



Postgraduate Programme Specification

Session	2025/26	Last Modified	2024
Named Award Title	Professional Doctorate		
Award Title for Each Award	D Prof: Education Nursing Midwifery Counselling Engineering Careers Guidance and Development Social Work Social Sciences/Sociology Pg Cert: Advanced Research and Professional Practice Pg Dip: Advanced Research and Professional Practice		
Date of Approval	12 May 2015, Subject Health Review 2021		
Details of Cohort Applies to	na		
Awarding Institution	University of the West of Scotland	Teaching Institution(s)	University of the West of Scotland
Language of Instruction & Examination		English	
Award Accredited by		na	
Maximum Period of Registration		4 years (part time equivalent)	
Duration of Study			
Full-time	3 years	Part-time	6 years
Placement (compulsory)	na		
Mode of Study	<input type="checkbox"/> Full-time <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part-time		
Campus	<input type="checkbox"/> Ayr <input type="checkbox"/> Dumfries	<input type="checkbox"/> Lanarkshire <input type="checkbox"/> London <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paisley	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online / Distance Learning <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)
School	Education and Social Sciences		

Divisional Programme Board	Education
Programme Leader	B Cross

Admissions Criteria

Candidates must be able to satisfy the general admission requirements of the University of the West of Scotland as specified in Chapter 2 of the University Regulatory Framework together with the following programme requirements:

Appropriate Undergraduate Qualifications:

Applicants will typically possess a degree or equivalent. In the absence of a degree, where entry requirements do not conform to the general entry requirements, other evidence can be considered on an individual basis in line with Regulations 2.13 – 2.36 (Recognition of Prior Learning – RPL / Recognition of Credit).

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Other Required Qualifications/Experience

Candidates will normally be required to have a Masters degree in a subject relevant to their area of study;

Candidates will also be expected to have significant professional experience, and be operating at a level within their organisation or profession where they can drive substantial change, have the opportunity to make a contribution to practice and/or exhibit powers of creativity and innovation.

Due to the blended learning nature of the Professional Doctorate programme, candidates wishing to be admitted on the programme must have access to an Internet connected computer.

Further desirable skills pre-application

In the case of a candidate whose native language is other than English, a Qualification Minimum Requirement applies. British Council International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Average Score of 6 or above, and for each component 5 or above. Information on other English language test scores is available from Admissions. Candidate should have strong communication/interpersonal skills and be able to work as part of a team. Strong ICT and research skills are also desirable.

General Overview

General Overview

The Professional Doctorate programme is designed for professionals working within Nursing; Midwifery; Engineering; Counselling; Social Work; Careers Guidance and Development; Education (primary, secondary and tertiary sectors) and those working within other

educational, training and professional settings. As a result the programme addresses a number of SDG, particularly 1-4 and 11. The curriculum includes specific content that offers a critical lens on decolonisation and sustainability issues.

The Professional Doctorate programme will be delivered in a blended learning format with a significant proportion of the teaching and learning approach being delivered, administered and supported through the UWS virtual learning environment (VLE) AULA.

Professional experience and work-based learning as well as the establishment of a 'community of practice' lies at the heart of this multidisciplinary Professional Doctorate. The programme is designed to enable the candidates to pursue Doctoral level opportunities based around the work that they undertake as part of their professional role. State of the art professional practice will be pursued as will the concept of the reflective practitioner supported by high-level relevant academic theory. The programme requires that the candidates demonstrate evidence of independent critical judgment and contribute to the development of original knowledge.

The educational aims are:

- To make a significant and original contribution to knowledge related to a professional background that meets career aspirations;
- To draw together concepts of self-reflection and reflexivity, reflective practice, the nature of professions and the researching professional in order to make a difference to the profession;
- To acknowledge the need for professionals to engage in higher professional development, to critically reflect on their practice and to develop transferable skills and competencies in order to gain a higher qualification.

The Professional Doctorate programme is designed primarily for candidates who have a Masters level qualification. The programme consists of three taught modules (Critical Professional Reflection; Research Theory and Design; Situated Professional Enquiry) and a research component comprising a professionally focused research study that will form the basis of the thesis or portfolio of evidence with report (dependent on the doctoral candidate's professional background).

Each of the taught modules within the programme will have a dedicated 'site' that will typically have the following interactive areas: Main Announcements, Main/Group Discussion Boards, Technical Help, Module Questions, Activities and Internet Café. In addition to these interactive areas, candidates will also have links to module and course documentation, guides on academic writing etc. Every module is constructed around the same basic architecture that ensures continuity for candidates as they progress. The fact that the Professional Doctorate programme has a significant online learning component means that there are some specific challenges in ensuring appropriate and effective Doctoral candidate guidance and support. Our strategy to overcome these challenges include the following:

(a) Clear online communication protocols: This includes the provision of 'service level' statements that ensure that Doctoral Candidate expectation levels are established prior to embarkation on the programme. This avoids misunderstanding and miscommunication arising.

(b) Appropriate and meaningful induction: For Doctoral Candidates new to the online environment, an induction period will be integrated into the first two-day meeting at the start of each module. The induction period is designed to help all participants overcome any technical issues and to familiarise themselves with the environment in general terms thus

enabling the doctoral candidates to focus on the learning from day 1 of each module. In general, our approach to teaching and learning online will be continually refined in light of experience and best practice originating from local, national and international research in this area. More specifically, the online element of the programme enables doctoral candidates to work at a time and place to suit both their personal and professional commitments and all modules across the programme are designed using an integrated model of online learning. The teaching style adopted across the programme is more that of a facilitator. Our approach is designed to foster a 'community of practice' which is grounded in social constructivist pedagogy where candidates develop into independent learners who are capable of demonstrating the competences required when studying at SCQF Level 12.

Participants in the Professional Doctorate will develop and enhance their employability skills in the areas of applying increased knowledge and understanding to their professional practice, a constant and integrated approach to generic cognitive skills, using a wide range of communication, ICT and numeracy skills, and demonstrate substantial authority in their professional area of practice in terms of accountability, autonomy and working with others. They will develop and enhance these skills in ways specific to, and of direct relevance, to their own professional context and to the demands and issues inherent within current and anticipated developments within this professional context.

Strategies for PDP will be incorporated into each of the modules and incorporating the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF) <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development/about-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework>. Planning for development and evaluating progress in preparation for using key research skills in professional practice is fundamental to the programme.

Typical Delivery Method

The teaching style adopted across the programme is more that of a facilitator. Our approach is designed to foster a 'community of practice' which is grounded in social constructivist pedagogy where candidates develop into independent learners who are capable of demonstrating the competences required when studying at SCQF Level 12. There are regular suggested readings which the candidate is required to supplement with independent reading on their specialist subject. Guidance on developing literature review is threaded throughout the taught units. In addition there are a number of skills development tasks both individual and group that are sequenced across the three modules, familiarising the candidate with tools, skills and current theoretical developments.

The need for formalised development planning will be emphasised to all candidates and they will be encouraged to formulate a development plan within the three taught modules in line with the learning outcomes of the modules. The module tutor team will support candidates in developing and reviewing their plans especially in relation to the programme aims and objectives. Participants embarking on the programme are likely to already have maintained a CPD portfolio and have undertake annual career reviews/personal development review as part of their contractual duties.

Any additional costs

There are no additional costs and a small allocation of funds for equipment and training at the doctoral level for candidates.

Graduate Attributes, Employability & Personal Development Planning

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Work Based Learning/Placement Details

Professional experience and work-based learning will be at the heart of this multidisciplinary Professional Doctorate. The programme will be designed to enable the candidates to pursue Doctoral level opportunities based around the work that they undertake as part of their professional role. State of the art professional practice will be pursued as will the concept of the reflective practitioner supported by high-level relevant academic theory.

Attendance and Engagement

In line with the [Student Attendance and Engagement Procedure](#), Students are academically engaged if they are regularly attending and participating in timetabled on-campus and online teaching sessions, asynchronous online learning activities, course-related learning resources, and complete assessments and submit these on time.

For the purposes of this programme, academic engagement equates to the following:

Participating robustly in community of practice activities and tasks, attend a majority of sessions and seminars, take responsibility for developing literature review strategies that enable the development of assessments and engage with personal tutorials.

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](#).

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The programme meets the requirements of equality and diversity designed with support from the Student Services and the Equality and Diversity Co-ordinator. The programme is designed to ensure that UWS's reputation as an inclusive institution is maintained and ensure that it extends its commitment to all, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation, across all areas of students, staff, campus and community activity. Inclusion within the course will be provided by:

- provision of a welcoming and supportive culture that promotes accessibility and equal opportunities to prospective candidates;
- promotion of confidence and knowledge of their rights as a candidate;

- promotion of respect and knowledge of client diversity, their needs, rights and professional responsibilities.

The above aims, supported by programme leader and module co-ordinator belief in fairness and equal opportunities, guide content, teaching and learning, assessment and evaluation. In accordance, teaching and learning strategies will be employed in a flexible manner and appropriate support can be provided to candidates where required to promote accessibility to all modules on the programme.

Disability disclosure is encouraged throughout recruitment, selection and throughout duration of the programme. Emphasis is placed on confidentiality of information, the benefits of disclosure and that no detriment to progress will be experienced. To enable the programme to be responsive to the demand of equality and diversity processes and procedures have been subjected to Equality Impact Screening. Evaluation by all key stakeholders throughout the life of the programme is central to our commitments.

Programme structures and requirements, SCQF level, term, module name and code, credits and awards ([Chapter 1, Regulatory Framework](#))

Learning Outcomes	
SCQF LEVEL 12 - Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert)	
Knowledge and Understanding	
A1	Demonstrate a critical overview of a subject/discipline/sector, including critical understanding of the principal theories, concepts and principles.
A2	Generate research knowledge that will help doctoral candidates to make a significant contribution to the theory that underpins their professional discipline.
A3	Demonstrate a critical overview of the principal research methods and skills required to complete a research study.
A4	
A5	
Practice - Applied Knowledge and Understanding	
B1	Apply a significant range of the principal professional skills, techniques, practices and/or materials associated with the subject/discipline/sector.
B2	In using and enhancing a range of complex skills, techniques, practices and/or materials that are at the forefront of one or more specialisms.
B3	In applying a range of standard and specialised research and/or equivalent instruments and techniques of enquiry.
B4	Synthesise research knowledge and skills with complex professional subject knowledge that is at the forefront of the specific professional discipline.
B5	
Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills	
C1	Apply a constant and integrated approach to critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas, information and issues.
C2	Identify, conceptualise and offer original and creative insights into new, complex and abstract ideas, information and issues.
C3	Develop original and creative responses to professional problems and issues associated with the candidates' professional context.
C4	Make informed judgments/decisions in the absence of complete data and information.
C5	Develop creative and original research designs in response to professional issues and situations.
Generic Cognitive Skills - Problem Solving, Analysis, Evaluation	
D1	Communicate at Doctoral level to a range of audiences and adapt communication to the context and purpose.
D2	Communicate at the standard of published academic work and/or critical dialogue and review with peers and experts in other specialisms/sectors.
D3	Use a range of ICT applications to support and enhance work at this level and specify software requirements to enhance work.
D4	Critically evaluate numerical and graphical data.
D5	
Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others	

Level 12- Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert)

Criteria for Award

Please refer to [UWS Regulatory Framework](#) for related regulations

Criteria for Progression and Award

The University's current Regulations on Awards and Assessment apply to all programmes:
Postgraduate Certificate (Pg Cert) Advanced Research and Professional Practice Credit points
At least 60 credits at Level 12. For the award of a PG Certificate in Advanced Research and Professional Practice 60 credit points must be achieved and must include the modules:
Critical Professional Reflection and Research Theory and Design

The standard of the Postgraduate Certificate shall be that expected of a graduate who has successfully completed a programme of study, either at a level demanding more advanced study than a Masters degree or at a level appropriate for a conversion programme, suitable for the fulfilment of the University's graduate skills and attributes and learning outcomes (see UWS Regulatory Framework). The normal length of study will be the equivalent of one year of part- time study.

Links: UWS Regulatory Framework; and Student Experience Policy Statement.

SCQF LEVEL 12 - Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip) Learning Outcomes	
Knowledge and Understanding	
A1	Demonstrate a detailed and up-to-date understanding of the professional framework, culture, issues and research requirements of their professional discipline.
A2	Demonstrate a critical overview of the principal research methods of enquiry and skills required to complete a research study within their own professional discipline.
A3	Demonstrate a critical and leading knowledge of research theory and that will put the candidates at the forefront of their professional discipline.
A4	Generate research knowledge that will help candidates to make a significant contribution to the theory that underpins their professional discipline.
A5	
Practice - Applied Knowledge and Understanding	
B1	Synthesize research knowledge and skills with complex professional subject knowledge that is at the forefront of the specific professional discipline.
B2	Apply a range of standard and specialized research skills and knowledge to professional research and enquiry.
B3	Demonstrate creative/original/novel application of research skills and theory to develop new knowledge.
B4	
B5	
Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills	
C1	Identify, conceptualize original and novel insights into complex professional issues.
C2	Develop creative and original research designs in response to professional issues.
C3	Deal with complex professional issues and make informed judgments about professional enquiry in the absence of complete information.
C4	
C5	
Generic Cognitive Skills - Problem Solving, Analysis, Evaluation	
D1	Use a significant range of advanced communication skills to report the findings of research studies.
D2	Report at the standards of published academic work to a range of audiences including peers and experts within the professional discipline.
D3	Use a range of ICT applications and software to support and enhance research methods.
D4	Critically evaluate a range of different data including numerical and graphical data.
D5	
Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others	
E1	Demonstrate a high level of professional authority in research activities (communities of practice).
E2	Take significant responsibility for substantial research studies.

E3	Demonstrate leadership in identifying and resolving and tackling professional issues.
E4	Managing complex ethical and professional issues and making judgments on emerging trends within profession.
E5	Take responsibility and effectively supervise the research of others.

Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip) Modules

CORE

SCQF Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Term			Footnotes
				1	2	3	
12	EDUC12003	Situated Professional Inquiry		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Footnotes for Core Modules							

Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip) Modules

OPTION

SCQF Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Term			Footnotes
				1	2	3	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Footnotes for Option Modules							

Level 12- Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip)

Criteria for Award

Please refer to [UWS Regulatory Framework](#) for related regulations

Distinction will be awarded in line with University Regulations and no imported credit can be used. (Regulations 3.35 & 3.26)

Credit points: At least 120 credits at Level 12

For the award of a PG Dip Advanced Research and Professional Practice 120 credit points must be achieved and must include:

Critical Professional Reflection

- Research Theory and Design
- Situated Professional Enquiry

The standard of the Postgraduate Diploma shall be that expected of a graduate, who has successfully completed an appropriate programme of study in a field for which prior knowledge and skills have provided an appropriate foundation, either at a level demanding more advanced and intensive study than a Masters degree or at a level appropriate for a conversion programme, and which is suitable for the fulfilment of the University's learning outcomes (see Regulatory Framework). The normal length of study will be the equivalent of two years of part-time study.

Links: [UWS Regulatory Framework](#); and [Student Experience Policy Statement](#).

SCQF LEVEL 12 – Doctorate

Learning Outcomes (Maximum of 5 per heading)

Knowledge and Understanding

A1	Demonstrate an ability to create and interpret relevant professional knowledge which extends the forefront of their discipline.
A2	Demonstrate an ability to critically evaluate research and academic enquiry including philosophy, review and appraisal, process, (methods and analysis) and development.
A3	Demonstrate an ability to critically appraise and synthesise literature, theoretical debates and ethical dimensions influencing their field of study.
A4	Demonstrate an ability to critically appreciate current political and policy factors influencing their professional specialisms nationally and internationally.
A5	

Practice - Applied Knowledge and Understanding

B1	Conceptualise, design and undertake substantial, original research for the generation of significant new knowledge and or understanding in their professional discipline.
B2	Develop the ability to synthesise ideas, concepts and approaches from their profession with relevant theoretical frameworks to create solutions, drive change, innovate and make a difference within their workplace.
B3	Solve complex multidisciplinary problems within the context of the workplace, taking into consideration budgetary, political, strategic, ethical and social issues.
B4	Develop and navigate the processes and structures for ethical conduct and governance associated with research.
B5	Demonstrate in depth reflection on personal and professional goals, aspirations and contribution to leadership in their discipline.

Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills

C1	Demonstrate a range of skills in order to present and defend written and verbal material for peer, professional and academic review.
C2	Use IT to retrieve literature, input and analyse data and support project management.
C3	Use a wide range of software to support and enhance practice at doctoral level and specify new software or refinements/improvements to existing software to increase effectiveness in professional practice.

C4	Demonstrate the ability to undertake critical evaluations of a wide range of numerical and graphical data in order to inform developments in professional practice.
C5	
Generic Cognitive Skills - Problem Solving, Analysis, Evaluation	
D1	Demonstrate strategic vision, innovation and creative design.
D2	Demonstrate an ability to critically review, synthesis, consolidate and extend professional knowledge, skills, practices and thinking in the candidates discipline.
D3	Demonstrate an ability to make informed judgements on complex situations in specialist fields.
D4	Demonstrate an ability to develop original and creative responses to problems and issues which relate to specific professional contexts at local, regional, national and possibly international level.
D5	Demonstrate an ability to deal with complex issues within the relevant professional context in the absence of complete or consistent data/information.
Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others	
E1	Exercise substantial autonomy and initiative in professional and equivalent activities taking the initiative in enhancing professional practice.
E2	Make informed judgements on political and policy aspects related to their professional field.
E3	Demonstrate project design and implementation which satisfies peer review and merits publication.
E4	Demonstrate leadership and initiative and make an identifiable contribution to change and development within professional practice.
E5	Deal with complex ethical and professional issues and make informed judgements on issues not addressed by current professional and/or ethical codes or practices.

interpretation of new knowledge and must be set in the context of current understanding in the field. The portfolio, taken as a whole, will make an original contribution to the candidate's professional practice.

A written report will make the portfolio a coherent whole and will normally be not more than 20,000 words. The report will be a reflective account of the work undertaken and presented in the portfolio. It will also include a summary of the current state of the art in the areas of the profession which are relevant to the work undertaken, and the academic theory relevant to the work. The extensive portfolio will support the report which will include material that directly supports the claims for achievement and the original contribution to knowledge. The report will refer to the portfolio.

The Doctoral College must be assured that sufficient progress has been made and that the planned research will be of the required doctoral standard. Those candidates who have not been able to meet the criteria to demonstrate sufficient level of knowledge and understanding will not be permitted to progress and may be awarded a Pg Dip in Advanced Research and Professional Practice.

Doctoral Modules

OPTION

SCQF Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Term			Footnotes
				1	2	3	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Footnotes for Option Modules							

Level 12- Professional Doctorate

Criteria for Award

Please refer to [UWS Regulatory Framework](#) for related regulations

The standard of the Professional Doctorate shall be that expected of a doctoral degree graduate who has successfully completed an appropriate programme of study in a field for which prior knowledge and skills have provided an appropriate foundation, at a level demanding more advanced and intensive study than a Masters degree, and which is suitable for the fulfilment of the University's learning outcomes (see Regulatory Framework) and which includes a compulsory element of advanced independent work.

Links: [UWS Regulatory Framework](#); and [Student Experience Policy Statement](#).

Regulations of Assessment

Candidates will be bound by the general assessment regulations of the University as specified in the [University Regulatory Framework](#).

To qualify for an award of the University, students must complete all the programme requirements and must meet the credit minima detailed in Chapter 1 of the Regulatory Framework.

Change/Version Control

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