

University of Plymouth

**Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Business
Plymouth Institute of Education**

Programme Specification

Postgraduate Certificate in Education: Autism

Programme start: January 2018 and September 2018

Approved by Minor Change November 2017

1. Final award title: Postgraduate Certificate in Education: Autism

Intermediate award title(s): not applicable

HECoS code: education studies / 100459

2. Awarding Institution: University of Plymouth

Teaching institution(s): University of Plymouth

Accrediting body(ies): not applicable

3. Distinctive Features of the Programme and the Student Experience

The Postgraduate Certificate in Autism is a modular level 7 programme that provides a structured pathway for practice-related research, professional development and scholarship within the field of autism understanding for teachers and other professionals. It offers a number of distinctive features designed to make it a dynamic and useful professionally worthwhile experience for teachers and other professionals.

The programme aligns with a key strategic need in UK education, namely the provision of high quality teachers and advisory teachers with a knowledge of teaching and learning issues relating to pupils and young people with autism. There is currently an acute shortage of professionals in this area while the assessment and diagnosis of this area is growing..

- The programme is designed and taught in collaboration with external partners such as Plymouth local authority Communication and Interaction Team (CIT), and Autism South West (REACCHSW), a regionally recognised social enterprise organisation which provides consultancy and training in the area of autism. This makes the programme dynamic, current and well-placed to support and influence practice in the field of autism.
- It is recognised that effective understanding of autism requires both good understanding of the knowledge base *and* a deep understanding of the pedagogical implications of different approaches to teaching and learning. We are able to provide a well-tailored, professionally useful, but also academically rigorous experience for professional learning in the area of autism.
- By teaching using a blended learning approach, and then supporting students individually through tutorial work, and face to face, the programme becomes open to a wider range of students. Pedagogically, the programme builds on long-term expertise within Plymouth Institute of Education, in supporting teaching and learning in this way.

- Assessment is focused on the relationship between theorising autism and practising autism understanding. By building the gradual development of an assignment into the teaching of the modules and focusing this on participants' practice settings, students can learn to develop academically strong, but practically useful and innovative work and ideas at level-7.
- Work is assessed through a carefully constructed underpinning of research and scholarship approaches, (building on these if they transfer to PGDip/MA).
- Whilst the Postgraduate Certificate in Education: Autism is an award in its own right, it is also designed to allow participants to transfer their credit into our MA Education programme. This means that students who are new, or returning, to level-7 study are able to begin with a relatively contained award and move on if they are successful and wish to progress.

4. Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Group(s)

At the time of writing there are no QAA benchmark statements for level 7 programmes in Education.

The Postgraduate Certificate in Education: Autism is designed based on the principles of the QAA Quality Code, and sets its expectations in line with the South East Education Consortium (SEEC) level descriptors.

The credit structure of 30 credits per module aligns with the University Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET) national agreement across all UK HE institutions.

5. Programme Structure

The Postgraduate Certificate in Education: Autism is part-time only. The programme structure is as follows with the table showing the modules being offered each semester (all 30 credits modules):subject to any exemptions permitted.

In the first year the programme will start in January 2018 (module 1 MAUT701, semester 2). Module 2 MAUT702 semester 1 will follow in September 2018, and will also be the starting point for a new intake should this be required.

Thereafter students will normally start the programme in January (module 1 semester 2) and follow the same pattern of progression, (module 2 semester 1) however it will also be possible, after review in line with the permitted change process, for participants to start the programme in September starting with module 2 with module 1 in Jan semester 2) and subsequently thereafter. An end point for some students will also be the beginning point for others, if this is required.

It should be noted that module 1 MAUT701 will normally run in Semester 2 and MAUT702 will normally run in semester 1.

This flexibility allows for the best use of resources within a small programme team who start other programmes in September. It also allows the best possible opportunities for students moving from other pathways. However, in the future it will

also be helpful to have the option of moving towards a September programme start via module 1 semester 1 (see below). This will only be after review (during the period of the permitted changes period) and requested via the minor changes process in November of the previous year, if required.

In summary:

The programme can be joined in either January or September via any one of the two modules.

Initial programme start:

January 2018 intake which will take MAUT701 in Semester 2 and continue taking MAUT702 in Semester 1 so completing the PG Cert programme.

Students can enter the programme via module 2 in September, 2018 if required (after review as indicated above) and then continue with module 1 in semester 2.

MAUT701 and MAUT702 will never run simultaneously.

Semester 2 21AU/SB/M start January 2022		Semester 1 21/SP/SB/M start September 2021	
MAUT701	MODULE TITLE: Autism: perspectives and contexts: understanding autism spectrum conditions (ASC).	MAUT702	MODULE TITLE Autism: strategies and interventions.).
MODULE TITLE: Autism: perspectives and contexts: understanding autism spectrum conditions (ASC).		MODULE TITLE Autism: strategies and interventions	

To gain the Postgraduate Certificate in Education: Autism award participants must successfully complete two 30 credit modules. There are currently no choices of modules for students. Module 2 is not conditional on having successfully undertaken module 1. Modules

can be taken in any order, if necessary, which allows flexibility in recruitment and progression. As shown above it is possible for modules to cross academic years and to be studied in any order. Module 1 or 2 can be taken independently if a student wishes and they will gain 30 credits for each module but there is no named outcome, unless they are studied within the regulatory time scale for completion of a programme, when a PG Cert can be awarded. The award of 30 credits can be transferred to the MA programme if all other criteria are satisfied (refer to Operational Specification for APCL and the MA specification for the transfer of credits).

The period of registration is normally either one or two years, part-time only (please refer to the operational specification in relation to when modules occur because of resources and the need for flexibility/exemption needs).

Programme Aims

The aims of the programme are for participants to be able to:

1. Develop a theoretical and critical understanding of autism; issues of assessment and diagnosis of autism and critically evaluate approaches, resources which are relevant to the area of autism and critically consider the nature of autism using appropriate tools of analysis.
2. Evaluate and critically appraise the biological, cognitive, behavioural, and psychoanalytical perspectives on ASC/autism.
3. Show a clear understanding and appreciation of some of the key literature and thinking related to autism and the education of young people with autism and to use this knowledge to critically evaluate and develop practice.
4. Develop a systematic and critical understanding of specific areas of autism and educational practices relating to teaching and learning of young people with autism; in relation to the body of knowledge and a contemporary theorisation of autism with associated implications for a range of teaching and learning approaches.
5. Understand autism from the four key areas of difficulty: social interaction and emotions/language communication/flexibility of thought and differences in imaginative thinking/and sensory differences.
6. Understand the four key areas of difficulty, (previously the triad of impairment) from a theoretical and critical perspective; in particular gain an understanding informed by the literature of how pedagogy can work to support young people with autism in their learning
7. Gain a deep evidence-informed theoretical and critical understanding of autism through actual case studies, and narratives from teachers, learners/pupils/students experiences; and the Implications for the curriculum

and strategies adopted and for schools' policies and practices to support the learning of pupils with autism

8. Understand the child with autism in the family and community and in relation to these areas: and to critically investigate the ethos, principles and underlying assumptions of a variety of educational and therapeutic approaches.
9. Develop systematic knowledge and understanding of teaching and learning with a focus on autism and expand participant's theoretical, conceptual and practical insights and thinking. To critically reflect upon the concept of an autism pedagogy and evaluate the use of specific interventions within inclusive settings.
10. Encourage enquiry, insight and analytic capability through research and writing with regard to the individualised patterns of behaviour and learning exhibited by individuals with Autism (ASC).

6. Programme Intended Learning Outcomes

6.1. Knowledge and understanding

On successful completion graduates should have developed:

1. A deep theoretical and critical understanding of autism
2. A systematic and contemporary understanding of learning as it applies to autism.
3. A systematic, theoretical understanding of autism practice and the implications of this for planning and realising autism friendly policy and practices.

6.2. Cognitive and intellectual skills

On successful completion graduates should have developed the ability to:

1. Critically analyse relevant discourses and that underpin autism making use of theoretical and methodological tools of interpretation and analysis.
2. Develop complex arguments about the theory and practice related to young people with autism.
3. Synthesise information in a manner that may be innovative, critically utilising knowledge or processes from the forefront of autism literature, research .towards discipline/practice
4. Exhibit a level of conceptual understanding in the area of autism that will allow critical evaluation of research, advanced scholarship and methodologies and an ability to understand alternative approaches

6.3. Key and transferable skills

On successful completion graduates should have developed the ability to:

1. Clearly communicate their knowledge and understanding of their work in clear and well-argued prose and in professional conversations, in order to influence practice.
2. Think clearly about new initiatives and test these in practice in an appropriate methodological and ethical manner.
3. Work effectively and flexibly with colleagues, and can clarify tasks and make appropriate use of the capacities of colleagues; is able to negotiate and accept alternative views.
4. Critically select and use full range of resources relevant to the area.
5. Critically reflect on own and others' thinking and practice in order to improve practice
6. Undertake work-based tasks with minimum guidance and is independent and self-critical learner, guiding the learning of others and managing own requirements for continuing professional development and to raise skills to higher level

7. Engage confidently in academic and professional communications with others, reporting on action clearly, autonomously and competently, and with critical insight
8. Carry out independent learning problem solving required for continuing professional study, making professional use of others where appropriate

6.4. Employment related skills

On successful completion graduates should have developed:

1. Greater confidence in the application of theoretical and practice based knowledge with reference to autism in their workplace.
2. A more critical and analytical approach to supporting change and transformative thinking with regard to autism in their workplace.
3. Leading on theory and practice with a range of educational and health professionals
4. Enhanced ability in supporting and leading the teaching and learning of colleagues.
5. To enhance the experience of young people with autism.

6.5. Practical skills

On successful completion graduates should have developed:

1. Greater confidence in generating and making use of theoretical ideas to understand practice and initiate change and to inform and support the practice of other professionals towards autism
2. The ability to undertake and set up a systematic inquiry/ies in practice related to autism in their organisation and professional practice.
3. See also 'employment skills' above

7. Admissions Criteria, including APCL, APEL and DAS arrangements

Applicants will hold a first degree (e.g. BA, BSc, BEd) or its equivalent and/or appropriate professional experience, which demonstrates the potential capability to work successfully at level-7. There is no requirement on applicants to be working in an educational capacity, though they should be able to draw on past experience of, or have access to an appropriate educational environment.

APCL: Those who have undertaken elements of a similar level-7 award at another institution may, as part of the process of admission to the programme, apply for Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL) for a maximum of 30 credits. Applicants must demonstrate how the outcomes of previous study can be matched against the outcomes for that part of the PG Cert autism award for which they are claiming exemption. This is likely to involve providing associated evidence including: a transcript of credits awarded; previous coursework and the markers feedback/comments. This collated information is reviewed by the PG Cert programme leader. The outcome of this is then communicated to the applicant.

APEL: It is possible that some applicants might, as part of the process of admission to the programme, be able to demonstrate their ability to match the success criteria in up to 30 credits through prior experiential learning. In this case they will be required to submit evidence of this in a form suitable for the Programme Leader to make an assessment. It should be noted that professional experience of teaching in the area of autism alone is not enough and applicants must demonstrate how their experience matches the requirements of academic work at level-7.

Disability Assist (DAS): The programme welcomes applicants from a wide range of cultural, social and professional backgrounds including those who have particular needs which need support in order to be able to learn effectively. Applicants will all go through the normal postgraduate taught programme application process and will therefore have the opportunity to declare any disability or particular needs. Where appropriate, a referral to DAS will be undertaken and appropriate action taken from there. The programme will work within the policy of Inclusive Pedagogy and assessment policy of the university.

8. Progression criteria for Final and Intermediate Awards

Credits: some participants may complete one module of the PG Cert and take their credits into another programme/institution, or continue within the MA programme framework. On successful completion of a module participants will receive a transcript outlining the number of credits gained at level-7.

Postgraduate Certificate in Autism: on completion of the full PG Cert participants will be awarded 60 credits at level-7 and receive the qualification entitled Postgraduate Certificate in Education: Autism.

Progression: The PG Cert programme has the option of progression onto the new MA Education within PloE.. Students can opt to follow the special educational needs (SEN) pathway to work towards an MA Education (Special Educational Needs) or the generic MA Education award upon a further 120 credits worth of study in accordance with the MA

Education programme specification. Students may also progress to the National Award for SEN Coordination, or the PG Cert in Inclusive Education.

9. Exceptions to Regulations

All the modules in this programme are taught in affiliation with CIT - Plymouth tutors and REACCH (Autism South West) tutors, as associate tutors. Most students are drawn currently from the Plymouth LA and region pool of teachers. Teaching on these modules can work within the semester timings, (and will as far as is possible) but must fit also into the availability of human resources (associate tutors other roles, Plymouth university tutor other commitments) and also the practical and professional roles of participants. Assessment involves teachers undertaking practice-related study/assessment tasks in their workplace which cannot always fit within the semester. (current university coursework guidelines suggest students 'would not normally be expected to work on assignments during vacation periods' and in light of how this expectation is also impacted on by school calendars, vacations and appropriate times when school based research can be carried out). In order to meet the needs of the student population the programme intends to attract (full-time professionals who are studying part-time) all the modules on the programme require **semester exemption with specific relation to assessment completion** to allow the teaching and the assessment of the PGCert modules to tie in with resource need and school based work, if necessary. This exemption allows **teaching and assessment** to fall outside the semester structure in order for the programme to be viable and also so students are not disadvantaged with regard to assessment opportunities.

10. Transitional Arrangements

The Postgraduate Certificate in Education: Autism will be replacing previous level-7 provision in the PLoE. There may be students who will have gained credit at level-7 either from previous modules on the old MA Education route being run out, or through stand-alone CPD credit. These students will have followed similar modules based on the same pattern as the new modules in this award and would therefore be expected to transfer up to 30 credits of their work into the new programme. Those with more than 30 credits would have the option of transferring this credit into the MA Education programme.

11. Mapping and Appendices:

11.1. ILO's against Modules Mapping

<p>Knowledge and understanding</p> <p>. On successful completion graduates should have developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A deep theoretical and critical understanding of autism, A systematic and contemporary understanding of learning as it applies to autism. A systematic, theoretical understanding of autism practice and the implications of this in the work place in developing expertise towards autism friendly policy and practices. 	<p>MAUT701/MAUT702</p>
--	-------------------------------

<p>Cognitive and intellectual skills On successful completion graduates should have developed the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Critically analyse relevant discourses that underpin autism making use of theoretical and methodological tools of interpretation and analysis. ○ Develop complex arguments about the theory and practice of teaching and learning for young people with autism. ○ Synthesise information in a manner that may be innovative, critically utilising knowledge or processes from the forefront of autism literature, research .towards discipline/practice ○ Exhibit a level of conceptual understanding in the area of autism that will allow critical evaluation of research, advanced scholarship and methodologies and an ability to understand alternative approaches 	<p>MAUT701/MAUT702</p>
<p>Key and transferable skills On successful completion graduates should have developed the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clearly communicate their knowledge and understanding of their work in clear and well-argued prose and in professional conversations, in order to influence practice. ● Think clearly about new initiatives and test these in practice in an appropriate methodological and ethical manner. ● Work effectively with colleagues and can clarify tasks and make appropriate use of the capacities of colleagues; is able to negotiate and accept alternative views ● Critically select and use full range of resources relevant to the area. ● Critically reflect on own and others' thinking and practice in order to improve practice ● Undertake work-based tasks with minimum guidance and is independent and self-critical learner, guiding the learning of others and managing own requirements for continuing professional development and to raise skills to higher level ● Engage confidently in academic and professional communications with others, reporting on action clearly, autonomously and competently, and with critical insight ● Carry out independent learning problem solving s required for continuing professional study, making professional use of others where appropriate 	<p>MAUT701/MAUT702</p>

<p>Employment related skills On successful completion graduates should have developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater confidence and theoretic knowledge in leading in their workplace. • A more critical and analytical approach to change and transformation of thinking and practices in their workplace. • 	<p>MAUT701/MAUT702</p>
<p>Practical skills On successful completion graduates should have developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater confidence in generating and making use of theoretical ideas to understand practice and initiate change and to inform and support the practice of other professionals • The ability to undertake a systematic inquiry/ies related to autism in their organisation and professional practice. • 	<p>MAUT701/MAUT702</p>

11.2. Assessment/Skills against Modules Mapping

<p>Assessment against Module Mapping</p>	
<p>Module/Programme intended learning outcomes</p>	<p>Related Assessment</p>
<p>At the end of a module the learner will normally through a critical reflection on theory and practice will be expected to be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify, select, critically analyse and evaluate ideas, perspectives, theories or data relevant to autism; undertake a critical, imaginative and ethical investigation in the area of autism which relates theory to practice; • locate thinking about autism within a broader context, usually through ideas, perspectives and theories from appropriate literature. • adopt a questioning, reflective and critically aware stance towards autism throughout the study. • select, apply and evaluate appropriate methodologies to aspects of the module content and utilise them competently and methodically. • show clarity and coherence in structure, writing conventions, style, presentation of evidence and argument; ensure the work is readable, accessible to its intended audience and effectively communicates the intended meaning. • generate 'new' ideas and connection within the ideas contained in the module, apply existing material to 	<p>MAUT701 Coursework Pass/Fail</p> <p>4000 – 5000 word assignment or equivalent. Critical reflection on theory and practice</p>

<p>new contexts or reappraise or critique familiar material; further, combine or resolve uncertainties, identify similarity, difference and interconnection, take risks and use rational and intuitive thinking.</p>	
<p>At the end of a module the learner normally through an ‘action research’ approach will be expected to be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify, select, critically analyse and evaluate ideas, perspectives, theories or data relevant to autism; undertake a critical, imaginative and ethical investigation in the area of autism which relates theory to practice; organise and manage a study relating to issues of intervention or teaching and learning and autism. • locate thinking about autism within a broader context, usually through ideas, perspectives and theories from appropriate literature, with a focus on autism and learning. • adopt a questioning, reflective and critically aware stance towards autism/learning throughout the study. • select, apply and evaluate appropriate methodologies to aspects of the module content and utilise them competently and methodically (eg ‘action research’) • show clarity and coherence in structure, writing conventions, style, presentation of evidence and argument; ensure the work is readable, accessible to its intended audience and effectively communicates the intended meaning. • generate new ideas and connections within the themes contained in the module, apply existing material to new contexts (learning in autism) or reappraise or critique familiar material; further, combine or resolve uncertainties, identify similarity, difference and interconnection, take risks and use rational and intuitive thinking. 	<p>MAUT702</p> <p>Coursework Pass/Fail</p> <p>4000 – 5000 word assignment or equivalent. Action Research</p>