



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

MA Learning in Communities

Admissions Guidance Specific to MA Learning in Communities

(for applicants with qualifications over 5 years old or who are claiming RPL)

We normally ask applicants to have entry qualifications which are no more than three years old when they apply for their degree programme. However, if you meet the university's [minimum entry requirements](#) for MA Learning in Communities but your qualifications were achieved **more than five years prior to entry** to the programme, your application may still be eligible for consideration if you can provide a portfolio of evidence of engagement in the wider field of practice and demonstrate what learning you have gained from this experience. This evidence and learning has to be relevant, sustained and verifiable.

Summary of application process

1. The first step is to e-mail the admissions team (CAHSS.UGAdmissions@ed.ac.uk) or one of the Programme Directors (Margaret.Petrie@ed.ac.uk or gary.fraser@ed.ac.uk) as soon as possible and certainly before you begin the application to ensure that your practice experience meets our requirements.
2. Compile a portfolio of evidence of prior experiential learning. See below for details of the suggested contents of this portfolio. Your portfolio should be e-mailed to the Admissions Team at CAHSS.UGAdmissions@ed.ac.uk, and will be considered alongside your UCAS application as part of the admissions process
3. Based on the examples of experience, learning and skills development noted below, demonstrate in the Personal Statement of your UCAS application what you have learned from this.
4. If your application is eligible for further consideration you will be invited for an interview.
5. If you are successful at interview you will be asked to submit an assignment of 700 to 1000 words. Guidance will be given on what form the assignment should take.



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Guidance for applicants

- To help you judge if you are likely to be eligible please consider the types of experience, learning and skills development considered to be relevant to this programme. These are listed below. However it is important that you contact the Admission Team - email CAHSS.UGAdmissions@ed.ac.uk - before you make an application, to make sure the experience, learning and skills development you have is sufficient for us to consider your eligibility for interview.
- It is important that any application you do make to us clearly demonstrates how you meet the requirements below, through your UCAS Personal Statement and Reference and your portfolio of experience. This will enable us to make an informed and fair decision about your eligibility for interview.
- If your application is considered eligible for further consideration you will be invited to an interview with a member of academic staff and a field work practitioner. If successful at this interview you will then also be asked to complete a short written assignment of between 700 and 1000 words to help provide evidence of your suitability to study at degree level.
- If the procedure for demonstrating the acquisition of knowledge, learning and skills from your practice experience is unclear, please contact the Admission Team - email CAHSS.UGAdmissions@ed.ac.uk - for advice on your eligibility and the process of application. Alternatively, you can contact one of the Programme Directors (Margaret.Petrie@ed.ac.uk or gary.fraser@ed.ac.uk).

Work experience portfolio of evidence

Below are some examples of the types of evidence required to demonstrate suitability for entry to the programme. The more evidence you provide in your portfolio, the better able we will be to assess your suitability. Your portfolio should be accompanied by a full current CV, including job descriptions, roles and responsibilities. In compiling your portfolio of evidence you need to consider the following:



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Relevance: the learning gained provides you with knowledge and skills relevant for the programme applied for

Sufficient: the learning gained is of an equivalent academic level to the standard entry requirement and the quantity of prior learning considered to be sufficient to demonstrate your potential

Verifiable: the evidence provided can be authenticated as being the outcome of your own effort

Examples of portfolio evidence

- Authored reports, i.e. research reports, annual reports
- Examples of completed funding applications
- Evaluation reports on your own educational or engagement activities
- Examples of your own practice such as educational materials developed, or courses taught
- Examples of self-reflection on teaching practice, i.e. from courses taught and the changes identified
- Examples of participant evaluations on courses taught
- Personal reflections on learning from personal development courses you have undertaken
- Evidence of personal/professional development, including certificates, course names, levels. Example courses may include Child Protection Training, PDA in Youth Work, Youth Achievement Award Assessor, working with groups, individual support, dealing with difficult and challenging behaviour, counselling skills
- Annual reviews/appraisals
- Testimony of employers/managers/colleagues
- Membership of relevant professional bodies, e.g. CLD Standards Council



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Relevant practice experience (voluntary or paid)

This might include experience in the broad field of Community Education, typically working with young people, with adults, or in the community. This experience must be from sustained involvement or activity **for one year or more**. The examples given below are intended to be illustrative not exhaustive.

- Adult Literacies and Numeracies (ALAN) including Teaching English as a Second Language (ESOL)
- Anti-poverty work including campaigning alliances/forums, money advice
- Befriending, Mentoring or Coaching organisations/projects
- Care settings including for example, youth residential care, support for homeless people or substance abuse recovery
- Community Arts & Theatre, including community based creative writing, arts, cultural and media projects
- Community based activism, e.g. membership of management committees, tenants' groups, community planning partnerships, community councils, etc.
- Community Development or Community Regeneration work, including environmental work
- Community Health or Health Improvement Programmes, e.g. mental health, well-being, physical fitness, emotional support projects, counselling, sexual health promotion, advice and information services, campaigning or advocacy work
- Community Safety and diversionary activity, e.g. in relation to behaviour in schools or communities; drug and alcohol reduction/prevention, midnight football
- Community service in Faith based organisations
- Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS), including Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) and Glasgow CVS (GCVS)
- Employability focused work, e.g. More Choices More Chances (MCMC/MC2), Community Based Intermediate Labour Market Programme (ILM)
- FE college in a welfare/student support role, e.g. preparation for FE support, support to develop self-esteem or self-confidence of non-traditional learners



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- Human rights activity and campaigning
- Integrated Children's Services (ICS) including parental or family support, Parenting Education, Young or Single parent groups
- Serving as an elected member, e.g. Youth Parliament, Local Council, Scottish or UK Parliament
- Trade Unionism activity and campaigning
- Working with offenders, community safety services, alternatives to prosecution
- Youth work

What kinds of knowledge, learning and skills are we looking for?

We expect applicants to be able to highlight how their experience can be judged in terms of the knowledge, learning and skills development in **some** of the areas exemplified below. We do not want you to simply describe your experience, but to discuss what you have gained from this experience in terms of knowledge, learning and skills. The examples below are illustrative rather than definitive.

Applicants should be able to demonstrate one or more of these in their application:

- Understanding in relation to the importance of informal learning and the values and educational practices which might help or hinder it
- Awareness of how communities can develop their own insights from experience and how this might be used for educational work
- Discuss how disadvantaged communities are often portrayed in the media and the impact this may have on the people who live there
- Awareness of the wider social and political context and how these might create problems as well as opportunities for people in communities
- Insight into the experiences of a particular group of people (e.g. people with disabilities, young people etc.) and how education might/might not develop their confidence and abilities



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- Scepticism towards commonly held assumptions which discriminate against different communities
- Knowledge and understanding of how education or social services can impact positively and negatively on people's lives

In addition to the above applicants should refer to relevant qualifications and or skills gained through experience. For example;

- **Training:** Child Protection Training, PDA in Youth Work, Youth Achievement Award Assessor
- **Skills:** Working with groups, individual support, dealing with difficult and challenging behaviour, Counselling skills