A Brief Guide to the Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTL) Masters in Educational Leadership (MEL)

BIRMINGHAM CITY University

Programme Philosophy and Aims

The philosophy underpinning the MTL and MEL programme can be summarised as follows:

MTL/MEL values and emphasises collaboration in the development of teachers and leaders in order to maximise their impact on children, young people or adult learners, their organisations and communities;

MTL/MEL supports continuing improvement and is rooted in a concept of partnership, which incorporates professional respect and promotes learning at all levels;

MTL/MEL is a highly effective way of ensuring that teachers and leaders are supported and equipped to meet the current and future needs of their learners within the context of the workplace.

This programme aims to enable students to:

- build on previous professional learning and workplace practice;
- take increasing responsibility for their own professional development through personalised and collaborative learning that draws appropriately on agreed content areas and workplace priorities;
- develop professional attributes, knowledge, skills and understanding together with practice-based enquiry skills in relation to the subject(s) and phase taught;
- develop skills of enquiry and the use of evidence, in relation to the impact of professional practice on the outcomes for learners within the work context;
- be at the forefront of professional practice in a specialist field in a subject, phase or aspect of teaching and/or leadership and be able to demonstrate effectiveness in enabling learners to make good progress;
- exhibit the characteristics of a confident and effective professional learner, able to stimulate and support a collaborative learning culture among immediate colleagues and within a wider professional community;
- become a proactive member of a wider group of experts in the chosen specialism.

Learning Outcomes

Knowledge and understanding

Students will be able to demonstrate:

- a command of the subject, specialism or curriculum area in relation to professional practice;
- a systematic understanding of research, literature, national frameworks and practical knowledge in relation to the content areas, drawn on appropriately to develop their practice.

Intellectual / cognitive skills

Students will be able to demonstrate that they can:

- draw on and critique a knowledge base;
- examine relevant research methodologies and ethical considerations, analyse workplace evidence gathered using suitable and well-justified data collection methods and discuss implications for future practice.

Practical / research skills

Students will be able to demonstrate that they can:

- identify personalised and collaborative professional learning needs;
- undertake critical and analytical enquiry into their professional practice using appropriate research and data collection methods.

Transferable / key skills

Students will be able to apply:

- development of professional attributes, knowledge, skills and understanding in their practice to support consistently effective teaching and increasingly positive impact on the learners they teach;
- self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act both independently and collaboratively in planning and implementing tasks at a professional level.

Learning and teaching

The learning and teaching strategy that underpins the MTL/MEL: applies across all learning outcomes and is designed to help the student become a more effective practitioner, with a positive impact on learning. The MTL/MEL seeks to integrate learning, teaching and experience, through:

- Audit and action planning to identify personal, professional and organisational priorities.
- Active professional learning, using case studies and work-based assignments designed to support critical reflection on professional practice.
- Gathering workplace evidence in a variety of ways, in order to analyse and evaluate professional practice.
- Alternative ways of looking at events and circumstances, prompting thinking towards alternatives for future practice.
- Group tutorials and support from colleagues and a university tutor, to mediate and support learning within the working context.
- Guided reading, supported self-study, independent study and research.
- Collaborative approaches to support and encourage students in their professional development, and ensure impact on organisational priorities.
- Individual tutorials to support the development of knowledge, understanding and skills, and enable the review and monitoring of progress.
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and e-learning, including word processing, databases, internet communication, information retrieval and on-line searches.
- Use of a virtual learning environment (VLE) to facilitate the exchange of ideas and information, and provide access to specific resources and activities.

Programme structure and requirements, levels, modules, credits and awards

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>Masters in Teaching and Learning</th><th>Masters in Educational Leadership</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Stage 1
(60 Credits)
Leading to PGCert in Education</td><td colspan="2">Introductory modules (15/30 Credits):
• Reflecting on professional practice
• Developing professional enquiry skills
Students may choose, with guidance, one of these modules at 30 credits, both modules at 15 credits or both modules at 30 credits, depending on their study needs and previous experience:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">And/or one or two 30 credit modules from Stage 2 below. Credits from previous study (e.g. PGCE), or accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL), can be used here.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Stage 2
(60 Credits)
Leading to PGDip in T&L or EL</td><td colspan="2">A further two 30 credit modules from…</td></tr>
<tr><td>Reflective module (30 credits):
• Reflecting on professional practice (Teaching and Learning)
Enquiry modules (30 credits):
Based in the workplace, aligned to personal, departmental and institutional development priorities, with tutor guidance:
• Teaching and learning, personalisation and assessment for learning
• Subject knowledge and curriculum development
• Learner development and inclusion
• Leadership and management, working with others</td><td>Reflective module (30 credits):
• Reflecting on professional practice (Educational Leadership)
Enquiry modules (30 credits):
Based in the workplace, aligned to personal, departmental and institutional development priorities, with tutor guidance:
• Leadership and management, working with others
• Professional development, coaching and mentoring
• Institutional effectiveness, change and improvement
• Partnership working and community involvement</td></tr>
<tr><td>Stage 3
(60 Credits)</td><td>Professional Practice Enquiry (Teaching and Learning) (60 Credits) including proposal stage and dissemination to workplace colleagues.</td><td>Professional Practice Enquiry (Educational Leadership) (60 Credits) including proposal stage and dissemination to workplace colleagues.</td></tr>
</table>

Most students will complete their MTL/MEL in three to five years. The mode of study is part-time, for professionals with strong study skills, with a major emphasis on independent and collaborative learning in the workplace.

Indicative module content

Please note this is not an exhaustive or exclusive list and is provided simply to offer ideas for enquiry foci, which are chosen based on individual and institutional priorities.

Teaching and learning, personalisation and assessment for learning:

- Teaching and learning: definitions, theories, pedagogies and skills.
- Teaching and learning strategies, such as personalisation, differentiation, assessment for learning and intervention.
- Setting suitable learning challenges for all learners and responding to their diverse backgrounds and learning needs.
- Diagnosis and assessment of learners' needs and strategies for identifying and overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of learners.
- Use of AfL as the basis for deploying appropriate and personalised teaching and learning strategies.
- Processes for gathering, recording and interpreting data and evidence of learning, to determine where students are in their learning, where they need to go next, and how best to get there.
- Formative and summative assessments: teacher questioning; marking; assessment of skills, knowledge and understanding; repertoire of assessment methods and ways of recording evidence; peer and self-assessment.
- Qualitative and quantitative evidence of achievement; use of assessment data, baseline data and measures of attainment and progress.
- Dialogue with and feedback to learners and, if appropriate, to their parents/carers.

Subject knowledge and curriculum development:

- Breadth and depth of content subject knowledge, in terms of the body of knowledge and skills in the subject,
- Pedagogical content knowledge, in terms of ways in which the teacher breaks down and communicates knowledge and skills to make them accessible to learners.
- Statutory requirements, national curricula and examination frameworks; development of qualifications and associated schemes of work.
- How subjects are evolving and why, including in line with the most recent trends and practice in corresponding business and employment sectors.
- Assessment in the subject(s) and tailoring teaching and learning appropriately to take account of it.
- The curriculum as the entire planned learning experience, including formal and informal areas of learning.
- Curriculum design including: entitlement; principles, values and attitudes; knowledge, understanding, skills; links between subjects and cross-curricular dimensions; learning in wider contexts beyond the classroom.
- Planning progression for all learners, including learners with SEN and disability and higher attainers; learners' common misconceptions in the subject(s) and how to address them.

Learner development and inclusion:

- Understanding the factors that affect individual learning, behaviour and well-being to help create a positive, safe and effective learning environment.
- Social, physical, emotional, psychological, cognitive, language, creative, cultural and moral development.
- Theories of learning and development, and their application in teaching; developing independent learners.
- Theories of behaviour development and learners' motivation; relationships between behaviour and learning.
- Barriers to learning and understanding the factors that affect development and achievement of learners with SEN and disability, or higher attainers; working with other professionals to support learning and development needs.
- Cultures, beliefs and attitudes towards diversity and inclusion; legislation, guidance, national and local policy on equality and inclusion (including SEN and disability).
- Understanding the needs of different groups of learners; gender, social and cultural factors in education; strategies for overcoming barriers to learning for different groups; education's contribution to improved social mobility.
- The role of parents/carers and families in learner development; working effectively and collaboratively with learners, parents and carers, support staff and other services beyond the organisation.

Leadership and management, working with others:

- Leadership and management definitions, values, theories, strategies and styles and their impact on the performance of others and on teaching and learning; the relationships and differences between leadership and management.
- Legislation, policy, guidance and local/national frameworks in relation to educational leadership.
- Leadership and management skills, including collaboration, consultation, communication and challenge.
- Leadership and management structures and processes; teams and how they integrate.
- Leading and managing teaching and learning, subjects/curriculum areas and other aspects of the organisation, including pastoral services, SEN and disability.
- Roles and responsibilities of different professionals and agencies working with learners, including those supporting SEN and disability, child protection and safeguarding.
- Multi-agency collaboration, communication and practice in meeting learners' needs.

Professional development, coaching and mentoring:

- Theories, models and frameworks for sustainable educational continuing professional development and learning.
- The development of learning organisations and communities of practice/enquiry; professional learning through local, regional, national and international networks and collaboration.
- Dissemination and sharing of practice and outcomes from professional learning.
- The influence of professional development on practice, teacher identity, leadership roles and institutional success.
- Theories and models of coaching and mentoring; differences and overlaps in coaching and mentoring practice.
- Training, development and education of new teachers and other professionals, including through coaching and mentoring.
- Peer-to-peer and collaborative support in professional development.
- The impact of professional development, coaching and mentoring on institutional practices and learning outcomes.

Institutional effectiveness, change and improvement:

- Discourses and theories of effectiveness, change and improvement in education.
- Legislation, policy, guidance and local/national frameworks for accountability, inspection, governance, challenge and support.
- Local, national and international educational influences on effectiveness, change and improvement, including policy, guidance, frameworks, performance measures and indicators.
- Analysing, benchmarking and evaluating institutional effectiveness in terms of provision and outcomes.
- Institutional strategic and operational development planning, action planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- Change processes and management, and improvement activities and their resourcing needs.
- Organisational learning and cultures; developing self-improving systems.
- The role of stakeholders in institutional development and change; student, parent and community voice.

Partnership working and community involvement:

- Communication, partnership and involvement with institutional stakeholders including students, staff, parents, governors and community members/organisations.
- System leadership across educational institutions, lateral partnerships and networks; institution-to-institution support, sharing of expertise and resources, and peer-review; managing learner transfers and transitions.
- Parental engagement and involvement in the learning and development of children and young people.
- Working with business, industry and employers, other stakeholders, including those contributing to work-related learning, curriculum development, work placements and teacher education.
- Multi-agency working, information sharing and partnership with external agencies to support families and learners with specific needs or facing challenging circumstances.
- Working with governors, local and national authorities and other supervisory bodies; systems and arrangements for external monitoring and evaluation of provision and outcomes.

MTL/MEL in practice

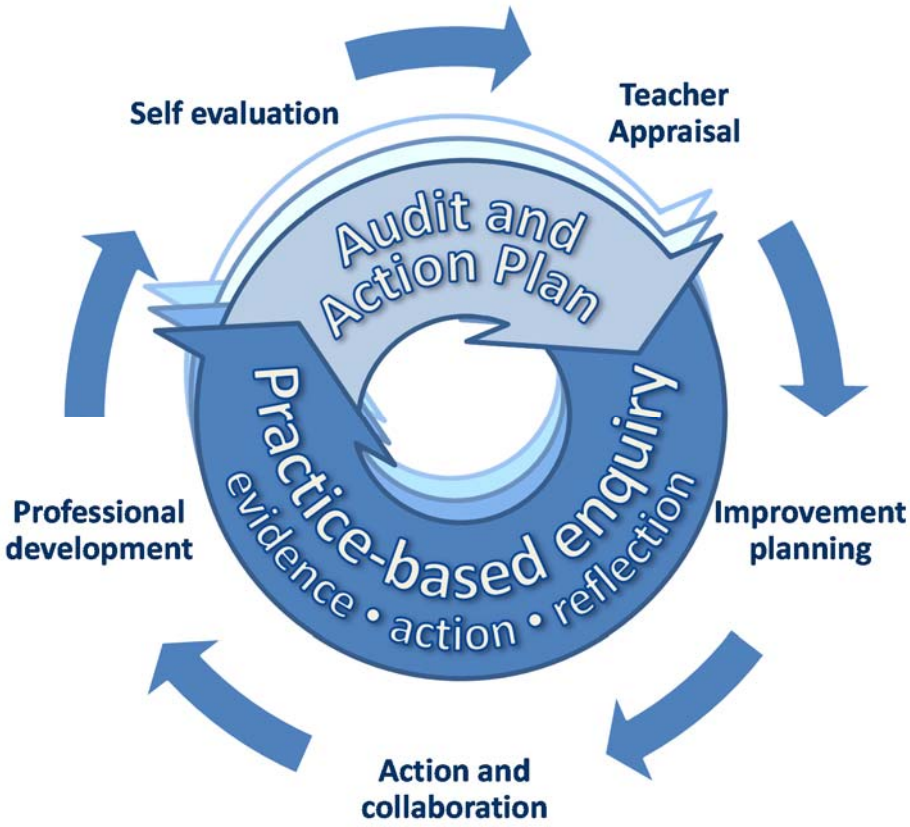
MTL/MEL can be closely linked to personal, departmental and institutional development priorities.

Each module begins with a simple **audit** and **action plan** process, which might draw on your school or department self-evaluation and/or personal appraisal objectives.

The action plan is used to guide your individual and collaborative study and record interactions with your tutor.

Practice-based enquiry involves:

- gathering workplace **evidence**, for example through observation, data analysis, surveys, diaries, interviews, pupil trails;
- taking **action** to change practice, make innovations and interventions, record impact and share findings;
- critical **reflection** on evidence gathered and actions taken, underpinned by a reading of wider policy, literature and research.



MTL enquiry example 1

Audit and action plan

- For the *teaching and learning, personalisation and AfL* module, a group of four teachers from different subjects decides to investigate aspects of assessment for learning, which is school priority.
- They narrow the focus to pupil feedback in lessons and plan their approach with senior staff and a tutor.

Reading

- With tutor support the teachers identify a selection of policy, literature and research on AfL and feedback.
- They share this out between them and agree to meet in three weeks to discuss key points from their individual reading.
- They also post a summary of each article on a shared blog and submit comments; the tutor adds comments too.

Action (lesson study)

- The teachers select some approaches to pupil feedback to try out, based on their shared reading. They jointly plan some lessons, comparing the variations across subjects.
- Each teacher observes one other teacher, identifying three or four specific pupils to watch closely during feedback interactions.
- After the lesson, the observing teacher briefly interviews the four pupils, to gauge their views on the feedback they received.

Evidence

- The teachers meet with their tutor to share, analyse and discuss the evidence they have gathered through observations and interviews.
- They produce slides and handouts on their findings to present at the next meeting of the teaching and learning group.

Reflection

- Each teacher uses their shared literature, evidence and resources to reflect on the impact of their collaborative enquiry and their presentation to colleagues.
- They write this up individually in the form of a critical commentary and submit it for assessment, along with their slides and handouts.

MTL enquiry example 2

Audit and action plan
- For the *learner development and inclusion* module, a teacher decides to focus on an autistic learner in their tutor group, Pupil A, who is underachieving according to assessments.
- They decide to investigate the reasons for this and plan their approach with senior staff and a tutor.

Action and evidence 1
- The teacher carries out a one day pupil trail, to see how Pupil A responds and learns in different lessons.
- With tutor support, the teacher also starts to gather a range of reading, guidance and research evidence relating to autism, to broaden and deepen their understanding of the condition.
- The teacher starts to write a literature review.

Action and evidence 2
- The teacher wants to find out more about Pupil A's views as a learner and also how teachers perceive Pupil A in their lessons.
- The teacher asks Pupil A to keep a diary over a three week period, to record their experiences in lessons and their feelings about them.
- Pupil A's teachers also agree to keep a three-week diary of how they think Pupil A is progressing in their lessons.

Evidence and reflection
- The teacher analyses the diaries and identifies teaching and learning strategies that appear more effective for meeting Pupil A's needs.
- They produce an information sheet about Pupil A and share it with all staff who teach him/her and a discussion takes place in a staff meeting.
- They write up the enquiry in the form of a critical commentary, updating and including their literature review, then submit it for assessment, along with their information sheet.

MEL enquiry example

Audit and action plan
- For the *institutional effectiveness, change and improvement* module, a leader identifies the need for more collaborative involvement from stakeholders in institutional development.
- They decide to produce a three-year strategic improvement plan through wide consultation.

Reading
- With tutor and colleague support, a range of guidance and literature on change management and strategic planning is identified.
- Some key points from material are shared in leadership meetings to select relevance to institutional priorities and practices.
- The leader starts to write a literature review.

Evidence
- A series of opportunities for gathering stakeholder views are organised, including Post-it consultation at parents' events and an online questionnaire for students, linked to key development priorities.
- This evidence is analysed and summarised to identify additional strategic actions and opportunities for parent and student involvement in change processes.

Action
- A three-year strategic improvement plan is produced, in a simple, accessible and visually appealing form. This sets out key priorities, strategic actions and success criteria. It is displayed around the institution and used by teams to inform shorter-term action planning.

Reflection
- The leader writes up the enquiry in the form of a critical commentary, updating and including their literature review, and then submits it for assessment, along with their strategic plan.

Further Information

For more information, contact the Programme Lead: **Ian Axtell – 0121 331 7322**, ian.axtell@bcu.ac.uk