

## Welcome to the MSc in Educational Research at The University of Manchester

Dear student

Thank you for choosing to study for the MSc in Educational Research at The University of Manchester. I hope that your time with us is enjoyable as well as academically stimulating.

The MSc in Educational Research is designed to equip you with the knowledge, skills, and experience, to pursue your own independent research. By the end of the course, you should be able to design and carry out research which is ethical and robust, which is appropriate to answer your own research questions and which can be trusted by anyone reading your research. Completion of the MSc to a sufficiently high standard is often a condition of entry to PhD study, and essential for students hoping to secure competitive funding to further their studies.

The MSc in Educational Research has a core team of tutors. Alongside myself, they are: Prof. Mel Ainscow, Prof. Alan Dyson, Dr. Andy Howes, Wendy Symes and Dr. Michael Wigelsworth. We are all active researchers, and together our interests span a wide range of research areas. We use our experiences as researchers to bring a practical dimension to our teaching and invite debate about issues we have encountered in our own work. The MSc has also been designed to create links between qualitative and quantitative research training units, and students are encouraged to think broadly about the different ways in which research problems can be addressed. The MSc is taught primarily through seminars and computer lab sessions. Course materials relating to each unit will also be available via the unit Blackboard site, (a website you can access using your university username and password).

Inside this welcome pack you should find everything you need to get you started with your studies including: some recommended reading, a welcome week timetable, the MSc programme timetable and online registration instructions.

We hope that you will benefit from your experiences on the course. We look forward to getting to know you during your time with us, and learning about your research interests.

Dr. Kirstin Kerr  
(Course Director)

# 1. Some core texts to get you started

If you want to do some reading in preparation for starting the course, here are some suggestions which give you some different starting points for exploring the literature. You will receive more detailed reading lists for each course when teaching starts.

1. It is a good idea to search the literature for articles which report research on your area(s) of interest. You can then see what sorts of research have already been done; what kinds of research questions they have asked; the sorts of data they are reporting; and how they have generated and analysed this. Until your registration is complete and you are able to access the University's library catalogue, you might want to start searching for articles on your area of interest by using internet search engines such as google scholar.
2. The MSc in Educational Research is a training course in research methodology. There are a wide range of research methodology 'handbooks' which provide a good grounding in different approaches to research and specific research methods. Comprehensive handbooks – which typically have a number of reprinted editions – include:
  - Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morison, K. Research Methods in Education. London: Routledge
  - Robson, C. Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers Oxford: Blackwell

The library has a wide range of comprehensive books on research methods. However, if you want to purchase a research methodology handbook, we would advise you to look at several different ones, and as they all cover the same broad topics, and to purchase the one you prefer and find easiest to follow.

You may also find the following book helpful in developing your academic reading and writing skills:

- Wallace, M and Wray A (2006) Critical Reading and Writing for Postgraduates London: Sage
3. There are books and articles on specific research approaches (for example, design experiments or action research) and on specific research methods (for example, survey design or interviewing) and on specific issues to do with the validity and trustworthiness of research. You will be asked to read about specific approaches, methods and issues during your course units, but are welcome to start searching the literature on approaches and methods which you think you might be particularly interested in. For example:
    - Adelman, C. (1993) Kurt Lewin and the origins of Action research, Educational Action Research, Vol 1, No 1, 7-23.

- Hammersley, M. and Atkinson, P. (1995) *Ethnography: principles in practice*. London: Routledge
  - Powney, J. and Watts, M. (1987) *Interviewing in educational research*. London: Routledge
  - Punch, K. (2003). *Survey Research. The Basics*. London: Sage Publications.
  - Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
4. If you are new to educational research, and/or are an international student who wants to begin their reading with a text written in clear and accessible English, we would recommend you start your reading with:
- Bell, J. (1999) *Doing your research project*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

You will then need to engage with more complex texts.

5. If you like concepts to be explained visually, a good book to start your reading with may be:
- Miles, M. B. and Huberman, A. M. *Qualitative Data Analysis. A source book*. London: Sage.

### **Keeping up-to-date about the English Education system**

It is also a good idea to keep abreast of educational developments in England, especially if you want to conduct your own research in an English context. The Guardian newspaper prints an education supplement on Tuesdays, the Times Educational Supplement is published every Friday, and the BBC website has education pages which are regularly updated.

### **Understanding statistics**

A good radio programme about social statistics is called 'More or Less' broadcast on BBC Radio 4, and is also available to download. 'More or Less' is an Open University programme. It explains the statistics reported in the media and used in shaping policy. Sometimes these relate directly to education. For example on 29.08.10 it gave a basic critique of the statistics reported in 'The Spirit Level' by Wilson and Pickett – a book which has been influential in discussions about educational inequality. On 22.04.11 it asked 'How well are British school children doing compared to their international peer group?' and investigated the validity of international student assessment through PISA tests. These programmes are available to download from an online archive on the BBC website.

## **2. Your welcome week timetable**

During welcome week students on the MSc in Educational Research will attend sessions with new Postgraduate Research Students who are starting their PhD studies. This is firstly because we want MSc students to feel that they are a part of our PhD community from

the beginning of their studies as many MSc students will hold 1+3 offers (MSc leading to PhD), or will want to progress to PhD on completing their MSc. Secondly, it is because some PhD students will also take MSc taught courses in order to improve their skills in relation to particular research methods, so it is a good way for MSc students to get to know all their potential classmates.

The activities which MSc students should attend are set out below. (There will be some other sessions during the week which are exclusively for students starting a 3 year PhD programme and they are not shown here).

### **Monday 16<sup>th</sup> September      Room G33 (Humanities Bridgeford Street)**

<b>9.30 – 10.00</b>	<b>Coffee and Collection of Welcome Pack</b>
<b>10.00 – 10.30</b>	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b> <i>Professor Kevin Woods, PGR Director</i>
<b>10.30 – 11.15</b>	<b>Life as a PGR student</b>
<b>11.15 – 11.30</b>	<b>BREAK</b>
<b>11.30 – 12.30</b>	<b>Expectations</b>
<b>12.30 – 12.50</b>	<b>Sign up for Round Table Sessions</b> <i>PGR Reps: Dimi Kaneva (MIE) and Kelly Watson (Geography)</i>
<b>12.50 – 2.00</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>
<b>5.00 – 7.00</b>	<b>Welcome Reception</b> - ALB Board Room, Level 2, Arthur Lewis Building

### **Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> September      Room 3.62, Simon Building 3A (morning)**

<b>10.00 – 10.20</b>	<b>PGR Support Network</b> <i>Sarah Darley-Nolan and Joseph Zhang</i>
<b>10.20 – 10.50</b>	<b>PGR Research Training</b> <i>Dr Graeme Hutcheson</i>
<b>10.50 – 11.10</b>	<b>BREAK</b>
<b>11.10 – 1.00</b>	<b>Assessed Taught Research Training Units</b> <i>Dr Kirstin Kerr</i>
<b>1.00 – 2.00</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>
<b>2.00 – 4.00</b>	<b>PGR Student Round Table</b> <i>PGR Reps: Dimi Kaneva (MIE) and Kelly Watson (Geography)</i>

**10.00 – 12.00****Buddying**

*Munas Ramli and Kelly Pickard-Smith - Buddy co-ordinators  
(plus various current research students)*

Students to ensure they obtain their student cards.

**Friday 20<sup>th</sup> September****10.00 – 11.00****Educational Research Lecture**

Professor Ruth Lupton  
Dr Ann Lendrum  
Professor Ian Stronach

**11.00 – 12.00****Library Tour**

*Dimi Kaneva and Sarah Darley-Nolan*

**12.00 – 1.00****LUNCH****1.30 – 2.00****Information management for research**

*Steve McIndoe and Ian Fishwick*

### **3. Your MSc course timetable**

#### **Semester 1**

Teaching starts on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2013 and finishes on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2013. (The last session of the term is likely to be a reading week).

All the rooms are in the Ellen Wilkinson Building unless stated otherwise.

#### **TUESDAYS (starting 24<sup>th</sup> September)**

Critical Reading and Writing (EDUC 60011), Tutor: Prof. Mel Ainscow, Room C3.19/20, 2-4pm

Planning of Research (EDUC 60500), Tutor: Dr. Kirstin Kerr, Room C3.19/20, 5-7pm

#### **THURSDAYS (starting 26<sup>th</sup> September)**

Qualitative data generation (EDUC 60531) Tutors: Prof. Alan Dyson and Dr. Kirstin Kerr  
Room C3.19/20 2-4pm

Quantitative data generation (EDUC 60521) Tutor: Wendy Symes, Room: Computer Cluster **Mansfield Cooper Building** 5-7pm

#### **Semester 2**

#### **WEDNESDAY (starting 29<sup>th</sup> January)**

Quantitative Data Analysis (EDUC 60542) Tutor: Dr. Michael Wigelsworth Room Computer Cluster: Mansfield Cooper 2-4pm

## MSc dissertation

The MSc dissertation requires students to carry out an original piece of research. This should be 20,000 words in length, to be submitted at the end of August 2014. (New part-time students following the course over two years will submit their dissertations in 2015). Students will need to plan their study, gain ethical approval, generate their own data, and analyse and present their findings. Students will start work on planning their dissertations and gaining ethical approval in Semester 2, alongside the two data analysis units they will be undertaking.

## 4. How to register for the programme

### September 2013 Registration

You should by now have received communication from the University about the on-line registration process and what is required of you. This is therefore designed as guidance to reiterate the importance of completing all aspects of registration via the online system.

If you haven't yet received any communication from the University inviting you to register then please make sure you have completed the following



IT sign up [www.iam.manchester.ac.uk](http://www.iam.manchester.ac.uk)



Confirm your attendance

### MyManchester

Once you have completed the IT sign up you will have access to the following prior to September.



Early Payment - Available until 31<sup>st</sup> August 2012



You can upload a photo for your student card



Access the crucial guide pages [www.studentnet.manchester.ac.uk/crucial-guide](http://www.studentnet.manchester.ac.uk/crucial-guide)

### Registration

This will open from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, however as this is a weekend we recommend that you try to register from **2<sup>nd</sup> September 2013**. Ideally you should complete all sections of the registration process prior to arriving at the University to access the University's online registration facility go to [MyManchester](#).

**Registration Hotline**

+44(0)161 306 5544

This hotline is available weekdays between 2<sup>nd</sup> September – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2013

9.00am - 5.00pm and the weekends in September except 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> September 2013.

If you do not register by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2013 the University Finance Office will impose a late registration fee. This fee will rise from £50 to £200 if you still haven't registered by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2013.

### **International Students**

Orientation will run between Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> September.

Contact: [orientation@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:orientation@manchester.ac.uk)

Website: [Orientation pages](#)

There will also be support available for students who arrive after this date, referrals will be made from the School to a team known as Purple People.

### **Distance Learning Students**

Student cards can be requested for posting out once you have completed registration and uploaded a photo via [ssc@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:ssc@manchester.ac.uk). Please remember to quote your student ID within the request.

If you are unable to contact the helpdesk due to time difference then please liaise with the PGT office, who will endeavour to ensure you are dealt with promptly.

### **Course Unit Selection**

Mandatory course units should appear automatically onto your student profile so please contact the PGT office if this isn't the case.

Core/Optional course units will need to be selected by yourself, using the student center (Self Service) section of My Manchester.

When searching please ensure the course subject is Education and the course number is the course unit code i.e. EDUC 71000 (dissertation) enter 71000. You should see the 2013-14 course unit and be able to select class.

If you experience any problems please contact the PGT Office.

### **Teaching**

Semester 1 course units start from **Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2013** and it is important that you check you are enrolled on your course units during your on-line registration. This is particularly important if your course unit is run via Blackboard as you will not gain access until your registration is complete and you have selected your course units. The deadline for students to enrol on course units is the third week of teaching.

Please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Postgraduate Taught Office team if you have any questions.

Christine Chadwick  
Jonathan Herbert