

Programme Specifications

CERTIFICATE IN THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF ASSESSMENT

1	Awarding body	University of Cambridge
2	Teaching institution	Institute of Continuing Education*
3	Accreditation details	none
4	Name of final award	Certificate in Principles and Practice of Assessment
5	Programme title	Principles and Practice of Assessment
6	UCAS code	n/a
7	JACS code(s)	X300
8	Relevant QAA benchmark statement(s)	Education Studies
9	Qualifications framework level	FHEQ Level 4
10	Date specification produced	July 2015

*Cognate Faculty endorsement provided by: Faculty of Education

This **Certificate in the Principles and Practice of Assessment** will be delivered by the University of Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education (ICE), as part of its credit-bearing programme at FHEQ levels 4, 5 and 6 (HE levels 1, 2 and 3), offered to part-time adult students.

ICE is a General Board, non-School institution whose purpose can be defined in two complementary ways. It is a conduit both for transmission of the University's knowledge and research on the one hand and for enabling members of the public to access higher education courses, whether for personal interest or professional development, on the other. In these ways it contributes significantly to the University's public engagement and widening participation commitments.

Each course is taught by members of ICE's Tutor Panel, all of whom are assessed under quality assurance procedures approved by the General Board. It is a requirement of Panel membership that tutors should have expertise in teaching adult learners with widely differing levels of academic experience and expertise. Academic responsibility for monitoring the performance of individual tutors working within the Public Programmes Division of ICE rests with the appropriate academic staff member (ASM), who is a designated University Teaching Officer.

Aims of the Programme

The programme aims to:

- introduce students to the purposes of assessment – formative and summative;
- explore the validity and reliability of forms of assessment;
- examine standard-setting, consistency and reliability in assessment;
- examine how to design appropriate assessment tools and develop specification;
- develop students' awareness of the processes and requirements of external examining and awarding procedures;
- examine the evidence required in assessment;
- explore issues of bias and fairness in the candidate's work-related assessment context;
- explore future directions of assessment.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the Certificate, within the constraints of an FHEQ level 4 programme, students should be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

Knowledge and understanding

- understand, evaluate and apply the key principles underlying assessment;
- demonstrate understanding of the key factors that need to be taken into account in devising assessment best fit for purpose;
- demonstrate in some detail their awareness of and familiarity with the issues surrounding transparency and accountability in assessment;
- demonstrate a clear understanding of some of the broader issues in assessment, such as societal impact;
- reflect on how the issues identified relate to their own work and/or personal experience.

Critical skills

- analyse and evaluate the different types of assessment and be able to discuss their appropriateness in different sets of circumstances;
- assess the impact of these principles on their own work and/or personal experience;
- describe and evaluate the stages of assessment from beginning to end of the assessment cycle;
- identify and analyse the steps necessary to ensure that the assessment process is always as robust as possible;
- critically analyse and evaluate all the evidence relating to the assessment process from context to test-taker, from test to results, including manageability and impact.

Teaching and learning methods

This will be a blended programme and the content, activities and interaction for each of the three units are both online and face-to-face. The ICE Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is a key resource and will provide the course materials and tasks, as well as the forum for interaction and discussion.

The emphasis is on full student participation so that the discussions and presentations can always be fully related to the needs and experience of individual participants. An important part of the programme will be the provision and analysis of specific examples of assessment materials and evidence relevant to the issue under discussion. Substantial independent study using the VLE and full participation in the online learning activities is an essential part of the course.

Assessment methods

Students are awarded a course grade on the basis of

1. Summative assignments totalling 9,000-12,000 words or their equivalent
2. Timely submission of assignments

Students who encounter difficulties affecting their performance in one or more of the above points may submit a claim of mitigating circumstances to be considered at the end of the course.

The word length specified for assignments is inclusive of references in the main body of the text and footnotes and endnotes but exclusive of any bibliography or list of resources consulted and any list of abbreviations that may be included at the beginning or end of the assignment.

The use of appendices is generally discouraged except where additional data, not available in published form, must be presented, and must be previously agreed with the tutor.

It is anticipated that such tasks will include: work-based assignments, reflective journals, literature reviews, essays, case-studies and projects.

Programme structure: overview

The course will be a named certificate, a nationally recognised qualification which is equivalent to 60 credits at FHEQ level 4 (HE level 1: half of the first year of an undergraduate degree). Students must successfully complete all three of the units within the course, each carrying 20 credits at FHEQ level 4 (HE Level 1).

Certificate structure: detail

Unit A: Principles of Assessment

This unit focuses on the key principles and concepts which underpin assessment, covering areas such as types and purposes of assessment; validity and reliability; and standard-setting and consistency.

Unit B: Practice of Assessment

This unit explores the main processes and issues entailed in the provision of good-quality assessment, covering areas such as: specification development; designing assessment tools; standardisation; and e-assessment.

Unit C: Evidence in Assessment

This unit looks at how judgements are made about knowledge, skills and performance, covering areas such as: the kind of evidence required; the candidate in the context of bias and fairness; reliable and valid assessment; maintaining standards; and the future direction of assessment.

Delivery

The course will be offered part-time through blended learning. The course must be taken as a continuous programme of study over one year.

Certificate requirements

The course is targeted at:

- Students of whatever age and previous experience with an interest in assessment, whether for professional or personal development;
- Students wishing to achieve a generic Certificate of Higher Education by combining this programme with courses from other accredited FHEQ level 4 awards.

Progression

Successful completion of the Certificate will require students to demonstrate the appropriate level of achievement against the learning outcomes of each unit, and the learning outcomes of the Certificate as a whole. The minimum criteria for achieving a pass at FHEQ level 4 are outlined in the ICE *Student Handbook*.

Students who have completed the Certificate will be able to progress to other HE provision within the Institute. Credit awarded by the Institute can be transferred into the degree programmes of other higher education providers. The amount of credit which can be transferred into degree programmes varies from institution to institution and is always at the discretion of the receiving institution.

Employability

Students completing this Certificate will have demonstrated high levels of motivation and personal commitment through part-time study. They will also have gained and demonstrated a number of valuable transferable skills, including:

- The capacity to construct and communicate oral and written arguments;
- The ability to begin to analyse, synthesise, evaluate and identify problems and solutions;
- The facility to improve their own learning and performance, including the development of study skills;
- The capacity to plan and manage their own learning and to reflect on their learning;
- The ability to use a Virtual Learning Environment as part of their learning process.

Managing Teaching Quality and Standards

The teaching quality and standards of the course will be monitored throughout by the Academic Director, who will report annually to the Subject Moderation Panel consisting of the internal assessor, University and external examiners plus other Faculty and ICE members as agreed by the Education Committee.

Student Support

Academic advice to students taking ICE courses is available both before and after they have registered for a course: first, from the appropriate member of the academic staff and, once the course has begun, from the Course Director and/or the Course Tutor.

Administrative enquiries are dealt with by Academic Programme Managers.

All students are provided at the start of a course with the ICE Student Handbook.

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this programme specification. At the time of publication, the programme specification has been approved by the relevant Faculty Board (or equivalent). Programme specifications are reviewed annually, however, during the course of the academical year, any approved changes to the programme will be communicated to enrolled students through email notification or publication in the Reporter. The relevant faculty or department will endeavour to update the programme specification accordingly, and prior to the start of the next academical year.

Further information about specifications and an archive of programme specifications for all awards of the University is available online at: www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/camdata/archive.html