

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION
(Taught Postgraduate)**



1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	MA
4	Programme Title	Cross-Cultural Communication and International Relations
5	Programme Code	4054
6	Programme Accreditation	N/A
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	N/A
8	FHEQ Level	Level 7
9	Date written/revised	January 2025

10 Programme Aims

The MA Cross-Cultural Communication and International Relations aims to equip students with a comprehensive understanding of inter- and cross-cultural communication theory and practice. The programme prepares students to navigate complex intercultural interactions across diverse educational, professional, and social settings. Students are supported by an experienced team of language and communication scholars with expertise in areas such as multilingualism, migration studies, sociolinguistics, professional communication, social psychology, English as an international language, social interaction studies, and multimodal communication.

The programme aims:

1. To introduce students to current theories, methodologies, and practices in the fields of Intercultural and Cross-Cultural Communication.
2. To support students to critically engage with current theories, methodologies, and practices in the fields of Intercultural and Cross-Cultural Communication, enabling them to analyse and interpret intercultural encounters in various communication contexts.
3. To develop in students a critical awareness and understanding of the ways in which culture and language shape communication, identity, power structures and social interactions.
4. To equip students with the theoretical and practical knowledge necessary to communicate effectively in diverse social and professional contexts.
5. To enable graduates to apply their knowledge of Inter- and Cross-Cultural communication effectively in the international relations contexts.
6. To support students to conduct independent research, applying qualitative and/or quantitative research methods and methodologies to explore inter- and cross-cultural communication phenomena.
7. To enable graduates to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to undertake further advanced studies in Cross-Cultural communication.
8. To provide a qualification which fully meets the requirements of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications Framework at Level 7.
9. To provide a programme which conforms in full with University policies and the QAA Quality Code.

11 Learning Outcomes

Intended Learning Outcomes for the Degree Programme conform to those defined by the FHEQ as being at Masters Level (Level 7). Thus the programme provides the opportunity for students to develop and demonstrate originality in the application of knowledge of Cross-Cultural Communication and of International Relations, and an understanding of how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research in these disciplines. Graduates of this Degree Programme will be able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, and will be able to show originality in tackling and solving problems, and designing and conducting empirical research projects. They will also have the ability to critically evaluate current research and advanced scholarship in Cross-Cultural Communication and in International Relations.

Graduates of this programme will also have a systematic understanding and critical awareness of current problems with, and new insights into, the nature of knowledge of cross-cultural communication. They will also have a deep understanding of the nature of culture and of group identity and their manifestation and realisation in individual communication practices. Allied to this will be a knowledge of the multidisciplinary nature of the field of International Relations, and how theory derived from these various sub-disciplines can inform an understanding of International Relations, and how both Cross-Cultural Communication and the field International Relations can inform us about contemporary culture, societies and social relationships in different national, international and/or cross-cultural settings and contexts.

Specific Intended Programme Learning Outcomes are detailed below.

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should have:

A1 An advanced level of knowledge, and critical understanding, of key theories, models and ideas in the study of both Cross-Cultural Communication and International Relations.

A2 An advanced understanding of the complex nature of culture and social and cultural identity, and how such identifications impact on communication practices, both within a cultural group, and in cross-cultural contexts.

A3 An advanced understanding of how human communication in general, and visual and aural in particular, influence and are themselves influenced by culture, cross-cultural communication and cultural identification.

A4 An advanced understanding of how theory derived from the various sub-disciplines can inform an understanding of the nature of social relationships and wider societal issues and interrelationships and ways in which these are articulated.

A5 An advanced and critical understanding of the main methodological approaches used in the study of Cross-Cultural Communication and in International Relations, such as research questionnaires, research interviews and various forms of discourse analysis and an advanced understanding of applying these approaches when conducting research in the fields of Cross-Cultural Communication and International Relations. This will include an advanced understanding of strengths and weaknesses of different types of data and the development of a critical use of sources.

A6 An advanced level of knowledge of how ethical issues impact on research. This will involve an advanced knowledge and understanding of matters relating to privacy and confidentiality in research; a critical awareness of the political context of research; a critical

awareness of professional codes of practice; an advanced knowledge and understanding of the power relations inherent in research fieldwork; and a critical awareness of the ethical responsibilities that a researcher has towards the researched

Teaching and Learning Methods

The teaching and learning strategies and methods for A1, A2, A3 and A4 are a combination of content specific lectures, seminars, workshops and group and individual tutorials.

Key theories, models and ideas of language and communication in general, and inter- and Cross-Cultural Communication in particular, will be introduced in the compulsory modules. Theories, models and ideas of language and communication in general, and inter- and Cross-Cultural Communication in particular will be introduced in more detail in specific modules.

In the specialist optional modules in International Relations, students will have the opportunity to focus on wider issues relating to the field of International Relations, as determined by their individual needs and interests.

A5 and A6 are also addressed in the teaching of the above-mentioned modules. Students also develop a knowledge of methodological and theoretical approaches, data collection and analytic skills through lectures, seminars, independent reading and hands-on experience in their Research Portfolio project and the connected module ALC8003 Research Portfolio (A5 and A6). Students are made aware of and acquire knowledge of ethical issues (A6) through this module, as well as through teamwork, presentations, case studies and independent reading.

Assessment Strategy

A1-A4 Assessed by means of coursework for all (compulsory and optional) modules. Coursework formats include written assignments, oral presentation and the Research Portfolio, part of which will be presented in written form, and part of which will be presented in the form of an oral presentation and related presentation slides.

A2-A4 Assessed by means of coursework and assignments for the compulsory modules and the optional Language and Communication modules.

A5 Assessed by means of coursework and assignments for all (compulsory and optional) modules, including the Research Portfolio.

A6 Assessed by means of the work produced for the Research Portfolio.

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

B1 define and formulate research problems, research questions and, where applicable, research hypotheses.

B2 understand the rationale for research methods, evaluate and make selections according to existing scholarship, research findings and thinking in connected disciplines, combined with students' own interests and professional ambitions.

B3 understand sampling, sampling error, and biases in general, and, in their own research, to consider ways to limit these inevitable limitations as much as possible.

B4 understand and apply concepts of generalisability, validity, reliability and replicability.

B5 apply research methods' analytic techniques appropriately and accurately, understanding the strengths and limitations of the technique(s) used.
Teaching and Learning Methods
The teaching and learning strategies and methods for B1-B5 are a combination of lectures, seminars, workshops, group tutorials and both discipline-specific individual and team-based problem solving exercises. Students will learn through completing assignments, practical exercises and designing and conducting research projects for the Research Portfolio.
Assessment Strategy
Intellectual Skills B1–B5 are assessed by means of written essays, individual presentations, empirical literature reviews and the empirical research project element of the Research Portfolio.
Subject-Related Skills
The programme provides the opportunity for students to develop and demonstrate: C1 The advanced skills of applying different theoretical and methodological approaches to particular cases of research in Cross-Cultural Communication and in the field of International Relations. C2 The advanced techniques of making oral presentations on issues related to Cross-Cultural Communication and to International Relations. C3 The ability to write a research proposal and conduct an empirical research project on a topic related to language, culture and/or communication. C4 Enhanced professional and general communication skills in cross-cultural/international contexts.
Teaching and Learning Methods
The teaching and learning strategies and methods for subject related skills (C1) are in the delivery of a range of specialist modules, through a combination of interactive lectures, seminars, and workshops. Students will be given support and guidance by their module leaders on both compulsory and optional modules.
Students will produce an individual oral presentation as part of the Research Portfolio (C2). They will be provided with guidance on this through participation in lectures and seminars.
Writing research proposals, and conducting and writing up empirical research projects, will be taught and practiced throughout lectures and seminars supporting the Research Portfolio project (C3). Supervisors, who will be either the Degree Programme Director, or another staff member from Cross-Cultural Communication, will discuss all aspects of the research project through individual supervision meetings. General professional and communication skills will be taught throughout compulsory and optional modules, and in the preparation of the Research Portfolio (C4).
Assessment Strategy
Practical skills C1, C2 and C4 are assessed by means of module assignments, and in particular the Research Portfolio. Practical skill C3 is assessed through the Research Portfolio.
Key Skills

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

D1 The skills to identify, retrieve and synthesise relevant materials, including annals, books, conference proceedings, journals, theses, and resources available electronically and online.

D2 The skills to maintain a personal bibliography.

D3 IT skills, including word processing, presentation slide preparation, and other basic computing skills, including spreadsheets and database management.

D4 The skills to communicate and present research findings effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences.

D5 The skills to work effectively to deadlines, both individually and in multilingual and multicultural groups.

D6 The ability to produce well-structured written work, appropriate to both the writing genre and the intended audience.

Teaching and Learning Methods

The teaching and learning strategies and methods for D1–D6 are in the preparation and feedback for a range of written assignments, and in the preparation and feedback for individual and group student presentations. These will occur in compulsory and optional modules, and in preparing the Research Portfolio. They provide opportunities for the students to co-operate, develop ideas, improve problem-solving capacity and work to deadlines. They will also provide opportunities for students to enhance their oral presentation skills. The Research Portfolio provides specific opportunities for skills development through the construction of a research plan, through synthesising knowledge and by participating in seminar workshops and individual meetings with supervisors and module leaders.

Assessment Strategy

Transferable skills D1-D6 are all assessed by means of module assignments, and in particular the Research Portfolio.

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features

Basic structure of the programme

The degree offers students the opportunity to follow their own professional and/or research interests in the fields of Cross-Cultural Communication and International Relations, while relating the theory, practice and knowledge in the fields of Social Psychology, Communication Studies, Intercultural Communication Studies, Ethnography and Discourse studies to their application in the study of Cross-Cultural Communication.

The programme consists of 120 credits of taught modules and a 60 credit Research Portfolio. The Research Portfolio is made up of three, inter-related assignments, produced throughout the year, and culminating in an empirical research project conducted over the summer.

The 120 credits of taught modules are made up of 60 credits from the Language and Communication range of modules, and 60 credits from the International Relations range of modules. Students who wish to take slightly more from one of the two strands may do so, following approval from their Degree Programme Director. Further details of the compulsory and optional taught modules are outlined in the Programme Regulations.

Candidates who successfully complete all the taught elements of the programme but do not wish to proceed to the Research Portfolio empirical research project will be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma, under the University's Examination Conventions for Taught Master's Programmes.

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

The MAs in Cross-Cultural Communication offered by Newcastle University are uniquely multidisciplinary, being the only MA programmes in the world which offer the students the chance to study Cross-Cultural Communication in addition to another academic and professional discipline, through the range of pathway specialisms.

The Research Portfolio is a unique alternative to the traditional MA dissertation model, providing students with the opportunity to do an MA dissertation equivalent in three parts, over the course of the academic year, while maintaining the requirement for an independent empirical research project to be submitted as a final assignment.

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

[Programme Regulations 2025-26](#)

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](#).

Accreditation reports
n/a

Additional mechanisms
n/a

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/>

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.