

University of Cambridge: Programme Specifications

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POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE OF PROFESSIONAL STUDY, EDUCATIONAL ENQUIRY, AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

1	Awarding body	University of Cambridge
2	Teaching institution	Faculty of Education
3	Accreditation details	25 Masters Level credits
4	Name of final award	PCPS
5	Programme title	Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Study Postgraduate Certificate of Educational Enquiry Postgraduate Certificate of Staff Development
6	JACS code(s)	X300
7	Relevant QAA benchmark statement(s)	Education
8	Qualifications framework level	7 (Masters)
9	Date specification was produced/ last revised	March 2009
10	Date specification was last reviewed	May 2010

Aims of the Programme

The Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Study (PCPS) is used to accredit the Faculty's taught Practitioner Professional Development (PPD) courses. These courses usually comprise 30 or 60 hours of study (or multiples thereof) with written work equivalent to 2,000 words and 4,000 words respectively. The PCPS is designed essentially to foster practice-focused enquiry for teachers and others engaged in and/or interested in reflecting upon educational processes. PCPS courses provide continuing professional development focused on understanding improvements in policy and practice, and help students prepare for potential career advancement.

Postgraduate certificate level courses are suitable either for participants looking for an introduction to an aspect of policy, practice or enquiry that is new to them or for those wishing to extend and develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in established areas of expertise, with a view to progressing on to Diploma or Masters courses in the future. Participants' work is expected to lead towards some form of **impact** upon practice or policy and to help students prepare for potential career advancement.

Specialist Certificate level courses within this programme

The Postgraduate Certificate of Educational Enquiry (PCEE) is equivalent to the PCPS in terms of level of study and credit accumulation. The PCEE enables participants to pursue individual development priorities through enquiry and reflection under supervision rather than by attending a taught course. Participants wishing to engage in independent, practice-focused enquiry in an emerging or established area of interest or expertise may be interested in using the PCEE to accredit their work. Hours of study and written work are again counted in units of 30 hours and 2,000 word equivalence.

The Postgraduate Certificate of Staff Development (PCSD) is again equivalent to the PCPS in terms of level of study and credit accumulation. Participants can study for a PCSD when they are involved with the Faculty in providing or supporting professional development opportunities for others, for example, as tutors or mentors within a taught programme. Participants would be expected to bring to this relationship some measure of expertise relating either to practice or to the processes of study and enquiry. Participants may gain the PCSD in recognition of skills, knowledge and understanding gained in relation to staff development. Hours of study and written work are again counted in units of 30 hours and 2,000 word equivalence.

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

Participants will develop their substantive knowledge and understanding in a specific area of study. This will include knowledge of recent relevant research and policy as well as of seminal work and practical application. The substantive content of individual courses changes in response to the needs of schools and Local Authorities as well as in response to policy. However, there are some major themes within the Faculty and Partnership provision.

Major themes within Faculty-based provision are:

- Improving teaching, learning and assessment practice, including subject studies;
- counselling, personal and social education and citizenship;
- nurture groups and mentoring;
- careers and information, advice and guidance (IAG) in the curriculum
- special educational needs and inclusion

Major themes within partnership provision are:

- inclusion and the role of the SENCO;
- supporting pupils with severe learning difficulties and physiological and neurological impairments;
- autism spectrum disorders and challenging behaviours;
- improving behaviour and attendance;
- teaching pupils with speech and language difficulties;
- information and communication technologies and the use of Interactive Whiteboards.

Details of the range of the current range of Faculty-based and Partnership PCPS courses are to be found on our website:

<http://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/ptpd/ppdprog.html>.

Skills and other attributes

Studying for the PCPS promotes critical reflection, reading for a purpose, presentational and research skills, together with other specific skills and attributes dependent on which PCPS course is undertaken.

Recruitment and Admissions

PCPS courses are aimed at professionals working with children and young people in schools and other settings. Most courses mainly recruit students with qualified teacher status (QTS). Some courses recruit teaching assistants (TAs), career advisors, counselors or others who do not necessarily have QTS but who contribute to the education and development of young people.

Publicity materials are sent to schools in the local area (Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk). These materials alert potential students to the type of PPD Faculty-based courses run each academic year and directs interested individuals to more detailed information about courses on the Faculty website. The website indicates how the PCPS might be used to progress through different PPD routes to an Advanced Diploma or Masters qualification.

The website also describes all the courses run in partnership with local authorities which may also be available to those working outside that particular authority. Teachers and others working in the local authorities with whom we are in partnership are alerted to partnership courses by their local authority.

Courses are also advertised by relevant professional associations and this 'targeting' has been successful in attracting students to some courses. Much recruitment is achieved through the recommendations of previous students demonstrating the value placed on courses by participants.

Prospective students may seek further information from the PPD office and apply for a PCPS course using the application procedure outlined on our website:

<http://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/ptpd/ppdapp.html>

Teaching and Learning Methods

Students encounter a wide range of teaching and learning methods which vary according to the subject and the particular environments in which they are working. Faculty-based teaching will include: lectures, seminars, workshops, peer-teaching, self-study, practical work, individual supervisions and student presentations. Most courses will involve students in applying ideas from courses in their own contexts and in reflection on the effectiveness of these ideas.

Each course tutor is available to give advice and support to students. Where courses are run outside of the Faculty, further support is available from one of the Faculty's link lecturers. Administrative issues are dealt with by the Course Administrator.

Assessment

In addition to completing the 80% attendance requirement, participants wishing to gain a Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Study (PCPS) will be expected to, for example:

- participate in course processes and activities provided as an integral part of the course programme;
- complete any tasks set in association with the course and specified in the course proposal or description;
- bring together any materials gathered or developed through course tasks or activities and present these as evidence of enquiry, for example, in the form of a portfolio or as a set of handouts for fellow participants;
- provide a critical and reflective commentary contextualising the materials; explaining their relationship to course-related enquiry; and summarising the learning that has taken place as a result of participation in the course, for example, in the form of a written account, a portfolio of materials or as a presentation to colleagues.

Assignments

Submissions for the award of a 30 hour PCPS should represent the equivalent of around 2000 words in writing, and for a 60 hour PCPS the equivalent of around 4,000 words in writing. This need not be in the form of an academic essay. Possible formats include the products of activities suggested in the section above regarding expectations of participants.

The PCPS is accredited at Masters Level and this should be reflected in the quality of the work produced for assessment. PCPS submissions will be judged either to have passed or failed in relation to the following criteria.

Work at PCPS level will provide evidence of:

- Impact upon professional development and practice
 - attempts to resolve issues and solve problems in relation to policy-making and/or professional practice;
 - some evaluation of impact or potential impact based on sound professional judgements;
 - commitment to ongoing development and enquiry.
- Development of knowledge, skills and understanding
 - a reflective approach to practice and/or policy and towards what has been learned;
 - extension in understanding and critical awareness of current problems /or new insights in relation to an area of professional practice;
 - understanding of tools and techniques applicable to enquiry in their professional context.
- Development of a project
 - systematic and well-managed enquiry focused on development and improvements in practice;
 - application of knowledge and techniques of enquiry in relation to their own practice.
- Development of criticality
 - some evaluation of practice, policy and/or research in the area;
 - evaluation of tools and techniques of enquiry or development.
- Presentation, structure and organization
 - ideas that are well-presented, carefully organised and clearly communicated

While grades are not awarded in the PCPS programme, comments from markers will indicate the strengths and the less successful aspects of submissions in terms of these criteria.

Quality Assurance

The high quality of the PCPS is supported by the following:

- The involvement of research active Faculty staff in teaching and/or in overseeing the courses as link lecturers;
- systematic programme of course evaluations, requiring responses from students, course tutors and link lecturers;
- A formal evaluation of students' experience is conducted at the end of the year, and issues arising are considered within the Faculty of Education by the Practitioner Professional Development (PPD) Management Group, the Standing Committee for PPD and the Faculty Board with a view to enhancing the programme for the future.
- overview of courses and course outcomes by the PPD manager;
- Internal Examiner's moderation of assignments from a rotating representative sample of courses;
- External Examiner evidence, verbal and in written reports.