Programme Specification

Programme Title and Name of Award	Master of Research (MRes)		
Academic Level	7	**Total Credits**	180
Professional Body Accreditation / Qualification	Not applicable		
Date of Professional Body Accreditation	Not applicable	**Accreditation Period**	Not applicable
UCAS Code	Not applicable		
HECoS Code	100962 (Research Skills)		
Criteria for Admission to the Programme	A 1st or 2:1 honours degree or equivalent in a relevant discipline from a recognised university in the UK or comparable university overseas; candidates may also have a master degree. Please refer to the Applicant Information pages of the University website for more information. For international applicants, a minimum IELTS score of 7.0 overall (with at least 6.5 in Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening) or equivalent is required. For APL, please refer to the University website Detailed criteria for admission to this programme can be found on the programme webpage. APL will be considered for up to 40 credits with previous L7 in research methods (mean of 60% or above). These would be reviewed on a case by case basis by the Graduate School and programme leader to ensure mapping of ILO is appropriate. When assessing the evidence against the requirements of ILO, consideration should be given to the following: subject content and knowledge; volume of learning; level of learning; evidence of achievement. There will be an interview process.		
Teaching Institution	University of Cumbria		
Owning Institute	Graduate School		
Programme delivered in conjunction with	Academic Institutes		

Principal Mode of Delivery	Distance Learning
Pattern of Delivery	Part time
Delivery Site(s)	Distance Learning
Programme Length	The MRes lasts for two years (part time) and comprises three modules (180 credits, Level 7).
Exit Awards	You may be awarded one of the following Exit Award if you fail to achieve the requirements of the full programme. For any 80 credits: PgC (Research in Professional Practice)
Period of Approval	September 2022 to September 2026

This programme has been approved (validated) by the University of Cumbria as suitable for a range of delivery modes, delivery patterns, and delivery sites. This level of potential flexibility does not reflect a commitment on behalf of the University to offer the programme by all modes/patterns and at all locations in every academic cycle. The details of the programme offered for a particular intake year will be as detailed on the programme webpage

Cumbria Graduate Attributes

Throughout your studies, you will be provided with the skills and knowledge relevant to the global workplace. All successful graduates of the University of Cumbria will be:

- Enquiring and open to change
- Self-reliant, adaptable and flexible
- Confident in your discipline as it develops and changes over time
- Capable of working across disciplines and working well with others
- Confident in your digital capabilities
- Able to manage your own professional and personal development
- A global citizen, socially responsible and aware of the potential contribution of your work to the cultural and economic wellbeing of the community and its impact on the environment
- A leader of people and of places
- Ambitious and proud

Programme Features

Master of Research (MRes):

Using evidence to inform decision-making is increasingly prevalent in professional practice. This Masters is designed to give you the skills, knowledge and understanding of how to do this through research and evaluation. The Masters is ideal as Continuous Professional Development qualification to support you in any profession or as an entry point to the research sector.

This is a Masters-level qualification involving taught elements, a research proposal and supervised independent research. You will undertake specified taught modules, on a part time basis, normally completed within twenty-four months of first registration and lead to the award of MRes. The University of Cumbria MRes programme is distinctive as it aims to develop participants as researchers capable of designing, leading and communicating research and development projects that contribute new knowledge but also have impact on practice within your subject, professional field or workplace context. You will be working with a core interdisciplinary programme team and drawing upon the established expertise of University of Cumbria academics and researchers.

The first year of the MRes focuses on understanding the range of research methods and their applicability in your chosen field, and how to develop research projects, funding applications or doctoral proposals based on an evaluation of current knowledge. The second year is dedicated to supporting you in conducting an independent research project, alongside formative activities that encourage you to develop your research networks and communities, the impact of your work, and how it might develop further.

The Graduate School supports all aspects of the research student journey from recruitment through supervision, monitoring, progression, assessment, examination and completion. Our *Postgraduate Research Code of Practice* and our annually updated *Research Degree Programme Handbooks are* provided to all students each academic year through the Blackboard virtual learning environment (VLE). The handbook details the student journey and the expectations and requirements of completing a specific research degree.

For students wishing to go on to the doctoral programme, we offer, in addition to the taught modules of the MRes, the Research Skills Development Programme coordinated by the Graduate School. Other research seminars are provided within Academic Institutes and/or Research Centres. Training on ethics is a mandatory component of all research programmes for students and supervisors.

Outline Structure:

Pre-registration - Application and proposal submitted to Research Student Admissions.

Interview. An interview will be completed for suitable applicants.

Enrolment: Enrolled at the University of Cumbria through on-line registration.

Registration: When the student is registered, a copy of the handbook will be issued to the student. Preliminary Induction will be provided in the first taught module. Standard registration will take place under the current UoC PgR regulations.

The study route is part-time and involves studying modules grounded in your professional context or subject of choice.

For those wanting to progress to the PhD and DProf, programmes are divided into two parts.

The **first part of the programme is the MRes** (taught components) or can be taken as an exit award for an MRes (Level 7). The first part lasts for two years (part time) and prepares the students for their research through taught modules (180 credits, Level 7).

The **MRes** modules will be:

Year one: 2 Modules:

MRES7103 **Research Methods for Professional Practice** 40 credits

MRES7104 **Project Design, Development and Planning** 40 credits

Year two: 1 Module:

MRES7105 **Research Project** 100 credits

Monitoring of Progress: In the MRes, progress will be monitored through achievement of a **pass mark of 50% or above**. However, note that progression to DProf or PhD normally will only be possible on successful completion of the MRes at an average mark of **60% or above (Merit)**. Condonation/compensation of a marginal failure is not permitted. Each module provides fundamental knowledge, skills or understanding that students must acquire in order to successfully achieve the learning outcomes of the programme.

Studying for a research masters part-time is a challenging but exciting journey which normally requires motivation related to personal interest and ambition to make a difference, in keeping with the values and principles of the University of Cumbria.

Programme Learning Outcomes

This programme is aimed at successful and ambitious professionals working in a range of business, public service or third sector settings who wish to progress and gain mastery in their personal and professional skills to the highest levels of academic and professional capability. The programme will enable you to evaluate evidence, conduct work-based evaluations, plan and conduct a range of research studies and prepare research proposals.

Level Descriptors

Level Descriptors describe in general terms the expected outcomes you will achieve at each level of study as you progress through your programmes. They describe the relative demand, complexity, depth of learning and learner autonomy associated with a particular level of learning and achievement. The University's Level Descriptors are aligned to the national [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#) (FHEQ) and are a key mechanism for ensuring the academic standards of the University's provision.

At Level 7 (Usually Master's level), you will be able to demonstrate that you have the ability:

- To display a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of your academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice.

- Employ advanced subject-specific and cognitive skills to enable decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations.

- Generate new ideas and support the achievement of desired outcomes.

- Accept accountability for decision making including the use of supervision.

- Analyse complex concepts and professional situations by means of synthesis of personal and workplace reflection and data drawn from scholarship and research in the field.

Programme Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for you to develop and demonstrate the following:

1. Contribute new knowledge and understanding of key disciplinary and interdisciplinary theory, and research relevant to your professional field, workplace context and chosen focus.
2. Advance your critical knowledge and understanding of research methodologies and skills enabling you to contribute to new knowledge through research in your professional field.
3. Influence research-informed change in practice within your professional field.
4. Develop professional researcher attributes and skills in planning, critical and creative thinking, communication, and self-management of your continuing professional development.
5. Exercise a high level of professional values and dispositions related to diversity, integrity, leadership and good practice.

External and Internal Reference Points

The following Subject Benchmark Statements and other external and internal reference points have been used to inform the Programme Outcomes:

There are no QAA subject benchmarks to which the programme relates as this MRes is aimed at a multiple profession working in an interdisciplinary cohort. The programme has been developed with reference to the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Other internal reference points may include:

UoC Strategic Plan

UoC Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

UoC Academic Regulations and Academic Procedures and Processes

Graduate Prospects

A Master of Research (MRes), while containing taught elements, focuses on research skills which are of fundamental importance in a range of professional settings. This MRes is a part-time degree that introduces research methods and provides a firm foundation for those who wish to develop their careers, enter the research sector or pursue doctoral study. This course will equip you for a career as professional researcher in either academic or non-academic environments.

For students with further study ambitions, it is possible to APL from the MRes into either a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) or a Doctor of Professional Practice (DProf). To progress from the MRes to the PhD or DProf you will require 60% average overall (merit or above) on successful completion of the MRes.

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategies employed to enable the Programme Outcomes to be Achieved and Demonstrated

As a student at the University of Cumbria, you are part of an inclusive learning community that recognises diversity and inclusion. You will have opportunities to learn by interacting with others in a collegiate, facilitative and dynamic learning environment. Teaching, assessment and student support will allow equal and equitable opportunities for you to optimise your potential and develop autonomy.

We seek to create a stimulating and innovative community of learning, whether encountered on campus or at a distance, or in the workplace. Facilitated by our expert practitioner staff, you will experience a learning environment that is well equipped, flexible, and stimulating.

Learning and Teaching

A key belief underpinning the programme is that all students are individual learners, with individual needs. The learning and teaching approach across this programme is reflective of a staff-student partnership to help develop each student's professional research capabilities, autonomy and independence as critical thinkers.

The programme will reflect the university's learning contexts in the enactment of our curriculum offer through online, at-a-distance learning – utilising full range of UoC digital resources and supported communication through learning technology supported by Blackboard interactive learning and repository facilities.

A variety of teaching and learning methods is employed throughout the course to ensure students acquire and develop appropriate concepts, knowledge, professional and personal skills.

Throughout the MRes, students are expected and encouraged to be active and reflective in their learning and to apply current thinking to their practice and research.

Summative and Formative Assessment

The assessment methods are:

- designed to provide a creative and balanced strategy across the programme
- enable the valid testing of the programme learning outcomes
- optimised for the modes and patterns of programme delivery
- remote the concept of 'assessment for learning' to enable the development of   independent and autonomous thinkers
- relevant to the needs of the workplace or professional field, allowing for authentic assessment and effective feedback to enable student success

Student Support

We provide responsive learner support that promotes student success. Our approach to learner support is designed to support achievement and progression, champion inclusivity and accessibility, prepare you for opportunities beyond study, and promote independence and resilience, enabling you to achieve your potential.

Academics and expert practitioners facilitate your learning through structured inquiry. You will be provided with access to high quality academic resources through physical and digital libraries and will be supported to develop skills that enable you to become a critical, reflective, discerning and independent learner and researcher.

Preparing for Postgraduate (PG) Study

This free online pre-entry Master level course "preparing for postgraduate study" is available free of charge through the Open Education Platform powered by Blackboard as is Head Start Plus. It provides a useful insight into the academic requirements of study at postgraduate level and is recommended to students who are about to start their PG qualification.

To access the course simply follow the link to https://openeducation.blackboard.com/cumbria and set-up a free account with Open Education. Once logged on, select the course free of charge and work through it at your own pace.

Induction

The programme-specific induction is embedded into the first module, including an introduction to the Research Development Framework

Personal Tutor

You will also be allocated a Personal Tutor. Your Personal Tutor will be proactively involved in the delivery of your programme and will have contact with you throughout your time at the University. They will support your learning and development, including through tutorials, Progress Reviews and other support as outlined in the Personal Tutoring Policy

Personal Development Planning

Personal development planning (PDP) has been embedded into the programme using the VITAE Researcher Development Framework and the pillars of leadership drawing on a number of key texts and expert views throughout the programme.

Library and Academic Support (based in Information Services)

Module leaders will collaborate with Library and Academic Tutors to ensure that your reading and resource lists are current and items are available via the library discovery tool OneSearch. Our postgraduate research platform will support your access and reading.

The Skills@Cumbria service can help support your academic skills and success throughout your programme. The service is delivered by a team of professional Library and Academic Tutors. It includes a suite of online self-help resources accessible 24/7 via the University's website and Blackboard site. It also provides group and individual advice and guidance accessible through and alongside your course and by different means such as face to face, email or virtual. Visit skills@cumbria for more details.

IT and Technical Support

Technology is an invaluable asset when it comes to studying, so it's important you know how to make the most out of the excellent facilities we have available. Our aim is to ensure you can access university electronic resources from anywhere or any device, whether on or off campus. The Student Hub is your one-stop gateway to all university systems, Outlook email, and OneDrive.

Whether you consider yourself a computer expert or you're not confident about your IT skills, we're always around to ensure you get the level of support you need. We have a wealth of information and support available on the website and have a dedicated IT Service Desk where you can talk to someone by phone or log your question online from anywhere, at any time.

Student Support Services

Student Support Services offer a wide range of support, including: careers and employability, financial help, counselling, health and wellbeing and support for disabled students and those with specific learning requirements. We also offer mentoring by trained students which you can request at any point during your studies. We know that you want to get the most out of your programme, make the best use of your time and find or continue in the career you always dreamed of. Access

university support and facilities easily and quickly via the [website](#) and/or via the Student Services guidance tile on the [Student Hub](#).

In addition to the range of guidance above, you have the opportunity to further develop your personal, academic and professional skills by taking part in a number of initiatives coordinated and delivered by professional services advisers:

Mature Students' Events

Whether it is a coffee morning, lunchtime gathering or a social event, there are events happening throughout the year to link you up with other mature students who will also be juggling a number of commitments alongside their studies.

Help is at Hand Events

Keep a look out for these interactive events on campus around October and January. You are encouraged to attend these as they showcase the range of support available here and give you the opportunity to talk to people from Finance, Accommodation, the Students' Union, the Wellbeing and Disability Team etc.

Programme Curriculum Map					
Academic Level	**Module Code**	**Module Title**	**Credits**	**Module Status***	**Programme Outcomes achieved**
7	MRES7103	Research Methods for Professional Practice	40	Core	2, 4
7	MRES7104	Project Design, Development and Planning	40	Core	1, 2, 3, 4
7	MRES7105	Research Project	100	Core	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Notes
The minimum pass mark for each module is 50%. However, to progress from the MRes to the PhD or DProf or you will require 60% overall average, Merit or above, on successful completion of the MRes.

You may be awarded one of the following awards if you do not achieve the requirements of the full MRes programme:

- any 80 credits PgC (Research in Professional Practice);

On successful completion of all three modules (180 credits), you can exit with a Master of Research (MRes).

* **Key to Module Statuses**	
Core Modules	Must be taken and must be successfully passed.
Compulsory Modules	Must be taken although it may possible to condone/compensate as a marginal fail (within the limits set out in the Academic Regulations and provided that all core or pass/fail elements of module assessment have been passed).
Optional Modules	Are a set of modules from which you will be required to choose a set number to study. Once chosen, it may possible to condone/compensate as a marginal fail (within the limits set out in the Academic Regulations and provided that all core or pass/fail elements of module assessment have been passed).

Qualificatory Practice Units	These are non-credit-bearing pass/fail components that are used to satisfy relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body professional requirements that are associated with the programme. These units must be successfully completed in order to pass the award but do not affect the final degree classification. An alternate award is available if you are not successful in the QPU element of your programme.

Programme Delivery Structure: Part Time				
Module Code	**Module Title**	**Delivery Pattern** **Sept – Dec** **Jan – May** **June – Aug**	**Method(s) of Assessment**	**Approximate Assessment Deadline**
MRES7103	Research Methods for Professional Practice	September Cohort Start: Semester 1 (Autumn), Year 1	A research portfolio comprising: 1. An applied qualitative research exercise 2. An applied quantitative research exercise An applied mixed methods exercise (6000 words)	January OR June
		January Cohort Start: Semester 2 (Spring), Year 1		
MRES7104	Project Design, Development and Planning	Semester 2 (Spring), Year 1	Preparing a research proposal for a project, funding bid or PhD, including draft ethics application with relevant appendices (5000 words).	June OR September
		Semester 3 (Summer), Year 1		
Students exiting at this point with 80 credits would receive a PgC (Research in Professional Practice)				
MRES7105	Research Project	Semester 1 and 2 (Year 2)	A research project contributing knowledge to a specific field (10,000 words)	June OR September
		Semester 2 and 3 (Year 2)		

Students exiting at this point with 180 credits would receive a Master of Research (MRes)

Methods for Evaluating and Improving the Quality and Standards of Learning	
Mechanisms used for the Review and Evaluation of the Curriculum and Learning, Teaching and Assessment Methods	• Programme Validation and Periodic Review • Annual Monitoring • Peer Review of Teaching • External Examiner Reports • Student Success and Quality Assurance Committee • Research Degrees Sub-Committee
Mechanisms used for gaining and responding to feedback on the quality of teaching and the learning experience – gained from: Students, graduates, employers, placement and work-based learning providers, other stakeholders, etc.	• PgR representatives' meetings including a MRes representative • Programme Evaluation: Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) - biannual • Programme tutorials • Feedback from External Examiner

Date of Programme Specification Production:	February 2020
Date Programme Specification was last updated:	February 2025
For further information about this programme, refer to the programme page on the University website	

The following information has implications for potential international applicants who require a Student Visa to study in the UK	
Is the placement requirement more than 50% of the programme?	No