

Course Specification

Course Summary Information		
1	Course Title	Doctorate in Health Practice Post-nominal: DHealth
2	Course Code	PR0185
3	Awarding Institution	Birmingham City University
4	Teaching Institution(s) (if different from point 3)	
5	Professional Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) accreditation (if applicable)	Not applicable

6	Course Description
	<p>The Professional Doctorate in Health Practice (DHealth) is a part-time multiprofessional programme leading to a doctoral award. It will enable you to advance your skills, knowledge and practice through research engagement. You will be an experienced practitioner seeking to develop your research capacity, transform practice and make a direct contribution to knowledge in your professional environment.</p> <p>You will benefit from being able to work within, and study alongside, a multidisciplinary team of experienced researchers and health professionals. The course draws on the considerable expertise and reputation in health professions development, education and practice- focused research in our Faculty of Health, Education and Life Sciences. The course is suitable for practitioners (including educators) from diverse backgrounds including, but not limited to, nursing, midwifery, public health, radiography, speech and language therapy and other allied health professions.</p> <p>If you have a health practitioner background and your main role is now in professional learning (e.g. in the university), it is not a requirement that you are also currently working in health /clinical practice outside the university. Through the admissions process, and the initial module learning, you will identify your 'area of practice' and the professional environment /context that you can focus upon for your research.</p> <p>Not sure which BCU Health or Education doctoral degree to go for? This decision tool can help you think about whether a professional doctorate (DHealth or EdD) or traditional PhD (in Health or Education) would be most appropriate for you.</p> <p>Overview of the course</p> <p>There is a period of structured and supportive learning activity and assessment in the first two years ('Module stage'), followed by the conduct of an independent doctoral inquiry and the production of a research thesis in the 'Thesis stage' (third year and beyond).</p> <p>Course delivery in the Module stage is designed to meet the learning needs of practitioners through a blended learning approach: study blocks (typically 2-3 days up to twice a year), supported by online learning activities and resources. The DHealth modules support the development of knowledge and skills for doctoral level professional practice, including critical thinking, and synthesis of knowledge and practice. You will explore contexts for health practice:</p>

policy, professional identities; research methods and methodology; evidence appraisal & literature review; knowledge mobilisation and co-creation. You will also have the opportunity to conduct a pilot study on an element of your research topic. Through your work in the modules and with the support of a Personal Tutor, you will generate and refine a plan for your research thesis.

In the Thesis stage (year 3 onwards), you will have a team of doctoral supervisors, at least one of whom will have expertise in your field of practice. They will support you to carry out a piece of original, independent research that can will generate new knowledge for practice, and to produce a thesis.

Key features

- Benefit from being part of a wider doctoral and researcher community in our Faculty, with a strong focus on practice-relevant research and knowledge implementation;
- Carry out significant independent research whilst remaining in your practice area;
- Expand your critical understanding of policy and practice in a multi-professional learning community;
- Advance your appreciation of research techniques and methodologies with a focus on relevance for investigating your own area of practice;
- Generate new knowledge, or make novel applications of knowledge for your specialist field of study that can have a positive impact on your professional practice and workplace;
- Develop confidence in presenting and defending your research within your area of practice.

Structure and duration

This is a flexible programme. You will typically study over five years, but may complete within four, or take up to a maximum of seven years (if required).

Year 1

- Critical Perspectives 1: Context, Policy & Health Practice
- Critical Perspectives 2: Knowledge to Care

Year 2

- Research Practice
- Pilot Inquiry (Health)

Years 3-5

- Thesis (50000 words)

Time commitment

We recognise that many of our students are in demanding full-time roles; the Professional Doctorate in Health Practice is designed to be flexible and supportive in order to accommodate these demands. However, you will need to be able to commit at least 17 hours per week (on average) to your studies throughout the duration of the programme, either through study leave or by working during evenings, weekends and holidays.

7	Course Awards		
7a	Name of Final Award	Level	Credits Awarded
	Doctorate in Health Practice - Post-nominal: DHealth	8	<i>Not applicable</i>
	PgCert Research Practice	7	60
7b	Exit Awards and Credits Awarded		

8	Derogation from the University Regulations
	<i>PG Cert Research Practice –approved derogation (pass both elements of assessment)</i>

9	Delivery Patterns			
	Mode(s) of Study	Location(s) of Study	Duration of Study	Code(s)
	Part Time Blended learning	City South	4-7 years (as per BCU Research Degree Regulations on duration of doctoral degrees)	PR0185

10	Entry Requirements	
	Home:	Bachelors degree –second class or higher. Normally, a Master’s degree or evidence of achievement at postgraduate level in a relevant area. Candidates must have a practice-based role within a health, clinical or health professional education setting. Candidates should normally have at least 1 years’ experience within their practice field.
	EU:	IELTS 7 (with no less than 6.5 in each component)
	International:	IELTS 7 (with no less than 6.5 in each component)

11	Course Aims	
	<p>The Professional Doctorate in Health Practice (DHealth) aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable students to develop as high-level practitioners who have a direct impact on practice, policy and innovation in their field of health practice. • Offer a deep and broad command of research methods and methodologies appropriate for generation and implementation of new knowledge for health practice; • Support students to engage in advanced scholarship to evaluate theory and evidence of relevance to professional practice in health; • Promote and support self-directed study towards completion of a significant independent research project that will generate original knowledge; • Develop students’ capacity and competencies in disseminating research to specialist /scholarly and non-specialist audiences to generate impact. 	

12 Course Learning Outcomes	
Knowledge & understanding	
1	Critically and creatively engage with a substantial body of practice based, methodological and /or theoretical knowledge.
2	Explore the relationship between knowledge, theory and practice to develop novel insights on the potential for making and influencing change in an area of health practice.
3	Generate and/or implement new knowledge through original practice-based research and advanced scholarship.
4	Critically reflect upon practice as a researcher and practitioner with reference to applicable techniques for carrying out research and academic inquiry at an advanced level.
Skills & other attributes	
5	Systematically search for, manage, evaluate and interpret an ever-increasing volume of evidence in a specialist area.
6	Conceptualise, design and implement an independent project for the generation and/or implementation of new practice-based knowledge.
7	Present knowledge that is at the forefront of the area of professional practice or discipline, of a quality that is worthy of publication for the wider scholarly community.
8	Communicate academic principles, concepts, research problems and outcomes effectively to professional colleagues and the wider public to impact on practice and /or policy.
9	Develop informed judgement on and formulate innovative solutions for complex problems in a specialist field.
10	Exercise professional standards in research and research integrity, with consideration for ethical, legal, and health and safety aspects.

13 Level Learning Outcomes	
	<p>Not differentiated. Apart from PgCert Research Practice /module RES7003 which is incorporated into the module stage of this course, all learning is at Level 8.</p> <p>PgCert Research Practice is a separate, previously validated award with its own approved learning outcomes (see PgCert programme specification)</p>

14 Course Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy	
	<p><i>This section explains the learning and teaching approaches, activities and experiences that your course will offer; the range of assessments and types of feedback and feed forward you will encounter, and explain how these will support your continuous learning throughout the course, and explain the expectations we have of you in this learning partnership.</i></p> <p>Teaching, learning and support</p> <p>In the Module stage (years 1 & 2) you will learn in a blended way: some blocks of teaching (typically 2-3 days at the start of a module) supported with learning activities (both scheduled and directed) in the virtual learning environment. Teaching in blocks will take various forms: short lectures, seminar discussions and workshops. Further learning activities will include guided reading, video lectures, discussion forums, journals/ blogging; and scheduled activities such as tutorials, action learning groups, writing sets and content sharing /peer review.</p> <p>The course has a strong ethos of interdisciplinary /multi-professional learning and reflection, and you will be asked to explore and share applications of the material to your own professional</p>

practice as part of the learning experience. This will support you to critically reflect, to robustly contextualise your practice experience/ assumptions and to formulate directions for further investigation. Peer learning is also an important thread, through the use of action learning and writing sets.

During the Module stage you will have a designated personal tutor who is familiar with your area of practice. You will meet your tutor regularly through the year to discuss your learning strategies and approaches; progress with assessments; and any challenges. Normally your personal tutor will also be appointed as one of your supervisors at the Thesis stage, to provide continuity of experience.

At the start of the Thesis stage (year 3 onwards), a supervision team will be formally appointed to support you through this independent research stage all the way to completion. A supervision team consists of two (sometimes three) academic staff acting as doctoral supervisors. The team will be appointed with consideration to their subject /methodological expertise and experience of doctoral supervision. At least one supervisor will normally be familiar with your specific field of practice. Supervisors provide assistance, advice and feedback on the processes of doctoral level research, analysis and writing. You should expect to meet your supervisors (virtually or face to face) regularly throughout the Thesis stage of the doctorate – typically, once per month.

The supervisory team plays an important role on the programme in providing you with:

- Guidance on the nature and methodology of applied research
- Opportunity to meet on a regular basis at appropriate times
- Supervision support combined with formative assessment of research and reflective work
- Assistance in identifying your own learning needs
- Constructive criticism of your work within a reasonable time
- Support in preparing for the progress reviews in the thesis stage; and for thesis submission;
- Feedback if your work is below the acceptable standard for the award and an explanation of the steps needed to remedy your unsatisfactory progress

Throughout the course (Module + Thesis stages) you are strongly encouraged to engage with doctoral researcher development activities offered by HELS Doc Skills Hub and the wider Doctoral Research College. These are offered to the whole doctoral researcher community and include methodology workshops; research skills 'pop-up' sessions; academic writing support, seminars for presenting your work and scholarship sessions on issues such as constructing a thesis; preparing for viva; writing for publication and career development. You will also be part of the wider research community in the Faculty –led by our Health research centre, [C-SCHaRR](#). We recommend you join at least one of the centre's [clusters](#), which provide a forum for discussing, progressing and presenting research through meetings and events.

The University hosts an annual research conference that incorporates the work of our doctoral researchers, at which you will be encouraged to present your work. These ongoing activities support your learning and development as a researcher and provide you with a scholarly network, as well as providing a continued sense of belonging to a community, which is particularly important for independent doctoral researchers. You will also be supported to identify and participate in external research /professional networks in your discipline area, including presenting at conferences.

Your learning is supported by BCU Library and Learning Resources and specialist librarians. The majority of reading for the Module stage is accessible online. The Library provides digital access to a wealth of evidence, including via scholarly databases.

Assessment strategy

During the Module phase, assessment takes place through coursework and 'in-person' assessment (such as poster; viva). Examples of coursework include essay, research proposal and research report. In some cases you will be able to select your assessment type from a palette ranging from multimedia formats to an article for publication. The assessment strategy as a whole supports core components of doctoral researcher development, including advanced level academic writing, communication to non-specialist audiences, and research planning. Assessment formats are authentic to the development of both your research skills, and the independent doctoral research project itself.

All the modules offer opportunity for formative feedback from tutors and/or peers while you work towards summative assessment, including through individual or group tutorials.

You will receive detailed written feedback /feedforward on all of your summative assessments to aid the further development of your academic skills, research focus and project plans. In this way, assessment through the Module stage will serve as groundwork for your doctoral research in the Thesis stage.

During the Thesis stage, your work with supervisors provides regular formative assessment opportunities through review and discussion of your plans, thesis writing and thinking. You should work with your supervisory team to agree expectations around submission and review of your work (frequency, timeframes), and the type of feedback required. These expectations and requirements may change as you move through different phases of research and thesis writing. Doctoral research is inherently individualistic and you should be willing to take responsibility for the experience and make independent judgements about the direction of your work. However, the ethos of the programme strongly emphasises the role of interaction through regular supervision in order to ensure the development and progress of your work.

In the Thesis stage, there are formal review points /milestones where your progress will be assessed:

- You will present your work to a Progression Assessment Panel formed of experienced researchers outside of your supervision team to ensure the work you are engaged in has doctoral scope (normally during year 3);
- Annual /interim reviews to monitor your progress towards completion.
- Additional reviews as required e.g. 'risk' monitoring and final stage review.

Your progression through these milestones is reviewed and confirmed by Faculty Research Degrees and Environment Committee.

In the final stages of completing your doctorate, you will be offered two formative review opportunities involving academics from outside your supervision team. When you have a final draft prior to submission, you are offered a Critical Reader who will provide independent comments on your whole thesis to support final editing and preparation for examination. Once you have submitted your thesis for examination, you will be offered a Mock Viva. This is an opportunity to practice presenting and defending your thesis..

The final examination involves preliminary assessment of the written thesis by the examining team, followed by defence of the thesis in an oral (*viva voce*) examination. This will be conducted in adherence with BCU's Research Degree Regulations.

As a Doctorate in an area of Professional Practice, your degree is governed by BCU's Research

Degree Regulations. In the Module stage we adhere to principles set out in BCU's Academic Regulations (which govern taught courses) in relation to assessment cycles and attempts.

Some aspects of your course, such as schedules and reading lists may change every year. Other aspects, such as changes to the title of the course, its learning outcomes and assessment strategy, require formal approval by the University before they can be altered. If any major changes to your course are proposed while you are studying, you will be consulted and given an opportunity to comment. If any changes are formally agreed, you will be informed.

15 Course Requirements

15a Level 7:

In order to complete this course a student must successfully complete all the following CORE modules (totalling 60 credits):

Module Code	Module Name	Credit Value
RES7003	Research Practice	60

Completion of this module leads to award: PgCert Research Practice. The PGCert (incorporating RES7003) is a separately validated award of BCU.

Level 8:

In order to complete this course a student must successfully complete all the following CORE modules (not credit bearing as Level 8 /research modules):

Module Code	Module Name	Credit Value
RES8004	Critical Perspectives 1: Context, Policy & Health Practice	--
RES8005	Critical Perspectives 2: Knowledge to Care	--
RES8006	Pilot Inquiry (Health)	--

In order to complete this course a student must also successfully complete:

	Research thesis (50000 words)	--
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15b Structure Diagram

The course is offered on a part-time basis only:

Module stage	Year 1		
	SEMESTER ONE Core Critical Perspectives 1: Context, Policy & Health Practice (Level 8)	SEMESTER TWO Core Critical Perspectives 2: Knowledge to Care (Level 8)	SEMESTER THREE CP2 assessment; private study
Module stage	Year 2		
	SEMESTER ONE Core RES7003 Research Practice (60 credits Level 7)* <small>*successful completion leads to award: PgCert Research Practice</small>	SEMESTER TWO	SEMESTER THREE Core Pilot Inquiry (Health) (Level 8)* <small>*Continues to end Semester 1 year 3</small>
Thesis stage	Years 3-5		
	Y3 Semester 1: Finish Pilot Inquiry (assessment)	Research Thesis (50000 words)	

16 Overall Student Workload and Balance of Assessment

Overall student *workload* consists of class contact hours, independent learning and assessment activity, with each credit taken equating to a total study time of around 10 hours. While actual contact hours may depend on the optional modules selected, the following information gives an indication of how much time students will need to allocate to different activities at each level of the course.

- *Scheduled Learning* includes lectures, practical classes and workshops, contact time specified in timetable
- *Directed Learning* includes placements, work-based learning, external visits, on-line activity, Graduate+, peer learning
- *Private Study* includes preparation for exams

The *balance of assessment* by mode of assessment (e.g. coursework, exam and in-person) depends to some extent on the optional modules chosen by students. The approximate percentage of the course assessed by coursework, exam and in-person is shown below.

Year 1 (module stage, L7 & L8)

Workload

10% time spent in timetabled teaching and learning activity*

*Scheduled hours in year 1 include those allocated on PgCert Research Practice (PT1229) course specification. This is an already existing approved course which is a required component of all doctoral degrees of the University.

Activity	Number of Hours
Scheduled Learning	38 'class' activities 30 researcher development provision /research events
Directed Learning	22

Private Study	810
Total Hours	900

Balance of Assessment

Assessment Mode	Percentage
Coursework	100%
Exam	
In-Person	

Year 2 (module stage, L8)
Workload

7% time spent in timetabled teaching and learning activity

Activity	Number of Hours
Scheduled Learning	42
Directed Learning	24
Private Study	834
Total Hours	900

Balance of Assessment

Assessment Mode	Percentage
Coursework	50%
Exam	
In-Person	50%

Years 3+ (Thesis stage L8)
Workload

100% private study (independent research & thesis development, supported by supervision)

Assessment

Assessment Mode	Percentage
In-Person (viva voce examination of the thesis)	100%