

Outline of Learning Company Model - FdSc Community and Public Services

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Community and Public Services operate in a complex and ever-changing environment. Public Services are commissioning more services from the Community and Voluntary sectors, working in collaboration with communities of all variations and working globally and locally to address significant social, political and economic challenges. This programme has been specifically designed to address these changes.

Community and Public Services require multiple skill sets to meet the needs of the public in a way that is user focused, transparent and in many cases, on-demand. And yet we know that the Sector suffers from skills shortages. In the *Skills for Justice Survey (2013)* Employers identified difficulty in filling posts: 60% felt applicants lacked skills and 30% that applicants lacked the required attitude. By revising our programme to become FdSc Community and Public Services, the course better reflects the reality of the public services environment both currently and in the future. This includes a focus on areas such as community collaboration, partnership working across sectors and the development of the employability skills which are so vital to success within the sector. As a work-based learning foundation degree, students have the opportunity to gain the skills and attitudes required for success in Community and Public Services. With this structure students are able to more fully understand how theory is applied in a community and public services environment. Our mantra is Theory into Practice into Policy.

The work-based learning environment operates using a Learning Company Model. This unique aspect of the programme involves students working with practitioners on real issues and projects. We invite a number of key community and public sector leaders and organisations to sign up as members/clients. These members engage with the students in project-based consultancy. The consultancy is free to clients, giving the students an opportunity to develop competencies and skills which gives them experience they can use to enhance their employability. We use this model instead of work placements/internships to ensure all students engage in a productive experience.

The learning environment is arranged to reflect the modern office environment - with open plan pods of desks and associated equipment simulating the professional office

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environment. This environment will also allow students to engage with clients both face-to-face as well as through virtual means.

While the Learning Company (along with a Student Engagement Masterclass with speaker who are leaders from across all sectors) is embedded in the Developing Competencies Module, skills and competencies are also developed across the programme. Every Module has five learning outcomes, one of which is a skill development. We use a spiral approach to teaching ensuring that learning from one module links to learning in another. In addition to this approach, every assessment reflects a real-world, current issue facing community and public services - grounded in theory and challenging students to critically analyse and evaluate its application in practice. This approach is designed to ensure that students are prepared for the work environment they will enter as graduates. The FdSc Programme also prepares students to continue their studies for an additional year in the BSc in Community and Public Service Management, which has both public service and health and social care pathways.

The following provides:

- Appendix One** [The accredited module outline](#): CITY 2130 Developing Competencies in Community and Public Services (2)
- Appendix Two** [The Course Handbook](#), outlining the place of the Learning Company module within the programme: PROGRAMME QUALITY HANDBOOK 2022-23 FdSc Community and Public Services
- Appendix Three** [Performance Appraisal document](#) used as part of the assessment
- Appendix Four** Outline of expected behaviours whilst participating within the Learning Company: [Student Code of Conduct](#)