

MSC PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT: OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Institute of Health

Academic Level:	7	Credits:	180
UCAS Code:	Not applicable		
Awarding Body:	University of Cumbria		
Delivery Site:	Distance Learning		
Programme Length:	Full-Time: 2 years standard Part-Time: 4 years standard		
Mode of Delivery:	Online Learning		
Pattern of Delivery:	Full time; Part time		
	Total weeks of study:	36	
	Delivery pattern:	3 x 12 week semesters	
	Standard semester dates:	Yes	
Programme Webpage:	TBC		

Entry Criteria

The University's standard criteria for admissions apply. Please refer to the [Applicant Information](#) pages of the University website for more information. For [APL](#), please refer to the University website. Detailed criteria for admission to this programme can be found on the programme webpage.

The decision to offer a place on the programme is at the discretion of the programme leader.

There is full commitment to equal opportunities criteria. The University is committed to widening access by taking candidates from a variety of educational backgrounds, without compromising academic standards.

The following additional requirements apply for entry to this programme:

Applicants must be an Occupational Therapist with current HCPC registration, currently practising as an Occupational Therapist and working within an appropriate environment/setting

Applicants will require access to a computer with:

- A reliable internet connection
- Microsoft or Apple Mac Supported Office Software *
- A supportive browser, such as Google Chrome

N.B. * Whilst you are a student at the University of Cumbria you can download and use Microsoft Office365 Professional for your own device.

PROGRAMME AIMS AND OUTCOMES

Programme Aims

This programme aims to:

1. Provide a coherent postgraduate progression route, which recognises and values your prior experience and learning
2. Provide a transformative learning experience for you to advance your academic and professional development through critical self-reflection and reflexivity
3. Enable you to develop a mastery of complex and specialised knowledge and a critical awareness of issues at the forefront of your field of practice
4. Develop conceptual knowledge and advanced understanding of how techniques of enquiry enable the critical and objective analysis, interpretation and application of research and evidence within your sphere of influence
5. Challenge existing knowledge and facilitate the development of new ideas and new ways of thinking
6. Increase knowledge and leadership skills that will enhance and develop your practice.

Programme Outcomes – Knowledge and Understanding

The programme provides opportunities for you to develop and demonstrate the following:

After 60 credits of study (PGCert) you will be able to demonstrate understanding of:

K1. The evidence, theories and policy drivers that underpin decision making and judgement in Occupational Therapy practice

K2. The holistic nature of Occupational Therapy practice, and applying the concepts and frameworks for

collaborative and partnership working

K3. The complexities of professional, ethical and legal perspectives relating to Occupational Therapy practice, incorporating sensitivity to diversity and cultural issues.

After 120 credits of study (PGDip) you will be able to demonstrate understanding of:

K4. The use and evaluation of a wide range of quality sources of evidence relevant to the area of study

K5. Research methods of enquiry relevant to your scope of practice

K6. Concepts and frameworks for collaborative and partnership working

K7. Contemporary and innovative approaches towards leading and developing practice.

After 180 credits of study (MSc) you will be able to demonstrate understanding of:

K8. Originality in the application of knowledge, and the practicalities and skills of conducting research and enquiry within your setting

K9. Critical awareness and new insights into the problems that occur within your area of professional practice or field of study.

Programme Outcomes – Skills and other Attributes

The programme provides opportunities for you to develop and demonstrate the following:

After 60 credits of study (PGCert) you will be able to:

- S1.** Formulate and complete a structured learning programme aligned to the Knowledge and Skills Framework (where applicable) and / or other appropriate competency standards that are appropriate to your professional Occupational Therapy role
- S2.** Use initiative in decision making and generate transformative solutions through the synthesis of ideas and information as a result of critical reflexivity
- S3.** Communicate effectively and emphatically with patients, colleagues and other practitioners in complex and unpredictable situations
- S4.** Use IT innovatively for the acquisition and the effective presentation of information
- S5.** Apply contemporary and innovative approaches towards leading and developing Occupational Therapy practice.

After 120 credits of study (PGDip) you will be able to:

- S6.** Analyse complex, incomplete or contradictory evidence and judge the appropriateness of the enquiry methodologies used
- S7.** Carry out research methods of enquiry relevant to your scope of practice
- S8.** Demonstrate awareness of the knowledge and skills used in leadership to influence practice
- S9.** Use critical reflexivity to analyse self and own actions to inform personal and professional development.

After 180 credits of study (MSc) you will be able to:

- S10.** Use problem solving skills to promote development of standards within Occupational Therapy practice
- S11.** Plan, design and execute a sustained piece of independent, intellectual work.

PROGRAMME FEATURES

Programme Overview

Our long-established Practice Development Framework comprises tailor-made continuing professional development (CPD) for all healthcare professionals including nurses, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, radiographers, midwives, paramedics as well as unregistered staff working in the health, wellbeing and social care sector. Your programme of study has been designed to meet your needs and interest in developing your professional and personal knowledge and expertise to develop excellence in practice within community, workplace and health and social care settings. Studying with us you will be offered the opportunity of tailoring your own programme of study. Delivery is flexible online distance learning. There may be opportunity to APL credits from other programmes you have studied into the programme and there are flexible funding options available, with the option to pay on a module-by-module basis or via a student loan where appropriate.

Your programme provides accessible higher education opportunities at a level which is appropriate to you, the student. The programme utilises a collaborative approach in the provision of inclusive person-centred continuing professional development education, which is responsive to market demand and which has been developed following extensive engagement with employers, current students and external commissioners. Whilst undertaking this programme of study, you will be introduced to and experience the process of transformative learning, founded upon personal critical reflection which will develop you as a knowledgeable, flexible, enquiring practitioner, capable of problem solving and leading innovative approaches.

Your programme *“will provide a distinctive, enabling framework to unlock innovation in programme design and delivery and prepare our graduates for sustainable success in their workplace, their community and the world”* (University of Cumbria, Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy [LTA]). Equally focussing upon one of the key themes from the same strategy we aim to be *“informed and enhanced through our research and professional practice, drawing on innovative and sector-leading approaches and contributions of employers and practice”*. This theme not only provides a foundation for your chosen area of study, but it also recognises the importance of using a clear educational curriculum model and framework to structure your programme, with you as the learner being central to this process.

Focussing on the knowledge and skills required for your employment, the curriculum accommodates the latest contemporary practice developments, key elements of reflective practice and transformative learning. Our University of Cumbria graduate attributes recognise the importance of you being *“self-reliant, adaptable and flexible”* in your thinking and practice. This will be reflected in developing and enhancing your skills of enquiry and encouraging you to be *“enquiring and open to change”* embracing the principles which underpin transformative learning. Our collaborative approach to learning has underpinned Practice Development programmes for many years and moving forward together we can support you as you adopt and benefit from the transformative learning process, which indicates an ongoing change and reflects the importance of life-long learning.

Managed by an overall framework leader, with individual programme leaders for each target award, the Practice Development Framework is based on the principles of credit accumulation (and transfer), flexibility and choice. You may be able to transfer existing internal (University of Cumbria) credit into your award, providing you can demonstrate currency and applicability of the credit to the award. Your programme incorporates a pre-determined selection of relevant health, wellbeing and social care modules.

The Practice Development Framework incorporates a variety of bespoke negotiated and work based learning modules which have been explicitly designed to meet your needs working in a wide range of practice situations. Morris (2018) describe work-based learning as a means for integrating university level learning with learning from experience in the workplace, the bringing together of self-knowledge, expertise at work and formal knowledge. Work-based learning is a learning process rather than a teaching process, which encourages you to take responsibility for your own learning and develops attitudes and skills towards lifelong learning [Håkansson Lindqvist et al., 2024](#)). These 'shell' modules allow you to undertake focussed study, relevant to you and your place of work which is directed by a pre-determined set of generic learning outcomes to ensure academic rigour and consistency is maintained. The nature of the content and assessed work will be determined cooperatively by you and / or your employer (where relevant) and a designated subject tutor.

Proposals to undertake either negotiated (NL) or work based learning (WBL) are submitted to the module leader for approval at the beginning of the semester. A designated subject tutor is appointed to supervise your study. Working with your tutor, you will agree a learning contract, specifying the exact focus and content of your NL / WBL module. This will detail your personal aims and specify the learning outcomes and agreed assessment activities which you will undertake in order to fully address the generic, pre-determined learning outcomes. Your tutor will assist you to identify key learning resources related to the area of study.

The assessment activity will be appropriate to the module content and may include an assessment of skills as well as knowledge, as appropriate to the subject of the NL/WBL. The learning contract will be submitted as part of the final coursework. For WBL, a practice-designated mentor will provide support and guidance within your workplace, the exact nature of this support will be agreed within the learning contract and approved by the tutor.

In the case of the **MSC Practice Development: Occupational Therapy**, you will be required to have undertaken the following core modules:

- Leadership Through Transformational Learning (20 credits)
- Research Methods (20 credits)
- Dissertation (60 credits or 40 credits). The 40 credit dissertation is only available for those students who, following APL of 120 credits into this programme are required to study one or both of the core modules, as well as the dissertation.

The remaining credits may be selected from the list of optional modules. Several of the listed optional modules are directly related to Occupational Therapy practice, with content and learning outcomes directly related to contemporary Occupational Therapy practice, whilst the remainder are

specifically offered to reflect the diverse settings within which Occupational Therapists work, facilitating consideration of the role of the Occupational Therapist from alternative perspectives, however choices must be relevant to your area of professional practice and target award and agreed in your personal and professional development plan with your personal tutor.

Our flexible online programme was developed informed and has evolved on the basis of collaboration with employers, stakeholders and students to meet the educational needs of a range of health professionals. It will see you gain the qualities and knowledge you need to become a high-calibre Occupational Therapy professional able to confidently deal with the changing dynamics of the health care economy. Our aim is to help you enhance your professional prospects and enable you to play an active role in developing your own Occupational Therapy practice. The facility to study modules online from your own home at a time that will fit around your shift pattern and day-to-day commitments further supports access to this advanced learning. We have extensive experience as CPD distance learning providers. All tutors are experienced in both clinical and academic practice.

Following completion of the MSC Practice Development: Occupational Therapy programme, the framework can facilitate your continual professional development via individual modules or short awards. The framework may also be used to prepare you for a PhD application or to undertake research.

Learning and Teaching

Teaching

The benefits of this programme are that the majority of your study will be asynchronous and accessible in a time and place convenient to you. Your module descriptor for the modules available to study will reflect the specific hours around each learning and teaching activity, as well as the expectations for guided independent study. These hours may differ between modules.

- At Level 7 you have 200 hours study per 20 credit module. For more specific information on how these hours are distributed, please consult the module descriptor form. As an example, these often consist of the following approximate hours:
 - 24 hours of personal contact time. This includes facilitated online discussion, synchronous VLE meetings, online presentations and tutorials and student formative feedback.
 - 176 hours of independent study. This may vary depending on the complexity of the topic and the student's own pace of learning.

Personal Tutoring hours may also be available on request.

Independent Learning

When not attending scheduled learning activities you will be expected to continue learning independently through self-study, both in the workplace and elsewhere. There is a significant amount of directed reading and independent critical exploration required to successfully complete your studies. All modules on the programme will have asynchronous learning requirements. It is expected that engagement with these tasks is undertaken and communication with module team is made where appropriate during the allocated independent learning weeks.

Teaching Staff

The framework is successfully delivered by a team of specialist, experienced lecturers, ensuring learning and teaching methods are contemporary and contextually relevant. Modules and programmes within the Practice Development framework have been written and are taught by a variety of professionals in their fields, with specialities in a wide range of subjects, including nurses, paramedics, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, midwives, radiographers, prescribers, advanced clinical practitioners as well as unregistered staff working in the health, wellbeing and social care sector. Programme leaders have extensive experience in supporting you to meet the needs of the programme, whilst achieving your own goals and aspirations for study on an individual level.

As a student at the University of Cumbria, you are part of an inclusive learning community that recognises diversity. You will have opportunities to learn by interacting with others in a collegiate, facilitative and dynamic learning environment. Teaching, assessment and student support will allow equal and equitable opportunities for you to optimise your potential and develop autonomy. We seek to create a stimulating and innovative community of learning, whether encountered on campus or at a distance. Facilitated by our expert practitioner staff, you will experience a learning environment that is well equipped, flexible, and stimulating.

The University of Cumbria, Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (LTA) underpins all aspects of the Practice Development Framework.

The framework is designed to be flexible, utilising the full range of UoC digital resources and supported communication through learning technology (including online and distributed places for learning). Learning is based in both academic study and practice environments. You are actively facilitated to use, apply and integrate your developing knowledge within your practice and to develop an enquiring, evaluative approach to your study and practice, through a transformative learning experience.

Where specifically included, work based learning is facilitated by a practice designated mentor, supported by the University.

Learning and Teaching Methods will:

- Promote the development of inclusive practice and address a range of learner types
- *"Scheduled learning and teaching"* encompasses a variety of approaches to learning and teaching across the framework. Strategies include online workshop activities, facilitated

discussion and debate, tutorials, guided study and reading, work based learning, reflection on practice

- Use learning technology to promote your learning and achievement, for example through the use of mobile technology, podcasts, webinars
- Provide active learning and social learning opportunities
- Provide appropriate engagement and facilitation models for distance, online and flexible learning students
- Provide opportunities for you to select modules appropriate to your professional context thus fostering employability prospects
- Foster aspiration and career readiness through work-based, experiential and inter-professional learning
- Be relevant to the needs of your workplace, emphasising problem-solving and the interaction of theory and practice
- Use research-informed teaching, drawing on health, social care and workplace knowledge and expertise.

The framework is successfully delivered by a team of specialist, experienced lecturers, ensuring learning and teaching methods are contemporary and contextually relevant.

Assessment

A range of assessment methods appropriate to the specific module of study are used including;

Written Assignment

Oral Assessment/Presentation

Portfolio

Set Exercise

Practical Skills Assessment

Feedback

Timely and meaningful feedback is provided to ensure students achieve their potential. The University requires feedback on assessment to be provided to students within a maximum of 20 working days. This programme uses constructive alignment, formative work / feedback and discussion informs summative works. All feedback on summative assessment is provided electronically, attached to the student submission, ensuring consistency of feedback approach and to facilitate ease of access for students. Feedback is provided via in-text commentary, verbal recording (using the assessment platform) and use of rubric.

Summative and Formative Assessment Methods:

- Assessment load is minimised for your benefit whilst upholding robust academic standards
- Are designed to provide a creative and balanced strategy across the programme
- Provide a range of authentic, engaging and challenging formative activities which as well as being important for learning, promote the value of formative work and contribute to the successful completion of the summative assignment task(s). Examples include quizzes, group work, peer review, presentations, reflection, tutorials, online activities which are designed to generate feedback on performance in order to improve learning
- Enable the valid testing of the programme learning outcomes, through a variety of summative assessments including for example; portfolio, case study, reports, reflective accounts, response to peer review, academic essays, appraisal of evidence
- Are relevant to the needs of the workplace, allowing for authentic assessment and effective formative feedback to facilitate your success
- Encourage you to critically reflect on your knowledge and skills development, in order to develop your ability to make sound professional judgements.

Graduate Prospects

Completion of this programme of study will enhance employability and career prospects. This may manifest in a number of ways, for example, you may use this qualification to gain promotion within your professional role or to develop or extend your sphere of practice.

MODULES

Code	Title	Credits	Status
HCPD7058	Leadership Through Transformational Learning	20	Core
HCPD7219	Research Methods	20	Core
HCPD7220	Dissertation	60	Core (students choose one)
HCPD7221	Dissertation	40	
Optional modules at Level 7 on MSc Practice Development: Occupational Therapy List valid at September 2025 – To be reviewed annually to ensure continued currency			
HCPD7015	Work Based Learning	20	Will be dependent on what the student negotiates to study and the nature of the assessment chosen
HCPD7040	Advancing Mental Health Across The Healthcare Spectrum (Advanced Level)	20	Prior to studying this module, you must normally have studied pre-requisite module HCPD6240 or equivalent
HCPD7200	Contemporary Practice: Supporting and Assessing Students in Healthcare Settings	20	If you have studied the equivalent module at Level 6 then you cannot also study this Level 7 version
HCPD7202-7205	Negotiated Learning	20	Will be dependent on what the student negotiates to study and the nature of the assessment chosen
HCPD7239	Dementia: Advanced Care	20	
HCPD7245	Foundations of End-of-Life Care for All Healthcare Professionals	20	This module is aimed at all healthcare practitioners who are involved in the care of patients with palliative/end of life care needs. To be eligible to study this module, you must be a qualified assistant practitioner, nurse associate, registered nurse or allied health professional.

			If you have studied the equivalent module at Level 6 then you cannot also study this Level 7 version
HCPD7249	Professional Advocate for Allied Health Professionals	20	To be eligible to study this module, you must be a registered AHP with live professional registration status. To achieve the practice-based elements of the module and competencies in practice, you must be allocated to a supervisor who should be a current professional nursing/paramedic/allied health professional advocate or hold a clinical supervision qualification and you must have the opportunity to observe and engage in a range of A-EQUIP related activities
HCPD7250	Consultation and Physical Examination: Health Assessment Skills	20	To be eligible to study this module, you must be a qualified healthcare professional with access to a suitable learning environment. If you have studied the equivalent module at Level 6 then you cannot also study this Level 7 version
HCPD7257	Managing Within a Strategic and Organisational Context	20	
HCPD7260	Coaching and Mentoring	20	
HCPD7266	Acute and Critical Care: Foundations for Practice	20	To be eligible to study this module, you must be a registered healthcare professional with at least 6 months experience of working within an acute care environment. If you have studied the equivalent module at Level 6 then you cannot also study this Level 7 version
HCPD7267	Critical or Acute Care: Independent Study	20	To be eligible to study this module, you must be a registered healthcare professional with at least 6 months experience of working within an acute care environment

HCPD7269	Patient Safety in Acute and Critical Care	20	To be eligible to study this module, you must be a registered health practitioner with regular access to an acute or critical care setting. If you have studied the equivalent module at Level 6 then you cannot also study this Level 7 version
HCPD7270	Advanced Pathophysiology and Diseases in Practice	20	To be eligible to study this module, you must have an understanding of the basic principles of physiology
HCPD7293	Clinical Supervision	20	
HCPD7299	Pain: Advanced Assessment and Management	20	
HROT7004	Contemporary and Sustainable Occupational Therapy Practice	20	*This module offers a blended approach to learning and teaching and some face to face attendance may be required
PGLT7011	Introduction to Teaching, Learning and Assessment	20	
PGLT7012	Researching Academic Practice	20	
PGLT7013	Curriculum Design and Development	20	
<p>Students exiting at this point with 60 credits would receive a PGCert Practice Development</p> <p>Students exiting at this point with 120 credits including the core modules on leadership and research methods would receive a PGDip Practice Development</p> <p>Students exiting at this point with 180 credits including all core modules would receive an MSC Practice Development: Occupational Therapy</p>			

Additional Module Information

There is a mandatory requirement that a minimum of 40 credits per academic year is studied unless a formal break from study or programme leader agreement exists.

The 40 credit Dissertation module HCPD7221 is only available for those students who have, through prior completion of a PGDip or equivalent qualification, have APL'd 120 Level 7 credits into the programme and have not, within that prior study, studied an equivalent of the core modules for this programme (Research Methods or Leadership Through Transformational Learning). Such students will be required to study the required core module(s) plus the 40 credit Dissertation (HCPD7221).

In addition to the core modules given above, you will be required to select 80 credits of optional modules from the choice available above. Optional modules **must be relevant to your area of practice** and have been agreed in your personal learning plan with your Personal Tutor.

To ensure that modules containing elements of negotiated and work based learning contribute to meeting the programme outcomes for your target award, you must discuss and agree the content of any such modules with your module tutor and document this in your personal development plan.

Key to Module Statuses

Core modules	Must be taken and must be successfully passed.
Optional modules	Are a set of modules from which you will be required to choose a set number to study. Once chosen, it may possible to compensate as a marginal fail (within the limits set out in the Academic Regulations and provided that all core or pass/fail elements of module assessment have been passed).

Optional modules may be subject to availability and viability. If we have insufficient numbers of students interested in an optional module in any given academic year, this may not be offered. If an optional module will not be running, we will advise you as soon as possible and help you choose an alternative module. Optional modules are normally selected 3 - 5 months in advance.

Timetables

Timetables are normally available no less than four weeks before the start of Semester 1. Please note that while we make every effort to ensure timetables are as student friendly as possible, scheduled learning can take place on any day of the week.

Our Timetabling team work hard to ensure that timetables are available to students as far in advance as possible, however there may be occasional exceptions such as in the case of teaching which falls outside of the usual academic calendar. The UoC academic calendar runs from August to July, so timetabling information for programmes which include teaching sessions in August may not be published until closer to the August delivery.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Student Support

The [Student Enquiry Point](#) is a simple way to contact Student Services. Using the Student Enquiry Point tile on the Student Hub you can submit an enquiry to any of the Student Services teams, which includes:

- [Careers and Employability](#)
- [Chaplaincy](#) for faith and spiritual wellbeing
- [Mental Health and Wellbeing](#)
- [Digital Skills](#)
- [Disability and Specific Learning Difficulty \(SpLD\)](#)
- [International Student Support](#)
- [Library](#)
- [Money Matters](#)
- [Safeguarding](#)
- [Skills@Cumbria](#)
- [Sports and Fitness Facilities](#)
- [University Student Accommodation](#)

As a student at the University of Cumbria you automatically become a member of the Students' Union. The Students' Union represents the views and interests of students within the University. The Students' Union is led by a group of Student Representatives who are elected by students in annual elections. They also support approximately 400 Student Academic Reps within each cohort across the entire University. The Students' Union represent the views of their cohort and work with academic staff to continuously develop and improve the experience for all University of Cumbria students. You can find out more about who represents you at www.ucsu.me.

You can email at any time on studentvoice@cumbria.ac.uk.

Course Costs

Tuition Fees

Course fees can be found <https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/study/courses/postgraduate/msc-Occupational-Therapy-practice-development/>

The following course-related costs are included in the fees:

- Use of equipment and PPE

Additional Costs

The following course-related costs are not included in the fees:

- Books and Journals: You will be able to access essential reading materials in hard or electronic copy, via the University's library or the module reading list; however, you may wish

to buy copies of any texts used to support your learning on your course. This may cost between £50 - £100 per year.

- Stationery: You should budget for stationery and consumables for your own personal use. This should include notebooks, pens and pencils for taking notes in class and/or in the field, as well as budgeting for the purchase of USB pen drives.
- Printing: You should also budget for any occasional printing and photocopying costs incurred in the preparation or submission of coursework. Whilst you will choose how much you need; there is an estimated cost of 10p per sheet which may cost around £15 - £40 per year.

For information Health Continuing Professional Development (CPD) standard module fees can be found <https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/study/student-finance/cpd/>

Exceptions to the Academic Regulations

This programme operates in accordance with the University's Academic Regulations and Academic Procedures and Processes with the following permitted variation due to Student Loan Company requirements:

- Length of the standard registration period.

External and Internal Benchmarks

External reference points include:

- Public Health England (2017) consultation document [Facing the Facts, Shaping the Future](#) (a draft health and care workforce strategy for England to 2027)
- Part 3: Standards for Pre-registration Occupational Therapy Programmes 2019
<https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/standards/standards-for-pre-registration-Occupational-Therapy-programmes.pdf>
- NMC The Code: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/nmc-publications/nmc-code.pdf>

Internal reference points include:

- [UoC Strategic Plan](#)
- [UoC Institutional Business Plans](#)
- [UoC Academic Regulations and Academic Procedures and Processes](#)

Disclaimer

This programme has been approved (validated) by the University of Cumbria as suitable for a range of delivery modes, delivery patterns, and delivery sites. This level of potential flexibility does not reflect a commitment on behalf of the University to offer the programme by all modes/patterns and at all locations in every academic cycle. The details of the programme offered for a particular intake year will be as detailed on the programme webpage.

Date of Programme Specification Production	Feb 25
Date Programme Specification was last updated	