Introduction and special features
The Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PCAP) is a professional development programme which aims to promote the development of high-quality professional practice in higher education. It equips you with a range of pedagogic techniques and practical skills which you can use in your own teaching, as well as practices which will help you thrive in the first year of teaching in higher education.

The programme showcases inspiring, student-led teaching approaches, and models effective practice in all aspects of the academic role. It has a competency-based curriculum founded on skill development. A diagnostic learning analysis at the start of the programme will identify your individual development priorities. This will inform a personalised professional learning plan, which enables you to engage with an individually-relevant set of online learning activities. The programme is designed to enable you to achieve HEA Fellowship and the programme learning outcomes are aligned with Descriptor 2 (FHEA) of the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF).

The programme encourages you to develop a reflective approach to your own practice. You will engage with contemporary research and scholarship relevant to your discipline, apply innovative approaches in your own teaching and evaluate your own teaching practice and that of others. You are encouraged to learn together with other participants as a community of learners.

The programme follows an intentionally blended approach, combining residential, off-campus, block delivery with synchronous and asynchronous online activities to model effective practice in online and face-to-face education. Face-to-face delivery through residential blocks will occur outside semester time to leave you free to concentrate on teaching and the other aspects of your academic role during teaching periods.
PCAP is located within the taught Masters degree framework in the School of Education. Participants successfully completing PCAP will have a progression route to the MA in Education or MA in Post-compulsory Education.

**Admissions criteria**
You must meet the University’s general entry criteria for postgraduate study. In addition, you must have:

- an honours degree or equivalent qualification and/or experience
- current employment in a job role which involves a substantive element of teaching, learning and assessing of higher education students

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/](https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/international/how-to-apply/english-language-requirements/)).

You may be eligible for entry on the basis of Accredited Prior (Experiential) Learning (APL/APEL). Candidates entering the programme through this route must have gained HEA Fellowship at Descriptor 1 (AFHEA) based on achievement in dimensions A2 Teach and/or support learning and A3 Assess and give feedback to learners of the UK Professional Standards Framework.

**Programme aims**
The PCAP programme aims to make an important contribution to the University’s strategic goal of Inspiring Learning, through supporting you to develop excellent practice in learning, teaching and assessment. It gives you an understanding of the needs and challenges of current students based on an understanding of scholarship and significant research. It underlines the importance of collaborative, transformative and inclusive approaches to learning and teaching informed by scholarly evidence and data, and the need to offer authentic, vocationally-relevant learning experiences.

This programme aims to be both pragmatic and inspiring, helping new academics survive and thrive in the academic role and showcasing inspiring, student-led teaching approaches in which all stakeholders are partners in the creation and sharing of knowledge. It will equip you with a toolbox of pedagogic techniques and practical skills which you can use in your own teaching. It encourages you to develop a reflective approach to your own practice, to engage with contemporary research relevant to your discipline, apply innovative approaches in your own teaching, and evaluate your own practice and that of others. It also aims to expose you to digital learning technologies and encourages you to consider the way in which technology can be used to support learning, both within and outside the classroom.

The programme aims to cultivate curiosity and advanced scholarship to enable future progression in academic study at a higher level such as PhD or professional doctorate. It also connects you closely to the York St John community of pedagogic practice and York St John’s institutional values.
Programme learning outcomes

Level 7

On successful completion of this level of study, you will be able to:

7.1 Analyse, synthesise and evaluate theories and concepts of higher education teaching, using critically reflective approaches

7.2 Select, justify and apply appropriate pedagogical approaches to the intentional design and delivery of effective learning activities

7.3 Discuss and refine your values and philosophy of teaching and learning in order to develop your identity as an academic professional

7.4 Reflectively evaluate your own practice in relation to the UKPSF (D2, Fellow of the HEA) and contemporary scholarship in the field

Programme Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Status of Module*</th>
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<tr>
<td>MAC001</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Learning, Teaching and Assessment in Higher Education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAC002</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Inspiring Learning</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*C: Compulsory

Learning, teaching and assessment

The learning, teaching and assessment strategy for the PCAP programme reflects the key objectives and priorities of the York St John University Inspiring Learning strategy.

The programme uses a blended approach to learning, teaching and assessment encouraging active learning, discussion and sharing of practice in both face-to-face and on-line environments. The pedagogic approach is consistent with the social constructivist principles which provide the theoretical basis for learning on the course. The pedagogic approach also reflects the principles of active learning and learning together with others in a community of practice. The delivery model uses a 2-day residential face-to-face block at the start of each module. The cost of these residential is included within the course fee, so there are no additional costs to you other than the cost of travel to the venue. The face-to-face delivery of this block model provides a broad overview of the topics covered within each module, provides an opportunity for authentic experiential skill development and sharing of practice, and facilitates the development of a learning community amongst the cohort. The remainder of each module is taught through a combination of synchronous and asynchronous online learning and self-managed authentic group learning activities. This allows you to engage more flexibly with the programme during semester time and to fit your study around the commitments of your job role. These action learning sets and problem-based learning, together with personal tutor mentoring, support the development of your own pedagogical practice. Built-in moments of critical reflection with participants sharing experiences and the learning that they gained will support your development as a reflective practitioner.

As the learning on this programme relates closely to your professional role and responsibilities, there is a close integration between learning, teaching and assessment on the course and your
own professional practice. For this reason, peer observation of practice contributes to the summative assessments in both modules, and the peer observation is a pass/fail component of each module. You must pass the peer observation to pass the module and to satisfy the AdvanceHE accreditation requirement to authenticate the practice of applicants.

The assessment strategy for the programme follows the principle of assessment for learning. Formative activities are built in throughout programme to enable you to gain experience with unfamiliar areas of academic practice and to see how different areas of academic practice integrate and connect. These activities are often framed as problem-based learning or action learning sets. Where you have not had the opportunity to evidence certain aspects of the UKPSF from your own practice, these activities provide experience which you can reflect upon in the summative assessments. The summative peer observations also serve a formative purpose, enabling you to benefit from feedback which assists in the development of your practice, and informs your reflections. The formative observation of practice built into the Learning, Teaching and Assessment in Higher Education module affords you the opportunity to develop your own practice through observing the practice of others.

The summative assessments for this programme are integrated assessments which serve the purpose of awarding academic credit and Fellowship of the Higher Education academy. The summative assessment for the Learning, Teaching and Assessment in Higher Education module requires you to create an electronic portfolio of professional academic practice evidencing achievement of dimensions A2 (Teach and support learning) and A3 (Assess and give feedback to learners) of the UKPSF at Descriptor 1. The assessment takes the form of a dialogic assessment of practice, with the portfolio providing the evidence to support this. Passing the summative assessment for this module makes you eligible for the award of AFHEA.

The summative assessment for the Inspiring Learning module requires you to engage in critical reflection on a module you have designed, taught or delivered. It is structured in the form of a module review which considers the effectiveness of the teaching and assessment approaches used in the module, and links these back to pedagogic literature and the descriptors and dimensions of the UKPSF.

Passing the summative assessments for both modules will enable you to evidence achievement of the dimensions of practice of the UKPSF at Descriptor 2 and makes you eligible for the award of FHEA.

As you develop your summative portfolio and written reflections, you will have opportunities to receive support and feedback from your peer group and personal tutor. Your tutor, for example, will typically discuss the evidence that you assemble against the UKPSF criteria, helping you to strengthen the scholarly nature of your pedagogic practice, to reflect critically on the evidence you present and to demonstrate progress towards fellowship. The tutor role is that of facilitator, with the onus being on you as an active agent of your own learning and that of others. The portfolio and written reflections will consist of a critically reflective commentary underpinned by reading and theory and cross-referenced to the UKPSF criteria. Tutors and assessors will be required to attend the mentor training which is already in place for the York St John University Professional Dialogic Route to D2 recognition as part of the York St John Recognising Academic Practice CPD Framework. All tutors and assessors will be Fellows of the HEA.

This programme is committed to inclusive practice through promoting equality, diversity and equal opportunity. Diversity of staff and students brings with different ideas, knowledge and experiences that contribute to an enriched learning environment. Promoting equality involves treating everyone with equal dignity and worth, irrespective of the group or groups to which they belong, while also
raising aspirations and supporting achievement for people with diverse requirements, entitlements and backgrounds. An inclusive environment for learning anticipates the varied requirements of learners, and this programme follows the principles of Universal Design for Learning in providing learning resources, activities and assessments. The programme encourages you to take an inclusive approach in your own practice and includes a specific focus on Universal Design for Learning approaches.

There is an emphasis within the programme on developing you as a learner within a community of practice that will provide sustainable support beyond the life of the programme. The use of self-managed groups such as action learning sets intentionally supports active learning, builds cross-organisational relationships, encourages a culture of questioning, enquiring, problem-solving, and enhancement of pedagogic practices. You are strongly encouraged to engage with the scholarship of learning and teaching through engaging with wider communities of practice at York St John, including the Research into Professional Practice in Learning and Education (RIPPLE) network and the annual UP North pedagogy conference.

Progression and graduation requirements
The University’s general regulations for choose an item: awards apply to this programme.

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

Internal and external reference points
This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

- University Mission Statement [see page two]
- Strategic Plan 2015-20 [see page four]
- Inspiring Learning Strategy
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
- UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF)
- Advance HE Accreditation requirements

Date written / revised: 11/01/19
Programme originally approved: 01/07/13