**Programme Specification – Postgraduate Courses Level 7 (MRes)**

**for courses starting in Academic Year 2025/26**

A Programme Specification should provide the key information about a programme in a format that is clear and accessible. The audience ranges from peers in the approval/re-approval process, reviewers / inspectors from national bodies, to current students and potential students selecting their courses.

Programme Specifications must be **checked annually and updated to reflect any changes** which have been made to the course (either routine updating, or approved changes). The date in Section 11 should be altered with a note to indicate what section/or approved update has taken place.

The award map is a fundamental and integral part of the Programme Specification and must be included (and published) either as part of Section 15 (where the listing of modules, etc., is relatively succinct) or as an appendix (where the programme has greater choice of modules, etc.). It is the award map that is mostly likely to be updated, e.g. through the addition or removal of modules.

**All new awards, and all courses going through re-approval or included in a Departmental Periodic Review are required to map the course level learning outcomes to the main module/s in which they are achieved (Section 13). Learning outcomes should be specified for the exit awards of PG Cert within the MRes award.** In mapping learning outcomes to modules, course teams will need to take account of the relevant qualification descriptors, subject benchmark statements, and any other relevant external reference points, such as professional body statements. Particular attention must be given to the relationship with mandatory modules, since all students must achieve all course learning outcomes in order to achieve the award. **Details of any specific modules required to achieve a named exit award should be clearly shown in Section 19, Regulation of Assessment, under Requirements for Awards.**  
The Programme Specification should be written as a concise statement of key information about the course that will be accessible to potential students. Advice on completing the template is available from AQU Officers.

The following supplementary documents should be provided as part of the Course Handbook (not in the Programme Specification):

* Course schedule: start/end dates for terms/semesters/modules/ showing requirements for full and part-time study as appropriate, or key activities focussed in specific weeks
* Assessment map: summative assessments and weightings mapped to modules for each level, indicating mandatory and optional modules
* Assessment calendar/schedule: showing submission deadlines (e.g. date or week number) for each assessment
* It is helpful to include a grid showing how transferable skills are taught, practised and assessed in modules.

**Updated:**

November 2020: Sections 10 and 17 hyperlinks corrected.  
January 2021: Section 13, amendment re Personal Academic Tutor meetings

March 2023, Section 16, change from FHEQ to OFS link.

*Guidance on completing the Programme Specification template is provided below in italics.*

When using tables, please include Alt Text headings for accessibility e.g. Table 1 below

Standard text (which should be modified where appropriate) is provided in non-italic text.

*Replace the above statements with the course award title e.g.:*

**Programme Specification for MRes Zoology**

**This document applies to Academic Year 2025/26 onwards**

Table 1 Programme specification for MRes Zoology

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **1.** | **Awarding institution/body** | University of Worcester |
| **2.** | **Teaching institution** | *(where joint teaching, list both institutions)* |
| **3.** | **Programme accredited by** | *(state if accredited by PSRB, otherwise N/A )* |
| **4.** | **Final award or awards** | MRes*. Provide this generic award title only, not full course title.* |
| **5.** | **Programme title** | *(as formally approved by APPG, e.g. Zoology, where a course offers descriptors in brackets, put the generic award here and also include the list of descriptors)* |
| **6.** | **Pathways available** | *(normally NA)* |
| **7.** | **Mode and/or site of delivery** | *(e.g. standard taught programme, block delivery, distance learning, flexible and distributed learning, on-line learning; state where and how programme delivered if not on the University of Worcester site)* |
| **8.** | **Mode of attendance and duration** | *(is the course approved for full time, part time or both? If both, ensure that Section 15 below details delivery arrangements. State if attendance is in evenings, weekends etc. – be as specific as possible and give normal period of study, e.g. 3 years full time).* |
| **9.** | **UCAS Code** | *N/A* |
| **10.** | **Subject Benchmark statement and/or professional body statement** | *(e.g.* [*QAA subject benchmark statement*](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements)*.*  *and the* [*QAA Masters Degree Characteristics*](https://www2.worc.ac.uk/aqu/documents/QAAMastersDegreeCharacteristicsFeb2020.pdf) *download available from* [*www.qaa.ac.uk*](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)*).*  *Include all external required subject/ professional reference points, such as PSRB or occupational standards. Give full title and date of publication, and/or relevant professional statement)* |
| **11.** | **Date of Programme Specification preparation/ revision** | *(For new courses, state month and year of first approval. For existing courses, include dates of any approved changes with reference to section and change made)* |

**12. Educational aims of the programme**

*Use this section to set out who the course is for, its basic philosophy/rationale and* ***any distinctive features of the course****. List the aims of the programme (what the course is designed to do) – normally between 6 and 10 specific aims. The University’s* [*Curriculum Design Policy*](http://www.worc.ac.uk/aqu/documents/CurriculumDesignPolicy.pdf) *is a useful reference point. Aims may not just be subject related but might relate to regional/professional/skills/employment or other objectives as well.*

**13. Intended learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment methods**

*This section should take account of the University’s* [*Curriculum Design Policy*](https://www.worc.ac.uk/aqu/documents/CurriculumDesignPolicy.pdf)*,* [*Assessment Policy*](https://www.worc.ac.uk/aqu/documents/AssessmentPolicy.pdf) *and* [*Guidance on writing learning outcomes*](https://www.worc.ac.uk/aqu/documents/LearningOutcomesGuide-PrinciplesforCourseDesign.pdf) *and developing assessment criteria, as well as the* [*QAA’s Revised UK Quality Code*](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/revised-uk-quality-code-for-higher-education.pdf?sfvrsn=4c19f781_8) *(for FHEQ and subject/qualification benchmarks) and any professional body requirements.*

*List the learning outcomes for the award. Learning outcomes must be set at threshold level for the award, be distinct to the award and should include those relating to generic and transferable/key skills as well as subject related skills, knowledge and understanding. Transferable/key skills should include information and digital literacy competencies, such as retrieving, evaluating and communicating information.*

***Specific learning outcomes must be identified for the following related sets of exit awards: PG Certificate and MRes degree.***

*Most MRes programmes are structured to have 60 credits of taught modules followed by 120 credits of dissertation, related to the Certificate and MRes awards respectively.*

*Guidance on the principles of mapping module codes to learning outcomes and exit awards can be found here:*

[*http://www.worc.ac.uk/aqu/documents/Mapping\_course\_and\_programme\_level\_learning\_outcomes.docx*](http://www.worc.ac.uk/aqu/documents/Mapping_course_and_programme_level_learning_outcomes.docx)

*Courses developed using largely existing modules need to ensure that the course aims and learning outcomes are different from any pre-existing courses.*

*It is recommended that a grid showing how key/transferable skills are taught/practiced and assessed within modules be included in the student handbook developed for the course approval process.*

***Please complete the boxes below, showing the appropriate award where applicable:***

*There would normally be 12-16 ILOs in total across the programme*. *Please number the Learning Outcomes using consecutive numbering.*

*Under “Module Code/s” list the modules or modules in which each learning outcome is* ***primarily*** *assessed.  
  
Please add more lines if required and adjust column size where appropriate.*

Table 2 knowledge and understanding outcomes and which module/code they relate to

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Knowledge and Understanding** | | | |
| **LO**  **no.** | On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to: | **Module Code/s** | **Award**  *State if*  *PG Cert or MRes* |
| 1. |  |  |  |
| 2. |  |  |  |

Table 3 cognitive and intellectual skills outcomes for module code/s

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Cognitive and Intellectual skills** | | | |
| **LO**  **no.** | On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to: | **Module Code/s** | **Award**  *State if*  *PG Cert or MRes* |
| 1. |  |  |  |
| 2. |  |  |  |

Table 4 learning skills and capabilities related to employability outcomes for module code/s

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Skills and capabilities related to employability** | | | |
| **LO**  **no.** | On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to: | **Module Code/s** | **Award**  *State if*  *PG Cert or MRes* |
| 1. |  |  |  |
| 2. |  |  |  |

Table 5 transferable/key skills outcomes for module code/s

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Transferable/key skills** | | | |
| **LO**  **no.** | On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to: | **Module Code/s** | **Award**  *State if*  *PG Cert or MRes* |
| 1. |  |  |  |
| 2. |  |  |  |

**Learning, teaching and assessment**

*It is acknowledged that the teaching and learning strategies for postgraduate programmes can be very different, so please adapt the text below to reflect the delivery of the course, bearing in mind the intention is to provide information for prospective as well as current students.*

*Begin this section with a brief overview of the key approaches to learning, teaching and assessment that students will experience and the methods used to enable students to achieve and demonstrate the learning outcomes. This should include reference to modes of teaching (e.g. lectures, seminars, workshops, practical sessions, work-based learning etc.) and types of assessment. It should make clear how the course makes use of learning technologies such as the VLE and e-portfolios. If the course is delivered wholly or predominantly through use of learning technologies, this should be made clear, together with an account of expectations of students in studying at a distance.*

*This brief overview should be followed by more detail about teaching, contact time and assessment as provided on the course webpages. Some example text is given below, which should be adapted where necessary.*

**Teaching**

*State the main teaching methods, and provide a sentence about each, describing what is*

*involved/purpose in relation to student learning.  Include a statement about meetings with personal academic tutor.*

*If relevant, include a sentence or two about work-based learning and placements, and or access to specialist learning resources/facilities.*

Example text:

Students are taught through a combination of interactive workshops, lectures, seminars, laboratory practical sessions, fieldwork, practical activities, etc. Interactive workshops take a variety of formats and are intended to enable the application of learning through discussion and small group activities.  Seminars enable the discussion and development of understanding of topics covered in lectures, and laboratory practical sessions are focused on developing subject specific skills and applied individual and group project work.

In addition, postgraduate students will have a minimum of two meetings with their Personal Academic Tutors, timed to coincide with key points such as induction or assessment.

The University places emphasis on enabling students to develop the independent learning capabilities that will equip them for lifelong learning and future employment, as well as academic achievement.  A mixture of independent study, teaching and academic support from Student Services and Library Services, and also the Personal Academic Tutoring system enables students to reflect on progress and build up a profile of skills, achievements and experiences that will help them to flourish and be successful.

**Contact time**

In a typical week students will have around [xx – xx] contact hours of teaching. The precise contact hours will depend on the optional modules selected and in the final year there is normally slightly less contact time in order to do more independent study.

Typically class contact time will be structured around:

* …
* …

**Independent self-study**

In addition to the contact time, students are expected to undertake around [xx] hours of personal self-study per week. Typically, this will involve …..

Independent learning is supported by a range of excellent learning facilities, including the Hive and library resources, the virtual learning environment, and extensive electronic learning resources.

**Teaching staff**

Students will be taught by a teaching team whose expertise and knowledge are closely matched to the content of the modules on the course. The team includes …..

Teaching is informed by research and consultancy, and [x number] of lecturers on the course have a higher education teaching qualification or are Fellows of the Higher Education Academy.

**Assessment**

The course provides opportunities to test understanding and learning informally through the completion of practice or ‘formative’ assignments. Each module has one or more formal or ‘summative’ assessment which is graded and counts towards the overall module grade.

Assessment methods include …..

The precise assessment requirements for an individual student in an academic year will vary according to the mandatory and optional modules taken, but a typical formal summative assessment pattern for each year of the course is:

Year 1

Year 2

Year 3

**14. Assessment strategy**

*This section should set out the* ***overall approach of the course to assessment,*** *demonstrating that the approach to assessment for the course has been considered holistically. The* [*University’s Assessment Policy*](http://www.worc.ac.uk/aqu/documents/AssessmentPolicy.pdf) *is an important point of reference and provides specific guidance on course assessment strategies.*

***Please do not duplicate information from Section 13,*** *however the following are examples that can be included: relationship of assessment to learning; range of assessment methods/tasks; balance of formative/summative assessment and feedback; use of diagnostic assessment; setting of assignment briefs; use of assessment and grade criteria, e.g. are assessment criteria/grade descriptors provided for each item of assessment, for different types of assessment, or has the team developed subject specific criteria and descriptors benchmarked to the University generic descriptors, plus any particular innovations etc.*

*A grid showing assessment methods and weightings mapped to modules at each level, together with an assessment calendar of submission dates must be included in the Course Handbook.*

**15. Programme structures and requirements**

*This section should include an award map using the standard award map format below, and showing for each level of the course: module code, module title, credit value, module status mandatory or optional), requirements for specific pathways and for awards with specialist descriptors.*

*This section must also include, where necessary a statement of any requirements or completion of periods of placement, etc., that may be additional to completion of the modules.*

*Where the course can be either full time or part time or is non-standard in delivery – e.g. delivered in blocks or through blended learning, a statement explaining how this works should be included. The detailed schedule for the course showing how modules are delivered over the academic year and any detailed information about full and part-time study should be set out in the course handbook.*

**Award map template for postgraduate awards - PG Certificate and MRes**

Table 6 award map for PG award

|  |
| --- |
| **Course Title:** |

|  |
| --- |
| **PG Certificate** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Module Code** | **Module Title** | **Credits** (Number) | **Status**  Mandatory (M)  or Optional (O) |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

*Delete unused columns*

Students registered on to the PG Cert Research Methods must successfully complete 60 credits

at Level 7 *(specify modules).*

Table 7 award map for level MRes award

|  |
| --- |
| **Masters (MRes)** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Module Code** | **Module Title** | **Credits** (Number) | **Status**  Mandatory (M)  or Optional (O) |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

*Delete unused columns*

To be awarded the MRes, students must complete a total of 180 credits at Level 7 including

a minimum of 120 credits from the dissertation.

(See Section 14.5 in the [TCRF](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/documents/TaughtCoursesRegulatoryFramework.pdf) for details).

\*A student can only progress to the MRes Thesis if the taught modules for the PG Cert have

been passed.

**16. QAA and professional academic standards and quality**

*Statement on the academic level of the course with reference to how the relevant* [*FHEQ qualification descriptor*](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf?sfvrsn=170af781_14)*,* [*Subject Benchmark Statement*](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements) *and/or relevant* [*Characteristics Statement*](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/the-existing-uk-quality-code/part-a-setting-and-maintaining-academic-standards) *(describing the distinctive features of various qualifications) has been applied.  This section can also include reference to PSRB requirements and/or other professional or national reference points where applicable; provide full title and date of any relevant benchmarks in each case.*

*This section must include an explicit statement:*

This award is located at Level 7 of the [[OfS sector recognised standards](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/53821cbf-5779-4380-bf2a-aa8f5c53ecd4/sector-recognised-standards.pdf)](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/53821cbf-5779-4380-bf2a-aa8f5c53ecd4/sector-recognised-standards.pdf).

**17. Support for students**

*This section should set out the course arrangements for Personal Academic Tutoring (including detail of its purpose, and how it is integral to the academic programme for the specific course) together with any course specific support arrangements, e.g. mentors for work-based learning, specialist tutors or workshops, induction etc.*

*It should NOT include general University wide support, but the following hyperlinks should be included.*

[*https://www2.worc.ac.uk/firstpoint/*](https://www2.worc.ac.uk/firstpoint/)

[*https://www.worcester.ac.uk/life/help-and-support/services-for-students/home.aspx*](https://www.worcester.ac.uk/life/help-and-support/services-for-students/home.aspx)

[*https://www2.worc.ac.uk/disabilityanddyslexia/*](https://www2.worc.ac.uk/disabilityanddyslexia/)

**18. Admissions**

*Please use the following headings:*

**Admissions policy**

*Please state the policy on admissions (who the course seeks to recruit, for example adults in work, international students; whether you interview or have other processes for selecting applicants), together with any commitments to widening participation, equality and diversity, and inclusion.*

**Entry requirements**

*Specify the entry requirements for the course in terms of the minimum standard entry qualifications (normally a lower second class Hons degree or equivalent) and any professional or other requirements (e.g. being in relevant work and having employer support). Specify English language requirements (*Minimum IELTS score of 6.5 for courses at Level *7) if course is intended to attract international applicants.*

*Modify the above, if you require Honours degree in a specific discipline or subject area, and add any further requirements. If the course is mainly aimed at people in work with few formal qualifications, say this.*

***The entry requirements shown in this section must be consistent with the information provided on the University webpages.***

See [Admissions Policy](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/documents/AdmissionsPolicy.pdf) for other acceptable qualifications.

**Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) requirements***If enhanced disclosure is required for the course, or for a specific work-based/practice-based module, please check that this complies with the latest guidance in the* [*Admissions Policy*](https://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/documents/AdmissionsPolicy.pdf) *Sections 18 & 19. Where a satisfactory DBS is a prerequisite for the course (or a placement/WBL experience that is a required element of the course), this must be clearly communicated to students prior to selection of modules.*

**Recognition of Prior Learning**

Students with relevant previous study at postgraduate level or with extensive experience may be considered eligible for recognition of prior learning. Please contact the Registry Admissions Office for further information or guidance on 01905 855111.

Further information on Recognition of Prior Learning can be found at

<http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/941.htm>

**Admissions procedures**

*State the arrangements for making applications and considering applications – i.e. are applicants invited for selection interviews, information visits, are they required to undertake selection/admissions tasks etc.*

**Admissions/selection criteria**

*Set out here the process and criteria for making an offer of a place to applicants. There is no need to repeat the entry requirements; this section is about the criteria used to determine whether or not a place on the course is to be offered. Criteria must be clear, specific and transparent.*

**19. Regulation of assessment**

*This section must include the standard text below. Please highlight for course approval/re-approval any different or additional regulations or requirements which specifically apply to the course. Variations to these standard regulations must be agreed with the Academic Registrar and Director of QED and approved by ASQEC.*

**The course operates under the University’s** [**Taught Courses Regulatory Framework**](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/documents/TaughtCoursesRegulatoryFramework.pdf)

**Requirements to pass modules**

* Modules are assessed using a variety of assessment activities which are detailed in the module specifications.
* The minimum pass mark is D- for each module.
* Students are required to submit all items of assessment in order to pass a module, and in some modules, a pass mark in each item of assessment may be required.
* Full details of the assessment requirements for a module, including the assessment criteria, are published in the module outline.

**Submission of assessment items**

* + Students who submit course work late but within 7 days (one week) of the due date will have work marked, but the grade will be capped at D- unless an application for mitigating circumstances is accepted.
  + Students who submit work later than 7 days (one week) will not have work marked unless they have submitted a valid claim of mitigating circumstances.
  + For full details of submission regulations please see the Taught Courses Regulatory Framework.

**Retrieval of failure**

* Students are entitled to resit failed assessment items for any module that is awarded a fail grade.
* Reassessment items that are passed are capped at D-.
* If a student is unsuccessful in the reassessment, they have the right to retake the module (or, in some circumstances, take an alternative module); the module grade for a re-taken module is capped at D-.
* A student who fails 60 credits or more after exhausting all reassessment opportunities may be required to withdraw from the University.
* A student will be notified of the reassessment opportunities in the results notification issued via the secure student portal (SOLE). It is the student’s responsibility to be aware of and comply with any reassessments.

This course is subject to the [University’s fitness to practise procedures](https://www2.worc.ac.uk/registryservices/documents/FitnesstoPractiseProcedures.pdf) *(delete if not required)*

**Requirements for Awards**

*Please include the following statements to define eligibility for these awards (including any specific mandatory modules which need to be passed to achieve the exit award, where applicable):*

Table 8 requirements for awards

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Award** | **Requirement** |
| PG Cert Research Methods in | Passed a minimum of 60 credits at Level 7, as specified on the award map |
| Masters (MRes) | Passed a minimum of 180 credits at Level 7 including 120 credits for the Research Project module, as specified on the award map |

The PG Cert award is unclassified. The awards of MRes may be made with Pass, Merit or Distinction.

**Classification of Masters**

The classification will be determined by whichever of the following two methods results in the higher classification.

Method 1

1. Candidates will be awarded a Distinction where they have attained an average of A- (PD) or higher from the credit achieved with the University for the award.
2. Candidates will be awarded a Merit where they have attained an average of C+ (PM) or higher from the credit achieved with the University for the award.

Method 2

1. Candidates will be awarded a Distinction, irrespective of their other module results, where they have attained 90 credits at grade A- (PD) or higher
2. Candidates will be awarded a Merit, irrespective of their other module results, where they have attained 90 credits at grade C+ (PM) or higher

Candidates will be awarded a Pass where they have not fulfilled the rules for Method 1 or Method 2, but are eligible for the award of a Masters.

For further information on Masters/MRes degree classification, see the [Taught Courses Regulatory Framework](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/documents/TaughtCoursesRegulatoryFramework.pdf).

*This section must also include details of any regulations which specifically apply to the course and/or are different to the standard regulations of the Taught Courses Regulatory Framework. Such regulations must be agreed with the Academic Registrar and Director of QED and approved by ASQEC.*

**20. Graduate destinations, employability and links with employers**

*This section should provide clear information about the kinds of employment and/or further study graduates take up, how the course prepares students for graduate employment, and the links with employers/professional bodies, etc., that assure the relevance of the course.*

*Please use the following headings:*

**Graduate destinations**

*Provide brief information about the career openings/progression routes/ further study opportunities for students who successfully complete the course, with actual statistics if appropriate. Include information about the employment market if appropriate. If the course is designed to have a progression route, give full details.*

**Student employability**

*State how the course prepares students for employment, through the development of employability skills and attributes, opportunities for work-related learning (including WBL, placements, work experience), careers education, workshops, support for preparing applications, for interviews etc.*

**Links with employers**

*Describe links with employers or professional bodies and how they have informed the design and development of the course, and /or are involved in the delivery or review of the course.*

**Please note:** This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in associated course documentation e.g. course handbooks, module outlines and module specifications,