

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION
(Taught Postgraduate)**



1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	PG Certificate
4	Programme Title	Research Training in the Social Sciences/Arts and Humanities
5	Programme Code	3044F 3426P
6	Programme Accreditation	Not appropriate
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	ESRC and AHRC Postgraduate Research Training Guidelines
8	FHEQ Level	Level 7
9	Last updated	July 2021

10 Programme Aims

1. To provide students with the research preparation necessary to conduct PhD research.
2. To provide the knowledge, understanding, skills and aptitudes necessary to undertake advanced research in the social sciences and the arts and humanities.
3. To provide the quantitative and qualitative research methods and techniques necessary to conduct Arts, Humanities and Social Science research.
4. To provide the information skills required to conduct research in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.
5. To produce graduates who are capable of successfully undertaking and completing advanced research in the public sector, or the private sector.
6. To provide a qualification which fully meets the learning outcomes at Level 7 in the FHEQ.
7. To provide a programme which complies with University policies and procedures and QAA codes of practice.

11 Learning Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas. The programme outcomes have references to the postgraduate research training guidelines for the ESRC and for the AHRC.

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should:

- A1 Appreciation of the theoretical traditions and concepts that influence and shape disciplines and the implications (both practical and methodological) of such theories for research within the social sciences and the arts and humanities.

A2 Awareness and understanding of the variety of philosophical principles and epistemological frameworks that underpin approaches to enquiry in the social sciences and the arts and humanities.

Teaching and Learning Methods

The theoretical traditions and concepts that influence and shape disciplines (A1), and the philosophical principles and epistemological frameworks that underpin enquiry (A2) are explored through a combination of directed online reading & activities, lectures, seminars and/or group work (as appropriate) in the compulsory modules. The module covers a series of topics on the philosophical foundations of knowledge, delivered by the module leader, and then a range of contemporary epistemological debates at the forefront of various disciplines are introduced by expert colleagues from around the Faculty.

Assessment Strategy

The assessment strategy for A1 and A2 will be a word assignment, which will assess the capacity of students to develop a comprehensive understanding of the philosophical principles and epistemological frameworks that underpin approaches to 1) enquiry in the social sciences and the arts and humanities, and to 2) a particular project (usually, not necessarily the student's own research project).

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

The programme provides the opportunity for students to develop and demonstrate:

B1 Principles

- (i) An understanding of the rationale for research methods and approaches, an appreciation of the value of a range of methods, approaches and sources available, be able to evaluate and select appropriate methods and approaches and be properly critical and reflexive about these choices.
- (ii) An advanced understanding of qualitative research in the social sciences, including an examination of the range of available methods such as participant observation, ethnographic fieldwork and interviewing and an exploration of the ethical principles, implications and dilemmas of qualitative research.
- (iii) An advanced understanding of critical analysis in the arts and humanities, including an examination of a range of available approaches to analysing texts, images and sounds and to researching Museums, Galleries, Places of Heritage and Archives.
- (iv) An understanding of sampling, sampling error and biases in results.
- (v) An understanding of and the ability to apply concepts of generalisability, validity, reliability and replicability.

B2 Data collection and analysis

- (i) Knowledge and understanding of the application of selected methods of data collection.
- (ii) Knowledge and understanding of the application of selected methods of data collection.
- (iii) An understanding of strengths and weaknesses of different types of data and the development of a critical use of sources.
- (iv) An understanding of the use of methods and tools to analyse data, including techniques for analysing qualitative data (as an example discourse analysis or event analysis) and multivariate analysis (such as multiple regression and log linear models).
- (v) Proficiency in both qualitative and quantitative data analysis for social scientists and critical analysis for the arts and humanities.

Practical Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

C General Research skills

C1 Bibliographic and computing skills:

- (i) the skills to identify and obtain relevant materials relating to research, including annals, books, journals, theses, conference proceedings and resources available electronically and online generally on the World Wide Web.
- (ii) The skills to maintain a personal research bibliography and use EndNote.
- (iii) IT skills, including word processing and other basic computing skills including spreadsheets and database management via software programmes including SPSS and NVivo.

Teaching and Learning Methods

The teaching and learning strategy for B1 (i-v) and B2 (i-v) will be delivered through the Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods modules. The strategy for B1 (i-v) is a combination of lectures, directed online reading & activities, small group work, workshops and interactive plenaries. The strategy for B2 (i-v) is a combination of lectures, directed online reading & activities, and workshops, which introduce the principles of statistical analysis, and data analysis practical's where the principles are put into practice via use of relevant software such as SPSS.

For C1, students will be asked to initially complete an online skills check, and from there will attend a combination of workshops and lectures, which will involve group work and provide an opportunity for students to put their online reading and activities into practice. Students will also be given self-paced materials on Blackboard to work through in their own time, and access to discussion boards to develop skills and knowledge of information management.

Assessment Strategy

The Assessment strategy for B1 (i-iv) will be a series of reports which will assess the capacity of students to develop a comprehensive understanding of research methods and approaches and their ability to choose methodologies and techniques of research and enquiry applicable to their own research topics. B2 (i-iv) will be a combination of reports and data practical assessments, which test the practical skills of employing statistical software competently and the statistical comprehension for choosing the appropriate statistical techniques, to answer particular research questions, and for the correct interpretation of the results.

For C, general research skills will be assessed by means of coursework which employ a range of approaches in order to accurately assess student abilities. The assessment for the information skills module will be constructing a bibliography, incorporating bibliographic search strategies and professional design and layout, and through reflecting on this process through a critical review of their search strategies. IT skills will be assessed by the bibliographic exercise and data practical assessment.

Transferable/Key Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

D Key Skills

The programme provides the opportunity for students to develop and demonstrate:

D1 the skills to communicate and present research findings effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences.

D2 the skills of effective written communication and presentation.

D3 the ability to work independently, with initiative and to work effectively as a member of both subject-specific and multi-disciplinary teams.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Teaching and learning strategy:

The ability to communicate and present research findings effectively are taught through both a blended approach, which provides students with directed online reading and activities, asynchronous discussion and in-person structured interactions. Students will also benefit from lectures and workshops, which are attended in person. Within some of these workshops, students will be split into smaller groups, with each group consisting of people from various disciplines, in order to engage with the teaching content whilst simultaneously learning to work with others from different backgrounds.

Assessment Strategy

Key skills (D) within the programme are assessed through a variety of different methods consisting of both presentations, which are also peer-reviewed, and critical essays whereby students are able to look at their research methodologies and examine their own applications.

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features

Basic structure of the programme

This programme has been designed to offer first stage PhD students a Certificate for the research training modules they take during the first stage of their degree, and it is now on offer to outside applicants who want to acquire research skills for their own project or for employment in the academic or non-academic research sector.

All students will take two compulsory 10 credit modules and one 20 credit module. Students then select a further 20 optional credits. Social Science students would be encouraged to take 20 credit module on quantitative methodology. Students from the arts and humanities would be encouraged to take the 20 credit module, which is an extended version of the compulsory qualitative methodology module. The difference between these two routes stem from the different requirements of the respective research councils (ESRC and AHRC) as regards research postgraduate training.

This is a one year full time or two year part time programme. It consists of the philosophy of knowledge, research methods and skill development. All 60 credits are taught at Faculty level. These 60 credits focus on generic research skills and competencies across the social sciences and arts and humanities.

Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)

This would be the only award for research preparation laying the foundation for the PhD programme, offered at Newcastle University, and would be a good preparation for employment in the academic and non-academic research sector.

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

[3044 3426 Programme Regulations 21-22](#)

13 Support for Student Learning

Generic information regarding University provision is available at the following link.

https://www.ncl.ac.uk/ltds/assets/documents/qsh_progspec_generic_info.pdf

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

Generic information regarding University provision is available at the following link.

https://www.ncl.ac.uk/ltds/assets/documents/qsh_progspec_generic_info.pdf

Accreditation reports

N/A

Additional mechanisms

N/A

15 Regulation of assessment

Generic information regarding University provision is available at the following link.

https://www.ncl.ac.uk/ltds/assets/documents/qsh_progspec_generic_info.pdf

In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

The University Prospectus: : <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/>
Degree Programme and University Regulations: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/>

Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided.