

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION**

<b>1 Awarding Institution</b>	Newcastle University
<b>2 Teaching Institution</b>	Newcastle University
<b>3 Final Award</b>	This programme can result in 5 possible exit awards depending on the modules selected for study:  Postgraduate Certificate in Cancer Studies (60 credits) <b>3031P</b> Postgraduate Diploma in Oncology (120 credits) <b>3395P</b> Postgraduate Diploma in Palliative Care (120 credits) <b>3396P</b> MSc in Oncology (180 credits) <b>5006P</b> MSc in Palliative Care (180 credits) <b>5007P</b> CPD in Oncology and Palliative Care <b>6016P</b>
<b>4 Programme Title</b>	MSc in Oncology and Palliative Care
<b>5 UCAS/Programme Code</b>	Postgraduate programme
<b>6 Programme Accreditation</b>	Newcastle University
<b>7 QAA Subject Benchmark(s)</b>	QAA distance learning guidelines <a href="http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/distanceLearning/">http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/distanceLearning/</a>
<b>8 FHEQ Level</b>	Masters (7)
<b>9 Date written/revised</b>	May 2010

**10 Programme Aims**

The aim of the programme is to facilitate the development of practitioners who are prepared to offer clinical leadership, clinical excellence, and cultivate interdisciplinary collaboration in the delivery of evidence based oncology/palliative care. To introduce the basis of research in oncology/palliative care and to prepare participants for further active research within their own discipline.

**11 Learning Outcomes**

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas. The programme outcomes have references to the benchmark statements for Oncology and Palliative Care.

**Knowledge and Understanding**

On completing the programme students should:

A1 Demonstrate an advanced knowledge of cancer, its management and the relief of symptoms associated with treatment and disease progression.

A2 Contribute to the development and evaluation of local cancer/palliative care services.

A3 Demonstrate an understanding of the current developments in cancer/palliative care.

A4 Demonstrate an advanced knowledge of the principles and techniques of research in cancer/palliative care.

A5 Demonstrate an understanding of the theoretical basis of cancer research.

#### **Teaching and Learning Methods**

All modules are taught web-based via the managed learning environment, BlackBoard. This incorporates web-based resources, discussion boards, and online presentations. Feedback is given on formative assessments and there is e-mail support from module leaders. (A1-A5).

#### **Assessment Strategy**

Students are assessed throughout the programme in a variety of ways including exercises, presentation slides, electronically submitted assignments and multiple choice questions (MCQs) (A1-A5).

#### **Intellectual Skills**

On completing the programme students should be able to:

B1 Draw upon relevant theories and research to constructively challenge existing practices.

B2 Advance practice via reflective practice and utilisation of research findings.

B3 Plan, conduct and report a programme of original research.

B4 Design and conduct a research project as part of the final dissertation.

#### **Teaching and Learning Methods**

All modules are taught web-based via the managed learning environment, Blackboard. This incorporates web-based resources, discussion boards, and online presentations. Feedback is given on formative assessments and there is e-mail support from module leaders (B1-B4).

#### **Assessment Strategy**

Students are assessed throughout the programme in a variety of ways including exercises, presentation slides, electronically submitted assignments and multiple choice questions (MCQs) (B1-B4).

#### **Practical Skills**

On completing the programme students should be able to:

C1 Develop qualitative research skills

#### **Teaching and Learning Methods**

A work based research study (dissertation) is planned and carried out by students completing the MSc programme (C1).

#### **Assessment Strategy**

To obtain the masters level the student is required to complete and submit a 15,000 word dissertation. Examination of the dissertation is by an experienced specialist working in the oncology field, and by a general scientist who will represent the opinion of a general reader drawn from a wider audience. (Although technically an examination script, the dissertation should represent a finished, stand alone piece of work which could be presented to a sponsor/employer as evidence of the level of achievement the student has attained) (C1).

<b>Transferable/Key Skills</b>
<p>On completing the programme students should be able to:</p> <p>D1 Competently and sensitively disseminate new knowledge acquired to colleagues, patients and families.</p> <p>D2 Assume responsibility for facilitating practice development within their respective discipline and workplace.</p> <p>D3 Actively promotes seamless interagency and multi-professional care.</p>
<b>Teaching and Learning Methods</b>
<p>All modules are taught web-based via the managed learning environment, Blackboard. This incorporates web-based resources, discussion boards, and online presentations. Feedback is given on formative assessments and there is e-mail support from module leaders. Students are encouraged to apply these transferrable/key skills to their workplace, whilst engaging with their chosen work based mentor to review how these skills can be best developed.</p>
<b>Assessment Strategy</b>
<p>Students are assessed throughout the programme in a variety of ways including exercises, presentation slides, electronically submitted assignments and multiple choice questions (MCQs) (D1-D3)</p>

## **12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features**

### **Basic structure of the programme**

This programme is a part time, on-line programme which has two pathways: Oncology and Palliative Care.

A candidate shall be admitted as a part-time student and shall pursue a programme of part-time study comprising modules to a value of 180 credits, studied to a maximum of 5 years.

A candidate shall normally study modules to a value of 120 credits and a research project to a value of 60 credits. Each module is worth 10 credits except ONC8018 which has 20 credits. Full details of all modules shall be provided in the Degree Programme Handbook.

<b>Code</b>	<b>Credits</b>	<b>Descriptive title</b>
ONC8000	10	Cancer Cell, Molecular Biology and Genetics
ONC8001	10	Cancer Pharmacology
ONC8002	10	Cancer Pathology
ONC8003	10	Research Methods (1)
ONC8004	10	Developments in Diagnostic Imaging in Oncology
ONC8005*	10	Palliative Care Themes and Perspectives
ONC8006	10	Management of Cancer - Psychosocial Issues
ONC8007	10	Research Methods (2) Statistics
ONC8008	10	Ethical Dimensions of Cancer/Palliative Care
ONC8010	10	Handling loss, grief and bereavement
ONC8012	10	Managing Pain
ONC8013	10	Practice Development
ONC8014	60	Dissertation
ONC8016	10	Interprofessional Palliative Care
ONC8017	10	Multiprofessional Management of Cancer Part 1
ONC8018	20	Multiprofessional Management of Cancer Part 2

\*(not running academic year 2010/11)

All modules are offered subject to the constraints of the timetable and any restrictions on the

number of students who may be taught that module. Not all modules will be offered each year.

A student may exit the programme prior to the award of the MSc with either a Postgraduate Diploma in Oncology or Palliative Care having gained 120 credits or a Postgraduate Certificate in Cancer Studies having gained 60 credits. Students exiting the programme at any stage will be provided with verification of academic credits gained.

All modules are delivered on-line using the web-based Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) BlackBoard. BlackBoard (VLE) uses web-based resources, assessment tools, discussion boards and the e-mail support from module leaders. In addition, administrative, technical and library support is provided.

Students are required to appoint a mentor in their workplace. The role of the mentor is to provide work-based support during the programme. Guidance on the role of the mentor is provided to all students REF

The two MSc pathways of Oncology or Palliative Care comprise of 180 credits. Alternatively students can work towards a Postgraduate Diploma in either Oncology or Palliative Care (120 credits) or a Postgraduate Certificate in Cancer Studies (60 credits). Stand alone modules can also be studied - these allow a student to pick and choose single modules to study which are relevant to their line of work. The programme is modularised so the student can choose which modules are most relevant to their circumstances. Students are allowed up to 30 credits of modules per semester. The dissertation module, which is required to complete the MSc programme can only commence on completion of 120 credits of the taught programme in either semester and is worth 60 credits. Each semester lasts 15 weeks with a 10 credit module being equivalent to 100 hours of notional study time.

#### **Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)**

This programme is the first web-based MSc programme in Oncology and Palliative Care to be offered. In addition to this, it is the sole postgraduate web-based degree programme offered by Newcastle University Medical School.

#### **Programme regulations (link to on-line version home page)**

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme/2009-2010/fmed.php>

### **13 Criteria for admission**

#### **3. Entry Requirements**

(a) A candidate will be accepted to study a programme in Oncology and Palliative Care at the discretion of the Degree Programme Director and in line with entry requirements:

- An undergraduate degree in a relevant health-related subject e.g. BSc Radiotherapy, BSc Nursing, MB BS/MB ChB, BSc Cancer Care/BSc Palliative Care
- Pharmacists who have a post basic diploma in clinical pharmacy or those who wish to specialise in oncology/palliative care pharmacy
- SHOs Specialist Registrars, Specialist Trainee's and equivalent grades training for part one of the FRCR examination or in Medical Oncology (or the equivalent). Consideration may also be given to Specialty Doctors, Non-Consultant Career Grade Doctors or equivalents on a minimum of two years' rotation or attachment to the clinical oncology department or specialist palliative care unit

- (b) If English is not the candidate's first language, then the candidate must meet **one** of the following criteria:
- IELTS 7.0 with at least 7.0 in writing and reading and at least 6.5 in speaking and listening;
  - Have been educated in an English-speaking country that is included in the list of countries that are exempt from the University's English Language Assessment;
  - Provide other evidence of a high level of competence in English, for example successful completion of A- levels or an undergraduate programme taught in English.

*Admissions policy/selection tools*

Application is made by completing a web-based form from the programme website. Before application students are directed to read the programme handbook and specification (see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/cancereducationweb-based/registration> )

*Non-standard Entry Requirements*

For postgraduate taught programmes, applications for Accreditation for Prior Certificated Learning (APL) and Prior Experiential Learning (APeL) will be considered on an individual basis, and on student request, by the Degree Programme Director(s).

APL/APeL applications must demonstrate that all the learning outcomes of a module or module(s) have been achieved previously through certificated or experiential learning. The Degree Programme Director(s) will consider applications in line with University policy and regulations relating to APL/APeL and with reference to the learning outcomes detailed in the Programme Specification and the appropriate Module Outline Forms.

APL/APeL for non modular programmes will be considered on an individual basis, and on student request, and permitted at the discretion of the DPD.

*Additional Requirements*

- Students are required to select a workplace mentor and obtain their consent on a mentor declaration form. The role and responsibility of the mentor is outlined in the following document:
- Reliable access to a computer, internet connection, and printer are requirements for this programme.

## **14 Support for Student Learning**

*Induction*

An induction website is available to all new students once they have fully registered. As part of the induction website - there is a module for training in the use of BlackBoard and this is constantly available to all students. A community module is also available for social interaction between the students and is accessible by all students, including those currently deferring. It is essential that new students complete the induction training before starting their modules. In addition, the Programme Handbook provides a comprehensive introduction to the curriculum, the programme structure and the academic support available. The BlackBoard VLE provides guidance on the modules, the curriculum, assessments specifics and how support and guidance. Students are encouraged to access this prior to the programme delivery commencing to support the induction session.

### *Study skills support*

Training in the use of BlackBoard VLE is provided as part of the induction website. Subsequent to this, use of the system is encouraged by the design of the learning materials covered during the first semester. More complex tasks that require more developed skills are introduced as the programme progresses. Evaluation to date indicates that the students are quickly able to use the learning system effectively and that although continued training is available, it is seldom required due to the intuitive nature of the managed learning environment in use by the University.

A range of study skills information, guidance and directed learning is offered by the university and students are signposted to these in the Programme Handbook and on Blackboard VLE. Study skills, how guidance can be accessed and how they will be utilised within the modules are covered in the Induction session. See:

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/library/teaching/stan/>

### *Academic support*

All students registered on a module may contact the relevant module leader(s) through the Programme Team. The Programme Team will arrange support by e-mail or telephone for the student. Most module leaders also maintain vigilance over the discussion boards as difficulties are often raised during a discussion board activity. In this way the community of students support each other, with guided facilitation from the module leader.

The initial point of contact for a student is through the Programme Team (unless the Module Leader has provided their contact details to the student). Thereafter the Degree Programme Director may be consulted.

The library is also available to support the needs of the students.

### *Pastoral support*

Students are required to select a workplace mentor, ideally a senior member of staff in the student's workplace environment and has experience in the field of study. The Mentor will provide support and guidance to the student. A Workplace Mentor Handbook is provided to facilitate this relationship, outline the role and responsibilities.

In addition the University offers a range of support services, including the Student Advice Centre, the Counselling and Wellbeing team, the Mature Student Support Officer, and a Childcare Support Officer. The programme team will signpost the student to the relevant services as requested. Access to these services are signposted to the student in the Programme Handbook and on the Blackboard VLE. See:

<http://www.unionsociety.co.uk/sac>

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/>

### *Support for students with disabilities*

There are no specific facilities for students with special needs. Module development has been with the intention of complying with the web accessibility initiative guidelines. The method of delivery of this programme would be of advantage to a student with certain difficulties, such as mobility problems. Students can contribute actively to the programme, without leaving their own homes or place of work.

The University's Disability Support Service provides help and advice for disabled students at the University. Access to these services are signposted to the student in the Programme Handbook and on the Blackboard VLE. See: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/disability-support/>

### *Learning resources*

Where possible all learning resources that are required for activities within each module are provided and distributed via Blackboard. Learning activities are designed with specific reference to resources that are available in an electronic format. Where a specific resource cannot be made available in an electronic format, alternative arrangements for distribution were made, or the activity will be redesigned to use an alternative resource that could be delivered electronically.

The University's main learning resources are provided by the Robinson and Walton Libraries (for books, journals, online resources), and Information Systems and Services, which supports campus-wide computing facilities. Access to these services are signposted to the student in the Programme Handbook and on the Blackboard VLE.

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/library/>  
<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/iss/>

## **15 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning**

### *Module reviews*

Each module runs for 15 weeks followed by a week for assessments. All students are requested to complete an evaluation exercise for the modules that they have been studying. This information is tabled and discussed at the semester 1 and semester 2 curriculum committees and each module leader is required to produce a response to the comments and feedback and to indicate an action plan to incorporate this feedback and improvements. The feedback will be posted on BlackBoard VLE illustrating the actions that have undertaken.

Students may raise issues during the running of the module which will be acted on as appropriate. Any notifications relating to the module are publicised via the 'Announcements' section on BlackBoard so that students are fully aware of any implications.

All module leaders have access to each others modules and are encouraged to browse the materials in order to gain insight into alternative methods and techniques of delivery. With a broad range of subject topics that require often quite different approaches, this method of review has been beneficial to module leaders to consider how to improve their own materials.

### *Programme reviews*

The Curriculum Committee conducts an Annual Monitoring and Review of the degree programme and reports to Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee. Any actions identified to improve the programme delivery or the learner experience is progressed through Curriculum Committee.

### *External Examiner reports*

External examiners have contributed to the evolution of this programme by providing feedback and commentary about the nature of the material, styles of activities and robustness of the assessment procedures. The Programme Team are required to respond to any actions identified by the External Examiner and incorporate this into the AMR. Students can view the AMR and Action Plan on BlackBoard VLE.

### *Student evaluations*

Student evaluations are conducted at the end of each semester via an on-line evaluation questionnaire. In the first instance, Individual students with specific problems are advised to contact the Programme Team, and thereafter the Degree Programme Directors or their Module Leader.

### *Mechanisms for gaining student feedback*

After considering the student evaluation at the end of the semester, an action plan is devised and progressed through Curriculum Committee. After review by the module leaders, the document is posted for comments by the students.

## **16 Regulation of assessment**

The pass mark for each module is 50. Students who fail to submit a module assessment on first and second attempt will be deemed to have failed the module and a mark of zero will be recorded. When this occurs, the programme team will inform the student that their progress on the programme will be reviewed. Students who fail a module will be expected to resit at either resit week or at the next available occasion of examination

For the Diploma, a student who fails up to 40 credits of the taught modules may be awarded a

Diploma under the rules of compensation providing the following conditions are met:

The average mark over all the assessments (including any reassessments) based on simple aggregation is at least 50

No single mark is below 40

For the Certificate, a student who fails up to 20 credits of taught modules may be awarded a Certificate under the rules of compensation providing the following conditions are met:

The average mark over all the assessments (including any reassessments) based on simple aggregation is at least 50

No single mark is below 40

The Masters' degree is awarded in line with the Common Marking Scheme with a Pass, Merit or Distinction.

#### *Common Marking Scheme*

Each module will be assessed in a manner appropriate to its content and intended learning outcomes, as agreed by the Board of Studies. The following assessment methods may be used: written examinations; assignments; case studies; in-course assessment, formative feedback. **The research module will be assessed on the generation of a research proposal and the research project will be assessed on the basis of a dissertation and examination.**

The University employs a common marking scheme, which is specified in the Taught Postgraduate Examination Conventions. The conventions are applied to the Masters', postgraduate Certificate and postgraduate Diploma awards, namely: The Certificate and Diploma qualification can be awarded with merit or distinction as follows:

<50 Fail  
50-59 Pass  
60-69 Pass with Merit  
70 or above Pass with Distinction

Each module work has a predefined marking grid in line with these conventions that is used to inform consistent and robust assessment and provide feedback to the students.

#### *Role of the External Examiner*

An External Examiner, a distinguished member of the subject community, is appointed by Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee, after recommendation from the Board of Studies.

The External Examiner is expected to:

- Review and approve examination papers
- Moderate examination and coursework marking
- Attend the Board of Examiners
- Report to the University on the standards of the programme

In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

The University Prospectus (see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/> )  
The Departmental Prospectus  
The University and Degree Programme Regulations see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/>  
The Degree Programme Handbook  
QAA Subject Review Report



Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. The accuracy of the information contained is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

## Annex

### Mapping of Intended Learning Outcomes onto Curriculum/Modules

Module	MSc Oncology	MSc Palliative Care	Intended Learning Outcomes			
			A	B	C	D
ONC8000			1 3 4	1		1
ONC8001			1 3 4	2		2
ONC8002			1			
ONC8003			4 5	3 4	1	1
ONC8004	Compulsory		1 2 3	1 2		1
ONC8005*		Compulsory	2	1 2		1 2 3
ONC8006			1 2 3 4	2		1 2 3
ONC8007			2 4 5	1 2 3 4	1	1
ONC8008			2			1 2 3
ONC8010		Compulsory	2 3			1 2
ONC8012		Compulsory	1 2 3 4	1 2		1 2 3
ONC8013			2 3	1 2		1 2 3
ONC8014	Compulsory	Compulsory	1 4 5	1 2 3 4	1	1 2 3
ONC8016		Compulsory	1 2 3 4	1		1 2 3
ONC8017	Compulsory		1 2 3 4	1 2	1	1 2 3
ONC8018	Compulsory		1 2 3 4	1 2	1	1 2 3

**Certificate in Cancer Studies:** any modules apart from ONC8014 can be studied to total 60 credits.

**Postgraduate Diploma Oncology:** same as MSc Oncology above minus ONC8014.

**Postgraduate Diploma Palliative Care:** same as MSc Palliative Care above minus ONC8014.

\*ONC8005 not available academic year 2010/11