**PhD E-Research & TEL (Revised Programme starting January 2023 Cohort)**

The ‘vision’ of this doctoral programme is to support individuals in terms of their own doctoral study ‘visions’. To support those ‘visions’, the programme provides a framework through which to explore different perspectives and possibilities in developing important research and doctoral practices. The doctoral programme in e-research and technology enhanced learning (TEL) is concerned with the application of digital technologies in education. It has now been running for 14 years. The programme has a wide take-up, with worldwide participation. As the programme was established 14 years ago, and since technologies have continued to be developed, and to have increasing effects upon society and education, this reviewed programme now accommodates important and contemporary challenges and approaches that are pertinent to leading educationalists and trainers, across education and training sectors.

The programme is divided into two parts and has a modular structure. All modules are compulsory and they are assessed, as is the thesis proposal and the final thesis.

- **Part One** (years 1 and 2) consists of four modules that offer participants guided study in key areas of technology enhanced learning research (described in more detail below).
- **Part Two** (years 3 and 4 minimum) – allows participants to carry out an original piece of research under the supervision of an academic member of staff that produces a thesis (of 50,000 words maximum).

**Part 1**

Four compulsory modules (45 credits each) are assessed by assignments of 3,000 words and 6,000 words. In Part 1, there will be one compulsory four-day residential meeting near the beginning of each year, alongside online (networked learning) tutor-supported activity and meetings.

**Module One**

Becoming an educational researcher: Researching the self and others as educational subjects.

**Runs for 18 weeks (specific dates to be confirmed) between: 1st January – 31st May 2023**

This introductory module on online doctoral study and research methodology will prepare participants for their transition into the educational and social science research community as a doctoral researcher.

The purpose of this module is to provide participants with solid foundations for planning, conducting, and evaluating an educational research project in the context
of e-research and technology enhanced learning. The module will offer a range of opportunities to learn and discuss different philosophical traditions and methodological approaches that underlie educational research projects. Participants will be guided to plan and conduct a small-scale research project in this module. The module will also offer a range of resources that participants can draw on in their own research that will help them understand different methodologies and methods, theoretical models and conceptual models, and their application in educational settings.

The module will cover key issues for those starting this journey: what is involved in doing a PhD and becoming an educational researcher; what the major philosophical and methodological approaches to educational research are; how the roles of researchers are positioned in those approaches; how educational research projects can be planned and conducted so that they are meaningful – personally, professionally and academically; what the value/power of researching the self (and personal experiences) as an educational subject are; and how rigour/validity can be promoted in interpretivist/subjectivist educational research.

Written assessment.

There are two equally-weighted assessments for this module: two 3,000 word written assignments, which can be based either on empirical or non-empirical data, and may relate to each other or not.

- Outcome 1: An analytic literature review, systematically searching and critically analysing e-research/TEL literature.
- Outcome 2: A brief research report, creatively collecting and rigorously analysing empirical data on an e-research/TEL topic.

**Module Two**

Researching contemporary questions concerning education and technologies.

**Runs for 18 weeks (specific dates to be confirmed) between: 1st June – 31st December 2023**

This module will cover four key topics that are fundamental elements when considering research within the field of technology enhanced learning. These are: basic concepts and foundations; context, space and time; learning as a cultural process; and methodologies, theoretical and conceptual models. You will be encouraged to take critical and analytical approaches, rather than just descriptive approaches, when exploring these fundamental elements.

1. Basic concepts and foundations will explore two different perspectives. Looking back will focus on the history of educational technology. Current perspectives will explore situated learning and networked learning.
2. Context, space and time will provide opportunities to consider three current crucial areas. These are technology for knowledge construction, media and mobile learning, and informal learning.

3. Learning as a cultural process will allow deeper insights into two areas. These are identity and subjectivity, and power and social justice.

4. Methodologies, theoretical and conceptual models will cover a range of possibilities. Two key areas of contemporary concern to be covered are discourse analysis, and data-mining and learning analytics.

An empirical study will be based on the conceptual backgrounds that form the earlier part of the module.

Written assessment

There is a single assessment for this module: a 6,000 word written assignment whose format should be a publishable-style outcome (but not necessarily requiring publication). Core aims of this module include engaging with academic knowledge production (including knowledge of academic writing formats and how to engage with existing scholarship). Requiring the production of a piece in the format of a journal article will contribute towards those aims; 6,000 words is broadly in line with the length of some journal articles in the field.

Module Three

Social practice, practitioner and institutional change in technology enhanced learning.

**Runs for 18 weeks (specific dates to be confirmed) between: 1st January – 31st May 2024.**

This module will cover a number of key areas that are important for research at doctoral level. These are: positioning technology in educational policy; theorising uses of technology in social practice; positioning technology as a spatial, material, or infrastructural phenomenon; managing and experiencing institutional change; changing professionals’ roles and developing their expertise; and collectively changing institutions and social practices. In this context, social practice theories are a cluster of theories which emphasise that meaning, identity and institutions are forged through social practices that are both recurrent and constantly developing; such theories typically emphasise the local emergence and development of particular practices, materiality and the role of artefacts, motivation and the co-development of individuals and collectives, and how human interactions are regulated by tacit rules.
Written assessment

There is a single assessment for this module: a 6,000 word written assignment whose format should be a publishable-style paper. Core aims of this programme include engaging with academic knowledge production (including knowledge of academic writing formats and how to engage with existing scholarship). Requiring the production of a piece in the format of a publishable-style paper will contribute towards those aims; 6,000 words is broadly typical of the length of some journal articles in the field.

Module Four

Researching emerging technologies and inclusion.

Runs for 18 weeks (specific dates to be confirmed) between: 1st June – 31st December 2024

This module will introduce participants to the principles of emerging technologies, their roles in inclusive education and concerns for universal design for learning. Researching emerging technologies is an oft-encountered need, as technology development is ongoing. There are important principles to consider when undertaking research in an emerging rather than a static environment, and these include the important need to consider inclusive learning and related practices.

Students will explore how emerging technologies have effects on pedagogy and assessment, and how pedagogy and assessment can be designed to meet the needs of all students, considering how inclusion can be identified and developed in the context of technology enhanced learning. Perspectives on inclusion, and the moral and legal imperatives that exist to ensure that teaching-learning is inclusive and accessible at every level of education and in the workplace will be considered. There will be a focus on how to research uses of emerging technologies in the context of innovation, from technology enhanced learning and pedagogical perspectives. Students will be introduced to mechanisms for investigating educational uses of emerging technologies, to critically evaluate benefits and challenges. Students will draw on innovative and evolving e-research approaches – such as learning analytics – alongside related ethical concerns to understand how emerging developments can underpin inclusive teaching-learning generally.

The module will enable a range of methodological approaches, theoretical and conceptual models to be explored, and used as appropriate. Case study approaches will be discussed in terms of emerging technologies; mixed methods and inclusive methods will be introduced that include participatory, emancipatory and arts-based methods, such as visual and narrative approaches.
Written assessment

There are two equally-weighted assessments for this module: two 3,000 word written assignments, the first of which can be based on empirical (newly gathered or existing) data. The assignments may relate to each other or not.

- **Outcome 1:** A critical review or a methodological review of participatory research or case study approaches, considering inclusive practices.
- **Outcome 2:** An initial research proposal (which will be developed following Module 4 into a confirmation document).

**Part 2 (Years 3 and 4)**

Your thesis represents the culmination of your studies and is the final step to becoming an autonomous researcher in technology enhanced learning. The thesis is a challenging but rewarding (maximum) 50,000-word project. Supported by your supervisor, you will have the primary role in choosing a topic for your project – typically, this will relate to your own professional concern, or the concerns of your institution, or employing authority. The qualification awarded is a PhD (subject to confirmation of PhD status in Part 2).

The thesis will represent a significant contribution to knowledge and will contain material which is of publishable quality. It will be comparable, in its presentation of the results of your work, to any PhD thesis at Lancaster University. It will also demonstrate some broader aspects of your capacity to pursue scholarly research or scholarship in your field of study, though this demonstration of competence will be made in conjunction with your assessed work on the four modules in Part 1 of your studies.