University of Plymouth

Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Business
Plymouth Institute of Education

Programme Specification

The National Award for SEN Coordination (NASENCO)
Postgraduate Certificate: Inclusive Education

Approved January 2009

Updated Programme Specification December 2016

Updated by Minor Change 28/11/16

Updated 4/9/19, 30/03/21

1. **Final award title: The National Award for SEN Coordination - Postgraduate Certificate: Or the Postgraduate Certificate Inclusive Education (for students who do not have QTS/QTLS, or are not in the post, or leadership position of being able to evidence SENCO experiences).**

   Intermediate award title(s): not applicable

   HECoS code: 101087 / special needs teaching

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 National Award is a modular level 7 programme that provides a structured pathway for practice-related research, professional development and scholarship within the field of SEN Coordination. It offers a number of distinctive features designed to make it professional work-based, as well as an academic 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 knowledge of issues relating to young people who experience SENDs.

- The programme is designed and taught in collaboration with regional local authorities
- Teaching and learning on the programme uses a blended learning approach, which supports students through tutorial work, and through virtual or face to face sessions. Pedagogically, the programme builds on long-term expertise within Plymouth Institute of Education, in supporting teaching and learning in this way, and with well established relationships with regional local authorities.
- Assessment is focused on the relationship between theory, policy, and practice. By building the gradual development of an assignment into the teaching of the modules and focusing this on participants' policy and practice settings, students can learn to develop academically strong, but practically and professionally 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 students wish to progress to PGDip/MA).
- Whilst the national award 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 move on if they are successful and wish to progress to further level 7 outcomes.

4.   Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Group(s)

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

The NASENCO is 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 NASENCO 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.

The programme received exemption from the semester structure in 2015.

Semester 1		Semester 2	
PGSEN704	**MODULE TITLE**: SEN: Organisational Contexts.	**PGSEN705**	**MODULE TITLE:** Leading on Teaching and Learning.
PGSEN703	**MODULE TITLE**: National Award for SEN Coordination Learning Outcomes	**PGSEN703**	**MODULE TITLE**: National Award for SEN Coordination Learning Outcomes

To gain the NASNCO participants must successfully complete two 30 credit modules. Participants must also complete the NASENCO outcomes portfolio (PGSEN703) which is non-credit bearing, but is 'endorsed' as a Pass/Fail. This module runs concurrently with PGSEN704/705. There are currently no choices of modules for students. Module 2 is not conditional on having successfully undertaken module 1, as assessment outcomes will not be available until April of the academic year. Module 2 does starts before the submission of module 1 and so this must be recognised by participants. If a student fails the assessment of module 1 there is another submission date in the following semester which aligns with the submission of module 2. It is possible for modules to cross academic years, but this is unlikely unless a student has interrupted their studies. Normally the programme will be completed in one year, starting in September/October and ending in submission in September (and October). 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: Inclusive Education 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 APL/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). The outcome of PG Cert: Inclusive Education is possible where a student is not in the professional role to complete NASENCO learning outcomes portfolio and where they complete two modules, PGSEN 704/705 successfully. This allows prospective or aspiring SENCos, and other educational professionals to study on the programme. It is possible for a participant to submit the learning outcomes portfolio within three years of the completion of the PG Cert: Inclusive Education, and receive the NASENCO.

6. Programme Aims

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

Develop a theoretical and critical understanding of SEN coordination and leadership; and to be able to evaluate approaches, and resources which are relevant to the area of SEND.

Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) need to fulfil the responsibilities set out in the SEND Code of Practice 0-25. They need to be effective in leading teaching and learning, and coordinating provision for pupils with SEND and/or disabilities in their schools/ educational settings, supporting and managing other staff; and ensuring that pupils/students receive high quality educational provision that enables them to make progress in their learning: and in addition the programme aims:

- to increase the participation of pupils/students with SEN and/or disabilities and raise their achievement, through developing SENCOs' professional attributes and improving their knowledge, understanding and skills. The 'achievement' of children and young people includes broader outcomes, not just academic attainment.
- to prepare SENCOs to lead teaching and learning and the provision for children and young people in their school/setting who have SEND and/or disabilities.
- to provide opportunities for SENCOs to share good practice and reflect critically and actively on their own role and practice.

The [SEND Code of Practice 0-25](#) outlines the key responsibilities of the SENCO role (para 6.90). There are also specific module aims which are set out in the Module Documents and as set out in the NASENCO Course Guide for students.

7.   Programme Intended Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the programme participants should be able to:

- demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of the statutory and regulatory context for SEN and disability equality
- demonstrate comprehensive knowledge and understand the implications of the principles and practice of leadership in different contexts
- work strategically with senior colleagues and governors (or equivalent) to lead ethos and policy
- lead, develop and, where necessary, challenge senior leaders, colleagues and governors in relation to statutory responsibilities, professional development and staff deployment
- demonstrate systematic knowledge and critical skills in the collection, analysis and use of data at a strategic and organisational level
- demonstrate knowledge of how to draw on external sources of support and expertise
- develop, implement, monitor and critically evaluate systems to identify, inform, plan, record and review SEND provision

THROUGH
- critically engaging in the relationship between theory, policy, and practice
- comparing and contrasting different perspectives
- handling relevant sources of literature, bodies of knowledge, and engage in current educational debates
- constructing organised, structured, critically reflective and analytic writing
- demonstrating
  - critical and analytic thinking
  - independent learning, self-management and organisation
  - oral and written communication skills
  - the ability to locate and use learning resources
  - information technology skills
  - the ability to work in groups and to problem solve

7.1   Knowledge and understanding

On successful completion participants should have developed:

A deep theoretical and critical understanding of SEN Coordination

A systematic, theoretical understanding of SEND practice/s and the implications of this for planning and realising educational activity which supports teachers and learners in developing expertise towards SEND policy, and practices.

7.2.   Cognitive and intellectual skills

On successful completion participants should have developed the ability to:

Critically analyse relevant ideas and pedagogical approaches that underpin SEN policy and practice 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 who experience SENDs.

Synthesise information in a manner that may be innovative, critically utilising knowledge or processes from the forefront of SENco literature, research towards policy and practice

Exhibit a level of conceptual understanding in the area of SEND that will allow critical evaluation of research, advanced scholarship and methodologies and an ability to understand alternative approaches.

7.3.   Key and transferable skills

On successful completion participants should have developed the ability to:

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 educational initiatives and test these in practice in an appropriate methodological and ethical manner.

Work effectively and flexibly with colleagues, and can clarify tasks and make appropriate use of the capacities of colleagues; and be able to negotiate and accept alternative views.

Critically select and use a full range of teaching and learning resources relevant to the area of professional work.

Critically reflect on own and others' thinking and practice in order to improve policy and practice.

Undertake work-based tasks with minimum guidance and display abilities of independent and self-critical learning, guiding the learning of others and managing own requirements for continuing professional development and to raise skills to higher levels.

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 and solving required for continuing professional study, making professional use of others where appropriate.

7.4. Employment related skills

On successful completion participants should have developed:

Greater confidence in the application of theoretical and practice based knowledge for SEN coordination and leadership, as well as the overall aims of the course and modules.

A more critical and analytical approach to supporting change and transformative thinking with regard to SEND, inclusion and disability.in the organisation.

An enhanced ability in supporting and leading the teaching and learning of colleagues.

To enhance the teaching and learning of young people who experience SEND.

7.5. Practical skills

On successful completion participants should have developed:

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 SENDs, such as how to construct relevant teaching environments.

The ability to undertake and set up a systematic inquiry/ies in educational practice related to SEND in their organisation and professional practice.

See also 'employment skills' above.

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

Applicants will normally 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. To achieve the PG Cert: Inclusive Education there is no requirement on applicants to be working in an educational/school based capacity, or to have QTS/QTLS though they should be able to draw on past experience of, or have access to an appropriate educational environment. Participants who wish to study for the NASENCO must have QTS/QTLS, and ideally be in the role of SENCO. However, it is possible to achieve the NASENCO as an aspiring SENCO, who is able to evidence their engagement with the role through the Learning Outcomes Portfolio (PGSEN703).

In brief participants to be able to undertake the programme will need:

- To have EYTS, QTS or QTLS, be a qualified teacher (ie successfully completed (NQT) induction period) and preferably be a SENCO
- To have access to children/young people with SEND
- To be able to **lead** (at least some) aspects of SEND in the school/college/educational setting
- To have the support of the Headteacher/principal (or Chair of Governors or equivalent if you are the head)

We also ask the Headteacher/principal (appropriate line manager) to complete a memorandum of agreement which indicates the school/college's support for the SENCO in terms of funding (where relevant), attendance on the course, time to study beyond the taught sessions, access to relevant information in school/college, and to name an in-school supporter to provide general support for participants on the programme.

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 NASENCO 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 NASENCO 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 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.

9.   Progression criteria for Final and Intermediate Awards

Credits: some participants may complete one module of the PGCert/NASENCO 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: Inclusive Education: on completion of the full PGCert participants will be awarded 60 credits at level-7 and receive the qualification entitled Postgraduate Certificate: Inclusive Education, or if they complete the National Outcomes Portfolio be awarded PG Cert: NASENCO.

Progression: The PGCert programme has the option of progression onto the MA Education within PIoE. 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.

10.   Exceptions to Regulations

All the modules in this programme are taught in affiliation with the regional local authorities (LA). Assessment involves teachers undertaking practice-related study/assessment tasks in their workplace which cannot generally fit within the semester period of assessment. (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 have been

granted semester exemption with specific relation to the starting of module dates across local authorities (though these adhere very closely to semester start dates where possible, but because of operational needs have to be staggered) and assessment completion to allow the teaching and the assessment of the modules to tie in with resource need and school based work and local authority resources.

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. Assessment therefore, is normally with a module 1 submission date in March for 'semester' 1 module, allowing students the Spring term to undertake practice-related investigations; and September for 'semester' 2 modules, allowing students to use the full summer term (and summer break to undertake their work. The non-credit related module PGSEN703 has a later submission date (usually two weeks after module 2 PGSEN705)

11. Transitional Arrangements
   N/A

12. Module mapping:

12.8. ILO's against Modules Mapping

Knowledge and understanding . On successful completion participants should have developed: A deep theoretical and critical understanding of SEND coordination. A systematic and contemporary understanding of learning as it applies to SEND. A systematic, theoretical understanding of SEND practice and the implications of this for planning and realising educational activity which supports teachers and learners in developing expertise towards SEND policy and practices.	**PGSEN703/704/705**
Cognitive and intellectual skills On successful completion participants should have developed the ability to: ■ Critically analyse relevant discourses and pedagogical approaches that underpin SEND coordination 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 SENDs. ■ Synthesise information in a manner that may be innovative, critically utilising knowledge or processes from the forefront of SEND literature, research towards discipline/practice ■ Exhibit a level of conceptual understanding in the area of SEND coordination that will allow critical evaluation of research, advanced scholarship and methodologies and an ability to understand alternative approaches ■ .	**PGSEN703/704/705**
Key and transferable skills	**PGSEN703/704/705**

On successful completion participants should have developed the ability to: • 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 educational 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 teaching and learning 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 •	
Employment related skills On successful completion participants should have developed: • Greater confidence and theoretical knowledge in leading learning and developing SEND coordination and pedagogy in their workplace. • A more critical and analytical approach to change and transformation of thinking and practices in their workplace. •	**PGSEN703/704/705**
Practical skills On successful completion participants should have developed: • 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 enquiry/ies in educational practice related to SEND in their organisation and professional practice.	**PGSEN703/704/705**

12.9. Assessment/Skills against Modules Mapping

Assessment against Module Mapping	
Module/Programme intended learning outcomes	**Related Assessment**
At the end of a module the learner will normally through a **critical reflection on theory and practice; a review of a body of knowledge; and through the understanding an aspect of data, (relevant to their work based context) be expected to be able to:** • identify, select, critically analyse and evaluate ideas, perspectives, theories or data relevant to SENCO; undertake a critical, imaginative and ethical investigation in the area of SEN which relates theory to practice; organise and manage a study relating to issues of teaching and learning and SENDs/SEN coordination. • locate thinking about SEND within a broader context, usually through ideas, perspectives and theories from appropriate literature. • adopt a questioning, reflective and critically aware stance towards SEND 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 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.	**PGSEN704Coursework** Pass/Fail 4000 – 5000 words assignment or equivalent. Critical reflection on theory and practice

At the end of a module the learner normally through **an 'action research' or a suitable form of practitioner research/enquiry relevant to their workplace context** approach **will be expected to be able to:** • identify, select, critically analyse and evaluate ideas, perspectives, theories or data relevant to SEND coordination; undertake a critical, imaginative and ethical investigation in the area of SEND Coordination which relates theory to practice; organise and manage a study relating to issues of teaching and learning. • locate thinking about SEND within a broader context, usually through ideas, perspectives and theories from appropriate literature, with a focus on SEND and learning. • adopt a questioning, reflective and critically aware stance towards SEND/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' or another approved/agreed methodology/approach). • 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) or reappraise or critique familiar material; further, combine or resolve uncertainties, identify similarity, difference and interconnection, take risks and use rational and intuitive thinking.	**PGSEN705** **Coursework** Pass/Fail 4000 – 5000 word assignment or equivalent. Action Research