding Powers in 2009/10.

The University's research strategy shows its commitment to enhancing its research capacity and building its community of postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers.

## **22 Career Opportunities & Links with Employers**

The programme is designed to develop core research and transferable skills and to enhance the employability of a research degree student both within an academic and research context but also outside of this context.

**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 study guide and course handbook.