

Programme Specification

Award and title: Doctor of Education

<i>School:</i>	Education, Language and Psychology
<i>Subject area:</i>	Children, Young People and Education
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2025-26
<i>in the month(s) of</i>	January
<i>Awarding institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Teaching institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Delivery location:</i>	York
<i>Programme/s accredited by:</i>	N/A
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Postgraduate Certificate Educational Research Postgraduate Diploma Educational Research MA Educational Research Master of Philosophy
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	N/A
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	N/A
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	Characteristics Statement Doctoral Degree (2020)
<i>Mode/s of study:</i>	Part-time for 4-6 years
<i>Language of study:</i>	English
<i>Paired with Foundation Year</i>	No
<i>Study abroad opportunities:</i>	No
<i>Opt-in YSJU Placement Year opportunity:</i>	No

Introduction and special features

The Doctor of Education (EdD) is a distinctive two-part programme that offers you the opportunity to develop your capacity as a reflexive researcher before moving on to complete your own original doctoral thesis. The programme is ideal for you if you are an experienced professional working in the broad area of education, which may include all levels of formal or informal education, as well as education-related services or allied disciplines such as health or social care. It is relevant for those with an interest in critically examining their professional practice in detail and using this to inform change. Many opt for a professional doctorate of this kind as a means of developing their expertise in a particular area of practice and to enhance their employability capabilities.

The EdD combines both taught and research-based elements across two parts. Part One, in years 1-2, includes four core modules, each of which is focused on acquiring systematic knowledge and engaging in meaningful reflection, interpretation, and critique of specific research problematics. Part Two, across years 3-6, is focused on developing your own original doctoral level research. This element is facilitated through a co-constructive approach with a supervisory team with expertise in your specific area. This programme structure is ideal for you if you are returning to academic study after some time or interested in thinking through some different research options before committing to a doctoral topic for your thesis.

The distinctive features of the EdD include:

Theoretically rich learning opportunities. The four taught modules across Part One emphasise the value of engaging with your professional practice in a critical and reflective way, leading to thoughtful and innovative discussion and analysis. Each of the modules builds systematically towards your thesis, with a focus on own professional identity; the context in which your practice takes place; your approach to gaining knowledge; and finally, the research impact you may seek to make.

A research-active teaching team. Whilst on the programme you will have access to an experienced team of tutors and supervisors, all of whom have expertise in their respective fields which span education policy, inclusive education, research methodologies, and applied linguistics. You can expect to be taught by staff from the University professoriate as well as other members of staff with significant responsibility for research.

The collegiality that develops as you learn together with others. Unlike traditional PhD programmes, where you are a sole-researcher, on the EdD you can listen to and contribute as part of a small but diverse doctoral cohort, allowing you to consider your professional practice from a range of perspectives and disciplinary backgrounds. Moreover, as you complete your assessed components and move towards your thesis, you are encouraged and supported to see yourself as part of the wider academic community of practice with a valid contribution to make.

The flexible nature of the programme. Having completed Part One, you will embark on your 50,000-word thesis but have the option of taking between two and four years to complete, thus allowing you to work at your own pace and in accordance with the demands of your professional and personal context.

The level of support. We appreciate that many embark on a professional doctorate after a break in study and so, alongside the structured teaching in Part One, we provide additional guidance to enable you to grow your confidence as an academic writer, including opportunities to make use of formative assessment opportunities, group development drop-ins, research writing days, and individual tutorials with your module tutors. Finally, as postgraduate researcher, you will also have access to all the provision made by the University for those on a traditional PhD route, which includes bespoke training, seminars, conferences, and development opportunities.

Admissions criteria

You must meet the minimum entry requirements which are published on the programme specific webpage. In addition, you must have:

Admission to the programme will be decided by an interview panel, and no candidates will be admitted solely on the basis of previous awards or professional experience. The typical minimum entrance qualifications for the Doctor of Education will be:

- An upper second-class honours (2:1) degree (or equivalent) and/or a Master's degree
- At least three years of relevant professional experience

All candidates must also currently be in a professional role that is relevant to this award. The relevance of past and current experience to a particular award will be judged at interview.

If you do not have traditional qualifications, you may be eligible for entry on the basis of Recognition of prior learning (RPL). We also consider applications for entry with advanced standing. Candidates with eligible professional experience may be admitted to the programme without the required academic qualifications provided they can demonstrate through other means that they have the necessary skills to study and research at doctoral level. This will usually be through the production of a piece of written work specified by the Programme Lead prior to interview.

A candidate whose first language is not English will be required to demonstrate sufficient competence in English as specified by the University. If your first language is not English, you need to take an IELTS test or an equivalent qualification accepted by the University (see <https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/international/how-to-apply/english-language-requirements/>).

If you have gained Level 8 credits on another professional doctorate programme, you may be permitted to transfer credit into the EdD under University credit-transfer rules provided you can demonstrate equivalence of learning to the taught modules in the first year of Part One of the programme. All modules on the EdD are at doctoral level and Master's-level credits will not be allowed as accredited prior learning on this programme. No more than 180 credits from taught components may be transferred in this way, and students must complete the thesis with us at York St John University.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

Candidates working with children or vulnerable adults are expected to have the necessary clearance to do so. For UK students this will be through the DBS and should be through the organisation they are working with. The University is not responsible for arranging fieldwork, work placements or clearance for students to engage with particular work-based environments. Candidates researching vulnerable groups in their work environment must include on application a letter from their employer (or equivalent) stating that they have the necessary clearance and permission to do so.

Programme aim(s)

The Doctor of Education (EdD) aims to promote a critical understanding of complex educational problematics leading to the transformation of professional practice. It aims to extend your capacity as an independent researcher with the ability to plan, conduct, and disseminate your own doctoral-level study. The programme aims to support you to make a meaningful contribution to the field of a quality to satisfy peer review and extend the forefront of the discipline. Finally, our aim is to create a vibrant research community with the capacity to have a transformative impact on educational policy and professional practice.

Programme learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of the programme students will be able to:

Level 8

8.1 Demonstrate a critical understanding of recent professional developments and current theoretical frameworks which have direct relevance to professional practice in education and your own professional context.

8.2 Engage in reflective processes and interpret, where appropriate, personal, local, organisational, national, cultural and international factors reflexively to provide insight into your own professional practice and research problematics.

8.3 Demonstrate your systematic acquisition and understanding of a body of knowledge which is at the forefront of the discipline and interpret this to generate original ideas.

8.4 Construct and defend a clear argument in relation to significant issues in education and communicate this at a quality to satisfy peer review or merit publication within the profession.

8.5 Demonstrate your understanding and rigorous application of methodologies and techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

8.6 Conceptualise and design a doctoral-level study for the generation of new knowledge framed around researchable questions.

8.7 Design and strategically plan for the transformation of professional practice.

8.8 Complete a substantive, original piece of research that meets the requirements of the University's regulations

Programme structure

The programme is based on 540 Level-8 credits, with 180 assigned to the taught element and 360 to the thesis. You will complete in 4-6 years of part-time study, with the first two years (Part One) consisting of four taught modules (each at 45 credits) and the remaining years (Part Two) dedicated to the production of a research thesis of up to 50,000 words.

Code	Level	Year	Month	Title	Credits	Module status	
						Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensatable (NC) or compensatable (X)
DOC8005M	8	1	Feb-Aug	Identifying and articulating issues in professional practice	45	C	NC
DOC8006M	8	1	May - Jan	Contextualising issues in professional practice	45	C	NC
DOC8007M	8	2	Feb-Aug	Researching issues in professional practice	45	C	NC
DOC8008M	8	2	May-Aug	Interpreting and impacting on issues in professional practice	45	C	NC

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the table above as non-compensatable. A non-compensatable module is one that must be passed at the relevant level (with a mark of 50) in order to progress.

Learning, teaching and assessment

The Doctor of Education programme has two parts, each of which has their own distinctive approaches to learning, teaching and assessment. Part One of the programme is taught and Part Two is an independent doctoral thesis.

Part One

The first part of the EdD has a deliberate 'architecture' designed to build towards your thesis. Part One has four 45-credit modules each consisting of least 36 hours of contact time. In module 1 (DOC8005M) you begin by considering your own professional biography and using reflexive methods to identify researchable issues in your practice. In module 2 (DOC8006M) you will take a step back and examine the broader context of your professional practice using different theoretical approaches to gain greater critical understanding. Module 3 (DOC8007M) will build your capacity as a researcher in readiness for you to conduct your own doctoral thesis. And finally, module 4 (DOC8008M) focuses on the process of interpretation and making meaning from data alongside identifying how you might seek to have an impact on practice, or perceptions of practice, through your research.

Each of the four modules is primarily taught through intensive teaching blocks. You will engage in both on-campus and online learning across the Monday to Friday of the February and May school half-terms in each of the first two years. On-campus taught sessions will include lectures, seminars and open discussion to reflect on the learning and apply to your own professional context. There is also opportunity for informal learning and socialising through organised meals and social gatherings; these are deemed to be part of the doctoral learning experience. Online learning will include access to pre-recorded materials, guided readings, and group activities accessed through our Virtual Learning Environment. Taking a blended approach in this way offers greater flexibility to think, reflect, and apply learning at your own pace but with the benefits of face-to-face interactions which serve to extend your depth of understanding. Beyond the four teaching blocks, you will be encouraged to attend three research writing days in April, July and October and monthly group development drop-ins facilitated in the evenings. As well as this, you will also have opportunity to make use of individual tutorials with module tutors which can be accessed online or face-to-face. Finally, you will be invited to join and be an active part of the University's and specifically the School

of Education, Language and Psychology's various research clusters, which provide further support but also embed you into a research culture with opportunities to share findings, test out ideas, and gain confidence in presenting your research.

From the outset of your doctoral journey, you will be encouraged to see yourself as a researcher rather than a student. Your written assessed work will reflect your own research interests and professional priorities and seek to 'speak' to the academic audiences where it will have the most impact. The first three modules include written submissions of 5000-8000 words and are designed to reflect the varied structure and format of academic journal articles, thus making your submissions more 'authentic' in nature and increasing your potential to publish from your doctoral studies. Whilst publication is not a condition of passing any module, it is the ambition of many doctoral students and enhances the capacity to transform practice in your professional field. Your submissions will first undergo a process of formative review, where you will receive feedback from tutors on how to develop, improve or clarify your ideas before being submitted for summative assessment. All summative assessments in Part One are marked on a pass/fail basis based on meeting the requirements of the specified Programme Learning Outcomes.

Part Two

Having successfully completed all four modules in Part One, you will be invited to submit a doctoral proposal and complete a Transfer meeting with your supervisory team and an independent Chair to assess your plans and ensure that you are in a position to embark on your 50,000-word thesis. Once approved, you will begin the process of completing a substantive and original piece of research. You will be expected to attend a minimum of six supervision meetings annually that may be conducted face-to-face or online.

In Part Two, the Transfer process, supervision and review processes will proceed according to the same guidelines as for PhDs. Assessment of the thesis will follow the regulations and procedures laid out for YSJ Research Degrees, using the specific learning outcomes and thesis requirements for this programme as the criteria against which your thesis will be judged. Examination will be by *viva voce*, which the student must attend in person, and will include feedback from both an external examiner as well as internal examiner from outside of your supervisory team.

Progression and graduation requirements

The University's general [regulations](#) for professional doctorate awards apply to this programme.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the Programme Structure section as non-compensatable.

In addition, the following programme-specific regulations apply in respect of progression and graduation:

- Students must pass all four taught modules in order to be eligible to progress from Part One to Part Two.
- Progression to Part Two will be determined by a Transfer Panel set up under the Research Degree Regulations who will assess individual research proposals
- Award of a Doctor of Education will be determined by a viva examination according to the Research Degree regulations
- The Postgraduate Certificate Educational Research will be awarded to students who exit with at least 60 credits from taught modules (e.g. 90 credits from two Professional Doctorate taught modules)
- The Postgraduate Diploma Educational Research will be awarded to students who exit with at least 120 credits from taught modules (e.g. 135 credits from three Professional Doctorate taught modules)
- The MA Educational Research will be awarded to students who exit with at least 180 credits from taught modules (e.g., successful completion of all Professional Doctorate taught modules)

- The Master of Philosophy may be awarded at the discretion of examiners for those students who complete a thesis but are not awarded a Professional Doctorate

Internal and external reference points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

- University mission and values
- University 2026 Strategy
- QAA subject benchmark statements
- Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications

Date written / revised:

Programme originally approved: