



Queen Margaret University

EDINBURGH

Programme Specification

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

1	Awarding Institution	Queen Margaret University
2	Teaching Institution	Queen Margaret University
3	Professional body accreditation	Chartered Institute of Public Relations Public Relations & Communications Association
4	Final Award	BA (Hons) Public Relations and Marketing Communications
	Subsidiary exit awards	Certification of Higher Education level 7 Diploma of Higher Education level 8 BA Public Relations and Marketing Communications level 9
5	Programme Title	BA (Hons) Public Relations and Marketing Communications
6	UCAS code (or other coding system if relevant)	P211
7	SCQF Level	10
8	Mode of delivery and duration	Full time 4 years (Part time 6 years)
9	Date of validation/review	9 May 2019

10. Educational Aims of the programme

1. To offer high quality education for professional communication practitioners based on an interdisciplinary approach.
2. Develop a deeper understanding of the relevant body of knowledge and students' personal and professional skills in order to contribute to the development of the subject area, field and profession of PR and Marketing.
3. To enhance students' lifelong learning skills and personal development so they contribute to a sustainable society at local, national and international levels

The Programme Objectives are for Graduates to:

1. Recognise and engage with key issues of modern societies such as equality, diversity and sustainability both as citizens and professional communicators.
2. Have an informed, critical and creative approach to understanding public relations and marketing in contemporary society.
3. Have an informed, critical, ethical and responsible approach to professional practice in the PR and Marketing industries and operating environments.
4. Meet the challenges of employment (including self-employment) in a society in which integrated and intercultural communications and converged media play a central role.
5. Have developed their intellectual capabilities of analysis and interpretation, critical evaluation, selection and synthesis, reasoned argument, research and creative problem solving.

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

- Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
- QAA Subject Benchmark statements for Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies (2016)

- The European Communication Professionals Skills and Innovation Programme (ECOPSI)
- Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) recognition criteria

12. Learning Outcomes of the Programme

A Knowledge and Understanding

On completion of the programme, the students will have gained knowledge and understanding of:

- A1. the roles of PR and Marketing communication systems, modes of representations and systems of meaning in the ordering of societies
- A2. the economic forces that influence and frame the PR, Marketing, media and creative industries, and the role of such industries in contemporary political and cultural life
- A3. the role of changing technology in media production and measurement, content manipulation, distribution, access and participation
- A4. the social, cultural, economic, political and technological histories from which different PR, Marketing and Media institutions, modes of communication, practices and structures have emerged
- A5. the legal, ethical and other regulatory frameworks that are relevant to PR and Marketing production, manipulation, distribution, circulation, and reception

B Intellectual Skills

On completion of the programme, students will be able to:

- B1. Engage critically with major thinkers, debates, intellectual paradigms, theories and principles applicable to the Public Relations and Marketing communications domain
- B2. Formulate appropriate research questions and employ appropriate qualitative and quantitative methods for exploring those questions
- B3. Select, analyse, summarise and synthesise evidence drawing on a range of sources and conceptual frameworks appropriate to public relations, media, marketing and events in order to develop lines of argument and sound judgement
- B4. Apply and critically evaluate, from a practical, ethical and theoretical perspective a variety of communication methods that apply to public relations and marketing techniques and disciplines
- B5. Select and apply appropriate knowledge, methodologies and theories to problem solving
- B6. Consider and evaluate their own work in a reflective manner, with reference to academic and/or professional issues, debates and conventions
- B7. Take responsibility for their own learning and continuing professional development to be lifelong learners who can reflect and build on their experiences to achieve success

C Practical Skills

On completion of the programme, students will be able to:

- C1. Initiate, develop and produce distinctive and creative work within various forms of writing, audio, visual, audio-visual or other electronic and digital media to a standard appropriate for the PR and Marketing industries
- C2. Draw upon and bring together ideas from different sources of knowledge and the different academic disciplines of PR, Media, Marketing and Events management
- C3. Be adaptable, creative and reflexive in producing output for a variety of audiences and in a variety of multi-platform media
- C4. Work to client briefs to design, organise and implement events that will appeal to a variety of audiences
- C5. Undertake fieldwork with appropriate consideration for ethics, safety and risk assessment
- C6. Demonstrate professional competencies when undertaking work experience

D Transferable Skills

On completion of the programme, students will be able to:

- D1. Work in flexible, creative and independent ways, showing self-discipline awareness of relevant ethical considerations, self-direction and reflexivity

- D2. Collate, organise and deploy ideas and information in order to formulate arguments cogently, and express them effectively in written, oral or other forms
- D3. Retrieve and generate information, and evaluate sources, in carrying out independent, self-directed research projects
- D4. Communicate effectively in interpersonal settings, in writing and in a variety of media
- D5. Work productively in a group or team, showing abilities at different times to listen, contribute and to lead effectively
- D6. Deliver work to a given length, format, brief and deadline, properly referencing sources and ideas and making use, as appropriate, of a problem-solving approach
- D7. Use a variety of computer-based skills ranging from basic competences such as data analysis to web-based technology and digital multimedia
- D8. Develop, as appropriate, specific proficiencies in using a range of current and emergent media technologies and being able to use metrics to gain insights from
- D9. Research and identify possible employment destinations

13. Teaching and learning methods and strategies

In line with the Student Experience Strategy, the programme consistently aims to place the student at the centre of the learning process. The teaching and the learning strategies utilised are designed to enable independent progress within a supportive framework. The structure and content of the programme modules are designed to facilitate flexibility and, at times, allow students to follow their own specific interests. They are also designed to balance the needs of academic scholarship with the practical skills and knowledge required to support graduate employability. To implement this strategy, a varied menu of learning and teaching methods have been used that allow all students to engage with, practice, and demonstrate mastery of new skills and achievements in as wide a variety of contexts as possible. Methods used include lectures, tutorials, discussions, field trips, reflective opportunities, case studies, problem-based learning and master-classes. This variety of approach, coupled with an emphasis on self-directed learning, supports the effectiveness of the learning process and fosters reflective student practice, allowing students to tailor their learning to their specific needs and aspirations. The diversity of these approaches ensures that the programme contains numerous opportunities for students to use their new knowledge and apply it critically to real-life examples.

Wherever possible, the programme team will adhere to QMU's Inclusive Learning and Teaching Policy in the delivery of programme content (<https://www.qmu.ac.uk/media/3974/inclusive-learning-and-teaching.pdf>). The majority of teaching materials are uploaded to the HUB in advance of teaching sessions and students are able to request that they record lectures and seminars.

Industry Based Learning

Professional Communications Placement

The aim of the 'Professional Communications Placement' module is to provide students with valuable practical experience relevant to their programme. It gives students the opportunity to develop, integrate and apply theoretical knowledge and skills gained across the course in a practical working environment.

The students are also expected to develop further their competence in core skills such as communication and problem solving and to work on their interpersonal skills. They will be required to exercise their initiative and time management skills in a professional setting and work effectively as a member of staff in the host organisation. This experience will allow students to assess career opportunities in the fields of PR, Marketing and Events Management.

Students are required to undertake a minimum of 150 hours (equivalent to 20 working days) with a host organisation. This is unpaid work experience, but we encourage hosts to pay travel and subsistence expenses.

14. Assessment strategies

Following the principle of constructive alignment, assessment on the programme is designed to evaluate how well students have achieved the learning outcomes of the programme. Assessment is located within individual modules, but the learning outcome of each module, clearly identified in the descriptor, is also aligned with particular programme learning outcomes.

The assessment strategy has also been informed by QMU's Graduate Attributes and aligns with guidance provided by the ASSAM School Academic Board (SAB) in regard to assessment load for taught modules. While it is expected that most modules will fit into such a framework, where there is a strong case for why a module might need a more bespoke assessment pattern, the module co-ordinator has been able to make that argument.

The programme uses a mixture of formative and summative assessments on modules. These include some examinations but are largely assessed through a variety of forms of coursework, including:

- Academic Essay
- Presentation
- Research Report
- Electronic Posting
- Case Study
- Practical or creative product (in appropriate medium)
- Reflective report
- Web-Portfolio
- Dissertation

These forms of assessment have been chosen to maximise students' high cognitive level activity. Most are the result of individual effort, but some take the form of group work. This is particularly the case in the media production modules at levels 1 and 2. Where group work is used in client projects, peer assessment is included so students can reward outstanding contribution. So a group grade becomes an individual mark as a consequence of students reflecting and assessing themselves and other group members against specific criteria.

When exams are used, care is taken to ensure they are designed in such a way as to minimise the possibility of students' merely reproducing their knowledge base of factual content, instead producing work that is, like the coursework, reflective, relational and analytic.

All assignment specifications are peer reviewed by the programme team and all level 3 and 4 assessment specifications and exam papers are forwarded to the external examiner for information and comment before distribution to students.

To support the student in managing their time across the semester, the submission dates of assignments are staggered to avoid them being overloaded with coursework at any particular point across the year. Prior to the semester starting staff submit proposed submission dates for modules via the school office, to an assessment tracker. Programme Leaders review this and can work with module coordinators to amend dates if there is felt to be excessive bunching.

Assessment formats for core modules on BA (Hons) PR & Marketing Communications

Core Modules PR & Marketing Communications Programme	Credit value	Assessment Format
LEVEL 1		
Studying Media and Communications	20	50% Media consumption diary, reflection and analysis 50% Essay
Media and Communication Industries	20	30% Infographic on industry case study 70% Essay
Introduction to Marketing	20	100% Seen paper exam
Digital Content Creation	20	100% Portfolio and reflective analysis
Media Production: Skills and Techniques	20	50% Video project (group grade) 50% Photography project
Media Production: Video Project	20	90% Non-fiction film (max 3 mins, group grade) 10% reflective essay
LEVEL 2		
Media Campaigning	20	70% Group project and presentation (individual mark calculated with peer assessment) 30% Reflective analysis
Analytics, Insight and Impact	20	100% Evaluation Plan
Popular Media Cultures	20	50% Essay 50% Case study
Digital Business and E-commerce Management	20	100% Digital business/e-commerce project
Event Management	20	50% Reflection 50% Reflection
Media Production: Online Journalism	20	50% Individual content project (photography or written) 50% Group journalism production project (group grade)
LEVEL 3		
Experiential Marketing and Consumer Behaviour	20	100% Individual Report
Campaigning and Practice	20	30% Essay 70% Group Project and presentation (individual grade with peer assessment)
Persuasive Communication	20	40% Essay 60% Case Study Analysis
Designing a Research Project	20	100% Research proposal
Advertising & Marketing Communication	20	100% Management Report
Elective	20	
LEVEL 4		
Professional Communications Placement	40	40% Web-portfolio of Materials 60% Reflective Report
Dissertation	40	100% Dissertation
Strategic Marketing Management	20	100% Marketing strategy and competitor response
Elective	20	

Formative Assessment

In addition to the summative assessments detailed above, students are also required to undertake a range of informal formative assessments. The assessments can vary from year to year but are all intended to provide students with the opportunity to 'test out' ideas and to gain practice in key skills such as critical thinking, presenting, and developing an argument. Feedback is primarily provided in class and can come from both tutors and peers. Indicative activities include:

- Formative assessment of an essay plan in semester one of first year
- Weekly feedback in seminars when groups are applying theory discussed in lectures to practice by developing Media and PR strategies for clients
- Progress presentation to tutor and client who provide feedback about planned events students are organising
- Tutor feedback on discussion posts on the module hub site
- Meetings with staff to discuss dissertation topics in advance of a proposal being submitted in the research methods module in third year

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

The named award follows a modular structure that operates across the institution and delivery of all modules follows the University's semester system. There are two semesters in an academic session, totalling 30 weeks. Teaching is delivered across 12 weeks and there are a number of weeks at the end of each semester without class contact. This time is set aside for independent study, examinations, and for the completion and marking of assignments.

The programme adheres to the SCQF guidelines that "one credit point represents the amount of learning achieved through a notional 10 hours of learning time which includes everything a learner has to do to achieve the outcomes in a qualification including the assessment procedures" (<https://scqf.org.uk/the-framework/about-the-framework/>).

A 20-credit module, the credit norm for modules on this programme, is therefore expected to require a notional 200 hours of student effort. The exceptions are the *Dissertation* and *Professional Communications Placement* that are worth 40 credits and so require a notional 400 hours of student effort.

The named degree has been designed to combine a good knowledge and understanding of public relations and marketing communications and has an applied focus. In years one and two students are required to complete a number of shared modules with other degrees in the division introducing students to the relevant concepts, theories, industries and production skills underpinning communications. In level 3 and 4 students can tailor their programme depending on elective choices, type of organisation selected for work experience and dissertation topic.

The degree is delivered as a full-time course over four years, although it is possible to study it part-time across six years where individual circumstances necessitates such an approach.

HNC/HND Articulation

We have articulation agreements with some FE colleges allowing direct entry to year 2 or 3 with an HNC and HND respectively in cognate subjects including Advertising and Public Relations, Creative Industries: Advertising, Events, Marketing and PR, Marketing, Marketing Communications and Creative Industries: Media and Communication.

Programme Structure for BA (Hons) PR and Marketing Communications

Level 1	Sem 1	Studying Media and Communications (20 credits)	Introduction to Marketing (20 credits)	Media Production: Skills and Techniques (20 credits)
	Sem 2	Media and Communications Industries (20 credits)	Digital Content Creation (20 credits)	Media Production: Video Project (20 credits)
Level 2	Sem 1	Media Campaigning (20 credits)	Analytics, Insights and Impact (20 credits)	Popular Media Cultures (20 credits)
	Sem 2	Digital Business and E-Commerce Management (20 credits)	Event Management (20 credits)	Media Production: Online Journalism (20 credits)
Level 3	Sem 1	Campaigning and Practice (20 credits)	Experiential Marketing and Consumer Behaviour (20 credits)	Elective in semester 1 or 2 (20 credits)
	Sem 2	Persuasive Communication (20 credits)	Advertising and Marketing Communication (20 credits)	Designing a Research Project (20 credits)
Level 4	Sem 1	Professional Communications Placement (year long, 40 credits)	Elective in semester 1 or 2 (20 credits)	Dissertation / Production dissertation (video or still image, year-long, 40 credits)
	Sem 2		Strategic Marketing Management (20 credits)	

Eligibility for Awards

There are no specific programme requirements for the name of the award so the standard QMU awards apply:

- Cert HE 120 credit points of which a minimum of 100 are at SCQF level 7 or higher
- Dip HE 240 credit points of which a minimum of 100 are at SCQF level 8 or higher
- Degree 360 credit points of which a minimum of 100 are at SCQF level 9 or higher
- Honours Degree 480 credit points of which a minimum of 220 are at SCQF level 9 and 10, including at least 100 at level 10

Ten SCQF Credits are equivalent to five European Credits (ECTS) therefore 120 SCQF credits equal 60 ECTS.

16. Criteria for admission

The University is committed to equality of opportunity. We seek to promote diversity amongst our students, staff and applicants. We recognise the contributions that are made by individuals from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences, to the achievement of our vision and strategic objectives. We aim to promote entry to a diverse range of students, whatever their background. The University seeks to provide access to its courses from as wide a range of entrants as possible, subject to the essential principle that entrants have a reasonable expectation of completing their

course successfully within the normal duration of the course. In processing applications for this programme the standard precepts of the University Admissions Regulations apply. Full details of both the admissions policy and contextualised admissions policy can be found at:

<https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/quality/committees-regulations-policies-and-procedures/regulations-policies-and-procedures/>

Standard entry requirements for BA (Hons) PR & Marketing Communications is as follows:

- Scottish Higher: Standard: BBBB
- Minimum: BCC
- A Level: BCC
- Irish Leaving Certificate: H2 H3
- International Baccalaureate: 28 points
- International: IELTS of 6.0 with no element lower than 5.5.
- Required subjects: English or Media Studies preferred at Higher/ A Level. English required and Maths preferred at Nat 5/GCSE.
- Mature/Access: Related Access course – see www.qmu.ac.uk/college-qualifications
- We welcome applications from mature students with other relevant qualifications and/or experience.

Direct Entry for BA (Hons) PR & Marketing Communications is as follows:

- **Year Two**
 - HNC/ HND: HNC/ HND in a related subject with B/CB in the graded unit
 - Scottish Higher: BC at Advanced Higher in relevant subjects plus BB at Higher
 - A Level: BBB in relevant subjects
- **Year Three**
 - HND in a related subject with CB in the graded units
 - For details of related HNC and HND courses, see www.qmu.ac.uk/college-qualifications

Non-standard Entry

While the centralised admissions team will manage applications for standard entry, applications for non-standard entry will be assessed by the Programme Leader to ensure consistency of decision-making in such cases. An interview with the applicant may be arranged in order to gather evidence. Entry would normally be based on the following criteria:

- Appropriate industry experience in PR and/or Marketing communications
- Recent study at FE or HE
- Ability to write a short essay/produce report on appropriate topic

Applications for entry with general advanced standing (i.e. credit for previous study) are referred to the University's Recognition of Prior Learning Panel. Credit may also be given for prior experiential learning. Normally, credit given will be specific rather than general, i.e. on a subject for subject basis. Students wishing to gain credits through APEL will be asked to demonstrate that they have met the learning outcomes of specific modules. They can do this by sharing a portfolio of evidence supported by a narrative.

English Language Requirements

Applicants must be able to communicate in English to a standard that is equivalent to level 6.0 of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), with no element below 5.5.

Applicants with Disabilities

The University welcomes a diverse learning community and aims to support all students to participate fully in their studies and in University life. Applicants are strongly advised to declare any disability on their application. All applicants who have declared a disability and/or additional support needs and have accepted an offer of admission will be contacted by a Disability Adviser to discuss their individual requirements and the support that may be available to them should they choose to study at QMU. The University will make every effort to ensure that required support arrangements are put in place, however, this is dependent on the student applying in sufficient time and identifying their disability clearly at the time of application.

17. Support for students and their learning

The University provides a range of support services to address students' academic and personal support needs. Most of these services can be accessed through the Student Services reception desk, which directs students to the best person to provide them with support about the following:

- financial advice
- counselling and well-being support
- disability service
- careers and employability service

Students with disabilities or additional learning needs are supported by the subject level Academic Disabled Students Coordinator who ensures that all reasonable adjustments are put in place to support the student in relation to teaching, learning and assessment. Individual learning plans are communicated to relevant staff. Meetings are held once per semester to discuss learning plans and make adjustments if necessary. The University Disability Services team provides advice and guidance to help develop the individual learning plan and can also guide students towards additional resources and assistive technology where required.

Other University support services include:

- administrative support from the School Office and Registry
- training in academic skills from the Effective Learning Service
- English language classes for students whose first language is not English
- support for international students from the International Office
- a range of services to aid direct entrants, including a dedicated induction week and peer mentoring
- support provided by the Library Helpdesk and liaison librarians
- support from Assist for IT issues
- welfare and representation from the Students' Union
- an on-site Business Gateway

Longitudinal Induction

There are a range of institutional induction activities to support students whether they are joining first year or direct entry students into levels 2, 3 and 4. The Effective Learning Service, (ELS) Library Resource Centre (LRC), School Office staff, Programme Leader and the teaching team provides these. Initial sessions pre-entry and at the beginning of the academic year are complemented throughout the year with additional 'induction' sessions delivered on a 'just-in-time' basis to articulate with the type of activity they will be undertaking at that point in the course. Some of these sessions are embedded into modules while the ELS and LRC offer others outside class time. Embedded sessions include an introduction to Hub, referencing, writing academic essays, presentation skills, working in groups and exam preparation.

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/>