UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Programme Title: **Introductory Commissioning Local Services**

Advanced Commissioning Local Services

Awarding Body: **Staffordshire University**

Teaching Institution: **Staffordshire University**

Final Awards: **Certificate of Credit**

Intermediate Awards:

Mode of Study

UCAS Codes: **N/A**

QAA Subject Benchmarks: **N/A**

Professional/Statutory Body:

Date of Production: **April 2010**

Date of Revision:

If you require this document in a larger text or a different media please contact us.

EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME

If you are studying at Level 4 (Introductory), you should, on completion of the module, be able to:
1. Understanding the policy context of commissioning in multiagency settings.
2. Describe the process involved in commissioning services.
3. Appreciate and identify competencies relevant to commissioning in multiagency settings.
4. Identify best practice in relation to commissioning.

If you are studying at Level 7 (Advanced), you should, on completion of the module, be able to:
1. Analyse the policy context of commissioning and multi-agency working.
2. Evaluate the processes involved in different models of commissioning services.
3. Critically assess the competencies relevant to commissioning in multiagency settings.
4. Analysing best practice in relation to commissioning.
5. Demonstrate an ability to communicate in a structured written format.

What is distinctive about this programme?

Over the last 30 years, the practice of central and local government commissioning social services has increased substantially. Practitioners who work in the statutory or voluntary sectors are under pressure to respond to the commissioning agenda. The Certificate of Credit in Commissioning Local Services explores the concepts and skills necessary for effective participation in the commissioning process. The Certificate provides essential CPD in this important skill area.

Each Certificate is a stand-alone short course comprising one 15-credit module. It is designed to provide students with knowledge and skills around the regeneration agenda, as well as being an HE "taster" for those who have not been in formal educational settings for some time. The Certificate will provide students with up to date knowledge and understanding of some of the issues relating to commissioning of local services that affect their work-practice. They will also explore a range of skills and tools that they can use within their work-places. It is expected that some students will progress from this short Certificate to longer awards. The credits from the Certificate may be transferred within and between higher education institutions and students may be able to use the credits from the Certificate to contribute as stepping stones to other HE qualifications. Staffordshire University has awards in related areas including:
➢ Certificate of CPD in Community Regeneration (30 credits L4 and L7)
➢ ULA in Community Regeneration (60 credits L4)
➢ B.A. Sociology or B.A. Crime, Deviance and Society
➢ M.A. Community Practice
➢ M.A. Regeneration
➢ M.A. Youth Work

The programme content and delivery methods have been devised in collaboration with professionals from the public and voluntary sectors. The Certificate has been developed as a direct response to needs identified by partner organisations and it responds explicitly to evolving themes within the region. The Certificate is taught by a group of tutors who have an active interest in and engagement with the delivery of

public services. Teaching is underpinned by consultancy and research in this area. Staff research specialisations include participation, community learning, area-based regeneration initiatives, and community arts and health, and community regeneration.

The Certificate of Credit complements the University's existing undergraduate awards in Skills for Sustainable Projects (Level 3), the Certificates of CPD and the ULA in Community Regeneration. It also complements the Get Talking: Community Consultation Course, which the Creative Communities Unit delivers to community groups and which is accredited at Levels 3, 4, and 7. The MA Community Practice, the MA Youth Work and the MA Regeneration will also benefit from the introduction of this short course, which may be used as an option. The Certificate reflects both the recognition of the need to develop a range of courses to support the development of skills in community regeneration and also the role the university plays in supporting the capacity of the public sector to deliver the community regeneration agenda.

The Certificate supports the University's objectives in the following ways:
To increase the University's effectiveness in developing new markets and new awards: The Certificates are designed to contribute to the University's portfolio of short courses with a CPD focus. They hope to attract potential students into higher education and provide them with a 'taster' that may encourage them to return for more substantive degree programmes.

To provide an impetus for award planning that is as concerned with the timing and method of the delivery as with content and subject: The Certificate of Credit is based on innovative delivery methods focusing on the idea of day-release for people in employment. The Certificate will be taught in day-long workshops (3 x 7 hours per 15 credits).   This format ensures the continuing integration of the curriculum and awards activities with the University's widening participation strategy in a time of change. The flexible learning methods adopted for the Certificate of Credit, in conjunction with work related learning, are very attractive to people who have not previously taken advantage of higher education. The curriculum of the Certificate offers both employability skills and subject content in keeping with national standards relating to regeneration.

PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

What will this programme teach me to do?

At the end of your studies you should be able to:

Knowledge & Understanding **Level 4:** Demonstrate knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with the subject area. **Level 7:** Demonstrate a systematic understanding of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice.
Learning **Level 4:** Develop lines of argument and make sound judgements in accordance with basic theories and concepts of the subject area. **Level 7:** Demonstrate the independent learning ability required to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level for continuing professional development
Enquiry **Level 4:** Present, evaluate and interpret qualitative and quantitative data. **Level 7:** Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding and critical evaluation of methodologies and techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship and, where appropriate, propose new hypotheses.
Analysis **Level 4:** Evaluate and interpret concepts and principles of the subject area. **Level 7:** Demonstrate a critical awareness and evaluation of current research, advanced scholarship, contemporary problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of the subject area.
Problem Solving **Level 4:** Evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems related to the subject area. **Level 7:** Evaluate complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and employ appropriate decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations**.**
Communication **Level 4:** Communicate the results of study/work accurately, reliably and with structured and coherent arguments. **Level 7:** Communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences.
Application **Level 4:** Undertake further training and develop new skills within a structured and managed environment. **Level 7:** Demonstrate originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline.
Reflection **Level 4:** Demonstrate the qualities and transferable skills necessary for practitioners in community, voluntary, public and private sector settings, requiring the exercise of initiative and some personal responsibility. **Level 7:** Demonstrate the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility, self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE, MODULES AND CREDITS

Award: CERTIFICATE OF CREDIT: INTRODUCTORY COMMISSIONING LOCAL SERVICES

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│      Introductory       │
│   Commissioning Local   │
│        Services         │
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Award: CERTIFICATE OF CREDIT: ADVANCED COMMISSIONING LOCAL SERVICES

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│  Advanced Commissioning │
│      Local Services     │
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HOW WILL I BE TAUGHT AND ASSESSED?

Teaching and Learning

The Certificate of Credit is being designed by a group of tutors who all have long teaching experience and an active interest in and engagement with the community, voluntary sector and community arts agendas. In devising the teaching, learning and assessment strategy for the Certificate of Credit, the team has drawn from this expertise, has consulted representatives from the voluntary, statutory and arts sectors, and has also been cognisant of current National, University and Faculty wide concerns with the following principles and issues:

- Widening student access and recruitment
- Inclusion and diversity
- Promotion of life-long learning
- Student focussed and student led learning
- Transmission of transferable skills
- Employability

The Certificate of Credit has been specifically designed to attract prospective students from a wide range of social and educational experiences. We therefore anticipate that, as these students embark on an HE course, they will present a multiplicity of academic and pastoral needs. In order to meet these exciting new challenges, we believe that our teaching, learning and assessment strategy must be sufficiently responsive to this diversity of student experience and demand. It must also be flexible enough to meet the different educational requirements of our students. We also recognise that most of our students are in full-time employment.

To this end, we have developed a distinctive delivery style for the Certificate of Credit, which articulates with the delivery style used across the Creative Communities Unit generally. The module will be delivered in 3 x 7 hour sessions rather that the standard 2 hours per week. For the students, this has the advantage that they do not have to attend university in the evenings or weekends, but can fit the teaching into the working week. Our research has shown that potential students for CPD-type awards prefer this model of delivery.

The Certificate of Credit articulates firmly with the community and work-related learning agenda. The module will provide practical skills that students can immediately transfer to their employment. The assessments provide the distinguishing feature of each Certificate. The assessments as Level 4 will be largely reflective and work-related pieces of coursework, which will allow students to articulate the concepts and methods discussed in class with their work experiences. The assessments at Level 7 will be more analytical in nature, requiring students to improve skills in traditional essay writing as possible preparation for progression onto a Master's degree. Work-related experiences will also be discussed in class, and students and tutors will learn from each other. Overall, the Certificate of Credit is concerned to provide an educational experience that is not only distinctive in terms of curriculum content and delivery but also facilitative in terms of employability.

Teaching and Learning

Our teaching, learning and assessment strategy seeks to combine both traditional and innovatory pedagogical principles. This is evidenced by curricula development, teaching and learning methods and modes of assessment.

The overall teaching and learning strategy of the award aims to enable students to attain the award outcomes, and to make progress towards understanding and

realising their own goals, some of which may be different from the award outcomes. Opportunities will be created for:
- An introduction to each skill and knowledge in the learning outcomes
- Consolidating these through practice and variation
- Students to autonomously (but with guidance as needed) employ these in developing their assessed pieces of work

The teaching and learning distinctiveness of the Certificates lies in:
- The tight integration of skills and knowledge provision
- The richness and depth enabled by the seven-hour workshop format
- The use of practical components within the workshop format
- The raising of professional issues, procedures and standards to the level of reflection

The Certificate of Credit will combine 'traditional' teaching and learning methods (for example, formal lectures and tutorials) with a variety of inter-active approaches. Delivery is sensitive to the needs and learning styles of the target market, and includes practice-based workshops; small group work; interactive lectures; simulations and case studies; and external practical work.

The Certificate will be team-taught by staff members from the Creative Communities Unit. Teaching and learning will take place in a relaxed and informal way, and students are strongly encouraged to participate.

Independent learning is important on the module, as it enables students to develop their subject and key skills and to prepare for written and oral communication. Student learning is further promoted through the feedback given to students, which takes several forms including one-to-one discussions on summative assessment.

Much of the student time will be spent in self-directed study. A characteristic of academic work in higher education is the ability required of the student to study independently. The Module Handbook is an important guide to independent study. It will outline the criteria for the assignments and provide introductory reading lists, as well as other resources necessary for successful completion of the module. The course will also be supported by on-line resource bases in the library and on the Creative Communities Unit web-site. Students will be further supported by in-class handouts and e-mail and telephone dialogues. It is expected that students will read around the topic, and will use the workshops to test their own ideas and to engage their colleagues and staff on the Certificate in debate and dialogue. Students should be respectful of the views of others and be prepared to work with each other to enhance the overall experience.

Use of Information Technology: Students will be encouraged to use the IT facilities and electronic learning resources of the University. This is in keeping with the commitment of the University to developing and extending learning and teaching based on electronic sources to enhance independent learning and skills that are transferable to the outside world of work. Initially, Blackboard will be used to support student learning in the classroom. The teaching team will explore further information technology utilisation within the modules. Students will be encouraged to use e-mail as a means of communication, to search the internet for relevant reports and other information, and to use word-processing, digital photography and desk-top publishing skills to prepare assignments. Much student support relating to assessment will take place via e-mail.

Assessment

Assessment methods
Each Level in the Certificate programme has its own assessment strategy. In recognition that most of our students will be in full-time employment, most of the assessments are in written coursework form so that the students have the greatest possible freedom in terms of time management to produce the assignment. The assessments as Level 4 will be largely reflective and work-related pieces of coursework, which will allow students to articulate the concepts and methods discussed in class with their work experiences. The assessments at Level 7 will be more analytical in nature, requiring students to improve skills in traditional essay writing as possible preparation for progression onto a Master's degree. The module handbook will provide clear guidance to the students on what is expected for the assessment.

Assessment strategy
The overall assessment strategy for the Certificate will be based on at least three forms of assessment: individual oral presentation, work-related portfolios and written coursework.

The oral presentation reflects presentation, discussion, and analytical skills required in both the academic and external professional environments. The work-based portfolio allows demonstration, in written and photographic form, of the concepts and skills central to the module. The essay is modelled on the published paper to the extent that this is the main method of professional discussion in the social sciences. The presentation and the written components of the portfolio should have a clear structure facilitating the presentation of an analysis or clear line of argument that focuses directly on the question under review. Essays and other written assignments should follow correct academic conventions of referencing and citation.

The titles of all components of the assessment are designed to reflect the learning objectives and planned skill enhancements of the module, as included in the module descriptor. Throughout the Certificate of Credit, formative feedback will be regularly provided in the workshops, in one-to-one discussions, and in discussions relating to formal assessment feedback.

Feedback from Tutors on Assessment
The team in line with UMF strategy regards this as a key aspect of student learning. The team will normally operate within a framework which comprises four elements:

1. Feedback on outlines/draft essays

2. The return of written work to students within a maximum of 20 working days of submission

3. Provision of written commentary comprising:
   - annotated engagement with the student's text and
   - summary of overall strengths and weaknesses

4. The opportunity to receive further verbal feedback from tutors when work is collected.

Personal Development Planning

The introduction of Personal Development Planning to the University is designed to enhance employability. The principles of PDP will be embedded in the modules comprising the Certificate and students will be encouraged to develop both intellectual and practical transferable skills. The assessment portfolio will focus on skills that can be applied to the work environment; this is intended to form the basis of PDP. PDP encourages reflection on the connections between skills used in the classroom and skills used in the workplace. Part-time students currently in employment will be encouraged to transfer what is done in the classroom to their workplace. Former students have noted the relevance of both conceptual and practical work done in class to their performance in the workplace. Further support for PDP will be provided by the Careers Service via the University's website @ http://www.staffs.ac.uk/services/careers/careersweb/pdp/pdp.htm

The Student Union also has a Personal Development Officer who is tasked to provide support around PDP issues.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Entry Requirements (including IELTS score)
What qualifications would I need to join this programme?

The entry requirements for the award are normally:

  ➢ For Level 4 modules: two A Levels or equivalent (any subject)
  ➢ For Level 7 modules: a first degree or equivalent (any subject)

In addition we pro-actively seek to encourage non-standard applicants who have considerable relevant experience and a record of academic achievement

Disability Statement

Staffordshire University operates a policy of inclusive teaching and learning to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to fulfil their educational potential. Details about how to apply to have your needs assessed can be found at:
http://www.staffs.ac.uk/study_here/disabled_students/index.jsp

AWARD SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Students will be provided with a Student Award Handbook that will provide a comprehensive range of information regarding the award, its delivery, the teaching and learning methodology, personal tutoring and pastoral support. Students will also receive a module handbook which details the teaching programme, the assessments and the reading list. The Certificate of Credit is also supported by the Creative Communities Unit website (www.staffs.ac.uk/community) and by a subject-specific library website. The Creating Communities Ning (http://creatingcommunities.ning.com/?xg_source=msg_mes_network) provides opportunities for students to communicate on issues relating to the Certificate outside of the University setting. We also draw attention in our documentation to web-based material including study skills support and other University support and materials.