

York University

York University appears to have a very active and impressive Centre for Lifelong Learning. The centre offers over 200 short courses which are detailed in a 104 page downloadable PDF brochure:

www.york.ac.uk/media/cll/documents/CLL-CourseBrochure-2014-15-web.pdf

The vast majority are below postgraduate level with some of those being unaccredited 'learning for pleasure' type courses and some being accredited at undergraduate level. There are no 'mixed-module' postgraduate programmes although there are 4 courses which lead to Postgraduate Certificates and Diplomas. Each course is online-only (though very interactive with, for example, online tutorials requiring webcam access) and takes place over two years with three 20 credit modules studied each year. There is no choice of modules within each course. 60 credits achieve the Certificate and a further 60 achieves the Diploma.

The cost for 120 credits is £ 4830, or £ 805 per 20 credits, with £2415 payable on commencement of each of the two years of study. Payment by instalments is available if required according to individual circumstances.

Leicester University

The Vaughan Centre for Lifelong Learning claims to be a specialist in the provision of distance learning courses with over 8000 students enrolled and over 50 masters degrees available. However, even with this number of courses there do not appear to be any modular masters degrees available (though there is some limited choice of modules within each degree pathway, e.g. choose 2 modules from 4 and so on). Certificates and Diplomas are available for many degree subjects (but not all).

On-campus taught courses tell a similar story with little or no modular choice within each degree pathway.

Costs are variable but appear to be in the range £ 830 to £ 930 per 20 credits.

Cambridge University

The Institute for Continuing Education has been in existence for almost 150 years and offers a number of Certificate, Diploma, Masters and 'learning for pleasure' courses. Of particular relevance is the Faculty of Education's PPD programme which offers a modular route to a Master of Studies qualification:

<http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/certificates-and-diplomas/postgraduate-awards>

The CATS from the various modules can be added together to achieve a Masters degree although it is not entirely clear if this can be over a longer period than the standard two years allowed for a part-time Masters degree.

Applicants are interviewed individually to negotiate a tailor-made route and the cost is in the region of £ 725 per 20 credits

Oxford University

The Department for Continuing Education claims in excess of 20,000 enrolments per year. There are around 50 undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications offered with no modular postgraduate routes. There are a number of certificates and diplomas but no apparent way to top these up to a Masters degree. There is an undergraduate modular degree with many modules taught on 1 weekend per month which is an interesting timetable.

The cost of 20 credits varies but appears to be in the region of £ 800 – 1000 depending on the course.

Sussex University

There has been a Centre for Continuing Education at Sussex but there is no trace of it on the current website - it is either therefore closed or very artfully hidden.

International Institutions

A search involving universities from the USA and other English-speaking countries has revealed no comparable routes to a Masters qualification to that proposed by the CLL.

Conclusion

This brief research reveals two significant conclusions. Firstly, the CLL offering is unique among those institutions surveyed. Secondly, the proposed costings are highly competitive. Costs of £ 700 - £ 1000 per 20 credits appear to be typical compared to the £ 350 per 20 credits tentatively proposed for the CLL offering. Depending on CLL aims/motivations this would be a strong marketing opportunity or an opportunity to increase the cost of each module (or indeed a combination of the two). Finally, the level of clarity achieved by many university websites is not high. It is often difficult to understand what is available and the new CLL website is much clearer than many of its competitors.

Alan Barrett-Evans
Nicolie Murphy

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