

Programme specification

Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice

<i>School:</i>	School of Education
<i>Entry in:</i>	January 2018
<i>Awarding Institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Teaching Institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Delivery Location:</i>	York St John University may also be delivered at other institutions including overseas
<i>Programme/s Accredited by:</i>	Recognised by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) within the York St John University Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Framework at Descriptor 2 (D2) (Fellow of the HEA)
<i>Exit Awards:</i>	None
<i>UCAS Code / GTTR / Other:</i>	Not applicable
<i>Joint Honours Combinations:</i>	Not applicable
<i>QAA Benchmark Group(s):</i>	Not applicable
<i>Mode/s of Study:</i>	Part-time over one year For academics with fractional contracts study may be over two years.
<i>Language of Study:</i>	English

Introduction and Special Features

The Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PCAP) is a professional development programme which aims to promote the development of high quality professional practice in higher education.

It is a University-wide programme which is located within the School of Education. The vision for this programme is that it will make a central contribution to the University's policy to provide exceptional learning, teaching and assessment as it underpins an exceptional student experience, the highest quality in learning and teaching and excellence in professional practice.

The programme aims to support staff in the development and dissemination of good practice and preparation for future changes in learning, teaching and assessment. Passing PCAP is not a requirement of probation but engagement with the programme is a requirement for all new staff with less than 3 years' experience in higher education.

This York St John PCAP is designed to meet the needs of colleagues wishing to gain professional status in teaching in higher education and to further enhance the quality of learning, teaching and assessment across the university. The programme is designed to make an important contribution to the York St John University aim to develop excellent practice in learning, teaching and assessment leading to an exceptional learning experience for students and staff.

The PCAP programme has potential for delivery overseas and at partner institutions.

Special features of the programme.

It is located within the York St John University CPD Framework: Recognising Academic Practice, which is accredited by the HEA. This PCAP is recognised at D2 of the UK Professional Standards Framework (PSF) (Fellow of the HEA).

The extension of this recognition by the HEA is available to PCAP participants overseas (upon payment of a fee).

The innovative dialogic approach to assessment which is an established part of our CPD Framework is a special feature of this programme.

The flexible and personalised nature of the learning, teaching and assessment strategy allows the programme to be personalised to the professional development needs of the participant rather than a 'one size fits all' approach.

The blended learning strategy models contemporary practice in higher education.

PCAP is located within the taught Masters degree framework in the School of Education and so participants successfully completing PCAP will have a progression route to the MA in Practitioner Research: Improving Professional Practice.

Admissions Criteria

At York St John University, the PCAP Programme is a requirement for all new members of academic staff with less than three years' teaching experience in higher education.

In addition to the University's general entry criteria for [postgraduate](#) study, you must have:

- an honours degree or equivalent qualification and/or experience;
- involvement in teaching and assessment of higher education courses;
- English language requirements;
- York St John University requires applicants whose first language is not English to at least meet one of the following:
 - Successful completion of a Bachelors or Master's degree at a University in a majority English speaking country (for a list of these consult the UKBA website at <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applicationforms/pbs/Tier4migrantguidance.pdf> and see point 104); where the first degree was taught entirely in the English medium then this is normally accepted as meeting the requirements and they must provide the documented evidence from the University that English was the medium of instruction;
 - The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) 7.0 with no less than 6.5 in each component or an equivalent English qualification (The IELTS must have been completed within the last two years and official certification must be seen) such as:
 - An internet Based Test (iBT) Test of English as a foreign Language (TOEFL) score of 87 overall (with no less than 23 in each band, other forms of TOEFL are not acceptable);
 - A Pearson Test of English Academic (PTE) of 59 overall, with no less than 59 in any component.

University staff who have learning support roles will be considered for entry to the programme if they have a substantial involvement in learning, teaching, assessment and feedback and are holders of an honours degree or equivalent qualification and/or experience.

Programme Aims

PCAP is designed to:

- provide a qualification in learning, teaching and assessment in higher education, with a view to achieving UKPSF D2 recognition as Fellow of the HEA;
- encourage and develop scholarship and research-informed practice in higher education;
- support the development of critically reflective practitioners;

- promote critical engagement with theories, values and assumptions in educational practice;
- contribute to the development of exceptional learning, teaching and assessment in higher education and the quality of the student experience;
- encourage engagement of staff in the development of the university in which they are employed as a learning community and in the sharing of best practice.

The PCAP programme is committed to:

- understanding how students learn;
- concern for individual learners, their development and empowerment;
- scholarship, enquiry and research-informed reflective practice;
- 'the learning community', working with and learning from colleagues and students;
- continuing reflection upon and evaluation of professional practice;
- improving the quality, flexibility and effectiveness of higher education.

Programme Learning Outcomes

Level 7 / FHEQ L7

1. demonstrate a theoretically informed approach to critical reflection on practice;
2. draw on theories and concepts of learning to inform practice;
3. enquire into, question and analyse their own practice as a reflective practitioner;
4. critically evaluate their own practice in relation to the UKPSF (D2, Fellow of the HEA).

Programme Structure

Modules for the Programme

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Status of Module*
MTS001	M	1 & 2	Academic Practice in Higher Education	60	CA

*CA: Compulsory for award.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The learning, teaching and assessment strategy for the PCAP programme reflects the key objectives and priorities of the York St John University Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategy 2012-2015 and its overarching aim to 'Develop innovative, inclusive and high quality teaching, learning and assessment practices that actively engage students and lead to an exceptional learning experience for students and staff'.

- *Key objective J* of the York St John University Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategy 2012-2015 is of particular relevance to the PCAP programme: 'Provide high quality development opportunities to enable staff to deliver exceptional learning, teaching and assessment practices'.
- *Key objective I* 'Make best use of technology enhanced learning tools' and
- *Key objective E* 'Promote a collaborative learning environment that encourages staff and students to engage in dialogue' are also of relevance.

The programme uses a blended approach to learning, teaching and assessment encouraging discussion and sharing of practice, both in face-to-face and on-line environments. The pedagogic approach to the use of both environments is consistent with social constructivist principles which provide the theoretical basis for learning on the course. The pedagogic approach also reflects the principles of active learning and learning together with others in a community of practice, both on-line and face-to-face. Face-to-face sessions provide opportunities to continue on-line discussions, to discuss material previously posted on the

Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), or for tutor input which may then be the focus for further discussion and reading. Participants will also meet in self-managing groups (on-line and face-to-face) for discussion and exchange of materials and ideas. The face-to-face sessions may be short sessions or more extended 'blocks' of time or both depending on fitness for purpose. Typically participants will be likely to encounter the following types of interactions and learning experiences on this programme:

- blended learning via tutor inputs, speakers/workshop facilitators, synchronous and asynchronous on-line discussion forums, seminars and tutorials;
- peer-supported learning via group discussions/action learning sets (face-to-face or on-line or both);
- reading, self-study, research and other independent work linked to the portfolio elements, use of VLE and e-learning material.

Participants may, for example, carry out their own small-scale pedagogic research into aspects of their professional practice or apply findings from research studies to inform future development of learning, teaching and assessment. They may present aspects of their portfolio narratives to each other by sharing their Mahara pages as they are being constructed in order to gain peer feedback. They may share ideas for sources of useful literature or the outcomes from engagement in CPD courses and conferences. These interactions will provide opportunities for participants to gain knowledge and understanding (for example from the specialist inputs to the programme as well as through collaborative learning with other participants and tutors), to share and develop their thinking and to contribute to one another's learning as members of a learning community.

The Salmon (2002) five-stage model for learning and teaching on-line is the framework which informs the approach to developing an on-line community and on-line socialisation. It reflects the York St John University Technology Enhanced Learning Quality Framework (the 3E Framework of Enhance-Extend-Empower). At the 'Enhance' stage, participants are supported to adopt the use of technology for their learning and assessment on the PCAP programme. This is, for example, through on-line learning and use of on-line tools such as Mahara for the e-portfolio. At this stage, there will be more tutor input and initial training/scaffolding in the application and use of technologies. This use of technology will be extended throughout the programme, for example, through individual and collaborative on-line learning with some tutor facilitation/mediation. At this 'Extend' stage, there will be less training and input on the use of technologies and more responsibility for participants to use these to enhance their learning on the programme, both individually and with peers. Through this experience on the programme participants will be empowered to develop their understanding of e-pedagogy and the use of technology in their own professional practice to support their students' learning.

The following key objectives are also relevant:

- *Key objective A* 'Provide high quality, research-informed teaching';
- *Key objective B* 'Provide an academic portfolio that is challenging, exciting and attractive to students';
- *Key objective F* 'Promote an emphasis on assessment for learning whilst maintaining the quality of assessment of learning'.

Learning, teaching and assessment strategies are designed to actively engage participants and to encourage the development of critically reflective practitioners. As the learning on this programme relates closely to participants' professional roles and responsibilities, there is a close integration between learning, teaching and assessment on the course and the participants' professional practice, for example, via work-based research and Peer Observation of Learning and Teaching (POLT) activity. The revised POLT process at York St John University promotes POLT as a quality enhancement activity and one which aims to contribute to reflective and scholarly approaches to teaching. It is, therefore, entirely appropriate to integrate experience of engagement in POLT with learning about, and reflection on, the development of good practice, as part of the PCAP programme. Participants are also encouraged to engage in wider professional development opportunities within the community in which they are employed and externally within the Higher Education sector. Formative support for assessment is built into the programme through peer-supported learning strategies which

encourage peers to provide one another with formative feedback as they discuss, critique and reflect on one another's ideas, plans and proposals. Formative support is also provided through tutorial support from the course team. Whilst the dialogue about the portfolio is part of the summative assessment strategy, it also has a strong formative function too. This reflective dialogue helps to develop thinking about professional practice and to feed forward into future plans for further professional development. The focus is on Assessment for Learning to support and strengthen the summative outcomes. As the portfolio construction is developing, participants will have opportunities to receive support and feedback from their peer group, mentor and tutor. The mentor, for example, will typically discuss the evidence that the participant is starting to assemble against the UKPSF criteria and will help participants to strengthen the scholarly nature of their pedagogic practice and to reflect critically on the evidence. Tutors will support the development of critical reflection on practice, the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings to this and will suggest relevant sources of literature on which to draw. The dialogue with the mentor will be another source of formative support for the final professional dialogue. The portfolio will typically consist of a critically reflective commentary which is underpinned by reading and theory and cross-referenced to the UKPSF D2 criteria and the sources of evidence which the participant has selected to include. Participants are discouraged from incorporating over-length and copious quantities of evidence and are guided to a more judicious approach to the selection of a carefully focused and purposeful evidence-base for inclusion. Mentors will be required to attend training and this may be combined with the mentor training which is already in place for the York St John University Professional Dialogic Route to D2 recognition as part of the Recognising Academic Practice York St John CPD Framework. Mentors will be Fellows of the HEA.

Learning and teaching strategies on the programme will embed intercultural understanding, social learning and discipline-relevant pedagogic understandings, values, theories and philosophies of learning.

Reasonable adjustments are made to teaching and assessments as appropriate for any participant declaring a disability and the guidance of the Student Services team is sought in such cases. This programme is committed to inclusive practice and is guided by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Quality Code for Higher Education which includes expectations for effective teaching, support and assessment of students in higher education and is an important reference point for good practice. We share the commitment to inclusive learning through promoting equality, diversity and equal opportunity and adhere to the belief that:

Diversity of staff and students brings with it different ideas, knowledge and experiences that contribute to an enriched learning environment. Promoting equality involves treating everyone with equal dignity and worth, irrespective of the group or groups to which they belong, while also raising aspirations and supporting achievement for people with diverse requirements, entitlements and backgrounds. An inclusive environment for learning anticipates the varied requirements of learners, for example because of a declared disability, specific cultural background, location, or age, and aims to ensure that all students have equal access to educational opportunities. Higher education providers, staff and students all have a role in and responsibility for promoting equality. (QAA Quality Code, Chapter B3: Learning and teaching, 2012 :4).

There is an emphasis within the programme on developing participants as learners within a community of practice that will provide sustainable support beyond the life of the certificate. This will be through the use of self-managed groups such as action learning sets as a key means to create a culture of active learning, building cross-organisational relationships, encouraging a culture of questioning, enquiring, problem-solving and enhancement of pedagogic practices. This is complemented by an emphasis on the use of a dialogue as an assessment tool to explore the relationship of participants, their practice and the UKPSF. The tutor role is that of facilitator with the onus on participants becoming active agents of their own and each other's learning.

Progression and Graduation Requirements

The University's [general regulations for postgraduate awards](#) apply to this programme.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the Programme Structure section.

Internal and External Reference Points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

- [University Mission Statement](#) [see page two]
- [Strategic Plan 2015-20](#) [see page four]
- [QAA subject benchmark statement](#)
- [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#)
- [York St John University Mission, Vision and Values Statements](#)
- [York St John University Technology Enhanced Learning Quality Framework](#)
- [UK Professional Standards Framework \(UKPSF\)](#)
- [Recognising Academic Practice: the York St John CPD framework](#)
- [York St John University Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2012-15](#)
- [York St John University Processes of Support for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Quality Assurance Agency Quality Code for Higher Education](#)
- [York St John University Quality Assurance Framework](#)
- [York St John University Guidelines for Internationalisation of Programmes and Modules \(PMA30\)](#)

Further Information

Further information on the programme of study may be obtained from:

- Admissions entry profile (Admissions)
- Programme validation document (Registry – Academic Quality Support)
- Regulations (Registry – Academic Quality Support)
- Student programme handbook (school)
- Module handbooks (school)
- Quality Assurance Agency Framework for Higher Education Qualifications. Master's degree characteristics (2010)

References:

Salmon, G. (2002) *E-tivities: the key to active online learning*. London: Kogan Page

Date written / revised: July 2013 revalidation, Reviewed: October 2014 (no change), July 2017
New programme for 2014/5