Introduction and special features
The Postgraduate Diploma in Academic Practice (PDAP) is a professional development programme which aims to promote the development of high-quality practice in teaching, learning and student support in higher education. It equips you with a range of pedagogic techniques, advising and tutoring practices and practical skills which you can use in your own teaching and tutoring. It gives you an understanding of the challenges faced by students and accentuates the importance of teaching and advising approaches informed by data and scholarly evidence. It considers how contemporary higher education policy shapes and influences the operation and delivery of learning and advising.

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). You will also be able to demonstrate your competency in academic advising against the UKAT Professional Framework for Advising and Tutoring.

The programme encourages you to become reflective teaching, learning and advising practitioners with the confidence to adopt effective, student-centred teaching, advising and tutoring practices to support student success and meet completion and employability agendas. You will engage with contemporary research and scholarship, apply innovative approaches in your support of learning and evaluate personal and institutional practices. You are encouraged to learn together as a community of learners. This programme connects you closely to the YSJ community of pedagogic practice and YSJ’s institutional values. It also seeks to connect you closely to national and global communities of advising and tutoring practice.
The PDAP programme is located within the taught Masters degree framework in the School of Education.

**Admissions criteria**
You must meet the University's general entry criteria for postgraduate study. In addition, you must have:
- A Doctoral (level 8) qualification
- current employment in a job role which involves a substantive element of teaching, learning and assessing of higher education students and academic advising/personal tutoring 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/).

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 Fellowship of the HEA 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**
This 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 also seeks to make an important contribution to improving student outcomes and increasing the standard of academic advising in higher education by enabling you to develop excellent practice in supporting student success through academic advising and personal tutoring. 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 you 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 and advising. 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 exposes 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

7.5. Use evidence-informed approaches to contribute to impartial, transparent judgements on academic standards and the enhancement of student learning

7.6. Appraise technology systems and evaluate their application to advising and tutoring

7.7. Select and apply appropriate methods for evaluating and enhancing individual and organisational advising and tutoring practice

Programme Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Status of Module</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Learning Teaching and Assessment</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Inspiring Learning</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>MAC003</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 or 2</td>
<td>Preparing for External Examining: Academic Standards and Enhancing Student Learning</td>
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<td>MAC011</td>
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<td>Foundations of Advising and Tutoring</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>Academic Practice Enhancement Project</td>
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</tbody>
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*C: Compulsory

Learning, teaching and assessment

The learning, teaching and assessment strategy for this 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.

Modules MAC001, MAC002, MAC011, MAC012 are delivered using a 2-day residential face-to-face block at the start of each module. These blocks are delivered as residential retreats scheduled outside of semester time (some over a weekend) so that staff can engage uninterrupted
away from the distractions of daily academic life. 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. The group learning activities, together with regular personal tutor mentoring, support the development of your own pedagogic and advising/tutoring 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 constitutes one of the summative assessments in some modules, and the peer observation is a pass/fail component of those 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 use of experiential skill development activities, reflection on personal tutoring practice in the workplace, and the advising enhancement project enables you to demonstrate your competency in fundamental advising and tutoring skills and the ability to operate as a confident, reflective advising practitioner.

The assessment strategy for the programme follows the principle of assessment for learning with formative activities built in throughout. Formative activities enable you to gain experience with unfamiliar areas of academic and tutoring practice and to see how different aspects of advising and student learning 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 or the UKAT Professional Framework for Advising and Tutoring from your own practice, these activities provide experience which you can reflect upon in the summative assessments. The summative peer observations of teaching 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 ‘selfish’ observation 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 experienced educators.

The course is assessed solely through coursework. The summative assessments for the Learning, Teaching and Assessment in HE and Inspiring Learning modules 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 Learning, Teaching and Assessment in HE and Inspiring Learning 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 are assembling 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. All tutors and assessors will be Fellows of the HEA.

The Foundations of Advising and Tutoring module is assessed through the creation of a portfolio of structured reflections which gives you a chance to really explore your own learning and demonstrate your practice. The structured reflections link evidence of your individual practice to relevant theory and competencies of the UKAT Professional Framework for Advising and Tutoring. The portfolio is assessed through a professional dialogic conversation between you and the assessors which offers useful formative feedforward into your professional practice.

The Student Success Through Advising and Tutoring module is assessed through a written critical reflection on the role of technology, quality enhancement and inclusive practice in your advising, and how this is influenced by higher education policy. You are also required to demonstrate your competency in the use of data and technology in advising students by completing a practical data analysis and interpretation assignment.

The Advising Enhancement Project allows you the space to engage further with the scholarship of advising and tutoring through active research, testing and critical evaluation of your ideas and concepts in a live setting. It is assessed through a written dissertation on the enhancement project work. Alternatively you can choose to study the Academic Practice Enhancement Project to enable you to engage further with the scholarship and enhancement of learning and teaching.

This programme is committed to inclusive practice through promoting equality, diversity and equal opportunity. Diversity of staff and students brings 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 teaching and tutoring 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 academic practice. The learning and the assessment strategies have relevance to the roles and interests of participants, enabling you to carry out practitioner research in your setting. You are strongly encouraged to engage with the scholarship of learning, teaching, and advising 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. You are also encouraged to engage with the wider academic advising/personal tutoring community both nationally and globally through online platforms.

**Progression and graduation requirements**
The University’s [general regulations for](#) postgraduate 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)](#)
- [UKAT Professional Framework for Advising and Tutoring](#)
- [Advance HE Accreditation requirements](#)

*Date written / revised: 11/01/19*

*Programme originally approved: 01/07/13*