1. Programme Title(s):

Doctorate of Social Sciences

2. Awarding body or institution:

University of Leicester

3. a)   Mode of study

Part-time

b)   Type of study

Distance Learning

4.   Registration periods:

The minimum period of registration is 48 months

The maximum period of registration is 72 months

5. Typical entry requirements:

Normally, we require evidence of a relevant Masters degree, preferably at distinction level, together with a detailed outline of the applicant's research proposal. The validity and quality of the proposal will be of crucial significance in determining eligibility for entry. We follow the University of Leicester's English language requirements in that applicants whose first language is not English should be a national from or have completed a qualification in a country where English is considered the medium of instruction, or have completed a recognised test or qualification in English.

6. Accreditation of Prior Learning:

We accept up to 30 credit points of APL based on students' request and ability to demonstrate equivalence of prior learning to the content of a specified module. Prior learning has to have taken place in the previous five years and is graded as a Pass. Decisions are at the discretion of the Doctorate Programme Team.

7. Programme aims:

The programme aims to produce a group of leading edge practitioners who have mastered the full range of the theoretical, practical and research knowledge/skills necessary for the conduct of their professional activities at the highest level. More specifically, the programme aims

- to provide the latest and most sophisticated theoretical knowledge for practitioners,
- to ensure that this knowledge can be used to inform practice and that practitioners can critically engage with developments in their field,
- to equip members of the profession to work with the tools and techniques necessary to conduct and evaluate research pertinent to their professional interests,
- to enhance the growing discipline areas of work, employment, HRD and learning.

By the end of the programme, students will have demonstrated:

- A thorough grasp of the theoretical foundations of the profession. This will include advanced theory from a number of different Social Science disciplines, e.g. sociology, economics, management science, the psychology of learning, sociology of education, and education and training policy.
- Knowledge of the range of research techniques available for enhancing professional skills.

- The ability to utilise appropriate research techniques to produce research of publishable quality.

8. Reference points used to inform the programme specification:

University of Leicester Regulations for Research Degrees, 2024
ESRC Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines 2009
[University of Leicester Education Strategy](#)
University of Leicester Student Support and Development Service website

9. Programme Outcomes:

All of the taught components lead to an exit qualification (MSocSci). Only the thesis (MN8000) leads to the award of a full qualification (DSocSci)

Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
(a) Subject and Professional skills		
Knowledge		
Advanced interdisciplinary knowledge of a range of subjects relating to human resources, labour markets, learning and skills, and of research methods and methodology.	Distance learning materials available online only, tutorials, online tutorials, online workshops, supervision and assignment feedback.	Module assignments, participation in workshops, viva, thesis.
Concepts		
Enhanced grasp of concepts, theories, underpinning debates relating to human resources, labour markets, learning and skills, and social research.	Distance learning materials available online only, tutorials, online tutorials, online workshops and assignment feedback.	Module assignments, participation in workshops, viva, thesis.
Techniques		
Mastery of: research methods; data collection, handling, analysis, bibliographical skills; critical, reflexive, and analytical skills.	Distance learning materials available online only, tutorials, online tutorials, online workshops and assignment feedback.	Module assignments, participation in workshops, viva, thesis.
Critical analysis		
Reflexive awareness of underpinning conceptual debates relating to human resources, labour markets, learning and skills and social research; ability to apply concepts rigorously and systematically within the process of research and via the vehicle of academic discussion and debate.	Distance learning materials available online only, tutorials, online tutorials, online workshops and assignment feedback.	Module assignments, participation in workshops, viva, thesis.
Presentation		
Ability to present material in a systematic and reflexive manner – one that adheres to attending academic standards. Ability to demonstrate understanding and appreciation of the inter- relationship between form and content of written work.	Distance learning materials available online only, tutorials, online tutorials, online workshops and assignment feedback.	Module assignments, participation in workshops, viva, thesis.

Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
Appraisal of evidence		
Ability to understand and critically appraise a range of academic materials relating to the fields of human resources, labour markets, learning and social research more generally. These include textual and visual materials.	Distance learning materials available online only, tutorials, online tutorials, online workshops and assignment feedback.	Module assignments, participation in workshops, viva, thesis.
(b) Transferable skills		
Research skills		
Ability to identify and develop an appropriate academic research problem. Ability to work with others and frame a relevant research project. Progressive development of core research skills: ability to identify and develop research questions; to design and implement research strategies which address these questions; the ability to collect, collate, and reflexively analyse research data to support clearly developed academic argument and analysis.	Distance learning materials available online only, tutorials, online tutorials, online workshops, assignment feedback, and supervision. Module 1 research training materials. The writing of the research proposal on application and the re- working of the research proposal at the end of the taught component. Supported online discussions, tutorials and supervisory sessions.	By Identifying and developing an appropriate academic research problem for the thesis component of the course. Managing a doctoral research project according to a realistic timeframe. Liaising with the supervisor(s) for the duration of the research placement. Managing independent study throughout the course. Module assignments, participation in workshops, viva, thesis.
Communication skills		
Ability to develop academic argument and analysis in a clear, well-structured manner in written work. Ability to meet high academic standards appropriate to the level of study and the fields covered. Reflexive understanding of academic conventions pertaining to subject areas.	Distance learning materials available online only, tutorials, online tutorials, online workshops, assignment feedback, viva preparation supervision	Module assignments, participation in workshops, viva, thesis.
Data presentation		
Ability to present research data in a clear and systematic manner, one that is both appropriate to the research undertaken and to the arguments developed. Awareness and understanding of the intrinsic relationship between analysis and presentation of data.	Distance learning materials available online only, tutorials, online tutorials, online workshops, assignment feedback, viva preparation supervision.	Module assignments, participation in workshops, viva, thesis.
Information technology		
To be familiar with basic tools for literature searches as well as data analysis and statistical packages. Ability to make judgements on appropriate tools Using advanced technology to use shared learning platforms as well as to communicate with staff and fellow students	Distance learning materials available online only, tutorials, online tutorials, online workshops, assignment feedback	Introductory materials including handbook, module assignments, participation in workshops

Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
Problem solving		
Ability to identify and develop appropriate academic research problems in assignments and thesis Tackling complex academic debates and discussions and applying them to own arguments and areas of research	Distance learning materials available online only, tutorials, online tutorials, online workshops, assignment feedback, viva preparation, supervision.	Module assignments, participation in workshops, viva, thesis.
Working relationships		
Managing relationship between themselves and supervisor for thesis.	Tutorials, online tutorials and supervision.	Appropriate contact with tutors and supervisor.
Managing learning		
Managing self directed learning and establishing time management	Distance learning materials available online only, tutorials, online tutorials, online workshops, assignment feedback, viva preparation supervision.	Module assignments, participation in workshops, viva, thesis.
Career management		
n/a to part-time DL students who are mature professionals	n/a	n/a

10. Special features:

Doctorate students would normally be expected to undertake fieldwork as appropriate to their thesis research question. This should be discussed with the supervisor in the first instance and cannot be undertaken before ethical approval has been granted.

11. Indications of programme quality:

The programme has consistently received very positive reports from external examiners and students. It has previously had academic approval to be run via our partner Hong Kong University / SPACE, though this approval is due for renewal in 2012.

12. Scheme of Assessment

Progression is dependent on successful completion of the previous module. No fails can be carried. On successful completion of the taught component (Modules 1 – 8, i.e. 180 Credits), students can exit with a Masters of Social Sciences. All course work must be completed successfully before progression to the thesis. On passing the thesis (total of 450 Credits), students will be awarded the degree of Doctorate of Social Sciences.

Module Assignments
70%+ – Distinction: Excellent work demonstrating independence of thinking/research. Content drawn from a range of well-chosen primary and secondary sources. Excellent organisation and illustration of arguments. Sophisticated analysis of texts and concepts and comprehensive coverage of relevant issues. Excellent presentation in accordance with appropriate academic conventions.

60-69% – Merit: Very good work demonstrating some evidence of independence of thinking/research. Content drawn from a range of primary and secondary sources. Very clear organisation and illustration of arguments. Very good critical analysis and thorough coverage of the relevant issues. Very good presentation in accordance with appropriate academic conventions.

50-59% – Pass: Satisfactory work demonstrating limited independence of thinking/research. Content drawn from a satisfactory range of primary and secondary sources. Competent critical analysis and adequate coverage of relevant issues. Satisfactory presentation overall although may demonstrate some shortcomings.

Below 50% – Fail: Poor work demonstrating no evidence of independence of thinking or research. Content drawn from unsatisfactory range of sources. Inadequate critical analysis and coverage of relevant issues. Presentation may be poor.

Thesis

The Thesis is awarded with the examiners recommending one of the following outcomes:

- be granted the degree of DSocSci
- be granted the degree of DSocSci subject to minor amendments to be completed to the satisfaction of the internal examiner between one – three month.
- be granted the degree of DSocSci subject to major amendments to be completed to the satisfaction of the internal examiner with between 3 to 6 months
- be referred for resubmission for the degree of DSocSci between 6 and 12 months and then re-viva
- failed with no right of resubmission[1]

13. Progression points

In cases where a student has failed to meet a requirement to progress he or she will be required to withdraw from the course and a recommendation will be made to the Board of Examiners for an intermediate award where appropriate.

14. Rules relating to re-sits or re-submissions:

In the event that a student fails a particular assignment, one opportunity will be provided for the assignment to be resubmitted, unless the original submission contains a very serious plagiarism offence in which case their studies will be terminated without the right to resubmit. Similarly if a student submits plagiarised work in the thesis then their studies will be terminated without the right to resubmit.

A resubmission must be submitted by the date set for submission of the next assignment. A resubmitted assignment can achieve a maximum of 50% (Pass grade). In the event of the resubmission not achieving a Pass grade, it will be recommended of the Board of Examiners that the student's studies on the course be terminated. If the student has to resubmit more than two assignments they will not be able to proceed to the Thesis.

15. Additional information [e.g. timetable for admissions]

February, May and October.

16. External Examiners

---

[1] Where the examiners recommend failure of a thesis, the candidate will exit with the award of Master of Social Science if they have successfully completed all of the taught modules and assignments and have accrued 180 credits.

The details of the External Examiner(s) for this programme and the most recent External Examiners' reports can be found [here](#).

Updates to the programme

Optional Module LM8011 deleted

Appendix 1: Programme structure (programme regulations)

MN8001 Introduction to Social Research (20 Credits)
MN8002 Philosophical and Methodological Foundations of Social Research (20 Credits)
MN8003 Quantitative Methods and Analysis (20 Credits)
MN8004 Qualitative Methods and Analysis (20 Credits)
Modules 5, 6 and 7 from the following Options (25 Credits each):
- MN8005 Workplace Learning
- MN8007 Knowledge Management and the Learning Organisation
- MN8008 Comparing National Education and Training Systems
- MN8009 Vocational Education and Lifelong Learning
- MN8010 Globalisation and HRD
- MN8013 Youth Transitions and the Labour Market
- MN8014 Gender, Work and Society
- MN8016 Industrial Relations
- MN8017 Developing Public Policy

MN8020 Thesis Proposal (25 Credits)
MN8000 Thesis (270 Credits)

Appendix 2: Module Specifications

[See module specification database](#) [Login required]