

LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY

# Course Specification

MA International Communication

MAITC

2018/19

[www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk](http://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk)



LEEDS  
BECKETT  
UNIVERSITY

## Record of Enhancement

<b>No.</b>	<b>Detail of modification</b> (Provide a brief description of the modification and where the Course Specification has been updated)	<b>Date Effective</b> (Indicate the academic year of entry and course level(s) to which the modification will apply)
V1-1	Updated External Examiner details Amended references to Leeds Metropolitan and X-Stream following name change	2014/15

## Version Control

For completion by Quality Assurance Services only	
<b>Next Re-validation date</b>	
<b>Version Control</b>	
Version number and date effective	

## Target award, course title and programme code:

MA International Communication

MAITC

## Level of qualification:

Level 7

## Course Rationale and Philosophy:

The Master in International Communication (MIC) is a joint project of five universities across Europe, all specialising in communications and public relations in international professional contexts. Those universities are Hanze University Groningen, IULM Milano, New Bulgarian University, Vilnius University and Leeds Beckett University. These universities comprise the Geert Hofstede Consortium.

The evolution of the course has started from successful Erasmus partnerships between those universities which have developed into a series of courses (each delivered and awarded by the home institution of the students) which offer substantial opportunities for students to engage in study at one of the other institutions within the consortium.

The full course is delivered over three semesters. Students will study at university one in semester one. Semester two will be spent in another of the five partner universities where students take the respective specialisations offered by that university. During semester three students will write their dissertation to the requirements of their home institution and may receive the benefit of supervision / advice from staff of one of the other universities within the consortium in addition to the supervision received from their home institution.

Graduates of the MIC are intended to be interculturally competent communication professionals able to work in a global context. They anticipate change and are able to create, offer and manage sustainable and innovative solutions to problems from the professional field at a senior managerial or consultancy level.

## Overview and Aims:

The MA International Communication aims:

- To provide a framework for aspiring communication managers and leaders to meet their career needs and enhance their career opportunities in the field of strategic corporate communications in order to enable them to provide effective strategic direction of the communications of organisations operating in an international environment.

- To provide students with knowledge and understanding of the integrative and holistic nature of corporate communications through integration between the various specialist areas.
- To provide students with the knowledge and understanding of various cultural environments which enables them to manage the communications of international organisations as well as organisations which operate in various cultural environments.
- To facilitate the development of increased confidence through personal insight and self-knowledge based on an understanding and appreciation of individual leadership and other behavioural aspects of success.
- To provide an opportunity for students to carry out a major independent piece of work in the form of a dissertation ('graduate assignment') which might be workplace related and to develop the research and consultancy skills and competencies associated with the successful outcomes of the activity.

The overall aim of the course is based on recent research findings (e.g. Ecopsi Project, Prof. Tench 2013) which suggest that the future public relations practitioner needs competencies which are an interplay of knowledge, skills and personal attributes.

Thus the modules can be classified as:

- a) Rather skills-oriented modules in which students apply the knowledge which they have learnt in more
- b) Rather subject knowledge focused modules in which basic concepts and recent trends, theories and research are critically discussed

## Course Learning Outcomes:

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

<b>1</b>	Demonstrate a critical, ethical and reflective approach to the theories and practice of international and intercultural public relations and corporate communication
<b>2</b>	Critically evaluate, synthesise and apply contemporary strategic management and communication theories and processes appropriate to the needs of organisations in an international context
<b>3</b>	Demonstrate analytical and evaluative skills in the application of theory and techniques to produce a significant independent research output
<b>4</b>	Learn independently and in teams, and use reflective skills to enable them to become lifelong learners and capable intercultural problem solvers
<b>5</b>	Synthesise conceptual, analytical models and apply research skills in order to complete a research project involving the investigation of complex, open-ended management problems within a communication context
<b>6</b>	Critically evaluate and demonstrate appropriate writing and professional communication skills to properly communicate with the stakeholders of international organisations

## Course Structure

### Level 7

The full 180 credit course is delivered over three semesters. Students will study at university one in semester one. Semester two will be spent in another of the five partner universities for which the student will be awarded APL on their return against the Leeds Beckett award. During semester three students will write their dissertation to the requirements of their home institution and may receive the benefit of supervision / advice from staff of one of the other universities within the consortium in addition to the supervision received from their home institution. All modules are 20 credits unless otherwise stated.

There is only one entry point in which is September.

Semester 1	Core (Y)	Semester 2	Core (Y)
Corporate Communications in an Intercultural Context	Y	Digital Communication Management	Y
Strategic Communication Planning and Management	Y	Public Relations Skills	Y
Global Business Environment	Y	Communication Audit	Y
Dissertation (60 credits)			Y

### Programme Overview

Number of Credits	Semester	Taught by:
60 credits	Semester 1: Core programme	University 1
60 credits	Semester 2: Specialisations	University 2
60 credits	Semester 3: Research and Dissertation	University 1 (with additional supervision from University 2)

### Contained awards available:

Award	Title	Level	Credits
PG Dip	International Communication	7	120
PG Cert	International Communication	7	60

## Length and status of programme and mode of study:

Length (years)	Status (FT/PT)	Mode (campus based/DL or other)
1 year	FT	Campus-based

## Learning and Teaching

### Learning and Teaching Approaches

#### Competencies and Action Learning

The challenge of the programme is to develop the students' theoretical understanding of the subject whilst developing their practical skills through taught elements and through independent case study learning.

Due to the vocational focus of the course the overall teaching approach can be described as:

competencies = knowledge and skills applied in practice

The traditional approach of firstly learning about theoretical concepts and applying them then to cases and projects is complemented by an action learning approach. This means that students undertake practical projects and reflect step by step under guidance of their tutor what they have learnt and how they can proceed with the next steps.

Students are encouraged to develop as independent learners and reflective practitioners, particularly through the submission of a portfolio and critical review for Public Relations Skills.

### Learning and Teaching Activities

Teaching and learning will be a mixture of lectures, seminars and lab-based workshops to cater for a variety of learning styles. The majority of the work will be done in seminars with group work based on case studies. The use of guest lecturers and "live" cases and projects is seen as integral to the teaching and learning strategy of the programme.

Each module is divided into different types of teaching sessions, i.e. lectures and seminars or tutorials. Deep learning, reflection and critical thinking shall be the focus of the seminars in the aftermath of the more lecture style sessions.

Additionally, the application of knowledge shall be fostered in tutorials through the use of case studies.

Seminars and tutorials require preparatory readings and preparation of case studies to enable class discussions and group work. Thus tutorials and seminars mainly serve the purpose to foster deep learning, critical discussion and the reception of feedback.

In the more vocational-oriented modules (e.g. PR Skills) students practice through writing or case presentations throughout the semester. Feedback is then provided individually or in group meetings.

There are consortium wide online tools such as a blog which connect all (MAITC/MIC) students and tutors from all universities. Additionally there is a facebook account on which students actively exchange their thought and where students provide advice to each other.

Additionally a newsletter is regularly published in which students report about their projects and modules.

Exchange and interculturality is further fostered through teacher mobility and common projects such as IP intercultural projects at which tutors and students from all universities come together during teaching free periods.

Regarding further support:

**Cultural diversity awareness** – during induction and the first weeks of the module “Corporate Communication in an Intercultural Context”

**Basic concepts of PR** – induction sessions before teaching starts

**Employability** – mainly during semester two an employability coordinator will introduce a mentoring scheme, prepare for placements and provide guest lectures and workshops with PR practitioners

**Graduate Attributes (UG Only)** - *All our undergraduate students will develop three graduate attributes; Enterprise, Digital Literacy, Global Outlook*

N/A

### **Use of the Virtual Learning Environment**

Over the past years the award has been taught, the VLE has increasing been used for teaching of all modules, and the use of new and social media in public relations has been integrated in teaching for all modules. An elective module on PR and New Media has also been developed and delivered and this is now core. This agrees with

the external critical reviewer's comment on the need for public relations to engage with new and social media.

So far VLE is mainly used a) as a repository tool to provide readings and case study materials in preparation of seminars and tutorials in which discussions and group work occur and b) as a communication tool which links MAITC students from various universities to their tutors (e.g. for discussing their dissertation projects).

Due to the small numbers of students and feedback received in student focus groups students prefer to receive (formative and summative) feedback in group and individual meetings with their tutors (especially in the more vocational oriented modules in which students practice writing or presenting).

Social media as a learning and teaching tool is mainly used in the Digital Communication Management module (which due to its experimental use of such tools can be considered as the most innovative module in that respect within the curriculum).

Additionally Skype has become a frequently used communication tool between tutors and students once students move on to their second university or working on their dissertations abroad.

### **Use of Blended Learning**

N/A

### **Student Support Network**

If you have a question or a problem relating to your course, your Course Administrator is there to help you. Course Administrators works closely with academic staff and can make referrals to teaching staff or to specialist professional services as appropriate. They can give you a confirmation of attendance letter, and a transcript. You may also like to contact your Course Rep or the Students' Union Advice team for additional support with course-related questions.

If you have any questions about life at our University in general, call into or contact the Student Hub on either campus to speak to our Student Experience Team. This team, consisting of recent graduates and permanent staff, are available to support you throughout your time here. They will make sure you have access to and are aware of the support, specialist services, and opportunities our University provides. There is a Student Hub on the ground floor of the Rose Bowl at City Campus and one

in Campus Central at Headingley. You can also find the team in the Gateway in the Leslie Silver Building at City Campus. The telephone number is 0113 812 3000, and the e-mail address is StudentHub@leedsbeckett.ac.uk.

Within MyBeckett you will see two tabs (Support and Opportunities) where you can find online information and resources for yourselves. The Support tab gives you access to details of services available to give you academic and personal support. These include Library Services, the Students' Union, Money advice, Disability advice and support, Wellbeing, International Student Services and Accommodation. There is also an A-Z of Support Services, and access to online appointments/registration.

The Opportunities tab is the place to explore the options you have for jobs, work placements, volunteering, and a wide range of other opportunities. For example, you can find out here how to get help with your CV, prepare for an interview, get a part-time job or voluntary role, take part in an international project, or join societies closer to home.

## **Assessment Strategy**

A variety of assessment methods are used, including case-study based individual assignments, a portfolio of PR writing and professional skills and group assignments (coursework and presentations). The latter are intended to reflect the current prevalence of presentations in the practice of Public Relations and to enhance presentation skills in students.

Group work is an important element of the problem solving approach to case studies. With regard to the allocation of individual marks in group assessments, a system of peer assessment amongst group members will be set up where appropriate. The individual assessment components are intended as a balance to give students the opportunity to work individually.

## **Feedback on Assessed Coursework**

In modules such as Strategic Communication Planning & Management and Corporate Communication in an Intercultural Context, students receive formative feedback after presenting proposals at the middle of the module delivery.

In the more vocational focused modules (such as Communication Audit and PR Skills) based on an action learning strategies, students receive on going supervision and formative feedback throughout their project work.

## **Module Assessment Methods**

## Module Titles

Written exam  
 Written assignment, including essay  
 Report  
 Dissertation  
 Portfolio  
 Project output (other than dissertation)  
 Oral assessment and presentation  
 Practical skills assessment  
 Set Exercise

### Level 7

Corporate Communication in an Intercultural Context		✓					✓		
Strategic Communication Planning and Management			✓				✓		
Global Business Environment		✓							
Digital Communication Management					✓				✓
Public Relations Skills					✓		✓		
Communication Audit			✓				✓		
Dissertation				✓					

### Employability and Professional Context:

Students of the MA International Communication are mainly attracted by the international feature of the course. Mostly they are interested in a career outside their home country or in an international corporations or organisations. Within the MA International Communication they consider Leeds Beckett as the option to study in UK. Thus Leeds Beckett profits from the high reputation of university education in the UK.

The philosophy of the course is well related to the idea of employability – it is considered to be competency based learning:

- The concept of competency-based learning is at the heart of the curriculum. This enables students to become reflective practitioners with the transferable competencies needed for their employability and committed to their on going personal development.
- The overall competency based learning approach ensures a consistent study experience whilst students take their modules at various universities.

- The content and learning experience of the course generates direct value for the students as they can apply the knowledge and skills directly in their professional practice.
- Competencies – skills and knowledge applied in professional practice

A new (subject specific) employability coordinator will be introduced who coordinates those elements which enhance the employability:

- Organises a mentoring scheme which ties students to PR practitioners, workshops with PR practitioners, preparation to find and do a placement.
- Graduates of the MIC are interculturally competent communication professionals able to work in a global context from a European Perspective. This includes new communication roles such as community managers or social media managers.

## Work Related Activities

**Placement or Work Related Activity Level:**

N/A

**Placement or Work Related Activity Length in Weeks:**

**Type of Placement or work related activity:**

## Reference Points used in course design and delivery

All our courses leading to Leeds Beckett University awards have been designed and approved in accordance with UK and European quality standards. Our courses utilise the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and where relevant subject benchmarks (where these are available) and professional, statutory and regulatory body requirements (for professionally accredited courses).

We review our courses annually and periodically, responding to student feedback and a range of information to enhance our courses. Our University is also subject to external review by the Quality Assurance Agency. Our latest report can be found on the QAA web site at <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports>

We appoint External Examiners to verify that our University sets and maintains standards for awards which adhere to relevant national subject benchmark statements and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (UK), ensure standards and student achievements are comparable with other Higher Education Institutions in the UK, with which they are familiar, and ensure that assessments

measure achievement of course and module learning outcomes and reach the required standard. External Examiners may also provide feedback on areas of good practice or potential enhancement.

### **Staff Teaching on the Course:**

You can find details of our highly qualified permanent teaching staff on our website, who are involved in teaching, research and administration associated with the course.

### **Regulatory Exemption details:**

N/A