

Applied Systemic Theory

Final award	PGDip
Intermediate awards available	PGCert
UCAS code	N/A
Details of professional body accreditation	Association for Family Therapy General Social Care Council
Relevant QAA Benchmark statements	N/A
Date specification last up-dated	July 2014

Programme content

The D4 Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Systemic Theory

The course is renowned and unique for a number of reasons:

- It has exceptionally high standards of teaching, testified by the positive student feedback and feedback from the external examiners to the course.
- The students have access to the resources of the Tavistock Clinic, which include the excellent library and MOODLE, an interactive learning web-based environment.
- The course integrates thinking and practice about issues of 'race', culture and diversity at every stage.
- The use of consulting partners introduces the important dimension of peer learning to student development.

Year 1 - Students are given an overview of systemic theory including the development of the major approaches that inform systemic practice. Emphasis is placed on examining effects of personal and societal contexts on professional tasks and systemic practice.

Year 2 – Students develop their learning from year one, applying more complex theory to their work settings, exploring current debates in thinking and practice and critically evaluating the theoretical basis of the systems approach.

- The course is offered at four sites – the Tavistock Clinic in London plus Brighton, Oxford and Maidstone.
- The course benefits from the rich inter-disciplinary tradition of the Tavistock; its teaching staff, library and the on-going programme of other courses and seminars which students are invited to attend.
- The course benefits from the international status of the Tavistock and many of the systemic trainers on its teaching staff. Trainees travel from all over the world.
- Structure of the training and teaching methods are congruent with the theory and method of systemic practice

The Institute also offers a black and minority ethnic support group for students

Applied Systemic Theory at UEL

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Admission requirements

Year 1

Students are expected to be working within a setting that will allow them to apply and develop systemic ideas. To this end, voluntary work placements are acceptable. Students would normally hold a first degree or be able to demonstrate proof of prior certified or experiential learning.

Year 2

Students must have satisfactorily passed the Postgraduate Certificate (D4 year 1 or D24) or equivalent or be able to demonstrate proof of prior certified or experiential learning. They are required to be in a work setting where they can interview families and audio or video tape such interviews.

At UEL we are committed to working together to build a learning community founded on equality of opportunity - a learning community which celebrates the rich diversity of our student and staff populations. Discriminatory behaviour has no place in our community and will not be tolerated. Within a spirit of respecting difference, our equality and diversity policies promise fair treatment and equality of opportunity for all. In pursuing this aim, we want people applying for a place at UEL to feel valued and know that the process and experience will be transparent and fair and no one will be refused access on the grounds of any protected characteristic stated in the Equality Act 2010

English Language Requirements

In the case of applicants whose first language is not English, then the normal requirement for postgraduate courses is IELTS 6.5 TOEFL IBT 91 + (min 18 in each component) depending on the course; UEL and the Trust also accept other English language requirements including country specific examinations. International qualifications will be checked for appropriate matriculation to UK Higher Education postgraduate courses.

All applicants are sent a detailed written account of the course and an application form.

Selection

By:

- (a) Application form
- (b) A written reference from the student's workplace supporting their application and another relevant reference
- (c) By interview. Candidates are required to bring to the interview a written account of a piece of work with a child, young person or family which they will be expected to discuss

All interviews are undertaken by staff members from the Tavistock Clinic. Applicants are expected to submit photocopies of their professional and academic qualifications at interview. In addition all students offered a place are required to have an enhanced CRB check which will be arranged the Trust.

International qualifications will be checked for appropriate matriculation to UK Higher Education postgraduate courses.

Students that apply to enter stages of the course may be admitted through normal Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) or Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APL) processes, or through an approved articulation agreement. It should be noted that given the developmental nature of this course in order for students to make a claim for Accreditation of Prior Learning (APEL or APL) they will have to both demonstrate and evidence that they have achieved the learning outcomes of any particular unit of the course for which they are seeking exemption and that in the opinion of the Course Tutors, that the APEL/APL being applied for, does not disadvantage the student in terms of future learning on the course

Programme structure

Each year of the course is part-time over three terms with students carrying out independent study and course projects in small groups outside the course time. Students who complete Year 1 may proceed to Year 2 However, students who successfully complete Year 1 may choose to exit at the end of the first year with a Postgraduate Certificate in Applied Systemic Theory.

Learning environment

The course is designed so that learning takes place through participation in theoretical seminars, application groups and course projects. Students are also invited to form consulting partnerships with fellow students to facilitate the learning process.

Assessment

Year 1

Students are required to submit three written pieces of work over the course of the year which are linked to curriculum areas. A percentage mark is given for each of these pieces of work.

- Exploration of Difference and Diversity: an essay of 2500 words which explores differences of 'race', culture, gender, class, physical ability and sexual orientation.
- Introduction to Systemic Theory 1- Family Observation and Theory Review: an essay of 3500 words of an observation of a non-clinical family using systemic concepts to analyse family relationships and interactions.
- Introduction to Systemic Applications 1- Agency Project: an essay of 2500 words which explores values and belief systems which underpin professional contexts.

Students are required to attend a minimum number of days and to participate in all learning activities on both courses

Year 2

Candidates are assessed academically and in respect of their clinical practice and undertake three assignments.

- Introduction to Systemic Applications 2- Practice Snapshot Project: an essay of 2000 words of an interview with a three generational non-clinical family with a transcript of section of the interview.

- Introduction to Systemic Theory 2- Theory Paper: an essay of 3500 words which examines and critically evaluates the theoretical basis of systemic approaches and their development.
- Introduction to Systemic Practice – Clinical Viva: a presentation and analysis of a systemic clinical interview with a family to a panel of examiners with an essay of 1000 words which includes a genogram.

Students work together throughout the year in consulting partnerships and in application groups present key concepts to the rest of the student body.

Relevance to work/profession

All learning is linked to students' professional and personal experience.

Thesis/Dissertation/project work

- Application groups for both years of the course encourage students to apply theory to practice, to discuss theoretical ideas and to reflect on practice using a systemic perspective.
- During Year 2, students are expected to keep learning diaries and to complete on-going skills assessments in conjunction with consulting partners

Added value

- Year 1 (Postgraduate Certificate) represents the first year of the GSCC Higher Specialist Award.
- Year 2 (Postgraduate Diploma) represents the second year of the GSCC Higher Specialist Award.

Your future career

Students completing the Postgraduate Diploma can apply for clinical training on the Masters in Systemic Psychotherapy (M6) course offered at the Tavistock & Portman NHS Foundation Trust, and in this way pursue accreditation as a Systemic Family Therapist.

How we support you

- Students are allocated to tutors with whom they meet throughout the year.
- Students are provided with study packs of reading material that is supplemented throughout the year.
- There are regular course meetings whereby the candidates can engage in a dialogue with staff about the course.
- A database of supervised placements is kept by the Directorate of Training and Postgraduate Education administration at the Tavistock for students requiring help in finding work placements. Many of these placements are provided by ex-students with whom the teachers and courses at the Tavistock have close and supportive links
- Students have access to reading material at the Tavistock library and via electronic mail and the Association of Family Therapy web journals.

Bonus factors

- The internationally distinguished academics and practitioners who visit the Systems team at the Tavistock are invited to present to students both Years 1 and 2 of the course.
- Students are invited to attend some of the conferences and seminars taking place at the Tavistock.
- In 2006-07 the trust implemented MOODLE which is a virtual learning environment accessible to students on courses validated by the Trust's university partners. Each academic course has been allocated a MOODLE page which contains substantial information and resources. Students can hold virtual meetings in chat rooms and debate over a longer period of time using the discussion forum. MOODLE represents a significant technological advance for the Trust and offers excellent support to students, particularly those studying part time or at a distance. Students also have access to UEL libraries.
- The course offers a unique opportunity for qualified professionals working in all branches of the caring professions with children, young people and families to engage in study for a higher academic award and to develop systemic knowledge, skills and capabilities in understanding the essential issues in therapeutic work with children young people and families.
- The course draws on students' personal and practice experience and facilitates the integration of relevant theoretical ideas and research in order to advanced clinical and supervisory practice.
- The course aims to develop sophisticated observational and assessment skills for use in practice work with children young people and families and encourages the development of critical analysis and self reflexivity in relation to systemic theory and practice.

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Outcomes section

Programme aims and learning outcomes

What is this programme designed to achieve?

This programme is designed to give you the opportunity to:

- Gain a well-developed understanding of systemic theory and practice to enable you to critique and consider ideas fluently
- Develop your practice skills so that you can confidently apply systemic theory to your work setting
- Learn to reflect usefully on the personal professional dimension of your practice
- Develop a capacity to recognize how multiple contexts including political, cultural and theoretical discourses inform your work and can support discrimination in practice

What will you learn?

Knowledge

- History of Systemic Ideas, including cybernetics and the development towards post-modern thinking
- Philosophical underpinning of Systemic ideas
- Cultural and political discourses and their place in the Systemic theoretical frame
- Approaches to working creatively with families

Thinking skills

- Develop an ability to analyse and critically evaluate theoretical ideas
- Develop an ability to reflect on practice and connect it to personal and professional development
- Develop an ability to understand how theory can support inherent discrimination in an organisations' practice and structure
- Develop a recognition of their own and others' involvement in their practice
- Design a clinical and research project.

Subject-Based Practical skills

- Engagement skills
- Interviewing skills
- Interventions
- Working with specific issues
- Working with specific contexts
- Positioning skills
- To undertake and document research projects.

Skills for life and work (general skills)

- Reflexivity – the capacity to observe and reflect on oneself in interaction
- Communication skills
- Capacity to observe and engage with difference
- Capacity to recognize and manage issues of power and discrimination

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Structure section

The programme structure

Introduction

At the University of East London all courses are credit-rated to help you to understand the amount and level of study that is needed.

One credit is equal to 10 hours of directed study time (this includes everything you do e.g. lecture, seminar and private study).

Credits are assigned to one of 5 levels:

- 0 - equivalent in standard to GCE 'A' level and is intended to prepare students for year one of an undergraduate degree programme
- 1 - equivalent in standard to the first year of a full-time undergraduate degree programme
- 2 - equivalent in standard to the second year of a full-time undergraduate degree programme
- 3 - equivalent in standard to the third year of a full-time undergraduate degree programme
- M - equivalent in standard to a Masters degree

Credit rating

The overall credit-rating of this course is 120 for Postgraduate Diploma, 60 for Postgraduate Certificate

Typical duration

- Year 1 – part-time over 3 terms on Fridays at the Tavistock and Maidstone and on Monday evenings in Brighton and Oxford.
- Year 2 – part-time over 3 terms on Fridays at the Tavistock and Maidstone and on Monday evenings in Brighton and Oxford. In Year 2 students are expected to undertake work projects outside study time.

Please note: Years 1 and 2 run on alternate years in Maidstone, Brighton and Oxford. Please contact the course team for details.

How the teaching year is divided

The teaching year begins early in October and ends early in July. It is divided into three terms. The Year 1 runs as described above mainly half a day a week. Year 2 runs for 8 days in term 1, 7 days in term 2, and 6 days in term 3: however, the frequency within terms varies on a regional basis.

What you will study when

The following are the core and optional requirements for this course:

Level/Year	Unit Title	Credit	Status
M Year 1	D4 Unit 1 Exploration of difference and diversity	20	Option D4
M Year 1	D4 Unit 2 Introduction to Systemic Theory 1	20	Option D4
M Year 1	D4 Unit 3 Introduction to Systemic Applications 1	20	Option D4
M Year 1	D4 Unit 4 Personal Professional Development	Non-Assessed	Option D4

The above four units studied together would lead to a PG Cert in Applied Systemic Theory (D4)

M Year 1	D24 Unit A Therapeutic Practice, Concepts and Contexts: applications for practice in working with children, young people and families with emotional and mental health difficulties	20	Option D24
M Year 1	D24 Unit Bb Family Observation and Systemic Theory	20	Option D24
M Year 1	D24 Unit C Introduction to child development research and presenting issues (3 terms)	20	Option D24
M Year 1	Experiential Group	Non-Assessed	Option D24
M Year 1	Working Conference	Non-Assessed	Option D24

The above five units studied together would lead to a PG Cert in Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Well-Being: Multidisciplinary Practice (D24)

M Year 2	D4 Unit 5 Introduction to Systemic Applications 2 – Practice Snapshot	20	Core
M Year 2	D4 Unit 6 Introduction to Systemic Theory 2 – Theory Paper	20	Core
M Year 2	D4 Unit 7 Introduction to Systemic Practice	20	Core
M Year 2	D4 Unit 8 Personal Professional Development (3 terms)	Non-assessed	Core

Students should decide before embarking on the course which Postgraduate Certificate route they wish to follow. Students would need to study the options for either Postgraduate Certificate D4 Applied Systemic Theory or D24 Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Well-Being: Multidisciplinary Practice. Students cannot study a combination of the units.

Requirements for gaining an award

In order to gain a Postgraduate Certificate, you will need to obtain 60 credits at Level M. To gain a named Postgraduate Certificate you would study a set group of modules from the list above.

In order to gain a Postgraduate Diploma, you will need to obtain 120 credits at Level M.

Additional information ...

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Assessment section

Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching and learning

Knowledge and thinking skills are developed through

- Teaching seminars including video
- Discussion
- Consulting partnerships
- Reading and writing
- Application group discussion and practice
- Video presentations
- Tutorials
- PPD work

Practical skills and skills for life and work are developed through

- Role play and discussion within large teaching group
- Application group work
- Applying ideas in work setting
- Videoing practice and reviewing
- Consulting partnerships
- Presentations
- PPD work

Assessment

Knowledge is assessed by

- Year 1 Written work – Exploration of Difference essay, Theory essay, Agency Project
- Year 2 Written work – Practice Snapshot Project, Theory essay
- Year 2 Clinical *Viva Voce* Examination
- Application group observation and feedback.
- Tutorial/supervisor observation and feedback.

Thinking skills are assessed by

- Assignments
- Application group observation and feedback
- Tutorial/supervisor observation and feedback.

Practical skills are assessed by

- Case discussions in application groups

- Tutorials.

Skills for life and work (general skills) are assessed by

- Assignments
- Presentation and engagement capacities can be assessed in whole group seminars, application groups and presentations of clinical work

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Quality section

How we assure the quality of this programme

Before this programme started

Before this programme started the University checked that:

- there would be enough qualified staff to teach the programme
- adequate resources would be in place
- the overall aims and objectives were appropriate
- the content of the programme met national benchmark requirements
- the programme met any professional/statutory body requirements
- the proposal met other internal quality criteria covering a range of issues such as admissions policy, teaching, learning and assessment strategy, and student support mechanisms

This is done through a process of course approval which involves convening a panel of academic experts including some subject specialists from other institutions. Each panel scrutinises available documents and talks to the staff who will teach the programme before deciding whether it can be approved

How we monitor the quality of this programme

The quality of this programme is monitored each year through evaluating:

- external examiner reports (considering quality and standards)
- statistical information (considering issues such as the pass rate)
- student feedback

Drawing on this and other information a Review and Enhancement Process is completed by the staff who teach the programme that is reviewed at departmental and faculty level.

Once every five years the University undertakes an in-depth review of the whole subject area. This is undertaken by a panel that includes at least three external subject specialists. The panel considers documents, looks at student work, speaks to current and former students and speaks to staff before drawing its conclusions. The result is a report highlighting good practice and identifying areas where action is needed.

The role of the programme committee

This programme has a course committee comprising all relevant teaching staff, student representatives and others who make a contribution towards the effective operation of the programme (e.g. library/technician staff). The committee is responsible for the quality of the programme. It oversees preparation of the Annual Quality Improvement Plan and proposes changes to improve quality. The course/subject area committee plays a critical role in the University's quality assurance procedures.

The role of external examiners

The standard of this programme is monitored by at least one external examiner.

External examiners have two primary responsibilities:

- To ensure the standard of the programme
- To ensure that justice is done to individual students

External examiners fulfil these responsibilities in a variety of ways including:

- Approving exam papers/assignments
- Attending assessment boards
- Reviewing samples of student work and moderating marks
- Ensuring that regulations are followed
- Providing feedback to the University through an annual report that enables us to make improvements for the future

Listening to the views of students

The following methods for gaining student feedback are used on this programme:

Student representation on course committees (meeting 2 times year)

- Formal – Evaluation forms
- Informal – Discussion in large group, application groups and tutorials

Students are notified of the action taken through:

- circulating the minutes of the course committee
- discussion in large group, application groups and tutorials

Listening to the views of others

The following methods are used for gaining the views of other interested parties:

- Contact with placements
- Meetings with Other members of Systems team
- Association for Family Therapy – Training committee

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Further Information section

Where you can find further information

Further information about this programme is available from:

- The UEL web site www.uel.ac.uk
- UEL Quality Manual www.uel.ac.uk/qa/qualityass_resp.htm
- The Tavistock & Portman NHS Trust website www.tavi-port.org
- [Tavistock Programme Specific Site](#)

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Further Information section

Alternative locations for studying this programme

Location	Which elements?	Taught by UEL staff	Taught by local staff	Method of Delivery
Brighton, Sussex	D4 – Year 1; D4 – Year 2*	No	Yes	Part time
Oxford	D4 – Year 1; D4 – Year 2*	No	Yes	Part time
Maidstone Kent	D4 – Year 1; D4 – Year 2*	No	Yes	Part time
-	-	-	-	-