

## **MA/Postgraduate Diploma in Careers Guidance For students entering in 2006**

Awarding Institution:	The University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	The University of Reading
Faculty of Arts and Humanities	
Programme length:	PG Dip - 9 months; MA – 15 months (f/time), 21 months (p/time)
Date of Specification:	January 2007
Programme Director:	Dr. P. Mignot
Board of Studies:	Careers Guidance
Accreditation:	The Institute of Careers Guidance

### **Summary of the Programme Aims**

The overall aim of the MA/PGD in Careers Guidance is to provide a course of education and training that will prepare students to undertake effectively the work of a guidance practitioner within the statutory sector of guidance provision in the UK (i.e. the Connexions Service), and with other organisations and agencies (e.g. University careers services and adult guidance networks). The MA/PGD is also designed to promote careers guidance as a research based profession - the MA dissertation provides students with an opportunity to make an original contribution to guidance as a professional discipline.

### **Transferable Skills**

The PGD curriculum is designed to provide the necessary underpinning theoretical knowledge and understanding which will enable students to develop a critical and reflective approach to professional practice.

Students are required to critically evaluate theoretical frameworks and methodologies, and articulate the links between theory and practice.

There is also the opportunity to develop a research based approach to professional development (which functions as basic preparation for the MA) as well as the opportunity to develop a wide range of transferable, interpersonal and intellectual skills.

### **Programme Content**

The course is divided into two parts - the Postgraduate Diploma (PGD), and the degree of Master of Arts (MA). The PGD stage is taken by full-time study for a period of nine months. The MA, by dissertation, may be taken by full-time or part-time study. A student taking the MA by full-time study is required to submit their dissertation within a period of 15 months from first registration on the course (i.e. the date of registration on the PGD). A student taking the MA dissertation by part-time study may begin the dissertation at the start of any term following successful completion of the PGD, provided that the intervening period does not exceed 36 months. In this latter case the MA dissertation must be submitted within twelve months of registration (i.e. the date of registration for the dissertation).

## 1. Part One: The Postgraduate Diploma

The syllabus for the PGD is comprised of seven modules which aim to provide a coherent structure for the course, covering the extensive knowledge base and contexts in which guidance practitioners work. The number of credits required for the PGD is 120.

The PGD modules are:

<b>Core Modules</b>	Credits	Level
CDMCG1 Guidance Theory and Practice: one - to - one interactions	20	M
CDMCG2 Guidance Theory and Practice: working in groups	20	M
CDMCG3 The Opportunity Structure	20	M
CDMCG5 Education and Careers Education	20	M
CDMCG6 Career Development Theory and Models of Guidance	20	M
<b>Optional Modules</b>		
*CD3CG4 The Management and Delivery of Guidance	20	H
CD3CG7 Supporting Young People	20	H

Each module is structured to promote and support the progression of students, in both their theoretical understanding, and in their development of practical skills. The minimum direct teaching time for each module is 30 hours.

**\*NB. HC34 is mandatory for those students requiring the Qualification in Careers Guidance (QCG) professional award.**

## 2. Part Two: The MA

Examination for the award of MA shall entail the successful completion of a 15000 word dissertation.

CDMCG8 MA Dissertation	60	M
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### **Progression Requirements**

Students are required to complete six modules. CDMCG1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 are mandatory. CD3CG4 and CD3CG7 are optional. On successful completion of the five mandatory modules and either CD3CG4 or CD3CG7, the student will have permission to proceed to the MA dissertation.

### **Summary of Teaching and Assessment**

#### 1. Teaching

Teaching is organised in modules that involve lectures, seminars and project based learning. Each module is supported by the following formalised practical activities: fieldwork placements, school/college attachments, and practice days in the University.

## 2. Assessment

Assessment is on a continuous basis throughout the PGD. There are both practical and written assessments. Practical assessments are undertaken in interviewing and group work. Written assessments are in the form of essays, case studies, and project work.

### Mark interpretation

70-100% Distinction

60-69% Merit

50-59% Good standard (Pass)

### Failing categories

40-49% Work below threshold standard

0-39% Unsatisfactory work

### For Masters Degrees

To pass the MA students must gain an average mark of 50 or more overall. In addition, the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 must be less than 60 credits.\*

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more overall including a mark of 70 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more overall including a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Merit.

### For PG Diploma

To pass the Postgraduate Diploma students must gain an average mark of 50 or more. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 must be less than 60 credits.\*

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for the award of a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Merit.

### For PG Certificate

To pass the Postgraduate Certificate students must gain an average mark of 50 or more. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 10 credits.\*

\* The provision to permit a candidate to be passed overall with a profile containing marks below 40 is made subject to the condition that there is evidence that the candidate applied his or herself to the work of those modules with reasonable diligence and has not been absent from the examination without reasonable cause.

## **Admission Requirements**

The standard academic entry requirement for the PGD/MA is a degree of any discipline. However, non-graduates with relevant experience and/or an equivalent qualification will be considered.

## **Support for Students and their Learning**

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support includes IT Services, which has several hundred computers and the University Library, which across its three sites holds over a million volumes, subscribes to around 4,000 current periodicals, has a range of electronic sources of information and houses the Student Access to Independent Learning ([S@IL](#)) computer-based teaching and learning facilities. There are language laboratory facilities both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme. Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Personal Tutors, the Careers Advisory Service, the University's Special Needs Advisor, Study Advisors, Hall Wardens and the Students' Union. Students are supported and encouraged to become independent learners through feedback and discussion with tutors.

## **Career Prospects**

Employment opportunities for careers guidance workers can be found in Connexions services, Further Education Colleges, Higher Education careers advisory services, adult guidance partnerships, charitable organisations, and other community based agencies.

## **Educational aims of the Programme**

The overall aim of the MA/PGD in Careers Guidance is to provide a course of education and training that will prepare students to undertake effectively the work of a guidance practitioner within the statutory sector of guidance provision in the UK (i.e. the Connexions Service), and with other organisations and agencies (e.g. University careers services and adult guidance networks). The MA/PGD is also designed to promote careers guidance as a research based profession - the MA dissertation provides students with an opportunity to make an original contribution to guidance as a professional discipline.

In order to promote the integration of theory and practice the following methodology is used to underpin the design and delivery of the curriculum:

- the location of interpersonal skills and anti-oppressive practice as the focal point of the course; this ensures that perspectives on equality of opportunity are developed through each module;
- providing opportunities for reflective practice in both group and individual tutorial settings; and
- the completion of a reflective journal, whereby students record evidence of their learning and professional development.

## Programme Outcomes

### Knowledge and Understanding

#### **A. Knowledge and understanding of:**

1. a range of theoretical frameworks and models of intervention that are applied to guidance work
2. the relationship between careers education and guidance practice
3. key theories about group dynamics and the behaviour of people in groups
4. the changing opportunity structure in the UK, including the causes and nature of unemployment
5. legislation that affects education, employment and training provision
6. organisation and management theory in evaluating the nature, functions and activities of careers/connexions services.
7. the processes of referral and advocacy within networks
8. how to design and evaluate careers education and guidance programmes
9. the relationship between national educational policy developments, structures and systems, and careers education and guidance provision.
10. the strategic and operational issues of managing careers education and guidance programmes
11. the major theories of career development
12. the significance of work to individuals and the concept of the work "ethic"
13. appreciate the links between social divisions and work/unemployment, and understand the social and psychological consequences of unemployment
14. the range of issues that affect young people and contribute to their need for intensive support

#### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

Students will have the opportunity to gain and develop their knowledge and understanding of careers guidance through lectures, seminars, independent study including project work and case studies. Continuous fieldwork will offer the opportunity to gain knowledge and understanding through participation and observation. Throughout the course there will be an emphasis on adult learning principles.

#### *Assessment*

Assessment is continuous throughout the course. Assessment tasks include essays, case studies, and projects.

## Skills and other attributes

### **B. Intellectual skills – able to**

1. be evaluative and analytical
2. demonstrate and exercise independence of thought
3. be reflective and self-critical
4. be sensitive to the values and needs of others
5. locate and critically evaluate the potential tensions between the professional role and organisational imperatives
6. make ethical decisions.
7. show a critical awareness of social policy processes
8. research social issues

### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

Students will be presented in all modules with models and theories which logically lead to different approaches to problem definition and social solutions. This will promote evaluative and critical thinking and demand independence of thought. Awareness of values in action will be stimulated by teaching and discussion and developed further through fieldwork, case studies, projects, and a reflective journal.

#### *Assessment*

All written assessments require evidence of critical evaluation. Assessment specifications are designed to promote independent learning and research skills. The integration of theory and practice is promoted through case studies and the compilation of a reflective journal. In addition, all practical assessments require the student to produce an evaluative commentary of their own performance.

### **C. Practical skills – able to**

1. to explore, identify and respond to client needs in the context of one-to-one interactions
2. record the outcomes of the guidance process in order to meet both organisational and individual client needs.
3. work with significant others, including parents and carers to support clients.
4. demonstrate effective interpersonal and presentation skills in managing group work in guidance
5. demonstrate their ability to lead and participate effectively in task-orientated groups of peers and colleagues
5. develop and utilise skills related to networking, team-working, negotiating, and marketing.
6. demonstrate the ability to refer and advocate on behalf of clients with other agencies and individuals.
7. use a range of counselling skills in order to help young people with issues that concern them
8. become proficient in the use of a range of computer-aided guidance systems commonly used in the field

### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

All modules place an emphasis on participative and experiential learning. The curriculum is designed to promote effective interpersonal and communication skills, team working, and problem-solving. The continuous fieldwork requires students to be proactive and effective in terms of time-management and organisation of self and work.

#### *Assessment*

Students are assessed on their practical skills in interviewing and group work. Interviewing and group work is conducted with a range of clients and in a range of contexts.

**D. Transferable skills – able to**

1. communicate effectively with individuals from a variety of backgrounds
2. organise and manage groups
3. give effective presentations
4. negotiate effectively
5. problem solve
6. organise own work effectively
7. manage time effectively
8. work as part of a team
9. communicate effectively in writing
10. apply numerical skills
11. manage own career

**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

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*Assessment*

Students are continuously assessed on their practical and written skills.

**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.**