

**PROGRAMME HANDBOOK
MA / MSC IN LEARNING WITH TECHNOLOGY
JUNE 2008 (REVISED)**

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1. Introduction and welcome

Welcome to the Masters in Learning with Technology – an exciting new development by the Institute for Educational Cybernetics at the University of Bolton.

This Masters degree is designed for professionals in a wide range of work contexts, has a high degree of flexibility, and can be tailored to the lifestyle of a working professional.

The course will appeal to anyone who is interested in the theme of learning with technology including e-learning, and how they can solve issues and challenges relevant to their work-role while developing a substantial body of knowledge. Learners on this course are titled 'student researchers' which reflects the freedoms and responsibilities which are essential to learning in this way. Likewise, tutors are titled 'learning facilitators' which reflects their role as advisers, negotiators and ultimately assessors.

A key aspect of this course is the access to international experts through an online 'hotseat' where you can quiz the experts on their field of expertise about how it relates to your work and studies.

Student researchers, learning facilitators and experts join a private online community of inquiry in which all are expected to take part to help each other with moral support, critical friendship, experience and know-how and, above all, inquiring dialogue around the key concepts and practices addressed by the course.

Because this course is fully online, you can take part at the time that suits your life and fit your learning around employment, child-care and other commitments. It is ideally suited to those who wish to study towards a relevant qualification, but without taking time out of their career.

The inquiry-based nature of studies, where student researchers themselves identify real work issues and opportunities and agree inquiry activities with their learning facilitator, makes this a highly personalised model for student researchers that also has immediate and tangible benefits for the employer.

The course offers an exciting opportunity for you to develop your professional capabilities – the time you spend at work on real issues contributes to the requirements of the course and you will become an effective evidence-based 'improver' in your professional practice.

This handbook contains all you need to know about the programme structure and management, academic regulations, teaching, learning and assessment strategies, module content and student researcher support and guidance.

As a student researcher it is your responsibility to read the programme handbook and become familiar with the university rules and regulations.

Director of the Institute for Educational Cybernetics, Professor Oleg Liber.

2. The Course Team

The following staff have particular responsibilities for the management, facilitation and support of the course, including acting as experts in their field. They are drawn from the University of Bolton's Institute for Educational Cybernetics which is a leading research and development centre, responsible for the JISC-CETIS service as well as many other projects related to learning with technology.

- Stephen Powell, Reader in Inquiry-based Learning (programme leader phone: 0785 4864124 email: s.j.powell@bolton.ac.uk)
- Richard Millwood, Reader in Distributed Learning
- Mark Johnson, Reader in Applied Research in Education Technology and Systems
- Sarah Holyfield, eLearning Focus Editor
- Dr. Christina Smart, eLearning Focus Journalist

Others in the IEC

- Dai Griffiths, Reader in eLearning
- Professor Oleg Liber, Director Institute for Educational Cybernetics

Contacts details for the above staff can be obtained from 'Staff Search' linked from the University website – <http://www.bolton.ac.uk> or for further biographical details – <http://www.bolton.ac.uk/IEC/People.aspx>

3. Opening Hours of Relevant Offices

The Departmental Office is room E4-036, located on the top floor of the Design Studio on the Deane Campus of the University of Bolton. It is advised that you visit by prior arrangement as the people you wish to see may not be available or located at this university site.

The *Student Centre* at The University of Bolton provides an integrated support service for all students. The opening hours are stated on the website. Contact details are:

Tel. +44 (0)1204 903733

E-mail: studentadvisers@bolton.ac.uk

Web: <http://www.bolton.ac.uk/Students/>

The opening hours of the library can be found via the website at

<http://www.bolton.ac.uk/Students/StudyResources/Library/Home.aspx>

4. Policies and Procedures

The course is based within the University of Bolton and subject to its policies, procedures and regulations.

These are the basis for carrying out the formal steps in your degree and can be found at <http://www.bolton.ac.uk/Students/PoliciesProceduresRegulations/Home.aspx>

5. Communication

It is your responsibility to ensure that they have access to a computer that is suitably connected to the Internet with the facility to download, store, and upload files. You will need to have some proficiency in ICT to ensure that they can successfully manage the course expectations.

Channel	Purpose
Programme website	Information giving about module requirements, deadlines, events, etc.
University of Bolton Website	Information giving about rules and regulations, student support, contact details, and access to library resources.
Community software	Academic and moral support, module discussions, access to expert guests, collaboration between community members.
Email	Individual communications around matters that cannot be resolved in the online community

The preferred context for communication between all parties is within the private online community. The value of sharing questions, however mundane, in the online community cannot be over-estimated. The team of Learning facilitators and course administrators will monitor the online community and intervene when necessary. Only if a matter is personal should direct contact be made and in such cases expect private email response within 48 hours on working days (Monday - Friday excluding bank holidays) throughout semester times, with allowance made for holidays and part time workers.

Programme leader Stephen Powell phone: 0785 4864124 email: s.j.powell@bolton.ac.uk

5.1 Online Community of Inquiry Code of Practice

An online community of inquiry forms a major part of the environment for learning on this course and you will be expected to use it extensively. The online community of student researchers and learning facilitators will often be a faster route to resolve queries and student researchers are expected to support each other through this context.

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This code of practice informs expectations, responsibilities and rights when participating. It is easy to mistake a brief expression for rudeness, but this is rarely intended.

ABOVE ALL, ASSUME GOOD INTENT!

1. The primary purpose for all members of the online community of inquiry is to carry out learning activities, share knowledge and information with fellow student researchers and give & receive personal support as you study;
2. Through the online community of inquiry, the course provides an opportunity for student researchers, learning facilitators, and 'expert witnesses' to engage in open dialogue and discussion in a climate that supports learning and collaboration;
3. The community operates on trust, so we ask that members apply the courtesies they would normally observe in any spoken conversation;
4. Please be polite and respectful, address your comments to the idea rather than the person;
5. Avoid dominating discussions;
6. Challenge each other in a constructive way;
7. Value others contributions and uphold a culture of mutual respect;
8. Seek to support other researchers and encourage a social aspect to the communities;
9. Take responsibility for your own learning - ask for help;
10. Log on regularly;
11. Respect the non-contact time of learning facilitators;
12. Assume responsibility for your learning;
13. Expect private email response within 48 hours on working days (Monday - Friday excluding bank holidays) throughout semester times, with allowance made for holidays and part time workers;
14. Expect community responses within 48 hours on working days (Monday - Friday excluding bank holidays).

Operational information and timetable details and changes are posted in the online community of inquiry.

Emergency contact details for student researchers and their e-mail addresses are available from registry, but normally all communications will take place in the online community.

6. Pastoral Support and Guidance

The programme leader is available as the first point of contact for pastoral matters, although you may choose to go directly to Student Services who are trained counsellors are available to offer appropriate help and guidance.

In addition, information about University of Bolton student support services can be found at <http://www.bolton.ac.uk/Students/AdviceAndSupport/Home.aspx> This includes support on: Accommodation; Careers; Chaplaincy; Counselling; Disability, Enrolment and Student Finance.

Normally if a student researcher has a personal or medical problem that is likely to affect their studies they would be encouraged to initially notify their personal learning facilitator. Depending on the nature of the problem this may also involve the module and/or Programme Leader.

If you need support and guidance from the departmental administration staff you would normally email idibl-support@bolton.ac.uk about personal issues or look for support in the online community for shared issues.

If necessary, you can visit the Departmental Office by prior arrangement: room E4-036, located on the top floor of the Design Studio on the Deane Campus of the University of Bolton.

7. Academic support and guidance

The first point of contact on specific module requirements is the module leader. For general academic and pastoral matters, the first point of contact is the personal learning facilitator assigned to each student. If issues still cannot be resolved then you should contact the programme leader.

Modules on this course are designed to structure learning, and in order to benefit from the online community are carried out in a predefined sequence in tandem with the cohort of student researchers who enrolled together. The focus for each module is identified by the student researcher in relation to their work circumstances and a learning contract is proposed and negotiated with the learning facilitator to ensure that the learning outcomes of each module can be achieved.

You take responsibility for your learning and are expected to look for guidance from peers as well as learning facilitators. Likewise, student researchers will be expected to offer support and guidance to their peers. Learning material will be sought by the student researcher from their professional practice, from the Internet and from the university library. Throughout the course, learning to learn and effective communication skills will be developed through an emphasis on reflective practice.

8. Assessment procedures

The programme comes under the scope of The University of Bolton's postgraduate modular framework, the regulations for which are defined in the document Assessment Regulations for the Postgraduate Modular Framework, published by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Unit from: <http://data.bolton.ac.uk/aqas//AssDocuments.htm>

To help students, the main points are briefly outlined below although in any disputes the Assessment regulations indicated above will be used to inform any decisions.

8.1 Submission of assessed work

The assignments you complete demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes for each module.

Assignment work from student researchers is collected and recorded online and it is the responsibility of student researchers to upload this to their assessment e-portfolio in good time to allow recovery for errors and issues arising. Although students are encouraged to use a wide range of appropriate technology and, it is their responsibility to agree with learning facilitators how this will be achieved so that the work can be submitted to deadlines and secured for external examiners.

All coursework, which is submitted for assessment, will be subject to deadlines. These will be communicated to you at the start of the academic along with start and finish dates for all modules being delivered. If work is submitted after the published deadline, one of two penalties will apply, as follows:

Up to two weeks late: the assignment will be marked as normal and the tutor's comments and feedback will be relayed back to the student, but 10 points will be deducted. The Exam Board will consider mitigating circumstances in accordance with the procedure outlined in The University of Bolton Student Handbook.

More than two weeks late: the assignment will be marked as normal and the tutor's comments and feedback will be relayed back to the student but the mark recorded for this work will be zero. The Exam Board will consider mitigating circumstances in accordance with the procedure outlined in the university regulations and Assessment Regulations for the Postgraduate Modular Framework.

8.2. Submission of Mitigating Circumstances

Mitigating circumstances will consist of those personal difficulties which cause exceptional interference with academic performance and which are over and above the normal difficulties experienced in life. They will be submitted by a student, supported by acceptable documentary evidence, and may be taken into account by the University Research Centres, Central Units & Services Quality Assurance And Enhancement Committee in determining the progression of students, the recommending of awards and the classification of qualifications.

Students who consider their performance in assessment has been affected by personal circumstances, such as illness, should complete a mitigating circumstances form. This, together with supporting documentary evidence, should be submitted to the Chairman of the Examination Board for consideration at the next meeting.

8.3. Marking and Feedback Policies and Procedures

Written feedback on each assignment is supplied by electronic means, normally within two weeks of the submission date. Summative feedback for any assignment it will contain an explanation of where your work sits in the marking structure and why and given under the following headings: strong points, and points to consider with targets for improvement.

8.4. Publication of Results

The grade for each assessed piece of work is made known to the student at the same time as the feedback for each assignment. The overall mark for the module is calculated and made known to the student with clear advice that the mark is provisional until it has been accepted at the next meeting of the Examination Board.

8.5. Examination Board

The programme conforms to the requirements of The University of Bolton Modular Masters framework. The Examinations Board is authorised to assess student performance in accordance with the assessment regulations and to assess any referred* or deferred* work. It works under the guidelines and terms of reference specified by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Unit of The University of Bolton. The rights, responsibilities and conduct of the Board shall be in accordance with the current policies and regulations of The University of Bolton. The Examinations Board meets twice a year to consider student progress and make recommendations for an award.

* these terms are explained in Assessment Regulations for the Postgraduate Modular Framework.

After every meeting of the Examination Board each student will be issued with a transcript detailing the results for each assessment studied to date. Any requirement for referred work to be re-submitted will be mentioned and the deadline for submission clearly stated.

8.6. Reassessment

Because all assessment is by coursework, there is no need for the 'repeat' outcome from an Examination board and all reassessment is covered by "refer" or "defer". The Board of Examiners shall not withhold permission for a student to be reassessed without good cause.

9. Module Completion and Withdrawal

9.1. Completions

Modules should be completed within the defined study period (including the extension period allowed for late submission). Under extraordinary circumstances such as tutor unavailability or central resource unavailability, submission dates may be extended by the module tutor or the Programme Leader.

9.2. Withdrawals

Students who wish to withdraw, transfer or suspend their studies on the programme must contact the Programme Leader immediately. The Programme Leader will be able to counsel the student regarding current and future options. If the student has a personal problem the Programme Leader will be able to offer guidance, with the assistance of counsellors from the Student Centre if necessary. It is the responsibility of the Programme Leader to authorise and sign the relevant form to withdraw the student from the programme or suspend studies.

9.3. Retention of Data

Individual student files (including academic/character references) will be held for a period of ten years and then destroyed.

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

1. Qualification	2. Programme Title	3. UCAS Code	4. Programme Type
Masters	Learning with Technology	N/A	Modular, Full and Part Time, Online Delivery

5. Main Purposes and Distinctive Features of the Programme

Learning with Technology has made substantial strides over the last thirty years, achieving real penetration into people's everyday lives in the last decade. It is a naturally inter-disciplinary field of study drawing on organisational theories, psychology, sociology, pedagogy, design and computer science. The pace of change in technology development means that knowledge in the field is rapidly changing and many practitioners are leaders in the field.

The purpose of this course is to develop your capacity for action research, ability as a critically reflective problem solver and effectiveness as an evidence-based 'improver' in your work context where your primary role is to develop the practices of learning with technology.

Study will provide the opportunity to become well versed in the inter-disciplinary knowledge and practice that are relevant to your work role. You will become confident in your ability to argue from an informed position about current issues and developments at the forefront of the Learning with Technology debate.

To help achieve the above you will:

- develop intellectual tools and techniques to help you inquire into your own professional practice
- engage in discussions with internationally recognised experts in Learning with Technology and draw on existing bodies of knowledge
- develop skills of using professional and theoretical knowledge to inform and develop your practice
- receive personal support from a learning facilitator who will help you integrate your work and study and apply rigorous inquiry processes
- belong to a community of inquiry where you will exchange ideas, offer moral support, and study collectively with other people working in the field of learning with technology
- develop communication and persuasion skills and plan and implement change strategies

6. What a graduate should know and be able to do on completion of the programme

On completion a graduate will be able to:

1. Independently identify opportunities to take actions for improvement at an organisational level, systematically implement innovative solutions and critically evaluate the outcomes.
2. Undertake a significant piece of research that fully and critically explores key issues demonstrating rigor in the research process.
3. Synthesize sources and communicate orally, in writing, and in appropriate media, in academic and professional contexts making well informed, coherent and persuasive arguments.
4. Critically analyse and evaluate complex issues and lead reasoned argument around topics of debate or controversy drawing on knowledge at the forefront of their field including a historical perspective.
5. Take a leadership role to articulate philosophies of lifelong learning, the applications of technology, and the way organisations work.
6. Use organisational theories to inform analysis and evaluation of their work context at a strategic level, critiquing local and national policies and develop recommendations for change.
7. Analyse and manage the implications of ethical dilemmas including social implications of activities and work pro-actively with others to formulate solutions.
8. Evaluate technology for its contribution to communication, co-ordination and an organisation's enterprise activities.

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<p><u>Knowledge and understanding in the context of the subject(s)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Policy, theory, critical issues and current theoretical perspectives in chosen field (s) of study 2. Professional standards, requirements, and expectations of chosen field(s) of study 3. Organisational theories applied to work context 4. Application of technology for learning and organisation to work context 5. Application of philosophies of learning to work context 6. Social implications of activities of work context 7. Ethical consideration in relation to research activities <p><u>Cognitive skills in the context of the subject(s)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Synthesise sources and develop convincing arguments 2. Critically analyse and evaluate complex issues 3. Apply theoretical knowledge to critical reflections on experience 4. Critically evaluate technological solutions for learning and organisation 5. Critically evaluate own practice 	<p><u>Subject-specific practical/professional skills</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The essence of this programme is that skills are applied to inquiries identified by the student researchers <p><u>Other skills (e.g. key/transferable) developed in subject or other contexts</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Systematically plan and undertake rigorous action research projects with some originality in the application of knowledge and identification of robust findings and conclusions 2. Communicate ideas in professional contexts taking account of audience and intended impact 3. Engage in reasoned professional debate 4. Work in teams and be prepared to take a leadership role
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7. Qualities, Skills & Capabilities Profile

A Cognitive	B Practical	C Personal & Social	D Other
Critical Reasoning	Information and processing skills	Independence/Autonomy	Team work
Conceptual Thinking	Conducting rigorous research	Time Management	Collaboration
Critical evaluation	Leadership and decision making	Negotiation	Evaluation of ICT for communication and organisation
Imagination and creativity	Workplace improver	Persuasion and influencing skills	Analysis of organisational practice and processes
Contextual subject knowledge	Application of to discipline knowledge to practice	Leading learning in community of practitioners	Operating at a strategic level

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Ethics of research	Application of technology	Personal strengths and development priorities	
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8. Duration and Structure of Programme/Modes of Study/Credit Volume of Study Units			
<p>(3 Years full-time; 4½-5 years part-time). Honours Degree = 360 credits; Intermediate Awards of Diploma of Higher Education and Certificate of Higher Education available at 240 and 120 credits respectively. All Honours degrees must include the study of 120 credits at Level H3.</p> <p>(12 months full-time; 3 years part-time). Masters Degree = 180 credits; Intermediate Awards of Post Graduate Diploma and Post Graduate Certificate available at 120 and 60 credits respectively. Certificate of professional development.</p>			
Part II <i>Students take 4 (Minor), 6 (Joint), 8 (Major) 10 (Single) Modules</i>			
Masters H7	Core Modules	Options (normally 20 credits each)	Project (20 credits)
	<p>Post Graduate Certificate – 60 Credits</p> <p>Analysing the Professional Context (30 credits)</p> <p>Organisational Improvement (30 credits)</p> <hr/> <p>Post Graduate Diploma - 120 Credits</p> <p>Action Research (30 credits)</p> <p>Action Research Preparation (30 credits)</p> <hr/> <p>Masters Degree - 180 credits</p> <p>Action, Research Exhibition, Validation and Synthesis (60 credits)</p>		
<p>9. Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy</p> <p>Learning and Teaching Methods</p> <p>Support by learning facilitators through online community of inquiry with students undertaking action research projects. High degree of emphasis on learning together through critical</p>		<p>10. Other Information (including compliance with relevant University policies)</p> <p>Date programme first offered</p> <p>October 2008</p>	

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<p>discourse and with moral support.</p> <p>Assessment Methods</p> <p>Patchwork media: an assessment e-portfolio of learning activities with a summative commentary identifying learning achieved related to intended learning outcomes.</p> <p>Assessment Classification System</p> <p>Pass Mark for individual Assessments – 40%</p> <p>Final Masters Degree Classification based on aggregated performance in all 180 Credits, and profile information for marginal candidates.</p> <p>Masters Classification Bands</p> <p>70% and above - Distinction</p> <p>40% - 69% - Pass</p> <p>0% - 39% - Fail</p>	<p>Admissions Criteria</p> <p>Standard Requirements</p> <p>Level 6 qualification or 5 years relevant work experience operating at an appropriate level and a context to carry out action for improvement in the theme of Learning with Technology.</p> <p>Non Standard Entry</p> <p>Other cases dealt with by admissions tutor on an individual basis.</p> <p>Indicators of Quality and Standards</p> <p>External Examiner moderates all assessment points.</p> <p>Action research methodology applied to course design and delivery.</p> <p>Validation event May 2008 with 2 external experts and employer representative</p>
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