

## **MSc Advanced Musculoskeletal Practice at City St George's: info and FAQs**

### **Background**

Advanced practice roles in MSK outpatient physiotherapy are not new. In fact, they have been around since the 1980s (Byles and Ling, 1989) with Masters level development underpinning Advanced MSK Physiotherapy Practice since the first MACP Masters programme was developed at University College London in 1992. Due to the longstanding high standards set by MACP accredited programmes, MSK outpatient physiotherapists have been particularly critical of Advanced Clinical Practice (ACP) Masters programmes for being too generic.

To address these concerns, we undertook interviews with recent alumni of Advanced MSK Practice MSc Programmes from four different universities (three MACP, one ACP) to understand what students valued and what they found unhelpful. We interviewed nine MSK outpatient physiotherapy consultants at six different NHS trusts to understand what they feel their staff should be learning to develop Advanced MSK Practice capabilities. We then set up our Advanced MSK Practice Steering Committee, made up of 17 MSK therapy consultants from MSK outpatient physiotherapy, hand therapy, major trauma, trauma and orthopaedics and podiatry, to collaboratively design our Advanced MSK Practice course structure and curriculum. Lastly, we ensured that our curriculum is mapped and accredited against relevant Advanced MSK Practice Frameworks.

Based on this robust process, if you study with us at City St George's, you will receive a contemporary, clinically relevant, high quality Advanced MSK Practice education, and you will be an accredited Advanced MSK Physiotherapist. Follow this [link to our website](#) for further information, including how to apply.

### **Course structure**

The course is underpinned by the four pillars of Advanced Practice: clinical practice, research, education and leadership. Typically, the full MSc would be completed part-time

over three years alongside your clinical role, but we can also accommodate a more flexible standalone modular approach provided this is supported by your sponsoring organisation, or if you are self-funding.

<b>MSc Advanced Clinical Practice (Advanced Musculoskeletal Practice)</b>				
	<b>Term 1</b>	<b>Term 2</b>	<b>Term 3</b>	<b>Credits</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	Advanced MSK 1: Principles of Advanced MSK Practice*	Advanced Clinical Reasoning in Health Assessment**	Leadership in Advanced Practice**	60
<b>Year 2</b>	Optional module	Advanced MSK 2: Applied Advanced MSK Practice*	Implementation and Improvement Sciences**	60
		Advancing Clinical Education and Supervision**		
<b>Year 3</b>	QI/Research Project**			60
	Optional module			
	Advanced MSK 3: Clinical Placement*			

**Table legend:** \*Core Adv MSK Practice Module, \*\*Core Adv Practice Module

### *Core Advanced Practice Modules*

These modules are compulsory for you to fulfil the four pillars of Advanced Practice as outlined in the [Multiprofessional Framework for Advanced Practice in England](#). These modules cover content that is beneficial for all clinicians and therefore are broadly multiprofessional meaning you will study alongside nurses and other AHPs such as pharmacists, paramedics, speech and language therapists, etc. Our students highly value collaborating with their multiprofessional colleagues within these modules as this provides an opportunity for innovation across professional boundaries.

## FAQs:

- *Q: Do I have to do all the core Advanced Practice modules?*

A: Yes. These are required to fulfil the four pillars and are what our MSc is mapped against for you to be an accredited Advanced Practitioner with an Advanced Practice digital badge. This accreditation is what enables our programme to offer fully funded places via NHSE and apprenticeships.

- *Q: Can I transfer credits from another university?*

A: Yes, we will accept transfer of MSc credits from other universities. If any module you have already completed is similar to any of our core Advanced Practice modules, for example, an MSc Education module, you could transfer these credits in lieu of our Advancing Clinical Education and Supervision module. If the credits for the module you wish to transfer is not similar to any of our core modules, you can still transfer the credits but this will reduce the amount of optional modules you can take with us. However, you do not need to transfer MSc credits if you do not want to.

## *Core Advanced MSK Practice Modules*

These modules, in combination with the *Core Advanced Practice Modules*, are compulsory for you to fulfil the [Musculoskeletal Advanced Practice Capabilities and Curriculum Framework](#). Upon completion of these, you will be an Advanced Musculoskeletal Practitioner. The Advanced MSK Practice 1 module is designed to meet the needs of a variety of MSK clinicians (physios, podiatrists, hand therapists, T&O therapists, etc). The Advanced MSK Practice 2 module is specific to your area of MSK practice (e.g., MSK physio outpatients). The Advanced MSK Practice 3: Clinical Placement module will be organised around your individual requirements for professional development and flexibility; you can complete this in your own place of work, or externally in a different organisation.

## FAQs:

- *Q: Do I have to do it in the order outlined above?*

A: You do need to complete Advanced MSK 1, 2 and 3 in chronological order. Other than this, you do not need to do it in the structure outlined above, but it is highly recommended. The programme has a spiral curriculum where learning in one module builds upon the learning from previous modules. The structure above is designed to maximise your learning experience.

- *Q: Do I have to do the Adv MSK Practice 3: Clinical Placement module?*

A: The Clinical Placement module is mandatory for the Advanced Musculoskeletal Practice award. You can opt not to take this module, but you would need to take an alternative 15 credit module. Without the Clinical Placement module, your award would be: MSc Advanced Clinical Practice, and you would not be eligible for MACP accreditation (please note, our application for MACP accreditation is awaiting final confirmation).

### **Course accreditations**

Our MSc Advanced Clinical Practice (Advanced Musculoskeletal Practice) programme has been mapped against several Advanced Practice frameworks. This includes:

- NHS England [Multiprofessional Framework for Advanced Practice in England](#). This is the NHS' foundations for Advanced Practice for all professions.
- NHS England [Musculoskeletal Advanced Practice Capabilities and Curriculum Framework](#). This is the NHS' foundations specifically for Advanced MSK Practice.
- The [International Federation of Orthopaedic Musculoskeletal & Manipulative Physical Therapists \(IFOMPT\) Educational Standards](#). The MACP is the UK member within IFOMPT. This is required for MACP accreditation.

This programme is accredited by NHS England against both the Multiprofessional and Musculoskeletal Frameworks for Advanced Practice. This means upon completion of this MSc, you will be an accredited Advanced MSK Practitioner. We have worked closely with the MACP and IFOMPT throughout the design of our curriculum and have applied for accreditation with the MACP which is awaiting final confirmation.

### **Our unique approach to teaching**

We have taken a blended approach to the delivery of our MSK teaching to ensure you get a well-rounded, clinically relevant, real-world education. The majority of the taught content is delivered by academics who still practice clinically, or by established Advanced and Consultant level MSK clinicians with the support of academics. We believe this achieves the optimum blend of academic rigor and up to date real life practice, ensuring you get the best quality teaching.

## **Sample MSK Curriculum**

Our curriculum is designed in collaboration with students, MSK therapy consultants, IFOMPT, MACP and NHSE.

### *Advanced MSK 1: Principles of Advanced Musculoskeletal Practice*

This module will provide you with the underpinning principles of Advanced MSK Practice to ensure that you can deliver your MSK clinical knowledge and capabilities with maximum effectiveness. Taught sessions include:

- How learners learn in Advanced MSK Practice
- Foundation psychology: theories of cognition, learning, memory, emotion and behaviour
- Behaviour change
- The impact of modern life on MSK health
- Pain neuroscience
- How digital and technological advances change the way we practice
- Health inequalities, population health, and health promotion
- Race and gender inequality in MSK healthcare
- Fundamentals of effective patient communication
- Principles of biomechanics and tissue stress
- Foundations of referring and interpreting imaging & bloods
- Evidence informed red flag pathology detection and management
- Multiprofessional solutions to address the MSK burden
- More...

### *Advanced MSK 2: Applied Advanced MSK Practice*

This module will provide you with the specific knowledge and capabilities that you need to practice at an Advanced level within MSK Outpatient Physiotherapy roles. We will cover a traditional curriculum including an evidence-based overview of lower and upper quadrant disorders, but provide a contemporary lens by threading the core principles of Advanced MSK 1 throughout the teaching to ensure you receive an Advanced MSK Practice education that enables you to maximise the effectiveness of your healthcare delivery. This will include:

- Theoretical and evidence based, contemporary understandings of MSK conditions including pathophysiology, anatomy, biomechanics and pain neuroscience

- Detection and management of relevant red flag pathologies including neurological, visceral and rheumatological conditions
- A theoretical and evidence-based overview and practical application of relevant examination procedures, assessment tools and outcome measures
- Critical discussion and application of consideration for advanced assessments techniques such as bloods, imaging and nerve conduction studies
- A theoretical and evidence-based overview and practical application of multi-modal management techniques including exercise rehabilitation, functional rehabilitation, manual manipulation, and other practical enhancements to rehabilitation such as taping, needling and myofascial techniques
- Critical discussion and application of consideration for advanced management techniques such as pharmacotherapy, soft tissue and joint injections, and surgical options

### *Advanced MSK 3: Clinical placement*

This module is a 150-hour work-based placement designed help you apply Advanced MSK Practice knowledge and capabilities in your own area of practice with patients. We will assist you in identifying an appropriate Advanced Practice clinical supervisor who will coach you throughout this process. We keep an approved list of supervisors, ensuring that you have a good experience on your placement and that your supervisor's knowledge and values aligns with our programme. This can take place in your own place of work, or in another MSK team in a different organisation. This can also include time spent in a range of Advanced MSK Practice settings such as MSK outpatient physiotherapy, podiatry, hand therapy and major trauma/trauma and orthopaedics.

### **Contact information**

For general queries such as module/course info, accreditations, figuring out if this is right for you, etc, email our Advanced MSK Practice lead, Michael Dunn, at [mdunn@sgul.ac.uk](mailto:mdunn@sgul.ac.uk).

For admin queries such as application support, module dates, admission criteria, etc, email our programme officers, Giacomo and Bernadette, at [ACP@sgul.ac.uk](mailto:ACP@sgul.ac.uk).