PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Medway

Part-time Graduate study
INTRODUCTION

Taught by expert staff in Kent’s Centre for Professional Practice (CPP), the postgraduate programme in Professional Practice builds on your existing work experience and qualifications to further your professional development.

About the programme

Designed for participants from private, public and third sector settings, this flexible, part-time programme allows you to broaden your expertise while gaining a recognised qualification to help progress your career.

You may choose to follow one of our specific accredited pathways or select modules of personal and professional interest from across the University.

Teaching is structured around a series of taught weekends, consisting of formal lectures, seminars and workshops. During the sessions, you explore your existing work practice, with modules designed to help you review and analyse current debates and challenges relevant to the professional context in which you work.

The programme gives you the opportunity to attain academic recognition for the skills, knowledge and experience you have developed in the workplace. In particular, you focus on strategic and critical analytical skills as well as knowledge relating to inter-professional working and research-based practice. By the end of the programme, you will have gained new perspectives on your professional role and developed new approaches to your day-to-day practice.

Academic excellence

Kent is ranked among the top 20 universities in the UK (The Guardian University Guide 2015). All our academic schools produce world-class research, and Kent is rated as internationally excellent, leading the way in many fields of study.

CPP is a transdisciplinary academic department focused on flexible work-related learning within higher education and has established itself as a leading centre for education, training, and research and development.

We work with a wide range of external partners and employers to create distinct and original work-based and work-related developmental and educational programmes, which respond to the unique workforce challenges experienced by employees and organisations across the region and beyond.

Our programmes are designed to enhance career progression and foster intellectual and professional development and practice.

Inspirational teaching

Kent is renowned for its teaching style; our academics have the outstanding ability to pass on their passion for study and debate. Staff are approachable and accessible; through direct contact with them, you are intellectually challenged and encouraged to broaden your horizons.
graduates are now working for organisations in the UK such as Great Ormond Street Hospital, Health Education England, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, Kent Probation Service, Rochester Grammar School, Brompton Academy and the University of Kent.

Flexible study
At CPP, we recognise the individual needs and working circumstances of professional people, the diverse nature of the workplace and the obstacles professionals may face in taking up learning opportunities.

Our programmes provide inclusive and coherent educational and work-related opportunities. We specialise in flexible, part-time programmes that acknowledge the competing priorities experienced by professionals who wish to remain in employment.

We also offer a flexible approach to learning, enabling you to take single modules or work towards a postgraduate certificate, diploma or Master’s degree.

Accreditation of Prior Experiential and/or Certificated Learning (APECL)
The Professional Practice programme may allow you to convert prior learning achievements into University of Kent academic credit via Accreditation of Prior Experiential and/or Certificated Learning. To be eligible for accreditation prior learning must be at the appropriate level and relevant to the Professional Practice programme’s learning outcomes. For details about claiming accreditation, please contact cppmedway@kent.ac.uk

Key facts
• Work-related, transdisciplinary programme.
• Suitable for professionals working in the public, private and third sector, including health and social care, education, local government and public services.
• Awards include postgraduate certificate, postgraduate diploma, MA and MSc.
• Part-time study over three years to achieve MA/MSc.
• Accreditation of Prior Learning (APECL) may be available.

Professional links
Our strong links with local employers and national organisations mean we keep up-to-date with important changes and developments in the workplace and understand the needs of employers and individual staff in relation to learning and development.

Staff within CPP have a range of expertise and many have experience of working in business, industry and the health sectors, and therefore provide a valuable contribution to our programmes.

In addition, CPP has a wealth of experience in delivering programmes with a work-related element, enabling us to support you to realise your potential in your working life.

Our postgraduate programmes attract successful professionals who come to Kent to develop their expertise. They progress to apply their knowledge in their chosen profession and develop their organisational strategy.

Career development
A postgraduate degree in Professional Practice is a particularly valuable and flexible qualification that can open the door to exciting careers in many professions. Graduates have progressed their careers and are now working as head teachers, deputy directors in human resources and organisational development, and college and university administration managers. Our most recent students and
Roxanna Costin is studying for an MSc in Professional Practice. She is currently Dental Office Manager at Health Education England.

What attracted you to studying Professional Practice at Kent?
The fact that the Centre for Professional Practice was open to consider applicants who did not hold a traditional qualification meant that I was able to enrol on this course based on the professional experience I had gained, especially within management. The area of study fits well with my day job, which is vital for this qualification because everything that we learn links back to it.

What have you particularly enjoyed?
I like the fact that my fellow students come from an array of working environments, enabling shared practice and unique learning. The debates in class are always useful.

In particular, I have enjoyed the Evidence-Based Practice module. This was a real challenge because everything you write about has to be so factual. Finding relevant data, or in fact discovering the lack of relevant data, opens your eyes to how information is communicated to us through various mediums – you end up questioning everything!

What about the teaching?
Our tutors are a fount of knowledge – they facilitate our learning and open our minds to question, explore and reach our own conclusions. The team at CPP genuinely enthuse about what they do and this is apparent in their delivery.

How would you describe your fellow students?
There’s an interesting mix of people, bringing a variety of strengths to the programme. Some have, like me, enrolled on the programme without the standard academic background, but bring a huge amount of knowledge and experience with them. Others are true academics, who support those of us who are not.

What’s the level of support like?
Excellent – it’s there if you need it. Our librarian responds quickly to queries and offers sound advice. The tutors always offer a one-to-one if you need to speak to them and the CPP support team is very responsive.

How do you think your studies at Kent will help you in your career development?
My studies have opened my mind to different approaches to the ways in which I undertake my role. I have a vast amount of experience with little to no formal training to support how I manage tasks. The programme has improved my confidence in delivering my thoughts and has encouraged me to question things. From a career perspective, this can only be a positive outcome.

What are you planning to do next?
The programme has definitely given me a thirst for knowledge. Who knows, I may engage in further education and perhaps undertake a PhD.

Can you offer any advice for those thinking about taking this course?
Do be prepared to make sacrifices. If you are a full-time employee, have a family or have other commitments, you will need to be prepared for additional pressure in these areas. Plan the time to study in advance. When it gets tough, talk to your peers, line manager and especially the staff at the University – they will understand. Most of all, enjoy it. This is a fabulous course which allows non-traditional students to study at a challenging level.
James Devine graduated from Kent in 2013 with an MSc in Professional Practice. He is currently Deputy Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development at Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Foundation Trust.

What attracted you to studying Professional Practice at Kent?
This type of Master’s qualification is unique in that it allows you to focus your studies on wider aspects of human resource management rather than the traditional, expected elements. I had worked with some of the tutors before, so I was aware of their calibre. The programme was structured around work, being on a Friday, Saturday and Sunday every six to eight weeks, meaning that my time away from work was kept to a minimum. This was a great selling point.

What did you particularly enjoy?
The tutors and my colleagues on the programme made it enjoyable, yet challenging enough that you knew you were benefiting from your studies.

What about the teaching?
Without exception, it was excellent! All the tutors were very different, yet they offered something to every student. Nothing was ever too much trouble, and they often shared their own time to ensure that you didn’t leave until you were clear about what was expected of you with regard to the assignments.

How would you describe your fellow students?
We all came from such varying backgrounds that when we saw each other, we were able to share new strategies and get advice on how to deal with situations. We always talked about the assignments and how we could share resources. It was never competitive, it was about supporting each other so that we all reached the finish line together.

Did you feel well supported in your studies?
Yes, the support was very good, particularly from the tutors. I think any other place of study would be hard pushed to compete with the tutors within the Professional Practice programme at Kent.

What about the facilities?
The facilities on campus were great for part-time students, with the library being open until 11 pm during term time.

How do you think your studies at Kent have affected your employment prospects?
I think they have improved vastly. Not just having a degree on my record, but the new skill sets, confidence and improved competence are all benefits to studying this programme.

Learning from colleagues and listening to their stories and professional challenges have also helped.

This degree allows for greater insight, personal reflection and the time to really challenge yourself to complete a unique degree programme. It lends itself to each student focusing on their own practice, and actually improving it, by taking the time to reflect on existing practice based on reality, as well as theory and literature.

What are you planning to do next?
I would like to consider further academic study as I really enjoyed this programme – and it would almost certainly be at Kent.

Can you offer any advice for those thinking about taking this course?
Just do it! Take time to speak with the tutors as they are clear and honest about the programme and your commitment to it – but if you are looking for an enjoyable degree programme, then you have found it.

WORLD-LEADING RESEARCH
In the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), Kent’s staff were found to be engaged in research of world-class standing.
The Professional Practice programme is designed to be completed over three years of part-time study, consisting of compulsory modules, plus a choice of optional modules offered by the Centre and/or from the wider University module catalogue. A final dissertation allows you to carry out an independent research project to explore a particular area of interest.

You can choose one of the following pathways:

- Professional Practice PCert, PDip, MA/MSc
- Professional Practice (Teaching and Learning) PDip, MSc.

Students following the PCert or PDip routes are only required to attend the study modules; they do not need to complete a dissertation. PCert students must successfully complete 60 credits worth of taught modules while PDip students must successfully complete 120 credits worth of taught modules.

Teaching methods

Teaching sessions are structured around the programme’s taught weekend sessions, which typically run from Friday to Sunday. These sessions include lectures, seminars, workshops and one-to-one supervisions.

Professional Practice PCert, PDip, MA/MSc

This flexible programme has been designed to encourage you to think more deeply about the challenges associated with your professional practice while enabling you to tailor your degree to your particular interests and career aspirations.

Course content

Stage 1
- Learning and Development in Organisations (30 credits)
- Evidence-Based Practice (15 credits)
- Inter-professional Working (15 credits)

Stage 2

Compulsory module
- Research Skills (15 credits)

Optional modules
You select from the following optional modules from within CPP (up to 45 credits), subject to availability; or a choice of modules from across the University (up to 45 credits); or a combination of both (subject to availability) up to 45 credits:
- Power Dynamics within Professional Practice (30 credits)
- Qualitative Research Methods Applied to Professional Practice (15 credits)
- Quantitative Research Methods Applied to Professional Practice (15 credits)
- Special Area of Study (30 credits).

Stage 3
- Dissertation (60 credits)

Professional Practice (Teaching and Learning) PDip, MSc

This is a specialist work-related pathway designed for qualified teachers.

Course content

Stage 1
- Learning and Development in Organisations (30 credits)
- Evidence-Based Practice (15 credits)
- Inter-professional Working (15 credits)

Stage 2
- Research Skills (15 credits)
- A Thinking School: Transforming Learning (30 credits)
- Addressing Barriers to Learning (15 credits)

Stage 3
- Dissertation (60 credits)

Assessment

Assessment includes written assignments, work-based projects, oral presentations, portfolio assessment, seminar contributions and reflective learning submissions. In the final stage of the programme, you complete a dissertation of 10-12,000 words.
Below is an overview of the Professional Practice programme modules.

Compulsory modules

**Learning and Development in Organisations**
In this module, you explore, develop and demonstrate competency in personal and professional learning and development planning. Drawing on a range of reflective models and frameworks, you explore ways of achieving high-quality ethical and professional learning and development planning within the workplace. You gain knowledge, skills and the necessary competencies to contribute to the learning and development needs of a given organisation. Action learning sets provide you with the opportunity to demonstrate the skills required for developing learning and development strategies related to professional and organisational development.

**Evidence-Based Practice**
Here, you focus on promoting the skills of the professional practitioner to become an effective user of research findings with a view to the enhancement of quality service outcomes. Sessions concentrate on the analysis of literature in order to inform evidence-based practice. You become familiar with critical appraisal tools and statistics principles used to analyse data. The module culminates in a forum designed to promote dialogue regarding the extent of external evidence available from systematic research and how this can be applied to improve outcomes within your area of professional practice.

**Inter-professional Working**
This module raises awareness about collaborative working as an increasingly important part of workplace culture. You focus on collaborative working through a journey of examination, discussion and reflection on emerging collaborative practices. The role of research in, and its impact on, interdisciplinary and collaborative working is also explored. The overall theme of the module stresses the importance of building on experiential learning when working together with others, while developing critical perspectives on project management and leadership in an inter-professional context.

**Research Skills**
As an evidence-based approach to professional working increases throughout organisations, there is a need for professionals to analyse critically within their own practice. This module prepares you to take part in research related to your own workplace and supports you to develop the skills to enable this process. You critically analyse research methodology and appraise the ever-increasing body of literature to enable an evidence-based approach to enhance professional effectiveness. There is the opportunity to develop a research proposal relevant to the workplace and use this project to develop skills in accessing literature databases and the internet, as well as critically assessing the limitations and appropriateness of research findings and methodologies.
**Dissertation**

The dissertation provides you with the opportunity to undertake a research project carried out in the workplace, which is relevant to your professional practice. You critically examine, in depth, a research question relevant to your practice. This should be supported by a critical review of the literature, a statement of the methods, an analysis of the data and an extended discussion of the findings.

**Optional modules**

Below is a list of the optional modules offered by CPP, subject to availability, and open to those students who are able to choose optional modules in Stage 2 of their programme. You can select modules of personal or professional interest from those offered by CPP, the wider University or a combination of both.

**Power Dynamics within Professional Practice**

You gain theoretical and applied knowledge and the opportunity to reflect critically and evaluate the theory and practice of power in the context of your own practice. This enables you to develop and apply strategies and techniques which are contextually relevant to your own workplace. Key topics include: ideological power and the language of power; power – a multifactorial concept; principles of power in relation to interpersonal relationships; critique power theory; dimensions and impact of power; application of concepts of power to your working practice.

**Qualitative Research Methods Applied to Professional Practice**

Here, you examine the theory and practice of qualitative research. You explore the various aspects of qualitative data collection techniques and methods of analysis as appropriate to an area of work-based enquiry related to your own professional practice. Topics covered include: the interview and interviewing techniques; focus groups; phenomenological methods of enquiry; ethnographic theory and method; case study methods; action research; documentary research; discourse analysis; content analysis; and narrative analysis.

**Quantitative Research Methods Applied to Professional Practice**

In this module, you focus on the theory and practice of quantitative research. You explore the various aspects of quantitative data collection techniques and methods of statistics analysis appropriate to an area of work-related enquiry related to your own professional practice. Topics include: quantitative data collection methods; survey design; statistical analysis techniques and tools; and interpretation of statistical data.

**Special Area of Study**

You create, design and implement a specialist project. By exploring a number of themes and concepts, for example, reflection on past or current practice or a piece of action research for the development of future practice, you are given the flexibility to design your own special concept; principles of power in relation to interpersonal relationships; critique power theory; dimensions and impact of power; application of concepts of power to your working practice.
Teaching and Learning pathway modules

These modules are available to qualified teachers taking the specialist Teaching and Learning pathway. Students following this pathway do not participate in optional modules at Stage 2.

A Thinking School: Transforming Learning

This module takes a critical look at the ‘thinking school’, an approach adopted both nationally and internationally. Defined by Professor Bob Burden as ‘an educational community in which all members share a common commitment to giving regular careful thought to everything that takes place’, the concept is now embraced within the UK educational sector as a model for evolving the educational structure within primary and secondary education. Here, you critically consider the concepts and principles of a thinking school in order to develop education professional practice. In particular, you gain a critical understanding of theoretical meta-cognitive processes and tools that underpin the language of a thinking school; analyse leadership approaches required to develop a thinking school which can be applied within the workplace; critically appraise vision statements to gain clarity on vision creation within current work-based practice; and create a strategic plan to model within current work-based practice.

Addressing Barriers to Learning

Overcoming the barriers to learning is the perpetual challenge within all teaching environments, one which has a significant impact on both learners and teachers alike. This module develops your understanding of the theoretical issues and practical challenges surrounding identified barriers to learning. Through an examination of current educational debates and reflection on experiential practice, you develop an awareness of potential strategies to address the barriers.

“IT joined this programme to consolidate my experience, take a view of my own practice and employment sector through a theoretical/academic lens and also to obtain a higher degree; something I had wanted to do for many years. The Professional Practice MSc is an excellent opportunity to meet all of these requirements.”

Jane Howard
MSc Professional Practice
HOW TO APPLY

Who should apply
This programme is suitable for professionals in a variety of settings including the private, public and third sectors, for example, health and social care, education, local government and public services. However, we welcome applications from all sectors.

Entry requirements
Applicants should hold a professional qualification or appropriate degree-level qualification and/or equivalent work experience at the appropriate level. Students entering the programme will be expected to demonstrate professional experience in a role that involves responsibility, which they have held for at least two years.

Applicants without traditional qualifications will be considered on an individual basis and will be required to demonstrate potential to study at postgraduate level.

English language
The University requires all non-native speakers of English to produce evidence of proficiency in written and spoken English.

Making an application
You can apply online at www.kent.ac.uk/courses/postgrad/apply

Application deadline
We strongly recommend that you apply as soon as possible. For further information, please contact CPP (see right).

Tuition fees
For the most up-to-date information on tuition fees, visit www.kent.ac.uk/finance-student/fees

Centre enquiries
If you would like an informal discussion about joining the Professional Practice programme, you may contact the Programme Director via CPP (see right).

Admissions enquiries
T: +44 (0)1227 827272

Come and visit us
We hold postgraduate events throughout the year. For details, see www.kent.ac.uk/opendays

Location
Medway

Faculty
Faculty of Social Sciences

Centre
Centre for Professional Practice

Contact
Centre for Professional Practice
T: +44 (0)1634 888929
E: cppmedway@kent.ac.uk
www.kent.ac.uk/cpp

Applications
Online at www.kent.ac.uk/courses/postgrad/apply

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Data protection: for administrative, academic and health and safety reasons, the University needs to process information about its students. Full registration as a student of the University is subject to your consent to process such information.
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To find out more about visiting the University, see our website:
www.kent.ac.uk/visit