Module Descriptor

Title	CDAS Dissertation		
Session	2026/27	**Status**	
Code	CDAS11002	**SCQF Level**	11
Credit Points	60	**ECTS (European Credit Transfer Scheme)**	30
School	**Education and Social Sciences**		
Module Co-ordinator	Prof Aileen O'Gorman		

Summary of Module

The CDAS dissertation module forms a major part of the MSc Contemporary Drug and Alcohol Studies programme. The module provides students with the opportunity to consolidate their learning on drug and alcohol issues by conducting an empirical research study on a topic of their choice which is relevant to the programme and agreed with the module co-ordinator.

Completion of the Trimester 1 Research Methods module ensures knowledge of a range of research techniques, providing a solid grounding in research methods and theory. Students are required to have an agreed Research Plan and successful completion of the methods module to progress on to the Dissertation.

The Dissertation Module provides further advanced drug and alcohol specific research skills through a series of taught workshops. These workshops equip students with the expertise required to conduct a research project independently, and to disseminate findings in line with academic conventions and professional standards. In addition, workshop-based teaching and learning enables students to identify and clarify their research topic, aims, methodology and design; to prepare for fieldwork and data analysis; and to submit a timely research proposal and research ethics application.

Ethics applications are required to be submitted to the School Ethics Committee and approval must be obtained before data collection can proceed.

On completion of an accepted research proposal, students are allocated a research dissertation supervisor who will provide individual guidance and support in their development as researchers and through the completion of their dissertation.

Module Delivery Method	On-Campus[1] ☐	Hybrid[2] ☐	Online[3] ☒	Work -Based Learning[4] ☐
Campuses for Module Delivery	☐ Ayr ☐ Dumfries	☐ Lanarkshire ☐ London ☐ Paisley	☒ Online / Distance Learning ☐ Other (specify)	

Terms for Module Delivery	Term 1	☐	Term 2	☒	Term 3	☒
Long-thin Delivery over more than one Term	Term 1 – Term 2	☐	Term 2 – Term 3	☐	Term 3 – Term 1	☐

Learning Outcomes	
L1	Demonstrate the ability to critically review and synthesise an extensive body of literature on a specific topic and formulate a research question.
L2	Identify, conceptualise and execute appropriate research methods and ethical considerations required to investigate a research question.
L3	Plan and organise work, exercising autonomy and initiative in professional activities, and discussing and debating with peers and research specialists.
L4	Gather and analyse data using appropriate software where necessary to support and enhance the effectiveness of their research findings and skills.
L5	Report independent research project in a dissertation format in line with academic standards and conventions.

Employability Skills and Personal Development Planning (PDP) Skills	
SCQF Headings	**During completion of this module, there will be an opportunity to achieve core skills in:**
Knowledge and Understanding (K and U)	**SCQF 11** A critical understanding of a range of theories relating to alcohol and drugs. A critical understanding of a range of techniques for the analysis of qualitative and/or quantitative data.
Practice: Applied Knowledge and Understanding	**SCQF 11** Utilising an appropriate range of research methods in order to undertake a substantial research project.

[1] Where contact hours are synchronous/ live and take place fully on campus. Campus-based learning is focused on providing an interactive learning experience supported by a range of digitally-enabled asynchronous learning opportunities including learning materials, resources, and opportunities provided via the virtual learning environment. On-campus contact hours will be clearly articulated to students.

[2] The module includes a combination of synchronous/ live on-campus and online learning events. These will be supported by a range of digitally-enabled asynchronous learning opportunities including learning materials, resources, and opportunities provided via the virtual learning environment. On-campus and online contact hours will be clearly articulated to students.

[3] Where all learning is solely delivered by web-based or internet-based technologies and the participants can engage in all learning activities through these means. All required contact hours will be clearly articulated to students.

[4] Learning activities where the main location for the learning experience is in the workplace. All required contact hours, whether online or on campus, will be clearly articulated to students

	Plan and execute a significant project of research, through the stages of idea generation, formation and investigation. Interpret, critically analyse and utilise primary and secondary sources of information including electronic sources.
Generic Cognitive skills	**SCQF 11** Consolidate and extend subject specialist knowledge, skills, academic writing practices and thinking. Demonstrate the ability to conduct analysis, evaluation and theoretical synthesis.
Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills	**SCQF 11** Communicate with peers and specialists in research. Evaluate and interpret data. Using appropriate software to support and enhance the effectiveness of their research skills.
Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others	**SCQF 11** Exercise substantial autonomy and initiative to complete a substantial research project from inception to completion. Take responsibility for their own work and contribute to the collaborative learning activities of the group. Form a supportive and productive research relationship with their dissertation supervisor. Systematically identify and address their own learning needs both in current and in new areas, making use of research in source materials as appropriate. Deal with complex ethical issues. Develop a critical understanding of the importance of the definition, identification and evidencing of social problems and their contested nature; Develop understanding of interdisciplinary research across the social sciences; Develop an advanced understanding of evidence-based policy-making and the policy process in relation to contemporary social issues.

Prerequisites	**Module Code**	**Module Title**
	Other	
Co-requisites	**Module Code** 11007	**Module Title** Applied Research Methods in Social Sciences

Learning and Teaching
In line with current learning and teaching principles, a 20-credit module includes 200 learning hours, normally including a minimum of 36 contact hours and maximum of 48 contact hours.

Learning Activities During completion of this module, the learning activities undertaken to achieve the module learning outcomes are stated below:	**Student Learning Hours** (Note: Learning hours include both contact hours and hours spent on other learning activities)
Lecture / Core Content Delivery	0 hours, online delivery
Practice-based Learning	10
Tutorial / Synchronous Support Activity	50
Asynchronous Class Activity	20
Independent Study	120
Please select	
TOTAL	200

Indicative Resources
The following materials form essential underpinning for the module content and ultimately for the learning outcomes: Bell, J. (2024) Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education, Health and Social Science. (8th ed) Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill Open University Press. Booth, A; Sutton, A; Clowes, M; Martyn St-James, M. (2025) Systematic Approaches to a Successful Literature Review (4th ed). London Sage. Burnett, J (2009) Doing your social science dissertation. Sage. London Biggam J. (2025) Succeeding with Your Master's Dissertation: A Step-by-Step Handbook (6th ed). Open University Press, Berkshire, England Murray, R. (2025) How to Write a Thesis (5th ed.) Open University Press, Berkshire, England
(N.B. Although reading lists should include current publications, students are advised (particularly for material marked with an asterisk*) to wait until the start of session for confirmation of the most up-to-date material)

Attendance and Engagement Requirements
In line with the Student Attendance and Engagement Procedure, all students are required to attend all scheduled classes and participate with all delivered elements of each module as part of their engagement with their programme of study. However, it is recognised that from time-to-time students will have justifiable reasons for periods of lack of engagement. Students who are unable to attend timetabled classes for any reason should report their absence to their programme leader or personal tutor. Consideration will be given to students who have protection under the appropriate equality law. Please refer to UWS Equality Diversity and Human Rights Code Feb 2023.

Equality and Diversity
The University's Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Procedure can be accessed at the following link: UWS Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Code. Aligned with the overall commitment to equality and diversity, learning materials will be presented electronically in formats that allow flexible access and manipulation of content (students should check with their programme leader for any queries). The CDAS programme complies with UWS regulations and guidance on inclusive learning and teaching practice. Specialist assistive equipment, support provision and adjustment to assessment practice will be made in accordance with UWS policy and regulations.
(N.B. Every effort will be made by the University to accommodate any equality and diversity issues brought to the attention of the School)

Supplemental Information

Divisional Programme Board	**Social Sciences**
Overall Assessment Results	☐ **Pass / Fail** ☒ **Graded**
Module Eligible for Compensation	☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** **If this module is eligible for compensation, there may be cases where compensation is not permitted due to programme accreditation requirements. Please check the associated programme specification for details.**
School Assessment Board	PG Social Sciences
Moderator	April Shaw
External Examiner	Fay Dennis
Accreditation Details	
Module Appears in CPD catalogue	☐ **Yes** ☒ **No**
Changes / Version Number	1. External Examiner updated 2. **Online only 26/27**

Assessment (also refer to Assessment Outcomes Grids below)
Assessment 1
A successful application to the MCS School Ethics Committee that demonstrates a critical application of appropriate ethical considerations for the required project. The application must fulfil both School and Subject specific ethical requirements and gain approval within the set time scale in order for students to proceed to data collection. A literature review which gives students the opportunity to acquire the skills to critically review a body of literature which they wish to further research and ensures engagement with the literature relevant to their research question at an early stage of the module. The thesis (12000 - 15000 words) worth 100% of the grade.
Assessment 2
Assessment 3

(N.B. (i) Assessment Outcomes Grids for the module (one for each component) can be found below which clearly demonstrate how the learning outcomes of the module will be assessed.

(ii) An indicative schedule listing approximate times within the academic calendar when assessment is likely to feature will be provided within the Student Module Handbook.)

Component 1							
Assessment Type	**LO1**	**LO2**	**LO3**	**LO4**	**LO5**	**Weighting of Assessment Element (%)**	**Timetabled Contact Hours**
Dissertation Thesis	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	100	

Component 2							
Assessment Type	**LO1**	**LO2**	**LO3**	**LO4**	**LO5**	**Weighting of Assessment Element (%)**	**Timetabled Contact Hours**
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		

Component 3							
Assessment Type	**LO1**	**LO2**	**LO3**	**LO4**	**LO5**	**Weighting of Assessment Element (%)**	**Timetabled Contact Hours**
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Combined total for all components						100%	hours

Change Control

What	**When**	**Who**