



Human Communication Sciences

COURSE OUTLINE

MSc / PGDip / PGCert: Speech Difficulties

Course Structure

The Programme runs for a calendar year from September to August of the following year, although students on the PG Certificate and Diploma will usually have submitted all of their written assignments by the middle of July. This extended academic year enables you to spread your studying over a longer year, and to take advantage of the best times for you personally to study. Some students will study full-time by attendance and there is also the option to study part-time and by distance learning.

The courses are delivered in a series of modules, and each module is also assigned a code, beginning with the letters HCS, and a credit rating (usually 15 credits).

Postgraduate Certificate students take the following modules part-time in one year (Total **60 credits**):

HCS 6025	Spoken & Written Language	15 credits
HCS 6027	Developing an Evidence Base for Practice	15 credits
HCS 6021	Speech Difficulties 1	15 credits
HCS 6022	Speech Difficulties 2	15 credits

Postgraduate Diploma students on the standard Speech Difficulties track take the above 4 modules plus the following either full-time in one year, or part-time in 2 years (Total **120 credits**):

HCS 6048	Research Methods A	15 credits
-	Option Module 1	15 credits
-	Option Module 2	15 credits
-	Option Module 3*	15 credits*

(NB: For Diploma students who may wish to progress to the MSc, the third option taken must be HCS6049 Research Methods B)

MSc students on the standard Speech Difficulties track will take the above modules and will also complete a research dissertation (Total **180 credits**):

HCS6007	HCS6100	Research Project (Dissertation)	60 credits
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Module Outlines

HCS 6027 Developing an Evidence Base for Practice

This module develops knowledge, understanding and skills for the promotion of evidence based practice for practitioners in education, health and social welfare contexts. Students will be introduced to levels and types of evidence, develop skills in framing questions about their practice, searching and reading the literature, and in critical analysis. Principles of assessment practice and psychometric interpretation will be explored. Students will develop skills in evaluating their own practice.

Aims are to:

- Examine the need for evidence-based practice for children with speech, language and communication impairments.
 - Equip professionals with the knowledge and skills to develop an evidence-base for practice.
 - Develop the understanding and skills to frame appropriate questions.
 - Explore commonly used types of evidence in education, social welfare and health. Develop understanding of principles of assessment practice and psychometrics. Develop information literacy and skills for searching the literature.
 - Develop the ability to critical analyse research literature that uses a range of methodologies.
 - Support practitioners to develop as reflective practitioners who are evaluating their own practice.
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HCS 6025 Spoken and Written Language

This module focuses on the development of spoken and written language, with specific references to phonological and literacy development. The relationship between speech and literacy is explored. Individual differences in speech and literacy skills are discussed. Theoretical perspectives and research findings about dyslexia and common types of developmental speech difficulty will be evaluated. Implications for practice are explored, including intervention strategies.

Aims are to:

- Outline the development of spoken and written language.
- Present a psycholinguistic approach to the study of speech and literacy, and exploration of the relationship between the two.
- Explore the theoretical underpinnings of the nature of dyslexia and developmental speech disorder and how these can be applied to management.
- Explore appropriate intervention and management issues.
- Develop skills in critical analysis of research findings in the field. Develop collaborative practice.
- Develop academic writing to include use of research evidence to support discussion.

HCS 6021 Speech 1: Nature and Investigation

This module offers a lifespan study of the nature of developmental speech difficulties from a range of perspectives: historical, medical, developmental, linguistic/cross-linguistic, phonetic, acoustic, psycholinguistic, psychosocial, educational. It then examines how developmental speech difficulties can be investigated drawing on knowledge and skills from each of these perspectives. These investigations include qualitative analysis of speech data; psychometric testing and application of ICT. Students will study current research into both theoretical aspects of speech difficulties and application to practice in a range of contexts.

Aims are to:

- Develop students' understanding of the nature of developmental speech difficulties across the lifespan.
 - Emphasise the associated difficulties which accompany speech difficulties, in particular, literacy and psychosocial aspects.
 - Introduce students to a range of techniques used for investigating speech. Skill students in carrying out investigations of speech and its difficulties.
 - Develop students' knowledge of how theoretical models and frameworks can be applied to the study of developmental speech difficulties
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HCS 6022 Speech 2: Intervention and Management

This module draws on current research into the management of clients with developmental speech difficulties in a range of contexts (e.g. schools, clinic, units) and situations. It adopts a range of perspectives (e.g. historical, medical, developmental, linguistic/cross-linguistic, psycholinguistic, psychosocial, educational, computer sciences) in order to plan intervention programmes for preschool children, school-age children, adolescents and adults with developmental speech and associated literacy and psychosocial difficulties. Intervention programmes for individuals and groups are evaluated by applying critical analysis skills to the research methodologies adopted. Different approaches to management, e.g. hands-on intervention, consultative role, working through others (e.g. parents / carers and assistants) are explored.

Aims are to:

- Develop students' understanding of how theoretical models and frameworks can be applied to the management of developmental speech difficulties
- Emphasise the associated difficulties which need to be taken into account when working with children/adults with speech difficulties, in particular, literacy and psychosocial aspects.
- Introduce students to a range of intervention and research techniques used for working with children with speech difficulties.
- Skill students in how to evaluate intervention studies
- Skill students in interaction skills when carrying out intervention with children/adults with speech difficulties.
- Examine critically the management of developmental speech difficulties by working through others, e.g. assistants/carers/parents.

HCS 6048 Research Methods A

This module will develop student's knowledge, understanding and skills of the range of research methodologies used in human communication sciences, education and health. The main aim of the module is to allow students to become competent consumers and producers of scientific evidence. Topics will include the qualitative and quantitative research cycle (e.g. study design, development of research questions), concepts of statistical analysis (e.g. descriptive statistics, presenting data, selected inferential statistics), qualitative research methods (e.g. interviews) and case study designs.

Aims are to support students in:

- Becoming competent in reading about and using scientific evidence and to undertake research.
 - Becoming aware of key issues in design and implementation of research across the range of qualitative and quantitative methodologies.
 - Developing an understanding of key concepts of descriptive and inferential statistics
 - Acquiring basic skills in presenting and analysing numerical data (descriptive and inferential statistics) using SPSS
 - Developing the ability to interpret the output from statistical data analysis.
 - Developing an understanding of qualitative methodologies and analysis of qualitative data.
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HCS 6049 Research Methods B

This module will expand student's knowledge, understanding and skills of the range of research methodologies used in human communication sciences, education and health. It will further develop their competencies in interpreting and producing scientific evidence. The main aim of the module is to allow students to design and conduct a methodologically and statistically sound research project. Topics will include inferential statistics (parametric and non-parametric statistical tests, effect sizes and strength of relationships, regression), psychometrics (concepts, derived scores and confidence intervals), and qualitative research methods (e.g. mixed methods) and qualitative data analysis.

Aims are to support students in:

- Further developing their competencies in interpreting and producing scientific evidence.
- Expanding their knowledge of issues in design and implementation of research across the range of qualitative and quantitative methodologies.
- Developing an understanding of the following concepts in inferential statistics (statistical significance, effect sizes, strength of relationship, regression)
- Developing the ability to choose an appropriate test of significance
- Becoming competent in using SPSS to analyse numerical data (descriptive and inferential statistics, graphs) and interpret the output from such statistical data analysis.
- Becoming aware of key concepts of psychometrics and how to use standardised test of ability and achievement
- Expanding their understanding of qualitative methodologies and analysis of qualitative data.

HCS 6007 Research Project (Dissertation) – Full-time students

HCS 6100 Research Project (Dissertation) – Part-time students

Students will design, implement and write up a research project on a topic of their choice, under the guidance of their academic supervisor.

Aims are to:

- Enhance students knowledge and understanding of the process of research
- Provide further research training and experience of carrying out an original research project to develop students as research practitioners
- Provide opportunities for students to advance their knowledge and understanding in their chosen area of study within the field of language and communication impairment.
- Provide opportunities to undertake data analysis in the methodology selected.
- Develop research presentation skills
- Develop skills in critical analysis of research findings in the field.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Study Blocks

There is a 2 – 3 day study block for each module. While not mandatory, students are expected to attend these if at all possible, as these are an integral part of the course. Although, we do understand that this may not be possible for students based outside of the UK, or who have particular circumstances. The lectures and workshops will support your independent study.

Independent study

Teaching on study blocks is supplemented by independent study using a range of online learning material via MOLE, the University's online learning environment. These will include readings and associated learning activities, links with appropriate web-based material and participation in virtual seminars online. Some core reading will be supplied electronically via the University Library. Students should be confident in their IT skills and in using a computer and the internet.

Tutorial Support

For full-time students regular group tutorials will be held through the year. For part-time / distance learning students, contact with tutors and other students is maintained through MOLE in virtual seminars and other activities and by email. This will support your independent study and assignment preparation.

Assessment: Each module is assessed by a written assignment.

Progression Through the Course

Students are able to transfer flexibly between the awards. A student may:

- enrol on the PG Certificate and decide to move to the PG Diploma
- enrol on the PG Diploma and decide to move to MSc
- enrol on the PG Diploma or MSc & decide to finish with the PG Certificate
- enrol on the MSc & decide to finish with the PG Diploma