

# PgCert Prospectus

Postgraduate Certificate in Higher  
Education Administration, Management  
and Leadership – October 2023 intake

Connecting  
and developing  
HE professionals

AUA

Est 1961



# Factual summary

**Awarding institution**

Nottingham Trent University  
(NTU)

**Teaching institution**

The Association of University  
Administrators (AUA)

**Final award**

Postgraduate Certificate  
(PgCert)

**Mode of delivery**

Self-directed, part-time,  
distance learning

**Duration of the  
programme**

12 months

**Level of Framework for  
Higher Education  
Qualifications (FHEQ)**

Level 7

**Credit  
value**

60 credits

**Notional learning time**

600 hours (average 12 hours  
per week)

**Validated**

18-19 March 2002

22-23 March 2006

29-30 March 2009

5 May 2012

7 July 2014

7 July 2017

1 July 2020

**Next  
validation**

2023

**Intakes per year**

Usually October and April

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# Welcome

UK higher education, like so many other sectors, has had to diversify and adapt to the extraordinary events of the past few years.



The administration and management of HE has evolved and expanded to meet these challenges. HE institutions need administrative and managerial staff who command a wide range of skills and knowledge and are competent in applying their experience in a complex professional environment.

The AUA Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education Administration, Management and Leadership (PgCert) is a specialised programme designed to realise your full potential as a UK HE professional. It has a strong reputation for its flexible approach, which enables you to tailor your learning to your development needs and to the specific reality of your working environment.



*I would definitely recommend the programme if you are looking to develop your career in HE. For me, it has been the change from working in HE to identifying how you can develop a career in the sector. As well as increasing my knowledge, it has shown me how to identify development opportunities in a different way.*

Ruth, Cardiff University





## What is the AUA PgCert?

The PgCert is a self-directed, part-time, distance and work based learning programme. It is validated at level 7 (masters level) and combines a substantial element of professional development and academic rigour, demanding a genuine commitment to learning and development.

The programme incorporates the AUA Values and the AUA Professional Behaviours and integrates theory and practice of higher education administration, management and leadership. There is a strong focus on developing your skills as a reflective practitioner; the ability to analyse individual knowledge, skills and experience and apply this to professional practice.

The PgCert is a collaborative programme jointly delivered by the AUA and Nottingham Trent University (NTU) who validate the award. All students are fully registered students of NTU.



# Why study the PgCert?

The programme is for professional managers and administrators across the spectrum of UK higher education.

Completing the programme formalises your professional experience with an academic qualification. By broadening your knowledge and understanding of the sector and by engaging you in professional development it will support your career development and enhance your professional practice.

## Programme aims

The aim of the programme is to enable you to analyse and evaluate your existing HE knowledge and to develop an understanding and critical awareness of current issues in the sector.

**Specifically the programme will enable you to:**

1. Engage in a process of planned professional development, based on reflection and self-assessment of your approach and performance in professional contexts
2. Develop an understanding and critical awareness of current issues in the sector, through independent learning and research
3. Develop an understanding of leadership and management in the context of HE
4. Enhance your professional practice through critical appraisal of, and reflection on, your knowledge, skills, behaviours and values
5. Develop reflective skills enabling you to apply your knowledge and understanding to evaluate and analyse your practice and experiences



*The AUA's PgCert...gave me the opportunity to think more about my approach to career development, it gave me a reason to explore more widely different areas of the HE sector that I might not usually be exposed to and has helped me to develop my professional practice.*

Simon, Lancaster University





# Progression routes

On successful completion of the PgCert, you are eligible to progress to further qualifications delivered by NTU.

Visit [ntu.ac.uk](http://ntu.ac.uk) for more information on the PgDip and MSc.



## Stage 1

**AUA PgCert**  
in HE Administration,  
Management and Leadership

(60 level 7 credits)

## Stage 2

**NTU PgDip**  
in HE Administration,  
Management and Leadership

(60 level 7 credits, a cumulative  
total of 120 credits)

## Stage 3

**NTU MSc**  
in HE Administration,  
Management and Leadership

(60 level 7 credits, a cumulative  
total of 180 credits)

# The programme

All assessment on the PgCert is coursework and task-based assessment. Modules run concurrently over the 12 months.

**Higher Education in Context module (30 credits)** There will be a choice of assessments and topics within this module with the option for you to tailor them to your professional context.

\*Assessments currently include a short formative assessment to aid development, a 1500 word blog task assessment, and a longer assessment of 4000 words based on a choice of HE topic areas and formats, to help you develop your critical awareness of current issues within the sector.

The module may include the following areas:

- The history and development of HE with a focus on the UK
- Current and developing HE policy
- The context within which the sector operates
- Leadership, governance and management within HE

\*Please note, assessments may be subject to change.

## **Professional Practice in Higher Education module (30 Credits)**

Assessments within this module have been designed to engage you in the principles of critical reflection and formal professional development planning. Through self-analysis of capacities against the AUA CPD Framework you will apply the AUA's Values and Professional Behaviours to your professional practice, drawing on your own experience and learning throughout the programme.

\*Assessments include a short formative assessment to aid development, followed by a 2000 word reflective assessment of leadership and management. The longer assessment, of 3500 words, will review personal development, progression and change.

The module may include the following areas:

- Models and principles of reflective practice and their application
- Approaches to personal development planning
- Self-analysis of capacities against the AUA CPD Framework
- The AUA Values and Professional Behaviours



*I just want to say how much I have enjoyed the programme – it's been great to see my marks improve...I've really been able to apply my learning to my current role.*

Charlotte, University of Liverpool





# What you can expect from the programme

The AUA provides a supportive framework to complement and enable you to plan your professional development and progress through the programme.

## Supporting your learning

Although you are required to manage your own learning, you are supported in a number of ways.

- A series of webinars delivered online
- A personal mentor
- The online learning resource, 'NOW', including NTU study skills support
- Fully registered student status and full access to NTU resources
- Support and advice from the AUA Office and Programme Team

## Webinar sessions

You are required to attend webinars that cover content for both modules. Sessions will be delivered as a series of online webinar sessions; spread over a week, half days or individual sessions throughout the 12 months in line with assessment activity. There is no face to face delivery for this cohort. Webinar sessions are interactive, and involve practical group discussions and provide guidance and information. They are a great opportunity to meet and network with other students on the programme. The dates of the webinar sessions will be available online.

## The online learning workspace 'NOW'

NOW is NTU's online workspace where you will find comprehensive guidance on all the elements of the programme and the regulations and background information on knowledge areas for both modules. There are suggested reading lists and self-led activities provided as a starting point for your learning.

You will have access to NOW ahead of the first sessions to complete induction exercises, which include personal development planning.

## The AUA office and programme team

You can contact the AUA office staff that form part of the programme team for support and advice on how the programme is structured, delivered, and assessed.

## Your mentor

You will be matched with a personal mentor from a different institution and/or contrasting area of expertise to support you through the programme. Mentors are professional HE managers and administrators and receive training by the AUA to undertake the role. The role of the mentor is not to teach, but to facilitate your self-directed learning, to broaden perspectives and to challenge your thinking beyond your immediate professional context.



*My mentor was great in providing honest and challenging feedback on my PDPs and meetings with him were always fruitful. He was very supportive and I couldn't have completed the programme without him!*

PgCert Graduate,  
Imperial College London



## What is expected of you?

The programme requires a real commitment to your professional development as finding time to undertake self-directed study alongside personal and working commitments can be a challenge.



### **Self-directed study**

As a self-directed programme, there is no taught provision. You need to independently engage with the syllabus and plan your learning and study, carry out literature searches and be prepared to do a significant amount of reading and investigation around the subject areas.

### **Expected workload**

We recommend that you need to commit on average to 12 hours of independent study per week. This is based on a 60 credit programme being the equivalent of 600 hours notional learning time. A study plan will help you manage your time and you may want to investigate the possibility of study leave with your employer.



*I have enjoyed the PgCert programme immensely. It has provided me with a rich opportunity to gain a better understanding of the higher education context, both in the UK and internationally, and to develop my critical writing skills.*

Nicola, Cardiff University / HEFCW



## Returning to academic study

If you have been away from study for some time, you will find practical advice on study skills, reflective practice and the standard of work expected on NOW. We also cover this in the webinar sessions. Recommended reading is available on the AUA website. Having a clear understanding of the requirement of the study skills listed below will help your transition onto the programme.

- Writing level 7 academic assignments
- Referencing
- 'Critical' reading of academic texts
- Taking notes (while reading)

# Entry requirements

Due to the nature of the study and assessment for the programme, in order to be eligible for admission to the programme applicants will usually:

- hold a UK or Republic of Ireland first degree (or equivalent); and
- have at least six months' experience of working in the higher education sector, preferably at a higher education institution, in an administrative or managerial capacity; and
- hold a current position within the UK or ROI HE sector in an administrative or managerial capacity.

Applicants who do not hold a first degree may be admitted to the programme if they can demonstrate their ability to succeed at level 7 study by:

- holding a current position within the UK or ROI HE sector in an administrative or managerial capacity; and
- having at least 12 months' experience of working in the HE sector in an administrative or managerial capacity; and/or
- holding comparable professional qualifications.



Applicants whose first language is not English must be competent in written and spoken English up to the following standard: IELTS 6.5 (minimum 5.5 in reading and writing) or TOEFL iBT 83 with at least: Reading 18, Listening 17, Speaking 20, Writing 17.

The programme is based on the UK higher education sector and therefore only eligible for applicants who live and work in the UK or ROI. Unfortunately it is not possible for anyone outside the UK or ROI to apply.

AUA membership is included in the programme fee as all students are required to be AUA members throughout their registration.

## Ready to apply?

Full details on how to apply can be found at [aua.ac.uk/pgcert](http://aua.ac.uk/pgcert) or you can contact us: [pgcert@aua.ac.uk](mailto:pgcert@aua.ac.uk)