

Transcript

Hello, I'm Norman Flynn. I'm the Academic Director of the Public Policy and Management programme here at CeFIMS, in the University of London. Since I've been directing the programme, since 2002, I've had lots of prospective students dropping into my office to ask me questions to help them decide whether this is the right program for them. And what I would like to do is answer some of those questions for you.

One question everybody asks is – will this programme be relevant for my career?

Well, it's a global programme; it draws on examples and experience for all parts of the world. We have students and graduates, throughout Europe, east and west, North America, and in Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Caribbean. Wherever there is government, more or less, we have students. The only places where the materials are less relevant are the dictatorships – where the military, religious or family dictators rule through fear and force, our courses are really not much help.

But the question sometimes means 'will this help me to progress in my career?' We cannot guarantee promotion, but we do guarantee to give you tools and concepts to analyse a wide variety of problems and show examples of how people have approached those problems around the world. For example – you may have been asked to design a decentralised budgeting system to make government budgets more democratic – you would read the principles of budgeting, the principles of decentralisation, as well as examples from places such as Sweden, the Netherlands, Brazil and Kenya. And then you would work out what is relevant in your own context. And then decide how best to do it!

People also ask – how can I choose which courses to take? The answer to this question is – it depends on where you want your career to go. Many of our students and graduates are working in public sector reform – either modernisation programmes or constructing states and governments from scratch, such as in Bosnia, or in the South African provincial governments or international organisations working in post-conflict reconstruction. These students tend to prefer some of our more technical courses, helping them to design budgeting and planning systems, tax systems, accounting systems, information strategies for government and so on. Others are in policy areas, whether in policy making or in policy advice, and they tend to major in the policy courses – such as public policy and strategy, or privatisation and public-private partnerships or in macro-economic policy. People in management jobs tend to opt for courses such as Human Resource Management or Managing Organisational Change. So think about where you want your career to go, and choose your route through the program depending on your specialist interest.

Now, you may have very narrow specialist interests, in which case, why not take one of our Postgraduate Diplomas – we have three of them, one in public financial management, one in public policy in finance, and one in management. Or maybe you don't need a qualification, maybe you've got two or three degrees already, so you could just take one or more of the individual courses that you need for your career.

'How much work will I have to do?' is another common question – and the answer is 'lots'!. Each individual course takes two months, and during that time we would expect you to spend about 15 hours a week studying. And then exams take place every year in October, and you will need to prepare for them in the month or so running up to exam time. This means that one of the main skills or students need is managing the balance of work, of domestic life and of study time. You can complete the Masters in two years if you are determined to, and some people do, but most people take longer than that. You can complete your Postgraduate Diploma in one year.

Another question people ask is 'How will I be supported during the programme?' People fear that the experience of studying through Distance Learning is an isolated one. You will be in touch with your tutors, a

specialist tutor, an expert in the subject, for each course; you'll be in touch with me, your Programme Director and with our team of administrators who will help you organise your route through the programme. But perhaps most important, you will have your online network of classmates throughout the programme, and throughout the world. As you do each course, you'll be part of a discussion forum and throughout the year during your whole registration period, you'll be in touch with all the other people studying your degree.

To help you decide whether this programme is for you, please browse the detailed course descriptions on this website and if you have any more questions of your own, please don't hesitate to ask, and just contact us through the 'contact us' button on the home page.

We look forward to hearing from you.