

LEVEL 7 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

Student name:		Student ID number:	
Programme:	Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)		
Module:	Professional and Pedagogic Studies: Researching the Learning: what, how and why am I teaching?		
Module code:	ECAD7006	Contribution to Overall Module Assessment (%):	100%
Lecturer:	Rachel Bendall /Elaine Sharpling	Internal Verifier:	
Assignment Title:	Design, conduct and critically evaluate a close-to practice research project (action research) arising from practice and investigated through identified research tools.	Word count (or equivalent):	4500 words PLUS the submission of a satisfactory Ethics Form and appendices
Submission deadline:	5.5.2026 23:59	Return date of provisional marks & written feedback:	3.6.2026
Submission method:	All written assessments, where practical and possible, must be submitted via Turnitin unless otherwise instructed by the Lecturer. (Please DO NOT put this assessment specification into Turnitin or it will match many similarities with other students' submissions.) Alternative submission method (if applicable): Late submission of the assessment will result in a late penalty mark. Penalties for late submission: Up to one week late, maximum mark of D. Over one week late, 0%. Only the Extenuating Circumstances Panel may approve a change to submission dates.		
Academic honesty / referencing:	Academic honesty is required. In the main body of your submission you must give credit to authors on whose research and ideas your work is based. Append to your submission a reference list that indicates the books, articles, etc. that you have used, cited or quoted in order to complete this assessment.		

Module Learning Outcomes

Upon the successful completion of this module, the student-teacher should be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- design and apply appropriate research methodologies demonstrating a critical understanding of the nature of educational research: being a skilled researcher;
- critically reflect upon the centrality of ethical practice within classroom-based research, and demonstrate deep understanding of its principles: being an ethical researcher;
- show autonomy in conducting close-to-practice inquiry to transform an aspect of personal practice which positively impacts learner outcomes: show some originality and rigor in the application of appropriate research skills;
- critically analyse and synthesise the relevant empirical evidence including education literature and policy documents, to identify key concepts and use this to formulate suitable approaches to transform classroom practice;
- critically evaluate research evidence, showing sound judgement of complex data to support pedagogic decisions and sharing these decisions in a professional setting: being part of an inquiry-based profession.

TASK DESCRIPTION

You will design, conduct and critically evaluate a close-to practice research project (action research) arising from practice and investigated through identified research tools.

A typical essay will be 4500 words (+/- 10%) including tables, figures and captions. You should include a word count with your work.

Essays should be submitted to Turnitin as follows:

To the 'Essay' tab - Title page (including student code and research question), text of essay, reference list.

To the 'Appendices' tab – **ONE document** in Word format that includes any appendices that are relevant to your essay.

These should include any research tools relevant to your study; e.g. observation schedule, interview questions, questionnaire.

These could also include: lesson plans, copies of pupils' work, details of the assent process.

Further information regarding the structure of your essay is available on Moodle.

You will also be required to submit an Ethics Form as part of the assessment of this module, which will be formally considered for approval by Yr Athrofa Ethics Committee. Details for the submission of your ethics form can be found in the module handbook.

GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS IN THE COMPLETION OF TASKS

NOTE: The guidance offered below is linked to the five generic assessment criteria overleaf.

1. Engagement with Literature Skills

Your work must be informed and supported by scholarly material that is *relevant* to and *focused* on the task(s) set; you should make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources, as appropriate (for example, refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the discipline). You should provide evidence that you have accessed a wide *range* of sources, which may be academic, governmental and industrial; these sources may include academic journal articles, textbooks, current news articles, organisational documents, and websites. You should consider the *credibility* of your sources; academic journals are normally highly credible sources while websites require careful consideration/selection and should be used sparingly. Any sources you use should be current and up-to-date, mostly published within the last five years or so, though seminal/important works in the field may be older. You must provide *evidence* of your research/own reading throughout your work, using correctly a suitable referencing system, including in-text citations in the main body of your work and a reference list at the end of your work.

Guidance specific to this assessment:

Your essay requires significant engagement with academic literature/theory; therefore, you should show a wide level of reading from sources such as textbooks and academic journals. Through reference to the literature, you should demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of your chosen research focus and of action research as a method of research. You could also refer to relevant Welsh Government publications, including curriculum documentation, and any other reports (e.g. WG, Estyn) that are relevant to your research focus.

2. Knowledge and Understanding Skills

At level 7, you should be able to demonstrate a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of your academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice, with a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to your own research or advanced scholarship. Your work must demonstrate your growing mastery of these concepts, principles, current challenges, innovation and insights associated with the subject area. *Knowledge* relates to the facts, information and skills you have acquired through your learning. You demonstrate your *understanding* by interpreting the meaning of the facts and information (knowledge). This means that you need to select and include in your work the contemporary concepts, techniques, models, theories, etc. appropriate to the task(s) set. You should be able to explain the theories, concepts, etc. meaningfully to show your understanding. Your mark/grade will also depend upon the *extent* to which you demonstrate your knowledge and understanding; ideally each should be complete and detailed, with comprehensive coverage.

Guidance specific to this assessment:

With reference to your own practice, you should demonstrate a systematic understanding of classroom research and of the benefits and drawbacks of using an action research approach in particular as a method of research. Knowledge of the background of, and theory behind, your chosen research focus should also be demonstrated, with an appreciation of the possible contribution of your specific research study within the field. You should critically reflect on relevant ethical frameworks that underpin educational research and consider specific ethical implications of research for and with children and/or young people within your context. You should demonstrate an understanding and application of concepts and underlying principles associated with the specific context of study.

3. Cognitive and Intellectual Skills

You should be able to: evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline; evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses; deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively to make sound judgements in the absence of complete data. Your work must contain evidence of logical, analytical thinking, evaluation and synthesis. For example, to examine and break information down into parts, make inferences, compile, compare and contrast information. This means not just describing what! But also justifying: Why? How? When? Who? Where? At what cost? At all times, you must provide justification for your arguments and judgements. Evidence that you have reflected upon the ideas of experts within the subject area is crucial to you providing a reasoned and informed debate within your work. Your choice of methodologies to gather data and information must be rigorously defended. Furthermore, you should provide evidence that you are able to make sound judgements and convincing arguments using data and concepts. Sound, valid, persuasive conclusions are necessary and must be derived from the content of your work. Where relevant, alternative solutions and recommendations may be proposed.

Guidance specific to this assessment:

You should devise and sustain arguments and discuss issues relating to the practical application of your research study within your classroom. You should evaluate and synthesise ideas in order to come to sound judgements. Recommendations should be convincing, persuasive, possibly challenging and derived from evaluation of the evidence. You should demonstrate an appropriate use of relevant ethical frameworks.

4. Practical Skills

At level 7, you should be able to demonstrate originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline. This includes acting autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level, originality in tackling and solving problems, and decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts or situations.

You should be able to demonstrate mastery of the leading edge subject-related concepts and ideas as they relate to real world situations and/or particular contexts. How do they work in practice? You will deploy models, methods, techniques, and/or theories, in those contexts or circumstances, to assess current situations, perhaps to formulate plans or plausible, justifiable recommendations to solve problems, or to propose new models, or to create artefacts, which may be innovative and creative, thereby demonstrating your understanding of how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research and/or application. This is likely to involve, for instance, the use of real world artefacts, examples and cases, the application of a model within an organisation and/or benchmarking one theory or organisation against others.

Guidance specific to this assessment:

You should refer to your own experience within a classroom context in order to demonstrate your understanding of the elements involved in the research study process. Your work should refer to the planning and implementing of your chosen study, including a discussion of any issues encountered and of the decision-making process during the study. Your personal responsibility in managing your own learning should be demonstrated through engagement with module content, self-directed study and reflective practice.

5. Transferable Skills for Life and Professional Practice

Your work must provide evidence of the qualities and transferable skills necessary for postgraduate-level employment in circumstances requiring sound judgement, personal responsibility and initiative in complex and unpredictable professional environments. This includes demonstrating: the independent learning ability for continuing professional development to advance existing skills and acquire new competences of a professional nature that will enable you to assume significant responsibility within organisations; that you can initiate and complete tasks, projects and procedures, whether individually and/or collaboratively, to a professional level; that you can use appropriate media to effectively communicate information, arguments and analysis in a variety of forms for a variety of audiences; fluency of expression; clarity and effectiveness in presentation and organisation. Work should be coherent and well-structured in presentation and organisation.

Guidance specific to this assessment:

You should undertake critical analysis and evaluation of the research methodology, identifying implications for future practice. You should demonstrate the attributes expected in professional practice including individual initiative, project management, collaborative working and inter-personal skills. Your essay should be written in a formal style, including appendices if relevant. You should consider your audience and ensure that your style and approach engages the reader.

STUDENT FEEDBACK FORM

This section details the *extent* to which the assessment criteria are demonstrated by you, which in turn determines your mark. The marks available for each category of skill are shown. Lecturers will use the space provided to comment on the achievement of the task(s), including those areas in which you have performed well and areas that would benefit from development/improvement.

Generic Assessment Criteria	Marks available	Marks awarded
1. Engagement with Literature Skills		
	20	
2. Knowledge and Understanding Skills		
	20	
3. Cognitive and Intellectual Skills		
	20	
4. Practical Application Skills		
	20	
5. Transferable Skills for Life and Professional Practice		
	20	

Assessment Mark (Assessment marks are subject to ratification at the Exam Board. These comments and marks are to give feedback on module work and are for guidance only until they are confirmed.)	Late Submission Penalties (tick if appropriate)		%
	Up to 1 week late (50% Max)		
	Over 1 week late (0%)		

GENERIC ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Level 7

In accordance with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, at the end of Level 7 students should be able to demonstrate: a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline or area of professional practice; a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship; originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline; conceptual understanding that enables the student to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses. They will be able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences. They will demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level to continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level. They the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility; decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations/professional environments; and the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

Level 7	FAIL	MARGINAL FAIL	SATISFACTORY (Pass)	GOOD	VERY GOOD	EXCELLENT
Category	F	E	D	C	B	A
Engagement with literature (including current research, referencing, academic conventions and academic honesty)	Poor engagement with essential reading. No evidence of wider reading. Reliance on inappropriate sources, and/or indiscriminate use of sources. Heavily reliant on information gained through class contact. Inconsistent and weak use of referencing.	Engagement with a very limited range of relevant and credible sources. Some omissions and minor errors. Referencing conventions evident though not always applied accurately or consistently.	Engagement with an appropriate range of research-informed literature, including sources retrieved independently. Some over-reliance on texts. Referencing may show minor inaccuracies or inconsistencies.	Engagement with a wide range of research-informed literature, including sources retrieved independently. Selection of relevant and credible sources. Very good use of referencing, with no/very few inaccuracies or inconsistencies.	Engagement with an extensive range of relevant and credible literature, informed by the latest research. Consistently accurate application of referencing.	Exceptional engagement with an extensive range of relevant and credible literature, informed by the latest research. High-level referencing skills consistently and professionally applied.
Knowledge and understanding	Gaps in knowledge, with only superficial	Limited knowledge and systematic	Knowledge is accurate and reasonably	Knowledge has a well-defined focus, which is	Excellent mastery of a complex and	Exceptional mastery of a complex and

Level 7	FAIL	MARGINAL FAIL	SATISFACTORY (Pass)	GOOD	VERY GOOD	EXCELLENT
Category	F	E	D	C	B	A
(A systematic, conceptual understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of the discipline; a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research)	systematic understanding. Some significant inaccuracies and/or irrelevant material. No critical awareness of current problems, insights, or latest research within the discipline.	understanding of the concepts and principles within the subject area, which to some marginal extent, is informed by current research and scholarship. Some critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, but often under-developed.	detailed. A systematic understanding of the field of study informed by, to some extent, current research and scholarship. A critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights though this may be under-developed occasionally.	reasonably extensive, coherent and detailed, with a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights. Exhibits good understanding of the breadth and depth of contemporary and established views, and the work is, at least in part, well-informed by current research and scholarship.	specialised area of knowledge. A systematic, excellent understanding of the concepts of the subject informed by current research and scholarship. Highly critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights. A critical, awareness of how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research.	specialised area of knowledge. An exceptionally critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights. An outstanding understanding of the concepts of the subject, well-informed by current research and scholarship. A critical, sophisticated and nuanced awareness of how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research.
Cognitive and intellectual skills (Critical evaluation of current research and methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses; make sound judgements in the	Largely descriptive work, with superficial use of critical evaluation of research and methodologies. Absent or weak development of hypotheses and judgements. Information accepted uncritically, uses generalised statements	Limited attempt at critical evaluation/ critique of current research and methodologies, tending towards description. Limited attempt to propose new hypotheses. Can deal with complex issues but not systematically or	Some critical evaluation/ critique of current research and methodologies, though slightly underdeveloped in places, Proposes adequate but limited new hypotheses, where relevant. Can deal with complex issues	Sound critical evaluation/ critique of current research and methodologies, Proposes new hypotheses, where appropriate. Can deal with complex issues systematically and with some creativity. Ability to make sound	Excellent critical evaluation/ critique of current research and methodologies, Proposes innovative hypotheses, where appropriate. Can synthesise complex issues systematically and creatively. Ability to	Exceptional critical evaluation/ critique of current research and methodologies, Proposes innovative hypotheses, where appropriate. Exemplary systematic and creative

Level 7	FAIL	MARGINAL FAIL	SATISFACTORY (Pass)	GOOD	VERY GOOD	EXCELLENT
Category	F	E	D	C	B	A
absence of complete data.)	made with scant evidence and unsubstantiated opinions. Ideas sometimes illogical and contradictory.	creatively. Some evidence to support emerging judgements but these may be underdeveloped or with a little inconsistency / mis-interpretation. May assert rather than argue a case.	but not fully systematically or creatively. Ability to make judgements based on data (that may be incomplete) but with some tendency to assert/state opinion rather than argue on the basis of reason and evidence.	judgements based on data (that may be incomplete)	investigate contradictory or incomplete information and make strong, persuasive, arguments and sophisticated judgements.	synthesis of complex issues. Ability to investigate contradictory or incomplete information and make strong, persuasive, arguments and sophisticated, nuanced, judgements. Potential for journal publication or doctoral research.
Practical skills (Originality / creativity in the application of knowledge, tools and techniques and in tackling and solving problems in complex and unpredictable professional situations; practical use of established techniques of research and enquiry to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline.)	Rudimentary application of methods, materials, tools and/or techniques but without consideration and competence. Flawed appreciation of the context of the application. Weak understanding of the application of theory to practice, with only occasional evidence of making appropriate links	An awareness and mostly appropriate application of well-established methods, materials, tools and/or techniques, with occasional errors. Basic appreciation of the context of the application. Theoretical knowledge and understanding applied in practice, but not always making logical links between the two.	An appropriate application of standard methods, materials, tools and/or techniques. Clear appreciation of the context of the application. Mainly consistent, accurate and logical application of theory to practice, making appropriate links between the two. Can identify problems and propose mostly	A very good application of a range of methods, materials, tools and/or techniques. Very good consideration of the context of the application, with perceptive insights. Can identify problems and propose appropriate solutions in complex and unpredictable contexts. Evidence of originality and creativity.	An advanced application of knowledge, methods, materials, tools and/or techniques. The context of the application is well considered, and insightful. Can identify complex problems and propose excellent solutions. An excellent grasp of techniques applicable to own research or advanced scholarship.	Exceptional application skills in complex, unpredictable, contexts, drawing skilfully on the latest research within the discipline. Can identify complex problems and propose sophisticated, original solutions. An outstanding application of techniques applicable to own research or advanced scholarship.

Level 7	FAIL	MARGINAL FAIL	SATISFACTORY (Pass)	GOOD	VERY GOOD	EXCELLENT
Category	F	E	D	C	B	A
	between the two. Weak problem-solving skills in complex and unpredictable contexts.	Can identify problems and propose basic solutions without fully appreciating the complexity of unpredictable contexts.	appropriate solutions in complex and unpredictable contexts, with elements of originality.		Shows originality in application of knowledge and techniques, and of how established techniques of enquiry create and interpret knowledge in the discipline.	Shows originality in application of knowledge and techniques, and of how established techniques of enquiry create and interpret knowledge in the discipline with assimilation and development of cutting edge processes and techniques.
Transferable skills for life and professional practice (Exercise of self-direction, autonomy and personal responsibility; plan and implement tasks at a professional level; independent learning; use appropriate media to communicate effectively and professionally to a variety of audiences; fluency of expression; systematic approach; clarity and effectiveness)	Communication medium is poorly designed and/or not suitable for the audience. Work is poorly presented in a disjointed manner. It is loosely, and at times incoherently, structured, with information and ideas often poorly expressed. Weak use of language and/or inappropriate style. Weak independent initiative (or collaboration, if relevant).	Can communicate in a suitable medium but with some room for improvement. Mostly ordered presentation and structure in which relevant ideas / concepts are reasonably expressed. Work may lack coherence in places. Can work as part of a team, but with limited involvement in group activities. Demonstrates some but not all of the basic skills required in	Can communicate effectively in a suitable format, but may have minor errors. Mostly coherent, organised work, in a suitable structure and is for the most part clearly expressed. Can work effectively independently and/or as part of a team, with clear contribution to group activities. Demonstrates the skills required in professional, postgraduate	Can communicate well, confidently and consistently in a suitable format. Work is coherent, fluent, well-structured and organised. Can work very well autonomously and/or as part of a team, with a good contribution to group activities. Demonstrates comprehensive professional, postgraduate employment skills.	Can communicate professionally confidently and consistently in a suitable format. Work is coherent, very fluent and is presented professionally. Can work autonomously with initiative. Where relevant can work professionally within a team, showing leadership skills as appropriate, managing conflict and meeting obligations.	Can communicate with an exceptionally high level of professionalism. Work is remarkably coherent, very fluent and is presented professionally. Can work outstandingly well and professionally within a team, showing advanced leadership skills. Demonstrates exemplary professional, postgraduate employment

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Category	F	E	D	C	B	A
in presentation and organisation.)	Limited evidence of the skills required in professional, postgraduate employment.	professional, postgraduate employment, with some areas of minor weakness.	employment, with some areas of strength and some of minor weakness.		Demonstrates excellent professional, postgraduate employment skills and a strong appetite for further development.	skills and a strong appetite for further development.

Suggested Structure for your Assignment

Section	Suggested word count (4500 total)
The ‘why’ of the research – tell us your story In the introduction of your research, tell us the story or your journey of why you have chosen this particular topic. These questions may help you reflect on your decisions. You should use the first person – ‘I...’ - What in your experience of becoming a teacher has led to your research topic – why have you chosen this area to research? - Why is this topic important to you and your beliefs as a teacher? The ‘where’ of the research – tell us about the context - BRIEFLY note the school and class/es context within which the research took place.	300

The ‘aim’ of your research • What are the aims and objectives of your research – what to you hope to find out and why? • What is your research question?	
The ‘ethics’ of your research In this section you should show that you understand how to be an ethical researcher by explaining how your positionality plays a part in your study. Other aspects of ethical thinking are noted in the following sections.	350
The ‘theoretical background’ of your study – show that your research is informed by literature Write in the 3rd person This section should consist of a discussion of literature that relates to your research question. Remember to: • Summarise and synthesise: give an overview of the main points of each source and combine them into a coherent whole. • Analyse and interpret: don’t just paraphrase other researchers. If possible, discuss the significance of the findings in relation to the literature as a whole. • Critically evaluate: mention the strengths and weaknesses of your sources, consider the author(s) and their expertise. • Write in well-structured paragraphs: use transitions and topic sentences to draw connections, comparisons and contrasts.	900
The ‘how’ of your research - explanation of an Action Research approach Write in the 3rd person This section should consist of a discussion of literature that relates to research methodology.	400

• Show your understanding of an action research approach • Discuss any challenges around the design of action research and propose solutions	
The ‘who’ of your research – the sample/participants in your research study Write in the 1st or 3rd person • Who were the participants be in your study? • How did you select your participants? • How did you gain consent/ongoing assent? Refer to your ethics form as appropriate	200
The ‘how’ of your research – explanation of your research tools Write about the research tools that you chose to use in your research study; e.g. observation, interview, questionnaire. For each research tool, discuss these points: Justify your choice and support this with reference to research literature. • Explain how each research tool was used to gather data to answer your research questions. • Direct the reader to examples of observation schedule / interview questions / questionnaire questions in the appendices • You must include information about how anonymity and confidentiality were maintained, and about how the right to withdraw was managed.	700
The ‘how’ of your research – method of analysing your data Write in the 1st/3rd person • Critically examine the thematic analysis approach – show that you understand how it relates to your data.	350

Do not describe the steps of the analysis but identify and discuss how your positionality plays a part in the analysis e.g what is the impact on the validity of your research?	
The ‘what’ of your research – discussion of findings - Present your findings under your identified themes - Return to your literature to support your ideas - Illustrate your findings with information from your data - Conclude with a summary paragraph of your key findings and comment on the validity, reliability and generalisability of your work	800
The next steps of your research – tell us your story This section is structured under three headings and must be written in the first person. You should frame your thinking with reference to the Professional Standards. Knowing – what have you learnt from your research? Being – has this experience changed your beliefs about teaching in any way? Acting – what are your next steps in becoming an enquiring teacher? ?	500
Reference List	
Appendices These must include: - Any research tools that you created, e.g. Observation Schedule, Interview Questions, Questionnaire, details of any other research method. - Ethics Form - Blank parental consent letter and details of the method used to gain pupil assent	

THIS DOCUMENT IS ALSO AVAILABLE IN WELSH