

POST-GRADUATE PROGRAMME IN PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

leading to the award of a Diploma,
Master of Philosophy or Doctor of Philosophy Degree

International accreditation for people who are
making a difference in their community or profession
..... and want to achieve their full potential



If you have a desire to develop the skills and knowledge of your field
and to deepen the contribution of your faith to your practice;
if you aspire to excellence in your professional life
and see it as the location of your calling from God...
... this programme is for you

POST-GRADUATE PROGRAMME IN PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Welcome to the Post-graduate Programme in Professional Practice (4P) offered by the Institute for Professional Excellence in collaboration with City University, London. If you are a senior level practitioner working in education, development, ministry, the media or business this programme is designed for you. Most Christians are activists, not academics, and by focussing on your practice, this programme can offer international recognition for what you do best - making a difference in your world.

The 4P is non-residential and you are expected to complete the programme while continuing to work. The programme provides a flexible self-managed framework which allows you, with your personal tutor, to design and manage your own pathway through the programme based on your professional circumstances and experience. As a practice-based research programme it seeks to value and enhance the naturally occurring learning opportunities you face in the workplace. You will design a portfolio comprising case studies, a research thesis and practice-based projects around these learning opportunities.

On enrolment you will be invited to attend an intensive residential school designed to give you a thorough orientation to the structure and requirements of the programme. A dedicated website will provide research materials, discussion forums and links to key resources. Regular participation in a supervision group or individual coaching consultations will provide face to face opportunities to monitor your progress, discuss critical issues, evaluate your work and interact with others on key ideas.

On registration you will be matriculated as an External Student of City University, London. On satisfactory completion of the programme you will be awarded the Degree of the University.

Why City University?

City was founded more than 100 years ago and received its Royal Charter as a University in 1966. Its location in the heart of London and the quality of its teaching and research has earned it an international reputation as "the University for business and the professions". Around 40 percent of City students are enrolled on post-graduate programmes, many involved in research linked to professional

development. One quarter of the student body is international, with the majority of overseas students coming from outside the European Union. The University has pioneered work-based learning programmes and has extensive experience in accrediting learning in the workplace and the community, leading to the award of MA, MPhil and PhD degrees in Professional Practice. The awards, granted by City University on successful completion of this programme, are recognised and respected worldwide for their high standards of academic and professional excellence.

Why the Institute for Professional Excellence?

The Institute for Professional Excellence (**i4Pe**) is a fully integrated part of the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (OCMS) and is responsible for the development, marketing, management and delivery of its programmes in Professional Practice. In the past 25 years OCMS has become a leading institution in the supervision of doctoral research in Christian action. The Centre serves a global network of Christians in church and professional life. The Centre's pioneering work in holistic mission has made a significant contribution to Christian thinking in the non-western world and its experience in working with practitioners in many fields of social, cultural and economic life provides an exciting context for creative learning.

The **i4Pe** has been established by OCMS to carry forward its commitment to faith-based professional development to serve the church and society in the non-western world. Through its programmes the **i4Pe** encourages practitioners to develop the skills and character of a research-minded and biblically shaped professional, capable of providing leadership in a wide variety of fields of professional practice.

Why you?

You have probably worked professionally in your chosen field for at least five years, preferably more. You have demonstrated ability to lead and run programmes or projects in your professional context and have a strong appetite to reflect on and learn from your practice and share your insights with others. You may come from an educational institution, mission agency or church, or you may be working in commercial, public or non-profit organisations in mainstream society. Whatever your professional context the programme provides a

coherent and disciplined opportunity for in depth research and reflection on your professional practice in the light of your Christian vocation. The 4P has been designed to be responsive to your needs and aspirations, and those of your employers or sponsors.

Why practice-based learning?

Practice-based learning (PBL) is learning grounded in action - learning in and through your action in the community or workplace. It is not the same as learning *for* work (eg. a work placement) or *at* work (eg. a training course related to work) but learning *through* work. The programme is focused on the challenges and choices faced in professional life and recognises this as a participative and social process. It contributes to the development of communities of practice through personal and collaborative inquiry and stimulates the pursuit of excellence and innovation in practice.

Why the 4P?

The church is growing rapidly in many parts of the

world, creating an increasing demand for competent leadership in many fields of Christian action. Global factors are at the same time contributing to rapid and radical change, presenting the emerging church with new and challenging opportunities for compassionate and transformative action in society and culture. The goal of the 4P is to increase the human capacity for Christian action in society and culture, particularly in the non-western world. This is accomplished through a post-graduate executive programme which develops the knowledge and skills for transformative leadership in professional life in the most significant fields of Christian involvement in society and culture - in community care, the media, education, development, business, etc. The programme is designed to develop a mature and critical awareness of the relationship between the practitioners' personal faith and values, organisational setting and professional practice, by interaction with relevant disciplines of study, using a multi-dimensional grid of reflective practice and research. The programme is supported locally, using the latest resources in internet technology and distance learning pedagogy.



WHAT IS DISTINCTIVE ABOUT THE 4P?

Once established in their field many practitioners are keen to update themselves professionally but most find that conventional post-graduate study may not be compatible with the realities of their professional practice. Programme content may not be relevant to their professional experience, or the delivery structure required by the educational institution may not fit their busy lives. The 4P has been designed to fill this gap. The programme draws on best practice in work-based learning and reflective practice, privileging the practical knowledge and experience of the practitioner and facilitating a process of critical inquiry and transformative action in their context. A few general principles shape our approach to practitioner research:

- It is about developing awareness in the moment of action, enabling us to reflect in and on our practice with the intention of bringing about change.
- It is about attending to our purposes in action with the intention of achieving congruity between our espoused values and action.
- It is about living out our values in our practice, by inquiring into our concerns for love, freedom, truth, justice and wisdom in our daily lives and relationships.
- It is about appreciating that we understand and communicate about the world in many different ways - intuitively, practically, emotionally and spiritually as well as intellectually. This means not letting any of these ways of understanding dominate the others, but choosing ways of knowing that fit the circumstances, and finding appropriate ways to communicate what we learn with others.
- It is about noticing that we live in complex, inter-connected worlds, making it impossible to separate issues from their context, without diminishing our understandings and ability to act with wisdom.
- It is about creating inquiring relationships with others, as we seek understanding in all these aspects of our professional and personal lives, often in organisational environments in which these values are denied or contradicted.

- It is about remembering that we cannot be perfect, that we often struggle to reconcile our beliefs and action; our personal needs and those of the wider community; our aspirations for transformation and awareness of the shadow side of our experience; and that these contradictions are a valuable source of knowledge.

While the programme is organised by a faculty team with international expertise and wide academic and professional experience, we are committed to the development of our own research and practice through our participation in this programme. We expect the process to challenge each of us - participant and staff - to live up to our high calling and reflect this in our own practice.

In more specific terms, the programme is shaped by the following principles:

Professional Relevance and Location

Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi and Damon (2001) describe good work as occurring “when excellence and ethics meet.” This programme is located at this juncture of quality and integrity in professional practice, providing you with the opportunity to enhance your competence and skills at the same time as deepening your personal values and sense of vocation. While providing exposure to the intellectual traditions and developing trends in your field, the programme also probes the personal characteristics necessary for improvement in individual performance. This is not merely an academic exercise - it can only be done in practice.

Self-directed learning

In keeping with the commitment to enable the participant to become ‘the author of their own practice’, and current views on effective learning, you are expected to manage your own research programme, guided and facilitated by the course team. Practitioners work in the “swampy lowlands” (Schon:1987) where “messy, confusing problems defy technical solution.” This programme is designed to help you and your colleagues apprehend, in the moment of action, the complexity you face and to respond as a whole person (physical, mental, emotional and spiritual).

Reflective Practice

At the heart of this process lies the skill of reflective practice - in its simplest form a conscious cycle of reflection and action which, as it deepens, develops the ability to establish critical distance from action (a critical subjectivity), regarding the sphere of action as micro-experiments from which to learn. The choices involved in this process are sharpened by the development of a critical awareness of the assumptions (beliefs, conventions and causal influences) that shape the 'habitus' (Bourdieu:1977) of practice. The mature reflective practitioner is simultaneously aware of these tacit influences on practice, reflecting in and on action in both the personal and social domain.

Practitioner Research

This programme supports the development of research minded practitioners who take an attitude of inquiry into all aspects of their work, generating an understanding of their practice as "living theory" (Whitehead:2006) or "personal theory" (Jarvis:1999)

in a continuous cycle of reflection and action that develops into a scholarship of practice.

Christian Scholarship

While increasingly evident in higher education in general, these principles are consistent with a Christian understanding of the human person and the natural world and are therefore integral to an understanding of the Christian vocation. For this reason, both implicitly and explicitly, this programme is designed to enable you to think and act theologically and ethically in your practice. It is assumed that the participant in the programme is sympathetic to this worldview and is committed to critical, creative and compassionate action in society and culture. This programme therefore provides the opportunity to evaluate and improve your practice in the light of this vision of personal, cultural and social transformation. It is expected that during and after the programme the reflective practitioner will write up their work for wider circulation in professional journals and other contexts.

References

- Gardner, H. Csikszentmihalyi, M. Damon, W (2001) Good Work. Basic Books, New York.
- Schon, D (1987) Educating the Reflective Practitioner. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.
- Bourdieu, P (1977) Outline of a Theory of Practice. Cambridge.
- Whitehead, J. McNiff, J (2006) Action Research, Living Theory. Sage, London.
- Jarvis, P (1999) The Practitioner-Researcher. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.



WHAT IS THE STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAMME?

The 4P is offered in collaboration with City University, London. It has been organised in response to the growing need for practice-focused study at the highest level. The traditional academic PhD is awarded in recognition of an original contribution to knowledge. The PhD in Professional Practice recognises that much knowledge may not be fully known in propositional terms but may be embedded in the practice of those who achieve major organisational change and/or excellence in professional life - evident in what might be recognised as originality of mind and scholarship of practice. The programme is therefore designed to integrate closely with your current work and is designed to add quality and value to your professional practice.

Criteria for Admission to the Research Programme

Applicants will usually be graduates of an approved University. Non-graduates with relevant qualifications and experience may be admitted. If you do not hold a Masters degree you need to consider carefully how your prior experience and education has prepared you for the demands of a research degree. You may be asked to complete Part One of the MA in Professional Practice or undertake alternative research and subject specific training which may increase the normal period of registration by up to one year.

The 4P is normally completed on a part time basis. There are three stages to the programme, leading to a Diploma, MPhil or PhD in Professional Practice.

The Diploma Stage

Candidates are initially enrolled in a six to twelve month Induction Programme involving an intensive Residential School followed by a period of self-managed work under personal or group mentoring. It is likely that during this time you will complete any supplementary training relevant to your research plans. During this stage you will have the opportunity to explore the nature of professional practice; the philosophy, theory and methodology of practitioner research; and undertake several cycles of action and reflection in your practice.

If you wish to exit the programme at the end of this stage you will have the opportunity of organising your work into a portfolio for examination, which, if successful, leads to the award of a Diploma in

Professional Practice awarded by the **i4Pe**. This will normally be completed within 15 to 18 months of enrolment.

If you wish to continue in the programme, in the place of a portfolio, you will be required to present a clear description of your research plans and evidence of your inquiry practice through work-based research and learning. With the help of your mentor, you will also need to identify a suitable research supervisor. This forms the basis of your registration with City University. The University will appoint a Director of Studies from their faculty.

The Master of Philosophy Stage

The Master of Philosophy (MPhil) phase normally lasts a further 2 years and provides you with the opportunity to either complete a portfolio for examination at the MPhil level or undertake some preliminary cycles of inquiry to be continued at the Doctoral level. In the MPhil phase the emphasis shifts from the development of inquiry skills to a more systematic inquiry in the field. Where possible you will continue to meet with a small group of peers to share your work and exchange experience.

At the end of this stage, if you wish to conclude your studies at a MPhil level you must organize your work into a portfolio for examination. If successful you will be awarded the degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) by the University. If you wish to continue to the PhD you will be required to present a portfolio of your work to date to a transfer panel in accordance with University regulations. The MPhil stage usually takes one and a half to two years (or more) beyond the Diploma stage, so reaching this point could take three to four years from the start of the programme.

The MPhil portfolio may comprise two smaller projects of practice-based inquiry (20,000 - 25,000 word equivalent) or one medium scale project of 40,000 to 50,000 word equivalent; or other equivalent arrangement agreed by the External Examiner.

The Doctoral Stage

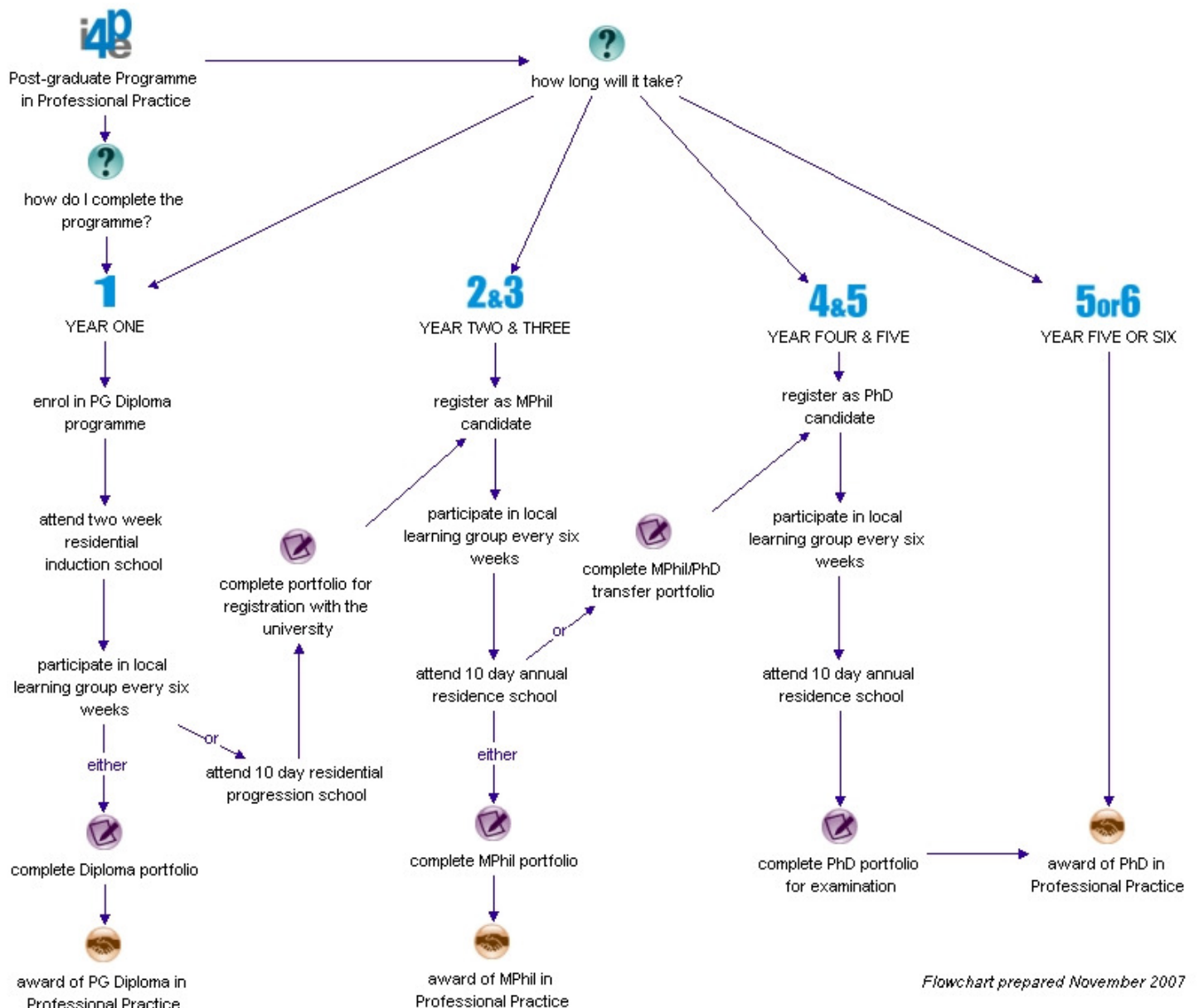
The Doctoral stage offers the opportunity to deepen the inquiries started at the MPhil level, taking the work to the standard of the PhD degree. During this phase you will continue to participate in a peer group although we recognise that your needs may

diverge. This stage will take a further two or three years beyond the MPhil stage on a part time basis - so requiring a total of five to six years to complete the whole process. The final portfolio will be an original creative project in its own right, and will reflect your personal and professional development over the course of the whole programme. It will usually incorporate work from all stages of the programme.

The final PhD portfolio may comprise one substantial piece of practice-based inquiry (60,000-90,000 word equivalent); two separate projects of practice-based inquiry involving either one smaller (20,000 – 25,000 word equivalent) and one larger project (50,000 - 70,000 word equivalent); two medium scale projects of 40,000 to 50,000 word equivalent each; or other equivalent arrangement agreed by the External Examiner.

Residential Requirements

You will be required to attend a three week induction school at the beginning of the programme and a further period of two weeks in residence before completion of the Diploma Stage. This residence may be in Oxford or elsewhere. Once registered with City University you will be required to spend a minimum of two weeks in Oxford each year. This is designed to give time for face to face interaction with your supervisor(s), an opportunity to present a report of your work in progress at an OCMS research seminar, and attend an annual review meeting at City University. In advance of this meeting you will be expected to submit a report of progress, an example of completed work and proposed plans for completing your research.



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO YOUR EMPLOYER OR ORGANISATION?

The 4P can provide direct and significant benefits to employers in both the for-profit and non-profit sector, including the opportunity to enable major change at departmental or organisational level. In general terms the programme offers:

- a senior staff development programme that can be fully integrated into your organisation which, because it leads to internationally recognised awards, can be highly motivating for your staff,
- an increase in your organisations intellectual capital through the creation of knowledge of direct value to your organisation - and staff skilled in research methods appropriate to your organisational goals.

The programme enables the participant to create new knowledge for professional use through project development and practitioner research. In more specific terms the employer can expect the programme to benefit their staff by:

- giving the participant increased knowledge, understanding and skill in their chosen field, resulting in greater professional confidence,
- requiring the participant to design work-based projects directly related to their organisational responsibilities through a three way partnership between employer, participant and programme - you don't have to wait for the student to learn and then apply what they have learned,

- helping the participant diffuse new ideas and skills to colleagues at work.

Organizational culture and individual style will influence how this occurs but the programme is designed to provide different opportunities for the learning experience to impact individual performance in the organization. This will include:

- enhanced ability to think and act strategically and implement strategic projects,
- improved inter-personal and communication skills,
- ability to lead and to support others in leadership roles,
- appreciation for different leadership styles and ability to match style to context,
- richer understanding of the missiological justification for strategic action and ability to motivate others,
- confidence to ask difficult questions and suggest innovative answers.

It is expected that participation in the 4P programme will involve a three way agreement between the participant, their employer and the programme leadership.



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For further information please contact

The Institute for Professional Excellence

www.i4pe.net

OCMS, PO Box 70, Oxford OX2 6HB, England