THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER
Unit Specification

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Title	The Local Academic Culture of Higher Education: a 'practice research' approach
Unit code	
Credit rating	15
Level	7
Contact hours	Lectures, Workshops and/or Seminars: 12 hours Directed Reading/exercises (inc. online activities): 48 hours Private Study: 80 hours
Other Scheduled teaching and learning activities*	
Pre-requisite units	New Academics Programme (NAP)or equivalent
Co-requisite units	None
School responsible	SEED
Member of staff responsible	Mike O'Donoghue
ECTS**	7.5
Notional hours of Learning***	150

2. AIMS

- To use reflective practice and evidence based approaches to research their won perspectives and to position these within the wider context of their professional academic locale;
- To develop an analytic perspective on their locale in order to gain an understanding of way in which policy is determined and drives institutional change;
- To learn how institutional policies are put into practice;
- To consider the ways in which the participant may engage as a full academic citizen within their locale and within the institution.

3. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE UNIT

In this module participants have the opportunity to explore the culture and practices of their own department – these include local approaches to teaching and learning; academic research culture and support; local and institutional policy interpretation – and to critically examine a theme of their own choosing which relates to an aspect of their own professional interests. The questions driving the participants' studies are:

● Why is the locale of my position the way it is? (e.g. Where is the focus of academic research, teaching, and administration situation in the participant's locale? What factors have been influential in determining this? What has been the source of these factors? (e.g. strong local leadership, national policy, income generation)).

● Where do I fit into current culture and practice? (e.g. what strengths do I bring to this locale and how might these contribute? What are my weaker areas and how can these be best addressed within the locale? How do my own professional expectations relate to those of my colleagues? etc.)

● What does 'success' mean in the locale context? (e.g. what do I see as the markers for my own success in the locale context? How are these achieved? How do these relate to academic research / teaching and learning / administration? How do these relate to expectations of performance with the culture and practice of my locale? Etc)

● What needs to be addressed to meet expectations? (e.g. How I do set about realising my self expectations within my working locale? What can be addressed with peers and students? Why and how are such markers determined?)

● How do the responses to the previous questions (above) meet or conflict with my own values and expectation? (e.g. are personally held values on teaching, learning, research, or other challenged in any way? If so, why and how? How might such challenges be addressed? Are personal values compromised or developed as a result of such reflection?)

In responding to these and related questions participants will be asked to review related scholarly publications and policy documents and to connect emerging responses from their own review with those in the literature. Participants will also be asked to identify and examine evidence in respect of their claims – this may take the form of student feedback on their own or their colleagues' teaching and learning; the nature and volume of scholarly publications; bespoke user generated feedback from students and peers; national and international statistical data, and other data sources as appropriate.

It is anticipated that participants may wish to interview senior colleagues within their locale in order to locate their own professional viewpoints with those of more experienced and successful colleagues. This form of interview bears comparison with professional develop interviews and target setting, but the responses generated from such meetings would form a basis for analysis and scholarly review rather than the creation of personal development plans. In some cases participants may wish to identify a professional mentor and review the themes of this module in one or more informal conversations over a period of time.

The end result of this module is for the participant to develop an analytic perspective on their locale in order to gain an understanding of way in which policy is determined and drives institutional change; how such policies are then put into practice; and the ways in which the participant may engage with such policies and locale practice in order to contribute as a full academic citizen within their locale and within the institution.

* To inform the "Key Information Set". Defined as 'any activity that a student has to attend or undertake at a fixed point and that has no flexibility for when it is undertaken, and where the student also has access to an available staff member' *("Provision of Information about Higher Education: Outcomes of consultation and next steps" June 2011/18)*

** ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System): There are 2 UK credits for every 1 ECT credit, in accordance with the Credit Framework (QAA). Therefore if a unit is worth 30 UK credits, this will equate to 15 ECT.

*** Notional hours of learning: The number of hours which it is expected that a learner (at a particular level) will spend, on average, to achieve the specified learning outcomes at that level. It is expected that there will be 10 hours of notional study associated with every 1 credit achieved. Therefore if a unit is worth 30 credits, this will equate to 300 notional study hours, in accordance with the Credit Framework (QAA).

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4. INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Category of outcome	Participants should be able to:
Knowledge and understanding	Participants will gain knowledge of different approaches to academic research and teaching practices within their professional locale; they will also gain understanding and experience in the use of the collection of evidence in practice-based research.
Intellectual skills	Critical review of professional practice, local and institutional policy, research publication standards (REF); teaching standards (NSS data).
Practical skills	Presentation to senior colleagues on their entry into their working locale
Transferable skills and personal qualities	Improved communication skills; improved presentation skills; improved learning resource design.

5. LEARNING AND TEACHING PROCESSES (INCLUDING THE USE OF E-LEARNING)

Critical review of University, Faculty and School policy documents
Creation and analysis of interview transcripts with senior managers, as group work in general; as individual task.
Review of Faculty and School procedures and committee; structures, roles and outcomes.
Group discussion of experiences – barriers, support, issues, questions.
Faculty and School teaching and learning student feedback analysis.
NSS analysis – online discussion.
Blog posting of weekly experiences.
Dilemma in teaching, management and research roles for online discussion.
Creation of PK style presentation for peer review online.

3. ASSESSMENT (INCLUDING FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT, E-ASSESSMENT, and INFORMATION ABOUT FEEDBACK)

Assessment task	Length	How and when feedback is provided	Weighting within unit (if relevant)
Participants will be asked to submit a critical essay based on one or more aspects of their professional practice based review.	4,000 words or equivalent	Within 15 working days of submissions	80%
A short pecha-kucha style presentation intended for an audience of peer and senior staff in the participant's locale (Note: the presentation is not expected to be made available to departmental colleagues, but should this be desirable colleagues will be briefed on related professional and ethical considerations)	Max 20 slides		20%

4. INDICATIVE READING LIST

Bain, K. (2004) *What the best college teachers do*, Harvard University Press.

Basit, T. and Tomlinson, S. (eds) (2014) *Social inclusion and higher education*, Policy Press

Bates, A.W. and Sangra, A. (2011) *Managing Technology in Higher Education: Strategies for Transforming Teaching and Learning*, John Wiley and Sons.

Baumfield, V., Hall, E. and Wall, K. (2012) *Action Research in Education: Learning Through Practitioner Enquiry*, second edition, Sage publications.

Brown, S. and Race, P. (2002) *Lecturing: a practical guide*. Kogan-Page

Cave, M., Hanney, S. and Kogan, M. (1991) The Use of Performance Indicators in Higher Education: A Critical Analysis of Developing Practice, second edition, Jessica Kingsley Publications.

Cohen, L., Manion, J and Morrrion J. (2011) *Research methods in education*, seventh edition, Routledge.

Collini, S. (2012) *What are Universities For?* Penguin Books.

Cousin, G. (2009) Researching learning in Higher Education, Routeledge.

Cowan, J. (2006) *On becoming an innovative University teacher: reflection in action*, second edition, OU Press.

Dearing, R. (1997) *The National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education*, Sumary report, NCIHE, available online at http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/ncihe/ Last accessed: 17-March-2014).

Denscombe, M (2010) *The Good Research Guide: for small-scale social research projects*, fourth edition, Open Univesity Press

Hobbs, V. (2007) *Faking it or hating it: can reflective practice be forced?*, Reflective Practice: Internal and Multidisciplinary Perspectives, volume 8 issue 3 pp 405-417

Knight, P. (2002) *Being a teacher in higher education*, Open Univesity Press

Knight, P. (2008)Small-*Scale Research: Pragmatic Inquiry in Social Science and the Caring Professions*, Sage Publications.

Laurillard, D. (2012) *Teaching as a Design Science: Building Pedagogical Patterns for Learning and Technology,* Routledge.

McMahon, . (2009) *Higher Learning, Greater Good: The Private and Social Benefits of Higher Education,* John Hopkins University Press.

Manual of Academic Practice (MAP), TLSO, University of Manchester. (Available online at http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/ncihe/ Last accessed: 17-March-2014).

Nathan, R. (2005) *My Freshman Year: what a professor learned by becoming a student*, Penguin.

Pollard, A. (2002) *Readings for reflective teaching*, Continuum, London.

Shattock, M. (2010) *Managing Successful Universities*, Open University Press.

Tight, Malcolm (2012) *Researching Higher Education.* SRHE.

Studies in Higher Education. (Journal) SRHE

Van Nieuwerburgh. C. (2014) *An Introduction to Coaching Skill: A Practical Guide.* Sage Publishing

Warwick, P (2007) *Reflective Practice: some notes on the development of the notion of professional reflection,* The Higher Education Academy (available online at http://escalate.ac.uk/downloads/3573.pdf last accessed: 17-March 2014)

For Information and advice on Link2Lists reading list software, see:

http://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/academicsupport/informationandadviceonlink2listsreadinglistsoftware/

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Related Policies:	
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Policy owner:	Louise Walmsley, Head of Teaching and Learning Support Office
Lead contact:	Miriam Graham, Teaching and Learning Adviser (Policies and Procedures)