PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION
(Taught Postgraduate)

Newcastle University

1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) Master of Arts (MA)
4	Programme Title	Museum Studies (PG Dip / MA) Art Museum and Gallery Studies (PG Dip / MA) Heritage Studies (PG Dip / MA)
5	Programme Code	Museum 3371 (PG Dip) / 4007 (MA) Art Museum and Gallery 3448 (PG Dip) / 4138 (MA) Heritage 3449 (PG Dip) / 4139 (MA
6	Programme Accreditation	N/A
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	N/A
8	FHEQ Level	Level 7
9	Last updated	July 2021

10	Programme Aims

1. To provide students with a range of learning opportunities (in relation to analytical, key, research and subject-specific skills) within the Museum/Art Museum and Gallery/Heritage (MGH) sector, with the opportunity to specialise in either M/G/H;

2. To provide a curriculum that is responsive to the professional and research requirements and skills needs of the M/G/H sector nationally and internationally;

3. To enable students to develop their capacity to learn in preparation for, or as part of, continuing professional development (CPD) and lifelong learning;

4. To provide access to Higher Education and appropriate professional qualifications to students from diverse backgrounds including those with disabilities;

5. To provide students with the opportunity to gain the skills and knowledge required to work in the M/G/H sector on graduation;

6. To enable students to undertake discrete pieces of independent research at postgraduate level through various activities and assignments;

7. To enable students to undertake a sustained piece of independent and original research at postgraduate level, through the production of an academic/professional research project (for MA students only);

8. To ensure that the programme meets the requirements of a Level 7 qualification as defined by the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications;

9. To give students the option of specializing in a topic which ranges beyond the compulsory modules of the MGH programme and allows them to build and develop their research interests; and

10. To ensure that the programme conforms to University policies and the QAA codes of practice (including work-based placements, where these are relevant to an individual student's selected pathway through the selection options).

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 benchmark statements for Arts and Culture.

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme, students should:

A1   Have a critical and sophisticated understanding of the scope of M/G/H studies;

A2   Have a critical understanding of the historical development of M/G/H studies in different geographical contexts;

A3   Be aware of and understand current challenges and developments in the M/G/H sector;

A4   Be aware of and have an in-depth understanding of the key philosophical principles, and theoretical and conceptual approaches of M/G/H studies;

A5   Be aware of and understand the various forms that M/G/H can take and how they can link to related discplines;

A6   Have an in-depth understanding the knowledge and skills for M/G/H curatorship/management;

A7   Understand the different values ascribed to M/G/H material;

A8   Be aware of the possibilities of using digital technologies in M/G/H;

A9   Have an in-depth understanding of the knowledge and skills needed for the caring of M/G/H collections (both in terms of tangible and intangible resources) and regarding Heritage, the natural and cultural landscapes in rural and urban context, built environment and heritage sites;

A10 Be aware of and understand the key issues and skills related to communicating and learning in museums and/or galleries (including exhibitions and public programmes (M/G/H and site interpretations and live interpretations (Heritage));

A11 Understand the relationship between the associated fields of M/G/H studies;

A12 Possess the detailed knowledge that comes from carrying out a sustained piece of independent in-depth research on a focused topic, or through a work-based placement, or a vocationally orientated project.

Teaching and Learning Methods

A1-A11 will be acquired through scheduled learning activities (including general lectures, and programme-specific seminars, small-group work and practicals) and guided independent study. University staff and visiting specialist practitioners in the M/G/H sector deliver the lectures. The more programme-specific practicals, small-group learning

activities, workshops, and fieldwork ensure that students relate theoretical knowledge to specific practical examples. Throughout the programme, students are provided with directed reading, but are encouraged to read far more widely, depending on their particular interests. Additionally, many modules have student-led group activities, which encourage students to express their prior experiences, knowledge and understanding in a peer-friendly setting. These are enriching activities, as students in the cohort come from different countries and bring different perspectives and views. Optional modules allow students to contextualize their knowledge of MGH and how they are related to other disciplines (A5)

A12 will be provided for through the in-depth knowledge of specialised topics delivered by the taught modules, and through the guidance and support provided by academic/professional research project supervision sessions. One of the 60-credit academic/professional research modules provides MA students with the opportunity to develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of a particular aspect of the M/G/H sector and its relationship to theoretical and/or professional aspects.

Assessment Strategy

Throughout the programme, students are exposed to a variety of assessment types. Assignments are designed to provide students with the opportunity to relate theoretical and practical constructs to real life situations outside of academia. Knowledge and understanding is assessed formatively through discussions, oral presentations, group exercises, one-page reports, role play etc. Summative assessments are in the form of individual and group assignments.

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

B1 Possess a detailed systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, cutting-edge M/G/H research and practice;

B2 Synthesise and critically reflect on different theories, concepts, arguments and sources of evidence;

B3 Possess a high-level appreciation of decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations;

B4 Conduct independent learning and the ability to problem solve and to make sound judgements at an advanced level;

B5 Demonstrate originality and maturity in the application of knowledge and concepts; and,

B6   Master data collection and analyse, evaluate, and interpret the principal source materials of M/G/H studies.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Through scheduled learning and teaching activities, students develop the ability to think critically and to apply advanced knowledge and methodological skills (B1-B6) they have acquired through their studies in order to present balanced and coherent arguments. Students are encouraged to develop and practice their intellectual skills through a wide range of types of assessed work (essays, reports, case studies, written exercises, reflective logs, and a dissertation for MA students). All modules (except research and placement modules) include group-work sessions, where students develop their cognitive skills in relation to real and topical issues in the M/G/H sector by engaging with each other. These sessions require students normally to search for book, academic and professional journal, newspaper, or web-based information and for them to discuss

such new information in the light of lectures and for them to come to a critical standpoint on any given topic. Feedback on individual and group presentations allows staff to supplement and illustrate their own teaching and provides students with further opportunities to learn.

Assessment Strategy

All written assignments enable students to develop their data gathering, evaluation, analytical, decision-making, problem solving, and interpretation skills (B1-B6) set within the wider academic framework of the programme. Thus, students are required to reference fully their work academically while understanding that, for example, a 'real' report may not include such references. Some assignments are split into a piece of professionally related work (e.g., writing an object label) and a critically reflective commentary on the work, requiring students to explain the reasoning behind their work and to link it to the theory relating to any given practice (B1 and B2).

Practical Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

C1 Master research and library skills, critical methodologies and theories, and tools for research in M/G/H studies/practice;

C2 Deal with or gain exposure to a range of complex M/G/H issues and problems in terms of the theoretical and conceptual debates currently at the forefront of academic work in M/G/H studies/practice acquiring the ability to make sound judgements;

C3 Master the methods and skills required to collect and interpret data relevant to research in M/G/H studies/practice and be able to demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems;

C4 Master a variety of skills according to the students' individual needs – e.g., data collection and management and use of IT to assist data handling and analysis;

C5 Develop and present detailed information verbally, in a coherent and articulate way;

C6 Apply advanced knowledge to practical situations;

C7 Demonstrate the ability to conduct a high-level piece of independent and original academic/professional research (specific to taking one of the three 60-credit modules towards the MA degree); and,

C8 Demonstrate subject-specific skills through practical and professional experience (varies based on module selection).

Teaching and Learning Methods

The compulsory modules include lectures from a number of professional colleagues involved on a day-to-day basis with the topic about which they lecture. Specialist practitioners ensure that the students are exposed to new developments and challenges facing the museum sector (C2). Contributors use a wide range of examples linking professional experience to the more theoretical knowledge and understanding. Seminars, small-group work, practicals, and workshops related to topics covered in lectures allow students to develop and practise their programme-specific and professional skills through, for example, role-play and oral presentations (C1-C8).
Pathway modules are more vocationally-based and will allow students to further develop and practice these skills including more focus on students working on small-group projects. The work-based options of the 12-week (one-day-a-week contact time) employer-based

20-credit placement module provides an intensive opportunity for students who elect to take it to further develop and practise work-related skills (PG Dip and MA), as will the selection of one of the elective 60-credit work-based or vocationally-orientated research project modules (C2-C6, C8) (MA only). Research training lectures, tutorials, guided reading, feedback on outline proposals, and continuous supervision will provide the basis for students to complete their research projects (C7).

Assessment Strategy

All modules require independent research to be carried out by the students, which is assessed through a variety of assignments. In all these forms of assessment, the skills (C1-C8) listed above will be tested to some degree. For MA students, this is assessed further through one of the 60-credit academic/professional research modules (C7). All assignments include an element of assessment related to the understanding of sector-related skills. In undertaking their assignments, students are encouraged to reflect on: 1) their own (voluntary or otherwise) experience in the sector; and, 2) case studies provided by lecturers. The 20-credit employer-based placement, or one of the two 60-credt work-based or vocationally-orientated research projects (MA only) provide possible elective opportunities for students to enhance professional, employability and entrepreneurial skills (C1-C8).

Transferable/Key Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

D1 Communicate successfully in both written and oral forms of expression;

D2 Communicate effectively with others when working in a group;

D3 Conduct independent learning;

D4 Manage time and prioritise tasks by working to strict deadlines; and,

D5 Use Information Technology; e.g., Internet, Blackboard, word processing, spreadsheets.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Students practise and develop their oral communication (D1) by presenting their findings from group work (D2) verbally to the whole cohort, either as groups or individually in each module. As part of the induction offer, students are introduced to what is expected from postgraduate students, particularly in relationship to the depth of study and the presentation of ideas. Additionally, during scheduled learning and teaching activities, students are exposed to and expected to engage with a variety of ways of writing (D2) required for their professional careers; e.g., news releases, management briefings, policy documents, general reports, implementation plans, and web content. Communication skills are fostered and developed gradually through the progression from seminars, small-group teaching and practical exercises to more extended submitted work, and for the MA route, through one of the 60-credit academic/professional research modules, all of which require keeping to programme deadlines and by planning and organising their written work (D4). The use of IT (D5) is developed through all the modules and also is nurtured through independent research and submission of work. When undertaking one of the 60-credit research modules (MA only), students will have to take ownership of their projects and take responsibility for independent learning (D3) and manage their time and prioritise tasks and work to self-set deadlines (D4).

Assessment Strategy

The majority of skills (D1-D5) mentioned above are assessed in most assignments. Attainment of all other key skills outcomes are not directly assessed but are seen as ancillary to the production of assessed work; e.g., verbal skills, time-management, planning and organising are necessary preconditions for meeting other intended learning outcomes.

It follows, therefore, that it is not possible to graduate without meeting the key skills outcomes.

12	Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features
Basic structure of the programme	

The period of study for a Postgraduate Diploma (PG Dip) shall normally be 9 months for a full-time mode and 18 months for a part-time mode. PG Dip students must complete six 20-credit modules for 120 total credits.

The period of study for a MA starting in September shall normally be 12 months for a full-time mode and 24 months for a part-time mode. MA students must complete an additional 60-credit academic/professional research module for 180 total credits.

All students receive a module handbook before the start of each module, which contain details of lectures, seminars, small-group work, practical work, fieldwork/study visits, assessed work, including assignment information. These handbooks also contain a list of aims and learning outcomes for the module, and a bibliography. Extra support material is provided through the computer-based 'managed learning environment' Blackboard.

YEAR 1 (All routes)
Students take four 20-credit compulsory modules; these compulsory modules draw on theoretical and practical examples from across the whole of the M/G/H sector and ensure that all students are provided with a broad understanding of the sector. Examples are drawn from local, national, and international case studies and discussion is frequently enhanced by the previous experience coming through the diversity of the student cohort. In semester 2 students can select one module from a list of options designed to appeal to and expand their knowledge of MGH and cognate disciplines. Work-Based Placement/Project – The Semester 2 work-based option of the 12-week (one- day-a-week contact time) employer-based 20-credit placement module (all routes) provides an opportunity, for students who elect to take it, to further develop employer-based learning. Similarly, although it will have a stronger research component, the Semester 3 elective 60-credit work-based profession research module (MA only) will also provide employer-based learning. Students will be required to apply for a place on either of these two modules. Selection for the modules will be based on an interview, with a clear set of criteria. In addition, a student who registers for one of these two modules cannot also register for the other one. In order to make sure students make the most of either of these employer-based opportunities, the Module Leader will arrange the placement with a host employer. Students discuss the type of placement most suited to them with the Module Leader or their Personal Tutor before the end of Semester 1 to try to best match the student with an appropriate host organisation. Please refer to the employer-based learning description below.

The Academic/Professional Research Project: Registered MA students undertake their 60-credit research project after the taught modules have been completed. Students will elect to take one of the following three options:

1. Research Dissertation
The dissertation is aimed at students who already know that they would like to go on to apply for further studies, or who wish to enter a career in the sector that is more research focused.

2. M/G/H Professional Practice and Research
This research module is aimed at students who may still be undecided about following a more academic or a more vocational route on graduation. This module should allow students to consider progressing on to postgraduate research programme in Museum/Gallery/Heritage Studies. However, this module should also give students better

employability opportunities for entering a career with employer organisations, as the research project will be based on a six-week work placement.

3. Research: vocationally-oriented project
This research module is also for students who may still be undecided about following a more academic or a more vocational route on graduation. This module should allow students to consider progressing on to postgraduate research programme in Museum/Gallery/Heritage Studies. This module is especially aimed more at students who would like to develop a research project that would help them to develop research skills used in entrepreneurial freelance consultancy research-type projects.

The assessment and assignment requirements and criteria will be slightly different for each of these 60-credit options and can be found on the relevant Module Outline Forms. Students are encouraged to think about their preference for one of these three and a potential topics as early as possible and discuss topics in detail with their Personal Tutors or the Degree Programme Director early in Semester 2 of Year 1.

Once a research topic has been agreed, students produce an academic/professional research project proposal of no more than 300 words. This short paper details their aims and objectives and the methods that they will employ to achieve them. If deemed necessary by the supervisor, the students will produce a second, more detailed proposal that explains their aims and research methodologies. These provide the basis of the research project to be undertaken.

The academic/professional research output in Year 1 must be an original piece of work and not simply a synthesis of existing knowledge. It requires the gathering and analysis of new data, the development of original arguments and the presentation of conclusions and recommendations. To be successful, the research output requires careful planning and preparation.

Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)
Fieldwork Activities: These provide students with an insight into the workings of different types of M/G/H organisations and different management structures. They provide students with the opportunity to be up-to-date with developments that are taking place in the M/G/H sector. Students are also encouraged to visit as many other M/G/H sites as possible so that they can begin to relate information and ideas presented in lectures, seminars and practicals to the real world.

Practice-based opportunities: Apart from the balance between academic theory and practice that runs through the 20-credit compulsory taught modules, the two 2nd Semester 20-credit option modules (all routes) will allow students to further develop their practical skills, based on what has been learnt in the four compulsory modules, increasing employability chances.

'Masterclasses' in the module MCH8532 allow the students to engage with cutting-edge practice and the research of the teaching team. These day-long workshops allow for a sustained and iterative process in which research questions, approaches and methods are put into practice.

Employer-Based Learning: The Semester 2 work-based option of the 12-week (one-day-a-week contact time) employer-based 20-credit M/G/H practice module (all routes) provides an opportunity, for students who elect to take it, to further develop employer-based learning. Similarly, although it will have a stronger research component, the Semester 3 elective 60-credit work-based profession research module (MA only) will also provide employer-based learning. In order to make sure students make the most of either of these

student with an appropriate host organisation. Placements will commence during Semester 2.
The Academic/Professional Research Project: Having the option to elect one of the three 60-credit research modules provides flexibility for MA students to construct an individual research pathway based on their personal career aspirations and strategies.

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

[Programme Regulations 23-24](#)

13 Support for Student Learning

Generic information regarding University provision is available [here](#).

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

Generic information regarding University provision is available [here](#).

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Accreditation reports

Additional mechanisms

15 Regulation of assessment

Please refer to the Postgraduate (Taught) Examination Conventions at

Generic information regarding University provision is available [here](#).
Role of the External Examiner
An External Examiner, a distinguished member of the subject community, is appointed by the University following recommendation from the Board of Studies. The External Examiner is required to:
i. confirm whether the standards of the University's awards meet or exceed the academic standards specified in external reference points such as the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, the UK Quality Code, subject benchmark statements, and, where appropriate, the requirements of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies;
ii. confirm whether the academic standards of the University's awards are consistent with those of similar programmes in other UK higher education institutions;
iii. report on whether the University's processes for assessment measure student achievement rigorously and fairly and are conducted in line with University policies and regulations;
iv. identify, where appropriate, examples of exemplary practice and innovation in learning, teaching and assessment;
v. comment on opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning experience provided to students.

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.