

Rheumatology

Postgraduate Diploma and MSc Courses





Postgraduate Diploma

Delivered over 1 year, the online, part-time, Postgraduate Diploma course is specially developed for busy health professionals. Formatted in 6 modules, each 6 weeks in duration; the course is designed to be practical and clinically focused.

MSc

The MSc runs over 1 calendar year, starting with an initial 12 week online module to develop their skills in critical appraisal and knowledge of research methodologies. Students then complete the professional project module which consists of a 1,500 word proposal and 10,500 word professional project.

Why study Rheumatology with us?

Taught completely online, our Postgraduate Diploma and MSc course in Rheumatology has been designed to create professionals who can independently access information and use the information to critically assess, evaluate and disseminate the evidence base related to Rheumatology. It will develop problem-solving and clinical skills together with preparing students to take a leadership role in Rheumatology.

All physicians need to be familiar with rheumatologically related conditions. Having a specialist knowledge in rheumatology is an increasingly important role and extra responsibility of medical personnel.

Our courses in Rheumatology have been developed for Doctors, GPs, Allied Health Professionals, Practice Nurses and those with related undergraduate degrees (e.g. Chiropractors, Osteopaths, Physiotherapists, Podiatrists, Occupational therapists, Pharmacists) or equivalent professional qualifications and background experience.

Students may apply for the MSc in Rheumatology as a two-year course, firstly completing the Postgraduate Diploma (120 credits), followed by the MSc (60 credits).

Rheumatology Postgraduate Diploma

Course Modules

Our online Rheumatology Postgraduate Diploma allows you to study for just one calendar year and is a part-time, distance-learning course. The course is worth 120 credits and comprises six modules of 20 credits, each running over a period of six weeks.

Module 1 - Rheumatology Epidemiology and Pathophysiology

Aim of the module:

- Develop a critical understanding and knowledge of the Epidemiology, Pathophysiology and the science in rheumatological disorders.

Synopsis of module content:

- The evolution of rheumatology as a speciality including notable people with rheumatological disorders throughout history and the representation of rheumatology within art.
- Epidemiology and economic impact.
- Pathophysiology of rheumatology disorders.
- Science in rheumatology (Including immunology, genetics and biomechanics).

On completion of this module, students will be able to:

1. Extract evidence of the evolution of the rheumatology speciality from art, history and science.
2. Demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of the pathophysiology and science of rheumatology disorders.
3. Demonstrate an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the epidemiology and global impact of rheumatology conditions.
4. Have the ability to critically appraise the health and economic consequences of rheumatology.

Module 2 - Multidisciplinary Treatment in Rheumatology

Aim of the module:

- To develop a critical understanding of diagnostics, treatment and care of rheumatology patients, including the appreciation of the multi-disciplinary team involved.

Synopsis of module content:

- Patient treatment pathways, triage and the role of primary care.
- What is the Multi-Disciplinary Team?
- The Role of Alternative and Complementary treatments.
- Understanding, recognition and care of the Psychological aspects of the disorders (Psyche meets the Soma).
- Patient education and management of their concerns.
- Self-Management techniques, support groups, use of social media and consequence of the digital age.

On completion of this module, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an ability to critically appraise the multi-disciplinary approach to the management of rheumatological treatment.
2. Demonstrate active engagement in the evolving role of the rheumatology healthcare professional in the digital age for improved patient treatment and care.

3. Apply appropriate patient education and management techniques in complex clinical situations.

4. Incorporate knowledge of the psychological aspects of Rheumatology disorders into clinical practice.

Module 3 - Drugs and Therapeutics in Rheumatology

Aim of the module:

- To develop critical knowledge and understand the scientific basis for therapeutic interventions available for the patient with a rheumatological disorder.

Synopsis of module content:

- Self Management Techniques, over the counter alternative medicine
- Portal of entry care
- Specialist treatments in secondary care setting
- Horizon scanning and scientific rationale of new treatments
- Non drug therapeutic treatments
- Cooperative management

On completion of this module, students will be able to:

1. Apply knowledge of the wide range of drug and therapeutics available to select the appropriate management choices for rheumatology patients in clinical practice.
2. Demonstrate in depth knowledge and understanding of the scientific basis for therapeutics in rheumatology treatment.
3. Critically evaluate information on emerging treatment pathways, including drug and non-drug therapies for rheumatology.

Module 4 - Diagnosis and Management of Inflammatory Arthritis

Aim of the module:

- To critically analyse the diagnostic and management approaches in inflammatory arthritis

Synopsis of module content:

- Diagnosis approach to a patient first presenting with rheumatology symptoms.
- Differential diagnosis of Inflammatory Arthritis.
- The role of laboratory test and imaging.
- The range of inflammatory arthritides including paediatric inflammatory arthritis.
- Non rheumatological disorders presenting to the rheumatology specialist.



Little did I know that the MSc was going to be a significant stepping stone in my medical career! Both the diploma and MSc were invaluable in terms of expanding my knowledge and management of Diabetes Medicine, but also enhanced my critical thinking and writing skills.

- Dr Kevin Fernando

On completion of this module, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate advanced knowledge of the diagnosis and management of a patient presenting with joint pain or loss of function.
2. Demonstrate in depth knowledge and understanding of inflammatory arthritis and its diagnosis.
3. Critically evaluate diagnostic techniques used in the clinical setting.

Module 5 - Connective Tissue Disease and Vasculitis

Aim of the module:

- To provide in depth understanding of the wide range of connective tissue disorders, their protein manifestations and the approaches to patients with possible connective tissue disease, with an emphasis on diagnosis and management.

Synopsis of module content:

- Covering the modes of presentation of a patient with possible connective tissue disease or vasculitis.

On completion of this module, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the wide range of connective tissue disorders and their protean manifestations.
2. Demonstrate a critical understanding of the diagnosis and management of connective tissue disorders.
3. Differentiate between the various modes of presentation in the patient with possible connective tissue diseases.

Module 6 - Soft Tissue Disorders, Hypermobility and Other Rheumatology Conditions

Aim of the module:

- To develop the in depth knowledge and understanding of soft tissue, hypermobility and connective tissue disorders, degenerative arthritis and traumatic conditions.

Synopsis of module content:

- Biomechanical Principles.
- Bone Biochemistry.
- Hypermobility and associated connective tissue disorders.
- Osteoarthritis/ degenerative disorders.
- Traumatic conditions.
- Crystal arthropathies.

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"When I enrolled into the course I had no idea about the opportunities it would provide me with. Having my first paper published through this course helped me overcome my apprehensions of academic writing and made me more confident to pursue it further. "

- Rutu Dave



On completion of this module, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of the complexities of a wide range of soft tissue disorders, hypermobility and connective tissue disorders, degenerative arthritis and crystal arthropathies, traumatic conditions.
2. Demonstrate a critical approach to the diagnosis and management of patients with these conditions/disorders.

Teaching Methods

Our courses are conducted entirely online through self-directed distance learning. However, you will receive guidance throughout with tutor-stimulated academic discussions, which are based on clinically-rich case scenarios. These usually occur within groups of 10-15 students, allowing you to clearly communicate with both your tutor and fellow students.

You will participate in a combination of group and individual activities, which are recorded in a reflective journal. This innovative teaching method enables you to envisage the translation of your studies into your every day work and practice.

Our dedicated Student Support Team are also available to help with any problems you may face. From navigating our online platform to advising you on deadlines, our team can assist with any questions or challenges you may have along the way.

Study skills week

Once you have secured your place on the course, you will be required to attend our Study Skills week. This will give you the opportunity to participate in workshops on Harvard referencing, scientific and reflective writings, and levels of evidence in preparation for your studies. It is compulsory for you to attend our Induction, as it'll provide you with a sturdy introduction to the course.

Rheumatology Postgraduate Diploma

Entry Requirements

Documents required:

- A copy of your updated CV including your address and date of birth.
- A copy of your undergraduate degree certificate.
- The name and email address of someone who is able to provide a reference, this can be a work colleague, employer or former tutor.
- A detailed personal statement explaining why you would like to undertake the course.

Applicants should submit copies of the following with their application:

Proficiency in the English language is also essential to completing our courses. If English is NOT your first language, we ask for proof of competency during the application process. We are able to accept an IELTS overall score of 6.0 (with a minimum of 5.5 for each band) or an equivalent qualification.

Health professionals working within a clinical setting, both UK and overseas, with a related Healthcare Science degree (including international qualifications) are eligible to apply for the Postgraduate Diploma in Rheumatology.

Applicants without the above academic criteria but relevant/ suitable experience can apply. Applications will be judged on the individual specifics of background and qualifications including ability to work at Postgraduate level (applicants may be asked to submit a piece of work for assessment to confirm that they are able to work comfortably at postgraduate level and demonstrate requisite clinical/professional knowledge).



Rheumatology MSc

Course Modules

Module 1 - Research Methodologies and Critical Appraisal

Aim of the module:

- To help students recognise, understand, interpret and apply methods used in healthcare research and critically appraise the various methodologies specific to Rheumatology research.
- Basic terminology used in epidemiology and research studies such as prevalence, incidence, sensitivity, specificity, false positive and false negatives.
- Interpreting graphical representation of epidemiological and statistical data such as Kaplan-Meier Curves, Forrest Plots and Meta-analyses.
- Calculations used in the assessment of research data such as relative risk, absolute risk, number needed to treat.
- Basic statistical tests and their applications including t-Tests, ANOVA, Chi-Square.
- Methodologies as applied to rheumatology research. Fundamentals of evidence based practice and its application into the clinical setting.
- Establishing patient registers and the value of disease specific registers.
- Research into educational principles for both health care practitioner and patient.
- Understanding what may work for the patient as well as the educator.

On completion of this module, students will be able to:

1. Interpret research in rheumatology medicine.
2. Display a critical understanding of the clinical implications of research and its impact upon healthcare delivery and service development.
3. Implement evidence based practice into care.

Module 2 - Professional Project

Aim of the module:

- To develop an ability to critically evaluate areas of professional practice.
- To critically appraise specific areas of clinical, research and organisational practice.
- To develop skills in independent research and study.
- To develop skills relevant to scientific publications.

Synopsis of the module:

The module will depend on the creation of a piece of work based upon a specific clinically related project relevant to the student's practice.

This project may comprise:

- Literature review and appraisal of the evidence.
- Audit of practice including organisational or clinical.
- Review and implementation of evidence-based practice.
- Qualitative or quantitative research (formal research involving human subjects is not anticipated).
- Case(s)-based and quality of service review with critical appraisal.
- Case report, review of literature and organisational assessment.

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On completion of this module, students will be able to:

1. Produce an extensive piece of literature which may be suitable for peer-reviewed publication.
2. Demonstrate an ability to recognise and implement good practice.
3. Critically evaluate practice and suggest improvements or change.
4. Incorporated knowledge of the research process in developing services appropriately.

Teaching Methods

Module 1 - Research Methodologies and Critical Appraisal

MSc teaching methods for this module are similar to the Postgraduate Diploma course modules, however it is run over 12 weeks.

Module 2 - Professional Project

To produce the professional project, students continue to use the online course; however much of the work is self-directed.

Students are expected in the first 8 weeks to interact with their tutor on a weekly basis. Students select a specific project and submit a project summary/ proposal (approximately 1,500 words).

Once the proposal has been approved, the professional project (10,500 words) itself is then completed through online guidance and supervision offered by the tutor. The student and tutor will interact regularly (weekly) on the dedicated students/ tutor discussion area or through any other means of communication deemed appropriate by both parties (telephone/ SKYPE/ email). Note of any verbal communication with the tutor is recorded in the student's journal by the student.

Entry Requirements

Entry to the one year Rheumatology MSc will require successful completion of the Rheumatology Postgraduate Diploma (120 credits). This can be from Diploma MSc, the University of South Wales or another UK university (having completed similar modules). We can discuss this with you during your application.

Individuals who have not completed the postgraduate diploma can apply for the Rheumatology MSc as a two year course consisting of eight modules (180 credits) with the first 120 credits deriving from the postgraduate diploma.

Entry requirements for the two-year course are as for the Postgraduate Diploma.

Applicants should be working in a clinical setting, either in the UK or overseas, and have a science degree in a relevant subject.

You will also need to submit copies of the following with your application:

- Qualification certificates
- A maximum of two professional and/or academic references
- IELTS score of 6.0 with a minimum of 5.5 for each band (or an equivalent qualification)

Graduates of this course will receive a Master of Science award from the University of South Wales, Diploma MSc's collaborative partner. The Rheumatology MSc course provides a progression route for the Postgraduate Diploma course in Rheumatology.



What do our students think?

Since 2010, over 1000 students have progressed their medical career by enrolling in one of our qualifications. We ourselves have learned a lot during this time and continually seek to improve the student learning experience. Here is what some of our previous students have said:

"I found the online learning very interesting. It enabled me to save money and time."

Dr Imad Eddin Rahamtalla, Doctor

"I strongly recommend Diploma MSc to all those busy physicians who are working in remote areas and wish to upgrade their knowledge."

Dr Junaid Zaffar, Diabetologist

"The learning was fun and enjoyable. The course was awesome and it increased my confidence."

Dr Sankar Nath Jha, Assistant Professor

"I found learning with Diploma MSc interesting, it helped to update my academic knowledge."

Dr Prasanth Kinattupurayil, Doctor

"I love that it was flexible and that I could log in at my convenience. I found this course to be very in-depth, informative, challenging and stimulating."

Kerri-Ann Best PGDip, RD



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