

## Musculoskeletal Medicine with Rheumatology for Practitioners with a Special Interest (PwSI): Postgraduate Diploma, Certificate Programme Specification

**Academic Year:** 2023/24

**Degree Awarding Body:** The University of Bradford

**Delivery Organisation:** The Ridge Education Ltd.

**Subject Benchmark:** Health Studies (QAA 2019)

**Target Awards:** Postgraduate Diploma; Postgraduate Certificate [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications Level 7]

**Further Award\*:** Master's Degree of Science [FHEQ Level 7]

**Mode of Study:** Part-time, distance learning with some attendance

**Programme duration:** Normally 18 months, no more than 60 months

\* Successful completion of the Postgraduate Diploma is required before students can register for the Master's degree offered by the University of Bradford.

**Please note:** This programme specification has been published in advance of the academic year to which it applies. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information is accurate at the time of publication, but changes may occur given the interval between publishing and commencement of teaching. Any change which impacts the terms and conditions of an applicant's offer will be communicated to them. Upon commencement of the programme, students will receive further detail about their course and any minor changes will be discussed and/or communicated at this point.

### Minor Modifications Schedule

(v1) February 2022: Separate specification produced with annual changes for 2022/23 academic year

(v2) April 2024: Annual changes for 2023/4 academic year

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## Introduction

This programme is one of a series of programmes taught by The Ridge Education Ltd and awarded by the University of Bradford. The programmes fall under the collaborative provision regulations, so although they are taught wholly by the external partner, quality assurance and assessment are governed by University of Bradford regulations.

The Ridge Education Ltd is the host organisation for the PwSI programme. They provide the premises, recruit and support teaching staff, and undertake the administration and management of the courses. Admissions are undertaken by the partner although administered formally by the university. Teaching is carried out by practising subject specialists recruited by staff at The Ridge but subject to approval by the university.

The university is responsible for course and quality management arrangements as well as the coordination of assessment procedures, including committees and exam boards. The university appoints and liaises with external examiners. The Faculty of Health Studies, School of Nursing and Healthcare Leadership provide academic and administrative support.

This part-time diploma programme contains a large element of work-based learning. Attendance is only required for a total of eight study days on five separate occasions throughout the 18 months and so the programme is accessible to students nationally. This programme enables practitioners to gain a formally recognised standard of competence in the area of Musculoskeletal Medicine with Rheumatology (MSK) as a Special Interest. It is taught and run by advanced clinicians, allied health professionals and staff within service improvement.

The programme structure is specifically designed to encourage the development of this specialist practitioner role, by encouraging collaborative clinical work-based training between the practitioner and the clinical mentor. The issues of ethics and informed consent are an integrated part of the students' daily practice, and it is implicit in all the modules that there is conformity to the usual standards and guidelines in these areas.

During the programme the emphasis lies on critical thinking, reflective learning and the practice of evidence-based medicine. Students are enabled to directly apply their learning to their current and future roles.

Any module can be selected as a standalone module if students do not wish to complete the whole programme. On successful completion of their chosen modules students will be awarded a Certificate. Students who successfully complete the Diploma will have greater breadth of knowledge of MSK medicine than those who complete the Certificate. Students who successfully complete all modules gain the Diploma and will be able to progress to the MSc in Musculoskeletal Medicine with Rheumatology for Practitioners with a Special Interest if they wish.

## **Programme Aims**

The programme is intended to:

- A1 Develop the subject-specific knowledge and skills to enable practitioners to practice musculoskeletal medicine and rheumatology at a higher level and to deal with complex clinical situations systematically;
- A2 Develop a subject-specific understanding of the role and responsibilities of consultant specialists and the multidisciplinary team in secondary care and to establish appropriate relationships with these professionals;
- A3 Position practitioners at the forefront of their subject-specific area of musculoskeletal/rheumatological medicine to develop and establish the most effective integrated care pathways between primary and secondary care for the patient with current NHS guidelines;

- A4 Engage practitioners in life-long learning through the enhancement of key skills, a thorough knowledge of critical appraisal and reflective practice;
- A5 Provide practitioners with a special interest with transferable nationally recognised training in musculoskeletal medicine with rheumatology.

## **Programme Learning Outcomes**

**To be eligible for the award of Postgraduate Certificate at FHEQ level 7, students will be able to:**

- P1 Critically analyse and apply current knowledge and skills to enable practitioners to work independently and manage patients in their care and to deal with complex clinical situations systematically;
- P2 Contribute to the development of clinical protocols and practice within the care pathway linking primary and secondary care in line with current recommendations;
- P3 Make strategic and appropriate clinical decisions within the relevant care pathway at a higher level with regard to the diagnosis, management, treatment and referral of patients;
- P4 Communicate complex clinical conclusions clearly and effectively to patients and the clinical team;
- P5 Evaluate the PwSI role, and its implications for the whole patient pathway and current techniques for improving the delivery of patient care;
- P6 Act autonomously and collaboratively in a multidisciplinary context.

**Please note:** All students will need to complete the Applied Methodologies module, for the award of the Postgraduate Certificate students will have studied ONE clinical module and so will have developed expertise in a single area of musculoskeletal medicine.

**Additionally, to be eligible for the award of the Postgraduate Diploma at FHEQ Level 7, students will have:**

- P7 studied THREE clinical modules and will have achieved a wider specialist expertise.

## **Curriculum**

The Postgraduate Diploma in Musculoskeletal Medicine with Rheumatology for Practitioners with a Special Interest is a modular programme encompassing four modules, three of which are clinical and one of which is a service improvement module. Each of the three clinical modules lasts six months. The service improvement module - Applied Methodologies - can be taken alongside one or more of the other modules, over a maximum period of 18 months. To achieve the Diploma with 120 credits, all modules are compulsory (core).

Clinical modules are designed to run over a 6 month period, with the exception of the Applied Methodologies module, that will run concurrently across the duration of the programme. For students who wish to exit at Certificate level with 60 credits they can choose to complete only one clinical module (see below: options). The Applied Methodologies module is compulsory (core) at both Certificate and Diploma level. Certificate students therefore complete one clinical module and the service improvement module.

## MSK Programme Modules

Module Code	Title	Credits	FHEQ Level
PSI7001-C	Applied Methodologies	30 Core	7
PSI7011-C	Musculoskeletal Disorders of the Upper Limb and Inflammatory Arthropathies	30 Option	7
PSI7012-C	Musculoskeletal Disorders of the Lower Limb and Metabolic Bone Disease	30 Option	7
PSI7013-C	Musculoskeletal Disorders of the Cervical, Thoracic and Lumbar Spine and Chronic Widespread Pain Disorders	30 Option	7

Students will be eligible to exit with the award of Postgraduate Certificate they have successfully completed at least 60 credits, which includes the Applied Methodologies module and achieved the award learning outcomes.

Students will be eligible to exit with the award of Postgraduate Diploma if they have successfully completed at least 120 credits, which includes the Applied Methodologies module and achieved the award learning outcomes.

**Please note:** The curriculum may change, subject to the University's course approval, monitoring and review procedures.

## Learning and Teaching Strategy

The Postgraduate Diploma is run and delivered by The Ridge Education Ltd and the award is made through the University of Bradford. A key feature of the programme is the development of clinical competence in a work environment.

A variety of teaching methods is employed in the programme, to enable students to fulfil the varied modular learning outcomes. The learning within the programme is gained through:

- **Direct tuition:** this occurs at the beginning of each module. Tutors are available by email if required during attachment periods to handle learning queries. Tutors are advanced clinical practitioners, allied health professionals and service improvement specialists.

- **Work-based learning:** this forms the central part of the programme of study in the form of clinical attachments. Each module should contain at least 14 sessions of direct clinical practice in a secondary care environment. This learning is undertaken on attachment in the locality, under the supervision of a clinical mentor. Students will approach the mentor in the first instance: they must be a registered advanced clinician in musculoskeletal medicine/rheumatology who has teaching experience. The clinical mentor will receive a specific Mentor Guide including advice and support from the programme management team in fulfilling the role of mentor.
- **Guided reading** (given by tutor and mentor): this complements the attachment and enables students to fulfil the theoretical background necessary for their attachment activities and prepares them for their written and presentational assignments.
- **E-learning:** the virtual learning environment gives access to the peer group and tutors during attachment, facilitating learning through clinical discussion, as well as providing support.
- **Local research and application:** The Applied Methodologies module involves working within the healthcare community and applying two different service improvement methodologies: a clinical audit and a patient pathway analysis. Learning takes place during the activities of researching and reading information, planning, preparation and application of these.

LOs 1, 3, and 6 will be developed through lectures, seminars and workshops on the teaching/assessment days; a programme manual; practical engagement with patients in the hospital setting under the supervision and mentorship of the consultant; reflective discussion with the mentor; reflective learning through case study preparation and clinical learning diary recording; the application of learning with patients in general practice and will be supported by guided reading. Outcomes 2 and 5 will be developed through the Applied Methodologies module. Outcomes 3 and 4 will be developed through practical engagement with patients in the hospital setting as well as their own practice under the supervision and mentorship of the consultant and through reflective discussion with the mentor on these and other occasions. Outcomes 4, 5 and 7 will be developed throughout the programme in all modules.

Optionality is available to students studying for the Certificate in their choice of modules. It is available to students studying for the Diploma in the choice of cases for the written reflective studies and the presentations.

## Assessment Strategy

Students will be provided with a detailed student handbook, containing guidance, marking criteria and reading lists. Assessment is designed to enable students to have a rounded measurement of the skills needed for their role in the healthcare community.

Clinical competence is verified through mentor signature after observation and discussion during the attachment periods.

All assessments are of an applied nature. In the clinical modules assessment is in the form of the verification of competence and key skills as observed by the mentor. This is supported by a learning diary which demonstrates both breadth of learning and experience. Reflective case studies are undertaken and presented. These address patients whom students have seen and managed clinically. Students are required to prepare and present a critical appraisal of a piece of published research to the student group.

In the Applied Methodologies module students submit a clinical audit and a patient pathway analysis in order to demonstrate their engagement with quality improvement procedures in patient care.

Students submit their work electronically and receive a summative numerical mark and written feedback. A draft may be sent to tutors for formative assessment. Students are awarded a numerical mark and receive written and verbal feedback.

## Assessment Regulations

This Programme conforms to the standard University of Bradford Postgraduate Assessment Regulations which are online at: <https://www.bradford.ac.uk/regulations/>

However, there are **two** programme exceptions to these regulations as listed below:

- Students will be required to pass all components of assessment at 40% or above without compensation, with the exception of the clinical competence element of each module which is marked on a pass/fail basis. All clinical elements must be passed.
- If the students overall mark for any module is below 40% they will have an automatic opportunity to undertake a second attempt at any assessment or components of assessment they have failed. A date will be given to the student by when they will need to submit their second attempt. Students will not need to wait until their marks have been presented to a Board of Examiners.

## Admission Requirements

The standard entry requirements for the programme are as follows:

- Students must be a suitably qualified registered primary or secondary care practitioner, demonstrating successful study skills at level 6, with at least two years relevant work experience in the UK;
- Students must obtain written support from a registered advanced clinician in their extended role area, such as an NHS hospital trust consultant in MSK or rheumatologist, for mentorship and the provision of a clinical attachment;
- Students must produce evidence of relevant registered qualification, currency and academic qualifications:

As the assessment elements of the programme require a substantial amount of written work at level 7, in accordance with regulations from the University of Bradford we ask that non-native speakers achieve certificated English language proficiency equivalent to IELTS 6.5 with no sub-test score lower than 5.5 before they begin their studies.

<https://www.bradford.ac.uk/international/entry-requirements/>

**Please note:** this admissions information relates to the contemporary recruitment cycle when this document was published. The entry requirements may be different for the current cycle. Visit the course page to check: <https://www.brad.ac.uk/courses/pg/pwsi-musculoskeletal-medicine-with-rheumatology/>

## Recognition of Prior Learning

The University of Bradford and its partners welcome applications from all potential students and most important in the decision to offer a place is our assessment of a candidate's potential to benefit from their studies and of their ability to succeed on this particular programme. Consideration of applications will be based on a combination of formal academic qualifications and other relevant experience.

If applicants have prior certificated learning or professional experience which may be equivalent to parts of this programme, the University has procedures to evaluate and recognise this learning in order to provide applicants with exemptions from specified modules or parts of the programme.

For more details about the University Recognition of Prior Learning procedures visit:

<https://www.brad.ac.uk/teaching-quality/prior-learning/>

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