

Briefing Document for Workplace Mentors
MSc, Post Graduate Diploma, Post Graduate Certificate
in Oncology & Palliative Care Newcastle University

Thank you for agreeing to be a Workplace Mentor for the distance learning MSc Oncology and Palliative Care programmes at Newcastle University. This document outlines the role of the Workplace Mentor and the extent of the responsibilities involved. As a Workplace Mentor you should be a senior member of staff that the student works closely with and you should be willing and able to provide professional and specialist advice and guidance to support the student's progress.

If you have not already done so, please complete and sign a [Mentor Declaration Form](#) which the student will return to us. In signing this you agree to:

- Meet on a regular basis with the applicant to discuss and review progress,
- Provide support and encouragement,

Time commitment for the Workplace Mentor is perceived as minimal. In academic terms, the student is responsible for their own study; your role as a mentor is to provide workplace specific and specialist support.

The Programme

This multi-professional work based programme of study is aimed at oncology professionals and palliative care practitioners including doctors, nurses, pharmacists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and radiographers. The programme covers all aspects of delivering seamless care to patients and includes treatment modalities, biological, psychosocial and ethical perspectives.

The programme is delivered via web-based distance learning. Details of the programme can be found on the [Masters' homepage](#). The aim of the programme is to develop practitioners who are prepared to offer clinical leadership, clinical excellence, and cultivate interdisciplinary collaboration in the delivery of evidence based oncology/palliative care.

The student may study the following qualifications within the programme:

- MSc Oncology
- MSc Palliative Care
- Postgraduate Diploma Oncology
- Postgraduate Diploma Palliative Care
- Certificate in Cancer Studies
- CPD (stand alone module)

The taught element of the programme (Modules)

The 'taught' curriculum of the programme is delivered in modules. There is a comprehensive selection of modules for the student to choose to study within the specialisms of oncology and palliative care. Information on the modules and their learning outcomes of each module can be found at: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/biomedicine/postgrad/taught/oncpall/modules.htm>.

Each module is delivered through a series of learning opportunities on BlackBoard, a Virtual Learning Environment, which the student accesses via the internet. The student may wish to seek your advice and expertise during their progression through the module curricula, especially when conceptualising their learning to the context of their immediate workplace or area of specialism. All aspects of the curriculum delivery, formative assessment and summative assessment for the module is supported by the University; students receive individual academic guidance and regular feedback on their progress from an experienced academic or subject specialist (the Module Leader). However, we recognise that students benefit greatly from support in their immediate workplace and we encourage the Workplace Mentor to meet with the student on a regular basis to discuss and review their progress.

At the end of each module, the student undertakes an assessment activity to ensure that the intended learning outcomes have been achieved.

The research element of the programme (the Dissertation)

Once the taught element of the programme has been completed, students studying the MSc in Oncology or the MSc in Palliative Care will undertake a research dissertation of 15,000 words. The subject of the dissertation is the choice of the student, but normally will reflect what is easily available to them in their own institution/workplace as part of their regular activities. We ask that the Workplace Mentor supports the student in identifying a research topic relevant to a particular discipline.

The student uses the dissertation to demonstrate that they have understood all the aspects of study design needed for the process of acquiring new knowledge. All aspects of the planning, drafting, writing, final assembly and submission of the dissertation are supported by the University; students receive individual help and advice from an experienced research supervisor in preparing their proposals and final dissertations. However, the factors that make for a successful dissertation tend to be very local-specific, therefore, good work place advice, support and guidance from the Workplace Mentor is very important.

If the dissertation requires ethical permission or registration within your employing institution, active engagement and approval of a senior person within that workplace will be required. The student may not be of sufficient seniority within your organisation to act as stand-alone investigator and as such, you may need to facilitate. We ask that the Workplace Mentor ensures that the student follows the institution's code of ethics at all times whilst conducting

their dissertation research. Any Health and Safety issues pertaining to the dissertation lie with the work institution, but are expected to be identical with those responsibilities in keeping with the student's employee status and regular duties.

If you require any additional guidance pertaining to the role of Workplace Mentor, please do not hesitate to contact the Programme Team on oncpall@ncl.ac.uk