PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION (Undergraduate)		Newcastle University

1	**Awarding Institution**	Newcastle University
2	**Teaching Institution**	Newcastle University
3	**Final Award**	BA (Hons)
4	**Programme Title**	Media, Communication and Cultural Studies Media, Communication and Cultural Studies (with International Study Year) Media, Communication and Cultural Studies (with Placement Year)
5	**UCAS/Programme Code**	PQL0, 1433U, 1454U
6	**Programme Accreditation**	N/A
7	**QAA Subject Benchmark(s)**	Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies
8	**FHEQ Level**	Level 6
9	**Last updated**	December 2023

10 Programme Aims

1. To provide students with a learning environment that cultivates personal and academic development by offering intellectually exciting and challenging experiences.
2. To produce professionals and graduates who can interpret, analyse and exercise critical judgement in the evaluation of theories, concepts, accounts and explanations produced within the fields of media, communications and culture.
3. To equip graduates with a knowledge and understanding of media, communicative and cultural activities across local and global situations and across historical and contemporary contexts.
4. To enable graduates to apply theories and concepts to the field of media, communication and culture and critically reflect on the reliability and validity of the resulting explanations.
5. To enable graduates to investigate problems and generate solutions by selecting and employing the most appropriate research methods, coding strategies and analytical frames.
6. To help form innovative and versatile professionals who are able to effectively create, manage and disseminate information textually, verbally and visually.
7. To provide students with the necessary transferable intellectual, vocational and employability skills appropriate to the contemporary employment market and post-graduate study.
8. To provide a qualification which fully meets the learning outcomes at Level 6 in the FHEQ.
9. To comply with prevailing University policies and QAA codes of practice.

For students on the Placement Year programme:
10. Provide students with the experience of seeking and securing a position with an employer.
11. Facilitate independent self-management and proactive interaction in a non-university setting.
12. Provide a period of practical work experience that will benefit current academic study and longer-term career plans.
13. Enable students to ethically apply their knowledge and skills in the workplace, reflect upon their development and effectively evidence and articulate their learning in relevant future settings.

For students on the International Study Year programme:
14. Offer students the opportunity to develop graduate attributes which increase employability, particularly communication and (where applicable) language skills, intercultural competencies, adaptability, resilience and global awareness.
15. Gain insight into international Higher Education and experience differences in academic approach and learning environment.
16. Provide the opportunity to experience new areas of study outside of their usual programme of study at Newcastle University.

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 reference to the benchmark statements for Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies.

Knowledge and Understanding
On completing the programme students should possess:

A1 Knowledge of key thinkers, theories, concepts and perspectives in the fields of media, communication and cultural studies and an understanding of how to critically evaluate this knowledge.

A2 Knowledge of media, communication systems and cultures and understanding of how they organise meanings, experiences and affects.

A3 Knowledge of how verbal, textual and visual representations impact upon relationships between individuals, groups, institutions, cultures, and societies.

A4 Knowledge of how cultural contexts and cultural consumption control, create and challenge individual and collective identities, experiences and emotions.

A5 Knowledge of class, age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and other social formations and how they shape the production, circulation and consumption of social, cultural and economic products, artefacts and commodities.

A6 Knowledge of the audio, visual, verbal and textual conventions through which sounds, images and words make meaning via different media and in different social and cultural contexts.

A7 Knowledge of a variety of research methodologies and understanding of how their philosophical traditions and attendant practices are used to produce information about the media, communicative action and culture.

For Students on the Placement Year programme:
A8 The ability to apply personal and professional development strategies to prioritise, plan and manage their own skills development and learning.

A9 The ability to research, select and apply relevant knowledge aimed at enhancing their own skills and effectiveness in specific duties at their placement.

A10 The ability to demonstrate an understanding of a work environment, how it functions and their contribution to it.

A11 The ability to relate their work-based learning to other areas of personal development, including academic performance.

For students on the International Study Year programme:
A12 Demonstrate the ability to adapt to different learning environments.

Teaching and Learning Methods
Outcomes 1-7 are achieved primarily through lectures with scholars who have national and international reputations in their field of study. These methods and strategies are supported by the use of a range of resources that include newspaper, television, film, radio, internet, social media and music recordings. These are supplemented by seminars (1-7), practical sessions (3, 6), tutorials (1-7), ICT, on-line communications, new and digital media (1-7) and research supervision

(1-7). Furthermore, computer clusters are used for the teaching of ICT elements (3, 6). These methods are facilitated by strategies that involve individual and collective learning (small group, class and stage).

All students at Stage 1 are given foundational knowledge in media, communication and cultural studies. At Stage 2, students have the chance to specialise in areas of their choice. At Stage 3, students' knowledge and understanding is further advanced by optional modules covering theory and concepts alongside their research-based dissertation. Teaching and learning methods are also enhanced by the involvement of professionals and practitioners from various media and culture industries. In addition, all students now pursue career and employability routes in-house. Opportunities are also available within a range of cultural and media industries.

Assessment Strategy

Knowledge and understanding are assessed by means of coursework, presentations and research-led assessment.

Coursework: essays, projects, portfolios, seminar preparation.

Presentations: individual presentations, group presentations.

Research-Led assessment: research proposals, dissertation.

The aim of the *coursework* is to enable students to explore their knowledge and understanding. Such methods encourage more sophisticated and critically inflected understanding of knowledge, theory and concepts. *Presentations* enable students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in a different medium, whilst the *research-led* assessment encourages deeper understanding and sustained engagement with particular knowledges, theories and concepts.

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

B1   Collect and select relevant information from a variety of sources including journals, archives, databases, reports, monographs, web pages and research papers.
B2   Manage multiple sources of information containing a variety of perspectives and effectively disseminate ideas in an organised, coherent and logical manner.
B3   Devise research questions in the areas of media, communication and culture and select the most appropriate methods and resources to explicate those questions.
B4   Evaluate the impacts of 'how we get knowledge' (epistemology) on the methods selected and the nature of the evidence that is consequently generated.
B5   Filter research data through coding strategies and provide critical interpretations of the significance of the data to the field of study.
B6   Reflexively recognise how biography, norms and values, ethical standpoints, cultural context and chronology may shape the research process**.**
B7   Demonstrate critical and creative writing skills across a range of media and cultural forms.
B8   Demonstrate professional communication skills in the media and cultural industries.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Students are given the opportunity to develop their subject specific skills in a range of forums. Across the degree students are required to support their knowledge and understanding, subject-specific skills and cognitive skills through the collection of supporting evidence. Achievement of all the outcomes in this area is underpinned by lectures (1-6), workshops (1, 3; 7, 8), seminars and tutorials (4, 6, 7, 8), ICT-based modules (2) and individual research supervision (1-6). The development of these skills is also enhanced by the use of group-led learning sessions (1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8).

The main emphasis in this area is that of research inquiry. Core modules at every stage facilitate students' awareness of a variety of research methods that are appropriate to media,

communication and cultural studies. It is important that students' relationship with methodology intensifies as their degree progresses and they develop a methodology of research as part of their research-led dissertation module.

Assessment Strategy

Subject-specific skills are assessed through coursework, presentations, and timed assessment.

Coursework: essays, projects, group portfolio, seminar preparation, seminar tasks.

Presentations: Individual presentations, group presentations.

Research-Led assessment: primary research, research proposals, and dissertation.

Exams: Timed assessments, seen and unseen examinations.

The aim of the *coursework* is to measure students' ability to interpret, analyse and recognise how different knowledges and understandings shape the fields of media, communication and cultural studies. *Presentations* enable the demonstration of the application of their subject-specific skills. *Research-led methods of assessment* allow students to apply perspectives in order to explain phenomena and they also enable students to adapt their skills to the everyday world.

Practical Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

C1   Interpret, analyse and exercise critical judgement in understanding and evaluation of major theoretical perspectives, concepts, and evidence presented in studies of media, communication and culture.
C2   Recognise how different theoretically informed perspectives contribute to different.knowledges and understandings of media, communication and culture.
C3   Apply theoretical perspectives to explain how individuals and social groups create, circulate and consume media, communication and culture.
C4   Engage in abstract thinking and concept-building and apply knowledge to both empirical situations and practical media.
C5   Adapt existing theories, concepts and explanations to explore new and emerging areas in the field of media, communication and cultural studies.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Developing students' interpreting, analysing and exercising critical judgement in the evaluation of the field of media, communication and cultural studies is accomplished through lectures (1-3). However, seminars and tutorials are predominantly used as means to enable students to discuss, learn to evaluate and demonstrate their skills (1-4). Specific teaching strategies such as group and individual problem-solving sessions (1-4), computer-assisted learning (1- 4), and research supervision (1-4) are also used to facilitate students' critical appreciation and application of theories and concepts in the field of media, communication and cultural studies. Email surgeries are also used where students can have designated one-to-one contact on a weekly basis.

Such strategies operationalise a range of resources that include academic studies, newspaper, literature, television, film, radio, internet, music recordings and photography, which are used to stimulate discussions that enable the application of theories and concepts to 'real life' examples (3, 4).

Assessment Strategy

Subject-specific skills are assessed through coursework, presentations, and timed assessment. These include:

Coursework: Essays, Projects, Group portfolio, Seminar preparation, Computer-based workbook.

Presentations: Individual presentations, Group presentations.

Research-Led assessment: Primary research, Research proposals, Dissertation.

Timed assessment: Seen examination.

Career planning and employability skills are now assessed through specific career-related modules offered as part of programme.

These methods of assessment enable students a thorough and systematic application of their cognitive skills. The *coursework* allows students to put into effect their analytic skills and capacities to critically evaluate in an in depth and systematic fashion. Presentations enable students to translate abstract thinking into analyses of practical events, engendering awareness of specific audiences. *Research-led methods of assessment* provide an opportunity to apply cognitive thinking to real-life phenomena in the field of media, communication and cultural studies. *Timed assessments* diagnostically ensure that students grasp the basic principles of cognitive thinking.

Transferable/Key Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

D1 Gather, organise and deploy ideas and information in order to formulate arguments and critical evaluations.
D2 Cogently communicate by means of well-prepared, clear and confident presentations, and coherent, concise written documents.
D3 Apply communication skills when dealing with a range of audiences such as clients, professionals and employers and culture and heritage industries.
D4 Use library and other information resources skilfully and appropriately.
D5 Solve problems.
D6 Use IT resources skilfully and appropriately from basic competencies, such as data analysis and word-processing, to more complex skills, such as using web-based or multi-media technology.
D7 Plan, organise and prioritise work activities to a given length, format, brief and deadline.
D8 Work productively in a group or team showing abilities at different times to listen, contribute and lead effectively.
D9 Work independently, in self–directed ways and with initiative.
D10 Identify and create action plans on the basis of career/employability sessions.

For students on the Placement Year programme:
D11 Reflect on and manage their own learning and development within the workplace.
D12 Use existing and new knowledge to enhance personal performance in a workplace environment, evaluate the impact and communicate this process.
D13 Use graduate skills in a professional manner in a workplace environment, evaluate the impact and communicate the personal development that has taken place.

For students on the International Study Year programme:
D14 Adapt and operate in different cultural environment.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Teaching methods and strategies that are employed to achieve these objectives include standard lectures (1, 2, 3, 4, 7), ICT based lectures (2-9), workshop sessions (2, 4, 5), library-based interactive sessions (4, 5, 6), seminars (1, 2, 5, 8) and web-based learning (1, 2, 7, 9). Tutorials and research supervision focus on solving problems and working independently (5, 9).

At Stages 1, 2 and 3 students have the opportunity to take modules which allow them to develop skills covering employability in the media and culture industries. These modules involve the direct

application of theories, concepts and perspectives to local organisation and companies. This is often undertaken in a consultancy context (10).

Seminars, where appropriate, involve presentations by students providing discussion and analysis of research/case study explorations.

Assessment Strategy

Key skills are assessed through:

Coursework: Essays (1-9), Projects, Portfolios (1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9), Seminar preparation (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9);

Presentations: Individual presentations (1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 9), Group presentations (1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8);

Research-Led assessments: Research Proposals (1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9), Dissertation; (1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9);

Exams: Timed assessments, seen examinations.

The aim of the *coursework* is to enable students to practice and hone their key skills. Such methods encourage more sophisticated and critically inflected understanding of knowledge, theory and concepts. *Presentations* enable students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in a different medium, whilst the *research-led* assessment encourages deeper understanding and sustained engagement with knowledges, theories and concepts. *Exams* are primarily used to allow students to demonstrate their understanding of core knowledges and concepts.

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features

Basic structure of the programme
(i) Basic structure of the programme

a. The programme is studied over three years full-time for students on PQL0 and over four years full-time for students on 1433U and 1454U.

b. The programme is made up of three stages for PQL0 students. Stage 1 modules are Certificate level; Stage 2 modules are Intermediate level; Stage 3 modules are Honours level. Students are required to study 90 credits at the appropriate level.

c. The programme is made up of four stages for 1433U and 1454U students. Stage 1 modules are certificate level and Stage 2 modules are Intermediate level. Students on 1433U spend a year studying internationally in between Stage 2 and 3 with DPD discretion. Students on 1454U spend a year on a work placement between Stage 2 and 3. These years do not contribute to the overall degree classification. Stage 3 modules are Honours level. Students are required to study 90 credits at the appropriate level.

d. The overall credit value of the programme is 360.

e. Each stage requires the study of modules with a credit value of 120. Each stage is made up of a mixture of *compulsory* (modules that must be taken), *core* (modules that must be taken and must be passed for a student to be able to complete each Stage) and *optional* modules (modules that are chosen from a set). *Compulsory and core* modules ensure that a baseline of knowledge, skills and understanding at Certificate, Intermediate and Honours levels are acquired by all students. *Optional* modules enable students to focus this knowledge in specialised areas.

(ii) Key Features of the Programme

The programme contains a number of distinctive features:

- The programme critically integrates theory and practice with respect to media, communication and culture, providing students with opportunities to mobilise academic theories and analytic skills to address practice-based activities, problems and contexts.

- Research and problem solving is a central concern of the programme.

- An innovative feature of the programme is that it is designed to focus on contextualising media, communication and culture in the workplace through core and compulsory modules.

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

PQL0 Programme Regulations 2024/25

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13   Support for Student Learning

Generic information regarding University provision is available here.

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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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15   Regulation of assessment

Generic information regarding University provision is available here.

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

The University Prospectus: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/degrees/#subject

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.