Course Specification

Overview and Aims

The PGCAP is designed as in-service development provision for professionals in academic and learning support roles in Higher Education in the UK. It has been designed to align with Descriptors 1 and 2 of the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) for teaching and supporting learning in HE.

The target market for the award is staff in academic and learning support roles at our own institution, who are relatively new to the institution and who do not yet possess a teaching qualification.

The award forms part of a broader institutional Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Framework and offers a credit bearing route to gaining professional recognition by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) at either Associate Fellow (AFHEA) or Fellow (FHEA) categories. Together with the award of credit, the PGCAP offers participants the opportunity to gain HEA fellowships that are nationally recognised and are of benefit to individuals professionally at this early stage in their career. Holding an accredited award and/or HEA Fellowship now forms part of the institutional data set for annual HESA returns, and as a consequence the profile of
this type of accredited provision is rising across the sector and participant success has positive benefits for the institution as a whole.

The Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP) has been designed to act as an introduction to academic practice for staff in academic and learning support roles at an early stage in their career through being:

- practice-based – of direct relevance to participants’ own practice through offering opportunities for participants to reflect on and enhance their own and others’ academic practices;
- strategically-aligned – aligned with institutional strategic initiatives and modelling good practice in, for example, approaches to course design, blended learning and research-informed teaching;
- underpinned by a scholarly approach – a masters-level course that engages participants critically with the research-base and pedagogic theories underpinning good practice whilst also supporting participants to engage in a process of enquiry into their own practices;
- developmental – the first stage in a framework of continuing professional development that aims to equip participants with the skills to enable further development throughout their career and through supporting participants to identify development needs and priorities to achieve their desired career trajectory.

The course aims to enable participants to become effective, reflective, research-informed, and values-based academic practitioners in higher education and to meet the requirements for recognition at either Descriptor 1 or 2 of the UKPSF.

The course sets out to provide opportunities for participants to explore, develop and share best practice across a range of academic activities from a critically informed perspective:

- evaluating and enhancing own and others’ teaching and learning activities;
- developing curricula and learning environments;
- supporting students and peers;
- engaging in critical reflection and research;
- defining personal development priorities and pathways concerning research, enterprise, and academic leadership;
- responding to changing student needs, and the wider context of higher education; and
- contributing to professional communities of practice.

A strong identity for the course itself is built through an emphasis on critical and reflective approaches to considering learning and teaching within a developing community of practice within the course, institution and wider communities of higher education. In addition, supporting participants to reflect on and develop their own professional academic identity is a key underpinning theme of the course.
**Course Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

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<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>develop as a confident and critical reflective practitioner;</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>critically apply literature relevant to academic practice to inform your own approaches;</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>identify and progress your personal professional development in areas of academic practice;</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>critically engage with an issue of relevance to the development and enhancement of academic practice;</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>critically engage with the UKPSF to evidence their achievement of the appropriate Descriptor.</td>
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</table>
Course Structure

Level 7
The PGCAP aims to enable participants to become confident, effective, reflective, research-informed, and values-based academic practitioners in HE, and to gain professional recognition within the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF). The course sets out to provide opportunities to explore, develop and share best practice across a range of academic activities from a critically informed perspective:

- evaluating and enhancing own and others’ teaching, learning and assessment activities;
- developing curricula and learning environments;
- supporting students and peers;
- engaging in critical reflection and research;
- defining personal and career development plans and priorities;
- responding to changing student needs, and the wider context of higher education;
- contributing to professional communities of practice.

The course places expectations on participants to take a critically reflective and scholarly-underpinned approach to the development of their own academic practices. The sphere of reference and influence progresses through the three modules with Module 1 providing an introduction to the development of professional practices at the level of participants own classroom teaching; Module 2 focussing on good practice in designing curricula and learning environments set in the context of participants own programmes and discipline area; and Module 3 equipping participants to undertake their own pedagogic research and disseminate their work across a broader community of practice. This is depicted below:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester 1</th>
<th>Core (Y)</th>
<th>Semester 2</th>
<th>Core (Y)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Practice &amp; Pedagogy (Module 1) 20cr</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Curriculum Development &amp; Learning Environments (Module 2) 20cr</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Approaches for Research for Academic Practice Enhancement (Module 3) 20cr</td>
<td>Y</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Learning and Teaching

Details relating to contact hours and other key information sets (KIS) are available on the course page of our Online Prospectus on our website.

Learning and Teaching Approaches

The design of the PGCAP is informed by our institutions Postgraduate Course Development Principles (http://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/partners/files/CLT_Postgraduate_Course_Development_Principles.pdf)

The course is designed to model key concepts in the development of academic practice through:

- demonstrating constructive alignment;
- being aligned to the UKPSF such that participants engage directly with a national framework and demonstrate their engagement through being assessed to gain professional recognition;
- modelling an appropriate variety of inclusive practices in delivery and assessment, use of VLE, ways of achieving a blended approach plus opportunity to experience online learning from the perspective of a student;
- developing reflective practice as a key concept relevant to continuous development of self and own practices;
- supporting career development and acting as an initial stage of continuous professional development (CPD);
- promoting depth of learning through a critical engagement with pedagogy to develop a pedagogic underpinning to own practices;
- promoting inclusive practices through the selection and design of an appropriate quality and variety of learning resources, activities and assessment experiences;
- implementing authentic assessments aimed at developing useful, realistic workplace skills / abilities, including building capability in pedagogic research;
- creating a strong course identity e.g. through Learning Sets as a means of forging long-lasting working relationships, networks and communities of practice;

The content and delivery of the PGCAP course are also designed to enable participants to demonstrate their achievement of an appropriate Descriptor of the UKPSF. This is facilitated, not only through the assessments of Modules 1 and 2, but by incorporating carefully designed in and out-of-class activities to stimulate and support participants’ critical engagement with the Dimensions of Practice of the UKPSF. These include a planned series of self-reflection activities to encourage participants to audit their own development against the UKPSF as they progress through the course and ultimately to plan their own career.

Over the PGCAP course, all of the Dimensions of Practice of the UKPSF are addressed, revisited and critically engaged with by participant’s, as required for participants to achieve FHEA recognition through their successful completion of the course.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UKPSF Dimensions of Practice</th>
<th>Module 1</th>
<th>Module 2</th>
<th>Module 3</th>
<th>PGCAP</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A1. Design and plan learning activities and/or programmes of study</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A2. Teach and/or support learning</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A3. Assess and give feedback to learners</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A4. Develop effective learning environments and approaches to student support and guidance</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A5. Engage in continuing professional development in subjects/disciplines and their pedagogy, incorporating research, scholarship and the evaluation of professional practices</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>K1. The subject material</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td><strong>K2. Appropriate methods for teaching, learning and assessing in the subject area and at the level of the academic programme</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>K3. How students learn, both generally and within their subject/disciplinary area(s)</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td><strong>K4. The use and value of appropriate learning technologies</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>K5. Methods for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>K6. The implications of quality assurance and quality enhancement for academic and professional practice with a particular focus on teaching</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>V1. Respect individual learners and diverse learning communities</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>V2. Promote participation in higher education and equality of opportunity for learners</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>V3. Use evidence-informed approaches and the outcomes from research, scholarship and continuing professional development</strong></td>
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<td>✓</td>
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Learning and Teaching Activities

Learning and teaching on the PGCAP places participants at the centre of the experience by fostering an interactive, inclusive, supportive and challenging environment, in which participants contribute to the development of themselves and their peers, commensurate with academic practice in higher education.

Participant engagement is key to all aspects of the course and learning and teaching activities are designed to enable participants to bring in and share their own experiences through in-class face-to-face discussion activities, with peers from different disciplines through Learning Sets and online via blended and distance learning approaches. The course is therefore firmly rooted in participant’s own practices is designed to foster critical reflection and development of those practices.

To support participants’ development of their practices, the course team aims to model a variety approaches through having carefully designed an appropriate and authentic range of learning and teaching activities into the course, such that participants can reflect on their experiences of these approaches and consider their use for their own practice:

- sharing their own work-based learning and professional experiences;
- face-to-face ‘taught’ sessions which will involve interactive learning, group and pair work with the full cohort;
- participating in peer support groups in the form of a “Learning Set”, normally comprising participants from different subject areas;
- engaging with digital learning resources and via synchronous & asynchronous online learning activities;
- fostering participants own use of learning technologies through demonstrating appropriate use of a range of available tools throughout the course;
- giving and gaining feedback from peers on the course through participation in a “microteach”;
- undertaking peer-observation and associated reflection through working with school/subject group-based mentors/critical friends;
- undertaking individual scholarly activity, including practice-based reflection;
- applying their learning through reflecting on and developing their own professional and academic practices.

Use of the Virtual Learning Environment

Each module of the course is supported by a module area in the MyBeckett VLE. Written summative assessments for the course are submitted and receive feedback through the VLE.
Within each module area of the VLE modules participants will have opportunity to work with open learning materials to inform and enhance their practice, review and extend their understanding of key knowledge areas, contribute to discussions and the building of community knowledge with peers, and find links to a wide variety of sector resources and networks.

The tools used to support and engage participants in the VLE will evolve in the light of experience, feedback and changes in the technology. Likely features you will encounter include:

- announcements & email
- discussions
- links to external resources
- wikis for contribution and shared learning
- groups
- uploaded tutor resources
- uploaded student-created resources
- open-learning resources

**Use of Blended-Learning**

Tutor-made recordings of ‘taught’ sessions will provide opportunities for participants to review and enhance key areas of content knowledge.

A schedule of online tasks will be set to engage participants in structured and purposeful Learning Set activities – to prompt and support participants to reflect on and discuss aspects of their learning on the course, to engage with specific readings of educational literature and to work collaboratively on group exercises.

The Distance Learning Unit (DLU) has been commissioned to develop, with staff in CLT, a four week, immersive, wholly online learning experience to provide participants with the opportunity to reflect on the experience of online learning from the perspective of a student.

On-line discussion boards and blog spaces will be made available to support out-of-class discussion of elements of the course.

Participants will have opportunity to submit and receive feedback on written summative assessments through the VLE.

Participants should expect to engage actively (and proactively) with a range of on-line/e-resources for at least 25% of the course delivery.
Assessment Strategy

Course assessments are constructively aligned with the learning outcomes of the course and reflect a variety of tasks which typify academic practice in HE. They are authentic and contribute to, as well as measure, participant learning. Across the course, participants have different opportunities to demonstrate their learning, through: a written reflective account of practice and professional development plan; a poster presentation for dissemination at a learning and teaching conference; a verbal presentation, mapping participants’ experiences to the UKPSF; a research proposal, targeted to the requirements of a specific participant-selected academic journal; and a career development plan to provide focus for post-PGCAP professional activities. Assessments provide a balance between written and verbal modes and aim to reflect and develop a range of professionally relevant skills.

Assessments are progressive and reflect an increasing sphere of reference and influence as participants progress through the three modules.

The assessments are also designed to progressively develop participants’ independence over the period of their participation on the course. The assessments provide for increasing choice and autonomy as the course progresses, becoming gradually more open and with a final module assessment designed as an authentic practice-based research proposal to grow individuals capability to undertake pedagogic research in an area wholly of their own choosing, as depicted below:
This aligns well with the learning outcome of the course to develop participants as a confident and critical reflective practitioners [LO1].

All modules are assessed on a Pass/Fail basis and participants must pass each component of assessment in order to pass the module. Reassessment opportunities are in line with current university academic regulations.

Participants will be judged to have achieved a pass grade on the extent to which they have achieved all the learning outcomes for each module.

**Feedback on Assessed Coursework**

Participants will be encouraged to discuss each assessed piece of work with their personal tutor for formative feedback, and will have opportunities to gain peer and tutor feedback on several elements of assessment through peer review (again mirroring establish academic practice). Detailed written summative feedback will be provided for all assessed components, and will indicate strengths as well as areas for improvement.

Participants will be provided with feedback as soon as possible but no later than four weeks after the assessment deadline. Feedback dates will be included in the Module Handbooks.

**Employability and Professional Context**

As an in-service course, all participants are engaging in related employment.

The course sets out to build critically reflective and evidence-informed practitioners whose practice is underpinned by professional values and core knowledge across the broad range of activities associated with academic practice in the modern university, and in part as defined by the UKPSF.

Re-accreditation by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) will be sought for the PGCAP following Periodic Review. Such accreditation enables professional recognition at either AFHEA of FHEA to be conferred on successful participants, depending on their exit point from the course.

Professional recognition by the HEA is nationally recognised and is portable across the UK HE sector, and in a growing number of international contexts.

On completion of the PGCAP, participants can use the RPL process to progress on to the new MA Education (MAEDC). This enables participants who successfully gain the PGCAP to continue their masters-level studies and to pursue an area of specialism such as:

- Leadership and Management
- Policy and Practice
- SEN and Inclusion
Education for social change

Equally, the course is designed to deliver relevant and tangible benefits for participants in their own work. Assessment outputs from Module 3 enhance the capability of participants who have successfully completed the course to undertake pedagogic research. This is aimed at stimulating staff at the University to undertake research of this nature and to contribute to the work of the Higher Education Research Group strand within the Centre for Research and Innovation in Childhood Education and Society (RICHES). This aspect of work is concerned with pedagogies, practice, theory, curriculum, policy, educational development and demonstrates how outcomes of the PGCAP align well with institutional drivers and support career development of individuals.

Work-Related Activities

Placement or Work-Related Activity Level:
N/A

Placement or Work-Related Activity Length in Weeks:
N/A

Type of Placement or Work-Related Activity:
N/A

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 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 website 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 FHEQ (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.
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 work 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.