

**Programme Specification and Curriculum Map for MSc/PG Diploma and
PG Certificate Professional Practice in Research Methods**

1. Programme title	MSc Professional Practice in Research Methods (180 Credits) PG Diploma Professional Practice in Research Methods (120 credits) PG Cert Professional Practice in Research Methods (60 Credits)
2. Awarding institution	Middlesex University
3. Teaching institution	Middlesex University
4. Programme accredited by	N/A
5. Final qualification	MSc/,PGDip/,PG Cert
6. Academic year	2014/15
7. Language of study	English
8. Mode of study	F/T,PT

1. Overview of the programme context and learning requirements

With a key focus on research practice into real-world problems, the course aims to enhance both academic and employment prospects and provides training across the whole research process.

It meets a range of needs, including those of students who want to progress to a research degree and a professional research career, and those professionals who require advanced research skills in their work. The course enables students and practitioners to gain an overview of social research theories and methodologies, explore ways of conducting research ethically and cross culturally, receive training in quantitative (SPSS) and qualitative (N VIVO) software packages, and engage in the community of practice of professional research in the University and wider world.

MSc Professional Practice in Social Research Methods– 180 credits at academic level 7 and 4 modules, and major project.

The core modules are:

SSC4601 Research Design and Ethics (30c) to provide a basis in the professional practice of research, including, research methodology, design and ethics in Social Sciences and an understanding of the basic principles for theorising and conducting research.

SSC4616 Quantitative Research Methods (30c). The module aims to provide an account of a range of quantitative research methods and strategies and how these can be applied to a variety of research areas and work settings. It provides skills for quantitative design and data collection as well as showing how to access and use major secondary and official data-banks. The module also provides an introduction to Statistics and Social Statistics in particular, presenting and discussing a range of descriptive and inferential techniques and illustrating how to use these with dedicated software packages (in particular Excel and SPSS). Finally, it provides the skills to analyse and critically evaluate research and publications based on statistical analysis.

SSC4617 Qualitative Research Methods (30c). The module aims to prepare students to undertake qualitative research in a variety of settings. It provides an introduction to a range of qualitative research methods and a critical awareness of the possibilities and limitations associated with each. It affords experience of qualitative research design, sampling, data collection, analysis and reporting. It introduces computer software (NVIVO10) for qualitative analysis with the aim of developing practical skills and a critical appreciation of the benefits and disadvantages of computer software for storing, organising and analysing

qualitative data.

Optional Modules – students are encouraged to consider a methods option such as – SSC4611 Spatial analysis for the social sciences but they are free to choose any level 7 subject specific option with the prior agreement of the Programme Leader. In addition, WBS4731 can be used for experience in own work place or through an internship.

WBS4760 Dissertation (60c). This module aims to provide the opportunity to develop projects, inquiries and/or other work-based activities that are designed to improve or inform areas of the student's or others' work/practice. The student will explore and critically discuss their work/practice and demonstrate the learning gained, as well as the development of their knowledge and skills. The learning will be located within the student's own localised and specialised work/practice.

Postgraduate Diploma Professional Practice in Research Methods – 120 credits at academic level 7 and 4 modules of which the core modules are:

SSC4601 Research Design and Ethics (30c) and SSC4617 Qualitative Research Methods (30c) or SSC4616 Quantitative Research Methods (30c)

plus

WBS4731 Internship (30 credits)

The specific content and approach for this module are negotiated in order to meet the requirements of individual professional development and/or organisational development needs. This will include negotiation of learning outcomes specific to the research/work/practice, identified research/work/practice themes, learning resources and assessment requirements to reflect the specific nature of the project, inquiry or other work-based activity undertaken.

Postgraduate Certificate Professional Practice in Research Methods – 60 credits at academic level 7 and 2 modules of which one is SSC4601 Research Design and Ethics (30c) to provide a basis in the professional practice of research, including research methodology, design and ethics in Social Sciences and an understanding of the basic principles for theorising and conducting research.

The second is chosen from one of the basic types of research methods – quantitative or qualitative methods i.e., SSC4616 Quantitative Research Methods (30c) or SSC4617 Qualitative Research Methods (30c).

2. Programme aims

To develop :

- in-depth knowledge of theoretical, epistemological and conceptual debates underpinning research
- proficiency in undertaking research in the real world, from devising a research question to writing up and presenting the final results
- skills to critically evaluate published research work, and debate issues about the role and value of research in society, policy and practice
- a critical appreciation of ethical issues pertaining to the research process and the implications for research in different settings e.g. with vulnerable participants or hard to reach groups
- evaluate the merits and potential limitations of various research methods for specific research topics
- the knowledge and skills necessary to undertake an original research project on a substantive issue or a methodological problem
- understanding and practical skills of advanced software packages and apply them to specific topics

3. Programme design and construction

MSc in Professional Practice in Research Methods:

SSC4601 Research Design and Ethics

(30c) Autumn start

And

SSC4616 Quantitative Research Methods (30c) Autumn start

And

SSC4617 Qualitative Research Methods (30c) Autumn start

Plus

Optional module

Plus

WBS4760 Dissertation

The core modules in this MSc programme enable students to develop a range of quantitative and qualitative research skills including research project design and data collection techniques. It is highly advantageous for research students to develop skills in both quantitative and qualitative methods. SSC4616 provides an introduction to Statistics and Social Statistics in particular, presenting and discussing a range of descriptive and inferential techniques and illustrating how to use these with dedicated software packages (in particular Excel and SPSS). SSC4617 prepares students to undertake qualitative research in a variety of settings by teaching qualitative research design, sampling, data collection, analysis and reporting. It also provides training in computer software (NVIVO8) for qualitative analysis with the aim of developing practical skills. SSC4616 and 4617 complement the epistemological, methodological and ethical debates discussed in WBL4730. The team delivering this programme work closely together and, as members of the Social Policy Research Centre, they collaborate on externally funded research projects. Their experience of real world research underpins their teaching.

PG Diploma Professional Practice in Research Methods:

SSC4601 Research Design and Ethics (30c) Autumn start

And

SSC4616 Quantitative Research Methods (30c)

SSC4617 Qualitative Research Methods (30c)

WBS4731 Internship (30c)

Total 120 c

PG Certificate Professional Practice in Research Methods:

SSC4601 Research Design and Ethics

(30c) Autumn start

And

SSC4616 Quantitative Research Methods (30c)

Or

SSC4617 Qualitative Research Methods (30c).

Total 60c

4. Description of negotiated programme learning outcomes

On completion of the programme the successful student will be able to:

Knowledge and Understanding

1. Identify and apply knowledge which demonstrates systematic and critical understanding of theory at the forefront of professional practice as a researcher.
2. Critically understand ethical principles which demonstrate a systematic knowledge and coherent application of professional codes of conduct to the work/practice of self/others.

Cognitive skills

1. Systematically analyse and synthesise a range of information and advanced theoretical perspectives which informs the development and critical evaluation of innovative research practice.
2. Reflect on own practice leading to significant transformative insights which have the potential to impact on the work/practice of self and/or others.
3. Critically evaluate and creatively apply methods of inquiry, action planning and/or problem solving that have the potential to enhance the work/practice/research of self and others.

Practical skills

1. Systematically design and develop research projects and/or inquires to transform the work/practice of self and others.
2. Systematically engage with professional networks which include the application of advanced interpersonal and networking skills with the potential to transform the research practice of self and others.
3. Persuasively communicate and systematically manage ideas and information for professional work/practices and/or academic audiences.

Personal and enabling skills

1. Critically reflect on and analyse personal motivations, aspirations and actions to plan own continuing professional development as a researcher.
2. Take the lead and be accountable for the strategic management of individual and/or group learning that demonstrates initiative in professional contexts.

5. Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategies

Knowledge is gained through a variety of teaching and lecturing methods: lectures, seminars, workshops and self-directed study. The teaching team are all research active and engage in high quality research on a wide range of subjects. Most teaching staff are renowned experts in their field. Workshops

include laboratory sessions for the teaching of advanced research methods software packages which are fully incorporated into the teaching of research methods. There is reference to specific case studies provided by staff and students and through the University Learning Resources.

Students learn cognitive skills through: Lectures, seminars and self-directed study develop skills in summarising and synthesising information. Additional information is provided for students through OasisPlus and all students are encouraged to become part of the community of practice of researchers by engaging in the SPRC Seminar series and other research activities in the wider university.

Students learn practical research skills through workshop exercises and through the negotiated projects. Basic computer software skills are taught in research laboratories which are accessible for students to practice. In addition students have access to resource based and electronic learning.

Students' knowledge and understanding is assessed by a variety of forms, both formative and summative: Essays, critical evaluation of published research, seminar presentations, research proposals, oral presentations: computer based assignments, developing a research proposal and piloting a qualitative research interview.

A range of other forms of assessments test different elements of cognitive skills: essays, analysis of published research (academic and policy), analysis of interview transcripts, computer assisted assignments, and pilot studies.

Students' practical skills are assessed by: Seminar presentations, analysis of transcripts of interviews, applications of software packages in quantitative and qualitative research.

Most assessments allow the student to focus on an aspect of their work, interest or professional development. Negotiated projects must relate to the students work, interests or career aspirations.

6. Negotiated Work Based Learning Project details

SSC4601 Research Design and Ethics

Module Aims:

- to explore the potential for research in policy, practice or workplace settings,
- critically consider the methodological and philosophical context of social research, relationships between different paradigms, methodologies, theories and research designs.
- to develop projects, inquiries or work-based activities to inform or improve practice
- appreciate the key issues, problems and controversies involved in designing and implementing a research project in different work and research environments.
- to develop research skills and become familiar with ethical and governance frameworks within which social science research takes place in contemporary Britain.
- negotiate themes of projects, inquiries or work-based activities which will enhance individual professional development and/or organisational development aims.
- critically reflect on and demonstrate evidence of learning in relation to work based practice and the negotiated topic.
- demonstrate evidence of professional and personal development through the chosen research topic.

Syllabus

- Introduction – research design, methodologies and research contexts
- Research designs and methodologies- positivism, interpretivism, critical theory, structuralism, post-structuralism, feminist methodologies, grounded theory, phenomenology; mixing methods and methodologies
- Writing a successful research proposal
- Research processes: literature searching and reviewing
- Ethical issues in research
- Researchers and 'the researched'
- Reporting and disseminating research findings

Learning outcomes:

Knowledge

On completion of this module the successful student will be able to:

1. systematically critique advanced theoretical perspectives, professional ethical codes and other knowledge applicable to your work/practice context and demonstrate their application to your work/practice and that of others (KU1, KU2);
2. demonstrate how the selection and application of methods of inquiry, action planning and problem solving in your project/inquiry/work-based activities contributes to transforming your practice and/or that of others (CS1, CS3);
3. critically reflect on engagement and networking with other practitioners and stakeholders and how it has changed and developed your work/practice (CS2);
4. critically evaluate the process of designing and developing your project/inquiry/work-based activity by systematically evaluating the outcomes (CS 3, PS 1);
5. demonstrate structured and persuasive communication, interpersonal and networking skills when sharing ideas and information with work/practice and academic audiences (PS2, PS 3);
6. demonstrate your ability to initiate and strategically manage your own and/or others' learning within a professional context and critically analyse how reflection upon your own professional development informs the project/inquiry (PES 1, PES 2).

Assessment requirements

100% Coursework:

Assessment mechanisms may be negotiated to meet the specific requirements of individual professional development and/or organisational development needs of the project, inquiry or other work-based activity undertaken.

Assessment:

Term 1

- Formative assessment - Oral presentation of literature review
- Summative assessment - A 2500 word reflective and critical discussion of the epistemological literature relevant to your work/ practice (40%)

Term 2

- Formative assessment - oral presentation of research project design
Summative assessment
- Designing a research project relevant to your own area your work/practice – outlining research questions, methodologies, literature review, ethical considerations, plan for data collection, analysis and dissemination strategies (3,500 words) - 60%

WBS4731 Work Experience Internship

The student will develop a project, research inquiry and/or other work-based activities that are designed to improve or inform areas of their own or others' research/work/practice. They will explore and critically discuss their research/work/practice and demonstrate the learning gained, as well as the development of their knowledge and skills. The learning will be located within their area of specialised research/work/ practice.

Learning outcomes

1. Systematically critique specialised knowledge and theory, professional ethical codes and other knowledge applicable to your work/practice/research context and demonstrate their application to the work/practice/research of self and that of others (KU1, KU 2);
2. Demonstrate how the selection and application of methods of inquiry, analytical strategies, action planning and problem solving in your project/inquiry/work-based activities contributes to transforming your practice and/or that of others (CS1, CS3);
3. Demonstrate the capacity to critically reflect on engagement and networking with other practitioners and stakeholders and how it has changed and developed your work/ practice (CS2);
4. Critically evaluate the process of designing and developing your

project/inquiry/work-based activity from proposal to dissemination by systematically evaluating the outcomes (CS 3, PS 1);

5. Demonstrate structured and persuasive communication, interpersonal and networking skills when sharing ideas and information with work/practice and academic audiences (PS2, PS 3);
6. Take responsibility for your own learning, identifying opportunities for developmental and transformative learning of self and others, and setting achievable measurable learning goals and performance indicators (PES 1, PES 2)
7. Assessment mechanisms will be negotiated to meet the specific requirements of individual professional development and/or organisational development needs of the project, inquiry or other work-based activity undertaken.
8. Assessment requirements will be equivalent to the submission of 6,000 words.

WBS4760 Dissertation

The student will design and execute an original project on a substantive or a methodological issue, demonstrate a grasp and synthesis of material within a range of inquiry, and apply critically a range of methodological approaches to a chosen field of inquiry. The assessment will be negotiated to meet the specific requirements of individual professional development and may include major project work undertaken as an internship negotiated by the student or in their current workplace or an existing voluntary role.

Learning outcomes

1. Systematically critique specialised knowledge and theory, professional ethical codes and other knowledge applicable to your work/practice/research context and demonstrate their application to the work/practice/research of self and that of others (KU1, KU 2);
2. Demonstrate how the selection and application of methods of inquiry, analytical strategies, action planning and problem solving in your project/inquiry/work-based activities contributes to transforming your practice and/or that of others (CS1, CS3);
3. Demonstrate the capacity to critically reflect on engagement and networking with other practitioners and stakeholders and how it has changed and developed your work/ practice (CS2);
4. Critically evaluate the process of designing and developing your

project/inquiry/work-based activity from proposal to dissemination by systematically evaluating the outcomes (CS 3, PS 1);

5. Demonstrate structured and persuasive communication, interpersonal and networking skills when sharing ideas and information with work/practice and academic audiences (PS2, PS 3);
6. Take responsibility for your own learning, identifying opportunities for developmental and transformative learning of self and others, and setting achievable measureable learning goals and performance indicators (PES 1, PES 2)
7. Assessment mechanisms may be negotiated to meet the specific requirements of individual professional development and/or organisational development needs of the project, inquiry or other work-based activity undertaken.
8. Assessment requirements will be equivalent to the submission of 12,000 words.

ork Based Learning Framework Level Descriptors

KU Knowledge and understanding

1. Identification and application of work-based knowledge
2. Understanding and application of ethical principles to work/practice

CS Cognitive skills

1. Analysis and evaluation of work-based information and concepts
2. Reflection on the wider contexts of work-based practice and learning
3. Work-based inquiry, action planning and problem solving

PS Practical skills

1. Work-based project design and development skills
2. Professional networking and interpersonal skills
3. Communication and information management

PES Personal and enabling skills

1. Self-directed professional development skills
2. Responsibility and leadership in work/practice contexts