

Programme Specification

A Programme Specification provides a concise summary of the main features of a programme and its intended learning outcomes. It is intended to be used by prospective students, current students, academic staff and potential employers.

Programme Title:	
Academic Professional	
(Academic professional (Degree): ST0477)	
Programme (AOS) Code(s):	MC1ACP2
UCAS Code:	N/a
Name of Final Award:	Postgraduate Certificate, PGCert
Level of Qualification:	Level 7
Regime of Delivery:	Work-Based Learning
Mode(s) of Delivery:	Part Time
Typical Length of Study (Years):	18 – 24 months
Professional Body Recognition / Accreditation (including specific requirements where applicable):	Advance HE

Brief Description of the Programme

The Academic Professional Apprenticeship is a 18-month/2-year work-based learning course offering a rich opportunity for attendees to reflect upon and develop their practice as university teachers and/or researchers. It is structured around a common core module in the first year and a specialist teaching or research module in the second year, aligned to the core and specialist elements of the Academic Professional Standard and the UK Professional Standards Framework. Apprentices will be supported in their learning by the University course team and also mentors within their workplace, who will facilitate their engagement with the Standard.

Learning and teaching activities involve a mix of face-to-face workshops, online learning, guided independent study and work-based learning and have been designed to maximise opportunities for apprentices to apply theory to practice and to broaden their repertoire of teaching strategies by exploring, evaluating and applying new teaching, learning and assessment methods in a safe and supportive context. Apprentices will also gain a valuable opportunity to simultaneously experience a higher education context both as a teacher and a learner.

The course incorporates a Postgraduate Certificate in Academic or Research Practice (PGCAP or PGCAP) and confers Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy on successful completion.

Programme Aims (linked to the Standard)

The main educational aims of the apprenticeship programme are to:

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| 1 | Provide academics who work within the higher education (HE) sector delivering higher education teaching and undertaking research the knowledge, skills and behaviours to support the development within their discipline. |
| 2 | Provide academics with the framework and the opportunities to engage in continuing professional development in both their discipline and their pedagogy and make use of appropriate technologies to support the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge. |

Programme Learning Outcomes

These core learning outcomes also form the outcomes for the PGCert Academic Practice.

ID	Learning Outcome
On successful completion of the programme the Academic Professional will have knowledge and understanding of:	
CK1	A range of teaching, assessment and feedback methods used in higher education to support learning and achievement.
CK2	How students learn and how to adapt delivery methods to support a range of students' needs
CK3	How research is conducted, within their own and related disciplines and in inter-disciplinary or trans-disciplinary contexts
CK4	Regulatory, administrative, financial, planning procedures, risk management, quality assurance and quality enhancement, and how they are related to their role in higher education
CK5	Technological processes associated with effectiveness in their role within the HE sector
CK6	Methods for evaluating the effectiveness of academic activities, such as teaching and the quality and impact of research
CK7	How to engage with relevant professional bodies and other external organisations to support their work
CK8	The principles of reflective practice and the methods for applying reflective practice to their own professional development
CK9	Innovative approaches to undertaking their work to create interest, understanding and enthusiasm among their students, funders or stakeholders
Core Skills	
On successful completion of the programme, the Academic Professional will be able to:	
CS1	Deliver higher education teaching of high quality.
CS2	Use varying teaching styles depending on the learning environment and students' needs
CS3	Develop research questions and hypotheses prior to undertaking research in their subject, discipline
CS4	Analyse, synthesise and use critical thinking in the conduct of research
CS5	Supervise and mentor students and peers to develop knowledge in their subject discipline
CS6	Implement approaches to academic practice that are informed by equality and diversity

CS7	Communicate orally and in writing and collaborate effectively, to manage people, processes or teams
CS8	Use digital technologies effectively to develop and disseminate knowledge and understanding of subject disciplines
CS9	Share ideas and evidence with students, peers, policy makers and private and public organisations through a variety of channels including publication and teaching
CS10	Collect evidence of the impact of their work, including through student surveys or citations
CS11	Manage their own continuing professional development (CPD) in subject disciplines and pedagogy, incorporating research, scholarship and professional practices
CS12	Manage their own time through preparation and prioritisation, time management, responsiveness to change, and achieving a work-life balance.

Core Values and Behaviours

On successful completion of the programme, the Academic Professional will be mindful of:

CVB1	Ethical, sustainable and inclusive practices and equality of opportunity to a professional standard
CVB2	The need to continuously develop their knowledge and insight in relation to career management, responsiveness to opportunities, networking, reputation and esteem
CVB3	The need to commit to CPD in relation to relevant contemporary issues such as: student employability and graduate employment destinations, ethics and sustainability, academic integrity, legal compliance and intellectual property, respect and confidentiality, and health and safety
CVB4	The need to consider evidence-informed approaches and the outcomes from research, scholarship and CPD to inform their own professional practice
CVB5	The wider context (policy, economic, societal, technological, legal, cultural and environmental) in which higher education operates, recognising the implications for professional practice
CVB6	The need to seek opportunities to network, to practise public engagement and to communicate effectively

Option 1

The learning outcomes for Option 1: Specialist role in Teaching are also the outcomes for the PGCert in Academic Practice

Specialist role in Teaching – Knowledge

On completion of the programme, the Academic Professional will have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of:

TK1	Current subject and pedagogic research which support the development of advanced practice in the learning environment
TK2	Complex information management and advanced digital literacy
TK3	The subject knowledge base and the methods for facilitating learning through engagement with it
TK4	The application of a wide range of technologies and digital skills in support of teaching and learning
TK5	The methods required to develop curricula, monitor delivery and evaluate course, award and programme design

Specialist role in Teaching – Skills

On completion of the programme, the Academic Professional will be able to:

TS1	Play a leading role in the development and deployment of innovative teaching and assessment techniques, to deliver HE teaching of high quality across a wide range of modules and to all levels
TS2	Develop innovative HE course materials, monitor delivery and evaluate course, award and programme design
TS3	Design a wide range of teaching environments to facilitate student learning and engagement
TS4	Integrate subject and pedagogic research into teaching and scholarly activity to enhance teaching and support changes of practice
TS5	Analyse and synthesise information and use critical thinking to share insight into their pedagogy and discipline area and improve engagement with excellence initiatives

Option 2

The learning outcomes for Option 2: Specialist role in Research are also the outcomes for the PGCert in Research Practice

Specialist role in Research – Knowledge

On completion of the programme, the Academic Professional in a specialist research role will have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of:

RK1	Current issues in the relevant disciplinary research literature
RK2	Research theories and the practical application of a full range of research methods
RK3	Relevant and up to date approaches to the management of research, including delivery to required timelines
RK4	Major funding streams and programmes in the relevant research field
RK5	The application of a wide range of technologies and advanced digital skills in support of research investigation and dissemination

Specialist role in Research – Skills

On completion of the programme, the Academic Professional in a specialist research role will be able to:

RS1	Frame research questions and methodology in the context of competitive proposals for research funding
RS2	Undertake effective management of research projects and budgets, assess risks and apply for ethical approval where required
RS3	Produce intellectual insight and innovations in their own discipline to be shared with students, peers and wider stakeholders
RS4	Author or co-author publications and disseminate research through a wide range of media
RS5	Develop and sustain links with industry and other external organisations to grow collaborations and develop opportunities to access funding

Programme Structure

Programmes are structured in stages. The number of stages will vary depending on the mode (e.g. full-time, part-time), duration and location of study which will be detailed in the Programme Handbook.

Modules are set at a specific academic level and listed as either core (compulsory) or optional. The level indicates the relative academic difficulty which will increase through the programme. Passing modules will reward you with academic credit. The amount of credits will depend on the complexity of the module and the level of effort required, which is measured in 'notional learning hours'.

Our [Academic Advice webpages](#) provide more information on the structure of taught awards offered by the University.

Please note: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year. Other option modules may also be introduced at a later stage enabling the programme to respond to sector developments.

Year 1 (Level 7)

Code	Module Title	Credit	Core / Option	Compensable (Normally Yes)
WB701	Developing Professional Knowledge Skills and Behaviours	30	Core	Yes

Year 2 (Level 7)

Code	Module Title	Credit	Core / Option	Compensable (Normally Yes)
WB704	Specialist Role in Teaching	30	Option	Yes
WB705	Specialist Role in Research	30	Option	Yes

Learning and Teaching Activities

Please see the [Academic Advice pages](#) for a description of learning and teaching activities that are recognised by the University. Detailed information on this specific programme is outlined below:

How students will learn

The learning and teaching strategy situates the student apprentice's professional journey within the organisation against the wider background of the HE sector. Student apprentices will therefore engage with activities within the University's virtual learning environment and the taught programme and also be directed to other relevant activities within the institution and beyond.

The University's VLE is central to the learning and teaching strategy. It will provide student apprentices with means to access a range of resources and to explore key issues, as well as usefully engaging them with the real 'user experience' as students. There will be opportunities to critically consider alternative technologies and their use in learning and teaching within the University, and how all of these relate to relevant internal institutional policy and practice as well as external professional body requirements.

Student apprentices will attend face-to-face workshops facilitated by members of the course team. Sessions will include contributions from relevant practitioners from within the organisation and external experts where appropriate. Student apprentices will furthermore be supported in

exploring appropriate opportunities inside the organisation to better understand the institutional issues and outside the University as a means of developing better understanding of the sector. Both the face-to-face workshops and the University VLE will be actively employed as a forum for student apprentices to develop working relationships with colleagues while considering critical issues relevant to learning, teaching and assessment and research in higher education.

At regular points during the module, student apprentices will participate in collaborative activities (for example, action learning sets) as a means of engaging with critical issues relevant to learning, teaching and assessment in higher education.

Professional conversations in the form of supervisory meetings with an appropriately qualified and experienced member of the course team will also be scheduled throughout, providing opportunities for discussions of how individual learning pathways may best be tailored to their particular requirements. For example, student apprentices will be guided on how they might achieve relevant categories of HEA fellowship as part of their engagement with the programme.

Regular meetings between the link tutor, the student apprentice and the workplace mentor will be held throughout as part of the normal management and administration of the student apprentice's Individual Learning Record (ILR) and engagement with the programme.

Additional Course Costs

There are costs associated with all studies, additional to the tuition fee, which require consideration, when planning and budgeting for expenditure. Costs are indicative and for the total length of the course shown unless otherwise stated and will increase with inflation; depending on the programme they may include equipment, printing, project materials, study trips, placement activities, DBS and/or other security checks.

None

Contact Hours

1 unit of credit is the equivalent of 10 notional learning hours. Full time undergraduate students study 120 credits (1200 hours) and full-time postgraduate students study 180 credits (1800 hours) per year or 'stage' of the course.

Course Stage	Scheduled Activities (Hours)	Guided Independent Study (Hours)	Placement / Study Abroad / Work Based Learning (Hours)
Stage 1 (Core)	30		270
Stage 2 (Specialism)	30		270
Total	60		540

Assessment Methods

The [Assessment and Examination webpages](#) provide further information on how assignments are marked and moderated, including a description of assessment activities. These also include further information about how feedback on assessed work is provided to students, including our commitment to ensure this is provided to students within 15 working days (the 'three-week turnaround').

How students will be assessed

The programme's assessment strategy has four purposes:

- Facilitation of a comprehensive and rigorous engagement with the standards core and specialist roles
- Summative assessment of on programme learning
- Determination of readiness for student apprentices to proceed to the EPA (i.e., it acts as the EPA Gateway)
- Provision of opportunities for the student apprentice to prepare and discuss their readiness for the EPA. That is, it has a formative role in preparing the student apprentice for the EPA

Accordingly, the types of assessment selected mirror the EPA requirements:

1. Presentation/Classroom-based sessions

Depending on the specialist route chosen, student apprentices will engage with a presentation or classroom based session designed to showcase knowledge, skills and behaviours relevant to their specialism.

2. Professional conversations

Student apprentices on both specialist routes will be assessed in part via a professional conversation in order to demonstrate that the knowledge, skills and behaviours required by the Standard have been met.

3. Written Submissions

The Written Submission will enable the apprentice to demonstrate the knowledge and skills required by the apprenticeship standard, related to the subject discipline of the apprentice. It will include an annex that shows mapping of evidence relevant to the specialist knowledge and skills in the specialist modules.

Classification

Calculation of final award: Level 7 – 100%

For full details of assessment regulations for all taught programmes please refer to our [Results webpages](#). These include the criteria for degree classification.

Admissions Requirements

Please see the [Application webpages](#) for more information on how to apply, including a statement on how we support students from a variety of backgrounds. Please also see our [general entry requirements](#) for taught programmes. Applicants who do not meet our published entry requirements are encouraged to contact our admissions team for further advice and guidance.

Typical applicant profile and any programme-specific entry requirements

Under UK Government rules, Apprentices must be employed for a minimum of 30 hours per week and must have the right to live and work in the UK (applies only in England). An Apprentice cannot be self-employed. The employer must enter into an Apprenticeship Agreement with the student. All candidates must be employed in a role related to the subject matter of the Apprenticeship and be sponsored by their employer. Applications can only be made through the sponsoring employer. The University will consider all such applications and will have the final decision whether to accept the candidate for entry to the programme.

- A first degree
- Will have completed their probationary period and will normally have 12 months HE experience
- Academic professionals undertaking this apprenticeship must work within a university or other scholarly institute engaged in higher education and typically undertake research, teach and support learning at levels 4 to 8 in the Framework for HE Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ), i.e. from HE Certificate to Doctorate levels.

Apprentices without level 2 English and Maths will need to provide evidence of achievement at this level prior to taking the end-point assessment.

Do applicants require a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check?

No

Opportunities for students on successful completion of the programme

On completion, the apprentice will have the knowledge, skills and occupational competence and professional attributes to enable them to be gainfully employed as an Academic Professional Research Specialist or Academic Professional Teaching Specialist.

Student apprentices will be supported in pursuing opportunities for learning and continuing professional development throughout the course. As well as engaging in these activities, student apprentices will be supported in framing achievements in order to identify routes for growth as part of their continuing development as professionals in their field.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Previous study, professional and / or vocational experiences may be recognised as the equivalent learning experience and permit exemption from studying certain modules. Please refer to our [Credit Accumulation webpages](#) for further guidance.

The University APL procedures will be used to accredit prior APCL and APEL. Apprentices who have completed a Postgraduate Certificate (MA or MSc) in Higher Education and who have continued to work in HE may apply for APCL from the core module.

Student Support

During the course of their studies, students will be supported in the following ways:

- At the start of their studies all students will receive a full **induction** to the programme which will include introduction to the staff responsible for delivering the course, and access to library and IT facilities
- The **Programme Handbook** will outline the exact nature of the course and how it is structured, including the availability of option modules
- Each student will be allocated a **workplace mentor** who will support their academic and professional development, be able to advise and guide them with their work-based learning and, where necessary, give advice on opportunities available to them in their workplaces
- Students will be able to access our full range of **support services**, including the Learning Development Unit for skills and study support, the Library, the Careers and Employability Team, Student Finance Team, Accommodation and Counselling Services

Programme specific support (if applicable)

Above and beyond access to the full range of University support systems and student services, apprentices on the APA will also benefit from regular tutorials with appropriate members of the course team as well as the ongoing support of a workplace mentor.

Appendices

Quality Assurance

Awarding Body:	The programme is accredited by Advance HE as a route to Fellowship of the HEA
Language of Study:	English
QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s):	Academic Professional Apprenticeship ST00477 UKPSF QAA FHEQ Level 7
Assessment Regulations:	<i>Academic Assessment Regulations</i> , accessible via the Academic Advice webpages (https://bucks.ac.uk/students/academicadvice)
Does the Fitness to Practise procedure apply to this programme?	No
Ethics Sub-committee	
Date Published / Updated:	
Date programme re-approval required:	Usually six years from date published / approved

Other awards available on programme (Exit Qualifications)

None

Degree Apprenticeships

The following information applies to work-based learning programmes designed to be delivered as part of a degree apprenticeship. For other programmes this section should be deleted.

Note: in this document the terms ‘apprentice’ and ‘student’ are used interchangeably.

Apprenticeship Standard:	Academic Professional ST0477
End Point Assessment (EPA):	Independent EPA: Retains a separate independent EPA and follows the recommended process

Degree Apprenticeships combine university study and work-based learning to enable apprentices to gain a full master’s or bachelor’s degree qualification. This provision of an academic degree is integrated with experience, practice and learning in the workplace. An apprentice has paid employment status and does not pay any training costs or student fees. Degree Apprenticeships are co-designed by employers ensuring that apprentices are equipped with the skills employers need and for their own future career.

The Standard and End Point Assessment Plan (EPA) - Independent

As well as containing on programme training and assessment, all apprenticeship standards must contain an end-point assessment (EPA).

Apprentices must undertake an independent end-point assessment, which is a synoptic assessment of the knowledge, skills and behaviours that have been learnt throughout the apprenticeship. The purpose of the assessment is to make sure the apprentice meets the standard set by employers and is fully competent in the occupation. It is taken by apprentices at the very end of the on-programme phase of training when their employer (and in some cases their training provider) is satisfied that they have met the “gateway” criteria to undertake the assessment. End-point-assessments are graded and an apprenticeship certificate is only awarded after end-point assessment is successfully completed.

End-point assessment must be administered by an assessor from an approved, independent Apprenticeship Assessment Organisation, and not by Bucks New University as the training provider for the on-programme part of the apprenticeship programme.

Admission requirements

Under UK Government rules, Degree Apprentices must be employed for a minimum of 30 hours per week and must have the right to live and work in the UK (applies only in England). A Degree Apprentice cannot be self-employed. The employer must enter into an Apprenticeship Agreement with the student.

All candidates must be employed in a role related to the subject matter of the Degree Apprenticeship and be sponsored by their employer. Applications can only be made through the sponsoring employer. The University will consider all such applications and will have the final decision whether to accept the candidate for entry to the programme.