



Quality Assurance

MSc Rheumatology Nursing/Rheumatology Practice

Programme Specification: Postgraduate

Information: the programme specification is the definitive document summarising the structure and content of your degree programme. It has been reviewed and updated to clarify to potential and current students what they can expect from the study of the subject over the course of your programme.

This programme specification applies to students starting the programme from September 2021 onwards.

Name of Programme: MSc Rheumatology Nursing/Rheumatology Practice

Mode of Study: Part-Time

FHEQ Level: 7

Duration: Two - five years

1. What is the Philosophy of the Programme?

People with musculoskeletal conditions need a wide range of high quality support and treatment from simple advice to highly technical, specialised medical and surgical treatment across many specialities for example, rheumatology, orthopaedics, pain clinics and community based social services (DH 2006). There has been guidance from NICE regarding the management of people with Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA, 2009) and Osteoarthritis (OA, 2008). The implementation of these guidelines will be influenced by the knowledge and skills of nurses and allied health professionals.

The NICE guidelines for adults with rheumatoid arthritis recommend that all patients should have access to a multi-disciplinary team to provide the opportunity for periodic assessments of the effects of the condition on everyday activities, mobility, mood, ability to work and the impact on social and leisure activities (NICE 2009). Whilst the OA guidelines state that the core interventions for people with this condition include education, exercise, weight management and the use of simple analgesia such as paracetamol. Consequently we need to ensure that rheumatology nurses and AHPs have the required clinical skills to implement these guidelines.

This programme will enable experienced clinical nurses and allied health professionals to manage the ongoing care of people with rheumatoid arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions. This will include the interpretation of haematological, biochemical and radiological investigations as well as making and receiving referrals from a host of colleagues in secondary and community care settings. In accordance with current health policy, the course will also develop clinical leadership skills

The policy document NHS Next Stage Review: A High Quality Workforce (DH 2008) and the recent report by the Prime Minister's Commission: Front Line Care (2010) emphasise that professionals must be positioned for success in leadership, management, research and educational roles. Critical to this, is that education curricula and training programmes be integrally linked into current and emerging models of care and scientific and technological advances. In this way, practitioners will be able to acquire the new capabilities and skills in order to respond to the patients' expectations in a variety of care settings.

The programme aims to enable students to:

- a) Demonstrate the capacity for critical enquiry, analysis, and application of knowledge in their practice and to support innovations in health and social care
- b) Engage in effective clinical musculoskeletal examination.
- c) Demonstrate the use and effect of medicines, and make decisions on drug administration based on research evidence.
- d) Demonstrate the interplay between psycho-social issues and patient functioning, and develop assessment and management strategies that address these issues.
- e) Promote the knowledge and skills required to be an effective clinical leader.
- f) Engage in the research process and contribute to research within their practice.
- g) Promote and enhance their skills in critical reflection, evaluation, professional decision making and leadership to inform best practice.
- h) Promote effective collaborative, interdisciplinary and interagency working practices.

The programme will combine conceptual, theoretical and practical approaches to the study of rheumatology and musculoskeletal conditions and provide the opportunity for the student to develop skills and expertise to an advanced level.

The programme aims to meet the generic statement of outcomes set out in the qualification descriptor within *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) (QAA 2014): <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/qualifications-and-credit-frameworks>

The goal is that graduates on completing the programme will typically have the following characteristics:

1. Subject-specific attributes

- An in-depth knowledge and understanding of their speciality, informed by current practice, scholarship and research, including a critical awareness of current issues and developments in the subject and the profession;
- The ability to apply research to professional situations, both practical and theoretical;

- The ability to use a range of techniques and research methods applicable to the professional activities.

2. Generic attributes

A range of generic abilities and skills that include the ability to:

- Use initiative and take responsibility;
- Solve problems in creative and innovative ways;
- Make decisions in challenging situations;
- Continue to learn independently and develop professionally;
- Communicate effectively, with colleagues and a wider audience, in a variety of media.

The main themes of the programme, which are embedded within specific modules, will focus upon: leadership and clinical management, evidence-based practice, research and professional role development.

Keele University is committed to developing graduates who demonstrate the ten Keele Graduate Attributes. How the MSc in Rheumatology Nursing will help to develop the graduate attributes is described in Appendix 1.

2. How is the Programme Taught and Delivered?

The main academic venue for this course will be the Staffordshire Rheumatology Centre at the Haywood Hospital. Some elements of the course may involve working with patients at the Haywood Hospital (e.g. clinical assessment). Modules will be taught through a mixture of lectures, interactive tutorials, problems-based learning, workshops, formal presentations and guided study. For the clinical examination and assessment module, lecturers have been involved in designing an interactive computer package to support home-based learning. Written handouts and visual aids will be used throughout the course.

All students will be required to undertake a period of private study, equivalent to an average of eight hours a week. Course preparation and study for assessment requirements will be made explicit throughout.

Student Support

The Course Director is an experienced senior rheumatology nurse and Honorary Professor with the School of Nursing and Midwifery who will provide pastoral support, personal and professional guidance and formative feedback and encouragement to the student during the length of their programme.

All module leaders are experienced members of staff at Keele University or work in the Rheumatology Department at the Haywood Hospital. Module leaders are responsible for the module delivery and will support the student within the completion of the given assessment tasks.

In addition a supportive learning network will be facilitated by the academic team via the Keele Learning Environment [KLE] for email communication, group discussion, tutorial support and peer support.

Additional Support

Additional support is available from:

- The Director of Learning beyond Registration who has disciplinary responsibility.
- The Student Support and Guidance Lecturer within the School of Nursing and Midwifery provide an additional layer of support for all students, but particularly for those with special learning needs.
- Keele University provides support, guidance and advice for all its students via the following departments.

Learning Support and Academic Guidance Dept.; Disability Services; English Language Unit; Independent Advice Unit; Student Support and Counselling Department; The Occupational Health Department / University Health Centre.

Programme Team

The programme team comprises six academic staff all of whom have extensive teaching, research and professional practice experience. All members of staff are registered with the relevant Professional Body and the majority have recognised and recordable teaching qualifications. They have extensive experience of teaching at postgraduate level. Visiting lecturers and leading clinicians will be invited to contribute within appropriate modules.

3. What is the Structure of the Programme?

The Postgraduate Diploma is designed to be undertaken by part time students over a two year period with the dissertation being completed in the third year. As national and international students will be attending the course will run over a number of short intensive blocks, each lasting two to five days. This pattern of teaching is compatible with sponsorship, enabling release from full-time employment to be managed whilst maintaining a full clinical role and providing protected time, outside direct teaching contact time, or paid work, for students' private study. It has also been evaluated positively by those students whose geographical location is distant to the delivery centre.

It is proposed that successful completion of assessed work from the taught component will lead to students being awarded a Diploma. Subject to successful completion of the taught course element, candidates may proceed to an MSc by means of a dissertation on a piece of research or a project on a topic of the student's choice, arising from issues raised during the course.

Students can exist the programme with a Postgraduate Certificate consisting of 60 credits which must include a physical assessment module (15 credits), drug therapy (30 credits) and another 15 credit module from the pathway.

	Compulsory Modules Postgraduate Diploma 120 Credits	Compulsory Modules MSc 180 Credits
An Introduction to Clinical Effectiveness (NUR-40039) 15 Credits	✓	✓

Physical Assessment in Rheumatology practice 1 (NUR-40044) 15 Credits	✓	✓
Drug Therapy in Rheumatology Practice (NUR-40041) 30 Credits	✓	✓
Psychological and Social Aspects of Care (NUR-40040) 15 Credits	✓	✓
Clinical Leadership (NUR-40042) 15 Credits	✓	✓
Physical Assessment in Rheumatology Practice 2 (NUR-40038) or Principles and Practice of Joint and Soft Tissue Injections (PTY40015). Both 15 Credits each.	✓	
Elective module 15 credits	✓	✓
Advanced Work Based Practice Project (NUR-40037) 60 credits		✓

A summary of the modules is provided below.

SECTION 3: STRUCTURE OF COURSE (Year 1)

Module Status	Module Title	Pre-requisites and Module Overview	Semester and Year	Level and Credits	Module Pass Mark
Compulsory	An Introduction to Clinical Effectiveness (NUR-40039)	<p>The last decade has seen an increasing emphasis laid on evidence based practice within healthcare in the NHS. The implication is that health care practitioners should have the ability to formulate key clinical questions relevant to their practice, search the literature, and be able to appraise published literature for its quality and relevance to their practice. This module will provide the student with an understanding of the fundamental concepts of clinical effectiveness. With this in mind, there will be some exploration of wider aspects of research, such as the potential of different research methods, ethical considerations in research, and some relevant statistical principles. Students will develop skills in undertaking a literature research, appraising evidence and will gain practical insight into the research processes underpinning clinical effectiveness.</p> <p><i>Specific entrance requirements apply.</i></p>	Semester 3 Year 1	Level 7 15 Credits	50%
Compulsory	Physical Assessment in Rheumatology Practice 1 (NUR-40044)	<p>Many health Care Practitioners are involved in conducting their own clinics for patients with Rheumatoid Arthritis. This module will provide the student with the knowledge and skills required to undertake a clinical assessment and examination of the shoulder, knee and hand complexes in patients with rheumatological conditions.</p> <p><i>Specific entrance requirements apply.</i></p>	Semester 1 Year 1	Level 7 15 Credits	50%

Module Status	Module Title	Pre-requisites and Module Overview	Semester and Year	Level and Credits	Module Pass Mark
Compulsory	Drug Therapy in Rheumatology Practice (NUR-40041)	This module is aimed at increasing the student's knowledge of anti-rheumatic drugs, their side effects and the basis for their use in clinical practice. It will also develop the skills of the students in the interpretation of results of investigations commonly performed in patients taking anti-rheumatic drugs <i>Specific entrance requirements apply.</i>	Semester 1 & 2 Year 1	Level 7 30 Credits	50%

SECTION 3: STRUCTURE OF COURSE (Year 2)

Module Status	Module Title	Pre-requisites and Module Overview	Semester and Year	Level and Credits	Module Pass Mark
Compulsory	Psychological and Social Aspects of Care (NUR-40040)	This module will examine the effects that musculoskeletal conditions can have on psychological and social functioning. The intention of the module is to enable the student to develop a theoretical understanding and practical application of the management of the patients' psycho-social problems within the clinical setting. <i>Specific entrance requirements apply.</i>	Semester 3 Year 2	Level 7 15 Credits	50%
Compulsory	Clinical Leadership (NUR-40042)	Many healthcare practitioners will have developed complex clinical skills but not undertaken any specific leadership training. This module will enable exploration of the evidence base that promotes effective clinical leadership whilst developing the practical skills required to lead a clinical team. <i>Specific entrance requirements</i>	Semester 3 Year 2	Level 7 15 Credits	50%

		<i>apply.</i>			
Optional	Physical Assessment in Rheumatology Practice 2 (NUR-40038) <i>OR</i> Principles and Practice of Joint and Soft Tissue Injection. (PTY40015)	Many Health Care Practitioners are involved in conducting their own clinics for patients with rheumatoid arthritis. This module will provide the student with the knowledge and skills required to undertake a clinical assessment and examination of the spine, pelvis and feet. <i>Specific entrance requirements apply.</i> Many Health Care Practitioners are involved in conducting their own clinics for people with a musculoskeletal condition. This module will provide the student with the knowledge and skills required for soft tissue and intra articular injections.	Semester 3 Year 2 Semester 3 Year 2	Level 7 15 Credits Level 7 15 Credits	50% 50%
Compulsory	Elective Module	Relevant to the student's scope of practice	Semester 3 Year 2	Level 7 15 Credits	50%

SECTION 3: STRUCTURE OF COURSE (Year 3)

Module Status	Module Title	Pre-requisites and Module Overview	Semester and Year	Level and Credits	Module Pass Mark
Compulsory	Advanced Work Based Practice Project NUR-40037	The dissertation will demonstrate the student's ability to negotiate, design, implement and evaluate the effectiveness on service delivery of an advanced work based project.	Year 3 Semester 1, 2 & 3.	Level 7 60 Credits in total	50%

This modular part-time programme, consists of 180 credits of level 7 modules, and the students will be able to select a combination of core and elective modules up to the value of 120 credits and 60 credits at dissertation to give a total of 180 level 7 credits for the Award (it is permissible to have up to 30 credits at level 6 in accordance with regulation 2A).

In addition, to progress from the Diploma stage to the Masters stage a student must have completed and normally achieved modular marks of $\geq 50\%$ in all modules, with re-examinations of coursework in no more than 3 modules.

Students progressing through the stages cannot claim intermediate awards nor use the award letters after their names.

4. How is the Programme Assessed?

The methods of assessment used throughout the programme will be suitable to assess the intended learning outcomes and qualification descriptors, and will ensure their synthesis throughout the programme. Each module on the programme is formally assessed. A range of assessments will be used in the programme, including written assignments, presentations, OSCEs, clinical scenarios and a research dissertation. A combination of assessment methods is employed in order to ensure validity and reliability of assessment and to motivate learning. Examiners are blinded to the student's identity for the marking of written work.

5. What are the Typical Admission Requirements for the Programme?

The programme is designed for experienced health and social care practitioners, involved in leading and developing Rheumatological and/or Musculoskeletal practice. All students who have applied and meet the entry requirements will have a telephone interview with the Programme Lead.

Potential/prospective students will normally:

Hold current first level Professional Registration with a relevant regulatory body e.g. Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC); Health Professional Council (HPC); General Social Care Council (GSCC).

Be working in clinical practice. Some potential/prospective students may be Managers within a musculoskeletal setting.

Hold an undergraduate second class honours degree or higher in a related subject with minimum of two years experience in professional practice.

Practitioners with extensive practice experience and no formal undergraduate degree will be considered for entry on the basis of evidence presented within their professional portfolio and discussion at interview.

Recognition of Prior Learning (APL)

Recognition of prior certificated learning (RPCL) and recognition of prior experiential learning (RPEL) will be permitted along the following lines. RPCL will be allowed where a module has been completed prior to registering on the MSc, whose content and learning objectives are equivalent to those of a module within the MSc. These credits must have been earned sufficiently recently that they are deemed to be 'current' (which will be judged in relation to the subject matter and disciplinary context, but will normally be no more than 5 years). The module offered for RPCL must have a credit rating at least as large as that of the Keele module against which it is offered, and the maximum credit value that can be contributed by an individual module offered for RPCL is the credit rating of the Keele module against which it is offered.

Through a similar process, and subject to the Director of LBR's approval, students may apply for recognition in respect of modules that they may wish to undertake at other HEIs during their registration on the MSc; such recognition cannot normally be given in respect of core modules within the MSc.

RPEL will be determined through the submission of a portfolio of experiential work, which will be assessed, and must similarly be offered against one or more specific modules in the MSc. The credit rating of the portfolio, which will be confirmed during the process of assessment, must be at least as large as that of the Keele module against which it is offered. Where a single portfolio of work is offered against more than one module, it must explicitly address the learning objectives of the modules concerned.

Whilst RPCL/RPEL is normally granted against a specific module in the Keele framework, if no such module exists within the framework RPCL/RPEL may still be permitted if the module or portfolio submitted meets level 7 learning objectives and the philosophy of this programme.

Extent of RPL Permissible

Within this programme the maximum permissible RPL credits are:

Postgraduate Diploma or Degree: 60 Credits

RPCL and RPEL are not possible within the MSc dissertation stage.

If, prior to registering on a programme, a student has taken one or more Keele modules that are specified modules on the programme, recognition of these modules will not normally count towards the maximum permissible RPCL.

Normally, no more than 25% of the credits with which a student wishes to gain an award can be contributed through recognition of modules undertaken at other HEIs during registration on the Keele framework. Credits that have formed part of a previous award outside this MSc programme (either through RPCL or through the modules offered within that award) cannot normally be used again in respect of an award in this framework.

The student will be referred to the RPL ISO school process.

6. Learning Resources

The student will have access to the Library and IT Services on the Main Keele Campus and also at the Clinical Education Centre [CEC].

Keele University Library: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/depts/li/info/>

Library information

The Library operates from two sites; the Campus Library which also houses [IT Services](#) and the [Health Library](#) in the Clinical Education Centre at the University Hospital of North Staffordshire NHS Trust. The Health Library is available to everyone who works for or with the NHS in North Staffordshire, all students and staff of Keele University and others with a need for health information. Most of the links below relate mainly to the Campus Library.

Students will be given a Programme Handbook and a specific Module Handbook as relevant to their studies.

7. Other Learning Opportunities

Students may be able to negotiate an appropriate elective module with an external institution either nationally or internationally. This will be discussed and confirmed with the Programme Lead/RPL Co-ordinator.

Learning is enhanced by the provision of an inter-professional learning environment. A blended learning approach is utilised including Keele Learning Environment (KLE) delivered by a combination of classroom and web based activities and resources.

8. Quality Management and Enhancement

The School of Nursing and Midwifery Postgraduate Course Committee will be responsible for managing and monitoring the Programme. The Postgraduate Course Committee is responsible to the School of Nursing and Midwifery Education Committee, which in turn is responsible to the School Executive Committee. Student feedback and evaluation will be gathered and considered in various ways, e.g. at the end of each module; through on-line questionnaires; and open forum for evaluative discussion with Programme / Module Leaders. Such evaluation is analysed and the results and freehand student comments, i.e. quantitative and qualitative data, are discussed at the twice yearly meetings of the Postgraduate Course Committee. The Committee responds to the evaluations and takes appropriate action. The results of student evaluation, and the responses to it, are regularly brought to the Staff/Student Liaison Committee. The Staff/Student Liaison Committee reports directly to the Education Committee of the School of Nursing and Midwifery.

The annual review of the course includes reports for all modules which form part of the course; the outcome of student evaluation of any of the modules forming part of the course which have been evaluated in the year under review; relevant statistical information, including student progression and mark distribution; first-destination statistics; admissions data; external examiners' reports; and reports of internal quality audits or external reviews. This annual review is sent to the Education Committee of the School of Nursing and Midwifery. These meetings feed into institutional quality audits and other quality enhancement processes. The School of Nursing and Midwifery has regular quality monitoring inspections by the Nursing and Midwifery Council and the Quality Assurance team at Keele. Additionally, evaluative feedback will be available to the external stakeholders e.g. the Strategic Health Authority and local NHS Trusts and PCTs. Additionally, the School of Nursing and Midwifery has ISO 9001-2000 ongoing award of accreditation since the summer of 2005.

The management team for the programme are:

- The Director of Learning Beyond Registration and Blended Learning
- The Programme Lead
- Identified Module Leaders

9. Programme version history

Version History	Date	CHANGES / NOTES
Date first created	1998	
Revision history	28 th July 2014 22 nd February 2021	Replacement of dissertation module with Advanced Work Based Practice Project, and 'Research for Health Professionals' with elective.
Date of approval	FEC, May 2021	

References

Department of Health (2004) *The NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (NHS KSF) and the Development Review Process* London, HMSO.

Department of Health (2006) *The Musculoskeletal Service Framework: A Joint responsibility doing it differently.* London, HMSO

Department of Health (2008) *NHS Next Stage Review: A High Quality Workforce* London, HMSO.

NICE (2009) *Rheumatoid Arthritis: The Management of Rheumatoid Arthritis in Adults.* Clinical Guideline 79, National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence

NICE (2008) *Osteoarthritis.* Clinical Guideline 59. National Institute for health and Clinical Excellence

Report of the Prime Minister's Commission on the Future of Nursing and Midwifery in England (2010) *Front Line Care: the future of nursing and midwifery in England.* London, HMSO.

Ryan S and Hill J (2004) A survey of practice in nurse led rheumatology clinics. *Rheumatology* 43 supplement 2:441

QAA (2014) *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) QAA.

Appendix 1: Graduate Attributes that will be developed through undertaking the MSc in Rheumatology Nursing

Attribute 1: an opening and questioning approach to ideas and perspectives

Through carefully and critically evaluating the arguments of others and providing your own original examples to illustrate your points during discussions in the taught modules, you will develop an appreciation of a range of ideas and perspectives that underpin rheumatology practice and develop confidence in your open ability to question the ideas that you encounter.

Attribute 2: an appreciation of the development and value of rheumatology as a subject of study

All modules foster an appreciation of the development and value of rheumatology as its own unique speciality. The students will gain knowledge and skills in applying theory and practice from the modules to all aspects of rheumatology care including physical assessment, drug therapy, psycho-social aspects of care, clinical leadership and research.

Attribute 3: the ability to locate, evaluate and synthesis complex information

The ability to know what information sources to locate and how to appraise the evidence obtained is an attribute that will be developed in the first module (clinical effectiveness) and will be a skill you develop and build on throughout all the subsequent modules.

Attribute 4: the ability creatively to solve problems

You will be using problem solving skills daily in your current clinical practice and these skills will be developed throughout the modules. In the drug therapy module you will engage with your peers to collectively problem solve clinical scenarios which are relevant to contemporary rheumatology practice and share your findings in a group presentation. Part of the assessment strategy for the physical assessment modules provides you with the opportunity to demonstrate your clinical reasoning skills,

Attribute 5: the awareness of global, social and ethical issues

Throughout the modules you will develop an appreciation that rheumatology is practiced within a global, social and ethical framework. These issues will be discussed throughout all the modules to help you develop the awareness to appreciate the social and ethical implications of everyday practice. The social implications of living with a long term condition will be discussed in depth in the psychological and social aspects of care module. The commonest conditions with rheumatology those of Osteoarthritis and Rheumatoid arthritis are encountered on a global scale and learning how other countries address the same issues within rheumatological practice can broaden your own knowledge base.

Attribute 6: effective written and oral communication skills

There are numerous opportunities throughout the taught aspect of the programme for you to present your ideas both individually and in a group context and obtain constructive feedback. With regards to written communication skills you will develop the ability to construct and analyse a discussion as you progress through the course.

You will be shown how to construct an assignment and access tutor support as any stage in the course to obtain feedback on your written work. The first two written assignments (modules 1 and 2) are smaller pieces of work designed to develop your critical appraisal and problem solving skills to prepare you for more substantial pieces of work which are introduced in module 3. You are able to access tutor support as often as you feel you require to. Your written skills will be further developed if you go on to take the Masters where you will have two supervisors who can support you through the process of writing a 15,000 word dissertation. Feedback from your supervisors can be sought on your draft chapters as you progress through the year.

Attribute 7: the ability to actively pursue your future goals

The leadership module provides you with the opportunity to identify your personal and professional goals and develop a plan as to how your identified goals can be achieved. This module also identifies the value of mentorship and the key attributes that you would require in a mentor to help you in the process of achieving your goals.

Attribute 8: the ability and motivation to make a difference

All our students are passionate about the clinical care they deliver on a daily basis. In fact the main motivating factor to enrol on the course is the desire to improve patient care. The course develops your confidence and skills to appraise and implement evidence base practice to improve care. By learning with students from within the UK and overseas the course fosters a supportive environment in which to learn from the experience of others. In our experience these supportive clinical and personal relationships continue long after the course has finished.

Attribute 9: a professional and reflective approach

All of our students are engaged in active clinical practice in their professional lives and the concepts of professionalism are embedded throughout the course in the work we do with you examining patients to the respect we show to each other as clinicians and as students. The assessment for the clinical leadership module is a reflective piece of work based on the student's own experience this enables the further development of analytical reflective skills and it is often the assignment that students report that enables them to take a fresh perspective on their clinical practice.

Attribute 10: the ability to manage and adapt to changing circumstances

Our students practice within an ever changing healthcare context and this course help you to develop the skills and confidence to adapt your practice to constantly changing situations. Contemporary health policy is discussed in the clinical leadership module to increase political awareness of the context in which you practice. There is also a workshop on managing change and managing stress to ensure that you are equipped to practice within an ever changing environment.