

Nottingham Trent University Course Specification

Basic Course Information		
1.	Awarding Institution:	Nottingham Trent University
2.	School/Campus:	Social Sciences, City campus
3.	Final Award, Course Title and Modes of Study:	Postgraduate Diploma in Career Guidance/Qualification in Career Guidance; Continuous Professional Development Full-time; part-time; blended learning
4.	Normal Duration:	One year – full-time Two years – part-time Not stipulated - blended learning
5.	UCAS Code:	Not applicable

6.	Overview and general educational aims of the course
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The Postgraduate Diploma in Career Guidance/Qualification in Career Guidance (PgDCG/QCG) is a dual-award which provides professional training and qualification for career guidance practitioners; preparing you to work with a range of clients in a variety of organisational settings, including education and training contexts. The course is delivered via full-time and part-time modes and meets all of the learning outcomes laid down by the professional body: the Career Development Institute (CDI). There are exits awards that offer a postgraduate certificate should you accumulate 60 credits but not achieve 120 credits. The combination of modules attained will determine whether you are awarded a Postgraduate Certificate in Career Guidance, Postgraduate Certificate in Career Education or Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Studies in Career Guidance.

In addition to full-time and part-time study there is a 'freestanding' blended learning mode of study that addresses the PgDCG/QCG learning outcomes. It is designed for continuous professional development (CPD) and, as such, applicants will need the agreement and support of their employer. It allows you to accumulate credits or attain an award of Postgraduate Certificate should you attain 60 credits, and the PgDCG/QCG should you attain 120 credits.

You will be taught by an enthusiastic and committed team of staff based mainly in the Division of Social Work and Professional Practice, and also within the Division of Sociology. The CDI has commended the course for its excellent teaching team and you will benefit from a broad spectrum of contemporary thinking and debate on careers education, information, advice, guidance and development (CEIAGD). Module leaders and lecturers have considerable expertise in the field of CEIACD; all have been practitioners in the career guidance sector before teaching in higher education.

The CDI has also commended the course for its professional links. Employers from agencies and organisations providing career guidance

services also contribute to the course's learning, via work related activities, to ensure that curriculum content remains relevant and informed by key developments and priorities within career guidance sectors.

You can be confident that the course:

1. Meets the high standards set by the CDI in terms of professional values, personal awareness, teaching and learning.
2. Provides a curriculum that covers, and individually assesses, specifically identified topics approved by the CDI.
3. Will equip you with the skills, qualities and knowledge required of a professional guidance practitioner that will allow you to meet the needs of clients in a variety of settings.

The course aims to enable you to:

1. Have a comprehensive understanding of CEIAGD and a critical awareness of current issues, debates and insights in the discipline.
2. Have the knowledge, skills, and understanding of the principles, theories, methods and ethical requirements of guidance practice.
3. Apply theory to practice in a range of professional settings.
4. Undertake research into aspects of practice and make recommendations for enhancement of service delivery.
5. Contribute original ideas in the workplace
6. Acquire the skills required for professional practice within the career guidance sector.
7. Reflect upon practice and performance, and identify CPD and development needs.

7. Course outcomes

Course outcomes describe what you should know and be able to do by the end of your course if you take advantage of the opportunities for learning that we provide.

Knowledge and understanding

By the end of the course you should be able to:

1. Demonstrate a critical appreciation and understanding of the national and international theories and approaches that underpin contemporary guidance and career guidance practice.
2. Critically appraise philosophical perspectives, ethical practice and the impact of one's own values and beliefs, and reflect upon their influences on policy, organisation and career guidance practice.
3. Acquire, synthesise and critically evaluate career information including national and international labour market information, and appraise its relevance for clients and career guidance professionals.
4. Critically evaluate policies and theories underpinning partnership working and their implications for professional practice.
5. Demonstrate critical appreciation of policy and contemporary national and international research informed perspectives that underpin career learning.

Skills, qualities and attributes

By the end of the course you should be able to:

1. Apply and critically reflect upon a range of guidance skills required for professional career guidance practice.
2. Apply ethical principles across the range of contexts within which career guidance is delivered.
3. Exercise initiative and personal accountability in the application of strategic approaches to guidance practice with clients.
4. Demonstrate expertise in the skill of professional guidance consultancy.
5. Demonstrate commitment to, and personal initiative in identifying and utilising opportunities and strategies for personal academic and career development.
6. Reflect on own and others' professional practice in order to contribute to the enhancement of service delivery.
7. Manage own employability demonstrated through enterprise activities and work-based and evidence-based practice.

8. **Teaching and Learning Methods**

The overarching principle informing the design of learning and teaching methods and approaches is that they enable you to develop knowledge and understanding, and to apply this to practice situations. A range of teaching and learning methods are used to enable you to develop the core knowledge, skills and understanding required to enhance your academic and theoretical understanding of CEIAGD, and to foster the development of the required skills for professional practice within the career guidance sector.

Methods for the full-time and part-time modes include:

- Lectures
- PowerPoint presentations
- Seminar groups for skills based elements – one-to-one and group guidance interactions - to gain/offer constructive feedback from/to peers, and from tutors
- Individual tutorials
- Keeping a reflective journal and reflective accounts
- Group activities including discussion, presentations and inquiry-based exercises, formative writing exercises
- Case study investigations from practice
- Role-play and practise activities to develop skills relating to one-to-one guidance and group interactions (both facilitative group work and presentations)
- Observation in the workplace
- Online discussions
- Visual and audio input
- Work related activities with organisations during specific periods within the timetable
- Guest speakers from different sectors of career guidance practice

Methods for the blended learning mode includes:

- Workshops to develop skills, knowledge and understanding
- Assessment workshop(s) for one-to-one guidance/career guidance interactions to enable learning by listening to other students' recorded interviews, and gaining/offering constructive feedback from/to peers and from tutors
- Individual online/telephone tutorials
- Keeping a reflective journal and reflective accounts
- Online activities including:
 - discussion Boards
 - case study investigations from practice
 - quizzes
 - formative written exercises, drawing from relevant literature in order to familiarise yourself with the work of seminal authors and practise the skill of academic writing
- To advance your learning in key areas of the curriculum there will be visual and audio input eg online PowerPoint presentations, recordings of one-to-one interactions
- Work related activities with employer eg investigation into an aspect of the career curriculum, critiquing and producing labour market information

For all learning modes there is directed, guided and independent learning methods, which are actively promoted to establish your autonomy, independence and responsibility for learning and professional development, reflecting the requirements of the CDI and the NTU Postgraduate Attributes.

9. **Assessment Methods**

The course has a variety of assessment methods to ensure that you can demonstrate you have met the course learning outcomes and the requirements of the CDI. The course team have developed an assessment strategy for your learning, which is appropriate to the demands of the course as a whole and demonstrates fitness for purpose within individual modules. The purpose of assessment is to enable you to demonstrate that you have fulfilled the learning outcomes of the course and achieved a specified standard. For the QCG element, this relates to the achievement of a consistent national standard of award.

It is an overarching assumption of the assessment strategy that all assessments contribute to, as distinct from merely validating, students' learning. To this end, the assessment methods, where possible, are varied and accommodate a variety of learning styles and preferences; from skills development, to reflection, to critical analysis and evaluation. Some assessment methods are stipulated by the CDI, which is indicated below:

- **Individual guidance interactions** with clients, which are usually either audio or video recorded in a workplace, or in the university, and assessed at the university. *The CDI stipulates that students must achieve six successful interview assessments.*
- **Facilitated group activities** carried out in a career guidance context,

and to be assessed by workplace colleagues or university staff. *The CDI stipulates that students must achieve three successful group session assessments, for which no more than one presentation can be used as evidence of group work.*

- A **reflective learning journal** in the area of career guidance interviewing. Students will gather a range of evidence, including formative and summative feedback evidence, current research and other relevant literature relating to theoretical perspectives and approaches, and evidence of professional activity in this area.
- **Case study reflections and self-reflective accounts** based on interview and group work guidance assessments.
The above two assessments fulfil the CDI requirements, which stipulate that documentation for the six interviews and three group sessions, should include written evaluation by the student on his/her own performance and the assessor's judgements and feedback.
- **Investigative reports** evaluating and critiquing aspects of professional practice that explores the key module concepts of: equality and diversity, ethical and reflective practice; career related curricula; and partnership working.
- A **research project** relating to labour market information. The CDI stipulates that students are *required to organise, undertake and report on a visit that demonstrates the ability to understand and interpret LMI.*
- A **portfolio of evidence** - *as stipulated by the CDI* - used as a basis for professional discussion. It is a capstone assessment whereby other assessments will form part of the evidence that is assessed against the learning outcomes as set out by the professional body. Students are required to reflect on personal learning in relation to directly and indirectly assessed learning outcomes, which supports the integration and consolidation of learning. The portfolio can be used to gain exemptions/provide evidence that is used when students begin post qualification studies or apply for posts within the sector.

10. **Course structure and curriculum**

Throughout the course you will be encouraged to enhance and contextualise your learning via the teaching and learning methods, assessment methods and by participating in work related activities. Work related activities are an integral part of the curriculum content and can be undertaken in a range of guidance settings, although most opportunities are within statutory, further and higher education institutions.

For the full-time and part-time modes, activities can include a block placement or placements with providers. In addition it can include inquiry-based tasks in partnership with organisations/employers, and skills-based tasks within the University and with external partners. Such project based activities will require you to negotiate the requirements of the task with employers/providers and to work collaboratively from the start to the completion of the project, thus reflecting the skills required of a career guidance practitioner in practice. If you are employed in a relevant role while undertaking the course you can opt to undertake the work related

activities with your employer.

For the blended learning mode it is anticipated that you will be employed in a relevant role and, as such, you will undertake work related activities with your employer. There will need to be a learning agreement in place between the employer and the University. This will outline requirements relating to access to situations and/or resources required for learning and assessment. If some situations are unable to be accessed the student will need to make alternative arrangements. You will be supported by the course team in clarifying the types of activities that will be required.

The course comprises six, twenty credit modules:

1. **One-to-One Guidance Interactions and Allied Theoretical Concepts (Part 1)**

The module aims to enable you to develop essential skills when working with individuals' in a one-to-one guidance situations, which are also appropriate for coaching, mentoring and advisory work. The module will provide opportunity for you to critically appraise a range of national and international theoretical perspectives and approaches that underpin contemporary guidance practice.

2. **Ethics, Values and Reflective Practice in a Guidance Context**

This module aims to provide you with the opportunity to critically appraise and reflect upon the fundamental theoretical and ethical principles underpinning professional practice in a guidance context. The learning from the module will enable you to become a reflective guidance practitioner and apply understanding of the key concepts to your own professional practice.

3. **Labour Market Information**

This module aims to enable you to identify, analyse and evaluate the key characteristics of contemporary labour markets at regional, national, international, and global levels. The structure of labour markets will be examined and key themes to be addressed are as follows: the ideological basis of the labour market policies of successive UK governments; the recurrent inequalities to be found in labour markets.

4. **One-to-One Career Guidance Interactions and Allied Theoretical Concepts (Part 2)**

This module aims to develop critical analytical and reflective skills that will enable you to plan, execute and critique one-to-one career guidance interactions, based on an informed ethical stance. The module will provide you with the opportunity to critically appraise a range of national and international theoretical perspectives and approaches that underpin and inform your understanding of both career and of contemporary career guidance practice.

5. **Working in Partnership and Evidence Based Practice**

This module aims to provide a framework to enable you to reflect on your learning and professional development within the course as a whole. A portfolio of evidence will be used as a basis for professional discussion, that will be assessed in order to demonstrate that you have met the learning outcomes required for the Qualification in Careers Guidance professional award. The module will also critically examine how organisations and individuals work in partnership in the context of CEIAGD.

6. **Career Related Learning**

This module aims to develop your critical thinking and analytical skills to enable you to facilitate career related group activities with clients across a range of guidance settings. You will learn to plan, design and deliver learning appropriate to small and large group settings, as well as broader curriculum design. You will develop a critical understanding of contemporary CEIAGD policy and curriculum initiatives, and evaluate their impact upon service delivery and peoples' career enactment.

You must have successfully completed Module 1 (One-to-One Guidance Interactions and Allied Theoretical Concepts - Part 1) before progressing on to Module 4 (One-to-One Career Guidance Interactions and Allied Theoretical Concepts - Part 2) since Part 2 builds upon, and complements, Part 1.

The PgDCG/QCG is delivered as a one year full-time course (with two day's attendance at University per week) and a two year part-time course (with one day's attendance at University per week) commencing at the start of the academic year (September). Within this model, part-time students study alongside the full-time cohort, studying modules 1-3 in the first year and 4-6 in the second year. The modules are timetabled in blocks of subject specific content that is usually delivered in three hour time frames or block days, allowing for learning to be contextualised – a key theme of the course.

The blended learning mode has two entry points within the year; September and January. The course consists of workshops at appropriate points in the learning process – usually at the start of the module but for skills-based elements this is more interspersed – and online learning. The workshop element is timetabled as block days and 'sits' within the full and part-time timetable. This will facilitate interaction with students on other modes of delivery, thus enhancing the learning experience. Modules are optional and you can study stand-alone modules accumulating credits, or you can work towards postgraduate certificate, postgraduate diploma and/or QCG awards (within the PgDCG/QCG course). Module 1 is a pre-requisite for Module 4 and, and such, will need to be completed successfully before progressing on to Module 4. Due to the portfolio being embedded in Module 5, which is a capstone assessment, this will need to be the last module studied as part of the blending learning mode of study.

11. **Admission to the course**

For current information regarding entry requirements, please see the 'Applying' tab on the course information web page.

12. Support for Learning

All students, irrespective of mode of study, will be offered an induction at the start of the course. The induction is tailored to meet the needs of students on the various study modes and attendance is required accordingly. If you are studying on the blended learning mode and are unable to get time to attend induction, all induction information will be made available to you online. You will also be given the opportunity to meet with the Course Leader to go through induction materials or to discuss this over the phone.

As part of induction, you will have an opportunity to meet the teaching team and Subject Administrator. You are informed about course details (for example course structure, assessment etc) and the NOW e-learning portal, and other resources you have access to as a student of the University. Representatives from a number of University departments deliver introductory sessions as part of induction: Students Support Services; Learning Support; Library Services; and the Widening Participation Team (regarding volunteering guidance/mentoring opportunities).

The course team are sensitive to the learning needs of all students and if you have particular learning needs you are encouraged to seek tutorial support with the Course Leader or relevant Module Leaders. Academic staff can also refer you to Student Support Services for additional learning and personal support.

For those studying on the blended learning route you will have access to tutors via online methods, telephone and direct contact time during days that you attend workshops. You can also request face-to-face tutorials outside of direct contact time, and will have access to Student Support Services.

There is a student mentoring scheme, which is open to all students and is voluntary for those who wish to mentor and those who wish to be mentored. It offers academic support. Alumni from the course and Year 2 part-time students mentor newly recruited students. Mentor and mentee are 'matched' by the Course Leader based on preferences, and specified needs and areas of expertise.

13. Graduate destinations / employability

The course equips students for employment within the career and employability sector. As such, employability is a core theme throughout the course. The theoretical perspectives and concepts relating to career development, occupational choice, career planning and transition are key elements within the course. You are not only required to apply these perspectives to guidance practice but also apply them to yourself in order to manage your own employability.

The course team comprises staff that have considerable experience in employability and career development as practitioners as well as educators,

including the current School Employability Coordinator. Their insights contribute to the development of the design and content of the course.

The course team has strong links with the Career Development Centre at NTU and the Careers Consultant linked to the School of Social Sciences. You will have access to this resource in relation to your own transition into employment. Both the Careers Consultant and Employability Co-ordinator, via the Course Leader, alert students to opportunities and events relevant to the career guidance profession.

The course team has strong links with employers. Employers from various parts of the guidance sector are invited to deliver presentations on aspects of the curriculum, and on recruitment and selection, which are timetabled within the full-time and part-time curriculum. Work related activities, in the form of placements and collaborative projects enhance the curriculum in offering you opportunities to apply your learning to practice and develop insights of the sector. It affords you opportunities to network and can be a way of demonstrating your capabilities and competencies to prospective employers.

Guest speaker PowerPoint presentations are made available to those studying on the blended learning mode. Invitation to attend sessions is open to you although attendance is dependent upon your availability and circumstances. Work related activities will be undertaken with your employer in line with assessment requirements, allowing you to apply your learning.

Student destinations from the course are excellent. Consistently, with each consecutive year, students gain employment in a range of roles within the career guidance and employability sector. Graduates gain professional career guidance and employability posts, primarily within statutory, further and higher education in a variety of roles, such as, Career Development Adviser (with a research focus); Career and Higher Education Adviser; Careers/IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance) Adviser; Career Management Consultant; European Partnerships Assistant; International Recruitment Officer; IAG/Careers Co-ordinator; Career Coach; and Diagnostic Officer. Destinations also include career education, guidance and employability roles in the Probation Service and adult services; Careers Advisers within the health sector; self-employed Careers and Employability Consultants; and Support and Welfare Advisers within a range of voluntary and community organisations. The destinations of previous cohorts indicate the role the design of curriculum plays in preparing graduates from the course for (re)entering the labour market.

14. Course standards and quality

The course uses the existing quality management systems to keep all aspects of the course under review and ensure that it complies with the University's quality standards policy and procedures, and developing policies within the School of Social Sciences. The External Examiner report ensures that the course continues to successfully comply with a range of academic standards. The External Examiner's report is considered at the course's annual review and feedback from

the report informs the course team's rolling action plan for the next academic year. The External Examiner's report is made available to you in the course Learning Room on NOW.

You, as students, play a key part in evaluating the course, your studies and the quality of your learning experience. You are represented at the course committee, which meets once a term to discuss a range of course issues. Student representatives have an opportunity to feedback to the course team and are encouraged to report the views of the whole student group. Supporting student representatives and encouraging their contribution is an integral part of the on-going development of the course. It is the responsibility of the course committee, led by the Course Leader, to ensure that the student 'voice' has opportunity to be heard and is responded to. Course Representatives are actively encouraged to contact all students, including those studying on the blended learning route, to ensure your views are recorded at course committee.

Module Leaders undertake module evaluation and share the findings and their responses with you. This is undertaken during lectures for those studying on the full-time and part-time modes, and online for those of you studying on the blended learning mode. Additionally, the Course Leader meets with each full-time and part-time cohort at least twice a year to provide you with an opportunity to discuss the course as a whole. For those studying on the blended learning mode there is opportunity to meet with the Course Leader, or to request an online/telephone tutorial should you wish to discuss the course. There is also a course evaluation at the end of the academic year and is in addition to the opportunities afforded at course committee. The course evaluation is undertaken during a timetabled session for those of you studying on the full-time and part-time modes. For those of you studying on the blended learning mode you will be requested to complete this online if you have studied all six modules. For students studying on all modes of study there will be opportunities for module level evaluation.

Your involvement is not tokenistic – it is an important part of the course's philosophy that aims to get to know you well and helps to ensure that you feel valued and involved. The commitment to eliciting and encouraging feedback will enable the course team to not only evaluate the teaching and the course as a whole, but it will be a crucial source of ideas to shape and continue to evolve the course so that it continues to meet your needs and the needs of future students, and provide you with a positive and constructive learning experience.

15. **Assessment regulations**

This course is subject to the University's Common Assessment Regulations (located in its [Academic Standards and Quality Handbook](#)). Any course specific assessment features are described below:

The QCG is awarded by the CDI and, as such, the course needs to address the learning outcomes and fulfil the assessment requirements set out by both the University and the CDI. Assessment requirements of the professional body are set out in section 9. The CDI stipulate that there is no compensation between modules and no compensation available for skills-

based assessments.

In line with University policy, the course will follow the NTU Grading Scheme for Postgraduate Courses from 2013-14.

16.

Additional Information

Collaborative partner(s):

Course referenced to national QAA

Benchmark Statements:

There are no QAA benchmark statements specifically addressing career guidance at Masters Level (for practice in England), however, benchmark statements for Counselling and Psychotherapy (2012) and Education Studies (2007) have been consulted. While the latter is set at degree level, it did offer a benchmark in terms of progression from Level 6. The course team have taken care to ensure that the course outcomes are appropriate to Masters Level and the award of the PgDCG, and that they also address the learning outcomes outlined by the CDI for the QCG.

Course recognised by:

Career Development Institute

Date implemented:

Any additional information: