Programme Specification

A statement of the knowledge, understanding and skills that underpin a taught programme of study leading to an award from The University of Sheffield

Programme Details

1. Programme title	Intercultural Communication
2. Programme code	MDLT08 Full-time, MDLT09 Part-time
3. QAA FHEQ level	M Level
4. Faculty	Arts and Humanities
5. Department	School of Languages and Cultures
6. Other departments providing credit bearing modules for the programme	iSchool, GEO (TBC), MGT (TBC)
7. Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body	Not applicable
8. Date of production/revision	September 2020, Revised March 2021

Awards	Type of award	Duration
9. Final award	MA	1 year Full-time, 2 years Part-time
10. Intermediate awards	PG Dip	
	PG Cert	

Programme Codes

11. JACS code(s) *Select between one and three codes from the HESA website.*	Q0	P0	L6
12. HECoS code(s) *Select between one and three codes from the HECoS vocabulary.*	100440 media	101233 (cultural studies)	100329 (modern languages)

Programme Delivery

13. Mode of study	Full-time; Part-time
14. Mode of delivery	On Campus; may include Blended Learning

15. Background to the programme and subject area

Intercultural Communication is the study of communication between people from different cultural groups or backgrounds. It focuses upon the relationship between people, culture and communication, and involves a high degree of knowledge, skills and awareness of aspects of culture, language and communication. It is a growing discipline across the world, and Sheffield has, since 2003, been at the forefront of the development of this important area of study at postgraduate level. The ability to communicate effectively in a variety of cultural contexts (for example, in a European branch of a UK company or among international or multicultural teams) is valued highly by employers across the world. There is an increasing need for highly-skilled communicators willing and able to address culture and communication challenges, in order to make a meaningful contribution in all aspects of working life. The programme also recognises the interplay between interculturality, diversity and inclusion, encouraging students to recognise the part they play in building a sustainable society.

The programme relates theory to Intercultural Communication practice and vice-versa, and in particular offers the opportunity to relate learning during the programme to practice in work-based environments. It will contain a substantial reflective element, focusing also on decision-making in complex intercultural contexts. Students will be encouraged to find opportunities for linking their studies to the work of public or private sector organisations, either in the UK or abroad.

This programme will be of interest to students of any academic and/or professional background with an interest in intercultural communication, and who understand the importance of language, culture, communication and intercultural awareness in today's world. Past and present students represent a wide range of ages, nationalities and professional backgrounds. Recent graduates have found work in International Business, the Communications, Media and Information Industry, Education, Publishing, International Project Management, Humanitarian and Non-Governmental Organisations, including the UN and the Language and Translation professions. Students from Sheffield become part of a growing community of Interculturalist alumni across the globe.

Further information is available from the Departmental web site: http://www.shef.ac.uk/slc

16. Programme aims

	The Diploma and MA in Intercultural Communication aims to:
A1	Provide quality teaching that is informed and invigorated by the scholarship of its staff, alert to the benefits of student-centred learning and which fosters inclusivity in both programme content and participation.
A2	Offer students a post-graduate programme that maximises opportunities for undertaking study which is at the forefront of the discipline, while closely relating it to work-based experience.
A3	Sustain a culture of learning that is able to foster the free pursuit of knowledge, the impartial analysis of values, the development of intercultural awareness and informed, tolerant and professional attitudes to the people, languages and cultures studied.
A4	Develop lifelong commitment to addressing intercultural issues in all areas of students' working life and function effectively in increasingly challenging intercultural professional and academic contexts.
A5	Develop in students to develop independence of thought, intellectual curiosity and a critical approach to evidence, theories, concepts and practice.
A6	Offer through choice of optional modules the opportunity to develop expertise in the application of intercultural communication studies to either a) language and information- related web content management b) audio-visual media contexts and practices.

17. Programme learning outcomes

	Knowledge and understanding	
	On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:	
		Links to Aim(s)
K1	Practical and critical understanding of the main theories and approaches to intercultural communication including research approaches, and abilities to analyse and evaluate their relative significance.	A1, A2
K2	Sound knowledge and critical understanding of the role of language and cultural values and norms in interactional contexts.	A1, A2
K3	Sound knowledge and understanding of the complexities involved in effective real-time intercultural communication.	A2, A5
K4	Critical awareness of historical and societal influences in intercultural communication and their capacities for influencing outcomes.	A1, A3, A4 A5
K5	**(MA Only)** Original ideas and insights arising from independent research in relation to one of the areas studied, including critical awareness of their applicability to the study of Intercultural Communication.	A5
K6	(depending on optional modules chosen) develop expertise in the specialist processes used in digital information management or audio-visual media development.	A6
	Skills and other attributes	
	On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to:	
S1	Acquire, use and critically evaluate information and language from a variety of sources, including research publications, newspapers, broadcasts, multimedia and digital information, websites, teachers, native speakers.	A1, A2, A5
S2	Effective skills in oral and written communication to both specialist and non-specialist audiences, independently and in collaboration with others.	A1, A3, A4
S3	The abilities and skills to consider a range of possible interpretations of events and practices, articulate courses of action and justify them on the basis of sound evidence.	A2, A3, A4
S4	Key transferable life-long learning skills such as peer observation, reflective practice, co-operative work, time management, and presentational skills, all of which will be of use in a variety of professions.	A4
S5	**(MA only)** The abilities and skills to develop and complete a research dissertation independently with supervision as required.	A5
S6	(depending on optional modules chosen) carry out specialist work on the processes used in digital information management or audio-visual media development.	A6

18. Learning and teaching methods

Development of the learning outcomes is promoted through the following teaching and learning methods:

Lectures fulfil a variety of different teaching roles, including the provision of basic information, the presentation of specific problems and methods of resolution, the stimulation of debate, and the encouragement to study further. (K1 – K6, S1 – S3). Multimedia resources are used in lectures and independent study, and student participation is strongly encouraged.

Seminars, which may be either staff-led or student-led, will be used throughout the programme for core and option modules. Their use is extensive and is designed to allow students to work through, analyse, understand and respond to information (K1, K3, K6, S3, S4, S6). Seminars devoted to target-language acquisition may take the form of classes (conducted partly or wholly in the target language) devoted to the development of communicative competence, with an evaluation of intercultural related issues (K2, K3, S1-S3). Seminars devoted to the development of intercultural competence in practice will involve participation in scenarios, role-plays, group discussions, and analysis of the outcomes of these activities (K4, S3, K5, S4).

Independent study. The programme actively encourages student-driven learning, with an emphasis on both the development of analytical and reflective reasoning, and on practical effectiveness. Students' independent study is required throughout the programme to ensure maximum benefit to seminars, and to allow for the development of critical reasoning from an informed personal perspective. Independent study is particularly important in the work-based placements and in the project and dissertation options (K1, S1, S4, S5).

Dissertation work under the supervision of academic staff allows students to develop and practise research knowledge and skills (K1, K2, S1, S4, S5).

Pair-and group work. The programme actively encourages the use of pair-and group work, particularly in the second semester. At the very heart of this programme is the issue of communication, and pair and group work is therefore an integral learning method (K2, K4, K5, S2-S4).

Consultations on a one-to-one basis with teaching staff are central to modules in reflective practice, directed reading, and an essential complement to other learning and teaching methods, providing an opportunity for students to discuss in greater depth issues that arise in seminars and in the course of independent learning or in preparation of the dissertation (K1, S1, S4).

Where appropriate (and particularly in the light of the experiences learnt from COVID-19), modes of delivery may include elements of online or blended learning.

19. Assessment and feedback methods

Opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the programme learning outcomes are provided through the following assessment methods:

A variety of assessment methods are used, involving both summative and formative assessment (some elements of coursework may fall into both categories).

Summative assessment is carried out in a variety of ways, including the following, and appropriate combinations of the following:

- Essay and report/proposal writing
- Written examinations, including 'open-book' examinations
- Project work (group and individual)
- Practical projects involving independent and/or group work
- Reflective journals
- Dissertation.

Regular formative assessment, particularly in the Autumn Semester in the form of written assignments and mini-presentations, is used to monitor and provide feedback on progression or areas of potential weakness (K1-K3). Summative assessment, in the form of essays, oral presentations, examinations, project proposals and completed projects and a dissertation, tests the ability to demonstrate subject knowledge and the development, refinement and reflection on key skills (K1-5, S1-S5). The dissertation and theoretical essays allow the demonstration of detailed subject knowledge, independent learning, and the application of key skills (S2).

Student work is judged against the Department's marking criteria and those of other participating departments. Written submissions are expected to be well written and presented (K5), in accordance with the advice given in the Department's Student Information and by individual module tutors. Essays are used to test the students'

acquisition of knowledge and key skills across the range (K1-K5, S1-S5). The advanced knowledge and skills outlined under K4-K5 and S4-S5 are assessed through a dissertation. The dissertation allows for the demonstration of detailed theoretical subject knowledge, independent learning, and the application of key skills including critical awareness of data collection and analysis, and sustained theoretical argument as well as critical reasoning (K4, K5).

The structure and relative weighting of core and optional modules laid out below will ensure that all students have an opportunity to develop knowledge and skills across the list of learning outcomes appropriate to their level of study. Students are also offered the option to develop expertise in a specific area relating to Intercultural communication (such as audio-visual media or digital information).

The quality of the programme is assured through student evaluation, monitoring and review of the degree structure and content and external examiner input.

Students will receive both formative and summative feedback along the course of their programme. Formative feedback will be provided in a variety of methods, such as periodic tests or exercises, which may be self-, peer- or tutor-assessed, or a combination of these, before students are required to complete summative assessment. These are designed to reinforce knowledge and skills, and to monitor carefully the students' progression.

Formative feedback is also used to provide timely and developmental feedback for students and to familiarise themselves with the Sheffield approach to assessment at an early stage. This is undertaken through activities such as running seminars, group and individual presentations, written work and a range of analytical pieces. Feedback is designed and developed following the Sheffield principles (https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/apse/apo/quality/assessment/feedback)

20. Programme structure and student development

The programme is modular in format as outlined below:

Graduates in languages may either wish to apply their learning to higher level study within their discipline, or acquire knowledge, understanding and skills of use in the workplace to complement their languages specialism. Graduates of other disciplines may wish to develop their proficiency in languages and intercultural communication and relate this to the specialism of their first degree or work experience. The reflective practice/ethnography modules will be of relevance for all those wishing to adopt such an approach to work-based intercultural communication, and develop these skills for life-long learning.

The option of incorporating a practical project into the dissertation allows for students to apply their learning to the practical needs and constraints of the workplace while pursuing in intellectual depth an aspect of Intercultural Communication which appeals to them.

To qualify for the award of MA in Intercultural Communication, students must accumulate 180 credits from the following:

● Three core modules to the value of 75 credits (Concepts and Approaches in Intercultural Communication, Research Methods in Languages and Cultures, Intercultural Communication in Practice and Reflective Practice: Ethnography), over the course of the AUT and SPR semesters, with the choice of either developing Ethnography further in Further Ethnography or taking the Intercultural Communication Seminar module, developing an in-depth critical understanding of one aspect of Intercultural communication.

● Approved/Option modules to the value of 45 credits, of relevance to their academic and professional background, experience and interest; these may be in either the Autumn or Spring semesters, depending on the modules chosen. Students will be invited to 45 credits of optional modules to be chosen from a broad range, allowing students to pursue routes of their choice through the programme or to opt for a specialist focus in digital Information or audio-visual media to the value of 45 credits.

● Dissertation Support classes, normally taken in the Spring Semester;

● Either a work placement or a dissertation, each worth 60 credits, normally undertaken in the Spring Semester.

These credits are accumulated over 12 months (full-time study) or 24 months (part-time study). In the case of full-time students, the normal expectation is that 60 credits will be taken in each Semester thus ensuring a balanced workload throughout the year. In some cases, however, student choice, and the availability of modules in a given year, may produce some slight variation in this pattern. In all cases the period between the end of the Spring Semester and the end of the period of registration is devoted to the dissertation. In the case of part-time students, the normal expectation is that 90 credits will be taken in each year of study, divided as evenly as possible (subject to student choice and module availability) between Semesters.

The Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma are awarded for successful completion of non-dissertation/work placement project modules to the value of 60 credits and 120 credits respectively.

The programme is structured around a core focus on language, culture and communication, with opportunities for students to deepen their knowledge of specific subject matter and methodologies in related subject areas. The range of options available to students allow for specialisation in a number of subject areas appealing to students from the broad range of academic backgrounds attracted by this MA programme. The emphasis on the relationship between theory and practice, developing knowledge at the forefront of their discipline, and considering the implications of this knowledge for a wide range of real-world scenarios, contributes to the achievement of the learning outcomes. The Dissertation module offers the opportunity for students to demonstrate their abilities to think, work and analyse independently, focusing on aspects relevant to the programme that address their particular interests and concerns.

Following the UK QAA Quality Frameworks, in some modules graduate students are taught alongside undergraduates, most commonly in language modules. However, these modules are 'enhanced' for graduate students principally by the use of modes of assessment which address the learning outcomes specific to this Master's programme, requiring more intensive and extensive study, and a greater degree of independent research. Where appropriate additional classes for graduate students only are also arranged.

Successful completion of the programme leads to the award of the Master's Degree, either with a 'Pass' "Merit" or 'Pass with distinction' grade. Students who do not proceed to the dissertation but who successfully complete the taught component of the programme (120 credits) are eligible for the award of Postgraduate Diploma in MA in Intercultural Communication or Postgraduate Certificate in MA in Intercultural Communication (60 credits).

Detailed information about the structure of programmes, regulations concerning assessment and progression and descriptions of individual modules are published in the University Calendar available online at http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/calendar/.

21. Criteria for admission to the programme

Normally an Upper Second Class degree in Arts or Social Sciences and a second language to at least intermediate level (CEFR B1; A/S or equivalent).

Students whose first language is not English must have passed either the IELTS (a minimum of 7 with 6.5 in each component) or an equivalent approved English language test. For further information see the University Admissions Service website at http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/admissions.

Detailed information regarding admission to the programme is available at http://www.shef.ac.uk/prospective/

22. Reference points

The learning outcomes have been developed to reflect the following points of reference:

Subject Benchmark Statements (2019):
https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/subject-benchmark-statements/subject-benchmark-statement-languages-cultures-and-societies.pdf?sfvrsn=4ce2cb81_4

Revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2018) (2019)
https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf

QAA Characteristics statement for Masters' degrees (February 2020)
https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/master's-degree-characteristics-statement8019abbe03dc611ba4caff140043ed24.pdf?sfvrsn=86c5ca81_12

University Strategic Plan
http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/strategicplan

Learning and Teaching Strategy (2016-21)
https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.661828!/file/FinalStrategy.pdf

The research interests of departmental staff and the Development Plan of the School of Languages and Cultures.

23. Additional information

This programme specification represents a significant amendment to previous versions of the programme; the underlying aims and outcomes remain the same as earlier versions, but have been consolidated and developed to reflect contemporary trends.

This specification represents a concise statement about the main features of the programme and should be considered alongside other sources of information provided by the teaching department(s) and the University. In addition to programme specific information, further information about studying at The University of Sheffield can be accessed via our Student Services web site at http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid.