Programme Specification

POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN ACADEMIC PRACTICE

Centre for Academic Practice & Enhancement (CAPE)

Academic Level:	7	Credits:	60
UCAS Code:	Not applicable		
Awarding Body:	University of Cumbria		
Delivery Site:	The Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP) will be offered solely online. This sustains the existing model of delivery and reflects the distributed campus model of the UoC. It is recognised that staff participating in PGCAP will do so from campuses at Carlisle, Lancaster, Ambleside, Barrow, Workington, London as well as remote apprenticeship delivery sites across southern England.		
Programme Length:	One year (two semesters) PT		
Mode of Delivery:	Distance Learning		
Pattern of Delivery:	Part time		
	Total weeks of study:	24 weeks	
	Delivery pattern:	2 x 12-week semesters	
	Standard semester dates:	Yes	
Placement:	NA		
PSRB:	Advance HE. Successful completion of PGCAP will lead to award of Fellow (D2) of Advance HE.		
	Date of accreditation: TBC (application by 30th Sept 2024)	Accreditation period: Four Years	
Programme Webpage:	https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/study/courses/postgraduate/pgc-academic-practice/		

Entry Criteria

This programme is only available to existing staff of the University of Cumbria. The following additional requirements apply for entry to this programme: Applicants for the PGCAP are expected to be teaching and/or supporting learning at level 4 or above for at least 70 hours over the duration of the programme. This is a requirement related to accreditation of the programme by Advance HE.

The University's standard criteria for admissions apply. Please refer to the [Applicant Information](#) pages of the University website for more information. Accreditation of prior learning is not permitted on the PGCAP. This is based on prior experience of the CAPE team in operating the PgCLTHE, and which route most effectively supports applicants with particular levels of experience and knowledge. Applicants will be screened at the point of pre-entry and at Academic Induction. If accreditation of prior learning would, in theory, be possible, they will be directed to the experiential route.

For more information about Advance HE and the requirements for Fellowship see the [Professional Standards Framework.](#)

PROGRAMME AIMS AND OUTCOMES

Programme Aims
By the end of this programme you will be able to: 1. Demonstrate meaningful engagement in impactful professional development focused on learning and teaching to enhance both your practice and student learning outcomes aligned with the Professional Standards Framework (PSF). 2. Reflect critically on your own teaching methods and make informed improvements based on scholarly evaluation. 3. Integrate appropriate teaching tools and resources into your practice and evaluate their impact. 4. Critically analyse relevant pedagogic scholarship and apply to your own professional practice.

Programme Outcomes – Knowledge and Understanding
The programme provides opportunities for you to develop and demonstrate the following: K1. Demonstrate inclusive and effective practice in learning and teaching in Higher Education and respond to the diversity of learning and teaching situations. K2. Critically engage with current scholarship on learning, teaching and assessment in Higher Education. K3. Critically reflect upon practice and continuous professional development.

Programme Outcomes – Skills and other Attributes
The programme provides opportunities for you to develop and demonstrate the following: S1. Design, implement and evaluate an enhancement in learning and teaching in Higher Education, drawing on recent scholarship. S2. Critically evaluate the use of appropriate digital tools and platforms to learning, drawing upon a research-informed evidence base. S3. Demonstrate alignment of professional practice with the Professional Standards Framework (PSF) Fellowship Descriptor 2.

PROGRAMME FEATURES

Programme Overview

The PGCAP at the University of Cumbria (UoC) is a professional development programme specifically designed to align with and advance the institution's Learning, Teaching & Assessment Plan. The PGCAP is underpinned by the UoC signature pedagogy of place-based engaged learning and University enhancement themes of authentic assessment, digital augmentation, learning optimisation and Universal Design for Learning. This programme will help you enhance your academic practice by connecting research in learning and teaching to your own professional context. You will place your professional development within the broader context of higher education, acknowledging your role as a potential leader and change-maker. A key aspect of the PGCAP is its focus on reflective, evidence-based teaching, where you'll be encouraged to develop as a practitioner who is informed by current educational research.

Reflective practice is developed through a variety of integrated activities and is a core component of the PGCAP. You will regularly reflect on your learning, teaching and professional development. Synchronous sessions introduce reflective models, such as Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle and Gibbs' Reflective Cycle, providing tools and frameworks for effective reflection. Structured reflection is also a key component of the assessment. The PGCAP concludes in a capstone project and encourages you to incorporate reflection into your long-term professional development planning. This ensures that reflective practice becomes central to both teaching and research, fostering continuous professional development.

Though comprising two modules, the programme is designed as an integrated learning experience, with preparation for PCAP7002 developing across PCAP7001 and rooted in learning and professional development within the first module. Personal tutorials are provided to ensure that this integration is well-supported and aligned with your professional goals. The learning, teaching and assessment approaches on the programme enable you to become part of a learning community, whereby you can learn from peers in different roles and disciplines.

Your mentor will support you in reflecting upon your practice and aligning your practice with the PSF. Your mentor will be familiar with your professional practice and can act as a 'critical friend'. They need to hold a minimum of FHEA and you are expected to meet with your mentee at least four times during the PGCAP.

You will be allocated a personal tutor from the wider programme team who holds a deep knowledge of the PSF and a minimum of FHEA. They act in line with the University's Personal Tutoring Policy. You will have group and personal tutorials to support you during the PGCAP.

The online delivery of the PGCAP enables flexibility and promotes access to synchronous sessions. Online learning will be delivered through the UoC digital ecosystem, including the Blackboard Ultra platform, ensuring a best-in-class approach to supporting learners. Upon successful completion you will be awarded Fellow of Advance HE, an internationally recognised award and a foundation for your continued personal development in higher education, as a reflective evidence-informed practitioner.

Learning and Teaching

The PGCAP consists of 2 x 30 credits module, with similar delivery patterns:

Module	Scheduled Learning and Teaching	Independent VLE Activity	Personal / Group Tutorial	Independent Learning	Total Teaching Time
Module 1 (30 Credits)	6 x 3 Hours Synchronous Sessions 1 x 2 Hour Assessment Workshop	48 Hours	2 Hours	230 Hours	300 Hours
Module 2 (30 Credits)	6 x 3 Hours Synchronous Sessions 1 x 2 Hours Synchronous Session	48 Hours	2 Hours	230 Hours	300 Hours

Teaching

Teaching on the PGCAP exemplifies our distinctive pedagogic practice at the University of Cumbria, as articulated within our Learning, Teaching and Assessment Plan. The scheduled teaching model consists of block delivery, and provides the opportunity to discuss, debate and explore key concepts and themes derived through asynchronous study in more depth with peers and expert practitioners. Asynchronous collaborative learning is designed to build a sense of belonging among a dispersed online cohort through working together on online activities alongside other professional commitments.

Independent VLE Activity

You will be expected to complete asynchronous activities prior to attending the synchronous sessions. There will be opportunity for reflective practice after the session, allowing you to consolidate your learning and apply insights to your own professional context.

Independent Learning

When not attending scheduled learning activities you will be expected to continue learning independently through self-study. You will be provided with relevant resources to help you to engage with independent learning.

Teaching Staff

The PGCAP has been designed by the Centre for Academic Practice Enhancement (CAPE), led by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Learning and Teaching). CAPE includes a Principal Fellow, Senior Fellows and Fellows of Advance HE. Individuals within the team have extensive experience of designing and delivering equivalent provision in academic practice both at Cumbria and at other HEIs. CAPE has successfully run the Advance HE-accredited Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in

HE for over 10 years. The Learning Technology team is also located within CAPE and provides considerable expertise in learning systems and online delivery.

The experience of developing and delivering the PgCLTHE over a number of years, combined with relevant metrics and feedback from relevant stakeholders (including participants and external examiners), has been used in the design of the new PGCAP. This is reinforced in feedback from the External Examiner (2023):

'CAPE is to be congratulated on delivering very successful professional educational development that no doubt positively influences the quality of teaching of the participants across the institution and partner organisations via the teaching qualification and recognition routes. The challenges to support such a wide range of backgrounds, both professional background, career stage and discipline wise, should not be underestimated. In addition, it is clear that the team well supports the needs of PSF mentors and assessors outside CAPE.'

Wider CAPE involvement in academic development (e.g. delivery of academic inductions etc) has been used to inform the content of the programme, particularly in focussing on the new needs of staff relatively new to the institution/teaching. The design of the new PGCAP has enabled a holistic approach to enhancement to be taken, drawing upon a range of feedback sources and reflection by the CAPE team on the implications and opportunities presented by the PSF 2023 and the new LTA Plan.

The core delivery team will be supplemented through guest lectures from pedagogic experts drawn from across the University of Cumbria, demonstrating breadth and depth in the range of themes and case studies explored during the programme. You will be allocated a mentor from within the University learning and teaching community to support you in enhancing your practice to meet the requirements of D2 recognition (Fellowship).

Assessment

PCAP7001: Learning and Teaching in Higher Education

Formative: formative assessment is integrated throughout the module. A variety of formative tasks will be undertaken and reflected on in a formative journal. The formative assessment includes a ten-minute presentation outlining plans for the capstone project, drawing upon relevant scholarship and contemporary practice.

Summative: Evidencing Professional Practice Portfolio - part one (100%, 3000 words)

Section one – two case studies (2 x 1000 words)

Section two – structured reflection on professional learning (1000 words)

PCAP7002: Change and Innovation in Academic Practice

Formative: formative assessment is integrated throughout the module. A variety of formative tasks will be undertaken and reflected on in a formative journal. The formative assessment includes a ten minute in-class presentation of work in progress for the enhancing academic practice project.

Summative: Evidencing Professional Practice Portfolio - part two (100%, equivalent to 3000 words)

Section one - Enhancing academic practice project (2500 words)

Section two - Reflection on practice and professional learning (5-minute pre-recorded presentation)

Section three – Authentication of practice. Record of a successful teaching observation that evidences your practice is in line with the requirements of D2 (Fellowship).

Feedback

Formative assessment will lead to feedback from tutors, other staff and peers. Feedback will take place in informal synchronous and asynchronous environments and will involve discussion of summative work in progress. Feedback on summative assessment will be provided in a written form by module tutors within the University's standard turnaround time (20 working days).

You will benefit from further feedback in dialogue with mentors, observers and Personal Tutors.

UoC Academic Regulations and Academic Procedures and Processes

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Plan

Graduate Prospects

Upon completion of the PGCAP, you will have acquired a broad range of skills that can be applied in various settings, including the effective use of digital learning systems and an in-depth understanding of pedagogic approaches and current scholarship on learning and teaching. Through developmental observations, you will apply effective teaching practices within your learning environment. Assessments are designed to help you apply these skills in real-world contexts, rather than being purely theoretical exercises. In this way, the PGCAP will help you become a well-rounded academic practitioner, proficient in both the scholarship of learning and teaching and effective pedagogic practices within educational environments.

Rather than being a defined endpoint, completing the PGCAP is seen as part of your ongoing development journey. As a Postgraduate Certificate, there is no distinction awarded, and both core modules are assessed on a pass/fail basis, meaning you must successfully complete each core module. Upon completion, you will be awarded Fellow of Advance HE status, securing a recognized teaching qualification for higher education that is fully portable and often required by many UK HE providers throughout your career.

MODULES

Year 1			
Code	**Title**	**Credits**	**Status**
PCAP7001	Learning and Teaching in Higher Education	30	Core
PCAP7002	Change and Innovation in Academic Practice	30	Core
Participants exiting at this point with 60 credits would receive a Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice			

Key to Module Statuses	
Core modules	Must be taken and must be successfully passed.

Timetables
Synchronous delivery will focus on drawing together theory and practice, promoting peer learning and collaboration between participants. Synchronous block delivery will be scheduled for Wednesday afternoons to avoid peak teaching periods.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Student Support
The Student Enquiry Point is a simple way to contact Student Services. Using the Student Enquiry Point tile on the Student Hub you can submit an enquiry to any of the Student Services teams, which includes: • Careers and Employability • Chaplaincy for faith and spiritual wellbeing • Mental Health and Wellbeing • Digital Skills • Disability and Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) • International Student Support • Library • Money Matters • Safeguarding • Skills@Cumbria • Sports and Fitness Facilities • University Student Accommodation As a student at the UoC you automatically become a member of the Students' Union. The Students' Union represents the views and interests of students within the University. The Students' Union is led by a group of Student Representatives who are elected by students in annual elections. They also support approximately 400 Student Academic Reps within each cohort across the entire University. The Students' Union represent the views of their cohort and work with academic staff to continuously develop and improve the experience for all UoC students. You can find out more about who represents you at www.ucsu.me. You can email at any time on studentvoice@cumbria.ac.uk.

Course Costs
Course cost £2240 Overseas course cost £4525 UoC staff must complete a fee waiver form once registered on the programme. **Additional Costs** No additional costs.

Exceptions to the Academic Regulations
This programme operates in accordance with the University's Academic Regulations and Academic Procedures and Processes with the following permitted exceptions of 2 x 30-credit core modules.

The rationale for this exception is 'that it is necessary for the proper delivery of the curriculum' (Academic Regulations (Taught Programmes), C3.4).

External and Internal Benchmarks

This programme aligns with the Advance HE Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education 2023 and forms part of the Cumbria Excellence in Learning & Teaching recognition scheme. Aims, learning outcomes and assessment have been mapped to the PSF Descriptors and Dimensions. Successful completion of the PGCAP will lead to the award of Fellowship (D2) of Advance HE.

The FHEQ descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 7 has been used as a reference point (note that, as a PGCert, the programme does not meet this descriptor in full).

The programme is aligned with the UoC Learning, Teaching and Assessment Plan and Academic Strategy. A comparison has been made with similar programmes across the sector, including drawing upon external expertise, to learn from existing good practice.

Disclaimer

This programme has been approved (validated) by the UoC as suitable for a range of delivery modes, delivery patterns, and delivery sites. This level of potential flexibility does not reflect a commitment on behalf of the University to offer the programme by all modes/patterns and at all locations in every academic cycle. The details of the programme offered for a particular intake year will be as detailed on the programme webpage:

https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/study/courses/postgraduate/pgc-academic-practice/