



# Programme Specification

Queen Margaret University

EDINBURGH

Where appropriate outcome statements have been referenced to the appropriate Benchmarking Statement (**BS**)

1	<b>Awarding Institution</b>	Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh
2	<b>Teaching Institution</b>	Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh
3	<b>Professional body accreditation</b>	No
4	<b>Final Award</b>	MRes
	<b>Subsidiary exit awards</b>	PgCert in Research
5	<b>Programme Title</b>	Master of Research
6	<b>UCAS code</b> (or other coding system if relevant)	
7	<b>SCQF Level</b>	11
8	<b>Mode of delivery and duration</b>	Full-time over 1 calendar year Part-time over 2 calendar years
9	<b>Date of validation/review</b>	-----

## 10. Educational Aims of the programme

The overall aim of the Programme is to contribute to meeting external demand for graduates who are well-equipped to undertake high-quality research that is relevant to users, industry and society. This multi-disciplinary programme contributes to the development of research capacity and capability by providing a broad, foundational research training for researchers across a wide range of disciplines and professions, including (but not limited to) those who seek to continue on to doctoral studies, or those looking to develop careers in academic research.

The educational aims of the programme are:

- to provide a broad foundational research training for researchers across a wide range of disciplines and backgrounds,
- to produce Masters graduates who have acquired and demonstrated the skills required to carry out all tasks and elements required in the course of the research process, and
- to produce graduates who can continue to pursue research or continue on to doctoral studies or develop careers within research.

## 11. Benchmark statements/professional and statutory body requirements covered by the programme

These aims are aligned with

- Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (2012). *SCQF level Descriptors* [online] Available from [https://www.sqa.org.uk/files\\_ccc/SCQF-LevelDescriptors.pdf](https://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/SCQF-LevelDescriptors.pdf)
- QAA (2015). *Characteristics Statement: Masters's Degree (QAA 1317)*. Gloucester: The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.
- QAA (2018). *UK Quality Code, Advice and Guidance: Research degrees*. Gloucester: The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. [www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code)
- Careers Research and Advisory Centre (2010). *Researcher Development Framework* [online] Available from <http://www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf>

## **12. Learning Outcomes of the Programme**

These may be divided in the following categories:

- Knowledge and understanding (KU)
- Intellectual (thinking) skills (I)
- Practical skills (P)
- Transferable skills (TS)

### **a. Post-graduate certificate in research**

By the end of the programme, the student will be able to

- Critically appraise and synthesise the current literature in order to develop research questions in the student's area of academic or professional interest (KU, I)
- Synthesise and integrate their knowledge of research methods and research applications to address research questions in the student's area of academic or professional interest (KU, I)
- Have an understanding of issues of ethics and ethicality in research and have been exposed to the issues relating to the ethics of undertaking research in sensitive areas (KU, P, TS)
- Demonstrate a critical understanding of the factors that should be taken into consideration during the planning, conduct and dissemination phases of a research study (KU, I, T, P)
- Understand the importance of targeted communication to researchers at all levels, and demonstrate an ability to achieve appropriate communication and engagement to a non-technical audience. (KU, I, P, T)
- Understand key career issues important for those wishing to incorporate research in their careers. (KU, P)

### **b. Post-graduate diploma of Research**

In addition to the learning outcomes identified for a Post-graduate Certificate of Research, the Post-graduate Diploma of Research adds the following outcomes:

- Demonstrate the ability to produce a comprehensive, authoritative, review of the literature in a specific area related to a planned programme of research, within the constraints of the chosen discipline. (KU, I, P)
- Plan a master's level programme of research in detail. (P)
- Understand the importance of openness in planning research and demonstrate an ability to engage with discipline-appropriate mechanisms and platforms for sharing research plans and/or methods (KU, I, P, T)

### **c. Master of Research**

In addition to the learning outcomes identified for a Post-graduate Diploma of Research, the Master of Research graduate will be able to:

- Make a significant contribution to the development of research and evidence based practice through the application of specialist research knowledge and skills to critically appraise, plan, conduct and evaluation an original piece of research and analyse its potential for research impact (KU, I, T, P)
- Present and be able to defend their rationale, approach or methodology, outcomes and conclusions of the findings of their research in a format appropriate for the audience (KU, I, T, P)

### **13. Teaching and learning methods and strategies**

The taught modules will incorporate a range of teaching and learning activities which will be underpinned by the assumption that the adult learners on this programme will already possess transferable skills and knowledge related to carrying out research. Considerable use will be made of the virtual learning environment through which students will be supported to further develop their autonomy and self-direction in terms of learning. Central to this will be the development of a community of practice through which students will support each other to develop their research skills.

Within this context, students will have the opportunity to engage with diverse teaching and learning activities which can include lectures, online tutorials, asynchronous online discussions, case study analysis, individual presentations and directed study.

In this context, the facilitative educational strategies for adult learners used this programme, will have the following features:

- Integration of reflective practices throughout the programme
- Incorporation of learning contracts
- Enabling students to learn from and with others, through supportive peer-assessment and feedback, guided by the tutor
  
- Where applicable use problem-based scenarios and/or case studies within learning sessions and promote collaborative working which is aligned with the context of contemporary research
- Class debate and critical discussion within interactive sessions where students can incorporate and/or build upon prior experiences and knowledge.

### **14. Assessment strategies**

A diverse range of assessment methods will be used to reflect the breadth of skills and knowledge covered in the different components of the award. These assessments are designed also to resemble the tasks that will be of a highly skilled researcher and thereby to assess the skills that students are developing towards meeting the central Educational aims of the programme. Assessment methods include the following: coursework, composition of blogs, production of research proposals, production of research outputs, and the presentation of key research findings. In general, the assessment pattern for each module reflects the aims, learning outcomes and the learning approaches for that module and allows the strengths of the individual student to be expressed in different ways.

### **15. Programme structures and features, curriculum units (modules), credits and award requirements (including any periods of placement)**

#### **15.1 Programme Credits and Award Requirements**

There are three possible exit awards within the programme: Post-graduate Certificate in Research (PgCert Research), Post-graduate Diploma in Research (PdDip Research) and Master of Research (MRes).

### Post-graduate Certificate in Research (PgCert Research)

For the award of a Post-graduate Certificate (Research) the student must successfully complete study of 60 M level credit points. Within this award the student *must* complete PM110 Research Methods (20 credits) and Communicating Research (20 credits).

### Post-graduate Diploma in Research (PgDip Research)

For the award of a Post-graduate Diploma (Research) the student must successfully complete study of 120 M level credit points. Within this award the student *must* complete PM110 Research Methods (20 credits), Communicating Research (20 credits) and Proposing, designing and pre-registering research – Mres Research Project Part 1 (60 Credits).

### Master of Research degree (MRes)

For the award of the Master of Research, the student must successfully complete study in modules equivalent to 120 M level credit points as outlined for the Post-graduate Diploma in Research as well as completing Answering your research question – MRes Research Project Part 2 (60 credits).

The MRes degree can have a specific postnominal qualifier added to it (e.g. MRes (Clinical Science)). The determination of the subject area will be based on the subject area of the research project followed in the degree, and will be formally agreed by the programme committee in consultation with the supervisor and the student.

## **15.2 Programme Structure and Modules**

The Master of Research programme offers all modules at M level (SCQF level 11). Full-time students are expected to study and complete all 180 credits within one academic year. Part-time students can elect to study a minimum of 15 credits to a maximum of 60 credits in one academic year. Both taught modules must be completed before progression to dissertation. The modules offered on the Master of Research are detailed below:

Figure 1: Modules in the Master of Research Programme

<b>MODULE TITLE</b>	<b>CREDIT POINTS</b>	<b>ROUTES</b>
Research Methods	20	FT / PT / distance learning
Communicating Research	20	FT / PT / distance learning
<i>Student Option</i>	20	FT / PT / distance learning
Proposing, designing and pre-registering research – Mres Research Project Part 1	60	FT / PT / distance learning
Answering your research question – MRes Research Project Part 2	60	FT / PT / distance learning

FT = Full-time  
PT = Part-time

## **16. Criteria for admission**

To be considered for the programme, applicants will normally be required to hold a first class or an upper second class honours degree in a relevant subject that includes a preliminary training in research methods, or equivalent, or an equivalent qualification with relevant work experience. Applicants holding qualifications from other international universities will have their qualifications assessed for equivalency using the NARIC system.

It is recognised that there may be suitable candidates who do not hold a formal degree/honours degree level qualification but who can demonstrate substantive professional experience. The programme team welcome applications from such candidates providing they are able to demonstrate:

- Evidence of appropriate work experience and/or supporting CPD activity which maps against the SCQF level descriptors for level 10;
- A statement of what the applicant has learnt from the above activity, showing how the learning has been at the equivalent of SCQF level 10;

Evidence may be obtained either through interview or in a written supporting statement.

Students without a first degree with extensive professional experience may be considered for admission if their experience is considered equivalent to that of a recent graduate holding a first degree.

Applicants who hold a lower second class honours degree or equivalent in a relevant subject may be considered if they can demonstrate performance at a 2.1 level or better in an independent research project of at least SCQF level 10.

Applicants of any standard will be rejected if QMU does not have the necessary expertise to supervise a project in their chosen subject at SCQF level 11.

Students may register for:

- a) for the Master of Research programme, OR
- b) for the Postgraduate Certificate in Research, OR
- c) The Postgraduate Diploma in Research, OR
- d) as an Associate student. Associate students receive a transcript on successful completion of a module; this can be transferred towards any postgraduate award through the Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CATS) scheme.

All applicants for whom English is not their first language will normally be required to demonstrate competence at a standard equivalent to British Council English Language Testing Service (IELTS) test at an aggregated grade of 7.0 or above with no element of performance below 6.5, or to demonstrate competence by achieving TOEFL equivalent scores on the test and individual components

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

QMU programmes normally provide the following student support:

- Personal Academic Tutors
- Personal Development Portfolios (via PebblePad)
- Student handbooks (via Hub)
- A variety of materials to support learning which may include: narrated lectures, lecture notes, tutorial questions and other learning materials via Hub
- Access to Student Learning Services, Library and IT support
- Access to Student Services: careers, counselling, disability advice □ Subject area Academic Disabled Student Co-ordinator □ Access to support services provided by the Student Union.

## **18. Quality Assurance arrangements**

This programme is governed by QMU's quality assurance procedures. See the QMU quality website for more detail: <http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/>

