

**The University of Edinburgh**

**The Moray House School of Education**

**School Postgraduate Studies Committee**

**29th January 2014**

**Validation Documents for the  
MSc in Social Justice and Community Action**

**Brief description of the paper**

The enclosed documents are for the validation of the MSc in Social Justice and Community Action and include the following:

- **MHSE Validation Committee Report & Response**
- **Programme Proposal & Appendices**
- **Programme Specification**
- **Course Descriptors**
- **Degree Programme Tables**
- **Demand Survey Results**
- **Demand Survey Calls**
- **Competitors Report**

**Action requested**

To consider the recommendations from the MHSE Validation Committee and to offer further comments on the validation of the MSc in Social Justice and Community Action

**Resource implications**

Does the paper have resource implications? **Yes**

If 'Yes', in which section(s) of the paper are they described?

**Programme Proposal and Appendices**

**Risk assessment**

Does the paper include a risk analysis? **Yes**

If 'Yes', in which section(s) of the paper is it set out?

**Programme Proposal**

**Equality and diversity**

Does the paper have equality and diversity implications? **Yes**

**If 'Yes', in which section(s) of the paper are they described?  
Programme Specification**

**Freedom of information**

**Can this paper be included in open business? Yes**

**If no, please indicate why the paper must be withheld, and for how long (eg until decision is publicly announced):**

**Its disclosure would substantially prejudice a programme of research  
Its disclosure would substantially prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs  
Its disclosure would substantially prejudice the commercial interests of any person or organisation  
Its disclosure would constitute a breach of confidence actionable in court  
Its disclosure would constitute a breach of the Data Protection Act  
Other (please give further details)**

**Any other relevant information**

**Akwugo Emejulu will attend for discussion of this item.**

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**Date of preparation: January 2014**



# THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

**MSc in Social Justice and Community Action**

**PROPOSAL (Revised)**

**Moray House School of Education**

**January 2014**

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**SUMMARY INFORMATION**

<b>Awarding Institution</b>	The University of Edinburgh
<b>School</b>	Moray House School of Education
<b>Final Award</b>	MSc with exit points at PgCert and PgDip
<b>Programme Title</b>	Social Justice and Community Action (online distance learning)
<b>Programme Director</b>	Dr. Akwugo Emejulu
<b>Duration of Study</b>	Part-time
<b>Proposed Start Date</b>	January 2015

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## **1. EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF PROGRAMME**

The MSc in Social Justice and Community Action is designed to critically engage students with the contested theories, politics and practices of social justice in local and global contexts. The goal of this programme is to challenge and support students to connect ideas of liberty, equality, citizenship and democracy to real world practice contexts in grassroots activism, public policy development and implementation and organisational management. The core content of the programme will draw on perspectives from critical education, politics, social policy and sociology. The digital medium of this fully online distance learning (ODL) programme is a key pedagogical tool to facilitate flexible, high quality, critical and collaborative learning environments for part-time students.

The educational aims of the programme are to:

- Engage students with the foundational and contemporary debates and dilemmas regarding social justice, equality, democracy and citizenship in global and local contexts
- Equip students with applied skills and knowledge in order to relate and connect social justice theories to real world challenges and dilemmas
- Enable students to synthesise and critically evaluate research, policy and practice evidence and claims regarding social (in)justice
- Provide students with research and inquiry skills to critically investigate issues related to social justice, equality, democracy, citizenship and political activism

## **2. BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSAL**

### **2.1 Policy context and relevance of the programme to the University and School Plans**

This proposed programme has developed from two interlinked University initiatives. Firstly, in recognition of the globalised nature of key challenges such as climate change, food security and migration, the University initiated the Global Academies—spaces for collaborative actions to address global social issues. The MSc in Social Justice and Community Action will be the first postgraduate programme affiliated to the Global Justice Academy, an interdisciplinary network to explore global justice concerns. Secondly, the Distance Education Initiative (DEI) seeks to develop and expand the University's online distance education postgraduate provision. The team for the MSc in Social Justice and Community Action was successful in securing £200,206 funding from the DEI for the development of this programme.

Consequently, the MSc in Social Justice and Community Action is uniquely positioned to contribute to and expand on existing work on the theme of 'global challenges' by considering social problems and relevant research, policy and activist responses from social justice perspectives at global and local levels. Through the digital medium, this programme will have the opportunity to be global in reach and local in context by attracting an international student market to study at the University whilst positioned within their particular locality. Thus, this programme is directly relevant to the University and School of Education plans for expanding high quality and globally significant online distance postgraduate provision.

## **2.2 MSc Social Justice and Community Action's relationship to School and University research areas**

The proposed MSc in Social Justice and Community Action builds on existing research activity within the School of Education and the Global Justice Academy. In particular, it links to current work undertaken by the:

- Community Education Research Group in relation to learning for democracy
- Digital Culture and Education Group in relation to digital education and the democratisation of knowledge
- Centre for Education for Racial Equality in Scotland in relation to intersectionality and racial justice
- Global Justice Academy in relation to economic and gender justice, citizenship and equality

This new MSc programme will provide the opportunity to establish direct links between current research and teaching, enhance dissemination opportunities, extend links with existing national and international networks, attract a high calibre pool of potential PhD students and further enhance research capacity in the area of social justice. It is anticipated that the programme will facilitate new collaborations within the School of Education and across the University.

## **3. PROGRAMME INFORMATION**

### **3.1 Programme overview**

The MSc in Social Justice and Community Action will be offered as a part-time online distance learning programme with an anticipated start date of January 2015. The programme will offer three exit routes at the PgCert, PgDip and MSc levels. In addition, continuing professional development (CPD), postgraduate professional development (PPD) and massive online open courses (MOOCs) will be explored for future development to serve as taster sessions to recruit new students onto the programme.

The MSc in Social Justice and Community Action (180 credits) will include four compulsory taught courses and a choice between a 'standard' 15,000 word masters dissertation or an equivalent applied research project:

- Theories and politics of social justice (20 credits) (new)
- Community action and social justice (20 credits) (new)
- Learning for democracy (20 credits) (new)
- Activist social research (20 credits) (new)
- Dissertation (Social Justice) (60 credits) (new) or Applied research project (Social Justice) (60 credits) (new)

Optional courses, which the programme team estimate will run bi-annually, at least for the first three years until the programme is established, will include:

- Policy analysis for social justice (20 credits) (new)
- Organisational management for social justice (20 credits) (new)

In addition, students, in consultation with the programme director, will be able to choose other option courses from across the University's existing ODL provision.

Programme directors for these online programmes have been consulted and have agreed to allow new students onto courses such as:

- E-Learning, politics and society (20 credits) (MSc in Digital Education)
- Global development challenges (20 credits) (PgCert in Global Development Challenges)
- Politics and theories of international development (20 credits) (PgCert in Global Development Challenges)
- Analysing development (20 credits) (PgCert in Global Development Challenges)
- Global environmental challenges (20 credits) (PgCert in Global Environment Challenges)
- Climate change impacts and adaptations (20 credits) (PgCert in Global Environment Challenges)
- Ecosystem values and management (20 credits) (PgCert in Global Environment Challenges)
- Global health challenges (20 credits) (PgCert in Global Health Challenges)
- Health inequalities and the social determinants of health (20 credits) (PgCert in Global Health Challenges)

To exit with a PgCert in Social Justice (60 credits) students will study:

- Theories and politics of social justice (20 credits)
- Community action and social justice (20 credits)
- Learning for democracy (20 credits)

To exit with a PgDip in Social Justice (120 credits) students will choose options in consultation with the programme director and study:

- Theories and politics of social justice (20 credits)
- Community action and social justice (20 credits)
- Learning for democracy (20 credits)
- Policy analysis for social justice (20 credits) *and/or* Organisational Management for social justice (20 credits) *and/or* one to two 20 credit option(s) from existing University ODL provision

## 4. MARKET INFORMATION

### 4.1 Target market

The proposed MSc in Social Justice and Community Action will primarily target as students professionals working on issues related to social justice in practice and policy in intermediary and/or grassroots third sector organisations and in the public and private sectors across the globe. We envision that these potential students will already be working directly with community groups, in social policy and research and/or in social welfare service provision in the public, private and third sectors. In addition, the programme will also target recent graduates, community activists and volunteers seeking to expand their knowledge and skills in order to secure employment in the areas of community practice, social justice policy development and implementation and social research. One of the unique features of this programme is that it is part-time and online, which means potential students can balance existing work and family commitments in their local contexts whilst studying 'at' Edinburgh. In addition, the applied nature of the programme means that students will gain practical skills to theorise and practice social justice in a variety of contexts.

It is anticipated that in the early years of the programme, at least for the first three years, that the MSc in Social Justice and Community Action may well directly compete with the MSc in Community Education and may have a negative impact on that programme's student numbers. However, given the fact that a regulating body will not professionally endorse and inspect the MSc in Social Justice and Community Action (unlike the MSc in Community Education), this direct competition should ease over time.

#### 4.2 Market research: Demand

Thanks to funding from the Distance Education Initiative, we have been able to assess the proposed programme's market demand (please note that we have since changed the name of the programme but the key elements of the programme, such as its aims and goals, the target market and course titles have remained mostly unchanged). From September 2012 to August 2013, 145 respondents have completed an online survey about the programme and 63.8% state that they are 'very interested' in studying on this programme with 75.8% of respondents most interested in the 'Theories and Politics of Social Justice' course. Importantly, 86.4% of respondents stated that they preferred to study the MSc part-time and online—because they are working full time. The most recent market demand survey is included in Appendix 1 and note that this demand survey is on-going thus the programme team will be able to assess interest and demand for the new during the development phase of the programme.

#### 4.3 Market research: Competitors

In terms of programme competition, 15 programmes (not including the existing MSc in Community Education at Edinburgh) in the US, UK and Ireland have been identified by the DEI Market Insight Officer as 'similar' to the proposed Masters in Social Justice. However, *none* of these programmes are online only with only two programmes offering a blended on-campus/online learning approach. The School of Education's DEI Project Officer contacted 13 out of the 15 institutions to ascertain further information about their future ODL plans, recruitment methods and student numbers and retention. Most programmes have ambitions to expand their ODL provision but at the time of writing, most were not in a position to offer an entirely online programme. Notwithstanding the economic crisis, most programmes reported stability in student recruitment with programmes typically recruiting 10-25 students per year. The most successful programmes, in terms of student recruitment and retention, at St. John's and Loyola Universities, appear to fare well due to their part-time structure targeting existing professionals.

Interestingly, many of the programmes contacted —particularly those in North America—were interested in partnering with the University to offer joint courses for their students. The full Competitor Report and Analysis is included in Appendix 2. The list of competitors is as follows:

Marygrove College (Michigan, USA)	MA in Social Justice (on-campus)
University of Western Kentucky (USA)	MA in Social Responsibility and S online/on-campus)
St John's University (New York, USA)	MA in Global Development and S campus)

Loyola University (Illinois, USA)	MA in Social Justice and Commun
Arizona State University (Arizona, USA)	MA in Social Justice and Human F
Brock University (Ontario, Canada)	MA in Social Justice and Equity S
London Metropolitan University (UK)	MA in International Human Right
University of Bath (UK)	MSc in Well-being and Human De
University of York (UK)	MSc in Economic and Social Polic
Institute of Education, University of London (UK)	MA in Social Justice and Educatio
University of Leeds (UK)	MA in Activism and Social Chang
National University of Ireland, Galway (Ireland)	MA in Public Advocacy and Activi
National University of Ireland, Maynooth (Ireland)	MA in Community Education, Equi only)
All Hallow's College, Dublin City University (Ireland)	MA in Social Justice and Public Po
Queen Margaret University (UK)	MSc in Social Justice (on-campus

## 5. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

### 5.1 Student numbers and fees

Based on the market demand survey results, the programme team have set the following targets over a three year period for student recruitment and fee income (see table below). Note that in the team's successful funding bid to the Distance Education Initiative, these numbers were closely scrutinised and assessed to be 'conservative but aspirational' in terms student recruitment and fee income. Also note that the programme team has been informed that the financial impact of students taking outside courses in other Schools is minimal because whatever losses might be incurred are typically off set by large numbers of outside students taking School of Education courses.

ITEM
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2013-14	2014-15	2015-2016
£	£	£

## INCOME

### **Planned number of students enrolling/taking programme**

Year 1 of study (enter your value)
Year 2 of study (if appropriate)
Year 3 of study (if appropriate)
<b>Estimated total students enrolled in current year</b>
<b>Estimated total students completing programme</b>

0	15	35
0	0	14
0	0	0
<b>0</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Cost for each year of Programme per student
Income from Year 1 students
Income from Year 2 students
Income from Year 3 students

0	3102	3257
0	46,530	113,999
0	0	43,971
0	0	0

<b>Estimated Total Gross Fee Income</b>
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<b>0</b>	<b>46,530</b>	<b>157,969</b>
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<i>Less University top-slice of 20% on PGT Gross Fee Income 20.00%</i>
<b>Estimated Net Fee Income</b>

0	9,306	31,594
<b>0</b>	<b>37,224</b>	<b>126,375</b>

Please note that there is currently some discrepancy between the fee estimates used by the Distance Education Initiative and those used by CHSS. The DEI Executive is currently working with CHSS to resolve this.

## 5.2 Resource implications and risks

Due to DEI funding, the initial two years of development and teaching costs of this proposed programme have been covered until the MSc in Social Justice and Community Action is in profit. In the table above, we are assuming profitability by year four (2017/18). As a result, the following expenditures are covered by the DEI grant for two years:

**DETAILS OF STAFF COSTS FROM DEI FUNDS**

List academic, support, admin staff costs  
give title, grade, role & proportion of FTE allocated to this work  
if hourly paid (eg tutors) give rate and hours of employment

Programme Director and Course Developer UE08.40 (0.5fte)
New Lecturer and Course Developer UE08.37 (1.0fte)
Course Developers UE08.40 (2 x 0.1fte)
<b>ODL Consultancy UE08.43 (0.2fte)</b>
<b>ODL Project Officer UE07.34 (1.0fte 01 Aug 13 - 31 Dec 13)</b>

2013-14	2014-15
28,414	29,004
49,953	52,100
11,366	11,602
9,759	0
16,752	0
<b>116,244</b>	<b>92,706</b>

**DETAILS OF STAFF COSTS CONTRIBUTED BY SCHOOL ETC**

List academic, support, admin staff costs  
give title, grade, role & proportion of FTE allocated to this work  
if hourly paid (eg tutors) give rate and hours of employment

Prog Dir and Course Development and tutor support UE08.40 (0.5fte from 2015-16 onwards)
Tutor support UE08.40 (2 x 0.25fte from Sep 2015-16; 2016-17 and 1.0fte in 2017-18)
New Lecturer UE08.37 (1.0fte from 2015-16 to 2017-18)
Course delivery UE08.42 (per 20 credit course per semester per year from Sep 2014)
Course assessment UE08.42 (per student, per intake)
Teaching and Marketing Admin UE05.18 (0.2fte from 2013-14 and 2014-15; 0.5fte onwards)
<b>ODL Consultancy UE08.43 (0.1fte)</b>
<b>ODL Marketing Officer UE07.30 (0.2fte 2013-14; 0.1fte onwards))</b>
<b>ODL Learning Technologist UE07.34 (0.2fte)</b>
<b>ODL Web Developer UE08.29 (0.2fte)</b>
<b>ODL Project Officer UE07.34 (0.5fte from 01Jan 14 to 31/7/14; 2014-15 to 2017-18)</b>

2013-14	2014-15
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	8,293
0	1,762
0	5,353
0	5,128
7,910	3,781
8,919	9,373
9,582	9,777
11,472	20,784

Despite DEI funding, this programme development is not risk free. See the below table for the risks and mitigating actions in relation to the MSc in Social Justice and Community Action:

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Probability</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation actions</b>
Under recruitment and/or high attrition of students for the proposed programme	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Severe</b>	1. Projected numbers of students per year is calculated based on the DEI administered demand survey and market research. 2. Clear marketing and recruitment strategy is being developed in partnership with Head of School, DEI team and HSS Marketing Officer. 3. Programme is being designed to ensure multiple pathways and exits to attract and retain a broad range of students
Lack of experience of existing staff in teaching and supporting students in an ODL environment	<b>Low</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	1. Programme and DEI team will run bespoke training sessions for relevant staff as well as signpost staff to IAD events. 2. Ability to draw on expertise of MSc Digital Education programme team and the newly recruited Lecturer in Social Justice to aid in development of curriculum and teaching methods
Delays in the validation process	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	The project team are aware the tight timeframe for the validation process and in consultation with the School's Deputy Director of Postgraduate Studies, are planning for the programme to launch in January 2015.

### 5.3 Scalability

One of the key goals for the Distance Education Initiative is to attract large numbers onto the University's ODL programmes. Under the present structure and arrangements for delivery, attracting large student numbers would appear to be very challenging in terms of the current resources allocated to this proposed new programme. However, scalability is not *only* about increasing the volume of students on a given programme. Its core aim is about *developing innovative approaches to growth and development* which is closely associated with factors such as: high quality teaching and course design; multiple exit awards and entry points in a given academic year; connecting with established regional and global networks; digital marketing; internationalisation; adequate staffing; innovative fee structures and effective uses of technology. The programme team for the MSc in Social Justice and Community Action is committed to building student numbers through high quality teaching and student support, however, for scalability to be a realistic goal for this and other ODL programmes within the School, a School-wide strategy and appropriate resource allocation appears to be required.

A key stipulation of the University's DEI funding is large-scale growth in postgraduate digital education programmes, thus the programme team is committed to the aspirational but realistic expansion in postgraduate numbers (as approved by the DEI

Steering Group) on the programme as indicated above, especially over the first four years. However, the programme team are aware that for this expansion in student numbers to work and for it not be overly burdensome for the teaching team's workloads, this will require more resources deployed by the School at the end of the DEI funding period. Thus, the programme team are committed to working closely with the HoS, HoI and the Graduate School in order to effectively balance its ambitious student expansion numbers with appropriate resources over a realistic and workable timeline. Please see Appendix 4 for the programme's scalability plans'.

## **6. APPENDICES**

### **6.1 Appendix 1: Demand Survey**

### **6.2 Appendix 2: Competitor's Report and Analysis**

### **6.3 Appendix 3: School Budget Spreadsheet**

### **6.4 Appendix 4: Scalability Plans**