



**QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST**

SCHOOL OF
SOCIAL SCIENCES,
EDUCATION AND
SOCIAL WORK

MSc
**HIGHER
EDUCATION**

**MAKING A SOCIAL
DIFFERENCE**

**SHAPING
A BETTER
WORLD
SINCE 1845**

**RUSSELL
GROUP**



MSc HIGHER EDUCATION

The MSc in Higher Education is designed to proactively address the diverse challenges facing higher education, for its long-term prosperity.

This comprehensive interdisciplinary curriculum recognises that the roles played by higher education in society, and by individuals within higher education institutions, are best served by engaging with **education as the key to transformation, access, and quality of higher education in this digital age.**

Responding to a growing need for cross-functional integration of policies with practices in higher education, our intellectually rich modules foster a learning culture of **leadership and development, innovation and evaluation.**

The MSc in Higher Education enables **institutional enhancement** in addition to **professional career advancement** of those driving and supporting academic matters. The programme emphasizes a concerted relationship between the often separated areas of educational development and scholarship for all those working within higher education, from policy-makers through to academic staff, officers, advisers, and evaluators of institutions, non-profit organisations and governmental agencies concerned with learning, research and civic engagement in higher education.

Whether you want to assure or inspire that which is within your realm of influence, shape a collective vision going forward, or purposefully strengthen its implementation and impact, we will ensure your processes are research-informed.

WHY CHOOSE QUEEN'S FOR THE MSc HIGHER EDUCATION?

The multidisciplinary perspectives of The School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work (SSESW) and the lived experiences of our academics from Northern Ireland and beyond, will enrich your engagement with Higher Education as a field of academic and professional study. Here are specific reasons you should choose to study in this field at Queen's...

Research-led institution

Queen's is a world renowned research-intensive university focused on the needs of society. Our research-led academics are committed to global academic excellence alongside local impact in areas of major societal challenge, working towards transformative processes of peace, inclusion and justice. Our education research is ranked 4th within the UK for research intensity, with 87% assessed as 'internationally excellent or world leading' (REF, 2014).

We share a social purpose

Queen's commitment to making a genuine, positive contribution to the needs of local communities and global societies is expressed in our Social Charter. This commits Queen's to promoting research with impact, education with a social purpose, and equality and excellence. Furthermore, we are committed to using the University as a space to promote civic culture and intercultural dialogue. Within the University we seek to address legacies of exclusion through, for example, our active engagement with the Athena SWAN process to change the unequal representation of women, and our commitment to widening participation among our students.

A flexible learning environment

Our structured pathways enable you to commit to a full post-graduate qualification or to incrementally build your own portfolio over time. You will receive support to represent, evaluate and enhance your practice;

professionalise your research capacity and scope; and extend your networks of international counterparts. While the full MSc qualification is advised, annual exit points (PG Certificate and PG Diploma) allow for flexibility in relation to individual and institutional planning. For those willing to make a more sustained commitment, the MSc in Higher Education puts you in a strong position for doctoral level studies at Queen's.

Assessment that matters

The MSc provides opportunities for diversified assessment which authentically replicates your professional practice, such as institutional reports, research papers, policies, conference presentations, portfolios, websites. The learning outcomes are aligned with international professional accreditation.

Digital capacity

Interwoven within the MSc are opportunities to create digital artefacts, and extend your digital presence. The experiential knowledge of educational technologies you gain, puts you in a strong position to critically ascertain their potential for your practice.

Challenging and inspiring topics

Module topics focus on fundamentally important aspects of the academic project in the first year. Broadening from that firmament, you will engage with current discourses and debates about transformation, access, quality and the digital in higher education in the second year. In so doing, you develop the capacity to design, implement, evaluate and research policies and practices which contribute individually, institutionally, nationally and/or globally.

SHAPE A BETTER WORLD

The programme aims to strengthen practices, to connect individuals and organisations, and to provide the conditions for the enhancement of higher education in diverse contexts across the globe.

It contributes to United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals, by

- Addressing a need for more informed and participatory decision-making in higher education.
- Promoting peace and social justice in transforming communities and organisations through teaching, research and civic engagement in higher education.

Responsive to the changing nature of higher education internationally, the course does not present theories or concepts as canonical. Conditions are provided for participants to become informed, by analysing and reflecting on individual and institutional thinking and practices; interacting with multiple resources; and developing ways in which to collect and generate data to evaluate the quality of policies and practices, towards enhancing the quality and experience of adult learning and knowledge production in their contexts.



ENHANCE YOUR INSTITUTION

The MSc in Higher Education will enhance the quality of your academic, management and support staff, and will put them in a strong position to lead higher education discussions on transformation, access, quality and the digital in your national context, with international standing.

The programme connects institutional educational development and quality enhancement with the international academic field of Higher Education studies. In so doing, it brings together various actors from within your organisation to dynamically and responsively strengthen your institutions' vision and purposes, aligning these with implementation in practice.

This qualification, from our research-intensive university, positions your staff to...

Take the lead

in discussions about issues impacted by the local and global in higher education;

Enhance and showcase

innovative and enhanced strategies and policies;

Strengthen and disseminate

principled practices;

Model excellence

by conducting rigorous evidence-based research and professional evaluation.

The first year of studies provides a broad foundation necessary to establish a shared language that reflects the principled ethos of the academic project against contextual educational objectives and global influences.

The second year is focused on enhancing participants' research skills while they explore specific topics of interest appropriate to their position. These pivot around transformation, access, quality and the digital in higher education.

These latter choices will inform participants' sustained research project in the final year, whether a work-based intervention or research, thereby developing their capacity to design, implement and evaluate reports, policies and practices in ways which make a genuine contribution to Higher Education.



MAXIMISE YOUR CAREER IMPACT

A postgraduate qualification in Higher Education from a research-intensive institution gives you the edge. Whether your professional, research and/ or teaching practice falls within the higher education landscape, the experiential knowledge gained in the MSc in Higher Education will better enable you to...

Assure quality

of your current practice through benchmarking with international policies, practices and case studies. Our modules provide the conditions for you to affirm your approaches for external stakeholders, and where relevant, go beyond this to enhance quality and challenge the status quo.

Make informed judgments

about the validity of arguments of 'best practice' for your context and purposes,

to inform the ways in which you refine and innovate towards 'next practice'.

Envisage ways ahead

in which the quality of current practices may be extended and enhanced, and innovations be infused. In the process, the field of Higher Education is made accessible to increase your publication output, research funding and impact.

Create opportunities

for stakeholders to inform quality, access and transformation of academic aspects of higher education in this digital age. In addition to supporting you generate data and feedback from various participants in higher education, the programme enables interdisciplinary and international connections, collaborations and mobility.



ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

The MSc in Higher Education is a three-year part-time qualification designed to challenge, inspire and empower you as a higher education practitioner and researcher.

The full MSc qualification is advised for the most comprehensive experience. However, our annual exit points (PG Certificate and PG Diploma) allow for flexibility in relation to individual and institutional planning.

YEAR 1

is foundational because it introduces concepts and debates central to the contemporary academic project, including the purposes of higher education, knowledge, adult learning and teaching, curriculum, assessment and evaluation.

Higher Education Learning & Teaching

**Core module*

With the rapidly changing nature of higher education globally, participants of this module will deepen their conceptual understanding of the constructed nature of the role of higher education, learning, teaching and knowledge creation at the local and global level, in order to develop their philosophy of higher education. Through a rich diversity of resources, peer interaction and blended-learning activities, enabling conditions are provided for participants to identify and articulate their thinking and practices in relation to institutional, national and international approaches and expectations, and to consider their role in enhancing the academic project.

Higher Education Curricula & Assessment

**Core module*

Curricula frame the nature and quality of student engagement in higher education. In this module participants' conceptual understanding of orientations to curricula and assessment in higher education will be enhanced as they design, interpret and implement curricula in their various roles. By contextualising constructions of 'the curriculum' and 'knowledge'; macro/ micro and

hidden curricula; stakeholders of curricula; and models of curriculum design, participants will be enabled to look at the significance of such structures for development and engagement. Towards this, participants will engage with the central purposes, principles and approaches to the assessment of and for adult learning; referential frameworks for assessment; formative and participatory assessment; and summative assessment and quality moderation.

Evaluation and Research of Higher Education Practice

**Core module*

Higher education institutions are often beset by policy/research-implementation gaps. To address this, in this module participants engage with concepts, principles and case studies of practices of evaluation in higher education, to guide principled and innovative change in their individual practice and at institutional level. The course content includes contextualising tensions and models of evaluation at national and international levels; formative and summative purposes of evaluation; and an introduction to ways in which to inform the evaluation of teaching and curricula, including multiple sources, methods and analytical approaches to collecting and generating qualitative and quantitative data to provide evidence to external stakeholders, to enhance practices and inform policies.

Participants successfully completing the first three modules continue to the second year of the MSc or exit with a **Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education**.

YEAR TWO

is designed to diversify and enhance participants' knowledge of approaches to research in higher education, while deepening their engagement with current discourses and developments in higher education.

Approaches to Researching Higher Education

**Core module*

Higher Education institutions are increasingly facing pressure for accountability. This module enables participant to develop knowledge of the central methodological orientations characteristic of studies in Higher Education and the skills to provide evidence of claims made; to support informed decision-making; and to elicit insights into the significance of institutional structures and cultures. We envisage accountability not so much as a top-down pressure based on externally determined criteria, but a process for ensuring the value of public investment in higher education and to encourage societal dialogue on the civic role of the sector. Topics build capacity for the research journey, from making principled choices about sources, methods and analytical processes, to the ways in which to initiate research (such as proposals, applications, peer reviews) and to disseminate findings and recommendations (whether for presentation, institutional reports, international publication, or digital communication).

Transforming Higher Education

** Elective module/ Short course*

This module enables participants to debate their role in transforming higher education, and to consider the role of higher education in transforming society. Engagement with models of higher education, and adult education traditions, will enable participants to focus on navigating the tensions, interests and purposes underpinning transformation in higher education including those of neoliberalism, social justice, internationalisation; civic responsibility and engagement etc. Mapping institutional concerns, through such concepts as structure, culture and agency, the multidisciplinary lenses of our research expertise will enable participants to explore leadership, legacy, identity, representation and change in their own contexts.

Access, Success and Challenge in Higher Education

** Elective module/ Short course*

Equity in higher education has been approached in divergent ways globally, growing educational development as a field to support 'access' at various levels. This module enables participants to approach this challenge from a meta-level, by stratifying global approaches into 'structural access', 'access and success', and 'access for challenge'. We explore the way 'access' initiatives should not simply be about helping new communities 'fit within' the existing culture of higher education, but how the meaning and practice of that culture should shift and evolve as a consequence of societal dialogue on the social role and purpose of higher education. The module will enable participants to engage with the ways in which individual agency and institutional structures and cultures enable, constrain, safeguard and open access to knowledge for those stakeholders negotiating the public, private and common good of higher education.

Quality for and of Higher Education

** Elective module/ Short course*

Quality is contested in higher education, as it relates to legitimation, power and risk. However, it holds the lever to drive institutional transformation and reduce risk. This module engages participants in debates as to how quality in higher education is framed and operationalised, by bringing contextual debates into proximity with inter/national, institutional, professional and progressive models of quality assurance, quality management and quality enhancement. Throughout the module, participants will explore the formative and summative purposes of quality, and the tensions they engender when attempting to safeguard, respond and innovate quality within curricula, the educational development of staff and students, and initiatives for inclusion and transformation.

Higher Education in a Digital Age

** Elective module/ Short course*

Technology has been an integral feature of adult learning, since the invention of paper. The digital age has brought with it added complexity and opportunity for higher education, where an institution's degree of

openness shapes its relation to contemporary society. This module provides a focused opportunity to intensely probe the possibilities, problematics and pragmatics of 'the digital' in participants' higher education contexts in this increasingly connected and surveyed global terrain. Participants will develop a principled framework to negotiate the uncertain changing nature of the digital, and will explore the significance for teaching and learning, research, civic engagement and professional advancement.

Participants successfully completing the research module and a choice of two elective modules progress to the final year of MSc, or exit with a **Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education**. Elective modules can be taken as stand-alone short courses from 2020.

YEAR THREE

provides opportunity for participants to demonstrate their mastery of a complex or specialised area of knowledge and of methodological skills when conducting research and/or advanced professional activity.

Research Project

* Core Module

Towards enhancing participants' expertise, knowledge and experience of conducting research about higher education, this module supports participants as they embark on in-depth research projects. Participants' research journey is facilitated every step of the way - through one-to-one supervisory expertise, online tutorials, and peer research groups. Oral, visual, written, and digital presentation skills are developed, culminating in an authentic and relevant product for your professional practice which details the research findings and insights (such as institutional reports, policies, conference presentations, research articles) while being aligned with international professional standards for post-graduate research.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The MSc in Higher Education is an intellectual stimulating programme, designed to inspire, provoke and broaden your thinking and practice going forward.

Flexible, part-time professional development

Inclusive of facilitated coursework and independent research, the MSc in Higher Education offers you five core modules and two electives modules over a three-year period of part-time study.

Your engagement is facilitated by our academics utilising blended-learning, which includes both synchronous and independent digital interactions. In the first year, each of the six-week modules include a week-long place-based component on the Belfast campus¹. The second and third year modules are facilitated fully online. The third year research project is undertaken through on-line interactions, where participants interact in peer research groups, and are apprenticed throughout the research journey with one-on-one synchronous supervisory expertise and continuous feedback. Such virtual interactions enable cross-institution and transnational connections, in addition to building critical digital capacity as participants gain experiential knowledge of educational technologies.

From 2020, elective modules can be taken as stand-alone short courses and entry to the second year MSc modules will be possible, for those who have demonstrated the requirements for prior learning. See <http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/ssesw/Study/ShortCourses/PostgraduateShortCourses/> for more details of SSESW's short courses. For more details on entry requirements see 'How to Apply'.

Blended learning

Your experiential engagement with technologies is a central objective of this programme. This enhances your learning processes as an individual, while building your capacity for digital communication and digital creation useful for your professional development and practice. The opportunity the MSc in Higher Education provides for you to reflect on your experiential learning of such technologies, is crucial for considering the contextual validity of such applications in your practice, in addition to more abstract and conceptual engagements within the formal content of the modules.

Support for your digital capacity is integrated within each module. This extends from accessing learning and research resources and materials, to creating digital representations and artefacts of your learning. Importantly, it enables both structured and informal social engagement with your peer participants.

In addition, opportunities are provided for specific aspects of educational technologies to be engaged with within the content and method of each module. The elective module focusing on the digital in higher education offered in the second year is particularly in-depth.

Such holistic engagement is designed to enhance participants' critical thinking and creativity in relation to digital aspects of higher education.

¹ Where institutions commit a minimum group enrolment from a specific location, alternative arrangements may be made for these in-person interactions to be offered off campus.



HOW TO APPLY

Diversity is a rich resource, and so we welcome participants from varied disciplinary backgrounds and levels of professional experience. Most important, is willingness to engage with matters of national and international significance in higher education, and an openness to contribute challenging ideas and approaches.

Qualifications for admission

As the first year of the programme offers a broad introduction to higher education, it is not necessary to have a previous degree in Higher Education for participating in the three foundational modules.

A 2.2 Honours degree or above or equivalent qualification acceptable to the University in any subject discipline. If you are an International applicant with a query about the acceptability of your academic qualification, you should refer to the 'Your Country' section of the University's website (go.qub.ac.uk/YourCountry) for advice on comparability with UK qualifications.

From 2020, entry to the second year MSc modules and short course modules will be possible for those who have demonstrated the requirements for prior learning. All applicants will normally work within or have access to a higher education institution.

Applications are submitted online via the Postgraduate Applications Portal (go.qub.ac.uk/pgapply). A step-by-step guide on the application and admissions process is available at go.qub.ac.uk/pgapplicationguide. If you need further advice, please contact: **postgrad.admissions@qub.ac.uk**

English language requirements

The English language requirement for entry to the MSc Higher Education programme at Queen's is expressed in terms of an IELTS Academic test score. The IELTS Academic overall score requirement is 6.5. For each individual test component, the minimum score required is normally 5.5, or an equivalent

acceptable to the University. For details of other English language qualifications which may be accepted by the University please visit **go.qub.ac.uk/EnglishLanguageReqs**

Visa

Visa and immigration requirements can sometimes seem intimidating; Queen's provides a high-level of support and advice on UK student visas directly for you. Working within Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner's code of standards (OISC), the International Student Support office is here to help you make a smooth transition from your home country to life in Belfast.

For information on how visa requirements are calculated, as well as Points Based System (PBS) and your Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) number, please see: **go.qub.ac.uk/intvisa**

Further information is also available at: **www.gov.uk/visas-immigration**

Fees

Tuition fees for the MSc in Higher Education are standard postgraduate taught fees for part time courses. See qub.ac.uk/TuitionFees for further information. As a guide, the following tuition fees apply to enrolments in the academic year 2018-19:

- The standard part time tuition fee for the MSc in HE programme is £1833 (NI/GB/EU) and £5233 (International) per year of study. Tuition fees for short course modules are currently £611 (NI/GB/EU) and £1744 (International).
- These fees are based on the Per Cats Points Fee for part time courses of £30.56 (NI/GB/EU) and £87.22 (International)

Tuition fees are subject to annual inflationary increases.



ABOUT BELFAST AND NORTHERN IRELAND

Belfast itself is a vibrant city on the current 'Must See' destination lists. It is also the safest region in the UK (British Crime Survey 2015/16). Awash with enthusiasm, culture and that famous Irish friendliness, course participants can also explore:

- The rest of the UK, Ireland and Europe with accessible airport and transport links to most major cities.
- Northern Ireland: happiest place in the UK (Office of National Statistics 2016) alongside the most affordable for students (NatWest Student Living Index 2015).
- Beautiful scenery and outdoor adventures such as the Giant's Causeway or hiking in the Mourne Mountains.
- Titanic Belfast is Europe's Leading Tourist Attraction (World Travel Awards 2016).
- Game of Thrones' film location and activity tours.
- Great entertainment and nights out; a buzzing arts and social scene from festivals, theatre and international events to historic pubs, stylish restaurants and brilliant shopping.



RANKED 25TH IN THE WORLD FOR INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK

(TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS 2018)



10TH IN THE UK FOR STUDENT SATISFACTION WITH THEIR COURSE

(GUARDIAN UNIVERSITY GUIDE 2018)



RANKED IN THE TOP 1% OF UNIVERSITIES IN THE WORLD

(QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS 2018/WEBOMETRICS.INFO)



QUEEN'S IS THE 9TH OLDEST UNIVERSITY IN THE UK

(COMPLETE UNIVERSITY GUIDE 2019)



WORLD LEADING RESEARCH JOINT 8TH IN THE UK FOR RESEARCH INTENSITY

(RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK REF 2014)



RANKED IN THE TOP 200 IN THE WORLD FOR GRADUATE PROSPECTS

(QS GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY RANKINGS 2018)





Dr Dina Zoe Belluigi has researched and taught within the field of Higher Education studies for well over a decade. She joined Queen's to contribute to their international education and social science programmes, with a particular focus on Higher Education studies. She was previously a Senior Lecturer at the Centre for Higher Education Research Teaching and Learning (CHERTL) at Rhodes University in South Africa, where she coordinated postgraduate programmes, taught academic

staff from a number of institutions, and consulted on educational development matters. Her teaching and supervision expertise is extensive, with a particular interest in the possibilities and problematics of the evaluation of student and staff learning, and equity in higher education.

Her current interests reflect the multidisciplinary nature of higher education studies, extending from a concern with agency and authorship, the politics of belonging and assessment, transformation and creativity – both in terms of student engagement and staff development. Underpinning these is a concern with the interpretative frameworks utilised in contexts undergoing change.

Dr Belluigi holds a Master of Fine Art, a Master of Education (Higher Education), and a transdisciplinary Phd (Kingston University, London). She is an associate fellow of the George J. Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice, and holds membership of a number of international associations and editorial boards related to research in higher education and educational development.

Dr Dina Zoe Belluigi
d.belluigi@qub.ac.uk

School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work
Queen's University Belfast
69-71 University Street
Belfast BT7 1HL
Northern Ireland

E: ssesw@qub.ac.uk
T: +44(0)29 9097 5941/3323/5117

Find out more about the School and the degrees at: www.qub.ac.uk/ssesw



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Information is correct at time of print and is subject to change (May 2018). For current information, please visit go.qub.ac.uk/coursefinder