



## **PGCert First Contact Physiotherapy Practitioner (Musculoskeletal) Programme Specification**

<https://www.bradford.ac.uk/courses/pg/first-contact-physiotherapy/>

<b>Academic Year:</b>	2024/25
<b>Awarding Body:</b>	The University of Bradford
<b>Target Award:</b>	Postgraduate Certificate, First Contact Physiotherapy Practitioner (Musculoskeletal) [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications Level 7]
<b>Programme Admissions:</b>	March
<b>Programme Modes of Study:</b>	12 months part-time, distance learning and in practice

**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**

1. January 2021: Specification reformatted and made accessible.
2. July 2021: Annual changes for 2021/22. Updated admissions section
3. February 2022: change to distance learning, update to the description of the role and start date of the programme.
4. March 2023: Annual changed for the 2023/24 academic year.
5. May 2024: Annual changes for the 2024/25 academic year.

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## **Introduction**

Experienced healthcare practitioners now have the opportunity to take on challenging roles, working across professional, organisational and system boundaries to meet diverse patient needs (Francis 2013, Cavendish 2013, HEE 2013). Physiotherapists working towards these roles, often at the forefront of innovative practice, are expected to undertake postgraduate education (Department of Health, 2010). This programme will prepare the student for the demands of the role of First Contact Physiotherapist by supporting and assisting the development of the student in the skills required specifically for this role, over and above more conventional postgraduate MSK (musculoskeletal) study.

The demands of this role require the physiotherapist to show capabilities within new pathways of patient assessment and management. There is therefore a need for appropriate training and governance to support staff moving into this practice. We recognise this and therefore are focusing on delivering safe and effective MSK specific practice using firstly simulation within the scope of these new pathways and secondly through practice in a primary care setting.

The programme is designed to develop the skills in complex reasoning, critical thinking and analysis required to undertake the role of a first contact physiotherapy practitioner in adult musculoskeletal practice. This will involve students using a wide range of career experience, applying it and integrating with the current evidence-based practice to improve patient management.

The programme will offer students the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills to a range of information, data, tools and techniques to improve the quality of care and improved access and outcomes with patients presenting with musculoskeletal conditions. You will be exposed to a range of clinical and professional situations through reflection, practice experience (some of which maybe via virtual consultations) which culminates in a clinical placement supported by linking the clinical experience with the academic learning and support, particularly the clinical placement and the role of the allocated clinical supervisor who would usually be an experienced first contact practitioner working in partnership with a University of Bradford academic mentor. Students will be allocated a suitable clinical placement, cost included in enhanced programme fee. The clinical supervisor will support (some of which may be online or long-arm supervision) the student in the clinical setting supporting assessment, clinical decision making, stratifying risk, ordering and interpreting investigations, onward referrals and determining outcomes within a primary care clinical governance setting.

The programme closely aligns with current thinking around physiotherapy musculoskeletal career frameworks and could lead to NHS Agenda for Change Band 7 first contact physiotherapy roles in primary care and onward to NHS Agenda for Change Band 8A as part of an advanced practice portfolio.

The Faculty of Health Studies is a major provider of education and training for individuals working within the health, social, independent and community/voluntary sector organisations across the Yorkshire and Humber Region. The physiotherapy and sport teaching team have won numerous university teaching excellence awards and this work has been recognised nationally with an AdvanceHE Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (2019). The Faculty focus on excellence though knowledge, practice, research, leadership and management aims to support the future sustainability of the individuals, through lifelong learning and improved employability and thereby influencing the future adaptability of individual organisations and service delivery to promote change.

## **Programme Aims**

The programme is intended to:

- A1 Provide programme that is vocationally relevant, which meets the student's professional development needs in a first contact setting, as well as the organisational needs of employers.
- A2 Provide opportunities in the clinical setting for inter-professional learning to share the professional knowledge, skills and experience common to a range of different health and social care disciplines.
- A3 Stimulate the student to become autonomous, self-directed learners who are motivated to sustain and advance their own continuous professional development.

- A4 Develop students' clinical skills, knowledge, and critical understanding to an advanced level, applicable to your own field of musculoskeletal practice.
- A5 Further develop cognitive and practical skills to undertake data synthesis, complex problem solving and risk assessment.
- A6 Prepare the student, to work in advanced and specialist roles with high levels of accountability.
- A7 Develop the student as a practitioner who will innovate, promote evidence informed practice, and improve service user outcomes.
- A8 Develop the student as a leader with skills and confidence, to act as a role model, supporting the professional development of colleagues and the work of the organisation within local governance framework.
- A9 Develop the student as a critically reflective, competent leader who will manage service development towards effective, sustainable, inclusive, fair, and ethically sensitive service provision.

## **Programme Learning Outcomes**

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

1. Develop a detailed knowledge, critically analyse and apply the research evidence that informs the development of policy and service delivery in First Contact Physiotherapy Practice (Musculoskeletal).
2. Demonstrate mastery of clinical or practical skills for the management of complex issues in First Contact Physiotherapy Practice (Musculoskeletal).
3. Apply knowledge of anatomy and physiology to undertake advanced assessment, diagnosis, complex care planning, health promotion and evaluation appropriate to First Contact Physiotherapy Practice (Musculoskeletal).
4. Reflect upon and demonstrate knowledge of values, ethical thinking, equality awareness, inclusive practice within First Contact Physiotherapy Practice (Musculoskeletal).
5. Develop and demonstrate the ability to articulate sound arguments and justify decisions using a variety of formats including written and oral communication skills.
6. Demonstrate advanced communication skills, problem solving and risk assessment in First Contact Physiotherapy Practice (Musculoskeletal).
7. Demonstrate the ability to use IT skills to gather and synthesise information, to access programme materials.
8. Critically reflect on your leadership skills and apply your professional knowledge to support the development of colleagues and the work of your organisation.

- Critically analyse clinical governance issues, service improvement and patient safety issues in First Contact Physiotherapy Practice (Musculoskeletal).

## Curriculum

The First Contact Physiotherapy Practitioner (Musculoskeletal) PGCert programme is made up of two 30-credit core modules. The modules are required to be completed successfully in sequence as Module 1 addresses the clinical knowledge and theory required to undertake successful completion of Module 2 in a first contact clinical environment.

**First Contact Physiotherapy 1 – Advanced Musculoskeletal Practice** is a module that allows students to explore recent advances, theoretical knowledge, and current musculoskeletal physiotherapy practice applicable to First Contact Practitioner settings and to demonstrate these skills and knowledge to be developed in a simulated environment.

**First Contact Physiotherapy 2 – Working in Primary Care** is a module that (upon successful completion of First Contact Physiotherapy 1) gives students the opportunity to apply and demonstrate recent advances and knowledge to deliver innovative FCP (MSK) services working with other members of the healthcare team to improve patient care and their access to high quality health services.

Module Code	Module Title	Credits	FHEQ Level	Study Period
PAR7013-C	First Contact Physiotherapy 1 – Advanced Musculoskeletal Practice	30	7	Semester 1
PAR7014-C	First Contact Physiotherapy 2 – Working in Primary Care	30	7	Semester 3

Students will be eligible to exit with the FHEQ Level 7 award of Postgraduate Certificate First Contact Practitioner (Musculoskeletal) if they have successfully completed 60 credits and achieved the award learning outcomes. THIS AWARD DOES NOT CONFER ELIGIBILITY TO REGISTER WITH THE HCPC.

## Learning and Teaching Strategy

Whilst following this programme of study, students will engage with learning through a range of blended teaching methods, including online delivery that will be synchronous ('synchronous' meaning 'live' session, not pre-recorded). However, student-centred approaches to learning are a feature of the modules and students will be expected to take responsibility for their own learning as they develop their academic skills. Teaching methods will include keynote lectures, enquiry-based learning, online learning, peer discussion and debate, the use of case studies and specific reflective activities.

There is an expectation that students will engage with the University Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) CANVAS throughout their course of study). An E-Portfolio is also used to demonstrate professional development, knowledge and skills in your role.

The aims of the blended learning teaching and learning strategies have been designed so that the student will be given the opportunity to develop theoretical understanding, practical application, research informed knowledge and critical thinking (Programme LOs 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 13), to develop a range of skills appropriate to the students professional field (Programme LOs 3, 4, 7, 10, 11, 12) your, organisation and workplace setting. The student will also develop skills and knowledge of research and application to their own practice area (Programme LOs 9, 13, 14 and 15).

The course of study will expose the student to a range of different teaching, learning and assessment strategies required to achieve the learning outcomes. The teaching approaches that are used across the Faculty of Health Studies are informed by the University and Faculty core values which are for teaching and learning to be: *Research informed, Reflective, Adaptable, Inclusive, Supportive, Ethical and Sustainable*. Therefore, the programme delivery includes the following:

- Lectures (online): to a group of students where information will be presented and discussed whilst informed by the core values.
- Work-based learning: where learning is directed within the work environment (some of which may be delivered online) and is reflected upon and then reported on.
- Use of virtual learning environments, to access information and to interact with other students. Delivery will be synchronous (live).
- Directed reading: where set reading may be recommended.
- Self-Directed learning: Where students are expected to develop their own learning by identifying areas of interest and areas in which knowledge needs to be developed.

## **Assessment Strategy**

Your learning will be assessed against the learning outcomes and programme aims through the use of a range of different assessment techniques which may include one or more of the following approaches:

- online training packages
- objective structured clinical examination
- The development of a reflective portfolio
- Capability/Competency document

## **Assessment Regulations**

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

## Admission Requirements

The University welcomes 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.

We take into consideration a number of factors when assessing your application. It's not just about your grades; we take the time to understand your personal circumstances and make decisions based on your potential to thrive at university and beyond.

The minimum entry requirement for this programme is to demonstrate the ability to work at postgraduate level. Students will usually have a Master's degree in Musculoskeletal practice or a closely related area, but applications are welcome from motivated students with significant relevant clinical experience. UK students applying without a Master's degree will require either a UK Bachelor's degree or GCSE English at Grade 4 (Grade C).

## Professional Entry Requirements

The current professional entry requirements for the programme are:

- Current registration with the Health and Care Professions Council.
- At least 3 years of post-registration experience in a musculoskeletal physiotherapy setting.
- To be currently employed as an HCPC registered physiotherapist and will either be operating in a First Contact Physiotherapy role or planning to enter this field.
- To have your application supported by your employer agreeing to release you to attend the taught content and practice placement. If you are self-employed, we are not able to offer reimbursement for lost earnings to attend the taught content and practice placement.
- To be able to attend the 75 hours practice placement during the working hours of 9am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, regardless of your current working arrangement.

## No Accredited Recognition of Prior Learning

This programme is not eligible for the University's Recognition of Prior Learning procedures and no credit can be imported against the FCP MSK curriculum.

## International and English Language Entry Requirements

This programme is open to international students **only if** you meet the requirements for being HCPC registered as a physiotherapist in the UK and to be practicing in FCP.

Applicants whose first language is not English will be expected to possess a University approved English Language qualification at **IELTS 7.0** with no sub-test score below 6.5, or equivalent. Please see: <https://www.bradford.ac.uk/international/entry-requirements/> for more details of qualifications we can accept. If you do not meet the IELTS requirement, you can take a University of Bradford pre-sessional English course with our Language Centre: <https://www.brad.ac.uk/courses/other/pre-sessional-english-language-programme/>

**Please note:** The information above relates to the contemporary recruitment cycle at time of publication and therefore may now be out of date. The current tariff, accepted qualifications for entry onto the programme and any restrictions that apply to admission or funding are published on the programme course listing website: Postgraduate Certificate in First Contact Physiotherapy Practitioner (Musculoskeletal), <https://www.bradford.ac.uk/courses/pg/first-contact-physiotherapy/>