

Doctorate in Medicine (DM) Revised Programme Specification.

Principal requirements

The DM programme meets the following requirements:

1. The DM programme is designed to accommodate applicants who are medically qualified Specialty or GP trainees (StR, beyond F2 grade), with adequate time remaining to complete the DM programme.
2. The award is at Doctoral level in line with the National Qualifications Framework.
3. The defining criteria are those for a research degree in that the DM is examined principally on the basis of a thesis, and the examiners are individually appointed for that thesis. All trainees will receive training in research, and need already to have a specialist clinical background.
4. Those wishing to enrol on the DM must have guaranteed research time.
5. Students registered on the DM will be overseen by the Faculty/Research Institute Postgraduate Committee in consultation with the DM programme director, and will be subject to the requirements of the Code of Practice on Postgraduate Research Degrees: (<https://www.keele.ac.uk/students/academiclife/currentpgrstudents/pgrcodeofpractice/>) plus the requirements specific to the DM outlined in this document and any additional requirements specified by the RI.

The DM carries the same academic weight as a PhD. The structure makes it more relevant to the circumstances of the main market for the programme, Specialist Registrars (StRs) and GPs.

Programme format

The timetable for PhD, DM and MPhil (taken on a full-time basis) is as follows:

Award	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
PhD	200 hours of research training over the course of the PhD, evidenced via PDLP.		Submit thesis of up to 100,000 words no earlier than end of year two, no later than end of year four	
DM	120 hours of research training over the course of the DM, evidenced via PDLP.		Submit thesis of up to 70,000 words no earlier than end of year two, no later than end of year four (FT)	
MPhil	60-70 hours of research training, evidenced via PDLP	Submit thesis of up to 60,000 words no earlier than end of year one, no later than end of year two		

1. *Timing and mode of attendance*

It is likely that StRs may only be able to commit 2 years to the programme whilst based locally. Nevertheless, some StRs could, in effect, commit FT for 2 years (where FT is defined as being able to give at least 30 hours a week to the DM programme – this would allow for one or two clinics a week if necessary) if it was agreed by their specialty training committee that their rotation was extended. If this is the case, to use the limited time to best effect, the research training and the research project need to be done largely in parallel, as with a PhD, rather than sequentially as is commonly the case with a professional doctorate.

Registration on the DM normally occurs at two points in the year, September and February. Intermediate start dates may be possible, with the DM programme director's approval.

2. *Integrating academic and clinical training and research*

The research project will be closely integrated with the student's professional employment, and time spent in the clinical environment will be relevant to the student's acquisition of research skills and the conduct of the research project. Some of the clinical time will be accredited as part of the DM, including where appropriate clinical training is taken as part of rotation requirements, providing this is evidenced via the PDLP.

Research projects will be identified by academic staff (principally clinicians), in specialties where there are suitable approved supervisors or where supervision is available for research undertaken in general practice.

3. *Location*

Students may register for the DM only if initially based at a clinical centre at which appropriate supervision, facilities and training can be provided (or, in the case of GPs, geographically near to, and with appropriate links to, such a centre). They must be able to attend Keele University for the requirements set out in the DM programme below. The aim is to complete the bulk of the required training and to have made good initial progress on the research during the first two years (with data collection ideally completed by this point). A structured supervision programme for the processes of data analysis and writing-up period will then be put in place, particularly when the student moves to another location.

4. *Potential applicants*

StRs coming to local clinical centres and intending to apply for the DM must discuss their application with the DM programme director and apply well before starting their research project. The availability of the DM programme will be dictated largely by whether the relevant clinical specialty has the necessary academic infrastructure and expertise to supervise DMs.

DM programme specification

1. *Admission to the programme*

Applicants may include Specialist Clinical Registrars during a 4- to 7-year rotation, GP trainees, GPs who have completed training but wish to enter the academic arena, those in a permanent non-training clinical post (staff grade/associate clinical specialists), medical practitioners coming from overseas to carry out research locally, or others wishing to combine clinical research with specialist training.

Prospective applicants must discuss their proposed research project, timescales, and the availability of supervision in the relevant clinical specialty with the DM programme director prior to making a formal application to the University.

Selection will be based on the same admission process and criteria as detailed in the Code of Practice on Research Degrees. The process of acceptance is subject to the approval of the Postgraduate Committee. The applicant must be accepted to undertake a project within the relevant clinical specialty, with a lead supervisor and second supervisor(s), who must be approved as per processes detailed in the Code of Practice for Research Degrees.

The DM programme can be offered to individuals within clinical training as an StR or on a GP training scheme intending to do a DM and in the process of applying for funding for a project grant, but registration on the DM, approval of the project, and designation of supervisors must occur and be approved by the Postgraduate Committee before the research project can be begun.

2. Timescales

As for other doctorate programmes:

FT minimum 2 years maximum 4 years
PT minimum 4 years maximum 8 years

Students will be deemed to be registered full-time if, and only if, they are able to commit at least 30 hours a week to the DM programme (PhD normal expectation 35 hours a week).

Within these timescales, the usual requirements of Doctoral Progression and other landmarks as specified in the Code of Practice for Research Degrees will apply.

3. Criteria and award

In order to fulfil the requirements of the DM, students will be expected to complete the following:

- 120 hours of generic and subject specific research training, to be agreed with the supervision team and evidenced via the PDLP, with at least 60 hours to be completed before doctoral progression.
- Undertake a research project in the clinical specialty and write it up into a thesis for examination (maximum 70,000 words)
- The award will be made on the basis of the thesis, to be individually examined in the same way as other research doctorates (doctoral level criteria). The maximum length of the thesis is shorter than the equivalent theses submitted for a PhD. However, this represents a difference in the scale of the project, not its academic level. The criteria for examination of the thesis are those relating to PhD.

The DM cannot be awarded on the basis of published work; applicants wishing to pursue this route should register for a PhD by publication.

4. Indicative programme

The structure below is based on someone studying FT for 2 years, and PT thereafter, assuming a September start, and is therefore indicative only:

Year 1 (FT)

- September: develop learning plan in consultation with supervision team, to be evidenced via PDLP and for this to be reviewed within 3 months,
- March- interim progress review (as detailed in Code of Practice).
- July – complete Annual Progress Review 1, as for PhD students with at least 60 hours of generic and subject specific research training evidenced via the PDLP

Year 2 (FT)

- Continue clinical training and maintenance of portfolio
- Complete all data collection for research
- March- interim progress review (as detailed in Code of Practice).
- June – put in place structured programme for supervision for remainder of programme to include face-to-face meetings at least quarterly.
- September- interim progress review (as detailed in Code of Practice).

Year 3 (PT)

- assuming student may have changed location as part of the rotation and/or now has greater clinical commitments
- Complete data analysis, draft thesis and invite comments from supervisors
- Continue to complete and evidence research training via PDLP.
- March- interim progress review (as detailed in Code of Practice).
- September- interim progress review (as detailed in Code of Practice).

Year 4 (PT)

- Attend Keele in line with structured programme for supervision and/or training as appropriate
- March- interim progress review (as detailed in Code of Practice).
- Submit APR3 within 6 months of plans for submission with relevant title and examination panel forms (as detailed in Code of Practice).

5. Transfer

Students will be able to apply to transfer to PhD provided that the proposed project is deemed suitable, and that any other requirements of the PhD have been, or will be, met. Students registered for a PhD may similarly apply to transfer to DM providing that their qualifications make them eligible for the DM and that the clinical training requirement can be met. Transfer, in either direction, can occur no later than the doctoral progression stage. Applications to transfer should be made to the appropriate DM Programme Director.

An MRes will be available as an interim qualification for students who do not proceed to the full DM but who can satisfy the requirements of an MRes programme (e.g. the MRes Health Research). Alternatively, a student may opt, or be required, to transfer to MPhil at the doctoral progression stage.

6. Management of the programme

The DM programme will be overseen by a programme director whose role will be to deal with recruitment onto the DM, and in particular to advise prospective applicants. They should normally be members of the Postgraduate Committee in the relevant Research Institute/Faculty.

The students registered on the DM will be overseen by the Postgraduate Committee in the relevant Research Institute/Faculty, and will be subject to the requirements of the Code of Practice on Postgraduate Research Degrees and the usual approvals from Research Degrees Committee, plus any additional requirements specified by the Research Institute/Faculty and the requirements specific to the DM outlined in this document.