

**Course Specification**

<b>A. Course Information</b>											
<b>Final award title(s)</b>	PG Cert Leadership in Health (Darzi)										
<b>Intermediate exit award title(s)</b>	N/A										
<b>UCAS Code</b>		<b>Course Code(s)</b>	4878								
<b>School</b>	London South Bank University										
	<input type="checkbox"/> ASC <input type="checkbox"/> ACI <input type="checkbox"/> BEA <input type="checkbox"/> BUS <input type="checkbox"/> ENG <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HSC <input type="checkbox"/> LSS										
<b>Division</b>	Advanced Clinical Practice										
<b>Course Director</b>	Rebecca Malby										
<b>Delivery site(s) for course(s)</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Southwark <input type="checkbox"/> Havering <input type="checkbox"/> Croydon <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <i>please specify</i>										
<b>Mode(s) of delivery</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Full time <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part time <input type="checkbox"/> other please specify										
<b>Length of course/start and finish dates</b>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Mode</th> <th>Length years</th> <th>Start - month</th> <th>Finish - month</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Part time</td> <td>1</td> <td>September</td> <td>August</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Mode	Length years	Start - month	Finish - month	Part time	1	September	August
	Mode	Length years	Start - month	Finish - month							
Part time	1	September	August								
<b>Is this course generally suitable for students on a Tier 4 visa?</b>	No										
<b>Approval dates:</b>	Course(s) validated / Subject to validation	June 2016									
	Course specification last updated and signed off	September 2023									
<b>Professional, Statutory &amp; Regulatory Body accreditation</b>	None										
<b>Reference points:</b>	Internal	Corporate Strategy 2020 - 2025 School Strategy LSBU Academic Regulations Academic Quality and Enhancement Website									
	External	QAA Quality Code for Higher Education 2018 Framework for Higher Education Qualifications Subject Benchmark Statements Competitions and Markets Authority SEEC Level Descriptors 2021 OfS Guidance									
<b>B. Course Aims and Features</b>											
<b>Distinctive features of course</b>	Bespoke programme developed for the NHS London Leadership Academy for the Darzi Clinical Fellows. The programme focuses on developing interdisciplinary leadership of cross sector health and social care change projects.  Background to the PG Cert Leadership in Health (Darzi)										

	<p>This PG Cert Leadership in Health (Darzi) is offered to the London Darzi Clinical Fellows, as part of our contract with NHS London Leadership Academy to provide the London Darzi Fellows programme which required a PG Cert as part of the overall programme offer. 2016 is the 8th year of the London Darzi Programme and the first year the Leadership Programme is being provided by LSBU. Our proposal was cognisant of the evaluation of the Darzi Fellows programme, and brings a strong focus to the Fellows' change projects, a particular strength of LSBU.</p> <p>All the students are degree level qualified doctors, nurses, therapists and scientists, taking a year out from their current roles to deliver change projects in the NHS in London. The London Leadership Academy, HEE and Sponsoring organisations provide funding for their salaries/ backfill and for LSBU to provide a comprehensive leadership programme.</p> <p>We are bringing the best of our applied research and teaching from the School of Health and Social care, and our enterprise work in the Institute of Health and Wellbeing to the London Darzi Fellowship Programme. Both build on our strengths in application and leadership practice.</p> <p>The PGCert provides the backbone to the Leadership Development Programme in the Fellowship Scheme. There are additional elements of supported learning alongside the PGCert within the Darzi programme – these comprise the U Lab MOOC with MIT, and 3-way coaching.</p>
<p><b>Course Aims</b></p>	<p>The London Darzi Fellowship in Clinical Leadership PG Cert Leadership in Health (Darzi) aims to develop clinical leaders from across the clinical professions to be both confident in and competent to lead and manage complex change across Health and Social Care.</p> <p>The programme aims to develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaders with the knowledge and understanding of leading change in health systems in order to lead the NHS of the future</li> <li>• Leaders who have a deep understanding of new models of care, their benefits, challenges and application</li> <li>• Leaders who can critically appraise evidence-based options for leading effective change</li> <li>• Leaders who can demonstrate confidence, resilience and the ability to lead in times of uncertainty</li> <li>• Leaders who have made an impact on healthcare through the delivery of real change within the programme</li> <li>• Leaders with a wide network of critical friends and alliances to learn from (peer-2-peer learning)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Course Learning Outcomes</b></p>	<p>a) <b>Students will have knowledge and understanding of:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The effect of context on leading effective health systems change programmes</li> <li>2. How to analyse health systems problems to determine the causalities, and how to communicate this analysis effectively.</li> <li>3. The range of approaches to change (from the fields of Quality, Coproduction and Systems leadership), and to new models of care, and which of these to utilise to best effect in relation to systems change problems.</li> <li>4. The theory and practice of peer leadership.</li> <li>5. Project design, management, implementation and evaluation for complex change projects.</li> <li>6. How to generate and analyse evidence, and how to make leadership judgements in uncertainty.</li> </ol> <p>b) <b>Students will develop their intellectual skills such that they are able to:</b></p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Critically analyse new approaches to health systems problems and their potential effectiveness and impact</li> <li>2. Evaluate change methodologies and develop critiques of them in relation to current health systems issues and, where appropriate, to propose new approaches.</li> </ol> <p style="margin-left: 40px;"><b>c) Students will acquire and develop practical skills such that they are able to:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Inquire into and interpret the impact of national and local context for service change programmes.</li> <li>2. Competently lead inter-disciplinary teams including being participants in groups cognisant of the group dynamics in action.</li> <li>3. Demonstrate self-directed, resilient leadership in tackling a systems leadership change programme and be able to reflect on and adapt the leadership approach as required.</li> <li>4. Identify, formulate and apply knowledge of the challenge of engaging diverse views in health systems change programmes</li> <li>5. Review and apply knowledge and understanding of quality initiatives in their local context, articulating their judgement in choosing a particular change model for identified problems.</li> <li>6. Lead change programmes across health and social care systems, cognisant of the systems dynamics in operation.</li> <li>7. Independently design and implement a change project methodology, including an appropriate monitoring and evaluation strategy</li> </ol> <p style="margin-left: 40px;"><b>d) Students will acquire and develop transferrable skills such that they are able to:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be responsible and ethical leaders:</li> <li>2. Apply personal skills in leading effectively, utilising systems power, in unpredictable and complex situations</li> <li>3. Take responsibility for complex systems change programmes</li> </ol>
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### **C. Teaching and Learning Strategy**

Our approach focuses on translating leading edge thinking, approaches, and tools into meaningful personal and organisational practice. This builds on LSBU's focus on applied research, skills development and using evidence-based practice to make an impact.

The emphasis is on facilitating tangible behaviour shifts in participants' leadership capability. All our development work is underpinned by academic theory, long-established and current, and also through the involvement of service users, carers, providers, commissioners and partners. We work closely with academic partners, think tanks, key opinion leaders in the NHS, local government, third-sector, and our development partners to ensure that our approaches are current, relevant and able to bring in new and challenging thinking. This informs both the design principles (e.g. learning styles, action learning, experiential learning, group behaviours) and programme content (e.g. theories of clinical leadership, organisational change, resilience). We are able to test this in our everyday delivery of service improvement and leadership projects. This helps to keep our ideas and delivery fresh and grounded, and ensure we are able to respond to any unforeseen changes.

#### Learning methods

Adult learners require far more than just information; they require a myriad of teaching technologies. We will apply adult learning principles to the design of our programme (Knowles 1984), for example:

- Adults need to know why they are learning something
- Adults learn through doing
- Adults are problem-solvers
- Adults learn best when the subject is of immediate use

We will provide a tried and tested approach to adult, and specifically professional, learning. This has been developed through our experience of similar, relevant experience and tailored to the individual and collective needs the Darzi Fellows. We use double loop learning methodology based on Kolb's experiential learning framework and support continued learning and development through learning sets so that participants 'learn how to learn', and have deeper sets of alternative ideas and behaviours from which to choose to act.

This focus on application shapes the Programme as a whole.

### **Learning approaches**

The programme utilises the following approaches and strategies for learning:

- a) Presentation of useful theory and exploration of its utility through adult learning methodologies (A)
- b) Immersion – induction in the fellows own organisation, visits into other organisations to explore coproduction, new models of care, quality and metrics in different environments (A2, A3)
- c) Two Simulations – one of Power in Systems; one of Flow (quality improvement) (A3)
- d) Myers Briggs Type Indicator as a way of understanding diversity (A4)
- e) Leadership Inquiry – interviews with senior leaders in health and social care as a group and individually (A)
- f) Median Group 1 hr sessions and discursive workshops
- g) Action Learning Sets – for the application ideas into practice and into the Fellow's wider work. (C and D)
- h) 3 way coaching of the sponsor and Fellow together to develop a learning contract and to review project progress. (C)
- i) Practice Workshops to develop leadership skills (C, D)
- j) Interviews with stakeholders for the projects, to be reviewed in the Action Learning Sets. (C)
- k) Designing and leading a change project in their local context. (B, C, D)
- l) Assessments of understanding through assignments to evaluate new care models (A), and evaluating coproduction projects (A), through presentations and group review (B) and through a full project report and reflection (C, D)

### **Application of learning**

Development of understanding of methodologies for change, personal strategies and skills for leadership including working with peers and with diversity are embedded in the programme modules and 'practice' workshops (skills development). These are applied and reviewed in Action Learning Sets and both the coaching and co-consulting sessions (part of the Leading Change in Systems) with Faculty where the Fellows seek advice and support for the design and implementation of their project.

### **Leading with Peers**

A major strand throughout the programme design, with a focus in every module, is developing the ability to work effectively and productively with peers from diverse backgrounds (including service users). Prof West's contribution to the Innovating Systems Module is specifically focused on this, and built on further in the coproduction sessions, in the group review sessions featured in every module, as well as being the underlying organising principle for the Action Learning Sets.

### **Clinical Leadership**

Throughout the programme the Fellows are exposed not only to the theory of clinical leadership but also to experienced clinical leaders, who share their personal approach. This also provides a network for the Fellows for current and future mentoring.

## **D. Assessment**

This programme is designed to be support knowledge, skills and practice in leading significant systems change. A range of strategies will be used. Formative assessments are used in each module to develop master's level academic performance and include a presentation to peers, a project proposal, a written reflection. A variety of summative assessments are used at the end of each module including, an essay ,a presentation and viva and a work-based project proposal, report and critical evaluation and reflection on learning These assessments allow

the student to demonstrate both the depth and breadth of knowledge and skills required to demonstrate competence as a Darzi Fellow in Clinical Leadership.

The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2014) - FHEQ set out levels of with the expectations at level 7 as follows:

- A systematic understanding of knowledge which is informed by innovations in leading health systems change
- A comprehensive understanding of change leadership techniques in health systems
- 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 leading health systems change
- Conceptual understanding that enables the student to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in health systems leadership
- An ability to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Details of assessment schedules can be found in the list of PGCert Leadership in Health (Darzi) modules

### E. Academic Regulations

The University's Academic Regulations apply for this course: [LSBU Academic Regulations](#)

#### 1.0 Protocol Fail / Compensation

The schools follows the university regulations apart from:

- Students/Apprentices will not be eligible for protocol fail or compensation in any module as a pass in all elements of assessment is required to demonstrate competence.

### F. Entry Requirements

In order to be considered for entry to the course(s) applicants will be required to have the following qualifications:

Undergraduate Clinical Degree (or international equivalent) normally with a classification of 2:2 or above

and to have been accepted onto the London Darzi Fellowship scheme

### G. Course structure(s)

#### Course overview

LHS\_7\_002 Core Concepts of Quality (20 credits: level 7)

LHS\_7\_004 Leading Change in Systems (20 credits: level 7)

LHS\_7\_005 Innovating Systems (20 credits: level 7)



Post Graduate Certificate

#### Placements information

None

### H. Course Modules

<b>Module Code</b>	<b>Module Title</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Semester</b>	<b>Credit value</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
LHS_7_002	Core Concepts of Quality	7	Both	20	4000-word written assignment
LHS_7_004	Leading Change in Systems	7	Both	20	4000-word written assignment
LHS_7_005	Innovating Systems	7	Both	20	Presentation and Viva

#### **I. Timetable information**

A full timetable is provided in the Course Brochure

#### **J. Costs and financial support**

##### **Course related costs**

##### **Tuition fees/financial support/accommodation and living costs**

Information on tuition fees/financial support can be found by clicking on the following link -

<http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/courses/undergraduate/fees-and-funding> or

<http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/fees-and-funding>

Information on living costs and accommodation can be found by clicking the following link-

<https://my.lsbu.ac.uk/my/portal/Student-Life-Centre/International-Students/Starting-at-LSBU/#expenses>

#### **List of Appendices**

Appendix A: Curriculum Map

Appendix B: Personal Development Planning (postgraduate courses)

Appendix C: Terminology

### Appendix A: Curriculum Map

This map provides a design aid to help course teams identify where course outcomes are being developed, taught and assessed within the course. It also provides a checklist for quality assurance purposes and may be used in validation, accreditation and external examining processes. Making the learning outcomes explicit will also help students to monitor their own learning and development as the course progresses.

Modules			A1	A2	B1	C1	D1	D2
Level	Title	Code						
7	Core Concepts of Quality	LHS_7_002		T D A	T D A			D
7	Leading Change in Systems	LHS_7_004	T D A		T D A			D
7	Innovating Systems	LHS_7_005	T D A		T D A	T D A	D A	D

## Appendix B: Personal Development Planning

Personal Development Planning (PDP) is a structured process by which an individual reflects upon their own learning, performance and/or achievement and identifies ways in which they might improve themselves academically and more broadly. Course teams are asked to indicate where/how in the course/across the modules this process is supported.

Approach to PDP	Level M (7)
1 Supporting the development and recognition of skills through the personal tutor system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All students are assigned a personal coach to develop their own PDP related to their personal learning needs, which is agreed with their Sponsor. The coach meets with the Fellow three times a year, at the outset in a 3-way meeting with the sponsor, and then twice more for coaching in relation to their PDP.</li> <li>• Students will be supported by the Course Director and their Darzi Fellowship Sponsor in relation to their pastoral/pathway needs through to the end of the programme</li> </ul>
2 Supporting the development and recognition of skills in academic modules.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An introduction to studying and writing at masters level will take place in the Orientation sessions</li> <li>▪ Through the masters modules and assessments, students will develop their ability to utilise relevant theory and knowledge to understand and critically evaluate concepts</li> <li>• Academic tutorials will be provided by all module leaders to support students with developing written work/exam preparation and preparing for practical sessions.</li> <li>• Marking grids will be used by all markers for all assessments and are published in each module guide</li> <li>• Across the modules, written feedback will be given to students from assessments, which is specific and state areas for improvement; facilitating students to develop their ability to utilise relevant theory knowledge to understand and critically discuss concepts.</li> <li>• Students will develop their critical appraisal skills through professional modules in relation to literature and research studies, and through their workplace change projects in relation to evidence based practice related to new models of care, systems leadership, change management, quality methods.</li> <li>• Students IT skills will be further developed by an advanced data searching session provided by the library and subsequent use of search engines, data bases, on-line learning resources and remote access journal facilities</li> <li>▪ IT skills will be further developed by the use of Moodle to provide students with key information and supplementary material to support their learning</li> <li>• Students will be required to undertake a formative exercise prior to joining the programme to evaluate their strengths/weaknesses in relation to their future leadership role. This forms the basis for the first coaching session.</li> <li>• Students are required to review their skills development in quality methods as part of the Core Concepts of Quality Module and provide feedback to their Action Learning Set and Facilitator. Feedback will be given from the module leader and a tutorial organised as required.</li> </ul>
3 Supporting the development and recognition of skills through purpose designed modules/.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will develop their ability to work in interdisciplinary groups, and leading as peers in leading effective change projects. This is practiced in their group work and group learning experiences undertaking visits to centres of health innovation; in their sessions with guest leaders from the health and social care system; in their Action Learning Sets.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practical skills e.g. Change management, Quality methods, Skills in Patient Flow provided in the Module workshops and in the 1:1 co-consulting sessions.</li> <li>• Practice Workshops on negotiation skills, conflict management skills, skills in personal and organisational resilience.</li> <li>• The ability to reflect on their practice and use problem-solving skills in familiar and unfamiliar situations is developed through the Leading Change Projects module and continues throughout the change projects in their organisations.</li> </ul>
4 Supporting the development and recognition of skills through research projects and dissertations work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All of the modules will develop students' ability to critically appraise research in relation to change practice.</li> <li>▪ The assessment for the Core Concepts of Quality Module requires critical analysis and evaluation of a coproduction project using a framework developed from their review of the research.</li> </ul>
5 Supporting the development and recognition of career management skills.	<p>This will continue with students developing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Skills in writing a project plan and full project review and report for work place change project which forms the case material for the Leading Change Projects Module</li> <li>▪ Presentation skills</li> <li>▪ Their ability to communicate a coherent argument in class discussions, debates and through assessments</li> <li>▪ Their ability to synthesise information and concepts through class discussions, debates and through written assessments</li> <li>▪ Group-working within an action learning format</li> </ul>
6 Supporting the development and recognition of career management skills through work placements or work experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will have the opportunity to reflect on their progress with practice based learning through completion of their Learning Journals, project proposal and full project report.</li> <li>• Students will receive formative feedback from their Sponsors and their Action Learning Set Facilitators.</li> <li>• Students will be encouraged to reflect on their role within their workplace during their organisational change projects with their coach</li> <li>• The work place project is a significant part of the Darzi programme, and the Fellows will be required to review their progress with their sponsors and review this with their Action Learning Sets</li> </ul>
7 Supporting the development of skills by recognising that they can be developed through extra curricula activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Darzi Fellows are joined into the Darzi Alumni for peer support and future mentoring</li> <li>• There are senior NHS leaders joining every module to present their experience and opportunities are provided for Fellows to network with these leaders for professional development</li> </ul> <p>We are providing access to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology MTx (free online courses) U.Lab - Transforming Business, Society and Self, in addition to the programme which provides an additional global network</p>
8 Supporting the development of the skills and attitudes as a basis for continuing professional development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be opportunities for reflection throughout the course, allowing for students to develop skills and challenge attitudes and practice.</li> <li>• Skills and attitudes which support continuing professional development will be encouraged and facilitated in the modules and action learning</li> <li>• Students will be encouraged to consider their future goals and aspirations through completion of a 360 narrative feedback process within the programme which is reviewed with their Coach to lead to revisions in their personal development action plan</li> </ul>

<p>9 Other approaches to personal development planning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will be asked to participate in the programme Realist Evaluation with focus groups throughout the programme.</li> </ul>
<p>10 The means by which self-reflection, evaluation and planned development is supported e.g. electronic or paper-based learning log or diary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This will be supported in the practice area by completion of Learning Journals (online) and a series of reflective exercises for engaging stakeholders in work based change projects.</li> <li>▪ In the Innovating Systems module students will be accessing the Myers Briggs evaluation.</li> <li>▪ In the coaching students will be undertaking prior self-assessment and then a 360 narrative feedback process during their project work, which it utilised in coaching for personal reflection and planning</li> <li>▪ In addition, self-reflection and evaluation will occur in group activities in taught sessions and Action Learning sessions, reviewing progress on the work based project.</li> </ul>

## Appendix C: Terminology

[Please provide a selection of definitions according to your own course and context to help prospective students who may not be familiar with terms used in higher education. Some examples are listed below]

<b>awarding body</b>	a UK higher education provider (typically a university) with the power to award higher education qualifications such as degrees
<b>bursary</b>	a financial award made to students to support their studies; sometimes used interchangeably with 'scholarship'
<b>collaborative provision</b>	a formal arrangement between a degree-awarding body and a partner organisation, allowing for the latter to provide higher education on behalf of the former
<b>compulsory module</b>	a module that students are required to take
<b>contact hours</b>	the time allocated to direct contact between a student and a member of staff through, for example, timetabled lectures, seminars and tutorials
<b>coursework</b>	student work that contributes towards the final result but is not assessed by written examination
<b>current students</b>	students enrolled on a course who have not yet completed their studies or been awarded their qualification
<b>delivery organisation</b>	an organisation that delivers learning opportunities on behalf of a degree-awarding body
<b>distance-learning course</b>	a course of study that does not involve face-to-face contact between students and tutors
<b>extracurricular</b>	activities undertaken by students outside their studies
<b>feedback (on assessment)</b>	advice to students following their completion of a piece of assessed or examined work
<b>formative assessment</b>	a type of assessment designed to help students learn more effectively, to progress in their studies and to prepare for summative assessment; formative assessment does not contribute to the final mark, grade or class of degree awarded to students

<b>higher education provider</b>	organisations that deliver higher education
<b>independent learning</b>	learning that occurs outside the classroom that might include preparation for scheduled sessions, follow-up work, wider reading or practice, completion of assessment tasks, or revision
<b>intensity of study</b>	the time taken to complete a part-time course compared to the equivalent full-time version: for example, half-time study would equate to 0.5 intensity of study
<b>lecture</b>	a presentation or talk on a particular topic; in general lectures involve larger groups of students than seminars and tutorials
<b>learning zone</b>	a flexible student space that supports independent and social learning
<b>material information</b>	information students need to make an informed decision, such as about what and where to study
<b>mode of study</b>	different ways of studying, such as full-time, part-time, e-learning or work-based learning
<b>modular course</b>	a course delivered using modules
<b>module</b>	a self-contained, formally structured unit of study, with a coherent and explicit set of learning outcomes and assessment criteria; some providers use the word 'course' or 'course unit' to refer to individual modules
<b>national teaching fellowship</b>	a national award for individuals who have made an outstanding impact on student learning and the teaching profession
<b>navigability (of websites)</b>	the ease with which users can obtain the information they require from a website
<b>optional module</b>	a module or course unit that students choose to take
<b>performance (examinations)</b>	a type of examination used in performance-based subjects such as drama and music
<b>professional body</b>	an organisation that oversees the activities of a particular profession and represents the interests of its members
<b>prospective student</b>	those applying or considering applying for any programme, at any level and employing any mode of study, with a higher education provider

<b>regulated course</b>	a course that is regulated by a regulatory body
<b>regulatory body</b>	an organisation recognised by government as being responsible for the regulation or approval of a particular range of issues and activities
<b>scholarship</b>	a type of bursary that recognises academic achievement and potential, and which is sometimes used interchangeably with 'bursary'
<b>semester</b>	either of the parts of an academic year that is divided into two for purposes of teaching and assessment (in contrast to division into terms)
<b>seminar</b>	seminars generally involve smaller numbers than lectures and enable students to engage in discussion of a particular topic and/or to explore it in more detail than might be covered in a lecture
<b>summative assessment</b>	formal assessment of students' work, contributing to the final result
<b>term</b>	any of the parts of an academic year that is divided into three or more for purposes of teaching and assessment (in contrast to division into semesters)
<b>total study time</b>	the total time required to study a module, unit or course, including all class contact, independent learning, revision and assessment
<b>tutorial</b>	one-to-one or small group supervision, feedback or detailed discussion on a particular topic or project
<b>work/study placement</b>	a planned period of experience outside the institution (for example, in a workplace or at another higher education institution) to help students develop particular skills, knowledge or understanding as part of their course
<b>workload</b>	see 'total study time'
<b>written examination</b>	a question or set of questions relating to a particular area of study to which candidates write answers usually (but not always) under timed conditions