



Queen Margaret University

EDINBURGH

Programme Specification

Where appropriate outcome statements have been referenced to the appropriate Benchmarking Statement (BS)

1	Awarding Institution	Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh
2	Teaching Institution	Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh
3	Professional body accreditation	None
4	Final Award	Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) Collaborative Working: Education and Therapy
	Subsidiary exit awards	Where individual modules are studied for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) purposes, an academic transcript related to performance in those modules will be generated (SCQF level 11 credits).
5	Programme Title	Post Graduate Certificate in Collaborative Working: Education and Therapy
6	UCAS code (or other coding system if relevant)	N/A
7	SCQF Level	11
8	Mode of delivery and duration	Part time only Online distance learning and blended learning Minimum 2 years Maximum 4 years
9	Date of validation/review	September 2014

10. Educational aims of the programme

The Postgraduate Certificate in Collaborative Working: Education and Therapy is a postgraduate modular programme of studies. The PG Certificate is designed to meet the needs of experienced staff within education and therapy who work within schools supporting pupils* to access the curriculum and participate fully in school life. Collaborative working is at the heart of the provision of inclusive learning for all those in the classroom. This programme meets the needs of staff who want to enhance their knowledge, understanding and practice performance in relation to collaborative working and pursuing best practice as an inclusive practitioner. It is anticipated that most students will undertake all four core modules, with assessment, culminating in the award of the PG Certificate. However, the modules may also be taken individually, with assessment, and used towards continuing professional development (CPD). A smaller number of students may elect to study the modules without undertaking the summative assessments. This latter method of study will be recognised through a certificate of attendance and students will be supported to generate a personal portfolio of evidence of their study and practice-related achievements, to aid demonstration of their commitment to life long learning, and personal and practice based development.

The overarching programme aim is to:

- Prepare experienced education and therapy staff for enhanced collaborative working in schools to enable pupils* to optimally participate in the curriculum and school life.

* In the context of this programme, 'pupil/s' are defined as children or young people who are attending school (this can be primary or secondary school, mainstream or special school). These learners have additional support needs which are currently, or could be in the future, supported by the direct or indirect assistance of education and therapy staff working collaboratively. The aim of that collaborative working is to offer support to enable inclusive learning for that pupil in the context of the curriculum and school life. The terms 'pupil' is used throughout the document to avoid confusion with the term 'learner/s' which relates to the participants on the PG Certificate programme of study.

The educational aims of the programme are to enable learners to:

1. Build upon their knowledge and experiences by critically reflecting on principles, concepts, theories and practice issues related to collaborative working in schools which supports inclusive learning**.
2. Advance their ability to critically appraise legislative frameworks, policy and evidence which informs contemporary issues in inclusive learning, and evaluate its application in the practice environment.
3. Enhance personal (transferable) skills which enable them to work more effectively, both collaboratively and autonomously, to support pupils with diverse needs.

** Inclusive learning is understood, within the context of this programme of studies, to relate to the processes, structures and actions which can increase the participation and achievement of all pupils attending school. The term is used in the spirit of the definition proposed in the Tomlinson Report (FEFC 1996) where the emphasis is to view the educational provision, for the individual with additional support needs, as being equivalent to those of all learners. Although the frame of reference for the programme of studies is to consider the school and/or classroom as the context for reflection and action, it is acknowledged that improvements in practice may impact upon the child and/or young person and their parents/carers/family *beyond* the classroom and school, i.e. the effects may extend into home life and participation within the community.

11. Benchmark statements and professional and statutory body requirements covered by the programme

This programme is an academic award, with no statutory requirements.

The learning outcomes for all modules are aligned with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF 2012) level 11 and the Queen Margaret University Taught Postgraduate Attributes of Performance (2013). During the process of development of the programme learning outcomes, a range of professional standards were examined, to determine the complementary nature of the programme learning outcomes with the CPD requirements of some of the potential students i.e. occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech and language therapists and teachers.

The following documents were used as the most contemporary and relevant points of reference for mapping the PGCertificate programme learning outcomes against a range of standards for selected professional groups. The diversity of the professional standards examined is reflective of the varied professional groups expected to take up places on the programme. The object of the mapping exercise was to display the currency of the programme regarding demonstration of continuing professional development.

For applicants who have a therapy background (i.e. occupational therapists, physiotherapists and speech and language therapists):

- Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) Standards of Proficiency for Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists and Physiotherapists (HPC 2013)

For applicants who are registered teachers (registered with the General Teaching Council, Scotland GTC):

- Standards for Full Registration (GTC 2012)
- Standards for Leadership (GTC 2012)

Mapping the programme learning outcomes against these standards demonstrated the value of the programme in matching an array of professional standards which must be maintained, and potentially further developed, for registered therapists and registered teachers.

12. Learning outcomes of the programme

On successful completion of the post graduate certificate, within the following criteria graduates will be able to:

Knowledge and Understanding

1. Demonstrate a critical, in-depth knowledge of current evidence based approaches underpinning inclusive learning and integrate this with their own specialist knowledge and experience.
2. Critically appraise and use relevant theories, principles and concepts of collaborative working and inclusive learning in practice.

Intellectual Skills

1. Critically evaluate relevant literature related to collaborative working and inclusive learning.
2. Critically review and reflect upon their own and others' knowledge, skills, roles and responsibilities within the school and/or classroom setting.
3. Critically analyse, evaluate and synthesise incomplete and complex information to generate informed perspectives on inclusive learning in the school setting.

Practical Skills

1. Apply evidence in original and creative ways to support inclusive learning in the practice setting.
2. Design, develop, implement and evaluate learning strategies and programmes or a series of learning opportunities which support pupils to optimally participate in the curriculum and school life.
3. Demonstrate sharing, discussion and debate within the group of learners to extend the individual's and groups' perspective, and aid understanding of each other's language and worldview in order to promote collaborative working in practice. (This will include exploration of the views of pupils and parents/carers).

Transferable Skills

1. Extend skills related to effective collaborative working with pupils, parents/carers, co-workers, peers and co-learners.
2. Communicate effectively in various media (i.e. oral, visual, written and computer-mediated communication) to a range of audiences (i.e. pupils, parents/carers, peers, co-workers, co-learners and tutors).
3. Actively engage in a community of practice to create new knowledge and ways of doing and knowing.
4. Engage in critical reflection to develop skills of self-appraisal and enable novel insights into praxis.
5. Demonstrate independence, autonomy and accountability in relation to personal and professional practice and development.

13. Teaching and learning methods and strategies

The teaching team are formed by CIRCLE (Child Inclusion Research into Curriculum Learning Education) Collaboration members. The CIRCLE Collaboration is made up of experienced specialist academics and front line practitioners. The CIRCLE Collaboration has been researching issues of inclusion within education and partnership working. This multi-professional group has researched therapy practice and school teachers' practice and integrated these findings to generate evidence based strategies and methods which support effective partnership working within the context of the inclusive classroom ethos. This programme of studies draws upon the research outputs of the CIRCLE Collaboration, as one of the streams of literature around which debate, critique and learning can be orientated. This therefore makes the Circle Collaboration team ideally placed to deliver this curriculum.

In the process of developing the PG Certificate in Education and Therapy Collaborative Working, the programme team has been influenced by a range of educational philosophies, ideologies and strategies. These will be briefly outlined below:

- Communities of practice and collaborative learning

This is the guiding philosophy for the programme and is congruent with social learning theory. A community of practice is where practitioners share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to improve their working by engaging in collaborative activities and discussion in order to develop a shared repertoire for practice. Within the PG Certificate in Education and Therapy Collaborative Working the community will involve learners from both education and health, bringing a rich and diverse range of knowledge and experience. The teaching team will include CIRCLE practitioners and researchers; and visiting lecturers, from a variety of

relevant backgrounds including parent and carer representatives, will be experts in their field. Methods will support collaborative learning through group work and peer feedback and will include Blackboard based discussions and activities.

- Autonomous adult learners

Congruent with the level and philosophy of postgraduate education and informed by the importance of developing practice, the programme is influenced by the need to promote autonomous intellectual endeavour and to support learners to become critical thinkers who have the ability to deconstruct concepts and theories and are able to negotiate social change. Methods encourage critical reflection and the development of individual learning plans and portfolios which support the development of personal transferable skills for complex roles in relation to inclusive learning and collaboration in the school setting.

- On-line learning

Approaches to learning are blended within this programme to allow flexibility of delivery and to suit different learning styles. Methods and approaches include e-learning and enquiry based learning. In relation to e-learning, all students will be introduced to Blackboard which provides an important forum for group discussion and communication and is used in all modules to promote critical reflection and sharing throughout the learning experience. Enquiry based learning (EBL) promotes active learning and reflection. Learners gain a deeper understanding of the subject-matter, as well as cognitive and leadership skills required for tackling complex problems that occur in practice. Students may also elect to study by distance learning only. Students should elect onto either on-line or face-to-face participation at the beginning of the course and should not usually switch once they have started with one method. This is to support development of a consistent community of practice and because some activities undertaken by students will be different depending on their mode of participation. In developing the programme and in designing online delivery we have made reference to the QAA's Quality Enhancement in E-Learning Special Interest Group's Toolkit for Harnessing Quality Assurance Processes for Technology Enhanced Learning (QAA 2011) and Blackboard's online guide for exemplary courses (Blackboard 2012).

14. Assessment strategies

A variety of assessment methods relevant to post-graduate education are adopted within the PGCertificate in Collaborative Working: Education and Therapy. These are designed to ensure the rigour of academic thinking as well as to encompass the development of transferable skills. Strategies ensure that assessment is both applied and practical, and supports personal growth and practice development. Assessment is personally and academically challenging and facilitates the application of critical analysis, reasoned decision making, reflective skills, collaborative skills and transferrable skills. Assessment strategies support personal development and action associated with practice development is at the heart of the assessment experience.

Methods of assessment include

- Individual learning plan
- Evaluation of a critical incident
- Case studies
- Work based project
- Self-appraisal and/or reflective report
- BlackBoard discussions and postings
- Critical review of research

The assessment pattern for each module reflects the aims, learning outcomes and the learning approaches for that module and allows the strengths of the individual student to be expressed in different ways. Guided by the principles of constructive alignment (Biggs 2007) the assessment methods are also supportive of deep learning. The use of formative assessment is an important component. This is in line with the programme philosophy of promoting autonomous learning while supporting learners to engage in their studies by enabling them to receive early feedback on their performance.

Summative assignments will be graded according to the specific criteria for that task and will reflect the learning outcomes for the module, the module content and learning experiences. The criteria for each summative assignment will also take cognisance of the Post Graduate Attributes of Performance (QMU, Taught Post Graduate Framework 2013). To pass a postgraduate module, a student must obtain at least 50% overall, and at least 40% in each component of assessment as specified in the module descriptor.

15. Programme structures and features, curriculum units (modules), credits and award requirements (including any periods of placement)

The PG Certificate is presented in a modular structure, working within a two semester academic calendar. The PG Certificate is awarded following the successful study of all three M-level (SCQF level 11) core modules:

- Evidence informed inclusive learning (15 credits)
- Enabling effective collaborative practice (15 credits); and
- Working together in action (30 credits).

The modules are designed to allow study in any order; however, students are advised to undertake the module, 'Evidence informed inclusive learning' in the early stages of study.

Each 15 credit module requires a notional student effort of 150 hours, double modules require 300 hours.

The minimum period for any student to complete the PG Certificate is one year. The maximum period for study will be four years.

All modules are offered on a part time basis. The programme uses a blended learning and distance learning approach. For blended learning students, face-to-face contact sessions (e.g. workshops, small group discussion, lecture etc.) are hosted at QMU's Musselburgh Campus; the QMU Virtual Learning Environment is BlackBoard. Students can also participate on-line via distance learning. Students should elect onto either on-line (distance learning) or face-to-face participation (blended learning) at the beginning of the course and should not usually switch once they have started with one method.

Face-to-face class contacts are offered during week day, twilight sessions (5.00pm – 7.00pm) and Saturday half days (9.30am – 1.30pm) or Saturday full days (9.30am – 4.30pm). All the content and materials used in the face-to-face sessions are available on line, additionally on-line students will complete self-directed study exercises which replicate the activities undertaken in class. All learners (distance and local) will collaborate together on the discussion Board of the Virtual Learning Environment and collaboration and discussion amongst all students is strongly encouraged.

The award of a PG Cert is unclassified, i.e. there are no distinctions or classifications associated with the award.

16. Criteria for admission

Students can apply to study in a variety of ways. Students may apply and register for study of all three modules and pursue the PGCertificate award; study individual modules/s as an associate student (undertaking related module assessments); or apply to study the modules without undertaking the assessments. In the case of the latter scenario, the student would be registered as an associate student.

The standard precepts of the current University Admissions and Registration regulations for Post Graduate applicants apply (see www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/gr/default.htm).The following programme specific requirements will also apply for all applicants.

- Students should normally have access (i.e. be working on a part or full time basis where their role involves working with pupils) to relevant practice areas (inclusive but not limited to: nurseries, primary schools, secondary schools, paediatric therapy departments and/or other children's services), that will allow them to meet the outcomes of the course and/or individual modules within that setting.
- Students must have completed a minimum of one year, full time equivalent experience of working with pupils, within the past three years.
- The student's personal statement should display: sufficient motivation; knowledge of the programme; potential to complete the study successfully and in the normal duration and show knowledge and capability of independent learning
 - educational, professional and personal experience will be considered.
- To support the development of a community of practice (COP) the Programme Leader will, as part of the admission process, create (where student numbers allow) a balanced cohort, including education, therapy and other staff.
- When all applications have been received, the Program Leader will review the applications, taking note of professional background, and offer places to ensure an adequate skill mix of professional backgrounds.
- This may mean capping the number of students from one professional background depending on applicant numbers in any given year.

- These actions are made in the spirit of developing a diverse community of practice wherein a variety of individuals (including education, therapy and other staff) share knowledge, information and experiences.
- Students who have met all other admissions criteria, but are not offered places due to their professional background will be informed of this and given the opportunity to re-apply in the next available in-take point.

For students applying to undertake module/s without assessment, the above criteria still apply, as all underpinning philosophy and teaching/learning strategies are reliant upon all participants sharing knowledge, information and experiences, based upon reflections on practice.

Accreditation of prior learning

Applicants who make an application for recognition of prior learning (APEL or APCL) must demonstrate achievement in relation to all components of the outlined curriculum.

17. Support for students and their learning

The following support and resources are offered to all students:

- Progressive (longitudinal) induction sessions for: the programme of studies, information and communications technologies at QMU, and the Learning Resource Centre.
- Study skills sessions, linked with induction.
- Personal academic tutor for each student.
- Personal development portfolios – and tutor support.
- Student handbook and QMU student diary.
- Access to student learning services, library and Information Technology (IT) support.
- Access to student services: careers, counselling, disability advice.
- Representation through student-staff committees.
- An English language unit provides support for students whose first language is not English.
- Use of Blackboard for distance access and interaction with other students.

18. Quality Assurance arrangements

This programme is governed by QMU's quality assurance procedures. See the QMU website for more detail: <http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/>

References

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