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“ I have learned something new in each module which has been directly applicable at work and I've grown in confidence in being prepared to challenge formulas and 'answers' to situations. It has been a great opportunity to network with capable people from other sectors. I have also tapped into my creative side and feel I am much more tuned-in at an intuitive level in relation to work situations and problem-solving challenges which can be handled creatively and still bring out the best in other people! ”

Welcome to the MSc in Management Learning & Change

The major features that make this programme stand out are:

- A very thorough grounding in the theoretical work on management learning and change
- A structured programme of learning with engaging like-minded people
- Intellectual stimulation in a supportive atmosphere
- The opportunity to develop critical habits of mind
- The opportunity to participate in and reflect on action learning sets
- An opportunity to work with arts-based learning approaches to management learning
- The help and support of dynamic, committed, friendly, enthusiastic staff
- A career-enhancing qualification from a prestigious British university

What you won't get is a cookbook or toolkit approach to change management because we believe every organisation is different and while you can learn from best practice, the only sustainable solution will have to be tailored to your particular situation.



“ I’ve learned an enormous amount - the course has challenged me to think differently about every aspect of my professional work and has provided a valuable set of concepts for everyday use. I have recently taken on a large-scale change programme and have applied some of the thinking from the course in getting to the heart of some seemingly intractable issues. ”

MSc in Management Learning & Change

The Masters in Management Learning & Change is a two-year, part-time taught masters degree. Students take four units in the first year and four in the second, followed by a dissertation. There is one piece of assessment for each unit. It is not possible to pursue the programme without doing the assessments.

The programme is studied at weekends only, which means that our students have minimum disruption to their work lives. On the other hand, it does place the onus firmly on students to provide the motivation and impetus to see the programme through.

What is special about the degree?

What makes the MSc distinctive is that it focuses on reflective practice as a major part of the learning experience. This means that some of the assessed work will be reflective, and that students will be encouraged to develop their own methods of reflective practice including keeping journals, doing reflective writing exercises, working with organisational symbols, artefacts, stories and rituals. These reflective habits of mind are one of the benefits that students will take away from the programme over and above academic knowledge.

The second feature that makes the programme distinctive is that it is the core aim of the teaching staff to enable students to do work that they never thought that they were capable of and which surprises even themselves. We aim to make you delighted at what you can do!

What are people looking for who do this programme?

The people who join our programmes join for a number of reasons. Occasionally they just want the qualification, although this rare. Generally speaking our students feel that they have reached a point in their career where they need a challenge or a kick-start to thinking more deeply about things. Many come wanting intellectual stimulation in the company of like-minded people. Some feel that they are at a cross-roads in their career and need some help thinking through what to do next. Many feel that they need to develop their academic or theoretical credibility when dealing with others who have higher degrees in business. Some are thinking of moving on and making big changes and see this as a first step in effecting this transition.

Course Structure



Year 1

Theories of Management Learning I

Managing Change I

Intervention Theory and Practice

Strategic Management

Year 2

Theories of Management Learning II

Managing Change II

Organisational Creativity & the Art of Management

Organisational Inquiry

Dissertation

The programme ends with the completion of the dissertation, which is designed to do two things. The first is to allow students to develop research skills so that they can better understand their own organisation or one they are working with, and their own sensemaking processes. The second is to allow students to pursue a major piece of research into an area of personal interest. Students will be allowed a very wide choice in the dissertation topic as long as it clearly relates to some aspect of management studies. Students are allocated a supervisor who will work with them on their research.

Action Learning

As Action Learning Sets have become so widely used in organisations over recent years, the programme provides an opportunity for students to experience action learning for themselves and to evaluate it as a developmental tool. Students are expected to self-organise into small groups of four to six people and to meet as a group up to six times per academic year. As the groups progress students often find them invaluable in thinking about what to do when the programme ends and what they might do in the future.

Important Issues in Management Learning

Ann Rippin and Daniel Doherty, who are the core of the teaching team on this programme, both believe strongly in participative, reflective teaching and learning, and about the importance of giving students the critical skills to manage their own learning and careers. The emphasis is on sensemaking.

“Not only have I learnt an immense amount but also my life has been enriched through interaction with some great facilitators and a fantastic group of co-learners.”



Ann Rippin on arts-based learning

Local authorities turn to Shakespeare for insights on leadership. High-powered facilitators get executives into sandpits or painting murals of the future. Team leaders send everyone into the car park with whistles and drums to improvise music together. If you have ever wondered about the theoretical underpinnings of these events you might be interested to know that academics all over the world are studying just such phenomena. And at Bristol we are particularly interested in what the American academic, Laurel Richardson, calls Creative Analytic Practices can do for individuals.

On this degree we look at what we can do with writing and storytelling and pictures to increase our own creativity and reflective practice. This is based on an understanding that organisations work at a symbolic and metaphorical level as well as rational and 'left-brained' one. It's an exciting approach because it aims to help people lead and manage better by borrowing some techniques from anthropologists, seeing organisations as cultures which can be explored and understood from their artefacts and the stories they tell. It suggests that the better and more precisely you understand an organisation the more you can do to bring about change that will be both lasting and appropriate. And it also shines a searching light on all this activity and asks the serious critical question whether this really does help organisations or if it is just expensive, self-indulgent nonsense.

At Bristol we won't insist on either position, but we will help you make up your own mind by thinking through the issues from an informed position.

Daniel Doherty on coaching

Much research into coaching and mentoring explores well defined pathways such as research into coach behaviours, and links between coaching and corporate return on investment. We here at the Department of Management are interested in these research developments but have chosen in our work to explore some of the less travelled but, we believe, rich avenues of coaching inquiry.

For example, we have been fascinated to look deeply into coachee perspectives on the coaching experience. This is an under-researched area yet is rich with insight and countervailing views on the efficacy of coaching. Our imaginations have been caught by research which has been exploring the effects of 'coaching without goals'; where the traditional premium on results and outputs is removed, focussing instead on inner developmental processes. Then there is the research which has compared coaching practice to that of counselling, and other 'helping professions' such as psychotherapy. This research has come to the somewhat startling conclusion that there is more similar between each of these of these fields, coaching and therapy, than there is within the fields.

We are also interested in the extent to which the process of researching into coaching impacts coaches ability to coach, or to be coached. And into the extent to which one becomes a better researcher through doing coaching. These themes are of particular interest to us, as we actively encourage our post experience students to join us in action research into their experiences of coaching, and to share these findings with their sponsoring organisations.

About us

About the Department

Members of the department have come to study management through different routes, and therefore we bring a range of perspectives to our teaching and research.

We question the assumptions that dominate management thinking with the conviction that being critical is positive and a fruitful basis for improving ideas and so bring new perspectives to the field of management.

We all share an enthusiasm, however, for pluralism, diversity and social justice.

About the School

The School of Economics, Finance and Management can trace its history back to the foundation of what was then University College Bristol in 1878, where economics was one of the subjects taught. Finance was first taught in the 1930s, and management in the 1990s. Now the School has an academic staff of 74, including 16 Professors and 15 Researchers.

The School places a strong emphasis on research excellence. Academic staff publish regularly in international journals and are on the editorial boards of leading general and specialist journals.

The most recent RAE (the official Research Assessment Exercise) put Bristol among the top universities in the UK.



How to Apply

Your application 'pack' should include:

- Postgraduate application form
- Two letters of reference
- Copies of relevant qualifications
- Current CV

All potential candidates are invited to interview with the Programme Director.

Entry Requirements

Normally a good honours degree in any academic discipline or relevant professional qualification.

Approximately five years relevant work experience is also required, including significant managerial responsibility.

Evidence of language ability (if applicable) through the possession of an overall score of 7.0 in the British Council's International English Language Testing Service (IELTS).

Fees

For details of the current fees please see our website.

Overseas Applicants

This programme is offered for part time study only. There is no full time option. Potential applicants should be aware that part-time study is only open to international students if they already have the correct permission to be in the UK. This programme does not meet the requirements for a student visa.

