

## **CERTIFICATE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN CONTINUING EDUCATION**

### **For students entering 2006**

Awarding Institution:	The University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	The University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject benchmarking group:	
Faculty of Arts and Humanities	Programme length: 2 years minimum
Date of specification: January 2007	
Programme Director: Dr Nina Brooke	
Board of Studies: Continuing Education	
Accreditation: not applicable	

#### **Summary of programme aims**

The primary aim of the Certificate of Higher Education in Continuing Education is to provide a flexible, part-time University 'C' level programme for members of the local community whether they have had previous experience of Higher Education or not. It aims to enable part-time adult students to become independent and confident learners with a range of appropriate subject-based and transferable skills. It aims to provide exposure to academic disciplines and a variety of learning experiences, as well as to develop knowledge and understanding of the topics covered. The Certificate of Higher Education in Continuing Education offers a flexible programme of learning allowing students to explore a range of different disciplines, topics and approaches.

#### **Transferable skills**

The University's Strategy for Teaching and Learning has identified a number of generic transferable skills that students can expect to have developed by the end of a degree programme (written and spoken communication; information-handling; problem-solving; team-working; use of information technology; numeracy). The Certificate of Higher Education in Continuing Education provides a starting-point for the development of these skills. The opportunity to develop effective communication in speech and writing, is gained through a range of activities including: group discussion, oral presentations and written work. Integral to this development is the gathering, synthesising and interpretation of information, as well as problem-solving and the critical judgement needed to challenge assumptions and previously unexamined opinions. Team-working is practised in discussion and group exercises. In addition, time-management skills are developed through attendance, participation in course activities and in meeting deadlines. The particular skills developed will depend on the modules selected throughout the programme.

#### **Programme content**

The programme is made up of Open Studies modules totalling 120 credits. Modules consist of blocks of 5, 10 or 20 credits. Annual listings of modules may be found in the Public Courses Prospectus.

Where specific disciplines have been studied, the Certificate will be stated to be in the discipline or disciplines taken. Otherwise the Certificate will be in 'Combined Studies'.

### **Progression requirements**

To qualify for the Certificate of Higher Education in Continuing Education 120 credits must be gained over a maximum of 8 years. Where 80 of the credits are gained at Distinction level, the Certificate is awarded at Distinction. It should be noted that the Certificate of Higher Education in Continuing Education does not normally lead directly to Higher Education Diploma or Degree study at Intermediate (I) and Higher (H) levels.

### **Summary of teaching and assessment**

Teaching techniques vary according to the nature of the subject covered in any one module. A wide range of techniques are used including lectures, structured and unstructured group discussion, workshops, demonstrations and practical work. A strong emphasis is placed on teaching methods that encourage student participation. Active participation by students is encouraged at all times. Assessment takes place during, and is returned at the end of the module. Assessment varies according to the subject and nature of the module. A wide range of assessment methods is employed. The majority of modules are assessed on the basis of coursework only, but a few are assessed through short tests, rather than formal university examinations. Assessment methods include essays, presentations, learning diaries, questionnaires, and weekly worksheets. A pass mark of 40% is required to gain credits for any module. Where this is not achieved students may retake assessment of the module, but may not gain marks in the 'distinction' range for their second attempt. Where students fail to pass the module assessment credits will not be awarded, but no other penalty will be incurred.

### **Admission requirements**

There are no formal admission requirements, although a small proportion of modules on offer within the programme do require some previous knowledge of a topic or discipline. This is clearly indicated in the module descriptions

### **Support for students and their learning**

The School of Continuing Education provides a programme of credit bearing Study Skills designed especially for adults returning or new to higher education. Students are encouraged to take advantage of access to the University Library. Many modules are also provided with books from the department's library. Students of the Certificate of Higher Education in Continuing Education also have access to computing facilities through the department's computer laboratory. Students receive written feedback on work submitted for assessment. In addition there are Advice Shops at which student can discuss and be advised on module selection.

### **Career prospects**

Although many students studying for the Certificate of Higher Education in Continuing Education will already have, or had, a career, the skills developed in the programme may easily be transferred to any career that requires effective communication, information gathering and handling, conceptual and creative thinking. For any employer, completion of the Certificate of Higher Education demonstrates that students can successfully apply themselves to an academic course, manage their personal time effectively and take personal responsibility for their intellectual development.

### **Opportunities for study abroad**

There are no opportunities for study abroad.

### **Educational aims of the programme**

The Certificate of Higher Education in Continuing Education aims to offer a flexible programme of learning allowing students to explore a range of different disciplines, topic and approaches. It aims to enable part-time adult students to become independent and confident learners with a range of appropriate subject-based and transferable skills that may facilitate lifelong learning. It aims to provide exposure to academic disciplines and a variety of learning experiences, as well as to develop knowledge and understanding of the topics at a Higher Education level.

### **Programme outcomes**

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, skills, qualities and other attributes in the following areas:

<p><b>A. Knowledge and understanding of</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. the basic principles and concepts relating of a broad range of topics covering one or more disciplines.</li><li>2. the importance of recognising the range and variety of approaches or interpretations within any discipline</li><li>3. the importance of up-dating knowledge</li><li>4. some of the current debates and issues in the disciplines studied</li></ol>	<p><b>Teaching and learning methods and strategies</b></p> <p>In the majority of cases previous knowledge of experience of a subject cannot be assumed therefore all modules provide an Introduction to the specifics of the module topic, covering the basic principles and concepts.</p> <p>All modules are concerned with encouraging students to be open-minded, and to build on and develop existing knowledge, while also recognising the variety of approaches, theories or interpretations possible. Students are encouraged, largely through discussion, to debate different views or approaches and explore solutions and interpretations.</p> <p>Throughout the programme students' knowledge is updated to include current views, concerns, issues and debates.</p> <p><b>Assessment</b></p> <p>Assessment tests that a basic understanding of the topic's main principles and concepts has been attained. It also seeks to ascertain an awareness of current debates and issues, and an awareness of the range of approaches, interpretations and theories on the topic</p>
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<p><b>B. Intellectual skills (able to)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. synthesise information from books, discussion and lectures accurately and reliably and to sift and integrate this information into discussion and/or written work</li> <li>2. challenge assumptions and previously unexamined opinions</li> <li>3. create a structured and coherent argument based on evidence</li> <li>4. suggest ways of solving problems within the subject area.</li> <li>5. participate effectively in group discussion</li> </ol>	<p><b>Teaching and learning methods and strategies</b></p> <p>Through specific focus on topics, issues and texts in group discussion and personal study, students are enabled to develop critical modes of enquiry about the selection and treatment of material. The research and analytical skills needed for problem-solving and for the communication of the results of their work, are practised in group discussion and in the production of work for assessment. The ability to create an argument based on evidence is also developed through class discussion and assessed work.</p> <p><b>Assessment</b></p> <p>Work submitted for assessment (whether in essay, presentation, worksheet, or learning diary form) tests relevant aspects of intellectual skills.</p>
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<p><b>Practical skills (able to)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. locate and synthesise relevant information from a variety of sources</li> <li>2. present written work in an appropriate format</li> <li>3. listen and communicate effectively in group discussion</li> <li>4. communicate the results of study/investigation, thoughts and ideas accurately and reliably in writing</li> <li>5. develop structured and coherent arguments in writing</li> </ol>	<p><b>Teaching and learning methods and strategies</b></p> <p>All of the practical skills are developed in each module, mainly through the production of work for assessment, but also through participation in class activities and group discussion. For both of these it is necessary for students to locate and synthesise relevant information, and to present this information in a structured and coherent manner in either a written or oral form.</p> <p><b>Assessment</b></p> <p>Work completed for assessment tests the students' assimilation and ability to use these skills. All forms of assessment require that students be able to synthesise information and communicate results of study/investigation in an appropriate, structured and coherent manner.</p>
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<p><b>Transferable skills (able to)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. listen and contribute effectively to group discussions and other team activities</li> <li>2. locate, select and handle information</li> <li>3. present findings and arguments cogently and coherently, orally and/or in writing</li> <li>4. work to deadlines and manage their time effectively</li> <li>5. demonstrate a responsible attitude to attendance and participation in scheduled course activities</li> <li>6. apply learning skills developed already developed</li> </ol>	<p><b>Teaching and learning methods and strategies</b></p> <p>Throughout the programme students have to opportunity to develop and build on the transferable skills listed. Students will work alongside their peers in various contexts enhancing their team-working skills, and further developing their abilities to listen and contribute effectively.</p> <p>Students will be required to locate, select and handle information, as well as be able to present findings and arguments effectively in order to participate effectively as a course member. The abilities to act responsibly, work to deadlines and manage their time effectively will be necessary in order to complete the course successfully.</p> <p>As students progress through the programme they will be able to apply learning skills developed in other modules.</p> <p><b>Assessment</b></p> <p>The assessment tasks will test the students' ability to communicate, to meet deadlines and to use the academic resources effectively. The class activities will test these abilities through the use of verbal communication as well as the student's ability to play an effective part in a team.</p>
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**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 he/she 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 the module description and in the programme handbook. The University reserves the right to modify this specification in unforeseen circumstances, or where the process of academic development and feedback from students, quality assurance processes or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.**