Programme Specification

Programme award and title: MLitt/Postgraduate Diploma in Public Relations Theory, Research and Education

SCQF Level: 11 SCQF Credit Value: 180

Educational aims of the programme:
Concise (e.g. a few sentences), general statement of aims and broad purposes of the programme

- This is a ‘teaching the teachers’ degree or conversion course for public relations practitioners who wish to go into education.
- The degree aims to teach the full range of public relations and communications management theory in depth; research methods as they apply to public relations practice and academia; issues in teaching public relations at all levels including CPD/FE/HE.
- Many public relations and communication management practitioners are recruited into teaching public relations and most of these will not have formal academic qualifications in the subject. Although initially such recruits are likely to teach practical modules, they will normally be expected to cover other parts of the curriculum for which they are less well prepared. The MLitt in Public Relations Theory, Research and Education aims to fill this gap. The MLitt in Public Relations Theory, Research and Education fills the gap between vocational/applied courses and PhD.

The MLitt aims to give a thorough theoretical grounding in public relations and communication management and relevant aspects of cognate disciplines.

The MLitt also aims to introduce students to teaching and learning in public relations, including curriculum development, setting educational aims and outcomes, assessment for educational and CPD contexts.

Intended programme learning outcomes:
Outline (e.g. one or two paragraphs) of what the student will know, understand and be able to do as a result of their learning, expressed in the categories below. Please consider the contribution made to the student's personal development planning (PDP) and future employability.

Knowledge and understanding
- Public relations and communications management concepts and theories
- Sociology of work and professions
- Moral theory as applied to codes of ethics and professions
- Relationship between theory and practice
- Relationship between education and professionalisation
- Distinctions between training and education
- History of ideas concerning persuasive communication in human society
- Social influence theories
- Cultural and critical theories in relation to public relations and communication management
- Intersections between public relations and communication management theories and those in international, inter-cultural and cross-cultural communications; organizational theories including those relating to culture, climate, symbolism and rhetoric
- History of, and practices in public relations education in a variety of cultural contexts

Subject-specific skills and other attributes
- Relating theory to practice (functional learning)
- Using theory to interpret and produce deeper understanding of practice to the benefit of that practice (applied theory)
- Engaging the practice as stakeholders in the development of concepts and theories (action research)
- Ability to critique practice using a variety of theoretical perspectives to motivate change (critical theory)
- Reflexive learning drawing on prior professional experience (auto-ethnographic approaches)

Generic skills (e.g. information skills, communication skills, critical, analytical and problem solving abilities) and other attributes
- Interpersonal and communication skills (seminar/tutorial model)
- Scholarly writing (journal model)
- Scholarly presentations (academic conference model)
- Curriculum and module design
- Student feedback skills

Learning, teaching and assessment strategies:
Outline (e.g. one or two paragraphs) on overall approach taken to develop and assess learning outcomes, including any distinctive features
- Essay work to demonstrate deep understanding of public relations and communication management theory and the theoretical debates concerning public relations and communication management in relation to concepts such as propaganda, discourse ethics, professionalism, social responsibility, promotional culture, inter-cultural and multi-cultural relations (Public Relations and Communication Management Theory; Public Relations and Society – History of Ideas; Social Influence Theories; Public Diplomacy & Strategic Communication).
- Application of theories of persuasion and social influence (Social Influence Theories).
- Applied projects to explore role of theory in practice in varied cultural contexts (Public Relations Research, Education and Professionalism).
- Reflexive assignments on practice, education and professionalism (Public Relations Research, Education and Professionalism; Theory, Practice and Education: Project).
- Curriculum design/development project (Public Relations Research, Education and Professionalism; Theory, Practice and Education: Project).
- Simulations (learning and teaching workshops at residential)
- Research proposal to test understanding of understanding of epistemologies underpinning research paradigms and their influence upon public relations theory development; knowledge of public relations theories and understanding of public relations and communications management theoretical paradigms and approaches (Research for Dissertation and Research for Practice).
- Content analysis as demonstration of specific research skills for practice (Research for Practice).
- Dissertation should demonstrate knowledge of public relations theories and the practice (understanding of the structure of the industry and the issues that it faces); demonstrate understanding and application of social science conventions at the level deemed appropriate by the ESRC.

Professional/statutory body accreditation or recognition:
I have kept the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) informed concerning the development of this degree. They have been very supportive and started to promote its existence, since it is of interest to their many tutors in the UK and overseas, often practitioners, who teach on their qualifications (Foundations, Advanced Certificate, Diploma). I would not, however, expect them to ‘recognise’ it formally, since this is not a vocational degree in terms of teaching public relations practice, rather it is a conversion degree for practitioners wishing to go into academia.
**Further details:**

Entry requirements: [http://www.external.stir.ac.uk/postgrad/index.php](http://www.external.stir.ac.uk/postgrad/index.php)

Programme structure: [http://www.calendar.stir.ac.uk/](http://www.calendar.stir.ac.uk/)

Relevant Subject Benchmark statement (if applicable): [http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/default.asp](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/default.asp)


Introduction/revision date: