



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Programme Specification

A statement of the knowledge, understanding and skills
that underpin a taught programme of study leading to
an award from
The University of Sheffield

Programme Details

1. Programme title	Health and Clinical Research Delivery
2. Programme code	HART111, HART112, HART113
3. QAA FHEQ level	7
4. Faculty	Faculty of Health
5. Department	School of Medicine and Population Health
6. Other departments providing credit bearing modules for the programme	HSS (HSS 60 credit dissertation - Lead: Parveen Ali Lead + HSS 30 credit research practice experience 2 - Lead: Jane McKeown + HSS 15 credit research practice experience 1 – Lead Fiona Wilson)
7. Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body	Not applicable
8. Date of production/revision	February 2024

Awards	Type of award	Duration
9. Final award	MSc (PGDip and PGCert options)	24 months (via RPL top-up)
10. Intermediate awards	PGDip	12 months
	PGCert	12 months

Programme Codes

11. JACS code(s) <i>Select between one and three codes from the HESA website.</i>	B900		
12. HECoS code(s) <i>Select between one and three codes from the HECoS vocabulary.</i>	100962		

Programme Delivery

13. Mode of study	Part-time
14. Mode of delivery	On-line

15. Background to the programme and subject area

This is one of several accredited programmes commissioned in line with the new NIHR-AoMRC Clinician Researcher Credentials Framework, which has been developed jointly by the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) and the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AoMRC). These complement previously commissioned Postgraduate Certificate courses and provide a progression route for healthcare professionals to move from PGCert to full Masters' degree.

There are two routes to completion:

- One is to recognise the 60 credit PG certificate offered by NIHR-AoMRC accredited HEIs (currently King's College London, Exeter and Newcastle) and use recognition of prior learning (RPL) to add the 60 credits to our new proposed top-up programme which will have exit routes at diploma (by students completing a further 60 credits) or masters (by students completing 120 credits).
- The other is to undertake the full 180 credits on our HCRD programme which will have exit routes at PGCert, PGDip or full masters.

The programme will be based within the Division of Population Health but delivered by staff from across the Faculty. It will complement the current campus-based MSc Clinical Research in its structure and high-quality teaching. It will offer a more 'work based'/practical exploration of health, care and clinical research. It will be accredited to a high profile prestigious scheme developed by the NIHR and Royal College of Physicians and will enhance the profile and reputation of the University, School of Medicine and Population Health and the Faculty for expertise in health and clinical research. The Department of Health and Social Care will also be providing bursaries for students to study on this scheme.

The target student audience are experienced health and care practitioners from all professional backgrounds, who aspire to take on the roles of Collaborator, Co-Investigator or Principal Investigator (PI). These are practitioners working in the UK and also those working in other countries around the world. This includes those who have no or limited research experience and those currently working in research delivery.

Clinician researchers may be from all registered healthcare disciplines including medicine, nursing, midwifery, pharmacists, healthcare scientists and other allied health professions.

This online programme will be named MSc Health and Clinical Research Delivery, this change is based on market research from global recruitment where key words such as 'health' are more applicable and attractive to government sponsorships than 'clinical'. In addition, we want to capture the expanding market of potential students from the social care and third sector health related organisations who do not traditionally see themselves as 'clinicians' by using the word health. Research within these types of organisations is being actively supported and encouraged by the NIHR and HEIs.

The proposed programme fits with the School and Faculty priorities to offer a high-quality Clinical Research Masters delivered fully via distance learning, part time. Teaching and support will be delivered from both clinical academic staff as well as leading researchers throughout the Faculty. Place based practice mentors will also support students. This will ensure high quality teaching and student support. This new programme plans to deliver a flexible learning programme which will appeal to a wider reaching target group of learners both in the UK and internationally. Our learners are often trying to balance work and life commitments alongside career development and learning opportunities. This programme will be co-designed with key stakeholders from this learner pool and thus be tailored

to their needs. In recent years we have had an increasing number of enquiries from both UK and international students if this programme can be completed via distance learning. Those institutions which offer online and part time options appear to hold the largest share of the market.

This new programme closely links to the School and Faculty L&T priorities and the University's Education Pillar. These links are the provision of high-quality education, provision of a flexible approach to learning, widening participation in education and promotion of employability. We will ensure applicants with relevant work experience are considered as well as those with traditional academic qualifications. The programme is designed to enable health care staff the opportunity to continue their learning and develop their career alongside other commitments. The programme also gives learners real life research skills by allowing them to acquire their learning through placement type activities (our research practice experience modules) and apply their learning within a place-based dissertation. These are designed to increase our learners' employability.

The programme will also promote the University's 'One University' pillar. It will be developed and delivered with the support of a wide stakeholder group including local partner NHS Trusts. Thus, promoting an outward facing ethos, building clinical and health research capacity (within NHS, academia and industry) and strengthening links with local, regional and national stakeholders, partners and public bodies. By working collaboratively with these partners to develop the course we will also link into the University's Innovation strategy by increasing and enhancing the University's leadership role in the region. With a clear focus on sustainable development, we will improve health outcomes, productivity and cultural vibrancy. In addition, this collaborative work supports the University's 'Research' pillar. By establishing and sustaining these clinical and health related partnerships we will ensure we are well positioned to exploit research opportunities and maximise research impact.

16. Programme aims

MSc Health and Clinical Research Delivery programme aims to:	
A1	Provide learners with flexible access to high quality interactive online learning to develop knowledge and insight in respect of the approaches to, and delivery of, health related and clinical research.
A2	Provide learners with a critical understanding, practical skills and experience of delivering research within varied real-world contexts.
A3	Provide learners with the knowledge, skills and behaviours which demonstrate capability to lead and deliver a research project within their scope of practice as a practice-based researcher.
A4	Provide learners with the skills and confidence needed to contribute to and develop towards leading health related and clinical research within varied real world contexts.

17. Programme learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding		
On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding:		
		Links to Aim(s)
K1	Identify and critically explain the processes and mechanisms involved in an inclusive research cycle in practice (including structures, regulations, consent, recruitment and retention, project management, documentation, PPIE), identifying similarities and key differences according to project type.	A1; A2; A3
K2	Identify the support structures and roles within the research ecosystem available to support health related research delivery within different practice contexts including the NHS and relate them to their own area of practice/area of interest.	A1; A2; A3
K3	Identify and critically reflect on the practical constraints and challenges of leading and delivering health related in real world contexts.	A1; A2; A3; A4
K4	Critically describe the principle methodological research approaches and study designs involved in health-related research.	A1; A2; A3; A4
Skills and other attributes		
On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to:		
S1	Demonstrate research leadership skills including, the ability to plan, organise, project manage, be autonomous, confident and inclusive and apply these skills to practice.	A1; A2; A3; A4
S2	Safely and ethically collect, store and manage research data within practice.	A1; A2; A3
S3	Communicate and collaborate inclusively and ethically with an interprofessional range of health-related research teams (including research participants) using accessible methods for the intended audience (eg written, verbal and creative digital).	A1; A2; A3; A4
S4	Act as a self-aware and reflective clinical research practitioner who thinks critically about their current and future research practice and is inclusive, resilient, adaptable, flexible and pragmatic when faced with professional and research leadership challenges.	A1; A2; A3; A4

18. Learning and teaching methods

Development of the learning outcomes is promoted through the following teaching and learning methods:

An **Induction Week** immediately before the autumn semester enables students to meet each other and staff who will be teaching them, to familiarise them with the resources available within The School of Medicine and Population Health to explore their expectations of the programme. Where possible these sessions will include synchronous sessions which will be recorded for those unable to attend. We will provide a programme specific session on returning to study and online study tips and skills, including advice from a course alumni. In addition to programme-specific activities and meetings, students participate in a programme alongside other School of Medicine and Population Health postgraduate students, providing basic skills in information management, independent study and

academic writing.

The programme will be provided on a **part time basis and delivered online** using a variety of interactive asynchronous methods including online lectures, videos, audio podcasts, written materials, guided reading, online discussion and presentations from researchers and topic experts (K1-4, S1-4). Optional synchronous online sessions will be offered to students to build a sense of community and connection with their peers and tutors. These sessions will be recorded and made available asynchronously on the Blackboard for those unable to attend due to work or caring commitments or time zone differences. The programme's target audience will be busy practising health and social care professionals. The programme's flexible online delivery methods will allow these learners to flex their learning around whatever time zone or shift pattern they are working.

The Research Practice experience modules 1 & 2 provide students with the opportunity for **real world practical learning opportunities** by linking them with a practice-based supervisor and associated learning opportunities to build their knowledge and skills according to their own personal training needs analysis (K1-4, S1-4).

Independent study is a key element of participation in the programme and students are expected to take responsibility for their own learning, and for the learning of other members of their cohort. Formative assessment activities and guided reading allow students to deepen their understanding of the issues raised. Distance learning materials and resources provide additional opportunities for independent study. Two core **Research Practice Experience modules (RPE 1 & RPE 2)** enable students to integrate and apply their learning within real world contexts and undertake independent study over two semesters with the support and guidance of both an academic and practice-based supervisor. The final component of the programme is the **dissertation**, which enables students to integrate their learning in an extended period of independent study (K1-4, S1-4).

19. Assessment and feedback methods

Opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the programme learning outcomes are provided through the following assessment methods:

Formative assessment

Regular formative assessments are conducted throughout the programme. These include peer and tutor assessments; an assessment of an outline final report (due for submission as summative assessment); peer review comments regarding other students' work and monitoring and informal assessment of group discussions with provision of feedback, either individually or in the group discussion forum as appropriate.

These assessments are used to test abilities and understanding of core principles, knowledge and skills during units and allow any areas of weakness or difficulty in individual students to be identified and resolved before they undertake the more formal course assessment work.

Summative assessment

Units are assessed by written assignments and reports, contribution to peer assessed activities and contribution to online group discussions. The format of assessments reflects the learning objectives of individual units, for example, a research report detailing a specific innovative study design (LO1-7); an Inclusive research practice structured essay (LO1-7). They also reflect the LO of the programme, for example contribution to online discussions (S3, S4) and provision of peer review comments (S3, S4).

During the Research Practice experience modules 1 & 2 students will complete a placement e-portfolio. Within RPE 1 students will be assessed via a written reflective essay assignment (1500 words) focused on one aspect of their portfolio learning (S4, K3). Within RPE 2 students will be assessed via written reflective essay assignment (3000 words) focused on one aspect of portfolio learning (S4, K3).

The dissertation (MSc only) is an opportunity to undertake an original piece of research based on primary or secondary data analysis, a service evaluation or literature review based on a topic that is

within the scope of the course. It should be realistically achievable within the time and resources available. Students will be encouraged to work up a concept based on an area of particular interest and/or relevance to themselves in order to integrate the learning and skills from the entire programme (K1-4, S1-4).

20. Programme structure and student development

The MSc in Health and Clinical Research delivery programme will be provided on a part time basis and run over three years. Students will have the opportunity to exit with a PGCert, PGDip and Masters' award. We will develop an RPLE process for students with an accredited PG cert award from NIHR-AoMRC accredited HEI or 60 Masters' level credits from other relevant modules (including practice-based modules). In cases where we would RPLE on the basis of work experience a portfolio of work and references would be required.

The PGCert (over 1 year: year 1): This will consist of the following existing population health modules:

- 15 credit core HAR6043 Introduction to Research Methods online (semester 1)
- 15 credit core HAR699 Leading and Managing Health Services Online (semester 2)
- 15 credit core HAR408 Doing Health and Clinical Research Well (semester 1)
- 15 credit core HAR409 Research Practice Experience 1 (semester 2)

The PGDip (over 1 year: year 2)

- The 30 credit core 'Research Practice Experience 2' module (semester 1 and 2) will offer students the chance to develop the skills, knowledge and attitude to become a future Principal Investigator through competency-focussed real-world experience of networked clinical research delivery. Core content will include a Training Needs Analysis, enabling a more bespoke experience to be offered based on previous knowledge.
- The 15 credit core 'Inclusive Research Practice' module (semester 1) will provide students with an opportunity to partner with a relevant local organisation or PPIE group to engage in critical discussion and reflection about the extent to which a networked research project (choice from own practice or prescribed example) is inclusive.
- The 15 credit core 'Innovative Designs for Research Impact' module (semester 2) will provide students with the opportunity to develop an understanding of, and apply a range of innovative methods and approaches to, delivering efficient research with real-world impact in varied real-world contexts.

Masters award (over 1 year: year 3)

- A 60 credit core dissertation module (semester 1 and 2) offers a chance for students to demonstrate their ability to plan, execute and evaluate methods to answer a research question arising from their research practice experience and identify implications for future research practice and pathways to impact on their work.

Detailed information about the structure of programmes, regulations concerning assessment and progression and descriptions of individual modules are published in the University Calendar available online at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/calendar/>.

21. Criteria for admission to the programme

The requirement for admission is an upper second-class Honours degree in a clinical subject or equivalent qualification (or the currently accepted PGT thresholds used by admissions to contact school programme leads for decision (55% for 2022-23).

22. Reference points

The learning outcomes have been developed to reflect the following points of reference:

Subject Benchmark Statements

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements>

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (2014)

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf>

University Vision

<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/vision>

23. Additional information

As world leading health research centres, the School of Medicine and Population Health, the Health Service Research Unit and the Faculty have many staff with international reputations for their research expertise. Partner organisations therefore look to the school and faculty to provide high quality health research training, fulfilling the University's Learning and Teaching strategic aim of providing excellence in practice.

This specification represents a concise statement about the main features of the programme and should be considered alongside other sources of information provided by the teaching department(s) and the University. In addition to programme specific information, further information about studying at The University of Sheffield can be accessed via our Student Services web site at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid>.