

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION
(Taught Postgraduate)**



1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	MA (Master of Arts)
4	Programme Title	Media and Public Relations
5	Programme Code	4076 F/P
6	Programme Accreditation	N/A
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	N/A
8	FHEQ Level	Level 7
9	Last updated	April 2025

10 Programme Aims

The MA in Media and Public Relations Programme integrates hands-on public relations practice with in-depth media analysis, preparing students for success in a fast-evolving industry. This programme explores the intersection of media, culture, politics and business, equipping students with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills essential for a successful career in public relations and communications.

This postgraduate programme is designed for aspiring and established media and public relations practitioners. It enhances academic knowledge while increasing students' awareness of the social, cultural, economic, and political forces shaping corporate and political events through the media. Students will gain insights into the latest media trends, public relations ethics, and the transformative role of AI in brand-audience engagement. The programme provides knowledge and practical skills about the current digital environment and online culture to equip students for public relations in the digital age. Students will also acquire advanced research skills and conceptual tools, empowering them to produce high-quality scholarly research in Media and Public Relations. With a strong emphasis on international perspectives, the programme explores the increasingly globalised nature of media production and consumption through comparative analysis and critical engagement with cross-cultural communication issues. Each year, the programme hosts exclusive masterclasses with expert external speakers to motivate students and help them build industry links.

The programme is taught by a research-active team in media, communication, and cultural studies with rich practice backgrounds. The curriculum draws on cutting-edge research, current case studies with practice-based training and existing module strengths to deliver a rich and rigorous academic experience. Additionally, the programme supports pathways to further study at PhD level. It also fosters strong industry links, ensuring students benefit from collaboration opportunities with media and public relations industries on both national and international scales.

In brief the programme aims:

1. To develop a sophisticated understanding of public relations theory and media practices through critical analysis at national and global levels.
2. To develop enhanced practical skills to enable students to work in the public relations industry across sectors globally as well as developing advanced research skills and conceptual tools that will enable students to produce high-quality scholarly research in Media and Public Relations.
3. To develop a global perspective on media production and consumption, fostering cross-cultural awareness and comparative analysis of international media landscapes.
4. To develop strong industry connections and professional skills, enhancing career prospects in public relations, corporate communication, and related media industries.

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 media, culture and society and of the skills associated with the practices of public relations.

- a) Conceptual, theoretical and methodological rigour in the application of knowledge to Media Studies through compulsory modules and the related options,
- b) The skills required to enhance employability in the profession of Public Relations.

Graduates of this degree programme will be able to demonstrate the analytical and critical skills needed to conduct and evaluate current research and advanced scholarship, and the practical skills necessary to become practicing Public Relations professionals

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should develop:

- A1.** A critical and sophisticated understanding of media, culture and society,
- A2.** An advanced knowledge and understanding of the key approaches to theorising and analysing media and public relations, which is informed by cutting-edge research,
- A3.** An in-depth knowledge and understanding of the media industry and its regulatory frameworks in a transnational context as it pertains to the public relations profession and media industry,
- A4.** An understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of different types of data dissemination and analysis in media, communication, journalism and public relations,
- A5.** An in-depth understanding of key production processes and professional practices relevant to media, cultural and communication industries,
- A6.** An advanced understanding and knowledge of the ethical responsibilities that a scholar and investigator has towards the object of research,
- A7.** An in-depth knowledge and understanding of professional methods and codes of practice as laid down by the Chartered Institute of Public Relations,
- A8.** An advanced knowledge and understanding of the power relations inherent in research fieldwork.

Teaching and Learning Methods

The teaching strategy is to offer a combination of lectures, interactive online materials, seminars, workshops and small-group tutorials. Students will develop skills in defining and formulating research issues, skills in methodology, data collection, analysis, bibliographic work, and competence in the critical use of sources in the following ways: seminars, independent reading and hands-on experience through project work and final project. Students acquire knowledge of ethical issues through teamwork, presentations, case studies and independent reading.

Assessment Strategy

A full range of assessment methods – including group presentations, case-study projects, written essay assignments, professional plans and profiles, methodological critiques of selected research studies, practice-based reports, individual and group oral presentations, portfolio of media production work and critical evaluation – will be employed. These will reflect the aims and objectives of the programme and the postgraduate level of the degree.

Intellectual Skills
<p>On completing the programme students should be able to apply:</p> <p>B1. Effective problem-solving strategies and high-level analytical and planning processes,</p> <p>B2. The capacity to define and formulate research problems, questions and hypotheses,</p> <p>B3. The ability to reflect on the relationship between theory and practice,</p> <p>B4. Conceptual, theoretical and methodological rigour in the application of knowledge to Media Studies through compulsory and optional modules,</p> <p>B5. The analytical and critical skills needed to assess and conduct current research and engage in advanced analysis,</p> <p>B6. The ability to critically analyse key theoretical and practical concerns,</p> <p>B7. The ability to assess the strengths and weaknesses of different types of data and to extract information from relevant data sources.</p>
Teaching and Learning Methods
<p>The teaching strategy consists of a combination of lectures, seminars and tutorials (including synchronous and asynchronous sessions delivered online), practical workshops, and fieldwork utilising both discipline-specific and team-based problem-solving exercises. Students will be provided with teaching and learning strategies that promote a sophisticated understanding of the relationship between theory and practice and of cross-cultural and transnational issues and contexts in media, public relations, and journalism through comparative analysis and global contextualisation of the subject matter. Students will learn through completing assignments, practical exercises, professional project work and a final project .</p>
Assessment Strategy
<p>Cognitive skills will be assessed by the final project and by professional and practical projects.</p>
Practical Skills
<p>On completing the programme students should be able to apply:</p> <p>C1. The complex practical skills to plan, deliver and assess a public relations event for the public, private or voluntary sector,</p> <p>C2. Practical skills needed for the production of various materials necessary for a public relations campaign,</p> <p>C3. Bibliographic skills needed to identify and retrieve relevant material, including books, journal articles, conference proceedings, statistical data, government and other public reports including resources available online and offline,</p> <p>C4. A sophisticated use of methods of evaluating a range of sources, texts and practices using theoretical frameworks that pertain to media, communication and cultural studies,</p> <p>C5. Skills to set up a campaign network for the optimal delivery of a PR campaign,</p> <p>C6. Skills to deliver PR campaign messages in a wide variety of media and a good understanding of the characteristics of these media,</p> <p>C7. Skills to produce effective press releases in accordance with journalistic practices.</p>
Teaching and Learning Methods

The teaching strategy is to provide subject-specific and professional skills through a range of specialist modules. Students will be provided with teaching and learning strategies that promote a sophisticated understanding of cross-cultural and transnational issues and contexts in media and public relations through comparative analysis and global contextualisation of the subject matter. Students will also be given support and guidance by their module leaders on both compulsory and optional modules. Each student will be allocated a personal dissertation supervisor who will discuss all aspects of research in the production of the dissertation on an individual basis. Students will work in teams and will present their work in a written format and orally. They will learn through participation in seminars and lectures, delivered both in person and online, and through the preparation of oral presentations, the final project and professional project work.

Assessment Strategy

These will be assessed through written proposals, professional and practical reports, and written assignments and the final project. .

Transferable/Key Skills

On completing the programme students should possess:

- D1.** The skills to communicate and present research findings effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences,
- D2.** The skills of effective written and oral communication and presentation,
- D3.** The capacity to manage research effectively, including planning, implementing and producing reports, assignments, and related projects on time,
- D4.** The skills to manage workloads and to work to deadlines,
- D5.** The skills to work effectively, both independently and as member of teams in both an academic and professional context.

Teaching and Learning Methods

The teaching strategy consists of a range of written assessment including essays, reports, written tests, projects, and other practical work and seminars/workshops in which students are required to work in teams as well as deliver individual presentations. They provide opportunities for the students to co-operate, develop ideas, improve problem-solving capacity and work to deadlines. The final project provides specific opportunities for skills development through the construction of a research plan, through synthesising knowledge and by participating in final project workshops on the methodologies module. .

Assessment Strategy

Key skills will be assessed through written proposals, practice-based reports, written essays and the final project. Assessments will test, as appropriate, theoretical, empirical and professional knowledge and understanding, together with their application to the profession of public relations. The assessments will reflect the postgraduate nature and aims of the course. They facilitate assessment on an equal footing for students from a wide range of cultural, national and disciplinary backgrounds.

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features

Basic structure of the programme

The MA Media and Public Relations combines theoretical, research-based and vocational elements to provide students with advanced proficiency in academic research and scholarship

combined with professional skills. The programme comprises modules to a credit value of 180. All students will be required to take 4 compulsory 20-credit modules (NB part-time students will be expected to complete these compulsory core modules in their first year of registration) and a compulsory 60-credit final project. All students also choose 40 credits of optional modules. With the approval of the Degree Programme Director, candidates may choose one 20-credit module from Level 6 (Stage 3) Undergraduate Media Programmes as one of their options (candidates cannot enrol again on an optional module that they have completed in previous studies at Newcastle University).

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

The key factor that distinguishes this course from other Masters programmes in Media and Public Relations is the combining of a research-led and critical approach with practical components that allow students to develop professional skills. The range of assessment reflects this diversity. Assessment requires students to:

- a) Engage with theories and concepts,
- b) Provide research evidence and engage with relevant literature,
- c) Demonstrate a critical understanding of research methodology,
- d) Develop practical skills of direct relevance to the profession of public relations.

Students will also have the opportunity to do a final project, enabling them to apply their critical understanding of research methodology and its application within an industry setting. This offer is subject to availability of industry organisations.

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/postgraduate/courses/>

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.

